

Jerome's polemic against Priscillian in his *Letter to Ctesiphon* (133, 4)*

In the fourth-century Priscillianism was the major heretical group in the Iberian Peninsula widely accused of embodying the teachings of the Gnostics and Manichaeans¹. Priscillian's asceticism and oratory skills won him many admirers and numerous opponents. The Priscillianist controversy ended tragically with his execution at the hands of the Emperor in 385/86².

Priscillian's opponents consistently charged him of both moral and doctrinal lapses. One of his critics was none other than Jerome who joined the concerted effort to extirpate the Priscillianists. The principal focus of this article is a letter

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1. A few examples are : AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus* 70, *CCSL* 46. *Aurelii Augustini Opera*, Pars XIII, 2. p. 333. PROSPER OF AQUITAINE, *Chronicum integrum pars secunda*, *MGH AA IX*, pp. 460 and 462 ; SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Chron.* II, 46, *CSEL* 1. pp. 99-100 ; Finally, ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, *Etymologiarum VIII*, *De haeresibus Christianorum*, 8, 5. 54 in *San Isidoro de Sevilla. Etimologías*. vol. 1 (Libros 1-X), edición bilingüe, (ed. J. OROZ RETA, et al), *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*, 433. Madrid, 1982, pp. 698-701. [Hereafter *San Isidoro de Sevilla*]. Noteworthy is Filastrius of Brescia, who alluded to the Priscillianists without referring to them specifically by name : *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 84, *CCSL* 9, pp. 253-254.

2. On the execution, W.H.C. FRENCH observed, «for the first time, a Christian had been condemned to death on what appeared to be a religious issue», in *The Rise of Christianity*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1984. p. 713 ; For Priscillian in general consult the groundbreaking study by H. CHADWICK, *Priscillian of Avila. The Occult and the charismatic in the early church*, Oxford, 1976 ; An enlightening recent study is by R. VAN DAM, «The heresy of Priscillian», chapter 5 in his book *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*, «The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 8», Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, pp. 88-114. For the most complete bibliography on Priscillian up to 1984 see A. FERREIRO, *The Visigoths in Gaul and Spain A.D. 418-711: A Bibliography*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1988. pp. 197-203, and J.E. LOPEZ PEREIRA, «Prisciliano de Avila y el Priscilianismo desde el siglo IV a nuestros días : Rutas bibliográficas», *Cuadernos Abulenses* 3 (1985), pp. 13-77.

that Jerome wrote to Ctesiphon, approximately in 415, or about three decades after Priscillian's execution. The letter in general has received limited commentary from modern researchers who oftentimes repeat in uncritical fashion what Jerome says about the moral and doctrinal errors of Priscillian³. Given Jerome's polemical style and tempestuous attitude are we wise to dismiss any possibility of exaggeration on his part? The letter, as a polemical document, indulges in a typological attack of Priscillianism, and as such raises questions about how accurately he portrays the sect. As David S. Wiesen reminds us about Jerome's literary style, «St. Jerome was uniquely suited by his learning as well as by his temperament to combine the inherited body of pagan satire with a new and vigorous Christian satiric spirit into a literary attack on the vices of society and of personal enemies⁴».

Jerome's attitude towards Priscillianists shifted from an ambiguous stance in his *De viris illustribus* which goes up to the year 393, to one of definite rejection in his *Letter to Ctesiphon*, written around 415. In the former work Jerome refused to outright condemn Priscillian nor even to link him to Gnosticism⁵. In the letter to Ctesiphon, as this study will confirm, Jerome linked Priscillianists not only to Gnosticism, but much more besides. I am not convinced that Jerome's change of mind was based on a better understanding of Priscillianism. It seems more plausible that Jerome joined at that latter date an already pervasive condemnation of Priscillian by the Church at large.

3. For critical discussions of the letter see M. J. RONDEAU, «D'une édition des "Lettres" de Saint Jérôme», *Revue des Études Latines* 42 (1964), pp. 166-184, especially pp. 180-181. P. DEVOS, «La date du voyage d'Égérie», *Analecta Bollandiana* 85 (1967), pp. 165-184, especially pp. 180-182; H. CHADWICK, *Priscillian of Avila*, pp. 37-38; V. BURRUS, *The making of a heresy. Authority, gender and the Priscillianist controversy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, July-1991, II-262 p., especially pp. 207-211. The author's treatment of the letter is couched within the broader goal of expounding the feminist issues surrounding the controversy with Priscillian. Also the preliminary foundation article by A. FERREIRO, «Sexual Depravity, Doctrinal Error, and Character Assassination in the Fourth Century: Jerome against the Priscillianists», *Studia Patristica* (in the press). Due to constraints imposed by the publisher I only focused upon the figures of Simon Magus and Nicolas of Antioch, which are undoubtedly to be viewed as foundational for the remainder of Jerome's exegesis in section four of the *Letter to Ctesiphon*. For the Latin edition consult *Epistula* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, pp. 247-248. In regard to Ctesiphon, J.N.D. Kelly observed: «We have no certain clue to Ctesiphon's identity, but Jerome's jibes at his 'religious illustrious house' where the 'heretic' holds forth, and at people who supply him with money, suggest that he was one of Pelagius's wealthy lay supporters (*Jerome: His life, writings and controversies*, New York: Harper and Row, 1975, p. 314). The author does not address Jerome's commentary on Priscillian at all in this work.

4. *St. Jerome as a Satirist: a study of Christian thought and letters*, Cornell University Press, 1964. pp. 6-7.

5. *De viris illustribus*, 121, in *Hieronym: De viris illustribus* (ed. W. HERDING) *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teuberiana* Leipzig, 1879, p. 162 = *PL* 23, c. 750. See D.G. HUNTER, «Resistance to the Virginal Ideal in Late Fourth-Century Rome: The Case of Jovinian», *Theological Studies* 48 (1987), pp. 56-60, especially at 57.

Jerome primarily discussed Pelagianism, not Priscillian, in the letter to Ctesiphon, and his remarks need to be considered within that broader dialogue. While Jerome refuted Pelagianism he directed Ctesiphon's attention to Priscillianism as an example of a sect that has likewise lapsed morally and doctrinally. Presumably whatever Jerome attributed to the Priscillianists he impugned upon the Pelagians as well⁶. Jerome's attack upon the moral/doctrinal errors of Priscillian revolved heavily on the 'types' of men and women that not only characterize the sect but all heretics in general. The typological heretical men and women Jerome associated with Priscillian represent the many 'faces' of heresy that Ctesiphon is warned to avoid.

Jerome focused his attack on Priscillianist women by interweaving key passages from Scripture. What emerges from his biblical exegesis is a devastating typological attack upon women. He singled out women led astray by Priscillian, and by all previous male heresiarchs. The first of the scriptural references is a combination of *Ephesians* 4: 14 and *2 Timothy* 3: 6-7 wherein emerges the image of weak women led astray by false male teachers. David Wiesen, however, reminds us that Jerome did not have only one view of women, anymore than he did of men⁷. Jerome's combined passages read: «silly women burdened with sins, carried about with every wind of doctrine, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth⁸». The women that Jerome paraded in the letter embody all of the characteristics and behavior unacceptable to the orthodox. They are arrogant and presumptuous women illegitimately seeking to abrogate the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jerome continued with a paraphrase of *2 Timothy* 4: 3, which he rephrased now to shift the focus upon 'vulnerable men' deceived by heretical women primarily because they are «men with itching ears who know neither how to hear nor how to speak⁹». As in the case of women Jerome only singled out men lured into spiritual deception. The male heretics represent individuals whose

6. V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, pp. 185-253.

7. *Ephesians* 4: 14 refers to "men" in non-gender specific fashion. Women are not singled-out as the main perpetrators of false doctrine. *2 Timothy* 3: 6-7 focuses upon "weakwilled" women, yet these passages are within a broader context. The verses preceding and following address males and females engaged in spiritual and carnal depravity. The section begins with the all inclusive "people", but it is men who violate, control, sway, and lead women astray. Once again, D. S. WIESEN notes that Jerome's most loyal supporters were women (*Jerome as a Satirist*, p. 164).

8. «Quid uolunt miserae mulierculae oneratae peccatis, quae circumferuntur omni uento doctrinae, semper discentes et nunquam ad scientiam ueritatis peruenientes», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 247.

9. «Et ceteri muliercularum socii, prurientes auribus et ignorantes quid audiant, quid loquantur, qui uetustissimum caenum, quasi nouam suscipiunt temperaturam», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 247. Scripture refers to men in gender free fashion, and Jerome departs from this sense to chastise specifically males. The 'hearing' and 'speaking' Jerome mentions was intended to convey the inability of heretics to hear the voice of Christ (See the *Gospel of John* 10. 4-5). Heretics do not hear the voice of Christ, neither do they speak his truth.

pride leads them to abuse the Word of God and lure spiritually weak people. All of them are tools of the Evil One intent on destroying the flock of God.

Jerome's biblical exegesis includes a reference from the Old Testament prophet *Ezekiel* 13: 10-16. 17. False prophets consciously mix old mire with a new form of [weak] cement to foster and whitewash falsehood. The passages in *Ezekiel* speak prophetically of a cleansing that God will send in the form of 'overflowing showers'; one that will tear down the edifice of falsehood. Jerome perceives his role, so it seems, as the prophet of God's cleansing power to bring down all of the errors brought together by Priscillian¹⁰.

Jerome closed the section on Priscillian with two scriptural references from the New and the Old Testaments, respectively. He quotes *2 Thessalonians* 2: 7 focusing on the warning 'Now also the mystery of iniquity is working'¹¹ alerting his readers that Satan and heretical teachers were alive and well in his own day as they had been in apostolic times. Here Jerome layed the culpability for spiritual error evenly at both men and women. Jerome, with prophetic condemnation, concluded with an admonition and quote from *Jeremiah* 17: 11. In his own words :

«Men and women in turn "lay snares for each other till we cannot but recall the prophet's words the partridge has cried aloud, she has gathered her young which she had not brought forth, she unrightfully gets riches ; in the midst of her days she shall forsake them, and in the end she shall be a fool"¹²»

Succinctly heretics are spiritually barren, abandoned, and in the end fools. The reference to *Jeremiah* served well his purpose to establish the deviancy of Priscillian and his followers, whom he charged of :

- (a) Spiritual kidnapping - 'quae non peperit'
- (b) Illegitimate riches - 'faciens divitias suas, non cum iudicio'
- (c) Not true devotion - 'In dimidio dierum derelinquet eas'

[Unlike Christ who promised never to abandon his sheep, *John* 10: 11-15].

- (d) Their fate is foolishness - 'et novissimum eius erit insipiens'

The scriptural references cited by Jerome set the tone for the remainder of the letter. The cardinal focus of Jerome's polemic against Priscillianism is the material couched between these scriptural references. Let us now turn our attention to the heart of Jerome's arguments, which he expounded in the form of a heresiarchical list.

10. *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 247.

11. «Nunc quoque mysterium iniquitatis operatur», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

12. «Duplex sexus utrumque supplantat, ut illud propheticum cogamur adsumere : clamavit perdix, congregavit quae non peperit, faciens diuitias suas non cum iudicio. in dimidio dierum derelinquit eum, et nouissimum eius erit insipiens», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

It is well known that some Church Fathers compiled lists of heretics intended for circulation in the Church¹³. I intend to investigate : Why Jerome singled out only a 'select few' of the heretics for his own list ? Of the heretics Jerome includes what deeper spiritual meaning do they signify, if at all, other than face value identification by the reader ? Lastly, how does each sect correspond to the actual charges against Priscillian as found in the major sources other than Jerome ? From Jerome's letter the following list of heretical men and women with accompanying accusations emerges:

Male	Female	Accusation
Simon Magus	Helena	A sect
Nicolas of Antioch	Bands of Women	uncleanness
Marcion	a woman (unidentified)	mindsnares
Apelles	Philumena	false doctrine
Montanus	Prisca / Maximilla	pervert churches
Arius	Constantia	lead world astray
Donatus	Lucilla	polluting baptism

Agape/Elpidius form the only exception where Jerome altered the gender of the list.

Agape	[Elpidius]	Spiritual blindness
Priscillian	Galla and her sister	Zoroaster/magic

The deeper meaning of each heretic, including their corresponding error, lies in the patristic sources from which Jerome carefully selected so as to develop a critique directed at both the Pelagian and Priscillianist sects¹⁴.

13. These are the major heresiarchic lists that I will make reference to in this study, along with a variety of other relevant sources : IRENAEUS OF LYON, *Contre les hérésies*, Livre 1. 2 (ed. A ROUSSEAU), *Sources Chrétiennes* (= SC), 264, Paris, 1979 ; CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Stromata* III, Cap. IV, *Die griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (= GCS) 2 band (ed. O. STÄHLIN), Leipzig, 1906, 1, pp. 207-208. HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, GCS 3 band (ed. P. WENDLAND), Leipzig, 1916. *Les Constitutions Apostoliques*, Tome II, Livres III-VI. (ed. M. METZGER), SC 329, Paris, 1986. FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, CCSL 9, pp. 227-ff. ; EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS, *Panarion haer.* (1-64), GCS, 2 band (ed. K. HOLLAND and J. DUMMER), Leipzig, 1915 and 1980. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, CCSL 46, pp. 283-358 ; VINCENT OF LÉRINS, *Commonitorium Excerpta*, CCSL 64, pp. 127-195. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, *Etymologiarum* VIII, *De haeresibus Christianorum*, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, pp. 692-702.

14. Jerome more than any other contemporary writer of Priscillian went beyond the Manichaeic-Gnostic association, although not everyone after him followed closely the arguments he brings forth in the letter. For example, AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 70, CCSL 46, p. 333. The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* identified a succession of all heretics from Simon Magus, 6. 8. 1, SC 329, pp. 314-317. Vincent of Lérins well after Jerome mentioned

Jerome began his list with a reference to Simon Magus, and for good reason. In all of the heretical lists Simon Magus consistently tops the list of Christian heresies and Irenaeus is the earliest source for this tradition¹⁵. The Church Fathers unanimously taught that Simon Magus is the ‘spiritual father’ of all heresy. Some sources such as Hippolytus’s *Refutation of all Heresies*, *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, and the *Commonitorium* of Vincent of Lérins explicitly teach that all subsequent heretics either spiritually derive indirectly from Simon or are his direct ‘successors’¹⁶. All of the heretics Jerome identified are understood to be pseudo-“spiritual successors” of Simon, and they all are spiritually embodied in Priscillian¹⁷. The position of both Simon and Priscillian at opposite ends of the list is not incidental. Simon and Priscillian appear as the Alpha and Omega of heresy, for all heresies ultimately are traceable to Simon. Jerome was quite conscious of the fact that in the New Testament it was the Apostle Peter that confronted, rebuked, and silenced Simon Magus¹⁸. Thus, Simon the “rock” crushed by his apostolic authority the other Simon, the ‘magician’, the anti-apostle who established a parallel pseudo-apostolic succession¹⁹. Again, the sources are clear on this encounter between Peter and

the succession, but Jerome provided in the letter the ‘specific heretical links’, between Simon and Priscillian, *Commonitorium*, *CCSL* 64, pp. 148-149, pp. 181 and 182.

15. IRENAEUS, *Contra haereses*, 1. 23. 1, *SC* 264, pp. 312-313. See A. LE BOULLUEC, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e-III^e siècles*, vol. 1 : *De Justin à Irénée*, Paris, 1985, pp. 481-483 and 558, for further discussion on the concept of heretical succession.

16. Hippolytus voiced a similar opinion : *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 6. 7, *GCS* 3, pp. 134-135. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, 6. 8. 1, *SC* 329, pp. 314-317, Eusebius of Caesarea had the same views : *HE*, 2. 13 (ed. G. BARDY), *SC* 31, pp. 66-68. [This edition reproduces the *GCS* text]. Pseudo-Tertullian called Simon Magus the “first” of all heretics : *Adversus omnes haereses. Tertulliani Opera*, pars II *opera Monastica*, *CCSL* 2. 2. p. 1401. VINCENT OF LÉRINS, *Commonitorium*, *CCLS* 64, p. 181.

17. The absence of specific language pointing to “succession” or “successors” of Simon Magus is readily evident in many early works on heresy, notably those by : IRENAEUS, *Contra haereses*, 1. 23. 2, *SC* 264, pp. 314-315, comes very close by saying that all heresies are “derived” from Simon Magus ; FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 29, *CCSL* 9, p. 228. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 1, *CCLS* 46, p. 290 ; They all gave Simon heretical primacy by positioning him first on their list of Christian heresies. Epiphanius of Salamis in the *Panarion* offers a more extensive dialogue on Simon and he used explicit language, but one that is still shy of the language that we find in the *Constitutions* or in Vincent of Lérins. Epiphanius said of Simon, «Simon Magus’s makes the first sect to begin in the time since Christ», *Panarion haer.* 21, 1. 1, *GCS* 1, p. 238. The only ‘succession’ in Epiphanius is in regard to the Gnostics.

18. *Acts of the Apostles* 8. 9-25. The Simon Magus tradition in the *Apocryphal New Testament* has its own separate development which does not contribute directly to the pseudo-apostolic succession that we are pursuing in this portion of the article. I am, however, currently working on a booklength monograph on the figure of Simon Magus from the Early Church to the Reformation.

19. The idea of pseudo-apostolic succession is implicit in the heretical lists, particularly the early ones. The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, voiced the precise language that

Simon, notably Eusebius of Caesarea ; and in Priscillian we find, spiritually speaking, an enemy of the apostles - and no less than the Apostle Peter - the one chosen by Christ to build his Church. Jerome in one stroke condemned Priscillian and advanced Petrine supremacy²⁰. That Priscillian was considered by some to be the conglomeration of all previous heresies, thrown together, so to speak, is attested in a letter that Pope Leo I wrote against the Priscillianists²¹. In the preface to his lengthy critique of Priscillianism, the pope expressed his anguish over a heresy which combined the error of all previous heretical teaching. He warned : «Indeed, if all the heresies which have arisen before the time of Priscillian were to be considered diligently, hardly any error will be found by which this impiety has not been infected²²».

Simon Magus is also accused of being intimate with a woman named Helena, who was his co-partner in propagating perverse doctrines²³. Priscillian was likewise accused first of leading women astray into doctrinal error, and second of cavorting with these women in orgiastic fashion²⁴. The patristic reference to

Jerome infused into his own list, see 6. 9. 6, *SC* 329, pp. 320-321. Consult A. LE BOULLUEC, *La notion d'hérésie* cited above in note 15.

20. Most of the sources remain true to the account in the *Acts of the Apostles*, but Eusebius used expressions like no other to describe the confrontation between Simon Peter and Simon Magus, for example, where he speaks of Simon and his followers negatively : *HE*, 2. 1. 10-12, *SC* 31, p. 51. Eusebius devoted chapter 13 to the origins of Simon, then, in chapter 14 he turned to Peter's ministry at Rome. Simon is considered the most formidable enemy of the Apostles : *HE*, 2. 13. 1 and 2. 14. 1, *SC* 31, p. 66-67 and 68, respectively. Finally Eusebius depicted Peter as the greatest of all Apostles who vanquished Simon Magus ; see *HE*, 2. 14, *SC* 31, pp. 68-70. For a partial discussion of Simon Magus and Eusebius, see B. PEARSON, «Eusebius and Gnosticism», in *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism* (H.W. ATTRIDGE and G. HATA, eds.), *Studia Post Biblica*, 42, E.J. Brill, 1992, pp. 291-310.

21. In the letter Pope Leo I did not spare colorful graphic language to expose the depravity of the Priscillianists, *Ep. 15, praef., PL* 54, c. 678-679.

22. «Denique si universae haereses quae ante Priscilliani tempus exortae sunt diligentius retractentur, nullus pene invenietur error de quo non traxerit impietas ista contagium : quae non contenta eorum recipere falsitates qui ab Evangelio sub Christi nomine deviarunt, tenebris se etiam paganitatis immersit, ut per magicarum artium profana secreta et mathematicorum vana mendacia, religionis fidem morumque rationem in potestate daemonum, et in effectu siderum collocarent». (*Ep. 15, praef., PL* 54, c. 679).

23. JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apologia* 1. 26. *Florilegium Patristicum* (ed. G. RAUSCHEN), Bonnæ 1904, pp. 39-42. IRENAEUS, *Contra haereses*, 1. 23. 2-4, *SC* 264, pp. 314-321. TERTULLIAN, *De anima*, 34, *CSEL* 20, pp. 358-360 ; HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 6. 19-20, *GCS* 3, pp. 145-148. EUSEBIUS OF CAESARIA, *HE*, 2. 13, *SC* 31, pp. 66-68. FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 29, *CCSL* 9, p. 229 ; EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion haer.* 21, 2. 2-3. 6, *GCS* 1, pp. 239-242.

24. Sulpicius Severus reported the sexual deviancy of Priscillian : «Inde iter coeptum ingressi, turpi sane pudibundoque comitatu, cun uxoris atque alienis etiam feminis, in quis erat Euchrotia ac filia eius Procula de qua fuit in sermone hominum Priscilliani stupro gravidam partum sibi gramini abegisse», *Chron.* II, 48, *CSEL* 1, p. 101, and in 50, p. 103 ; Jerome elsewhere echoed this behavior : «soli cum solis clauduntur mulierculis et illud eis inter coitum amplexusque», *Ep.* 133. 3, *CSEL* 56, p. 245 ; Pope Leo I chastised the

Helena brought a deeper moral dimension to Jerome's commentary on Simon Magus. Jerome referred to Helena as a 'harlot', an insulting remark that invoked the sexual improprieties that accompany such an accusation. Irenaeus portrayed Helena as a woman created by the mind of Simon, and he seemed to have meant this quite literally. He also states that both were worshipped by their followers as Jupiter and Minerva, respectively²⁵. Additionally, those who followed them built statues in their honor, and they made liberal use of love potions on each other, presumably to engage in illicit sexual activities²⁶. Patristic writers were able to embody in Helena the sex, magic, and idolatry repeatedly associated later with the Priscillianists. Jerome never entertained the possibility that Helena, who accompanied Simon Magus, was initiating or participating in a "female succession" of heretics. The doctrine of apostolic succession, even in its pseudo-heretical form, is definitely confined to males. Helen although a culprit along with Simon Magus is perceived as dependent on him.

Jerome remained faithful to the patristic tradition in regard to Nicolas's strict succession from Simon Magus, but he shifted to the moral realm rather than doctrinal error only. Jerome did not ignore the moral dimension in Simon but his attention there was more on Simon as originator of doctrinal error. With

immorality of the Priscillianists, too : «Videbant enim omnem curam honestatis auferri, omnem conjugiorum copulam solvi, simulque divinum jus humanumque subverti», *PL* 54, c. 679-680. Also his remarks in 54, c. 683-684, 689 and 691. Finally, the Council of Braga (561) made the same accusations in canons 11 and 15, in *Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos*, José VIVES (ed. et al), Barcelona-Madrid, 1963. pp. 68-69 [Hereafter *Concilios Visigóticos*].

25. *Contra haereses*, 1. 23. 4, *SC* 264, pp. 318-319. The most significant research on Simon Magus and Helena is : H. WAITZ, «Simon Magus in der altchristlichen Literatur», *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums* 5 (1904), pp. 138-140 ; L. H. VINCENT, «Le culte d'Hélène à Samarie», *Revue Biblique* 45 (1936), pp. 221-232, with plates of statuary ; G. QUISPÉL, «Simon en Helena», *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 5 (1951), pp. 339-345 ; L. CERFAUX, «Simon le Magicien à Samarie», *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 27 (1937), pp. 615-617 = reprinted in *Recueil L. Cerfaux*, Ed. J. DUCULOT & GEMBLoux, 1954, pp. 259-262 ; G. ORY, «Le mythe Samaritain d'Hélène», *Cahiers du Cercle Ernest Renan* 3, 12 (1956), pp. 1-32 ; There are scattered references to Helena in J.M.A. SALLES-DABADIE, *Recherches sur Simon le Mage*. 1, *L'Apophysis megalè*, Cahiers de la Revue Biblique, 10, Paris, 1969 ; One of the most thorough treatments is by K. BEYSCHLAG, *Simon Magus und die Christliche Gnosis*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 16, Tübingen, 1974 ; G. LÜDEMANN, *Untersuchungen zur simonianischen Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1974, pp. 55-65. K. RUDOLPH, «Simon Magus oder Gnosticus ?», *Theologische Rundschau* 42 (1977), pp. 328-351 ; R. BERGMEIER, «Die Gestalt des Simon Magus in Act 8 und in der simonianischen Gnosis-Aporien einer Gesamtdeutung», *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Älteren Kirche*, 77 (1986), pp. 273-275 ; J. FOSSUM, «The Simonian Sophia Myth», *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle religioni*, *L'Aquila* 11 (1987), pp. 185-197. All of these studies provide extensive references to the sources and pertinent secondary literature.

26. *Contra haereses*, 1. 23.4, *SC*, 264, pp. 318-319. See also HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 6. 19-20, *GCS* 3, pp. 145-148, and for a summary of Simon's doctrines, p. 143.

Nicolas, Jerome did not bypass the doctrinal concerns altogether, yet it is abundantly clear that Nicolas embodies a "type" of all future moral heretics and that is why he called Nicolas the "deviser of all uncleanness²⁷". As Simon is the font of doctrinal error, Nicolas is the wellspring of immorality. Jerome associated immoral behavior amongst the heretics every bit as much as doctrinal error.

The patristic commentary on Nicolas brings to the surface what Jerome wished to convey to Ctesiphon. Irenaeus established the tradition that Nicolas was one of seven deacons appointed by the apostles at Jerusalem²⁸. In his *Against Heresies* he accused Nicolas and his followers of leading lives, "of unrestrained indulgence", which also included idolatry²⁹. According to Irenaeus, the *Apocalypse* of John singled out Nicolas and the Nicolaitans for their immorality. Clement of Alexandria is less sure whether Nicolas actually founded the sect of the Nicolaitans³⁰. Clement reports an incident, which he doubts to be true, and it is apparently the source of all of the negative rumors about Nicolas³¹. Nicolas allegedly brought his wife to the apostles, to whom he offered her up in marriage and encouraged her to "abuse the flesh", which Clement understood to mean Nicolas's renunciation of his own passions. Clement continued by pointing out that Nicolas never married again, his daughters remained virgins, and that even his son remained chaste³². In the latter tradition, Isidore of Seville in the *Etymologies* opted for the morally lapsed view

27. «Nicolaus Antiochenus, omnium inmunditiarum repertor, choros duxit femineos», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

28. IRENAEUS, *Contra haereses*, 1. 26. 3, *SC* 264, pp. 348-349. PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, *Adversus omnes haereses*, *CCSL* 2. 2, pp. 1402-1403.

29. *Contra haereses*, 1. 26. 3, *SC* 264, pp. 348-349.

30. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Strom.*, 3, 4, *GCS* 1, pp. 207-208. *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, likewise cast doubt over the connection between Nicolas and the Nicolaitans, 6. 8. 2, *SC* 329, pp. 316-317. Epiphanius did not question this tradition, *Panarion haer.* 25, *GCS*, 1, pp. 267-274. In the latter tradition Nicolas is credited with the foundation of the sect, for example, Filastrius of Brescia seems to have adopted a neutral position - whether by intent is difficult to ascertain -, since he focused only on the 'person' rather than the 'sect'. *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 33, *CCSL* 9, p. 231. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 5, *CCSL* 46, p. 291. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE followed the Augustinian tradition faithfully in Spain : *Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum*, 8. 5. 5, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, pp. 693-695. On the Nicolaitans see P. PRIGENT, «L'hérésie asiatic et l'église confessante de l'Apocalypse à Ignace», *Vigiliae Christianae* 31 (1977), pp. 1-22, especially pp. 10-22. Also his more comprehensive *L'Apocalypse de Jean. Commentaire du Nouveau Testament*, sér. II, 14, Genève, Labor et Fides, 1988.

31. *Strom.*, 3, 4, *GCS* 1, pp. 207-208.

32. *Strom.*, 3, 4, *GCS* 1, pp. 207-208. See also EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, *HE*, 3. 29. 1-4, *SC* 31, pp. 139-140. EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS, *Panarion haer.* 25, *GCS* 1, pp. 267-274. Some convey only that Nicolas had been a deacon, chosen by the Apostles, and who subsequently fell into doctrinal error. For example, see HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 7. 36, *GCS* 3, pp. 222-223. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, 6. 8. 2, *SC*, 329, pp. 316-317. FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, *CCSL* 9, pp. 231-232. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 5, *CCSL* 46, p. 291-292.

of Nicolas. Isidore repeated his appointment by Peter as deacon in Jerusalem, and he uncritically cited the doubtful story that Nicolas gave up his wife to be seduced by the apostles³³.

Jerome chose to ignore Clement and embrace the Irenaeus tradition in which Nicolas was reprimanded for perverted sexual behavior. Priscillian was, then, the spiritual descendent of Simon in doctrinal error and of Nicolas in immorality. If one accepts Irenaeus's account, as with Simon, Nicolas was confronted, repudiated, and cast out by one of the most prominent apostles, John the beloved of Christ. With this line of reasoning the Priscillianists, as all heretics, are opposed to apostolic teaching and morality.

Jerome associated Nicolas with the companionship of "bands of women", a view that ignored a good portion of patristic writers, notably Clement but again borrowing heavily from Irenaeus³⁴. This view of Nicolas cavorting with numerous women is consistent with the alleged behavior associated with Priscillian, especially in Sulpicius Severus and Pope Leo I³⁵. Sulpicius singled out specific women supposedly sexually involved with Priscillian, such as Procula, who allegedly became pregnant and had an abortion³⁶. In other places, Priscillian is depicted participating in sexual orgies and nude liturgical services. These allegations are echoes of the somewhat obscure Adamite sect frequently mentioned in some heretical lists³⁷. Such rumors seem to have been behind the conciliar prohibition at the Council of Zaragoza (380) that women should stay away from other men [Priscillianists]³⁸. At the outset Jerome established the two

33. *Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum* 8. 5. 5, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, p. 694. The bishop of Seville closed his observations with the Apostle John's condemnation of Nicolas, a clear scriptural reference to the Nicolaitans in the Apocalypse. *Ibid*, «Quos Iohannes in *Apocalypsi* inprobat dicent (2. 6) : 'Sed hoc habes quod odisti facta Nicolaitarum'».

34. *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

35. See note 27 above.

36. «Cum uxoribus atque alienis etiam feminis, in quis erat Euchrotia ac filia eius Procula, de qua fuit in sermone hominum Priscilliani stupro grauidam partum sibi graminiibus abegisse», Sulpicius Severus, *Chron.* II, 48, *CSEL* 1, p. 101. See note 24 above.

37. Sulpicius referred to nude prayer services, *Chron.* II, 50, *CSEL* 1. p. 103. Jerome specifically mentioned this practice. *Ep.* 133. 3, *CSEL* 56, p. 245. What is readily evident from this study is the fact that most heretical sects were accused of nudity, sexual liberties, and other related practices. Augustine included the Adamites in his list, *De haeresibus*, 31, *CSSL* 46, pp. 304-305.

38. «Ut mulieres omnes ecclesiae catholicae et fideles a vivorum alienorum lectione et coetibus separentur, vel ad ipsas legentes aliae studio vel docendi vel discendi conveniant, quoniam hoc Apostolus iubet. Ab universis episcopis dictum est : Anathema futuros qui hanc concilii sententiam non observaverint», canon 1, *Concilios Visigóticos*, p. 16. The most thorough treatment of the Council of Zaragoza is the collection of essays in *I Concilio Caesaraugustano. MDC Aniversario*, Zaragoza, 25-27 de septiembre de 1980, Zaragoza, 1980. In the same volume, see specifically the essay by J.M. BLÁZQUEZ, «Prisciliano, introductor del ascetismo en Hispania. Las fuentes. Estudio de la investigación moderna», pp. 65-121. See also F. BOLGIANI, «La polemica di Clemente Alessandrino contra gli gnostici

major foundations upon which the remaining heresiarchical structure rests, and he found his pillars in the men Simon/Nicolas, and the women Helena/Bands of Women.

Jerome accused Marcion and an unidentified woman of collaborating together to deceive men, particularly at Rome³⁹. Marcion certainly represents more than a male who cavorted with questionable women, for he was better known for his role in the debates over the Canon of the New Testament, and its relationship with the Old Testament.

Irenaeus mentioned Marcion, within the context of other heretics, whom he also accused of being disciples and successors of Simon Magus. Concerning any immoral behavior with women, or of employing female emissaries, he is completely silent⁴⁰. The Pseudo-Tertullian reported that Marcion was "excommunicated because of a rape committed on a certain virgin⁴¹". Jerome's belief that Marcion sent a woman to Rome to deceive men is equally isolated and is not corroborated by any previous or contemporary writers. In this manner Jerome was able to maintain both the male heretical successions and the parallel list of female "followers". The male line with Marcion is based firmly on a well established growing tradition ; whereas the female line is more the imagination of Jerome, and one that certainly modified the story of the virgin related by Pseudo-Tertullian. I believe that Jerome's reference to Rome is an allusion to St. Peter, symbolically pitting Marcion against the "Chief of the Apostles⁴²".

There is more, typologically speaking, to consider about Marcion and for what he was best known, the debate over the Canon of Scripture. According to the tradition, Marcion had rejected the Old Testament as inconsistent with the spirit and message of the New Testament ; furthermore his selection of the latter testament was to be found within an even narrower corpus of gospels and epistles. As far as Jerome was concerned the question of the Canon was a closed topic settled by the Church in earlier times. The case of Priscillian is an example

libertini nel III libro degli Stromati», in *Studi in onore di A. Pincherle. Studi e Materiali di storia delle religioni*, 38, 2 vols., Roma, 1967, pp. 86-136.

39. «Marcion Romam praemisit mulierem, quae deceptarum sibi animos praepararet», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. See also A. SALLES, «Simon le Magicien ou Marcion ?», *Vigiliae Christianae* 12, 4 (1958), pp. 197-224.

40. IRENAEUS, *Contra haereses*, 1. 27. 1-4, *SC* 264, pp. 348-355. The same is true of the testimony found in Hippolytus and Eusebius who did not intimate that Marcion had misbehaved with any women. HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 10. 19, *GCS* 3, pp. 279-280. EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, *HE*, 4. 11. 8-10, *SC* 31, pp. 175-176. Filastrius of Brescia, Augustine, and Isidore of Seville likewise did not connect Marcion with any female followers. FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 44, *CCSL* 9, p. 236. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 22, *CCSL* 46, pp. 299-300. *Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum*, 8. 5. 21, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, p. 695.

41. PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, *Adversus omnes haereses*, *CCSL* 2. 2, p. 1408.

42. *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. A tantalizing element in Irenaeus and Eusebius is the specific inclusion of Rome and the papacy in their entries on Marcion. In Irenaeus, Cerdo and Marcion are treated together : *Contra haereses* 1. 27. 1-4, *SC*, 264, pp. 348-355. Eusebius quoted Irenaeus on these matters as his chief source : *HE*, 4. 11, *SC* 31, pp. 173-176.

that for some the Canon was still a matter of discussion, and a dialogue filled with controversy. Jerome spoke for what was rapidly emerging as the consensus Catholic view of the Canon, whereas Priscillian - as Jerome saw him - was the symbolic Marcionite vestige who would violate the Scripture as found in both testaments. There is a consistent litany of charges levelled against Priscillian for his use of apocryphal or non-canonical books⁴³. The reference to apocryphal works seems to point to Priscillian's own writings and Gnostic gospels and epistles. The First Council of Braga (561) whose primary agenda was to deal with an apparently strong persistent Priscillianism in Galicia, referred to these books :

«It is not proper to recite in church psalms composed by laymen nor to read books that are outside the canonical books of the New and Old Testament⁴⁴».

The subject of the Canon was continued with vigor by Jerome in the section on Apelles and the prophetess Philumena, about whom he says, "Apelles possessed in Philumena a companion in his doctrines⁴⁵". The parallel with Jerome's earlier comments about Simon and Helena is striking.

43. Irenaeus singled out this issue, too, *Contra haereses*, 1. 27. 2, SC 264, pp. 350-351. Filastrius of Brescia also commented on Marcion's canonical preferences : *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 44, CCSL 9, p. 236. Also relevant is his entry, 88, pp. 255-256. Some of the testimony includes Pope Leo I, in an indirect reference to tampering with the holy books, «per ipsos doctrinae Priscillianae Evangelium subditur Christi, ut ad profanos sensus pietate sanctorum voluminum depravat, sub nominibus prophetarum et apostolorum non hoc praedicetur quod Spiritus sanctus docuit, sed quod diaboli minister inseruit», *Ep. 15, praef.*, PL 54, c. 680, see also c. 687-688. Augustine devoted an entire letter to this topic : *Ep. 237*, CSEL 57, pp. 526-532 ; and *De haeresibus*, 70, CCSL 46, pp. 333-334. There are other references in VINCENT OF LÉRINS, *Commonitorium*, CCSL 64, p. 182. More explicitly at the First Council of Toledo (400) : «Et cum accepisset chartulam, de scripto recitavit: Omnes libros haereticos, et maxime Priscilliani doctrinam, iuxta quod hodie lectum est», and in the same council, «nullis libris apocryphis aut novis scientiis, quas Priscillianus composuerat involutum... quaecumque contra fidem catholicam Priscillianus scripserat cum ipso auctore damnassee», *Concilios Visigóticos*, pp. 29, 30-31 and 33, also the First Council of Braga (561), *Concilios Visigóticos*, pp. 69, 73. Jerome addressed the use of extra-biblical sources and the writing of books by the Priscillianists in several works, and in some cases indirectly, such as, his *Commentariorum in Esaiam. Libri XII-XVIII*, CCSL 73A. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, Pars 1, 2 A, p. 735. Another indirect citation is in *Praefatio S. Hieronymi in Pentateuchum*, PL 28, c. 180-181. Also, but more directly, in *De viris illustribus*, 121, 122, 123, (ed. W. HERDING), pp. 62-63, = PL 23, c. 750-751. See the edition by R. BRAUN, *Contre Marcion*, 2 t., SC 365, 368, Paris, 1990, 1991.

44. Canon 12, p. 73, note in the same council, canon 17 which was directed at Priscillian : «Si quis scribaturas, quas Priscillianus secundum suum depravarit errorem vel tractatos Dictinii quos ipse Dictinius antequam converteretur...», *Concilios Visigóticos*, p. 69.

45. «Apelles Philumenem suarum comitem habuit doctrinarum» : *Ep. 133. 4*, CSEL 56, p. 248. A rather startling gap in the testimony on this sect is the absence of Philumena, for example : FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 47, CCSL 9, p. 237 ; EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion haer.* 44, GCS 2, pp. 189-199 ; AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 23, CCSL 46, p. 300 and ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, *Etymologiarum VIII* ; *De haeresibus Christianorum*, 8. 5. 12, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, p. 695.

Tertullian in several works directed his attention to Apelles and Philumena. Firstly, he established the heretical lineage, that Jerome found useful in his polemic. Tertullian in his *On Prescription Against Heretics* taught that Apelles had been a disciple of Marcion, but that Apelles forsook continence ; thus precipitating a schism between them, a story he repeated in the *On the Flesh of Christ*⁴⁶. In the former work Tertullian identified the woman as being from Alexandria, and in both works he says that Apelles forsook her in order to take up an affair with Philumena, whom he colorfully calls “an enormous prostitute”, and in either case both were illicit unions⁴⁷. It is rather surprising in view of what the Pseudo-Tertullian *Against All Heresies* said about Marcion earlier that he appears as more sexually continent than Apelles. The Pseudo-Tertullian was not consistent here, although most of the remaining sources do repeat the continence of Marcion⁴⁸. It is also here that we are introduced to the spiritual dimension of this heresy. Pseudo-Tertullian, after alerting the readers to the carnality of these heretics, continued to call Philumena a prophetess that apparently seduced Apelles⁴⁹. Jerome who was well acquainted with this commentary helped Ctesiphon make the spiritual associations between them and the Priscillianists.

Hippolytus elaborated the spiritual dimension of Apelles and Philumena in his work *Refutation of all Heresies*. Apelles «devotes himself to the discourses of a certain Philumena as to the revelations of a prophetess, and to a book which he calls *Revelations*⁵⁰». The reference to a prophetess and a book called *Revelations* is clearly an issue directly related to the question of Canon. Again, as far as Jerome was concerned there were no other books outside of the Vulgate Canon that could be legitimately called upon as authoritative, much less apostolic. Add to all of these concerns the woman, Philumena, the “enormous prostitute” (as Tertullian called her), the mediatrix of these prophecies. Jerome had about as tight a case against this heresy as any orthodox zealot could ever wish for, and the connections he made with Priscillian require little imagination on our part.

The moral impropriety of Apelles and Philumena, along with the prominent role of the latter, are similar to practices associated with Priscillian. The question of the Canon in relation to Philumena's book of *Revelations* is

46. *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 30, CSEL 70, p. 37 in the same work, 33, pp. 41-42 ; also his, *De carne Christi* 6, CSEL 70, p. 203 in the same work chapter 8, pp. 212-214. See also, J.P. MAHÉ, *La chair du Christ*, 2 t., SC 216, 217, Paris, 1975. Tertullian referred to Apelles and Philumena in *Adversus Marcionem, Tertulliani Opera, pars* 1, 3, 11. and 4, 17, CCSL 1, pp. 521-523 and 585-588. And, *De anima*, 23 and 26, CSEL 20, pp. 335-336 ; 362-363.

47. «Postea vero immane prostibulum et ipsam» : *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 30, CSEL 70, p. 37. Eusebius adds little to the previous commentary in general, but he too did not spare negative language concerning Philumena : *HE*, 5. 13. 2, SC 41, pp. 42-43.

48. See note 40 above.

49. PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, *Adversus omnes haereses*, CCSL 2. 2, p. 1409.

50. HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 7. 38, GCS 3, p. 224 and 10. 20, GCS 3, pp. 280-281.

certainly reflected in the apocryphal books associated with Priscillian. Jerome also maintained the succession of heretics since it was widely believed that Apelles had been a disciple of Marcion. Jerome did depart from the patristic commentary in how he depicted the relationship between Apelles and Philumena. Jerome spoke of Philumena as an “associate” of Apelles, whereas, in Hippolytus, Apelles is virtually led and spellbound by Philumena⁵¹. The relationship Jerome espoused was especially consistent with the Priscillian tradition regarding the woman Agape as we shall see below. Priscillian is spoken of as both leading astray or being swayed by women, but he is most frequently portrayed as the “man” in charge⁵². Jerome obviously desired to maintain at this juncture a line of male heretics assisted by women who propagate the message of their male teachers.

In Montanus Jerome arrived at the end of what he called “ancient history”, and in numerous ways he continued to challenge the question of extra-biblical revelation as before with Marcion and Apelles. Jerome singled out both spiritual and moral lapses, calling Montanus “that mouthpiece of an unclean spirit”, who was also guilty of leading astray “two wealthy and high born ladies, Prisca and Maximilla⁵³”. Montanus allegedly used the two women to bribe and sexually pervert many churches⁵⁴. In summary, Jerome alerted his readers that the Montanists gave women a prominent role, claimed to have additional messages from God, and much more besides.

As with Apelles and Philumena, the primary practice of the Montanists that Jerome focused upon was their self-proclaimed belief that God spoke to them directly as he had done with the apostles. Tertullian in *A Treatise on the Soul* reported that a Montanist woman claimed to receive visions, to talk to angels - even Jesus himself - and to be able to discern people’s hearts⁵⁵. Hippolytus taught that Montanists preached a message which they believed superceded that given by Christ⁵⁶. Apollonius in *Concerning Montanism* accused Montanist women of leaving their husbands, taking gifts and money, lending on interest ;

51. Jerome used “comitem habuit” to describe their relationship, such an association is certainly not reflected in most of the sources, *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

52. Especially in the *Chronicon* of Sulpicius Severus : «Is ubi doctrinam exitiabilem aggressus est, multos nobilium pluresque populares auctoritate persuadendi et arte blandiendi allucit in societatem. ad hoc mulieres nouarum rerum cupidae, fluxa fide et ad omnia curioso ingenio, cateruatim ad eum confluebant» (*Chron.* II, 46, *CSEL* 1, pp. 99-100).

53. «Montanus, inmundi spiritus praedicator, multas ecclesias per Priscam et Maximillam, nobiles et opulentas feminas, primum auro corruptit ; dein heresi polluit. dimittam uetera, ad uiciniora transcendam», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus* 26 and 27, *CCSL* 46, pp. 302-303.

54. In Sulpicius the charge of bribery is singled out as yet another of the moral lapses of the Priscillianists. Some examples in the *Chronicon* are 48 and 49, *CSEL* 1, pp. 101-103.

55. *De anima*, 9, *CSEL* 20, p. 310.

56. HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 8. 19, *GCS* 3, p. 238. Also, EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion haer.* 4. 8, *GCS* 2, p. 219-241.

and if that were not enough, a weakness for expensive clothes, jewelry, including an appetite for gambling⁵⁷.

Jerome revealed some of his views on the Montanists in *Letter 41*, wherein he targeted the prophetic-revelation message of this sect. He commenced with a reference to the "Day of Pentecost" as a unique event that in itself was a fulfilled final event⁵⁸. Apparently, if we are to believe Jerome, the Montanists claimed a somewhat similar outpouring of the Spirit, which *de facto* made their message equal to the apostles, if not superior⁵⁹. The True Church, continued Jerome, was inaugurated at Pentecost, and it is from those apostles *only* that legitimate successors proceed. Jerome qualified his previous statements, where he affirmed that he did not oppose prophecy, only that type which claimed to supercede the revelation of Scripture⁶⁰. He fully agreed with previous commentators who attacked the Montanist claim of an exclusive fullness of apostolic knowledge not possessed or received by anyone else.

The parallels that Jerome desired to make between the Montanists and Priscillianists seemed to be the following. Earlier in section three of *Letter 133* Jerome said Priscillianists «are rash enough to claim for themselves the twofold credit of perfection and wisdom⁶¹». When Priscillian was blamed for leading women astray, these were usually socially high born and wealthy, like Prisca and Maximilla. Sulpicius Severus similarly attributed to the Priscillianists bribery and other forms of irresponsible uses of money to buy influence and power⁶². The 'unclean spirit' that spoke through Montanus was Jerome's way of establishing the satanic origins of both Montanists and Priscillianists.

The prominent role of women in both sects is all too obvious. Equally significant was the widely held tradition that Montanus and Maximilla committed suicide and died a tragic death, as all heretics, figuratively speaking, ultimately do. In both incidents the heretics met death and Jerome's statement that Priscillian was «condemned by the whole world and put to death by the

57. EUSEBIUS, *HE*, 5. 18. 3-4, *SC* 41, p. 56. Consult, Asterius Urbanus in EUSEBIUS, *HE*, 5. 16-17, *SC* 41, pp. 46-54.

58. *Ep.* 41, 1, *CSEL* 54, pp. 311-312.

59. Hippolytus shared this opinion, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 8. 19, *GCS* 3, pp. 238. FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber.* 49, *CCSL* 9. p. 238. There is a rich tradition on the biblical exegesis of 'Babel and Pentecost' see my «Linguarum diversitate : 'Babel and Pentecost' in Leander's homily at the Third Council of Toledo», *Actas del XIV Centenario del Concilio III de Toledo 589-1989*, Toledo 10-14, May, 1989. Toledo 1991 pp. 237-248. JEROME, *Ep.* 41, 1, *CSEL* 54, pp. 311-312.

60. JEROME, *Ep.* 41, 1, *CSEL* 54, p. 312. Augustine repeated with no innovation the corpus of earlier writers, *De haeresibus*, 26 and 27, *CCSL* 46. pp. 302-303. Isidore of Seville referred to the alleged Montanist belief that they possessed a superior revelation, *Etymologiarum* VIII, *De haeresibus Christianorum* 8. 5. 27, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, p. 696.

61. «uerbum perfectionis, et scientiae sibi temere uindicantes», *Ep.* 133. 3, *CSEL* 56, p. 245.

62. See note 54 above.

secular sword» should be interpreted within this framework⁶³. And from this point onward Jerome turned his attention to heretical groups that flourished in his own words, “to times nearer to our own”, and so he set his sights upon Arius⁶⁴.

Arianism in Jerome’s day was a heresy that still raged in the East and one contemporaneous with Priscillianism. Jerome blamed Arius for leading the world astray, and also for “beguiling the Emperor’s sister⁶⁵”. This sister was Constantia, who exemplified yet another “high born woman”, led astray by a heretic. Briefly told, Constantia was deceived by a presbyter in the royal palace, who was, in a sense, a “closet” Arian, one who believed that Arius had been misrepresented and unjustly condemned at Nicaea. It seems the presbyter persuaded Constantia of Arius’ innocence, then she in turn made efforts to convince her brother, the Emperor, to reconsider Arius’ condemnation⁶⁶.

Jerome was intent on associating Priscillian with the Arian heresy especially its Trinitarian theology. It was exceedingly desirable, if not crucial, for Jerome to establish a “heretical” link between Priscillian and Arianism, the most explosive theological heresy of the fourth century⁶⁷. Jerome’s direct association of Arius with Priscillian is unique since the major contemporary sources, notably Sulpicius Severus and the Council of Zaragoza (380), do not specifically call Priscillian an Arian.

Such Arian associations were creatively made in the latter sources, such as, the First Council of Braga (561) and the letter of Pope Leo I⁶⁸. At the First Council of Braga Arius is not specifically mentioned by name in relation to Priscillian, but such an omission is not insurmountable. The initial four canons that condemn Priscillian address his Trinitarian doctrine, and if what they relate is accurate, they are without question Arian views⁶⁹. I have noted elsewhere that Arianism, which had been pervasive in Galicia prior to the council, is not mentioned specifically in the least. The bishops, as I have argued, believed that Arianism was dead, at least officially, since the Suevic monarchy no longer

63. See EUSEBIUS OF CAESARIA, *HE* 5.16. 13, *SC* 41, p. 50.

64. *Dimittam uetera, ad uiciniora transcendam*, *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

65. *Arius, ut orbem caperet, sororem principis ante decepit*, *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

66. See, SOZOMEN, *HE*, 2. 27, *SC* 306 (trans. André-Jean FESTUGIÈRE) Paris, 1983. pp. 348-355. The editor notes that Sozomen is following both Rufinus (*HE* 1 (x), 12) and Socrates Scholasticus (*HE* 1, 25), p. 349. Constantia is not mentioned in FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA *Diversarum hereseon liber* 66, *CCSL* 9, p. 244. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus*, 49, *CCSL* 46, pp. 320-321. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, *Etymologiarum* VIII, *De haeresibus Christianorum* 8. 5. 43, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, p. 698.

67. The literature on Arianism is extensive. For an introduction in a broader context and with detailed current bibliography see, W.H.C. FRIEND, *The Rise of Christianity*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1984. Consult R.P.C. HANSON, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy 318-381*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1988, pp. 516-530.

68. Pope Leo I, *Ep.* 15, *PL* 54, c. 678-695. First Council of Braga (561), *Concilios Visigóticos*, pp. 65-77.

69. First Council of Braga (561), *Concilios Visigóticos*, pp. 67-68.

claimed to be followers of Arianism⁷⁰. In Galicia bolder claims for the eradication of heresy, both Arian and Priscillianist, were announced at the Second Council of Braga of 572. In the opening speech it was declared «through the help of Christ's grace there is no doubt about the unity and orthodoxy of the faith in this province⁷¹». It was alarming enough to admit to the possibility of one heresy in that province [Priscillianism], it was quite another matter to affirm Arianism, particularly in view of its most recent official extirpation. In the four canons of the First Council of Braga Priscillian was associated with numerous heretics, they are all 'safely' in the distant past, however⁷².

A letter of Pope Leo I was read by the bishops at the First Council of Braga (561), and it appears to have been the singular major document used against the Priscillianists⁷³. The pope mentioned these heretics by name in regard to the Trinity : Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, and Photinus, all later identified at the Council. He pressed further on the Trinity to refute Priscillian when he said : "In this they also pursue the Arian's mistake". We are to understand "also" as a reference to an earlier section in the letter where Pope Leo I had already dealt point by point with Priscillianist Trinitarianism⁷⁴. The bishops gathered at Braga chose not to mention Arianism specifically as found in Leo's letter.

Constantia does not occupy a central role in Arianism, but for Jerome's purposes she became an important feminine connection with the preceding male heretics and their female companions. She is also exemplary of a heretical woman easily swayed into heresy and scheming behind the scenes.

Jerome moves on to address the Donatists. Donatus and Lucilla are blamed for «defiling with his polluting baptism many unhappy people in Africa», and what that baptism entailed theologically is what Jerome wanted to bring to the surface⁷⁵. The Donatist debate centered upon the legitimacy of bishops, who had lapsed during persecution and then after the persecution lifted asked to be reinstated. The Donatists argued against the *traditores* [bishops] who cooperated with the Imperial authorities in handing over religious books. The Donatist church emphatically required re-baptism as a necessary prerequisite to mend the treasonous past of the *traditores* ; the Catholics argued otherwise on all of these

70. «The Missionary Labors of St. Martin of Braga in 6th Century Galicia», *Studia Monastica* 23, 1 (1981), pp. 19-20.

71. «*Et quia opitulante Christi gratia de unitate et rectitudine fidei in hac provincia nihil [sic] es dubium*», *Concilios Visigóticos*, p. 79.

72. For example «sicut Sabellius et Priscillianus dixerunt», canons 1, 2, 3, and 4, *Concilios Visigóticos*, pp. 67-68.

73. First Council of Braga (561), *Concilios Visigóticos*, p. 66.

74. «Quod blasphemiae genus de Sabellii opinione sumpserunt» (15, 3) ; «Quod utique non auferent dicere, nisi Pauli Samosatani et Photini» (15, 2), And more directly on the Arian affiliation : «In quo Arianorum quoque suffragantur errori» (*Ep.* 15, 1, *PL* 54, c. 681).

75. «Donatus, per Africam ut infelices quosque fetentibus pollueret aquis, Lucillae opibus adiutus est», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. Consult also, AUGUSTINE, *Contra Litteras Petilianus Libri Tres* 1, *CSEL* 52, pp. 3-23. *S. Optati Milevitani Libri VII* 1, 16-20, *CSEL* 26, pp. 18-22.

points⁷⁶. I have reduced the complexities of Donatism to single out those areas that Jerome could have associated with Priscillian. Four areas that serve Jerome's intent were : the concept of *traditores* ; the illegitimacy of bishops ; the sectarian nature of Donatism ; and the role of Lucilla.

The denunciation of *traditores* leveled by the Donatists was a charge readily reversed by the Catholics and applied to all heretics. In the spiritual sense heretics have betrayed the sacred message that had been given to the Church, and they have 'chosen' not to maintain the whole counsel of God. The Donatists were rebuked for calling themselves the 'True Church' and excluding all others who were not of their [true] fold. Donatism was meant by Jerome to force this message : the Priscillianists are traitors of the faith who have falsely passed themselves off as the 'true heirs' of apostolic teaching.

The second issue in Donatism focused upon the legitimacy of bishops. The posture of the Donatists rejected *in toto* the ecclesiastical structure of the Catholics, for that matter of any other 'church' as well. A major episode in Priscillian's career was his consecration as bishop of Avila⁷⁷. Priscillian was consecrated by bishops who had abandoned Catholic orthodoxy to pursue him as their leader. The emergence of a parallel Church, accompanied with its own episcopacy, was a major concern of Sulpicius Severus⁷⁸. Priscillian could not claim any apostolic legitimacy as a bishop, nor could those who were consecrated by him, nor any self-styled successors after his death. Jerome would have Ctesiphon recall that the only succession these bishops belonged to was the pseudo-apostolic one inaugurated by Simon Magus. Jerome apparently really believed, in the spiritual sense, that there existed an antiapostolic succession parallel to that of the Apostles. In both successions it is the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the Evil One that propagate them, respectively. Like the Donatists, the Priscillianists do not have a theological apostolic foundation to legitimize the existence or propagation of their church. Priscillian seemed to have required re-baptism, as the Donatists had done, but the canons of the First Council of Toledo (400) do not specify what distinguished the rite of baptism of the Priscillianists and Catholics⁷⁹.

An important corollary issue invoked in such debates between Catholics and heretics, before and after this era, has to do with the sectarian nature of heretics. Jerome deliberately mentioned Africa not just for geographical accuracy ; rather, to draw attention to the parochial nature of this sect, which unlike the Catholics had a more limited following. In the final analysis, not a single heresy

76. See the seminal study by W.H.C. FRENCH, *The Donatist Church*, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1971.

77. SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *Chron.* II, 47, *CSEL* 1, pp. 100-101.

78. Sulpicius described graphically the deep division Priscillianism caused, even well after the execution : «At inter nostros perpetuum discordiarum bellum exarserat, quod iam per quindecim annos foedis dissensionibus agitatum nullo modo sopiri poterat», *Chron.* II, 51, *CSEL* 1, p. 105.

79. The reference to baptism is in canon 18 : «Si quis in his erroribus Priscilliani secta sequitur vel profitetur, ut aliud in salutem baptismi contra sedem sancti Petri faciat, anathema sit», *Concilios Visigóticos*, p. 28.

could claim universal acceptance, an argument frequently voiced by the Catholics. Jerome applied such a judgment to this local sect in Spain. Although Priscillian did claim a following in Gaul, the Priscillianists could never in good faith claim universal acceptance. The frequent allusions to St. Peter via Simon Magus, the reference to Rome, and the sectarianism of this sect that are couched in Jerome's letter were intended to pit Priscillian in opposition to the universal church, a position pressed increasingly by the bishops of Rome⁸⁰. Finally, as with Arius and Constantia, Lucilla did not occupy a very significant place in the Donatist debate. We do know that she was a noble woman from Carthage and a strong supporter of the Donatists against the Catholics⁸¹. Jerome did not fail to make the typological connection between Lucilla and the women who followed Priscillian.

Jerome finally focused upon the Iberian Peninsula, where «in Spain the blind woman Agape led the blind man Elpidius into the ditch⁸²». There is a remarkable resemblance in this relationship with that of Apelles and Philumena. In this section, however, Jerome introduced some very interesting twists to the relationship between Agape and Priscillian. Agape, the woman, is the primary culprit who leads Elpidius astray into spiritual blindness, but there is more. Jerome also adds in what is a remarkable departure from his list of previous heretics *successoremque sui Priscillianum habuit*. If *habuit* has Agape as the subject then this makes Priscillian her successor, and this is the most likely reading according to Virginia Burrus⁸³. Agape is culpable of deceiving both Elpidius and Priscillian. Agape's alleged engendering of a successor in Priscillian provides the 'type' of a woman pretending to be a teacher of men and propagating spiritual offspring. At this point in the letter Jerome has reached the apogee of his narrative and Agape's activity is the most damning evidence of heretical behavior, an indictment against Pelagian and Priscillianist women. Jerome gave Agape the principal credit for being a teacher of Priscillian as an example of the grossest violation of apostolic succession. Agape is also Jerome's 'spiritual link' to connect Priscillian with Marcus of Memphis. We also do not need to hold Jerome here to fostering an *immediate* succession from

80. In the First Council of Braga (561), the bishops gathered specifically pointed out that Pope Leo I was [about or approximately -Latin -*Fere*] the fortieth successor of St. Peter *beatissimus papa urbis Romae Leo, qui quadragesimus fere extitit apostoli Petri successor, Concilios Visigóticos*, p. 66. Also in canon 18 of the First Council of Toledo (400) it is expressed specifically that Priscillian is in direct opposition to St. Peter, *Concilios Visigóticos*, p.28.

81. Lucilla is not reported at all by Filastrius of Brescia, Augustine, nor by Isidore of Seville. Filastrius devotes little space to the Donatists : *Diversarum hereseon liber* 83, *CCSL* 9, p. 253. Augustine's entry on the Donatists is one of his lengthiest : *De haeresibus*, 69, *CCSL* 46, pp. 331-333. Isidore is very brief : *Etymologiarum* VIII, *De haeresibus Christianorum* 8. 5. 51, in *San Isidoro de Sevilla*, p. 698.

82. *In Hispania Agape Elpidium, mulier uirum, caecum caeca duxit in foueam*, *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248.

83. *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. See V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, pp. 210-211, note 90.

Agape ; rather it seems to be a 'typological' succession, just as Priscillian is a successor of all of the heretics in the list. Jerome brings this novel "succession" to an abrupt halt in his ensuing statement where he says that Priscillian engendered the woman 'Galla' and in this fashion reestablishes the masculine succession. Jerome may have borrowed his information from Sulpicius Severus and the latter created a nexus between the Gnostics and Priscillian, a link that by his own admission was "not at all easy to explain"⁸⁴. According to Sulpicius, a Gnostic Marcus of Memphis was the first to introduce Gnosticism into the Iberian Peninsula, and Agape and Elpidius were his first pupils. They, in turn, were the teachers of Priscillian. Another unique aspect about them is that neither are found in any other heretical lists.

Of Agape and Elpidius we know nothing else, but of Marcus there is plenty in the patristic sources, and Jerome had already identified Marcus in his *Commentaries on Isaiah* (17. 64. 4-5) as the Gnostic heretic 'behind' Agape. In a letter to Theodora, Jerome commented more about Marcus, citing Irenaeus as his major source. He erroneously called Marcus a disciple of Basilides. In the remainder of his exposition Jerome was consistent with the previous commentaries on Marcus. Jerome accused Marcus of misleading unlearned men and high-born women, and of engaging in unlawful intercourse⁸⁵. The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* called Marcus a spiritual successor of Simon Magus and Hippolytus reports that Marcus even allowed women to offer up the Eucharist⁸⁶. For Jerome's purpose Marcus confirms the illicit sexual behavior of heretics, the sexually loose women heretics tend to attract, the seduction of weak-minded uneducated men, and lastly but no less important, the unbroken succession with Simon Magus.

The reference to Marcus is not without its problems as Virginia Burrus alerts us. Jerome links Priscillian with the Marcus identified by Irenaeus in several places. Sulpicius made a similar connection identifying Marcus as the originator

84. «Qui quidem et partem habent Gnosticae haereseos de Basilidis impietate uenientem», *Ep.* 133. 3, *CSEL* 56, p. 245. Here Jerome seems to be drawing directly from Sulpicius Severus who attributed the arrival of Gnosticism not to Marcus of Memphis but to Priscillian's teachers Agape, and Elpidius. See *Chron.* II, 46, *CSEL.* 1, pp. 99-100.

85. «Quod Marcus quidam de Basilidis Gnostici stirpe descendens primum ad Gallias uenerit...maximeque nobiles feminas quaedam in occulto mysteria repromittens hoc errore seduxerit magicis artibus et secreta corporum uoluptate amorem sui concilians», *Ep.* 75, 3, *CSEL* 55, p. 72. Again, the primary source for the entire tradition was Irenaeus, *Contra haereses*, 1. 13-15, *SC* 264, pp. 188-253. See also EPIPHANIUS, *Panarion haer.* 34, *GCS* 2, pp. 5-39.

86. 6. 8. 1, *SC* 328, pp. 316-317. HIPPOLYTUS, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 6. 40, *GCS* 3, pp. 171-172. Eusebius added to all of these deviant practices the charge that Marcus was remarkably skilled in magic arts, *HE*, 4. 11. 4, *SC* 31, p. 174. Isidore of Seville in *De uiris illustribus* mentioned Marcus specifically in his entry on Priscillian, whereas Filastrius of Brescia, Augustine, and Pseudo-Tertullian did not contribute any novelties on Marcus : *De uiris illustribus*, C. CODOÑER MERINO (ed.) p. 135. FILASTRIUS OF BRESCIA, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, 42, *CCSL* 9, p. 235. AUGUSTINE, *De haeresibus* 14, *CCSL* 46, p. 296. The PSEUDO-TERTULLIAN, *Adversus omnes haereses*, focused only on doctrinal error : *CCSL* 2. 2 pp. 1407-1408.

of Gnosticism in the Iberian Peninsula, yet he does not say that Marcus taught Priscillian directly⁸⁷. Recall that Agape and Elpidius were taught by Marcus according to Sulpicius. Some scholars have argued back and forth on the question whether there are indeed two traditions of Marcus ; the one of Irenaeus, and the one described by Jerome and Sulpicius⁸⁸. The problem seems to be exacerbated, I believe, by an insistence on a strict literal reading of the chronology in these passages. Jerome is creating in the letter and elsewhere typological spiritual links with previous heretics and this is especially true in the case of Marcus of Memphis, as Virginia Burrus notes, Jerome was intent on creating a “gnosticized portrait of Priscillian⁸⁹”. This liberty is evident in his *Commentaries on Isaiah* where he quotes Irenaeus regarding Marcus’s activity in Gaul, but Jerome extends it into Iberia as well⁹⁰. The use of typological rhetoric and arguments allows for such flexibility and is not necessarily to be dismissed as only willful distortion, although it was not beneath Jerome to exaggerate or invent details. Sulpicius offers a working chronology and links which Jerome greatly exploits in the letter.

Since Jerome had already acknowledged the connection between Marcus and Agape he did not need to repeat it in rote fashion in the letter because he had a different agenda here. Jerome wanted a female Gnostic culprit identified with Priscillian in the list and Agape was that person. Jerome was not thinking in absolute chronological fashion ; he was thinking of spiritual typological connections.

In the concluding entry Jerome reported that Priscillian, was a zealous devotee of a magician of Zoroaster and became a bishop through him⁹¹. The censure of Zoroastrianism associated Priscillian directly with the magical arts. Jerome’s fixation on Priscillian’s fascination with magic and magicians is well-founded, or at least consistent with other testimony, whereas no other writer attaches explicitly Zoroastrianism to Priscillian. The brief reference to Zoroaster is another example of the literary freedom Jerome indulged in to attack the Priscillianists. As I have stated before, a literalistic pursuit of the minute facts, strict chronology, and exact descriptions of practices matter little in this style of polemic. Jerome wants to associate Priscillian with magic : Why not with one of the most notorious magicians, Zoroaster ? Noteworthy in the entry is Jerome’s condemnation of Priscillian’s ordination as a bishop which he says was the work of a Zoroastrian bishop.

The accusation of the magical occultic background of Priscillian was one of several essential offenses that permitted the Emperor Maximus to arrest, try, and execute Priscillian at Trier in 385. Jerome, therefore, boasted with self-righteous indignation that the “whole world” justly punished Priscillian by death with the

87. *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, pp. 200-201, note 52.

88. V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, pp. 189-191, note 13.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

90. *Commentariorum in Esaiam*, *CCSL* 73A, Pars 1, 2A, p. 735. See note 86 above. V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, p. 191, note 12.

91. *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL*, 56, p. 248 ; V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, p. 209.

secular sword. That Priscillian was rejected by all of the major ecclesiastics of his day and that he was put to death is absolutely true, but Jerome deliberately chose not to mention their unanimous opposition to the execution⁹².

Of 'Galla' and the 'sister' we know absolutely nothing else. What Jerome mentions here is all that we possess, for they are absent in the entire corpus of sources. As with Marcus the exact meaning of the phrase, *Galla non gente sed nomine germanam huc illucque currentem alterius et vicinae haereseos reliquit haeredem* has been the source of much discussion. The word seems to refer to a 'Gallic woman' that formed part of the band of women that followed Priscillian in Gaul. In either case, whether the citation refers to a specific woman Galla or a generic group from Gaul, Jerome is still able to accomplish his overall purposes⁹³. The Gallic woman and the 'sister' that perpetuate heresy have all of the heretical characteristics of Agape and is once again a visible manifestation of Priscillian's spiritual fruit. He was not only taught and deceived by Agape, Priscillian now deceives a 'woman' or 'women', and they in turn take the initiative to propagate heresy. Just what the second heresy of kindred form was is also unknown, for Jerome does not explicitly expound, presumably we can infer a version of the teachings of Priscillianism. I maintain that one of Jerome's messages here is to affirm the continued proliferation of heretical teachings, for he closed the letter with 2 *Thessalonians* 2: 7: «Now also the mystery of iniquity is working», a forceful affirmation that the spirit of Simon Magus was alive and in Priscillian. It was Vincent of Lérins who expressed this thought so well : *a*

92. *Chron.* II, 48, *CSEL* 1, p. 101. Martin of Tours, Pope Damasus, and Ambrose of Milan condemned the audacious behavior of the Emperor. Martin of Tours even implored the Emperor not to shed blood. According to Sulpicius, the Emperor delayed the trial until the aging Martin of Tours had passed away. «Namque tum Martinus apud Treueros constitutus non desinebat increpare Ithacium, ut ab accusatione desisteret, Maximum orare, ut sanguine infelicitum abstinere, satis superque sufficere, ut episcopali sententia haeretici iudicati ecclesiis pellerentur : saeuum esse et inauditum nefas, ut causam ecclesiae iudex saeculi iudicaret. denique quoad usque Martinus Treueris fuit, dilata cognitio est : et mox discessurus egeria auctoritate a Maximo elicit sponsonem, nihil cruentum in reos constituendum», *Chron.* II, 50, *CSEL* 1, p. 103. Pope Leo I, in like manner as Jerome, spoke uncritically of Priscillian's execution, nor did he even hint about the uproar against these unfortunate events by the leading members of the Church in that era, *Ep.* 15, *praef.*, *PL* 54, c. 679. Sulpicius expresses his disgust of Hidacius and Ithacius, Priscillian's main accusers, *Chron.* II, 50, *CSEL* 1, p. 103. Ambrose voiced similar outrage, *Ep.* 30 (Maur. 24) 12, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, pars decima. Epistulae et Acta*, Tom. I. *Epistularum Libri I-VI*, *CSEL* 82, 1, pp. 214-215 and also in *Ep.* 68 (Maur 26), *CSEL* 82, 2, pp. 169-178.

93. «Et uicinae hereseos reliquit heredem», *Ep.* 133. 4, *CSEL* 56, p. 248. Sulpicius Severus identified two women named Euchrotia and her daughter Procula, but not one by the name Galla. V. BURRUS, *Making of a heresy*, p. 211, notes 91 and 92. See also pp. 211-212 where the author argues that the reference to Galla is to a proper name following Ferdinand CAVALLERA, «Galla non gente sed nomine», *BLE* 38 (1937), pp. 186-190. For relevant bibliography on Galla see, M.-J. RONDEAU, «D'une édition», pp. 180-181 and Paul DEVOS, «Date du voyage d'Égérie», pp. 180-181. Also H. CHADWICK, *Priscillian of Avila*, pp. 37-38. The consensus seems to be that Galla is a proper name. I concur on the grounds that it is consistent with Jerome's identification of specific proper names in his list, with one exception, the anonymous woman he associated with Marcion.

quo vetus ille turpitudinum gurges usque in novissimum Priscillianum continua et occulta successione manavit. (From whom the old stream of disgrace [heresy] flows and persists in uninterrupted and secret succession in the most recent [heretic], Priscillian⁹⁴.)

Conclusion

The letter to Ctesiphon as a source of Priscillianism has numerous limitations. Jerome's principal agenda is to launch an attack on Pelagians and not the Priscillianist sect directly. On account of its polemical intent the letter is filled with typological language that does not necessarily contain an accurate portrayal of the Priscillianists. Jerome's selective use of patristic sources, his limited first-hand acquaintance with the sect, and not the least his inflammatory rhetoric casts serious doubts on the veracity of the moral and doctrinal lapses he attributes to the Priscillianists.

The letter also sheds light on Jerome's attitude towards women. The heretical women represent 'typologically' behavior unbecoming of orthodox women. Each of them embody various aspects of a negative feminine tradition; for example: Helena and the Bands of Women are the originating types of doctrinal/sexual depravity. Marcion's unidentified woman is guilty of 'seducing' others at Rome, while Constantia and Lucilla engage in similar sinister activities behind the scenes. Philumena and Prisca/Maximilla are excellent examples of demonically seduced women who believe God is speaking through them in prophetic fashion. They also falsely imitate the apostolic duties of legitimate bishops. Agape seems to personify the most damnable example of a woman 'out of place' as she audaciously teaches Priscillian and pretends to perpetuate a legitimate succession of apostolic truth. Jerome, in a sense, left the best for last in Agape, a Gnostic woman as the quintessential exemplar of the female heretic. 'Galla' and the 'sister', encouraged by Priscillian, are presented by Jerome of perpetuating heresy freely without any seeming reliance [submission] on male authority. Jerome presented to Ctesiphon a 'hall of fame' of women clearly out of place in the Church, and his warning is that Pelagius and his female followers, like the Priscillianists, have overstepped the acceptable boundaries of orthodox definitions of the role of women.

The men paraded by Jerome from Simon Magus down to Elpidius, all represent typologically moral and doctrinal behavior associated with the Priscillianists. Simon and Nicolas are responsible for giving 'birth', so to speak, to the doctrinal and moral errors of all heretics. Marcion reminds the reader of Priscillian's appetite for non-canonical books. With Apelles and Montanus Jerome continued the theme of extra-biblical revelation which he wants to associate with all heretics, especially Pelagius and Priscillian. Arius the most well known heretic in Jerome's day is creatively associated with Priscillian in so far as Trinitarian errors are concerned. Donatus is a fine example Jerome employs to bring to the surface the parochial nature of *all* heretics who cannot

94. *Commonitorium*, CCSL 64. p. 181.

claim the universal proliferation of the Catholics, and Priscillian similarly is guilty of perpetuating doctrines in a 'corner' of the world. Elpidius exemplifies a weak male seduced by a Gnostic woman who in his blindness, along with Agape, deceives Priscillian, a clear expression of the 'blind leading the blind'.

The letter to Ctesiphon is useful as an example of the polemical style of Jerome. It also reveals his mastery and selective use of patristic sources. As a Priscillianist document Jerome's treatment is rather unique in that he established extensive 'typological' heretical links between Priscillian and previous heresies. What Jerome does not confirm is the moral and doctrinal error of Priscillian, rather in rote fashion he repeats the ubiquitous negative rumors about the sect.

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ABSTRACT : The fourth-century Priscillianist controversy in the Iberian Peninsula and Gaul drew much attention from admirers and opponents. One formidable voice opposed to Priscillian was Jerome. In his *133 Letter* written to Ctesiphon, approximately in 415, Jerome launched an attack against Priscillianists in section four of that letter. Jerome utilized mainly typology to associate Priscillian with the previous major heresies going ultimately back to the 'Father' of Christian heresy, Simon Magus. This study proposes for the first time an in-depth exploration of Jerome's polemic to discredit the Priscillianists.