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RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY C.E.

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Abstract

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY C.E.

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Religion is often a crucial factor in the way in which people identify themselves and the communities to which they feel they belong. Both the nature of the particular religion and its context within society are significant variables affecting the individual's experience. Based on these premises, this thesis examines the religious history of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. The focus is on the two very different religious traditions, paganism and Christianity, which each saw its status in society change dramatically. The conversion of Constantine and the subsequent establishment of Christianity as the favoured religion of the Roman Empire presents an interesting turning-point between pagan and Christian periods.

The thesis follows a chronological pattern. The pagan environment is considered first, with attention focused on the role played by the pagan traditions in the maintenance of group identity. We then examine the situation of Christians in the predominantly pagan Roman Empire at the beginning of the century.

The second part concentrates on the latter part of the century, when the situation was to some extent reversed. After giving a brief overview of the practical impact of Christianity's rise to imperial favour, we consider the ways in which Christian's sense of themselves had changed. Finally, we offer a brief examination of the impact on paganism and the clues that point to the changing sense of identity and community among pagans in a period when official patronage had abandoned the pagan institutions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The reputation of the early church as a tight-knit supportive community survives to feed the imaginations of the twentieth century. Those first Christians are known to have shared their belongings, called each other brother and sister, assisted each other in need, and together suffered mockery and persecution from the uncomprehending world. Recent studies, in particular that of Wayne Meeks, have illuminated the way in which solidarity was nurtured by the first Christians[1]. Both character and situation combined to produce this state of affairs: character, because the community of the faithful, celebrated in the Eucharist, was from the beginning integral to Christianity; situation, because the early Christians formed a dissident minority within the Roman Empire.

By the Middle Ages, this situation had of course been transformed. The Church in Europe claimed as its own the vast majority of Christendom's inhabitants. Society itself was defined as Christian, in contrast to the society of the first Christian centuries, against which the Church determinedly defined itself. Others, notably Jews, were encouraged by their minority status to turn to their fellows for community and identity. Because being Christian was the norm in medieval Europe, the triumphant Church had, paradoxically, considerably less power than the persecuted Church to instil

in its members a self-conscious sense of Christian identity and of privileged fellowship.

The key period in the transformation of the Church lay in the years surrounding the conversion of Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the favoured religion of the empire. At the beginning of the century, Christians were confronted with the "Great Persecution". Within the lifetime of many who witnessed that time of threat, Christianity's favoured status had been established by important official patronage and by the beginning of sanctions against the practice of other religions. From the time of the first Christians to the age of Christendom, the changes for the Church and therefore for Christians were many. Certain features are obvious: the community, already far beyond the face-to-face, became much larger; from a faith chosen by most of its members despite obstacles, it became a group to which many adhered by birth or convenience; as it expanded, its boundaries, once sharpened by persecutions, grew vaguer. On the external front, the transformation was more dramatic. As Church and State grew together, the whole topography of society was altered. Clearly, Christians came to enjoy numerical and psychological dominance, as well as a position of prestige. The general attitude to the world ouside became less negative as the Church swallowed the world. The tension that exists for those who are members of mutually opposed

groups was shifted from the Christian community to pagans. We also need to give our attention to a minority of Christians who found the new state of affairs insufficient to the call they felt. For some of them a solution opened itself up in monasticism, while others were excluded from the Church as heretics.

The subject is of particular interest in the modern Western world, which has just recently undergone a shift in the opposite direction. Christianity has become more and more a minority concern. It is no longer possible to assume, as it was in the Europe of the Middle Ages and beyond, that people with Christian parents will identify themselves as Christians. Those who continue to call themselves Christians have had to struggle with what that means in a secular world. The growth of the ecumenical movement may be interpreted as the result, at least in part, of the greater readiness of Christians of different denominations to unite in the face of the vaster non-Christian world.

Twentieth-century theologians have, to a greater or lesser extent, grappled with the implications of Christianity's minority status. The following reflection from Thomas Merton suggests a parallel with the situation of Jews, for so long a close-knit minority, and contrasts the modern situation of the Church with the medieval:

> I am for the diaspora. I prefer it to the closed medieval hegemony. It may offer much better chances of a real Christian life and brotherhood.[2]

Karl Rahner points to the different possible reactions to the changing situation of the Church:

> The smaller Christ's flock becomes in the pluralism of modern society, so much the less can it afford a mentality of the ghetto and the sect, so much more open must it be to the outer world.[3]

The modern world also offers another, different window on to the changes of the fourth century. Sociologists have been able to bring a fair degree of light to a pattern of development that is experienced by many religious groups in the modern Western world. Through the work of Weber and Troeltsch, it is clear that the common characteristics of some of these groups enable us to establish a typology of sects. These sects, if they maintain the adherence of the next generation, tend to join the mainstream, and adopt the characteristics of "churches". It has long been noticed that this is also the pattern followed by early Christianity. However, by the beginning of the fourth-century the Church had shed many of the characteristics of a sect. It is important also to bear in mind the very different context of the period. The pagan Roman Empire is not the mirror of the secular modern world.

If the context is different, the nature of the evidence available to us today certainly is so too. There is very little direct evidence about how people felt, a limitation that is best firmly acknowledged. Attempting to look into the hearts and minds of the people of the fourth century is not only idle but misleading. In seeking such information we succumb to the temptation of psychologizing, a temptation which will almost inevitably entail seeing the past as a mirror of ourselves. S.C. Humphreys, reviewing the different approaches to the study of religion in the ancient world, warns of the dangers: "...the individualistic, psychological approach to religion is by nature ill-equipped to deal with differences between societies and periods"[4].

But this gap in the evidence does not mean that nothing can be learned about the experiences of Christians or others of the fourth century. The subject of this study involves a triangle of relationships: individual, group and society at large. The identity and sense of community experienced by any individual depends partly on the will and character of that particular individual, but also on the characteristics of the group to which she or he belongs. The nature of the group and the experiences of its members are in turn affected by its situation in the wider society. All of this is comprised in the elusive concept of "a sense of belonging". While as

historians we can never achieve a complete picture of people's experiences, we can at least uncover some outlines of the groups, in this case the religious communities, and of their place in society.

Applied to Christianity in the fourth century, this would mean looking at the total landscape to see where the church fitted in, including attitudes of outsiders, the strength of the church (both numerical and psychological) and the distinctness of boundaries between Christian and non-Christian. Relevant also are the following points: whether Christians chose to be such or not; how easily they could leave; the internal structures of the Church and how they commanded the allegiance of its members; the size of the group, both absolutely and relatively, and the interpretation of demands on individual members made by the faith or the church.

To understand the environment in the fourth century we need to examine how religion fitted into pagan society. In this context, we can then examine the Church and Christians at the beginning of the century, before considering the changes. To complete the picture we need also to look at how the pagan "community" was remoulded by the Christian take-over of the stage. The study will follow this outline.

A word must be said about the focus on the fourth century. The boundaries of the century are boundaries of convenience and no more. The Church has in fact been developing from the time it began, both before and after the fourth century[5]. These changes involve continual accommodations to, and reactions, to the environment. An advantage in confining the study to the fourth century is that the days of pagan hegemony remain within sight. Other mighty changes, such as the military disasters of the early fifth century, have not had a chance to change the face of the empire too radically, which is not to say that we can isolate the religious shift and hope to discern a straightforward pattern of cause and effect in the developments of the fourth century. The shape and role of the social groups of the empire were evolving independently of the church's change in status.

It must similarly be noted that the Roman Empire covered a large and by no means homogeneous area. The religious practices and communities differed in important ways from region to region. Generalizations must therefore be understood to expect numerous exceptions.

I. THE PAGAN ENVIRONMENT

Paganism in the Roman Empire did not exist, not, at least, as a self-constituted entity. It was Christians who gave the name *pagani* itself to the followers of traditional religion. First attested in Christian inscriptions of the early fourth century, the term remained colloquial for a long time thereafter.[1] Modern historians likewise rarely use the term "pagan" when discussing religion in antiquity, unless they are considering the period when Christianity was an alternative. Without the presence of another, very different, religious outlook with which to contrast the "pagan" ways, there is scant temptation, for them or for us, to make a unity out of the myriad cults, "the pullulation of beliefs"[2] which the empire boasted. Having so much on offer in the religious field, the Romans understandably termed atheists those who rejected it *all*. If you were not for the gods, you must be against them. The traditional Romans' difficulties in grasping the position of the exclusively monotheistic (but not atheist) Christians, stemmed paradoxically from their own religious tolerance. Their openness to alternative manifestations of divinity mirrored the lack of boundaries on the human plane: one could not formally "become" a pagan[3], and there was certainly no possibility of excommunication.

Religious exclusivism was not, however, introduced to the Roman world by the Christians. By the time of the Empire, there were already Jewish communities in many parts of the Mediterranean world, and their ways were familiar, if in caricature, to many[4]. The Roman authorities were by no means the first to confront the Jewish people's determined allegiance to their religious tradition. The loyalty itself was something Romans could identify with: even if their religion was odd, it was understandable, even praiseworthy, for the Jews to follow the ways of their ancestors.

Ramsay MacMullen emphasizes the importance of age as a criterion for evaluating religious practices or belief, quoting Tertullian: "Apud vos quoque religionis est instar, fidem de temporibus adserere"[5]. In particular, respect was due to the ancestral gods of the family or community: they were part of "ta patria"[6].

We are brought thus to a consideration of the other side of paganism's "non-entity": its inseparability from the society to which it belonged. Many of the gods worshipped were identified by place; civic communities had their patron deities; civic magistrates led processions for religious festivals, which also served as fairs; athletic competitions were organized in honour of a god; trades associations had patron deities. The discrete religious elements can no more

be detached from the Roman Empire than they could be from medieval Christendom. The Christian religion, however, both preceded and survived the Middle Ages: arguably a question of historical accident, but also made possible by the existence of a doctrinal tradition and an institution. For pagans in the Roman Empire, religion was, in general, more a matter of practice than of belief; the community it related to already existed as a community on other terms, and was not formed primarily on religious grounds. From the pagan point of view, it would make better sense to say that community involved religion, than that religion involved community.

The question before us, then, concerns the role played by religion in the communities of the Roman Empire. In the society in which Christians lived, how far did membership in those communities call for acceptance of pagan belief or practice? By studying this aspect, we will concentrate on religion as it relates to social cohesion. As a result, aspects of religion which have nothing to do with community will not be considered.

The Roman Empire presents itself to us largely as a community of cities. The lack of evidence relative to the lives of the rural inhabitants keeps them out of mind; when they are brought to our attention, we have little means of telling how much of significance for the overall picture we

are missing. In his examination of the pagan experience, Lane Fox emphasizes the links between town and country. Townspeople travelled to rural festivals and shrines, while the town festivals in turn attracted people from the country. A simplistic distinction between town and country, he argues, is not warranted[7]. MacMullen emphasizes the probability of important economic links (the town's wealth depending on the country) and patron-client relationships[8]. In reference to the rural dwellers coming to the towns for the festivals, he notes that amphitheatres in several towns had sections of seats reserved for people of particular villages[9]. On the other hand, Brown has found a very decided barrier dividing town and country in the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, and advances as evidence Libanius' perception of country people as very alien to the inhabitants of Antioch[10]. We have, of course, no reason to expect a simple answer and we are certainly safer in not attempting an answer at all. Since by all accounts most Christians lived in the towns, the focus on cities forced on us by the evidence is, fortunately, quite apposite.

In the Hellenic East, the city had long constituted the basic political unit. Even within the Roman Empire, the polis retained a considerable degree of autonomy. It is therefore no surprise to find that the city continued to be a focus of identity and loyalty for its inhabitants. The virtue of

philopatris, which inspired the wealthy to make generous gifts, was a patriotism that referred to one's city.

When we look at what it meant to belong to a city, we quickly find that religion was consistently and intimately involved. Each city had its own gods, present in a particular local form, even if they were also "international". Artemis protected Ephesus; the inhabitants of Sardis worshipped Zeus Lydius; Asclepius was peculiarly present at Pergamum; in Carthage one found Dea Caelestis; Zeus and Hera watched over Amastris; over Panamara, Zeus and Hecate; Iarhibol was "ancestral" at Palmyra, Aphrodite at Didyma; Artemis was "anassa" and "προεστωσης τῆς πόλεως" in Perge[11]. Careful and respectful attention to the gods was deemed essential for the prosperity of the city. In the words of Kenneth Harl:

> The political life and patriotic spirit of the polis sprang from the proper veneration of ancestral cults according to the dictates of custom, and every public action required at least a token sanctification from the immortal gods of the city.[12]

The Roman emperors clearly understood the significance of the gods and paid appropriate respect to them when visiting. The celebration of the emperor's arrival, a ceremony called the adventus, and jointly choreographed by town and emperor, accorded an important role to the gods of the city. In the East, the visit would often be commemorated by a special mint

of coins: some of these show the emperor being greeted by or visiting the gods[13]. Lesser visiting officials could also expect to have rights and duties relative to the gods. A priest in third century Egypt reported: "for the visit of the most distinguished prefect..., all [statues] in the temple crowned with wreaths..., anointing of all the statues in the temple with oil..., workmen accompanying the image of the god to go and greet the prefect, wreaths for the image, a rhetor addressing the most distinguished prefect..."[14]. Officials in turn would pay their respects to the gods[15].

The city authorities concerned themselves with the care of the gods, naturally enough, since the identity and well-being of the city were at stake. The magistrates had prominent roles to play at the religious festivals and processions; they intervened in matters of temple management; they might decide to make a special offering or establish a temple, using town money[16]. An example of the intimate connection between city and religion is provided by the case of the Umbrian town of Hispellum, which in c. 333 C.E. requested permission to dedicate a temple to the gens flavia. With the favourable answer came a name change to "Flavia Constans"[17].

Even the calendar could be ordered according to religious criteria[18]. The holidays on the civic calendar were the

festivals. The statues of the god might be taken out in procession; sacrifices would provide the meat for a feast; there might be related athletic, musical or dramatic events, as well as opportunities for business[19]. The festivals were thus important for the community as a whole, whatever the individuals' religious enthusiasm. Holy days were occasions for eating together, whether in a dining room adjoining a temple, at a privately-funded sacred dining room, in homes or at picnics in the open air[20]. Despite the economic difficulties of the third century, festivals continued to be financed[21]. All this was a matter of civic pride, not simply religious conscience or light relief.

Special religious occasions provided excellent opportunities for cities to pursue rivalries with their neighbours. A city's reputation could be enhanced by lavish display in procession and rituals, and by accompanying games. Price identifies festivals as the "essential framework...in Asia Minor"[22], and, in the eastern part of the empire, the tradition of religious festivals long antedated the Roman Empire[23]. The emperor had it in his power to elevate festivals and games to the status of "sacred". Games could be more specifically "isopythian", "actian" or "capitoline". The occasion might be advertised on coins: one coin from mid third-century Tarsus finds room for the full name: "Severeia Olympia Adrianeia Kaisarea Augousteia Aktia"[24]. Delegates

with invitations would be sent to neighbouring cities[25]. Victors in sacred games obtained special honours and privileges from the city[26]. When provincial festivals were held, the relative status of participating cities would be marked by the order in which their representatives processed[27]. In the Western parts of the empire, where no coins were struck to serve as witnesses to events, MacMullen gathers some evidence of festivals. The role of religion is, however, sometimes unclear[28].

By his wide-ranging accumulation of information on paganism in the Roman Empire, MacMullen highlights "the ways by which religion was established close to the center of daily life and therefore forced itself on people's attention"[29]. Much of the same information serves our purpose of showing how often the city's identity included a religious aspect. Being aware of belonging to a particular city and feeling pride in it often came in a context of attention to the city's gods.

If the religious festivals served to cement the bonds between citizens, the corrolary must be that non-citizens might feel excluded. Those who came in from the surrounding countryside would have reason to feel a little differently towards a city they did not inhabit[30]. Visitors from nearby cities who responded to the invitations must, of course, have felt themselves guests, rather than part of the family, given

the evidence of inter-city rivalry. Long-term visitors or immigrants might establish a cult of their home city's gods. In 174 C.E. the Tyrians at Puteoli wrote to their mother city seeking assistance with the maintenance of their national deities[31].

This information suggests the importance of one's native city identity even in immigration; it also reveals the central role played by the gods in that identity[32]. In a world of relatively high mobility[33], the demands of ancestral worship ran counter to the tradition of localized gods. MacMullen's analysis of the data leads him to the conclusion that people largely persisted in their ancestral cults. The appearance of cults in regions where they were previously unknown reflects more the movement of people than conversion of the locals: "the new turns out to be ancestral, ta patria - only displaced"[34]. Garth Fowden, making a somewhat different point, discusses the importance of mobility in the gods: religion "had to be itself a patria, a home wherever one went"[35].

While mobility was gradually changing the ethnic composition of many cities in the empire and therefore their religious allegiances, the shape of the communities was also affected. Price advances the view that in the course of time, beneficiaries of sacrifices were enlarged to include women and

non-citizens. "The changes in sacrifice that did take place show the way in which the institution reflected changes in society, such as the widening definition of membership of the community and the increasing sphere of public action allowed to individuals vis-à-vis the city"[36].

Recent studies, however, have argued against concluding that mobility created a society characterized by "rootless inhabitants of great cities"[37]. The Tyrians at Puteoli were clearly well aware of their roots. The notion that a group of people could maintain their identity when transplanted had an ancient and reputable history. Thucydides has Nicias encourage the Athenian soldiers in Sicily with the thought that they could settle anywhere and be a city: "Men make a city, not walls or ships without men"[38]. There is also plenty of evidence of communities existing within the cities, many of which, in any case, were not so large[39]. Given the high population density in most urban areas, town-dwellers must have known their neighbours well.

In Italy, the relationship was formalized in street associations (the vici). The neighbourhood might also boast compitalia, cross-road cults. Practitioners of a special trade would often live in the same part of town, but whether they did or not, they were likely to have an association. The latter's activities went beyond the pursuit of interests

related to the members' work: in some cases the association had a set of rooms that would serve for social functions and many associations ran burial insurance[40]. From first-century Egyptian papyri relating to trades associations we have records of by-laws, dues, banquet-days and fines for misconduct[41]. These associations usually had a patron deity; meetings might open with a prayer and the god's holy days would be celebrated[42]. The Iobacchi in Athens are revealed to us in an inscription of one of their meetings in 176 C.E. This all-male club had a hierarchy of officers and a devotion to the god Dionysus. At their meeting in 176 they received Herodes Atticus as their new high priest[43].

On the international scene, the association of successful artists proclaimed its religious orientation in its long-winded name: "Sacred Society of World-Wide Travelling Victorious-in-Sacred-Games Gold-Crowned Artists Dedicated to Dionysius and Our Lord [present emperor]". A surviving certificate of membership dated to 264 C.E. attests that the holder had paid the fees "and all the sacred charges for the worship of the emperors". The corresponding organization of athletes was dedicated to Herakles[44]. At another level of society, then, community entailed religion.

The social function of the associations deserves to be stressed. Because associations inspired the Roman authorities

with fears of conspiracy, groups that went beyond innocuous social gatherings were unlikely to survive long. The Iobacchi had monthly meetings at which wine was drunk; they also celebrated the society's anniversary and Dionysus' festivals. Rules and officers existed to ensure that some members' high spirits did not interfere with the enjoyment of the others. Communal eating tends to be rich in meaning in any human society and a meal shared together with gods and fellow humans was a basic feature of the Greco-Roman world. J.P. Kane argues that the significance of such meals is to be found in the combination of social pleasure and honouring of the gods, rather than in some sacramental interpretation, tempting though that may be. He bases his argument on the appearance of the cult meal in a wide variety of different Greco-Roman traditions[45]. MacMullen makes the complementary point that religion is at the heart of social life at this period. "There existed - it is no great exaggeration to say it of all but the fairly rich - no formal social life in the world of the Apologists that was entirely secular"[46].

Largely hidden from view of the outside world, certainly from our view, were the domestic cults. Literary testimony, together with archeological evidence from Pompeii, Herculaneum and elsewhere, reveals aspects of the cult of Vesta and the Lares and Penates of the Roman household[47]. Comparable cults are known in Alexandria and Greece[48]. How much of these

survived to the fourth century, we are less than clear, but we do know of the export of the household cult to distant parts of the Roman empire[49], and Tertullian testifies to the practice of family festivals in his period[50]. The family was an important element on the Edessan religious scene, where tombs were always designed for the individual, the relatives and posterity[51].

The picture of pervasive religion could be further adorned, with, for example, examination of the army or school communities. Fraternities existed within the army which continued among groups of veterans settled together. Corporately organized, they might, for example, make a dedication to Jupiter[52]. Tertullian offers us a picture of the schoolmaster, involved in offerings to Minerva (made possible by the new pupils' fees); prize-giving ceremonies were graced with the presence of civic dignitaries who participated in the cult of the gods[53].

The peculiar melding of religion with politics found in the imperial cult makes it of great relevance to a study of the relation between religion and community. It must be said, however, that its very peculiarity has made interpretation difficult. What it meant to the participants, to worshippers or worshipped, is a matter of some controversy. However, the evidence of what happened points once again to the importance

of the civic context. Price goes so far as to say that, without some form of community organization, there is no place for the imperial cult[54]. Imperial temples were a matter of prestige for a city; the cult could provide occasion for festivals and rituals, competitive games and even sometimes the revelation of mysteries[55]. The imperial cult might be associated with an already existing local festival, or be the inspiration for the establishment of a new festival. Against a view common among modern scholars that only the élite in the cities were involved in the cult, Price argues for its importance for the city as a whole[56].

How far did the imperial cult unite people across the Roman Empire? It has been called "the link which held together all the diverse parts of the vast Empire"[57]. Price speaks of the standardization of statues of the Roman Emperor[58]. But the main function of the cult seems to have been the maintenance of relations between emperor and subject, rather than between subjects throughout the empire. Through the formalized language of the imperial cult, the cities of the East[59] conducted external relations, pursuing rivalries and diplomatic initiatives, while simultaneously providing an arena for internal politics. Price concludes: "The cult was a major part of the web of power that formed the fabric of society"[60].

In the social landscape of the Roman Empire, the various communities had primary functions that were non-religious. The city, whose importance as a community has been emphasized, was first of all a political unit. Trades associations would appear to have a primary raison-d'être in the furtherance of the shared economic and political interests of their members. Biology throws a family together; soldiers in the army, pupils in the school were assembled on a particular pretext. The empire with its emperor was something its inhabitants had to live within: the development of the imperial cult was one of the ways in which they adapted. Some of the associations, on the other hand, appear to have existed for purely religious and social purposes (and the two, it must be remembered, were intimately linked in the Roman Empire). We are dealing with intimate groups, whose internal structures might be quite formalized; membership would be optional and its boundaries clear. There is no evidence that membership implied anything about other aspects of one's life: there was no ideology. Such associations echoed and reinforced the patterns of wider society, by maintaining the patron-client relationships, by re-creating the civic structures in their own organizations, by involving themselves in the life of the community at large. It is interesting that the association is one of the models Meeks suggests are most illuminative for understanding the early Christian Church[61].

There were religious groupings which have generally been considered to have gone far beyond most religious associations in the creation of communities and identity, to some extent separating members from the rest of society. The category used is sometimes "mysteries", sometimes "Oriental religions", with a high degree of overlap between the two. Vermaseren lists as the principal deities of the mystery cults: Demeter, Isis, Mithras, Dionysus and Cybele[62]. Turcan defines "Oriental religions" as more precisely the religions of "Greco-Oriental" origin[63], and goes on to deal with Cybele, Isis, various Syrian gods including Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras, Hermes Trismegistos, Dionysus and Sabazios, amongst others. The particular element in these cults that needs to be considered is the initiation into secret mysteries. Initiation implied, or was taken to imply, an adherence that was more profound and had more impact on the person's identity than a simple matter of joining an association. Secondly, the fact that the mysteries were not accessible to the uninitiated established a barrier between those who were "in" and those who were not. This barrier becomes more significant where the mysteries offered a comprehensive guide for life. Malaise expresses such a view with regard to followers of Isis:

> Le citoyen qui suivait la déesse, s'il n'abandonnait pas toute vie profane, entrait dans un nouvel univers: il devenait avant tout un citoyen de l'univers isiaque[64].

In other words, Malaise argues that this new religious identity took priority over membership in other communities. As others have done, Turcan attributes the popularity of cults such as the Dionysiac to a decline in the potency of the civic community:

> ...à une époque où comme au temps des Diadoques, la cité n'encadre plus aussi étroitement et moralement l'individu, le problème ne se pose plus en pareils termes. L'homme hellénistique est, à certains égards, "libéré", et d'autant plus inquiet ou incertain[65].

Whether the role of the city had developed in the way suggested by Turcan is questionable. But the point about the individual seeking a new home has much to support it in Apuleius' story of Lucius. The architecture of the temples of Isis even suggested an isolation from the city in which they were located. While Greco-Roman temples were traditionally open, the Iseum was kept at a remove from the world by a precinct, creating in Pompeii and Rome, "une espèce d'entité étrangère à la ville"[66]. The main festivals would be public, but those interested could join a group, or collegia, of worshippers. Lucius took the opportunity of taking up residence within the temple precinct[67]; archeological findings have confirmed the possibility of initiands "living in"[68]. However, initiation was only available to those whom the god personally called. The ceremony apparently served to symbolize the voluntary death of the initiand[69]. For priests,

life might be affected in other ways: men were to have shaved heads, all were to wear white linen and papyrus or palm shoes[70]. Plutarch tells us that most legumes, mutton, pork and salt were prohibited[71].

The Mithraists are of special interest because their structures suggest a particularly intense form of community and identity. All their ceremonies were closed, they met in small groups and they had a seven-stage hierarchy[72]. The Mithraea were traditionally caves; where that was impossible the meeting places were underground. MacMullen concludes from the archaelogical remains that Mithraists gave considerable attention to special effects, particularly using lighting, in their rites[73]. Meals were, by all accounts, a regular occurrence: the Mithraea were clearly designed with this purpose in mind. We know almost nothing about what happened at their meetings, what their beliefs were and what impact Mithraism had on their daily lives. Unlike other cults, it had no centre, its links with its Persian homeland being negligeable. It follows that it was not an ancestral worship for anyone[74].

It is significant that, despite the readiness of Roman emperors to seek the support of a wide variety of gods, there is no official devotion attested before the restoration of a Mithraeum at Carnuntum in 307 by Diocletian, Galerius and

Licinius[75]. This lack of attention and the shortage of surviving information on the cult together point to a position on the margins of official life.

Clues can be pieced together, then, to present a picture of religions very different from the traditional Greco-Roman cults. Isis, with her special appeal for women, and Mithras, with his almost exclusively male followers, may be portrayed as gods who led devotees towards a new life, metaphorically leaving behind the old communities and entering as individuals a new community. Such evidence as we have, however, is far from being unanimously in support of this proposition.

First, the danger of dealing with false categories must be faced. MacMullen has aptly challenged the supposition that there exists some kind of unity in the "Oriental religions", coming from places as distinct as Egypt, Asia Minor and the Middle East[76]. The Romans themselves certainly made use of the label "externa superstitio", but by following their example too closely, we risk falling into their prejudices. If some of the cults seemed alien to the Romans of Rome, the empire was such a vast and varied territory that all cults must have been alien to some of its inhabitants. Conversely, each cult was likely to have been familiar to some inhabitants, for whom the worship was ancestral and who faithfully carried their gods across the seas when they

settled in foreign lands. MacMullen argues from the epigraphic evidence that most of the growth of what he calls "the dynamic cults" is due to immigration, rather than conversion. For example, a large proportion of the names of Isis worshippers in Italy betray non-Italian origins[77]. He excepts from his rule Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras, "two cults in the west [which] appear to have grown to a good size from nothing"[78]. It must be said, however, that there is no proof in the non-Italian names that the bearers' ancestors worshipped Isis: the statistics could also bear the interpretation that non-natives were more subject to the alienation to which Isis is supposed to have ministered.

Generalizations about cults must also take into account the diversity of the empire. There was no coordination between the cult organizations in various cities: Lucius arriving in Rome needed to be initiated into the mysteries of Isis in that city. It is well-known that syncretism allowed a god to be worshipped in the old style but under a new name. Isis was so prone to appear in different guises that she was called "polyonymous", even "myrionymous". It is dangerous, then, to collect together details about the cult from every corner of the empire, and from any and every century. For example, a study of the Dionysiac cult in Roman Africa shows no evidence of the tension with political authorities so familiar from Euripides' Bacchae. Dionysus, or Liber Pater as

he appears almost exclusively in Africa, received the dedication of many official monuments; magistrates participated in his festivals; his cult was often linked with others, including the imperial cult. The survival of certain inscriptions of Dionysiac worshippers reveals to us that participation in the cult was often a family matter[79]. Liber's relationship with his followers certainly does not appear to be different from those of the "traditional" gods.

As far as initiation into the mysteries goes, MacMullen takes the position that it was not generally an exclusive affair:

> ...so-called mysteries were in general quite open, come-if-you-wish ceremonies, to which as large an audience as possible was attracted by interpretive dancing, singing and music of all sorts[80].

This is perhaps overstated but, in addition to the arguments he advances, there is some confirmation to be found in the evidence of a priest of Zeus of Panamara sending invitations to whole cities to join the mystery[81]. Apart from Mithraism, all cults held public ceremonies[82].

Whatever else they did (and this is crucial), none of these cults excluded followers from the worship of the other pagan gods. If in some cases there was a new opportunity for the individual to enter a freely chosen community and to find

therein a series of levels of meaning, this entailed no break with the ways of the past. Nor is it easy to argue that mystery religions were gaining on the traditional religions in the course of the third and fourth centuries. In his classic work, Conversion, Nock consistently contrasts the conversion Christianity called for with the demands and offers of pagan cults. He remarks, for example:

> A man used Mithraism, but he did not belong to it body and soul[83].

In the light of the above, Malaise's comment cited earlier, on the Isiac belonging above all to the Isiac world, appears at least overstated. It is, of course, credible that certain individuals should have had such an experience, but the state of the evidence prevents us from concluding that the experience was generalized.

The intellectual aspect does clearly appear in the philosophical schools. The circles of students that formed around certain teachers had more in common with religious communities than we might at first assume[84]. Two prominent philosophers of the third century, Plotinus and Porphyry, taught a form of Neoplatonism which had distinctly mystical aspects[85]. Plotinus' asceticism is an indication that his thinking had an impact on his personal lifestyle[86]. There was also a direct connection with the pagan gods: Porphyry wrote

Philosophy from Oracles, a work giving prescriptions for cults[87]. Similarly, those interested in Hermetical thinking had a blend of philosophy and pagan religion that offered new avenues for the relevance of religion in a pagan's life. Although some would argue that the treatises are purely literary, they may have developed out of, and in turn have nourished, a well-defined community[88].

In conclusion, it is worth considering what changes, if any, can be detected in the religious landscape of the pagan empire by the beginning of the fourth century. Since religion was to a high degree of a communal nature, any changes should properly be seen in the context of general changes in society. This would be beyond the scope of the present study, but a number of points may be considered.

A conventional view of the religious changes of Late Antiquity relies upon the weakening of the pagan cults in the face of the advance of Christianity. Price criticizes what he calls the Christianizing assumptions of the decline model, pointing out that the theory of the decline of cities, to which it is usually attached, has also been widely set aside[89].

One of the key facts used to argue for the decline in pagan cults is the sharp reduction in the numbers of

inscriptions set up and in religious building activity in the second part of the third century[90].

However, for reasons presumably connected to the economic difficulties of that century, inscriptions of all kinds were reduced in frequency at that period. As MacMullen concludes, "the data...tell nothing about people's faith. It is not the priest who is stilled, but the stonecutter"[91]. There was perhaps less money available for some of the more extravagant forms of worship that would leave their records for us to comtemplate. To jump from this to the conclusion that people were dissatisfied with the gods is risky[92].

Peter Brown advances an interesting thesis on religious change that takes us onto new ground. He links the decline in inscriptions to a shift from an "age of equipoise" to an "age of ambition"[93]. According to his argument, urban élites in the third century no longer secured their positions in society by public spending: instead they advanced themselves through personal aggrandizement. Private palaces replaced the public building efforts. At about the same time, especially in the east, he identifies the beginning of a shift in the locus of the supernatural, away from the public sacrifices and temples (situated figuratively at the heart of society) and towards the "holy man"[94]. This "holy man" was an individual with

special access to supernatural powers, who achieved the status by being the "stranger par excellence"[95].

The shift in focus away from the community and towards the individual has been identified by many modern scholars. Turcan, for example, apparently speaking of the whole imperial period, states:

> Une partie de la vie cultuelle se déplace hors des aires publiques et traditionnelles. Elle ne se vit plus nécessairement dans les temples ou devant les temples, autour des autels du centre municipal, mais chez les particuliers ou dans les clubs privés...On se groupe pour sacrifier, certes, mais à l'abri des regards indiscrets...[96]

The other element commonly noted is the trend towards syncretism, by which some strands of paganism turned themselves into virtual monotheism. The rise (and fall and rise again) of Sol Invictus is a prime piece of relevant evidence. This should not be overplayed: MacMullen reminds us that in between Aurelian and Constantine, with their special regard for Sol, came the Tetrarchs with their classical titles of Jovian and Hercules[97]. The implication is that Diocletian was reacting against the religious tendency of his predecessor.

Whatever the particular significance of the promotion of Sol, the association reminds us that the emperors were still

actors on the religious stage. Any theory of a tendency towards privatization of religion must be counterbalanced with an acceptance of the key role of the central authority, whose spectacular effect was, of course, about to be seen at the beginning of the fourth century.

To sum up, religion in the pagan empire functioned as the confirmation, rather than the creator, of community. It lent identity, but more to the community than to the individual. The various religions of initiation can be seen as exceptions demonstrating the outer limits of the pagan system. Christianity was able to create new boundaries of community and offer an identity in a way that was beyond the scope of paganism. The examination of these peculiarities of Christianity calls our attention in the next chapter.

II. CHRISTIAN BELONGING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

The Church, when it arrived on the scene and needed a name, was called in Greek ekklesia, borrowed into Latin as ecclesia. Tellingly, the word's primary meaning was "assembly", the gathering of the citizens of the city-state. The city of which the faithful Christians formed the assembly was, of course, the City of God. The pattern of pagan antiquity was in effect turned upside down. Because they belonged to a community, pagans worshipped the gods together; Christians belonged to a community because they worshipped God.

> καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἑνι σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πρᾶξιν, οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἕν σῶμα ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷσ ἀλλήλων μέλη.[1]

Paul had made clear, in this passage as elsewhere, that being Christian meant belonging to a united community, or "one body". The idea was fundamental. Paul's thoughts are echoed in, for example, Tertullian's comment:

> Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spei foedere[2].

Such a conviction lay behind Eusebius' decision to write a history of the Church, a kind of work that would be inconceivable in the pagan milieu. The notion of the "people of God" clearly derives to a large extent from the Jewish

tradition. Christians were the new Israel, rejoicing in the new covenant. Unlike the Jewish people, the Christian community was created from nought and was open to all: the Church was composed of Jew and non-Jew, Greek and barbarian, male and female, slave and free. Christians called themselves the "third race", but if it was to have any meaning, they had to construct it for themselves.

Creation of a new people is no mean undertaking, but Christianity demanded the commitment without which it would certainly have been unthinkable. Jesus had called people to leave everything and follow him. The Christian faith was supposed to take precedence and to be relevant in all aspects of an individual's life. In Dodd ' terms, it was a "totalist creed"[3]; it was a religion requiring conversion, not mere adhesion, according to Nock's distinction[4]. It is possible to imagine an individualistic creed which made exclusive demands on the faithful, leading them to stand out from society at large, but without emphasis on solidarity. But Christianity set community at the heart of its message: so Cyprian declared that "nemini salus esse nisi in ecclesia possit"[5]. The Church joined Christ in calling forth self-sacrifice, as we see in the passion of Bishop Irenaeus of Sirmium. On the point of execution, the bishop proclaimed in his prayer that he was suffering: "propter nomen tuum et plebem tuam productam de ecclesia tua catholica Sirmensium"[6].

The Church as a whole must come before its individual members. Thus, the Bishop Fructuosus, approaching martyrdom and asked by someone for prayers, replied, "In mente me habere necesse est ecclesiam catholicam ab oriente usque in occidentem"[7]. Cyprian's epistles constantly emphasized the importance of unity within the Church. All should pray together on behalf of all:"Dominus ... oratione communi et concordi prece orantes pro omnibus iussit orare"[8].

The imagery used for the Church reflects the role it played in the minds of Christians. Especially popular was the image of the Church as Mother, found as early as Irenaeus, and adopted by Tertullian, Cyprian and Clement of Alexandria[9]. In harmony with this conviction, the martyr Phileas rejected the prefect's admonitions to relent for the sake of his wife, retorting that his relatives were the apostles and martyrs[10]. The Church demanded that the faithful substituted the "family" of Christians for their natural family. Christians called each other "brother" and "sister", to the consternation of some early observers who concluded that they were practising incest[11].

By the beginning of the fourth century, the Church had developed its own ideology to such an extent that Christian patterns of thinking could be profoundly different from the

non-Christian. It had distinguished itself first from Judaism, and then later it had entered the Greco-Roman arena. Much of the refinement and elaboration of Christian thinking was achieved through wrestling with non-Christian philosophies and internal differences. In the process, Christianity was influenced by various philosophical ways of thinking, and the Church defined itself in opposition to various positions it chose to label heretical.

By the third century, Christianity had come a long way from the early faith that could be dismissed as a superstitio, at least from the point of view of the cultural elite of the Roman Empire. Clement of Alexandria's literary work is evidence of his erudition. He became one of the early teachers of a Christian school at Alexandria, where Origen later also taught, until he moved to Caesarea and established a school and library there. Clement, Origen and others brought the wisdom and skills of Greco-Roman philosophy and literature to bear on Christianity, assimilating the Church to a philosophical school. The development had contradictory implications: on the one hand, Christians could meet the cultured class on their own terms; on the other hand, Christian intellectuals were building an independent tradition which would distinguish them from their pagan contemporaries. Christian thinkers were heavily influenced by Platonism, but their doctrines of God and of human fallenness, for example,

separated them in important ways from pagan Platonism[12]. One notable aspect of Christian learning was that all classes were encouraged to pursue it, even if only the wealthy could afford a full education. Several bishops in the region were products of the Alexandrian school, including Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, pupil of Origen and sometime head of the school. This bishop spent a full three days among the villagers in the Arsinoite nome of Egypt, arguing them out of a doctrine they were inclined to hold[13]. According to Hippolytus' Apostolic Traditions, all the faithful were to take very seriously the opportunities for instruction[14].

The distinctiveness of Christian thinking is by no means confined to the arena of philosophy. Clement of Alexandria's prescriptions dealt with a wide range of issues, such as sex, money and vegetarianism. Christian rulings on what constituted incest differed from pagan opinions. Likewise, the Church was distinctive in its strong stand on infanticide and adultery[15]. Even the way Christians interpreted the landscape or natural disasters could mark them off from the rest of society: Lane Fox contrasts the pagan interpretation of the volcanoes of Burnt Lydia with the Christian. For the former, the activities of the gods were to blame; for the latter, human sin was accountable[16]. In terms of history, too, the Christian mind brought a new view, as is demonstrated

by Eusebius' Chronicle, correlating sacred and secular history.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that all Christians reformed their thinking and consistently adhered to Christian principles. Human nature being what it is, that could hardly be possible. What is significant for our purposes is that Christians were constantly called to base themselves on the Christian faith.

Christianity, then, offered depth of identity; it was also interested in keeping the boundaries of the community clear. Entry and exit were formalized through baptism and excommunication, while the issue of who was to be excluded because of sin or false doctrine was hotly debated. In theory, at least, the distinction between Christian and non-Christian was well-defined.

By the third century, the procedures for admission into the Church were very elaborate. Those preparing themselves for baptism, the catechumens, were to spend two or three years learning about the faith, attending part of the liturgy, and following detailed rules of life[17]. Origen describes the different levels of instruction and the careful testing of postulants[18]. After instruction, candidates for baptism were examined to ensure they were leading suitable lives. Baptism

itself was from the beginning rich in symbolism, and interpreted mystically. The old self died and the new self was born to God through baptism[19].

From this discussion, two points follow. Firstly, entry into the Church was taken extremely seriously by the ecclesiastical authorities, who developed procedures which encouraged postulants to take it seriously also. Belonging to the Church was not so easily achieved and hence unlikely to be taken lightly. Secondly, the long period of preparation meant that significant numbers of people at any one time would find themselves on the margins of the Church. These people had chosen the Christian way, were receiving instruction, and were supposed to lead a Christian life; they participated in community meals and could be called Christians[20]. But only the baptized were reborn; only they could be admitted to the Eucharist[21].

On the other end, as it were, the edges of Christianity were frayed by the existence of sundry sinners, who had forfeited their place in the Church by their acts. Tertullian in his work on penance, De Penitentia, allowed Christians a single faltering. Christians who had sinned found themselves outside the Church, literally as well as figuratively, since public penance required them to spend some time standing at the entrance of the Church[22].

The categories of sins and their corresponding penances were refined over the years, giving the potential for several grades of Christians. Drawing from the evidence of Gregory Thaumaturgus, Lane Fox describes a church of the 250s: "inside were gathered the virtuous and the minor sinners who were banned only from communion; outside waited the "standing" sinners in the porch and the serious cases who were required to grovel and ask for their brothers' prayers as they went in and out of the building"[23].

The limits of penance had always been a subject of debate (Tertullian later in life denied the Church the right to forgive grave sins), but the stakes were considerably raised at the time of the Decian persecution. At issue were the terms of re-entry for those many Christians who had been less than perfect in their Christian witness. Opinions clashed particularly in the West: in Carthage two synods were charged with tackling the question. The argument concerned not only who should be re-admitted to the Church and how, but also who had the authority to decide. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, found himself in an awkward situation when confessors used their peculiar access to divine power to forgive the lapsed.

In the event, the arrival of the plague and fear of renewed persecution led to the second council in 252 granting

peace to the lapsed. Some Christians, led by Novatian, however, had far higher standards and went into schism. Similar arguments on the lapsed occurred elsewhere and at other times, causing more or less severe divisions within the Church.

The other important area where the margins of the Church was fiercely disputed was in the field of heresy. The Church had early taken to opposing what it called false doctrine as a means of establishing its identity. In Markus' study of the Church's development of self-definition, two stages are identified. The first, the encounter with the Gnostic movement, was essentially completed by 200 C.E. The second phase saw the growth of a variety of "heresies"[24].

The particulars of the heresies and schisms need not detain us here; what is noteworthy is that they attest to the intellectual dynamism and intensity which Christianity could inspire. Whatever the personal, political and theological factors at play, the disputing groups were prepared to argue hard over who was right and who formed the true Church. This fact had important implications for an individual's sense of belonging. In general terms, it suggests a lively interest in the community that could on occasion fuel opposing movements. Those actually caught up in such a division would presumably be to a greater or lesser degree preoccupied by the internal

troubles of the Church, implying an identification with the community. Clearly too, there were in some places significant numbers of people who called themselves Christians but whom others called heretics.

In each of the three categories, the catechumens, the penitent and the heterodox, we find people who might or might not be considered Christian. The first two groups at least were anxious to belong fully, while the heterodox might argue that they were the Church. By the beginning of the fourth century, it was firmly established that authority to decide the question lay to a large extent with the bishops, or if need be, a council, all under obligation to attend to the Church's traditions.

We move, then, from matters of theory to the practical realities of Christian living. By the fourth century the Church had developed a quite elaborate organizational structure. The bishops, already present in the earliest Church, had consolidated their position. In their own dioceses, they reigned alone[25]. Not surprisingly, some bishops seem to have abused their royal prerogatives: Origen complains about bishops who are worse than tyrants in making themselves fearful and inaccessible, especially to the poor[26]. Christians could turn to the bishop for arbitration, reproof of sinners, discernment of false teachers, oversight of the

education of orphans, social assistance for the needy and visiting of the sick[27]. To help him with the administration, the bishop could rely upon deacons and sub-deacons[28]. According to Hippolytus, the deacon was "not ordained to the priesthood but to the service of the bishop, in order to do what he orders him"[29].

As the Christian communities expanded, priests were needed to tend to individual churches. Rome under Bishop Dionysius (260-269 C.E.) was organized into parishes, each with its own presbyter[30].

The bishop's authority was not, however, absolute even within his own diocese. The awareness of the Church universal was brought home not just through rhetoric, but through practical inter-dependence. Bishops could only be ordained by other bishops[31] and the choice of a bishop thus required the assent of bishops of neighbouring dioceses. By the third century ecclesiastical provinces were taking shape, especially in the eastern part of the empire[32]. A hierarchy had emerged, with the largest town in the region usually becoming the metropolitan see. Contacts within the province and beyond could be frequent. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria from 247 to 264 C.E., made skilful use of an annual letter announcing the date for Easter to centralize the organization of the Church in Egypt under Alexandrian leadership[33]. Lane Fox sets

the "vigorous pattern of embassies, petitions and letters" among Christians against the background of the second and third century Empire, when cities, groups or individuals "pursued their interests by a flurry of letters, envoys and petitions to any higher authority which could possibly advance them"[34]. Particularly important problems could be addressed at synods, the pronouncements of which carried the combined authority of all the bishops who attended.

Not all communication was directed towards resolving disputes. A Christian community in need could expect assistance from churches elsewhere. Rome had a particularly good record in this regard[35]. The community might provide useful business contacts too. A letter from a corn-dealer in Arsinoë, whose link with his Roman agent may well have been the bishop of A exandria, gives a tantalizing hint of the possible uses of the Christian community[36].

Complementing the organized relief efforts of the Church, Christians were encouraged to the virtues of hospitality (Origen has two homilies on the subject) and charity. Eusebius, quoting from one of the letters of Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria, reports the Christians' valiant ministry to the sick during an outbreak of plague[37]. Some letters of Meletian Christians, preserved on papyri, record the writers' expectations that Christians will help each other in times of

financial need: God exhorts us to give succour to the unfortunate, " μάλιστα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἡμῶν "[38]. Cyprian, writing in c. 250 C.E. from hiding during the Decian persecution, asks his priests and deacons to "apply themselves to taking care of the widows, the sick and all the poor", leaving instructions also for the support of indigent travellers[39]. A few years later he wrote a treatise exhorting Christians to works of charity, concluding with references to apostolic unity and sharing of possessions: "quodcunque enim Dei est, in nostra usurpatione commune est, nec quisquam a beneficiis eius et muneribus arcetur, quominus omne humanum genus bonitate ac longitate divina aequaliter perfruatur"[40]. Church leaders did not preach against private property, and it goes without saying that Christians did not always live up to the standards of charity set before them. Nevertheless, the establishment of systems of relief back up Tertullian's claim that pagans were amazed at Christian solidarity: "Vide, inquiunt, ut invicem se diligant"[41].

One of the Christian forms of charity to which Tertullian drew particular attention was the burial of the indigent. The existence of associations to look after the burial of departed members has been discussed in the previous chapter[42]. Unlike the burial associations, however, the Church sought voluntary donations according to means rather than compulsory fees. The existence of Christian cemeteries in the third

century confirms that even in death the Church claimed its members[43].

At the heart of the Christian community was the Eucharist. Fowden lays special emphasis on "the ubiquity and predictability of the eucharistic gathering celebrated in house churches scattered across the empire and beyond"[44]. This aspect can perhaps be overplayed: after all we have to assume that most Christians were well settled in one place. Everyone, on the other hand, could appreciate the community-building effects of the regular shared meal with its mystical significance, open only to baptized Christians.

In his recent study, The Body and Society, Brown concentrates his attention on the practice of sexual renunciation in the early Church. The virtue that was made out of virginity resulted in new social groupings. Unmarried and widowed women (then as now there appear to have been more female than male Christians) existed in greater proportions than in society at large, without the traditional ties of household and family. Brown describes Origen's view of how such independence opened up "a great communion of human and angelic beings"[45]. An order of widows had existed from early Christian times. In a letter of Cornelius, bishop of Rome, preserved in Eusebius, the more than 1500 widows in Rome are classed along with people in need[46]. But from other sources

we know that widows were pursuing a ministry: Hippolytus distinguishes them from the (exclusively male) clergy, but is clear that they are appointed[47]. His insistence that they should not be ordained suggests that other practices were known. While it is far from clear what role was played by virgins in the early Church, we do know that they were a force to be reckoned with. Cyprian was much exercised by the disciplining of virgins[48]. We have hints of an organized class of women in a letter of complaint about Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch. He apparently worked closely with groups of women called subintroductae, who would accompany him on visits[49]. A work falsely ascribed to Clement of Rome, possibly to be dated to the third century, describes groups of single men in Syria who travelled from village to village, offering lengthy prayers, psalm-singing and recitations of Scripture[50].

Membership in the Church thus offered social structures peculiar to itself. Someone who had chosen to lead a Christian life of virginity would almost inevitably find significant identification in the Church. The same would apply to those men who were ordained as clergy. As the structures of the Church became more established, they provided a framework within which Christians situated themselves. As Brown remarks, the Church offered community

which left Christians less bound to ties of kinship, neighbourhood and region[51].

So far we have been discussing the Church as a society of converts, but of course by the fourth century many Christians had been born into Christian families. Unfortunately we cannot say how many. We do know that Tertullian, around the turn of the third century, was concerned at the practice of infant baptism; in the middle of the century, Origen was critical of Christians who prided themselves on their family history in the faith[52]. Those born to Christian parents may or may not have been active members in the Church in later life: in either case, their impression of the Christian community must have been different from that of Christians who joined it as adults.

Another factor requiring consideration is the size of the community. Estimates for the total Christian population in the Roman Empire at the time of Constantine's conversion vary widely. It is significant that before 250 there are scarcely any references to Christians in the pagan written evidence that survives[53]. Lane Fox concludes that Christians formed "a small, but extremely articulate, minority", emphasizing also their spread[54].

For the individual Christian, while the sense of connectedness with the universal Church might be real, the home Church seems to have remained quite intimate. The expanded meeting-space for Christians at Dura-Europos was large enough for about 60 people[55]. We have already seen how the Church in Rome was re-organized into smaller units. This is the other side to the point made by Lane Fox that Church membership in any one town was several times the size of that of the largest known cult society[56]. The Church, it could be argued, knew how to strike the balance between intimacy and universality.

From the question of the absolute size of Christian communities we have already moved on to consideration of their relative size, and thus to the second half of this section, which concerns the Church in its relations with the external world. Most important to bear in mind is the size of the Roman Empire and its diversity. At the beginning of the fourth century, Christians were to be found almost everywhere, in terms of both geography and social class, but they were more concentrated in some areas[57]. There is evidence to suggest that Christianity was strong in Phrygia, and Eusebius tells us of a town, possibly in Phrygia, that was completely Christian[58]. In southern Spain and Gaul, Christians appear to have been few, while they were distinctly rare in the Celtic North-West and the Danube frontier provinces[59]. Even within

a region there could be great variation: for example, Palestine in general was highly Christianized, but there were few Christians in Gaza even at the end of the fourth century[60]. Apart from Egypt and North Africa, which had significant numbers of rural Christians, Church members were mostly found in the cities[61]. But even in Oxyrhynchus, a town in Egypt, the two Christian churches were complemented by twelve pagan temples and a synagogue at the opening of the fourth century[62]. Most Christians, it seems fairly clear, found themselves in a distinct minority.

The last chapter offered a sketch of the landscape in which this minority was placed. Traditional religion was profoundly involved in the political and social structures of the empire. But it was also a highly diverse society, with many different peoples and many different gods. Edessa is perhaps an extreme example of the multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages and religions that might enjoy a place in one city[63].

Needless to say, the various groups making up the empire did not always live together without tension. Some were politically or economically oppressed and were struggling to re-assert their own identity. Frend in particular has argued that membership in the Church became part of the protest movement of some dissident peoples. He suggests that Egyptian

peasants expressed their aversion to Greek-speaking overlords and tax-collectors in a movement towards both Christianity and increased use of Coptic. In North Africa he has seen the olive-growing Berber population of the Numidian High Plains leading the Donatist challenge to the Latin-speaking Catholics in the lowlands[64]. This view of the direct correspondence between religious dissent and socio-political tension has, however, been successfully challenged[65]. Whatever the relationship between Christianity and other groups, it is important to remember the social context in which Christians found themselves. The Church might bring together individuals from communities at conflict; it might be itself divided by the opposing interests of its various members. Christians in turn might find their loyalties torn between the different communities to which they belonged.

"By the last quarter of the third century the church had become part of the landscape, if not part of the urban establishment, over much of the Mediterranean world"[66]. In considering the situation of Christians at the time of the Great Persecution, it is important to give due weight to the evidence supporting this view of Frend's that Christianity was an accepted part of the scenery. In Nicomedia in 303 the cathedral stood on high ground, in full view of the imperial palace[67], even if this "fanum editissimum" could be leveled to the ground in a matter of a few hours[68]. Eusebius speaks

enthusiastically of the period preceding the Great Persecution as one of great freedom. He talks of Christians holding positions of authority, of Christians in the imperial household speaking openly about the faith, of large church buildings constructed to accommodate the crowds attending Christian gatherings. He claims that arrangements were made allowing Christians to circumvent the normal requirements of participation in sacrifice[69]. Gallienus' rescripts of 260 returning Christian places of worship and cemeteries to the Church were significant in legalizing the institution. The Church's confidence in its situation is attested to by the decision in 272 of some of its leaders to refer their difficulties with Paul of Samosata to the emperor Aurelian[70]. The fact that Aurelian adjudicated in favour of the authority of the bishops in Italy reveals that the state recognized the Church's leaders.

Christian intellectuals at the turn of the fourth century still might feel the need to occupy themselves with pagan propaganda directed against them. But the charges were no longer in the order of false stories of criminal and immoral behaviour, as in the days of Tertullian and Minucius Felix. Hierocles, author of an attack on Christianity to which Eusebius responded, was well acquainted with the Bible and challenged Christianity by comparing Jesus' miracles with those of Apollonius of Tyana. Porphyry's work, Against the

Christians, argued in favour of renewed persecution, but on the grounds of apostasy, which charge he supported by detailed criticism of Christian Biblical exegesis[71]. He cited an oracle by which Hecate acknowledged that Jesus was a pious man, who ought not to be blamed for the folly of his disciples in worshipping him[72].

The prevalence of calumnies affected not only the intellectuals' debate, but also the popular imagination, and hence the everyday experience, of Christians. Origen, writing in the mid-third century, maintained that at that time some pagans avoided Christians even in conversation, because of the reports of their wickedness[73]. How much such an attitude persisted into the fourth century is difficult to gauge. Fowden considers that Lane Fox has made the worlds of pagan and Christian too distinct and that it is difficult to argue that by the third century the Christian milieu was still utterly alien to paganism[74]. In support of Fowden's view we should bear in mind Eusebius' account of the impact of Christian ministry during a period of famine and outbreak of plague in the East. In the crisis Christians earned themselves a good reputation by their selflessness, causing pagans to declare that "they alone were truly pious and religious"[75].

It is also significant that we do not find evidence of widespread popular support for the Great Persecution, in contrast to earlier days when the killing of Christians was something of a spectator sport[76]. Lane Fox uses three accounts of martyrdoms (whose relation to historical fact is, however, debatable) to suggest the range of pagan responses[77]. Two stories from Edessa tell of pagans opposing the execution of Christians and assisting in their burial. Eusebius argues that the cities and provincial councils in the East which petitioned the emperor Maximin to act against the Christians were simply behaving as they knew the emperor wanted[78]. Whether this is the full truth or not, the petition need not have represented the wishes of many of the people. The evidence from the later part of the fourth century suggests that the elites of the cities were among those who clung most tenaciously to the traditional religion[79]. The promotion of the spurious memoirs of Pilate, at least as Eusebius tells it, falls into the same pattern of officially-sponsored anti-Christian propaganda among a population that was not particularly hostile[80]. It appears that from the mid-third century the initiative for persecution shifted from subjects and cities to the emperors themselves[81].

Having taken into account the signs of tolerance towards Christians at the beginning of the fourth century, we must also take seriously the fact that they were the victims of

persecution. Starting with Valerian in 257, emperors seeking to uproot Christianity targeted not simply individuals but the Church as institution, that is, its leaders, its books, its property and its right of meeting[82]. The accusation faced by Christians was that of disloyalty. Christians' refusal to show the proper respect for the gods was held to be extremely dangerous because the gods were likely to vent their anger on all indiscriminately. For those who believed Diocletian's haruspices that the entrails were not giving the proper signs because of the presence of Christians[83], the mere existence of Christians put the security of the empire at risk. A rescript of Maximin to the city of Tyre is unambiguous about the good that is achieved through pious worship of the gods and the disasters that are caused through evil deeds; in consequence Christians who persisted in their error might be expelled from the city[84]. The citizens were no doubt happy to have it in writing that their attitude towards the divine emperor earned them some more dependable human favours. Arnobius is at pains to refute the charge that Christians are responsible for all the calamities of the world: he argues that disasters were known before Christianity and are part of the nature of things[85]. Lactantius attempts to show that, in fact, the Christian God has brought calamities down on the persecutors of the Christians as a punishment for their wickedness[86].

The charge of disloyalty would have been important to Christians not simply because of the heightened risk of persecution, but because outsiders thereby implied that Christians had to choose between the Church and other communities to which they belonged. The Neoplatonist Porphyry attacked Christians for, among other things, their attitude of non-cooperation[87]. We have no means of knowing how often Christians faced accusations of disloyalty and how it affected them, but in times of persecution, the choice was likely to be forced upon them. Many elements of the Great Persecution, particularly those devised by Maximin, were designed to heighten the incompatibility of Christianity with everyday life in the pagan empire. In 308 C.E., goods for sale in the market-place were deliberately sprinkled with pagan libations or sacrificial blood; checks for Christians were set up at the city gates and in the public baths, and pagan worship was given a higher profile[88].

Lane Fox reminds us that victimization of Christians because of their faith was not confined to official repression. Christians would have had little protection against their husbands or owners who might have expressed their displeasure in violent form[89]. The vulnerability of the Christian woman married to a pagan husband must be seen in the context of the many barriers to independence for women. If her family was also pagan and disapproving of her religion,

she might well have nowhere to turn should she want a divorce[90]. We must then take into account the various and complex pressures that belonged to each Christian's situation in life.

Women who had taken the alternative course of virginity, and thus did not face the opposition of house and husband, were not thereby protected from outsiders' disapproval. The novelty of the status and the social organizations of Christian virgins was disturbing to some: such seems to be the implication of the attempts at sexual violence of which they were at times the victims[91].

Pagan attitudes towards Christians in the early fourth century must be described as varied. To a significant degree society had come to accommodate them; if some prejudices persisted, there was no longer the level of fear and hatred that had marked earlier generations and there was even perhaps appreciation of the contribution they had to offer. Similar ambiguities characterized the attitude of Christians towards the saecula. The radical spirit of an apocalyptic community underwent mitigation in a Church that had grown accustomed to the idea that the end was not just around the corner.

The ideal was certainly stark enough. Cyprian writes: "Saeculo renuntiaveramus cum baptizati sumus"[92]. Those forced

to make an ultimate choice between the two worlds obviously saw the opposition as most complete. So the martyr Speratus is said to have proclaimed in 180 C.E.: "ego imperium huius seculi non cognosco; sed magis illi Deo servio quem nemo hominum vidit nec videre his oculis potest"[93].

Tertullian was rigorous in his interpretation of the day-to-day implications of this ideal. In his works De Idolatria and De Spectaculis, he urged Christians to avoid participating in anything that was tainted with idolatry. In his view, such indirect participation in pagan worship as making idols[94] or selling incense of sacrificial victims[95] was as blameworthy as more direct involvement. Tertullian was quite clear that this would affect Christians' means of earning a living[96]. The Christian should also be distinguished by a refusal to participate in pagan festivals[97] or to use a pagan oath in making up a contract (something he realized was highly problematic)[98].

Christian writers would, however, find that at times it was unhelpful to stress Christian alienation. Apologists seeking to win toleration for the Church were rather more inclined to argue that Christians were participants in the life of the Empire. Tertullian himself in his Apology is pleased to point out that Christians loyally pray for empire and emperor, and that they are found in all arenas of life

except the temples, living and working alongside non-Christians[99]. To Celsus' complaints that Christians do not contribute to public welfare, Origen responds that Christians do give very valuable assistance, not by serving in the army or in civic office, but through their prayers[100].

In practice, many Christians were more intimately involved in the pagan world than either Tertullian or Origen might have liked to acknowledge. It could hardly have been otherwise as long as they did not take themselves off to live in total isolation. We have already seen how Christians could be members of a basically pagan family or household. MacMullen cites a Christian meeting-place in Rome that from about 200 to 400 C.E. was separated only by a door from other rooms used by a non-Christian group[101].

It is clear from the evidence that Christians pursued all manner of careers, including some that would compromise their religious purity. The Council of Elvira, meeting probably just before the Great Persecution, made rulings about Christians who served as <u>flamines</u>[102]. Eusebius reported the presence of Christians in high positions in the imperial power structures. The incident in Nicomedia already referred to, when Christians crossing themselves were accused of sabotaging the work of <u>haruspices</u>, is highly suggestive of the kind of compromises that Christians must daily have been making.

There were Christians in the army, despite the complaints about its religion[103]. The Council of Arles deemed it necessary to decree that charioteers and actors who continued to exercise their profession should be debarred from communion[104]. A Phrygian inscription tells of a Christian who was also a professional athlete, honourary citizen of many cities and member of his own city's Senate and Elders' Association[105]. Constant strictures against participation in theatre, dance and gladiatorial shows suggest that many Christians continued to attend.

The moral dilemma faced by Christians was of course likely to be most intense in periods of persecution. Some Christians were successful in juggling their various allegiances, by some kind of concessions to the authorities, such as a bribe or by sending someone else to sacrifice in their place. Some provided a more conclusive sign of their renunciation of Christianity, opting for the pagan world. Others, in numbers unknown, but probably not massive, declared their unconditional commitment to the faith and suffered death, imprisonment or forced labour in the mines[106]. The same hard line is seen in the boast made by Gregory of Nazianzus' mother, Nonna, that she had never kissed or shaken hands with a pagan[107].

While the majority of Christians were prepared to take appropriate measures to ensure that they did not end up in prison or in the arena, they revered the more heroic in their midst, whose principles might lead them to an early, but notable, death. Similarly, in times of peace, those whom Lane Fox calls the "overachievers" could express their commitment by means of an uncompromising rejection of the pagan world. Disagreement over the degree of compromise acceptable was central in many of the ecclesiastical schisms. Periodic persecutions served as a purge of the less determined and temporarily strengthened the hand of the radical. But when peace returned, and in particular after Constantine's conversion, the struggle was intense between those who wanted a Church set against the world and those who wanted the Church to absorb society[108]. The results of this debate over whether the Church should be a school for sinners or a society for saints[109] form the core of the rest of our study.

III. The Turning-Point

The scene has been set for the shift in status of Christianity, the immediate focus of our interest. Christianity changed from persecuted minority to favoured religion, fast enough to call attention to itself. The conversion of Constantine brought in its train an increase in absolute and relative numbers, as more and more availed themselves of the benefits, spiritual and other, of being Christian. We should not, however, be in too much of a hurry to declare the supremacy of the Church, obscuring the uncertainties and complexities through the distorting lens of hindsight[1]. It appears debatable whether Christians at the end of the century formed a majority within the empire[2]. These circumstances make the focus of this study the effect of change in status, rather than change in numbers. In order to undertake a study of these effects, we require an outline of the change itself.

The significant aspects of the change in the status of Christianity are threefold: firstly, the end of persecution; secondly, the establishment of Christianity as favoured religion, and, finally, the imposition of penalties for paganism.

The Great Persecution had never been uniformly imposed, and some places and periods offered Christians more room to breathe. In the spring of 311, the emperor Galerius published from his sick-bed the Edict of Toleration, formally ending the persecution of Christians[3]. Although it went out in the name of the four members of the Tetrarchy[4], Maximin exploited a loophole in the edict which allowed him to continue persecution in the East.

In 313 Constantine, riding high from his recent victory at the Milvian Bridge, met Licinius at Milan and together they produced the edict which is often regarded as the decisive turning-point[5]. The emperors thereby declared their desire for complete religious toleration, in pursuit of which they retracted all previous orders concerning Christians. The edict also called for restoration of confiscated Church property[6]. Significantly, the emperors referred to non-Christians simply as "the others"[7], and by explicitly stating that freedom of religion applied also to them, they already suggested the possibility of the alternative.

Events, however, confirmed that Licinius' signature on the edict had more to do with pressure from Constantine than with personal commitment. As hostility between the two emperors grew, Licinius harried Christians in his territory, purging them from his palace, closing some churches and

pursuing various other measures[8]. Constantine's victory at Chrysopolis in September 324 made him the sole ruler of the Roman Empire and his policy of favouritism towards the Church prevailed.

The privileges followed fast on the Edict of Milan. The Church came to benefit extensively from the emperor's generosity with the imperial purse. Eusebius preserves a letter from Constantine to Bishop Caecilian of Carthage, dated to 313, informing him that financial assistance is being offered to ministers of the church[9]. In the same year, Constantine donated to the Church his wife's palace on the Lateran, just one of many benefactions to the churches in Rome and elsewhere in Italy[10]. Restoration and building of churches was one of Constantine's enthusiasms[11], and his mother, Helena, commemorated her visit to Jerusalem by building a church over the tomb of Christ[12].

By the time Julian was emperor, the benefits at the disposition of the church had accumulated. A portion of taxes raised in the cities went to the support of clergy. Virgins and widows were receiving public support[13]. The clergy had the use of the public post, which they apparently stretched to its limits[14].

Important, too, were the exemptions accorded to the church and its officials. Another of the favours Constantine offered to the bishop of Carthage in 313 was the exemption of clergy from all public offices[15]. Since those offices could be a heavy financial burden, this was a privilege very much worth having; in fact, it was felt to be so valuable that ordination came to be sought after specifically for this advantage, to the annoyance of Constantine. In 320, and again in 326, he directed that this refuge from municipal duties should be closed off[16]. The law, however, was relaxed by Constantius[17]. Tax exemptions were another benefit enjoyed by the clergy[18]. In 359 the bishops at the Council of Ariminum called for exemption from all forms of taxation: although they did not win their point, the church was exempted from all "new taxes"[19].

The Roman emperors also accorded important juridical powers to the bishops. Constantine recognized the authority of episcopal tribunals in 318, and later gave clergy power to manumit slaves[20]. Episcopal courts were granted an exclusive authority over bishops[21]. By 412 all clergy were immune to trial in secular courts[22].

Beyond these privileges, other measures were taken of a more symbolic significance. For example, a cubit that was traditionally associated with the annual flooding of the Nile

was transferred from the Serapeum in Alexandria to a church[23]. In 321 Constantine decreed that Sunday should be a day of rest: since he calls it the Day of the Sun, however, the rationale is ambiguous[24]. The establishment of Constantinople as a new Rome and a Christian city[25] was, of course, rich in symbolism. The status of Christians (or at least those judged to be the real Christians) was considerably enhanced by the close interest accorded by the fourth-century emperors to matters of Church doctrine and discipline.

The various elements tending towards the establishment of Christianity as the state religion were temporarily overturned by the accession of Julian in 361. Privileges were withdrawn; widows and virgins were even required to begin repaying the assistance they had previously received[26]. Temporary, however, the setback proved to be. Less than three months after Julian's death in 363, Christianity was once again proclaimed the religion of the empire[27]. Sozomen tells us that Jovian also quickly restored all privileges and immunities previously enjoyed[28].

The final series of events of significance for the changing status of Christians is formed by the measures taken against non-Christians. We have already noted that the "Edict of Milan" proclaimed religious tolerance for all, a policy which Constantine seems to have maintained throughout his

reign[29]. He did take measures against private divination[30]. His sons, however, took steps towards a systematic suppression, prohibiting sacrifices and closing temples[31]. Constantius' edict of 356 imposed a capital punishment for those who "devote their attention to sacrifices or to worship images"[32]. The periodically repeated prohibitions on sacrifice were clearly little heeded. It was not until the reign of Theodosius that an attempt was made to uproot the whole structure of paganism[33]. That the law was not effective is shown both by the evidence for the persistence of paganism, and by the fact that the law was repeated several times, with penalties mounting until death was prescribed in 435. On the other hand, the various edicts of the period are perhaps better seen as statements of the emperors' position, a position which made room for acts of violence against pagan shrines. Indeed we find Theodosius receiving favourably petitions for the destruction of temples[34] and on other occasions disregarding spontaneous attacks[35].

In some ways, however, the pagans in the fourth century very quickly came to be peripheral, as the real struggle was taking place between the various groups of Christians, each claiming to constitute the "true church". This kind of argument was of course nothing new: what had changed was the interest of the emperor in the disputes and the consequences of winning imperial support. From the time Constantine

started distributing bounty to Christians, the existence of rival churches in North Africa had caused him to specify that the intended recipient was the Catholic Church alone[36]. In 380 the emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius published an edict directed to the citizens of Constantinople. The true religion which all were enjoined to practise was identified as that of Pope Damasus and Peter, bishop of Alexandria. Those not following this rule were judged to be "demented and insane", were to be called heretics and their meeting-places might not bear the name of churches[37]. Pagans were not even mentioned. We see here the signs of a new compulsory religion, compulsory in a way peculiar to Christianity, just as the obligations of pagan religion were mandatory in a way peculiar to pagan Greco-Roman society[38].

IV. DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

> If a small coterie of enthusiasts widens its circumference to comprise the majority of the population, it meets new problems of definition.[1]

Such is the context in which Alexander Murray, reviewing Peter Brown's work, places the Church "in the shadow of Constantine". That the numbers of Christians rose dramatically immediately after Constantine's conversion appears from the evidence[2] untrue, although in the long term mass Christianization did occur. Furthermore, we have seen that by the beginning of the fourth century the highly organized and far-ranging Church could hardly be described as a "small coterie of enthusiasts". The change in status of the church, as outlined in the preceding chapter, was, however, dramatic enough to have a serious impact on what it meant to be Christian. In the first instance, this has a bearing on the relations between Christians and the non-Christian world. These external changes must be expected to have affected in turn the Church's internal developments.

How, then, was imperial favouritism towards the Church felt by Christians? Did they enjoy heightened prestige among non-Christians? While they themselves may have felt pride in belonging to the victorious church, evidence for the attitudes of non-Christians is at best ambiguous. The absence of

conversions in massive numbers must be significant. For many of those who did convert, the attractions of Christianity seem to have been of a practical nature[3]. Eusebius tells us something of the enticements that Constantine held out to non-Christians to encourage them to convert[4], a technique that Julian was to employ for opposite purposes[5]. Libanius reminded Theodosius that those who converted under pressure were doing no more than play-acting at being Christians[6]. In Constantine's reign, the town of Orcistus in Phrygia boasted it deserved preferential treatment, because all its inhabitants were Christian[7]. The port city of Gaza, Maiuma, had correctly calculated the benefits of Christianity: when all the inhabitants together embraced Christianity, it was rewarded for its piety by Constantine with the status of city and the name of Constantia[8]. Overall, the Church became the recipient of valuable gifts and privileges, which previously had gone elsewhere, notably to pagan temples[9]. The implication of the above is that pagans were not so impressed by the success of Christianity that they flocked to convert, though the consequences of imperial favouritism gave some more material incentives.

One of the attractions lay in the increased power of the Church. Its bishops, who, as we have seen, already wielded considerable authority, saw their sphere of influence enlarged. At the beginning of the century, the bishop Ossius

enjoyed a privileged position of influence in the Court of Constantine, a position he owed to particular circumstances rather than the status of the Church. Following the conversion of Constantine, episcopal authority was officially recognized and important opportunities for influence opened up for all bishops. As has been noted, bishops were accorded powers of arbitration and of manumission. The emperor frequently had dealings with bishops, not always amicable, as the history of Athanasius demonstrates. It is interesting that Constantine called himself the bishop of those outside the Church, indicating that the episcopal role was somehow worthy of an emperor[10].

The way was thus prepared for a bishop with exceptional talents, Ambrose of Milan, to act as adviser and conscience to the Emperor Theodosius. R.A. Markus describes the Church that Augustine encountered in Rome and Milan as "a cosmopolitan Church, wielding wide influence over emperors and officials, occupying a place of leadership in society, confident of its power to absorb, mould and transform it"[11]. The most outstanding examples of that influence are to be seen in Ambrose's interventions in the incidents of the Callinicum synagogue and the Thessalonican massacre. The bishop persuaded Theodosius to withdraw instructions for the church to rebuild the synagogue at Callinicum[12]. In 390, Ambrose boldly remonstrated Theodosius for the massacre at

Thessalonica. Chastened by the bishop, Theodosius submitted himself to a public confession and ritual humiliation[13]. The lure of power, wealth and status was so great that contenders for an episcopal throne might go to considerable lengths to further their ambition: we are told that, in 366-7, rivalry for the Roman throne was the cause of fighting that left 137 Christians dead in a single day[14].

On the intellectual scene, as well as the political, Christian leaders of the fourth century had significant roles. Origen may have been summoned by the emperor's mother for a discussion[15], but he was exceptional. In the fourth century the range of prominent Christian men and women of erudition was remarkable. The essential condition for such a state of affairs was the Christianization of the aristocracy. Although many of the upper social echelons remained resolutely pagan, there were families such as that of Basil, bishop of Caesarea, with his brother, Gregory of Nyssa, and their sister, Macrina. They enjoyed the combined assurance of their aristocratic background and their orthodox religion. All in all, the Church attracted many of those with the potential for political or intellectual leadership: it became, in fact, "an organization competing with the state itself"[16]. As the century marched on, more and more of the pagan upper classes passed quietly into the Christian camp[17].

Important events favourable to the Church, interpreted as evidence of divine intervention, must also be accounted to the rising prestige of Christians. Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge had confirmed the potency of the Christian standard; eighty years later, a miraculous wind assisted the forces of the Christian emperor in defeating the usurper at the Battle of Frigidus[18]. In between, God's will had been discerned in the overthrow of Julian's plans for the Jews to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem[19]. Socrates expresses irritation that Jews did not find this sufficient encouragement to convert to Christianity, upset though they were. Others were swayed by similar events: at least, Sozomen reports that such was the effect of the sudden massive flooding of the Nile[20]. As the locus of power shifted, Christians were seen to have privileged access to the holy, through their holy men, their ascetics and through the relics of their saints.

The powerful backing of the temporal powers gave Christians a security that could and did lead to arrogance and abuse. Attacks on non-Christians and their property often went unpunished and we can only conclude that among certain circles Christians must have been unpopular. The Jews of Callinicum whose synagogue was destroyed by Christians might be allowed to have little fondness for them, and the emperor's subsequent decision that no damages should be paid confirmed

for the Jews that Christians were to be feared. Equally, when Christians went on the offensive against pagan shrines, they inevitably provoked hostility, although it manifested itself in violent forms perhaps less often than we might expect. The demolition of the temples at Alexandria, organized by the bishop Theophilus in 386, so outraged the pagans that they attacked and killed Christians[21]. Martin, bishop of Tours towards the end of the century and a central figure in the Christianization of Gaul, apparently matched his sermons against paganism with acts of vandalism against shrines[22]. Mark the Deacon's account of Porphyry's efforts to eradicate paganism in Gaza at the turn of the century demonstrates the backing Christians could obtain at this stage, through persistent pleading. Eventually Porphyry was able to bring to Gaza an official, armed forces, and an imperial letter commanding the destruction of the temples[23]. At times, however, the imperial authority was exerted in favour of the temples. For example, one law ordered temples outside the city walls to be preserved for plays and spectacles[24].

But on the whole the transition could take place relatively quietly, because there existed on the personal level a considerable tolerance of religious diversity. Christians were among the students of the pagan teacher, Hypatia[25]. The presence of non-Christians in the upper reaches of the government is taken for granted by all: the

career of Themistius is by itself sufficient indication that acknowledged paganism was not a barrier. The advance of Christianity within the army was by all accounts slow[26], implying that soldiers of different religious affiliations lived together in relative harmony.

Overall, being a Christian in the later fourth century thus meant belonging to a body that now enjoyed considerable privileges instead of official opposition. Its leaders, already of consequence within the Christian community in the preceding century, had their authority recognized by the secular world. Pagans knew Christians could be confident in the protection of the civil powers as well as the heavenly; they could have pride not only in God's infinite wisdom but also in the considerable, if finite, wisdom and learning of their scholars. Events had shown the whole world that the God of the Christians was supremely powerful.

For Christians, the change in their status provoked some fundamental questions about the role of the Church in the world. Some, as we have seen, took the opportunity to give violent expression to the traditional Christian hostility towards things pagan. Throughout the years of oppression, Christians had borne their sufferings without seeking reprisals, making their arguments for tolerance. But once the advantage was theirs, Christians showed markedly less interest

in tolerance. Sozomen describes how under Constantine's inspiration and direction, Christian bands went from place to place, burning or confiscating the contents of pagan shrines[27]. His conclusion that these tactics were overwhelmingly successful in persuading the people to despise pagan ways should caution the historian, but Constantinople was certainly adorned with monuments taken from various parts of the empire and there is plentiful evidence, particularly from later in the century, of violent anti-pagan activities. In the middle of the century, the Sicilian teacher of rhetoric and convert to Christianity, Firmicus Maternus, wrote a pamphlet urging the emperors to destroy pagan practices outright[28]. Fowden's article on the role of the bishops in the destruction of temples reveals how far both imperial and ecclesiastical authorities were to follow his advice[29]. Monks were often accomplices of the bishops: so, for example, Libanius reports that at Antioch victims of attacks perpetrated by monks were sent away unsatisfied by the bishop to whom they went to complain[30]. Bishop Porphyry's campaign against the pagan temples of Gaza, as described by Mark the Deacon, was deliberately planned and doggedly pursued: in Fowden's words, the bishop is presented as an "heroic leader in the epic struggle of the Christians against the idolaters"[31].

In general, the Roman Empire of the fourth century saw a high degree of religious conflict, which frequently took a violent turn. Of the many riots, a significant number had direct or indirect causes of a religious character. The victims were by no means always non-Christian. In an anti-Christian riot at Sufes in about 400 C.E., 60 Christians were killed, while the celebration of a pagan festival at Calama led to the church being stoned, one cleric killed and others forced into hiding. Augustine complained that the authorities offered no protection to the Christians[32]. When bishop Eustathius was deposed in Antioch, the various Christian factions created disturbances which affected the whole city[33].

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the above is that, in certain places and at certain times, being Christian meant being on one side of a battle. The important difference from their situation in the days of persecution lay in the fact that Christians now added to their conviction of spiritual right the backing of imperial might.

But there is another side to the coin. Attitudes towards the traditional culture of the old pagan world had, we have seen, already been fairly accommodating and were unlikely to become less so as the Church became a pillar of the larger society. Augustine was certainly ready to interpret history in such a fashion: after the end of the persecutions, he

alleged, Church leaders made concessions for pagans who wished to convert but who were not prepared to give up their habits of feasting[34]. As far as the rigorists went, there remained tensions: so Jerome admonished himself for being too attached to Classical literature[35] and John Chrysostom inveighed tirelessly against the theatre and other amusements. But Jerome did not take his dream so seriously as to abandon his reading of the classics, and Chrysostom followed in a respectable tradition of pagans as well as Christians who condemned popular amusements (without much impact on the populace). MacMullen describes Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great, who both complained about gladiatorial entertainments, as a "censorious minority within the Christian population, as Pliny and Dio Chrysostom had been within the pagan population"[36].

Christians evidently continued to flock to the entertainments, to John Chrysostom's outrage. The bishops gathered at the Council of Carthage in 401 were more relaxed: they merely requested that shows not be held on Sundays or Christian festivals[37]. We know that the emperors Theodosius and Arcadius so little thought the theatre incompatible with their Christianity that in 384 they supplied players for the festivals in Rome[38]. It is worth noting that it was the pagan emperor Julian, and not Christian authorities, who in 362 banned Christians from teaching in schools on the grounds that

the classics and the gospels were incompatible. In his examination of the extent to which converts' lives were changed, MacMullen points to the continuance among Christians of many habits which could be considered more or less un-Christian. They continued to enjoy drinking-parties, with their attendant rites of supplication, to participate in pagan festivals, to worship the emperor and to seek solutions to problems, especially medical, in magic[39].

That many, if not the majority of, Christians should persist in the old ways need occasion no surprise. Most people, after all, find themselves at home in the world in which they grew up. More interesting for the question at hand is the prominence of various movements who sought what Frend has called the "Christianity of discontinuity"[40]. Whether adherents of groups splintering in protest from the orthodox or ascetics dissociating themselves from the temptations of the flesh, such people believed that belonging properly to the Church entailed deliberately not belonging to the secular world. The different ways in which individuals understood their Christian commitment will be examined further below.

The questions about what was permissible for Christians were much the same as those of previous centuries, although the context had changed. The end of persecution, however, brought forward a new dilemma concerning the relations of the

Church itself with the state. R.A. Markus describes how for Eusebius the conversion of Constantine constituted the end of Church history as he knew it. The Church was no longer a clearly identifiable organization, with boundaries marking it off from the realm of secular power: instead the two had joined to form a Christian politeia[41].

For Christians who adopted this line of reasoning, the challenge was less the maintenance of the purity of the Church than the Christianization of the world. Others disagreed and insisted that the Church remain rigorously separate. Given the radical and unexpected changes in the situation of the church it is hardly cause for surprise that Christians were not unanimous in their opinions on appropriate Church-state relations[42]. Moreover, the seeds of the present dissension are to be found in the disagreements of previous centuries on the degree of compromise with the world that Christians should be allowed. The western Christians continued to be more rigorous than the eastern in wanting no blurring of the boundaries. Thus Donatus asked rhetorically: "Quid est imperatori cum Ecclesia?"[43]. The Circumcellions, an extremist branch of the Donatists emerging about 340 C.E., expressed their opposition to the saeculum through violent action[44].

Within the orthodox church, the western bishops were largely firm, if less extreme, in holding that the emperor

had no business meddling in the affairs of the Church. In the course of a dispute between Constantius and the western bishops over the condemnation of Athanasius, Hosius of Córdoba sent the emperor an unambiguous letter: "Don't intrude yourself into ecclesiastical matters, and don't give us orders about these things. It is rather for you to learn about them from us"[45]. Ambrose was no less clear: "palaces belong to the emperor, churches to the bishop"[46].

In the East, however, emperors who so wished (and Theodosius certainly did) could pass all manner of rulings on who held the correct faith, without the bishops protesting that emperors had no rights in the field[47]. One reason for this attitude was perhaps the fact that Christianity served as a common link between the various ethnic groups, who for the most part preferred the security that the emperor could offer[48].

To what extent did the establishment of Christianity change the "shape" of the Empire? Christian attitudes to the "barbarians" surrounding the Roman Empire suggest that the old mental boundaries persisted among Christian Romans. Significantly, there was little interest in evangelization beyond the frontiers of the empire[49]. Monks on the eastern frontier were active in battles against the Persians[50]. It is altogether natural that the old prejudices should survive, but

they did take on a Christian flavour. Since many of those Christians beyond the frontiers were Arian, the "barbarians" were regarded as hopelessly heretical, thus confirming that from the religious point of view, too, they were indeed beyond the pale. On the other hand, the Church in the West was more disposed to accept collaboration with barbarians and saw conversion as a means of creating "a bridge between barbarism and civilization"[51].

In the eastern parts of the empire, in particular, patriotism attached the individual to the city more than to the region, or to the empire. Such pride in one's city certainly cannot have been absent in Christians; moreover, the fact that civil and ecclesiastical divisions often coincided allowed rivalries to be carried over into the field of Church politics. So, for example, civic pride played its part in the anxieties over the order of precedence of bishoprics. Brown analyzes the ways in which John Chrysostom tried to counter attachment to the city by elevating the household community. At the same time, according to Brown, he denounced the loci of collective festivity and promoted the practice of virginity, thus denying the city its right to demand children of its citizens. In his attempt to create an alternative all-embracing community, John was, however, signally unsuccessful[52].

On the other hand, the Church was reasonably effective in calling forth alternative allegiances, riding perhaps on the momentum of shifts appearing for other reasons. Civic pride did not detain the Church Fathers very often[53]. Wealthy cosmopolitan Christians established a network of contacts throughout the empire. Their gifts, which in previous centuries would have gone to the city and its people, were made to the Church and her people[54]. The new category of the poor as deserving of charity was indifferent to the boundaries created by citizenship: contrast the corn doles given to the citizens[55]. Cemeteries and shrines of the saints, newly significant in the landscape of the holy, were often outside the limits of the town[56]. Monks left behind the existing social world and created their own communities. In all these ways, Christianity acted as a creative force, fashioning a new social landscape.

As society was restructured, what it meant to an individual to be Christian was also affected. The century began with a society that in its dominant form saw religion largely as the expression and guarantor of political and social communities. As Christianity began to have its impact on the shape of society, religion came to play a greater role in the creation of the communities themselves[57]. Of course, the old patterns remained strong: as we have seen, civic pride proved tenacious[58]. Gregory of Nazianzus was disappointed

with the people of Constantinople who seemed to him more interested in the things that make them proud of their city than in religious matters[59]. And Christians, like everyone else, tended to accept the institutions of society as a given: so, for example, they did not question the existence of slavery.

But changes there were, and they contributed to the widening gap between eastern and western parts of the empire, as each developed different models for the relationship between Church and state. One of the significant changes in the social landscape of the fourth century lay in the new opportunities for advancement offered by the Church and by the state bureaucracy[60]. Throughout much of the century, the imperial court was predominantly Christian, while the traditional aristocracy continued to be to a considerable extent pagan. In this area, then, the lines on religious grounds coincided with the boundaries between new and traditional forms of power[61]. Brown sensitively interprets the accusations of sorcery as arising from the conflict between change and stability in a traditional society[62]. Power deriving from new sources was particularly apt to arouse accusations of sorcery from the upholders of traditional status. The Christian Church itself, directly challenging the old beliefs and organization, harnessed the ill-defined

spiritual forces. After all, the distinction between miracles and magic, saints and sorcerers was less than clear[63].

Another development related to the new forms of power affected the system of patronage. In the Roman Empire communities were formed and relationships cemented by the tradition of gift-giving and receiving[64]. Itself receiving the patronage of the emperors, the Church became an important patron, able to create communities by its gift-giving. As we have noted above[65], the Church broke with the previous tradition of giving to the cities by choosing the poor as the privileged recipients[66]. The fruits of this concern, apart from a re-ordering of mental categories, were such novel institutions as hospitals and shelters for the elderly and orphans[67].

With its access to new scales of wealth, the Church could broaden the scope of its charitable works. For the rich, gift-giving had traditionally been essential as a means of averting envy; to a certain extent the process of Christianization can be seen as a redirection of the gifts from the city to the Church[68]. Augustine is forthright in calling for the Church to be substituted for the city as the recipient of gifts[69]. But, as Paul Veyne has shown, Christian charity did not perform the same function as

"l'évergetisme"[70], because of the focus of charity to the poor.

The spiritual landscape also underwent important changes, illuminated in particular by Peter Brown. In a world of the religious sensibilities of Late Antiquity, spiritual power was to be taken seriously. Privileged contacts with the divine were to be found in new places: in the relics of the holy dead and in the living men and women who sanctified their bodies. This is a development whose beginnings preceded the fourth century: we have already noted the shift in the locus of the holy and the rise of the "holy man"[71]. These features became more pronounced in the period coinciding with the establishment of Christianity. According to Brown, the "holy man" came to play an important role as patron and adjudicator in Asia Minor in the fourth and fifth centuries[72]. As we have seen, his special authority was achieved through deliberate alienation, often involving asceticism. Similarly, the monks in the Egyptian desert deliberately abandoned society to create a counter-world[73]. While virgins and widows were more likely to remain "in the world", they marked themselves off by disciplining their bodies[74]. The bodies of martyrs and saints, which, like all the dead, would traditionally have been considered unclean and buried outside the city or village, were now understood to be specially holy[75].

All of these became privileged intermediaries between heaven and earth, belonging properly to neither. The particular success of the Church lay in harnessing these powers. So we find bishops, especially in the West, basing their power on the cult of saints[76], while the anarchic potential of the ascetics was largely averted. While there were clear signs of tension between ascetics and the church hierarchy, the latter were on the whole successful in their efforts to monitor and control the former[77]. In his Life of Antony, Athanasius has the saint direct his fellow monks to hold the clergy, including deacons, in higher regard even than himself[78]. Athanasius, as a bishop, had a decided interest in having such a position broadcast and believed.

In summary, Christians of the later fourth century continued to identify themselves strongly in opposition to pagans, although sharp divisions within the Church left them preoccupied with arguments over the identity of the true Church. The significant difference consequent upon the conversion of Constantine was that Christians could now argue from a position of security and strength. They were subject to the corruption and pride that tends to accompany power, although their bubble was to burst early in the fifth century as a result of the invasions of the Goths. The worldly privileges accorded the Church made being a Christian an advantage in many areas of life. At the same time, the Church

had its role to play in the reshaping of the world, so that Christian institutions and principles increasingly became integrated into society. The boundary between Church and the world was being eroded.

These external changes could not but affect Christianity internally: that is, what it meant to be a Christian among Christians. Many aspects did not change dramatically. In most places there were not mass conversions that would mean the numbers in a congregation swelled enormously. The formal rules for determining who was a Christian were not changed. Even though late baptism is denounced by the Church Fathers, it continued to be practised at least until the end of the fourth century[79]. For an unknown number, being Christian involved an important element of individual choice. On the other hand, we do know of whole communities being expected to share a religion: the inhabitants of Maiuma[80] can hardly have all individually decided to become Christians. The coloni and serfs on estates in North Africa appear to have followed the religion of the landowners. Augustine protested at a Donatist bishop giving compulsory Donatist baptism to the Catholic peasants on an estate recently acquired near Hippo. To the complaint, the bishop retorted that Catholics did the same[81]. The implications of these pieces of evidence are highly significant. Being Christian became for more and more people the natural concomitant of belonging to a community, much as

pagan religious rites were the expression of membership in a community.

The internal organization of the Church saw further development in the course of the fourth century, largely in continuation of previous trends. Church councils became frequent, facilitated by the freedom, the means and, at times, the imperial encouragement enjoyed by the Church leaders[82]. Nicaea formalized the system of metropolitan bishops, who enjoyed special authority for hosting meetings of the bishops of the province and a veto on episcopal appointments. The Nicene rule was not, however, at first applied in Africa and Spain, where bishops were ranked rather by seniority[83]. The Council at Constantinople in 381 furthered the organization of diocesan structure and determined hierarchy among dioceses[84]. As the administrative structures were developed, metropolitan bishops could better control and promote unity in the province, and even play a part in events beyond the province, an opportunity which Athanasius skilfully exploited[85].

The higher ranks of the clergy came to be recruited mostly from the upper social classes. While in earlier generations, members of these classes took positions of authority in, for example, the city council, in the fourth century, they found new scope for eminence in the episcopal throne. The election to the bishopric of Milan of Ambrose, not even a baptized

Christian, but a prominent citizen, is instructive. It appears that Pinianus' wealth was so attractive to the North Africans among whom he was visiting that he was nearly ordained by force[86]. The distinction between the property of the bishop and that of his church might not always be clear: to deal with such a problem, the Council of Antioch ruled that careful records should be kept[87]. Bishops were known to give church property to their relatives, and bribes were offered by rival candidates to episcopal election[88]. All in all, it is evident that suitable qualifications for ordination came to have more to do with wealth, worldly status and skills, than with prior commitment to the Church[89].

While the Church excluded women from the clergy and thus maintained the tradition of reserving the key positions of power for men, some women did find unusual opportunities for authority within the Church. Though we know little enough about it, the office of deaconness was developed in the fourth century. The deaconnesses, who in the east at least were ordained, probably engaged in Christian education for women and assisted in some liturgical functions[90]. The fourth century also witnessed the more prominent achievements of wealthy women who were leaders in the intellectual field and in the monastic movement[91]. The facts can be discerned even if the deep-seated prejudice against women wielding authority caused them to be veiled: so Marcella, when consulted, always

attributed her response to a man[92]; so, too, the Church Fathers praise women for their humility and pass over in silence their leadership of monastic communities[93].

The acquisition of unprecendented wealth, through the legalization of bequests and the favours of the emperors, had an enormous impact on the Church. House-churches were replaced by separate ecclesiastical buildings. The bigger cities were graced with appropriately-sized cathedrals[94]. There were funds too for whole Christian comlexes, often on the outskirts of the town and generally revealing in their architecture indifference to the pagan buildings around[95].

The increase in the prosperity of the Church also had its impact on the clergy. In the later fourth century we find the bishops, especially Roman, becoming ostentatiously wealthy and the custom of kissing the bishop's hand was begun[96]. Special honours were accorded to bishops[97]. The Council of Sardica recognized and tried to deal with the ambitious designs of some bishops, who might apparently be found loitering in other cities, making known their contempt for the local bishop's lack of education[98]. The acquisitive behaviour of some priests had become marked enough to attract the satirical pen of Jerome[99]. The first generalized denunciation of simony comes from a Roman council, probably under Pope Siricius (385-99 C.E.)[100]. We have seen how Christian gift-

giving, with its focus on the poor as recipients, had a role to play in the shaping of society. A lot of the wealth, however, that came to the Church, remained with the institution itself, making possible the splendour and the comforts, as well as the generosity, of the Church triumphant.

For an organization as large as the Church, effective communication was evidently crucial. The longstanding disposition of Christians to maintain contact with each other has already been noted[101]. The fourth century brought easier and more frequent communication. The various councils brought together numbers of Church leaders, but their travelling was by no means confined to such events[102]. Gregory of Nyssa describes the state carriage he travelled in on one occasion as a church constantly at worship[103]. Though the availability of the official transport system doubtless facilitated communication among members of the Church, many who had not the right to its use nevertheless travelled wide distances across the empire. We are, of course, particularly well-informed about the progress of the nobility, who, by visits as well as by letters, were able to form an empire-wide élite by the end of the century[104].

The rise of the pilgrimage, however, entailed the journeying of countless individuals, whose fame and wealth was of less account. The old Christian tradition of

hospitality played its part in the establishment of facilities for Christian pilgrims along the principal pilgrim routes[105]. The accounts of crowded churches is another indication of popular enthusiasm for pilgrimages[106]. As Harl interestingly observes, Christians differed from pagans in being inclined to attach the sources of local pride to the universal faith, so that the one strengthened the other[107]. The effectiveness of the network of communication is demonstrated by the speedy appearance of Athanasius' Vita Antonii in the West, followed quickly by the rise of monasticism on the eastern model. The Church was thus able to have a significant impact on the geography of the Empire, as the points of interest and the routes increasingly corresponded to Christian preoccupations.

Overall, the tendency of the increased elaboration of Church structures was to create an institution more and more able to replace the old civic structures. The pace of change should not be over-estimated. Lepelley is at pains to argue that in North Africa the Christianization of the old municipal institutions was extremely slow and that the organizations of the Church and state remained distinct[108]. He concludes: "Même quand il devint, à partir du règne de Théodose, la religion officielle et presque obligatoire de l'Empire, le christianisme eut beaucoup de mal à constituer un ciment civique"[109]. In the East, too, the Church of the fourth

century was still a long way from replacing the old institutions[110]. Yet the Church was already beginning to offer an alternative way of organizing society[111].

As Christianity became increasingly pervasive and the Church's organization was elaborated, it might be assumed that the Christian identity would become more and more all-encompassing. On the other hand, it can be argued that the adhesion of convenience of large numbers to the Church would have the effect of "diluting" what it meant to the Christian[112]. Such a view must be treated with caution. Firstly, from the beginning Christiani' _ depended on converts who were attracted for a variety of r ons. Secondly, rules determining which aspects of traditional life the Christian should maintain were by no means fixed and universally accepted. The Christian who consulted the astrologer could be fully as fervent as the one who refrained, the two simply having different ideas about appropriate Christian attitudes towards astrology. Finally, the fourth century is in any case arguably the wrong period for the effects of mass adhesion to be felt most strongly. There are many who would maintain that the decisive shift in the situation and hence nature of Christianity came rather in the third century[113]. Certainly, the tolerance of the later third century allowed the mingling of Christian and pagan as much as that of the fourth century. On the other hand, since numbers of converts to Christianity

under the first Christian emperors appear not to have been enormous[114], it can also be argued that we should look to the later centuries for the effect of mass Christianization.

Given that it is beyond the capacity of the most fervent convert to reconstruct the mental furniture and practical aspects of life from top to bottom, there must necessarily be an overlap between the worlds of pagan and Christian. The question before us is whether the overlap increased in the course of the fourth century.

Another way to approach the problem is to consider that the Church is constantly re-forming itself, reflecting, as well as shaping, its age. One of the most significant consequences of the victory of Christianity was that the Church acquired considerable new powers to shape society. In some areas this necessitated compromises. For example, Christian puritans from Tertullian to John Chrysostom could denounce the theatre with eloquence. Many Christians nevertheless continued to amuse themselves at the theatre, in earlier centuries as in the fourth. In John Chrysostom's day, however, Church leaders could influence society with rules as well as sermons. With the former, practical considerations are key. It is in this light that we should interpret the request of the bishops at the Council of Carthage that plays not be performed on Sundays or Christian holidays, recognizing

that the people either could not or should not be forced to do without the theatre[115]. Similarly, John Chrysostom's standards of Christianity precluded the use of amulets, but a significant proportion of his congregation presumably continued to find them a useful precaution[116]. Seeking to answer the question "What difference did Christianity make?", MacMullen studies the areas of sexual norms, slavery, gladiatorial shows, judicial penalties and corruption, and concludes that it made very little difference[117].

At stake were the boundaries to be set by the Church on the acceptable; in practice they proved to be rather wide. A most important retention from traditional Greco-Roman society was the education system, which was to ensure the survival of Greco-Roman culture as a foundation for society[118].

Apart from accepting or rejecting aspects of traditional society, the Church had a third way of responding: she could re-fashion institutions so that they could be understood to serve a Christian function. The ceremony of the <u>adventus</u>, which served to unite the whole city[119], was adapted for the purpose of welcoming relics of a saint[120]. The rituals that were once part of the cult of the emperor were thus remoulded for Christian purposes. Brown also notes that the saints' festivals were so organized as to include everyone[121], which according to Christianity's redefinition of the community,

meant the inclusion of the poor and women[122]. The rituals surrounding the designation of a municipal official could be transferred to that of a bishop: Lepelley finds a clear parallel between the recorded acclamations of the Oxyrhynchus assembly and the response Augustine reports he received when he proposed a priest as his successor[123]. The pagan calendar gave way to a Christian one, which might, for example, replace the spring festival with the feast of the Apostle Thomas, and simultaneously take over such customs as the fairs that accompanied festivals[124]. The building of grand new churches provided an equivalent development on the architectural plane. The basilicas could serve as objects of civic pride, just as the pagan monuments, many of them destined for destruction, had done before them.

These beginnings of the Christianization of society, and in the fourth century there was not much more than beginnings, meant that individuals would no longer need to seek out the Church: the Church was coming to them. Just as not being pagan had in the past required a deliberate opting out of the community's activities, so now not being Christian would mean excluding oneself from the festivals, processions and episcopal elections which were preoccupying the community. Even the doctrinal controversies provided new subjects for general conversation and popular involvement. The processions and slogans of factionalism gave people chance to show

great enthusiasm and energy, to be a visible religious crowd with a sense of participation"[125]. Perhaps it was easier for the members of the Roman Empire to become Christian than it would have been to give up their assumption that membership in a community entailed adherence to the religion of the community[126]. Of course, developments arose at a different pace in different parts of the empire: throughout the century there would have been pagan as well as Christian public events in most cities.

The gradual development of Christianity as the religion of the community as a whole could not, however, alter the fact that it was fundamentally a religion of conversion, rather than of adhesion, a religion that preached the coming of the heavenly kingdom, not the welfare of the empire. It is within the context of this tension that we must consider crucial developments that were fed and directed by Christians for whom the faith required an absolute commitment. A graded version of Christianity allowed those with a higher sense of vocation to be ordained (although the possibilities in this line were severely limited for women) or to follow the ascetic life. Others insisted that the higher demands must apply to all Christians: on this issue. as well as others, Pelagians, Priscillianists and Donatists found themselves divided from the rest of the Church. All of these distinctions must have

had serious implications for what it meant to be Christian, both for the highly, as for the less, committed.

The cleavage between clergy and lay, which was destined to become fundamental in the Catholic Church, shows signs of widening in the fourth century. Certainly, the leaders of the Church were to be found among the higher ranks of the ordained, while minor orders had proliferated in the preceding century as Church life became increasingly clericalized[127]. The replacement of the house-churches with purpose-built churches encouraged the formalization of ritual and roles. Thrones were constructed for the bishops, who would sit magnificently surrounded by their clergy[128]. The privileges granted clergy added to their prestige as well as to their wealth[129]. John Chrysostom clearly expresses his conviction that the clergy are spiritually superior to the laity[130]. The history of the Church came to be largely a history of the clergy, as Markus points out it was for Eusebius' successors:

> The lines which marked out the Christian people in the world had melted away, but new lines had come to mark out a clerical élite among them.[131]

On the other hand, the fourth century was an era of prominent laypeople, an era, however, whose end coincided more or less with that of the century[132].

In fact, as a way of affirming one's total commitment to Christianity, asceticism is more characteristic of the period than ordination. Ascetics were distinguished from the saeculari or kosmikoi by their renunciation of the world. They might do so in quite literal fashion by retiring to the desert, achieving a "self-imposed annihilation of [their] social status"[133]. In the desert they created a "counter-world"[134]; in Athanasius' striking phrase, they made the desert a city[135]. In The Body and Society, Brown powerfully shows how ascetics who remained physically within the city walls could yet dissociate themselves from the world by strict control of their body: "its untouched state spoke of a barrier between the Christian laity of the towns and villages.. and the monks"[136]. Although female ascetics did not have the same options as the male, the way of virginity provided an important form of liberation for women, enabling some of them to travel and to study[137], to live in and lead religious communities[138], and, despite some anxieties around the issue, to choose their protectors and spiritual guides[139]. In his work on widows, Ambrose explicitly points out that an important advantage of chastity for women is that they are free from the bonds of childbearing and subjection to their husbands[140].

The boundaries between the world of the ascetic and the saeculum should not be drawn too distinctly. Philip Rousseau

has illuminated the extensive contacts between the Pachomian community in the Egyptian desert and the neighbouring secular society[141]. Gregory of Nazianzus reflects that Basil the Great aimed to combine the active and contemplative modes of life[142]. On the other hand, Jerome's letters are suggestive of a quite distinctive thought-world inhabited by ascetics. He writes long letters explaining appropriate behaviour for those who have abandoned the world[143] by becoming a monk, a priest or a virgin[144]. He is in contact with numerous people trying to lead the ascetic life, including some as far away as Gaul, thus revealing a wide-ranging network. In a letter written in 403 C.E. he advises a mother on the education of her daughter and suggests that, when she is old enough, she be sent to her grandmother and aunt in Bethlehem so that she can grow up in a monastery, never knowing the world[145]. When it is possible to talk of members of the next generation being brought up in the "counter-world", it appears that a sub-group within Christianity has been created with a distinct identity, even if the boundaries are less than clearly drawn.

Many of the groups splintering from the Catholic Church shared the ascetics' ideals, but alienated themselves from the Church by a greater intolerance for compromise. The Donatists maintained the old pre-Constantinian tradition of the North African Church, which set the church over against the secular world[146]. The Priscillianists, a heretical group

in Spain, insisted on renunciation for all and promoted ascetic practices, including celibacy[147]. Pelagius called for perfection in both the individual and the religious group and demanded that one law be applied to all, without double standard[148]. These points were not necessarily the key elements forcing separation from the Catholic Church, but it is nevertheless significant that these so-called heretics refused a compromise with the world, which Catholics had to accept, if not for themselves, at least for other members of their church.

These instances of individuals and groups, with their own fervently held ideas of how to lead the Christian life, remind us that Christian society was never homogeneous. From the very beginnings of Christianity, these tensions have existed and have been fought over all the more intensely because the community of faithful has always been an integral element of Christian thought and life. The process by which the Church defined itself was not completed by the fourth century, and the "correct" answers to the theological controversies of the period were only established by long deliberation. Thus, from the doctrinal point of view, the very nature of Christianity continued to be in flux. With the establishment of Christianity as the favoured religion, however, the question of who was a Christian, and what it meant, spilled out on to the full arena of society, thereby affecting the lives and

experiences not only of those in the Church, but also of those outside.

V. PAGANISM POST-CONSTANTINE

The shape of the foregoing study of the development of Christian identity and community requires as a pendant some examination of the corresponding pagan development. After all, as Christians became the majority, pagans took the opposite path towards minority status. On the other hand, it would be misleading to suggest that there was a simple cross-over: firstly, we need to take into account the changes independent of the religious developments, which affected society as a whole, and, secondly, paganism had, as we have seen, a fundamentally different relation to community from that of Christianity. Given that the pagan religion or religions of the Roman Empire functioned as the validator of the various communities, what shape would paganism take when the majority of members of those communities rejected it? In the fourth century, even before the numbers became decisive, the most significant official patronage had been redirected from the pagan gods to the Christian God.

The development within paganism must be seen in the context of a fairly high degree of tolerance for those faithful to the old traditions. Pagans continued to be prominent among the noted intellectuals, as the examples of Hypatia, Libanius and Themistius confirm. Christians were prepared to learn from such teachers: Socrates, the Church historian, clearly feels no embarassment at naming himself

student of two pagan grammarians who were forced to flee Alexandria in the riots following the destruction of the Serapeum[1]. Why, indeed, should he think it odd, when such as Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom were among the pupils of Libanius, when the emperor Theodosius himself entrusted the education of his son, Arcadius, to the pagan Themistius? Known pagan affiliation was similarly no barrier to appointment to important political positions: so we gather from the careers of Symmachus, Prefect of Rome, or of Tatianus, made Praetorian Prefect in 388, to give just two examples. Official support for various aspects of the pagan structure were slow to be withdrawn: Gratian was the first emperor to reject the title of Pontifex Maximus; he also withdrew subsidies from the old cults and removed the statue and altar of Victory from the Senate, this as late as 382 C.E.

The large numbers of inhabitants of the Empire who persisted in the traditional religion continued to put up inscriptions, participate in festivals and rest their confidence for their city in the goodwill of the gods[2]. They enabled Libanius to write of his city, in some speeches, as inclined to seek traditional recourse in prayers to the gods in times of danger or celebration[3]. This, we need to remember, was also John Chrysostom's Antioch, a city where Christianity seemed to dominate[4]. The fact that Libanius elsewhere acknowledges, directly or indirectly, the impact

that the spread of Christianity had on pagan institutions[5] indicates that his image of a religiously-traditional Antioch is an imaginative construct. Many areas, as we have already seen, had a far lower percentage of Christians than Antioch, and no effort of imagination was in fact required to establish a comfortable pagan environment. The interest of the study, however, lies in those parts where change was taking place.

The implications of the series of laws against apostasy are also to be borne in mind[6]. Christians who returned to paganism were to lose their right of testation and their right to inherit; they were to be disqualified from giving testimony, and to lose any rank they held. Moreover, they were to have no opportunity of purging their penalty[7]. The repetition and increasing harshness of these laws make clear the continuing attraction of the traditional religion, which Christian authorities believed could be most effectively countered by severe punishment, involving the segregation of the guilty "from the community of all men"[8]. The option of expulsion, adopted in many cases for heretics[9], is explicitly rejected for apostates[10]. The implication of these measures is illuminating. They are based on the premise, not necessarily true, that Christians did in fact make up society, and that there was not a rival community of pagans, where apostates could feel comfortably at home. The heretics, on the other hand, were surely expelled because of their ability

to present a rival Church, dangerously attractive to those of the Catholic faith.

On the one side, then, we have the continuity of the old ways, together with their continued attraction; on the other side, the indubitable retreat of paganism in the face of the establishment of Christianity. While the laws constraining fourth century paganism might not seem particularly severe, and while they certainly were not uniformly enforced, pagans were on the defensive. This is clearly the case with Libanius's suggestion that temples should be preserved, to be used, if for nothing else, as tax-collection centres[11]. In his plea for the Altar of Victory in the Senate, Symmachus makes the argument for tolerance, an argument characteristic of minorities, and used by Christians in preceding centuries[12].

This defensiveness had its grounding in the reality of imperial patronage of Christianity, and an attendant zeal on the part of some Christians, which could go unpunished beyond the limits set by the law. Libanius, for example, complains of the harrassment of pagans in the form of illegal inquisitions of priests, arrests of the poor, and attacks on philosophers[13]. When Julian fined those responsible for destroying pagan temples, many bishops, clergy and lay Christian were imprisoned because they could not pay the

penalties[14]. By the end of the century, the level of violence against pagan institutions had increased, and had greater official, if extra-legal, backing[15]. As Christians became more secure, pagans became more vulnerable. These aggressions must have had considerable impact on pagans and on their sense of their place in the empire. At times, as has been noted[16], pagans had recourse to violence in defence of their ways: in 397, at Trent, Christian missionaries were murdered trying to stop converts from taking part in traditional field-blessing rites[17].

Another characteristic of fourth-century pagan discourse, this time not shared with the persecuted Christians, is the nostalgia for the past. Libanius, for example, describes Julian reacting to the sight of temples in ruins, rituals banned, and altars overturned[18]. Pagans mourned the days when the garlanded temples were full of worshippers[19]. For Symmachus, the antiquity of the worship of the gods is of first importance[20] and he laments, for example, the loss of the wealth and privileges of the Vestal Virgins[21].

The witnesses being called forward have the drawback of being highly unrepresentative: Libanius and Symmachus were both members of the social and political elite and their remarks must be interpreted in the light of the particular form and function of the addresses in which they appear.

But the dearth of evidence available more or less forces such a lop-sided view. In fact, the very narrowness of the range is illuminating. Even taking account of the fact that Christianity was ultimately victorious, and that therefore Christian records had considerably better chances of survival, pagans had apparently very little to say about what their religion meant to them. They did not develop the Christian habit of strengthening each other through letters and visits. They did not, despite Julian's efforts, develop the institutions capable of uniting pagans throughout the empire, in the way that the formidable institutional links of Christians maintained cohesion. The pagan religions which most cultivated community-spirit through secret rites appear to have lost support in the fourth century. The cults of Cybele and Mithras receded[22]. There was surprisingly little done to organize resistance: when pagans clashed with Christians, as they did over the destruction of the Serapeum, it was generally in spontaneous and undirected reaction to events. Pagans did not commemorate their martyrs.

The well-documented pagan reaction sponsored by Julian is perhaps most interesting in that it failed to inspire a convincing revival. Most pagans were unsympathetic to Julian's fanatical devotion[23]. Symbolic of the failure was Julian's disappointment over the festival of Apollo at Daphne, where the only victim for sacrifice was a goose the priest

himself had brought. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest in pagan traditions[24]. The pagans of Antioch, however, certainly seem to have lacked the energy and cohesion, that enabled the Christians, in contrast, to organize an impressive procession in response to Julian's order to move the bones of St. Babylas[25]. It is this absence of response to the establishment of Christianity that has led scholars to wonder at the way in which paganism appears simply to have rolled over and died.

Furthermore, there is no sign of pagans turning in upon themselves in an attempt to preserve their traditions, as threatened minorities often do. Mixed marriages apparently posed no problems on the pagan side. At least in the upper social classes, it was frequently the men who maintained the pagan traditions, while the women were more likely to be Christian[26]. Libanius, a pagan with little sympathy for Christianity, nevertheless continued to associate with Christians.

Where we can report positive findings is in the coincidence of social class with pagan affiliation. The struggle over the Altar of Victory involves more than a religious struggle. The senators were organized under the leadership of Symmachus and Nicomachus Flavianus, both men from wealthy, ancient families, admirers of Rome's past

glories and the traditional gods who used to protect the city. At stake was the maintenance of the traditional authority of the Roman aristocracy in the face of encroaching rival claims of the imperial court and the new Rome, Constantinople[27].

Significantly, this pagan reaction apparently did not draw upon support from outside the senatorial class. In other instances, too, defence of pagan traditions formed an integral part of the normal efforts at self-identification and self-preservation of social groups.

For the educated upper classes, adherence to paganism might indicate a commitment to Hellenism, in opposition to what was perceived to be the barbarism of Christianity. Julian's edict banning Christians from teaching the classics had great potential for highlighting this dichotomy. It is significant that the academic community was one of the last pagan strongholds[28]. However, Christians had long been challenging pagan claims to a monopoly on culture. By the end of the fourth century, Synesius was finding a comfortable synthesis of Christianity and Neoplatonism and Theodosius was decreeing that pagan temples were to be preserved as works of art[29].

Sozomen reports that in 362, under Julian's rule, the city council at Cyzicus sent an embassy to the emperor requesting

the restoration of the temples: this initiative provoked threats of violence from artisans in the city[30]. This is just one example of a city whose ruling body, made up of male members of the upper social class, favoured paganism, while the lower classes were predominantly Christian[31]. The rural communities, many of whom remained pagan longer than the cities, constitute further examples of pre-existent social groups having religion as one of their identifying characteristics.

Finally, it is important to consider the ways in which paganism, like Christianity, was reshaped in accordance with general social changes. Peter Brown in particular has been concerned to highlight this, arguing that the shifts in the locus of the supernatural obtained in pagan culture as well as Christian[32]. The "friends of God", those outsiders with special contacts with the divine, were sometimes pagan[33]. Eunapius' Lives of the Philosophers reveals something of the reverence that such pagan "holy men" could command. Heirs of the third-century philosopher-miracle-men, Plotinus and Porphyry, Eunapius' philosophers illustrate one of the directions in which pagan religion could develop.

But while the pagan "holy men" that Garth Fowden considers seem to have gathered around them a tightly-knit group of followers, he considers that their marginalization from the

rest of a society was of an essentially unproductive kind. The preoccupation with philosophy, and the largely urban and privileged background that that entailed left them isolated. Partly as a result, they did not provide leadership within the pagan community, nor were they active in resisting the attacks on the temples or in attempting to prevent conversions to Christianity[34].

With this last element, then, the picture of paganism that has been forming is once again confirmed. It appears that in the key area of the creation of new communities it was somehow quite unable to match the potential of Christianity. How far this difference between the two religious systems contributed to the triumph of Christianity is another question, but the subsequent history of the Church richly shows the opportunities that existed for a force that could radically reshape societies into new communities.

CONCLUSION

It is peculiarly difficult to uncover what is comprehended by the term "belonging", of which the sense of community and the sense of identity are two key elements. This study has explored what it meant to "belong" in the fourth century, whether as a Christian or as a pagan. The limits set for the study are admittedly artificial, and the clues are at best indirect. We can hope for no more than a very incomplete answer to the question, "What impact did the change in status of the Church have on fourth-century Christians' and pagans' experience of community and identity?"

The dramatic appearance of the Church's triumph needs to be nuanced. Despite the Great Persecution, Christians at the beginning of the century were significantly less marginalized than they had been a century previously. The institutions of the Church had seen a formidable development. In some areas, being Christian had become a matter of course, part of an inherited identity.

The Church Triumphant did, however, bring with it important and far-ranging implications. There were shifts in power, wealth and prestige, in the shape of society, and, most fundamentally, in people's mental picture of the world. But we are dealing with a process which was by no means completed in the fourth-century: the stage was merely being set for the

years to follow, when the Church came more and more to define society, rather than defining itself in opposition to society, as it had in its first centuries. The notion of the universality of the Church prevailed; it might be said to earn the name in two senses: there was to be one Church throughout the world, and the Church would have its influence throughout society.

Such a radical change in the nature of the Church met opposition, as we have seen, from within as well as from outside the Church. The universalist tendencies did not result in a monolithic Church. In many places and at many periods, there were disputes, often bitter, over what role the Church was to play, and over who was to be counted among its members. But important though the heterogeneity was, what was finally more significant was the capacity of the Church to absorb society, including the dissenting voices. The two major wings of the Church, the Orthodox in the East and the Roman Catholic in the West, achieved a remarkable monopoly over religious allegiances throughout the Middle Ages.

This thesis has argued that a significant factor in this success lay in the development of a tiered religious community. Through the clerical ranks and the various forms of religious life, the Church made room for, and tapped the energy of, those who felt called to a more intense commitment

to the Christian way. In this way, the Church was to a large degree able to serve functions that were in tension with each other. The Church could act as a framework for society, bind together the community, offer identity to all its members, and preserve the traditional ways. On the other hand, the Church could also create new and challenging communities, such as the "desert-cities" of the monastic communities.

The same tensions can be seen today, although the form is, of course, rather different. Some North Americans look to their Church to serve as the focal centre of their ethnic community. Others expect the Church not to buttress the old ways, but to work for the overturning of the unjust old order. In the recent Gulf War, some Church leaders could be seen backing the moral claims of the political leaders, while others assumed a critical role and offered an alternative moral vision.

On the pagan side, the survival of many ancient customs into the fifth century and long beyond is not to be minimized. But the origins of beliefs and habits are not necessarily very significant to an individual's sense of belonging. It is in this area that the key to the decline of pagan religion in the Roman Empire may lie. Paganism's failure to evoke new communities made it a weak contender against a rival such as the Church. It is also perhaps a clue to part of the reason

for the success of, for example, both Christianity and Islam in gaining converts from followers of traditional religions in many parts of the world.

It is illuminating to contrast the ways in which paganism and Christianity adapted themselves to their changing status in society. The pagan institutions were fundamentally fitted for the maintenance of the community to which they belonged: when the status of majority religion was lost, much of the power of the religion was lost. Christianity, on the other hand, exerted a powerful attraction while still a minority concern. In fact, it could profit by its marginal situation, offering an intentionally alternative allegiance. On assuming majority status, the Church could fill the role of the pagan institutions in holding together the community, but went much further in redirecting and recreating society.

Despite the supposed rise of the age of secularism, the twentieth century continues to see religions playing a crucial role in the lives of both individuals and societies. In this period of mass migration and rapid communication, and of tensions between nationalism and regionalism, the question of what makes one belong has particular relevance. A brief study of religious identity and community in the distant, but not totally alien, fourth century can thus offer a different perspective from which to view the modern situation.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Meeks, 1983, ch.3.

2. Merton, 1964, p. 322.

3. Rahner, 1974, p. 30.

4. Humphreys, 1978, pp. 19-20; an example of the insecure positions to which psychologizing leads us is found in Dodds, 1965.

5. cf. Brown, 1982, p. 94: "The conflict of Christianity and paganism in the fourth century takes on a breathless urgency largely because we insist in cramming the conflict into the narrow space of one century".

CHAPTER I

1. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 30.

2. MacMullen, 1981, p. 1.

3. There did, however, exist initiation rites for some cults: these will be discussed below.

4. e.g. Juv., Sat. XIV, 96-105: the son follows the Jewish ways of his father.

5. Tert. Ap. 19.1f: "With you pagans, too, it is almost a religion to demand belief on the basis of age", trans. MacMullen, 1981, pp. 2f; cf. Min. Fel., 6.3: "quippe antiquitas caerimoniis atque fanis tantum sanctitatis tribuere consuevit quantum adstruxerit vetustatis".

6. MacMullen, 1981, pp. 2f.; cf. Porph., Ep. ad Marcellam, 18: "οὕτως γὰρ μέγιστος καρπὸς εὐσεβείας τιμᾶν τὸ θεῖον κατὰ τὰ πάτρια".

7. Lane Fox, 1987, pp. 41-46.

8. MacMullen, 1974, ch. II, especially pp. 28-31 and 45-47 for economic contact but urban scorn of things rural.

9. MacMullen, 1974, p. 55.

10. Brown, 1982, p. 155, "...for there is much evidence, throughout this area [eastern Mediterranean], as also for Asia Minor, that the basic and unchanging relationship between town and village was a non-relationship."

11. MacMullen, 1981, p. 142, note 17; cf. Min. Fel., 6.1, each city worshipping its own gods.

12. Harl, 1987, p. 54.

13. ibid., pp. 52-70.

14. Wilcken, U., 1912, in MacMullen, 1981, p.43.

15. MacMullen, 1981, p. 43 and note 2.

16. ibid., pp. 104f with notes. Most examples of towns making dedications or erecting temples are from Africa.

17. I.L.S., 705.

18. Price, 1984, p. 106, pointing out that names of imperial priests were sometimes used to divide the calendar; cf. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 67.

19. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 67-69.

20. Lib., Or. 30.19: people in the country used to gather at times of festivals to sacrifice and feast; cf. MacMullen, 1981, pp. 34-39.

21. Harl, 1987, p. 64.

22. Price, 1984, p. 102.

23. P. Cartledge, "The Greek Religious Festivals", in Easterling and Muir, edd., 1985, pp. 98-127.

24. Harl, 1987, pp. 62-70 and plate 29.7.

25. Price, 1984, pp. 127f.

26. Harl, 1987, p. 23.

27. Price, 1984, pp. 128f.

28. MacMullen, 1981, 25-26 and note 33, p. 153: some literary, some archaeological evidence.

29. MacMullen, 1981, p. 36.

30. Following disturbances in Alexandria, Caracalla expelled all non-residents from the city, but made an exception for country-dwellers coming into the city for festivals. In Egypt, therefore, the country-dwellers' outsider status was a matter of law: Lewis, 1983, p. 202.

31. O.G.I.S. 595; cf. MacMullen, 1981, p. 142, note 18 for other examples; also, MacMullen, 1974: Athene worshipped by Athenians abroad; Lane Fox, 1986, p. 82, for example, Xanthos the Lycian establishing a shrine dedicated to Men in Attica.

32. Drijvers, 1980, in his study on Edessan religion, points out that cults abroad were maintained in ways that connected them to the cult at home, concluding that, in the Roman Empire, "the various religions of foreign origin mainly served to help the strangers to keep their own identity" (p. 186).

33. The mobility was not, however, necessarily higher than, say, the first century C.E.

34. MacMullen, 1981, pp. 112-18, quotation p. 117.

35. Fowden, 1988, p. 177.

36. Price, 1980, p. 41; cf. Wardman, 1982, p. 16: processions, thanksgivings, triumphs and banquets usually open to all social orders.

37. Dodds, 1965, p. 137; contra, Brown, 1978.

38. Thuc. VII.77.7: "ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, καὶ οὐ τεῖχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρων κεναί".

39. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 46f.

40. MacMullen, 1974, pp. 68f for vici and compitalia; pp. 69-80 for trades associations.

41. Lewis, 1983, p. 144.

42. MacMullen, 1974, p. 82.

43. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 85-88.

44. Lewis, 1983, pp. 148f.

45. J.P. Kane, "The Mithraic Cult Meal in its Greek and Roman Environment", in Hinnels, ed., 1975, Vol. II.

46. MacMullen, 1981, p. 40, concluding a survey of religiously-connected social life, pp. 36ff.

47. Orr, 1978.

48. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 83.

49. Orr, 1978, pp. 1588-90.

50. Harman, 1978.

51. Drijvers, 1980, p. 187.

52. MacMullen, 1984b.

53. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 83.

54. Price, 1984, p. 78: "... the imperial cult is found in a wide range of settlements which were communally organized, but not in places where communal organization was lacking"; cf. Bell, 1957, p. 57: imperial cult in Egypt organized municipally rather than centrally.

55. G.W. Bowersock, "The Imperial Cult: Perceptions and Persistence", in Meyers & Sanders, edd., 1982, p. 173.

56. Price, 1984, pp. 107-14.

57. Bell, 1957, p. 58.

58. Price, 1984, p. 172.

59. The imperial cult was less prominent in the West.

60. Price, 1984, pp. 243-48, quotation p. 248.

61. Meeks, 1983, pp. 77-80, pointing out the dissimilarities also.

62. Vermaseren, 1977, p. 7.

63. Turcan, 1989, p. 13.

64. Malaise, 1972, p. 142.

65. Turcan, 1989, p. 294.

66. ibid., p. 107.

67. Ap., Met. XI, 19.

68. Turcan, 1989, p. 105.

69. Ap., Met. XI, 21 and 23.

70. Malaise, 1972, pp. 137f.

71. Plut., De Is. 5.

72. Turcan, 1989, p. 212-29. He maintains average numbers for each cell were about 20.

73. MacMullen, 1981, p. 125.

74. ibid., pp. 118f; cf. p. 122: "...for a god with no great temple anywhere, without ta patria in which to anchor loyalty, without a city or a people to proclaim his wonders, the winning of prominence across a full quarter of the empire was quite remarkable".

75. Turcan, 1989, p. 237.

76. MacMullen, 1981, pp. 126f.

77. ibid., pp. 114f.

78. ibid., p. 118.

79. Roger Hanoune, "Les Associations Dionysiaques dans l'Afrique Romaine", pp. 149-64, in Ecole Française de Rome, 1986.

80. MacMullen, 1981, p. 24.

81. Kane, op. cit., pp. 330f, admittedly from the second century B.C.E.

82. Turcan, 1989, p. 212.

83. Nock, 1933, p. 14.

84. Geffcken, 1978, p. 75: "I myself hold the opinion that in the period here under discussion, that is, in the third century, philosophy and religious practice cannot be easily separated".

85. ibid., pp. 45ff for Plotinus; pp. 57ff for Porphyry.

86. ibid., p. 42.

87. ibid., p. 57.

88. ibid., p. 77. Geffcken considers that the Hermetical writings were designed "to serve the edification of a community". Our information about such communities is,

however, very limited, notwithstanding the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts.

89. Price, 1984, pp. 14f.

90. Geffcken, 1978, p. 25.

91. MacMullen, 1981, p. 127.

92. cf. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 577: "Much of the map suffers more from obscurity than demonstrable gloom".

93. Brown, 1978, ch. 2.

94. ibid., ch. 3.

95. Brown, 1982, p. 130: "In late Roman society, the holy man was deliberately not human".

96. Turcan, 1989, pp. 319f; cf. Lewis, 1983, p. 98: "The emphasis in matters spiritual shifted ever more from a community to an individual experience".

97. MacMullen, 1981, p. 127.

CHAPTER II

1. N.T., Rom. 12, 4-5.

2. Tert., Ap. 39, 1.

3. Dodds, 1965, p. 134.

4. Nock, 1933, ch. 1.

5. Cyp., Ep. 4.4.3.

6. Acts 2 [illegible].4.

7. ibid., 12.3.6, martyrdom dated to 259 C.E.

8. Cyp., Ep. 11.7.3.

9. Baus, 1980, pp. 365f.

10. Acts 27 = Acta Phileae.

11. e.g., Min. Fel., 9.2: "passim etiam inter eos velut quaedam libidinum religio miscetur, ac se promisce appelant fratres et sorores, ut etiam non insolens

stuprum intercessione sacri nominis fiat incestum"; cf. 31.

12. H. A. Armstrong, "The Self-Definition of Christianity in Relation to Later Platonism", in Sanders, ed., 1980.

13. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 265.

14. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 35.

15. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 351.

16. ibid., p. 478.

17. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 16; ibid., 17 for 3 years (less if zealous and persevering); Hefele, ed., 1894, Vol. I, p. 139, Council of Elvira: flamines who abstain from sacrifice while catechumens may be baptized at the end of a two-year period.

18. Orig. C. Cels. 3.51.

19. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 15-18 and 20f.

20. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 316f.

21. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 26.

22. Baus, 1980, ch. 25.

23. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 337.

24. R.A. Markus, "The Problem of Self-Definition - From Sect to Church", in Sanders, ed., 1980.

25. Eus., H.E. 6.43.1.

26. Orig., Comm. in Matt., XVI.8 = P.G. 13 col. 1393: "καὶ φοβεροὺς ἑαυτοὺς καὶ δυσπροσίτους μάλιστα, τοῖς πένησι κατασκευάζοντες ... ὡς οὐδὲ οἱ τύραννοι, καὶ ὠμότεροι τῶν ἀρχόντων πρὸς τοὺς ἱκέτας".

27. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 499-502; cf. tasks of bishop outlined in Hipp., Trad. Ap. 3.5f, visiting sick: 30.

28. Frend, 1984, p. 406.

29. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 8: "quia non in sacerdotio ordinatur, sed in ministerio episcopi, ut faciat ea quae ab ipso iubentur".

30. Frend, 1984, p. 401.

31. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 2.

32. Baus, 1980, pp. 353-55.

33. Frend, 1984, p. 402.

34. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 512.

35. Baus, 1980, p. 311.

36. Frend, 1965, p. 330.

37. Eus., H.E. 7.22.

38. Bell, 1924, Pap. 1915; cf. Pap. 1916: a further request.

39. Cyp., Ep. 7.2: "Viduarum et infirmorum et omnium pauperum curam peto diligenter habeatis".

40. Cyp., De Op. et El., 24 = P.L. 4 col. 644.

41. Tert., Ap. 39.7.

42. See above, p. 18.

43. Frend, 1965, p. 317: Valerian' edict, 257 C.E., forbad Christians meeting in cemeteries.

44. Fowden, 1988, p. 177.

45. Brown, 1988, p. 171.

46. Eus., H.E. 6.43.

47. Hipp., Trad. Ap. 10.

48. Cyp., Ep. 4, dealing with virgins who had been associating with men; De hab. virg., on proper dress, e.g. 14f = P.L. 4 col. 455: "nunc nobis ad virgines sermo est; quarum quo sublimior gloria est, major et cura est".

49. Eus., H.E. 7.30.

50. Brown, 1988, p. 196.

51. Brown, 1978, p. 74.

52. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 338f.

53. ibid., p. 269.

54. ibid., p. 270.

55. ibid., p. 270.

56. ibid., p. 325, surely overstating the case by referring to "any town"; cf. Brown, 1988, p. 192: the Christian Church in Rome was "larger than any other voluntary group in the city".

57. A.H.M. Jones, "The Social Background of the Struggle between Paganism and Christianity", in Momigliano, ed., 1963, p. 17.

58. Eus., H.E. 8.11.1; for Phrygia in general: Lane Fox, 1986, p. 587.

59. Frend, 1965, p. 324.

60. Jones, op. cit., p. 22.

61. ibid., pp. 17-19.

62. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 589f.

63. Drijvers, 1980, ch. 7.

64. Frend, 1976, ch. XI.

65. R.A. Markus, "Christianity and Dissent in Roman N. Africa", in Baker, ed., 1972; cf. Brown, 1965, pp. 281-83.

66. Frend, 1984, p. 398.

67. ibid., p. 398, drawing from Lact., De Mort. Pers. 12. 3.

68. Lact., De Mort. Pers. 12.4; cf. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 587.

69. Eus., H.E. 8.1.1-6.

70. Eus., H.E. 7.

71. Barnes, 1981, p. 176.

72. Aug., Civ. Dei 19.23; cf. R.L. Wilken, "The Christians as the Romans (and Greeks) saw them", in Sanders, ed., 1980.

73. Orig., C. Cels. 6.27.

74. Fowden, 1988, p. 174.

75. Eus., H.E. 9.8.14: "εὐσεβεῖς τε καὶ μόνος θεοσσεβεῖς τούτους ἀληθῶς".

76. e.g. Eus., H.E. 5.1, on the martyrs of Lyons.

77. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 599-601.

78. Eus., H.E. 9.2; 9.4; 9.7.

79. e.g. Soz., H.E. 5.15.4ff: in 362, under Julian, city councillors press for restoration of pagan worship and artisans threaten a riot.

80. Eus., H.E. 9.5: the authorities in each region were urged to circulate the memoirs and teachers were to have children studying them; cf. 6.41, during the Decian persecution, generalized hostility towards Christians was aroused, apparently successfully, by the authorities.

81. Lane Fox, 1986, p. 450.

82. ibid., p. 422.

83. Lact., De Mort. Pers. 10.

84. Eus., H.E. 9.7.

85. Arn., Adv. Nat. 1.1-16.

86. Lact., De Mort. Pers. e.g. 5.7: "cum igitur tales poenas de sacrilegis deus exegerit..."

87. Frend, 1965, pp. 358f.

88. Lane Fox, 1986, pp. 596f.

89. ibid., pp. 423f.

90. MacDonald, 1990, pp. 233f.

91. Brown, 1988, p. 192; cf. Acts 22: Christian woman in 304, in Thessalonica, placed in a brothel before being ordered burned alive.

92. Cyp., Ep. 13.5.3.

93. Acts 6.6.

94. Tert., De Idol. 3.4.

95. ibid., 11.6.

96. ibid., 8.2 and 12.

97. ibid., 13.5 and 14.6.

98. ibid., 23.

99. Tert., Ap. 30,4 prayers offered for empire and its institutions; 42.2-3 Christians participating in all areas of life.

100. Orig., C. Cels. 8.73; 8.75.

101. MacMullen, 1984a, pp. 39f.

102. Hefele, ed., 1894, Vol. I, pp. 138f, Council of Elvira, Can. 2 and 3: no re-admittance to community to one who had actually sacrificed.

103. Helgeland, 1979, pp. 764f, for opinions of Church Fathers; pp. 765-97 for evidence of Christians serving in the army.

104. Hefele, ed., 1894, Vol. I, pp. 186f, Council of Arles, Can. 4: "Ut aurigae dum agitant excommunicentur" and Can. 5: "Ut theatrici quamdiu agunt excommunicentur". cf. p. 164, Council of Elvira, Can. 62: aurigae and pantomimi must give up their profession when they convert.

105. MacMullen, 1984a, p. 40.

106. ibid., p. 597.

107. Greg. Naz., Or. 18.10 = P.G. 35 col. 996.

108. Markus, op. cit., in Baker, ed., 1972; referring to the dispute between Donatists and Catholics.

109. Phrase used by Lane Fox, 1986, p. 549 on debate in the wake of Decian persecution.

CHAPTER III

1. As Sozomen does in H.E. 1.8 in gathering together all of Constantine's actions tending towards the establishment of the Church.

2. Chadwick, 1967, p. 152: majority non-Christian until late 4th century; cf. MacMullen, 1984a, pp. 81f: empire predominantly non-Christian in 400.

3. Text in Lact., De Mort. Pers. 34.1-5 and, in Greek translation, Eus., H.E. 8.17.6-10.

4. Lact., De Mort. Pers. 36.3.

5. e.g. Johnson, 1976, p. 67 "The so-called "Edict of Milan", by which the Roman Empire reversed its policy of hostility to Christianity and accorded it full legal recognition was one of the decisive events in world history".

6. Lact., De Mort. Pers. 48.2-12.

7. "aliis", ibid., 48.6.

8. Eus., H.E. 10.8.10f and 14-19: plotting against bishops, some of whom are murdered; destroying or closing churches and planning a general persecution; cf. V.C. 1.51-56 = P.G. 20 coll. 965-972.

9. Eus., H.E. 10.6.

10. Frend, 1984, p. 487.

11. Soc., H.E. 1.16 and 1.18.

12. ibid., 1.17.

13. Soz., H.E. 5.5.

14. Eus., H.E. 10.5.23: Constantine informing bishop Chrestus of Syracuse that he has the use of the public post to go to the Council of Arles.

15. Eus., H.E. 10.7; C.Th. 16.2.2 in 319 C.E.; 16.2.24 in 377 C.E. accords the exemption to priests, deacons, subdeacons, exorcists, lectors, doorkeepers and "likewise all persons who are of the first rank in the church".

16. C.Th. 16.2.3 and 16.2.6.

17. C.Th. 16.2.9 in 349 C.E.; cf. 16.2.11.

18. C.Th. 16.2.8; 16.2.10; 16.2.14.

19. C.Th. 16.2.15.

20. Frend, 1984, p. 488; episcopal tribunals: C.Th. 1.27.1; manumission: C.Th. 4.7.1.

21. C.Th. 16.2.12 in 355 C.E.

22. Hillgarth, ed., 1969, p. 45.

23. Soc., H.E. 1.18.

24. C.Th. 2.8.1.

25. Soc., H.E. 1.16.

26. Soz., H.E. 5.5.2, cited above.

27. ibid., 6.3.3.

28. ibid.; cf. subsequent confirmations of church privileges: C.Th. 16.2.29 in 395 C.E., and 2.30 in 397 C.E.

29. Barnes, 1981, ch. XII, however, takes a different line.

30. C.Th. 16.10.1, 321 C.E., making the exception for public divination.

31. C.Th. 16.10.2; 16.10.4; 16.10.5.

32. C.Th. 16.10.6.

33. Hillgarth, ed., 1969, p. 44; C.Th. 16.10.10 in 391 C.E., followed by C.Th. 16.10.11-12 in 391, 392 and 395. There is disagreement among modern scholars over the legality of sacrifice under Constantine: Barnes, pp.322-25, in Dihle, ed., 1989.

34. Jones, 1966, p. 71.

35. e.g. Lib., Or. 30.12-14: monks attacking temples are not punished.

36. Eus., H.E. 10.6.1-5; C.Th. 16.5.1 in 326 C.E.

37. C.Th. 16.1.2 in 380 C.E.

38. cf. Frend, 1984, p. 616: "With the emperor Theodosius I (379-95) emerges a concept of state-catholicism to which all subjects of the empire must adhere".

CHAPTER IV

1. Murray, 1983, p. 193.

2. See above, Ch. III, note 2.

3. Soz., H.E. 2.5.1 has some converting to Christianity out of envy at the honour in which Christians are held by the emperor. This is ambiguous, as honour could well refer to concrete advantages.

4. Eus., V.C. 3.58 = P.G. 20 col. 1125: generous gifts to poor as part of a campaign to make Christians out of the people of Heliopolis.

5. Brown, 1982, p. 97.

6. Lib., Or. 30.28.

7. Frend, 1984, p. 445, with note 31, p. 467.

8. Soz., H.E. 2.5.7-8.

9. Clerical privileges had a precedent in tax privileges for pagan priests and exemptions from taxes and public services for members of the international associations of athletes, musicians and dramatists: Grant, 1977, pp. 61f.

10. Eus., V.C. 4.24 = P.G. 20 col. 1172.

11. Markus, 1970, p. 105.

12. Amb., Ep. 40 = P.L. 16 coll. 1101ff, and 41 = P.L. 16 coll. 1160ff.

13. Soz., H.E. 7.25.1-7; Amb., Ep. . 1.

14. Amm. Marc., 27.3.12f.

15. Eus., H.E. 6.21.3f.

16. Momigliano, ed., 1963, p. 9. He goes on to say that the Church was already winning the competition: "if [a man] liked power he would soon discover that there was more power to be found in the Church than in the State."

17. See, for example, Bregman's thesis on Synesius of Cyrene: "a generation later, an old-fashioned pagan such as Synesius could not only follow in the footsteps of Themistius, but even go him one further by joining the Christian camp": Bregman, 1982, p. 45; cf. Brown, 1972, p. 178 on the "drift into a respectable Christianity".

18. Soc., H.E. 5.25.12-14; Soz., H.E. 7.24.

19. Soc., H.E. 3.20.8-15; Soz., H.E. 5.22.7-9.

20. Soz., H.E. 7.20.

21. Soc., H.E. 5.16.1-6.

22. Fowden, 1978, p.71; cf. Frend, 1984, pp. 708f, for Martin as well as other Christian challenges of pagan strongholds.

23. Marc. Diac. V. Porph. 9.63 = P.G. 65 col. 1239.

24. C.Th. 16.10.3; cf. 16.10.8, 16.10.15 and 16.10.18.

25. H.I. Marrou, "Synesius of Cyrene and Alexandrian Neoplatonism", in Momigliano, ed., 1963, p. 140; cf. p. 137, maintaining that literary studies in Alexandria were pursued in an atmosphere of religious neutrality.

26. MacMullen, 1984b, p. 80.

27. Soz., H.E. 2.5.

28. Firm. Mat., De Err., especially 16.4; 20.7; 29.1.

29. Fowden, 1978.

30. Lib., Or. 30.11.

31. Fowden, 1978, p. 72.

32. Aug., Ep. 50: Sufes; Ep. 91.8: Calama.

33. Downey, 1961, p. 352.

34. Aug., Ep. 29.9.

35. Jer., Ep. 22.30: in a dream he is charged with being a Ciceronian.

36. MacMullen, 1986, p. 330.

37. Lepelley, 1979, p.380.

38. MacMullen, 1986, p. 330.

39. MacMullen, 1984a, pp. 75-77.

40. Frend, 1984, p. 402.

41. Markus, 1983, II, p.7: "As the fourth century wore on, the "new people" whose history Eusebius had been writing was rapidly becoming identifiable with the peoples of the Roman Empire and its fringes".

42. The argument is still alive in the 20th century.

43. Opt., De Schism. Donat. 3.3 = P.L. 11 col. 999.

44. Frend, 1984, pp. 572f.

45. Ath., Hist. Ar. 44 = P.G. 25 col. 745: "μὴ τίθει σεαυτὸν εἰς τὰ ἐκκλησιαστικά· μηδὲ σὺ περὶ τούτων ἡμῖν παρακελεύου· ἀλλα μᾶλλον παρ'ἡμῶν σὺ μάνθανε ταῦτα".

46. Amb., Ep. 20.19 = P.L. col. 999: "ad imperatorem palatia pertinent, ad sacerdotem Ecclesiae".

47. Frend, 1984, pp. 639f.

48. Frend, 1976, XVIII, p.7: "Belief in a divinely appointed society dominated by emperor and church had slowly percolated to all levels of the population in the east".

49. Brown, 1972, p. 53. But Frend, 1984, p. 727, notes that a few far-sighted Christians of the fourth century did see the usefulness of missions; cf. W.H.C. Frend, ch. III in Dihle, ed., 1989, pp. 73-85 on mission as foreign policy under Constantius; E.A. Thompson, in Momigliano, ed., 1963, pp. 56-64 argues that these efforts were not well-developed.

50. Frend, 1976, XVIII, p. 8. For example, the defence of Nisibis in 349-60 C.E. was largely inspired by the monastic bishop, Jacobus.

51. Momigliano, ed., 1963, p. 14.

52. Brown, 1988, pp. 315-19.

53. Kopecek, 1974, finds that Gregory of Nyssa had little interest in civic patriotism, but that the elder and younger Gregories of Nazianzus took a very traditional pride in a church built out of private funds.

54. Veyne, 1976, pp. 51f.

55. J. Chr. De Eleem. α': John Chrysostom presents himself as "not an ambassador of another city...but the ambassador of the poor in this city".

56. Brown, 1981, pp. 3-5.

57. cf. Wardman, 1982, p. 170: "An important point about the introduction of Christianity is that it stood for a quantitative increase in the social impact of religion".

58. cf. Brown, 1988, p. 319: "To hope that the eastern Mediterranean city would shed its profane traditions by becoming little more than an assemblage of pious Christian households involved a fatal underestimation of the power of the classical sense of the civic community".

59. Greg. Naz., Or. 36.12.19 = P.G. 36 col 280.

60. Alfödy, 1988, p. 191.

61. Brown, 1972, p. 126.

62. ibid., pp. 123f.

63. ibid., p. 129.

64. Brown, 1981, p. 45.

65. See above, p. 84.

66. Brown, 1981, p. 46: "[Almsgiving] amounted to nothing less than a claim by the new leaders of the Christian church to redraw the immemorial boundaries of the urban community".

67. ibid., p. 66.

68. Brown, 1981, p. 38.

69. Veyne, 1976, p. 51.

70. ibid., p. 44.

71. See above, pp. 31f.

72. Brown, 1982, pp. 130f.

73. Brown, 1988, p. 217.

74. ibid., e.g. p. 356.

75. Brown, 1981, p. 6.

76. ibid., p. 8.

77. Rousseau, 1985, p. 153; p. 170 for references to tensions.

78. Ath., V.A. 67 = P.G. 26 col. 937.

79. Jones, 1964, pp.980f.

80. See above, p. 71.

81. Aug., c. lit. Petil. II. 83 = P.L. 43 coll. 315f; cf. H. Chadwick, "Augustine on pagans and Christians: Reflections on religious and social change", in Beales & Best, ed., 1985, p.19.

82. Amm. Marc., 21.16.18, cited above, for acerbic comment on the fruit of Constantius' efforts to bring the bishops to unity through frequent synods: a hamstrung cursus publicus.

83. Jones, 1964, pp. 880f.

84. Soc., H.E. 5.8.13-19.

85. Rousseau, 1985, p. 6; cf. Frend, 1976, XVI, pp. 30-37.

86. Aug., Epp. 125 and 126 = P.L. 33 coll. 473-83.

87. Hefele, ed., 1896, Vol. II, p. 73, Synod of Antioch in Encaeniis, in 341 C.E., Can. 24.

88. Jones, 1964, p. 896.

89. MacMullen, 1984a, pp. 52f.

90. Clark, 1986, pp. 49f.

91. Clark, 1986, pp. 50f: monasteries founded and/or led by women.

92. ibid., p. 47.

93. ibid., pp. 209f.

94. eg. the Domus Aurea in Antioch, begun by Constantine and completed by his son, Constantius: Downey, 1961, pp. 342ff.

95. Frend, 1984, pp. 557f.

96. Chadwick, 1967, p. 164.

97. ibid., p. 163.

98. Hefele, ed., 1896, Vol. II, pp. 143f, Council of Sardica, Can. 11.

99. Jer., Ep. 22.28; cf. Amm. Marc., 27.3.11ff, comparing the wealth and corruption of bishops of Rome with the frugality of provincial bishops.

100. Jones, 1966, p. 262.

101. See above, p. 45.

102. As is indicated by complaints about the over-use of the cursus publicus, note 82 above.

103. Greg. Nys., Ep. 2 = P.G. 46 col. 1013B: "τὸ γὰρ ὄχημα ἡμιν ἀντὶ Ἐκκλησίας καὶ μοναστηρίου ἦν, διὰ πάσης τῆς ὁδοῦ συμψαλλόντων πάντων καὶ συννηστευόντων τῷ Κυρίῳ".

104. Brown, 1981, pp. 93f.

105. Hunt, 1982, pp. 63-66.

106. ibid., pp. 23-27.

107. Harl, 1987, p. 104: "In the Christian city of the fourth century, potent local beliefs and energies were harnessed to the universal purpose".

108. Lepelley, 1979, pp. 371f.

109. ibid., p. 403.

110. cf. Harl, 1987, pp. 102f.: "Not until the last half of the sixth century did the Christian episcopacy, along with a Christianized upper class, place a decidedly Christian stamp on local life and patriotism by erecting Christian buildings and instituting civic religious processions, holy days and cults to saints".

111. Lepelley, 1979, p. 402 for Christians breaking the unity of the city; cf. Harl, 1987, p. 103: "Even so, the Christian bishops of the early fourth century, backed by the rulings of Constantine and his sons, had already coopted much of the local political pride and civic religious sentiment once directed by the pagan decurional class".

112. cf. Lepelley, 1979, p. 378: "à mesure que se multipliaient les conversions massives, baissait la proportion des chrétiens fervents, prêts à suivre leurs pasteurs sur la voie de l'ascétisme". Also Brown, 1981, pp. 12-22 on the 2-tiered model, according to which the constant popular religion

influences the religion of the élite, a model which Brown criticizes.

113. T.D. Barnes, "Christians and Pagans in the Reign of Constantius", in Dihle ed., 1989, pp. 306f.

114. See above, Ch. III, note 2.

115. Lepelley, 1979, p. 380; cf. Hefele, ed., 1894, Vol. I, p. 417: 4th Carthaginian Synod in 398, Can. 88: "He who neglects divine service on festivals, and goes instead to the theatre, shall be excommunicated".

116. A.A. Barb, "The Survival of Magic Arts", in Momigliano, ed., 1963, pp. 106f.

117. MacMullen, 1986.

118. Laistner, 1951, pp. 51f.

119. See above, p. 12.

120. Brown, 1981, p. 98.

121. ibid.

122. Brown, 1981, p. 41.

123. Lepelley, 1979, p. 146.

124. Drijvers, 1984, XVI, p. 39.

125. Wardman, 1982, p. 153.

126. cf. Bonner, 1984, p. 348.

127. Frend, 1984, pp. 405-07.

128. ibid., p. 558.

129. Clerics largely from curial class, enjoyed worldly advantages in exemptions, new opportunities for career, amassing wealth, etc.: Jones, 1964, 925f.

130. J.Chr., <u>De Sacerd.</u> 2.2.

131. Markus, 1983, p. 15; cf. Brown, 1988, p. 361: "Hierarchy, and not community, had become the order of the day".

132. Brown, 1972, p. 225: "The defeat of Pelagianism forced the Roman clergy to the fore. The great lay patrons of the late fourth and early fifth centuries cautiously stepped aside".

133. Brown, 1988, p. 214.

134. ibid., p. 217.

135. Ath., V.A. 14 = P.G. 26 col. 865: "ἡ ἔρημος ἐπόλισθη".

136. Brown, 1988, p. 243; cf. Basil, Ep. 2: "τούτων δὲ μία φυγή, ὁ χωρισμός ἀπο τοῦ κοσμου παντός".

by which he says he means the breaking of the soul's sympathy with the body.

137. Clark, 1986, p. 47.

138. ibid., pp. 50f.

139. Brown, 1988, p. 266; "the world of female priests represented, in reality, a zone of exceptional fluidity and free choice".

140. Amb., De Vid. 81 = P.L. 16 col. 259.

141. Rousseau, 1985, Ch. VIII.

142. Greg. Naz., Or. 43.62 = P.G. 36 col. 577.

143. Jer., Ep. 52.1 = P.L. 22 col. 527, written in answer to a request from a priest, Nepotian, for: "praecepta vivendi, et qua ratione is, qui saeculi militia derelicta, vel monachus coeperit esse, vel clericus, rectum Christi tramitem teneat, ne ad diversa vitiorum diverticula rapiatur".

144. ibid., 22 = P.L. 22 coll. 394ff, and 52 = P.L. 22 coll. 527ff.

145. ibid., 107.13 = P.L. 22 col. 877: "nutriatur in monasterio, sit inter virginum choros ... nesciat saeculum, vivat angelice..."

146. Markus, op. cit., in Baker, ed., 1972, pp. 27-29.

147. Chadwick, 1976, pp. 8 and 29.

148. Brown, 1972, p. 194: "the stream of perfectionism which, in a Jerome, a Paulinus, an Augustine, had flowed in a concentrated jet, will be widened, by

Pelagius and his followers into a flood, into whose icy puritanism they would immerse the whole Christian community."

CHAPTER V

1. Soc., H.E. 5.16.

2. Geffcken, 1978, p. 161 notes an apparent increase in numbers of pagan inscriptions in the 360s and 370s.

3. Lib., Or. 20.48 and 22.5.

4. cf. Browning, 1975, p. 161: "Libanius gives the impression that his native city is almost wholly pagan, John Chrysostom that it is almost wholly Christian".

5. e.g. Lib., Or. 30, most obviously; Or. 2.30 more allusively, referring to decline in wealth, attendance at temples; Libanius advocates a return to the temples as a remedy for the troubles of the city, but only makes indirect references to Christians.

6. C.Th. 16.7.1-7, from 381 C.E. onwards.

7. C.Th. 16.7.4; 16.7.5, both in 391 C.E.

8. C.Th. 16.7.4.

9. e.g. C.Th. 16.5.6, in 381; 16.5.11 in 383 C.E.

10. C.Th. 16.7.4.

11. Lib., Or. 30.42.

12. Sym., Rel. 3.3: "pars eorum [= principes] prior caerimonias patrum coluit, recentior non removit. si exemplum non facit religio veterum, faciat dissimulatio proximorum"; cf. Momigliano, ed., 1963, p. 81: pagan historians on the defensive.

13. Lib., Or. 18.286f.

14. Soz., H.E. 5.55.

15. Notably the efforts of Cynegius, Praetorian Prefect in the 380s.

16. See above, p. 78.

17. Hillgarth, ed., 1969, p. 51.

18. Lib., Or. 18.23.

19. ibid., 2.30.

20. Sym., Rel. 3.4 and 3.10.

21. ibid., 11ff.

22. Geffcken, 1978, ch. 3, but he also reports something of a comeback of Cybele and Attis in the 370s.

23. Jul. Misopogon 15.346 B/C; Lib., Or. 18.171f.

24. e.g. Frend, 1984, p. 604: city councils in Numidia hailed Julian as liberator, restorer of religion.

25. Soz., H.E. 5.19.18f.

26. cf. Frend, 1984, p. 561; Brown, 1972, pp. 172f: Christian women marrying pagan men.

27. Brown, 1972, pp. 167, warns however against seeing too sharp a dichotomy between the court and the senatorial aristocracy.

28. Fowden, 1982, pp. 33-38: late paganism associated with philosophy, in particular Neoplatonism.

29. C.Th. 16.10.15.

30. Soz., H.E. 5.15.4ff.

31. Frend, 1976, p. 19; Lepelley, 1979, p. 348: paganism found particularly among the ruling classes of cities.

32. See above, p. 31.

33. Brown, 1978, ch. 3.

34. Fowden, 1982, pp. 33-59.

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P.L. Patrologiae Latinae, ed., J.-P. Migne, 1844-64, Paris

Abbreviations of primary sources used in notes appear in brackets.

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