

Image and Virtue in Ambrose of Milan

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IMAGE AND VIRTUE IN AMBROSE OF MILAN

by

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ABSTRACT
IMAGE AND VIRTUE IN AMBROSE OF MILAN

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This dissertation analyzes Ambrose of Milan's trinitarian theology and doctrine of human action and argues that a visual logic—that works disclose nature—animates both. Ambrose's trinitarian theology, on the one hand, trades in scriptural proofs that emphasize the tangible works (*opera*) of the Son as revelatory of his divinity and indicative of his shared, invisible power with the Father. While Ambrose differs from his Latin and Greek predecessors, he takes up controverted texts in his Christological reflection, many of which are borrowed from anti-monarchian and anti-homoian debates in the several generations prior. To show Ambrose's consonance with the pre- and pro-Nicenes, I first investigate the common exegetical strands that occupy four Latins: Tertullian, Novatian of Rome, Hilary of Poitiers, and Marius Victorinus. In his own Christology, Ambrose uses many of the same debated scriptural passages as they did to foreground the importance of the Son's works for revealing his shared divine power with the Father.

However, Ambrose builds upon these exegetical strands, adding unique and unprecedented reflection that colors his theological anthropology and subsequent moral counsel. In particular, Ambrose adapts the trope of God as Painter, supported by Isaiah 49:16, when considering the moral significance of the image of God. While such a move might appear miniscule, I argue to the contrary. If the God who is known by and operates under the auspices of a visual logic paints the human soul, then the correlative action of the individual will follow a similar script. This similar script is plain in Ambrose's doctrine of human action. Ambrose's consistent emphasis on public Christian virtue is adapted largely from Roman exhortations to public virtue and married neatly to Ambrose's pro-Nicene Christology.

While the distinct character of human action is public, the signal content of Christian virtue has to do with its simplicity. Simplicity in word and deed not only serves as moral ideal, but does the double service of dismissing Ambrose's most proximate doctrinal opponents, the homoians. I conclude that by connecting orthodoxy and virtue, Ambrose affords us a noteworthy contribution to fourth-century Christian theology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Andrew M. Harmon, B.A., M.Div., Th.M.

I made it my job to write sentences. And I wrote a lot of them. Some made it in here smoothly. Others were excised. And still others, even after I wrangled them, were reluctant hangers-on. While writing a dissertation is challenging, it is something of a comfortable uncomfotability, a gentle toil where the real struggle is over verbs, demonstrative pronouns, and adverbs rather than flesh and blood. But, it is toil still, and toil, to paraphrase Philo of Alexandria, is like the light, and we cannot see without the light.

When I read this now, I see the things I wanted to say, read the words I did not write. So be it. I know now that there is grace, both for myself and for those conscripted to reading, in stopping. Now that I have reached that precipice of acceptable imperfection, I am also able to see those who have helped and encouraged me along the way, family, friends, advisors, mentors, and colleagues, each of whom has pushed me to this point. Now I realize that I wrote a dissertation about virtue because this long list of folks embodies such love and beauty. I am overwhelmed at these individuals' honesty, inquisitiveness, and charity.

I must first give thanks to my board, Dr. Michel Barnes, Dr. Michael Cover, Fr. Joseph Mueller, and Dr. Warren Smith. From them, I have learned much, only some of which can be found within the pages of this dissertation. The bits that can be found in these pages have to do with precision and care, with reading and analyzing texts, turning them inside and out. The bits that cannot be found in these pages have to do with a graced disposition to learning, life, and others.

Barnes has been my tireless advocate, prodding me on to look in odd places for even odder answers, holding up my work to the highest standards, and reassuring me along the way. Cover has been a colleague and sounding board, a compatriot in things Anglican and Philonic, and a source of creative scrutiny for my teaching and research. Fr. Joe has balanced his painstaking comments with pastoral sensitivity, something few achieve and even fewer master. Smith's book on Ambrose, in many ways, got me thinking more about this particular personality with theological rigor and depth. He also invited me to participate in a workshop on Ambrose's moral theology at Oxford, an experience that enriched my research, the fruits of which are borne throughout this dissertation.

Marquette has formed a steady support network for my doctoral studies. Gale Prusinski and Pat Psuik answered my dozens of questions with attention and grace. The Department of Theology has been and will continue to be in good hands with them at the helm. My colleagues, Jason Gehrke, Jon Heaps, Ryan Hemmer, Dave Kiger, Dan Morehead, Kellen Plaxco, Gene Schlesinger, Luke Togni, Stephen Waers, Steven Zittergruen and many others, have shared of themselves, listened to me, and watched me

get lost in the weeds of the fourth century. I am thankful for their kindness, encouragement, thoroughness, absurd humor, and above all, their friendships that helped pierce through the moments of darkness. Thank you.

I would not be here if not for my mother, Mary Ann Harmon. They say that people do not get into theology for the money, but, in my case, this is not exactly true. When I was an elementary-school child, my mother would pay me to catch key words or phrases in the weekly sermon. Little did she know that over two decades later, for better or worse, I would write a book filled with many of those same words. As a single mother of an only child, she raised me, asking me questions of meaning and engaging my imagination early. Hours around our kitchen table consoled, frustrated, inspired, and motivated me to keep searching. My mother has been there all along, supporting me through thick and thin with loving guidance and persistent prayer. I am blessed to be her son and am forever in her debt.

My two daughters, Frances Cole and Bonnie Louise, were born since starting my doctoral work at Marquette. Because of them, our home never lacks the full range of human emotion. I have learned so much from them: when to laugh, when to cry, when to dance, and perhaps most importantly, when to nap. Their births and ever-expanding worlds help put writing this dissertation in perspective. I am beyond proud to be their father and am thrilled to see the young women they will become.

Above all, I am grateful for my wife, Anna, without whose constant support I could not have completed this. When I came home angry or frustrated, she was there. When I came home excited about something tiny and esoteric, she listened. Anna dutifully, if fitfully, read portions of these chapters, often commenting that her eyes were crossing by staring at the Latin footnotes or that I needed to rewrite or, heaven forbid, delete something. And all this she did with our daughters, crawling, sprinting, and screaming through our too-cozy home. She is a saint, so much more patient and sweet and wise than I. This dissertation is for her.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Bibliothèque augustinienne
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series latina
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
FOTC	The Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
PG	Patrologia graeca
PL	Patrologia latina
PO	Patrologia orientalis
SC	Sources chrétiennes
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>

Ambrose of Milan (Ambr.)

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abraham</i>
<i>Apol. Dau.</i>	<i>De apologia prophetae Dauid</i>
<i>Aux.</i>	<i>Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicis tradendis (Ep. 75a)</i>
<i>Bon. mort.</i>	<i>De bono mortis</i>
<i>Cain</i>	<i>De Cain et Abel</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Ep. ext. coll.</i>	<i>Epistulae extra collectionem</i>
<i>Es.</i>	<i>Expositio Esariae prophetae (frag.)</i>
<i>Exc.</i>	<i>De excessu fratris</i>
<i>Ex. uirg.</i>	<i>Exhortatio uirginitatis</i>
<i>Fid.</i>	<i>De fide (ad Gratianum Augustum)</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga saeculi</i>
<i>Gest. conc. Aquil.</i>	<i>De gestis concilii Aquileiensis</i>
<i>Hel.</i>	<i>De Helia et ieiunio</i>
<i>Hex.</i>	<i>Hexaameron</i>
<i>Hymn.</i>	<i>Hymni</i>
<i>Iac.</i>	<i>De Iacob et uita beata</i>
<i>Incarn.</i>	<i>De incarnationis dominicae sacramento</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>De institutione uirginis</i>
<i>Iob</i>	<i>De interpellatione Iob et Dauid</i>
<i>Ios.</i>	<i>De Ioseph</i>
<i>Is.</i>	<i>De Isaac uel anima</i>
<i>Luc.</i>	<i>Expositio euangelii secundum Lucam</i>
<i>Myst.</i>	<i>De mysteriis</i>

<i>Nab.</i>	<i>De Nabuthae</i>
<i>Noe</i>	<i>De Noe</i>
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De officiis</i>
<i>Paen.</i>	<i>De paenitentia</i>
<i>Parad.</i>	<i>De paradiso</i>
<i>Patr.</i>	<i>De patriarchis</i>
<i>Psal.</i>	<i>Explanatio psalmorum XII</i>
<i>Psal. 118</i>	<i>Expositio psalmi CXVIII</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De sacramentis</i>
<i>Spir.</i>	<i>De Spiritu sancto</i>
<i>Symb.</i>	<i>Explanatio symboli</i>
<i>Tob.</i>	<i>De Tobia</i>
<i>Valent.</i>	<i>De obitu Valentiniani</i>
<i>Vid.</i>	<i>De uiduis</i>
<i>Virg.</i>	<i>De uirginibus</i>
<i>Virgin.</i>	<i>De uiginitate</i>

Other Ancient Authors

[Anonymous]

<i>Phgn.</i>	<i>Physiognomica</i>
<i>Rhetor. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>

Aristotle (Arist.)

<i>An. pr.</i>	<i>Analytica priora</i>
<i>De motu an.</i>	<i>De motu animalium</i>
<i>Hist. an.</i>	<i>Historia animalium</i>

Athanasius of Alexandria (Athanas.)

<i>Ar.</i>	<i>Orationes contra Arianos</i>
<i>Incarn.</i>	<i>Oratio de incarnatione Verbi</i>
<i>Syn.</i>	<i>De synodis</i>

Augustine of Hippo (Aug.)

<i>Ciu.</i>	<i>De ciuitate Dei</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessionum libri XIII</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Ep. ad cath.</i>	<i>Epistula ad catholicos</i>

<i>Gen. imp.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber</i>
<i>Grat. Chr.</i>	<i>De gratia Christi</i>
<i>Iul.</i>	<i>Contra Iulianum</i>
<i>Nup.</i>	<i>De nuptiis et concupiscentia</i>
<i>Pelag.</i>	<i>Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum</i>
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermones</i>
Aulus Gellius (Gell.)	
<i>NA</i>	<i>Noctes Atticae</i>
Chromatius of Aquileia (Chromat.)	
<i>Mat.</i>	<i>Tractatus in euangelium Matthaei</i>
Cicero (Cic.)	
<i>Amic.</i>	<i>De amicitia</i>
<i>Brut.</i>	<i>Brutus</i>
<i>Nat. D.</i>	<i>De natura deorum</i>
<i>De or.</i>	<i>De oratore</i>
<i>Fin.</i>	<i>De finibus</i>
<i>Off.</i>	<i>De officiis</i>
<i>Orat.</i>	<i>Orator ad M. Brutum</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	<i>De republica</i>
<i>Tusc.</i>	<i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
Cyprian of Carthage (Cypr.)	
<i>Hab. uirg.</i>	<i>De habitu uirginum</i>
Didymus the Blind (Didy.)	
<i>Spir.</i>	<i>De Spiritu sancto</i>
<i>Com. Psal.</i>	<i>Commentarii in Psalmos</i>
Dio Chrysotomus (Dio. Chrys.)	
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>
Diogenes Laertius (Dio. Laert.)	

Eucherius of Lyon (Eucher.)

Form.

*Formulae
intelligentiae*

Inst.

*Instructiones ad
Salonium*

Gregory of Elvira (Greg. Illib.)

Fid. Orth.

De fide orthodoxa

Tr. in Cant.

*Tractatus in Cantica
canticorum*

Tract. Orig.

Tractatus Origenis

Hilary of Poitiers (Hilar.)

Ar.

Liber contra Arianos

Psal.

Tractatus super Psalmos

Syn.

De synodis

Trin.

De trinitate

Irenaeus Lyon (Iren.)

Haer.

Aduersus haereses

Jerome (Hier.)

Adu. Pelag.

*Aduersus Pelagianos
dialogi III*

Ep.

Epistulae

Is.

*Commentariorum in
Isaiam*

Vir. ill.

De uiris illustribus

Lactantius (Lact.)

Inst.

*Diuinarum institutionum
libri VII*

Ir.

De ira Dei

Livy (Livy.)

Ab urb. con.

Ab urbe condita

Lucan (Luc.)

Demon.
Icar.

Demonax
Icaromenippus

Lucretius (Lucretius)

Marius Victorius (Mar. Vict.)

Ar.
Cand.
Homoous.

Aduersus Arium
Ad Candidum Arrianum
De ὁμοουσίῳ recipiendo

Novatian (Novatian.)

Trin.

De trinitate

Origen (Orig.)

C. Cels.
Com. Ion.

Com. Rom.

Hom. Gen.
Hom. Num.
Hom. Luc.
Hom. Psal.
Prin.

Contra Celsum
Commentaria in
Euangelium Ioannis
Commentaria in
Epistolam ad Romanos
Homiliae in Genesim
Homiliae in Numeros
Homiliae in Lucam
Homiliae in Psalmos
De principiis

Ovid (Ov.)

Amor.
Met.
Tr.

Ars amoris
Metamorphoses
Tristia

Paulinus of Nola (P.-Nol.)

Carm.
Ep.

Carmina
Epistulae

Petronius (Petron.)

Sat.

Satyricon

Philo of Alexandria (Philo)

<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantione</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>

Phoebadius of Agen (Phoeb.)

<i>Ar.</i>	<i>Liber contra arrianos</i>
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Plato (Pl.)

<i>Cra.</i>	<i>Cratylus</i>
<i>Phlb.</i>	<i>Philebus</i>
<i>Prm.</i>	<i>Parmenides</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	<i>Respublica</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Sophista</i>

Pliny the Elder (Plin.)

<i>HN</i>	<i>Naturalis historia</i>
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Pliny the Younger (Plin.)

<i>Pan.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>
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Prudentius (Prud.)

<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamartigeneia</i>
-------------	----------------------

Pseudo-Tertullian (Ps.-Tert.)

<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Carmen aduersus Marcionitas</i>
--------------	----------------------------------------

Quintilian (Quint.)

<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutio oratoria</i>
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Sallust (Sall.)	
<i>Iug.</i>	<i>Bellum Iugurthinum</i>
Seneca the Younger (Sen.)	
<i>Cons. hel.</i>	<i>De consolation ad Helviam</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Silius Italicus (Sil.)	
<i>Pun.</i>	<i>Punica</i>
Sulpicius Severus (Supl. Sev.)	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicorum libri duo</i>
Tacitus (Tac.)	
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annales</i>
Tertullian (Tert.)	
<i>An.</i>	<i>De anima</i>
<i>Cult. fem.</i>	<i>De cultu feminarum</i>
<i>Herm.</i>	<i>Aduersus Hermogenem</i>
<i>Iud.</i>	<i>Aduersus Iudaeos</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Aduersus Marcionem</i>
<i>Prax.</i>	<i>Aduersus Praxean</i>
<i>Res.</i>	<i>De resurrectione carnis</i>
<i>Scorp.</i>	<i>Scorpiace</i>
Valerius Maximus (Val. Max.)	
<i>Fact. ac dict.</i>	<i>Factorum ac dictorum libri IX</i>
Virgil (Verg.)	
<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
Xenophon (Xen.)	
<i>Oec.</i>	<i>Oeconomicus</i>

Well, if you want to say at least some true things about a man's intentions, you will have a strong chance of success if you mention what he actually did or is doing.

–G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* §4

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad
In naked majesty seemed lords of all
And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure,
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed.

–John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 4:288–94

INTRODUCTION

“For Jesus is seen not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the spirit.”¹

The Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio, one of the three Ambrose commissioned during his episcopacy, is located just outside Milan’s ancient walls. Its towering glory consists of two-story windows, ornate frescoes, and thick arches and is matched by an impressive collection of relics within and its location—atop a martyrs’ cemetery. However, Sant’Ambrogio’s remarkable features hide a hurried foundation. Uneven riverbed stones, piled on and cemented alongside broken bricks and tiles—lain with seemingly little rhyme or reason—hold up the structure. Contrast this foundation with that of Milan’s “New Cathedral” (later dedicated to Saint Thecla), comprised of well-ordered pebbles—carefully placed and replaced—and the difference is glaring. The Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio, erected some three decades after the New Cathedral, reveals a rushed project timeline and a new generation’s building techniques, forced to adapt to financial demand, custom, and function.²

The subject of this dissertation is the relationship of the visible to the invisible for Ambrose. I sketch the general contours of the Sant’Ambrogio because they give us insight into the man whose name the Basilica bears. Ambrose was a notable politician turned bishop, a governor turned scriptural exegete and champion of Nicene orthodoxy. He was educated in the typical Roman fashion with other budding Latin elites, yet his

¹ Ambr. *Luc.* 1.5 (CSEL 32/4: 13). Translations are my own unless indicated otherwise. Footnotes too are working and not intended to be exhaustive, so as not to tire the reader.

² Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 68–92, at 72–78.

facility with Greek texts outshined even his most famous baptizand, Augustine of Hippo.³ Add to this that he was, as he puts it, “snatched” from his public administrations, quickly baptized, ordained, and “universally” acclaimed to the episcopacy, and Sant’Ambrogio’s mottled foundation becomes an even more apt parallel.⁴

This dissertation will reconsider the ways in which Ambrose’s theology, buttressed by classical sources,⁵ holds together by means of a visual logic.⁶ Ambrose’s

³ That Ambrose was fluent in Greek has become a scholarly commonplace. For an exception to this claim, see S. Giet, “De saint Basile à saint Ambroise,” *Recherches des sciences religieuses* 33 (1944): 95–128.

⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 1.1.4 (CCSL 15: 2). *Ego enim raptus de tribunalibus atque administrationis infulis ad sacerdotium, docere uos coepi quod ipse non didici. Itaque factus est ut prius docere inciperem quam discere. Discendum igitur mihi simul et docendum est quoniam non uacauit ante discere.* See Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 14–15. McLynn reads Rufinus’ account of Ambrose’s rapid ascendancy to bishop as a “charade,” put together either by Ambrose or his political authorities.

⁵ Ambrose’s facility with various philosophical texts, whether direct or mediated, will raise the inevitable question of just how much philosophical weight his statements bear. This question has been an open one in secondary scholarship since (at least) the mid-twentieth century, evidenced by a glut of works on Ambrose and Augustine. A few representative examples include: Pierre Hadot, “Platon et Plotin dans trois sermons de saint Ambroise,” *Revue des études latines* 34 (1956): 220–39; Pierre Courcelle, “Plotin et saint Ambroise,” *Revue de philologie, de littérature, et d’histoire anciennes* 76 (1950): 29–56; idem, “Nouveaux aspects du platonisme chez saint Ambroise,” *Revue des études latines* 34 (1956): 220–39; idem, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1973); Goulven Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie* (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1974); idem, “L’Homme intérieur selon saint Ambroise,” in *Ambroise de Milan: XVIe centenaire de son élection épiscopale*, ed. Yves-Marie Duval (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 283–308; Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, “Ambrose and Philosophy,” in Lionel R. Wickham and Caroline P. Bammel, eds., *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity. Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 112–28; John C. Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirm and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 232–49. Though these (and other) studies come to a variety of conclusions, their insights point to the fact that Ambrose’s approach to philosophical sources is complicated, both similar and dissimilar from the founts of pagan wisdom in general and Platonic sources in particular.

⁶ With precious few exceptions and unsurprisingly, the explorations of early Christians’ distinctly theological motivations in foregrounding the importance of sight and visibility have been largely relegated to Augustine. See, e.g., Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), at 309–12; idem, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 230–50; Michel R. Barnes, “The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology of 400,” *Modern Theology* 19.3 (2003): 329–55; Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 85–109; Margaret Miles, “Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine’s ‘De Trinitate’ and ‘Confessions,’” *The Journal of Religion* 63.2 (1983): 125–42; Mary Sirridge, “‘*Quam videndo intus dicimus*’: Seeing and Saying in *De Trinitate* XV,” in *Medieval Analyses in*

Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 1.5–1.9 will function as our organizing passage throughout. There we find Ambrose linking the enacted character of divine action and its human counterpart. Such reflection is sheltered under an explication of Luke 1:2 (“Accordingly, as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word.”).⁷ Though the gospel writer appears concerned with the seeming reliability of the narrative to follow, Ambrose shows little interest in discussing issues of reliability. He instead focuses on the two predicated sources of the

Language and Cognition: Acts of the Symposium of The Copenhagen School of Medieval Philosophy, January 10–13, 1996, ed. Sten Ebbesen and Russell L. Friedman (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1999), 317–30; Roland Teske, S.J., “St. Augustine and the Vision of God,” in *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren et al (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 287–308. A couple recent treatments help broaden the importance of sight and visibility outside of simply Augustine. See Michel René Barnes, “Latin Trinitarian Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70–84; idem, “A Night at the OPERA: That the Father is Seen in the Son,” unpublished monograph chapter; and Brian P. Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 60–84, at 67–69. Other secondary treatments deal with early Christian seeing, and while beneficial, are not distinctly theological. E.g., Susan Ashbrook Harvey, “Olfactory Knowing: Signs of Smell in the Lives of Simeon Stylites,” in *After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Hans J. W. Drijvers*, ed. G. J. Reineck and A. C. Klugkist (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1999), 23–34; Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrimage to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); eadem, “The Pilgrim’s Gaze in the Age before Icons,” in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Roberts S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 98–115; eadem, “‘Taste and See’: The Eucharist and the Eyes of Faith in the Fourth Century,” *Church History* 70 (2001): 619–43; Cynthia Hahn, “Loca Sancta Souvenirs: Sealing the Pilgrim’s Experience,” in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert Ousterhout (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 85–95; and Patricia Cox Miller, “‘The Little Blue Flower Is Red’: Relics and the Poetizing of the Body,” *J ECS* 8 (2000): 213–36.

⁷ Scholarly engagement with this fruitful passage has been non-existent, with the exception of Brian Dunkle’s very recent monograph on Ambrose’s hymns. See Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan*, 64. Dunkle references a portion of the passage, highlights the importance of the “spiritual senses,” and concludes, “Ambrose affirms that the created order has a certain integrity that can function as a means for sensing the divine” (64). Still, Dunkle mentions nothing of the second half of Ambrose’s reflection, which emphasizes the visibility of virtue and intention. Ambrose’s quip that “Jesus is seen not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the Spirit” [Ambr. *Luc.* 1.5 (CSEL 32/4: 13)] has a distinct afterlife and is in fact critical to developments in Western theology. Augustine picks up on it in his *Epistles* 147 and 148 to Paulina and Fortunatus, respectively, when discussing whether or not God can be seen. From the seed of Ambrose’s reflection, Augustine derives a complex, threefold hierarchy of seeing: corporeally, spiritually, and intellectually. See esp. Aug. *Ep.* 147.19.46 (CSEL 44: 320–21) and Aug. *Ep.* 148.2.9–10 (CSEL 44: 339–41). The thirteenth-century supplement to Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae* also references Ambrose’s phrase when responding to whether or not the blessed will one day see God with the eyes of the body. Ambrose’s statement is further used as authoritative support for the Supplement’s distinction between seeing directly and indirectly. See *ST* III suppl. 92, a. 2.

narrative's assumed reliability—(1) eyewitnesses and (2) ministers of the Word—taking each predication in turn. Talk of eyewitnesses pertains to those who saw Jesus, but it also triggers within Ambrose's scriptural imagination a collection of biblical texts debated in monarchian and homoian controversies. These texts represent the literary battleground for determining the discrete identity of the Son and the nature of the Son's relationship to the Father, respectively. Evidence of Ambrose's debt to these interpretative traditions, I will argue, is clear.

Dispute and controversy over the Son's visibility arose with the monarchian controversies of the early third century. Tertullian's *Against Praxeas* will serve as our initial entrance into early monarchian theology and the biblical texts that inform it. The follower of Praxeas, Tertullian contends, was guilty of eliding the identity of the Father and Son; the Father could be said to simply *become* the Son. In response, Tertullian upholds the distinctive identity of the Son and his connection to the Father. While Tertullian applies language of the Son's "projection" from the Father and tends toward a "minoration" of the Son with respect to the Father, he indicates the Son's substantial continuity with the Father.⁸ Just as a sunbeam allows us to see in the light of the sun, so does the Son allow us to glimpse something divine. Still, this sunbeam is a *portio* that moderates the sun's substance.⁹

While several generations separated Tertullian's anti-monarchian polemic and the post-Nicene homoian controversies, similar scriptural texts were disputed in both battles.

⁸ The language of "minoration" is Ernest Evans'. See Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas: The Text Edited, with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2011), 44. For a primary text that admits of this minoration interpretation, see Tert. *Prax.* 9.2 (CCSL 2: 1168).

⁹ Tert. *Prax.* 14.3 (CCSL 2: 1176).

Phillip's demand to see the Father (Jn. 14:8–10), for instance, is consistently cited, as is Jesus's statement that he can do nothing apart from the Father (Jn. 5:19). Homoians, unlike monarchians, did not question the distinct identity of the Son. That was assumed. Homoians questioned the Son's sharing of substance or power with Father. The true God was thought to be invisible, and given that the Son was visible, it made little sense to identify the Son as God. This seeming, and substantial, disparity between Father and Son was only compounded by the fact that the word "substance" was nowhere to be found in the scriptures.

Anti-homoian polemics, like those we find in Hilary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus, and Ambrose, assumed the mantle of reexamining the homoians' supporting texts. Though specific to their respective contexts, Hilary, Victorinus, and Ambrose all reference the critical importance of the Son's visible *opera* for determining the Son's invisible shared divinity and power with the Father. Victorinus uses the Greek term ὁμοούσιος for making his case; Hilary and Ambrose do not. It is clear however that each of the three is trying to defend the Nicene cause against those who want to drive an ontological wedge between the Father and Son based on the latter's visibility.

Upon his appointment to the see of Milan by acclamation, Ambrose became a dominant personality in a religious-political landscape fraught with debate. Though complicated by imperial power and regional politics, this debate was over whether the Son was of the same or similar substance as the Father. Ambrose, as we will see, was an ardent defender of the former. His predecessor, Auxentius, argued the latter—that the Son was of similar, but not of the same, substance as the Father.¹⁰ Because of his similar

¹⁰ For an extensive overview of homoian theology, see Michel Meslin, *Les Ariens d'Occident: 335–430* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), 253–403. On Ambrose's engagement with homoian theology in

proof texts and exegetical strategies, Ambrose's inclusion in this Latin pro-Nicene tradition is straightforward. I will further claim that these traditional Latin debts are driven by a visual logic that emphasizes Jesus's concrete works as sources of insight into the invisible nature of the Godhead. While there might be some who quibble with this claim, it is admittedly benign. Ambrose's unprecedented move comes when he connects this Christological visual logic with a similar logic pertaining to human action and the acquisition of virtue. Such a connection is made, again, with reference to the second predicate in Luke 1:2 ("ministers of the Word"). The ministers are those who follow after the precepts of Jesus, virtuous in both *intentio* and *actio*. The apostles, Mary and Martha, and other followers of Jesus depict for us the challenge of having intent and action expressed in our deeds. Often, Ambrose insists, human action favors one or the other: well intended but not enacted, or too hasty and not thought through.

Human action follows the same visual script as its divine analogue, revealing individuals' true intentions and theological allegiances. I maintain throughout that this parallel construction was no coincidence but an intentional product of Ambrose's combining his theological sources and his typically Roman education. As one formed for public service and political readiness, Ambrose filters his patchwork theological sourcing through the life of the orator. In so doing, he translates his Latin theological heritage, which foregrounds the concrete works of Jesus, into a moral register. What results are exhortations to distinctly public virtue: the importance of bodily comportment, voice inflection, and gait. These, as we will explore, are critical topics in the works of Cicero,

particular, see Christoph Markschies, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie: Kirchen- und theologiegeschichtliche Studien zu Antiarrianismus und Neunizänismus bei Ambrosius und im lateinischen Westen (364-381 n.Chr.)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 84–142.

Quintilian, and Seneca, among others. Discerning the intricacies of human action, for Ambrose, thus offers insight into the moral standing of an individual.

This bridge Ambrose draws between divine and human action, I argue, is operative in his description of the image of God, which is supported by his gloss on Isaiah 49:16 (“Behold, Jerusalem, I have painted thy walls,” LXX). Two things follow. First, I will show that for Ambrose, Isaiah 49:16 proves that God is the source of virtue. Secondly, in Ambrose’s gloss on Isaiah 49:16, he holds that a well-painted soul is one in which “the semblance of divine operation shines.”¹¹ With this phrase, I argue that Ambrose does not simply intend a claim to the human being’s dignity. Careful study of Ambrose’s other uses of “semblance” and “shines” establishes that the semblance of divine operation shines in the soul means that the character of human action mirrors its divine author. In other words, human action follows the same visual logic as the action of its divine artist.

Discerning the character of human action presses us to say something about the content of that action. The last chapter proposes that, for Ambrose, the distinctiveness of the saint’s moral action is her simplicity of intention, word, and deed. Ambrose further maintains that Jesus is the “beginning” (*principium*) of virtue, meaning he is both the moral standard and starting point of virtue. That Christ can be labeled the *principium* again sends Ambrose looking for other instances of the word in the scriptures. I will note that Ambrose’s use of *principium* comes from a variant of Isaiah 9:6 (“...and the *principium* shall be upon his shoulders”), which Ambrose attaches to the first part of the verse (“a child born and son given”). The reference to a child—Ambrose takes it to imply

¹¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

Christ as *the* Child—indicates the virtue embodied in childlikeness, again reiterating the importance of simplicity.

I argue that Ambrose’s use of a family of words for simplicity—*simplicitas*, *integritas*, etc.—does the double service of reiterating the concrete and lived character of human action, while attaching simplicity to orthodoxy. It is no coincidence then that Ambrose resorts to the common trope of calling the homoian position as decidedly un-simple. Proceedings from the Council of Aquileia will serve as an extended test case. Repeatedly, Ambrose lambasts Palladius and Secundianus, labeling them deceptive and cagey. Such duplicitous behavior, he thinks, poorly hides their vice and, perhaps more importantly, their theological missteps and homoian allegiance. In light of these connections, Ambrose’s exhortation to mean what we say is not simply a veiled attempt at theatrical rhetoric. How one presents herself in word and deed speaks volumes about her interior motivations and theological proclivities. By treating human action as a script, Ambrose aligns public virtue and orthodoxy, both components motivated by a visual logic that attends to the significance of works for indicators of invisible realities.

Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized in five chapters. Chapter One identifies four Latin antecedents to Ambrose: Tertullian, Novatian, Hilary of Poitiers, and Marius Victorinus, who helped lay the foundation of Western Christology. In each of these authors, I show how and for what ends their theology is driven by a visual logic that tries either to argue for the Son’s discrete identity or to square the Son’s visibility with the invisibility of the true God. Chapter Two reveals Ambrose as a card-carrying member of this Latin

theological tradition, highlighting the critical importance of Jesus' visibility for disclosing his own invisible divinity, which he is said to share with the Father. For Ambrose, Jesus' works (*opera*) prove his divinity; because of them we can see that the Son shares a single power with the Father. Hence, the logic works the other way, as well. Because the Son and Father share a common, invisible power, when we witness the Son's works, we are actually witnessing the Father working, too. Ambrose describes this divine working in several ways, but his most lasting statement argues simply for the unity of operations.

Chapter Three bridges Ambrose's Christology and his moral theology by way of his doctrine of the image of God. If God can be said to operate in accord with such a visual logic, then two things can be said about human beings. The first is that Ambrose's description of God as image-painter of human beings, supported by his unprecedented use and interpretation of Isaiah 49:16 ("Behold, Jerusalem, I have painted thy walls."), means that God is the source of moral action. Chapter four explicates the second implication of Ambrose's claim that the well-painted soul is one "in which a semblance of divine operation shines."¹² This phrase, I argue, implies not only the beauty or inherent dignity of the human person, but that human action resembles its divine counterpart. Or, to put it more precisely, the same visual logic that governs Ambrose's considerations of divine operations governs his considerations of virtuous human action.

If chapter four shows how human action resembles its divine counterpart, then Chapter Five argues for the distinctive Christian (or pro-Nicene) content of that action. In that chapter, I seek to answer the question of what makes Christian virtue different from

¹² Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

those who do not accept God's simplicity, either because they worship many gods or because they posit a difference of substance within the Trinity. The chapter begins by drawing out Ambrose's claim of the homoians' deception and disingenuity in the council proceedings from Aquileia, 381 CE. Lest we think such a claim is mere rhetorical artifice, I show simplicity as moral ideal and the hallmark of the Christian in Ambrose's two-part funeral oration for his brother, Satyrus. Thus, simplicity marks off distinct Christian virtue. The chapter concludes by analyzing Ambrose's interactions with and descriptions of non-Nicenes. These interactions and descriptions serve to upbraid his opponents' deception and duplicity and promote the simple practices and presentation of faith and truth. Ambrose depicts non-Nicenes as disingenuous and vicious, while pro-Nicenes, consistent and simple in their faithful words and deeds, allow their yea to be yea.

While the chapters that follow aim at theological reconstruction, I take into account Ambrose's public station and pedagogical and rhetorical training, typical of a budding, fourth-century Roman elite. Brief glimpses into these avenues of formation serve only to emphasize the visual logic operative over the course of Ambrose's bishopric and his writings. The successful Roman proconsul, much like the true orator or philosopher, was to practice what he preached, to comport the body, voice, and gait such that interior stability was publicized for both his own sake and for the sake of his audience. These ideals are not lost on Ambrose, who, though "snatched" from his civic duties, transposed those same ideals to his episcopal office and allowed them to inform his theology.

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT WE SEE WHEN WE SEE THE SON: PRECEDENTS IN LATIN TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

From its advent, Latin trinitarian theology's concern for the relationship between the Father and Son has been centered on the theme of sight or visibility. Multiple scriptural passages, highlighting the critical importance of seeing the Son (or God, in general),¹ fuel this reflection and rise to prominence within the Latin tradition because of their contested status in third-century monarchian controversies² and fourth-century debates between pro-Nicenes and Western homoians.³ Though a century-wide chasm and

¹ E.g., Isaiah 44:6, 45:5, 45:14; Baruch 3:36–38; John 5:19, 10:30, 14:9–11; Romans 1:20, 9:5; Philippians 2:5–7; Colossians 1:15; and Hebrews 1:3, 1 Timothy 1:17, 6:16. See Michel René Barnes, “Latin Trinitarian Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70–84, at 72–73. Barnes notes that “from its beginning Latin theology has an emphasis on ‘sight’ in trinitarian theology: our sight of the Son, of the Father in the Son, and the Son’s sight of the Father,” and that Tertullian “begins the Latin anti-monarchian emphasis on the theophanies as ‘proofs’ for the separate existence of the Father and the Son.” See also Alan F. Segal, “Two Powers in Heaven’ and Early Christian Trinitarian Thinking,” in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., and Gerald O’Collins, S.J. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 73–95. Building on his earlier book, Segal maintains that disputes over “two powers” find their origins in Hellenistic Jewish (esp. Philo) and Rabbinic thinkers. There is also an emphasis on sight in Greek theology, particularly Origen, but the overlap of the cited scriptural passages between Origen and Ambrose is not as great as that between Latin traditions and Ambrose. Hilary, for instance, points out that the “Arians” use John 5:19, 10:30, and 14:8–11 for their argumentation. See Hilar. *Trin.* 8.37 (CCSL 62a: 350), 8.48 (CCSL 62a: 360–61), 9.2 (CCSL 62a: 372–73), 10.21 (CCSL 62a: 474–75), 10.25 (CCSL 62a: 479–81). See also Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 824–48, where he lists debated scriptures in trinitarian controversies, and he notes that John’s gospel was “the major battlefield in the New Testament during the Arian controversy” (834); Richard Paul Vaggione, *OHC, Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 383–95; Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1975), 505–10; Meslin, *Les Ariens d’Occident 335–430*, 231–34.

² See Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 3–10, at 8; Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1958), 3: 63; Stephen E. Waers, “Monarchianism and Origen’s Early Trinitarian Theology” (PhD Dissertation, Marquette University, 2016), *passim*.

³ By “pro-Nicene” in this chapter, I am referring generally to those in support of the Nicene formula and its key theological pressure points. In the next chapter I write of pro-Nicene theology as a technical category, distinguishing it from neo-Nicene theology. That a similar polemic, with similar proof texts, could be deployed is no doubt due to certain similarities between monarchianism and Western homoianism. See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 566–67. Hanson writes: “It was certainly an item in the Homoian faith that a doctrine of the Incarnation meant a reduction of divinity. . . . Ever since the Second Sirmium Creed of 357 . . . a drastic subordination of the Son to the Father had been the keynote of this school of thought. . . . The *Sermo Arianorum* maintains that the Son is eternally,

the epoch-making Council of Nicaea separated these debates, a common canon of contested texts lay at the core of each.⁴ Extended reflection on Phillip's demand of Jesus to see the Father (Jn 14:8–10), for instance, can be found both in Tertullian's polemic against the monarchian Praxeas and in Marius Victorinus's defense of the consubstantiality of the Son and Father against "the Arians".⁵

Commonality, however, should not detract from the debates' differing goals. Anti-monarchians attempted to establish the discrete, divine identity of the Son, while anti-homoians, generally unworried with establishing the Son's identity as such, sought to understand how witnessing the visible words and works of the Son grants insight into the invisible nature of the Father. This insight into the divine nature is possible, by anti-homoian lights, because the Father and Son are united in power (or in substance).⁶ By and large, passages from the Gospel of John served as the exegetical battleground upon which this fight ensued.⁷ Four authors are particularly beneficial for our analysis: Tertullian of

constitutionally, subordinated to the Father, even after the necessity of doing anything to promote our salvation is past."

⁴ See D. H. Williams, "Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century," *HTR* 99.2 (2006): 187–206. Williams shows how monarchian and Arian theologies were often grouped together as two expressions of a similar heresy. I explore Williams's analysis later in bridging anti-monarchian and anti-homoian polemics. See also R. P. C. Hanson, "The Bible in the Early Church," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and P. R. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 412–53, at 416, 440–48.

⁵ John 14:8–10 as well as multiple other scriptural texts will be studied in detail throughout.

⁶ With Barnes, Ayres, and others, I prefer to speak of pro-Nicene theology as a transformation (rather than an abrupt change) of its pre-Nicene antecedents. See Michel René Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," *Augustinian Studies* 26.2 (1995): 51–79; Ayres, *Nicaea*, 302–4; Matthew Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10–66. See also M. R. Barnes, "A Night at the OPERA: That the Father is Seen in the Son," unpublished monograph chapter. Barnes calls anti-monarchianism the "platform logic of Latin trinitarian theology," and he states that "key points of engagement with the monarchians remain basic themes or exegetical nodes in Latin trinitarian theology, among which are a concern for the connection between sight and being, and the exegesis of John 14:9–10."

⁷ See Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 112–28. Wiles draws out the exegetical context

Carthage, Novatian of Rome, Hilary of Poitiers, and Marius Victorinus.⁸ These four serve as touchstones, and identifying the general contours of their trinitarian theologies will aid both in locating Ambrose's deep Latin debts and in naming his critical advances.

Tertullian of Carthage

Emphasis on seeing God is prevalent throughout Tertullian's (ca. 160–240) works, unsurprising if we consider Daniélou's assertion that Tertullian's theology takes the form of "a kind of phenomenology" for seeking to understand the identity of the Son.⁹ Writing in North Africa, Tertullian debated the teachings of various opponents. His treatise *Against Praxeas* was penned against a figure likely connected to the Roman

of third- and fourth-century christological debates. He writes: "This same characteristic of the Gospel [of John] gave rise also to the teaching of Praxeas and Noetus, who identified the divine element in Christ with the Father. This challenge could be met in two ways. In the first place, it was necessary to show that the Gospel [of John] makes a clear distinction between the persons of the Father and the Son. And secondly, it was necessary to give an alternative exegesis of those texts on which Praxeas and Noetus had sought to base their case. Both tasks involved a more precise definition of the pattern of Christological interpretation demanded by the Fourth Gospel" (117). Hanson notes the importance of Johannine texts in Christological debates, as well. See Hanson, "The Bible in the Early Church," 444–45.

⁸ I focus here on precedents in Latin trinitarian theology, rather than Greek, because the scriptural consonances between Ambrose and his Latin forbears are more striking than his consonances with Greek ones. See Michel René Barnes, *Power of God: Dynamis in Gregory Nyssa* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 219. I realize the challenge inherent in cloistering off "Latin" from "Greek," especially given recent scholarly advances that tend to frustrate such neat dichotomies. My working distinction between Greek and Latin here has nothing to do with freighted theological or philosophical assumptions and everything to do with that which is written in either the Greek or Latin language. The theme of sight is also prevalent in Greek theology. The scholarly assumption that has been shown to be deeply problematic was that the West moved from unity to trinity, while the East moved from trinity to unity. See again Michel René Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," 51–79; and Lewis Ayres, "'Remember That You Are Catholic' (*serm.* 52.2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God," *J ECS* 8.1 (2000): 39–82, and sources cited therein.

⁹ Jean Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity: A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicea, vol. 3*, trans. David Smith and John Austin Baker (London; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 343. For dating and background information, see Johannes Quasten, ed., *Patrology, Vol. 2: The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1983), 246–339, at 284–85 for *Against Praxeas*.

bishop Callistus, and his followers.¹⁰ Tertullian only gives us two bits of information about this Praxeas: that he traveled from Asia to Rome¹¹ and that, while in Rome, he persuaded the bishop against Montanist teachings.¹² Praxean theology was known for stressing the absolute unity of God, and hence, for making the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit “one and the same.”¹³ Based on Tertullian’s engagement in *Against Praxeas*, we can conclude that the monarchians buttressed such strong claims to unity by highlighting

¹⁰ Waers, “Monarchianism and Origen’s Early Trinitarian Theology,” 133. Waers notes Hermann that Hagemann (*Die römische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* [Freiburg im Breisgau, 1864], 234–57) advances the view that Praxeas was a pseudonym for Callistus. See Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 525–35 and Ronald E. Heine, “The Christology of Callistus,” *JTS* 49 (1998): 56–91, at 58 and 60. See Andrew Brian McGowan, “Tertullian and the ‘Heretical’ Origins of the ‘Orthodox’ Trinity,” *J ECS* 14.4 (2006): 437–57, at 449–51; Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 525–29. See also Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 59–61. Harnack argues against the scholarly assumption that “Praxeas” was a “nickname . . . that by it [readers] really ought to understand Noëtus, Epigonus, or Callistus” (3: 59). Cf. Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 24–25. Dunn asserts that “Praxeas . . . may well be a pseudonym for a Roman figure who advocated monarchianism (modalism or patripassianism), the doctrine that so insisted on the oneness of God that it blurred any distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit because each was just God in a particular guise.” J. N. D. Kelly makes a similar point in his *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), 121. Evans does not argue either way, simply that it has been suggested that Praxeas is a placeholder or nickname. See Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas*, 10, 184–85. See also Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 52–80. Harnack asserts that “Monarchians of all shades” “represented the conception of the Person of Christ founded on the history of salvation, as against one based on the history of his nature” (3: 62). Harnack labels the opponents of Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, and Novatian “modalistic monarchians.” He asserts that monarchianism was “for almost a generation the official theory in Rome” (3: 53) and that “sympathies of the vast majority of the Roman Christians . . . were on the side of the Monarchians, even among the clergy only a minority supported Hippolytus” (3: 57). See Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. 2, 285 where Praxeas is named “a Modalist or Patripassian.” Quasten, Ernest Evans, and Timothy Barnes all date *Adversus Praxean* to Tertullian’s “Montanist period” (213 CE) because of its strident language against those who oppose its tenets. See Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas*, 75–82; Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*, reissued with corrections and a postscript, 1985 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 326–28. While Tertullian’s career is typically divided between pre- and post-Montanist phases, several recent treatments shy away from drawing stark lines of distinction and are less inclined to see dramatic changes in Tertullian’s literary output. See, e.g., Dunn, *Tertullian*, 6; and Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 68–69.

¹¹ Tert. *Prax.* 1.4 (CCSL 2: 1159).

¹² Tert. *Prax.* 1.5 (CCSL 2: 1159–60). See Waers, “Monarchianism and Origen’s Early Trinitarian Theology,” 132–33.

¹³ Tert. *Prax.* 2.3 (CCSL 2: 1162; trans. Evans, 132): *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat.*

scriptures like Isaiah 45:5 (“I am God and there is none beside me.”)¹⁴—a position one commentator has helpfully called “an exclusive understanding of the unity of God.”¹⁵ To combat such teaching, Tertullian takes exception to both the form and content of monarchian exegesis and reinterprets those same signal texts to conform to what he claims is received teaching and to a creedal “rule of faith.”

Certain monarchians were also known for identifying the body of the Son as the true manifestation of the Father,¹⁶ a tendency that laid bare debts to Stoic mixture theory.¹⁷ Quick to label the Godhead (or Father) “spirit” (*pneuma*), monarchians maintained the Son was properly human. Only when the spirit was mixed with the human could the human be termed properly divine. This “mixing” of divine and human elements was precisely how the Roman monarchian Callistus, for instance, could conclude that the Son was united with the Father.¹⁸ Regarding this monarchian logic of bodily unity, Anthony Briggman writes: “This union of the Father/Spirit with the Son as ‘one God’

¹⁴ Tert. *Prax.* 20.1 (CCSL 2: 1186): *Ego Deus et alius praeter me non est.*

¹⁵ Waers, “Monarchianism and Origen’s Early Trinitarian Theology,” 139.

¹⁶ See Heine, “Christology of Callistus,” 61–63, 68–71, 75–78. Heine references Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 9.12.16–19, which presents Callistus’ exegesis of John 14:10: “For the Father who was in him assumed the flesh and made it God by uniting it with himself, and made it one, so that Father and Son are designated one God, and this unity, being a person, cannot be two, and so the Father suffered with the Son.”

¹⁷ See Anthony Briggman, “Irenaeus’ Christology of Mixture,” *JTS* 64.2 (2013): 516–55, at 517–18. Briggman writes that the “Stoic concern [was] to arrive at a physical theory that explains how the active principle (God/pneuma/Logos) and passive principle (matter) relate to each other.” Cf. Katharina Bracht, “Product or Foundation? The Relationship between the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity and Christology in Hippolytus’ and Tertullian’s Debate with Monarchianism,” *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 18 (2007): 14–31, at 24. Bracht mentions Tertullian takes up “the stoic theory of the physical unification of bodies . . . not as in the case of an alloy, in which both substances are transformed into a new one and take on new characteristics, but in the sense of an extensive mixture, when both substances retain their original characteristics.” See Paul Mattei, “Angelus ad imaginem? L’anthropologie de Tertullien,” *Augustinianum* 41.2 (2001): 291–327, at 299, where Mattei draws out the connection between Tertullian’s image theology and how in Christ the image of man “coincides” with the effigy of the Word.

¹⁸ Briggman, “Irenaeus’ Christology of Mixture,” 526.

becomes problematic when it comes to the passion of Jesus, for in order to avoid patripassianism Callistus must be able to say that the Son suffers while the Father/Spirit does not.”¹⁹ Briggman’s assessment makes it plain why Tertullian would write that Praxeas “drove out the Paraclete and crucified the Father.”²⁰ The mixing of the spirit and human might well have yielded a possible answer to the Son’s distinct identity, but it also could be understood to compromise the spirit by subjecting it to the suffering of the human body. Recognizing this lurking and untenable problem, monarchians concluded that the Father could participate in the suffering of the Son without feeling the same effects as the Son.

Tertullian then summarizes the monarchian position as follows: “The Father himself came down into the virgin, was himself born of her, himself suffered, and therefore, is himself Jesus Christ” (*Ipsum dicit Patrem descendisse in uirginem, ipsum ex ea natum, ipsum passum, denique ipsum esse Iesum Christum*).²¹ As Tertullian sees it, Praxeas must describe the life, ministry, and death of the Son as modes of paternal manifestation: the Father is (or becomes) the Son, even as he condescended from invisible to visible. The danger, in Tertullian’s eyes, was that each of the divine persons would lose a distinct identity. And this very danger was the pitfall that came packaged with naming God as one without qualification or specification. If the Praxean line was

¹⁹ Briggman, “Irenaeus’ Christology of Mixture,” 526.

²⁰ Tert. *Prax.* 1.5 (CCSL 2: 1160).

²¹ Tert. *Prax.* 1.1 (CCSL 2: 1159). Translations are mine unless noted otherwise. See Mark DelCogliano, “The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6.1 (2012): 117–38, at 128.

taken, then the ways in which the scriptures speak of divine agency—of each divine person acting—would be lost.

With this critique in mind, Tertullian's concern throughout *Against Praxeas* is to maintain that the visible presence of the Son as a divine person does not detract from the Father's single, unmatched power. To make his case for both the transcendence of the Father and real existence of the Son, Tertullian describes how the monarchians have failed to recognize the critical distinction between divine monarchy and "economy" (*oikonomia*). This distinction implies that there is both one God and that

the one only God has a Son, his Word who proceeded from him, through whom all things have been made; and without whom nothing has been made (Jn. 1:1–4): that this one was sent by the Father into the virgin and was born of her, being both man and God, Son of man and Son of God, and was named Jesus Christ; that he suffered, died, and was buried, according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3–4) and, having been raised up by the Father and taken back into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father (Mk. 16:19) and will come to judge the quick and the dead (Acts 10:42); and that thereafter he, according to his promise, (Jn. 16:7), sent from the Father the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²²

Tertullian labels this a rule of faith (*regula fidei*), that is, a tried standard that antedates all the "very novelty of yesterday's Praxeas" (*ipsa nouellitas Praxeae hesterni*).²³ The catechetical nature of the rule further reveals that Tertullian understood the debate with the monarchians to be one over received teaching.²⁴ "Remember at every point that I have professed this rule" (*regulam*), Tertullian reminds his audience, "by which I testify that

²² Tert. *Prax.* 2.1 (CCSL 2: 1160). For more on Tertullian's monarchian context and consonances with Hippolytus, see Bracht, "Product or Foundation?," 21–25.

²³ Tert. *Prax.* 2.2 (CCSL 2: 1160). For more on Tertullian's use of *regula*, including a cross-textual analysis, see Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 188–92. Evans contends: "The Rule of Faith is not a form of words but a series of ideas, a guide for teachers rather than a test of the neophyte's faith" (189).

²⁴ See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 2006), 100–130, at 115–16. Kelly references *Prax.* 2 and shows its consonances with the ancient Roman baptismal creed.

the Father and Son and Spirit are unseparated from one another, and in that case you will recognize what I say and in what sense I say it” (*et ita quid quomodo dicatur agnosces*).²⁵

Several passages from *Against Praxeas* bear out Tertullian’s anti-monarchian intent and uncover the importance of seeing the Father by means of the Son and what that seeing says about the identity of the Son and his relationship to the Father. Tertullian notes, as do the monarchians, that he finds throughout the scriptures descriptions of God, both unseen²⁶ and seen.²⁷ The challenge rests squarely on the exegete to insure that the seeming contradiction of these statements on the visibility and invisibility of God remains more apparent than real. Tertullian contends that in all the Old Testament theophanies—e.g., Abraham at the oak of Mamre (Gen. 18) or Jacob wrestling with a heavenly figure (Gen. 32)—there must have been an “other” (*alius*) besides the invisible God, and this other is manifesting the divine presence. Tertullian names the Son this “other.”²⁸ As the

²⁵ Tert. *Prax.* 9.1 (CCSL 2: 1168).

²⁶ E.g., Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16. See René Braun, *Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1977), 53. For Tertullian’s references to Exodus 33:20, see Tert. *Prax.* 14.1 (CCSL 2: 1176), 14.5 (CCSL 2: 1177), 14.8 (CCSL 2: 1177–78), 15.2 (CCSL 2: 1178–79); *Marc.* 2.27 (CSEL 47: 373–74), 4.22 (CSEL 47: 495–96), 5.19 (CSEL 47: 643). For Tertullian’s references to John 1:18, see *Prax.* 8.3 (CCSL 2: 1174), 15.2 (CCSL 2: 1178–79), 15.4 (CCSL 2: 1179), 15.6 (CCSL 2: 1179), 21.3 (CCSL 2: 1186). For references to 1 Timothy 6:16, see *Prax.* 15.2 (CCSL 2: 1178–79), 15.4 (CCSL 2: 1179), 15.8 (CCSL 2: 1180), 16.6 (CCSL 2: 1181–82).

²⁷ E.g., 1 John 1:1 (“We have seen and heard and handled the Word of life”); 1 Corinthians 9:1 (“Have I not, he says, seen Jesus”). For Tertullian’s other references to 1 John 1:1, see *Prax.* 15.2–5 (CCSL 2: 1178–79). For Tertullian’s other references to 1 Corinthians 9:1, see *Prax.* 15.2, 15.7 (CCSL 2: 1179–80).

²⁸ Tert. *Prax.* 14.6 (CCSL 2: 1177). For other instances of *alius* see *Prax.* 5.5, 12.6–7, 21.2–3, 25.1. For a discussion of *alius* in *Prax.*, see D. Rankin, “Tertullian’s Vocabulary of the Divine Individuals in *Adversus Praxean*,” *Sacris Erudiri* 40 (2001): 5–46, at 10–13. Cf. Segal, “Two Powers in Heaven,” 86–87. Segal points to both Philo and Justin Martyr as those who wrote of the λόγος as ἕτερος θεός. Segal points to the work of E. R. Goodenough (*The Theology of Justin Martyr: An Investigation into the Conceptions of the Earliest Christian Literature and Its Hellenistic and Judaistic Influences* [Jena: Verlag Frommannsche Buchhandlung, 1923]) for secondary support of “another God” in Hellenistic Jewish literature.

Father's *alius* the Son is like the Father in every way possible, and yet distinct "by distribution" (*distributione*).²⁹

Therefore it was the Son always who was seen and the Son always who conversed and the Son always who worked by the authority and will of the Father; because "the Son can do nothing of himself, unless he should see the Father doing it" (Jn. 5:19)—doing it, of course, *in his mind*. For the Father acts *by mind*, whereas the Son sees and accomplishes that which is *in the Father's mind*. Thus all things were made by the Son, and without him nothing was made (cf. Jn. 1:3).³⁰

Here, we witness Tertullian explicating the relationship between descriptions of God as visible and invisible and glossing John 5:19 for his defense. The Son, following the authority and will of the Father, reveals the invisible Father, who acts "in mind" (*in sensu*).

Substantia is what Father and Son share.³¹ The Father is invisible with reference to his "plentitude of divinity" (*plenitudinem diuinitatis*)³² and "plentitude of majesty" (*plenitudine maiestatis*),³³ and the Son is seen "according to human capacity" (*secundum hominum capacitates*).³⁴ The Son, as word and spirit, is invisible "out of the condition of

²⁹ Tert. *Prax.* 9.1 (CCSL 2: 1168).

³⁰ *Prax.* 15.9 (CCSL 2: 1180): *Filius ergo uisus est semper et Filius conuersatus est semper et Filius operates est semper ex auctoritate Patris et uoluntate quia Filius nihil a semetipso potest facere, nisi uiderit Patrem facientem, in sensu scilicet facientem. Pater enim sensu agit, Filius uero quod in Patris sensu est uidens perficit. Sic omnia per Filium facta sunt et sine illo factum est nihil.* See Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, 187–94.

³¹ *Prax.* 2.4 (CCSL 2: 1161). *Quasi non sic quoque unus sit omnia dum ex uno omnia per substantiae scilicet unitatem et nihilominus custodiatur oikonomiae sacramentum, quae unitatem in trinitatem disponit, tres dirigens ... Patrem et Filium et Spiritum, tres autem non statu sed gradu, nec substantia sed forma, nec potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiae et unius status et unius potestatis quia unus Deus ex quo et gradus isti et formae et species in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti depuntantur.* For a discussion of this vocabulary in Tertullian, see Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 38–58. Evans maintains that *substantia* in *Prax.* should be understood as a similar concept to Aristotelian οὐσία (Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 53).

³² *Prax.* 14.2 (CCSL 2: 1176).

³³ *Prax.* 14.3 (CCSL 2: 1176).

³⁴ *Prax.* 14.2 (CCSL 2: 1176).

his substance” (*ex substantiae condicione iam nunc*),³⁵ and yet visible according to the “measure of his derivation” (*pro modulo deriuationis*).³⁶ By *substantia* I take Tertullian to mean, as Daniélou has maintained, “the concrete ground which permanently underlies individual realities and persists throughout the varieties of qualities, actions and changing elements.”³⁷ *Substantia* is that given which serves to “define the different orders of reality.”³⁸

To make his point, Tertullian offers an analogy: “just as we may not look upon the sun in respect of the total of its substance (*substantiae*) which is in the sky, though with our eyes we can tolerate its beam because of the moderation of the portion which from thence reaches out to the earth.”³⁹ The Son is likened to a beam of sunlight, a *portio* of the substance that allows us to see something of the light without gazing directly at the searing fullness of the sun. It is not simply that the beam is seen and the sun unseen; the beam proceeds out of the sun’s substance and moderates that substance so that all is illumined. Similarly, it is not simply that the Son is seen while the Father is not—Tertullian’s distinctions between divine unity and economy cannot be mapped neatly

³⁵ *Prax.* 14.6 (CCSL 2: 1177).

³⁶ *Prax.* 14.3 (CCSL 2: 1176).

³⁷ Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 345–46.

³⁸ Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 346.

³⁹ *Prax.* 14.3 (CCSL 2: 1176; trans. adapted from Evans, 149). *Sicut nec solemnibus obis contemplari licet, quantum ad ipsam substantiae summam quae est in caelis, radium autem eius toleramus oculis pro temperatura portionis quae in terram inde porrigitur.* See Evans, 39–45, who explores the range of meanings associated with *substantia* in Tertullian’s broader corpus: sense of property; akin to ὑπόστασις; and synonymous with “being” or “essence”. See also Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, 167–99. Daniélou discusses the important role *substantia* plays in Tertullian’s works, noting the dispute over Tertullian’s possible sources of the term. Daniélou implicitly sides with Braun, who argues against Harnack (theory of legal origin) and Evans (Latinized Greek concept) that *substantia* is a term used from “everyday speech . . . further proof of the fact that Tertullian’s vocabulary is more indebted to ordinary language than to technical vocabulary” (345).

onto the distinctions between visibility and invisibility.⁴⁰ While the Father is absolutely unseen in himself, the Son is seen according to human capacity and unseen according to his substantial unity with the Father; the Son's visibility depends on his "condition" (*condicio*) in the economy of salvation. As we noted above, in *Against Praxeas* 2.4, Tertullian uses the technical term *gradus*, which denotes the "order of succession of the divine persons" and indicates divine threeness, conjuring up images of logical progression or steps. Ultimately, however, consideration of these "grades and forms and species" points to the one God (*unus Deus*).⁴¹ "They are three, not by status, but by grade" (*tres autem non statu sed gradu*), as Tertullian puts it.⁴²

The constant give and take between unity and trinity recurs throughout Tertullian's work, emerging prominently at *Against Praxeas* 24.

Therefore he also made manifest the conjunction of the two persons, so that the Father separately might not, as though visible, be asked for in open view, and that the Son might be accepted as the representor of the Father. And no less did [Jesus] explain this also, in what manner the Father was in the Son and the Son in the Father: "The words," he says, "that I speak unto you, are not mine" (Jn. 14:10)—evidently because they are the Father's—"but the Father remaining in me does the works" (Jn. 14:10). Therefore the Father, remaining in the Son through works of power and words of doctrine, is seen through those things through which he remains, and through him in whom he remains: and from this very fact it is apparent that each person is himself and none other, while he says, "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (Jn. 14:11). And so he says, "Believe." But "believe"

⁴⁰ Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 365. "This contrast [between invisible Father and visible Son] does not affect the specific nature of the persons of the Trinity in eternity, but only their existence as individual figures in the economy."

⁴¹ *Prax.* 2.4 (CCSL 2: 1161). *Tres autem non statu sed gradu, nec substantia sed forma, nec potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiae et unius status et unius potestatis quia unus Deus ex quo et gradus isti et formae et species in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti deputantur.* Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 359. See Joseph Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien, II: Substantialité et individualité; étude du vocabulaire philosophique*, *Théologie* 69 (Paris: Aubier, 1966), 297–430. See too Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 52–53.

⁴² *Prax.* 2.4 (CCSL 2: 1161). See also *Prax.* 9.3 (CCSL 2: 1168–69): *Sic alium a se Paracletum, quomodo et nos a Patre alium Filium ut tertium gradum ostenderet in Paracletum, sicut nos secundum in Filio propter oikonomiae obseruationem.*

what? That I am the Father? I think it is not so written, but, “That I am in the Father and the Father in me, or if not, believe because of the works” (Jn. 14:11)—those works in fact through which the Father was seen in the Son, not with the eyes but with the mind.⁴³

Note that Tertullian emphasizes the distinctiveness of Father and Son with reference to John 14:10–11: “each person is himself and none other”.⁴⁴ Such an emphasis is held over and against the monarchian claim that the Son actually *is* the Father or that the Father *becomes* the Son. We also see Tertullian arguing for the indivisibility of the Father and Son, an argument that highlights, again, the inseparable substance of the persons.⁴⁵

The Father and Son are united, not in a single bodily person, but in “works of power and words of doctrine” (*per opera ergo uirtutum et uerba doctrinae*), and that this is “in respect of unity of substance, not of singularity of number” (*ad substantiae unitatem, non ad numeri singularitatem*).⁴⁶ For Tertullian, Christ functions as the *uicarius*

⁴³ Tert. *Prax.* 24.7–8 (CCSL 2: 1195; trans. amended from Evans 168–69). Bolding added for emphasis. *Igitur et manifestam fecit duarum personarum coniunctionem ne pater seorsum quasi uisibilis in conspectu desideraretur et ut filius repraesentator patris haberetur. Et nihilominus hoc quoque interpretatus est quomodo pater esset in filio et filius in patre: uerba, inquit, quae ego loquor uobis, non sunt mea—utique quia patris—pater autem manens in me facit opera. Per opera ergo uirtutum et uerba doctrinae manens in filio pater per ea uidetur per quae manet et per eum in quo manet, ex hoc ipso apparente proprietate utriusque personae, dum dicit: ego sum in patre et pater in me. Atque adeo: credite, ait. Quid? me patrem esse? non puto scriptum esse, sed: quia ego in patre et pater in me, si quo minus, uel propter opera credite, ea utique opera per quae pater in filio non uisu, sed sensu uidebatur.* See Kevin B. McCrudden, “Monarchy and Economy in Tertullian’s *Adversus Praxeam*,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55.3 (2002): 325–37, at 334–35. McCrudden argues that the dangers of patripassianism undergird many of Tertullian’s polemical statements and motivate him to uphold the Father as invisible. McCrudden writes: “Since the Father is invisible and totally transcendent, there needs to be a visible manifestation of the invisible, one who is both second to the Father, yet united to the Father through the principle of origin in order that the transcendent Father might be revealed. In other words, Tertullian’s principle of the invisible and visible God underlies and drives his economic reflections on the Son’s authentic distinctness” (335).

⁴⁴ See Evans, *Tertullian*, 41. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 20–30. In identifying Origen of Alexandria as a starting point for analyzing Nicene theology, Ayres notes a dynamic similar to that of Tertullian here, namely, that of each divine person’s unique identity.

⁴⁵ See Tert. *Prax.* 19.8 (CCSL 2: 1185): *non ex separatione substantiae sed ex dispositione, cum indiuiduum et inseparatum Filium a Patre pronuntiamus, nec statu sed gradu alium, qui etsi Deus dicatur, quando nominatur singularis, non ideo duos Deos faciat sed unum, hoc ipso quod et Deus ex unitate Patris uocari habeat.*

⁴⁶ Tert. *Prax.* 25.1 (CCSL 2: 1195).

patris or *repraesentator patris*, by which he means not simply that the Son is “representative of the Father,” but that the Son makes present—quite literally, he is the “re-presenter”—that which (or the One whom) he recalls or sees.⁴⁷ These works and words are done through the Son and by the Father, and subsequently reveal the character of the Father, since the Father “remains” (*manet*) in the Son. While Tertullian’s grammar of this indivisibility and inseparability is not as precise or technical as that of writers in the throes of fourth-century Nicene controversies, the beginnings of such a doctrine of common substance are nonetheless discernable here.⁴⁸

The Son is said to witness the Father’s working *in sensu* (“in mind”) and act accordingly, accomplishing that which the Father has *in sensu*.⁴⁹ A technical understanding of *sensus* will further aid us in analyzing how and for what ends Tertullian spells out the distinction between divine visibility and invisibility.⁵⁰ Two possible sources help Tertullian sketch the content of *sensus*. First, *sensus* was a slippery concept in the Roman rhetorical tradition; its rendering varied from “feeling” to “meaning” to

⁴⁷ See Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas*, 308–9.

⁴⁸ See also Tert. *Herm.* 44.3 (CSEL 47: 174): *Et cui credibile est deum non apparuisse materiae uel qua consubstantiali suae per aeternitatem?*

⁴⁹ Tert. *Prax.* 15.9 (CCSL 2: 1180).

⁵⁰ See Gerald Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016), 22–27. Boersma indicates that the Son is seen “according to his mission or proper to the economy of salvation” (23). This is a critical point for Boersma, citing other secondary literature that tends to view the Son as visible and Father as invisible all the way down. Boersma’s brief section on Tertullian concludes thus: “As image, Christ is the same substance as his source and not the mediating visible image of the invisible God. Nevertheless, in the economy of salvation, Tertullian distinguishes between the *Logos*, who as invisible image shares the invisible substance of the Father, and the *sarx*—the visible image that Christ manifested in the theophanies of the Old Testament and the Incarnation” (27). See also Rankin, “Tertullian’s Vocabulary,” 13, 19: “[Tertullian] is primarily committed to the notion of the oneness of God but also to an economic threeness, implied and expressed, within it. . . . *substantia*, *potestas* and *status* [are] characteristics of the divine one-ness, while concepts such as *gradus*, *species* and *forma* are of its threeness.”

“understanding.”⁵¹ Well-versed in classical rhetoric, Tertullian likely recognized the slippage inherent in the term and attempts to use it in a more or less consistent manner when referring to a given person, place or thing (word, deed, God, etc.): *sensus* has something to do with something rational.⁵²

The use of *sensus* also recurs in the Latin *Asclepius*, a partial translation of an Egyptian-Greek Gnostic text written sometime before 413 CE and circulated throughout North Africa.⁵³ *Sensus* here functions as a technical psychological term referring to something immaterial, pure, and specifically divine. At one point, the anonymous author calls *sensus* “the soul of the gods.”⁵⁴ Still, *sensus* appears to pertain only to the highest, most powerful gods.⁵⁵ These subtleties notwithstanding, *sensus* carries with it multiple valances, similar to the Greek νοῦς (“intellect”), of which *sensus* is considered a rough

⁵¹ See Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.13.32 (LCL 268: 314–17), where Cicero indicates that every living thing has *sensus*; Cic. *De or.* 2.45.189 (LCL 348: 332–35), where *sensus* is synonymous with “feeling” or “affection.” Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 8.2 (LCL 126: 336–39), where Quintilian juxtaposes words with a clear sense and those with a “concealed meaning” (*occultos sensus*); and Phaedrus, *Fables* 4.5 (LCL 436: 306–7), where *sensus* is referred to as the “meaning” of a document. Cf. Phaedrus, *Fables* 1.7 (LCL 436: 200–1), refers to a *sensum communem* (“common sense”).

⁵² For use of *sensus* in reference to the human subject, see Tert. *Marc.* 1.16, where Tertullian contrasts *corpus* and *sensus*; *Marc.* 2.16, where Tertullian indicates that the human mind has the same “*motus et sensus*” as its divine counterpart, yet not of the same quality. Cf. Cic. *De or.* 2.35.148 (LCL 348: 304–5), where Cicero writes of judging changes in the orator’s countenance for clues to his *sensus animi*.

⁵³ See *Corpus Hermeticum II: Asclepius*, ed. A. D. Nock and trans. A. J. Festugière (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1945), 296–355. The most recent English translation is Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English Translation with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 67–92. See also Stephen Gersh, “Theological Doctrines of the Latin Asclepius,” in Richard T. Wallis, Jay Bregman, eds., *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 129–66; Clement Salaman, *Asclepius: The Perfect Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2007), 11–50. Gersh notes how the Latin *Asclepius* is a result of “syncretism” between Platonism and Stoicism, emphasizing both the “radical transcendence” and “thorough immanence” of the divine (132).

⁵⁴ *Corpus Hermeticum II: Asclepius* 17: 315–17; trans. Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, 77.

⁵⁵ *Corpus Hermeticum II: Asclepius* 18: 317; trans. Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, 77.

Latin rendering.⁵⁶ Festugière notes that *sensus* is a distinct Gnostic term that pertains to the faculty of divine intuition.⁵⁷ In the Latin *Asclepius*, *sensus* thus designates discrete insight of divine origin⁵⁸ that grants perception or understanding of that origin's character.⁵⁹ At the work's closing, the Hermeticist hymns to the "most high god":

We thank you, supreme and most high god, by whose grace alone we have attained the light of your knowledge; holy name that must be honored, the one name by which our ancestral faith blesses god alone, we thank you who deign to grant to all a father's fidelity, reverence and love, along with any power that is sweeter, by giving us the gift of *mind*, reason, and understanding—*mind*, by which we may know you; reason, by which we may seek you in our dim suppositions; knowledge, by which we may rejoice in knowing you.⁶⁰

Sensus, here translated as "mind," is a divine property bestowed upon human beings that allows for knowledge of the divine. *Sensus* is grouped with, but distinct from, *ratio* and

⁵⁶ See Copenhagen, *Hermetica*, at 217–18, 221. See also Walter Scott, *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which contain Religious and Philosophical Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistos*, volume III: Notes on the Latin *Asclepius* and the Hermetic Excerpts of Stobaeus, ed. Walter Scott (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), 100–2. Scott connects *sensus* to νοῦς and immediately to Philo (because of his repeated use of νοῦς). See also Édouard Jauneau, "Sensus dans l'exégèse biblique du haut moyen âge (IXe – XIIe siècle), in *Tendenda vela: Excursions littéraires et digressions philosophiques à travers le moyen âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 87–98, at 87–88.

⁵⁷ See Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum II*, 363.

⁵⁸ *Corpus Hermeticum II: Asclepius 7*: 303–4; trans. Copenhagen, 70.

⁵⁹ See J. Peter Södergård, *The Hermetic Piety of the Mind: A Semiotic and Cognitive Study of the Discourse of Hermes Trismegistos* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003), 26–67. Though Södergård is focused on the function of νοῦς, his explorations bear on ours here. He indicates that νοῦς "functions as a central metaphor and concept in the Hermetic discourse which conveys *metaphysical presence and means for transcendence*" (31). Södergård also takes exception with Festugière's claim that the *Corpus Hermeticum* is simply a collection of Greek philosophical sayings with no true Egyptian influence. On this, cf. Peter Kingsley, "Poimandres: The Etymology of the Name and Origins of the Hermetica," in *From Poimandres to Jacob Böhme: Gnosis, Hermetism and the Christian Tradition*, ed. Roelof van den Broek, Cis van Heertum (Amsterdam: In de Pelikann, 2000), 41–76, at 50–53 with John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 389–92, which describes Hermetic Gnosticism as indicative of a "Platonic Underworld."

⁶⁰ *Corpus Hermeticum II: Asclepius 41*: 353–55; trans. altered from Copenhagen, 92, with emphasis added. *Gratias tibi summe, exsuperantissime; tua enim gratia tantum sumus cognitionis tuae lumen consecuti, nomen sanctum et honorandum, nomen unum quo solus deus est beneficendus religione paterna, quoniam omnibus paternam pietatem et religionem et amorem et, quaecumque est dulcior efficacia, praebere dignaris condonans nos sensu, ratione, intelligentia: sensu, ut te cognouerimus; ratione, ut te suspicionibus indagemus; cognitione, ut te cognoscentes gaudeamus.*

intellegentia, each pertaining to different ways of comprehending the divine (knowing, seeking, and rejoicing).

In *Against Praxeas* 5.2–3, Tertullian equates God’s reason with the divine *sensus*, writing:

God is rational and reason is primarily in him and thus from him are all things [rational]: and that reason is *his mind*. This the Greeks call “logos”, by which word we also designate discourse: and consequently our people are already wont, through the artlessness of the translation, to say that “discourse was in the beginning with God” (cf. Jn. 1:1), though it would be more appropriate to consider reason more ancient, because God is not discursive from the beginning but is rational even before the beginning, and because discourse itself, having its ground in reason, shows reason to be prior as being its substance.⁶¹

Sensus describes the rational, motivational, and invisible nature of some thing (word, deed, God, etc.).⁶² Here, *sensus* is equated with reason (*ratio*) itself, as that which was in the beginning within God (*in ipsum*). Here too, Tertullian mentions the connection of *sensus* to the Greek λόγος, which he Latinizes as “discourse” (*sermo*): “Mind” (*sensus*) and reason” (*ratio*) are prior to “discourse” (*sermo*). When the Father is thus said to act *in sensu*, Tertullian is grasping at how to best explain the rational character of divine activity, that there is something behind the physical act itself.⁶³

⁶¹ Tert. *Prax.* 5.2–3 (CCSL 2: 1163–64). *Rationalis enim deus et ratio in ipsum prius et ita ab ipso omnia. Quae ratio sensus ipsius est. Hanc graeci λόγον dicunt, quo uocabulo etiam sermonem appellamus ideo que iam in usu est nostrorum per simplicitatem interpretationis sermonem dicere in primordio apud deum fuisse, cum magis rationem competat antiquiorem haberi, quia non sermonalis a principio sed rationalis deus etiam ante principium, et quia ipse quoque sermo ratione consistens priorem eam ut substantiam suam ostendat.* Later in the section, Tertullian writes: “Before the establishment of the universe God was not alone, since he had reason in himself and in reason discourse, which he made another beside himself by activity within himself. This power and the disposition of the divine mind (*divini sensus dispositio*) is in the scriptures also displayed under the name of wisdom (*sophiae nomine ostenditur*)” (*Prax.* 5.7–6.1 [CCSL 2: 1164]). See Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas*, 31–38, 212–13.

⁶² See *Prax.* 3.6 (CCSL 2: 1162; trans. Evans, 133). Tertullian distinguishes between the “meaning” (*sensus*) of a fact and the “sound of a word.”

⁶³ *Prax.* 6.1 (CCSL 2: 1165), where God is said to have established and begotten “in his own *sensu*.”

Such an attempt to explain the rational character of activity by means of *sensus* is present at *Against Praxeas* 6.1 and 6.3. It is according to God's *sensus* that all things were created and have their being.

For first, when God willed to put forth in their substances and species those things among which he had distributed his wisdom and reason and discourse, he first brought forth discourse, having its own individual reason and wisdom, so that the things of the universe might come into existence through the one through whom they had been thought and arranged, indeed, even insofar as they were made within the mind of God. And this one thing had been lacking to them that they should be plainly recognized and understood in their own species and substances.⁶⁴

Tertullian's distinction between God's creation and God's *sensus* here functions similarly to his distinction between divine economy and unity, respectively. God's agential, rational activity appears to designate the economic workings of the Godhead—"so that the things of the universe . . . might come into existence" Tertullian's use of *sensus* describes that this creation has already happened "within the mind of God."

We have seen how *sensus* functions as insight into the timeless "mind" of God, akin to others of Tertullian's statements regarding the marked unity of the Father. I indicated above that one of the qualities of *sensus* is its invisibility, a quality that descriptions from Roman rhetorical traditions and the Latin *Asclepius*, differences notwithstanding, also endorse. Such a claim interjects the following challenge: How can the Son, visible as he is, "see" the Father invisibly, *in sensu*? Let us recall the earlier reference:

⁶⁴ *Prax.* 6.3 (CCSL 2: 1165); italics added for emphasis. The Latin reads as follows: *Nam, ut primum Deus uoluit ea quae cum sophia et ratione et sermone disposuerat intra se, in substantias et species suas edere, ipsum primum protulit sermonem, habentem in se indiuiduas suas, rationem et sophiam, ut per ipsum fierent uniuersa per quem erant cogitata atque disposita, immo et facta iam quantum in Dei sensu. Hoc enim eis deerat ut coram quoque in suis speciebus atque substantiis cognoscerentur et tenerentur.*

Therefore it was the Son who was always seen and the Son who always conversed and the Son who always worked by the authority and will of the Father; because “the Son can do nothing of himself, unless he should see the Father doing it” (Jn. 5:19)—doing it, of course, in his mind. For the Father acts by mind, whereas the Son sees and accomplishes that which is in the Father’s mind. Thus, all things were made by the Son, and without him nothing was made (Jn. 1:3).⁶⁵

John 5:19 helps Tertullian’s case that the Son can do nothing of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing; the Son always works by the “authority and will of the Father,” seeing and accomplishing that which the Son sees the Father doing. Again, the unity/economy distinction appears to be operative here in the distinction between the presence of the Son’s words in the Father’s mind and the accomplishment of the same works by the Son in the world. This distinction can help answer the question of how the Son is able to see the Father’s *sensus*, if in fact it is invisible.

Though Tertullian never explicitly labels *sensus* invisible in *Against Praxeas*, he does note its incorporeality in *Against Marcion* 1.16 by contrasting *sensus* and *corpus*. In arguing against the Marcionite claim that there are two gods, one pertaining to things visible, the other to things invisible, Tertullian maintains that the same God made both heaven and earth, things seen and unseen. He then draws an analogy to the human subject: “Man too is himself similarly tempered with diversity, both in body and in mind” (*Sic et hominem ipsum diversitas temperavit, tam in corpore quam in sensu*).⁶⁶ Given this

⁶⁵ Tert. *Prax.* 15.9 (CCSL 2: 1180). Bolding added for emphasis. *Filius ergo uisus est semper et filius conuersatus est semper et filius operatus est semper ex auctoritate patris et uoluntate quia filius nihil a semetipso potest facere, nisi uiderit patrem facientem, in sensu scilicet facientem. Pater enim sensu agit, filius uero quod in patris sensu est uidens perficit. Sic omnia per filium facta sunt et sine illo factum est nihil.* See Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, 187–94.

⁶⁶ Tert. *Marc.* 1.16. (CSEL 47: 311): The remainder of the section reads as follows: *Alia membra fortia, alia infirma; alia honesta, alia inhonesta; alia gemina, alia unica; alia comparia, alia disparia. Proinde et in sensu nunc laetitia, nunc anxietas; nunc amor, nunc odium; nunc ira, nunc lenitas. Sensus is used in the context of responding to Marcion’s claim of two gods, competing from the side, respectively, of things visible and invisible.*

statement and the above association of *sensus* with divine unity (rather than economy), we can conclude that the Son “sees” the works of the Father *in sensu* by virtue of that divine unity. Tertullian’s statement that the Father is seen “not with the eyes but with the mind” (*non uisu, sed sensu uidebatur*) further highlights a distinction between the body and *sensus*. Such statements are telling too of a qualified understanding of invisibility: though no one has ever seen God (Jn. 1:18), the Father is seen in the works of the Son (Jn. 14:9), and the Son is able to “see” the Father.

To further draw out the technical content of *sensus*, Tertullian later references Isaiah 40:13: “Who has known the mind of the Lord and who has been his counselor” (*Quis cognouit sensum Domini et quis illi consilio fuit*)?⁶⁷ The multiple manuscripts of the Vetus Latina show variants of the phrase, “the mind of God” — what Tertullian translates as *sensum Domini*. Gryson’s critical edition of the Vetus presents *sensus*,⁶⁸ *mens*,⁶⁹ and *spiritus*⁷⁰ as Latin equivalents of the LXX $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$.⁷¹ (We recall that in the Latin *Asclepius* *sensus* functions as a rendering for $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, a technical term that recurs in the Greek manuscripts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of North African Gnostic texts authored sometime before 413 CE.) Tertullian concludes that only Christ, the

⁶⁷ Tert. *Prax.* 19.2 (CCSL 2: 1184). Tertullian’s Latin rendering is typical of the Vetus Latina text of the Apostolic Fathers and Irenaeus and remains more or less unchanged throughout his works. For other references to Isaiah 40:13 in Tertullian’s works, see *Herm.* 17–18 (CSEL 47: 144–45); *Marc.* 2.2 (CSEL 47: 335), 5.6 (CSEL 47: 590–91), 5.18 (CSEL 47: 638–39).

⁶⁸ See Cypr. *Test.* 3.53 (CSEL 3/1: 155); Ambr. *Fid.* 4.11.144 (CSEL 78: 208); *Hex.* 1.3.9 (CSEL 32/1: 8); *Luc.* 6.4 (CSEL 32/4: 233), 6.27 (CSEL 32/4: 242); *Spir.* 2.9.90 (CSEL 79: 122), 3.3.16 (CSEL 79: 158).

⁶⁹ See Mar.-Vict. *Ar.* 1.37 (CSEL 83/1: 121); Aug. *Psal.* 7.1 (CCSL 38: 36); *Serm.* 27.7 (CCSL 41: 366); *Iul.* 2.90 (CSEL 85/1: 225).

⁷⁰ See Hier. *Is.* 11.40.12/17 (CCSL 73: 459–60). This is also the translation in Jerome’s Vulgate.

⁷¹ See *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, ed. Gryson, Band 12/2: 926–27.

Wisdom and Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), has known the mind of the Father (*solus sciens sensum patris*) and acts endowed with divine power and insight. Because the Son and Father are unified in mental substance, the Son “sees and accomplishes that which is in the Father’s mind,” making known the Father’s invisible attributes by his works.⁷² Sight is thus critical for Tertullian as he bridges the invisible realities of God (*sensus* and *substantia*) and the works of the Son: by “seeing” the Father, the Son is able to act in accordance with the Father’s will; by “seeing” the Son, we are able to know something of that same will.

Another passage, from *Against Praxeas* 20, highlights other Johannine verses that raise questions of the Father’s relationship to the Son as it pertains to “seeing” the divine.

But for the further restraints of [monarchian] arguments we must pay attention to whatever they will excerpt from the scriptures to support their opinion, unwilling as they are to look at other things which preserve the rule, and that while preserving the divine union and the place of monarchy. For as in the old [books] they retain nothing else except, “I am God and there is none other beside me” (Is. 45:5), so also in the Gospel the Lord’s answer to Philip is considered, “I and the Father are one” (Jn. 10:30), and, “Whoever has seen me sees the Father,” and, “I am in the Father and the Father in me” (Jn. 14:9–11). To these three passages [the monarchians] wish the whole implementation of both testaments to yield, though the smaller number ought to be understood in accordance with the greater. But this is the characteristic of all heretics. Since there are a few places which can be found in the woods, they defend the few against the many and become advocates of the later against the earlier. But the rule always determined for every thing in earlier instances from the beginning prescribes even for the later—and the same in the case of the fewer.⁷³

⁷² Tert. *Prax.* 15.9 (CCSL 2: 1180).

⁷³ Tert. *Prax.* 20.1–3 (CCSL 2: 1186; Evans, 159). *Sed argumentationibus eorum adhuc retundendis opera praebenda est si quid de scripturis ad sententiam suam excerptent, cetera nolentes intueri quae et ipsa regulam seruant et quidem salua unione diuinitatis et monarchiae statu. Nam sicut in ueteribus nihil aliud tenent quam ego deus et alius praeter me non est, ita in euangelio responsionem domini ad philippum tuentur: ego et pater unum sumus, et: qui me uiderit, uidit et patrem, et: ego in patre et pater in me. His tribus capitulis totum instrumentum utriusque testamenti uolunt cedere cum oporteat secundum plura intellegi pauciora.* Hippolytus levels a similar charge against Noetus in *Contra noetum* 3.1, asserting that Noetus’ exegesis is “piecemeal.” See Andrew B. McGowan, “God in Early Latin Theology: Tertullian and the Trinity,” in Brian Daley et al., *God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 61–82.

In a passage critical of the monarchians' selective exegesis—picking and choosing passages to highlight the unity of God—Tertullian quotes the three scriptural touchstones in question: Isaiah 45:5, John 10:30, and John 14:9–11.⁷⁴ These three texts, central to monarchian exegesis, represented contested theological ground in anti-monarchian polemic.⁷⁵ Enumerating his opponents' textual support and lambasting their interpretive methods provides a springboard for Tertullian's counter-exegesis.

Just two chapters later, Tertullian argues that monarchian identification of the Father and Son as a single person on the basis of John 10:30 is mistaken. Instead, by wielding a grammatical critique, Tertullian maintains that the Father and Son are *unum*, “one thing,” and not *unus*, a single *persona*; the gospel text reads “the Father and I are one,” not “is one,” implying that the Father and Son are in fact distinct *personae*.⁷⁶ While Tertullian is not precise regarding the character of this *unum*, his argument is straightforward: the Father and Son are similar and united by love and will; this unity can be glimpsed by means of the Son's words and works.

⁷⁴ See Heine, “Christology of Callistus,” 74; Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 21–22. For the importance of anti-monarchian exegesis of John 14:9–11 in pro-Nicene debates, see also Matthew R. Crawford, “The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14.10–11,” *J ECS* 21.4 (2013): 537–67, at 549–55.

⁷⁵ No extant monarchian writings survive; their thought can be reconstructed only through polemical works. To think of monarchian theology as a unified whole is to ignore the multiple exegetical trends that several monarchians cultivate. See Heine, “The Christology of Callistus”; Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 58; J. F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the History of Christian Doctrine* (London: Methuen, 1933); Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 10–18; T. E. Pollard, “The Exegesis of John X. 30 in the Early Trinitarian Controversies,” *NTS* 3 (1956–57): 334–49, at 335; Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 54; Maurice Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 118–19; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 120; Waers, “Monarchianism and Origen's Early Trinitarian Theology,” 131–150.

⁷⁶ See Tert. *Prax.* 22.11 (CCSL 2: 1191). “Yet when he says that two, of the masculine gender, are one <thing>, in the neuter—which is not concerned with singularity but with unity, with similitude, with conjunction, with the love of the Father who loveth the Son, and with the obedience of the Son who obeys the Father's will—when he says, *One <thing> are I and the Father*, he shows that those whom he equates and conjoins are two” (Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 164).

Still, as Ernest Evans notes, Tertullian admits a certain “minoration” of the Son (and Spirit) at *Against Praxeas* 9.⁷⁷

For the Father is the whole substance (*tota substantia est*), while the Son is a derivation (*deriuatio*) and portion of the whole (*portio totius*), as he himself professes, “Because my Father is greater than I” (Jn. 14:28) and by him, and he has also been made less (*minoratus*), he [the Son] sings in the psalm, “a little on this side of the angels” (Ps. 8:6). So also the Father is other (*alius*) than the Son as being greater (*maior*) than the Son, as he who begets is other than he who is begotten, as he who sends is other than he who is sent, as he who makes is other than he through whom a thing is made.⁷⁸

Since the Son, who is begotten and sent and mediates the Father’s making, is other than the Father, who begets, sends, and makes, the Son can be said to be less than the Father as a derived portion of the Father’s plenitude. Glossing John 14:28, Tertullian writes that the Son is a “derivation and portion of the whole.” While Tertullian affirms this minoration, he is adamant to assert that the substance is nevertheless one and undivided: just as a root is undivided from its shoot or spring from its river or sun from its beam, so are the Father and Son undivided.⁷⁹ Tertullian calls the shoot, river, and beam “species”⁸⁰ and “projections” (προβολαί), applying in Greek a Valentinian-Gnostic technical term,⁸¹ of the substances whence they proceed.⁸² To distance himself from the Valentinians’

⁷⁷ See Evans, *Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas*, 44.

⁷⁸ Tert. *Prax.* 9.2 (CCSL 2: 1168).

⁷⁹ *Prax.* 8.5 (CCSL 2: 1167–68). All these images become typical of anti-monarchian polemic. See Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 70–76.

⁸⁰ *Prax.* 8.5 (CCSL 2: 1167).

⁸¹ *Prax.* 8.1–2 (CCSL 2: 1167): *Hic si qui putauerit me προβολήν aliquam introducere, id est prolationem rei alterius ex altera, quo facit Valentinus, alium atque alium Aeonem de Aeone producens, primo quidem dicam tibi: Non ideo non utitur et ueritas uocabulo isto et re ac censu eius quia et haeresis utatur. Immo haeresis potius ex ueritate accepit quod ad medacium suum strueret. . . . Valentinus προβολὰς suas discernit et separat ab auctore et ita longe ab eo ponit ut Aeon patrem nesciat.*

⁸² *Prax.* 8.5–7 (CCSL 2: 1168). Tertullian uses *profero* (“carry out,” “bring forth”) and *prodeo* (“come forth”) to explain the dynamic introduced by the technical term προβολή.

understanding of “projection,” Tertullian argues that though projections are indeed distinct from their sources (root, spring, and sun), they are of the substance of their sources, dependent upon and intrinsically linked to them. He accuses the Valentinians of misusing the word, constructing it into a lie (*Immo haeresis potius ex ueritate accepit quod ad medacium suum strueret*) and severing the “projection” from its causal source (*Valentinus προβολὰς suas discernit et separat ab auctore*).⁸³

The importance of Tertullian’s anti-monarchian polemic for the future of Latin trinitarian theology cannot be overstated. His polemical writing makes prominent the Son’s visibility through his works in relationship to the invisibility of the Father. Exegetical debates over who or what was revealed in the Old Testament theophanies and New Testament miracles ossified Tertullian’s concern. The Son was said to be invisible with respect to his unity with the Father and visible with respect to his economic dispensation and perfect submission to the Father.

Novatian of Rome

Novatian of Rome (ca. 200–58) develops Tertullian’s anti-monarchian claims about the identity of the Son given his visibility and the invisibility of God.⁸⁴ Novatian’s

⁸³ *Prax.* 8.1–2 (CCSL 2: 1167).

⁸⁴ For a general introduction into Novatian’s Trinitarian thought, see Russell J. DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian, the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity: A Study of the Text and the Doctrine* (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1970), 21–36; and Novatian, *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, translation and introduction by Russell J. DeSimone, FOTC 67 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 1–12. Novatian, it has been said, never went a day without reading Tertullian. See Adolf von Harnack, *Tertullian in der Litteratur der alten Kirchen* (Berlin: Sitzungsberichte Preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaft, 1895), 562.

treatise *On the Trinity*⁸⁵ was written to oppose monarchians—particularly Sabellians⁸⁶—and adoptionists; the work grants us insight into doctrinal developments regarding the Father-Son relationship.⁸⁷ The Sabellians, Novatian writes, “think of [Jesus] not as the Son, but as God the Father Himself,” a description similar to the one Tertullian offers of Praxeas and his followers.⁸⁸ Adoptionists, on the other hand, according to Novatian, maintained that Jesus was mere man. *On the Trinity* thus represents an author caught between a Sabellian rock and an adoptionist hard place,⁸⁹ or as Novatian himself says, “the Lord is crucified between two thieves” (*inter duos latrones crucifigitur Dominus*).⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Jerome calls Novatian’s *Trin.* “a sort of epitome” of Tertullian’s *Prax.* (Hier. *Vir. ill.* 70). Cf. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. 2, 212–19. *De trinitate*’s “treatment of [the Trinity] is much more exact and systematic, much more complete and extensive than that of any prior attempt” (217). See also Adhémar d’Alès, *Novatien, Étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, Études de théologie historique (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1924), 84–134, at 90–91, 126. DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 41–52. DeSimone, against Jerome, is adamant that Novatian’s *De trinitate* represents real development and is not “a mere compendium of [Tertullian’s *Aduersus praxean*]” (42). DeSimone dates the *De trinitate* before 250 CE (43–44) and also notes, with others, that the work “can only improperly be called a treatise on the Trinity” since it deals primarily with the first two persons of the Trinity, only mentioning the Holy Spirit in passing. More precisely, it should be thought of as a commentary on the rule of faith (48).

⁸⁶ See Novatian. *Trin.* 12.8–9 (CCSL 4: 32). See also Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 58–59.

⁸⁷ See Daniel Lloyd, “Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome’s Theology of the Son” (PhD Dissertation, Milwaukee, WI, 2012), 8. Lloyd calls this second group (adoptionists) “humanitarian monarchianists.” Cf. James Leonard Papandrea, “Between Two Thieves: Novatian of Rome and Kenosis Christology,” in *If These Stones Could Speak . . . : Studies on Patristic Texts and Archeology; Essays in Honor of Dennis E. Groh* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2009), 51–71.

⁸⁸ Novatian. *Trin.* 23.2 (CCSL 4: 57) and Tert. *Prax.* 10.4 (CCSL 2: 1169). Epiphanius of Salamis describes Sabellius and his followers as teaching the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are simply different names for the same hypostasis. See Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.1.1–62.8.5, in *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Sects 47-80, De Fide* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 121–28. Epiphanius argues that the “recent” (62.1.1) Sabellian heresy argued that “the Father is the same, the Son is the same, and the Holy Spirit is the same, so that there are three names in one entity” (62.1.4). Sabellius used the image of a sun with three operations: illumining, warming, and the shape of the orb (62.1.6–8). In the West, theologians typically referred to such formulations as “patripassian,” while “Sabellian” was typically used by Eastern Christians. Harnack argues that the Monarchian distinction between Father and Son was “nominal,” while at the same time “more than nominal . . . [since] the one God, in being born man, *appeared* as Son” (Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 64). See also Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, 167 n.1, who maintains that “la théologie de Novatien, comme son langage, dépend étroitment” on Tertullian.

⁸⁹ See Geoffrey D. Dunn, “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian’s *De Trinitate*,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 78 (2002): 385–409, at 409. Dunn describes Novatian as “sailing between the Scylla and Charybdis of Adoptionism and Modalism.” See Novatian. *Trin.* 12.9 (CCSL 4:32). *Eligant ergo ex duobus, quid uelint, hunc qui ab Africo uenit Filium esse an Patrem; Deus enim dicitur ab*

With opposition on both his right and left, Novatian was forced to present a doctrine of the Trinity without collapsing the Father into the Son and without arguing that the Son was mere man.⁹¹ Novatian nuances Tertullian's image language, tempering it with talk of form.⁹² There are two pressure points for this aversion to image language. On the one hand, image language, trading in the language of "seeming" or "appearing," summons the ghosts of Docetism (that Christ only "appeared" to be human).⁹³ Still, on the other, Novatian occasionally discourages consideration of Christ as image because image language is to be associated with created human beings. Exegesis of Philippians 2:6–11 helps his case. "If Christ had been only a man," Novatian writes, "he would have been spoken of as in 'the image' of God, not 'in the form' of God. For we know that humanity was made according to the image, not according to the form, of God."⁹⁴

Africo uenturus. Si Filium, quid dubitant Christum et Deum dicere? Deum enim scriptura dicit esse uenturum. Si Patrem, quid dubitant cum Sabellii temeritate misceri, qui Christum Patrem dicit? Nisi quoniam siue illum Patrem, siue Filium dixerint, ab haeresi sua inuiti licet desciscant necesse est, qui Christum hominem tantummodo solent dicere, dum illum rebus ipsis coacti Deum incipient promere, siue dum illum Patrem, siue dum illum Filium uoluerint nuncupare.

⁹⁰ Novatian. *Trin.* 30.6 (CCSL 4: 73).

⁹¹ See Dunn, "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's *De Trinitate*," at 386, 390. Contrary to other notable scholars, Dunn argues that from the outset of *Trin.*, Novatian is concerned with the "threeness" of God and with challenges for explaining the "oneness" of God.

⁹² Novatian. *Trin.* 22.2 (CCSL 4: 55). See Russell J. DeSimone, "Again the *Kenosis* of *Phil.* 2,6–11," *Augustinianum* 32.1 (1992): 91–104, at 99–100; Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image*, 28. This is not to say that Novatian fails to use image language. As we will see later, he trades in such language in the latter chapters of *Trin.*

⁹³ See Novatian. *Trin.* 10.6 (CCSL 4: 27). *Neque igitur eum haereticorum agnoscimus christum, qui in imagine, ut dicitur, fuit et non in ueritate, <ne> nihil uerum eorum quae gessit fecerit, si ipse phantasma et non ueritas fuit, neque eum qui nihil in se nostri corporis gessit, dum ex maria nihil accepit, ne non nobis uenerit, dum non in nostra substantia uisus apparuit, neque illum qui aetheream siue sideream, ut alii uoluerunt haeretici, induit carnem, ne nullam in illo nostram intellegamus salutem, si non etiam nostri corporis cognoscamus soliditatem, nec ullum omnino alterum, qui quoduis aliud ex figmento haereticorum gesserit corpus fabularum.*

⁹⁴ Novatian. *Trin.* 22.2 (CCSL 4: 55). *Si homo tantummodo Christus, in imagine Dei, non in forma Dei relatus fuisset. Hominem enim scimus ad imaginem, non ad formam Dei factum.* See Tert. *Prax.* 2.4 (CCSL 2: 1161), noted above at n. 21, where *forma* is a descriptor of God's economic manifestation in the world. *Quasi non sic quoque unus sit omnia dum ex uno omnia per substantiae scilicet unitatem et*

By adapting Pauline language from Philippians 2, Novatian creates a theoretical distinction between image (*imago*) and form (*forma*): image is a predicate proper to human beings, form, proper only to God. To describe the distinction's content, Novatian argues that the Son is "chief and noble" (*praecipuus atque generosus*) above all creation, including the angels, and that the Son is "the imitator of all His Father's works (*imitator omnium paternorum operum*) in that he himself works even as his Father."⁹⁵

Novatian supplements his gloss on Philippians 2 with reference to John 14:8–10 as proof of how this divine power is disclosed.⁹⁶ Referencing Philip's exchange with Jesus—"Lord, show us the Father," etc.—Novatian argues that the works of the Son bear out the shared power of the Father and Son and so sets his position contrary to Sabellian and monarchian exegesis.

For what the Lord said—"If you have known me, you have known my Father also: and henceforth you have known Him, and have seen Him" (Jn. 14:7)—he had said not wanting to be understood as the Father, but that the one, who thoroughly and fully and with all faith and all reverence approaches the Son of God, by every means shall attain and shall see the Father through the Son himself, in whom he thus believes. "For no one," he says, "can come to the Father but through me" (Jn. 6:44). And for that reason he shall not only come to God the Father, and shall know the Father Himself; but, moreover, he ought thus to hold, and so to presume in mind and soul that he has henceforth not only known, but seen the Father.⁹⁷

nihilominus custodiatur oikonomiae sacramentum, quae unitatem in trinitatem disponit, tres dirigens . . . Patrem et Filium et Spiritum, tres autem non statu sed gradu, nec substantia sed forma, nec potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiae et unius status et unius potestatis quia unus Deus ex quo et gradus isti et formae et species in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti depuntantur.

⁹⁵ Novatian. *Trin.* 22.2 (CCSL 4: 55).

⁹⁶ The use of John 14 (particularly verses 8–10), as mentioned at the outset of the chapter, has a broad following in Latin theology. For Novatian's recourse to Johannine texts, see Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, 25–28.

⁹⁷ Novatian. *Trin.* 28.4–5 (CCSL 4: 66): *quod enim dixit dominus: si me cognouistis, et patrem meum cognouistis, et amodo nostis illum et uidistis illum, non sic dixerat ut se patrem uellet intellegi, sed quoniam qui penitus et plene et cum tota fide et tota religione accessit ad dei filium, omnibus modis per ipsum filium, in quem sic credit, ad patrem peruenturus sit eundem que uisurus. nemo enim, inquit, potest uenire ad patrem nisi per me. et ideo ad patrem deum non tantum uenturus est et cogniturus ipsum patrem,*

According to Novatian, present in the Son's very words to his followers is evidence for the divine unity of works and power between the Father and Son. This evidence exists because, according to Novatian, the Son is the image of the Father. The Son as image shows us something of the Father, and hence, to know and see the Son is to know and see the Father. Later in the chapter Novatian clarifies how this seeing takes place. Novatian then resorts to the use of image language which he had earlier discouraged:

Seeing the image of God the Father through the Son, it was as if [the one seeing] saw the Father; since every one believing on the Son should be exercised in the contemplation of the image, so that, being accustomed to seeing the divinity in the image, he may progress and grow even to the perfect contemplation of God the Father Almighty.⁹⁸

When one sees the Son, it is “as if” (*atque si*) one sees the Father. Novatian pushes the point still further: seeing the Father in the Son has to do with spiritual progress and growth to perfect contemplation. Seeing the Son, through whom shines the image of the Father, is an act of preparatory contemplation for the viewer. The Son as image is an educative tool by which we become accustomed to seeing divinity so as to become fit for perfect contemplation of God.

Novatian's logic here hinges on two significant clusters of terminology. The first pertains to being accustomed or habituated to seeing the Father by seeing the Son—a line

sed etiam sic tenere debet atque ita animo ac mente praesumere, quasi iam nouerit patrem pariter et uiderit. For the theme that the “Word performs the works of God,” see Lloyd, “Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome's Theology of the Son,” 208–14. Cf. Novatian, *Trin.* 22.2 (CCSL 4: 55).

⁹⁸ Novatian. *Trin.* 28.25 (CCSL 4: 68): [...] *dum imaginem dei patris per filium uidet, atque si uiderit patrem, quandoquidem unusquisque credens in filium exerceatur in imaginis contemplatione, ut assuefactus ad diuinitatem uidendam in imagine proficere possit et crescere usque ad dei patris omnipotentis perfectam contemplationem* [...].

of thinking also present in Irenaeus.⁹⁹ Throughout *On the Trinity*, Novatian uses terms like *assuefacio*,¹⁰⁰ *assuesco*,¹⁰¹ and *soleo*¹⁰² (and their cognates) to describe both the Son's economical descent and humanity's preparation for seeing the Father face-to-face. The second cluster of terms supplements accustomization language and pertains to verbs of sight and seeing. *On the Trinity* 18.1–5 is perhaps the clearest example of these terms at work. The passage is worth quoting at length:

Behold, the same Moses recounts in another place that God was seen by Abraham (Gen. 12:7, 18:1). Yet that same Moses hears from God that “no one sees God and lives” (Ex. 33:20). If God cannot be seen, then how was God seen? Or if God is seen, then how is God not able to be seen? For John also says, “No man has seen God” (Jn. 1:18) and the Apostle Paul, “Whom no man has seen, nor can see” (1 Tim. 6:16). But certainly scripture does not lie. Therefore God was truly seen. From this we can understand that it was not the Father who was seen, for the Father is never seen; but the Son, who has been accustomed both to descend and to be seen because he has descended. “For he is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), so that the meanness and fragility of the human condition might grow, already then, occasionally accustomed to see God the Father in the image of God, that is, in the Son of God. For gradually and incrementally human frailty had to be nourished by the image toward that glory, so that one day it would be able to see God the Father. For great things are dangerous if they are sudden. For even the sudden light of the sun after darkness, with its too great splendor, will not make manifest the light of day to unaccustomed eyes, but rather causes blindness. And lest this should occur to the injury of human eyes, the darkness is disrupted and dissipated little by little; and the rising of that luminary, mounting by moderate increments that escape notice, gently accustoms their eyes to bear its full orb by the increments of its rays. So also, therefore, Christ—that is, the image of God and the Son of God—is looked upon by men, inasmuch as he could be seen. And thus the fragility and meanness of the human lot is nourished, led forth, and educated by him; so that, having been accustomed to gaze upon the Son, it may one day be able to see God the Father Himself as he is, that it may not be stricken

⁹⁹ For examples of accustomization or accustomizing language in Irenaeus, see *Haer.* 3.17.1, 3.20.2, 4.5.4–5, 4.13.2, 4.21.3, 4.38.1, 5.8.1. See Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 81–115; idem, “Irenaeus,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Theologians*, 2 Volume Set, ed. Ian S. Markham (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 1: 124.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Novatian. *Trin.* 18.4 (CCSL 4: 44), 28.25 (CCSL 4: 67–68), 29.16 (CCSL 4: 71).

¹⁰¹ E.g., *Trin.* 18.3 (CCSL 4: 44), 18.5 (CCSL 4: 44).

¹⁰² E.g., *Trin.* 12.9 (CCSL 4: 32), 18.2 (CCSL 4: 44), 18.13 (CCSL 45–46), 18.16 (CCSL 4: 46), 30.2 (CCSL 4: 72).

by His sudden and intolerable brightness of his majesty, and be unable to see God the Father, whom it has always desired.¹⁰³

In the above passage, Novatian's logic takes up seemingly contradictory scriptural statements that God is both seen and unseen. Abraham was said to have seen God and yet Exodus indicates that no one has ever seen God and lived. Reference, too, to John's gospel and Paul's First Epistle to Timothy reiterate the challenge. Each of these citations refer, Novatian maintains, to the invisibility of the Father, not of the Son. The Son was surely seen—this is why he is called “the Image of God.” “Image,” as earlier indicated when we considered other texts, points Novatian clearly to concern for what it means to “see” the Son. Adapting Tertullian's metaphor of the sun and its “projections” from *Against Praxeas* 8.5,¹⁰⁴ Novatian explains how human beings are accustomed to see the unseen God through the Son. The Son as image thus plays an educative role in individuals' eventual vision of God.

¹⁰³ Novatian. *Trin.* 18.1–5 (CCSL 4: 44). *Ecce idem Moyses refert alio in loco quod Abrahae uisus sit Deus. Atquin idem Moyses audit a Deo quod nemo hominum Deum uideat et uiuat. Si uideri non potest Deus, quomodo uisus est Deus? Aut si uisus est, quomodo uideri non potest? Nam et Ioannes Deum nemo, inquit, uidit umquam, et apostolus Paulus: Quem uidit hominum nemo nec uidere potest. Sed non utique scriptura mentitur. Ergo uere uisus est Deus. Ex quo intellegi potest quod non Pater uisus sit, qui numquam uisus est, sed Filius, qui et descendere solitus est et uideri, quia descenderit. Imago est enim inuisibilis Dei, ut mediocritas et fragilitas condicionis humanae Deum Patrem uidere aliquando iam tunc assuesceret in imagine Dei, hoc est in Filio Dei. Gradatim enim et per incrementa fragilitas humana nutriri debuit per imaginem ad istam gloriam, ut Deum Patrem uidere posset aliquando. Periculosa sunt enim quae magna sunt, si repentina sunt. Nam etiam lux solis subita post tenebras splendore nimio insuetis oculis non ostendet diem, sed potius faciet caecitatem. Quod ne in damnum humanorum contingat oculorum, paulatim disruptis et dissipatis tenebris ortus luminaris istius mediocribus incrementis fallenter assurgens oculos hominum sensim assuefacit ad totum orbem suum ferendum per incrementa radiorum. Sic ergo et Christus, id est imago Dei et Filius Dei, ab hominibus inspicitur, qua poterat uideri. Et ideo fragilitas et mediocritas sortis humanae per ipsum alitur, producitur, educatur, ut aliquando Deum quoque ipsum Patrem, assueta Filium conspiceret, possit ut est uidere, ne maiestatis ipsius repentino et intolerabili fulgore percussa intercipi possit, ut Deum Patrem, quem semper optauit, uidere non possit. See Adhémar d'Alès, *Novatien, étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, *Études de Théologie Historique* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1924), 111–12. D'Alès mentions this passage in the context of “Alexandrian philosophy,” which developed a “theory of divine intermediaries.”*

¹⁰⁴ See Tert. *Prax.* 8.5 (CCSL 2: 1167–68).

Verbs of sight and contemplation determine the meaning of this passage: *uideo*, *inspicio*, and *conspicio* each taking on a different shades of meaning. *Video* is Novatian's typical marker of sight, rendered simply as "see." *Inspicio* serves to emphasize attention or consideration in ways *uideo* cannot; hence, I translate *ab hominibus inspicitur* as "looked upon by men." *Conspicio* connotes not only sight, but lasting attention and thorough regard, and therefore, I have translated it "gaze upon." To say that these verbs and their cognates represent a true progression in modes of seeing would be too presumptuous or even contrived. But, at the least, Novatian does seem to be communicating multiple aspects of seeing. The one who sees the Son is both visually aware of the Son's works and wholly attends to their beauty and power. And in so seeing, analyzing, and attending, the individual becomes habituated to the final vision of God. In other words, vocabulary of seeing and of being accustomed function as a description of a divine pedagogy performed through the Son.

At *On the Trinity* 3.6, Novatian recalls that creation itself was once humanity's means for knowing God, the visible by which we were to glean the invisible. He makes his case with a paraphrase of Romans 1:20: "the human mind (*animus*), learning hidden things from those that are manifest (*ex manifestis occulata condiscens*), from the greatness of the works (*de operum magnitudine*) which it sees, might, with the eyes of the mind (*oculis mentis*), consider the greatness of the Maker."¹⁰⁵ This statement is as much a claim about the epistemology of the seer as it is about the creation seen. Human beings are wired to understand hidden things by things manifest. Even given this fact, Novatian reiterates, we must be "accustomed" to see aright; our bodies are likewise to be

¹⁰⁵ Novatian. *Trin.* 3.6 (CCSL 4: 16).

“accustomed” (*assuefacit*), so they too can be associated with God’s divine power.¹⁰⁶ The Son serves as our tutor, nourishing and educating us to that eventual reality by imaging the Father to us.

While such a statement might bear similarities to Tertullian, Novatian does not argue in the same ways that the Father and Son share a single substance. Most often, Novatian will use substance with reference to the stuff of which Jesus is made rather than a statement of identity of the Father and the Son.¹⁰⁷ Still, later Latin Nicenes will shy away from Novatian’s language that within Jesus there is a “concord of substance” (*concordia substantiae*)¹⁰⁸ or that between the Father and Son there is a “communion of substance” (*communio substantiae*).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Novatian. *Trin.* 29.16 (CCSL 4: 71). See Lloyd, “Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome’s Theology of the Son,” 82–87. Understanding how the Son educates and helps human beings become “accustomed” to seeing God implicitly confirms Dunn’s assessment that “an exploration of the doctrine of the Trinity was less Novatian’s concern (I am not saying though that it was of no concern) than was helping his readers to understand their faith in the activity of God throughout salvation history. If this be the case then the evidence in the treatise of Novatian’s shortcomings with regard to trinitarian theology may not be shortcomings at all but may be evidence that the Trinity *per se* was not at all the centre of his pamphlet” (Dunn, “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian’s *De Trinitate*,” 390).

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., Novatian. *Trin.* 10.8–9 (CCSL 4: 28). *Quid ergo tibi cum figura corporis, si corpus odisti? Immo reuinceris corporis quod odisti circumferre substantiam, cuius suscipere uoluisti etiam figuram; odisse enim debueras corporis imitationem, si oderas ueritatem, quoniam si alter es, aliter uenire debueras, ne dicereris filius creatoris, si uel imaginem habuisses carnis et corporis. Certe si oderas natiuitatem, quia creatoris oderas nuptiarum coniunctionem, recusare debueras etiam imitationem hominis qui per nuptias nascitur creatoris. Neque igitur eum haereticorum agnoscimus christum, qui in imagine, ut dicitur, fuit et non in ueritate, <ne> nihil uerum eorum quae gessit fecerit, si ipse phantasma et non ueritas fuit, neque eum qui nihil in se nostri corporis gessit, dum ex maria nihil accepit, ne non nobis uenerit, dum non in nostra substantia uisus apparuit, neque illum qui aetheream siue sideream, ut alii uoluerunt haeretici, induit carnem, ne nullam in illo nostram intellegamus salutem, si non etiam nostri corporis cognoscamus soliditatem, nec ullum omnino alterum, qui quoduis aliud ex figmento haereticorum gesserit corpus fabularum.*

¹⁰⁸ *Trin.* 24.11 (CCSL 4: 60): *deum accipiant atque ideo christum iesum dominum ex utroque connexum, ut ita dixerim, ex utroque contextum atque concretum et in eadem utriusque substantiae concordia mutui ad inuicem foederis confibulatione sociatum hominem et deum scripturae hoc ipsum dicentis ueritate cognoscant.*

¹⁰⁹ *Trin.* 31.20 (CCSL 4: 77–78): *Vnde unus deus ostenditur uerus et aeternus pater, a quo solo haec uis diuinitatis emissa, etiam in filium tradita et directa, rursum per substantiae communionem ad patrem reuoluitur.* Most Latin Nicenes will not indicate more than one *substantia* with reference to God. See, however, Augustine’s somewhat forced and untechnical description, which makes ὑποστάσις

Following trends in image theology, Novatian argues that the image of God's divinity is manifest through the Son.¹¹⁰ Since the Son is the image of the Father, by seeing the Son, we have insight into the nature of the Father. "For [the Son] is also the image of God," Novatian writes elsewhere, "hence added to these things is the fact that 'as the Father works, so does the Son work also' (Jn. 5:19) and the Son is the imitator of all the Father's works. Accordingly, everyone should consider that he has (in a certain sense) already seen the Father, inasmuch as he sees the one who always imitates the invisible Father in all his works."¹¹¹

While others, like Hilary and Ambrose, utilize image language to describe the Son, they will not say that the Son "imitates" the Father, because of the Nicene worry that if the Son imitated the Father, he would be considered less than consubstantial with God the Father. The Son's image is for Nicene theologians not a result of the imitation of the Father, but the iconic manifestation of the Father's nature. For Hilary, as we will see, language of seeing (primarily, *uideo* and cognates) pertains to knowing something of the Father's and the Son's consubstantiality.

The Nicene worry is alien to Novatian. Considering the present Son and his deeds prepares the seer over time to see the Father face-to-face. The dynamic is similar to what

coincide with Latin *substantia* in his *Trin.* 5.8.10 (CCSL 50: 216–17). See Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 296–301; Richard Cross, "Quid Tres? On what precisely Augustine professes not to understand in *De Trinitate* V and VII," *HTR* 100 (2007): 215–32; Johannes Arnold, "Begriff und heilsökonomische Bedeutung der göttlichen Sendungen in Augustinus *De Trinitate*," *Recherches augustiniennes* 25 (1991): 3–69.

¹¹⁰ For a brief analysis of Novatian's image theology, see Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image*, 27–31. See also Michel René Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19.3 (2003): 329–55, at 340–41.

¹¹¹ Novatian. *Trin.* 28.15 (CCSL 4: 67). *Nam et imago est Dei Patris, ut his etiam illud accedat, quoniam sicut Pater operatur, ita operatur et Filius, et imitator est Filius omnium operum paternorum, ut perinde habeat unusquisque quasi iam uiderit Patrem, dum eum uidet qui inuisibilem Patrem in omnibus operibus semper imitatur.*

we witnessed in Tertullian: the works of the Son prove the Son divine and reveal his intimate connection with the Father. Still, for Novatian, the Father is “always both the same and equal to Himself,”¹¹² which means that the Father is unable to experience change, birth, time, place, etc. Statements like these drive an ontological wedge between the Father and the Son.¹¹³ The Father is unable to be “accustomed” to anything—He simply is. The Son, on the other hand, occupies a middle ground: he communes with the Father’s substance, and yet, like humanity, he can be affected because he can be prepared for, or “accustomed” to, his earthly descent.¹¹⁴

Fourth-century authors recycle many of the same proof-texts used by Tertullian and Novatian in their anti-monarchian writings—a fact that frustrates the once-assumed claim of the radical novelty of fourth- and fifth-century theology.¹¹⁵ In part the association between those before and after Nicaea is a blurring of the lines that were thought to separate their opponents. The sort of damnation by association was

¹¹² Novatian. *Trin.* 4.7 (CCSL 4: 18). See D’Alès, *Novatien, étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, 100, 122–23.

¹¹³ Cf. D’Alès, *Novatien, étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, 126; and Dunn, “The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian’s *De Trinitate*,” 400–5. Dunn appears to follow D’Alès’ suggestion that the invisibility/visibility distinction between Father and Son does not pertain to divinity but to “a subordination of dignity or of function between Son and Father” (400). Michel Barnes critiques D’Alès as “resolving the antinomy . . . via an anachronistic reading” (Barnes, “The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity,” 351, n.42).

¹¹⁴ E.g., Novatian. *Trin.* 18.1–5 (CCSL 4: 44). See Lloyd, “Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome’s Theology of the Son,” at 238–86.

¹¹⁵ See Williams, “Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century”; Winrich A. Löhr, “A Sense of Tradition: The Homoiousian Church Party,” in *Arianism After Arius*, ed. M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 81–100; William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1970), 247; Mark Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 125–30. Löhr helpfully notes that nuanced heresiology became rare for those in the throes of the fourth-century Christological debates (Löhr, 99).

common.¹¹⁶ It would be easy to make a hard-and-fast identification of pro-Nicenes and their pre-Nicene proto-orthodox forebears—propped up by similar constellations of controverted scriptural texts in either group. Such an association blurs the lines drawn by later Latins after Nicaea. Nicenes like Hilary, Marius Victorinus, and Ambrose (even Augustine) could not assume a role for the Son like that assigned to him by their predecessors. Because of their respective track records in post-Nicene debates, each argues in discrete ways for the equal divinity of the Father and Son. So while these Nicenes resemble those categorized as “traditional Latin theologians” based largely on their scriptural references and logics, their thought signals important theological development.

Hilary of Poitiers

Fourth-century debates over the relationship of the Father and Son took on a different shade than the anti-monarchian polemics of the third century, addressing new doctrinal challenges and anxieties. Most significantly, the Nicene formula introduced a

¹¹⁶ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.15.123–3.15.126 (CSEL 78: 150–52): *Quomodo negant dei esse substantiam? Quomodo uerbum substantiae, quod creberrimum in scripturis est, putant esse uitandum, cum ipsi "ex alia substantia" - hoc est eterousion - dicendo filium substantiam tamen in deo esse non abnuant? Non igitur uerbum, sed uim uerbi fugiunt, quia nolunt uerum esse dei filium. Nam licet humano uerbo non possit diuinae generationis series conpraehendi, tamen iudicarunt patres fidem suam tali proprie contra eterousion sermone signandam, auctoritatem secuti prophetae qui ait: Quis stetit in substantia domini et uidit uerbum eius? Secundum impietatem igitur suam positum substantiae uerbum recipiunt Arriani, secundum pietatem autem fidelium conprobatum repudiant et refutant. Nam quid est aliud, cur homousion patri nolint filium dici, nisi quia nolunt uerum esse dei filium confiteri? Sicut auctor ipsorum Eusebius Nicomedensis epistula sua prodidit scribens: Si uerum, inquit, dei filium et increatum dicimus, homousion cum patre incipimus confiteri. Haec cum lecta esset epistula in concilio Nicaeno, hoc uerbum in tractatu fidei posuerunt patres, quod uiderunt aduersariis esse formidini, ut tamquam euaginato ab ipsis gladio ipsorum caput nefandae heresis amputarent. Frustra autem uerbum istud propter Sabellianos declinare se dicunt et in eo suam imperitiam produnt. Homousion enim aliud alii, non ipsum est sibi. See also Williams, “Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century,” 203–4.*

new descriptor for the relationship of the Father and Son: ὁμοούσιος. Particularly acute for Hilary, bishop of Poitiers (ca. 310–67 CE), as for his near-contemporary Ambrose, was Western homoianism, a theology which proposed that the Son was similar (ὅμοιος), but not equal, in substance or essence to the Father.¹¹⁷ This one iota of difference fostered great dissention, often complicated by imperial edict and influence. Hilary's *On the Councils* offers primary evidence for this interaction between homoian and homoousian allegiances. Perhaps more importantly, this interaction is driven in large part by scriptural references to the Son's visibility and the homoian inability to reconcile that visibility with other passages promoting divine invisibility.

They [the Homoians] excuse themselves for having desired to be silent as to ὁμοούσιον and ὁμοιούσιον on the ground that they taught that the meaning of the words was identical. Unskilled bishops (*rudes episcopii*), I believe, and ignorant (*ignorantes*) of the significance of ὁμοούσιον: as though there had never been any council about the matter, or any quarrels (*lites*) But it is not known how he [the Son] was born, can it be unknown, that God the Son being born not of another substance but of God, has not an essence differing from the Father's? Have they not read that the Son is to be honored (*honorificandum*) even as the Father (cf. Jn. 5:23), that they prefer the Father in honor? Did they consider it unknown that the Father is seen in the Son (*in Filio uideri*) (cf. Jn. 14:9), that they make the Son differ in dignity, splendor, and majesty?¹¹⁸

Here, we see that, in the midst of an invective against homoians Ursacius and Valens, Hilary is concerned with the homoian tendency to subordinate the Son to the Father and how that tendency is hitched to anxieties over divine (in)visibility. “Were they uniformed that the Father is seen in the Son?” Hilary asks rhetorically. In failing to recognize both

¹¹⁷ See Gustave Bardy, “L’Occident et les documents de la controverse arienne,” *Revue des sciences religieuses* 20 (1940): 28–63.

¹¹⁸ Hilar. *Syn.* 27.79 (PL 10: 532–33). As Borchardt explores, Hilary never refers to the names of his living opponents, and only rarely to Arius or Sabellius (C. F. A. Borchardt, *Hilary of Poitiers' Role in the Arian Struggle* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966], 53–138). Hilary instead is content to level invective against non-Nicenes. Hilar. *Trin.* 5.25 (CCSL 62: 176–77), 6.7 (CCSL 62: 202), 7.6 (CCSL 62: 265–66), 8.28 (CCSL 62a: 339–40), 8.40 (CCSL 62a: 353–54).

the unity and distinction of the Father and Son, homoians subordinated the Son and thus honored him less than the Father. John 5:23 and John 14:9 are the textual cornerstones for Hilary's contention: since the Father is seen in the Son, the two should be worshipped equally.

Throughout this section of *On the Councils*, Hilary cites Johannine texts contested throughout trinitarian controversies (Jn. 5:19, 5:25; 14:9, etc.) to prove that the Son is of the same substance as the Father, countering the typical homoian doctrine of the subordinated role of the Son due to his visibility. Only the invisible Father, by homoian lights, was to be properly called God. But the fact that the Son acts in accord with the Father, Hilary rebuts, implies likeness, and thus, equality of "power" (*uirtus*) and "nature" (*natura*).¹¹⁹ "No likeness exists," Hilary writes, "unless there be an equality of nature (*aequalitate naturae*), and equality of nature cannot exist unless there be unity (*una*), not of person (*personae*) but of kind (*generis*)."¹²⁰

For Hilary, as we saw for Novatian and will see for Ambrose, the Son is the true image or manifestation of the Father; this image grants the viewer a connection to the shared invisible power of Father and Son.¹²¹ On this point, Hilary exegetes John 5:19, 10:30, and 14:8–10 against his opponents to demonstrate the "true meaning" (*ueritas demonstrata*) of the scriptures and to explain what it might mean that the Father and Son are both one and yet discrete.¹²² Although Hilary's twelve-book *On the Trinity* was

¹¹⁹ Hilar. *Syn.* 27.75 (PL 10: 529–30).

¹²⁰ Hilar. *Syn.* 27.76 (PL 10: 530).

¹²¹ Hilar. *Trin.* 3.5–7 (CCSL 62: 76–78).

¹²² Hilar. *Trin.* 10.5 (CCSL 62a: 462). For Hilary on "inseparable operations," see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 182–83. George Newlands notes a "high proportion of Johannine texts" in Hilary's *De*

compiled over the course of several years, the theme of seeing the Father in the Son recurs throughout. Particularly important for our analysis are books 3, 8, and 9.¹²³

Throughout *On the Trinity* Hilary responds to the homoian challenge doubting that a visible Son can be of the same substance or share the same power as an invisible God.¹²⁴ To handle this issue Hilary's homoian opponents maintained a "concord of unanimity, so that there may be in them a unity of will not of nature, that is, that they may be one not by what they are, but by wanting the same thing . . . Thus, it is not nature which makes [Father and Son] one, but will."¹²⁵ While the claim to a volitional unity might satisfy some, Hilary argues that the homoians' claim is an empty one.¹²⁶ Unities of will and person fail to describe the unique union between Father and Son; the two must be unified in nature (or kind), as well. Hilary argues further that homoian explanations of the unity are propped up by mistaken understandings of key passages from the gospel of John that introduce a stumbling block to their own teaching.

For heretics labor to deceive others by the dictum, "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30), that it might not be believed that in them is the unity of nature and non-

trinitate at George M. Newlands, *Hilary of Poitiers: A Study in Theological Method* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 164.

¹²³ It is generally considered that the first four books of *De trinitate* were written prior to Hilary's exile, with the remainder of the treatise coming later. For my understanding of *Trin.*, I am indebted to Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*; and Carl Beckwith, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73–148. Weedman notes the polemical contexts of Hilary's writing. Beckwith notes the later additions to books 2 and 3 of *Trin.*, in particular the somewhat jarring preface of book 3 that introduces exegesis of John 14:8–10.

¹²⁴ See Hilar. *Trin.* 3.1 (CCSL 62: 73). "It seems impossible that something should be both within and without another (*ut quod in altero sit aequè idipsum extra alterum sit*), or that . . . these beings can reciprocally contain one another."

¹²⁵ Hilar. *Trin.* 8.5 (CCSL 62a: 318–19). Hilar. *Trin.* 8.17 (CCSL 62a: 328–29). Mark Weedman argues that Philippians 2:6–7 provides the exegetical schema for understanding *Trin.* 8 and 9. See Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, 131–35.

¹²⁶ Hilar. *Trin.* 3.5 (CCSL 62: 77). This emptiness, in part, is because Jesus's "mode of action frustrates sight and sense . . . the power of God (*uirtus Dei*) is manifest in the deeds discerned."

differing essence of deity, but only a oneness from mutual love and an agreement of wills. To this end, they produce an example of that unity, as we demonstrated above, even from the words of the Lord, “they all may be one, as you Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us” (Jn. 17:21).¹²⁷

Hilary surely does not deny unanimity of Father and Son, but contends that it is impossible for two to be unified in will and not nature, their visibility and invisibility notwithstanding. In fact, and he puts it even more strongly: unity of will comes packaged with unity of nature—“the same nature cannot will diverse things.”¹²⁸

Following John 10:30, Hilary maintains both that the Son’s words and works are accurate manifestations of the Father’s nature and that the Father and Son are one in their shared nature.

The Father speaks through [the Son’s] speaking, and works through his working, and judges through his judgment, and through his being seen, and reconciles through his reconciling, and abides in him who abides in the Father—what more appropriate words, I ask, could he have used in his teaching to suit our understanding of his exposition, that we might understand their unity, than those by which, through the truth of the birth and the unity of the nature, it is declared that whatever the Son did and said, the Father said and did in the Son? This says nothing of a nature alien to Him, or added by creation to God, or born into God from a portion of God, but it betokens the divinity begotten by a perfect birth as perfect God, who has such assurance of the consciousness of his nature that he says, “I am in the Father and the Father in me” (Jn. 14:11), and again, “All things whatsoever the Father has are mine” (Jn. 16:15). For [the Son] lacks nothing of

¹²⁷ Hilar. *Trin.* 8.10 (CSEL 62a: 321–22): *Laborantes enim heretici fallere per id quod dictum est Ego et Pater unum sumus, ne naturae in his unitas et indifferens diuinitatis substantia crederetur, sed ex dilectione mutua et ex uoluntatum concordia unum essent, exemplum unitatis istius, ut superius demonstrauius, etiam ex dictis Domini protulerunt: Vt omnes unum sint, sicut tu Pater in me et ego in te, ut et ipsi sint in nobis.*

¹²⁸ Hilar. *Trin.* 8.19 (CCSL 62a: 330): *Vnum sunt Pater et Filius natura honore uirtute; nec natura eadem potest uelle diuersa.* See also *Trin.* 7.24–25, 9.69–70. For a similar statement in *De synodiis*, see Hilar. *Syn.* 27.76 (PL 10: 530). “No likeness exists unless there be an equality of nature (*aequalitate naturae*), and equality of nature cannot exist unless there be unity (*una*), not of person (*personae*) but of kind (*generis*).” Beckwith points to the similarity of Hilary’s understanding of the unity of will and nature to that of George of Laodicea (*Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity*, 144). See also Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, 142–43. Weedman glosses Hilary’s argument this way: “Only someone who is similar to the Father is the Father’s and can carry out the Father’s works. By his birth, the Son possess [sic] everything in himself that is God, so we must acknowledge that the works the Son does are characteristic of God.” See also Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 568.

God in him in whose working and speaking and manifestation God works and speaks and is seen. They are not two either in their work, word, or the manifestation of one.¹²⁹

Hilary's Nicene gloss of John 10:30 comes by way of John 14:11 and 16:15: the invisible unity of the Father and Son is borne out in the Son's operations; this is what the gospel writer intended by writing that the Father is "in the Son" and the Son "in the Father" (Jn. 14:11). The Father speaks, works, and is seen "through" (*per*) the Son's words and works and in his revelation.

On the Trinity 9 carries through book 8's emphasis on seeing the Father in and through the Son and his works. Throughout the book, Hilary cites homoian proof texts pertaining to the Son's perceived inferiority to the Father (Jn. 17:3, 5:19, 14:28; Mt. 24:36). By referencing these verses, the homoians indicate that calling the Son "God" is only "a mere title."¹³⁰ What the homoians fail to understand, Hilary retorts, is that some passages in the scriptures pertain to the Son as the "form of God," others to the Son as the "form of a servant;"¹³¹ and "the homoians misread these passages because they ascribe

¹²⁹ Hilar. *Trin.* 8.52 (CCSL 62a: 364–65). *Dicens enim se per loquentem loqui et per operantem operari et per iudicantem iudicare et per uisum uideri et per reconciliantem reconciliare et manere se in eo qui in se maneret, quaero quo alio ad intelligentiae nostrae sensum expositionis suae uti potuerit aptiore sermone, ut unum esse intellegerentur, quam isto quo per natiuitatis ueritatem et naturae unitatem quidquid Filius ageret ac diceret, id in Filio Pater et loqueretur et gereret? Non est hoc itaque naturae a se alienae, neque per creationem in Deum comparatae, neque ex portione Dei in Deum natae; sed perfecta natiuitate in Deum perfectum genitae diuinitatis. Cuius haec naturalis conscientiae fiducia est, ut dicat: Ego in Patre et Pater in me; et rursum: Omnia quae Patris sunt mea sunt. Nihil enim ei ex Deo deest, quo operante et loquente et uiso, Deus et operatur et loquitur et uidetur. Non sunt duo in unius uel operatione uel sermone uel uisu.* See Newlands, *Hilary of Poitiers*, 107–9. "The dicta/facta dialectic of the rhetorical tradition now being bridge by the one Verbum of the incarnation . . . Hilary is much concerned to stress that God can only be known through God . . . More precisely, God is known in Christ."

¹³⁰ Hilar. *Trin.* 9.2 (CCSL 62a: 372).

¹³¹ Hilar. *Trin.* 9.14 (CCSL 62a: 386). See For more on Christ and *forma*, see Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, 130–35. That Christ is in the *forma dei* is a statement of equality of nature for Hilary. When the Son assumes the *forma serui*, however, that unity is frustrated. Weedman continues: "Although the Father and Son's natures remained united, the incarnated Son lost the unity with the Father's *forma*; he retains the Father's power, but not his form. The assumption of the humanity, however, did create an obstacle to their unity. The *forma serui* lost the unity of nature with the Father, and

what is appropriate to the *forma serui* to the *forma dei*.”¹³² The well-known Christ hymn from Philippians 2, where Paul considers the Son’s forms of both God and man, serves as an interpretive lens to tackle challenging passages.¹³³ For Hilary, the Son makes the Father known because he is the very “form of God and the image of His substance” (*est Dei forma et imago substantiae eius*)¹³⁴ (Heb. 1:3). With reference to key scriptural texts, Hilary reiterates that image language should not designate a nature of lower status, but that the Father and Son are united in substance. It is, in other words, through the “power of the Son’s nature that they might come to know the nature. Once understood, the power of the nature would show them the nature of the understood power” (*intellecta naturae uirtus naturam intellectatae uirtutis ostenderet*).¹³⁵

this disunity will only be overcome when the Son’s humanity assumes the glory of the Son’s divine nature. . . . The unity of their glory had departed in the incarnation, but when the *forma serui* receives the Father’s glory, the Son will remain what he always was, united with the Father’s glory and form.”

¹³² Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, 132. Weedman notes that throughout the remainder of *De trinitate*, Hilary’s use of Phil. 2:5-8 serves less and less like a “straightforward exegetical principle [and more like] a theological ‘dynamic.’”

¹³³ See Paul Henry, “Kénose,” in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1957): 55–138; Pierre Grelot, “La traduction et l’interprétation de Ph 2, 6–7,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 91 (1971): 897–922.

¹³⁴ Hilar. *Trin.* 3.23 (CCSL 62: 95). See also Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image*, 35–36, where Boersma notes that *forma dei* and *imago dei* function as “synonyms for Hilary.” See also Newlands, *Hilary of Poitiers*, 125, where he makes the case that names—like “image”—are not merely names, “but through them the things which they signify are themselves revealed.”

¹³⁵ Hilar. *Trin.* 8.49 (CCSL 62a: 361). See Hilar. *Syn.* 15 (PL 10: 491–2). *cum patri filius et coimaginatus ad speciem sit, nec sit dissimilis in genere; quia diversitatem substantiae geniti ex substantia patris filii similitudo non recipit, et omnem in se divinitatis paternae, qualis et quanta forma est, invisibilis Dei filius et imago complectitur: et hoc vere est esse filium, paternae scilicet formae veritatem coimaginatae in se naturae perfecta similitudine retulisse*. See Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image*, 39–46. While Boersma capably interprets key passages from *Trin.* and elsewhere, he fails to explicate how and what precisely the words and works of the Son disclose. Instead, Boersma investigates, somewhat understandably, the nature and function of image-language (esp. Col. 1:15) in Hilary’s polemical context, concluding that the Son as image of God must be understood as an “invisible”; the Son “is not the visible mediation of the invisible God; the Son is not ‘image’ as a midway point between God and humanity who as ontologically inferior reveals the incomprehensible Father. . . . While the Son draws his life from the Father he receives the fullness of divinity from the Father, perfect from perfect, whole from whole. . . . ‘Image’ is demonstrative of quality, for Hilary, for which reason the image cannot be anything less than its invisible source” (at 42–43). I do not doubt this is the case for Hilary, but I wonder how

At *On the Trinity* 9.20, Hilary maintains that in “almost all [of the Son’s] discourses, he offers the explanation of this mystery, never separating himself from the divine unity . . . he places himself in unity with [the Father] . . . So Christ, who works the works, and the Father who testifies through them, show that they are of an inseparable nature through the birth, for the operation of Christ is signified to be itself the testimony of God concerning him.”¹³⁶ It is through the Son’s works that the substantial unity of Father and Son is seen; preeminent of those works is the birth of the Son. Where the scriptures seem to speak of an essential distinction between Father and Son, Hilary argues that the Son and Father have the “same power in operation” (*uirtus operandi*);¹³⁷ the two are “inseparable;” and “to behold the Son is the same as to behold the Father.”¹³⁸ The inseparability and unity of nature, in short, are not compromised by the Son’s visibility, but are in fact evident as a result. “The Son, who is equal with the Father, is displayed in his works (*in gestis*),” Hilary posits, “so that that the Father could be seen in Him: in order that through him, the Father himself might be discerned equal to the Son, and that we might know that in Father and Son there is no distinction of the power of nature.”¹³⁹

Clear similarities exist between Hilary’s exegesis of these debated scriptures and Tertullian’s a century or so prior. A touchpoint of these theological reflections is an

Boersma would square Hilary’s discussion of the Son’s words and works with reference to his claims to the invisibility of the image.

¹³⁶ Hilar. *Trin.* 9.20 (CCSL 62a: 390–92).

¹³⁷ Hilar. *Trin.* 9.46 (CCSL 62a: 423). *Quodsi eadem est uirtus operandi et eadem est religio honorandi, non intellego in quo tandem naturae infirmis contumelia relinquatur, cum eadem sit in Patre et Filio et uirtutis potestas et honoris aequalitas.*

¹³⁸ Hilar. *Trin.* 9.52 (CCSL 62a: 430).

¹³⁹ Hilar. *Trin.* 9.52 (CCSL 62a: 430). See Jean Doignon, “Une exégèse d’Hilaire de Poitiers sur le désir de voir la face de Dieu,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 41.3 (1994): 542–45.

ongoing dispute over the visibility of the divine. Both Tertullian and Hilary highlight the importance of seeing divine manifestations as disclosing discrete filial identity and/or the Godhead's invisible substance: seeing divine works in the Old Testament theophanies; seeing the Son's works in the gospels; and most significantly in moving into the fourth century, seeing the essential unity God in the works of the Son. By witnessing the Son's works, and since the Father and Son are united in both will and nature, Hilary argues that the Father's very substance is on display. To that end, Hilary glosses several Johannine (and Pauline) passages to rebut non-Nicene exegesis.

Marius Victorinus

While Hilary's anti-homoian theology is anything but non-technical,¹⁴⁰ Marius Victorinus (ca. 300¹⁴¹–65 CE¹⁴²) presents us with a careful explication of homoousian

¹⁴⁰ See Barnes, *The Power of God*, 172. Barnes argues that Hilary uses power “in very technical senses indeed.” This can be held up against Carl Beckwith's claim that Hilary's “language is frustratingly economical” and “strained because of his lack of a technical Trinitarian vocabulary” that develops later in the fourth century. (“What he is attempting to express is what the next generations of pro-Nicenes will articulate as one *ousia* and two eternally distinct *hypostases*.”) Cf. Beckwith, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity*, 132.

¹⁴¹ Cf. A. H. Travis, “Marius Victorinus,” *HTR* 36 (1943): 83–90. Travis puts Victorinus' birth at 281. Pierre Hadot follows suit, arguing that Victorinus' conversion later in life must mean he was 70 or 80 at the time of his conversion. See Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1971), 24–25. For general introduction, see F. F. Bruce, “Marius Victorinus and His Works: In Memory of Alexander Souter (1872–1948),” in *A Mind for What Matters: Collected Essays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 213–32.

¹⁴² John Voelker notes that Victorinus is barely mentioned after the mid-360s. See John T. Voelker, “The Trinitarian Theology of Marius Victorinus: Polemic and Exegesis” (PhD Dissertation, Marquette University, 2006), 201. See also Aug. *Conf.* 8.2.3–8.3.5, who recounts Victorinus as “extremely learned,” “tutor to numerous noble senators,” who “defended [pagan] cults for many years with a voice terrifying to opponents.” Augustine makes the point in recalling Victorinus' “conversion” to Christianity that he “preferred to make profession of his salvation before the holy congregation.” This confession, Augustine maintains, countered his “public profession” of rhetoric, for which he was renown, even lionized (*Conf.* 8.3.5). Augustine's picture of Victorinus as a “hard-core” pagan is an assumed anachronism in secondary works. See Stephen Andrew Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 16–40, at 22–23, ns. 33–34; Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, 52–58, 235–52; Robert A.

theology, buttressed by debts to classical rhetoric and neo-Platonic sources.¹⁴³ Jerome names Victorinus an African by birth, who taught rhetoric in Rome under Constantius' imperial rule (337–61 CE).¹⁴⁴ Soon after his conversion to Christianity, Victorinus wrote works against various Arians “in dialectic style and obscure language—only to be understood by the learned,” as Jerome puts it.¹⁴⁵ It is debated as to whether Ambrose knew or studied with Victorinus while both were in Rome prior to the former's appointment to the episcopacy, or while they were both in Milan. Though scholars

Markus, “Paganism, Christianity and the Latin Classics in the Fourth Century,” in J. W. Binns, ed., *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century* (London: Routledge, 1974), 1–21; R. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 29. Cf. Ramsey MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 69–71.

¹⁴³ See Paul Henry, “The *Adversus Arium* of Marius Victorinus, the First Systematic Exposition of the Doctrine of the Trinity,” *JTS* 1.1 (1950): 42–55. Henry is primarily concerned with tracking down Plotinian themes in Victorinus' work, showing how and where Victorinus adopts and adapts Neo-Platonism for his understanding of the trinity. On Victorinus' debts to Neo-Platonism, see Marcia Colish, “The Neoplatonic Tradition: The Contribution of Marius Victorinus,” in *The Neoplatonic Tradition: Jewish, Christian and Islamic Themes*, ed. Arjo Vanderjagt and Detlev Pätzold (Cologne: Dinter, 1991), 57–74.

¹⁴⁴ We know that Ambrose was connected to Simplicianus, wrote letters to him referring to their deep abiding friendship. See Ambr. *Ep.* 37, 38, 65, 67. See F. Holmes Dudden, *The Life and Times of Ambrose of Milan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), 1: 57–8; J. Patout Burns, “A Surprise for Simplician,” in *Studies on Patristic Texts and Archaeology: If these stones could speak—Essays in Honor of Dennis Edward Groh*, ed. George Kalantzis and Thomas F. Martin (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 7–27. Burns mines Ambrose's letters and Augustine's writings to reconstruct their correspondences with Simplicianus, primarily dealing with the conceptions of grace and Christian freedom. We also know that Simplicianus was connected to Victorinus. Aime Solignac, “Le cercle milanais,” in *BA* 14, (Paris: Desclée de brouwer, 1962), 529–36, at 532). Solignac names Simplicianus as “le centre” of the Milanese Christian-Platonist “circle.” See also Pierre Paul Courcelle, *Recherches sur les ‘Confessions’ de saint Augustin*, (Paris: E. de Boccard), 170–71, 383–91, at 383–84. In a recent treatment of Victorinus, Gerald Boersma refers to him offhandedly as “the African philosopher.” See Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image*, 57.; Boersma, “Participation in Christ: Psalm 118 in Ambrose and Augustine,” *Augustinianum* 54.1 (2014): 173–97, in which Boersma argues that *Psal.* 118 is evidence “of the neo-Platonic milieu current in Milan at this time” and that “Ambrose's account of the soul displays many Platonic resonances” (174).

¹⁴⁵ Hier. *Vir. ill.* 101. The generally accepted timeline for Victorinus' polemical works, dated from 358 to 363, can be found in Hadot's introduction to the Sources chrétiennes critical edition, *Traité théologiques sur la Trinité* (SC 68: 7–89), and reproduced in Quasten, *Patrology* 4: 70–72.

generally accept the presence of a “Milanese circle” of Christian-Platonists, the precise character and structure of such a “circle” is contested.¹⁴⁶

Victorinus is unique in the Latin Christian tradition for his analogous descriptions of God. The relationship of the Father and Son is portrayed in conceptual pairs: potency and act, substance and image, and hiddenness and manifestation, among others. Each of these pairs identifies how the Father and Son can be both distinct—seen in the case of the Son, unseen in the Father—and yet, of the same substance. Throughout his polemical works, written from 358 CE onwards, Victorinus constructs a philosophically rigorous dialogue on the possibility and promise of using analogy in pro-Nicene trinitarian theology.

Victorinus’ “Arian” opponent, Candidus by name, garners the brunt of his ire in several letters.¹⁴⁷ In his first letter to Candidus, Victorinus admits the audacity in speaking

¹⁴⁶ See Solignac, “Le cercle milanais,” BA 14, 529–36, at 530; Pierre Paul Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident, de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948), 119–29; Courcelle, *Recherches sur les “Confessions” de saint Augustin*, 13–38, 168–74. Pierre Hadot, citing Courcelle (*Recherches sur les “Confessions”*) exclusively, assumes Ambrose’s familiarity with Victorinus. See Hadot, *Traité théologique sur la Trinité*, 84–85. Both Ambrose and Victorinus, Hadot contends, were part of Milan’s neo-Platonic Christian elite, evidenced by their affinity with Plotinus. For a similar track, see Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, “Ambrose and Philosophy,” in Lionel Ralph Wickham and Caroline Penrose Hammond Bammel, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead, Ely Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge (1971–1980), in Celebration of His Eightieth Birthday, 9th April 1993* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 117–28. Lenox-Congnyham assumes Ambrose’s familiarity with the “Neoplatonic circles” in Milan. So too does Johannes van Oort. See his *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study Into Augustine’s City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), at 50–51. Cf. Goulven Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 170–71. Madec maintains that the “audaciously metaphysical Neo-Platonism” (le néoplatonisme audacieusement métaphysique) of Marius Victorinus had “little in common with the “moralizing Neo-Platonism” (le néoplatisme moralisant) of Ambrose.

¹⁴⁷ See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 532, assumes Candidus is a literary construction. Hanson also notes how much more sophisticated Victorinus’ trinitarian theology is than any Arian thinker (at *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 533–34). “If we ask how much Marius knew of the Arianism which he attacked in his works, we must answer that he knew more than all and also less than all about Arianism. . . . In short, there is no satisfactory evidence that Marius Victorinus had any genuine knowledge of Arianism as it was in his day. He could exercise his intellect *more rhetorico* in producing arguments which he was later to refute, and he could reproduce some old Arian documents which had long become the stock texts for controversy, but that was all. He occasionally refers to Marcellus and Photinus, but shows no close acquaintance with their doctrines.” Cf. Hadot, *Traité théologique sur la*

of what or who God is, citing Isaiah 40:13 (“Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor?”),¹⁴⁸ but proceeds nonetheless, noting that the Holy Spirit “arouses analogies of ideas (*figurationes intellegentiarum*) inscribed (*inscriptas*) in our soul from all eternity.”¹⁴⁹ These analogies grant insight into the consubstantial relationship of the Father and Son (and to a lesser extent, the Holy Spirit).¹⁵⁰ The analogies pair concepts or terms, each dependent on the other for its very existence. To speak “by analogy” (*similtudine*) helps the speaker understand the nature of divine consubstantiality (*homoousios*). Victorinus’ recurrent analogy is act and potency; act, a specific species or existent, reveals potency to act.¹⁵¹ “For every being has an inseparable species,” he writes, “or rather, the species itself is the substance itself, not that the species is prior to ‘to be,’ but because the species makes ‘to be.’ definite. . . and ‘to be’ is the Father, the species is the Son.”¹⁵² Lest we gloss over the stark claim above, let us consider what it might mean for an external manifestation (*species*) to “define” a substance.

Trinité, 23–27. Hadot is here silent on Candidus as a literary construction. Elsewhere, however, Hadot argues that Candidus functions as a literary device to show how a Christian might reason with an Arian interlocutor and that philosophers starting from the same philosophical viewpoints can arrive at different conclusions. See Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Collection des études augustinienes 32 (Paris: Études augustinienes, 1968), 1.40, n.3.

¹⁴⁸ Victorinus translates the verse as follows: *Quis enim cognouit domini mentem aut quis fuit eius conciliator?*

¹⁴⁹ Mar. Vict. *Cand.* 1 (CSEL 83/1: 15).

¹⁵⁰ See Mar. Vict. *Cand.* 31 (CSEL 83/1: 47). See also Hadot, *Traité théologiques sur la Trinité*, 77–88.

¹⁵¹ See Marcia I. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 131–141, at 135; R. A. Markus, “Marius Victorinus,” in *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 331–40; Hadot, *Traité théologiques sur la Trinité*, 78. Hadot describes the analogy as “d’origine stoïcienne, qui considère l’existence concrète comme le terme d’une progression vers la détermination.”

¹⁵² Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.19 (CSEL 83/1: 84).

If God is “at once being and act” (*qui et id est quod est esse et id quod operari*), then both aspects are constitutive of the character of God.¹⁵³ Victorinus identifies the Father as the first action and first existence and substance, “the original τὸ ὄν . . . existing always without beginning, existing from himself” (*sine principio semper existens, a se existens*).¹⁵⁴ The Son, on the other hand, is understood as “action (*actio*) . . . the image of the substance of God (*substantiae dei imago*) . . . through which God is understood (*intellegitur*), as it was declared: ‘Whoever sees me, sees the Father’” (Jn 14.9).¹⁵⁵ While the contours of Victorinus’ argument are unique to the Latin tradition, his use of certain Johannine proof texts has substantial precedent, complicating the occasional scholarly claim to his relative independence from the Latin polemical tradition or to his supposed facile fabrication of Arian theology.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.33 (CSEL 83.1: 115). For Victorinus’ use of the substantive infinitive for his argument, see Michael D. Metzger, “Marius Victorinus and the Substantive Infinitive,” *Eranos* 72 (1974): 65–70, at 68–70. Metzger makes the point that “there is only one known example of an infinitive modified by an attributive adjective before Marius Victorinus [Pliny, *Letters* 8.9 (LCL 59: 26-7)]. The same is true for the combination of a pronoun in the Genitive case with an infinitive [Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 7.3.7 (LCL 492: 135–36)]. There are no earlier instances of substantives in the Genitive case used in this manner. It would appear then that the expanded and sophisticated utilization of the substantive infinitive is due to the activity of Marius Victorinus, a man writing in the heat of the philosophical and theological controversies of the fourth century. . . . I am inclined to . . . see [the substantive infinitive] as a native Latin expression whose employment was expanded both by contact with Greek and by the need to deal with certain philosophical and theological problems” (Metzger, “Marius Victorinus and the Substantive Infinitive,” 68, 70).

¹⁵⁴ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.33 (CSEL 83/1: 116).

¹⁵⁵ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.34 CSEL 83/1: 116). See Ambr. *Fid.* 5.7.97 (CSEL 78: 251). See also Mar. Vict. *Cand.* 1.14 (CSEL 83/1: 31–32), where Victorinus uses the image of a pregnant woman as an example of potency and act co-existing within the same being: *Quid autem generat? Quod fuit intus. Quid igitur fuit intus in deo? Nihil aliud quam τὸ ὄν, uerum τὸ ὄν, magis autem προόν, quod est supra generale ὄν genus, quod supra ὄντως ὄντα, ὄν iam operante potentia. Hic est Iesus Christus.*”

¹⁵⁶ The long-held, rarely-challenged assumption is that Victorinus, while writing in Latin, is novel in his theology. Gerald Boersma, for instance, juxtaposes Victorinus and other pro-Nicenes; Hilary and Ambrose use the anti-monarchian tradition, while “Victorinus develops a self-standing theology of image to fit the Homoousian cause” (Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image*, 53). Mark Weedman (*The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, 56–73) contends that Marius Victorinus shows a great deal of “independence” and should thus not be depicted as reliant on Latin predecessors. See Hanson, *Search*, 531–56; and Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 287–98. Of Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.11 (CSEL 83/1: 69), Hanson

Victorinus sees the dynamic pair of being and act throughout creation. At *Against Arius* 1.32 he describes the incorporeal soul in these terms. Matter, he indicates, always has a form (species), and so the incorporeal substance that is the soul, in which there is matter, always “has a definition and image (*definitionem et imaginem*), its vital and understanding power” (*uitalem potentiam et intellegentialem*).¹⁵⁷ A soul is thus “doubly powerful” (*bipotens*)—existing as being and “one movement of life and understanding” (*potentia in uno motu existente uitae et intellegentiae*). The soul is “substance and movement,” and Victorinus understands this double movement of life and understanding to be consubstantial with the incorporeal essence of the soul.¹⁵⁸

Victorinus supplements his Johannine reflection with Pauline material to further clarify his logic of the consubstantiality of the Father and Son.¹⁵⁹ Pride of place is given

notes that Victorinus is resolutely “anti-Tertullianic” in both thought and vocabulary, denying the use of *persona* language for fear that it could easily lapse into patripassianism (Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 544–45). Hanson later argues that Victorinus’ theology is a “synthesis of Neo-Platonism and Christianity, confident and brilliant. . . . But . . . [he] had no influence that can be ascertained on his contemporaries in the West. Few, if any, could have understood him, certainly not Ambrose nor Damasus, and Hilary would have been alarmed at his ready use of philosophical terms” (Hanson, *Search*, 862). Cf. Voelker, “The Trinitarian Theology of Marius Victorinus: Polemic and Exegesis,” esp. 111–60, 224–25. Voelker, showing how Victorinus uses typically anti-monarchian scriptural texts for his defense, argues against this assumed independence and for Victorinus’ connection to prior and contemporary Latin polemical literature. While Voelker stops short of saying Victorinus adopted Tertullian’s *Against Praxeas*, he does indicate that “the theme of divine visibility is the most obvious portion of Tertullian that makes its way into Victorinus’ fourth-century Nicene-trinitarian polemic and exegesis 150 years later” (53), and that “there are clear instances in Victorinus’ works where he harks back to Tertullian’s reading of Scripture, including his use of specific trinitarian Scripture texts and commonplaces (the same can be said about his familiarity and use of Novatian)” (224). Voelker admits, however, that Victorinus references only John 5:19 in *Against Arius*. Still, he concludes that when Victorinus does use the text, it bears significant polemical weight.

¹⁵⁷ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.32 (CSEL 83/1: 113). See Hadot, *Traité théologique sur la Trinité*, 79. Hadot notes “l’originalité” of Victorinus is not that he discusses a substance’s determinative nature, but that he associates being with the Father and the Son with form, the determination of that being.

¹⁵⁸ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.32 (CSEL 83/1: 113).

¹⁵⁹ This is unsurprising given the fact that Victorinus is well known for his commentaries on the Pauline epistles, which were penned a couple years after his doctrinal works and are thought to be the first extensive Latin commentaries on Paul. Stephen Cooper, “Philosophical Exegesis in Marius Victorinus’ Commentaries on Paul,” in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. Josef Lössl and John

to the exegesis of Colossians 1:15–16 (where Christ is labeled “the image of the invisible God”) and 1 Corinthians 1:24 (where Christ is called “the power and wisdom of God”).

Victorinus interprets 1 Corinthians 1:24 by analogizing the double predication (“wisdom and power”) of the Son:

For with God things are not as they are in bodies or in bodily things where the eye is one thing, sight another, or as they are in fire, where fire is one thing, its light another. For both eye and fire have need of something other: the eye, of a light different from itself so that from it and through it vision can take place, and the fire has need of air so that light might come from it. But the power and wisdom of God are like vision: the power of vision has vision within it. This vision is externalized when the power of vision acts; then vision is begotten by the power of vision and is itself its only begotten—for nothing else is begotten by it. And vision is related to the power of vision, not only within, when it is in potentiality, but when it is more outside, when it is in action; so vision is related to the power of vision. Vision is therefore consubstantial with the power of vision, and the whole is one: indeed, the power of vision rests, but vision is in movement; and by vision all things are made visible.¹⁶⁰

The most notable and illustrative example here is the power and act of vision. Victorinus aims to show that vision includes both a “power” or “potentiality” and the “act” of seeing. In so offering the example, Victorinus notes a clean distinction and clear

W. Watt (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 67–90. Cooper maintains that Victorinus’ “predilection for understanding church doctrine in light of philosophical teaching is really nothing other than his desire to do theology, which for him . . . meant faith pursuing the path of reason seeking understanding. But in the commentaries, unlike his trinitarian treatises which expound a pro-Nicene doctrine of God in light of highly technical language of late Platonist teachings on first principles, he attempts to articulate these deeper theological matters in a way that would be comprehensible to a reader who lacked philosophical expertise” (88–89).

¹⁶⁰ Mar. Vict. Ar. 1.40 (CSEL 83/1: 126–27). *Non enim ut in corporibus aut in corporalibus, aliud est oculus, aliud uisio, aut in igne, aliud ignis, aliud lumen eius. Eget enim et oculus et ignis, alterius alicuius, et oculus alterius luminis, ut sit et ex ipso et in ipso uisio, et ignis aeris, ut sit ex ipso lumen. Sed sicuti uisionis potentia in se habet uisionem, tunc foris existentem, cum operatur potentia uisionis, et generatur a potentia uisionis uisio unigenita ea ipsa—nihil enim aliud ab ea gignitur—et ad potentiam uisionis uisio est, non intus solum, sed et intus in potentia et in actione magis foris, et ideo ad potentiam quippe uisio cum sit, ὁμοούσιον ergo uisionem potentiae uisio et unum totum, et potentia quidem quiescit, uisio autem in motu est, et per uisionem omnia uisibilia fiunt.* See also Barnes, *The Power of God*, 149–72, at 153–56. Barnes references this passage and Victorinus’ unique gloss of 1 Corinthians 1:24 and distinctive use of the Greek ὁμοούσιον.

connection between the internal (*intus*) reality and external (*foris*) manifestation of that reality: the internal needs the external and vice versa for the vision to be fully considered.

Victorinus' strong statement of consubstantiality in *Against Arius* 1.40 concludes with a defense of impassability, maintaining that the predications of Son—the “Power and Wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24)—are the activities (*acta*) that remain with (*iuxta*) God and pertain to that which is external (*foris*). Victorinus then concludes with a succinct statement: “And if there is passion (*passio*), the passion is in the action (*in actione*).”¹⁶¹

The economy of words is striking; it is unclear if Victorinus intends *the* Passion (crucifixion) or simply means *a* passion (emotion or internal disturbance). Either way, the move preempts patripassian critiques hurled at pro-Nicenes by non-Nicene theologies of the Son; the critiques implied that since the *homoousion* meant that the Son simply was the Father, when the Son suffered, the Father suffered, as well. But by locating the *passio* of God *in actione*, Victorinus shores up the impassibility of the Father, assuring that it was the Son, consubstantial with the Father, who suffered in his *species*.

While every analogy breaks down at a certain point, it is clear for Victorinus that the precise terms matter less than the dynamic they seek to convey, namely, that the Father and Son are distinct from each other yet share the same substance. The act/potency relationship within a single genus of substance gets Victorinus the absolute distinction and sharing of the same substance:

[...] Whether we call them God and Word, or God and the power and wisdom of God or being and life or being and understanding or intelligence, or being, life, and understanding, or Father and Son, or light and brightness, or God and character, or God and form and image, or substance and species, or substance and movement, or power and action, or silence and speech, it must be confessed as the

¹⁶¹ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.40 (CSEL 83/1: 127).

same substance. For if we call God being and the Son life, how do we separate life from being, whether in the Father or in the Son?¹⁶²

Victorinus' concatenation of analogies reiterates his prime point: simply because Father and Son are confessed to be distinct does not mean they cannot be consubstantial. The point is a critical one for combatting common homoian claims about the invisibility of the true God and the subordinated status of the visible Son.

Victorinus also describes the invisibility of the Father and the visibility of the Son in terms of movement (*motus*), which he names as the determinative factor for life, understood as motion moving itself.

That which is life and self-movement is the Father. But that which to be moved and through itself to be life is the Son. For the cause of movement is life. The Father is then, and *by predominance*, original life, having hidden in him a movement which remains in repose, interior self-movement. But the Son is manifested movement, and for this reason the Son, because he has proceeded from that which is interior movement, is existing as movement *by predominance*, because he is movement manifested.¹⁶³

Here we see the Father labeled as “hidden” movement, while the Son is “movement manifested.” Again, it is the Son who reveals the “interior self-movement” (*intus se mouentem*) of the Father by his life. A thorny issue arises when Victorinus writes of the

¹⁶² Mar. Vict. Ar. 1.41 (CSEL 83/1: 129–30). *Quo modo quod sit ipsa dicemus: siue deum et λόγον dicemus, siue deum et dei uirtutem et sapientiam, siue quod est esse et uitam, siue quod est esse et intellegere, siue patrem et filium, siue lumen et effulgentiam, siue deum et chacterem, siue deum et formam et imaginem, siue substantiam et speciem, sicut ibi, non ut hic, siue substantiam et motionem, siue potentiam et actionem, siue silentium et effatum, ipsam substantiam esse confitendum. Deum enim quod est esse dicentes, filium uitam, quomodo separamus uitam ab eo quod est esse, siue in patre, siue in filio.*

¹⁶³ Mar. Vict. Ar. 1.42 (CSEL 83/1: 132): *Hoc igitur quod est esse uitam et per semet esse motionem pater est. Hoc autem quod est motum esse et per semet esse uitam filius est. Causa enim motionis uita. Pater ergo et magis principalis uita, motionem requiescentem habens in abscondito et intus se mouentem. Filius autem in manifesto motio, et ideo filius, quoniam ab eo quod est intus processit, magis autem motio existens, quod in manifesto.* Emphasis added. See Hadot, *Traité des théologiques sur la Trinité*, 79. Hadot lists “predominance” and “implication” as two typically neoplatonic elements of Victorinus’ thought. See Mary T. Clark, “A Neoplatonic Commentary on the Christian Tradition: Marius Victorinus,” in Dominic J. O’Meara, ed., *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1978), 24–33, at 30–31; eadem, “Marius Victorinus Afer, Porphyry, and the History of Philosophy,” in R. Baine Harris, ed., *The Significance of Neoplatonism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1976), 265–74, at 266; A. C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 98–120, at 114–15.

Father, as life, as the “cause of movement,” presuming some sort of inequality between Father and Son. Such causality language might give readers pause, but Victorinus appears only to defend the consubstantiality of Father and Son highlighted at Nicaea—manifested in texts like John 10:30 and Philippians 2—with passages like John 14:28 (“The Father is greater than I”), a commonplace of anti-Nicene theologies. John Voelker points to Victorinus’ text *On the Importance of Accepting the Homoousios* 3.23–27, where there is a clear distinction between Christ being “from God” and Christ being “by God”:

For you say: “God from God, light from light.” Is this from nothing when you name the source? Therefore Christ is from God (*de deo*), he is not, therefore, from nothing (*de nihilo*), he is from light (*de lumine*), not from nothing (*de nihilo*). For “from God” (*de deo*) signifies from God’s substance (*de ipsius substantia*). Indeed, “by God” (*a deo*) is something else (*aliud*). Indeed, all is by God (*a deo*), however Christ is from God (*de deo*).¹⁶⁴

For the Son to be “from” the Father, in other words, does not necessitate subordination as it does for creatures, but only that the Son is “from God’s substance.” Thus, Victorinus can write that the Son is both “equal and inferior to the Father” (*et aequalis est patri et inferior*).¹⁶⁵ Victorinus nevertheless maintains that the Father and the Son are both life and movement, though the Father is “by predominance” (*magis*) life, the Son is “by predominance” movement.

Conclusion

The above has surveyed four Latin theologians to throw into stark relief a central, but neglected theme in the development of Latin theological doctrine: visibility of the

¹⁶⁴ Mar. Vict. *Homoous.* 3.23–27 (CSEL 83/1: 282). Cited at Voelker, “The Trinitarian Theology of Marius Victorinus: Polemic and Exegesis,” 176, translation amended. Cf. Hilar. *Trin.* 3.12 (CCSL 62: 83–84).

¹⁶⁵ Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 1.13 (CSEL 83/1: 71).

Son. Visibility, as we explored, proved pivotal in trinitarian debates over the identity of the Son and his relationship of the Father and Son. These debates begin in earnest with third-century monarchian controversies, which privileged the perfect power of the Father and the lesser role of the Son. For their defense, monarchians cluster scriptural references to the invisibility of the Father and the visible Son. To combat claims that the Father simply becomes the visible Son, Tertullian (and other anti-monarchians) re-exegeted those same contentious references to different ends. The Father did not become the Son, but remained the Father; to see the dynamism of invisibility-visibility as a contradiction was to mistake substance for economy. The Son was to be seen as a divine “projection,” dependent upon and yet distinct from the Father. There are explicit places in *Against Praxeas* where this motion out from the Father results in subordinating tendencies: the Son is less than the Father, “a little on this side of the angels.”¹⁶⁶ Still, while Tertullian lacks the later terminology of *consubstantialis*, he is adamant to show the continuity, rather than disjunction, of substance between Father and Son.

A similar dynamic comes through in Novatian’s *On the Trinity*. Novatian, treading a third path between Sabellian modalist and adoptionist christologies, argues both against the Son as visible manifestation of the Father and the Son as mere man. To that end, he explores what it means that the Son is the form and image of God. Early on in his treatise, Novatian hones in on language of the *forma dei*; the Son is properly the form of, not the image of, God; the latter was a predication reserved exclusively for human beings.

¹⁶⁶ E.g., Tert. *Prax.* 9.2 (CCSL 2: 1168).

Novatian later returns to the use of image language with reference to the Son, contending that it captures a crucial aspect of filial nature. The Son, both as form and image, is understood as the imitator of God's works: the Son sees the Father and acts accordingly. This is image as imitation. That the Son properly images the Father means that Novatian has no issue explicating verses like John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I"). The Son as the form of God, according to Novatian's gloss of Philippians 2:5–8, is equal with God, "having divine power over every creature . . . after the example of the Father."¹⁶⁷ It is precisely the question of the Son's equality, and not his similarity or likeness, which is under debate. However fascinating Novatian's consideration of "image" is, his repeated use of imitation language with reference to the Son had little Nicene afterlife.

Later pro-Nicenes, like Gregory of Nyssa, are careful to speak of the Son as "image" in increasingly technical ways, but here, what is contested is not the Son imaging the Father. The challenge in the fourth century is over whether the visible Son is equal with the invisible Father, and if so, in what ways the Son is equal in power, substance, and divinity. Hilary of Poitiers and Marius Victorinus were our cases in point. Their polemical trinitarian works aim to prove the Son's consubstantial relationship with the Father over against non-Nicene theologies. For Hilary, Jesus, the Son and image of God, shared the Father's substance, nature, and power. The Son's works and words manifest not simply his similarity of divine substance, as the homoians would have it, but the very equality of divine substance. While the homoians argued for a difference in substance of Father and Son based on the former's invisibility and latter's visibility, for

¹⁶⁷ Novatian. *Trin.* 22.4 (CCSL 4: 55).

Hilary, the visibility of the Son did not allow for any subordination. To say the Son acts in accord with the Father's will implied an equality of divine power and nature. True unity would not exist if substantial equality did not exist, as well.

Marius Victorinus offers perhaps the most philosophically rigorous explication of the Father-Son relationship against the homoians. By plumbing the depths of analogical reasoning, Victorinus presents us with technical illustrations that spell out how God can be both invisible Father and visible Son. His example of sight is a powerful one. Sight implicates both the potency to see and the exterior acts of seeing itself; one cannot do away with the potency to see without destroying the actual sight. In a similar way, God, existence itself, is both unseen "being" and seen "act." This is what Victorinus intends when he says the Son's relationship to the Father is "consubstantial." Other analogies help Victorinus' case, but in the end we are left with a philosophically inflected defense of ὁμοούσιος that adapts traditional anti-monarchian exegesis.

Ambrose's familiarity with these texts and the authors that gloss them is unstated but plain to the trained eye. His repeated use of Johannine texts, textual arguments for a single-power theology, and most importantly for our purposes, the critical importance of visibility secures his membership in this Latin polemical tradition. It is to Ambrose that we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO: THE FIGURES OF BODIES AND THE GRACE OF THEIR OFFICES: SIGHT AND SEEING IN AMBROSE'S TRINITARIAN POLEMIC

“If he was visible in the flesh, it was that flesh that was visible, not his divinity; the flesh was passible, not his divinity.”¹

Text traditionally used in anti-monarchian and anti-homoian ways drive

Ambrose's Christological reflection on the dual Latin emphasis on divine unity (of power, nature, substance, etc.) and on the manifestation of that unity in the works of the Son.² Like several Latins who preceded him, Ambrose cites key scriptures that play on the invisible-visible dynamic, making critical the status of the Son as divine revealer.³ This chapter shows Ambrose hard at work arguing against two strands of non-Nicene exegetical theology.⁴ Ambrose's Trinitarian polemic is first aimed at those who profess

¹ Ambr. *Symb.* 4 (CSEL 73: 6). *Si fuit uisibilis in carne, caro illa fuit uisibilis, non diuinitas, fuit passibilis caro, non diuinitas.* A scholarly cloud of unknowing once hovered above the *Symb.*; its authorship was disputed, and the text was initially not attributed to Ambrose. This cloud has lifted, and the work is typically assumed to be of Ambrosian authorship, even if it has been neglected in secondary literature. The *Explanatio* is undated but bears immediate resemblance to *De mysteriis* and *De sacramentis*, works typically dated ca. 390 CE. See Richard Hugh Connolly, *The Explanatio Symboli Ad Initiandos*, Texts and Studies, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 28–39. Connolly notes similarities in vocabulary between the *Explanatio symboli* and *De sacramentis*, *De fide*, and *Hexaemeron* (among others). Most significant for our purposes is that Connolly draws attention to Ambrose's use of *operatio*, *uoluntas*, *maiestas*. Connolly finally suggests that language of the *symboli* in the texts surrounding the Basilica Controversy (noted later in this chapter) “gives the setting” for the work and that “it is tempting to imagine that it was on this very occasion—a stormy one, as the letter [*Ep.* 76] shows—that our *Explanatio* was delivered” (39). If Connolly is correct, and the Basilica Controversy is the context, then the *Symb.* would be dated 385/6 CE.

² See Michel René Barnes, “Latin Trinitarian Theology,” 70–84, at 73–75, 80. Barnes maintains that the doctrine of unity of power/operations is arguably more foundational to Latin Trinitarian theology than substance/person language. Cf. Bracht, “Product or Foundation?,” 14–31. Bracht makes the point that Hippolytus' *Against Noetus* and Tertullian's *Against Praeexus*, both anti-monarchian polemics, provided a foundational reflection for Latin Trinitarian theology, however, he overemphasizes the importance of *persona* language as the driving impetus in Latin theology at this time.

³ E.g., John 10:30, 10:38, 14: 9–11; Romans 1:20; 1 Corinthians 1:24; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Colossians 1:13–15; Hebrews 1:3.

⁴ See Williams, “Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century,” 203–4. Williams notes three non-Nicene theologies that are the focus of Ambrose's

multiple powers in the Trinity. Their argument runs as follows: Since the true God is invisible and is endowed with a divine power, and since the visible Jesus claims to be God and is presumably endowed with a divine power, then we must conclude that multiple powers exist in the Trinity. Ambrose also fends off those who say that there is no consubstantial relationship between the Father and Son. To these two challenges, Ambrose offers variations of a single-power theology. By “power” Ambrose means something along the lines of, as Michel Barnes has put it, “the intrinsic capacity of a nature to affect, insofar as that nature is what it is and exists.”⁵ Power, in sum, names a general capacity to act.

As mentioned in the last chapter, homoian theologians exegeted certain texts to consider the relationship of the Father and Son. To counter homoian exegetes, Nicene supporters reinterpreted those same texts to argue for the shared divinity (power, substance, etc.) of Father and Son. In the extant fragments of homoian bishops, distinction between Father and Son is a live question, reiterated in terms of invisibility and visibility. One of Ambrose’s main theological interlocutors, Palladius of Rartiarica,⁶ refuted, condemned, and deposed after their interactions at the Council of Aquileia in 381 CE, promotes a distinction between Father and Son driven by the Son’s visibility. In a passage indicative of homoian theology, Palladius writes:

polemic: Sabellian, Photinian, and Arian. In Ambrose’s description, Sabellius confused the Father and the Word; Photinus held that the Son’s first appearance was in Mary’s womb; and Arius promoted multiple powers in God.

⁵ Barnes, *Power of God*, 171. Barnes locates the roots of this conception of *dunamis* in pre-Platonic philosophy and he emphasizes that *dunamis*, in that context, was “causal” (52–54).

⁶ For more on Palladius and the Basilica Controversy, see Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 188–96; D. H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 84–87; Meslin, *Les Ariens d’Occident 335–430*, 111–34.

There is the question of whether the Son is the invisible God. It has been said to you that the Father: “No man has ever seen, nor can see him” (1 Tim. 6:16); and similarly, “The invisible, immortal, only God” (1 Tim. 1:17); and “No one has seen God and lived” (Ex. 33:20); and again “No one has ever seen God, the only-begotten has made him known, who is in the bosom of the Father” (Jn. 1:18). But about the Son it is said, “We have seen his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father” (Jn. 1:14); and “God appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre” (Gen. 18.1); and then there is the episode with the blind man, who said, “Who is the Son of God, that I may believe in him?” and the Son of God himself said in reply, “It is he whom you have seen, and to whom you are speaking” (Jn. 9:36–37).⁷

Several controverted texts are on display here, fueling the problem Palladius sees with the juxtaposition of the Father’s invisibility and the Son’s visibility. Michel Barnes, rightly I think, makes this passage out to be something of a synecdoche for homoian theology in the second half of the fourth century. From it, Barnes enumerates five theological touchstones typical of homoian theology. 1. The true God is invisible. 2. The Son’s signal feature is his visibility.⁸ 3. Old Testament theophanies are to be understood as revelations

⁷ Cited in Barnes, “The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity,” 336–37. See “Fragments de Palladius” 106.340v (SC 267: 290–91). *Rursus si Filius inuisibilis D[eu]s. Dictum est tibi scibtum esse de Patre: ‘Quem uidit hominum nemo neque uidere potest’ (1 Tim. 6:16) item: ‘Inuisibili inmortalis soli D[e]o’ (1 Tim. 1:17), item: ‘D[eu]m nemo uiduit et uiuet’ (Ex. 33:20) sed et adhuc: ‘D[eu]m nemo uidit unquam, unigenitus qui est in sinu Patris ipse enarrauit’ (Jn. 1:18) de Filio uero: ‘Et uidimus gloriam eius, gloriam tamquam unigeniti a Patre’ (Jn. 1:14), item: ‘D[eu]s autem apparauit Abrahae [s]edenti ad ilicem Manbrae’ (Gen. 18:1), item ei [q]ui cecus fuerat dicenti: ‘Quis est Filius D[e]i, ut creda[m] [i]n illum’ (Jn. 9:36), dictum esse ab ipso Filio D[e]i: ‘Quem uidisti et qui loquitur tecu[m] [i]pse est’ (Jn. 9:37). Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 265–67, explores Ambrose’s interaction with Palladius and Secundianus as indicative of the sustained presence of homoian theology in the second-half of the fourth century.*

⁸ See e.g., Ambr. *Symb.* 4 (CSEL 73: 6–7), where Ambrose characterizes the “Arians” as those who, misinterpreting anti-Sabellian formulas in Milan’s creed, “judge the omnipotent Father as invisible and impassible . . . so that they might designate the Son as visible and passible.” In his (and the only) English translation, Richard Connolly notes that “the text here is very compressed and the sense obscure. . . . [T]he text is not certain. . . . The reference to the Symbol of the Roman Church seems to imply that whereas ‘we’ (at Milan?) profess to follow the Roman text, by departing from it and adding ‘invisible and impassible’ after the mention of the Father we should lay ourselves open to the charge of asserting that the Son, in his divine nature, is visible and passible; and they would then say ‘You see, they have the Symbol thus’, in order that they might describe the Son as visible and passible.” See Connolly, *The Explanatio Symboli Ad Initandos*, 22n1. Cf. Ambr. *Fid.* 2.3.33 (CSEL 78: 68). While Ambrose initially groups heretics under the umbrella of promoting *potestates plures* of God, he distinguishes in this passage the Sabellians, who “confound the Father and the Son,” on the one hand, and the Arians, “who sever the Father from the Son” (*patrem filiumque secernens*), on the other. In clear opposition, Ambrose offers an affirmation of the distinctiveness of the two persons and avows their unified divinity. Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 79–80: “The Western Fathers and opponents of heretics from the middle of the fourth century

of the Son. 4. The Son's visibility is also found in the New Testament. 5. This theology is expressed as exegesis.⁹ Each of these five touchstones points, in unique ways, to the critical role of the visibility of the Son in determining his relationship to the true (read: invisible) God. To explicate the relationship of the Father and Son, Ambrose follows the polemical path of his forebears, returning again and again to the key scriptural texts in question. And so, similar to what we have observed in the antecedent Latin tradition, Ambrose reexegetes those same texts for Nicene ends: the Father and the Son are said to share in a single, invisible power (*uirtus, potestas*), evidenced and discerned by a "unity of operation" (*unitas operationis*).¹⁰

Distinctive of fourth-century pro-Nicene authors is the assumption that power functions, according to Barnes, as "the same kind of title as 'eternal' or 'good' or 'omnipotent': whatever is this, is God. Since the Son has the same power as the Father, the Son is God as the Father is God."¹¹ This assumption, for Barnes, helps parse out differences between neo-Nicene and pro-Nicene. He writes: "Distinguishing features of the two forms of 'Nicene' theology include: (1) neo-Nicene theology identifies the Son as the single, proper 'Power' of God, while pro-Nicene theology understands the Father and

speak not infrequently of Monarchians—Sabellians; but they, as a rule have simply copied Greek sources, from which they have transferred the confusion that prevailed among the Greek representatives of Sabellianism, and to a still greater extent, we must admit, among the historians who were hostile to it." In his footnote, Harnack names Ambrose: "Whether Ambrosius or Ambrosiaster refer . . . to Roman or say Western Monarchians living in their time is at least questionable" (3: 79, n.1).

⁹ See Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity," 337.

¹⁰ As will be noted throughout, substance (*substantia*) and divinity (*diuinitas*) are also significant points of unity between the Father and the Son. The phrase "unity of operation" recurs in Ambrose's corpus, and it will be discussed in the final section of the present chapter. See, for instance, the dissertation's organizing text, *Luc.* 1.7 (CSEL 32/4: 14–15), mentioned in the Introduction and later in this chapter.

¹¹ Barnes, *Power of God*, 169–72, at 170.

Son to share the ‘Power’ of God, and thus to share the same nature; and (2) neo-Nicene theology is not engaged in the debate over John 5:19, while pro-Nicene is.” Lewis Ayres specifies Barnes’ definition of pro-Nicene by enumerating three principles: (1) a distinction between person and nature (“whatever is predicated of the divine nature is predicated of the three persons equally and understood to be one”) (2) eternal generation of the Son occurring within the unified and unknowable divinity and; (3) a doctrine of inseparable operations.¹²

Scholars have picked up on the pivotal role power plays in fourth-century theology. The last century has given us a number of accounts of “neo-Nicene” theology and, increasingly and more recently, “pro-Nicene” theology. In particular, there has been debate as to what precisely constitutes “neo-Nicene” theology. Largely continental, this debate, as Ayres points out, has been conceived on Harnack’s terms (i.e., over Athanasius’s unity and the Cappadocians’ diversity as the nexus of primary development). “If up till now [381],” Harnack writes, “orthodox faith had meant the recognition of a mysterious plurality in the substantial unity of the Godhead, it was now made permissible to turn the unity into a mystery, i.e., to reduce it to equality and to make the threefoldness the starting-point. . . . The unity of the Godhead, as the Cappadocians conceived of it, was not the same as the unity which Athanasius had in mind.”¹³

¹² Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236–40, at 236. As will become apparent in this chapter’s final section, I am loathe to use the phrase “doctrine of inseparable operations,” even while Ambrose will describe unified operation between the Father and Son as “inseparable.”

¹³ Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 4: 80–101, at 84–85.

If we expect a technical power vocabulary to match Ambrose's specific references to power, we will be left disappointed. Ambrose's power terminology is varied: he freely mixes *potestas* (and cognates) and *uirtus* (and cognates), and no real distinction exists between them in his works.¹⁴ With whichever term, Ambrose concludes repeatedly that there is to be one power in God and that the Trinitarian persons are somehow unified in that power. For his defense, Ambrose trades in logic typical of what scholars have called "neo-Nicene" and "pro-Nicene" theologies.¹⁵ Neo-Nicene theologians like Athanasius, Phoebadius of Agen, and Gregory of Elvira call the Son himself the "Power of God." Since there is only one true Son, it follows that there could be only one power in God. Pro-Nicene theologians like Didymus the Blind and the Cappadocians assign to divine power roughly the same place as substance in their discourse on unity and distinction in the Godhead and assert that the Father and Son share one power. Ambrose's simultaneous use of both neo- and pro-Nicene lines suggests their complementary characters. Ambrose defends the eternity of Christ with reference to both Romans 1:20 ("For the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by

¹⁴ Ambrose's *De fide* book 1 is a concentrated example of this free mixing of technical terms. For references to *potestas*, see *Fid.* 1.1.6–7 (CSEL 78: 6–7), 1.1.9 (CSEL 78: 7), 1.1.10 (CSEL 78: 8), 1.3.19 (CSEL 78: 11), 1.4.33 (CSEL 78: 16), 1.12.76 (CSEL 78: 33), 1.13.85 (CSEL 78: 37), 1.16.106 (CSEL 78: 45–46), 1.17.112 (CSEL 78: 48), 1.17.117 (CSEL 78: 50). For references to *uirtus*, see *Fid.* 1.2.13 (CSEL 78: 9), 1.2.16 (CSEL 78: 9–10), 1.2.17 (CSEL 78: 10), 1.5.39 (CSEL 78: 17), 1.7.49–50 (CSEL 78: 21–22), 1.8.57 (CSEL 78: 25), 1.10.62 (CSEL 78: 27), 1.10.67 (CSEL 78: 29), 1.11.68 (CSEL 78: 29–30), 1.17.112 (CSEL 78: 48). This instances notwithstanding, Ambrose typically uses *uirtus* to speak about moral excellence. See, e.g., *Abr.* 2.6.33 (CSEL 32/1: 590): *denique ut Abraham humilius, qui electionem optulit, ita Loth insolentius, qui electionem usurpauit—uirtus se humiliat, extollit autem se iniquitas—qui se debuit committere maturiori, ut esset tutior, denique eligere nesciuit. nam primo leuauit oculos et regionem conspexit, hoc est illam rem, quae non esset prima ordine, sed tertia, hoc est nouissima. prima sunt enim quae sunt animae bona, secunda quae corporis, id est salus uirtus pulchritudo formae gratia, tertia sunt quae accidunt, hoc est diuitiae potestates patria amici gloria.*

¹⁵ See Barnes, *Power of God*, 169–72; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236–40.

the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity”)¹⁶ and 1 Corinthians 1:24 (“unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and wisdom of God”),¹⁷ with both single-power theologies in his corner:

Hear now another argument from which he makes clear the eternity of the Son. The apostle says that “God’s power and divinity are eternal” (Rom. 1:20). However, Christ is the power of God, for it is written “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24). Therefore if Christ is the power of God, since the power of God is eternal, then Christ is also eternal.¹⁸

Ambrose, in line with neo-Nicene convictions, labels Christ the *uirtus dei*. Since this power is eternal and since Christ is identical to this power, so Christ is eternal.

The pro-Nicene position is indebted to and builds upon its neo-Nicene antecedent with special reference to John 5:19 (“The Son can do nothing of himself, but only that which he has seen the Father doing”).¹⁹ As we saw above, Ambrose has no problem labeling Christ the “wisdom and power of God”²⁰—reminiscent of neo-Nicene exegesis.²¹

¹⁶ Apart from *Myst.* 3.8 (CSEL 73: 91) and *Fug.* 3.14 (CSEL 32/2: 174), Ambrose rarely cites the entire verse. He uses it in two ways. The first highlights the “invisible things of God” in light of divine revelation. See, e.g., *Luc.* 1.7 (CSEL 32/4: 15): *inuisibilia enim eius per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur*. The second straightforwardly references God’s “everlasting power and divinity,” for example, at *Fid.* 1.10.62 (CSEL 78: 27).

¹⁷ See *Luc.* 6.33 (CSEL 32/4: 245). *Ipsis uero uocatis, Iudaeis atque Graecis, Christum dei uirtutem et dei sapientiam*.

¹⁸ *Ambr. Fid.* 1.10.62 (CSEL 78: 27). *Accipe aliud, quo clareat filium sempiternum. Apostolus dicit quod dei sempiterna uirtus sit adque diuinitas. Virtus autem dei Christus; scriptum est enim Christum esse dei uirtutem et dei sapientiam. Ergo si Christus dei uirtus, quia uirtus dei sempiterna, sempiternus igitur et Christus*. See “Fragments de Palladius” 102–4.340r (SC 267: 288–89), where Palladius uses both Romans 1:20 and 1 Corinthians 1:24 in addition to Colossians 1:15.

¹⁹ *Non potest filius a se facere quicquam nisi quod uiderit facientem patrem*. Almost all of Ambrose’s references to this verse are in *De fide*. For the most extensive treatment, see e.g., *Fid.* 4.4.38–4.4.47 (CSEL 78: 170–73) and 4.5.63–4.6.71 (CSEL 78: 178–81). Ambrose’s preoccupation with John 5:19 is undoubtedly more acute in the later books of *De fide*, written after the first two books. I discuss the shift in Ambrose’s terminology and seeming familiarity with homoian theology later in this chapter. Dispute over the meaning of John 5:19 can be found in “Fragments de Palladius” 81–82.336r (SC 267: 264–67).

²⁰ The two most common occasions for this neo-Nicene line of exegesis are when Ambrose references either Romans 1:20 (“the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and divinity”) or 1 Corinthians 1:24

Still, his neo-Nicene exegesis is buttressed by a largely pro-Nicene theology, arguing that the Father and Son share a common invisible power seen whenever the Son acts. While the distinction between neo- and pro-Nicene power theologies might seem oblique, even tangential, I rehearse it precisely because it will come up in later discussions of what precisely the Son reveals through his works. For Ambrose, as we will see, the Son and Father are united in a single, invisible power, and the visible works of the Son reveal that unity of power and prove the Son's divinity.

The present chapter proceeds in four sections. The first reconstructs how Ambrose thinks the invisible is revealed by means of the visible. To that end, I analyze Ambrose's descriptions of the process of sight elucidated in his explanation of the baptismal ritual. The second section shows how this visual logic is operative in Ambrose's claims of seeing the Father in the Son. The third section locates the opponents' positions against which Ambrose directs his Trinitarian polemic and explores how he argues against claims to both multiple divine powers and bodily Trinitarian unity. Scriptural statements of divine invisibility and visibility form the theological scaffolding for this polemic. The fourth and final section explores what Ambrose thinks we see when we see divine works. Here, I foreground how themes of visibility and sight motivate Ambrose's discussions of the unity of divine operations and power that obtains between the Father and Son.

([...] "Christ, the power of God and wisdom of God"). For examples of the former, see Ambr. *Fid.* 5.8.112 (CSEL 78: 258) and 5.13.165 (CSEL 78: 275). For an example of the latter, see Ambr. *Fid.* 1.2.16 (CSEL 78: 10). For a rare neo-Nicene gloss of John 14:6, see *Fid.* 3.7.50 (CSEL 78: 126), where "the way (i.e., Jesus)" is called the "power of God" (*dei uirtus*).

²¹ E.g., Athan. *Ar.* 1.11. "[...] turning to the Greeks, [Paul] has said, 'The visible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' And what the power of God is, he teaches us elsewhere himself, 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1:24). Surely in these words he does not designate the Father, as you often whisper to one another, affirming that the Father is 'his eternal power' (Rom. 1:20). This is not so; for he says not, 'God himself is the power,' but 'his is the power.' Very plain is it to all that 'his' is not 'he;' yet not something alien but rather proper to him."

Ambrose on Seeing in spiritu

The bulk of this chapter argues that, for Ambrose, the Son is seen, and that in being seen, Son shows us something of the invisible divine nature. It is beneficial to first show how Ambrose thinks human beings see things of God “in the Spirit” (*in spiritu*).²² Ambrose’s argument is seemingly straightforward: we understand invisible, metaphysical realities by means of the visible. He makes his case by attending to two complementary registers. The first deals with the invisible principle from which springs a given act. We might imagine such a register noting the weight of seeing for discerning the unseen impulses of a given action (for example, power, love, fear, knowledge of the good, etc.).²³ The second register is distinctly eschatological and concerns itself with how seeing can pick up eternal significance. When writing in these ways, Ambrose will often identify an epistemic distance between the things we see now (in a mirror dimly) and the things we will see (face-to-face) (see 1 Cor. 13:12). This present section shows how these two registers implicate one another, tracing how Ambrose’s distinct scriptural reasoning holds them together.

Since Ambrose believes that human beings harbor unseen powers moving them to act and are destined to realities beyond their current state, he deduces that human beings have a general proclivity toward unseen realities. For Ambrose, this proclivity is plain because of the ways we see in general and the ways we see things of the Church and of

²² Ambr. *Luc.* 1.6 (CSEL 32/4: 13).

²³ I see this register akin to Ambrose’s debts to Latin rhetorical traditions, which themselves depend on both physiognomy (judging moral character off appearance and action) and Stoic action theory. I will explore these debts in more detail in Chapter Four.

faith in particular. The logic of seeing that draws us into unseen realities permeates Ambrose's writings. For instance, Ambrose's opening chapters in *On the Mysteries* (ca. 390) describe baptism as both a visible act and an invisible reality; Ambrose calls the latter the "very reason of the sacraments" (*ipsam rationem sacramentorum*).²⁴ Explaining the "reason" behind baptism forces Ambrose to reconstruct the tangible, step-by-step logistics of the rite; each step is an intentional expression of an unseen reality.²⁵

Craig Satterlee helpfully indicates that explaining the rite would have been critical to the baptized, recent or otherwise. The aim, in sum, was "to have a persuasive, enlightening, deepening effect on the hearers' understanding of the Church's rites of initiation that leads them to live in the different, new dimension that is the Christian life."²⁶ Keep in mind, the demand for mystagogy—the formation of the newly initiated in the Church's mysteries—was, in large part, meant to address the shifting religious-political landscape of the fourth century. With the Empire and its leaders tolerating, and

²⁴ Ambr. *Myst.* 1.2 (CSEL 73: 89). Other secondary treatments consider Ambrose's *De mysteriis* and *De sacramentis* as critical for understanding his theology. See Christoph Jakob, "Arkandisziplin", *Allegorese, Mystagogie: Ein neuer Zugang zur Theologie des Ambrosius von Mailand*, Athenäum Monografien: Theologie Theophaneia 32 (Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1990); Craig Alan Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching* (Collegville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 1–7; and recently, Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 74–123. Cf. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 238, n.67. McLynn argues that "Much work on the relationship between Ambrose's treatises and their homiletic core is vitiated by excessive use of his two baptismal works . . . as a control."

²⁵ See Joseph Martos, *Deconstructing Sacramental Theology and Reconstructing Catholic Ritual* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 124–29. Martos discusses Ambrose as one who initiated the shift from "metaphorical description" of the sacraments to a "metaphysical explanation" (at 124). Martos also labels Ambrose "mechanical" in his thinking, by which he means, that "anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved" (at 126). Ambrose displays such "mechanical thinking" in *Myst.* 3.8 (CSEL 73: 91–92; cited below) and his thought is supposedly in contrast to that of Cyril of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa.

²⁶ Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching*, 2. There is no shortage of literature on Ambrose's mystagogical preaching, and much of this literature references something of a shift in perception, seeing, or sight as critical to Ambrose's motivation. See Edward Yarnold, "The Ceremonies of Initiation in the *De Sacramentis* and *De mysteriis* of St. Ambrose," *SP* 10, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 453–63; Giampietro Francesconi, *Storia e simbolo: "Mysterium in figura": la simbolica storico-sacramentale nel linguaggio e nella teologia di Ambrogio di Milano* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1981).

even embracing, Christianity, churches became flooded with people nominally familiar with, but ultimately untrained in, the faith. Mystagogy served as a doctrinal life raft that kept neophytes afloat, pointing out holy things previously obscured by public spectacle.²⁷

Maria Doerfler too has highlighted the importance of “seeing” in the late-antique Latin West, given Christianity’s newly assumed political role. With the Church acquiring and learning to wield such public clout, Doerfler contends that a “kind of double- and triple-vision” was demanded of churchgoers at this time. “Before their eyes, a government official could turn bishop, the threatening heights of his judgment seat converted into the spiritual elevation of the episcopal chair.”²⁸ Ambrose, a proconsul turned bishop of the functional capitol of the Western Empire, was a case in point.²⁹ Because of the acclamation by which he was chosen for the episcopacy in the age of an

²⁷ For an exploration of late-ancient spectacle and theater in preaching, see Blake Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives: John Chrysostom’s Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), at 13–41 for an overview of the role of theater and 20–31 for the theater’s educational force for literate and illiterate alike. For an example of Ambrose’s critique of spectacle see, *Psal. 118 5.28* (CSEL 62: 97): *Auertamus igitur oculos nostros a uanitatibus, ne, quod oculus uiderit, animus concupiscat; mystica enim differamus interim. utinam hac interpretatione possimus reuocare ad diuersa circensium ludorum atque theatralium spectacula festinantes! Vanitas est illa quam cernis. pantomimum aspicias, uanitas est; luctatores aspicias, uanitas est, quia cernis eos de uiridibus frondibus luctantes habere coronas; illi enim ueri sunt luctatores, qui aduersum huius saeculi luctantur inlecebras et non capit oculos suos palaestra embrorum. Equos currentes aspicias, uanitas est, quia uane currunt qui ascendentem saluare non possunt. Denique recursus ipse te doceat, quia uane currunt qui non directum conficiunt iter, obliuiscetes superiora et ea quae posteriora sunt adpetentes.*

²⁸ Maria Doerfler, “Law and Order: Monastic Formation, Episcopal Authority, and Conceptions of Justice in Late Antiquity” (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2013), 322–23.

²⁹ A proconsul during late antiquity was functionally a provincial governor with authority over a particular region. In Ambrose’s case, he was proconsul of Emilia and Liguria, modern-day northern Italy. For the role of a Roman proconsul generally, see J. B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage: From Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 76–85. Rives notes that, though broad, the wideranging duties of the proconsul were concerned with the “administration of justice and the supervision of towns” (77). The proconsul was the liason between Rome and local elites. Rives also comments that the religious role of the proconsul was, like the emperor, “to lend prestige and to heighten the identification with Rome rather than from any particular religious authority” (at 83). See also Jill Harries, “Triple Vision: Ulpian of Tyre on the Duties of the Proconsul,” in *Roman Rule in Greek and Latin Writing: Double Vision*, ed. Jesper Majbom Madsen and Roger Rees (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 193–209, at 194–99.

imperialy-supported Church, citizens—the new laity—had to be trained to “see” him not as governor, but as bishop and pastor. Doerfler continues,

Teaching others to see was, after all, one of [the Christian clergy’s] great preoccupations, in large part because of most Christians’ manifest inability to discern what they ought to have been able to recognize “naturally” and “instinctively.” . . . [The preachers told them] what they ought to have seen, re-visioning the events in their full spiritual complexity on their audiences’ behalf, and in the process re-inscribing the latter’s experiences through their narration.³⁰

For Doerfler, “seeing” became important during the fourth century CE in ways unimagined in times prior. “Natural” or “instinctive” seeing, Doerfler indicates, thus became an effective pedagogical site for the sake of educating the faithful and buttressing the institution of the Church.

Satterlee and Doerfler emphasize in discrete ways the importance of seeing for the constitution of the late-antique church. For Satterlee, seeing deepened Ambrose’s homelitical teaching, enriching the messages of the gospel for those with ears to hear. For Doerfler, the importance of multivalent seeing arose out of cultural, rather than explicitly theological, necessity.³¹ Because of the shifting religious-political landscape, clergy were forced to adapt, to learn to educate their congregations in new ways of seeing.

Since sight itself was multivalent,³² seeing with “corporeal eyes” was one thing; seeing with the eyes of faith was another—since “those things which are not seen are

³⁰ Doerfler, “Law and Order,” 326–27. Emphasis in original.

³¹ See Doerfler, “Law and Order,” 187: “[...] biblical interpretation is thus a strand of judicial and ethical reasoning that runs alongside that of philosophically-informed reasoning. The conjunction of the two lines of argument is, in many regards, as old as the Christian religion, or at least as old as its Scriptures, and the development of legal reasoning and means of arbitration for communal disputes was among its authors’ first tasks.”

³² Ambrose is not unique in this. See Mariette Canévet, “Sens spirituel,” in *Les sens spirituels: sens spirituel, goût spirituel, toucher, touches, gourmandise spirituelle, luxure spirituelle*, Dictionnaire de spiritualité 15 (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1993), 3–41. Origen, on whom Ambrose relied, writes of “spiritual senses” often. See Karl Rahner, “Le début d’une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène,” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 13 (1932): 113–45; John M. Dillon, “*Aisthêsis Noêtê*: A Doctrine of

much greater than those which are.”³³ Ambrose has multiple ways of describing such seeing: “through the eyes of the spirit” (*per oculis spiritualibus*)³⁴, “by the eyes of the soul” (*oculis animae*)³⁵, or by “the eyes of the heart” (*oculi cordis*).³⁶ All these descriptions express the spiritual sense of seeing. This spiritual sense, Georgia Frank maintains, “stood for a variety of mental images and visual processes taught to new Christians as a way to prepare them to receive the eucharistic bread and wine. Without erasing the evidence of the physical sense, these visual strategies generated a host of mental images . . . [N]eophytes were taught to look closer at the liturgy unfolding.”³⁷ Participating in the sacraments allowed one to peer behind the veil hiding a world unimagined. “Sight” thus functioned as an activity constitutive of the Church. And

Spiritual Senses in Origen and Plotinus,” in *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetzky*, eds. A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel, and J. Riaud (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 443–55. See too Clement, *Strom.* 5.4 (SC 278: 56–67).

³³ Ambr. *Sacr.* 1.3.10 (CSEL 73: 20). See Ambr. *Spir.* 3.12.87 (CSEL 79: 186): *Nempe hanc claritatem uiderunt apostoli, cum dominus Iesus diuinitatis suae luce in monte fulgeret. Uiderunt, inquit, apostoli et in faciem prociderunt. Putas ne illos, uel cum prociderent, adorasse, cum fulgorem diuini luminis corporalibus oculis sustinere non possent, et splendor lucis aeternae aciem visus mortalis obduceret?*

³⁴ *Luc.* 1.5 (CSEL 32/4: 13).

³⁵ *Psal.* 118 1.11 (CSEL 62: 12).

³⁶ *Parad.* 6.33 (CSEL 32/1: 290).

³⁷ Georgia Frank, “‘Taste and See’: The Eucharist and the Eyes of Faith in the Fourth Century,” *Church History* 70.4 (2001): 619–43. While Frank begins her analysis with Ambrose (and returns to him throughout her article), she notes that “other catechists of Ambrose’s day [Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopuestia] explored these sensory faultlines more fully” (620). See also Kimberly Hope Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement: Sacramental Participation in the Trinitarian Mystery* (Minneapolis: Liturgical Press, 2011), 27–28. Belcher’s brief mention of Ambrose owes to Georgia Frank (“Taste and See”), highlighting that this style of preaching aimed at “*cultural discipline* that allowed their auditors, through practice, to see the unseen” (28, emphasis original). See also Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 34 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Carruthers’s excellent and wideranging work explores the rhetorical force and function of images in the construction of memory. I have also benefited from Liz James and Ruth Webb, “‘To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places’: *Ekphrasis* and Art in Byzantium,” *Art History* 14.1 (1991): 1–17. See also Liz James, “Color and Meaning in Byzantium,” *J ECS* 11.2 (2003): 223–33, who calls the use of *ekphrasis* “rhetorical and experiential” (at 223).

Ambrose understood his role as bishop, in large part, as requiring him to alter (or correct) the content of his congregants' seeing within a liturgical context.

When Ambrose recalls the baptismal rite to his listeners, he reminds them continuously that the multiple movements within the rite indicate metaphysical realities. The rite begins with "the mystery of the opening" (*apertionis mysterium*), whereby the scene of the healing of a man deaf and mute from Mark 7:31–37 was reenacted by the priest and the initiate.³⁸ Ambrose touched the mouth of the baptized, quoting Jesus' Aramaic imperative: "*ephpheta*" ("be opened"). The initiate was then led into a "sanctuary of regeneration," stripped naked, and anointed by the clergy with oil before a threefold water baptism by immersion.

For Ambrose, the rite served as an index of deeper meaning, each component symbolizing a metaphysical reality. He reminds his audience that the baptized were ushered into the "holy of holies" and that they "saw the Levite, . . . the priest, . . . saw the highest priest."³⁹ Ambrose then sums up the dynamic between what was done and the meaning behind it with a word of counsel: "Do not consider the figures of the bodies, but the grace of their offices" (*noli considerare corporum figuras sed ministeriorum gratiam*).⁴⁰ Ambrose redraws and rehearses this distinction between the tangible *figura*

³⁸ Ambr. *Myst.* 1.3 (CSEL 73: 90). See also *Symb.* 1 (CSEL 73: 3). See also Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 3–8, 70–123, at 79–80; Garry Wills, *Font of Life: Ambrose, Augustine, and the Mystery of Baptism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 108–10. Wills's work seeks to reconstruct Ambrose's sacramental practice, especially with respect to the baptism of Augustine.

³⁹ Ambr. *Myst.* 2.6 (CSEL 73: 90).

⁴⁰ Ambr. *Myst.* 2.6. See *Psal.* 39.9 (CSEL 64/6: 218); *Luc.* 3.49 (CSEL 32/4: 136–37), where Ambrose writes of Adam "preceding Christ in figure" (*praecederet in figura*). See also Baziél Maes, *La loi naturelle selon Ambroise de Milan* (Presses de l'Université Grégorienne: Rome, 1967), 111–12. Maes briefly explicates Ambrose's distinction between *imago*, *figura*, *typus*, and *ueritas* in explaining the relationship of Christ to the law and prophets. See also Victor Saxer, "Figura corporis et sanguinis Domini: Une formule eucharistique des premiers siècles chez Tertullien, Hippolyte et Ambroise," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 47 (1971): 65–89.

and the unseen *gratia* throughout *On the Mysteries*, repeatedly referring to scriptural texts to make the case that what is seen is only a sign, a temporal manifestation of a fuller reality:

What have you seen? Water, certainly, but not this alone; the Levites (deacons) ministering with it, the highest priest (bishop) questioning and consecrating. First of all, the apostle taught you that “we are not to contemplate the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen, eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). For elsewhere you have “the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are understood through the things that have been made; his eternal power also and divinity” (Rom. 1:20) are judged by his works. Therefore, too, the Lord himself says: “If you do not believe me, at least believe my works” (Jn. 10:38). Believe therefore that the presence of divinity is at hand there. You believe the work, do you not believe the presence? From where does the work follow, unless the presence preceded it?⁴¹

The passage utilizes the baptismal rite as an object lesson to explain the general dynamic the Christian faith instills: visible things are temporary figures of eternal graces.

Ambrose’s reflection here begins with the sacramental rite; the various components—water, the minister, etc.—are but figures of deeper realities. Ambrose’s scriptural supports (2 Cor. 4:18, Rom. 1:20, Jn. 10:38) point to realities both unseen (motive principle) and final (eschatological) that lay behind concrete action. For the remainder of

⁴¹ Ambr. *Myst.* 3.8 (CSEL 73: 91–92). *quid uidisti? aquas utique, sed non solas: leuitas illis ministrantes, summum sacerdotem interrogantem et consecrantem. primum omnium docuit te apostolus non ea contemplanda nobis, quae uidentur, sed quae non uidentur, quoniam, quae uidentur, temporalia sunt, quae autem non uidentur, aeterna. nam et alibi habes, quia inuisibilia dei a creatura mundi per ea, quae facta sunt, conpraehenduntur, sempiterna quoque uirtus eius et diuinitas operibus aestimatur. unde et ipse dominus ait: si mihi non creditis, uel operibus credite. crede ergo diuinitatis illic adesse praesentiam. operationem credis, non credis praesentiam? unde sequeretur operatio, nisi praecederet ante praesentia?* *De mysteriis* and *De sacramentis* are roughly contemporary works and cover much of the same theological ground, presenting to neophytes reflection on the nature of the sacraments. *De sacramentis* offers a very similar description of the act of baptism. See Ambr. *Sacr.* 1.3.10 (CSEL 73: 19–20). “You entered; you saw water; you saw the priest; you saw the Levite. Lest someone say, ‘Is this all?’ Yes, this is all, truly all, where there is all innocence, where there is all piety, all grace, all sanctification. You have seen what you were able to see with the eyes of your body, with human perception; you have not seen those things which are effected but those which are seen. Those which are not seen are much greater than those which are seen, ‘For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal’ (2 Cor. 4:18).” See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 148–57. Smith mentions how Ambrose juxtaposes the Christian baptismal rite with the Jewish mysteries, identifying Ambrose’s language of *uirtus* with *gratia* and how the use of *similitudo* functions within Ambrose’s baptismal theology.

this section, I want to focus on the first two of these texts, 2 Corinthians 4:18 and Romans 1:20. The next section will consider Ambrose's use of John 10:38 and examine how visual logic drives his Christology.

Ambrose's persistent use of 2 Corinthians 4:18 ("We are not to contemplate the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen, eternal") helps him distinguish things temporal from things eternal. For example, in his work *On Abraham* (ca. 387), Ambrose discusses whether, when, and how Abraham saw God. He references 2 Corinthians 4:18 to signal the goal of Abraham's devotion: flight from the Chaldean teachings (things temporal) and attention to "true religion" that considers things unseen, foremost of which is the invisible God (things eternal). Abraham's ability to see God, Ambrose concludes, results from ceasing to look for God within the world (*intra mundum*), in things seen, and in shifting his religious allegiance and becoming humble.⁴² By renouncing the teachings of the Chaldeans, Abraham "began to see God and to recognize God as God, by whose invisible power (*inuisibili uirtute*) he perceived all things to be ruled and governed."⁴³

The goal of seeing things unseen, supported by 2 Corinthians 4:18, is applied to the struggle for virtue in Ambrose's treatise *On the Good of Death* (390 CE), as well. When describing the process of divesting ourselves of pleasure and the subsequent need for the soul's eschatological flight, Ambrose writes: "We cannot comprehend such

⁴² See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 90–91, which argues that *fides* and *deutio* for Ambrose help determine the lasting value of things eternal, with special attention to Abraham.

⁴³ Ambr. *Abr.* 2.3.9 (CSEL 32/1: 571). See also *Abr.* 2.8.46 (CSEL 32/1: 599–600): *Intellegibilis enim usia caelum est, uisibilis uel sensibilis substantia terra est. . . . Ex illa intellegibili substantia theoreticae uitae induat altitudinem, spectans non illa quae uidentur, sed quae non uidentur, hoc est non terrena, non corporalia, non praesentia, sed incorporalia aeterna caelestia, de ista autem uisibili substantia operatoriae atque ciuilibus disciplinae capessat gratiam.*

heavenly truth with hands or eyes or ears, because ‘what is seen is temporal, but what is not seen is eternal’ (2 Cor. 4:18). Indeed we are often deceived by sight (*fallimur uisu*) and we see things for the most part other than they really are (*aliter pleraque quam sunt uidemus*). . . . Let us contemplate, not what is seen, but what is unseen.”⁴⁴ East of Eden our senses are not trustworthy guides; worldly pleasures and pursuits complicate our contemplation of higher things unseen.⁴⁵ Ambrose always pulls a veil between where we are and where we are going (or who we are and who we will be). To assume untroubled access to things eternal by means of perfect vision and insight peddles counterfeit confidence in our present state, as well as treating that which is seen, the temporal, as if it were eternal.⁴⁶ The verse in question (2 Cor. 4:18) functions in large part as a reminder of the deceit the senses interject into our pursuits; for Ambrose, the verse reiterates the eternal character of the final goal.⁴⁷

While 2 Corinthians 4:18 serves as an eternal check on our corporeal confidence, Romans 1:20 (“For the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity”) helps Ambrose argue for seeing things unseen in contexts pertaining to both creation and Christology. In Ambrose’s *Hexameron* the use of Romans 1:20 is understandably with reference to

⁴⁴ Ambr. *Bon. mort.* 3.10 (CSEL 32/1: 711).

⁴⁵ See Ambr. *Bon. mort.* 5.16 (CSEL 32/1: 717–18), where Ambrose warns against the “snares” (*laquei*) of the world and body.

⁴⁶ See Ambr. *Myst.* 3.15 (CSEL 73: 95).

⁴⁷ For other references to 2 Corinthians 4:18, see: *Noe* 20.72 (CSEL 32/1: 466); *Ep.* 21.3 (CSEL 82/1: 154–55); *Ep.* 22.14–15 (CSEL 82/1: 166); *Ep.* 31.1 (CSEL 82/1: 216); *Hex.* 1.3.9 (CSEL 32/1: 8); *Off.* 2.10.52 (CCSL 15: 116), 3.1.7 (CCSL 15: 155); *Luc.* 6.34 (CSEL 32/4: 246); *Psal.* 118 10.7 (CSEL 62: 206–7), 10.25 (CSEL 62: 219), where Ambrose asserts that “the image of the invisible God is not in that which is seen but that which is unseen”; 18.41 (CSEL 62: 419), where Ambrose connects *quae non uidentur aeterna* with Christ, who is described as *non temporalis, sed ex patre ante tempora quasi deus uerus dei filius et quasi uirtus sempiterna supra tempora*.

creation: the intricacies and beauties of creation proclaim the “invisible majesty” (*inuisibilis maiestas*) of its author.⁴⁸ Elsewhere, however, Ambrose’s use of Romans 1:20 is most often Christological.⁴⁹ When exegeting Luke 1:2—“As they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word”⁵⁰—Ambrose writes generally about seeing God in or through Jesus as analogous to seeing the Creator’s handiwork in or through creation. “I see Jesus, I see also the Father, when I raise my eyes to heaven, I turn them to the seas, I turn them again to the land. ‘For the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made’ (Rom. 1:20).”⁵¹ This Christological use is more typical of Ambrose’s proof-texting, which should become unsurprising given Asterius’ non-Nicene use of Romans 1:20 discussed later in the chapter.

Most of the Christological uses of Romans 1:20 are obvious borrowings of the Pauline phrase, “the eternal power and divinity,” which Ambrose glosses as predicates of Christ himself and therefore proof of Christ’s eternal nature.

Therefore we declare the Son to be “eternal Power” (Rom. 1:20). If, then, his “power and divinity are eternal,” surely his potency is eternal also. Therefore, he who diminishes the Son diminishes the Father; he offends piety and violates charity. Let us honor the Son, “in whom the Father is well pleased,” for it has pleased the Father that praise be given to the Son, “in whom He Himself is well pleased” (Mt. 3:17, 17:5).⁵²

⁴⁸ Ambr. *Hex.* 2.4.15 (CSEL 32/1: 54). See also *Hex.* 1.4.16 (CSEL 32/1: 14); *Psal.* 118 2.33 (CSEL 62: 39–40).

⁴⁹ See Ayres, “Remember You Are Catholic,” 63, at n.56.

⁵⁰ See Ambr. *Luc.* 1.5 (CSEL 32/4: 12), where Ambrose first quotes the verse: *Sicut tradiderunt inquit nobis qui ab initio ipsi uiderunt et ministri fuerunt uerbi.* Cf. Orig. *Hom. Luc.* 1.4–5 (SC 87: 104–7). As noted in the introduction, Ambrose’s interpretation of this verse bears resemblance to Origen’s *Homilies on Luke*. Still, Ambrose’s gloss is informed by homoian anxieties alien to Origen.

⁵¹ Ambr. *Luc.* 1.7 (CSEL 32/4: 14).

⁵² Ambr. *Fid.* 4.8.80 (CSEL 78: 184): *Et ideo filium ‘sempiternam’ dicimus esse ‘uirtutem.’ Si ergo ‘sempiterna eius uirtus adque diuinitas,’ utique et potentia eius est sempiterna. Filio igitur qui*

Here, with recourse to a Christological reading of Romans 1:20, Ambrose offers a neo-Nicene interpretation of the verse: the Son is the eternal Power of God, and thus to dishonor the Son is to dishonor the Father. In fact, Ambrose's Christological use of Romans 1:20 is always neo-Nicene: the visible things of God tell of the Son as the single, eternal, divine power.

“Whoever Has Seen Me Has Seen the Father”: Seeing the Father in the Son

We indicated in the previous section that to make his case that visible works are signs of invisible realities, Ambrose references two Pauline texts (2 Cor. 4:18 and Rom. 1:20) in connection to the words of Jesus in John 10:38. In so doing, Ambrose offers his audience a parallel construction of the contemplation of things unseen through things seen. Just as the ritual elements of baptism point to deeper spiritual realities, so too do things made (*quae facta sunt*) disclose the *inuisibilia* of God (even God's “power and divinity”). Still, by attaching 2 Corinthians 4:18 and Romans 1:20 to Jesus' words in John 10:38, Ambrose is making a further point. Just as baptism is a visible index for invisible realities, so are Jesus' visible works (*opera*) indicative of, or “precede[d]” (*praecederet*) by, his “presence of divinity” (*diuinitatis praesentiam*).⁵³ What follows further illumines this logic and reveals how Jesus' *opera* allow us to see the Father.

derogat, patri derogat, pietatem offendit, uiolat caritatem. Nos honorificemus filium, ‘in quo pater conplacet; placet enim patri, ut laudetur filius, ‘in quo ipse conplacuit.’ See also *Fid.* 4.10.118 (CSEL 78: 199), 5.13.164 (CSEL 78: 275).

⁵³ Ambr. *Myst.* 3.8 (CSEL 73: 91–92).

While Ambrose reflects repeatedly on the “works” (*opera*) of the Son throughout his corpus, explicit quotation of John 10:38 is less common. Ambrose’s *Flight from the World* 2.10 is an exception. “The power of God is an operational power,” Ambrose writes. “Even if God is not seen, he is judged from his works, and his works reveal the worker so that he who is not comprehended may be perceived. On this account also the Lord says, ‘If you do not believe me, at least believe the works’ (Jn. 10:38).”⁵⁴ Ambrose’s use of John 10:38 drives his distinction between what is “perceived” (*intellegatur*) and “comprehended” (*conprehenditur*), the latter more significant than the former. By “perceive” (*intellegatur*), I take Ambrose to mean something straightforward like “see” or “glimpse.” One need not “comprehend” something seen or perceived, however. So, by “comprehend” (*conprehenditur*), I take Ambrose to be intimating something “grasped” or “received into one’s mind.”⁵⁵ Jesus’ “works” (*opera*) function as our mode to perceive something of God, while the full comprehension of the divine remains out of reach.

Ambrose will often adapt this visual logic when labeling Christ the true Image of God. We see this logic on display, for instance, during the controversy over the Portian Basilica between Nicenes and homoians in 385/6 CE.⁵⁶ When summoned to the imperial

⁵⁴ Ambr. *Fug.* 2.10 (CSEL 32/2: 170). *ergo operatoria uirtus dei. Etsi non uidetur, tamen ex suis operibus aestimatur operatoremque opera sua produnt, ut intellegatur qui non comprehenditur. Unde et dominus ait: ‘si mihi non creditis, uel operibus credite.’* See *Symb.* 6 (CSEL 73: 9), where Ambrose references Jn. 10:38 when explaining the Nicene formula’s line about Christian belief in the remission of sins. In his *Psal.* 118 7.7 (CSEL 62: 131), Ambrose uses a similar collection of verbs for seeing and comprehending: *suscipitur* (“accept”), *intellegitur* (“perceive with our understanding”), and *conprehenditur* (“comprehend”).

⁵⁵ Akin to Silius Italicus’ lines in *Punica*. See *Sil. Pun.* 3.406–8 (LCL 277: 144–45).

⁵⁶ See Ambr. *Ep.* 76 (CSEL 82/3: 108–25). There is scholarly debate over two issues: first, which basilica was demanded, the Portian or the Nova; and second, how many sieges took place. On the first of these, see, e.g., Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts*, 214–15. On the second, see Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, “The Topography of the Basilica Conflict of A.D. 385/6 in Milan,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 31.3 (1982): 353–63, at 354–6. See also Marcia L. Colish, “Why the Portiana?: Reflections on the Milanese Basilica Crisis of 386,” *J ECS* 10.3 (2002): 361–72.

court, demanding he offer up the basilica, Ambrose refused and was subsequently held in contempt of court. Outside the imperial palace, a mob of Ambrosian supporters coalesced and forced the release of the bishop. The court relented, released Ambrose, and, for a time, retracted the demand for the basilica. Several months later, the homoians gained another foothold—official recognition as the Catholic faith.⁵⁷ Several formal imperial demands ensued to yield first the Portian and then the New Basilica. Ambrose again refused, culminating in a sermon against the homoian Auxentius, Ambrose’s predecessor as bishop and, though deceased, the ultimate catalyst behind the imperial demands.⁵⁸

Near the end of his sermon, dated to Palm Sunday 386 CE, Ambrose addresses the Basilica dispute by concatenating and reinterpreting a number of debated scriptural texts to form a cohesive argument against homoian discontents.⁵⁹ He prefaces this part of his sermon by comparing the “Arians” and “Jews” and contends that the former are much worse than the latter because they are “willing to surrender to the Emperor the rights of the Church.”⁶⁰ To make his case, Ambrose cites Matthew 22:18–21, where Jesus tells the

Colish notes that the Portiana sat outside of the city center, while the Basilica Nova was at the city’s center and was the primary site of Ambrose’s ministry. At the time, these were the only two churches with baptisteries, shedding further light on the homoian demand for control of the basilica around Easter.

⁵⁷ See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts*, 212–13.

⁵⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 76a.17 (CSEL 82/3: 92).

⁵⁹ Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 12, 13, 20; Aug. *Conf.* 9.7 (CSEL 33: 208–9); Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.15–16; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.13; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.11; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.13. The secondary literature is voluminous. I am particularly indebted to Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts*, 210–17; Lenox-Conyngham, “The Topography of the Basilica Conflict of A.D. 385/6 in Milan.”

⁶⁰ Ambr. *Ep.* 75a.31 (CSEL 82/3: 103). The sermon is often also titled *Contra Auxentium*. See Mary Sheather, “Theory and Practice in Ambrose: *De officiis* and the Political Interventions of the Bishop of Milan,” in Geoffrey Dunn and Wendy Mayer, eds. *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 167–85, at 172–78. Recall too *Fid.* 5.9.116 (CSEL 78: 259–60), where Ambrose connects the Arians and Jews. On Ambrose’s literary association of the heretics with the Jews, see Maria Doerfler, “Ambrose’s Jews: The Creation of Judaism

Pharisees' disciples and some of the Herodians to consider the impressed "image" on a denarius in order to determine whether to pay a tax to Caesar.⁶¹ By asking to whom they should render money and allegiance, these challengers of Jesus—these are Ambrose's "Jews"—sought to put Jesus to the test. Ambrose leveled the charge of betrayal against the Arians, since they presented themselves as "following their author" (*sequuntur auctorem*, that is, Arius) and were "liars" (*perfidi*) who failed to render to the Church that to which it had a right, instead giving it to Caesar, that is, the emperor. The implied conclusion is this: the "Arians" have surrendered to the emperor the very things of God—in this case, the Basilica.

The Arians ostensibly take the place of the Pharisees and Herodians in Ambrose's sermon; they are the ones who try to put Jesus to the test by offering a denarius with a faulty image on it, in hopes of securing the basilicas. Ambrose's reply links the "image" on the coin from Matthew 22:20 with both a Christological gloss of Genesis 1:26 and a series of contested texts (e.g., Heb. 1:3; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 10:30).

But in the church I know of one image, that is the Image of the invisible God, concerning whom God said: "Let us make man after our image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26), that image about whom it is written, that Christ is the "splendor of glory and the image of God's substance" (Heb. 1:3). In this image, I discern the Father, as the Lord Jesus himself said: "Whoever sees me sees the Father" (Jn. 14:9). For this image is not separated from the Father, for it taught me the unity of the Trinity, saying, "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30) and later, "All things which the Father has are mine" (Jn. 16:15). And concerning the Holy Spirit, he says that it is the spirit of Christ, and has received from Christ, as it is written, "He shall receive from me and announce it to you" (Jn. 16:15).⁶²

and Heterodox Christianity in Ambrose of Milan's *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*," *Church History* 80.4 (2011): 749–72.

⁶¹ See Ambr. *Ep.* 76.19 (CSEL 82/3: 119), where Ambrose references Matthew 22:21 when recalling the imperial demands to his sister, Marcellina.

⁶² Ambr. *Ep.* 75a.32 (CSEL 82/3: 104).

Ambrose's logic is on full display: Jesus' reference to the "image" on the coin triggers consideration of the Image of God's substance; seeing that Image constitutes seeing the invisible Father, since the Father and his Image are united. The use of texts assembled for anti-homoian polemic lends support to Ambrose's claim that the Son is the true Image, divine by his unity with the Father.

In a letter to a certain layman named Irenaeus concerning Christ as the true chief good of humanity (*summum bonum*), Ambrose writes that Jesus is present as both the "interior Image of God, the character of his substance . . . and as man" (*adsum interior imago dei, character substantiae, et adsum ut homo*).⁶³ The terms *imago dei* and *character substantiae* with reference to Christ are adapted from Colossians 1:15⁶⁴ and Hebrews 1:3⁶⁵, respectively, and recur in Ambrose's corpus. In accordance with a traditional usage among Latin authors, Ambrose then implies the inscrutability of Christ's

⁶³ Ambr. *Ep.* 11.8 (CSEL 82/1: 82).

⁶⁴ For Ambrose's many uses of Colossians 1:15, see *Aux.* 32 (CSEL 82/3: 104); *Ep.* 1.22 (CSEL 82/1: 14), 5.4 (CSEL 82/1: 36), 22.11 (CSEL 82/1: 164); *Hex.* 1.4.15 (CSEL 32/1: 13), 1.5.19 (CSEL 32/1: 15–16), 2.5.19 (CSEL 32/1: 57–58), *Exc.* 2.109 (CSEL 73: 311–12); *Fid.* 1.7.48–49 (CSEL 78: 21–22), 5.2.34 (CSEL 78: 229), 5.7.97 (CSEL 78: 251), 5.11.138 (CSEL 78: 267), 5.17.219 (CSEL 78: 300), 5.19.228 (CSEL 78: 303–4); *Incar.* 10.110 (CSEL 79: 277), 10.112 (CSEL 79: 278–79); *Is.* 5.48 (CSEL 32/1: 673); *Luc.* 2.27 (CSEL 32/4: 55), 2.94 (CSEL 32/4: 96), 3.49 (CSEL 32/4: 124), 7.24 (CSEL 32/4: 292), 7.232 (CSEL 32/4: 386), 10.49 (CSEL 32/4: 474); *Paen.* 1.9.41 (CSEL 73: 139), *Parad.* 5.26 (CSEL 32/1: 283); *Psal.* 118 3.20 (CSEL 62: 51–52), 10.16 (CSEL 62: 212), 19.28 (CSEL 62: 436); *Psal.* 43.90 (CSEL 64: 325), 47.16 (CSEL 64: 356); *Spir.* 2.12.138 (CSEL 79: 140); *Virg.* 1.8.48 (PL 16: 202).

⁶⁵ For Ambrose's many uses of Hebrews 1:3, see *Aux.* 32 (CSEL 82/3: 104); *Hex.* 2.6.19 (CSEL 32/1: 57), 3.7.32 (CSEL 32/1: 80), 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 234), *Ex. uirg.* 9.57 (PL 16: 353), *Fid.* 1.7.48 (CSEL 78: 21), 1.13.79 (CSEL 78: 34), 3.11.78–80 (CSEL 78: 137), 3.14.108 (CSEL 78: 147), 3.16.135–3.17.137 (CSEL 78: 156–57), 4.2.23 (CSEL 78: 164), 4.9.108 (CSEL 78: 195–96), 4.10.134 (CSEL 78: 204–5), 5.2.34 (CSEL 78: 229), 5.7.97 (CSEL 78: 251), 5.8.104 (CSEL 78: 254–55), 5.9.118 (CSEL 78: 260–61), 5.11.138 (CSEL 78: 267), 5.16.198 (CSEL 78: 291–92), 5.18.224 (CSEL 78: 302), 5.19.228 (CSEL 78: 303–4); *Incar.* 5.44 (CSEL 79: 246), 8.81 (CSEL 79: 265), 10.108–10.111 (CSEL 79: 276–77); *Luc.* 2.12 (CSEL 32/4: 47–48); *Psal.* 118 19.38 (CSEL 62: 441); *Psal.* 35.22 (CSEL 64: 65), 38.24 (CSEL 64: 202), 40.35 (CSEL 64: 252–53), 43.12 (CSEL 64: 270), 47.19 (CSEL 64: 358–59); *Sacr.* 6.1.1 (CSEL 73: 72); *Spir.* 2.12.138 (CSEL 79: 140); *Vid.* 5.31 (PL 16: 244); *Virg.* 1.8.46–48 (PL 16: 201–2), 2.2.7 (PL 16: 209). See "Fragments de Palladius" 102.340r (SC 267: 288–89) and 134.346v (SC 260: 316–17). See also Frances M. Young, "Christological Ideas in the Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews," *JTS* 20.1 (1969): 150–63; Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973).

divine nature through a question amended from Jeremiah 17:9b: “But who knows me” (*sed quis cognoscit me*)?⁶⁶ Ambrose and his readers’ likely familiarity with the text allows him both to omit the initial clause (Jer. 17:9a) “for he is man” (*et homo est*) and to appoint the Son as the questioner, posing the inquiry.⁶⁷ Ambrose’s answer is particularly enlightening: “For they see a man, but by his works they believe that he is beyond man (*sed operibus supra hominem crediderunt*). Was he not as man when he wept over Lazarus, and yet above man when he resuscitated him? Was he not as man when flogged, and yet above man when he took away the sin of the whole world?”⁶⁸ As the Image of God, Jesus’ life and ministry, in other words, inevitably manifests the visible/invisible dynamic: “For they see a man, but by his works they believe that he is beyond man”—an allusion to John 10:38. Instances of Jesus’ perceived fragility, both emotional in the case of Lazarus’ death and physical in the case of his own flogging, place the focus on the visibility of the Son’s humanity. But Ambrose then proceeds to point to the invisible transcendence manifested within each instance itself and acknowledged by faith, in contrast to sight: the Son raised Lazarus to new life despite his deeply human emotion; and only someone *supra hominem* could “take away the sins of the world.”

⁶⁶ See Tert. *Marc.* 3.7 (CSEL 47: 387); Comm. *Apol.* 370 (CCSL 128: 87); Cypr. *Test.* 2.10 (CSEL 3/1: 74).

⁶⁷ For similar shorthand citation of Jeremiah 17:9, see Hier. *Ier.* 3.74 (CSEL 59: 210).

⁶⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 11.8 (CSEL 82/1: 83). *Sed quis cognoscit me? Hominem enim uiderunt, sed operibus supra hominem crediderunt. An non ut homo, cum Lazarum fleret, et rursus supra hominem, com eum resuscitari? An non ut homo, cum uapularet, et rursus supra hominem, cum totius mundi peccatum tolleret?* Ambrose references the latter portion of the verse a few times throughout his career, most often citing it as: *Et homo est et quis cognoscet eum?* For these references, see *Ep.* 39.7 (CSEL 82/2: 31); *Psal.* 118 12.3 (CSEL 62: 253). Ambrose’s use of *cognosco* is most common in the Latin tradition (e.g., Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius). Far less common was the use of *agnosco*. For these instances, see Ambr. *Inst.* 16.99 (PL 16: 329); *Paen.* 1.3.12 (CSEL 73: 125). Augustine picks up on the usage of *agnosco* in his references to the verse.

For Ambrose, the Son's *opera* offer their audience entrance into a mystery, not unlike the sacrament of baptism. *Opera*, in other words, point beyond themselves to their ultimate invisible realities. Since the works themselves demand further interpretation, they constitute something of a divine pedagogy, which serves to train audiences to see something beyond the seen works themselves. Such logic is operative in Ambrose's remarkable passage from the *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 1.7, first mentioned in my Introduction.

What, then, is it to see God? I do not want you would not ask me. Ask the gospel, ask the Lord himself; nay, hear him saying, "Philip, whoever has seen me has seen the Father, who sent me. How do you say, "Show us the Father?" Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? (Jn. 14:9-10)" Certainly, a body is not seen in a body, nor a spirit in a spirit, but the Father alone is seen in the Son, or the Son is seen in the Father. For unlike are not seen in unlike; but where there is unity of operation and of power, the Son is seen in the Father and the Father in the Son. "For the works I do," he says, "he also does" (Jn 5:19). In the works Jesus is seen, and the Father is discerned in the Son's works.⁶⁹

Ambrose's reasoning here is threefold. First, Ambrose maintains that seeing God amounts to seeing the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father. Secondly, Ambrose clarifies what sort of seeing takes place when the Father or Son is seen. Since the Son can be said to image the Father, Ambrose must reiterate the precise relationship that obtains between the Father and Son. With the statement "Certainly a body is not seen in a body, nor a spirit in a spirit. . . . For unlike are not seen in unlike" Ambrose fends off non-Nicene pitfalls that posit a corporeal indwelling of the divine persons. And as Ambrose will argue, corporeal indwelling of the persons presupposes a dissimilarity of Son and

⁶⁹ *Luc. 1.7* (CSEL 32/4: 14–15). *Quid est ergo deum uidere? Nolo me interrogas: euangelium interroga, ipsum dominum interroga, immo dicentem audi: Philippe, qui me uidit uidit et patrem, qui me misit. Quomodo tu dicis: ostende nobis patrem? Non credis quia ego in patre et pater in me est? Vtique non corpus uidetur in corpore nec spiritus uidetur in spiritu, sed solus ille pater uidetur in filio aut iste filius uidetur in patre; non enim dissimiles in dissimilibus uidentur, sed ubi unitas operationis est atque uirtutis, et filius in patre et pater uidetur in filio. Quae ego inquit opera facio, et ille facit. In operibus Iesus uidetur, in operibus filii et pater cernitur.* Emphasis added.

Father. Thirdly, and finally, Ambrose claims that seeing the Father in the Son is only possible if there is a “unity of operation and of power” (*unitas operationis est atque uirtutis*), a statement which links this visual logic to the importance of seeing the works of God.

This section has shown that the visual logic identified in Ambrose’s reflection on the baptismal rite extends to his Christology. To that end, I argued that Ambrose makes much of the Son’s works (*opera*) as indicators of his divinity, affording insights into the Father. Commonly disputed texts, like Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:3, further support Ambrose’s point that the Son is the one who truly images the Father and reveals something of God. In seeing the Son, in other words, we can be confident that we are seeing the Father.

Divine Visibility, Multiple Powers, and Bodily Unity: Ambrose’s Pro-Nicene Polemic

Still, the contention that the Father is seen in the Son must be clarified. What is the precise character of seeing that takes place when we see the Father in the Son? This section analyzes how Ambrose’s pro-Nicene image theology, driven by visual logic, is used to fend off his non-Nicene opponents. We can discern two main ways Ambrose responds to non-Nicene teaching, both of which wrestle with the challenge of seeing the Father in the Son. The first responds to the claim that there are multiple powers in God, while the second rebuts the claim that divine unity is somehow corporeal, or, affirms that

seeing the Son in the Father is different than seeing a body in a body.⁷⁰ Ambrose's polemic re-exegetes his opponents' favorite scriptural supports and upholds the pro-Nicene line: in God, a single, invisible power unifies the three divine persons.

First, Ambrose writes against the non-Nicene position that multiple powers exist in God, a common characterization of Arius and his followers.⁷¹ Rowan Williams explains the logic behind this multiple powers doctrine: "The Logos truly exists as a subject distinct from the Father; but defining qualities, the essential life, of one subject cannot be shared with another; therefore the divine attributes applied to the Son must be true of him in a sense quite different from that in which they are true of the Father."⁷² If a power was posited proper to God, the same power could not be spoken of with reference to Christ, especially since the former is unseen, the latter, seen. This Arian line was supported by multiple scriptural texts that described the Son and Father as separate agents (e.g., Mt. 24:36; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 14:28). To meet the challenge, Arian exegetes concluded God was the Lord of powers, and thereby ruled over multiple powers. The Son was considered great, but only one of God's powers.⁷³

⁷⁰ See *Luc. 1.7* (CSEL 32/4: 15): *Vtique non corpus uidetur in corpore nec spiritus uidetur in spiritu, sed solus ille pater uidetur in filio aut iste filius uidetur in patre.*

⁷¹ See Barnes, *Power of God*, 126–72, at 165–72. Barnes narrates a significant shift in speaking of multiple powers in God with the writings of Marcellus of Ancyra. The critique that Arius (and Asterius) posited multiple powers in God is frequent in fourth-century literature. Though not using the language of *dunameis* or *exousiai*, Athanasius' *De synodis* notes several scriptures that were used to argue for multiple powers in God.

⁷² Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 232. See also idem, "The Logic of Arianism," *JTS* 34 (1983): 56–81.

⁷³ See Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 112–14; Stuart G. Hall, "The Thalia of Arius in Athanasius' Accounts," in Robert C. Gregg, ed., *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments: Papers from The Ninth International Conference on Patristic Studies* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 37–58, at 50; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 20.

Descriptions of first-generation followers of Arius were said to identify the multiple acts of and by God and his Son; from these acts, they were said to argue that (at least) two powers resided in the Trinity. Athanasius recalls the Arian interpretation of Joel 2:25 (LXX), which refers to the “locust and the caterpillar” as “my great power” (ἡ δύναμίς μου ἡ μεγάλη) and concludes from this verse that there were multiple powers in the Trinity, of which Christ was one.⁷⁴ Examples of this multiple-powers doctrine are frequent in fourth-century literature—many fragments are preserved in anti-Arian literature. For instance, Athanasius quotes a fragment from Asterius of Cappadocia (d. 341 CE), that “many-headed sophist” and supposed follower of Arius, in his *On the Synods* 18:

For the blessed Paul said not that he preached Christ [to be] his, that is, God’s “own power” or “wisdom,” but without the addition, “God’s power and God’s wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:24), preaching that God’s own power was distinct, which was connatural and co-existent with him unoriginately, generative indeed of Christ, creative of the whole world; concerning which he teaches in his epistle to the Romans that “the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and divinity” (Rom. 1:20). For as no one would say that the deity there mentioned was Christ, but the Father himself, so, as I think, his eternal power is also not the only-begotten God (Jn. 1:18), but the Father who begot him. And he teaches us of another power and wisdom of God, namely, that which is manifested through Christ, and made known through the works themselves of his ministry.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ See Athan. *Syn.* 18.6 (SC 563: 238–39) Athanasius also lists the psalmist’s language of “the Lord of hosts” or “powers.” See Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.36, where the historian indicates Asterius’ reference to Joel 2:25 and association with Arius. See also Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 20, where he indicates that Asterius, not Arius, referenced Joel 2:25. Cf. Orig. *Com. Rom.* 1.14 (SC 532: 228–31), where Origen glosses Romans 1:16 (“the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”) with references to other verses that mention “power,” one of which is Joel 2:25. See also Orig. *Cels.* 2.9, which refers to Jesus as a “great power and a God like the God and Father of the universe.”

⁷⁵ Athan. *Syn.* 18.4–7 (SC 563: 236–39). “Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος Χριστὸν κηρύσσειν τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἢ τὴν σοφίαν αὐτοῦ, τουτέστι τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ δίχα τῆς προσθήκης δύναμιν θεοῦ καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν, ἄλλην μὲν εἶναι τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν, τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτῷ καὶ συνυπάρχουσαν αὐτῷ ἀγεννήτως κηρύσσων, γεννητικὴν μὲν οὖσαν, δηλονότι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δημιουργικὴν δὲ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου. Περὶ ἧς ἐν τῇ Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῇ διδάσκων ἔλεγε: Τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ πίστεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα καθορᾶται ἢ τε αἰδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης. Ὡσπερ γὰρ τὴν εἰρημένην ἐνταυθοῖ θεότητα, οὐκ ἂν τις φαίεν

Asterius emphasizes the singular power of God and a distinct power which comes from the manifestation of Christ through his works. As Athanasius writes of Asterius: “the Son is considered one among others” (εἰς τῶν πάντων ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός).⁷⁶ Athanasius concludes thusly on the basis of a fragment of Asterius that cites 1 Corinthians 1:24 and Romans 1:20, two controversial texts in anti-monarchian and anti-homoian polemics, for defense. What is particularly striking for our purposes is that in the generation prior to Ambrose and roughly contemporaneous with Asterius, Hilary only twice mentions Romans 1:20 in his anti-homoian writings, while Ambrose references the verse 30-odd times. This difference between him and Hilary indicates that Ambrose clearly has a distinctive, if not a borrowed or outdated, “Arianism” in his crosshairs.

Supporting the possibility of Ambrose’s borrowed early descriptions of Arianism are the first two books of *On the Faith* (ca. 378/9 CE). There, we find Ambrose fumbling through textbook summaries of heresies and lacking theological nuance.⁷⁷ The laundry

Χριστὸν εἶναι, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸν ὑπάρχειν τὸν πατέρα, οὕτως, οἶμαι, καὶ ἡ αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις οὐχ ὁ μονογενῆς θεός, ἀλλ’ ὁ γεννήσας ὑπάρχει πατήρ. Ἄλλην δὲ δύναμιν καὶ σοφίαν διδάσκει θεοῦ τὴν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ δεικνυμένην δηλονότι καὶ διὰ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν τῆς διακονίας αὐτοῦ γνωριζομένην.”

⁷⁶ Athan. *Syn.* 17.4 (SC 563: 232–33). See also Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 32–41, which lists multiple fragments from Asterius preserved by Athanasius.

⁷⁷ See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 667–75, at 668–69. Ambrose himself admits that the work is “less of a disputation concerning the faith than a weaving together of many testimonies” (*De fide* 1.prol.4 (CSEL 78: 6)). For statements of the hurried nature of Ambrose’s appointment and his unpreparedness, see Ambr. *Off.* 1.1.4 (CCSL 15: 2). (cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.4); Ambr. *Paen.* 2.8.67–73 (CSEL 73: 190–93). See Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 116–161; Ivor J. Davidson, “A Tale of Two Approaches: Ambrose, *De Officiis* 1.1–22 and Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.1–6,” *JTS* 52.1 (2001): 69–76, at 63–64. Davidson’s attempts at reconstructing the text also consider whether Ambrose’s *De officiis* was meant to be read as a treatise or preached as a sermon. Davidson mentions that Ambrose’s statement of inadequacy goes beyond classical examples, but he does not say how.

list of heresies in book one indicts Arius for promoting multiple powers in God.⁷⁸

Ambrose argues against such a claim: God is one, and “if God is one, one is the name, one is the power of the Trinity.”⁷⁹ In support of his claim to the unity of God, Ambrose cites John 10:30: “‘One [thing,] Jesus] said, so that there would be no separation of power (*discretio potestatis*), and he adds ‘we are,’ so that you would know the Father and Son, so that it would be believed the perfect Father has begotten the perfect Son and the Father and Son would be one, not by confusion, but by unity of nature” (*pater ac fillius unum sint non confusione, sed unitate naturae*).⁸⁰ While Arians hold that there are two or three gods, Ambrose argues that God is characterized by “a single power” (*unius potestatis*) that admits diversity.⁸¹

To bolster his case, Ambrose recalls another contested text, the Great Commission: “Go, baptize the nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19).⁸² Based on this verse, non-Nicenes discerned the three divine persons as

⁷⁸ Ambr. *Fid.* 1.1.6 (CSEL 78: 6–7). *Adsertio autem nostrae fidei haec est, ut unum deum esse dicamus neque ut gentes filium separemus neque ut Iudaei natum ex patre ante tempora et ex uirgine postea editum denegamus neque ut Sabellius patrem confundamus et uerbum, ut eundem patrem adseramus et filium, neque ut Fotinus initium filii ex uirgine disputemus neque ut Arrius plures credendo et dissimiles potestates plures deos gentili errore faciamus, quia scriptum est: ‘Audi Istrahel, dominus deus tuus dominus unus est’* (Deut. 6:4). See Michel R. Barnes, “One Nature, One Power: Consensus Doctrine in Pro-Nicene Polemic,” *SP* 29 (1997): 205–23, at 211. Barnes suggests that Origen’s doctrine of multiple powers “serves as a precedent for one side in the controversies of the fourth century. When the Son is identified as God’s ‘second power’, His existence is distinguished from the affective capacity connatural to God’s nature.” By affective capacity, Barnes means that the Son as second power is distinct from the essential power of God. See also Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 502–28, at 505–6.

⁷⁹ *Fid.* 1.1.8 (CSEL 78: 7).

⁸⁰ *Fid.* 1.1.9 (CSEL 78: 7).

⁸¹ *Fid.* 1.1.10 (CSEL 78: 8).

⁸² *Fid.* 1.1.10 (CSEL 78: 8). See *Fid.* 1.1.8 (CSEL 78: 7), where Ambrose again references Matthew 28:19 and emphasizes the singular nature of the name: ‘*in nomine*’ *utique, non ‘in nominibus.*’ For a discrete fourth-century reading of Matthew 28:19, see Hilar. *Trin.* 2.1 (CCSL 62: 38); *Psal.* 2.31 (CCSL 61: 58). On Hilary’s connection to Matthew 28:19, see Meslin, *Les Ariens d’Occident 335–430*, 293–94; Jean Doignon, *Hilaire de Poitiers: “Disciple et témoin de la vérité,”* (356–367) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 22–24. See also Mar. Vict. *Ar.* 4.18 (CSEL 83/1: 251). There appears to be precedent for

representative of three discrete divine powers. But, Ambrose argues, by again proposing multiple divine powers, the Arians threaten the singular name of God. Ambrose maintains that such a move introduces conflict and division (*diuisum*) into the Godhead, and in recalling another verse from Matthew’s gospel, a kingdom divided against itself will easily be overthrown (Mt. 12:25).⁸³

Even while Ambrose argues against multiple divine powers in this way in his roughshod first book of *On the Faith*, he reasons similarly in *On the Faith* 5.9.116–5.9.117, a portion of the work considered by scholars more favorably and much more nuanced.⁸⁴ There too Ambrose references the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19), a text, he indicates, the Arians misinterpret repeatedly. Ambrose’s rehearsal of the Arian gloss here is similar to *On the Faith* 1.1.10: these multiple “names” of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are to be associated with multiple divine powers.

Why is it that the Arians, after the Jewish fashion, are such false and impudent interpreters of the divine sayings, going indeed so far as to say that there is one power of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit, since it is written: “Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19)? And from the order of words, they make a differentiation of divine power.⁸⁵

Matthew 28:19 as a disputed text among Nicenes and Arians in the East, as well. See Basil, *Aduersus Eunomium* 3.2 (SC 305: 150–53). See Timothy P. McConnell, *Illumination in Basil of Caesarea’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 33–47. Lewis Ayres also notes the “Dedication” Creed of Antioch (341 CE), which references Matthew 28:19 and indicates “the names are not given lightly or idly, but signify exactly the particular hypostasis and order and glory of each of those who are named, so that they are three in hypostasis but one in agreement.” See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 118–21, at 118. For the primary text, see Hilar. *Syn.* 29 (PL 10: 502a–503b).

⁸³ *Fid.* 1.1.11 (CSEL 78: 8). For other references to Mt. 12:25 in polemical contexts, see *Fid.* 3.12.92–93 (CSEL 78: 141), against the homoians; *Paen.* 2.4.20–28 (CSEL 73: 172–5), against the Novatianists.

⁸⁴ See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 264, where Ayres mentions that, from the beginning and throughout *De fide*, Ambrose “sees the common operation of the three who are one in divine substance as the central mystery [of the Christian faith].”

⁸⁵ *Fid.* 5.9.116 (CSEL 78: 259–60). *Quin etiam more iudaico etiam falsi et inprudentes interpretaetes Arriani uerborum sunt diuinorum dicentes usque adeo aliam patris aliam fili aliam sancti esse spiritus*

Ambrose's reply reiterates his previous argument: in the Trinity, there is a "unity of majesty and of name" (*unitate maiestatis ac nominis*).⁸⁶ True, throughout the scriptures, there are places where the Son is named before the Father. But these instances, Ambrose maintains, do not indicate a divine hierarchy, let alone that the Son is a power above the Father. "Faith knows not this order," Ambrose concludes, "it knows not a divided honor of Father and Son. I have not read, nor heard, nor found various degrees in God. I have never read of a second god, or a third. I have read of a first; I have heard of a 'first and only' (Is. 44:6)."⁸⁷ It is clear that Ambrose is committed to a unified, singular power in the Godhead. To draw from the order of multiple names an ontological ranking that splits the persons into separate powers, one subordinate to the other, misses the text's intent. Since "the order of words is often changed" (*uerborum ordo saepe mutatur*), Ambrose argues, whatever "order" there appears to be should not be determinative of division between the persons in ranked terms of their divinity, in which they are one.⁸⁸

potestatem, ut scriptum sit: 'Ite, docete omnes gentes baptizantes eos in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti,' et ex uerborum ordine differentiam diuinae faciunt potestatis.

⁸⁶ *Fid.* 5.9.117 (CSEL 78: 260). Ambrose makes a similar argument in *Spir.* 1.13.132 (CSEL 79: 72): *Quis igitur unitatem negare audeat nominis, cum operationis uideat unitatem? Sed quid ego unitatem nominis argumentis adstruo, cum diuinae uocis euidentis testimonium sit unum nomen esse patris et filii et spiritus sancti? Scriptum est enim: 'Ite, baptizate gentes in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti.' 'In nomine' dixit, non 'in nominibus.' Non ergo aliud nomen patris, aliud nomen filii, aliud nomen spiritus sancti, quia unus deus; non plura nomina, quia non duo dei, non tres dei. Cf. *Spir.* 2.8.71 (CSEL 79: 114–15), 3.19.148 (CSEL 79: 212–13); *Sacr.* 2.7.22 (CSEL 73: 35).*

⁸⁷ *Fid.* 5.9.117 (CSEL 78: 260). *Nescit hunc ordinem fides, nescit discretum patris et filii honorem. Non legi, non audiui, nec aliquem in deo inuenio gradum. Nusquam secundum, nusquam tertium deum legi. 'Primum' legi, 'primum' ac 'solum' audiui.* Ambrose's worries about ranking the divine persons are assuaged with references to Revelation 1:17 ("for I am the first and the last"). For Ambrose's several references to Revelation 1:17, see *Myst.* 8.46 (CSEL 73: 108); *Apol. Dau.* 1.17.81 (CSEL 32/2: 352); *Inst.* 11.73 (PL 16: 323); *Psal.* 118 20.3 (CSEL 62: 446); *Sacr.* 5.1.1 (CSEL 73: 59).

⁸⁸ *Fid.* 5.9.118 (CSEL 78: 261).

The visibility of the Son and his divinity led Ambrose's opponents to yet another conclusion: the unity of the Father and Son is somehow bodily in nature. The pro-Nicene claim to a single divine power, Ambrose argues, also fends off this threat. Four passages in particular show Ambrose's allergy to bodily unity of the Father and the Son. The first passage that shows Ambrose's allergy to the idea of a bodily unity of the Trinity, *On the Faith* 1.7.49–1.7.50, uses image language to continue the argument for prepositional unity between the Father and Son. Ambrose contends that the predication “Image” of the Son necessitates that the Son is “from God” (*de deo*). And the Son's being image *de deo* is not of a bodily nature but a matter of power. The passage reads as follows:

The prophets say: “In your light we will see light” (Ps. 35:10, LXX), and again they say, “For it is the brightness of an eternal light and the spotless mirror of God's majesty, the image of his goodness” (Wis. 7:26). See what great things are declared: “Brightness,” because the clarity of the paternal light is in the Son; “a spotless mirror,” because the Father is seen in the Son; “the image of goodness,” not because a body in a body is discerned, but the whole power in the Son. “Image” teaches us that he is not dissimilar, it signifies that he is the expressed character, “brightness” marks out his eternity. “Image” therefore is not the face of a body, nor a composition of rouges or waxes, but something simple from God, “coming out of the Father” (cf. Jn. 8:42) expressed from the source.⁸⁹

By juxtaposing bodily language with that pertaining to divinity, Ambrose contends that the Son is “from God, ‘having come out from the Father,’ pressed out of the source.”

“The ‘image,’” he writes, “is not a face of a body (*non uultus est corporalis*), not

⁸⁹ Ambr. *Fid.* 1.7.49 (CSEL 78: 21–22): *Prophetae dicunt: ‘In lumine tuo uidebimus lumen,’ (Ps. 35:10), prophetae dicunt: ‘Splendor est enim lucis aeternae et speculum sine macula dei maiestatis et imago bonitatis illius’ (Wis. 7:26). Vide quanta dicantur: ‘Splendor,’ quod claritas paternae lucis in filio sit, ‘speculum sine macula,’ quod pater uideatur in filio, ‘imago bonitatis,’ quod non corpus in corpore, sed uirtus in filio tota cernatur. ‘Imago’ docet non esse dissimilem, character expressum esse significat, ‘splendor’ signat aeternum. ‘Imago’ itaque non uultus est corporalis, non fucus composita, non ceris, sed simplex de deo, ‘egressa de patre’ (cf. Jn. 8:42) expressa de fonte. See also *Psal.* 38.24 (CSEL 64/6: 202–3), where Jesus is described as *bona imago non ceris picturae figurata radiantis, sed plenitudine diuinitatis expressa. In qua imagine et pater simul uidetur et filius, quia utriusque eorum unitas operationis effulget.* For how *Fid.* 1.7.49 relates to Ambrose's broader theological claims, see Marksches, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie*, 89–109; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 70–76; Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image*, 92–94. Boersma quotes the passage and references Ambrose's image theology in the context of other Latins, notably Hilary and Marius Victorinus.*

composed of rouges (*non fucis conposita*), nor of wax (*non ceris*), but is simple and from God (*simplex de deo*), ‘having come out from the Father’ (*egressa de patre*), pressed out from the source.”⁹⁰

While the overarching claim to incorporeal unity is very similar to what we get, for example, in Hilary’s *On the Trinity* 3.23,⁹¹ Ambrose’s pairing of Psalm 35:10⁹² and Wisdom 7:26⁹³ is distinctive in Latin Christian literature, although also seen in Gregory

⁹⁰ Ambr. *Fid.* 1.7.49 (CSEL 78: 22). In Chapter Four, we will see Ambrose adapting the same material language—notably *fucus* and *cera*—to describe the moral pitfalls inherent in failing to bear the image of God. Our prime reference will be Ambrose’s *Hex.* 6.8.47. “Therefore, man, you have been painted by the Lord God, your painter. You are fortunate to have a painter of extravagance. Don’t erase that painting, one that shines not with rouge but truth (*non fucio sed ueritatem fulgentem*), expressed not in wax but in grace (*non cera expressam sed gratia*).”

⁹¹ See Hilar. *Trin.* 3.23 (CCSL 62: 95–96), which references John 10:30, Hebrews 1:3, and Genesis 1:26. *Audis: Ego et Pater unum sumus. Quid discindis et distrahis Filium a Patre? Vnum sunt, scilicet is qui est et is qui ab eo est, nihil habens quod non sit etiam in eo a quo est. Cum audis Filium dicentem: Ego et Pater unum sumus, personis rem adcommoda. Gignenti et genito professionis suae permittite sententiam. Sint unum, ut sunt qui genuit et genitus est. Cur naturam excludis, cur ueritatem interimis? Audis: Pater in me et ego in Patre. Et hoc de Patre et Filio Fili opera testantur. Non corpus per intelligentiam nostram corpori inmittimus, neque ut aquam uino infundimus; sed eandem in utroque et uirtutis similitudinem et deitatis plenitudinem confitemur. Omnia enim Filius accepit a Patre, et est Dei forma et imago substantiae eius. Eum enim qui est ab eo qui est substantiae imago tantum ad subsistendi fidem, non etiam ad aliquam naturae dissimilitudinem intellegendam discernit. Patrem autem in Filio et Filium in Patre esse, plenitudo in utroque diuinitatis perfecta est. Non enim deminutio Patris est Filius, nec Filius imperfectus a Patre est. Imago sola non est, et similitudo non sibi est. Deo autem simile aliquid esse nisi quod ex se erit non potest. Non enim aliunde est quod in omnibus simile est, neque diuersitatem duobus admisceri alterius ad alterum similitudo permittit. Ne similia permutes, neque sibi ex ueritate indiscreta disiungas: quia qui dixit: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram, inuicem esse sui similes in eo quod similitudinem nostram dicat ostendit. Ne contigeris, ne contrectaueris, ne corruperis! Tene naturae nomina, tene Fili professionem. Nolo aduleris, ut Filium de tuo laudes: bene habet, ut his quae sunt scribta contentus sis.* See also Scully, *Physicalist Soteriology in Hilary of Poitiers*, 31; and Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image*, 41–43. Both Scully and Boersma mention Hilar. *Trin.* 3.23.

⁹² For other Christological references to Psalm 35:10, see *Psal.* 35.22 (CSEL 64/6: 65–66), where Ambrose exegetes the verse with reference to other texts central to anti-homoian polemic, namely Hebrews 1:3, John 14:9–10, John 1:1, John 10:38, John 10:30. Other examples include: *Parad.* 3.13 (CSEL 32/1: 272); *Spir.* 1.14.142 (CSEL 79: 76), 1.15.152 (CSEL 79: 80); *Luc.* 10.46 (CSEL 32/4: 473); *Fug.* 9.52 (CSEL 32/2: 204). See also Hervé Savon, *Saint Ambroise devant l’exégèse de Philon le Juif* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1977), 220–23.

⁹³ Cassiodorus’ *Institutions* 1.5 references the status of the Book of Wisdom and mentions that Ambrose and Augustine gave sermons on the book, although neither collection is extant. For other occurrences of Ambrose’s use of Wisdom 7:26, see *Abr.* 2.10.76 (CSEL 32/1: 628–29); *Luc.* 8.68 (CSEL 32/4: 426); *Spir.* 1.14.142 (CSEL 79: 75–76), 3.12.87 (CSEL 79: 186); *Fid.* 1.13.79 (CSEL 78: 34–35),

of Elvira's *On the Orthodox Faith*.⁹⁴ This scriptural pairing discloses how precisely the manifestation of the Son—the “Image of his goodness”—reveals the power and majesty of God. Ambrose's interpretation of the scriptural constellation is driven by an underlying image theology which argues that the Son is from the Father, and that their consubstantial relationship inheres not in physical appearance but in their “whole power” (*tota uirtus*).⁹⁵ The Son, Ambrose argues, displays this divine power; he is, as Ambrose puts it elsewhere, the “Image of the Father's substance.”⁹⁶ Since the Son is the perfect

2.pro.3 (CSEL 78: 58), 2.pro.14 (CSEL 78: 62), 2.2.32 (CSEL 78: 67). See Marksches, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie*, 99–100.

⁹⁴ Gregory's work was issued twice, and both editions connect Psalm 35:10 and Wisdom 7:26, with the differences in their treatment being slight. See Greg. Illib. *Fid. Orth.* 5.59 (CCSL 69: 234). See Manlio Simonetti's introduction to Gregory of Elvira in his Italian translation of the *Fid. Orth.* in *Gregorio Di Elvira: La fede*, M. Simonetti, ed. (Torino: Societa Editrice Internazionale, 1975), 5–50. See also Jörg Ulrich, *Die Anfänge der Abendländischen Rezeption des Nizänums* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 195–212; Hugo Koch, “In Gregors von Elvira Schrifttum und Quellen,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 52 (1932): 238–72, at 271–72. In the main, Koch's article treats sources for Gregory's *Tractatus Origenis*, and only briefly his *De fide*. The passage in question (5.59) is mentioned at the conclusion of Koch's article, which cites Tertullian's *Apol.* 21 (CCSL 1: 122–28), *Prax.* 8 (noted above), and Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* 61 (a text that draws an analogy: fire : fire :: Wisdom : God. The scriptural text with which Justin concludes is Proverbs 8:22ff.). See also Manlio Simonetti, *Studi sull'arianesimo* (Roma: Editrice Studium, 1965), 9–87, where Simonetti treats early interpretations of Proverbs 8:22ff. In the homoian Palladius' fragments, there are two references to Proverbs 8:22: at “Fragments de Palladius” 111.341v (SC 267: 296–97) and at 134.346v (SC 267: 316–17). The latter fragment is linked with Colossians 1:15–17. For Ambrose's similarity to, but not necessarily his reliance upon, Gregory, see Marksches, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie*, 205, 210. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 80–81, 156 n.41, 240 n.36, makes the point that Gregory of Elvira (and other pro-Nicene theologians) shares a family resemblance to Ambrose and Hilary, but he never makes the explicit connection regarding a shared use of Wisdom 7 and Psalm 35. Finally, see, too, François Szabó, *Le Christ créateur chez saint Ambroise*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 2 (Roma: Studium theologicum Augustinianum, 1968), 30, n.53, who points to an argument for a “fonds commun de la foi de Nicée et de la théologie d'Athanase,” discernable in Damasus' *Tome*, Ambrose, Marius Victorinus, Gregory of Elvira, and Phoebadius of Agen.

⁹⁵ See Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image*, 89–95. Boersma makes the case that for Ambrose image theology is “in the first place Christology” and therefore is a distinctly “spiritual reality” (89). Cf. Phoeb. *Ar.* 23.1–3 (CCSL 64: 46), where Phoebadius cautions against using *deum ex deo, lumen ex lumine* for fear that “another” (*alterus*) God or light could be derived from such reasoning. See also Michel Barnes, “Other Latin Nicenes,” unpublished article.

⁹⁶ *Ambr. Fid.* 5.7.97 (CSEL 78: 251). For concepts critical to Ambrose's Trinitarian theology in *De Fide* (*unius substantiae, unitas, natura, aequalitas*, etc.), see Marksches, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie*, 197–212. For similar statement, see Mar.-Vict. *Ar.* 1.34 (CSEL 83/1: 116): *Substantiae autem dei imago est actio filiusque est, per quam intellegitur, et quod sit declaratur: 'qui me uidit, uidit patrem,' et ipsa substantia existens, habens esse et a se.* Cf. Hilar. *Trin.* 11.5 (CCSL 62a: 533–34). Hilary writes that Christ is “the Image of the invisible God and the Form of God.”

Image of the Father, he bears characteristics of the Father's interior nature without complication. In his *On the Mystery of the Lord's Incarnation* (ca. 382),⁹⁷ penned soon after books four and five of *On the Faith* and *On the Holy Spirit*, Ambrose writes that the Son alone is called the image of the invisible God and the mark of God's substance, because "in him there is the unity of the same nature and the expression of his majesty" (*in eo naturae eiusdem unitas et eius maiestatis expressio est*).⁹⁸ Though Psalm 35:10 and Wisdom 7:26 are not quoted explicitly, many of the same key words and phrases noted in *On the Faith* 1.7.49 above are on display in *On the Mystery of the Lord's Incarnation* in short space—e.g., *unitas*, *maiestas*, and *expressio*.

Our second passage, *On the Faith* 1.7.50, furthers the general contours of Ambrose's image theology in broad strokes, denying the non-Nicene assertion of the dissimilarity between Father and Son. The Father and Son are similar, even united, in some way. Ambrose argues, by referring to John 14:6 and 1 Corinthians 1:24 that the Father-Son relationship is non-corporeal. "Whoever looks upon the Son sees the Father in image," Ambrose writes, and this "Father in image" is evident because of the Son's deeds. Ambrose continues:

Do you see what sort of image is spoken of? The image is truth (Jn. 14:6), justice (1 Cor. 1:30), the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24); it is not dumb, for it is the Word; not insensible, for it is wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24); not empty, for it is power; not vacuous, for it is life; not dead, for it is the resurrection (Jn. 11:25). You see, then,

⁹⁷ Dating the work is difficult. Ambrose refers to *Fid.* in it, so the earliest is likely late 381 CE. See Quasten, 4: 170.

⁹⁸ Ambr. *Incarn.* 10.110 (CSEL 79: 277). See Basil, *Adversus Eunomius* 2.16 (SC 305: 62–65), where Basil cites Psalm 35:10 in a Christological context. See also Ambr. *Fid.* 3.11.89–91 (CSEL 78: 140–41), at 3.11.89: *Aut si pater in filio sicut filius in patre, et substantiae utique et operationis unitas non negatur*"; *Hex.* 6.7.41 (CSEL 32/1: 233): "There is no discrepancy either in divinity or in operation. Therefore, in both we do not have one person (*persona*), but one substance (*substantia*)."

that while he is called an image, they signify that there is a Father, whose image is the Son, since no one can be his own image.⁹⁹

By “image” here, Ambrose indicates that there is no difference or dissimilarity between the Father and the Son, who is the perfect Image: he is the manifestation of justice, power, and wisdom.

Ambrose’s *On the Faith* 5.11.134–35 is our third example that the unity that obtains between the Father and the Son is not corporeal but incorporeal. Ambrose’s statement here comes at the conclusion of a discussion over whether the obedience of Christ should be attributed to his humanity or divinity. After Ambrose states that the Son is obedient in the flesh, he contends that the unity of the Father and Son is non-bodily.

. . . for there is one sentiment and one operation in the Trinity. Just as the Father “is seen” in the Son, not indeed in bodily appearance, but in the unity of divinity so also the Father “speaks” in the Son, not with a temporal voice nor with a bodily sound, but in the unity of the work. So when he had said: “The Father who abides in me, speaks”; and “the works that I do, he does” (Jn. 14:10), he added: “Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; otherwise believe these things on account of the works themselves” (Jn. 14:17).¹⁰⁰

Ambrose is concerned with how precisely the Father can be said “to be seen” in the Son. References to Johannine texts support and help Ambrose address this concern. The Son can be said to image the Father, Ambrose maintains, not by his corporeal appearance (*specie corporali*) nor does he speak in the Son by “temporal voice” (*temporali uoce*) or a “bodily sound” (*corporali sono*), but by his “unity of divinity” and “unity of work.” His

⁹⁹ Ambr. *Fid.* 1.7.50 (CSEL 78: 22). *Vides quam imaginem dicat? Imago ista ueritas est, imago ista iustitia est, imago ista 'dei uirtus' est, non muta, quia uerbum est, non insensibilis, quia sapientia est, non inanis, quia uirtus est, non uacua, quia uita est, non mortua, quia resurrectio est. Vides ergo quia dum imago dicitur, patrem significant esse, cuius imago sit filius, quia nemo potest ipse sibi imago sua esse.*

¹⁰⁰ Ambr. *Fid.* 5.11.134–35 (CSEL 78: 265–66). *Quia una sententia et operatio trinitatis est. Sicut enim pater "uidetur" in filio, non utique specie corporali, sed unitate diuinitatis, ita etiam pater "loquitur" in filio, non temporali uoce nec corporali sono, sed operis unitate. Denique cum dixisset: Pater, qui in me manet, ipse loquitur, et opera, quae ego facio, ipse facit, addidit: Credite mihi, quia ego in patre et pater in me. Alioquin propter opera ipsa credite.*

tentative explanations of material verbs (e.g., “seen . . . not in bodily appearance” and “speaks . . . not with an earthly voice or a bodily sound”) further fend off associating bodily unity with the divine. Instead, here, as in the passage from *On the Faith* 1.7.49–50 above, Ambrose reasserts that the Son is able to show forth the Father, not because of a corporeal unity, but because of their a single, shared, invisible divinity and work.

Lest we think that Ambrose’s argument for non-corporeal unity between the Father and Son is peculiar to *On the Faith*, *On the Holy Spirit* 3.11.82 serves as our fourth and final example.

What does it mean, then, that the Father is worshipped in Christ, except that the Father is in Christ, and the Father speaks in Christ, and the Father remains in Christ (Jn. 14:10–11)? Not, indeed, as a body in a body, for God is not a body; nor as a confused mixture, but as the true in the true, God in God, Light in Light; as the eternal Father in the co-eternal Son. So it should not be understood as a putting of a body [into another], but as a unity of power. Therefore, by unity of power, Christ is jointly worshipped in the Father when God the Father is worshipped in Christ. In like manner, then, by unity of the same power the Spirit is jointly worshipped in God, when God is worshipped in Spirit (Jn. 4:24).¹⁰¹

While there are obvious differences between this passage and Tertullian’s *Against Praxeas* 24.7–8 cited in the previous chapter, a common scriptural proof, John 14:9–10, is central to both.¹⁰² And both Tertullian and Ambrose refer to John 14:9–10 to assert that

¹⁰¹ *Spir.* 3.11.82 (CSEL 79: 184): *Quid est ergo ‘adoratur in Christo pater,’ nisi quia ‘est in Christo pater’ et ‘loquitur in Christo pater’ at ‘manet in Christo pater’ (Jn. 14:10–11)? Non utique quasi corpus in corpore—non enim deus corpus—nec quasi confusus in confuso, sed quasi uerus in uero, deus in deo, lumen in lumine, quasi pater sempiternus in filio coaeterno. Non ergo insertio corporis intellegitur, sed unitas potestatis. Ergo per unitatem potestatis coadoratur in patre Christus, cum deus pater adoratur in Christo. Similiter itaque per unitatem potestatis eiusdem coadoratur in deo spiritus, dum deus adoratur ‘in spiritu.’*

¹⁰² See Tert. *Prax.* 24.7–8 (CCSL 2: 1195). “Therefore he also made manifest the conjunction of the two persons (*duarum personarum coniunctionem*), so that the Father separately might not, as though visible, be asked for in open view, and that the Son might be accepted as the representor of the Father (*ut Filius repraesentator Patris haberetur*). And no less did [Jesus] explain this also, in what manner the Father was in the Son and the Son in the Father: ‘The words,’ he says, ‘that I speak unto you, are not mine’—evidently because they are the Father’s—“but the Father abiding in me does the works’ (*Pater autem manens in me facit opera*). Therefore the Father, abiding (*manens*) in the Son through works of miracles and words of doctrine (*per opera ergo uirtutum et uerba doctrinae*), is seen (*uidetur*) through

the Father is in Christ invisibly. Following this line, Ambrose explicitly refuses to describe the character of unity between Father and Son corporeally—“not as a body in a body” (*non utique quasi corpus in corpore*), he writes.

This line of argumentation places Ambrose in conversation with Didymus the Blind’s *On the Holy Spirit* 87–90.¹⁰³ There, Didymus argues that the Spirit is of the same nature and power as the Father and Son, refuting his opponents who argue that scriptural passages contradict one another when describing who or what casts out demons: Is it the “Finger of God” (Lk. 11.19–20) or the Spirit (Mt. 12:28)? These passages should not be taken to show substantial difference among persons of the Trinity, but to “demonstrate the unity of a substance, not also its dimensions.”¹⁰⁴ Didymus continues:

For just as the hand, through which everything is accomplished and worked, is not divided from the body, and just as the hand belongs to him whose hand it is, so also is the finger not separated from the hand of which it is the finger. And so, spurn inequalities and dimensions when you think about God, and understand the unity that obtains among the finger and the hand and the entire body. Now it is by this Finger that the Law was written on tablets of stone (cf. Ex 31:18).¹⁰⁵

those things through which he abides (*per quae manet*), and through him in whom he abides (*per eum in quo manet*): the proper character of each person being apparent from this very fact, while he says, “I am in the Father and the Father in me.” And so he says, “Believe.” But “believe” what? That I am the Father? I think it is not so written, but, ‘That I am in the Father and the Father in me, or if not, believe because of the works’ (*si quo minus uel propter opera credite*)—those works in fact through which the Father was seen in the Son, not with the eyes but with the mind (*ea utique opera per quae Pater in Filio non uisu, sed sensu uidebatur*).”

¹⁰³ Ambrose’s work, dated to 381 CE, owes much to Didymus’s homonymous work, dated to the 360s.

¹⁰⁴ Didymus, *Spir.* 89 (SC 386: 228–29). Translation from: Athanasius and Didymus the Blind, *Works on the Spirit: Athanasius’s Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit and Didymus’s On the Holy Spirit*. Translated by Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, and Lewis Ayres, Popular Patristics Series 43 (Yonkers: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 171.

¹⁰⁵ Didymus, *Spir.* 90 (SC 386: 228–29). *Sicut enim manus non dividitur a corpore, per quam cuncta perficit et operator, et in eo est cuius est manus, sic et digitus non separatur a manu cuius est digitus. Reice itaque inaequalitates et mensuras cum de Deo cogitas, et intellege digiti et manus et totius corporis unitatem, quo digito et lex in tabulis lapideis scripta est.*

Didymus is adamant to show that bodily language—talk of “lowly things” (*minora*), he writes—should not lead readers to analyze the size or quality of certain body parts. Rather, the scripture intends reflection on “incorporeal realities” (*incorporalibus*).¹⁰⁶ The body’s unity with its multiple composite parts, in sum, serves as an analogy for incorporeal divine unity.

In the most recent English translation of Didymus’ *On the Holy Spirit*, the translators note the Aristotelian contours of Didymus’ logic here. By Aristotle’s lights, the parts of a natural body—its arms and legs, for example, are not accidentally continuous. They are “naturally continuous,” unified “in themselves” (καθ’αὐτό) because they always move together, which makes their movement “indivisible in time” (ἀδιαίρετος δὲ κατὰ χρόνον).¹⁰⁷ According to Didymus, the character of divine unity follows suit: though there is diversity introduced in the Godhead by virtue of three discrete persons, this diversity of persons does not exclude the natural unity among them, even if that unity does not have shared motion through space as its marker.

In his *On the Holy Spirit* 3.11.82, Ambrose agrees with Didymus’ general point about the Trinity—the inseparability of the divine persons. There is a “unity of power” (*unitas potestatis*) which binds the Father and Son and that is expressed prepositionally (“true in the true, God in God, light in light”) and adapted presumably from the Nicene formula. Didymus wants to explore the “incorporeal realities” that language pertaining to the body can depict, and certainly does not want to insinuate a bodily unity. Rather, for

¹⁰⁶ Didymus, *Spir.* 89 (SC 386: 228–29; DelCogliano, Radde-Gallwitz, and Ayres, 171).

¹⁰⁷ Arist. *Metaph.* 5.6.2 (LCL 271: 228–29). I am grateful to conversation with Kellen Plaxco and his work on inseparable operations in Didymus for pointing out the connection to Aristotle. See Kellen Plaxco, “Didymus the Blind’s Pro-Nicene Doctrine of ‘Inseparable Operations,’” unpublished monograph.

Didymus, as for Ambrose, the unity of the three persons is natural, like that of a body and its parts.

This section has explored two nodes of Ambrose's pro-Nicene theology, both hinging on a single-power theology. At some points, he argues against those who predicated multiple powers in God because of the Son's visibility and Father's invisibility. He does this by asserting that the Son and the Father share the same singular power and that this can be discerned through Jesus's statements of divine unity in John's gospel. At other points, Ambrose argues against the notion that the character of this unity between Father and Son is somehow corporeal. So while the Son and his works are visible, there is, Ambrose contends, invisible power behind such visible works and attested by them. In this invisible power, the Father and Son are unified. Johannine texts fund Ambrose's arguments. Sometimes Ambrose seeks to describe how the Father is made visible in the Son. Sometimes Ambrose seeks to describe how the Son makes the Father visible. While these fuel two discrete sorts of reflection, they point Ambrose to the same doctrine, namely that the Father and Son share a single, invisible power. And that the Father and the Son share a single, invisible power determines that the works of God are discerned and described in a way that surpasses bodily sight of their incarnate manifestation in Christ.

Unity of Operation and Power: Seeing the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son

The first three sections of this chapter have made plain both the general inclination to view visible things with an eye toward the invisible realities they express and how that general inclination underlies a single-power theology that helps

Ambrose fend off non-Nicene theologies. These I take as the broad contours of Ambrose's Trinitarian theology. But these contours simply sketch Ambrose's polemic and demand further specification. The question before us then is this: What does Ambrose think we see (or should see) when we see the works of God? This section argues that Ambrose answers the question by subscribing to a doctrine of the unity of operation.¹⁰⁸

In saying that divine operation for Ambrose is unified, I mean broadly two things: (1) the Son's work is expressive of his divinity; and (2) the Son's divinity is shared with the Father. Therefore, the deeds performed and words spoken by Jesus show that the Father and Son are one. To make his case, Ambrose argues that the Son images God the Father. More precisely, the character of the Son's works (*opera*) discloses his invisible unity with God.

Examples from Ambrose's image theology uncover the connection between divine operations and the unity between Father and Son. The first is found in a homily on Genesis 1:26 from Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*.¹⁰⁹ When God utters, "Let us make man in our image and likeness" (Gen. 1.26), Ambrose asserts, the Father is speaking to the Son. This position is contrary to that of the "Jews" and the "Arians," who both believe that the Father has uttered these words to angels (*seruolis*).¹¹⁰ After noting that the one to whom

¹⁰⁸ See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 44–50. Differing descriptions of divine operation have led Lewis Ayres to claim that there are discrete doctrines of common and inseparable operations. Ambrose's discourse, Ayres contends, primarily conveys a doctrine of common operations but "hints at inseparable operation . . . [which argues that] all three divine persons work in each divine act" (46). While I do think the distinction Ayres maintains is present, I do not know if it amounts to separate discernable doctrines, which is why I stick with the phrase "unity of operation."

¹⁰⁹ The series of sermons is typically dated between 386–90 CE.

¹¹⁰ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.40 (CSEL 32.1: 230): *Sed ipsius creationis nostrae seriem consideremus. Faciamus inquit hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram. Quis hoc dicit? Nonne deus, qui te fecit?*

he speaks shares a likeness and similitude with God, Ambrose strings together references typical of anti-monarchian and anti-homoian polemics: Colossians 1:13–15; John 14:8–10; John 10:30; and Exodus 3:14, respectively, to affirm that the Son, as the true divine Image, bears resemblance to the Father. Ambrose’s argument is unsurprising given his Nicene commitments: because of the Son’s unity with the Father, neither is there any precedence of rank between Father and Son, nor dissimilarity between the two in divinity or work.¹¹¹ He continues:

Listen to the Apostle who tells us who is the image of God: “Who has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His majesty in whom we have our redemption and the remission of our sins, who is the image of the invisible God and the first-born of every creature” (Col. 1:13–15). He who always is and was from the beginning is the “Image” of the Father. Hence it is the “Image” who says: “Philip, he who sees me sees also the Father.” And again, although you see the living “Image” of the living Father, “How can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me” (Jn. 14:8–10)? The “Image” of God is power, not infirmity. The “Image” of God is wisdom; the Image of God is Justice, and in fact, wisdom is divine justice is eternal. The “Image” of God is the one alone who has said: “I and the Father are one” (Jn. 10:30), thus possessing the likeness of the Father so as to have a unity of divinity and of plenitude. When he says “let us make,” how can there be inequality? When, again, he says “to our likeness,” where is the dissimilitude? So, when he says in the Gospel: “I and the Father,” there is certainly not one person. But when he says: “We are one [thing],” there is no discrepancy either in divinity or in operation. Both, therefore, do not have one person, but one substance. Rightly did he add “we are,” because to always “be” is divine, so that you would believe to be coeternal the one whom you thought to be dissimilar.¹¹²

Quid est deus? Caro an spiritus? Non caro utique, sed spiritus, cuius similis caro esse non potest, quia ipse incorporeus et inuisibilis est, caro autem et comprehenditur et uidetur. Cui dicit? Non sibi utique, quia non dicit 'faciam', sed 'faciamus', non angelis, quia ministri sunt, serui autem cum domino et opera cum auctore non possunt operationis habere consortium, sed dicit filio, etiamsi Iudaei nolint, etiamsi Ariani repugnent.

¹¹¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.41 (CSEL 32/1: 232–33). This passage is critical too for analysis of Ambrose’s doctrine of the image of God, which I explore in chapters three and four below.

¹¹² *Hex.* 6.7.41 (CSEL 32/1: 232–33). *Sed qui sit imago dei audi dicentem: ‘qui eripuit nos inquit de potestate tenebrarum et transtulit in regnum fili claritatis suae, in quo habemus redemptionem et remissionem peccatorum, qui est imago dei inuisibilis et primogenitus uniuersae creaturae’ (Col. 1:13–15). Ipse est imago patris qui semper est et erat in principio. Denique imago est qui dicit: ‘Philippe, qui uidet me uidet et patrem’ et quomodo tu, cum imaginem uiuam patris uiuentis uideas, dicis: ‘ostende nobis patrem? Non credis quia ego in patre et pater in me est’ (Jn. 14:8–10)? Imago dei uirtus est, non infirmitas,*

Ambrose's consideration of the Image points him to the similitude between Father and Son. This Image is coeternal, and thus one, with the Father. For Ambrose, this divine similitude indicates a "unity of divinity and fullness" (*diuinitatis et plenitudinis unitatem*) between the Son and Father. Here, the language is not of a unity of power but of a unity of *substantia*. Though the terms of the logic are different, the dynamic is functionally similar: whatever the Father is, so the Son is, as well. The Son's visibility—as the one who images and is united with the Father—discloses the "living Father." Ambrose further contends that this unity of Father and Son allows for "no discrepancy either in divinity or in operation" (*nulla est discrepantia diuinitatis aut operis*). For our purposes, we can say that it is due to the unity of *substantia* or *diuinitas* between Father and Son that the divine works can be said to be one. And it is in seeing the Son as Image that we are able to discern more fully this unity.

Ambrose will describe divine operation as inseparable, by which he means that when we witness the *opera* of the Son, we are seeing each divine person, as well.¹¹³ As an outworking of a doctrine of divine simplicity—that as first principle, God cannot be a composite creature—recourse to inseparable operations further establishes how the work

*imago dei sapientia est. Imago dei iustitia est, sed sapientia diuina est et sempiterna iustitia est. Imago dei est solus ille qui dixit: 'ego et pater unum sumus, ita habens similitudinem patris, ut diuinitatis et plenitudinis habeat unitatem. Ubi dicit 'faciamus,' quomodo inaequalitas? Cum iterum dicat 'ad similitudinem nostrum,' ubi est dissimilitudo? Sic et in euangelio, ubi dicit 'ego et pater,' utique non una persona est; ubi autem ait 'unum sumus,' nulla est discrepantia diuinitatis aut operis. Non igitur in utroque una persona, sed una substantia est. Et bene addidit 'sumus,' quia semper esse diuinum est, ut coaeternum credas quem putabas esse dissimilem. See also Szabó, *Le Christ créateur chez saint Ambroise*, 41–57.*

The similarity between Ambrose's homily and Basil of Casaerea's on the same topic is undeniable. See Basil, *Hexaemeron* 9.6 (SC 26: 518–20).

¹¹³ See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 46; Ayres, "Remember That You Are Catholic," 39–82; Adam Ployd, *Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church: A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 101–43, at 122–25.

of the Son functions as a dense index of invisible unity with the Father (and the Spirit).¹¹⁴

A passage from book four of *On the Faith*, for instance, uses the language of “inseparable” to spell out how the Father and Son can be said to work together. After referencing John 5:19–20—that the Son and Father do the same things because of the inseparable and undivided charity between them—Ambrose writes:

But if, as it truly is, love is naturally inseparable, then indeed operation is naturally inseparable, and it is impossible that the work of the Son should not be in agreement with the Father's will, when what the Son works, the Father works also, and what the Father works, the Son works also, and what the Son speaks, the Father speaks also, as it is written: “My Father, who abides in me, He speaks, and the works that I do, He does” (Jn. 14:10). For the Father established nothing without His power and wisdom, because he made all things in wisdom, as it is written: “In wisdom have you made all things;” (Ps. 103:24) and indeed, God the Word made nothing without the Father.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ For the connection between divine simplicity and a pro-Nicene doctrine of inseparable operations, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 273–301. Ayres also shows how claims to divine inseparability point to the practice of “appropriation” (attributing to one divine person some characteristic common to the Godhead). See also Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and the Transformation of Divine Simplicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), *passim*, esp. 208–12. While Radde-Gallwitz’s main aim is analysis of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, his coinciding of simplicity and the virtues is particularly important here because it offers a theoretical backdrop against we can discern unity of different things said to be simple and non-composite, be they virtues, persons, etc. See also Radde-Gallwitz, “Gregory of Nyssa on the Reciprocity of the Virtues,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 58.2 (2007): 537–52; John M. Cooper, “The Unity of Virtue,” in *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 76–117. Throughout his career, Ambrose argues for the unity of the virtues. His best known statement can be found in *Off.* 2.8.43 (CCSL 15: 112): *Denique sapientum definitione, in quo una uirtus est, concurrunt ceterae nec potest sine iustitia esse prudentia*. See *Abr.* 1.3.10 (CSEL 32/1: 509), where Ambrose argues that Abraham, in possessing, *deuotio*, is said to possess all the virtues. See also Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 88–89; Davidson, *Ambrose: De Officiis*, 550.

¹¹⁵ *Ambr. Fid.* 4.6.68 (CSEL 78: 180). *Quod si naturaliter est, ut uere est, inseparabilis caritas, inseparabilis utique est etiam operatio naturaliter, et impossibile, ut opus filii cum patre non conueniat uoluntate, quando id, quod filius operatur, operatur et pater, et quod pater operatur, operatur et filius, et quod loquitur filius, loquitur et pater, sicut scriptum est: ‘Pater meus, qui in me manet, ipse loquitur et opera, quae ego facio, ipse facit’ (Jn. 14:10). Nihil enim pater sine uirtute adque sapientia sua condidit, quia ‘omnia in sapientia’ fecit, sicut scriptum est: ‘Omnia in sapientia fecisti’ (Ps. 103:24). Nihil etiam deus uerbum sine patre fecit*. See also *Fid.* 2.7.52 (CSEL 78: 74), where Ambrose remarks: “there is one will where there is one operation” (*una ergo uoluntas, ubi una operatio*); and *Symb.* 5 (CSEL 73: 8), where Ambrose aligns “one judgment (*unum iudicium*) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” with “one will” (*una uoluntas*), “one majesty” (*una maiestas*), and one operation of sanctification. Ambrose is not unique in his emphasis on unity of will. See also Hilar. *Trin.* 3.9 (CCSL 62: 80), 4.12 (CCSL 62: 112–13), 8.5–17 (CCSL 62a: 317–29). In *Trin.* 8.5, Hilary explicitly uses the phrase “unity of will” (*unitate uoluntatis*). The discussion of divine volition could also have been precipitated by the spate of commentaries on the Pauline epistles beginning in the 360s and continuing well into the fifth century.

If we speak of God as the epitome of love, then the love binding God with his Son is, by nature, inseparable. It would thus follow, Ambrose suggests, that there is likewise a single, inseparable will between Father and Son, and their divine *opera* are inseparable, as well.¹¹⁶ John 14:10 lends textual support to Ambrose’s point here: what the Son works and speaks, that, too, the Father works and speaks. Reference to Psalm 103:24 supports Ambrose’s claim that the Father “established nothing without his power and wisdom.” Similarly, it can be said that the Word made nothing without the Father.¹¹⁷

Roughly contemporaneous with *On the Faith* 4 is *On the Holy Spirit* (ca. 381). Throughout the work Ambrose describes divine operation as inseparable: the works of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of peace, grace, love, etc. indicate a unity of power and inseparability of power and substance. “If there is one peace, one grace, one love, and one communication of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” Ambrose maintains, “then there is certainly one operation. And where there is one operation, by all means power cannot be divided nor substance separated. For if so how could the grace of the same work come together?”¹¹⁸ Ambrose’s logic here is again driven by scriptural proofs:

¹¹⁶ At both *Fid.* 4.5.62 (CSEL 78: 178) and 4.6.67 (CSEL 78: 180). Ambrose places the charity between Father and Son as the cause of the identity of their operation. Cf. *Aug. Trin.* 1.4.7–1.5.8 (CCSL 50: 34–37), 1.6.12 (CCSL 50: 41–42), 1.12.25 (CCSL 50: 64–65). In each of these instances Augustine argues for the inseparability of operation but without reference to John 5:19–20—which is Ambrose’s organizing text. I am grateful to Michel Barnes for pointing out this similarity and discrepancy, which contravenes Mountain, the CCSL editor of Augustine’s *Trin.* Cf. *Aug. Tract. eu. Io.* 20 (CCSL 36: 202–11), which analyzes the inseparable operation of Son and Father with recourse to John 5:19.

¹¹⁷ See also *Ambr. Fid.* 5.16.197 (CSEL 78: 291) for a similar gloss of Psalm 103:24. *Quomodo enim uultis haec fecisse dei filium? Numquid quasi anulum, qui non sentit, quod exprimit? Sed ‘omnia in sapientia’ (Ps. 103:24) pater fecit, id omnia per filium fecit, qui est ‘uirtus dei adque sapientia’ (1 Cor. 1:24).* See also *Ambr. Spir.* 3.11.83 (CSEL 79: 184).

¹¹⁸ *Ambr. Spir.* 1.12.131 (CSEL 79: 71–72). *Si igitur una pax, una gratia, una caritas, una communicatio est patris et filii et spiritus sancti, una certe operatio est. Et ubi una operatio est, utique non potest uirtus esse diuisa, discreta substantia. Nam quomodo operationis eiusdem gratia conueniret? See also *Spir.* 2.10.101 (CSEL 79: 125–26), where the single operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is*

2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:21; Ephesians 5:2; John 3:16; Romans 8:32; Galatians 2:20, 5:22; and 1 John 1:3. Each of these texts, in one way or another, implicates multiple persons of the Trinity in a single work of peace, grace, love, or communion.

Later in *On the Holy Spirit* Ambrose reiterates the argument that the Son's works and words reveal his undivided operation with the Father.

The Father is never divided from the operation of the Son, and what the Son works, he knows the Father wills, and what the Father wills he knows and works. Finally, that you might not think that there is some difference of work either in time or in order between the Father and the Son, but might believe the oneness of the same operation, he said: "and the works which I do He himself does" (Jn. 14:10). And again, that you might not believe that there is some difference in the distinction of the work, but might judge that the Father and the Son will the same, do the same, and have the same power, Wisdom says to you about the Father: "For whatever things [the Father] does, the same things the Son also does similarly" (Jn. 5:19). So there is not some prior or second action, but the same effect of one operation.¹¹⁹

The sheer number of uses of *opera* and its cognates is almost overwhelming. The emphasis on the inseparability of divine persons with respect to their *opera* is plain: the Son's *opera* are never distinct from the Father's. The above passage further suggests that this "unity of operation" (*unius operationis*) exists because the Son knows both that and also what precisely the Father wills; the two are united in will and motive power, even as

indicative of a single will, calling, and commanding for the sake of the Church. Ambrose writes: *Nec solum una operatio ubique est patris et filii et spiritus sancti, sed etiam una adque eadem uoluntas, una uoluntas, una uocatio, una praeceptio*. See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 369–72, which notes Augustine's dependence on the Latin tradition (Hilary and Ambrose) for his doctrine of inseparable operations.

¹¹⁹ Ambr. *Spir.* 2.12.135–36 (CSEL 79: 139–40). *nec umquam pater a filii operatione diuiditur, et quod operatur filius, scit patrem uelle, et quod uult pater, filium nouit operari. Denique ne uel in tempore uel in ordine aliquam inter patrem et filium putares operis esse distantiam, sed eiusdem operationis crederes unitatem: Et opera, inquit, quae ego facio, ipse facit. Et rursus ne discretionem aliquam in operis distinctione sentiret, sed idem uelle, idem facere, idem posse patrem et filium iudicares, dicit tibi sapientia de patre: Quaecumque enim ille fecerit, eadem et filius facit similiter. Non ergo aliqui prior uel secundus est actus, sed idem unius operationis effectus est*. See also *Spir.* 2.13.148 (CSEL 79: 145), where Ambrose maintains that all three persons work in all of the apostles: *Nec solum una operatio in Petro inuenitur patris et filii et spiritus sancti, sed etiam in omnibus apostolis diuinae operationis unitas reuelatur*.

they are united in operation. As Ambrose puts it: “So there is not some prior or second action, but the same effect of one operation” (*sed idem unius operationis effectus est*).

Ambrose’s *On the Holy Spirit* 3.5.31 bears out this point with recourse not to John 5:19, 14:10, or the like, but to Psalm 18:2 (“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows the work of his hands”) and Psalm 8:4 (“For I will behold your heavens, the works of your fingers”).¹²⁰ Ambrose has earlier entertained the possibility that certain people understood the scriptural images of God’s hand and God’s finger so as to think Son (as Hand) or the Spirit (as Finger) a small portion of God or an entity lesser than God, since these images indicate body parts of God. He borrows this description and argument from Didymus the Blind’s *On the Holy Spirit* 87–90, a passage commented upon above with reference to Ambrose’s allergy to corporeal unity amongst the divine persons.¹²¹ In using Didymus’s images and claims as his foundation, Ambrose discloses

¹²⁰ Ambrose is clearly building upon the foundation laid by Didymus the Blind’s *Spir.* here, which refers to the Holy Spirit as the “Finger of God.” There, Didymus quotes Luke 11:19–20, though, and not Psalm 8:4, and he declares that if this finger is “joined to a hand and a hand to him whose hand it is, then without a doubt the finger is ascribed to the substance of him whose finger it is.” See *Didy. Spir.* 87–90 (SC 386: 227–29; DeIcogliano et al trans. 171). See also Plaxco, “Didymus the Blind’s Pro-Nicene Doctrine of ‘Inseparable Operations,’” unpublished monograph. At *Ambr. Spir.* 3.3.11 (CSEL 79: 154–55), Ambrose, too, quotes Luke 11:20.

¹²¹ No Latin theologian, save the anonymous *De trinitate*, prior to Ambrose references the *digitus dei* (or some variation thereof) as a descriptor of the Holy Spirit. See Anon. *De trin.* 12, lines 1380ff. The *De trin.* indicates that there are those who do not understand the Holy Spirit to be the *digitus dei*. Depending on when one dates Ambrosiaster’s Pauline commentaries, that author too could be added to this exception. See *Ambrosiast. Qu. test.* 97.20 (CSEL 50: 185–86). Cf. *Tert. Marc.* 4.26 (CSEL 47: 511–12): *apud pharaonem enim uenefici illi, adhibiti aduersus moysen, uirtutem creatoris digitum dei appellauerunt—digitus dei est hoc—quod significaret etiam ualidissimum tamen. Hoc et christus ostendens, commemorator, non obliuator uetustatum, scilicet suarum, uirtutem dei digitum dei dixit, non alterius intellegendam quam eius, apud quem hoc erat appellata.* In short, Tertullian refers to the finger of God as God’s (creative) power and by referring to Exodus 8:19 (“but the magicians said, ‘this is the finger of God’”). Hilary adopts this interpretive line too. *Hilar. Tract. in Ps.* 135.7 (CSEL 22: 718). Prior to Ambrose, understanding the Holy Spirit as *digitus dei* was particular to Greeks. Importing this reflection from Didymus, Ambrose interjects the claim for the Holy Spirit as the *digitus dei* into Trinitarian considerations. Latins writing in Ambrose’s wake come to readily associate the *digitus dei* with the Holy Spirit, most notably Augustine. See *Aug. Qu. Hept* 2.25 (CSEL 28/3: 105–6); *Psalm.* 90.2.8 (CCSL 39: 1274); *Serm.* 8.18 (CCSL 41: 99) 155.3 (CCSL 41Ba: 110); *Faust.* 15.4 (CSEL 25/1: 423); *Spir. et litt.* 16.28 (CSEL 60: 182). See also Eucher. *Instr.* 1.33 (CSEL 31: 77).

his commitment to a unity of divine operations. For Didymus, as for Ambrose, the contested scriptural images of both the finger and hand of God reveal a unity of divinity power and subsequent unity of operation. Here is Ambrose:

But let them [the homoians?] learn, as I have often said, that not inequality but unity of power is signified by this testimony; inasmuch as things which are the works of God are also the works of [his] hands, as we read that the same are the works of [his] fingers. For it is written: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament announces the work of his hands” (Ps. 18:2); and elsewhere: “In the beginning you founded the earth, O Lord; and the heavens are the works of your hands” (Ps. 101:26). So then the works of [his] hands are the same as the works of God. There is not therefore any distinction of the operation according to the kind of bodily members, but a unity of power. But those which are the works of the hands are also the works of the fingers, for it is equally written, “For I will see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have established” (Ps. 8:4) What less are the fingers here said to have made than the hands, since they made the same thing as the hands, as it is written, “For you, Lord, have made me glad through your making, and in the works of your hands will I rejoice (Ps. 91:5).”¹²²

At *On the Holy Spirit* 3.3.11, Ambrose names the Holy Spirit the Finger of God (Lk. 11:20) and the Son, the Right Hand of God (Ex. 15:6). The Finger and Right Hand of God share a common, purposive goal: to cast out evil. And since the Holy Spirit and Son can be said to do the same things, to have the same end in mind, they are unified in

¹²² *Spir.* 3.5.31–3.5.32 (CSEL 79: 162–63). *Sed accipiant, ut saepius dixi, non inaequalitatem, sed unitatem potestatis hac testificatione signari, quandoquidem, quae opera dei sunt, eadem sint opera manuum, eadem etiam legerimus opera esse digitorum.* *Scriptum est enim: ‘Caeli enarrant gloriam dei et opera manuum eius annuntiat firmamentum,’ et alibi: ‘Initio terram tu fundasti, domine, et opera manuum tuarum sunt caeli.’ Eadem igitur sunt opera manuum, quae sunt opera dei. Non ergo aliqua pro membrorum corporalium qualitate discretio operationis, sed unitas potestatis est. Quae autem opera sunt manuum, eadem opera digitorum, quia aequè scriptum est: ‘Quoniam uidebo caelos, opera digitorum tuorum, lunam et stellas quas tu fundasti.’ Quid hic igitur digiti minus quam manus fecisse produntur, cum idem fecerint digiti, quod manus, sicut scriptum est: ‘Quoniam delectasti me, domine, in factura tua, et in operibus manuum tuarum delectabor?’* Emphasis added. For additional references to *Ps.* 18:2, see *Epistulae extra collectionem* 14.5 (CSEL 82/3: 237); *Ep.* 77.4–5 (CSEL 82/3: 129–30); *Hex.* 1.4.16 (CSEL 32/1: 14), 2.4.15 (CSEL 32/1: 54); *Fid.* 4.2.17 (CSEL 78: 163). A particularly fruitful reference mentioning Christ and the virtues with reference to the theme of sight is *Luc.* 10.40 (CSEL 32/4: 470). “There are also virtues (*uirtutes*) ‘of the heavens’ which ‘declare the glory of God’ (Ps. 18:2) and which would be moved by a fuller infusion of Christ, spiritual virtues which see Christ (*uirtutes spirituales quae uident Christum*). David taught us how these virtues would be moved, saying, ‘Draw near to him and be enlightened’ (Ps. 33:5). Paul also taught how you may see Christ, for ‘when you shall be converted to the Lord, the veil is lifted’ (2. Cor. 3:16), and you see Christ.”

substantia.¹²³ The block quote immediately above supplements such a logic with recourse to several Psalms that Didymus does not cite (Ps. 18:2, 101:26, 8:4, 91:5), showing Ambrose hard at work in gathering additional texts to reinforce his argument.

Whether Milanese homoians were in fact promoting a corporeal divine unity based on texts pertaining to God's hand or finger is less important for our purposes than the fact that Ambrose borrows and supplements Didymus's strong claims to the inseparability of operations. The Trinitarian persons can be said to be united in substance or power because they are united in work. Just before *On the Holy Spirit* 3.5.31–3.5.32, Ambrose contends that we should not assume a “lessening” (*deminutionem*) of Spirit or Son simply because the persons are depicted as the finger or hand of God. Ambrose also contends that since this finger and hand are “of God,” they can be said to do the same work as God. As Ambrose reiterates here, “a unity of power” (*unitas potestatis*) obtains among the three just as it does between a finger and hand and the person whose they are.

This section has examined what (or who) Ambrose thinks we see when we see the works of God. Ambrose argues that the works of the Son of God are expressive of an invisible, shared unity (of operation, power, substance, divinity) with the Father. In large part, this unity stems from Ambrose's image theology. Drawing from contested passages of scripture, the Son can be said to image the Father, communicated by the character of his works. So when we see the Son, we see a shared divine unity manifest. On a couple of occasions, Ambrose argues that the works are inseparable, further strengthening a claim to divine unity. So when we see the Son, not only do we see his divinity manifest, we see the Father and Spirit are present as well doing the very same action by the very same

¹²³ *Spir.* 3.3.12 (CSEL 79: 155). It is noteworthy that this line is not simply borrowed from Didymus and dropped, but carried through in later works. See Ambr. *Luc.* 7.92–93 (CSEL 32/4: 320–21).

power. Hence, whatever the work tells us about the Son, it tells us about the Father and the Holy Spirit. For Ambrose, visible *opera* both uncover the relational unity of the Trinity and are communicative of the loving character of that unity.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the ways in which the theme of visibility is operative in Ambrose's theology in general and his Christological reflection in particular. I explained in the first section how it is that Ambrose thinks we can see something divine and invisible by analyzing his description of the concrete sacrament of baptism. By saying that we see *in spiritu*, I argued that, for Ambrose, initiation into the Church is initiation into a new mode of seeing, not with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of soul or heart. I then showed how this line of thinking, this visual logic, functions in his Christology through key scriptural references. These references help Ambrose make the case that the Son is the image of the Father and that seeing the Son allows us to see the Father.

The third section examined the character of this seeing of the Son and showed how the description of the character helps Ambrose rebut non-Nicene theologies. On the one hand, Ambrose is arguing against those—typically first-generation followers of Arius, perhaps according to his textbook definitions of heresy—who promoted a doctrine of multiple powers in God. These Arians deduced such a claim from the fact that the Son was seen while the Father was hidden; the two persons were two discrete agents and thus disclosed (at least) two motive powers for their two separate courses of action. Focusing on visibility also helps Ambrose deflect a second non-Nicene position: that there is

somehow a bodily unity between the divine persons. For his reply, we analyzed Ambrose's statement that when the Son is said to be in the Father, such a relationship is different from saying "a body is in a body." Ambrose rejects each non-Nicene claim by means of a single-power theology: though the Son is visible, he is nevertheless unified with Father by an invisible power common to both. The two share the same motive power for their action, an unseen unity that is disclosed in the Son's activities.

Hence, the question that we addressed in our final section was this: what do we see when we see God? I argued Ambrose's answer to this question lies in his description of the unity of divine operations. The unity of operations can be said to prove the Son's shared power or divinity with the Father. Occasionally, Ambrose will describe this unity as inseparable, meaning that all three divine persons are active in each work of God.

Ambrose's textured Trinitarian theology, chocked full of traditional anti-monarchian and anti-homoian proof texts, helps shed new light on his teaching on the image of God and the moral demands that come packaged with it. We might put the matter this way: If individuals are made according to the image of God, that is, according to the Son, then some resemblance between God and humanity must follow. This idea might appear to be a straightforward point that does not bear repeating or further analysis. Still, in view of our exploration of the strong themes of visibility and sight in Ambrose's Trinitarian logic, we would do well to consider it afresh.

CHAPTER THREE: “BEHOLD, JERUSALEM, I HAVE PAINTED THY WALLS”: GOD AS PAINTER AND SOURCE OF VIRTUE

The claim of the remaining chapters is that the same dynamic that drives Ambrose’s trinitarian theology dictates his moral theology. This chapter shows how the infancy of this connection can be found in Ambrose’s doctrine of the image of God. First we examine Ambrose’s description of God as the image-painter of human beings, thus, the source of moral action. Next, we see that the well-painted soul is one “in which a semblance of divine operation shines.”¹ This phrase, I argue, implies not only the beauty or inherent dignity of the human person, but that human action resembles the character of its divine counterpart. This chapter tackles Ambrose’s claim that God is the source of human virtue, while the next chapter addresses the character of human virtue.

To make the case for God as the source of virtue, I first explore precedents to Ambrose’s description of God as painter, specifically Origen and the broader Alexandrian tradition.² Origen explains the moral importance of such an image in the

¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

² Ambrose further recontextualizes Origen’s talk of competing images with recourse to Roman traditions, as well, but these traditions are more helpful for understanding the character of human action and are thus included in the next chapter. Ambrose has been critiqued in his time and ours for plagiarizing Greek sources. Jerome’s open disdain for Ambrose is well noted. In his introduction to Origen’s *Homilies on Luke*, Jerome, writing to Paula and Eustochium, calls Ambrose’s commentary “childish in expression and dull in content” which is why he translated Origen’s homilies. “On my left I hear an ominous crow cawing; in remarkable fashion it gleams with the colored feathers of all the birds, although the bird itself is black as night.” See also Neil Adkin, “Jerome on Ambrose: The Preface to the Translation of Origen’s Homilies on Luke,” *Revue bénédictine* 107 (1997): 5–14; idem, “Ambrose and Jerome: The Opening Shot,” *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993): 364–76; Pierre Nautin, “Le premier échange épistolaire entre Jérôme et Damase: Lettres réelles ou fictives?” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 30 (1983): 331–44; Harald Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958), 372; Ludwig Herrmann, “Ambrosius von Mailand als Trinitätstheologe,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 68 (1958): 197–218; Gérard Nauroy, “Jérôme, lecteur et censeur de l’exégèse d’Ambroise de Milan,” in *Jérôme entre l’Occident et l’Orient*, ed. Yves-Marie Duval (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1988), 173–203; Angelo Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 17–19. See also Richard A. Layton, “Plagiarism and Lay Patronage of Ascetic Scholarship: Jerome, Ambrose, and Rufinus,” *JECS* 10.4 (2002): 489–522.

pursuit of godlikeness, shunning the lure of rival images in the process.³ The second section bears out how Ambrose translates this tradition into his Latin context and theology by linking it with interpretations of Isaiah 49:16 (LXX): “Behold, Jerusalem, I have painted thy walls.” The use of this verse, I argue, points to God as the source of virtue. While asserting that God is the source of virtue appears to be a straightforward claim, important nuance lies just beneath the surface. At times, for instance, Ambrose charges his listeners to attend to themselves alone (Cf. Dt. 4:9, 15:9)—a charge that seemingly smacks of self-sufficiency. But I argue that by exploring his scriptural logic, we will see that Ambrose contends that individuals’ dependency on God for their moral goodness implies that virtue must be “dispossessed.”⁴ The final section shows how Ambrose connects the claim that human beings have been divinely painted to the maintenance of that image instead of its vicious manifestations.

³ I have benefited from Georgia Frank, “The Image in Tandem: Painting Metaphors and Moral Discourse in Late Antique Christianity,” in *The Subjective Eye: Essays in Culture, Religion, and Gender in Honor of Margaret R. Miles*, ed. Richard Valantasis (Eugene: OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 33–47. While not exploring the works of Origen or Ambrose, Frank’s work spells out how other early Christians (mostly Greek and Syrian) understood the moral significance of imaging virtue and/or the divine.

⁴ My understanding of the dispossession of virtue owes to James Wetzel’s account of Augustine, Ambrose’s most famous baptizand. See his “Splendid Vices and Secular Virtues: Variations on Milbank’s Augustine,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32.2 (2004): 271–300, at 298–99. “Augustine tells us that we have no self to speak of that is not in God’s keeping. To refer the virtues to God, then, is to find oneself in dispossession. This is close to, if not the same as, losing one’s life in order to gain it, or God becoming sin in order to enable human beings to become something else.” See also Wetzel, “What the Saints Know: Quasi-Epistemological Reflections,” in *Parting Knowledge: Essays after Augustine* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 248–62, at 261–62.

Bearing Incorporeal Images: Views from Alexandria

One key tradition that funds Ambrose's image theology has Platonic roots and is likely mediated through Origen.⁵ Two aspects of Origen's theology influence Ambrose's in this domain and are worth exploring: (1) God as the painter of the interior person and (2) the moral implications that comes packaged with being so painted, expressed by the challenge of imitation and the lure of rival images.

Origen himself is indebted to generations of reflection on the image of God. Philo, for instance, offered a complex, two-pronged analysis of the creation of human beings, interpreting Genesis 1:26–27 in light of Platonic Timaeon image theology. When Genesis 1:26 speaks of being made according to the image, Philo takes the statement as descriptive of the νοῦς, the intellect, which is patterned after “the One”;⁶ in being so patterned, the human intellect bears certain a rational resemblance to his Maker.

When Philo exegetes Genesis 2:7, he indicates that the second creation narrative has to do with the formation of the physical individual. Of this creation, he says that the rational soul is the equivalent to “a genuine coinage of that divine and invisible spirit (του θείου καὶ ἀοράτου πνεύματος ἐκείνου), having been signed and stamped by the seal of God (σημειωθὲν καὶ τυπωθὲν σφραγίδι θεοῦ) whose engraver (ὁ χαρακτήρ) is the eternal Logos.”⁷ Emphasis on the sign and seal of God as image places Philo in

⁵ Didymus the Blind likely figures into Ambrose's image theology, too, but I focus here on Origen since, as will become plain, he and Ambrose share a common doctrine of rival images. For further study on Didymus' image theology, see Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 85–113.

⁶ Philo, *Opif.* 69 (LCL 226: 54–55).

⁷ Philo, *Plant.* 18–19. See Philo, *Her.* 57 (LCL 261: 310–13)

Stoic company and reveals the mottled nature of Philo's Middle Platonism. In an attempt to harmonize Platonic and Stoic elements, Philo indicates elsewhere that the receiving of God's breath is "an impression stamped by the divine power, to which Moses gives the appropriate title of 'image,' thus indicating that God is the Archetype of rational existence, while man is a copy and likeness."⁸ For Philo, Genesis 1 and 2 offer two different, albeit related, depictions of what it means to be made according to the image. The first, represented by Genesis 1, has to do with the incorporeal human mind imaging the divine mind, while the second, Genesis 2, has to do with the individual as "stamped according to the image of God", formed as objects of "sense-perception" (αἰσθητός),⁹ and exiled to the "borderland" (μεθόριον) between mortality and immortality.¹⁰ Both glosses open the door to an emphasis on imitation for the maintenance and display of that original created nature.

Origen adapts and transposes Philo's interpretation christologically, emphasizing that human beings are created "according to the Image," that is, according to the Son, the invisible, "express Image" of the Father.¹¹ By virtue of our creation "according to the

⁸ Philo, *Det.* 83–4 (LCL 227: 258–59). ἀλλὰ τύπον τινὰ καὶ χαρακτηῖρα θείας δυνάμεως, ἢν ὀνόματι κυρίου Μωυσῆς εἰκόνα καλεῖ, δηλῶν ὅτι ἀρχέτυπον μὲν φύσεως λογικῆς ὁ θεός ἐστι, μίμημα δὲ καὶ ἀπεικόνισμα ἄνθρωπος.

⁹ Philo, *Opif.* 136 (LCL 226: 106–9).

¹⁰ Philo, *Opif.* 134–35 (LCL 226: 106–7). See also, Philo, *Leg.* 1.31–2 (LCL 226: 166–67); 2.5 (LCL 226: 226–27). "Ἐκεῖνος δ' ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὁ γηγενής, ὁ παντὸς τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν ἀρχηγέτης, ἐκάτερον ἄριστος ψυχὴν τε καὶ σῶμα γεγενῆσθαι μοι δοκεῖ καὶ μακροῦ τι τοὺς ἔπειτα διενεγκεῖν κατὰ τὰς ἐν ἀμφοτέροις ὑπερβολάς· ὁ γὰρ ἀληθεία καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς οὕτως ὄντως ἦν."

¹¹ Origen, *Prin.* 1.2.6–8 (SC 252: 120–29). The plain reference here is to Hebrews 1:3, but behind it lies Origen's obsession with Wisdom 7:25–26, a passage Origen exegetes immediately following the reference here. For the importance of Wisdom 7 in Christological reflection in the third and fourth centuries, see Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 22–24; Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, 131–51. Williams identifies Wisdom 7 as a key Christological text in Alexandria, made popular by Origen and often paired with Hebrews 1:3. For other secondary treatments of the role of Wisdom in early Christian theology, see Robert M. Grant, *After the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 70–82; William Schoedel, "Jewish Wisdom and the Formation of the Christian Ascetic," in Robert Wilken, ed., *Aspects of Wisdom in*

image,” we bear a rational resemblance to the Son, whom Origen labels “the Word of reason.”¹² The chain is causal: to be created according to the image of the Son means that human beings bear a rational likeness to the Son. Rational likeness subjects individuals to either praise or blame based on how that capacity is used: praise for virtue, blame for vice.¹³

Much ink has been spilled on Origen’s doctrine of the image of God,¹⁴ but one feature is worth exploring to better understand Ambrose’s own conception: the distinction drawn between the image of God and its rivals.¹⁵ For this purpose, Origen

Judaism and Early Christianity (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 169–99; Alistair H. B. Logan, “Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology,” in Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel, eds., *Origeniana Tertia* (Roma: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1985), 123–29; Roelof Van Den Broek, “The Theology of the Teachings of Silvanus,” *VC* 40.1 (1986): 1–23; Ronald R. Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 64–70, 207–8; Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 69–70.

¹² Orig. *Prin.* 1.3.8 (SC 252: 162–63).

¹³ This is roughly Origen’s doctrine of ἀυτεξούσιον (commonly rendered “free will” or “self-determination”), laid out in its most systematic form in *De principiis* 3.1–8. See my “Motion, Education, and Care: Reading Origen With the Stoics” in *Origeniana Undecima: Origen and Origenism in Western Thought*, ed. Anders-Christian Jacobsen (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2016), 821–30, which owes to insights in Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* (Berkeley: UC Berkeley Press, 2011), 102–24. See also John Rist, “The Greek and Latin Texts of the Discussion of Free Will in ‘De principiis’ Book III,” in *Origeniana: premier colloque international des études origéniennes*, ed. H. Crouzel, et al (Bari: Università Istituto di Letteratura Christiana Antica, 1975), 97–111; B. Darrell Jackson, “Sources of Origen’s Doctrine of Freedom,” *Church History* 35.1 (1966): 13–23.

¹⁴ While relying primarily on texts from *Prin.*, the classic work on Origen’s doctrine of the image is Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l’image de Dieu chez Origène* (Paris: Aubier, 1956). Though scholars are indebted to the attention Crouzel places on certain texts, and at times his careful readings of Origen, he is often viewed with suspicion because of his unproblematic depictions of Origen as a pre-Nicene. For a brief summary of Crouzel on the image of God, see Walter Burghardt, “The Image of God in Man: Alexandrian Orientations,” *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of Catholic Society of America Ottawa, Ontario. June 19–22, 1961* (St. Joseph’s Seminary: CTSA, 1962), 147–60, esp. 150–52. For more recent treatments, see Anders Lund Jacobsen, “Genesis 1–3 as Source for the Anthropology of Origen,” *VC* 62.3 (2008): 213–32; and Mark Edwards, *Image, Word and God in the Early Christian Centuries* (Farnham: Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 100–15. Neither Jacobsen nor Edwards engages Crouzel’s *Théologie de l’image* in detail.

¹⁵ While engagement or familiarity with 1 Corinthians 15:49 is understandably absent, Philo’s *Leg.* 1.29.90 (LCL 226: 206–7) expresses a similar doctrine *in nuce*. “For the mind that was made after the image is not earthly but heavenly.” For more detailed consideration of the earthly/worldly/devilish man, see Wolfgang Seibel, *Fleisch und Geist beim Heiligen Ambrosius*, Münchener theologische Studien, 14. Bd

supplements reflection on Genesis 1:26–28 with that from 1 Corinthians 15:49. The second passage—“just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man”—serves to elucidate the first: to be made according to the divine image is to bear that image in clear juxtaposition to earthly counterparts to that image. The view originates from Origen’s description of God as painter and human beings as paintings. He writes:

Therefore this is the image about which the Father said to the Son: “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (Gen. 1:26). The Son of God is the painter of this image. And because he is such a great painter, his image can be obscured by negligence but cannot be deleted by malice. For the image of God always remains, even if you yourself draw “the image of the earthly” (1 Cor. 15:49) over it in yourself. You yourself paint that picture in yourself. For when lust has darkened you, you have introduced one earthly color. But if you also burn with avarice you have mixed in also another color. And also when anger makes you bloodred, you add no less also a third color. Another rouge is added also of pride and another of impiety. And so by each individual species of malice, like various colors which have been brought together, you yourself paint in yourself this “image of the earthly” (1 Cor. 15:49) which God did not make in you.¹⁶

(München: K. Zink, 1958), 100–1; Gregory E. Sterling, ““Wisdom among the Perfect’: Creation Traditions in Alexandrian Judaism and Corinthian Christianity,” *Novum Testamentum* 37 (1995): 355–84, at 366–67; Sterling, “The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the Study of Christian Origins,” in *Philo und das Neues Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen; 1. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus Judaico-Hellenisticum, 1.–4. Mai 2003, Eisenach, Jena*, ed. Roland Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, WUNT 172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 21–52; Felipe De Jesus Legarreta-Castillo, *The Figure of Adam in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15: The New Creation and Its Ethical and Social Reconfiguration* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 119–66, at 136–42.

¹⁶ Orig. *Hom. Gen.* 13.4 (SC 7: 328). *Haec ergo imago est de qua dicebat Pater ad filium: ‘Faciamus homines ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram.’ Filius Dei est pictor huius imaginis. Et quia talis et tantus est pictor, imago eius obscurari per incuriam potest, deleri per malitiam non potest. Manet enim semper in te imago Dei, licet tu tibi ipse superducas ‘imaginem terreni.’ Istam picturam tu tibi ipse depingis. Cum enim te libido fuscaverit, induxisti unum colorem terrenum; si uero et auaritia aestuas, miscuisti et alium. Sed et cum te ira sanguineum facit, addis nihilominus et tertium colorem. Superbiae quoque alius additur fucus et impietatis alius. Et sic per singulas quasque malitiae species, uelut diuersis coloribus congregatis, hanc ‘imaginem terreni,’ quam Deus in te non fecit, tu tibi ipse depingis.* For more on the human response to God as painter, see Lekkas, *Liberté et progrès chez Origène*, 153–64. Lekkas connects the theme of negligence (ἀμέλεια) with both Origen’s controversial doctrine of satiety and, albeit in passing, with progress toward the original image of God. For the importance of sight in Origen’s doctrine of the image of God, see Robin M. Jensen, *Face to Face: Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 94–99.

For Origen, the divine image is located in the soul.¹⁷ The Son has painted that image within: “For he is within you and does not come from without, just as ‘also the kingdom of God is within you’ (Lk. 17:21). Origen supports the contention of the internal nature of the image with scriptural reference to the parable of the woman and the lost coin (Lk. 15:8–10). He continues: “And that woman who had lost a drachma did not find it on the outside, but in her house, after ‘she lit a lamp and cleaned her house’ from dirt and filth which the sloth and dullness of a long time had heaped up, and then she found the drachma.”¹⁸ The challenge, as Origen sees it, is not to allow passion and vice to creep into the mind, since, according to the painting metaphor, additional colors could sully the masterpiece. God painted within the individual the divine image; by covetousness or rage or some other vice an “earthly color” (*colorem terrenum*) is introduced “in you” (*in te*).¹⁹ Add enough colors, in sum, and the original divine image is marred—but not destroyed—and a new, alien earthly image emerges from a worldly brush.²⁰

It is noteworthy that Origen attaches his reflection on Genesis 1:26 to consideration of 1 Corinthians 15:49. Both verses play a critical role in shaping both

¹⁷ See also Orig. *Hom. Gen.* 1.13 (SC 7: 56). *Is autem, qui ad imaginem Dei factus est, interior homo noster est, inuisibilis et incorporealis et incorruptus atque immortalis.*

¹⁸ Orig. *Hom. Gen.* 13.4 (SC 7: 326–27). See also Jensen, *Face to Face*, 101–3, which contrasts Origen and Athanasius on the topic of seeing the divine as a means of knowing.

¹⁹ See Philo, *Opif.* 23.69–71 (LCL 226: 54–57). Two themes emerge in Philo that Origen latches onto: 1. The incorporeal nature of the image and 2. a distinction between image and archetype or pattern. See David Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 175. Runia critiques Crouzel by insisting that that he fails to adequately attend to Origen’s Philonic roots. Runia concludes: “A closer examination of texts might well reveal that Origen actually sharpens up Philo’s emphases on this point in the direction of a thoroughgoing anti-corporealism.” Cf. Crouzel, *Théologie de l’image de Dieu chez Origène*, 52–57.

²⁰ See Gerald A McCool, “The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine’s Theology of the Image of God in Man,” *Theological Studies* 20.1 (1959): 62–81. McCool argues that Ambrose is so indebted to Origen that he must say, with Origen, that the image cannot be lost. While it should be evident at the conclusion of this chapter that Ambrose is indebted to Origen, he will say at times that the image can be lost or destroyed.

Origen's (and Ambrose's) doctrine of the image of God. In the block quote above (*Hom. Gen.* 13.4), we see that critical importance on display. The Son paints within the human being the image of God. And though this image is beautiful by virtue of the Artist's character, because of "negligence" (*per incuriam*), this image is on contested moral ground, tempted to overlay itself with the "image of the earthly." Origen offers several examples of how vice can "paint" over the Son's original depiction within the human person. It is easy for Origen to associate vice or passion with color here; anger discolors the face, lust ruddies the cheeks. These different vicious habits or behaviors, Origen notes, "are brought together" (*congregatis*) and create a worldly palette of obscuring colors.

An earlier homily on Genesis 1:26 also reveals Origen associating the doctrine of rival images with the pursuit of godlikeness.²¹ Distinguishing image and likeness serves Origen as a didactic tool for describing pursuit of virtue.²² In following after Jesus the Son, the truest image according to whom humanity was created, individuals attain a godlikeness, a heavenly image in contrast to an earthly one.²³

²¹ Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène*, 35. Crouzel notes that, for Origen, likeness of God (ὁμοίωσις θεῷ) is the "purpose of life." See also Anders-Christian Jacobsen, "Conversion to Christian Philosophy—the Case of Origen's School in Caesarea," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 16.1 (2015): 145–57. Jacobsen, in ways parallel to Crouzel, upholds the "realisation of the image of God" as the primary aim of Origen's teaching (at 150).

²² Cf. Orig. *Cels.* 4.30 (SC 136: 254). See also Orig. *Com. Ion.* 20.22.23 (GCS 4: 355). Origen insists that his opponent, Celsus, misunderstands Genesis 1:26ff by thinking of humanity as altogether resembling God at their creation (ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγονότες πάντη ἔσμεν αὐτῷ ὅμοιοι). Contrary to this gloss, Origen recalls a clear "distinction" (διαφοράν) being made between "according to the image of God" (κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ) and "according to the likeness" (καθ' ὁμοίωσιν), for which Celsus fails to account.

²³ See *Com. Ion.* 2.2. Origen speaks of the Word as the "archetypal image." See also Mark DelCogliano, "Eusebian Theologies of the Son as the Image of God before 341," *JECS* 14.4 (2006): 459–84. DelCogliano analyzes the early fourth-century trope that spoke of Jesus as the "image of God" and how that trope is taken in (at least) two directions. Athanasius and Asterius take up a "participative" understanding, DelCogliano argues, while Eusebian theologians take up a "constitutive" one. The former

For if man made according to the image of God, by gazing on the image of the devil has been made like him in sin and contrary to nature, how much more by gazing on the Image of God, according to whose likeness he has been made, will he receive that form which was given to him by nature, through the Word and his power. And let no one, seeing his image to be more with the devil than with God, despair that he can again regain the form of the image of God, because the Savior came not “to call the just, but sinners to repentance” (Cf. Mt. 9:9–13). Matthew was a tax collector and undoubtedly his image was like the devil, but when he comes to the Image of God, our Lord and Savior, and follows that image, he is transformed to the likeness of the image of God. “James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother” were fishermen and “uneducated men” (Mt. 4:18), who undoubtedly then bore a likeness more to the image of the devil, but they also, following the Image of God, are made like him, as are the other apostles.²⁴

While there is no clean distinction between image and likeness in this passage from the *Homilies on Genesis*, there appears to be at least a two-step process by which an individual pursues godlikeness: “seeing” constitutes the first, “following” after the true image, the second. These two steps, I would argue, are what Origen has in mind when he uses the phrase “gazing on the image.” When Matthew, for instance, sees and follows after the Image, he is transformed (*transformatus*) from his earthly or devilish image of a publican to the likeness of the Image of God.²⁵ Origen presents this transformation as a process, moving from seeing oneself as earthly image to seeing and eventually longing after the heavenly Image. Origen does not say here what precisely attracts one to imitate a

indicates that the Son is God by participation in the true God, while the latter indicates the Son’s divinity by virtue of his imitation of the Father.

²⁴ Orig. *Hom. Gen.* 1.13 (SC 7: 62–65). *Si enim ad imaginem Dei factus homo contra naturam intuens imaginem diaboli per peccatum similis eius effectus est, multo magis intuens imaginem Dei, ad cuius similitudinem factus est a Deo, per Verbum et uirtutem eius recipient [eius] formam illam quae data ei fuerat per naturam. Et nemo desperet uidens similitudinem suam magis esse cum diabolo quam cum Deo posse se iterum recuperare formam imaginis Dei, quia non uenit Saluator uocare iustos sed peccatores in paenitentiam (Lk. 5:32). Matthaeus publicanus erat et utique imago eius diaboli similis erat, sed ueniens ad imaginem Dei, Dominum et Saluatorem nostrum, et sequens eam transformatus est ad similitudinem imaginis Dei. Iacobus, Zebedaei filius, et Iohannes, frater eius (Mt. 4:21) piscatores erant (Mt. 4:18) et homines sine litteris (Acts 4:13), qui utique tunc magis ad imaginem diabolicam similitudinem referebant, sed sequentes et isti imaginem Dei similes facti sunt ei, sicut et ceteri Apostoli.*

²⁵ See *Com. Ion.* 2.4, where images of the earthly and heavenly are pitted against one another in the context of Origen’s interpretation of Revelation 19:11–16.

heavenly image and throw off an earthly one. He writes only of the necessity of doing so for regaining the likeness to the Image that Adam once lost.

The connection between image and imitation recurs in Origen's homilies on Psalm 38:7a (LXX) ("indeed though man walks about in an image . . .").²⁶ According to Origen, since the Psalmist wrote of an image, the author must have a particular image of something in mind. Origen concludes that this particular Image is Jesus, citing Colossians 1:15 ("the Image of God and firstborn of all creation"). Origen then pits this Image from Colossians 1:15 against multiple, earthly images (*diuersis imaginibus*), expounding on Pauline language from 1 Corinthians 15:49.²⁷ "Though man walks about in an image' (Ps. 38:7a), but in whose image?," Origen asks. "God, an earthly image, a heavenly image?"²⁸ Origen searches out an answer by equating living according to the divine law (*secundum legem dei uiuunt*) with bearing a heavenly image, and conversely, "living carnally" (*carnaliter uiuunt*) with bearing an earthly one.

Now it is yours to discuss and inquire from the faith and works of each, from way of life and actions, from thoughts and words, and to consider whether he or she walks in the image or in an image of the earthly one. . . . And again, if you are an imitator of neither Christ nor Paul, who says: "Be imitators of me, just as I am of Christ," (1 Cor. 11:1) but you are an imitator of the works of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning: if you have earthly wisdom and speak earthly things your treasure and your heart are on the earth, you bear the image.²⁹

²⁶ Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.1 (SC 411: 370). Cf. Ambr. *Iob* 3.1.1 (CSEL 32/2: 248).

²⁷ For Origen, these two verses are deeply connected not only because of their use of image-language, but also because of the assumed Pauline authorship of both letters.

²⁸ Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.1 (SC 411: 370).

²⁹ Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.1 (SC 411: 370). *Tuum est iam discutere et exquirere ex uniuscuiusque fide et operibus, ex conversatione et actibus, ex cogitationibus et verbis et considerare utrum in imagine caelestis ambulet, an in imagine terreni. . . . Et rursus si non es imitator Christi nec apostoli Pauli, qui dicit: Imitatores mei estote, sicut ego Christi, sed imitator es operum diaboli qui homicida fuit ab initio: et si terrena sapias et terrena loquaris et thesaurus tuus et cor tuum in terra sit, terreni imaginem portas.*

The passage is shot through with imitation language. Either one is an imitator of Paul and, therefore, Christ, or one is an imitator of the devil and inheritor of earthly wisdom. Imitation is equated with bearing an image: the image of the one whom we choose to imitate will be manifest in our “faith and works.” Furthermore, as Origen puts it in a homily on Genesis, “as one who sees an image of someone sees him whose image it is.”³⁰

While Origen harps on proper imitation, drawing on Paul’s clean distinction between bearing an earthly and heavenly image, the outworking of this pursuit is less neat. “Every sinner bears the image,” Origen writes, “but does not do so similarly: a murderer and a liar do not carry the image of the earthly one equally, or an adulterer and mocker, or a corruptor of children and a thief, although all these carry the image of the earthly one, there is a great difference between them according to the diversity of sin.”³¹ Corruption takes on many hues manifested by myriad vicious states—a claim Origen adapts from the laundry list of fleshly works in Galatians 5; these vices muddy their corresponding virtues by exhibiting tyrannical behavior rather than holy humility. Again citing 1 Corinthians 15:49, Origen pits these diverse earthly images against their heavenly counterparts by leveraging the painting metaphor to prescribe a remedy: “If you will scrape off all the dye from your senses of this worst picture, and wipe off every figment of poisonous color, the images will make you perish.”³² Like their rivals,

³⁰ Orig. *Gen. Hom.* 1.13 (SC 7: 60).

³¹ Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.2 (SC 411: 380). *Utputa omnis peccator portat imaginem terreni, sed non omnis similiter: non aequae imaginem terreni portat homicida et mendax, aut adulter et conviciosus, aut puerorum corruptor et fur, quamuis omnes isti terreni imaginem portent, sed multa est inter ipsos differentia pro diueritate peccati.*

³² Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.2 (SC 411: 382). *Si non detraxeris et abraseris a sensibus tuis omnem fucum pessimae huius picturae et omne figmentum uenenati coloris absterseris, ipsae te imagines perire facient.*

heavenly or virtuous images are multiple. Origen lauds participating in images provided by the ecclesial community—Paul and Timothy, in particular, imitate the Son by their obvious virtues.³³ By imitating Paul and Timothy, one participates in their very character, even in their particular virtues.³⁴

We should add one more point about Origen’s doctrine of the image of God that will help to better illumine Ambrose’s: bearing the image of a virtue is necessarily provisional this side of heaven. Later in the same homily on Psalm 38:7a, Origen writes:

Therefore, we walk in the image of knowledge, and not in knowledge itself (*in imagine scientiae ambulamus et non in ipsa scientia*). . . . Equally, we walk in the image of wisdom (*in ipsa sapientia imagine*) and not in wisdom itself (*in ipsa sapientia*). . . . I daresay the same thing about the justice of God, that we walk in an image of justice (*in imagine iustitiae*) and not yet do we march in that justice (*in illa iustitia*) in which is face to face (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).³⁵

Here we see Origen’s blending of a clear Platonic resemblance between the thing itself and an image of that thing with Pauline logic (“which is face to face”). Image language helps Origen distinguish uncertain possession of virtue in this life from virtue’s perfect eschatological fulfillment. For Origen, to image the virtues is a participatory and imperfect enterprise; no created thing has unmediated access to God, who is the source of knowledge, wisdom, and justice itself, but we can only participate in that knowledge, wisdom, and justice, and in this life that participation is imperfect.

³³ Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.2–3 (SC 411: 380–83).

³⁴ Origen’s doctrine of participation likely owes to middle Platonic sources. For similarities, see Numenius, fr. 12, in Édouard des Places, *Fragments* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1973), 54–55; fr. 16, Des Places, 57.

³⁵ Orig. *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.2 (SC 411: 374).

God as Painter: Ambrose's Hexaemeron 6.7.42–6.8.49

To see how Ambrose adapts Origen's doctrine of God as image-painter and the corresponding challenge of rival images, we must go to the well-worn text of his several homilies on the creation of the world. A portion of his sermon on the sixth day of creation in particular, *Hexaemeron* 6.7.40–6.8.49, offers us his most detailed gloss on Genesis 1:26–27.³⁶ Ambrose begins his reflections on the sixth day of creation by lauding the greatness of humanity, insisting that God's "wreath for victory is assigned to the last day." Standing back from a consideration of the first five days' glory and seeking to better present the uniqueness of human beings, Ambrose charges his listeners to "enter . . . into this mighty and wonderful theater of the whole visible creation."³⁷ While it is clear throughout the homily (and those that precede it) that Ambrose wants to get on with the sermon series to discuss the wonders of human beings (and apparently his listeners do too),³⁸ he is forced by "the order which scripture is laid down" to ponder the nature, diversity, and respective roles of the animals.³⁹

³⁶ See Ragnar Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse: saint Augustin et le problème de la fin de l'homme dans la philosophie ancienne* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1962), 165–76, at 168–69. Typically, scholars date the homilies between 386 and 390 CE. Dating the homilies to the late 380s was popularized by Courcelle and has largely gone unquestioned. In large part, I think such dating makes for a neat transition to Augustine. Augustine's visit to Milan is dated to 385/6 CE, and this time happens to coincide with the apex of Ambrose's teaching and literary output. See Aug. *conf.* 6.3.4 (CSEL 33: 117–18), where Augustine references the significance of hearing Ambrose's teaching on the image of God. Holte makes the case that Ambrose's hexameral homilies were "copieusement inspiré de pensées puisées dans les *Ennéades* de Plotin" (at 167). See, e.g., Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 4: 153–54. See also Herman Somers, "Image de Dieu: Les sources de l'exégèse augustinienne," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 7 (1961): 105–25; R. A. Markus, "'Imago' and 'Similitudo' in Augustine," *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 10.2–3 (1964): 125–44, at 130.

³⁷ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.1.2 (CSEL 32/1: 204).

³⁸ See *Hex.* 6.2.3 (CSEL 32/1: 205–).

³⁹ *Hex.* 6.2.3 (CSEL 32/1: 205). See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 32–34, 314–17. Ayres indicates that "patristic exegesis takes as its point of departure the 'plain' sense of the text of scripture" (32). He adopts Eugene Rogers's phrase "the way the words run" for how these sacred texts were glossed

By considering animals, their creation and respective characteristics, Ambrose's audience is first to learn of the uniqueness of human beings and is then charged to likewise live well. For instance, Ambrose writes:

In the first place, nature has thrown down on their belly every species of cattle, beast, and fish, so that some crawl on their stomachs. You may observe that other animals that are supported on their feet are, by reason of the motion of a four-footed body, are, as it were, more fixed to the earth than free. They have in fact no ability to stand erect. They therefore seek their sustenance in the earth, solely pursuing the pleasures of the stomach toward which they incline onto your belly. Take care not to be bent over like cattle. See that you do not incline—not so much, oh human being, in body as in cupidity. Have regard for the form of your body and assume in accordance with it the appearance of loftiness and strength. Leave to animals the sole privilege of feeding in a prone position. Why, contrary to your nature, do you bend over in the act of eating? Why do you find delight in what is a violation of nature? Why do you feed on things of the earth like cattle, intent on food both day and night? What do you dishonor yourself by surrendering to the allurements of the body, a slave to the belly and its appetite? Why do you deprive yourself of the intelligence with which the Creator has endowed you? Why do you put yourself on the level of the beasts of burden? To dissociate yourself from these was the will of God, when He said: “Do not become like the horse and the mule who have no understanding” (Ps 31:10).⁴⁰

Underlying this quote is Ambrose's concern for the coinciding of self-consistency and consistency with nature. How creatures are created in other words determines what sorts of things are proper to those creatures. Ambrose chronicles various creatures, noting their

in general. See Eugene Rogers, “How the Virtues of an Interpreter Presuppose and Perfect Hermeneutics: The Case of Thomas Aquinas,” *Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 64–81. Ayres mentions that Basil's hexameral homilies follow the plain sense of the text, tracing how “the words of Scripture run,” and in this, Ayres argues, “we see Basil not so much constructing a ‘Christian ontology’ as shaping strategies that will give a pro-Nicene cast to his ontological reflection” (Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 314).

⁴⁰ *Hex.* 6.3.10 (CSEL 32/1: 209–10). Translation amended from FOTC 42: 233. *Primum quia omnia genera pecorum, bestiarum ac piscium in alium natura prostravit, ut alia uentre repant, alia quae pedibus sustententur demersa magis quadripedi corporis gressu et uelut adfixa terries uideas esse quam libera, siquidem, cum erigendi se non habeant facultatem, de terra uictum requirunt et uentris, in quem deflectuntur, solas sequuntur uoluptates. caue, o homo, pecorum more curuari, caue in alium te non tam corpore quam cupiditate deflectas. respice corporis tui formam et speciem congruentem celsi uigoris adsume, sine sola animalia prona pascantur. cur te in edendo sternis ipse, quem natura non strauit? cur eo delectaris in quo naturae iniuria est? cur noctes et dies cibo intentus pecorum more terrena depasceris? cur inlecebris corporalibus deditus ipsum te inhonoras, dum uentri atque eius passionibus seruis? cur intellectum tibi adimis, quem tibi creator adtribuit? Cur te iumentis comparas, a quibus te uoluit deus segregare dicens: nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus, in quibus non est intellectus?*

several and unique natures and how attending to these naturespoints to their relative success as the sort of creatures they are. The reason cows have four feet is that they are to eat from the earth, for example; they have no need to be upright. To bring the connection between nature and necessity to bear on human beings, Ambrose contends that human beings are distinct sorts of creatures and should act according to their created natures, not in accordance with the natures of other creatures.

Ambrose's use of examples and reasoning from creation corresponds with the Stoic commonplace of living according to nature. Zeno maintains that the telos of human beings is to live φύσεως ("naturally" or "agreeably with nature"), an ideal he equates with the virtuous life.⁴¹ Brad Inwood helps us further express this connection:

For in a rational and therefore consistent Universe, consistency with one's own life will be a necessary condition for consistency with the whole of which one is a part. This consistency with oneself will also be a corollary of consistency with Nature as a whole. But the Stoics would also have claimed that in their deterministic but providential world, if one failed to achieve harmony with nature, sooner or later one would fall out of harmony with oneself.⁴²

Self-consistency can thus either be seen as a consequence of attending to nature or as a microcosm of it. In either case, the two conditions implicate one another, as Inwood notes. This point is critical for understanding Ambrose's repeated exhortation to "Attend to thyself" and his scriptural citation to "Drink from thy own cisterns" (Prov. 5:15). To be consistent is the ideal, and it is by looking first outward at creation and then inward that

⁴¹ Dio. Laert. 7.1.88 (LCL 185: 194–95), 7.5.169–70 (LCL 185: 272–73), Posidonius, Hecato, and Chryssipus are also noted as arguing for the ideal of living in accord with nature and equating such a life with virtue. See Josiah B. Gould, *Philosophy of Chrysippus* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 161–80.

⁴² Brad Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 105–26, at 106.

we can diagnose and remedy inconsistencies in our lives that threaten the acquisition of such an ideal.

Examples from creation, Ambrose writes, prove that Moses (and the scriptures, more generally) recorded only that which was to benefit our salvation.⁴³ Ambrose's interpretation also betrays his concern over the presentation of the body and its appearance of "loftiness and strength," and nature gives him the illustrations he needs. Animals are industrious and diligent; "we should follow their example and avoid slothfulness."⁴⁴ Ambrose admits these are "lofty aims," but creatures small and large impress the need to pursue the good willingly. The ant, for instance, "lays up provision for a future day without compulsion and with freedom of foresight,"⁴⁵ while bears lick their young into form and shape and so commend us to do the same for our children.⁴⁶ And just as dogs are non-rational, but through persistence and training are able to cultivate obedience, we are to learn the intricacies of syllogistic reasoning which are, at first blush, difficult to comprehend.⁴⁷

Much of Ambrose's interpretation bears resemblance Basil's *Hexameron*, but he still extols it to his listeners for moral reflection: "We cannot fully know ourselves without first knowing the nature of all living creatures" (*non possumus plenius nos cognoscere nisi prius quae sit omnium natura animantium cognouerimus*), he writes.⁴⁸

⁴³ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.2.8 (CSEL 32/1: 208–9).

⁴⁴ *Hex.* 6.4.16 (CSEL 32/1: 212–13).

⁴⁵ *Hex.* 6.4.16 (CSEL 32/1: 212–13).

⁴⁶ *Hex.* 6.4.18 (CSEL 32/1: 214).

⁴⁷ *Hex.* 6.4.24 (CSEL 32/1: 220–21).

⁴⁸ *Hex.* 6.2.3 (CSEL 32/1: 205). See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 315. By relying on Basil, Ambrose is to be up to the same thing in his homilies, namely, as Ayres puts it, that by "shap[ing] a mode

Knowing or attending to ourselves—Ambrose translates Deuteronomy 4.9 and 15:9 as “*adtende tibi*.”⁴⁹—implies an examination of who we are at bottom: namely, a soul created according to the image of God. This, he argues, is the distinguishing mark of humanity.⁵⁰

Channeling Origen, and possibly the author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*,⁵¹

Ambrose artfully builds on the metaphor of God as a painter, adding to it an alternate

of attention to the created order[,] we may come to see the diverse activities of created natures reflecting the initial and ongoing harmonious action of the Word in all things and thus grow in appreciation of the providential and immediate action of the triune God, while, from the human point of view, we may speak of shaping patterns of attention.”

⁴⁹ The adaption of this trope is likely from Basil’s “Homily on the Words ‘Be attentive to yourself.’” See Basil, *L’homélie de Basile de Césarée sur le mot ‘observe-toi toi-même’: Édition critique du texte grec et étude sur la tradition manuscrite* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962), 23–37. English translation: Basil the Great, *On The Human Condition*, trans. Nonna Verna Harrison (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimirs Seminary Press, 2005), 93–105. Gerald Boersma indicates, following Pierre Courcelle, that Ambrose is adapting “a standard Stoic interpretation of the Delphic oracle.” See Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image*, 95; Pierre Courcelle, “Saint Ambroise devant le précepte delphique,” in *Forma futuri: Studi in onore del cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Torino: Bottega d’Erasmus, 1975), 179–88. Boersma cites Epict. *Enchir.* 13–14 (LCL 218: 492–95) as primary source evidence of this tradition. See also Ambrose, *Psal.* 118 2.13 (CSEL 62: 27), where he contends that the book of Deuteronomy is the origin of the maxim; the “Gentiles,” he writes, ascribe its origin to the Delphic oracle. Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.22.51–3 (LCL 141: 60–63); Juv. *Sat.* 11.27 (LCL 91: 402–3).

⁵⁰ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.1.2 (CSEL 32/1: 204–5).

⁵¹ The text is often attributed to Hippolytus, but its authorship is disputed. Regardless of authorship, the text references “painting” or “to paint” a couple times in the fifth book. See (Ps?) Hippol. *Haer.* 5.8.17–18 (GCS, Hippolytus Werke 3: 92), where the verse is referenced but in what appears to be a variant that Ambrose is adapting from the LXX: ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν μου ἐζωγράφηκα ὑμᾶς (“I have painted you upon my hands.”). Again, at 5.17.5 (GCS, Hippolytus Werke 3: 114), when explicating the Peratae’s heresy, the author indicates that they speak of the Son as akin to a painter. The analogy depicts an artist painting from nature, transforming all the forms (ιδέας) before him to the canvas. Likewise, the Son transfers paternal ideas onto unformed matter (ὑλη). Jerome names Ambrose’s debts in the *Hexameron* as being Basil and Hippolytus, not Origen. See Hier. *Ep.* 84.7 (CSEL 55: 130). See also Hier. *Vir. ill.* 61 (CCSL 114a: 35), which treats Hippolytus (“bishop of some church—the name of the city I have not been able to learn”), lists his works, two of which are *On the Six Days of Creation* and *On Genesis*, and indicates that he “is speaking in the church in the presence of Origen.” See Martin Karl Klein, *Meletemata ambrosiana mythologica de Hippolyto doxographica de exameri fontibus* (Königsberg: R. Lankeit, 1927), 80, who argues for Ambrose’s knowledge of a lost Hippolytan Genesis commentary. The scholarly consensus that Ambrose relied on Hippolytus seems to stem from Jerome’s statement. See Oscar von Gebhardt und Adolf Harnack, *Die Gnostischen Quellen Hippolyts in seiner Hauptschrift gegen die Häretiker* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1890), 115–20; Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen litteratur bis Eusebius: Die Überlieferung und der bestand. Bearb. unter mitwirkung von Erwin Preuschen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1893), 627n.22; K. Schenkl, “Praefatio,” in CSEL 32/1: xiv–xv; Courcelle,

translation of Isaiah 49:16 (LXX). Here is the key passage under consideration, first in Latin, then in the common English translation:

Adtende inquit tibi soli (Cf. Dt. 4:9, 15:9). aliud enim sumus nos, aliud sunt nostra, alia quae circa nos sunt. nos sumus, hoc est anima et mens, nostra sunt corporis membra et sensus eius, circa nos autem pecunia est, serui sunt et uitae istius adparatus. tibi igitur adtende, te ipsum scito, hoc est non quales lacertos habeas, non quantam corporis fortudinem, non quantas possessiones, quantam potentiam, sed qualem animam ac mentem, unde omnia consilia proficiscuntur, ad quam operum tuorum fructus refertur. illa est enim plena sapientiae, plena pietatis atque iustitiae, quoniam omnis uirtus a deo. cui dicit deus: “ecce, Hierusalem, pinxi muros tuos” (Is. 49:16). illa anima a deo pingitur, quae habet in se uirtutum gratiam renitentem splendoremque pietatis. illa anima bene picta est, in qua elucet diuinae operationis effigies, illa anima bene picta est, in qua est splendor gloriae et paternae imago substantiae. secundum hanc imaginem, quae refulget, pictura pretiosa est. secundum hanc imaginem Adam ante peccatum, sed ubi lapsus est, deposuit imaginem caelestis, sumpsit terrestris effigiem.⁵²

“Attend to thyself alone,” says Scripture. In fact, we must distinguish between “ourselves,” “ours,” and “what surrounds us.” “Ourselves” refers to body and soul. “Ours” are the members of our bodies and our senses. “What surrounds us” consists of our money, our slaves, and all that belongs to this life. “Attend to thyself,” therefore, “know thyself,” that is to say not what muscular arms you have, not how strong you are physically, or how many possessions or power you have. Attend, rather, to your soul and mind, whence all our deliberations emanate and to which the profit of your works is referred. Here only is the fullness of wisdom, the plenitude of piety and justice of which God speaks—for all virtue comes from God: “Behold, Jerusalem, I have painted thy walls” (Is. 49:16). That soul of yours is painted by God, who holds in Himself the flashing beauty of virtue and the splendor of piety. That soul is well painted in which shines the imprint of divine operation. That soul is well painted in which resides the splendor of grace and the reflection of its paternal nature. Precious is that picture which in its brilliance is in accord with that divine reflection. Adam before he sinned conformed to this image. But after his fall he lost that celestial image and took on one that is terrestrial [sic].⁵³

Recherches sur les “Confessions” de saint Augustin, 341n.1, 358n.3; Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose of Milan*, 1:16 n.2, 1:113 n.7, 2:680.

⁵² Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34). See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 236–37 n.54.

⁵³ *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34; trans. FOTC 42: 255).

For Ambrose, God is the artist who crafts the interior human and who is the source of moral excellence.⁵⁴ At the Fall, Adam “lost” (*deposuit*) the image and took up an earthly one—a clear reference to 1 Cor. 15:49.⁵⁵ This much is plain.

However, the common English translation is misleading at two key junctures. The primary challenge in translation lies with the first *illa* (*illa est enim plena sapientiae* [...]). In this context, the word can be taken an adverb, as the English translation above has it, and rendered “here,” “in that way,” or “there.” If *illa* is rendered adverbially (“Here only is the fullness of wisdom, the plenitude of piety and justice of which God speaks”), then the results are strained: the “profit of your works” (*operum tuorum fructus*) or the process of attending to oneself is presumably the source of the soul’s fullness. On this reading, the soul would merit virtues based on the fruit of its works. Such a reading, however, fails to take into account the predicate adjectives “*plena sapientiae . . . pietatis . . . iustitiae*.” The more plausible translation, I would argue, is to take *illa* as a demonstrative feminine pronoun, rendered “that one (feminine thing).” In this case, *illa* would refer to either “*animam*” (*anima*), “*mentem*” (*mens*), or to them both collectively, since both are singular, feminine antecedents. Given Ambrose’s multiple references to *illa anima* after the Isaiah 49:16 reference, I take this first *illa* to refer to *anima*, “the soul.”

⁵⁴ Cf. Orig. *Hom. Gen.* 13.4 (SC 7: 328). *Filius Dei est pictor huius imaginis. Et quia talis et tantus est pictor, imago eius obscurari per incuriam potest, deleri per malitiam non potest. Manet enim semper in te imago Dei, licet tu tibi ipse superducas ‘imaginem terreni.’*

⁵⁵ Cf. Ambr. *Sacr.* 5.4.27 (CSEL 73: 70–71). *Diues eras ad imaginem et similitudinem dei factus. Perdidisti, quod habebas, hoc est humilitatem, dum adrogantiam desideras uindicare, perdidisti pecuniam; sicut Adam nudus es factus. Accepisti a diabolo debitum, quod non erat necessarium. Et ideo qui eras luber in Christo, debitor factus es diabolic. Cautionem tuam tenebat inimicus, sed eam dominus crucifixit et suo cruore deleuit. Abstulit debitum tuum reddidit libertatem.*

If we translate *illa* as “that (soul),” then it follows that *plena sapientiae . . . pietatis atque iustitiae* constitute a string of predicate adjectives, which describe the condition or state of that soul. Furthermore, translating *plena sapientiae* as “fullness of wisdom,” as the English translation above, can easily lead to the misunderstanding the *anima* as “the fullness (*plena*) of wisdom, the fullness (*plena*) of piety and justice.”⁵⁶ But *plena* is an adjective, commonly rendered “full” or “filled;” it often takes a genitive—some person, place or thing is “full of” or “filled with” some other thing. In this case, *illa* (*anima*) is said to be “full of” [or “filled with”] wisdom, full of piety and justice.

A more faithful rendering would translate *plena* as “full of” or “filled with,” allowing for a smoother connection with the next clause—“for all virtue is from God.” Instead of emphasizing the atomism of the individual, this slight translational move would heighten the necessity for the individual to be filled by God for the pursuit of moral excellence. Reference to Isaiah 49:16 follows and offers scriptural proof that God “paints” the “walls” of the soul (*pinxi muros tuos*). And reflecting on the fact that God has painted us with divine works, Ambrose indicates, affords the recognition that the *anima* is “full of wisdom, full of piety and justice.”⁵⁷

A second translational challenge follows from the first and is revealed with the following phrase: “that soul of yours is painted by God, who holds in Himself the flashing beauty of virtue and the splendor of piety” (from: *illa anima a deo pingitur, quae habet in se virtutum gratiam renitentem splendoremque pietatis*). Warren Smith has helpfully pointed out that *quae* in the dependent clause refers not to God, but is feminine

⁵⁶ Cf. Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 18–19. Smith follows the FOTC translation: “Here only is the fullness of wisdom, the plentitude of piety and justice of which God speaks.”

⁵⁷ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233).

in gender and refers to the soul, leaving us with the rendering of “that soul, which holds in itself the shining grace and splendor of piety.”⁵⁸ Therefore, I take “virtue” (*uirtutum*) as appositional; in short, “shining grace” and “splendor of piety” is virtue. A retranslation of the passage will manifest this shift and the contours of Ambrose’s logic:

It says, “Attend to yourself alone” (Dt. 4:9, 15:9). One thing is what we are, another is what things are ours, and another is that which surrounds us. What we are, that is a soul and mind; what things are ours, that is the members of our body and its senses; that which surrounds us, that is our money, servants, and provision of this life. Therefore, attend to yourself, and know yourself, that is, not what sort of muscular arms you have, nor how much bodily strength or how many possessions or however much power you have, but attend to what kind of soul and mind you have, whence all your plans originate and to which the fruit of your work is referred. That soul is full of wisdom, full of piety and justice, since all virtue is from God. And to that soul God says: “Behold, Jerusalem, I have painted your walls” (Is. 49:16). The soul that holds in itself the shining grace of virtue and splendor of piety is painted by God. That soul is well painted, in which the semblance of divine operation shines; that soul is well painted in which resides the splendor of glory and the image of paternal substance. The picture which shine according to this image is precious. Adam lived according to this image before he sinned, but when he fell, he deposited the image of the heavenly one and assumed the semblance of the earthly one.⁵⁹

Attending to oneself means reflecting on the soul, which God, the source of moral goodness and beauty, has adorned with the semblances of divine operation. In being so painted, that soul holds in itself the beauty of virtue. Ambrose’s statement represents a clear affirmation of God as the source of virtue and artfully describes the demands that come packaged with such an affirmation.

Ambrose’s use and gloss of Isaiah 49:16 is unique to the Latin tradition;⁶⁰ his reference the soul’s walls being painted by God pertains to a Latin translation more akin

⁵⁸ See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 236–37, n.54.

⁵⁹ *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

⁶⁰ For Ambrose’s other references to Isaiah 49:16, see *Hex.* 6.8.47 (CSEL 32/1: 238), 6.8.49 (CSEL 32/1: 240); *Ex. uirg.* 10.68 (PL 16: 356); *Iob* 3.8.24 (CSEL 32/2: 261–62); *Psal.* 118 14.43 (CSEL 62: 328); *Psal.* 47.22 (CSEL 64: 359). All of these references occur after at least 383 CE. I say “at least”

to the LXX text: “ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν μου ἐζωγράφησά σου τὰ τεῖχη.” Key for Ambrose here is the verb ἐζωγράφησά from ζωγραφέω (“to paint”), a verb used by Plato and Plutarch before him.⁶¹ Didymus the Blind, a figure with whom Ambrose was familiar by at least 381 CE, refers to the Isaiah 49:16 twice in his *Commentary on the Psalms* 29–34 when exegeting Psalm 30:6 (“Into your hands I will entrust my soul”).⁶² Didymus argues the imagery of God’s painting of Jerusalem’s walls refers to the perceptible things of an incorporeal God, and in no way should the painting upon the hands of God be considered material. Didymus wonders after the nature of these walls, citing Proverbs 1:21, a verse which describes Lady Wisdom as “proclaimed on top of the walls.” “Of this statement,” Didymus writes, “let us say that a herald appears on top of the perceptible walls proclaiming things concerning the virtues. The walls are the watchmen of the mind, and the virtues and the divine works will make this known inside man.”⁶³

since *Job* is sometimes dated to 383 CE and other times to 387–89 CE. That these references all show up in or after the mid-380s is mildly interesting, but I think this lies more due to an increase in his literary output than to some development in doctrine: Ambrose produces an incredible amount of material between 386–90 CE. Cf. Hier. *Is.* 13.668–69 (PL 24: 469–70). In this commentary, typically dated around 410 CE, Jerome uses *depinxi* and *defixi*. See also Iren. *Haer.* 5.35.2. Irenaeus’ Latin translator uses *depinxi*.

⁶¹ Greek-English Lexicon, Liddel and Scott (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), s.v. “ζωγραφέω.” For early uses in Greek literature, see Pl. *Resp.* 598a (LCL 276: 402–3); *Cra.* 434a–b (LCL 167: 168–69); *Phlb.* 39d (LCL 164: 302–3). For reference to Plato on divine artistry or craft, see Pl. *Soph.* 265e (LCL 123: 448–49) and *Prm.* 132d–e (LCL 167: 218–21). See also Jean Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* (Ambroise, *Exam. 1, 1-4*) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 20–21, 34–37. For a discussion of divine creation as a work of art, see Sen. *Ep.* 65.7–10 (LCL 75: 448–51).

⁶² Didy. *Com. Psal. 29–34* 139,21–140,12, in Michael Gronewald, *Didymos der Blinde: Psalmenkommentar (Tura-Papyrus)*, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen, Bd. 3 (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1968), 52–55.

⁶³ Didy. *Com. Psal. 29–34* 140, 2–4.

While Irenaeus mentions Isaiah 49:16 in *Against Heresies* 5.32.2, citation of the LXX of Isaiah 49:16 outside of Didymus is scant.⁶⁴ Whether Ambrose is privvy to Didymus' *Commentary on the Psalms* is debateable. Similarities are plain, specifically, as we will see, in the linking of divine painting and virtue. Ambrose translates ἐξωγράφησά into Latin as *pinxi* (from *pingo*, *pingere*) and its other forms (*pingitur* and *picta*, *pictus est*). Ambrose's Latin translation is representative of what Gryson has termed "le texte européen" of the *Vetus Latina*.⁶⁵ The contrast between Ambrose's "le texte européen"—clearly inflected by the LXX—and the more typical Latin translation, "Behold, I have inscribed your walls on my hands and your walls are ever before my eyes" (*ecce in manibus meis descripsi te muri tui coram oculis mei semper*), is striking. There is no mention of the "hands" of God (i.e., "... on my hands") or that God "remembers us" in any of Ambrose's references to Isaiah 49:16—the verse instead designates the importance of being created in such a masterful way by God, and with that in mind, how the human agent should act.

If the scholarly assumption holds that Ambrose is indebted to Basil's hexameral homilies, then naming God as painter serves to distinguish his position from his Greek contemporary. When he discusses what it looks like for human beings, made according to the image of God, to pursue the likeness of God, Basil writes that God

⁶⁴ Iren. *Haer.* 5.35.2. Irenaeus references the verse alongside Galatians 4:26, a verse which cites Jerusalem as free and the mother of us all. *De qua ait propheta Esaias: ecce in manibus meis depinxi muros tuos, et in conspectu meo es semper*. Cyril of Alexandria mentions Isaiah 49:16 in his *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 4.4.676 (PG 70: 1068). John Chrysostom references Isaiah 49:16 in his *Homiliae in Ioannem* 61 (PG 59: 338), typically dated to 391 CE (about five years after Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*). For a later (late-fifth, early-sixth century) mention of the verse, see Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 561–62 (PG 87/2: 2476).

⁶⁵ Gryson cites Ambrose as evidence of "le texte européen" that offered "une révision plus profonde . . . qui a été plusieurs fois retouchée d'après diverses formes du texte grec" (*Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, ed. Gryson, Band 12/1: 17).

let us be artisans (ἐργάτας) of the likeness to God, so that the pay for the work would be ours. Thus we would not be like images made by a painter (ζωγράφου), lying without purpose, lest our likeness should bring praise to another. For when you see an image (τὴν εἰκόνα) exactly shaped like the prototype (πρωτότυπον), you do not praise the image, but you marvel at the painter.⁶⁶

A painted image, to Basil's mind, is static and lifeless, lacking the rational "power" (δύναμις) that in fact distinguishes human beings. The worry is that if God is the painter, then praise is due to God alone, not to the individual who knowingly assents to the good and avoids evil. But since, Basil opines, human beings who seek after godlikeness deserve reward and recognition for their pursuit, the works, while aided by grace, must be distinctly theirs.

By Basil's lights, conceiving of God as painter both undermines the agency of the individual and bypasses recognition of human excellence; for him, the very possibility of the virtues necessitates such a recognition. Basil's distinction between image and likeness underlies his aversion to labeling God as painter and human beings as paintings. "For this [the pursuit of godlikeness] God gave power (δύναμιν)," Basil maintains. "If he created you also according to the likeness, what would be yours to give? . . . But now the one is given [i.e., image], the other is left incomplete (ἀτελές) [i.e., likeness]; that you may

⁶⁶ Basil, *Ton anthropon geneseōs* 1.16 (SC 160: 208). Emphasis added. For further reflection on Basil's relationship to the text of Genesis and the formation of his sermons with his audience in mind, see Raymond Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 105–31. Van Dam notes that the sermons were likely given over the course of a week, morning and evening, and possibly during Lent. As such, they evince a dialogical character: the homilies' "delivery on consecutive days in rapid succession offers a unique opportunity to examine aspects of the dialogue between a preacher and his audience. . . . Basil learned from and reacted to the responses of his listeners. . . . Even as he listened to the audience, he was listening to himself" (at 109). A prime example of such listening can be seen in the difference between homily one's philosophical invective and homily five's immense practicality, driven by agricultural imagery. Van Dam, however, does not discuss the two homilies on humanity's creation, and mentions in passing that they are "sometimes attributed to Basil" (210, n.1). For a survey of scholarly arguments over the authenticity of these two homilies, see the introduction by Smets and van Esbroeck in SC 160: 13–126; and Harrison's introduction to Basil the Great, *On The Human Condition*, 14–18. The question of whether these homilies are from Basil himself arises from the rhetorical differences between *Ton anthropon geneseōs* and Basil's first nine hexameral homilies.

perfect (τελειώσας) yourself, become worthy of the recompense by God.”⁶⁷ Basil reiterates the nature of the image—the capacity to reason and rule over our passions—and emphasizes the educative role creation and scripture play in our attention to the soul and pursuit of godlikeness.

Though Ambrose maintains Basil’s distinguishing mark of the image by insisting on the soul’s capacity for reason and action—what he calls “liveliness for attention” (*ab intuendi uiuacitate*)⁶⁸—Ambrose has no qualms about labeling God as painter and human beings as divine product.⁶⁹ In fact, he explicitly glosses a version of Isaiah 49:16 that presents God as painter (and Jerusalem or the soul as masterpiece), rather than other, more common Latin translations which depict God as inscribing Jerusalem upon his hands.⁷⁰ With this choice of version, the soul (and its “walls”), and not God’s own hands, becomes the canvas for divine agency: God decorates the soul with the works of God. Here, in rather artful terms, Ambrose describes what it means to be made in and maintain the image of God: it means having the soul “well painted” (*bene picta*) by God. A “well

⁶⁷ Basil, *Ton anthropon geneseōs* 1.17 (SC 160: 210).

⁶⁸ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.46 (CSEL 32/1: 237).

⁶⁹ Cf. McCool, “The Ambrosian Origin of St. Augustine’s Theology of the Image of God in Man,” 66–68. McCool mentions Ambrose’s description of the painted image from *Hex.* 6.7.42, straightforwardly arguing that “the sermons of Ambrose did in fact propose a theology of the image and likeness of God in which Plotinus’ metaphysics had been adapted to the exigencies of the Christian Platonism of Alexandria. Augustine could have discovered it if he listened carefully to the instructions of Ambrose. . . . Its [*Hex.* 6.7.42] dependence on Origen’s *Homilies on Genesis* is unconcealed. The divine image in the human soul is described in words taken from Origen’s thirteenth homily on Genesis (at 66–67).” In sum, Ambrose’s ultimate antecedent, for McCool, is Plotinus, Christianized in the Alexandrian tradition, of which Origen is preeminent.

⁷⁰ Cf. Aug. *Ep. ad cath.* 7.16 (CSEL 52/2: 249). *Ecce super manus meas descripsi muros tuos, in conspectu etiam meo es in perpetuum et breui aedificaberis ab his a quibus euersa es.*

painted” soul allows the “semblance of divine operation” to shine through (*elucet*) and the glory of the “image of paternal substance” to take up residence.⁷¹

“Drinking from Thy Own Oysters”: Ambrose and the Dispossession of Virtue

This understanding of God as the “painter” of the soul and the source of virtue is both argued and assumed throughout Ambrose’s corpus; it also undergirds his view on the Christian’s dispossession of virtue. By dispossession of virtue I mean that virtue is something given in grace and not simply a result of acquisition, gumption, or something in between. And since it is a grace, virtue is to be referred to its source: God. In *On the Good of Death*, Ambrose exhorts his listeners to “flee evil things and exalt the soul,” naming the “flight” (*fuga*) from evil as that which attains the virtues particular to the image and likeness of God. To take flight and eventually attain virtue aids in the restoration of the image that was lost by our first parents in the garden. And just before Ambrose again cites Isaiah 49:16, he notes that God has painted us “with the colors of the virtues” (*quasi auctor pinxit uirtutum coloribus*); we are thus to maintain, not neglect, the image by attending to our souls.⁷² There is more to say about this passage, but here, it suffices to say that God is the one who paints, even decorates, us with the colors of the virtues.

⁷¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 234).

⁷² Ambr. *Bon. mort.* 5.17 (CSEL 32/1: 719). *Fugiamus ergo haec mala et exaltemus animam nostram ad illam imaginem dei et similitudinem. Fuga malorum similitudo dei est et uirtutibus imago dei acquiritur. Ideo qui nos pinxit quasi auctor pinxit uirtutum coloribus: ‘ecce ego,’ inquit, ‘Hirerusalem, pinxi muros tuos’ (Is. 49:16). Non detergeamus pinicillo negligentiae depicta animae nostrae firmamenta muralia.*

On the Good of Death 5.17 depicts the medium of God's painting differently than *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42. While in *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42 Ambrose describes the soul as painted with "a semblance of divine operation," in *On the Good of Death* 5.17 the soul is painted with "the colors of the virtues." This subtle difference forces us to wrestle with the distinction between "divine operation" and the "virtues." On the surface, the difference is plain. Divine operation, as we explored in the last chapter, is the fruit of God's (not our) creative power. But further, the Son's works (*opera*) serve as pedagogical scripts, snapshots of divine intervention, that point beyond the works themselves. Seeing the works of the Son, for instance, grants the viewer insight into the nature of the Father and Son's shared invisible power.

The virtues, for Ambrose, are participatory and performative. This is the case for (at least) two reasons. First, human beings are created and are a step removed from the perfect and causal source of each virtue. Hence, every human expression of moral excellence is a participation in the proper form of that virtue. Second, east of Eden, the aligning of our mind, action, and affect is a complicated affair. We must learn to become virtuous by means of consistent imitation of laudable exemplars. Ambrose reiterates this challenge by reflecting early and often on the deception the flesh introduces into our moral pursuits. To remedy such challenges, Ambrose argues that virtue is better seen and imitated than theorized, foregrounding the importance of exemplars for his moral vision. We will say much more about how exemplars drive Ambrose's moral vision, but here I simply want to flag the importance of seeing exemplars and recognizing their virtue for its acquisition and practice.

Ambrose's understanding of the virtues follows a typically Stoic track with Platonic and Aristotelian elements built in, as well. The virtues are perfections of human dispositions embodied by those who exemplify steadiness of spirit. Ambrose will say that the virtuous have no need of external legal requirement; they simply know and do what is virtuous. This is not unlike the description of the Stoic sage, who, as Michael Frede puts it, "unshakably knows what the good is."⁷³ Many of the virtuous forebears of the faith that Ambrose names—Noah, Jacob, and Joseph⁷⁴—come prior to the dissemination of the Mosaic Law, and this, he thinks, is no coincidence. For Ambrose, the saint

is a law unto himself and has no need for summoning the law from afar, for he carries it enclosed in his heart, having the law written on the tablets of his heart, and it is said to him, "Drink water out of thy own vessels and from the stream of thy own well" (Prov. 5:15). What is so close to us as the word of God? This is the word on our heart and on our lips which we do not see and hold.⁷⁵

The truly wise are those who rely not on external demand for following the law, but simply are themselves their own laws, knowing and pursuing the good always and everywhere. These laws are not arbitrary, but are inscribed on creation and human nature. In willing that which is in accord with nature, the saint does "all things rightly . . . without offense, without blame, without loss and disturbance within himself."⁷⁶ To make

⁷³ Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, 121. See Charlotte Stough, "Stoic Determinism and Moral Responsibility," in *The Stoics*, ed. John Rist (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 203–33, at 211. Stough writes that the early Stoics affirm "that virtue and vice are stable and relatively permanent dispositions to act morally or immorally. . . . For the Stoics identified moral dispositions with physical states of the soul, which they believed to be relatively constant."

⁷⁴ Ambr. *Ep.* 7.7 (CSEL 82/1: 46).

⁷⁵ Ambr. *Ep.* 7.18 (CSEL 82/1: 51–52). *iustus enim 'ipse sibi lex est,' non habens necesse longius sibi accersire formam uirtutis, quam corde inclusam gerat, 'scriptum habens opus legis in tabulis cordis sui' (cf. Rom. 2:15), cui dictum sit: 'Bibe aquam de tuis uasis et de puteorum tuorum fontibus' (Prov. 5:15). Quid enim nobis tam proximum quam dei uerbum? Hoc est 'uerbum in corde nostro et in ore nostro' (Rom. 10:8), quod non uidemus et tenemus.*

⁷⁶ Ambr. *Ep.* 7.19 (CSEL 82/1: 52–53). *Qui autem bene facit omnia, recte facit omnia. Qui uero recte facit omnia, utique inoffense et inreprehensibiliter et sine damno et commotione sui fauit omnia. Cui*

his case, Ambrose references two verses. The first is unsurprising: “the law is not made for the just but for the unjust” (1 Tim. 1:9).⁷⁷ Those apart from the law, notably in the patriarchal history, can have true justice by following after divine laws given in nature.

Tracking down Ambrose’s usage of the second verse, Proverbs 5:15—“Drink water out of thy own vessels and from the stream of thy own well”—might appear tangential, but examining his several uses grants insight into how he conceives of the nature of virtue, what that virtue might mean for the action of the saint, and how the description of such an action differs from its philosophical shades.⁷⁸ While Ambrose’s adaption of this gloss likely comes from Origen’s *Homilies on Genesis*, it is, like Isaiah 49:16, unique to the Latin Christian tradition until Ambrose.⁷⁹ He refers to the verse eight times throughout his corpus to refer to some form of inner contemplation; three of those uses show forth a doctrine of the sufficiency of virtue.

On the surface, Ambrose’s citation of Proverbs 5:15 appears to promote something of self-reliance. In fact, Augustine notes Pelagius’s affection for and use of

igitur hoc subsit, ut inoffense faciat, faciat inreprehensibiliter, faciat sine commotione sui, sine damno, nihil insipienter facit, sed sapienter omnia. Cf. Philo, *Prob.* 9.59–60 (LCL 363: 42–45).

⁷⁷ Most of Ambrose’s references to 1 Timothy 1:9 support his reasoning in *Ep.* 7. See e.g., *Ambr. Off.* 3.5.31 (CCSL 15: 173) and *Psal.* 36.69 (CSEL 64: 128); *Psal.* 118 16.18 (CSEL 62: 362). Cf. *Luc.* 3.30 (CSEL 32/4: 120), where Ambrose interprets the verse as shedding light on the inclusion of non-Jews into the people of God (i.e., outsiders are those who need the law). See Maes, *La Loi naturelle selon Ambroise de Milan*, 151–83, where he discusses Ambrose’s view of relationship of the law to the religious outsider.

⁷⁸ For Ambrose’s references to Prov. 5:15, see *Iac.* 1.7.29 (CSEL 32/2: 22–23), 2.4.17 (CSEL 32/2: 42); *Is.* 4.22 (CSEL 32/1: 656), 4.24 (CSEL 32/1: 658), 5.39 (CSEL 32/1: 666); *Psal.* 37.11 (CSEL 64: 144), 45.3 (CSEL 64: 331); *Spir.* 1.16.162 (CSEL 79: 83); *Bon. mort.* 5.20 (CSEL 32/1: 722); *Ep.* 7.18 (CSEL 82/1: 52), *Ep.* 11.24 (CSEL 82/1: 92); *hex.* 3.12.49 (CSEL 32/1: 91–92); *Off.* 3.1.1 (SBL 95/2: 80); *Parad.* 3.13 (CSEL 32/1: 272); *Tob.* 5.21 (CSEL 32/2: 528).

⁷⁹ See Orig. *Hom. Num.* 12.1 (GCS 20: 95), where Origen associates Proverbs 5:15 with John 7:38, as Ambrose does in *Hex.* 3.12.49 below. See also Orig. *Gen. Hom.* 7.5 (SC 7: 206–7), 12.5 (SC 7: 306–7), 13.4 (SC 7: 330–3).

Ambrose's writings in his doctrine of free will and its relationship to divine grace.⁸⁰ At first glance, it is not too much of a stretch to see an easy alliance between Pelagius and Ambrose on human perfection. Simply look within yourself and your own resources, Ambrose seems to say, and act accordingly. In one of his homilies on creation, for example, Ambrose's call to self-sufficiency seems even more egregious:

In yourself (*in te ipso*) lies the sweetness of your grace, from you (*ex te*) does it blossom, in you (*in te*) it remains, within you (*intus tibi*) it rests, you must search in yourself (*in te ipso*) for the pleasantness of your conscience (*iocunditas tuae conscientiae*). For that reason, it says: "Drink water out of your own (*de tuis*) cisterns and the streams of your own (*de tuorum*) wells" (Prov. 5:15).⁸¹

It is impossible not to take note of the repeated and overt use of reflexive prepositional phrases—*in te ipso*, *ex te*, *in te*, *intus tibi*, *de tuis*, *de tuorum*. If we attend solely to these reflexives, it certainly appears plain that Ambrose is exhorting his audiences to look inside themselves for the strength to live and act well.⁸² Initially, this might well seem to

⁸⁰ Augustine's references to Pelagius's use of Ambrose are frequent and peppered throughout his writings. These, it can be deduced, represent something of a battle over authority, attempting to answer the question of who has a legitimate claim on Ambrose's teachings, Pelagius or Augustine. See *Aug. Nupt.* 1.35.40 (CSEL 42: 251–52), 2.5.15 (CSEL 42: 268), 2.29.51 (CSEL 42: 307–8); *Pelag.* 4.11.29–4.12.34 (CSEL 60: 559–70); *Iul.* 1.30 (CSEL 85/1: 24); *Grat. Chr.* 43.47–50.55 (CSEL 42: 159–66). For secondary scholarship on Augustine's use of tradition (Ambrose, in particular) in distinction from his rivals, see Mathijs Lamberigts, "Augustine's Use of Tradition in His Reaction to Julian of Aclanum's *Ad Turbantium: Contra Iulianum* I–II," *Augustinian Studies* 41.1 (2010): 183–200, at 187–88; Gerald Bostock, "The Influence of Origen on Pelagius and Western Monasticism," in *Origeniana Septima: Origenes in den Auseinandersetzungen des 4. Jahrhunderts*, ed. W. A. Bienert and U. Kühneweg (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 381–96. For Augustine's multiple references to, and favorable monikers for, Ambrose, see Barbara Beyenka, O.P., "The Names of St. Ambrose in the Works of St. Augustine," *Augustinian Studies* 5 (1974): 19–28. The association of Pelagius with other disputed figures was commonplace and typical of authors other than Augustine, as well. Jerome, for instance, associates Pelagius with Origen. Given Ambrose's widely known borrowing from Origen, Jerome's statement might also represent a skirmish over proper authority. See *Hier. Ep.* 133.3 (CSEL 56/1: 246–47); *Adu. Pelag.* 1.19 (CCSL 80: 24–25), 3.19 (CCSL 80: 123–24).

⁸¹ *Ambr. Hex.* 3.12.49 (CSEL 32/1: 91–92).

⁸² Cf. Burns, "A Surprise for Simplician," 7–27, at 12–16. Burns identifies an "ambivalence" which "betrays a hesitation between the demands of a confessional theology which attributes to God all glory for human success and the requirements of a theodicy, a defense of divine justice, which must assign a foundation in human free choices for every deviation of God's part from disinterested liberality or even overwhelming generosity. Ambrose attempted to establish a middle ground by affirming that God's graciousness precedes and exceeds the creature's merits but that particular gifts are wisely and

be the case, but there is nuance if we examine still another instance of Ambrose's exegesis of the verse.

Ambrose's *On Paradise*, dated early on in his career (ca. 375–78 CE), shows us this nuance in light of Proverbs 5:15:

There was a fount which irrigated the land of Paradise. Is not this stream our Lord Jesus Christ, the Fount as well as the Father of eternal life? It is written: "For with you is the fountain of life" (Ps. 35:10). Hence, "From within him there shall flow living waters" (Jn. 7:38⁸³). We read of a fountain and a river which irrigates the fruit-bearing tree of Paradise, the tree that bears fruit for life eternal. You have read, then, that a fount was there and that "a river rose in Eden" (cf. Gen. 2:10) that is, in your soul there exists a fount. This is the meaning of Solomon's words: "Drink water out of thy own cisterns and the streams of thy own well" (Prov. 5:15). This refers to the fount which rose out of that well-tilled soul, full of pleasant things, this fount which irrigates Paradise, that is to say, the soul's virtues that sprout because of their eminent merit.⁸⁴

The passage is bookended by reference to the divine fount that irrigates paradise (*fons qui inrigaret paradisum . . . fons qui inrigat paradisum*); "Is not this stream our Lord Jesus Christ, the Fount as well as the Father of eternal life?," Ambrose asks. Ambrose equates the soul with paradise, while Christ, the fount, waters that paradise and causes the virtues to spring up within it. "Thy own vessels/cisterns" or "thy own wells" to which Proverbs 5:15 refers are not simply the individual's faculties devoid of outside intervention, but the

appropriately distributed" (14). This, of course, is another way of saying that Ambrose affirms the critical importance of divine authorship in the case of moral excellence and demands that individuals take responsibility for their action.

⁸³ For Ambrose's other uses of John 7:38, see *Hex.* 3.1.6 (CSEL 32/1: 62); *Psal.* 39.22 (CSEL 64: 228), 45.12 (CSEL 64: 337–38), 48.4 (CSEL 64: 363), 61.14 (CSEL 64: 386); *Spir.* 1.16.156 (CSEL 79: 83).

⁸⁴ *Ambr. Parad.* 3.13 (CSEL 32/1: 272). *Erat fons qui inrigaret paradisum. Qui fons nisi dominus Iesus Christus, fons uitae aeternae sicut pater? Quia scriptum est: 'quoniam apud te fons uitae' (Gen. 2:10), denique: 'flumina de uentre eius fluent aquae uiuae' (Ps. 35:10a). Et fons legitur et fluius legitur, qui inrigat paradisi lignum fructuosum, quo ferat fructum in uitam aeternam (Jn. 7:38). Hic ergo fons, sicut legisti—fons enim procedit inquit ex Eden, id est: in anima tua fons est, unde et Solomon ait: 'bibe aquam de tuis uasis et de puteorum tuorum fontibus' (Prov. 5:15)—hic est fons, qui procedit ex illa exercitata et plena uoluptatis anima, hic fons, qui inrigat paradisum, hoc est uirtutes animae eminentissimo merito pullulantas.*

divine action in the soul, an action which causes virtue to flow in the soul. “This,” Ambrose says, “refers to that fount which rose out of that well-tilled soul, full of pleasant things.”

This allegorical interpretation of Eden is derived from Philo, to whom Ambrose is indebted for large swaths of his exegesis.⁸⁵ Philo understands the Garden as the soul, divinely attended; by God’s planting, the Garden brings forth “earthly excellence” (ἐπίγειον ἀρετήν).⁸⁶ These earthly excellences are “copies” (μίμημα ἀπεικόνισμα) of their heavenly archetypes. That God plants the virtues within the soul, Philo thinks, obviates the possibility of the soul boasting of its excellence: “the mind that says ‘I plant’ is guilty of impiety,” he writes.⁸⁷ Instead, the reference in Genesis 2 to both the general source of water and the four named rivers flowing out from it warrants discussing the implanted virtues in general (“generic virtue” (ἡ γενικὴ ἀρετή) or “goodness” (ἡ ἀγαθότης)) and specific excellences in particular (prudence, self-mastery, courage, and justice).⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Five of Ambrose’s works are typically labeled his “Philonic Treatises,” most dating to the first half of his episcopacy: *Parad.*, *Noe*, *Cain*, *Abr.*, and *Fug.* For Ambrose’s adoption of Philo on this passage, see Savon, *Saint Ambroise devant l’exégèse de Philon le Juif*, 215–41. Savon notes Ambrose’s reference to Psalm 35:10 at 220–23. On Ambrose and Philo more generally, see also Enzo Lucchesi, *L’usage de Philon dans l’oeuvre exegetique de Saint Ambroise: Une “Quellenforschung” relative aux commentaires d’Ambroise sur la Genèse* (Leiden: Brill, 1977); David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen: Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 1993), 291–311. Runia notes an ongoing “debate” as to the nature of Ambrose’s adoption of Philonic material, with Savon and Lucchesi on either side. In broadest strokes, Savon argues that Ambrose reshapes and reworks Philo; Lucchesi contends Ambrose is more of a textual historian, cutting-and-pasting portions of Philo’s texts. See Joseph Paramelle and Enzo Lucchesi, *Philon d’Alexandrie Questions sur la Genèse II, 1-7: Texte grec, version arménienne, parallèles latins*, Cahiers d’orientalisme 3 (Genève: P. Cramer, 1984), 75ff.

⁸⁶ Philo, *Leg.* 1.14 (LCL 226: 174–75). See Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983), 135–76; Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 292.

⁸⁷ Philo, *Leg.* 1.15 (LCL 226: 176–77).

⁸⁸ Cf. Philo, *Leg.* 1.14–24 (LCL 226: 174–97). Philo glosses all of those particular things planted in the Garden of Eden as pertaining to the variety of the virtues planted in the soul. “By these rivers

In *On Paradise* 3.13, Ambrose connects Philo’s interpretation with Proverbs 5:15 to show that attending to the soul implicates divine action and distinguishes God as creator and human beings as created. So, Ambrose’s exhortation to “look within” or “drink from thy own cisterns” is not straightforward counsel for earthly gumption. Rather, it is an exhortation to recall one’s created nature—to recall that God has graced us with every good and perfect gift, including the seeds (or “colors”) of moral excellence. Taking time and space to explicate Proverbs 5:15 and the role the saint plays in determining virtue helps explain God as the granter of such virtue. The conclusion is indeed similar to that of understanding God as painter of the soul: those who best embody and bear the image of God owe to God the relative success of their moral status. The virtues, while manifested in saintly lives and actions, point ultimately to one who has painted the soul with the manifold colors of moral excellence. While such a conclusion might frustrate Basil, Ambrose has no issue with it—God is the source and giver of all virtue. What makes the saint so saintly, in fact, is her humble devotion to God and the dispossession of the very virtues that her fellows laud and opponents chastise. She is the one who allows divine grace to shine through.⁸⁹

[Moses’] purpose is to indicate the particular virtues. These are four in number, prudence, self-mastery, courage, justice. The largest river, of which the four are effluxes, is generic virtue, which we have called ‘goodness.’ The four effluxes are the virtues of the same number. Generic virtue takes its start from Eden, the wisdom of God, which is full of joy, and brightness, and exultation, glorying and priding itself only upon God its Father; but the specific virtues, four in number, are derived from generic virtue, which like a river waters the perfect achievements of each of them with an abundant flow of noble doings. Let us look too at the particular words used. ‘A river,’ it says ‘issues forth from Eden to water the garden.’ ‘River’ is generic virtue, goodness. This issues forth out of Eden, the wisdom of God, and this is the Reason of God; for after that has generic virtue been made. And generic virtue waters the garden, that is, it waters the particular virtues.”

⁸⁹ See Rowan Williams, “The Holy Body in Hagiography,” in *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and John W. Watt (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 63–78, at 75–76. While dealing with different authors—particularly Greek and Syriac—Williams points to a similar dynamic in fourth-and-fifth-century authors. “The holy body becomes significant *because* it is empty, passive, and subject to alien will” (at 76).

Images, Divine or Otherwise

For Ambrose, as for Origen, the description of God as painter and of human beings as paintings, is not only a matter of fact, but also necessitates moral action. We have begun to explore how Ambrose discerns these moral implications of being painted: “attending” to the soul is a therapeutic process of recognizing God’s gifting of moral excellence. For this picture of the examined life, Ambrose quotes Isaiah 49:16, the use and explication of which, as we indicated, is novel to the Latin tradition. There is yet another aspect of Origen’s image theology that informs what I will call, Ambrose’s “doctrine of rival images.” The broad strokes of the doctrine go like this. Human beings are created according to the image of God, which necessarily entails bearing a divine or heavenly image.⁹⁰ East of Eden, the lure and pull of vice is so strong, we are tempted instead to bear an earthly image. Origen explicates the doctrine by linking Genesis 1:26–27 and 1 Corinthians 15:49; the link connects the “putting on” of image the heavenly Adam rather than its dusty, earthbound counterpart with living in accord with humanity’s initial createdness in the image of God.

⁹⁰ See Patricia Cox Miller, “Visceral Seeing: The Holy Body in Late Ancient Christianity,” *J ECS* 12.4 (2004): 391–411. My discussion of the doctrine of rival images is arguably paralleled by what Cox Miller has coined, “visceral seeing,” which she defines as “not only the viewer’s response to images of the body but also the particular kind of image that is capable of provoking such a response” (at 396). She continues: “[V]isceral seeing refers to corporeal responses to word-pictures of the body, responses that implicate the reader in such a way that the boundary between text and reader begins to weaken” (at 396). Miller owes the phrase “visceral seeing” and the conceptuality behind it to James Elkins, *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). While not addressing the texts or doctrine of rival images directly, Gerald Boersma’s notes on Ambrose’s use of participation language is conceptually related to this doctrine. See his “Participation in Christ,” 175–76: “*Participatio* is employed by Ambrose to express various ways of ‘sharing in’ something or someone: do not participate in wickedness, Ambrose urges his flock; rather participate in Christ in whom God is well pleased” (175).

Ambrose grafts Origen's doctrine of rival images into his image theology and commends it to his audiences for the moral struggle sure to ensue. Before he sinned, Ambrose maintains, Adam conformed to the heavenly image, refracting the glory initially given him. When he sinned, however, Adam "deposited" the image of the heavenly one (*deposuit imaginem caelestis*) and "assumed" that of the earthly one (*sumpsit terrestris effigiem*).⁹¹ This theme of rival images, just as in Origen, is buttressed by exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15:49, and recurs throughout Ambrose's works.⁹²

In his *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* Ambrose interprets the passage "render unto Caesar" in light of the doctrine of rival images.⁹³ By focusing on Luke 20:24, where Jesus asks, "Whose image and inscription [is on the coin]?" Ambrose maintains:

Questioned concerning the drachma, Jesus asks concerning the image, for there is one Image of God, another image of the world. Therefore, he [the apostle Paul], also admonishes us, "As we have borne the image of the earthly one, let us bear also the image of the heavenly one (1 Cor. 15:49). Christ does not have the image of Caesar, because "he is the Image of God" (Col. 1:15). Peter does not have the image of Caesar, because he said, "We have left all things, and followed you" (Mt. 19:27; Mk. 10:28). The image of Caesar is not found in James and John, because they are "the Sons of Thunder" (Mk. 3:17).⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42. For other references to 1 Corinthians 15:49 in Ambrose's works, see *Fid.* 5.14.175 (CSEL 78: 280); *Psal.* 38.26 (CSEL 64: 204); *Iob* 3.8.24 (CSEL 32/2: 261–62); *Ep.* 29.7 (CSEL 82/1: 198–99); and *De patriarchis* 8.35 (CSEL 32/2: 145), where Ambrose references the image of Caesar on the coin from Mt. 22:17–21.

⁹² Cf. Viktor Hahn, *Das wahre Gesetz: Eine Untersuchung der Auffassung des Ambrosius von Mailand vom Verhältnis der beiden Testamente* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969). Hahn argues that Ambrose is so absorbed in the Pauline thought world that he adapts Pauline tropes, often without acknowledging their presence or rootedness in the New Testament.

⁹³ Recall too that Ambrose glosses this passage to support his image theology in the context of his trinitarian polemic. See Ambr. *Ep.* 75a.31 (CSEL 82/3: 103).

⁹⁴ Ambr. *Luc.* 9.34–5 (CSEL 32/4: 451–52). *Postulatus didragma quaerit de imagine; alia enim imago dei, alia imago mundi. Unde et ille nos admonet: "sicut portauimus imaginem terreni illius, portemus et imaginem huius caelestis." Imaginem Caesaris non habet Christus, quia imago est dei. imaginem Caesaris non habet Petrus. Quia dicit: "reliquimus omnia et secuti sumus te." imago Caesaris non reperitur in Iacobo uel Iohanne, quia filii tonitruui.*

Ambrose's interpretation here plainly follows Origen's, attaching the image to the imprint on the coin, explaining it by 1 Corinthians 15:49.⁹⁵ It is also clear that when Ambrose begins to explain Jesus' exhortation to his questioners to attend to the image on the coin, he has Pauline texts generally and 1 Corinthians 15:49 and Colossians 1:15 particularly in mind. Just after Ambrose writes that "Jesus asks concerning the image, for there is one Image of God, and another image of the world," a generic third-person verb is used "therefore, he admonishes us" (*admonet*). There is no titular indication that Paul or "the Apostle" is the one referenced, simply, "therefore, he admonishes also us." Here too we see that the archetypal images are different from *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42: the Image of God is Christ, while the image of the world or earthly image is Caesar. The force of the doctrine and its hortatory purposes nevertheless remains the same. The goal is to throw off earthly images and to seek after and attain that of the heavenly one, who is the true Image of God, Christ.

Ambrose's *On Duties* offers an even fuller and more developed example of the doctrine at work. Ambrose counsels his listeners to

⁹⁵ See Orig. *Hom. Luc.* 39.5–6 (SC 87: 454–56). "There are two images in man. [One he received from God when he was made, in the beginning, as Scripture says in the book of Genesis, 'according (*iuxta*) to the image and likeness of God.' The other image is earthly.] Man received this second image later. He was expelled from paradise on account of disobedience and sin, after the 'prince of this world' (*principis saeculi huius*) had tempted him with his enticements. [For, just as the coin, or denarius, has an image of the emperor of this world, so he who does the works of 'the ruler of the darkness' bears the image of him whose works he does. Jesus commanded that image to be handed over and cast away from his face. He wills us to take on that image according to which we were made from the beginning, according to God's likeness.] And thus it happens that we give 'to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what is God's.' Jesus said, 'show me a coin.' For 'coin,' Matthew wrote denarius.' When Jesus had taken it, he said, 'Whose inscription does it have?' they answered and said, 'Caesar's.' And he said to them in turn, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.' [Paul also uttered this conclusion and said, 'As we bear the image of the earthly man, we should also bear the image of the heavenly man.' When Christ says, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's,'] he means this: 'Put off the person of the earthly man, cast off the earthly image, so that you can put on yourselves the person of the heavenly and give 'to God what is God's.'"

preserve the image, so that we attain to the truth that awaits us there. Let the image of justice be in us, and let the image of wisdom be in us, for that day will come, and we shall be assessed according to that image. Do not allow the enemy to find his image in you, or his rage or his fury, for these are the image of wickedness. Your enemy the devil goes about like a roaring lion, looking for someone to destroy, someone to devour.⁹⁶

Here we see that, distinct from his explication in *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42, Ambrose portrays a wider range of heavenly and earthly images. The heavenly Image is explained in terms of the virtues, justice and wisdom in particular, whereas the earthly image is associated with the devil and the vicious habits of rage and fury, affective signposts on the way to wickedness. For Ambrose, bearing and maintaining an image has direct relevance to the attainment of greater truth or falsehood, and that greater truth or falsehood is what determines the given image. Hence, images of wisdom or justice are both determined by, and give provisional insight into, paradigmatic wisdom or justice.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Ambr. *Off.* 1.49.240–1.49.241 (CCSL 15: 88–89; trans. adapted from Davidson, 255–57): *Ergo dum hic sumus, seruemus imaginem, ut ibi perueniamus ad ueritatem. Sit in nobis imago iustitiae, sit imago sapientiae, quia uenietur ad illum diem et secundum imaginem aestimabimur. Non inueniat in te aduersarius imaginem suam, non rabiem, non furorem: in his enim imago nequitiae est. Aduersarius enim diabolus sicut leo rugiens quaerit quem occidat, quem deuoret.* The similarity among Origen’s doctrine of rival images (e.g., *Hom. Psal.* 38.2.2 (SC 411: 374)) cited above, this passage, and *Psal.* 118 20.34 (CSEL 62: 505) is striking: *Fulget in te imago iustitiae, imago sapientiae, imago uirtutis. Et quia imago dei in corde est tuo, sit et in operibus tuis, sit effigies euangelii in tuis factis, ut in tuis moribus mea praecepta custodias.* (“Let the image of justice, wisdom and power shine in you. And because the image of God is in your heart, may it also be in your works; let the portrait of the Gospel be in your deeds, so that you keep my precepts in all your ways.”)

⁹⁷ Origen’s imprint is plain: the image of something is momentary, a purgative prop prior to encountering the thing itself. Here too we come to a crossroads and must pose a question: how compatible is Ambrose’s injunction to “attend to” creation and its norms with his charge to attain an image of something? The former option, as we indicated, smacks of Stoic consideration of nature and the norms that dictate it: considering a thing’s nature points to norms, especially moral norms, by which that thing should act. To attain an image of something admits a (Platonic) provisional component operative in our existence: our days are shaded by sin and circumstance, and so the best we can hope for is a temporal sort of perfection. Ambrose is content to hold both of these together; he has no issue adhering to fixed norms in nature and confessing to the eventual inability of the human agent prior to seeing God face-to-face. This apparent blind spot might be a simple contradiction, a by-product of Ambrose’s muddling of sources like Basil, Origen, Philo, and Cicero.

There will come a day, Ambrose writes, when each will be assessed according to how his or her image(s) of virtue or of God were maintained. Divine judgment will be meted out based on the extent to which an image is “displayed,” according to Davidson’s translation. Such a translation emphasizes the importance of an image’s visibility to the pursuit of moral excellence. While this might lead us to conclude that the image can roughly be identified with its physical appearance and activity, this is not the case entirely the case here. There is no verb “display” in the Latin; Ambrose’s economic prose is striking: “we will be assessed according to the image” (*secundum imaginem aestimabimur*).⁹⁸ It is clear Ambrose has some sort of physical manifestation of an image in mind; his repeated claims to bodily comportment in *On Duties* give this away.

But to see Ambrose’s subtlety in *On Duties* 1.49.240–41, let us reconsider the first part of our original quotation from *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42, where Ambrose locates the essence of the individual in her being divinely gifted with a soul and mind:

One thing is what we are, another is what things are ours, and another is that which surrounds us. What we are, that is a soul and mind; what things are ours, that is the members of our bodies and our senses; that which surrounds us, that is our money, servants, and provision of this life. Therefore, attend to yourself, and know yourself, that is, not what sort of muscular arms you have, nor how much bodily strength or how many possessions or however much power you have, but attend to what kind of soul and mind you have, whence all your plans originate and to which the fruit of your work is referred.⁹⁹

Ambrose is careful to distinguish between what human beings are, what they possess, and what surrounds them. What humans truly “are” (*sumus*) is something invisible: a soul and

⁹⁸ Ambr. *Off.* 1.49.240 (CCSL 15: 88).

⁹⁹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34). *Aliud enim sumus nos, aliud sunt nostra, alia quae circa nos sunt. nos sumus, hos est anima et mens, nostra sunt corporis membra et sensus eius, circa nos autem pecunia est, serui sunt et uitae istius adparatus. Tibi igitur adtende, te ipsum scito, hoc est non quales lacertos habeas, non quantam corporis fortunam, non quantas possessiones, quantam potentiam, sed qualem animam ac mentem, unde omnia consilia proficiscuntur, ad quam operum tuorum fructus refertur.*

mind (*anima ac mens*), not the things they happen to have. The image resides in the soul and is the signal distinction of the human being. To know and attend to oneself and that image is not to consider “what sort of muscular arms you have, . . . how much bodily strength or how many possessions or however much power you have,” but to ruminate on the state and quality of the soul.

A few sections later at *Hexaemeron* 6.8.45 Ambrose explicitly refuses to equate the body with the image, because, unlike the soul, it cannot speculate on all things.¹⁰⁰ The body is stationary, unable to imagine other possibilities, whereas the soul (*anima*) (and Ambrose uses *mens*, as well¹⁰¹) “sees absent things and surveys in its vision faraway lands.” “In a moment” (*illuc uno momento*), Ambrose contends, “the seemingly remotest places are imagined and understood.”¹⁰² It is rather the power of the mind that “adheres to Christ” (*Christo adhaeret*) and by which “God is attained” (*deo iungitur*).¹⁰³ The body cannot encapsulate the intricate nature of the human person; an invisible motivating capacity or principle, the soul, always informs the body. At its best, and under grace’s

¹⁰⁰ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.8.45 (CSEL 32/1: 235–36). *non ergo caro potest esse ad imaginem dei, sed anima nostra, quae libera est et diffusis cogitationibus atque consiliis huc atque illud uagatur, quae considerando spectat omnia.*

¹⁰¹ While presumably there is a distinction between *anima* and *mens*, Ambrose does not here distinguish. A similar haziness is obvious in his *Ex. uirg.* 10.68 (PL 16: 356), where Ambrose asks, “In what therefore do we consist? In substance of soul and vigor of mind (*in animae substantia et mentis uigore*). . . . Therefore we are not flesh (*caro*), but spirit (*spiritus*).” Here again, Ambrose blurs the lines between soul and mind and spirit, and the three words appear to function as synonyms for “something invisible that we are.” Ambrose once again goes on to reference Deuteronomy’s injunction to *attende tibi* and, yet again, Isaiah 49:16 with respect to being formed in the image and likeness of God: “Accept how great an image from Christ, that you were made according to his likeness. Preserve that image, how Christ painted in you his works, therefore he says to Jerusalem, that is, to the peaceful soul, ‘Behold Jerusalem, I have painted thy walls.’”

¹⁰² Ambr. *Hex.* 6.8.45 (CSEL 32/1: 235–36).

¹⁰³ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.8.45 (CSEL 32/1: 235–36).

auspices, the body and soul are in harmonious union.¹⁰⁴ The dynamic of the invisible nature of the image and its accompanying motivations and the necessity for its visibility expressed in virtuous action will occupy much of what follows.

The dynamic between body and soul can be presented similarly—although not identically—to the relationship between the visible Son and the invisible Father. Just as Ambrose repeatedly emphasizes the role visible works play in understanding the Son (and by extension, the Father), Ambrose refuses to describe the union of the persons as somehow physical; their unity is always invisible. Similarly, while Ambrose impresses the importance of displaying virtuous images, the soul is the invisible defining mark of the individual, impressed with the “holy seal of imitation” (*in hac pium diuinae imitationis insigne*). The body, on the other hand, subject to sin and decay, bears similarity to the animals (*corpus autem ad speciem bestiarum*).¹⁰⁵ Without the rational soul—Ambrose calls it “our whole” (*in hac totus es*)—human beings are bestial.¹⁰⁶

The soul, not the body, Ambrose argues, is therefore made according to the image of God, which is to conform to the true Image that is the second person (*conformis*

¹⁰⁴ Ambrose will describe this union in several ways, the most compelling and evocative I think is that of the soul playing the body as an instrument. See *Bon. mort.* 7.27 (CSEL 32/1: 727–28). “The soul, playing in moderation on the body as if on a musical stringed instrument, strikes the passions of the flesh as if they were notes on the strings, but with its fingertips, so to speak. Thus it produces music in euphonious accord with a virtuous way of life, and in all its thoughts and works sees to it that its counsels harmonize with its deeds.” For further description of this union in Ambrose’s theology, see Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 29–33.

¹⁰⁵ *Ambr. Hex.* 6.7.43 (CSEL 32/1: 234).

¹⁰⁶ *Hex.* 6.7.43 (CSEL 32/1: 234). For an extended reflection on Ambrose’s understanding of the soul as the “essence” of the human being, see Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 19–20; Boersma, “Participation in Christ,” 177–81. See also Holte, *Béatitude et sagesse*, 168, which argues that the conception of the individual as incorporeal is supported both by the Hebrew Scriptures and Platonic thought.

domini Iesu) by bearing images proper to that person.¹⁰⁷ Ambrose presses the point further in *Hexaemeron* 6.7.47 by connecting humanity’s pursuit of holiness to the mind or soul rather than the body. Ambrose then again alludes to Isaiah 49:16: “Therefore, man, you have been painted by the Lord God, your painter. You are fortunate to have a painter of extravagance. Do not erase that painting, one that is bright not with rouge but with truth (*non fuco sed ueritatem fulgentem*), not expressed in wax but in grace (*non cera expressam sed gratia*).”¹⁰⁸ Without mentioning rival images, the content of Ambrose’s distinction hinges on physical appearance and how that appearance implies a true or false disposition. Continuing this line, he adamantly rejects women’s use of makeup.

You erase that picture, woman, if you smear your face with that material whiteness or if you apply an artificial rouge. That is a picture of vice, not of beauty; that is a picture of fraud, not of simplicity. It is a temporal picture—cleaned off by sweat or by rain. That picture deceives and cheats: so that neither do you please the one you desire to please, who realizes it is not you, but an alien thing that is pleasing. You also displease your Author, who sees His own work erased.¹⁰⁹

Chapter Five will unpack Ambrose’s textured understanding of simplicity, noted here as fraud’s foil. Suffice it here to say that, for Ambrose, the use of makeup illustrates the physical habit of covering oneself with artificiality and is symptomatic of the human

¹⁰⁷ *Hex.* 6.8.46 (CSEL 32/1: 237).

¹⁰⁸ *Hex.* 6.8.47 (CSEL 32/1: 238). See also *Ambr. Is.* 4.24 (CSEL 32/1: 658), where he speaks of not allowing the image to be smeared with the rouge.

¹⁰⁹ *Ambr. Hex.* 6.8.47 (CSEL 32/1: 238). *Deles picturam, mulier, si uultum tuum materiali candore oblinas, si adquisito rubore perfundas. Illa pictura vitii, non decoris est, illa pictura fraudis, non simplicitatis est, illa pictura temporalis est— aut pluuia aut sudore tergetur—illa pictura fallit et decipit, ut neque illi placeas cui placere desideras, qui intellegit non tuum, sed alienum esse quod placeat, et tuo displiceas auctori, qui uidet opus suum esse deletum.*

propensity to craft inferior self-images as an amateur painter (*nouis*) would.¹¹⁰ Following this propensity, Ambrose maintains, is a serious offence, one he warns vehemently against: “Don’t remove the picture of God and assume a picture of a whore!”¹¹¹

The challenge, of course, is not simply to present oneself as moderate, but for that moderation to be deeply rooted in the soul—a moral ideal easier stated than accomplished. This side of heaven, the human heart is too easily beguiled. Ambrose’s remedy, in part, is to “look around” (*omnia ergo circum inspice*), to be aware of the world’s “noxious and fraudulent plots” (*noxia et fraudulenta consilia*),¹¹² and fend off those plots by means of recalling our inner “greatness” (*quantus*).¹¹³ This greatness, Ambrose reiterates, is due to the fact that God has painted the soul’s walls. By attending to the “walls,” individuals become increasingly aware of the ways in which the allurements and snares of the world entice and ensnare.¹¹⁴ Ambrose offers scriptural warrant for such reflection: “I am a city fortified, a city besieged” (Isaiah 27:3, LXX);

¹¹⁰ Cf. R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 43–45. Bloch cites Ambrose’s homily in general and the passage against makeup in particular, noting that Ambrose’s driving motivation is different than Tertullian’s, which he goes on to describe. For Bloch, Ambrose is mostly concerned with deception and its moral effects, whereas Tertullian, in his treatise *Cult. fem.*, is primarily concerned with sexual ethics. Ambrose’s and Tertullian’s differing anxieties aside, Bloch fails to reference Ambrose’s discussion on the image of God (or the fact that God paints the soul with the diverse colors of virtue). The argument here—that artificiality is to be shunned—parallels Ambrose’s argument against unnatural speech and philosophical dialectic, explored in detailed in Chapter Four. Tertullian will figure in this discussion in other ways in later chapters.

¹¹¹ *Hex.* 6.8.47 (CSEL 32/1: 238).

¹¹² *Hex.* 6.8.48 (CSEL 32/1: 239).

¹¹³ *Hex.* 6.8.50 (CSEL 32/1: 241). See Goulven Madec, “L’homme intérieur selon saint Ambroise,” in Yves-Marie Duval, ed. *Ambroise de Milan: XVI^e centenaire de son élection épiscopale* (Paris: Études augustinienne, 1974), 283–308. Madec cites the passage from *Hex.* 6.8.49ff.

¹¹⁴ *Ambr. Hex.* 6.8.49 (CSEL 32/1: 240–41). See also *Ambr. Ep.* 36.11 (CSEL 82/1: 8–9). “Woe to him who has a fortune amassed by deceit, and builds in blood a city, in other words, his soul. For it is this [the soul] which is built like a city. Greed does not build it, but sets it on fire and burns it. Do you wish to build your city well?”

and “I am a wall and my breasts are towers” (Song of Songs 8:10). For Ambrose, these verses manifest God’s sure defense of, and provision for, the church. The second of these (Song of Songs 8:10) represents the steadfastness of the Church (“walls”) and the oversight of its priests (“towers”) in teaching truths both sacred and secular.¹¹⁵

Ambrose’s two working distinctions—“rouge” (*fucus*) versus “truth” (*ueritas*) and “wax” (*cera*) versus “grace” (*gratia*)— serve him to distinguish marred images from their pristine counterparts. *Fucus* was a relatively inexpensive red or purple dye created from rock lichen and frequently used as cover up.¹¹⁶ Its metaphorical sense, owing primarily in Cicero, implies deceit or pretense.¹¹⁷ Quintilian too warns against decadent style precipitated purely by popularity and renown using *fucus*: “all this [flourish] fades into nothingness by comparison with better things, just as ‘wool with orchella dyed’ (*lana tinta fuco*) seems fine if there is no purple in sight, but ‘if you put it near Laconian dyes,’

¹¹⁵ Ambr. *Hex* 6.8.49 (CSEL 32/1: 240–41). For other references to Isaiah 27:3, see *Bon. mort.* 5.17 (CSEL 32/1: 719); *Is.* 5.39 (CSEL 32/1: 665); *Psal.* 118 22.37 (CSEL 62: 506). For other references to Song of Songs 8:10, see *Bon. mort.* 5.18 (CSEL 32/1: 719); *Psal.* 118 22.39 (CSEL 62: 507); *Virgin.* 1.8.49 (PL 16: 102). Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentarius in Canticum canticorum* 9. Gregory’s homily deals with Song of Songs 4:10–15. In glossing “my bride is an enclosed garden,” he writes: “So, then, the person who has become a garden with trees like these, flourishing and fully planted and protected on every side by the fence of the commandments, so that there is no entry afforded to the thief or to wild beasts . . . if then I say someone is both a garden and a garden that is protected, that person becomes sister and bride of the One who says to such a soul: ‘My sister bride is an enclosed garden.’”

¹¹⁶ Arist. *Hist. an.* 6.13, 17 (LCL 438: 272–7, 290–91); Plin. *HN* 13.48 (LCL 370: 178–79), 26.66 (LCL 393: 323–24); Xen. *Oec.* 10 (LCL 478: 474–81).

¹¹⁷ See especially Cic. *De or.* 3.25 (LCL 349: 80–81), 3.52 (LCL 349: 158–59); *Brut.* 44.162 (LCL 342: 138–40). See also Quint. *Inst.* 2.15 (LCL 124: 362–63), 8.3 (LCL 126: 342–43), 12.10 (LCL 494: 120–21); Sen. *Consl. hel.* 5.56–57 (LCL 254: 426–29); Gell. *NA* 6.14 (LCL 200: 62–63); Ov. *Tr.* 1.5 (LCL 151: 2–3). There is ample secondary literature on the “gendering” of women with reference to the prohibition of cosmetics. Representative examples include Kelly Olson, “Cosmetics in Roman Antiquity: Substance, Remedy, Poison,” *Classical World* 102.3 (2009): 291–310; Maria Wyke, *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 115–54; Amy Richlin, “Making up a Woman: The Face of Roman Gender,” in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger, eds., *Off with Her Head!: The Denial of Women’s Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 185–213; Marguerite Johnson, *Ovid on Cosmetics: ‘Medicamina Faciei Femineae’ and Related Texts* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

as Ovid says, ‘the sight of better things eclipses it.’”¹¹⁸ The earliest Christian resonances, as we will see in the next chapter, are found in Tertullian.¹¹⁹ “Truth” (*ueritas*) contrasts with *fucus*. Elsewhere, and as we will note in the next chapter, Ambrose will use *ueritas* as that which is contrary to a fleeting image.¹²⁰ *Veritas* indicates a certain unadorned stability, differing from the convoluted presentations of the world.

It is unclear exactly what Ambrose intends with the second distinction, an image “not expressed in wax but in grace (*non cera expressam sed gratia*).”¹²¹ Based on his role as exegete in a Roman context, there are at least three possibilities. First, Ambrose could be making passing reference to biblical passages which depict creation’s fragility before God.¹²² Given Ambrose’s wide-ranging use of scripture in general and the Psalms in particular, this is certainly a possibility. Secondly, given the context of a gloss on the Painter and the painting, we could easily understand Ambrose as simply using an

¹¹⁸ Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.73–76 (LCL 494: 320–23). See A. E. Housman, “Fragmenta Poetarum,” *The Classical Review* 49.5 (1935): 166–68, at 167.

¹¹⁹ Johannes Quasten, ed., *Patrology, Vol. 2: The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus* (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1983), 246–47. “When Christ founded the new religion He did it in order to lead mankind in *agnitionem ueritatis* (*Apology* 21,30). The Christian God is the *Deus uerus*; those who find Him find the fullness of truth. *Veritas* is what the demons hate, what the pagans reject, and what the Christians suffers and dies for. *Veritas* separates the Christian from the pagan. In all these statements there is deep religious feeling, and an ardent longing for honesty.” For the only instance of *fucus* in Tertullian’s corpus, see his *De cultu feminarum* 1.2.1. See Tert. *Herm.* 1, 2, 33, 36, 45 (CSEL 47: 126–28, 162–66, 174–76). Tertullian refers to Hermogenes as a painter who paints his own portrait. Most have taken this to simply mean that Hermogenes was a painter by trade, possibly even of icons in Carthage. Tertullian could well have a figural use or an ulterior motive in mind. For more on Tertullian’s depiction of his opponents, see Jean-Claude Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1972), 38–49. See also Lact. *Inst.* 2.18, 5.1, 6.21. Lactantius carries through the distinction between pretense and truth, occasionally using *fucus* and its cognates. Other Christian usages are relatively rare. Exceptions include: Prud. *Ham.* Prologue 274 (LCL 387: 222–23); Aug. *Ep.* 56.1–2 (LCL 239: 480–81).

¹²⁰ See, e.g., Ambr. *Fug.* 4.22 (CSEL 32/2: 182). *Non enim erat apud eum imago, sed ueritas, non effigies ignauiae, sed solida forma iustitiae et uiuae uirtutis expressio intellegibilis.*

¹²¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.8.47 (CSEL 32/1: 238). See also Ambr. *Is.* (CSEL 32/1: 658), where he speaks of not allowing the image to be “smeared with the world’s rouge.”

¹²² E.g., Psalms 22:14; 68:2; 97:5.

artisanal example to expand his driving metaphor. Earlier, in a homily on the second day of creation, Ambrose contrasts human artists with their divine paradigm:

Artisans are accustomed to crafting individual parts and afterwards connecting them with skillful blending, so that those who hammer out of marble or handle with bronze or press into wax human faces or bodies do not know in what manner the various parts come together, nor do they know the grace the future connection might bring. . . . God, however, as appraiser of the work's entirety, foreseeing what is going to happen as something completed, praises that part of His work which is still in its initial stages, being already cognizant of its termination. This is not to be wondered at, since in God's case the completion of a thing does not depend on the consummation of the actual work, but on the predestination of His will. God praises each individual part as fitting with what is to come. God praises the total work, which is compounded of the loveliness of each part. For that true beauty consists of a fitting adjustment in each part and in the whole, so that the grace in each part and the fullness of the fitting form all the parts should be praised.¹²³

Wax implied the passing nature of a thing and its uncertain future, perhaps a passing reference to Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.847.¹²⁴ God, foreseeing the completed creation, is able to praise each portion of the creation, knowing full well how each part will fit together. The human artisan, gifted as she may be in working with stone, precious metal, or wax, cannot be certain as to the connection of individual parts of the masterpiece; that artisan is ignorant of the "grace the future connection brings."

¹²³ *Hex.* 2.5.21 (CSEL 32/1: 58). *solent artifices singula prius favere et postea habili commissione conectere, ut qui uultus hominum uel corpora excudunt de marmore uel aere fingunt uel ceris exprimunt, non tamen sciunt quemadmodum sibi possint membra singula conuenire et quid gratiae adferat futura conexio. . . . deus uero tamquam aestimator uniuersitatis praeuidens quae futura sunt quasi perfecta iam laudat quae adhuc in primi operis exordio sunt, finem operis cognitione praeueniens. nec mirum apud quem rerum perfectio non in consummatione operis, sed in suae praedestinatione est uoluntatis. laudat singula quasi conuenientia futuris, laudat plenitudinem singulorum uenustate conpostiam. illa est enim uera pulchritudo et in singulis membris esse quod deceat et in toto, ut in singulis gratia, in omnibus formae conuenientis plenitudo laudetur.*

¹²⁴ See Verg. *Aen.* 6.847–53 (LCL 63: 592–93): *Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera (credo equidem), uiuos ducent de marmore uultus, orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent: tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento (hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem, parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.*"

A third plausible valence could be an oblique critique of the Roman funerary practice of making masks to wear in mourning. Often made of wax, these *imagines* were quite expensive and symbolized nobility and wealth. A well-known passage in Polybius' *Histories* depicts the importance of this Roman practice:

Whenever any illustrious man dies, he is carried at his funeral into the forum to the so-called "rostra", sometimes conspicuous in an upright posture and more rarely reclined. Here with all the people standing round, a grown-up son, if he has left one who happens to be present, or if not some other relative mounts the rostra and discourses on the virtues and successful achievements of the dead during his lifetime. As a consequence the multitude and not only those who had a part in these achievements, but those also who had none, when the facts are recalled to their minds and brought before their eyes, are moved to such sympathy that the loss seems to be not confined to the mourners, but a public one affecting the whole people. Next after the internment and the performance of the usual ceremonies, they place the image of the departed in the most conspicuous position in the house, enclosed in a wooden shrine. This image is a mask reproducing him with remarkable fidelity both in its modeling and complexion of the deceased. On the occasion of public sacrifices they display these images, and decorate them with much care, and when any distinguished member of the family dies they take them to the funeral, putting them on men who seem to them to bear the closest resemblance to the original in stature and carriage.¹²⁵

Here we see the notable's funerary encomium, recalling virtues and achievements, was accompanied by a lifelike masks which serves as an icon of the deceased. Sallust indicates the moral importance of these *imagines*, writing of how they inflamed the hearts of their onlookers (*quom maiorum imagines intuerentur, uehementissime sibi animum ad*

¹²⁵ Polybius is typically the primary source for the description and rationale of this practice. See Polyb. 6.7.53 (LCL 138: 428–31). For secondary treatments of funerary practices in general and *imagines* in particular, see Clive Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus*, Classical Studies and Ancient History (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 16–21, 25, 115; Jane D. Chaplin, *Livy's Exemplary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 14–15; John Pollini, "Ritualizing Death in Republican Rome: Religion, Class Struggle, and the Wax Ancestral Mask Tradition's Origin and Influence on Veristic Portraiture," in Nicola Laneri, ed., *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, Oriental Institute Seminars 3 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007), 237–85; Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1–59, 220–69; James Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum: The Roman Discourse of Exemplarity and the Jewish and Christian Language of Leadership* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 46–51, 67–68.

uirtutem adscendi).¹²⁶ These ancestral depictions in other words functioned as tactile examples of the virtues; wax quite literally imaged the notable, capturing him staid and steady and presenting him before those remembering. By the time of Valerius Maximus (1st cent. CE), Clive Skidmore maintains, *imagines* “had become a virtual synonym for historical examples.”¹²⁷ The *imagines maiorum* were not simply funerary remembrances, but functioned positively as pedagogical tools for the pursuit of moral excellence.

Ambrose might have intended any or all of the above in his distinction between wax and grace. If taken together, these possibilities reveal the textured nature of his juxtaposition. Wax was visible, fragile, fleeting, easily contorted, and represented the crafting of human hands, while grace was invisible, lasting, stable, and represented the handiwork of the Creator. Whatever his intent, the distinction throws into relief the stark difference between the temporal and eternal, between images divine and human, invisible and visible.

Conclusion

Our concern in this chapter was to show how Ambrose describes God as the source of the virtues, a claim, I argued, that he makes from his novel use of Isaiah 49:16. According to Ambrose, God has adorned the “walls” of the soul with the myriad colors of divine operation and the virtues. While others, like Basil of Caesarea, might wince at the depiction of God as a painter, Ambrose relishes in it, repeatedly using the metaphor and its supporting verse throughout his career. By no means does Ambrose think—again,

¹²⁶ Sall. *Iug.* 4.5 (LCL 116: 172–73).

¹²⁷ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen*, 25.

unlike Basil—that such a description shortchanges human agency; indeed, for him, it helps connect the givenness of human nature to the pursuit of virtue.

Arguing for God as the source of virtue pressured us to tackle Ambrose’s seemingly contradictory statements over the sufficiency of internal stability and virtue. To that end, I tracked his curious use of Proverbs 5:15, likely owing again to Origen, to show that claims to the sufficiency of virtue come bundled with an understanding of God who gifts that virtue. That God is the source and bestower of moral excellence, in other words, necessarily means that any manifestation of such excellence must be referred to God. This is what I called the saint’s “dispossession” of virtue.

Finally, I showed that Ambrose’s image theology garners further moral purchase with his repeated use of a doctrine of rival images, expressed with recourse to 1 Corinthians 15:49. As for Origen who preceded him, the verse crystallizes for Ambrose the difficulties of bearing or acquiring moral excellence this side of heaven. While divine or virtuous images point to their ultimate author and source, worldly and devilish images weigh down upon us, begging to be put on and imitated. Ambrose depicts the challenge in physical terms, but the battle is ever among things unseen. Still, for all his talk of the invisibility of the image, the location of that image in the soul (or mind), and his disparaging of a body that holds us fast, Ambrose constantly exhorts his audiences to public virtues. I will argue that this stress on—even infatuation with—virtuous presentation is where Ambrose’s debt to the Roman virtue tradition, which Tertullian and Cyprian inherit and further, rears its head. The next chapter analyzes how Ambrose thinks physical action is indicative of one’s inner condition. Transformation, on this

account, is from the outside in: paring down physical embellishment and extravagance encourages and instills modesty of soul.

CHAPTER FOUR: GOD'S VIRTUE AND OURS: IMAGING THE CHARACTER OF DIVINE OPERATION

“What concerned classical men was the capacity of the inner to permeate the outer. They expected their soul to display its quality in their body, and, along with the body, in those concrete and visible particulars of poise and lifestyle that counted so much for them.”¹

The last chapter argued that Ambrose's metaphor of God as the painter of the soul pointed to God as the source of moral excellence. To make my case, I analyzed Ambrose's unique reference to Isaiah 49:16 in his homily on the sixth day of creation. God's beautiful adornment of the soul for Ambrose is a reality that comes packaged with moral demands of attending to and maintaining such beauty. Drawing on Origen's distinction between types of images gives Ambrose occasion for tangibly describing what should or should not constitute the publicizing of those images.

The present chapter analyzes Ambrose's claim that the well-painted soul is one “in which a semblance of divine operation shines” (*in qua elucet diuinae operationis effigies*) with attention to his Latin debts.² I first plumb the depth of Ambrose's use of *eluceo* (“shine”) and *effigies* (“semblance[s]”) throughout his corpus to get to the bottom of the rhetorical significance of the phrase from *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42. This analysis leads neatly into a brief depiction of the general lines Ambrose adapts from Roman tradition, showing in particular how the emphasis on virtuous physical presentation and the ornamentation of the body highlight chaste emotions and their corresponding virtuous actions. These emotions and actions serve as scripts for reading interior disposition and

¹ Peter Brown, “The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity,” *Representations* 2 (1983): 1–25, at 5.

² Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

moral standing. The third section gives examples of how Ambrose trades in this Roman tradition of publicizing virtue. And the fourth section ties the multiple threads of the analysis together, arguing that reading Ambrose with these rhetorical and theological sources in mind proves that human action images the character of its divine counterpart.

“No matter how deeply Ambrose read in Greek,” Peter Brown quips, “he thought and felt in Latin. This was his moral ‘mother tongue.’”³ Brown, I think, is right:

Ambrose’s relative facility with Greek sources (especially his Alexandrian ones) should not obstruct our view of his deep-seated *romanitas*⁴—what Harnack has called “the spirit of the West.”⁵ What follows argues that Ambrose’s Latin debts complement, if not dictate, his Greek ones. As a young man on the cutting edge of a new nobility, Ambrose aspired to be, as the quote at the outset of the chapter suggests, “a classical man.” He studied Roman classics with the grammarians at a young age; his corpus is peppered with examples and turns of phrase from Virgil, Sallust, Seneca, Terence, Ovid, and Valerius Maximus, among others. Common to each of these authors is the foregrounded importance of public virtue for the acquisition of social power. Trained as a proconsul prior to his bishopric, Ambrose was keenly familiar with both the importance of public performance in matters of civic dispute and the specific educational formation this performance entailed.⁶ After only three years in civic service, Ambrose traded the din of political tribunals for the clamor of ecclesial councils. And though Ambrose’s old *officia*

³ Brown, *The Body and Society*, 348.

⁴ See Tert. *Pall.* 4.1 (CSEL 76: 114). For more on *romanitas*, see J. N. Adams, “‘Romanitas’ and the Latin Language,” *The Classical Quarterly* 53.1 (2003): 184–205 and sources cited therein.

⁵ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 5: 48.

⁶ See Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan’s Method of Mystagogical Preaching*, 36–38.

dissipated, the residue of valorized Roman excellence remained, revealed by his nagging concern with the ways in which his students and parishioners acted in public.⁷

Because of their ubiquity, Latin influences on Ambrose have proved difficult to trace, going largely unanalyzed thanks to their relative obviousness.⁸ The Roman sources familiar to Ambrose assert with consistency that maintaining a virtuous image of oneself pertains to recalling norms given by nature and tested traditions and acquitting oneself according to such norms and traditions. The bones of this reflection can be located in late-republican and early-imperial Roman virtue discourse. Early Christians, like Tertullian and Cyprian, adapted many of these calls to bodily comportment with nature, attaching divine authorship and heavenly virtues to the maintenance of the image of God.

These early Christian writings initially take the form of counsel given to virgins, which explains what bearing the image should look like, what Marcia Colish has called

⁷ For brief but helpful analysis of bodily comportment in Ambrose, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, “The Ethics of Gesture,” in *Zone 4: Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Two*, ed. by Michael Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Urzone, 1989), 128–47, at 129–33. Schmitt’s work builds upon the work of Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” *Economy and Society* 2.1 (1973): 70–88. Peter Brown picks up on these themes in Late Antiquity generally in his article “The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity,” esp. 4–5. For attention to comportment proper to clergy, see Rudolf Haensch, “Christlicher Euergetismus ob honorem? Die Einsetzung von Klerikern in ihre Ämter und die von diesen vorangetriebenen Bauprojekte,” in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, ed. Johan Leemans, Peter Van Nuffelen, et al (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 167–81.

⁸ Two exceptions are Yves-Marie Duval, “Sur une page de saint Cyprien chez saint Ambroise: *Hexameron* 6,8,47 et *De habitu uirginum* 15–17,” *Revue des études augustiniennes* 16.1–2 (1970): 25–34; idem, “L’originalité du *De uirginibus* dans le mouvement ascétique occidental: Ambroise, Cyprien, Athanase,” in *Ambroise de Milan: XVI^e centenaire de son élection épiscopale*, ed. Y.-M. Duval (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 9–66, esp. 21–28. Duval’s interest is more in connecting third- and fourth-century texts on virginity (Cyprian, Ambrose, Athanasius, Zeno of Verona), but at several points, he makes reference to the texts central to our analysis (Cyprian’s *De habitu uirginum* 14–17 and Ambrose’s *Hexameron* 6.8.47). Duval also notes Cyprian’s worry over the adulteration of the “natural image of God” (“L’originalité du *De uirginibus*, 26–27). Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3: 313, n.2, where Harnack notes parallels between Cyprian and Ambrose; and *Dogma*, 5: 48, n.2, where Harnack concludes that Ambrose does not appear to have read Cyprian’s works.

“cosmetic theology.”⁹ While the use of “cosmetic” might imply something superficial or contrived, Colish simply states that cosmetic theology communicated the immorality latent in altering one’s natural appearance.¹⁰ When it comes to Ambrose, however, Colish also offers seemingly contradictory claims regarding his appropriation and furtherance of cosmetic theology. She writes that Ambrose “made a contribution of his own to the theme of cosmetic theology,” yet that “cosmetic theology comes up only once in his oeuvre, and briefly, in his *Hexameron*.”¹¹ What follows here shows the insufficiency of Colish’s confusing statements on Ambrose’s familiarity with cosmetic theology. Ambrose, I argue, repeatedly impresses upon his listeners the critical importance of self-presentation.¹²

What Might “Shines Forth” and “Semblance” Mean for Ambrose?

Up to this point, I have intimated that Ambrose’s doctrine of the image of God Ambrose manifests his concern for both the visible and invisible components of the moral life. We flagged the curious phrase that the well-painted soul is one in which “the

⁹ See Marcia L. Colish, “Cosmetic Theology: The Transformation of a Stoic Theme,” *Assays: Critical Approaches to Medieval and Renaissance Texts* 1 (1981): 3–14. In her essay, Colish traces the origins of “cosmetic theology” to fourth-century BCE and the Cynics, then shows its incorporation into Stoic sources, and finally, early Christian literature. Her main concern is not cosmetic theology’s origins, but its transformative heritage for Roman Stoics and early Christians.

¹⁰ Colish, “Cosmetic Theology,” 3.

¹¹ Colish, “Cosmetic Theology,” 10. Cf. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages II. Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought through the Sixth Century*, 48–70.

¹² While I have not come across anyone to speak of Ambrose’s simultaneous warnings against the body and embodied action and endorsements of their importance, Layton identifies such a balancing act in Didymus the Blind (an early source for Ambrose in elucidating pro-Nicene theology). Layton shows Didymus between Origen and Clement, on the one hand, and Methodius, on the other. See Richard A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 85–113.

semblance of divine operation shines” (*elucet diuinae operationis effigies*), a phrase which the remainder of the chapter considers. To that end, this section first scrutinizes Ambrose’s other uses of “shines forth” (*eluceo*) and “semblance(s)” (*effigies*) to clarify what he means when he writes that a semblance of divine operation shines in the soul.

While the use of *eluceo* is not uncommon in the Latin theological tradition preceding Ambrose,¹³ it is imbued with distinct meaning throughout his works. Of these, several of his uses of this verb refer to the hand of God at work in creation. For instance, when exegeting Genesis 1:2 at *Hexaemeron* 1.8.29, Ambrose writes that “the operation of the Holy Trinity clearly shines forth in the constitution of the world” (*in constitutione mundi operatio trinitatis eluceat*).¹⁴ Examining created things, in short, serves to make plain the distinctive role of the Trinity in creation. However, Ambrose rarely attaches *eluceo* to the person of Jesus, shining out from God, presumably for fear of the baggage such a doctrine could introduce. In fact, only once does Ambrose use the verb to describe Jesus as “shining forth as the figure of God” (*figura dei christus eluceat*).¹⁵

By far, Ambrose’s most common use of the verb comes when he is speaking about internal realities made manifest in human acting. In *On Isaac* Ambrose notes the protected inviolability of wisdom that, if truly acquired, is unable to be seized or lessened. This permanence characterizes virtues that reside deep in the soul or mind and are not attached to particular property. Although the enemy attempts to threaten and

¹³ For relevant examples, see Tert. *Jud.* 3 (CSEL 70: 262); *Ieiun.* 3 (CSEL 20: 277); Greg. Illib. *Tr. in Cant.* 2.29 (CCSL 69: 188); Hilar. *Trin.* 7.4 (CCSL 62: 263), 10.8 (CCSL 62a: 465); Lact. *Inst.* 7.3.25.

¹⁴ Ambr. *Hex.* 1.8.29 (CSEL 32/1: 28–29). See also *Hex.* 5.13.40, (CSEL 32/1: 172), where Ambrose follows Virgil’s *Eclogues* and indicates that the “grace of the halcyon should shine forth.” See also *Psal.* 118 5.7 (CSEL 62: 86).

¹⁵ Ambr. *Virg.* 1.8.48 (PL 16: 202).

confuse wisdom's application, the virtue's integrity "shines forth."¹⁶ A similar statement appears in *The Prayer of Job and David* 3.2.3, indicating that Israel's moral goodness "shines forth" in their works, according to a reading of Psalm 72:1 (LXX): "How good is God to Israel, to those who are upright in heart!"¹⁷ Here, too, the verb appears in the context of the inviolability of virtue: "For true and perfect wisdom is not taken away by the torments, nor does it lose what it is, because it casts out fear by its zealous and loving purpose."¹⁸

Ambrose uses *eluceo* repeatedly in *Exposition of Psalm 118*, most often to describe the inner beauty of some thing beaming forth. He first uses the verb in the work's prologue to describe the process of exegeting the abecedarian psalm, insisting that David, the putative psalmist, has "diffused moral teachings like radiant stars, which shine forth and stand out."¹⁹ In the fifth book, drawing on Song of Songs 2:1–2²⁰, Ambrose identifies the church as a "lily" that "shines in the sight of all people."²¹ And in a later homily, Ambrose reflects similarly on Christ's doctrine "shining forth" from chaste young women (*eluceat pulchritude doctrinae*).²²

¹⁶ Ambr. *Is.* 6.56 (CSEL 32/1: 680).

¹⁷ Ambr. *Iob* 3.2.3 (CSEL 32/2: 249).

¹⁸ Ambr. *Iob* 3.2.3 (CSEL 32/2: 250).

¹⁹ Ambr. *Psal.* 118 prol.1 (CSEL 62: 3). *meritoque plerisque locis moralium psalmodum sententias tamquam stellarum diffudit lumina, quae elucent atque eminent...*

²⁰ *Ego flos campi et lilium conuallium, sicut lilium in medio spinarum*. For Ambrose's other references to these verses, see *Inst.* 14.92–15.93 (PL 16: 327–28); *Virgin.* 9.51 (PL 16: 279); *Virg.* 1.8.43 (PL 16: 200); *Is.* 4.30 (CSEL 32/1: 660); *Luc.* 7.128 (CSEL 32/4: 338); *Psal.* 118 5.12 (CSEL 62: 88); *Spir.* 2.5.39 (CSEL 79: 101).

²¹ Ambr. *Psal.* 118 5.7 (CSEL 62: 86).

²² Ambr. *Psal.* 118 15.14 (CSEL 62: 337).

While “shining forth” could imply a relative darkness of a given context into which a thing shines, only once does Ambrose use the verb to refer to the challenge of some thing overshadowing whatever is shining. At *Exposition of Psalm 118* 17.14–18, Ambrose reflects on Psalm 118:133 in which the psalmist petitions God to “Direct my steps according to your word.” The reference to “steps,” perhaps unsurprisingly, sends Ambrose down an exegetical rabbit hole, tracking down verses that reference feet and shoes. He notes Isaiah 52:7²³, Exodus 3:5²⁴, Joshua 5:16²⁵, and Matthew 3:11²⁶ on the scriptural importance of going barefoot. Walking barefoot evinces a rusticity in the barefoot’s news, a frankness that is often lost on the clergy and bishop, who, occasionally like the scribes and Pharisees, are embroiled in controversy. “It is perhaps for this reason,” Ambrose concludes, “that the apostles are sent out with bare feet (Cf. Mt. 10:10), so that their disputation might not be overshadowed but would shine out.”²⁷ Here, Ambrose maintains that misused power and sin cloud the Church and its offices: “Often the clergy have done wrong, the bishop has changed his mind, the rich have sided with

²³ *Psal.* 118 17.15 (CSEL 62: 385): *Quam speciosi sunt pedes euangelizantium pacem, euangelizantium bona!* For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s works, see *Ep.* 11.6–8 (CSEL 82/1: 81–83); *Inst.* 14.88 (PL 16: 326).

²⁴ *Psal.* 118 17.16 (CSEL 62: 385): *Solue calciamentum pedum tuorum.* For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s works, see *Ep.* 6.1 (CSEL 82/1: 39); *Fid.* 3.10.71 (CSEL 78: 134–35); *Fug.* 5.25 (CSEL 32/2: 184), 7.43 (CSEL 32/2: 197–98); *Is.* 4.16 (CSEL 32/1: 653); *Luc.* 2.81 (CSEL 32/4: 85), 3.34 (CSEL 32/4: 124), 7.57 (CSEL 32/4: 305), 9.31 (CSEL 32/4: 449–50); *Valent.* 67 (CSEL 73: 361); *Paen.* 2.11.107 (CSEL 73: 206); *Patr.* 4.22 (CSEL 32/2: 136–37), 11.54 (CSEL 32/2: 155); *Psal.* 118 8.20 (CSEL 62: 162).

²⁵ *Psal.* 118 17.17 (CSEL 62: 386): *Ideo ad Moysen dictum est: solue calciamentum dictum est et ad Iesum Naue [...].* For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s works, see *Ep.* 6.1 (CSEL 82/1: 39); *Fid.* 3.10.71 (CSEL 78: 134–35); *Luc.* 9.31 (CSEL 32/4: 449–50).

²⁶ *Psal.* 118 17.18 (CSEL 62: 386): *Post me uenit uir cuius non sum dignus calciamenta portare.* For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s works, see *Fid.* 3.10.69 (CSEL 78: 134); *Hel.* 22.83–84 (CSEL 32/2: 463–64); *Is.* 8.77 (CSEL 32/1: 696); *Paen.* 1.8.34 (CSEL 73: 136); *Psal.* 118 3.15 (CSEL 62: 48–49); *Spir.* 1.3.41 (CSEL 79: 31), 1.3.43 (CSEL 79: 32), 1.14.145 (CSEL 79: 77).

²⁷ *Ambr. Psal.* 118 17.18 (CSEL 62: 387). *Et apostoli ideo fortasse nudis mittuntur pedibus, ne obdumbraretur eorum disputatio sed eluceret.*

those who hold power in the world, but the people have preserved their own faith.”²⁸ The “bare feet” of the apostles are hence representative of a purity and frankness of the good news; the gospel has the power to “shine forth,” piercing such darkness, and shows how the Church can be “beautiful in her shoes.”²⁹

Ambrose’s *On Abraham* offers us one of his more technical uses of *eluceo* attached to human action. The work’s second book begins by stating that Abraham’s historical narrative should be understood “to explain the progression of the appearance of virtue” (*uirtutis formae quondam processum explicare*).³⁰ Abraham’s *exemplum*, Ambrose argues, is “set before us” so that we might attain the “form and likeness of virtue” (*in formam uirtutis speciemque*).³¹ With this in mind, Ambrose presents his readers with a moral exegesis, owing much to Philo, which follows the contours of Abraham’s life. The call that begins Abraham’s journey, “And go forth out of thy house,” pertains allegorically to the words that proceed from our mind, Ambrose contends.

The house of the mind is the spoken word. For just as the father of the family lives in his own house and has the authority to rule his household, so also the mind lives in our utterances and governs our words, and its strength and discipline shine forth in what we say. As a good father of a family is appraised from the very entrance of this house, so also our mind is weighed from our words. Moreover, it strikes and answers with the rhythms of the voice.³²

²⁸ *Psal.* 118 17.18 (CSEL 62: 386–87; Trans. from Tomkinson, 247). *Plerumque clerus errauit, sacerdos mutauit sententiam, diuites cum saeculi istius terreno rege senserunt, populus fidem propriam reseruauit.*

²⁹ *Ambr. Psal.* 118 17.18 (CSEL 62: 386).

³⁰ *Ambr. Abr.* 2.1.1 (CSEL 32/1: 564).

³¹ *Ambr. Abr.* 2.1.1 (CSEL 32/1: 565).

³² *Ambr. Abr.* 2.1.2 (CSEL 32/1: 566). *Domus mentis prolatiuum uerbum est. sicut enim pater familias habitat in domo sua et in potestate habet quemadmodum regat domum suam ita etiam mens in sermonibus nostris habitat et gubernat uerba nostra et uis eius ac disciplina in sermone elucet. Ut bonus pater familias a primo uestibulo domus aestimatur ita etiam de sermonibus nostris mens nostra perpenditur. Denique etiam modulis uocis pulsata et reuocat. Cf. Philo, *Migr.* 2–5 (LCL 261: 132–35),*

Drawing on Philo's exegesis from *On the Migration of Abraham*, Ambrose maintains that the father (*pater familias*) here represents the mind, the governor of the body.

“Utterances” (*sermonibus*) and “words” (*uerba*) are occasions for determining the mind's “strength” (*uis*) and “discipline” (*disciplina*), since, Ambrose says, the mind's power “shines forth” (*elucet*) in things said. Through the external manifestation of the voice, in other words, the character of the mind can be “weighed from our words” (*de sermonibus nostris mens nostra perpenditur*).³³

Ambrose's adaptation of this line of Philonic exegesis persists throughout his writings and is supported by similar claims in his moral counsel. *On Duties* 1.46.223–1.46.225 explains how an individual's words and deeds reflect the beauty of God, which “shone forth in every part of the world” (*quod in singulis mundi partibus elucebat*).³⁴ Nature, Ambrose argues, arranges both “character and appearance” (*personam igitur et speciem nobis natura ipsa dispensat*) and thus gives us a paradigm by which to act.³⁵ Such a paradigm is set forth in the splendor of creation.

You have that general seemliness; for God made the beauty of this world. You have it also in its parts; for God made the light and marked off the day from the night, when he made heaven, and separated land and when he set the sun and moon and starts to shine on the earth, he approved of them all one by one.

where Philo lays out that the “mind has speech for its house . . . secluded from the rest of the homestead. It is the mind's living place . . . It is there that mind displays in orderly form itself and all the conceptions to which it gives birth, treating it as a man treats a house.”

³³ Ambr. *Abr.* 2.1.2. Ambrose argues similarly in his *Psal.* 118 7.13 (CSEL 62: 135). In glossing Psalm 118:51– (though mocked) “I did not swerve from your law”—Ambrose writes “in these words shine out not only the grace of good work but also the purity of inmost conscience” (*in quo non solum boni operis elucet gratia, sed etiam intimae puritatis conscientiae*).

³⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 1.46.225 (CCSL 15: 83).

³⁵ Ambr. *Off.* 1.46.223 (CCSL 83). Cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.97–100 (Winterbottom, 40; trans. Walsh, 35). “The obligation which stems from this advances first on the path which leads to harmony with nature and to the preservation of its laws. If we take nature as our guide, we shall never go astray...” *Officium autem quod ab eo ducitur hanc primum habet uiam, quae deducit ad conuenientiam conseruationemque naturae; quam si sequemur duces, numquam aberrabimus.*

Therefore this comeliness, which shone forth in each single part of the world has been resplendent in the whole . . . If any one preserves an even tenor in the whole of life, and measure in all that he does, and order and keeps consistency and moderation in his words and moderation in his deeds, then what is seemly stands forth conspicuous in his life and shines forth as in some mirror.³⁶

Here we see a combination of two interpretive lines Ambrose utilizes throughout his writings: the goodness and work of God shine forth in creation, and the things of the “mind” (*mens*) shine forth in a virtuous life. In fact, not only are the two lines combined, they are functionally used to describe the same dynamic. The “order and consistency” in one’s words—and here in *On Duties* Ambrose includes “moderation in deeds,” as well—discloses an evenness of soul “as in some mirror” (*quasi in quodam speculo elucet*). Ambrose’s counsel here to clergy-in-training precedes further considerations on how acting with great care, pleasant speech and tempered disposition reveals a relative stability of impulse or inclination. Actions thus can be said to “shine forth” from their actors, serving as signs for discerning inclination.”³⁷

Ambrose’s frequent use of *eluceo* supports, as I have been arguing, a visual logic in his descriptions of human action. An agent’s true, unseen motivations can be said to “shine forth” in his or her words and works. Audiences are thus able to discern these motivations when observing the act and agent in question. Such language of shining forth often finds itself alongside consideration of something imaging something else. An image can thus be said to shine forth and reveal something of its paradigm in the process. In

³⁶ Ambr. *Off.* 1.46.224–1.46.225 (CCSL 15: 83). *Habes hunc decorem generalem, quia fecit Deus mundi istius pulchritudinem. Habes et per partes, quia cum faceret Deus lucem, et diem noctemque distingueret, cum conderet caelum, cum terras et maria separaret, cum solem et lunam et stellas constitueret lucere super terram, probavit singula. Ergo decorum hoc quod in singulis mundi partibus elucebat, in universitate respandit. . . . Si quis igitur aequabilitatem universae uitae et singularum actionum modos seruet, ordinem quoque et constantiam dicatorum atque operum moderationemque custodiat, in eius uita decorum illud excellit et quasi in quodam speculo elucet.*

³⁷ Ambr. *Off.* 1.47.237 (CCSL 15: 86–87).

considering Ambrose's frequent and varied reflection on the nature of an image, an analysis of his use of *effigies* ("image(s)," "semblance(s)," "depiction(s)," etc.) and its cognates is also beneficial. Ambrose employs *effigies* in a variety of contexts, negative, positive, or generally neutral. *Effigies*, similar to its cousins, *imago*, *similitudo*, and even *figura*, is likewise dependent upon the thing that it is presenting or imaging, and indicative of the nature of the thing imaged.³⁸

In Ambrose's writing, *effigies* occasionally takes on negative connotations. Ambrose describes Laban's household gods (Gen. 31) as *effigies*, "likenesses" or "semblances," of the "solid form of justice."³⁹ The implication is straightforwardly negative: Laban's *effigies* are fractured figurines, graven images which attempt to depict something divine and unseen, and which ultimately pale in comparison to the solid *forma* of justice present in the Hebrew patriarchal narratives. This use of *effigies* is unsurprising given some of Ambrose's other statements, particularly in *On Duties*. There, Ambrose uses *effigies* in two discrete ways within the same discussion of proper physical behavior (tone, volume of speech, gait, etc.). He first uses *effigies* as the rough equivalent to a

³⁸ In general, this statement is in agreement with the Roman traditions preceding him. See, e.g., Lucr. 4.98–109 (LCL 181: 284–85); Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.37.103 (LCL 268: 100–1); Ov. *Met.* 1.83 (LCL 42: 8–9). In *Against Marcion*, Tertullian uses *effigies* and *imago* and *similitudo* with reference to the Carmen Christi of Philippians 2:6–7, rebutting the Marcionite claim that this image language describes a phantom reality. See Tert. *Marc.* 5.20 (CSEL 47: 647–48).

³⁹ Ambr. *Fug.* 4.22 (CSEL 32/2: 182). . . . *ut Laban scrutans domum eius nihil apud eum inane, nihil uacuum repperiret, nulla simulacra, nullam effigiem uanitatis. Non enim erat apud eum imago, sed ueritas, non effigies ignauiae, sed solida forma iustitiae et uiuae uirtutis expressio intellegibilis. Itaque Laban perscrutatus est domum eius spiritalem et non inuenit effigies; plena enim erat non figurarum, sed negotiorum.* See also *Psal.* 118 8.58 (CSEL 62: 188), where *effigies* functions similarly. "For in heaven you do not have such crimes as driving a next door neighbor out of his farm, of defrauding a widow of profits accruing to her from her inheritance, of thrusting out minors from property bordering on one's own, and then, to crown it all, of enclosing an image of some heavenly power in wood, silver, gold or bronze (*in lignum denique et quodcumque argenti atque auri uel aeris metallum uelut effigiem quondam caelestis includere potestatis*). These things are redolent of the most appalling sacrilege and have no place in the heavens, but are all too frequent on earth."

“statue” to describe the opposite extreme of walking hurriedly; i.e., there is a problem with acting like a lifeless statue.⁴⁰

Ambrose uses *effigies* with a different valence later in book one of *On Duties*, exhorting his audience to “imitate nature: for her *effigies*, the rule of discipline, is the form of the honorable.”⁴¹ Here, *effigies* is something akin to a straightforward representation, given by nature. By no means, then, is *effigies* negative (for example, the equivalent to a lifeless statue or graven figurines); it is a matter of fact and moral standard given by nature’s underlying plan. In his two-part elegy for his brother, *Death of Satyrus*, Ambrose’s use of *effigies* is more or less neutral, as well. At 2.127, Ambrose mentions the folly of philosophers who, following certain poets, argue that men can be changed to the forms of beasts. To which Ambrose responds by asking rhetorically,

How much greater a marvel, however, would it be that the soul which rules man should take on itself the nature of a beast so opposed to that of man, and being capable of reason should be able to pass over to an irrational animal, than that the form of the body should have been changed?⁴²

The context of the reflection is plainly negative, but the use of *effigies* is not; it simply is part of stating a matter of fact. Later in the treatise, Ambrose writes similarly: “those who are made in the image and likeness of God cannot be transformed into the forms of beasts; since it is not the image of the body but reason which is [made] after the likeness

⁴⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.74 (CCSL 15: 28). *Nec in illis ergo tamquam simulacrorum effigies probo nec in istis tamquam excussorum ruinas.*

⁴¹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.20.84 (CCSL 15: 31–32). *Naturam imitemur: eius effigies, formula disciplinae, forma honestatis est.*

⁴² *Exc.* 2.127 (CSEL 73: 321). *Quanto maioris est prodigii gubernatricem hominis animam adversam humano generi bestiarum suscipere naturam capacem que rationis ad inrationabile animal posse transire quam corporis effigies esse mutata?* See Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, 380.

of God.”⁴³ Here, the two clauses reflect the same dynamic: reason is created “according to the image and likeness of God” and is contrasted with the “form of beasts” (*effigies bestiarum*) and the “image of the body.” Still, despite the evaluative freight, *effigies* functions as a straightforward description of the physical manifestation of animals.

Throughout his corpus, Ambrose predominantly uses *effigies* in positive senses. In *On the Faith* 2.2.32, Ambrose uses *effigies* with respect to Christ: the “image of eternal goodness” (*effigiem aeternae bonitatis*), mentioning Wisdom 7:26 (*Splendor est enim lucis aeternae et speculum sine macula dei maiestatis et imago bonitatis illius*) in passing.⁴⁴ While the mention of Wisdom 7:26 is noteworthy in its own regard, paraphrasing the verse places *effigies* and *imago* as synonyms. *On the Holy Spirit* 1.6.79 depicts the Holy Spirit as “expressing the *effigiem* of the heavenly image in us” (*ut spiritus sanctus exprimat in nobis imaginis caelestis effigiem*).⁴⁵ Ambrose’s reflection in *Death of Satyrus*, as we will see in the next and final chapter, describes his brother as setting forth simplicity in word and deed, manifesting the “semblance of perfect virtue” (*perfectae uirtutis effigie*).⁴⁶ Here, too, like the other instances above, *effigies* is positive, even laudable, and attached to divine agency. We should want, in other words, to be an effigy of the heavenly image. These markedly positive uses stand in stark opposition to Laban’s *effigies* noted above.

⁴³ *Exc.* 2.130 (CSEL 73: 322). *Et secundum imaginem et similitudinem dei factos transferri non posse in effigies bestiarum, cum utique ad similitudinem dei non corporis sit imago, sed ratio?*

⁴⁴ *Ambr. Fid.* 2.2.32 (CSEL 78: 67). *cum sit imago bonitatis exprimens aeternae in sese bonitatis effigiem, sicut et supra ostendimus scriptum, quia ipse est speculum sine macula et imago bonitatis illius.*

⁴⁵ *Spir.* 1.6.79 (CSEL 79: 48).

⁴⁶ *Exc.* 1.51 (CSEL 73: 237).

Particular contexts notwithstanding, common to all Ambrose's uses of *effigies* is the force both of an image and what that image communicates by its manifestation. It is not too much of a stretch to see how Ambrose's uses of *effigies* coincide with his doctrine of rival images, explored in the previous chapter. Both images and *effigies* can be manifestations of things both heavenly and virtuous or worldly and base. Like "image," *effigies* does not function on its own, but is always tied to the moral status of the thing it happens to be disclosing.

In the *Exposition of Psalm 118*, *effigies* typically pertain to heavenly or virtuous depictions of the saints or of God. In light of Psalm 118:38 ("Establish your word for your servant in your fear"), Ambrose asserts that godly fear is akin to a throne for Christ's teaching, the foundation of which is solidified by the saints' golden wisdom. He continues, "as a good statue presents a likeness of truth, so too, the words of the saints" (*simulacrum autem bonum tamquam effigies ueritatis sermo sanctorum*).⁴⁷ While "semblances of truth" (*effigies ueritatis*) might tempt a negative gloss, here semblances are positive; *effigies* offer glimpses into the real, pointing to the founts of wisdom and truth.

Elsewhere in *Exposition of Psalm 118*, Ambrose applies *effigies* to discussions of the image of God. "For what is so precious as an image of God?" Ambrose asks rhetorically. "This [being created according to the image] should fill you with faith, such that a sort of representation of your Maker (*auctoris effigies*) should shine out from your

⁴⁷ *Psalm*. 118 5.39 (CSEL 62: 104; trans. Tomkinson, 68).

heart, so that if any were to question your soul, they would not fail to find the Maker.”⁴⁸

The visual logic we have been exploring throughout underlies Ambrose’s statement here. Given the remarkable reality of being so created (so painted) in God’s image, a “representation” (*effigies*) will be noticeable. Notice, too, that Ambrose flips the equation in the second clause. While the first indicated that one’s created (we could even say “internal”) reality will shine forth exteriorly, the second formulation is the opposite: given one’s action or representation, the internal reality will become apparent. So, it is noteworthy that Ambrose’s notion of *imago* and *effigies* work both inside out and outside in.

The similarity here to our key phrase under consideration—that the well-painted soul is one “in which a semblance of divine operation shines”—is unmistakable. It is not simply that being created according to the image and likeness of God is a statement of great human dignity, though it is that, as well. It is that a “representation” (*effigies*) will “shine forth” (*refulgeat*), such that God’s creational fingerprints will be plain. The precise distinction, if any, behind “image” (*imago*) and “representation” (*effigies*) here is unclear. It does appear that, in this context, *imago* occupies the singular reality of being created by God, while *effigies* has more to do with the moral implications of reflecting that created reality and therefore is explicated in different contexts.

Near the end of his *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, Ambrose again distinguishes *imago* and *effigies*.

Let the images of justice, wisdom and virtue shine in you. And because the Image of God is in your heart, may it also be in your works; let the representation of the

⁴⁸ *Psal.* 118 10.10 (CSEL 62: 209). *An quicquam tam pretiosum quam imago est dei, quae tibi primo fidem debet infundere, ut in corde tuo refulgeat quaedam auctoris effigies, ne, qui mentem tuam interrogat, non agnoscat auctorem?*

gospel be in your deeds, so that you keep my precepts in your habits. If you offer the other cheek to one who strikes you, if you have your enemy, if you take up your cross and follow me, then the representation of the gospel will be in you. It was for this reason that I carried my cross for you; that you would not hesitate to carry it on account of me.⁴⁹

Here image language—*imago* and *effigies*—pertains both to the image of God and also to representative snapshots of respective virtues (justice and wisdom, in particular). These images, Ambrose indicates, are to “shine in you” (*in te*) because the *imago dei* is *in corde*. Somehow—and he does not tell us exactly how—Ambrose conceives of this image *in corde* as present in one’s works. Ambrose calls this enacted image an *effigies*. There is, as he sees it, a connection between interior and exterior: “because (*quia*) the Image of God is in your heart, may it be in your works.”⁵⁰ Ambrose continues by giving explanatory content to this *effigies*: “If you offer the other cheek to one who strikes you,” Ambrose writes, “if you have your enemy, if you take up your cross and follow me, then the representation of the gospel (*effigies euangelii*) will be in you.”

Ambrose’s two-pronged image vocabulary here affords us an intriguing conclusion: the *effigies euangelii* is the rough equivalent of the *imago dei in operibus*. The moral content of this enacted *effigies* is from Matthew 5:39 (“turn the other cheek”) and Matthew 16:24 (“take up your cross and follow me”). Attending to and upholding gospel “precepts” (*praecepta*)—offering the other cheek, taking up one’s cross, following after Jesus—are the contents of this *effigies* of the Gospel. Ambrose, as we will see in Chapter Five, will add to these gospel precepts and the content of Jesus’ ethic, but suffice

⁴⁹ *Psal.* 118 22.34 (CSEL 62: 505). *Fulget in te imago iustitiae, imago sapientiae, imago uirtutis. Et quia imago dei in corde est tuo, sit et in operibus tuis, sit effigies euangelii in tuis factis, ut in tuis moribus mea praecepta custodias. Effigies euangelii erit in te, si percutienti maxillam alteram praebas, si diligas inimicum tuum, si crucem tuam tollas et me sequaris. Ideo crucem ego pro uobis portauì, ne tu propter me portare dubitares.*

⁵⁰ *Psal.* 118 22.34 (CSEL 62: 505). Emphasis added.

it here to say that *effigies* is indicative of their paradigms. Hence, in the passage from *Exposition of Psalm 118* above, I translate *effigies* as “representation” because the force of the passage bespeaks Ambrose’s clear emphasis on displaying *in operibus, in factis, in moribus* these inner realities (*in te, in corde*). In a word, as images of the virtues and of God shine within, they demand to be embodied by the Gospel ethic of non-retaliation and co-suffering with Christ. This ethic will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Seeing Ourselves Being Seen: Displays of Virtue in the Roman Tradition

Ambrose’s discrete emphasis on the moral function and force of image recalls our analysis of his doctrine of rival images adapted from Origen in the last chapter.

Ambrose’s debts to Origen and Platonic tradition run so deep, most scholars will say, that he rejects any positive assessment of the body whatsoever. There is such an emphasis on the flight of the soul from the prison of the body, such residual Platonic dualism,⁵¹ that no reader of Ambrose “could accuse [him] of having been well disposed to the human body.”⁵² Throughout Ambrose’s corpus we do indeed find the ideal of the unmoored soul, bursting forth from its fleshly prison to ascend to heavenly, incorporeal heights. Part of

⁵¹ See Brown, *The Body and Society*, 341–65, at 348–49.

⁵² Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 56–59, at 56. Cf. Boersma, *Augustine’s Early Theology of Image*, 102–131. Boersma discusses the “embodied” descriptions Ambrose offers throughout his career concerning the *imago dei*. His analysis is more nuanced than Moorhead’s, to be sure, but when he comes to analyzing Ambrose’s exhortation against cosmetics in *Hexaemeron* 6.8.47, Boersma claims “Ambrose is never concerned with the body per se. Rather his concern is that the soul perfect its spirit of *apatheia* with respect to the body and conform, *secundum naturam*, to that of which it is an image” (at 120–21). The body, Boersma argues, is to be used “like an instrument” for salvific purposes; its nature is “penultimate” (at 123). Boersma is correct that Ambrose views the body as subject to death and decay, but in what follows I argue that Ambrose’s concern is with the body precisely because the ways in which we move and physically present ourselves disclose the nature of the soul. Cf. Chad Tyler Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine’s Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine’s Pneumatology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 82–83. In the midst of his reassessment of Augustine’s early pneumatology, Gerber mentions Ambrose’s clear calls to the flight of the soul. However, Gerber distinguishes those calls from Plotinus’s similar calls.

what makes scriptural exemplars so attractive and convincing for Ambrose is their attention to otherworldly matters, treating their time on earth as a mere passing, preparatory pilgrimage.⁵³ Themes of the immaterial soul's imprisonment and its desired freedom are so prevalent in Ambrose's *On the Good of Death*, for instance, that John Cavadini argues Ambrose's concern with the reappropriation of Platonism outstrips any distinctly Christian anthropology.⁵⁴ "The body," Cavadini contends, "is therefore more an impediment to the soul's function than a help."⁵⁵ Hence, when Ambrose calls his listeners to "imitate the practice of death" (*usum mortis imitantes*) for therapy from grief, Cavadini concludes that his supposed Christian formulation becomes hazy at best and compromised at worst. Cavadini's position represents only one side of the coin, however. While it is evident that Ambrose retains certain aspects of Origen's (undeniably Platonic) emphasis on the incorporeal nature of the image and requisite flight of the soul,⁵⁶ he explicates the content of bearing such an image with physical descriptions and concrete

⁵³ Ambr. *Off.* 2.5.18 (CCSL 15: 103). See Ivor J. Davidson, "The 'Vita Beata'," 200. For the claim and supporting evidence that for Ambrose the virtues are preparatory, see Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 218–21.

⁵⁴ See Cavadini, "Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*," 232–49. The criticism is as unsurprising as it is unfounded and misplaced, in part because Ambrose's use of sources is not as neat as it would need to be for Cavadini's suspicions to be warranted. Underlying Cavadini's critique of *De bono mortis* is a worry of the purity of Christian anthropology over and against its secular counterfeits.

⁵⁵ Cavadini, "Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*," 235. See also Brown, *The Body and Society*, 345–53. "From Philo, Origen, and Plotinus," Brown writes, "Ambrose had picked up a dualism of soul and body of exceptional sharpness. He instinctively tended to identify Paul's somber and all-engulfing sense of the war between the spirit and the flesh with the more familiar, classical opposition of mind and body. . . . We are dealing with a man whose imaginative world was a tensile system. It was built up through a series of potent antitheses—Christian and pagan, Catholic and heretic, Bible truth and 'worldly' guesswork, Church and *saeculum*, soul and body. . . . To be a Catholic Christian was to keep these antitheses absolute: to admit 'admixture' was to 'pollute' one's own body and that of the Church. To surrender any boundary line was to court the ancient shame of the Roman male—it was to 'become soft,' to be 'effeminated'" (346–47).

⁵⁶ See Jed W. Atkins, "The *Officia* of St. Ambrose's *De Officiis*," *J ECS* 19.1 (2011): 49–77, at 68–69.

examples. Such descriptions and examples exhort listeners to bodily comportment, pointing to what Davidson has called, an “obsession with what people see.”⁵⁷

For Roman elites, temperance, modesty, and their accompanying emotions comprised moral indexes for being seen by others.⁵⁸ These virtues (*pudor*, *pudicitia*, and *uerecundia*) pertained to differing elements of public exposure and perception.⁵⁹ Robert Kaster asserts that an examination of these traits provides “scripts” for analyzing moral action.⁶⁰ *Pudor* (commonly rendered as “a sense of shame”), for instance, might arise

⁵⁷ Davidson, *De Officiis*, 2: 655. See also Davidson, “Social Construction and the Rhetoric of Ecclesial Presence: Ambrose’s Milan,” *SP* 38 (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 385–93, at 386, 392–93, where Davidson writes of Ambrose’s concern with “image-making.” By this Davidson intends to draw out elements of Ambrose’s attempt at the “triumph of orthodoxy;” “it was about determining the way people perceived and thought of his church, and striving to ensure that their images were of a socially triumphant Catholicism, which combined the respectability of continuity in some areas with a bold renovation of moral standards in others” (387). Rita Lizzi’s historical reconstruction of Northern Italy’s churches around this time is also helpful for understanding Ambrose’s moral vision. See her article “Ambrose’s Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 156–73, at 166. Lizzi writes, “Born and educated into the senatorial class, Ambrose had acquired considerable bureaucratic and administrative experience in the years preceding his election. In his letters, in the *De Officiis* and in numerous other works published during his episcopate, he was committed to having the other bishops in Northern Italy adopt the conduct and language typical of the senatorial nobility. This contributed to setting on an equal footing the relationship between Church and State hierarchies and, in turn, to advancing the penetration of Christianity within the upper class. In this perspective, Ambrose urged his colleagues to improve their intellectual training.”

⁵⁸ In the few pages that follow, similar ground is covered, albeit in briefer fashion, in my “Aspects of Moral Perfection in Ambrose’s *De officiis*,” *SP* (Forthcoming).

⁵⁹ See Matthew Roller, “Precept(or) and Example in Seneca,” in *Roman Reflections: Studies in Latin Philosophy*, ed. Gareth D. Williams and Katharina Volk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 129–56. Roller notes the “first stage” of exemplarity’s moral importance is that an action is done “in the public eye . . . under the gaze of an audience representing a community of which performer and spectators are a part” (at 130).

⁶⁰ Robert Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 28–65. While Kaster labels these traits emotions rather than virtues, the difference he has in mind between the two is never explored. If there is an operative distinction, its explication is at most secondary for my purposes. The concern is rather with how public displays or abuses of moral excellence offer scripts for analyzing action and intention. See also Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 300–23, at 309–11. Morgan remarks on Kaster’s work and notes that *uerecundia* and similar virtues were of little import to non-elites because implicit in those elite virtues was a heightened sense of public scrutiny and hierarchical expectation. Cf. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*, 328–29, where Courcelle notes the presence of *uerecundia* in Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* 1.23 (LCL 44: 40–41). There are other places, specifically in Ambrose’s *Exc.*, where Courcelle cites Apuleius’s influence.

when one's chastity is violated or when a person pursues self-interested ends at the expense of the community or when impulse is given free rein. Each of these could easily—and more, noticeably—blush one's cheeks. This alteration of one's natural countenance offers entrance into describing a given action and its consequences.⁶¹ In general, however, these emotions and virtues are, as Kaster puts it, instances of “seeing yourself being seen.”⁶²

Two likely strands of thought that inform such heightened anxiety over publicizing virtue in the Roman tradition. The first the commonplace reliance on physiognomy in antiquity, the “science” of judging moral disposition on the basis of human countenance and, occasionally, action. Physical presentation, for the physiognomist, was a telltale sign of a subject's character.⁶³ While most who practiced physiognomic reflection were committed to the “reading” of a person's face, some, like Aristotle, pointed to comportment of the body more generally. In an oft-cited passage from the *Prior Analytics*, Aristotle concludes:

It is possible to judge men's character from their physical appearance (τὸ δὲ φυσιογνωμονεῖν), if one grants that body and soul change together in all natural affections. (No doubt after a man has learned music his soul has undergone a

⁶¹ Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome*, 44–45.

⁶² Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome*, 56. Kaster notes that the most obvious similarity between *pudor* and *uerecundia* is that “both emotions are experienced when attention is directed to an assessment of the self in a social setting” (61).

⁶³ There are many examples of such thinking throughout classical texts. See, e.g., Arist. [*Phgn.*] (LCL 307: 81–138); Gell. *NA* 1.9.2 (LCL 195: 45–47). Recent secondary treatments include: George Boys-Stones, “Physiognomy and Ancient Psychological Theory,” in Simon Swain, ed., *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19–124; Mladen Popović, *Reading the Human Body: Physiognomics and Astrology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic-Early Roman Period Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 68–118; Kevin Berland, “Inborn Character and Free Will in the History of Physiognomy,” in *Physiognomy in Profile: Lavater's Impact on European Culture*, ed. Melissa Percival and Graeme Tytler (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 25–38; Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), at 55–81.

certain change, but this affection is not one which comes to us naturally; I mean such affections as fits of anger or desires among natural excitements.) Supposing, then, this is granted, and also that there is one sign of one affection, and that we can recognize the affection and sign proper to each class of creatures, we shall be able to judge character from physical appearance. For if a peculiar affection applies to any individual class, e.g., courage to lions, there must be some corresponding sign of it; for it has been assumed that body and soul are affected together.⁶⁴

Underlying Aristotle's comments is the assumed unity of body and soul; the two work together and "change together in all natural affections."⁶⁵ When the soul is moved, the body follows suit. There is much more to say about physiognomy and the scholarly debates over which thinkers were sympathetic to such views. Here, though, I simply want to flag Aristotle's claim that the body can serve as a "sign" (τὸ σημεῖον) by which character is read (φυσιογνωμονεῖν).

While scholars dispute the force, influence, and effectiveness of physiognomic reflection, another strand informed Roman anxieties over the public presentation and subsequent violation of moral excellence: Stoic admonitions to "live according to nature."⁶⁶ Though the maxim to "live according to nature" was ubiquitous, spanning generations and contexts—Seneca calls it "our [the Stoics'] motto" (*propositum nostrum*)—application was far from uniform.⁶⁷ Some, like Musonius Rufus, were

⁶⁴ Arist. *An. pr.* 2.27 (LCL 325: 526–29).

⁶⁵ See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 29–42. Smith writes of Ambrose's concept of body-soul unity ("hylomorphic unity," "moral unity") and the effects of the Fall on that unity. I discuss Smith's claims below with reference to several representative passages from Ambrose.

⁶⁶ Diogenes Laertius notes that Zeno of Citium was the first to expound this maxim as the basis of Stoic ethics. On Zeno, see Dio. Laert. 7.1.88 (LCL 185: 194–95). On other Stoics, see Dio. Laert. 7.5.169–70 (LCL 185: 272–73). See also Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism*, 105–26; Gould, *Philosophy of Chrysippus*, 161–80; John M. Cooper, "Eudaimonism, the Appeal to Nature, and 'Moral Duty' in Stoicism," in *Aristotle, Kant, and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*, ed. Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 261–84, at 267–75.

⁶⁷ Sen. *Ep.* 5.4 (LCL 75: 22–23).

rigorists and agreed that nature had ordained, for instance, that men not cut their hair or shave. Sages, by Musonius' lights, could be picked out as the hairiest among us.⁶⁸ Others, like Seneca, took a more moderate position, allowing trimmed beards in the hopes of attracting new students. For Seneca, being well-groomed bespoke moderation, offering onlookers an object lesson through which they could discern intent behind physical appearance.⁶⁹

Within the Roman tradition, anxieties both physiognomic and Stoic fuel late-Republican and early-imperial writings on the publicizing of virtue. A good wife, Valerius Maximus writes in his work *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, is one

⁶⁸ Muson. *Lecture 21*, in Cora E. Lutz, trans., "Musonius Rufus: 'The Roman Socrates,'" *Yale Classical Studies* 10, ed. A. R. Bellinger (New Haven, 1947), 128–29. See Orig. *Cels.* 3.66 (SC 136: 150–53), where Origen mentions Musonius and Socrates as noteworthy pagans. See also John Dillon, "The Social Role of the Philosopher in the Second Century C.E.: Some Remarks," in Philip A. Stadter and L. Van der Stockt, ed., *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan* (98–117 A.D.) (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 28–40. The classic introductions to Musonius Rufus are Cora E. Lutz, "Musonius Rufus: 'The Roman Socrates,'" 3–31; A. J. Festiguière, *Deux Prédicateurs de l'Antiquité: Télès et Musonius* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique, 1978). For more recent treatments of Musonius Rufus and the relationship of his teaching to that of other Stoics, see J. T. Dillon, *Musonius Rufus and Education in the Good Life: A Model of Teaching and Living Virtue* (Dallas: University Press of America, 2004), esp. 9–19; James A. Francis, *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 1–21, at 11–14; Raymond A. Belliotti, *Roman Philosophy and the Good Life* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 181–223, at 196–203; Runar M. Thorsteinsson, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40–54, at 44–46; Richard Valantasis, *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2008), 278–91. Valantasis notes that Musonius set up his ascetical system to deal with hardship of both body and soul: "There is no suggestion here of denigration or rejection of the body. Nor is there any sense that bodily practices are secondary to spiritual practices. The focus on the performance of specific acts of endurance allows Musonius to integrate body and soul in one common ascetical formation that benefits the whole person" (at 290).

⁶⁹ Sen. *Ep.* 5.3 (LCL 75: 20–21). *Id agamus, ut meliorem vitam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam; alioquin quos emendari volumus, fugamus a nobis et avertimus.* ["Let us try to maintain a higher standard of life than that of the multitude, but not a contrary standard; otherwise, we shall frighten away and repel the very persons whom we are trying to improve."] Seneca is adamant that "live according to nature" (*secundum naturam uiuere*) (5.4) implies a "mean" (*modus*) (5.5) that seeks to communicate the prime motivation for philosophy: a communal sense that accompanies "humanity and sociability" (*hoc primum philosophia promittit, sensum communem, humanitatem et congregationem*) (5.4).

conspicuous both in her fertility and chastity, her *pudicitia*.⁷⁰ Valerius catalogues multiple examples enamored with public scrutiny and the payoff of chastity. Verginius murdered his daughter in the Forum, “preferring to be the slayer of a chaste daughter than the father of a defiled one.”⁷¹ After the daughter of a noble Roman knight, Pontius Aufidianus, was raped, Pontius killed both the guilty and the innocent to avoid a “disgraceful marriage” between the two.⁷²

Other authors describe similar anxieties over attaining and maintaining chastity. In his *Annals*, Tacitus provides a soaring description of Agrippina the Elder, noted for her “shining chastity”;⁷³ Petronius’ *Satyricon* tells of a woman from Ephesus whose spectacle of chastity drew visitors far and wide.⁷⁴ *Pudicitia* made “public” also served to ward off predatory behavior, according to Seneca the Elder’s *Controversies*; a matron’s dress, gait, eye contact, and taciturnity worked together to dull rapacious advances and disclose virtue.⁷⁵ And while the exact combination of these factors for certain acquisition of virtue

⁷⁰ Val. Max. *Fact. ac dict.* 7.1.1 (LCL 493: 102–5). See Livy. *Ab urb. con.* 1.1.57–59 (LCL 114: 196–99). Sextus Tarquinius is taken over not only by lust (*libido*) for Lucretia’s beauty, but also by her *spectata castitas*. See also Dennis Trout, “Re-Textualizing Lucretia: Cultural Subversion in the *City of God*,” *J ECS* 2.1 (1994): 53–70.

⁷¹ Val. Max. *Fact. ac dict.* 6.1.1–2 (LCL 493: 2–5). *Verginius, plebeii generis, sed patricii uir spiritus, ne probro contaminaretur domus sua, proprio sanguini non pepercit: nam cum Ap. Claudius decemuir filiae eius uirginis stuprum, potestatis uiribus fretus, pertinacius expeteret, deductam in forum puellam occidit, pudicaeque interemptor quam corruptae pater esse maluit.* See Livy. *Ab urb. con.* 3.44–49 (LCL 133: 142–61). Livy’s description is much more detailed, chronicling the intensely public nature of the case.

⁷² Val. Max. *Fact. ac dict.* 6.1.3 (LCL 493: 2–5).

⁷³ Tac. *Ann.* 1.41 (LCL 249: 314–15).

⁷⁴ Petron. *Sat.* 111–13 (LCL 15: 268–77).

⁷⁵ Sen. *Controv.* 2.7.3 (LCL 463: 366–67). *Si tantum in formonsa sperari posset quantum placere potest, omnes formonsae in se uniuersos oculos conuerterent. Matriona, quae <tuta> esse aduersus sollicitatoris lasciuam uolet, prodeat in tantum ornata quantum ne inmundata sit; habeat comites eius aetatis quae inpudicum, si nihil aliud, in uerecundiam annorum mouere possit; ferat iacentis in terram oculos; aduersus officiosum salutarem inhumana potius quam inuerecunda sit; etiam in necessaria resalutandi uice multo rubore confusa <sit>. Sic se in uerecundiam pigneret <ut> longe ante inpudicitiam*

is not explicated, two things are assumed: when chastity is violated, its onlookers will know, and external or physical violation spoils inner sanctity.⁷⁶

This obsession over visible representation expressing one's moral standing is determinative for early Latin Christian virginity discourses, which trade in many of the same technical terms as its late-Republican and early-imperial forebears. Tertullian and Cyprian cite the same virtues—*pudor*, *pudicitia*, *uerecundia*—as well as their cousins—*clementia*, *castitas*, *temperantia*, *modestia*, *simplicitas*—for both similar and dissimilar ends. Ultimate standards were different, to be sure; the anxiety, however, was similar. How Christian women presented themselves in public betrayed their true thoughts, feelings, moral, even theological, dispositions. For Tertullian and Cyprian, image language funded the description of such a presentation.⁷⁷

Tertullian's two-book *On the Apparel of Women*, dated somewhere between 198 and 204 CE, considers the importance of modesty and simplicity in dress and presentation and connects that simplicity and presentation to salvation. Cosmetics are specifically denounced because they blur natural beauty; those who stain their cheeks

suam ore quam uerbo neget. ["If a beautiful woman offered as much hope as pleasure to the beholder, all beauties would turn the eyes of the world upon them. A married woman who wants to be safe from the lust of the seducer must go out dressed up only so far as to avoid unkemptness. Let her have companions old enough, at the very least, to make the shameless respect their years. Let her go about with her eyes on the ground. In the face of the over-attentive greeting, let her be impolite rather than immodest."]

⁷⁶ Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 71. Rebecca Langlands sums up the logic this way: "the way that married women dress and behave in public is grounds for making valid decisions about their moral standing" (71). Marcia Colish has called this Roman reflection on the connection of physical appearance and moral standing "cosmetic theology." Our late-modern preconceptions of "cosmetic" notwithstanding, Colish's clever category and phrase identifies those authors infatuated with moral attentiveness to the norms of nature and the physical decoration of that nature. See n. 8 above. Cf. Marcia L. Colish, "Cosmetic Theology," 3–14; Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages II*, 48–70.

⁷⁷ See Tert. *An.* 20 (CSEL 20: 332–33), 42 (CSEL 20: 369); *Res.* 12 (CSEL 47: 40–41). See also Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 209–31; Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique*; Braun, *Deus Christianorum*; Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 91–116; Brown, *The Body and Society*, 76–82, 153–54.

with rouge make themselves enemies of God.⁷⁸ For Tertullian, “apparel” (*cultus*) and “adornment” (*ornatus*) are necessarily opposed. *Cultus* is that which is fitting for a womanly grace (*mundus*); *ornatus* leads to womanly disgrace (*immundus*) and deception.⁷⁹

For Tertullian, the vicious roots of physical adornment are twofold. He first traces the advent of cosmetics back to fallen angels, a theme in the apocryphal Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 8:1).⁸⁰ Tertullian then links these unnatural arts to the devil, the “rival creator.”⁸¹ By Tertullian’s lights, the devil, who “by wickedness transformed humanity’s spirit” (*spiritum hominis malitia transfiguravit*), also introduced to our first parents the way in which “to change the body” (*corpus mutare monstraret*).⁸² “Whatever, then, is

⁷⁸ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.5 (CSEL 70: 78–79). See Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique*, 49–65. A dated but still helpful treatment of the treatise is Lillian B. Lawler, “Two Portraits from Tertullian,” *The Classical Journal* 25.1 (1929): 19–23. Lawler’s concern is largely to reconstruct the actual fashion and ornamentation against which Tertullian is writing; she concludes that Tertullian’s descriptions are “free from exaggeration and distortion and altogether reliable” (23).

⁷⁹ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 1.4 (CSEL 70: 64). See also Carly Daniel-Hughes, *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage: Dressing for the Resurrection* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 75–78. Cf. Ov. *Amor* 3.160–210 (LCL 232: 128–33). On Tertullian’s potential familiarity with Ovid and other Latin poets, see René Braun, “Tertullien et les poètes latins,” in R. Braun, *Approches de Tertullien: Vingt-six études sur l’auteur et sur l’oeuvre (1955-1990)* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1992), 21–33.

⁸⁰ See Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177–80, 190–200. For the status of 1 Enoch as scripture in the early church, see James C. VanderKam, *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Brill: Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 1996), 33–101, at 47–54, 67–70; Loren Stuckenbruck, “The Book of Enoch: Its Reception in Second Temple Jewish and in Christian Tradition,” *Early Christianity* 4.1 (2013): 7–40, at 15–21. The tradition is referenced in Tert. *Cult. fem.* 1.2 (CSEL 70: 60–61); 2.10 (CSEL 70: 87–88). For discussion on the exegetical significance of 1 Enoch in early Christian literature and 1 Enoch 8:1–3 in particular, see Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 163–167. See also George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96.3 (1977): 383–405, at 397–404. Nickelsburg insists that the fallen angels interject illicit instruction into the world; he also further connects the Azazel narrative to the Prometheus myth. See Paul D. Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96.2 (1977): 195–233. Hanson’s case resembles Nickelsburg’s, focusing on the errant instruction introduced by Azazel (and other angels). But instead of connecting the section of the Book of Watchers to the Prometheus myth, Hanson finds deep resonances of 1 Enoch with Leviticus 16.

⁸¹ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.5 (CSEL 70: 78–79).

⁸² Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.5 (CSEL 70: 79).

plastered on,” Tertullian contends, “is the devil's occupation” (*ergo quod infingitur diaboli negotium est*).⁸³ Since God is on the side of the modest,⁸⁴ “salvation, of both women and men, is determined chiefly in an exhibition of sexual modesty” (*ea salus nec feminarum modo sed etiam uirorum in exhibitione praecipue pudicitiae statuta est*).⁸⁵

True adornment should come not from fineries of jewelry and makeup, but from the beauties of the virtues. Tertullian concludes his treatise by allegorizing the effects of cosmetics:

Go forth therefore made-up in the ointments and ornaments of prophets and apostles; drawing your whiteness from simplicity, your ruddy hue from modesty; painting your eyes with bashfulness, and your mouth with silence; plant in your ears the word of God; tie on your necks the yoke of Christ. Submit your head to your husbands, and you will be enough adorned. Occupy your hands with spinning; keep your feet at home; and you will be more pleasing than if were decked gold. Clothe yourselves with the silk of uprightness, the fine linen of sanctity, the purple of modesty. So painted, you will have God for a lover.⁸⁶

Leaving aside Tertullian's complicated understanding that this virtuous sort of female adornment should be proximately for her husband at home and finally for her God, suffice it to say that the ornamentation (or lack thereof) of the body reveals either devilish or divine allegiance. To be well dressed and well made up was to be present to one's

⁸³ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.5 (CSEL 70: 79).

⁸⁴ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.8 (CSEL 70: 84).

⁸⁵ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.1 (CSEL 70: 71). See Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome*, *passim*, esp. 1–77.

⁸⁶ Tert. *Cult. fem.* 2.13 (CSEL 70: 95). *Prodite uos iam medicamentis et ornamentis extractae prophetarum et apostolorum, sumentes de simplicitate candorem, de pudicitia ruborem, depictae oculos uerecundia et os taciturnitate, inserentes in aures sermonem Dei, adnectentes ceruicibus iugum Christi. Caput maritis subicite et satis ornatae eritis; manus lanis occupate, pedes domi figite et plus quam in auro placebitis. Vestite uos serico probitatis, byssino sanctitatis, purpura pudicitiae. Taliter pigmentatae Deum habebitis amatorem.* Daniel-Hughes notes the “ekphrastic” nature of this passage, “a trick of technical oratory . . . [that] involves painting a detailed picture for one's audience with words” (Daniel-Hughes, *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage*, 80).

created nature: a bare face disclosed a natural soul adorned with the virtues, the perfections of the created order.

Cyprian, like his Carthaginian progenitor Tertullian, utilizes the Book of the Watchers to recount the advent of makeup. Those fallen angels “taught them also to paint (*fucare*) the eyes with blackness drawn round them in a circle, and to stain the cheeks with a deceitful red (*genas mendacio ruboris inficere*), and to change the hair with adulterous colors (*adulterinis coloribus*), and to expunge all truth both of face and head (*expugnare omnem oris et capitis ueritatem*), by the assault of their own corruption.”⁸⁷ Unlike Tertullian, however, Cyprian is less interested in crafting an invective against female behavior than with educating a small group of women committed to celibacy in the home.⁸⁸ He connects this interpretive tradition with Genesis 1:26: human beings are crafted according to the divine image, and as such, they are to be charged with preserving that image rather than a rival demonic cover-up.⁸⁹ Since, as Cyprian puts it, “everything that is changed is the devil’s,” seeking to alter one’s appearance is functionally an affront to God as artist.⁹⁰ Cyprian illustrates this point by considering an artist whose painting is amended by an unskilled imposter. Even with slight edits, the work is ruined, the artist is

⁸⁷ *Cypr. Hab. uirg.* 14 (CSEL 3: 197–98). See Duval, “Sur une page de saint Cyprien chez saint Ambroise,” at 27–28, n.7. Yves-Marie Duval has explicitly connected Cyprian’s treatise to Ambrose’s, offering a fine-grained study of the two texts. Similarities notwithstanding, Duval cannot account for Ambrose’s reference to Isaiah 49:16, noting only that it is not present in Tertullian or Cyprian’s logic. See E. W. Watson, “The ‘De Habitu Virginum’ of St. Cyprian,” *JTS* 22.88 (1921): 361–67, at 363. While Watson comments on Cyprian’s rhetorical excess, he nevertheless places Cyprian within a strand of Roman thinking, exemplified by Seneca, that treated various moral questions in an “artificial way.” I take Watson’s adjective “artificial” here as roughly synonymous with “hyberbolic” or “embellished.”

⁸⁸ See Colish, “Cosmetic Theology,” 8–9.

⁸⁹ *Cypr. Hab. uirg.* 15 (CSEL 3: 198).

⁹⁰ *Cypr. Hab. uirg.* 15 (CSEL 3:198).

insulted, and the truth that once obtained in the original image is not preserved.⁹¹ In conceiving of the female body as a masterpiece, Cyprian wonders if God will cease to recognize the individual because of her unnatural adornment, and, at the last, say

this is not my work and our image. You have polluted your skin with false medicine, and you have mutated your hair with an adulterous color. Your face is violently taken over by a lie, your figure is corrupted, your countenance is alien. You cannot see God, since your eyes are not those which God made, but those which the devil has infected. You have followed him, you have imitated the blazing red and painted eyes of the serpent. As you are dressed by your enemy, with him also you shall burn.⁹²

As much as Cyprian's hypothetical statement might be an indictment on the extravagance of makeup, it serves to establish and reiterate created nature as a moral standard and designate the consequences for corrupting the image of God: the inability to "see" God. Cyprian is explicit: God will judge these virgins based on how well they physically maintain their original divine image.

Each of the authors highlighted above is preoccupied by an "obsession with what people see." Ambrose's preoccupation, he admits, is similar and aimed at securing favorable public opinion (*decet enim actuum operumque nostrorum testem esse publicam existimationem*).⁹³ But he does not stop there: his purpose is also evangelical, not simply for the sake of saving public face. As Ambrose puts it: "the person who sees a minister of

⁹¹ Cypr. *Hab. uirg* (CSEL 3:198–99). See also Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, 63–66.

⁹² Cypr. *Hab. uirg* 17 (CSEL 3:199). *Opus hoc meum non est nec imago haec nostra est. cutem falso medicamine polluisti, crinem adultero colore mutati, expugnata est medacio facies, figura corrupta est, uultus alienus. Deum uidere non poteris, quando oculi tibi non sunt quos Deus fecit sed quos diabolus infecit. Illum tu sectata es, rutilos adque depictos oculos serpentis imitata es, de inimico tuo compta, cum illo partier arsura*. See also Brown, *The Body and Society*, 192–95. Brown spells out the importance that the body plays in Cyprian's works. The body of the Christian for him served as a "microcosm of the threatened state of the Church" (195). Brown continues: "Church and body alike were both presented in terms of ever-vigilant control, from which the relentless pressure of the *saeculum* gave no respite" (195).

⁹³ Ambr. *Off.* 1.50.247 (CCSL 15: 91). See also Ambr. *Off.* 1.47.226 (CCSL 15: 84); 2.7.29 (CCSL 15: 108); 2.8.40–45 (CCSL 15: 111–13); 2.15.68–69 (CCSL 15: 121).

the altar adorned with the virtues appropriate to his calling will bring praise to the Author of these virtues, and will worship the Lord who has such lowly servants.”⁹⁴ The virtues for Ambrose are not simply acquired techniques for gaining social or political renown, although they often function like that, too. Virtuous images in us reveal their divine source and foretell a fuller reality yet to come, further raising the stakes for decorum and decency.

Gauging the Spirit Through the Body: Ambrose’s Roman Virtue

Understanding background traditions that likely motivated Ambrose’s milieu and training cannot help but inform our analysis. As a card-carrying member of the Roman virtue tradition, Ambrose evinces physiognomic and Stoic psychological influence. His writing is driven by an obsession with what people see—by what Davidson has called his “image-making.”⁹⁵ Ambrose consciously and consistently constructs a reputable Nicene identity intended to wield power and to tamp down discontents. While I do not disagree with Davidson’s charge—Ambrose was indeed concerned with facilitating and fostering religious politics, looking the part of ecclesial victor and mediator in the process—I think Ambrose’s motivating concern is also moral and spiritual. If this is the case, his doctrine is not merely social and political, but critical to understanding both his broader theological vision and his adaptation of rhetoric.

⁹⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 1.50.247 (CCSL 15: 91).

⁹⁵ Davidson, “Social Construction and the Rhetoric of Ecclesial Presence: Ambrose’s Milan,” 392–93.

Ambrose's familiarity with Roman rhetorical and early Latin theological traditions has either been assumed or ignored by secondary treatments. This lacuna is due, in large part, to the picture of Ambrose as a traditionally educated proconsul prior to his episcopacy.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Carole Hill's unpublished dissertation on Ambrose as a reader and transformer of classical texts is worth mentioning here. Hill argues that Ambrose's theology presents his readers with a "fusion" of Roman and Christian elements,⁹⁷ supported by debts to apologetic literature that sought to portray Christianity as a viable way of life.⁹⁸ While I am nervous about language of "fusion"—as if Roman and Christian traditions were discrete until Ambrose melded or intertwined them—Hill's hunch, I think, is the right one: Ambrose's anxiety over the presentation or publicizing of virtue has a distinctly Roman pedigree. Or, as Jean-Claude Schmitt has put it, Ambrose "defined the Christian virtue of gesture, under the headings of *modestia*, *temperantia*, and most importantly, *uerecundia*."⁹⁹ Multiple texts in *On Duties* bear this out.

To be modest, for instance, is to hold one's tongue in order to cloak (and eventually remedy) the existence of passion, so that anger or indignation does not disturb the proprieties of speech.¹⁰⁰ Young priests are not to visit the home of a woman or virgin alone; this is not only for temptation's sake, but as Ambrose asks rhetorically: "Why

⁹⁶ See Paulin. *Vit. Ambr.* 5. *Sed postquam edoctus liberalibus disciplinis ex urbe egressus est professusque in auditorio praefecturae praetorii, ita splendide causas perorabat ut eligeretur a uiro illustri Probo, tunc praefecto praetorii, ad consilium tribuendum.*

⁹⁷ Carole Hill, "Classical and Christian Traditions in Some Writings of Saint Ambrose of Milan" (DPhil Dissertation, Oxford University, 1985), 36.

⁹⁸ Hill, "Classical and Christian Tradition in Some Writings of Ambrose of Milan," 54.

⁹⁹ Schmitt, "The Ethics of Gesture," 132.

¹⁰⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 1.4.14 (CCSL 15: 6).

should we give worldly people the occasion to criticize us?”¹⁰¹ Therapy for such behavior works outside in, beginning with “keeping close watch over clemency and modesty (*clementiam ac uerecundiam*).”¹⁰² The beauty of modesty (*uerecundia*) is manifested in both word and deed, evidenced by certain mannerisms, tones of voice, and styles of walking.¹⁰³ Ambrose’s underlying assumption is that whatever stability (or lack thereof) is present within is made plain through one’s actions.¹⁰⁴

Similar to actions, emotions can be “read” to determine moral standing, as well.¹⁰⁵

Shame (*pudor*) serves as a bellwether foretelling potential violations of modesty, chastity,

¹⁰¹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.21.87 (CCSL 15: 32–33).

¹⁰² Ambr. *Off.* 1.17.65 (CCSL 15: 24; Trans. from Davidson, 155).

¹⁰³ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.67 (CCSL 15: 25; Trans. from Davidson, 157).. *Ne <ultra> modum progrediari loquendi, ne quid indecorum sermo resonet tuus. speculum enim mentis plerumque in uerbis refulget. ipsum uocis sonum librat modestia ne cuiusquam offendat aurem vox fortior. denique in ipso canendi genere prima disciplina uerecundiae est; immo etiam in omni usu loquendi, ut sensim quis aut psallere aut canere aut postremo loqui incipiat, ut uerecunda principia commendent processum.* “It guarantees that you never go beyond the measure that is appropriate when you speak and that your language never drops an unseemly note. The image of our spirit is so often reflected in the words that we use. Moderation balances even the sound of the voice, so that if a person has a voice that is a little on the strong side it will not offend anyone's ear. In the art of singing, the very first rule people have to learn is the importance of modesty. Indeed, this applies not just in singing, but in any vocal process: a person always has to start off in the same gradual manner, whether he is going to intone a psalm, or sing, or indeed speak. The idea is that if you begin modestly, you will commend what is to follow.” On the Stoic importance of φωνή or *uox*, see Wolfram Ax, *Laut, Stimme und Sprache: Studien zu drei Grundbegriffen der antiken Sprachtheorie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

¹⁰⁴ Ambrose uses *stabilitas* throughout his career, usually with reference to a firmness of faith or soul and the steadiness that perfect virtue brings. See *Iac.* 2.6.28 (CSEL 32/2: 48); *Iob* 3.3.5 (CSEL 32/2: 252); *Psal.* 118 11.18 (CSEL 62: 244), 12.29 (CSEL 62: 269), 17.15 (CSEL 62: 385). Stability’s rough synonyms include *constantia* and *firmitudo*. Though each term carries discrete emphases and valences, as far as I can tell, they are used more or less interchangeably. For representative examples of each, see *Abr.* 2.9.51 (CSEL 32/1: 604) for *constantia* and *Bon. mort.* 3.12 (CSEL 32/1: 714) for *firmitudo* (in conjunction with *constantia*). At *Spir.* 3.3.14 (CSEL 79: 156) Ambrose maintains that the *firmitudo* of the soul will be lessened if the unity of the Godhead is not confessed. These terms (*stabilitas*, *constantia*, and *firmitudo*) also have distinct connection to *simplicitas* and *purus*, since the individual who is stable and unmoved by the senses and the body can be said to be simple, plain, and uncomplicated in the coordination of inner and outer realities. For more on this connection, see *Off.* 1.18.75 (CCSL 15: 28), where Ambrose in discusses manners of walking and the standards of nature.

¹⁰⁵ For precisely what I mean by “emotion” here, see Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome*, 8–9, 32–33. “[A]ny emotion-term is just the lexicalized residue of what happens when the data of life are processed in a particular way . . . to produce a particular kind of emotionalized consciousness, a particular set of thoughts and feelings. . . . I mean that if you are a Roman monitoring your

and their accompanying excellences. Ambrose cites Susanna's willing silence before vicious elders (Dan. 13¹⁰⁶): she considered her "great act of modesty" (*maximus actus uerecundiae est*) more precious than her life (*tacebat in periculis Susanna et grauius uerecundiae quam uitae damnum putabat*).¹⁰⁷ In so doing, Susanna allowed shame to be her companion and guide, knowing full well that shame "is always on the lookout and on its guard against the first signs of danger."¹⁰⁸ Shame also pervades the story of the Annunciation, Ambrose maintains, and he commends the Virgin Mary's virtue in the process.

Here she is, in her chamber, and on her own; she keeps silent when the angel greets her and is moved when he comes into the room; and, the gaze of the virgin travels toward the sight of the masculine sex. She was humble, yes, but such was her modesty that she did not return his greeting or make any response to him—unless when she learned her role in the Lord's generation; and even then she spoke only to ask how this amazing thing could be so, not to talk for the sake of talking.¹⁰⁹

emotions, you will register the playing out of this process by saying (for example) "*hui! fastidium!*" . . . The emotion properly understood, however, is the whole process and all its constituent elements, the little narrative or dramatic script that is acted out from the evaluative perception at its beginning to the various possible responses at the end. Subtract any element of the script, and the experience is fundamentally altered: without a response (even one instantly rejected or suppressed), there is only dispassionate evaluation of the phenomena; without an evaluation (even one that does not register consciously), there is a mere seizure of mind and body that is *about* nothing at all" (8).

¹⁰⁶ Chapters 13–14 of Daniel are often considered addenda or appendices to the larger biblical book. Protestants largely reject these chapters/stories as deuterocanonical or apocryphal. This rejection is due in large part because of the text's survival in Greek, but not Hebrew. Daniel 13, which includes the narrative of Susanna and Joakim, is present in the LXX. For more on the "additions" to Daniel, see Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions*, Anchor Bible Commentary 44 (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1977), 23–149; Alexander. A. DiLella, "The Textual History of Septuagint-Daniel and Theodotion-Daniel," in John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, eds., *The Book of Daniel, Vol. 2: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 586–607.

¹⁰⁷ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.68 (CCSL 15: 25). See A. M. Piredda, "Susanna e il silenzio: L'interpretazione di Ambrogio," *Sandalion* 14 (1991): 169–92. Davidson notes strong classical precedents for "eloquent silence" (I. Davidson, *De Officiis: Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* [2002], 2, 454). Cf. Orig. *Com. Rom.* 7.16 (SC 543: 404–15).

¹⁰⁸ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.69 (CCSL 15: 26; Trans. Davidson, 159).

¹⁰⁹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.69 (CCSL 15: 26). *quod in cubiculo, quod sola, quod salutata ab angelo tacet et mota est in introitu eius, quod ad uirilis sexus speciem peregrinatur aspectus uirginis. Itaque quamuis*

Here, we read Ambrose's description of Mary being "moved" (*mota est*) when Gabriel, considered by Ambrose as a male angel, "greet[s]" (*salutata*) her and announces that she will bear the Christ. Ambrose explains Mary as feeling shame; she "is moved." Still, rather than return the Gabriel's greeting (*resalutauit*), Mary's modesty, coupled with her humility, demands she remain quiet until she heard of her divine mission.

Ambrose also glosses the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector from Luke 18 to show shame as a companion to modesty. The former prays that God be merciful to him because of his great deeds, while the latter, knowing that the sinner's prayer should "veil itself with a blush of shame," beats his breast in humble repentance—a display of "modesty" (*uerecundia*) that wins God's favor.¹¹⁰ The examples of Susanna, Mary, and the tax collector from Luke 18 point to the complex relationship of emotion to virtue in general, and to shame, chastity, and modesty, in particular. Ambrose's immediate audience (new or nearly ordained priests) was tasked with discerning how these emotions and virtues implicate one another for concrete action. In the cases of Susanna, Mary, and the tax collector, Ambrose stresses the moral value of silence or measured and modest speech, refusing to allow inner perturbations to dictate reactionary behavior or excessive talking.

These *exempla* occasion Ambrose's generalized counsel: "It is from the attitude of the body that the habit of the spirit is gauged" (*habitus enim mentis in corporis statu*

esset humilis, prae uerecundia tamen non resalutauit nec ullum responsum retulit nisi ubi de suscipienda Domini generatione cognouit, ut qualitatem effectus disceret, non ut sermonem proferret.

¹¹⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.70 (CCSL 15: 26–27). Ambrose intimates that modesty, shame, etc. can be perfected or honed with better training, grace, and more accurate doctrine. Others in the Roman tradition do not share this position. Seneca, for instance, longs for personified Wisdom to take away tendencies for embarrassment, but concludes that this is simply not possible because of the inevitability of nature. See Sen. *Ep.* 11 (LCL 75: 60–5).

cernitur).¹¹¹ How an individual holds and presents him- or herself, in short, discloses the *habitus mentis*. Ambrose's interest in the comportment of the body owes much to ancient rhetoric.¹¹² Here, in particular, Ambrose's *exempla* and counsel follow very nearly Cicero's description of the successful orator.

For delivery is wholly the concern of the feelings, and these are mirrored by the face and expressed by the eyes; for this is the only part of the body capable of producing as many indications and variations as there are emotions, and there is nobody who can produce the same effect with the eyes shut. . . . For it is by action the body talks so it is all the more necessary to make it agree with the thought; and nature has given us eyes, as she has given the horse and the lion their mane and tail and ears, to indicate the feelings of the mind, so that in the matter of delivery which we are now considering the face is next in importance to the voice; and the eyes are the dominant feature in the face.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.71 (CCSL 15: 27).

¹¹² During the Second Sophistic, it was commonplace to accuse philosophers of inconsistency between belief and physical behavior. See Luc. *Icar.* 29 (LCL 54: 316–17): “There is a class of men which made its appearance in the world not long ago, lazy, disputatious, vainglorious, quick-tempered, gluttonous, doltish, addle-pated, full of effrontery and to use the language of Homer, “a useless load to the soil.” Well, these people, dividing themselves into schools and inventing various word-mazes, have called themselves Stoics, Academics, Epicureans, Peripatetics and other things much more laughable than these. Then, cloaking themselves in the high-sounding name of Virtue, elevating their eyebrows, wrinkling up their foreheads and letting their beards grow long, they go about hiding loathsome habits under a false garb, very like actors in tragedy; for if you take away from the latter their masks and their gold-embroidered robes, nothing is left but a comical little creature hired for the show at seven drachmas.” Lucan's *Icaromenippus* depicts Menippus, who, in imitating the infamous Icarus, crafts wings to fly up to Zeus, only to find Zeus hell-bent on destroying all philosophers. Here, we get a glimpse of Zeus's divine judgment, critiquing philosophical presentation and its absence of actual content. Philosophers are lambasted for being akin to comic, hired actors, “cloaking themselves in the high-sounding name of Virtue” but offering little content in return. To Lucan's mind, there is a disconnect, in other words, between the behavior and actual content. See also See Luc. *Demon.* 1–2 (LCL 14: 142–43); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.83–96 (LCL 257: 206–13). See also Roller, “Precept(or) and Example in Seneca,” 152–53, which notes a similar dynamic with reference to “philosophers who do not live according to their own *praecepta*” (at 152), citing Seneca's *Ep.* 108.36–108.37 (LCL 77: 252–53). In not living according to the precepts he teaches, a philosopher is useless: “a teacher like that can help me no more than a sea-sick pilot can be efficient in a storm. . . . What good is a frightened and vomiting steersman to me” (at 108.37).

¹¹³ Cic. *De or.* 3.59.222–24 (LCL 349: 176–79). *Animi est enim omnis actio, et imago animi vultus, indices oculi; nam haec est una pars corporis quae quot animi motus sunt tot significationes et commutationes possit efficere, neque vero est quisquam qui eadem conivens efficiat. . . . Est enim actio quasi sermo corporis, quo magis menti congruens esse debet; oculos autem natura nobis, ut equo et leoni iubas, caudam, aures, ad motus animorum declarandos dedit, quare in hac nostra actione secundum vocem vultus valet; is autem oculis gubernator.*

We can note the importance of the face for Cicero in listening to and translating body language that reveals what is happening in the mind. The body's movement (*actio*) in particular is of great interest to Cicero here. "For is it by action the body talks so it is all the more necessary to make it agree with the thought," he writes. The above passage also uses examples from the natural world to reiterate the ends requisite for human action: just as nature has "given us eyes . . . she has given the horse and lion their mane and tail and ears." The assumed connection is plain: things proper to nature are discernable by reading a given creature's physical appearance and activities.

Of course, in this passage, Cicero concerns himself with oratorical delivery and demeanor, but Ambrose's hortatory counsel to priests is not altogether different. Words and deeds indicate a priest's virtuous modesty. As Ambrose puts it, "the mirror of the mind shines forth for the most part in our words" (*Speculum enim mentis plerumque in uerbis refulget*).¹¹⁴ Jarring or awkward movements and incendiary speech are, for Ambrose, telling of a lack of self-consistency and inner stability. Anger literally contorts the face, and pride noticeably alters the way one walks.¹¹⁵ In one of his more memorable examples, Ambrose recalls his own refusal to admit an ordinand to the priesthood and a dismissal of a practicing clergy member because of the their respective gaits.

You will recall, my sons, a certain friend of ours. He appeared to commend himself by carrying out his duties with due care; yet I still refused to admit him into the body of the clergy. I had one reason only, and it was this: he carried himself physically in a way that was totally unseemly. You will recall another man, too. He was already a member of the clergy when I first encountered him, but I issued instructions that he was never to walk in front of me, for the cocky way in which he walked was—to be frank—painful for me to behold. And I said

¹¹⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.67 (CCSL 15: 25).

¹¹⁵ Ambr. *Off.* 1.45.229 (CCSL 15: 84–85). See Cic. *Off.* 1.130–32 (Winterbottom, 53–55; Trans. amended from Walsh, 44–45).

just that when he was restored to his office after committing his offence. I had no other reason but this to reject these men; but I did not prove mistaken in my judgment, for both of them went on to leave the church: they showed themselves to be every bit as faithless in spirit as their style of walking had suggested. One deserted the faith at the time of the Arian onslaught; the other was so keen on money that he was prepared to say he was not one of us, so as to escape being judged by his bishop. The image of the fickleness inside these men beamed forth in the way they walked—they had all the appearance of wandering jesters.¹¹⁶

“Gait”—a functional *actio*—is the singular reason Ambrose cites for dismissing the two priests; he confirms that he was correct in his judgment when the two leave the Church—“they showed themselves to be every bit as faithless in spirit as their style of walking had suggested.” The two had an *illorum incessu imago leuitatis*—literally, “an image of levity”—that was manifested in their particular species of walking.¹¹⁷

The dismissal of these newly and nearly ordained priests shows Ambrose doing something akin to physiognomy—reading moral standing off of physical representation. This practice was common in the works of his Latin pre-Nicene predecessors, like Tertullian and Cyprian, as well as in other non-Christian philosophical and rhetorical texts, pointed out above, reading moral standing off of physical representation is also

¹¹⁶ Ambr. *Off.* 1.17.72 (CCSL 15: 27; Trans. amended from Davidson, 161). *Meministis, filii, quemdam amicum, cum sedulis se uideretur commendare officiis, hoc solo tamen in clerum a me non receptum, quod gestus eius plurimum dedeceret; alterum quoque, cum in clero repperissem, iubere me ne unquam praeiret mihi, quia uelut quodam insolentis incessus uerbere oculos feriret meos. Idque dixi cum redderetur post offensam muneri. Hoc solum excepi, nec fefellit sententia: uterque enim ab ecclesia recessit, ut qualis incessu prodebatur, talis perfidia animi demonstraretur. Namque alter Arianæ infestationis tempore fidem deseruit, alter pecuniae studio, ne iudicium subiret sacerdotale, se nostrum negavit. Lucebat in illorum incessu imago leuitatis, species quaedam scurrarum percursantium.*

¹¹⁷ Ambrose, I would argue, is playing upon *species*’s multiple meanings here. That these two dismissed clergy exhibited a particular *species* of walking implies at least two things. First, the *species* of the *imago leuitatis* occupies a different *category* than a heavenly image. Secondly, *species* also carries the connotation of a visible representation. Hence, the *species* (read: the appearance) of these priests’ walking style indicates something vicious.

operative in Cicero's *On Duties*, Ambrose's most proximate source and foil for his own *On Duties*.¹¹⁸

Ambrose's remarkable similarities to pre-Nicene theologians and Cicero (among others) have not cooled debate over the motivations behind his counsel about bodily comportment generally and behind the description of walking in this passage in particular. Neil McLynn, for one, is hesitant to take Ambrose at his word, maintaining that he had more than one reason to dismiss these men.¹¹⁹ McLynn's Ambrose trades not in issues of moral theology, of explicit and concerned ethical counsel and warning, but in the currency of social capital. Ambrose would not have dismissed these priests because of their pompous walking styles, McLynn contends, but because of a desire to weed out those who posed a non-Nicene threat to his authority, likely holdovers from Auxentius's bishopric.¹²⁰ McLynn's Ambrose is less concerned with the actual ethical formation of his flock than with using his ecclesial authority for political gain.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Cic. *Off.* 1.130–31: “So any adornment unworthy of a man should be isolated from his person, and he should be careful not to betray a similar effeminacy in his gestures and movements. The movements rehearsed on the exercise-ground, for example, are often rather offensive, and some gestures of actors are rather foppish. In both these cases what wins praise is the straightforward and wholesome. A dignified appearance is to be maintained by the healthy complexion which is tidy enough to avoid boorish and uncivilized slovenliness. We must devote similar care to our dress; as in most things, the ideal here is the golden mean. We must be careful also not to saunter along too mincingly, looking like the tray-bearers in public processions, nor again to hurry along at breakneck speed so that we puff and blow, go red in the face, wear agonized expressions—all indicating clearly that we lack fixed purpose. But we must work even harder than this to make sure that our mental processes do not forsake nature's path” (Trans. Walsh, 44).

¹¹⁹ See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, xiii–xviii, 34–35. McLynn admits the difficulty of locating the “real Ambrose” because of the “façade” these strategies project, concealing an “inner man” behind the mask. Instead of embarking on such a search, by steering clear of theological analysis, McLynn ably renarrates the social and historical context of Ambrose's tenure as bishop. McLynn indicates that the dismissal of the two priests is akin to others of Ambrose's public actions, meant to show the importance of publicizing his actions for garnering social clout.

¹²⁰ Ivor Davidson's tack is different from McLynn's. See Davidson, “A Tale of Two Approaches,” 61–83, at 74–76. “The modesty of 1.1–22 has nothing to do with a diplomatic attempt to forestall criticism of the bishop's credentials. Rather, in an environment where personality clashes, petty squabbles, and selfish ambitions are an inevitable on-going reality, Ambrose aims implicitly to equate such attitudes with the arrogance and self-aggrandizement displayed by the ungodly, and to contrast this spirit with the image

While McLynn is more than capable of discerning Ambrose's embroilment in late antique religious politics, his inherent suspicion regarding Ambrose's writing and counsel here is, I think, overstated. Elsewhere, as I have pointed out, discussion of bodily comportment reiterates Ambrose's obsession with public perception. And again and again, Ambrose reinforces this obsession with theological claims, calling into question McLynn's assessment that Ambrose crafts a doctrinal artifice to cloak his attempts at influencing emperors, winning over the public, and securing political power. The body and its movements are moral scripts for Ambrose, the reading of which aids in discerning the soul and its inward movements, even its deepest longings and allegiances. In this, he is clearly at-home in the Roman traditions of public virtue, which emphasize both a moral attentiveness to living according to one's nature and physical moderation as an indicator of such attentiveness or lack thereof.

of the humble Christian minister. He introduces himself as a modest student-teacher, conscious of his own limitations, precisely in order to show that his style epitomizes the Christian approach; pride and self-seeking are synonymous with a pagan ethic which has been rendered obsolete by the gospel' (ibid., 76). See also, Davidson, *De Officiis*, 2: 510–511, where Davidson comments: "A[mbrose] evidently had no shortage of applicants, if he could refuse a man simply because of his gait. The second individual was among the clergy inherited by A[mbrose] from Auxentius' time. . . . A[mbrose] had initially endeavoured not to create alienation by directly replacing those of homoian sympathies with his own pro-Nicene candidates, but perhaps he found some subtler ways of altering his retinue. We have no indication that the kind of rejection described here was typical, but even an isolated case or two would have contributed indirectly to the end-result of ensuring that the bishop's ranks were filled with the 'right' men." See also Doerfler, "Law and Order," 221–30, at 227. Doerfler mentions the example in passing, maintaining that the relationship of clergy to their bishops paralleled children to their father. For similar appraisals, see Meslin, *Les Ariens d'Occident*, 335–430, 45; Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 438.

¹²¹ The concern that drives much of this investigation is whether Ambrose can be trusted in light of his crafted self-presentation rooted in his classical training. The tendency has been to think either that Ambrose was theologically rigorous and fought off bands of heretics, or that he was concerned with presenting an image of Christianity and his office tending toward the heroic. Even if the latter is the case—and I do not doubt that it is, in part—much can still be gleaned from Ambrose's examples, rhetorical construction and all. I take Davidson's tack here as a middling position between Ambrose the dramatist, concerned only with crafting an episcopal persona and drama for imperial on-lookers, and Ambrose the anti-Arian bully, constantly fighting back heretical surges based on his principled faith. For Ambrose, theology and rhetoric are not opposed, but go hand-in-glove. See Ivor J. Davidson, "Staging the Church?: Theology as Theater," *J ECS* 8.3 (2000): 413–51, at 421–23.

Finally, one should point out that Ambrose is at home in the thought-world of an early Stoic psychology of action. The driving question of such action theory is, as Brad Inwood has put it, “how the things we do, actions, can be related to thoughts, sentences, and other more or less mental entities used to describe and talk about the things we do.”¹²² The Stoics thought that action was caused by the agent’s rational assent to a given impulse. The goal, as often described, was one of ἀπάθεια. Our modern presuppositions notwithstanding, Stoic “apathy” was not a carefree, emotionless state, but the ordered and proper alignment of reason and internal impulse.¹²³ Key to this alignment was attending to the demands inherent in one’s given nature. Assent fostered motivation for a given action, such that the agent would be able to render an account of her doings, the imagined end for which she acted, and such that she might be held responsible for a given action.¹²⁴

Walking was one of the Stoics’ most famous object lessons for the role of judgment and human action. Seneca’s *Epistle* 113 recounts a debate between Cleanthes and Chrysippus in describing the motivations and mechanics of walking.¹²⁵ Cleanthes held the more moderate position of the two: bits of movements within an individual’s spirit were transmitted to one’s limbs, causing their movement.¹²⁶ “The action, properly speaking, is not the movement of the limbs,” Inwood writes of Cleanthes’ position, “but

¹²² Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism*, 95.

¹²³ Dio. Laer. 7.110 (LCL 185: 216–17). ἔστι δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος κατὰ Ζήνωνα ἢ ἄλογος καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ψυχῆς κίνησις ἢ ὀρμὴ πλεονάζουσα. See also J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 22–36, at 29. See Stough, “Stoic Determinism and Moral Responsibility,” 205–6.

¹²⁴ Stough, “Stoic Determinism and Moral Responsibility,” 207–09.

¹²⁵ Sen. *Ep.* 113.23–25 (LCL 77: 294–95). See also Sen. *Ep.* 66.5–6 (LCL 76: 4–5), where Seneca describes the “modest gait, a calm and honest countenance, and a bearing that suits the man of wisdom.”

¹²⁶ Cf. Arist. *De Motu an.* 702a (LCL 323: 466–69).

the *pneuma* which made them move.”¹²⁷ Chrysippus’ claim was stronger (and likely less orthodox): the primal essence itself was the movement of the limbs; the act of walking was an instance of the *principale ipsum*, or, as John Rist has put it, “an act of the personality itself.”¹²⁸ Rist continues: “Walking is in fact a showing forth or state of our continuing decision; or, we might say conversely, our continuing decision is the conceptual image of our action.”¹²⁹

The two Stoics’ debate is thus over whether the internal principle first moved and next operated upon the legs for the purpose of walking or whether internal and external movement happened simultaneously. Cleanthes took the former position, which appears to have been Stoic convention, Chrysippus the latter. Chrysippus’ *corrigendum* took up the issue of temporal sequencing. It was not that we first think about moving our limbs and then begin to move them, but rather that judgment and movement come packaged together. While the debate was proximately over walking, it ultimately pertained to the existence and function of emotions in relation to rational assent. “The problem about πάθη is similar to the problem of any bodily activity,” Rist writes. “In [Chrysippus’] view, it seems, we do not make judgments and then feel emotional effects. The emotional effects are a part—and indeed an inseparable part—of the judgment itself.”¹³⁰ Still,

¹²⁷ Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism*, 50

¹²⁸ Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 34.

¹²⁹ Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 34.

¹³⁰ Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 33–35.

despite their differences, both Cleanthes and Chrysippus maintained a core claim: that *pneuma* caused the exterior movement of walking.¹³¹

This brief excursus into Stoic psychology of action gives greater texture and depth to Ambrose's critiques of voice inflection and gait. Behind his critiques in sum is a Roman world that largely assumes the connection between internal states and external action. To put it even more starkly: it would be strange in Ambrose's time not to connect impulse or intention to a given action. The connection to our organizing passage from *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 1.7–1.9* is striking. There, we recall, Ambrose's statement regarding first "reading" Jesus' acts as insight into his invisible divinity and shared power with the Father; this was followed by a parallel reading of scriptural exemplars' actions as insight into the intention.¹³² The character of each act indicates its interior motive source and the relative balance of virtue's twins: action and intention.

Imaging Divine Operation, or, Smith on the "Unity of the Faculties" in Ambrose

Given our word studies above of *eluceo* and *effigies* and our investigation of Ambrose's debts to the Roman virtue tradition, we can now return to the curious phrase that the well-painted soul is one in which "a semblance of divine operation shines" and offer a perhaps more provocative reinterpretation. In one respect, the statement is a common outworking of image theologies: a created thing will inevitably resemble its

¹³¹ See Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 33–35. The close connection between inner and outer states further illumines the fact that Stoics are often labeled "materialists" and that in Stoic reflection on human action, "impulse" (*horme*) rather than "action" (*praxis*) is used more often. See Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism*, 52–53.

¹³² Ambr. *Luc.* 1.8–9 (CSEL 32/4: 16).

creator in one way or another. Most will find this and similar lines familiar and attach that familiarity to the influence of “Hellenistic” traditions on theologians like Ambrose.

But we might be surprised to find a very similar statement in the Latin tradition, of an ideal shining forth in its copy in Cicero’s description of the perfect orator.

Consequently in delineating the perfect orator I shall be portraying such a one as perhaps has never existed. Indeed I am not inquiring who was the perfect orator, but what is that unsurpassable idea which seldom if ever appears throughout a whole speech but does shine forth at some times and in some places, more frequently in some speakers, more rarely perhaps in others. But I am firmly of the opinion that nothing of any kind is so beautiful as not to be excelled in beauty by that of which it is a copy, as a mask is an image of a face. This ideal cannot be perceived by the eye or ear, nor by any of the senses, but we can nevertheless grasp it by the mind and the imagination. For example, in the case of the statues of Phidias, the most perfect of their kind that we have ever seen, and in the case of the paintings I have mentioned, we can, in spite of their beauty, imagine something more beautiful. . . . Accordingly, as there is something perfect and surpassing in the case of sculpture and painting—an intellectual ideal by reference to which the artist represents those objects which do not themselves appear to the eye, so with our minds we see the ideal of perfect eloquence, but with our ears we catch only the copy.¹³³

¹³³ Cic. *Orat.* 2.7–3.11 (LCL 342: 310–14). *Atque ego in summo oratore fingendo talem informabo qualis fortasse nemo fuit. Non enim quaero quis fuerit, sed quid sit illud quo nihil esse possit praestantius, quod in perpetuitate dicendi non saepe atque haud scio an nunquam in aliqua autem parte eluceat aliquando, idem apud alios densius, apud alios fortasse rarius. Sed ego sic statuo, nihil esse in ullo genere tam pulchrum, quo non pulchrius id sit unde illud ut ex ore aliquo quasi imago exprimatur. Quod neque oculis neque auribus neque ullo sensu percipi potest, cogitatione tamen et mente complectimur. Itaque et Phidiae simulacris, quibus nihil in illo genere perfectius uidemus, et eis picturis quas nominavi cogitare tamen possumus pulchriora. . . . Ut igitur in formis et figuris est aliquid perfectum et excellens, cuius ad cogitatam speciem imitando referuntur ea quae sub oculos ipsa non cadunt, sic perfectae eloquentiae speciem animo uidemus, effigiem auribus quaerimus.* See also Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 52–113, at 93–95. In his discussion of Antiochus of Ascalon, Dillon points to Cic. *Orat.* 2.7–3.11 (LCL 342: 310–14). This passage and others from Cicero is representative of Antiochus’s emendations of Plato. Cicero’s passage can thus be seen as a reinterpretation of Plato’s notion that “ideas . . . derive their eternity and immutability not from their existence in a transcendent realm, but rather from the essential uniformity of the human intellect” (94). For more on Phidias’s statues as “the most perfect of their kind”, see Verity Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 224–35. “In viewing Phidias’ creation, one beheld not simply a statue, but a visual embodiment of Hellenic religious tradition itself. The sense of epiphanic encounter generated by the image thus demonstrated the Greek world’s privileged relationship with the divine, symbolising not only the piety and virtue of worshippers at Olympia, but also the vibrancy and vitality of Hellenic culture” (at 226–27).

For Cicero, there appears to be little distinction among his various words for copy (*similacrum, pictura, forma, figura, effigies*); each has similar interpretive force as the others. There is an ideal of the “perfect orator” (*summo oratore*), of which only a copy or image “shines forth” (*eluceat*). Semblances are not negative, they are simply how we come to know something of the true and beautiful. Cicero references Phidias’ statues, said to be “the most perfect of their kind,” and still, they point to something yet more beautiful. The crafted beauty representative in these works of art, in other words, points to something further. Or, as Cicero concludes, “with our minds we conceive the ideal of perfect eloquence, but with our ears we catch only the copy.” It is not simply that beauty resides in the copy or statue. It is that, when these works of art are experienced, we are able, in sum, “to see” (*uidemus*) perfect eloquence distinct from its images, and to which the very images point.

Most early Christian reflection on the image of God entailed a related claim. The human being, even in her beautifully created complexity—“the most perfect of its kind”—will point to something still greater, namely, her Creator. Treatments of Ambrose, by and large, follow this tack and argue that he attaches rational and invisible value to the divine image within the soul and that the image’s stated beauty reveals the increate dignity present therein. The soul, adorned with divine works, necessarily bears the marks, an image or *effigies*, of those works. In this instance, we can conclude that *effigies* is straightforwardly a matter of fact that further emphasizes the difference between Painter and masterpiece.

The most recent secondary treatment is that from Warren Smith. In reference to *Hexaemeron* 6.7.41, Warren Smith argues that Ambrose’s intent in using the metaphor of

God as Painter and the individual as painting is for the purpose of highlighting the beauty of the soul.

Like the interior walls of Jerusalem, [the soul] has been adorned by God with God's own virtues. Where one sees the beauty of virtue, one sees the artistry of God's creative operation. Such likeness to the divine is not hidden but shines out on the world through the soul. Such a soul that simultaneously sets its thoughts upon God and gives life to the body does not participate in worldly vanity, but bears the divine image to the world.¹³⁴

I think Smith is right to foreground Ambrose's artistic metaphor in order to understand the import of the image of God has for anthropology. Ambrose surely wants to draw attention to the beauty of the image depicted in—or, more properly, on—the soul. As we have seen repeatedly, he reiterates to his audiences that each of them needs to “attend to thyself alone,” to consider what he or she is at bottom, following the words from Exodus and Deuteronomy and the Delphic injunction. Such self-contemplation serves as moral motivation to throw off images of vice and put on images of virtues.¹³⁵

Smith is also correct to highlight Ambrose's use of “shine” (*elucet*) to communicate that godlikeness beams through the world. I am most interested in Smith's attention to how the soul, as he puts it, “gives life to the body . . . [and] bears the divine image to the world.”¹³⁶ What this chapter has suggested is that this conclusion can be taken a step further with consideration of Ambrose's Roman debts. These debts, contracted through his education and training as public official, temper and occasionally

¹³⁴ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 19.

¹³⁵ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 326–28. This is in line proper to what Lewis Ayres has called a “dual-focus” anthropology. Ayres writes: “Any anthropology is ‘dual-focus’ where problems with unsanctified human thinking and action—and the cure for those problems—are described by exploring how human beings should possess a trained soul that animates the body and attends to their joint τέλος in the divine presence through contemplation of God” (at 326).

¹³⁶ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 19.

direct Ambrose's Greek debts. Since the human being can be said to bear the marks of divine operation within, she continuously reflects a dynamic similar to divine *opera* in her activity. It is not simply that God adorns the soul—although it is surely that—it is that the character of human action resembles its divine painter's by virtue of being so painted. This connection of human and divine action, sharing similar logics, is critical I think to Ambrose's moral vision, and can help us, as readers, understand why Ambrose seems to harp on the tangible enactment of moral virtues and the exemplars who perform them.

So, the more technical, and perhaps more provocative, implication, based on our reflection above on the nature of divine and human action, goes like this. If God painted the soul such that divine operation shines within it, then we can expect the soul's operation to reflect the same (or at least a similar) character as divine operation. By saying human action reflects the character of divine operation, I mean that the logistics of human action mirror divine action, that, whether in divine action or in human action, the invisible, divine or human, is in some respect made known by the visible. Latin theologians' understanding of divine operation, as argued in Chapter One, explained divine action by highlighting biblical passages presenting the Son's visibility as indicative of his divinity and indicative of a shared, single divine power. By means of the Son's visible works and words, we are able to identify both his divine status and the unity of power between the visible works and the invisible divine life.

When Ambrose thus maintains that a "semblance of divine operation shines" in the rational soul, I am arguing that he has this visual logic of Trinitarian unity and operation in mind. If this is the case, then two things follow. First, just as the invisible Father and visible Son are united in power, will, and operation, so are the soul and body

to be united in power, will, and operation. At the beginning of *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42, Ambrose lays out a threefold distinction between “what we are” (*nos sumus*), “the things that are ours” (*sunt nostra*), and “that which surrounds us” (*quae circa nos sunt*).¹³⁷ “What we are” refers to the unity of body and soul, in their initial marriage and presumably prior to our first parents’ sin; “the things that are ours” refers to the “members of our bodies and senses;” and “that which what surrounds us” refers to the things proper to this life. The distinction affords Ambrose discrete ways of talking about the body and the material world that are more complex than simply equating the body with death and imprisonment. So, Ambrose’s repeated injunction, “Attend to thyself,” charges his listeners to consider the prelapsarian unity of body and soul rather than one’s physical members or the desiderata of one’s present state.

Through the lens of *Hexaemeron* 6.7.40ff., Smith picks up on this unity and seeks in part to reappraise the ways in which the body and soul can be said to cohere. Smith argues that there are two principle philosophical sources behind Ambrose’s claims to this unity; Smith calls this claim Ambrose’s “hylomorphic theory.”¹³⁸ The first line is the Aristotelian. In Ambrose’s “clear” adaptation of Aristotle, Smith argues that the soul is both the formal cause of the body and its animating principle that “determines the end to

¹³⁷ *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233). Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Song of Songs* 9 (GNO 6: 275–76; translation from Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World 13 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012], 291). Gregory’s homily deals with Song of Songs 4:10–15: “But the motion of the reasoning faculty becomes properly *ours* only when it is going in the direction of what is beneficial for us and when it assists us in every way to possess what is good. . . . Of the things that are within us, there are some, whatever is proper to the soul, that are truly ours; and there are some, things associated with the body, I mean, and things outside of us, that we appropriate as though they were ours because, by reason of some erroneous notion, we deem what is alien to be our own.”

¹³⁸ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 29–42.

which our bodily actions are directed.”¹³⁹ The relationship of the soul to the body is here an “instrumental” one.

That the soul can be said to instrumentalize the body for the attainment of virtue Smith thinks points to a second philosophical source: Plotinus and the Platonic tradition. In this stream of thought, the soul is the more important of the two and “attends” to the body’s needs for its governance.¹⁴⁰ While both Aristotle and Plotinus lie in the background, Smith contends that Ambrose is more Plotinian than Aristotelian. Smith understands, à la John Cavadini,¹⁴¹ that this Plotinian predominance is seen in the importance that Ambrose places on the flight of the immaterial soul from the body. Like Cavadini, Smith cites *On the Good of Death* and the soul’s temptation amongst bodily or worldly snares.¹⁴² By soul and body, Smith maintains, Ambrose has in mind, like other authors of his day, something like the “competing faculties or impulses of the soul that have different orientations” and Ambrose is thinking about the subsequent longing for “harmonic unity” or “moral unity” of these faculties.¹⁴³

While Smith’s reconstruction has greatly facilitated discerning Ambrose’s potential classical debts and their Christian transformations, he fails to attend to the significance of embodied, particularly Roman, public virtue in Ambrose’s moral counsel. I do not mean that Smith fails to discuss virtue. He does, and, in some places, at length. I

¹³⁹ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 29.

¹⁴⁰ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 30.

¹⁴¹ See Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*,” in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity*, 232–49.

¹⁴² See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 31. Smith cites Ambr. *Bon. mort.* 6.25 (CSEL 32/1: 725–26) in reference to worldly snares.

¹⁴³ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 33.

mean rather that Smith sees the struggle between soul and body to be remedied with reference to a decidedly Greek ascent to incorporeal realities or contemplation. By doing so, Smith attends well to the Greek's heritage in Ambrose's background.

I do not deny that Ambrose plainly has Greek thinkers at his disposal and that his work occasionally evinces themes of interior, incorporeal ascent and contemplation. Take this statement as an example. "I have often preached," Ambrose admits, "on flight from this world."¹⁴⁴ Later in the same work, Ambrose tells his readers to gaze upon Christ with "inner eyes" (*interioribus oculis*),¹⁴⁵ and, like David, to take up "an ascent of the mind (*mentis ascensione*) . . . to become a type of Christ" (*typus Christi*).¹⁴⁶ Lines like these are peppered throughout, and, some might even say, dictate Ambrose's moral counsel.

Smith's underlying presupposition is Ambrose's focus on ascent, contemplation, and hence, virtue owes to his Greek sources. He says as much at the outset of his treatment: "This book extends the argument of Hadot, Madec, and Lenox-Conyngham that Ambrose's theology is primarily an expression of his reading of Scripture—albeit in conversation with philosopher-exegetes like Philo and Origen—rather than Plato or Plotinus."¹⁴⁷ But Ambrose also maintains, as we have explored above, the undeniable importance of virtue publicized, of priests and catechumens holding their bodies in certain ways and those ways being indicative of an interior stability and moderation. And these sorts of statements are difficult to square with Ambrose's supposedly consistent doctrine of the imprisoned soul, needing to ignore bodily realities that weigh it down.

¹⁴⁴ Ambr. *Fug.* 1.1 (CSEL 32/2: 163).

¹⁴⁵ Ambr. *Fug.* 1.4 (CSEL 32/2: 165).

¹⁴⁶ Ambr. *Fug.* 4.19 (CSEL 32/2: 179–80).

¹⁴⁷ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, xviii.

Here, the body is not altogether damnable, but a key means of communication—the physical comportment of the body tells of theological allegiance and moral disposition. And while Smith admits such a nuance when he cites Ambrose’s trifold treatment of the body from *Hexaemeron* 6.7.42—*nos sumus; sunt nostra; quae circa nos sunt*¹⁴⁸—he concludes that the body, at best, functions as a sort of moral placeholder for our appetitive or passionate failings east of Eden. Making such a move leads Smith to believe that Ambrose prescribes the quick remedy of such failings as the flight of the soul from the body. This, Smith concludes, is Ambrose’s virtuous ideal. Ultimately, Smith’s recourse to flight of the soul from the body obviates the possibility for the body to be a locus for moral transformation; for Smith’s Ambrose, the body should instead be treated with suspicion and ultimately left behind.

Ambrose certainly desires a unity of body and soul, and a similar unity can even be seen in Aristotle. But Ambrose’s commitment to an Aristotelian “harmonic unity” between body and soul is at least supplemented, if not outshined, by Stoic reflection on reason as distinctive of the human condition and the governor of the individual. Because the soul is the informing principle of the body, the soul is tasked with subjecting the body, its impulses and appetites, under the governing principle of reason. It is the case that this governing is in part the work of faculties, competing appetites and the like, but Ambrose is also adamant that the physical body’s activity will disclose the inner nature of the soul.

While Smith capably explicates the moral unity present in Ambrose’s theology, my primary concern here is perhaps more basic: to show how physical action discloses

¹⁴⁸ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233).

the inner nature of the agent. Maria Doerfler has called this disclosure the way in which the body serves as a moral “synecdoche” for late antique authors.¹⁴⁹ For Ambrose, the physical body serves as a script by which the successes and challenges of the inner soul are made plain. The unity of body and soul, therefore, is ultimately concerned with the publicizing of interior action, with how bodies live and express the dispositions of the souls that quicken and govern them. The point is not to disregard Ambrose’s reflection on competing faculties, but to draw attention to the fact that the way in which one knows about the imbalance (or balance) of those faculties is by seeing such an imbalance (or balance) disclosed in concrete action. Smith hints at an admission along these lines when he notes that occasionally Ambrose intends a unity of body and soul that might be termed “physical.”¹⁵⁰ Rather than explaining what such a claim might mean, Smith instead attends to the soul’s longing for “moral unity” in Ambrose, a move I argue attends not to the claims of public virtue, but to mystical and incorporeal ascent.

The question is not whether Ambrose is more Roman or Greek, but how these differing strands (Cicero, Philo, etc.) come together, even occasionally contradict each other, in the same mind. The tendency to read Ambrose, following Jerome’s charges of plagiarism, as a warmed over, out-of-touch Greek lookalike does a disservice to the texture and nuance of *romanitas* in late antiquity generally and Ambrose’s discrete theological contribution to virtue particularly. The old view that Romanness, as a state of

¹⁴⁹ See Maria E. Doerfler, “Coming Apart at the Seams: Cross-Dressing, Masculinity, and the Social Body in Late Antiquity,” in *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity* (Ashgate: Burlington, VT, 2014), 37–51, at 48. Doerfler admits the now-pervasive view of Ambrose as political powerbroker (as seen, for instance, in the work of Neil McLynn), but contends that “the true battle . . . would not be fought merely over pagan altars and the trappings of imperial office, but over the hearts, minds, and bodies of Roman citizens. The latter’s importance was further enhanced by virtue of the body’s privileged powers of signification in late ancient thought.”

¹⁵⁰ Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 33.

mind, is the rough equivalent to being power-hungry dies a slow death. Still, this is the essence of Roman culture McLynn, Brown, and, by negation, Smith assume. McLynn's Ambrose is Roman in the sense that he is cagey; Brown's in the sense that he is too political to be contemplative; and Smith's in the sense that Ambrose's Hellenism is the (transformed) pagan source for best understanding Ambrose's virtue theology. What I have sought to do throughout, and in Chapter Four in particular, is to balance the Greek and Roman threads in Ambrose so as not to resort to this antinomy. The promise in reading Ambrose as a thoroughgoing Roman who adapts Greek exegesis takes his pre-episcopal training and career seriously and affords us, as his late modern interpreters, a more fulsome portrait of him as cosmopolitan bishop. Taking seriously the ubiquity of Ambrose's Roman debts also paints for us a more complex and distinct picture of his public, pro-Nicene virtue, and it helps us to see the Latin and Roman traditions behind his theology.

Conclusion

If it is the case that Ambrose is "obsessed with what people see," as Davidson claims, then the struggle for the unity of soul and body is not only a competition of faculties, but the challenge of measured self-presentation. To see a given action granted insight into the motivating principle, emotions, and general affect of the agent. This chapter has argued that Ambrose's familiarity with Roman rhetorical and Latin theological traditions, forged in the crucible of controversy, supports the visual logic we identified in his Trinitarian theology. We can also say the obverse: the visual logic present in Ambrose's rhetorical training is reiterated by his Trinitarian theology.

Ambrose's rhetorical training as a public official, while presumably traditional, was not the unavoidable conclusion or supplement to a pro-Nicene theology. Parallel visual logics between Trinitarian and moral theologies were not inevitable. Public virtue did not have to be Christian virtue; plenty of other ascetic programs could be squared with pious, Nicene theology. Fourth-century thinkers other than Ambrose exemplify alternate forms.

Still, for Ambrose, public virtue became the telltale signifier of the soul. Such a program of public virtue aided in winnowing discontents from the Church, to be sure; it also, as I have argued above, bore the logical marks of pro-Nicene Christology.¹⁵¹ Lewis Ayres gestures to something like this conclusion in *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, indicating that the reach of pro-Nicene thought extended into “accounts of the spiritual progress that constitute Christian life. . . . Emphasis on the coequal statue of the Word and on the simplicity of the divine existence resulted in a deferring of our cognitive rest and in the construction of a new attention to the paradoxes and tensions of speaking, seeing, tasting, and touching in Christian existence.”¹⁵² For Ambrose, attention to the visual logic in his reflection on God was coequal with his attention to human action. This twinning of divine and human action, I have maintained, was the result of a particular blend of public, educational training and the result of intellectual influence in the context of theological polemic. A question still lingers, however: if the character of human action follows a similar logic as its divine author and counterpart, and if human action reveals the

¹⁵¹ See Brown, *The Body and Society*, 345–47.

¹⁵² See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 340–43, at 341.

character of the human soul, what should watermark the content of human action? What is the distinctive characteristic Ambrose specifies for pro-Nicene virtue?

**CHAPTER FIVE: “FOR EVERY SIMPLE SOUL IS BLESSED”: PRO-NICENE
VIRTUE, CHRISTIAN AND SIMPLE**

The concern throughout the previous four chapters has been analyzing Ambrose’s considerations on divine and human action. Ambrose connects these doctrines with a visual logic: visible works disclose invisible nature. In his Christology, the visible works of the Son indicate his deity and shared power with the Father. This reflection comes to expression in Ambrose’s debates with the homoians—debates that shaped most of his corpus.

A similar visual logic drives Ambrose’s moral anthropology and subsequent doctrine of human action. Chapter Three examined God as Painter and hence, as the source of moral excellence, while the last chapter analyzed the force of Ambrose’s curious statement that the well-painted soul is the one “in which a semblance of divine operation shines.”¹ I argued that this phrase helps us understand not only that the rational soul is dignified, but that the character of divine operation will be imaged or mirrored by its human counterpart. So, just as Ambrose describes divine operation as visible works disclosing the invisible nature of God, the human subject’s visible works disclose her unseen human motivations and impulses. Or, as I put it in the last chapter, virtuous human action mirrors the character of its divine author and counterpart. If virtues are intrinsically public, for Ambrose, questions linger, namely: What is the uniquely Christian content of Christian (public) virtue according to Ambrose? What distinguishes Christian action from its multiple laudable rivals or even from apparent non-Christian virtues? This chapter poses an answer: for Ambrose, true Christian virtue is *simple* in

¹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

intent, word, and deed. By “simple” Ambrose intends a specific content, which I will explore in this chapter.

This chapter’s organization in part seeks to rebuff the claim that several secondary treatments have implicitly put forward: that Ambrose’s use of rhetoric is necessarily opposed to his theology. I flagged this claim in Brown’s treatment of Ambrose in his *Augustine: A Biography*, as well as in McLynn’s inherent suspicion of all things theological in Ambrose’s writings, a suspicion that unearths ulterior motives and power plays at work. In order to revisit the scholarly antinomy between Ambrose’s rhetoric and theology, I first explore proceedings from the Council of Aquileia (381 CE). There, as we will see, Ambrose lambasts homoians Palladius and Secundianus for being deceptive and failing to confess a simple faith. Still, polemical charges of deception were common in the later fourth century, and Ambrose’s resort to them in the conciliar context does not prove simplicity’s theological content. Ambrose, as several have suggested, could have disguised his theological shortcomings under the guise of rhetorical tactics.

The second section of this chapter proves the moral importance Ambrose places on simplicity in a context where precious few would question his motives: his first funeral oration at the passing of his brother, Satyrus.² I zero in on one passage in

² For more on *De excessu fratris* and its role as a piece of early Christian consolation literature, see Yves-Marie Duval, “Formes profanes et formes bibliques dans les oraisons funèbres de saint Ambroise,” in *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l’antiquité tardive en occident*, ed. M. Fuhrmann (Geneva, 1968), 235–92; Hervé Savon, “La première oraison funèbre de saint Ambroise (*De excessu fratris* 1) et les deux sources de la consolation chrétienne,” *Revue des études latines* 58 (1980), 370–402; Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 36–39. For Ambrose’s similarities to other authors who wrote philosophical consolation, like Cicero and Seneca, see Marie-Pierre Labrique, “Ambroise de Milan et Sénèque: À propos du ‘De excessu fratris II’,” *Latomus* 50.2 (1991): 409–18. See also Marksches, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie*, 102–6, which uses *Exc.* to examine Ambrose’s early Christology. For locating funeral orations within the genre of epideictic rhetoric, see Laurent Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric: Questioning the Stakes of Ancient Praise* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2015), 21–28.

particular, where Ambrose uses key and technical terms for exploring the content and effects of moral simplicity.

Reading Heresy as Vice: Pro-Nicene Virtue and Its Homoian Deviants

This section shows that identifying simplicity as an ideal does the double service of helping distinguish pro-Nicene virtue from its homoian deviants.³ The trope of homoian deception took root early in Ambrose's mind. Ambrose's use of the trope, some have said, shows his careful and measured use of rhetorical rather than theological training. This use is, to put it crassly, merely a tactic, wielded in a "rapid though rather superficial fashion"⁴ and manifested by multiple blanket condemnations of "Arianism" rather than specific Arians.⁵

³ See Richard Paul Vaggione, O.H.C., "Of Monks and Lounge Lizards: 'Arians', Polemics and Asceticism in the Roman East," in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 181–214. Vaggione ably reconstructs the Greek association of heresy and vice. See also Daniel H. Williams, "Necessary Alliance or Polemical Portrayal? Tracing the Historical Alignment of Arians and Pagans in the Later Fourth Century," in *Historica, theologica et philosophia, critica et philologica*, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *SP* 29 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 178–94. Williams argues that Nicene polemics against Arians rested on the association of heresy and paganism. See too Maria Doerfler, "Ambrose's Jews," 749–72. Doerfler further notes the connection between Ambrose's "Jews" and heretics, both *en masse* and in particular in the *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, exploring how Ambrose uses rhetorical techniques to "establish guilt by association" (at 753). Rather than seek to reconstruct the historical landscape of competing religious traditions in Milan, Doerfler proceeds with the understanding that these tactics "reveal far more about the framework that the bishop sought to create for his audience than about links—perceived or genuine—between Jews and heretics in fourth-century northern Italy" (at 754). Further, the association in *Luc.* of Jews and heretics is "bi-directional, moving from 'Jewishness' to 'heresy' and vice versa" (764). Others have written about the association of non-Christian "groups" for mass dismissal. See, e.g., Averil Cameron, "Jews and Heretics—A Category Error?" in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 345–60.

⁴ For this turn of phrase, see Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, 180. While I think this "rather superficial" manner of dismissing is typically for him, Ambrose does mention specific figures on occasion. See, for example, *Ambr. Ep.* 13.6 (CSEL 35/1: 56). In this letter, addressed to the Roman council on behalf of Gratian and Valentinian II, Ambrose notes the case of the homoian bishop Florentius of Puteoli, expelled from that see only to sneak back into his former jurisdiction several years later to instigate riots. The fifth-century historian Sozomen identifies homoian elusiveness and persuasion in finding their way back into the

In an epistle offering counsel to newly appointed Constantius, about to assume jurisdiction of a homoian basilica in Illyria,⁶ Ambrose warns the region's residents are "saturated with false teaching"; that they "spread false seeds of doctrine"; that they are guilty of "perfidy"; and that their "minds [are] imbued with the poisons of infidelity."⁷

emperor's good graces. See his *Hist. eccl.* 4.19. This judgment is reiterated by Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 562, 669.

⁵ See Ambr. *Fid.* 1.5.34–42 (CSEL 78: 16–7). There, Ambrose gives a broad characterization of the "Arians": "They say that the Son of God is unlike (*dissimilem*) his Father. To say this of a man would be an insult. They say that the Son of God had a beginning in time, whereas he himself is the source and ordainer of time and all that therein is. . . . They say that he was created. . . . They deny his goodness. . . . They deny that he is truly Son of God (*negant uerum dei filium*), they deny his omnipotence. . . . Furthermore, the Arians deny that in Godhead the Son is one with the Father (*negant etiam diuinitate unum esse cum patre*). . . . Seeing, then, that the heretic says that Christ is unlike (*dissimilem*) his Father, and seeks to maintain this by subtle disputation (*uersutis disputationibus*), we must cite the Scripture: 'Take heed that no one make spoil of you by philosophy [...].'" Hanson notes that in defending their theology, homoians "were under the constant necessity of disavowing a position which their opponents . . . constantly ascribed to them—that of Anhomoianism. This was the doctrine that the Son was positively unlike the Father without further qualification" (Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 572).

⁶ For background on Illyria, the area immediately east of the Adriatic, its dangers, and Ambrose's distaste for it, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 88–106. The Nicene mythos surrounding Illyria promoted it as a seedbed for heresy, and the products of its errant teaching were akin to outgrowths which sought to choke out orthodoxy. The heretical characterization of Illyria was at root supported by the widespread claim that Arius himself had been exiled there. In his brief stint before being recalled to Egypt, Arius supposedly nurtured the heresy in the region by means of deception. According to Athanasius, Ursacius of Singidunum and Valens of Mursa were two of Arius' top students; both were condemned at the Council of Rimini in 359, some twenty years after their supposed teacher's death. Recent English-language treatments of Arius after Nicaea include: Timothy Barnes, "The Exile and Recalls of Arius," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 60.1 (2009): 109–29, at 125–26; R. Williams, *Arius*; Maurice Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism Through the Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 36; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 173, n.71, 591–97. Hanson notes that Valens of Mursa and Ursacius of Singidunum are almost always mentioned together. See Mar.-Vict. *Ar.* 1.42 (CSEL 83/1: 132), where the Illyrians are mentioned in the same terms as the Arians, Lucianists, and Eusebians who promote "diverse and heretical opinions" (*diuersae opinionis et haeretici*). See also Michel Barnes, "The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon," in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, ed. L. Ayres and G. Jones (London: Routledge, 1998), 47–67, at 58, which argues that "the use of Valens and Ursacius as types of Arius is a feature of the Western pro-Nicene, anti-Arian polemic of the [three-]fifties and early sixties, and no later: even polemicists from the seventies as indebted to Athanasius as the Latin-speaking Ambrose and the Greek-speaking Epiphanius no longer refer to Valens and Ursacius in this way." For the use and examples of literary constructs for invectives against Arians, see Maurice Wiles, "Attitudes to Arius in the Arian Controversy," in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 31–43.

⁷ Ambr. *Ep.* 36.28 (CSEL 82/2: 18). For a later explication of this sentiment, see Ambr. *Incarn.* 2.7 (CSEL 79: 227). There, Ambrose writes of a Eunomian "coming from the fount of Arian impiety [who] slips in the copious mire of his perfidy as he asserts that the generation of Christ . . . is to be sown from the traditions of philosophy [...]." See Gérard Nauroy, "L'Écriture dans la pastorale d'Ambroise de Milan," in *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, ed. J. Fontaine and E. Pietri, vol. 2, Bible de tous les temps (Paris:

Mixing metaphors, Ambrose further maintains that these “poisons of infidelity” function like a stream, hell-bent on overwhelming the Church.⁸ And so understandably, Ambrose likens Constantius’ position to taking the helm of a ship during the perilous storm of deception.⁹ To rise above the tumult, Ambrose advises speech that is “pure and plain (*puri et dilucidi*) so that by moral disputation [Constantius] may pour sweetness into the ears of the people, and the grace of [his] words (*gratia uerborum*) may allure (*demulceas*) the crowd to follow willingly where you lead.”¹⁰ The answer, in sum, to the tide of

Beauchesne, 1985), 371–408, at 391. Nauroy mentions Ambrose’s letter to Constantius in only one section of his essay and notes in passing that it could easily be considered Ambrose’s *De doctrina christiana*.

⁸ See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 240. Mixing metaphors, McLynn notes, is typical of Ambrose’s exegetical practices. Rarely does he explicate themes systematically. Instead, Ambrose “range[s] across the Old Testament, unraveling one mystery after another through application of a figurative interpretation, an exhilarating fizzing of paradoxes which conjure up the possibility that sense could be made of the whole.” This ranging across the Old Testament consists of Ambrose assembling direct and passing references to texts mentioning water, rivers, and the sea, and to the difficulty and pitfalls of the world. All these he associates with one another, and each plays a particular role in constructing his response.

⁹ Ambr. *Ep.* 36.1–3 (CSEL 82/3: 3–5). Cf. Ambr. *Ep. ex.* 9. See also Lizzi, “Ambrose’s Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy,” 156–73, at 160. Lizzi highlights the fact that the likely area of Constantius’ jurisdiction had been ravaged by severe agricultural problems, giving further reason for mentioning competing (non-Nicene versus pro-Nicene) “streams.”

¹⁰ Ambr. *Ep.* 36.5 (CSEL 82/2: 5). See also Ambr. *Ep.* 36.7 (CSEL 82/2: 6): “Such speech brings solid truth as well as sweetness and delight. “Let your exhortations be full of discernment” (*alloquia tua plena intellectus sint*), Ambrose advises, “let the manifestation (*manifestatio*) of your words shine forth (*fulgeat*), let your discernment gleam (*intellectus coruscet*), and let no treatment require strange things by assertion, and not any word of yours go out in vain (*in uanum*) and go forth without meaning (*sine sensu*), but let your discourse defend itself with its own weapons (*armis suis sese ipse tueatur*). It is a bandage (*est enim alligatura*) which binds up the wounds of souls, and if anyone rejects this, he exhibits his despair of his own health. Likewise, with those who are vexed by a serious sore, use the oil of speech (*oleo sermonis*) that you may soften their hardness of mind (*foueas mentis duritiam*); apply a poultice (*appone malagma*); put on a bandage of healthful precept (*adiunge alligaturam salutaris praecepti*), so that you may never allow those who are roaming or who are wavering regarding the faith or the observance of discipline to perish through loss of courage (*solutio animo*) and a breakdown of strength (*remisso uigore*).” Here, Ambrose connects exhortation (*alloquia*) and bandaging the sick and sore (*alligatura*), exemplifying how speech can be both its own defense and the balm for the wounded soul. The connection also shows how Ambrose sees persuasion as beneficial for salvation, for convincing souls of their errant ways and setting them right. In other contexts, Ambrose uses *alligans* and its cognates in reference to Jesus, the one who places upon our sin-sickened souls the words of heaven as a bandage. The words of heaven are a “good bandage” (*bona alligatura*), Ambrose writes, which “connect[s] the bones of [our] fractured souls.” For other instances of this connection, see Ambr. *Psal.* 118 21.5 (CSEL 62: 476). See also Ambr. *Patr.* 4.23 (CSEL 32/1: 137). Cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.10–12 (LCL 358: 180–83), which speaks of the difficulty of finding one who will speak plainly and frankly. On the Second Sophistic and its effects in Christianity until the Fall of Rome, see Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*

duplicity is “pure and plain” speech, which helps woo audiences and pierce through uncertainty.

Proceedings from the Council of Aquileia (381 CE)¹¹ reveal that the trope of homoian deception had become something of a pro-Nicene commonplace by the second half of the fourth century.¹² In his debate with two of the council’s homoian representatives, Palladius and Secundianus, Ambrose charges his opponents with deceit, with tactics that attempted to postpone their inevitable condemnation.¹³ The council’s proceedings also attest to the homoian bishops’ claim to a straightforward exegesis of scripture: only biblical language should be predicated of the Father and the Son. “I speak to you according to the Scriptures. I call the Son the very Son of God,” Palladius maintains.¹⁴ While employing scriptural language might seem a laudable goal, the extant

(Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 35–70; George Alexander Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 47–50, 187–82; Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), *passim*, esp. 197–212. Janice M. Lauer and Kelly Pender, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2004), 51–57.

¹¹ For discussion of the historical, religious-political context surrounding the Council of Aquileia, see Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts*, 154–84 and multiple texts cited therein. Williams notes the provenance of the *Gest. conc. Aquil.* manuscript at 169–72. The current critical editions (both CSEL edited by Zelzer and SC edited by Gryson) we have depend on a fifth-century compilation of anti-Arian texts that were amended by pro-homoian sources. The amendments, Williams indicates, were “directed at Ambrose and the proceedings of the council” (at 170).

¹² See “Fragments of Palladius” 106.340v (SC 267: 290–91). See Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution*, 91–92, who mentions Ambrose and Augustine as those who lambasted non-Nicenes and the influence of philosophy and who “demanded a return to biblical simplicity” (at 91). D. H. Williams sees similar charges of deception in the Council of Ariminum, some two decades prior to Aquileia, lending credence to the trope as common. See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Debates*, 26–32. See also Meslin, *Les Ariens d’Occident 335–430*, 90, 127. See also Doerfler, “Ambrose’s Jews,” 764. Doerfler in particular points to homoian deception as a commonplace, particularly in the East.

¹³ Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 109–10, 596. Hanson notes from the *Scholia* how Palladius “trapped” Ambrose, who appears driven to the verge of patripassianism.

¹⁴ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 18 (CSEL 82/3: 336). See Gryson, ed., *Scolia ariennes*, 178, n.2. Gryson notes that Nicenes might have been hesitant to enter into scriptural debates because the authors of the scriptures “ignoraient la notion philosophique de consubstantialité, et leurs expressions favorisaient

records of the council's proceedings depict this move as a diversionary tactic, portraying Palladius as disingenuous when questioned and as forcing Ambrose and his pro-Nicene colleagues to coax tendentious positions out of him.¹⁵

Upon invitation to the council, Palladius likely expected a collegial dialogue, Christian to Christian,¹⁶ but Ambrose instead assumed the magisterial mantle, playing “the double part of public prosecutor and principal judge.”¹⁷ At the Council's commencement, Ambrose orders Arius' infamous letter to Alexander of Alexandria to be read before the entire council. When interrogated about his possible allegiance with Arius's teaching—that the Father alone is eternal and that the Son is not everlasting, but created—Palladius' first response is not to reply to Arius's teaching, but to accuse Ambrose of a mistrial: “You have crafted, as appears by the sacred document which you

plutôt la théologie archaïsante des ariens.” See also Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* 18–22; Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy*, 10–17, 35. Homoian claims to the scriptures led Maurice Wiles to label homoian doctrine “scriptural and unphilosophical in character” (35). Wiles's characterization would help to explain in part Palladius' initial refusal to enter into debate at Aquileia and to begin utilizing “being” (οὐσία) or “substance” (*substantia*) with reference to the Son. Since these terms did not occur in scripture, they should not have been predicated of the Son. See Williams, *Arius*, 234–35, which remarks on the earnestness of anti-Nicenes regarding the “the catholic and scriptural nature of their language,” on the fact that they “see themselves as guardians of centrally important formulae.” See D. H. Williams, “The Anti-Arian Campaigns of Hilary of Poitiers and the ‘Liber contra Auxentium,’” *Church History* 61.1 (1992): 7–27, at 9, n.10. Williams notes that Palladius vehemently denied using terms like of *dissimilis*.

¹⁵ See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 124. Hanson notes that Ambrose's questions are “leading” and that his invoking of anathemas is “outrageously unfair” since Palladius had not read the document in question. For a brief description of Palladius' theology, see Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 563–64.

¹⁶ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 12 (CSEL 82/3: 333).

¹⁷ For this turn of phrase, see Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 1:199–206, at 201. In his *Apologia* penned soon after the conclusion of the Council of Aquileia, Palladius records that the room in which he and Secundianus had been interrogated was a narrow room off the main basilica (*secretarium*) (SC 267: 274). Dudden goes on to argue that Ambrose's anti-Arian push at Aquileia was intended “to strike a blow which would effectively crush the lingering remnants of the heresy in North Italy and Illyricum” (at 1:199), and that the “Council of Aquileia marks the victory of Catholicism over Arianism, so far as the Western Empire was concerned” (1:205). See also, Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 547, who calls the Council the “definitive defeat of Arianism in the West.” While the Council undoubtedly was a marked point of Catholic prominence, McLynn's nuanced view is more accurate. See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 1–52.

have brought forward, that this should not be a full and general council: in the absence of our colleagues we are not able to speak.”¹⁸ As recorded, Palladius’ response makes him seem simply to be biding time. In reality, however, there were only a couple of “Eastern bishops” — his “colleagues” — in attendance.¹⁹

Palladius is portrayed as cornered, outnumbered, and insistent that the prosecution’s case be postponed. Throughout, Palladius commits to diverting attention away from theological positions. In so doing, he seeks to avoid Ambrose’s incessant interrogation with responses like: “It is not within your authority to ask me;”²⁰ “Neither have I seen Arius nor do I know who he is;”²¹ and “We do not respond to you now, but we will respond to you in a general and full council.”²² After these attempts to dispute the council’s legitimacy, which are depicted as procedural stalling, Palladius answers the interrogation, responding succinctly and often reluctantly.²³

Ambrose and the other pro-Nicene bishops take Palladius’ taciturn disposition as at least deceptive, if not an outright affront to creedal allegiance. Early in the proceedings Ambrose indicates: “That you [Palladius] may see how simply (*simpliciter*) we seek the

¹⁸ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 6 (CSEL 82/3: 329).

¹⁹ E.g., Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 6–8 (CSEL 82/3: 329–30), 10–11 (CSEL 82/2: 331–32). Three dozen or so bishops, most from northern Italy, were in attendance. Williams indicates that the gathering “resembled a north Italian synod more than a general western council” (175). It is safe to assume that Palladius felt the deck stacked against him and his homoian compatriots. Ambrose indicates at the council’s outset that stenographers were used, but Palladius accuses them of pro-Nicene allegiance and occasionally refuses to speak for fear that his answers would be misrepresented.

²⁰ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 11 (CSEL 82/3: 332).

²¹ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 14 (CSEL 82/3: 334).

²² Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 32 (CSEL 82/3: 345).

²³ *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 20 (CSEL 82/3: 337), 50 (CSEL 82/3: 356–57). For similar description of Secundianus at the council, see *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 28 (CSEL 82/3: 343), and of Attalus, see *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 44 (CSEL 82/3: 353).

truth. . . . For by speaking as you do, you appear to deny that the Son of God is the true God (*deum uerum*); if however you confess simply (*simpliciter*) that the Son of God is true God, state it in the order in which I proposed it to you.”²⁴ Later, another bishop for the pro-Nicene side, the host Valerian of Aquileia, speaks up: “Do not agitate Palladius so much, he is not able to confess our truths simply (*simpliciter*); for his conscience is confused by a twofold blasphemy (*duplici blasfemia*): he was ordained by the Photinians and was then condemned by them, and now, he will be condemned further.”²⁵

What we see repeatedly is that the pro-Nicenes use their majority against their opponents and wield key rhetorical tactics for dismissing them;²⁶ “strategy, not theology,” Williams writes, “was the need of the moment.”²⁷ At the conclusion of the proceedings, Secundianus receives treatment similar to that doled out to Palladius.²⁸ Ambrose presses him to confess “simply” (*simpliciter*) the Son to be “true God.” Secundianus refuses, and instead predicates “only-begotten” (*unigenitus*) of Christ and professes him to be the “true Son of God.” In response, Ambrose references Matthew 5:37 (“Let your word be yea, yea. . .”) and repeats, “say simply (*simpliciter*): the only-begotten Son of God is true

²⁴ *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 18 (CSEL 82/3: 336). See Yves-Marie Duval, “Le sens des débats d’Aquilée pour les nicéens: Nicée-Rimini-Aquilée,” in *Atti del colloquio internazionale sul concilio di Aquileia del 381*, *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 21 (Udine: Arti grafiche friulane, 1981), 69–97, at 80–81.

²⁵ *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 49 (CSEL 82/3: 356). The accusation of Palladius’ ordination by the Photinians is disregarded as rhetorical in secondary literature. See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 595; Meslin, *Les Ariens d’Occident 335–430*, 85–92.

²⁶ See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*, 175–181, at 179–80. Williams mentions Ambrose’s charge of *fraus* but indicates that this charge is entirely because Ambrose thought that the Nicene council fathers at Ariminum were deceived by a faulty interpretation of Arius’ letter to Alexander. While this might well be part of the case, Williams does not explicitly connect *fraus*, heresy, and vice with each other to show how Ambrose denigrates the homoian bishops’ case, a point that is drawn out in the remainder of the chapter.

²⁷ Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*, 178.

²⁸ *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 67–71 (CSEL 82/3: 365–67).

God.” After Secundianus replies succinctly to heated questioning, Eusebius butts in, accusing him of Photinian and Sabellian allegiances. The exchange reaches a fever pitch when Ambrose repeats: “You should have brought [your profession] forward today, but you are attempting to evade (*subterfugere*). You demand a profession of me, and I demand a profession of you. Is the Son of God true God?”²⁹ Secundianus refuses to consent to Ambrose’s questioning; he will again only confess to the Son’s status as “only-begotten” (*unigenitus*) and not “true God” (*deus uerus*).³⁰

According to Ambrose, the homoians were guilty of heresy, temporizing, equivocating, deceiving, and disseminating “perfidy” (*perfidiam*).³¹ Ambrose’s dual dismantling of heresy and vice proved an effective technique for dismissing his opponents, disclosing his classical training in the art of epideictic rhetoric, along the way. Still, Ambrose’s and his allies’ calls for simplicity of speech are more than a rhetorical façade. As I have been arguing, Ambrose’s critiques of the form or presentation of action and language—here, in the Council’s proceedings, accusations of deception or disingenuous speech—are critiques of the underlying motivations of that same action and language.

²⁹ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 74 (CSEL 82/3: 368).

³⁰ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 75 (CSEL 82/3: 368). See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*, 183. Williams calls the Nicenes’ perspective “reactive, almost regressive, in the sense that the assembly is concerned with attacking the Christological theses exemplified at Ariminum by means of Arius’ letter” and that “in effect, no progress is made theologically.”

³¹ Ambr. *Gest. conc. Aquil.* 18. There are several references to Palladius’ claim to simply “speaking according to the scriptures.” Ambrose’s tactics here bear uncanny resemblance to Athanasius’ *Life of Antony (passim)*. Athanasius argues that Arians’ lies presaged the coming of the Antichrist (69); that Arian teaching was not from the apostles but from demons and their father, the devil (82); and that the Arians were captured by impiety and vice (69, 89). See Williams, *Arius*, 89–91; Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine*, Cambridge Classical Studies (New York: University of Cambridge, 2008), 101–47, 223–35.

That the proceedings represent more than empty rhetoric to cover up shortcomings in logic or training is evidenced by the fact that Ambrose upholds the importance of simplicity in word and deed even when the acute challenge of homoian religious politics lessened in Milan during the second half of his tenure as bishop. These calls to simplicity took the form of heightened demands of renunciation. And these demands functioned as protreptics to pro-Nicene Christian devotion.³² Ambrose begins *Epistle 27* to Sabinus, dated near the end of his career in 394/5 CE, with a discussion of Paulinus, future bishop of Nola (354–431 CE), who, while noble in birth, social rank, and wealth, had taken up the practices of the faith.³³ Because of his conversion, Paulinus gave away his all his property and said farewell to his former life, “relieving himself of the heavy burden of home, country, and kindred in order to serve God with greater zeal.”³⁴

³² During the fourth century, renunciation became a necessary virtue of the clergy. See Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise*, 295–317, at 301–8. See also Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 201–10, at 206–9. Smith does not mention Paulinus of Nola or Ambrose’s letter recalling his exemplary conversion, but does write of the importance of renunciation and “forgetting” past sins, attachment, and means of education.

³³ Ambr. *Ep. 27* (CSEL 82/1: 180–87). See Dennis E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 63–66, 78–103. Trout indicates that Paulinus’ retreat into seclusion in northern Spain was quite likely because of the loss of a child, the evidence for which is reconstructed through several of Paulinus’ later poems. See also Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* (Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 86–87. For Ambrose’s relationship with Sabinus, see Lizzi, “Ambrose’s Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy,” 160.

³⁴ Ambr. *Ep. 27.1* (CSEL 82/1: 180). For the general contours, timeline, and critical dating of Paulinus’ conversion, see Dennis Elwood Trout, “Secular Renunciation and Social Action: Paulinus of Nola and Late Roman Society” (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 1989), 131–76. See also Pierre Fabre, *Saint Paulin de Nole et l’amitié chrétienne*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome, fasc. 167 (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1949). The burden of wealth was not simply a construct of religious zealotry, but an intense weight that pressured its participants into social and political action. See Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 185–240. Brown also connects Paulinus’ renunciation with Priscillian and his ascetic denial and cultish practices resembling Gnostic Manichaeism. See Supl.–Sev. *Chron.* 2.46–51 (CSEL 1: 99–105).

Paulinus' wife, Therasia, is said to have followed suit, imitating her husband's "virtue and zeal" (*uirtuti et studio*).³⁵

We read in his *Carmina* that Paulinus perceived his own struggle as being between the Muses and Christ.³⁶ For him, there was to be no mixed message: philosophical wisdom, rhetorical extravagance, and poetic fictions paled in comparison to God's power and illumination.³⁷ Paulinus could not serve two masters; by loving the One he must hate the other.³⁸ This shift in will and disposition altered everything for Paulinus. In decorating a Church under his new jurisdiction, Paulinus exclaims, "The black ugliness is hidden, and painting has restored youthful brilliance to the old architecture by pouring over it the splendor of varied colors."³⁹ These faithful new colors hid the "idle wealth, impure love and soiled desire at the rubble of the soul."⁴⁰

"When our leading men hear this [remarkable renunciation], what will they say?" Ambrose wonders. "It is unthinkable that a man of such family, such background, such nature, gifted with such eloquence (*tanta praeditum eloquentia*), should retire from the

³⁵ Ambr. *Ep.* 27.2 (CSEL 82/1: 180).

³⁶ The classic example is from P.-Nol. *Carm.* 10.115 (CSEL 30: 29). There, Paulinus speaks of the Muses as being *sine numine numina* or "names without power." See Michael Stuart Flower, "'sine numine numina': Ausonius and the Oulipo," in *Unclassical Traditions: Volume I, Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. Christopher Kelly, Richard Flower, and Michael Stuart Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 2010), 140–63.

³⁷ See P.-Nol. *Carm.* 10.35–38 (CSEL 30: 25). See also Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 78–103. Trout traces this conflict between *ars* and Christian devotion in *Carm.* 10.

³⁸ P. G. Walsh, "Paulinus of Nola and the Conflict of Ideologies in the Fourth Century," in P. Granfield and J. A. Jungmann, eds., *Kyriakon: Festschrift for Johannes Quasten*, 2 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 2: 565–71.

³⁹ P.-Nol. *Carm.* 28.212–28.214 (CSEL 30: 300).

⁴⁰ P.-Nol. *Carm.* 28.285–86 (CSEL 30: 303).

Senate and that the succession of so noble a family should be broken.”⁴¹ Surely that man would feel shame, Ambrose imagines the notables would say. He then crafts his own reply by means of two biblically-inflected rhetorical questions: Was David ashamed when he danced before the Ark of the Covenant? Was Isaiah ashamed when he went “naked and barefoot (*nudus et discalciatus*) through the crowd, exclaiming heavenly oracles?”⁴² On the surface, such renunciation (and its scriptural analogues) appears unseemly if taken as an isolated incident, but within the correct context, Ambrose contends, it is in fact worshipful. “No one becomes committed to excess (*luxui committit*) unless he departs from the precepts of the true God (*dei ueri*),” he concludes.

Whenever he begins to abound in the excesses of luxury, he begins deviating from the true faith. Then he commits two grievous crimes: an outrage of the body and sacrilege of the mind. One who does not follow the Lord his God therefore gorges himself or herself with luxury and pleasure, those destructive passions of the body. One who engorges and immerses himself or herself in these hog-pools falls into the snares of faithlessness.⁴³

We should note here that again mind and body are linked. Ambrose equates abounding in “luxury” with nobility, exemplified by excess of wealth; the perpetrator is guilty of sins of visible and invisible.⁴⁴

Ambrose employs visceral language for describing the profligate: he is engorged, bloated with luxury and “immersed in hog-pools” (*uolutabrum*). Ambrose will only use *uolutabrum* a couple times in his writings, the first of which is in his *Concerning Virgins*

⁴¹ Ambr. *Ep.* 27.3 (CSEL 82/1: 181).

⁴² Ambr. *Ep.* 27.4 (CSEL 82/1: 181).

⁴³ Ambr. *Ep.* 27.16 (CSEL 82/1: 186). *Ubi autem coeperit quis luxuriari, incipit deviare a fide vera. Ita duo maxima committit crimina, obprobria carnis et mentis sacrilegia. Ergo qui non sequitur dominum deum suum, ingurgitat se luxuriae ac libidini, pestiferis corporis passionibus. Qui autem se ingurgitaverit adque inmerserit volutabris, perfidiae laqueos incurrit.*

⁴⁴ See P.-Nol. *Carm.* 10.305–10 (CSEL 30: 38), where Paulinus speaks about the great weight of worldly things bearing down on him.

(ca. 377), where he describes the modest flower of virginity growing in the garden of the Lord. In that garden, “the water of the pure fountain shines, reflecting features of the image of God (*inpressam signaculis imaginem dei*), lest its streams be polluted, having been sprinkled with mud from the hog-pools (*uolutabris*) of the spiritual wild beasts.”⁴⁵ Here, too, the absence of lurching about in these *uolutabra* marks off purity: virginal modesty is unpolluted by such spiritual wallowing places. For Ambrose, devotion to the *deus uerus* precludes cavorting in these metaphorical “hog-pools,” be they spiritual and allegorical in the case of the virgins or material in the case of Paulinus. Still, Ambrose is not simply denouncing wealth in toto, but warning of the “destructive passions” (*corporis passionibus*) that can creep in if luxury persists.⁴⁶

Pro-Nicene devotion to the *deus uerus*, as we saw above in Ambrose’s exchange with Secundianus, prohibits attachment to such fineries.⁴⁷ Anti-homoian polemic was replete with similar charges of failing to worship the *deus uerus*. This is no coincidence. If the diversionary tactics of the “Arians” failed to take seriously the “simplicity” proper to confession of the true God, then further self-discipline was necessary.⁴⁸ In view of the recurring visual logic of Ambrose’s Christological and moral reflections, such a conclusion should not be surprising. What we see repeatedly in Ambrose’s interactions

⁴⁵ Ambr. *Virg.* 1.8.45 (PL 16: 201).

⁴⁶ *Ep.* 27.16 (CSEL 82/1: 186).

⁴⁷ Smith comes to similar conclusions in reference to a different passage of Ambrose’s. See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 202.

⁴⁸ See Vaggione, “Of Monks and Lounge Lizards,” 182, 202. Vaggione uses the language of “anti-monks” and “false ascetics” of non-Nicenes in accordance with Nicene theological evidence charging non-Nicenes with a lack of virtue. See also Lizzi, “Ambrose’s Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy,” at 162–63. While Lizzi’s concern is a historical reconstruction of ecclesial presence and influence in Northern Italy with respect to paganism, her conclusions aid in considering the social and ethical dynamics of Western sees at this time.

with the homoians is that, to his mind, wayward theological statements betrayed a misstep in inner judgment.⁴⁹ Deception and evasiveness disclosed heresy and unnecessary attachment to worldly ways. The “Arians,” Ambrose warns in his *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 8.17, are “intent on worldly pursuits, . . . [they] pursue the fellowship of kingly power, in order that they might impugn the truth of the Church with military arms. Do they not seem to you to be lying in purple and on linen cushions (Cf. Lk. 16:19), those who defend embellishments rather than truths?”⁵⁰ Notice Ambrose’s clever association of “lying in purple” and “embellishments” (*fucata*). As we explored above in Chapter Three, *fucus* was a purple dye derived from lichen in the Mediterranean Basin, often used for cosmetic purposes. Cicero and Quintilian in the Roman tradition and Cyprian in the early Latin Christian tradition began using the term *fucus* metaphorically, playing off the concealing aspect of makeup. Here, Ambrose puts forth a multivalent use of *fucata*: mentioning purple, the dye’s actual color, and the implication that the Arians shade the truth by way of lavish deception in word and deed.

Perhaps ironically, fourth-century Christian denunciations of extravagance and corresponding calls for simplicity were often themselves exemplary in their eloquence, and their authors happened to find themselves in positions of great authority and prominence. Paulinus, for instance, became bishop of Nola, Ambrose, bishop of Milan. On the one hand, Ambrose’s classical education demanded the sort of persuasion driven

⁴⁹ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 343. Cf. Averil Cameron, “Ascetic Closure and the End of Antiquity,” in Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantassis, eds. *Asceticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 147–61, at 154. See also idem, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 72ff.

⁵⁰ Ambr. *Luc.* 8.17 (CSEL 32/4: 399): *pone nunc ante conspectum saecularibus Arrianos studiis intentos, qui societatem potentiae regalis adfectant, ut armis militaribus impugnent ecclesiae ueritatem, nonne tibi uidentur in quadam purpura et bysso exstructis iacentes toris, qui pro ueris fucata defendant.*

by eloquence that Paulinus supposedly disowned.⁵¹ Yet, on the other, Ambrose's abrupt appointment as bishop forced him into a position that was distinctly for the people and that made rusticity and frank speech necessary. Ambrose was self-conscious enough to realize the near-palpable contradiction. These competing goals showed the critical importance of public presentation, of showing when, where, and how Christian virtues outstripped their rivals.⁵²

Since what resulted oftentimes was an elaborate, verbose underselling of pro-Nicene Christianity for the masses,⁵³ Ambrose could easily be depicted as playing a rhetorical game with smoke and mirrors. I do not doubt that Ambrose is conjuring up his rhetorical education for the sake of winning arguments. But as the next sections will show, it is hard to get around his repeated discussions of the saint's simple virtue. The same simplicity of word and deed that cuts against the grain of homoian deception at the Council of Aquileia in 381 is upheld as a pious ideal. And based on the context of Ambrose's statement of this ideal, we would do well to hold our suspicion in abeyance.

⁵¹ See A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 47–88; Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, "Prologue Topics and Translation Problems in Latin Commentaries on Paul," in *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. Josef Lössl and John W. Watt (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 33–47, at 44–45.

⁵² See Walsh, "Paulinus of Nola and the Conflict of Ideologies in the Fourth Century," 2: 567–70.

⁵³ See Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 153–64; A. Edward Sicienski, "Gilding the Lily: A Patristic Defense of Liturgical Splendor," in Susan R. Holman, ed., *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 211–20. Both Janes and Sicienski note that the seeming contradiction between promoting the virtue of simplicity and the extravagance expended in the liturgy and on the Church itself represents a distinctly modern worry. Sicienski argues that "it is clear that the fathers never believed that gold and wealth were absolute evils to be avoided at all costs" (at 212). For a similar conclusion, see also Auksi, *Christian Plain Style*, 164–67.

Simplicity in Elegy: Satyrus as an Exemplum of Faith

Simplicity as a moral ideal is not relegated to Ambrose's conciliar interactions, often deemed to be object lessons in rhetorical flourish and dismissal. Quite to the contrary, simplicity emerges early and often in Ambrose's career and pointedly in his *Death of Satyrus*, the two-part elegy for his departed brother. Throughout the work, dated to the first few years of his episcopacy (378 CE), Ambrose lionizes his late brother as an *exemplum* of faith, steady in virtue and devoted to holy living. Here, though the context is notably different—at the somber occasion of a loved one's death rather than in conciliar proceedings—the moral ideal is similar to what we saw in the proceedings of the Council of Aquileia: just as Ambrose exhorted homoians to the ideal of simple word and deed, he said that Satyrus had attained the saintly goal of simplicity. The following passage, taken from the work's first part, will serve to organize the remainder of our chapter.

But in what words can I set forth [Satyrus'] simplicity? By this I mean a certain moderation of habits and soberness of mind. Forgive me, I beg, and attribute it to my grief, if I allow myself to speak somewhat fully about him with whom I am no longer permitted to converse. And certainly it profits you to see that you have borne this kindly office not led by weak feelings, but by sound judgment; neither impelled by pity for his death, but provoked by desire to do honor to his virtues. For every simple soul is blessed. And so great was his simplicity that converted into a child, he shines with the innocent simplicity of that age, an effigy of perfect virtue, and like a mirror of innocent habits. Therefore he entered into the kingdom of heaven, because he believed in the word of God, because he, like a child, rejected the artistry of flattery. He quietly absorbed the grief of insult that he had sharply sought to avenge; he was more inclined to complaint than to guile, ready for conciliation, intractable toward ambition, holy in modesty, so that in him one would rather speak of such an excess of bashfulness than look for a necessary amount of it.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Ambr. *Exc.* 1.51 (CSEL 73: 236–37): *Qua vero prosecutione simplicitatem eius edisseram? Ea est enim quaedam morum temperantia mentis que sobrietas. Date, quaeso, ueniam et permittite dolori meo, ut de eo mihi paulo uberius liceat loqui, cum quo iam non conceditur conloqui. Certe et uobis proficit, ut aduertatis non fragilitate quadam uos hoc officium, sed iudicio detulisse, nec misericordia mortis impulsos, sed uirtutum honorificentia prouocatos. Anima enim benedicta omnis simplex. tanta autem*

Ambrose here describes both the content and effects of simplicity. The content of simplicity, as he puts it, is “temperance of habits and sobriety of mind” (*Ea est enim quaedam morum temperantia mentis que sobrietas*). The prominence of *temperantia* in Ambrose’s catalogue of virtues is unsurprising given our explorations of his admonitions on bodily comportment; its importance for his moral psychology and theology cannot be overstated. Here, as elsewhere, temperance regards that which is fit and seemly with a calmness of mind and spirit. Though on occasion Ambrose will write of temperance as a virtue proper to the body (and not the mind or soul), he predominantly applies temperance to both corporeal and incorporeal realities.⁵⁵ In the case of Satyrus, temperance is applied to “habits” (*morum*).

Ambrose’s use of “habit” (*mos, moris*) here is striking and intends a depth of meaning lost on late-moderns. *Mos* was but one term used for “habit” throughout the Latin tradition.⁵⁶ Hilary and Augustine trade in language of *consuetudo*;⁵⁷ Thomas

simplicitas, ut conuersus in puerum simplicitate illius aetatis innoxiae, perfectae uirtutis effigie et quodam innocentium morum speculo reluceret. Intrauit igitur in regnum caelorum, quoniam credidit dei uerbo, quoniam sicut puer artem reppulit adulandi, iniuriae dolorem clementer absorbit quam inclementius uindicauit, querelae quam dolo promptior, satisfactioni facilis, difficilis ambitioni, sanctus pudori, ut frequenter in eo superfluum magis uerecundiam praedicares quam necessariam quaereres. Emphasis added. See Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, 319–36, where Courcelle notes parallels between some of Ambrose’s technical terminology in *Exc.* and Apuleius’s *De Platone* and *Apologia*. See also Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie*, 27–36. Madec explores the dating and background for the treatise and its stylization but nowhere references this passage, even in his section on the simplicity of faith at 214–36. See also Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 129–45, which mentions *Exc.* multiple times, but in the context of Ambrose’s understanding of resurrection in the second oration. Smith does not comment on this passage.

⁵⁵ *Abr.* 2.10.68 (CSEL 32/1: 624). In *On Abraham*, the pair of *temperantia* and *sobrietas* paired are proper to the body and must be connected to virtues particular to the soul, like *prudentia* and *iustitia*.

⁵⁶ Quintilian talks about orators communicating *mores* as being received through imitation by a student, in part through the comportment of the body. See Quint. *Or.* 1.11.2–3 (LCL 124: 236–39). [*N*]am frequens imitatio transit in mores. Ne gestus quidem omnis ac motus a comoedis petendus est. Quamquam enim utrumque eorum ad quendam modum praestare debet orator, plurimum tamen aberit a scaenico, nec uultu nec manu nec excursionibus nimius. Nam si qua in his ars est dicentium, ea prima est ne ars esse uideatur.

Aquinas is well known for baptizing Aristotle's conception of *habitus* for Christian purposes.⁵⁸ Ambrose will also use *consuetudo* and *habitus* elsewhere. Here, however, he makes a conscious decision to use *mos*, a term engraved upon the Roman consciousness as an accepted way of living laid by one's ancestors and undergirded by social and political norms.⁵⁹ Cicero is replete with reference to the "way of our ancestors" (*mos maiorum*). Here, for Ambrose to evoke Satyrus's *temperantia morum* implies his brother's calm and steady following of the established ways of those who preceded him.⁶⁰

"Sobriety of mind" (*sobrietas mentis*) recalls others of Ambrose's metaphorical statements on sobriety and drunkenness in general,⁶¹ chief of which is his statement, borrowed from Philo, on the Spirit's bestowal of "sober drunkenness" to the soul.⁶² More particularly, Ambrose's turn of phrase in *Death of Satyrus* 1.51 presages his several uses

⁵⁷ Hilar. *Trin.* 1.1 (CCSL 62: 1–2); Aug. *Conf.* 8.11.26 (CSEL 33: 192). See John G. Prendiville, S.J., "The Development of the Idea of Habit in the Thought of Saint Augustine," in *Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought, and Religion*, ed. Edwin A. Quain, Bernard M. Peebles, et al (New York: Fordham University Press, 1972), 29–99. It is worth noting that Prendiville mentions nothing of Ambrose's use of *mos* and its distinction from Augustine's typical use of *consuetudo*.

⁵⁸ The best-known instance is Thomas's so-called "treatise on habit" at *ST* I–II.49–54.

⁵⁹ For an excellent overview of the crafting, force, and function of *mos* in the Latin traditions, see Henriette van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models: The Political Strategy of a Newcomer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1–25, at 12–17, and sources cited therein.

⁶⁰ *Off.* 1.27.129 (CCSL 15: 47). Van der Blom also attaches the construction of *mos* to the shaping of "cultural memory," a term coined and popularized by Jan Assmann.

⁶¹ Examples include: *Hex.* 3.7.28 (CSEL 32/1: 77), 3.13.55 (CSEL 32/1: 98), 3.17.72 (CSEL 32/1: 109); *Noe* 8.24 (CSEL 32/1: 429), 11.38 (CSEL 32/1: 437), 12.41 (CSEL 32/1: 439), 14.49 (CSEL 32/1: 447); *Abr.* 2.4.17 (CSEL 32/1: 576); *Bon. mort.* 6.25 (CSEL 32/1: 726); *Fid.* 1.20.135 (CSEL 78: 56); *Ios.* 6.34 (CSEL 32/2: 96). Augustine also uses the metaphor when recalling his time in Milan. See Aug. *Conf.* 5.13.23 (CSEL 33: 110): *Et ueni mediolanum ad ambrosium episcopum, in optimis notum orbi terrae, pium cultorem tuum, cuius tunc eloquia strenue ministrabant adipem frumenti tui et laetitiam olei et sobriam uini ebrietatem populo tuo.*

⁶² See Ambrose's hymn "Splendor paternae." For secondary statements on the phrase, see Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 308; Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose*, 103–5.

of the precise phrase *sobrietas mentis*.⁶³ *Sobrietas* (and related terms) function similarly as *temperantia* and *modestia* in Ambrose's moral vocabulary.⁶⁴ Soberness implied a moderate and measured disposition in acting and in counteracting and preempting the seductive threats of passions that drive the individual to extreme behaviors. Applying the metaphor of soberness to the reasoning faculty (*mens*) would thus demand an even, rational approach in deliberation, and a refusal to be thrown about by the roiling tides of contingency.

From this description of Satyrus, we are further able to discern two qualities of simplicity particular to Ambrose's moral vision and distinctive of a faithful life. First, simplicity is considered childlike in its innocence. I will show that childlikeness, for Ambrose, is imitative of and stems from "the Child," by which he means the promised Son and second person of the Trinity. Second, simplicity shuns pretense, making its practitioners semblances of perfect virtue and mirrors of habitual innocence. The third section analyzes this portrayal of shunning pretense and putting on simplicity, qualities that emerge in Ambrose's depiction of homoians and their theology. The third section thus shows that the exhortation to simple virtue does the double service of being a moral standard and an anti-homoian trope. I thus conclude by showing how, for Ambrose, simplicity as a moral ideal is uniquely pro-Nicene, exemplifying what Ayres has called the "'portability' of ascetic practice and literature."⁶⁵

⁶³ *Hex.* 1.4.14 (CSEL 32/1: 12), 1.8.31 (CSEL 32/1: 32); *Abr.* 2.11.85 (CSEL 32/1: 636); *Patr.* 3.13 (CSEL 32/2: 313); *Hel.* 8.23 (CSEL 32/2: 424); *Off.* 1.3.12 (CCSL 15: 5); *Ep.* 1.19 (CSEL 82/1: 13).

⁶⁴ Examples include: *Psal.* 118 10.43 (CSEL 62:229), 22.15 (CSEL 62: 495–95); *Ep.* 1.19 (CSEL 82/1: 13); *Iac.* 1.2.5 (CSEL 32/2: 7), 1.8.37 (CSEL 32/2: 29); *Off.* 1.3.12 (CCSL 15: 5), 2.16.76 (CCSL 15: 124).

⁶⁵ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 343.

Simplicity as Childlikeness: Imitating the “Beginning” of Virtue

Ambrose’s statement that Satyrus was “converted into a child shining with the simplicity of that guiltless age” (*ut conuersus in puerum simplicitate illius aetatis innoxiae reluceret*) deserves our attention. The expression includes a paraphrase of Matthew 18:3 (*nisi conuersi fueritis et efficiamini sicut puer iste, non intrabitis in regnum caelorum*)⁶⁶, where Jesus exhorts his disciples to become like little children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. At a handful of places, Ambrose mentions either Matthew 18:3 explicitly or the importance of becoming a child in simplicity characteristic of the virtuous Christian.

In his most extensive ethical counsel to young priests, *On Duties*, Ambrose refers to Matthew 18:3 when exhorting his audience to “avoid or temper anger” (*uitemus aut temperemus iracundiam*) so that it does not “limit our praises or exaggerate our vices” (*aut in laudibus exceptio aut in uitiiis exaggeratio*).⁶⁷ Children’s tantrums are then exemplified to express the ease with which the fires of anger can be quenched. “True, children are easily provoked into quarrelling with one another,” Ambrose admits, “but they are calmed down readily enough and revert to their normal selves, more agreeable than they were before; they do not know how to behave deceitfully and artfully.”⁶⁸ A

⁶⁶ This translation is typical of Ambrose’s citation of Matthew 18:3. For Ambrose’s other uses of Matthew 18:3, see *Abr.* 1.5.39 (CSEL 32/1: 532); *Luc.* 8.57 (CSEL 32/4: 420); *Off.* 1.21.93 (CCSL 15: 34–35); *Parad.* 12.59 (CSEL 32/1: 320); *Psal.* 36.52 (CSEL 64: 111).

⁶⁷ *Ambr. Off.* 1.21.93 (CCSL 15: 34–35).

⁶⁸ *Ambr. Off.* 1.21.93 (CSEL 15: 34; trans. Davidson, 173): *Et si cito pueri inter se mouentur, facile sedantur et maiore suauitate in se recurrunt; nesciunt se subdole artificioseque tractare.*

reference to Matthew 18:3 follows, which Ambrose interprets Christologically: “the Lord himself, that is, ‘the Power of God’ (1 Cor. 1:24), became just as a child, ‘though reviled, he reviled not; though struck, he did not strike back’ (1 Pt. 2:23).”⁶⁹ Likewise and perhaps somewhat idealistically, Ambrose states that children have a short memory when it comes to wrongs received, displaying no malice or hints at retaliation, only innocence, recognizing even at their young age that “one fault quickly forges another.”⁷⁰ Ambrose counsels his priests to act likewise: “Guard your place and keep custody of your heart’s simplicity and purity” (*locum tuum serua, simplicitatem et puritatem tui pectoris custodi*).⁷¹

Ambrose’s most detailed descriptions of childlikeness as characteristic of simplicity are in his *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*, books seven and eight, written several years after his comments in *On Duties*. At *Exposition* 7.22–23, Ambrose exegetes Luke 9:48 (“whosoever shall receive this child in my name...”) to introduce the claim that “simplicity ought to be without arrogance, charity without envy, and devotion without anger.”⁷² Luke 9:48 gives Ambrose occasion to reflect on the importance of Jesus’s words and what children and “receiving” them might mean for one’s moral life. The “mind of a child” (*mens pueri*), Ambrose maintains, fulfills the tripartite claim that simplicity should be without arrogance, charity without envy, and devotion without

⁶⁹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.21.93 (CSEL 15: 35): *itaque ipse Dominus, hoc est Dei virtus, sicut puer, cum malediceretur, non remaledixit; cum percuteretur, non repressit.*

⁷⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 1.21.93 (CSEL 15: 35; trans. Davidson, 173). Cf. Sen. *Ira* 2.19.4 (LCL 214: 206–7). Seneca argues that “the anger of children and women is more vehement than serious, and it is lighter at the start.”

⁷¹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.21.93 (CCSL 15: 35).

⁷² Ambr. *Luc.* 7.23 (CSEL 32/4: 292).

anger. By behaving without strings attached or ulterior motives, children are said to act with “purity of affect,”⁷³ and to pursue the “form of virtue” (*formam uirtutis*).⁷⁴

The “purity of affect” and “form of the virtues” are distinguished from the counterfeit “appearance of obedience” (*species obsequiorum*).⁷⁵ The distinction between *forma* and *species* here is an interesting one, given that Ambrose will use the two terms as rough synonyms elsewhere. In *On the Mysteries* 4.25, for instance, Ambrose uses *species* in a paraphrase of both Philippians 2:8 (*Et specie inuentus ut homo*) and John 5:37b (*Neque speciem eius uidistis*), respectively.⁷⁶ This usage of *species*, as we will see later in this chapter, is preceded by a consideration of the difference between the “true dove” (*uera columba*) in Genesis’s flood narrative and the “semblance” (*species*) of a dove which descends on Jesus at his baptism (Mt. 3). Differences in usage notwithstanding, Ambrose utilizes the visual qualities in both *forma* and *species*. By juxtaposing “form” (*forma*) and “appearance” (*species*) in *Exposition* 7.22–23, Ambrose

⁷³ *Luc.* 7.22 (CSEL 32/4: 292).

⁷⁴ Ambr. *Luc.* 7.22–23 (CSEL 32/4: 292). [...] *sed dominus non obsequiorum speciem, puritatem quaerit adfectus. Denique supra ait: quicumque receperit puerum istum in nomine meo. Quo loco dominus simplicitatem sine adrogantia docet, caritatem sine inuidia, deuotionem sine iracundia esse debere; nam et pueri mens prouectoris adfectu recipienda suadet, quia, dum puer nihil sibi uindicat, formam uirtutis exsequitur et, si rationem nescit, culpam ignorant. Tamen quia plerisque non uirtus, sed infirmitas uidetur sine ratione simplicitas, ut tu ueram recipias admoneris, id est ut exsequaris industria munus naturae.* Ambrose uses *forma* and *species* together to explain virtue a couple times throughout his corpus. See *Abr.* 1.1.1 (CSEL 32/1: 501): *Nam si altiore disputatione processus quidam et forma uirtutis et quaedam species exprimatur, tamen forensia quoque actuum eius uestigia spectare uirtutis profectus est*; and *Abr.* 2.1.1 (CSEL 32/1: 565): *Ergo ut mens, quae in Adam totam se delectationi et inlecebris corporalibus dederat, in formam uirtutis speciem que transiret, uir sapiens nobis ad imitandum propositus est.* In addition to these, Ambrose uses the phrase *forma uirtutis* in *Fug.* 4.17 (CSEL 32/2: 178).

⁷⁵ Ambr. *Luc.* 7.22 (CSEL 32/4: 292).

⁷⁶ Ambr. *Myst.* 4.25 (CSEL 73: 99). Cf. *Abr.* 2.11.84 (CSEL 32/1: 635), where Ambrose uses *species* for a “type of thing”; *Hex.* 1.1.1 (CSEL 32/1: 3), which distinguishes “matter” (*materia*) and “form” (*species*); 1.2.5 (CSEL 32/1: 4), where Ambrose uses the phrase “proposed model” (*speciem propositam*) to describe an errant (Timaeon?) view of creation.

aims at aligning inner states and outward appearance. Pursuing and seeing the “form of the virtues” is lauded, while cultivating only an “appearance” is denigrated and shunned.

A fuller exposition of childlike simplicity and its connection to virtue comes in the eighth book of the *Exposition* in light of Luke 18:16: “Let the little children come to me and do not prohibit them; of such as these is the kingdom of heaven.”⁷⁷ Given their feebleness in mind and body, Ambrose wonders why Jesus would name children as worthy of the kingdom of heaven. And, moreover, if children are the promised heirs of the heavenly kingdom, why did Jesus choose grown men as his apostles? What is it about children that indicates their divinely favored status? “Perhaps, because [children] do not know malice,” Ambrose writes,

they have not learned to deceive, they dare not strike back, they neglect to search for wealth, they do not strive after honor and ambition. But virtue is not to be ignorant of those things, but to despise them, nor is there praise of abstinence where there is integrity of weakness. It is not therefore childhood that is designated, but goodness emulating childhood’s simplicity.⁷⁸

Children operate with a certain innocence, Ambrose contends. This is admittedly due in large part to their ignorance. Still, it is their sincere simplicity that Ambrose lauds. Virtue knows not ignorance, but, as children do, it does choose to neglect wealth, honor, and highhandedness. So, true virtue is both embodied by children in its innocence and simplicity and not embodied by children because puerile ignorance is not typical of virtue. It is therefore not childlike immaturity or ignorance that Ambrose lionizes—what

⁷⁷ Ambr. *Luc.* 8.57 (CSEL 32/4: 419–20): *sinite pueros uenire ad me et nolite eos uetare; talium est enim regnum dei.* See also *Luc.* 8.61 (CSEL 32/4: 422), where Ambrose reiterates the teaching highlighted here.

⁷⁸ *Luc.* 8.57 (CSEL 32/4: 419–20; Trans adapted from Tomkinson, 358): *Fortasse quia malitiam nescient, fraudare non nouerint, referire non audeant, scrutari ignorent opes, honorem, ambitionem non appetent. Sed non ignorare ista uirtus est, sed contemnere nec continentiae laus, ubi infirmitatis integritas. Non igitur pueritia, sed aemula puerilis simplicitatis bonitas designatur.*

Ambrose labels “childhood” (*pueritia*)—but “childlike” (*puerilis*) *integritas* and *simplicitas*.⁷⁹

Ambrose continues by again referring to Matthew 18:3 (“Unless you turn and become like this little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”) to reiterate his point. This citation prompts a line of questions and responses pertaining to the precise identity of “this little child” and what it might look like to “turn and become like” him.

He writes:

Who is this boy to be imitated by Christ’s apostles? Not one of the children? So, this is the virtue of the apostles? But, then, who is the boy? He of whom Isaiah says, “For child is born to us, a son is given to us” (Is. 9:6)? For the Child Himself said to you, “Take up thy cross and follow me” (Mt. 16:24). And that you may recognize the Child, when “he was cursed, he did not curse in return; though he was struck, he did not strike back” (1 Pt. 2:23). For this is perfect virtue. Thus, there is in childhood the venerable old age of customs and in old age, an innocent childhood. “For venerable old age is not that of a long time, nor counted by the number of years. But the understanding of men is grey hairs and a spotless life is old age” (Wis. 4:8–9).⁸⁰

Ambrose asks, and subsequently answers, about the exemplary child by citing three verses: Isaiah 9:6 (“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”),⁸¹ Matthew 16:24

⁷⁹ Cf. *Psal.* 36.52 (CSEL 64: 111), where Ambrose does not make this distinction. There, he maintains that Jesus teaches us *pueritia* and its *uirtus* (*ipse nos docuit pueritiam esse uirtutem*). A similar figurative logic can be found in Ambrose’s statements on eunuchs: the demands of the faith are demands of chastity, not castration. See *Ambr. Off.* 2.6.27 (CCSL 15: 107); *Vid.* 13.75 (PL 16: 257–58); *Virgin.* 6.28–30 (PL 16: 273). For more on this sort of figurative exegesis, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 70–103, at 89–92

⁸⁰ *Ambr. Luc.* 8.58 (CSEL 32/4: 420; trans. amended from Tomkinson, 358): *Quis est ergo puer imitandus apostolis christi? Num unus ex paruulis? Haec igitur uirtus apostolorum? Quis ergo puer? Ne forte ille de quo Esaias dicit: Puer natus est nobis, filius datus est nobis? Ipse enim tibi puer dixit: Tolle crucem tuam et sequere me. Et ut agnoscas puerum: Cum malediceretur, non remaledixit; cum percuteretur, non percussit; haec est enim perfecta uirtus. Itaque et in pueritia est quaedam uenerabilis morum senectus et in senectute innocens pueritia; senectus enim uenerabilis est, non diuturna, nec numero annorum computata; cani sunt autem sensus hominum et aetas senectutis uita immaculata.*

⁸¹ *Puer natus est nobis. Filius datus est nobis.* For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s corpus, see *Abr.* 1.8.77 (CSEL 32/1: 552); *Ep.* 17.11 (CSEL 82/1: 126); *Exc.* 1.12 (CSEL 73: 215); *Fid.* 3.7.53–3.8.57, 3.9.60 (CSEL 78: 127–30), 4.1.6 (CSEL 78: 160), 4.6.63 (CSEL 78: 179); *Iob* 4.4.17; *Luc.* 1.40 (CSEL 32/4: 35), 2.55 (CSEL 32/4: 71), 3.8 (CSEL 32/4: 104), 6.4 (CSEL 32/4: 233), 8.58 (CSEL

(“Take up your cross and follow me”),⁸² and 1 Peter 2:23 (“Though he was cursed, he did not curse in return; though he was struck, he did not strike back”).⁸³ The third of these, 1 Peter 2:23, we identified in the last chapter as critical to understanding how the *imago Dei* was to be a “representation of the gospel” (*effigies euangelii*).⁸⁴ This ethic of non-retaliation pervades Jesus’ “precepts” (*praecepta*) and, as Ambrose notes repeatedly, is characteristic of children.⁸⁵

Still, being “converted” to a child might lead us to Nicodemus’s question, a puzzle over how one advanced in years might reverse the course of time. Ambrose argues that there is a wisdom that comes from childhood’s innocence and a similar innocence brought about by wisdom’s age. For support of this claim, he quotes Wisdom of Solomon 4:8–9: “For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years. But the understanding of men is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age” (*senectus enim uenerabilis est, non diuturna, nec numero annorum computata; cani sunt autem*

32/4: 420), 10.112 (CSEL 32/4: 497); *Paen.* 2.4.24 (CSEL 73: 174); *Patr.* 6.31 (CSEL 32/2: 142); *Psal.* 118 10.14 (CSEL 62: 211), 13.7 (CSEL 62: 286), 22.3 (CSEL 62: 490); *Psal.* 1.33 (CSEL 64: 30), 36.52 (CSEL 64: 111); *Sacr.* 2.2.4 (CSEL 73: 26–27); *Spir.* 1.5.66 (CSEL 79), 2.2.20 (CSEL 79), 3.2.9 (CSEL 79).

⁸² *Tolle crucem tuam et sequere me*. For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s corpus, see *Abr.* 1.4.29–30 (CSEL 32/1: 524–25); *Apol. Dau.* 9.47 (CSEL 32/2: 331); *Ep.* 1.15 (CSEL 82/1: 10), 4.16 (CSEL 82/1: 34); *Fug.* 2.6 (CSEL 32/2: 167); *Iob* 3.11.28 (CSEL 32/1: 265); *Off.* 1.29.142 (CCSL 15: 51), 2.3.9 (CCSL 15: 101); *Paen.* 2.10.97 (CSEL 73: 201–2); *Psal.* 118 6.25 (CSEL 62: 121), 13.10 (CSEL 62: 288), 22.34 (CSEL 62: 505).

⁸³ *Cum malediceretur, non remaledicit; cum percuteretur, non repercussit*. For other references to this verse in Ambrose’s corpus, see *Fid.* 3.7.52 (CSEL 78: 127); *Virg.* 13.86 (PL 16: 526); *Luc.* 5.21 (CSEL 32/4: 188), 5.77 (CSEL 32/4: 213), 7.59 (CSEL 32/4: 306), 8.58 (CSEL 32/4: 420); *Off.* 1.21.93 (CCSL 15:); *Parad.* 12.59 (CSEL 32/1: 320); *Psal.* 118 13.27 (CSEL 62: 297), 14.28 (CSEL 62: 317); *Psal.* 37.45 (CSEL 64: 173).

⁸⁴ See *Psal.* 118 22.34 (CSEL 62: 505).

⁸⁵ *Off.* 1.10.33 (CCSL 15: 12), 1.21.93 (CCSL 15: 34–35). See also *Exc* 1.51 (CSEL 73: 237). The demands of non-retaliation are highlighted in Ambrose’s praise of Satyrus, as is evidenced by the organizing passage quoted above. “He quietly absorbed the grief of insult which more sharply he sought to avenge” (*iniuriae dolorem clementer absorbuuit quam inclementius uindicauit*).

sensus hominum et aetas senectutis uita immaculata).⁸⁶ There are only a few patristic references to Wisdom 4:8–9 in early Christian literature, save Origen’s *Commentary on John* which mentions only a portion of Wisdom 4:9,⁸⁷ a citation in Epiphanius’s *Panarion*,⁸⁸ and Gregory Nazianzus’s passing reference to qualities of “old age.”⁸⁹ The amount of Ambrose use of this scripture, here and elsewhere, is unprecedented in the Latin tradition.⁹⁰ The text offers a middle way between the prized character of antiquity and the novelty Christian commitment brings, calling followers to be born anew.

For many Hellenistic Jewish writers, early Christian apologists, and some of Ambrose’s contemporaries, both Greek and Latin, to claim Christianity’s remote antiquity pointed to its superiority over its rivals. In the main, this too is what we see in Ambrose’s writing: saints antedate sages, philosophers, and heroes, and therefore the faithful’s embodiment and expressions of the good life win out.⁹¹ Still, what to do with verses like Matthew 18:3 and Luke 18:16 that laud not the tested wisdom of history, but

⁸⁶ Ambr. *Luc.* 8.58 (CSEL 32/4: 420).

⁸⁷ Orig. *Com. Ion.* 20.10.79.

⁸⁸ See also Epiphanius, *Panarion* 67.4.7, in Williams, trans., *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 312.

⁸⁹ Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration* 43.23.

⁹⁰ For other references to Wisdom 4:8–9 in Ambrose’s corpus, see *Abr.* 2.9.64 (CSEL 32/1: 619); *Cain* 1.3.11 (CSEL 32/1: 346), 2.1.2 (CSEL 32/1: 378); *Noe* 31.119 (CSEL 32/1: 419), *Psal.* 118 2.17 (CSEL 62: 30), 6.20 (CSEL 62: 118), 6.30 (CSEL 62: 123), 13.13 (CSEL 62: 289), 16.6 (CSEL 62: 354); *Psal.* 36.59 (CSEL 64: 117), 43.5 (CSEL 64: 363); *Ep.* 20.9 (CSEL 82/1: 150), 52.5 (CSEL 82/2: 70); *Iac.* 2.8.35 (CSEL 32/2: 52); *Ios.* 8.43 (CSEL 32/2: 103); *Off.* 2.20.101 (CCSL 15: 134). See Gryson (ed.), *Vetus* 11/1, 306–9. For other uses in the Latin tradition, see P.-Nol. *Ep.* 13.6 (CSEL 29: 89); Aug. *Ep.* 218.1 (CSEL 57: 425); Eucher. *Form.* 5 (CSEL 31: 32).

⁹¹ See my forthcoming article, “History and Virtue: Contextualizing Exemplarity in Ambrose,” *JECS* 25.2 (2017). For the production of an exemplary canon in another author, Thodoret of Cyrhus—during roughly the same time—see Krueger, “Typological Figuration in Theodoret of Cyrhus’s Religious History and the Art of Postbiblical Narrative,” 393–419. Krueger maintains that Theodoret’s use of biblical typology, informed by his rhetorical and philosophical education, creates a literary device for ascetical purposes. By appealing to virtuous biblical models and connecting those models to Christ, Krueger argues, Theodoret reshapes (even fabricates) certain events (at 398).

the moral and salvific standing of children, their simplicity and fresh innocence? Wisdom 4:8–9 helps Ambrose solve the apparent quandary; it serves as a bridge verse, wedding the innocence that Christianity demands—the “new creation” at baptism—and the veteran respect of antiquity.

Ambrose’s use of the first verse in *Exposition* 8.58, Isaiah 9:6, is unique in this moral context.⁹² For Ambrose, Isaiah’s well-known prophetic sentence serves to name the Child worthy to be imitated and followed: Jesus is “the Child Himself” (*ipse puer*), Ambrose tells us, who sets out the moral ideal for individuals to look to for guidance. Distinctive of this childlike way is a life of self-denial and non-retaliation, described in the bible verses cited in *Exposition* 8.58. This way of life Ambrose labels *perfecta uirtus*.⁹³ And yet Ambrose’s assertion of the Child as virtuous ideal emerges from a career of engagement with Isaiah 9:6 and its possible moral implications.

On the Faith 3.7.46ff. likely represents Ambrose’s first attempt at using Isaiah 9:6 in connection with the acquisition of virtue. Written around 380 CE, *On the Faith* 3 is remarkably more precise than the work’s first two books, as it tackles the scriptural logic of the homoians rather than engaging broad-brushed comments on the “Arian” heresy. Leading up to his use of Isaiah 9:6 in *On the Faith* 3.7.46, Ambrose disputes the meaning of Proverbs 8:22, a popular anti-Arian reference: “The Lord created me the beginning of

⁹² While he was definitely not the first to refer to Isaiah 9:6, Ambrose was the first, as far as I can determine, to gloss this verse with reference to securing virtue rather than in discussing how the prophet foretold the Son’s birth. For use of Isaiah 9:6 in the generation after Ambrose, and not in the same hortatory ways, see Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria’s Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, 18–30, 60–62.

⁹³ At other points, Ambrose criticizes children for their silly behavior, telling his audience to “stop judging like a child, speaking like a child, thinking like a child, and behaving like a child” (*Off.* 1.16.62 [CCSL 15: 23]). See also *Off.* 1.18.67 (CCSL 15: 25), where the childish silence deserves to be criticized; and *Off.* 3.22.128 (CCSL 15: 201), where Ambrose critiques children for changing friends haphazardly, like Cicero’s arguments in *Amic.* 33–34 (LCL 154: 144–47). For a textual comparison of *Off.* 3.22.128 and Cicero’s, see Davidson, *Ambrose: De officiis*, 2: 899–900.

his ways for his works” (*Dominus creavit me principium uiarum suarum in opera sua*).⁹⁴ Ambrose understands Proverbs 8:22 as a description of the incarnation—the redemption of the Father’s creation is accomplished in the incarnation and works of the Son.⁹⁵ The Son, Ambrose contends, is without a doubt “the beginning” of all things, quoting John 8:25: “[Jesus] was asked, ‘Who are you?’ He answered, ‘The beginning, as I have told you’” (*Cum interrogatus in carne ‘tu qui es?’ responderit: ‘Principium quod et loquor uobis’*).⁹⁶ Ambrose argues that John 8:25 refers not only to the Son’s eternal nature, but to

⁹⁴ *Fid.* 3.7.46 (CSEL 78: 124–25).

⁹⁵ Proverbs 8:22 was a controverted scriptural battleground in homoian-Nicene debates. See “Fragments de Palladius,” 110, 340r–v (SC 260: 294–97) and 134, 346v–347r (SC 260: 315–17). For secondary analysis on the use of Proverbs 8:22 in Trinitarian debates, see Manlio Simonetti, “Sull’ interpretazione patristica di Proverbi 8,22,” in *Studi sull’ Arianesimo* (Rome: Editrice Studium, 1965), 9–87; Michel van Parys, “Exégèse et théologie trinitaire: Prov. 8,22 chez les Pères cappadociens,” *Irénikon* 43 (1970): 363–79; Frances Young, “Proverbs 8 in Interpretation: Wisdom Personified; Fourth-Century Readings: Assumptions and Debates,” in *Reading Texts, Seeking Wisdom: Scripture and Theology*, ed. David F. Ford and Graham Stanton (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 102–15; Sara Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy 325–345* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 38–95, at 57–58, 66, 94; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 106–15, 370; idem, “Exegesis in the Trinitarian Controversies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul Blowers and Peter Martens (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming); Barnes, *The Power of God*, 112, 196–97; Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, *passim*, esp. 30, 50, 102–25, 824–49.

⁹⁶ *Fid.* 3.7.49 (CSEL 78: 125). See also, *Fid.* 5.10.121 (CSEL 78: 262); *Luc.* 10.112 (CSEL 32/4: 497), both of which reference Christ as *principium*. Augustine cites John 8:25 twice, using *principium* both times. See *Aug. Ep.* 149.25 (CSEL 44: 371); *Gen. imp.* 2.3 (CSEL 28/1: 461–62). *Principium* rather than *intium* (or related words) ends up in the Vulgate (*Principium quod et loquor uobis*). In both Ambrose’s references to John 8:25, “beginning” (either *principium* or *intium*) is taken as a nominative (“[I am] the beginning, who speaks to you.”) rather than an adverbial accusative, sometimes labeled an internal accusative, (“Just as I have been telling you from the beginning”). This latter rendering is most typical of English translations. The adverbial accusative is an accusative object which functionally renames the action of the verb. In this case, the literal translation, taking an accusative rendering of *principium*, would be woodenly: “What I speak the beginning to you”, but is rendered “What I have been telling you from (or since) the beginning”). For more on the this construction in John 8:25 and related literature, see Chyrs C. Caragounis, “What Did Jesus Mean by τὴν ἀρχὴν in John 8:25?,” *Novum Testamentum* 49.2 (2007): 129–47; Gualtiero Calboli, “Latin Syntax and Greek,” in *New Perspectives on Historical Latin Syntax: Syntax of the Sentence*, ed. Philip Baldi and Pierluigi Cuzzolin, (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 65–195, at 111–14. Origen mentions John 8:25 in his *Com. Ion.* 19.159–60, but the remainder of the book is lost and he does not mention Jesus as the “beginning.” In the extant text, Origen does not reference Isaiah 9:6. For others of Ambrose’s use of this verse, see *Hex.* 1.2.5 (CSEL 32/1: 4), 1.4.15–16 (CSEL 32/1: 13–14); *Tob.* 19.66 (CSEL 32/2: 559). Each of these texts refers to John 8:25 and uses *intium* rather than *principium* for Jesus’s response. In *Hex.* 1.2.5 Ambrose uses both *intium* and *principium* interchangeably throughout the passage for “beginning,” with little explanation why. With no explicit reason, he refers to two uses of “beginning” in scripture: Genesis 1:1 (*in principio fecit deus caelum et terram*) and John 8:25 (*Intium quod et loquor uobis*). *Hex.* 1.4.15–16 is similar to *Hex.* 1.2.5 in that it uses several different

the fact that he is the “author of each virtue” (*uniuscuiusque uirtutis auctorem*).⁹⁷ In so authoring each virtue, Christ “paves the road to heaven for us” (*ad caelum nobis sterneret iter*),⁹⁸ revealing the ways of the good life driven by holy excellence.⁹⁹ Ambrose writes that Christ is thus both the perfect exemplar of virtue and, as “author” (*auctor*), the very “beginning” (*principium*) of all virtue.

Christ then is the beginning of our virtue, the beginning of our integrity, who taught virgins not to pine for lying with men, but integrity of the mind and of the body more to the Holy Spirit than to a husband. Christ is the beginning of frugality, who “became poor though he was rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). Christ is the beginning of patience, who, “though cursed, did not curse, though struck, did not strike back” (1 Pt. 2:23). Christ is the beginning of humility, who “accepted the form of a slave” (Phil. 2:7), though equal to the Father in his majesty of virtue. From him, each virtue receives its beginning. For this cause then, that we might learn these various virtues, “a Son was given us, whose beginning was upon his shoulder” (Is. 9:6). That “beginning” is the Lord’s cross—the beginning of

words for “beginning” (*initium*, *principium*, and *caput*). When John 8:25 is cited, Ambrose uses *initium*, but later he uses *principium* to describe Christ (*in hoc ergo principio, id est in Christo...*). Ambrose also uses *caput* as synonymous with *principium* and *initium*, indicating that some have translated Genesis 1:1 (*in principio*) from the Greek ἐν κεφαλαίῳ, which they render *in capite*. As far as I can tell, there are three possible reasons for Ambrose’s variations of “beginning” in general and his use of John 8:25 in particular. First, it is possible that Ambrose is using two different sources for John 8:25 in *De fide* and *Hexaemeron*. Second, it is possible that Ambrose came across a variant in the Vetus, which led him to introduce unique terms for “beginning.” Third, it is possible that Ambrose is using these words interchangeably for variety’s sake, for artistic purposes rather than technical ones. Complicating the first two of these possibilities is the fact that Ambrose uses *principium* as “beginning” and in his citation of John 8:25 in *Luc.* 10.112 (CSEL 32/4: 397)—a work the date of which remains uncertain. There is similar uncertainty surrounding the dating of *Tob.* 19.66 (CSEL 32/2: 559), a text that includes *initium* in Ambrose’s citation of John 8:25. Hence, we are unable to say that Ambrose had one textual variant up to, say, the early 380s, and then another after, when he was composing his hexameral homilies. Speculating on precisely why, then, Ambrose uses *principium* at some places and *initium* at others is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁹⁷ *Fid.* 3.7.49 (CSEL 78: 126). See also *Hex.* 1.2.5 (CSEL 32/1: 4), where Ambrose’s description of God as creator bears remarkable resemblance to his statements about Jesus in *Fid.* 3.7.49, where Ambrose writes as follows: *Vnde diuino spiritu praeuidens sanctus Moyses hos hominum errores fore et iam forte coepisse in exordio sermonis sui sic ait: In principio fecit deus caelum et terram, initium rerum, auctorem mundi, creationem materiae comprehendens, ut deum cognosceres ante initium mundi esse uel ipsum esse initium uniuersorum, sicut in euangelio dei filius dicentibus: tu quis es? respondit: Initium quod et loquor uobis, et ipsum dedisse gignendi rebus initium et ipsum esse creatorem mundi, non idea quadam duce imitatore materiae, ex qua non ad arbitrium suum, sed ad speciem propositam sua opera conformaret. Pulchre quoque ait: In principio fecit, ut inconprehensibilem celeritatem operis exprimeret, cum effectum prius operationis inpletae quam indicium coeptae explicauisset.*

⁹⁸ *Fid.* 3.7.50 (CSEL 78: 126).

⁹⁹ *Fid.* 3.7.51 (CSEL 78: 126).

fortitude, whereby a way has been opened to the holy martyrs to enter the sufferings of the holy war.¹⁰⁰

Notice here Ambrose's naming of the virtue is followed by Christ's perfect virtue—self-denial, humiliation, non-retaliation—most fully exemplified at the crucifixion. By associating the Son with “the beginning” to which Proverbs 8:22 refers, Ambrose can point to other “beginnings” embodied by Jesus' life and crucifixion. The reference to Isaiah 9:6, noted above, is remarkable in this respect, as well. The “beginning” from which Ambrose gets his argument comes not simply from the young age of the child promised from Isaiah 9:6, but from the second half of the verse's textual variant: “whose beginning was upon his shoulders” (*cuius principium super umeros eius*).¹⁰¹ *Principium* here is polyvalent, connoting “origin” as well as “precedence,” indicating both the Son's eternity and his preeminence over all others.¹⁰² It is, perhaps, because of the distinctly pro-Nicene context that Ambrose feels obliged to argue for the Son's eternity.

The second half of Isaiah 9:6, as Ambrose cites it (*cuius principium super umeros eius*), sounds odd, since most contemporary translations trade in language of “government” or “power” rather than “beginning.” Ambrose's citation of *principium* for

¹⁰⁰ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.7.52–53 (CSEL 78: 127): *Principium itaque nostrae uirtutis est Christus, principium integritatis, qui docuit uirgines non uiriles expectare concubitus, sed integritatem mentis et corporis sancto magis dicare spiritui quam marito; principium parsimoniae Christus, qui pauper factus est, cum diues esset, principium patientiae Christus, qui, cum malediceretur, non remaledixit, cum percuteretur, non repercussit, principium humilitatis Christus, qui "formam serui accepit", cum patrem deum maiestate uirtutis aequaret. Ex illo enim accepit uirtus unaquaeque principium. Et ideo ut haec uirtutum genera disceremus, filius datus est nobis, cuius principium super umeros eius. Principium illud crux domini est, principium fortitudinis, quo uia sanctis est reserata martyribus ad sacri certaminis passionem.*

¹⁰¹ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.7.53 (CSEL 78: 127).

¹⁰² Ambrose could be adapting this polyvalence of *principium* from Tertullian, who indicates that *principium* has to do both with “order” and with “power”. See Tert. *Herm.* 19 (CSEL 47: 147–48): *Possunt et aliter principium interpretari, non ab re tamen, nam et in Graeco principii uocabulum, quod est ἀρχή, non tantum ordinatiuum sed et potestatiuum capit principatum, unde et archontes dicunt principes et magistratus. Ergo secundum hanc quoque significationem principium pro principatu et potestate sumetur. In principatu enim et in potestate deus fecit caelum et terram.*

the verse is atypical in the Latin tradition preceding him. Other Latins used texts that utilized *imperium* not *principium*, for example.¹⁰³ But Ambrose’s translation most closely follows the LXX, which notes the “beginning” (ἀρχή) being upon the Son’s shoulders.¹⁰⁴

Ambrose indicates that the prophet Isaiah saw this *principium*, which is why he quotes Isaiah 9:6.¹⁰⁵ For all Ambrose’s language of Christ as the *principium* of virtue and his reference to Isaiah’s prophecy of the child, he does not reference Matthew 18:3 (“Unless you turn and become like this little child, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”) or similar verses at *On the Faith* 3.7.53. Christ is the one Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 9:6—the “Child” and the “Son”—the verse does not directly reference a moral ideal, only that Christ is a beginning and that that beginning pertains to virtue.

Ambrose treats each descriptor from Isaiah 9:6 separately, “Child (who is born)” and “Son (who is given).” The Child, he writes, is “a gift from earth,” while the latter, the Son, is “a gift from heaven.”¹⁰⁶ And though each pertains to a discrete type of gift, both point to “one thing, perfect in respect to each, without any mutability of divinity and without any diminishment of human nature.”¹⁰⁷ The magis’ singular adoration shows that “the one who was seen in the stalls is the very Lord of heaven” (*ut ostenderent ipsum*

¹⁰³ See, e.g., Tert. *Marc.* 3.19 (CSEL 47: 408); *Adu. Iud.* 10.11 (CCSL 2: 1378); Lac. *Inst.* 4.12.10 (CSEL 19: 312); Chromat. *Mat.* 5.1 (CCSL 9A: 216), 6.1 (CCSL 9A: 220), 55.2 (CCSL 9A: 473–74).

¹⁰⁴ See Gryson (ed.), *Vetus Latina* 12/1, 288. *Principium* is one of five *Vetus* variants and is representative of a sub-variant of what Gryson calls “le texte européen.” Other variants include: *imperium*, *initium*, *potestas*, and *principatus*. For the LXX use of ἀρχή in reference to the verse, see Eusebius, *Demonstratio Euangelica* 9.8; Basil [Dub.], *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 9.226 (PG 30: 512); Marcellus, *De incarnatione et contra Arianos* 22.91 (PG 26: 1025); Hippolytus, *De benedictionibus Isaaci et Iacobi* 21.222 (PO 27: 88).

¹⁰⁵ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.8.54 (CSEL 78: 127–28).

¹⁰⁶ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.8.54 (CSEL 78: 128).

¹⁰⁷ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.8.54 (CSEL 78: 128): *utrumque unus in utroque perfectus et sine mutabilitate diunitatis et sine humanae inminutione naturae.*

esse caeli dominum, qui in praeseptibus uideretur).¹⁰⁸ Here again, we cannot help but flag the visual logic at work: seeing Christ—this time, at his birth as “Child”—grants insight into his nature as “the very Lord of heaven.”

In the paragraphs immediately following Ambrose’s citation of Isaiah 9:6, he indicates that there are “other places” (*alii*), presumably other textual variants of which he is aware, which include an additional *nobis* (“to us”).¹⁰⁹ With this slight addition, the verse thus reads: “A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us” (*Puer natus est nobis, filius et datus est nobis*). Ambrose uses the additional *nobis* to his rhetorical advantage, indicating that the “to us” is directed not toward the world in general, but to Nicenes in particular. He lists Jews, Manicheans, Marcionites, Photinians, Sabellians, and Arians as those for whom neither a child nor a son was given;¹¹⁰ hence, Ambrose can say that this particular variant of Isaiah 9:6 “extinguishes multiple heresies” (*hic locus multas hereses extinguat*).¹¹¹

The pairing of John 8:25 (Jesus’ statement: “I am the *principium*”) and Isaiah 9:6 recurs in Ambrose’s *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 10.112. There, in exegeting the reasoning for the placement of the sign above Jesus’ head at the crucifixion (“Behold, the King of the Jews”), Ambrose references the two verses—Isaiah 9:6 first, followed by John 8:25.

So the title is written and placed above, not below, the cross, because “the beginning is upon his shoulders” (Is. 9:6). So what is “the beginning” if not his eternal power and divinity? Hence, when Jesus was asked, “Who are you?” he

¹⁰⁸ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.8.54 (CSEL 78: 128).

¹⁰⁹ *Fid.* 3.8.56 (CSEL 78: 128).

¹¹⁰ *Fid.* 3.8.57–58 (CSEL 78: 128–29).

¹¹¹ *Fid.* 3.8.57 (CSEL 78: 128–29).

replied “the beginning, who also spoke to you” (Jn. 8:25). Let us read this title, “Jesus of Nazareth,” it says, “The King of the Jews” (Jn. 19:19).¹¹²

Here, we see that the positioning of the title—*super* not *infra*—leads Ambrose to attach the event with the two scriptures in question. That the sign is near his shoulders conjures up reference to Isaiah 9:6, and Isaiah’s reference to the *principium* recalls John 8:25.

While others prior to Ambrose discussed the nature of *principium* as well as Christ’s relationship to the Father in terms of eternity and virtue, Ambrose is the first Latin to label Christ as *principium uirtutis*.¹¹³ Claiming Christ as the *principium uirtutis* interjects Ambrose into a longstanding and ongoing dialogue with classical philosophers, over the *principia*, the “beginnings” or “principles”, of virtue.¹¹⁴ Cicero names the sides

¹¹² *Luc.* 10.112 (CSEL 32/4: 497). *Scribitur autem titulus et super crucem ponitur, non infra crucem. quia ‘principium super umeros eius.’ principium autem quod est nisi sempiterna uirtus eius atque diuinitas? Unde et ipse interrogatus: ‘tu quis es?’ respondit: ‘principium, quod et loquor uobis.’ Legamus hunc titulum. ‘Iesus inquit Nazarenus rex Iudaeorum.’*

¹¹³ See, e.g., Tert. *Herm.* 19 (CSEL 47: 146–48), which discusses the “true meaning” of the term *principium* with reference to John 10:30, Genesis 1:1, and Proverbs 8:22; Ps.-Tert. *Marc.* 5.200 (CCSL 2: 1453), which refers to Christ as the *uirtus* of the Father *sub imagine*; Lact. *Inst.* 1.7 (CSEL 19: 28), who indicates that God’s virtue cannot be estimated, even as his beginning is not comprehended; Mar.-Vict. *Ar.* 1.58 (CSEL 83/1: 158), where the Holy Spirit is labeled the *principium* of movement and the Son is the *uirtus* of God. Augustine is known for predicating *principium* of Jesus, as well, in distinguishing Christian and Platonic teaching. See, e.g., Aug. *Ciu.* 10.23–24 (CSEL 40/1: 484–86): *Nose itaque ita non dicimus deo uel tria principia, cum de Deo loquimur, sicut nec duos deos uel tres nobis licitum est dicere quamuis de unoquoque loquentes, uel a Patre uel de Filio uel de Spiritu sancto, etiam singulum quemque Deum esse fateamur, nec dicamus tamen quod haeretici Sabelliani. . . . Sed subditus Porphyrius inuidis potestatibus, de quibus et erubescerat, et eas libere redarguere formidabat, noluit intellegere Dominum Christum esse principium, cuius incarnatione purgamur.* For secondary literature on Augustine, Christ, and *principium*, see B. Dalsgaard Larsen, “Saint Augustine on Christ as principium in *De ciuitate Dei*, 10,23–24,” *SP* 22 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 283–89. Larsen mentions Ambrose’s use in passing at 285–86, arguing that Ambrose “interprets *principium* as reign (*principatus*) and finds in John 8,25 Christ’s own testimony that he has won sovereignty by his victory over death” (at 285).

¹¹⁴ By at least the time he pens his hexameral homilies (386 CE), Ambrose appears cognizant of the philosophical freight *principium* can bear. See, e.g., *Hex.* 1.1.1 (CSEL 32/1: 3): *Tantum ne opinionis adsumpsisse homines, ut aliqui eorum tria principia constituerent omnium, deum et exemplar et materiam, sicut Plato discipuli que eius, et ea incorrupta et increata ac sine initio esse adseuerarent deum que non tamquam creatorem materiae, sed tamquam artificem ad exemplar, hoc est ideam intendentem fecisse mundum de materia, quam uocant ὕλην, quae gignendi causas rebus omnibus dedisse adseratur, ipsum quoque mundum incorruptum nec creatum aut factum aestimarent, alii quoque, ut Aristoteles cum suis disputandum putauit, duo principia ponerent, materiam et speciem, et tertium cum his, quod operatorium dicitur, cui subpeteret competenter efficere quod adoriendum putasset.*

of the debate in his *On Ends*, citing several *principia* for virtue and discussing Stoic claims at length. At *On Ends* 4.15.40–4.17.46, Cicero praises the Stoics who label nature the *principium officii*,¹¹⁵ and he argues they are better than most at finding the proper “principle” (*principium*) for action.¹¹⁶ The *principia* serve as both the ideals and the starting points; nature functions as the means by which Stoics know that and how to act.¹¹⁷ If we are right that such considerations are part of the backdrop for Ambrose’s reflections on *principium* of virtue, then saying Christ is the “beginning” of virtue signals his preeminence over nature in matters of moral decision making. It is Christ, and not nature, who instructs us in virtue, which is to be driven by his example of childlike simplicity.

It would be a challenge *not* to draw similarities between Ambrose’s exegetically motivated statements on Christ as *principium* from *On the Faith* 3 and those on childlikeness from *On Duties* 1.21.93 and *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 8.58 and 10.112. Though used in differing exegetical contexts, and not all utilizing Isaiah 9:6, they all have a similar argument: Jesus calls us to be like children in the putting on of simplicity, and the ideal of childlikeness is found in the Son, whose poverty, persecution, and crucifixion constitute both the origins and ideals of virtue.

¹¹⁵ Cic. *Fin.* 4.15.40 (LCL 40: 344-45).

¹¹⁶ Cic. *Fin.* 4.16.43 (LCL 40: 346-49).

¹¹⁷ Cic. *Fin.* 4.17.46 (LCL 40: 350–53).

Semblances of Virtue and Mirrors of Innocence: Embodied Simplicity as Normative

The second aspect of simplicity prompted by Ambrose’s description of Satyrus is that Satyrus “shines with a semblance of perfect virtue” (*perfectae uirtutis effigie*) and “with a mirror of innocence of habits” (*quodam innocentium morum speculo reluceret*).¹¹⁸ Possible philosophical debts aside, this phrase’s similarity to Ambrose’s claim that the well-painted soul is the one in which “a semblance of divine operation shines” (*elucet diuinae operationis effigies*) is plain.¹¹⁹ From it we concluded in Chapter Four that *effigies* functions as an image’s enacted representation and display of invisible realities. Applying this finding to Ambrose’s depiction of Satyrus from *Death of Satyrus* 1.51, we can similarly make the case that Satyrus’ simplicity is necessarily a concrete manifestation, an *effigies*, of perfect virtue and a mirror of innocence. Let us take each predication—Satyrus having a semblance and Satyrus having a mirror—in turn.

The first effect of Satyrus’ simplicity is that he “shine[s] with a semblance of perfect virtue.” Recall our prior analysis of *effigies*, which interpreted the predication this way: Satyrus’ simplicity is a lived representation of virtue. This should not be a surprising conclusion if we recall Ambrose’s consistent reference to *exempla* of the Christian faith throughout his writings. He begins his best-known ethical work, *On Duties*, by enumerating *exempla* from the scriptures; each *exemplum* personifies the very virtues its audience seeks.¹²⁰ Rather than first explicate definitions of the virtues and then

¹¹⁸ Ambr. *Exc.* 1.51 (CSEL 73: 236–37). See Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, 320–25, where he argues that language of “perfect virtue” and “mirror” is likely adapted from Apuleius’s Platonism.

¹¹⁹ Ambr. *Hex.* 6.7.42 (CSEL 32/1: 233–34).

¹²⁰ For Ambrose’s use of exemplars with the end of trumping secular counterfeits, see Wolf Steidle, “Beobachtung zu des Ambrosius Schrift De officiis,” *VC* 38.1 (1984): 18–66, at 20–35; Steidle,

point to those same virtues' manifestation or application, Ambrose does just the opposite, allowing virtuous *exempla* to precipitate further technical analysis. "It is artificial,"

Ambrose contends, "to start by defining duty and then divide it into fixed categories."¹²¹

He continues,

We want to shun artificiality: we would rather present the examples of our ancestors, which are neither difficult to understand nor tricky to handle. The life of our ancestors ought to be a mirror of moral instruction for us rather than a record of our own ingenuity, and we should show respect by imitating them instead of looking clever in the way we structure arguments.¹²²

On Duties 1.25.116 is significant for our purposes on several levels. As we saw earlier in the chapter, the excess of *ars*—translated here as “artificiality”—is a trope often attached to Ambrose’s most bitter doctrinal rivals, the homoians. For Ambrose, Christians sympathetic to Nicaea offer straightforward teaching, unconcerned with technicality or florid explanation. But here, I want to explore Ambrose’s main reason for placing exemplars prior to the definitions of the virtues they embody: *exempla maiorum* are easy to understand.¹²³

“Beobachtung zum Gedankengang im 2. Buch von Ambrosius, De officiis,” *VC* 39.3 (1985): 280–98; Klaus Zelzer, “Zur Beurteilung der Cicero-Imitatio bei Ambrosius,” *Wiener Studien* 11 (1977): 168–91. Ambrose’s impetus for using exemplars for training in virtue is mirrored by his zeal for recovering relics of martyrs, specifically the physical bodies of Gervasius and Protasius. See Filippo Carlà, “Milan, Ravenna, Rome: Some Reflections on the Cult of the Saints and on Civic Politics in Late Antique Italy,” *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 46.2 (2010): 197–272, at 198–211, 238–41. “The relationship between the patron and his believers is based on the physical presence of the relics, and is then strongly connected to the geographical place (or places) where such relics are held” (204).

¹²¹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.25.116 (CCSL 15: 42; trans. amended from Davidson, 185): *Sed hoc artis est ut primo officium definiatur, postea certa in genera dividatur.*

¹²² Ambr. *Off.* 1.25.116 (CCSL 15: 42; trans. Davidson, 185): *Nos autem artem fugimus, exempla maiorum proponimus quae neque obscuritatem adferunt ad intellegendum neque ad tractandum uersutias. Sit igitur nobis uita maiorum disciplinae speculum, non calliditatis commentarium, imitandi reuerentia, non disputandi astutia.*

¹²³ See Seneca’s similar statement in *Ep.* 6.5 (LCL 75: 26–27), “the way is long if one follows precepts, but short and helpful, if one follows examples” (*longum iter est per praecepta, breue et efficax per exempla*). Cf. Plin. *Pan.* 45.6 (LCL 59: 422–23).

We should first note that the signal importance Ambrose places on exemplars in his moral theology is typically Roman. The theme is prevalent throughout Roman educational works with which Ambrose would have been familiar.¹²⁴ Quintilian, for one, praises the effectiveness of foregrounding exemplars and the retelling of national histories for moral training. “Even more important are the records of the notable sayings and actions of the past,” he writes. “Nowhere is there a larger or more striking supply of these than in the history of our own country. Could there be any better teachers of courage, justice, loyalty, self-control, frugality, or contempt for pain and death?”¹²⁵ For Quintilian, examples are easy to follow and readily available; history offers the fullest catalogue of excellent human action and functions as the best and most straightforward pedagogue of virtue.

The significance of easy-to-follow examples was also used to distinguish Roman education from its Greek counterpart. Anthony Corbeill explains these efforts of Roman

¹²⁴ For more on Ambrose’s educational background, see Saterlee, *Ambrose of Milan’s Method of Mystagogical Preaching*, 36–44. For more on grammatical and rhetorical Roman education, see Stanley Frederick Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 189–276.

¹²⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 12.2.29–31 (LCL 494: 236–37). See also Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.15 (LCL 127: 258–59); Val. Max. *Fact. ac dict.* 1.praef (LCL 492: 12–15); *Rhet. Her.* 4.49.62 (LCL 403: 382–87), where a pertinent example is said able to “render a thought more brilliant” and shed “light upon what was somewhat obscure.” See Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire*, 122–59. For a dated, but still helpful treatment of *exempla* in the Roman rhetorical tradition, see Bennet J. Price, “‘Παράδειγμα’ and ‘Exemplum’ in Ancient Rhetorical Theory” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1975). Price is keen to highlight both the general continuity in rhetorical writing on *exempla* and its multiple strands of discontinuity, concluding that it is in general unhelpful to offer an Ur-definition for *exemplum* over the entirety of Greco-Roman literature. Instead, Price contends that we must look to each specific author to see what function examples have. For a recent treatment of the *mos maiorum* in the Roman tradition and with reference to Judaism and Christianity, see Petitfils, *Mos Christianorum*. The formative role of exemplars in the Christian life is continued and expanded in Augustine’s works. See Wetzell, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 112–60; Ayres, “Into the Poem of the Universe: *Exempla*, Conversion, and the Church in Augustine’s *Confessions*,” *ZAC* 13 (2009): 263–81. Ayres’s article shows how Augustine’s use of *exempla* aids in the reconstruction of Christian memory (conversion) and in stimulating ordered desire. Ayres’s conclusions bear resemblance to work in cultural studies. See, e.g., Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

Republican authors to adapt Greek rhetorical elements while simultaneously seeking to distance themselves from those same Greeks. This process, Corbeill contends, sought to “naturalize” Hellenistic models into the Roman social landscape.¹²⁶ This naturalization exacerbated a seemingly understandable, though likely exaggerated, tension between Greeks and Romans, the broad strokes of which are discernable in Cicero and Quintilian, among others. The tension is fueled by a distinction between theory and practice: Greeks prefer theory, Romans, practice.¹²⁷ One implication of Roman exhortation to practice rather than theory was that public display and spectacle became significant educational nexuses, which placed a high price on the budding rhetorical training of established and aspiring Roman elites. What resulted was a growing contingent of Latin rhetors, who themselves adapted the forms and impetuses of Greek rhetoric, while ignoring or lambasting their Greek forebears.

In *On Duties* 1.25.116, Ambrose adapts the Roman argument for exemplarity for argument against all things non-Nicene, using his educational formation against itself. The relative ubiquity of exemplarity’s preeminence in Roman rhetorical manuals should not obscure Ambrose’s uniqueness here. While he continues this traditional reflection on exemplars—say, instead of Greek “precepts”¹²⁸—Ambrose’s stable of exemplars aims to outstrip classical canons by embodying the “simple faith of truth” (*simplex ueritatis*

¹²⁶ Anthony Corbeill, “Education in the Roman Republic: Creating Traditions,” in Yun Lee Too, ed., *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 261–87, at 261–62.

¹²⁷ See Cic. *Rep.* 4.3 (LCL 213: 232–3).

¹²⁸ See Matthew Roller, “Exemplarity in Roman Culture: The Cases of Horatius Cocles and Cloelia,” *Classical Philology* 99 (2004): 1–56.

fides).¹²⁹ Throughout *On Duties* he repeatedly admits the “remarkable” (*praclaerus*) nature of Roman heroes and sages (generals, philosophers, etc.), while nevertheless maintaining that Christian analogues out-simplify, and often antedate, them.¹³⁰

For instance, at *On Duties* 3.12.80–3.13.84, Ambrose contrasts Jephthah’s daughter (Judg. 11–12) and Judith with two Pythagorean sages, Damon and Phintias.¹³¹ After being condemned to death by a tyrannical ruler, the first sage requested to postpone the execution. If he failed to return, the second sage’s life would be taken. The ruler grants the postponement, and is surprised to find the first sage return to be executed on the day promised. In the face of such anxiety, the second sage waited calmly and patiently for his comrade’s return. Once reunited, the sages’ calmness and display of friendship was so disarming and remarkable that the tyrant’s hand was stayed, and he even befriended them.

While Ambrose acknowledges the strong camaraderie between the two sages and lauds their even disposition, he argues that scriptural examples surpass these Pythagorean ideals. Similar to the first sage, Jephthah’s daughter (Judg. 11:30–39) hears of her impending sacrifice and thereupon requests time (two months) to communally mourn not the loss of her life, but her virginity, which was “now to be consecrated by death.”¹³²

¹²⁹ Ambr. *Abr.* 1.2.3 (CSEL 32/1: 503). See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 88–94; Elizabeth Bisbee Goldfarb, “Transformation Through Imitation’: Biblical Figures as Moral *Exempla* in the Post-Classical World” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2005), 165–90.

¹³⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 3.15.92 (CCSL 15: 188). I explore Ambrose’s argument for antedating—or laying claim to Christianity’s remotest antiquity—in my forthcoming article “History and Virtue: Contextualizing Exemplarity in Ambrose.” See also Peter Auksi, *Christian Plain Style: The Evolution of a Spiritual Ideal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995) 144–73, at 150.

¹³¹ See Cic. *Off.* 3.45 (Winterbottom, 126–27). An earlier telling of the story can be found in Cic. *Tusc.* 5.32 (LCL 141: 488–91). Ambrose also names the two sages at *Virg.* 2.5.34 (PL 16: 216).

¹³² Ambr. *Off.* 3.13.81 (CCSL 15: 184). For other references to this story in Ambrose’s writings, see *Off.* 1.50.255 (CCSL 15: 94–95); *Valent.* 49 (CSEL 73: 353). See also John L. Thompson, *Writing the*

Neither friends' tears nor grief nor laments "move" (*mouit*) her¹³³: she freely returned and submitted herself to death. Ambrose offers the example of Judith too, who acted like the Pythagorean sages, but whose courage surpassed the philosophers:

Like them, she showed not a trace of fear at the danger of death. But with her there was more: she showed no fear at the danger to her honor, and that is a matter of graver concern to women of good character. Like them, she did not quake at the prospect of the executioner's knife. But she went further: she did not quake at the prospect of a whole army and all its weaponry.¹³⁴

The courage of both Jephthah's daughter and Judith bears striking similarity to the equanimity of the Pythagorean sages. Ambrose admits as much. However, he makes the case that these scriptural *exempla* are "more remarkable" (*praecellentius*), "more ancient" (*antiquius*),¹³⁵ "much more magnificent" (*magnificentius multo*), "more illustrious" (*illustrius*),¹³⁶ and "amazing" (*mirabilis*).¹³⁷ Both women display courage on a grander scale than do the sages: exhibiting their virtue before armies and entire groups instead of a single ruler. In the case of Jephthah's daughter, Ambrose is keen to point out the

Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 100–78, at 118–21. Thompson admits no real development in Ambrose's usage of the story of Jephthah's daughter throughout his career, but claims that "his comments are best understood as driven . . . by his desired applications" (at 121).

¹³³ Similar language of being "moved," as noted in Chapter Four, is operative in Ambrose's description of the Annunciation. See Ambr. *Off.* 1.18.69 (CCSL 15: 26).

¹³⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 3.13.83 (CCSL 15: 185; trans. amended from Davidson, 405): *Utique quod in illis Pythagoreis duobus mirantur, non expavit mortis periculum, sed nec pudoris, quod est gravius bonis feminis; non ictum carnificis sed nec totius exercitus tela trepidavit.* For more on Ambrose's use of Judith in his corpus, see Virginia Burrus, "'Equipped for Victory': Ambrose and the Gendering of Orthodoxy," *JECS* 4.4 (1996): 461–75, at 472–74; Marcia Colish, "Ambrose of Milan on Chastity," in *Chastity: A Study in Perception, Ideals, Opposition*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 37–60, at 50, 58; Jean Doignon, "La première exposition ambrosienne de l'"*exemplum*" de Judith ("De virginibus", 2, 4, 24)," in *Ambroise de Milan. XVIe centenaire de son élection épiscopale*, ed. Y.-M. Duval (Paris, 1974), 219–28; Fernando Vera, "Los ejemplos femeninos en san Ambrosio" (Doctoral thesis, La Universidad de Navarra, 2003), 154.

¹³⁵ Ambr. *Off.* 3.12.80 (CCSL 15: 184).

¹³⁶ Ambr. *Off.* 3.12.81 (CCSL 15: 184).

¹³⁷ Ambr. *Off.* 3.13.82 (CCSL 15: 185).

contrast between a seemingly meek virgin's action and that of a great philosophical sage. In Judith's example, Ambrose similarly distinguishes between the assumed male victor and the subjugated female: "Her first triumph was that she returned from the enemy's tent with her honor intact; her second was that as a woman she carried off a victory over a man, and put nations to flight through the plan she devised."¹³⁸

Elsewhere, Ambrose's comments on the effectiveness of Christian exemplars and the easy therapy the retelling of their lives brings. His treatise on the life of Abraham is a case in point. There, Ambrose notes at the work's outset that Moses—putative author of Genesis—depicts Abraham's life in such a way as to "resuscitate the hearts of men gliding into vice" (*corda hominum in uitium labentia resuscitaret*).¹³⁹ Ambrose claims that the Abrahamic narrative offers a more lasting "expression of virtue" (*expressam uirtutem*) than its classical counterparts, Plato's *Republic* and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, in particular. Plato's *Republic* presents its readers with "something fictive and counterfeit" (*aliquam fictam et adumbratam*), while Xenophon trades in the "ostentatious falsehood of eloquence" (*ambitioso eloquentiae mendacio*).¹⁴⁰ Ambrose's Abraham, instead, deals with the "simple faith of truth" (*simplex ueritatis fides*): "devotion" (*deuotionem*) and "fruitful virtue" (*efficacia fructuosa*).¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Ambr. *Off.* 3.13.82 (CCSL 15: 185).

¹³⁹ *Abr.* 1.1.2 (CSEL 32/1: 501).

¹⁴⁰ *Abr.* 1.1.2 (CSEL 32/1: 502). A related statement can be found in Ambr. *Luc.* Prol.1 (CSEL 32/4: 3): *scripturi in euangelii librum, quem Lucas sanctus pleniore quodam modo rerum dominicarum distinctione digessit, stilum ipsum prius exponendum putamus; est enim historicus. nam licet scriptura diuina mundanae euacuet sapientiae disciplinam, quod maiore fucata uerborum ambitu quam rerum ratione subnixa sit, tamen si quis in scripturis diuinis etiam illa quae miranda illi putant quaerit*, Ambrose makes the point that the scriptures, and the gospel of Luke in particular, evince a "historical style" (*stilus historicus*) that pierces through the "embellishments of words" (*fucata uerborum*).

¹⁴¹ *Abr.* 1.2.5 (CSEL 32/1: 505). Ambrose uses *efficacia* a handful of times rather than *uirtus* in discussing moral excellence or the unique efficiency of something. See *Exc.* 1.23 (CSEL 73: 222); *Luc.*

Ambrose also lauds *exempla maiorum* because they afford students of virtue “a mirror of moral instruction” (*Sit igitur nobis uita maiorum disciplinae speculum*). Simply put, when we take note of others’ exemplary action, our own shortcomings are laid bare.¹⁴² Ambrose uses a similar phrase in his catechetical work on the patriarch Joseph, for instance, proposing that the patriarch be “set before us as a mirror of purity” (*speculum castitatis*).¹⁴³ As a mirror of purity, Joseph’s character and actions “shine forth with modesty” (*lucet pudicitia*) and reflect the splendor of virtue.¹⁴⁴ Talk of *speculum* works hand-in-glove with our previous analysis of both Ambrose’s doctrine of rival images, borrowed from Origen (Chapter Three), and his claim that divine operation “shines forth” in the soul and is discernible in the character of human action (Chapter Four). If the soul can be said to image its model—be it a biblical or early Christian exemplar or God—it is a short step to say that the agent reflects that model.¹⁴⁵

Talk of a “mirror” of laudable action also helps individuals identify a plumb line of virtue, an ideal to which the agent is tasked to conform. Still, the mirror is not a stagnant principle or set of precepts, but a life lived under the auspices of grace. Joseph’s signal virtue, for instance, is *pudicitia*, annexed to, and lived out with respect to, *castitas*.

10.31 (CSEL 32/4: 467); *Hex* 6.9.61 (CSEL 32/1: 252); *Valent.* 79b (CSEL 73: 367). Cf. *Lac. Ir.* 10.37 (CSEL 27/1: 91).

¹⁴² Ambr. *Off.* 1.25.116 (CCSL 15: 42; trans. Davidson, 185). Cf. Ambr. *Psal.* 118 20.33 (CSEL 62: 460–61), where the gospel is called both the *morum magisterium* and *speculum iustae conuersationis*.

¹⁴³ Ambr. *Ios.* 1.2 (CSEL 32/2: 74). See Colish, *Ambrose’s Patriarchs*, 127–48, at 128–29. For background on Joseph as exemplar in Ambrose, see Anna Maria Piredda, “La tipologia sacerdotale del patriarca Giuseppe in Ambrogio,” *Sandalion* 10–11 (1987–88): 153–63.

¹⁴⁴ Ambr. *Ios.* 1.2 (CSEL 32/2: 74). See Ambr. *Hex.* 6.8.45 (CSEL 32/1: 236), where, by means of a gloss on 2 Corinthians 3:18 (*Nos itaque omnes reuelata facie gloriam dei speculantes ad eandem imaginem reformamur a gloria in gloriam sicut a domini spiritu*), the soul is referred to as a mirror that reflects divine glory.

¹⁴⁵ See Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 46–47.

In his life, Joseph reflects this virtue, and by reading his life and hearing his example, we can envision that virtuous standard and scrutinize and improve our own actions. By beholding beautiful and laudable manifestations of a given virtue, we come to know the content of that virtue and how to enact it. This means of communicating virtue—we might call it “example-first”—serves to reinforce the visual dynamic we have explored in previous chapters on Ambrose’s Christology and moral anthropology. To know God is to see, to “read”, Jesus’ *opera*. Likewise, to know the principles, precepts, or definitions of virtue is to see the virtue performed.

Simple virtue is not only first embodied; its character reveals that it is uncomplicated by passion and driven by holy impulse. In his treatise *On Isaac*, Ambrose interprets Rebecca’s dismounting of her camel and the removal of her veil (cf. Gen. 24:65) as the search for the “true beauty of naked virtue” (*uerum decorum nudae uirtutis*).¹⁴⁶ Ambrose offers two glosses on the unveiling of Rebecca. The first posits that the garment is representative of concupiscence and the trappings of deceit. Such a line would make sense of both Ambrose’s exhortations to chastity and praise of virginity, but also of his repeated warnings against philosophy. The philosophers—cloaked with *pallia*—are accused of interjecting deception and unnecessary confusion into people’s

¹⁴⁶ Ambr. *Is.* 6.55 (CSEL 32/1: 679). Being cloaked in virtue, charity, or God often follows reference to Song of Songs 5:7 (*percusserunt me et uulnerauerunt me, tulerunt pallium a me custodes murorum*). See *Psal.* 118 7.35–36 (CSEL 62: 148), where the Church, personified as a woman, retains her cloak: *Quomodo ergo infra tulerunt pallium, nisi forte quia processu operosae fidei ecclesia dum nudatur, a domino plus amatur, expolians se ueterem hominem, ut nouum induat, quem non operiunt indumenta, sed mentis secreta clarificant, aut quia amictum sapientiae saecularis ad Christum uentura deposuit? Et Noe exutus est pallium, postea quam coepit esse perfectior*. See also *Psal.* 118 14.34 (CSEL 62: 320): *Bonus amictus uitae aeternae. Hoc pallium sponsae custodes uolerunt auferre murorum, quo primus homo fuerat exutus; sed anima Deo deuota quaesitum diu tenendo et non dimittendo dilectum pretioso caritatis diuinae se uestiuit inuolucro. Beati igitur qui tali pallio uestiuntur et amictum huiusmodi legis obseruatione meruerunt*.

minds. And so, by taking off the philosopher's cloak, Rebecca's heart is stripped bare of wrongful desire and excessive education.¹⁴⁷

Ambrose puts forth a second interpretation of Rebecca's unveiling. The soul, when stripped, can be revealed to be of good intent. Ambrose cites John 14:30 for his support: "The prince of this world is coming and in me he will find nothing" (*uenit enim huius mundi princeps, et in me inueniet nihil*).¹⁴⁸ "Nothing" (*nihil*) here indicates an absence of worldly wisdom and convention; hence, when the prince of the world comes, he will find nothing indicative of earthly pleasure, secular learning, or the like. Ambrose then concludes: "Blessed is the one in whom he [the prince of the world] does not find grave or multiple sins, but on her finds an amice of faith and the rule of wisdom."¹⁴⁹ So, again, "nothing" does not convey a physically naked subject, but pertains rather to noteworthy transgression. The faithful are to be "clothed" with garments of faith and the rule of wisdom. This amice of faith and discipline of virtue exemplify true wisdom, inviolable and unassailable to outside forces. Such virtue, such singlemindedness of good intent, bespeaks "true integrity" (*uera integritas*), which "shines forth" (*elucet*) in the face of loss or challenge.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ See Ambr. *Virgin.* 8.48 (PL 16: 278–79), where Ambrose contrasts the philosopher's *pallium* with Christ's, which he also calls the *amicum prudentiae, insigne patientiae*. See also Ambr. *Virgin.* 12.76 (PL 16: 285), 14.85–92 (PL 16: 287–90), where "if one removes the amice of philosophy, then he will draw near to Christ."

¹⁴⁸ For other references to this verse in Ambrose's works, see *Abr.* 2.9.62 (CSEL 32/1: 616); *Bon. mort.* 5.16 (CSEL 32/1: 717); *Ep.* 1.17 (CSEL 82/1: 11); *Fug.* 4.23 (CSEL 32/2: 183); *Iac.* 2.6.24 (CSEL 32/2: 46); *Is.* 6.55 (CSEL 32/1: 679–80); *Luc.* 4.39 (CSEL 32/4: 158); *Off.* 1.49.241 (CCSL 15: 88); *Psal.* 118 14.36 (CSEL 62: 322); *Psal.* 38.27 (CSEL 64: 204–5); *Tob.* 9.33 (CSEL 32/2: 536); *Virgin.* 17.109 (PL 16: 294).

¹⁴⁹ Ambr. *Is.* 6.55 (CSEL 32/1: 680): *Beata et illa est in qua non grauius aut multa peccata inuenit, sed inuenit in ea amicum fidei et sapientiae disciplinam.*

¹⁵⁰ Ambr. *Is.* 6.56 (CSEL 32/1: 680).

As Margaret Mohrmann has pointed out, Ambrose's use of *integritas* as a broad moral category has its roots in his writings on virginity and chastity, writings which bookend his episcopacy.¹⁵¹ The one with integrity is chaste outside and measured inside; her body and soul are harmoniously aligned. Virgins, like children, exemplify true virtue in their innocence, by devoting their entire selves to God.¹⁵² In *On Virgins* (ca. 376/7 CE), Ambrose praises his sister Marcellina, a consecrated virgin, for her "love of integrity" (*amor integritatis*).¹⁵³ Throughout the work, *integritas* functions as a synonym of "chastity" (*castitas*) and "modesty" (*pudor, modestia*),¹⁵⁴ while signaling "virtue" (*uirtus*).

Let virginity be first marked by the voice, let modesty close the mouth, let religion remove weakness, and habit instruct nature. Let her gravity first announce a virgin to me, by a shy approach, by a sober gait, by a modest countenance. Let the signs of virtue be preceded by the evidence of integrity.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ See Margaret E. Mohrmann, "Integrity: *Integritas, Innocentia, Simplicitas*," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 24.2 (2004): 25–37. See also Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie*, 36–45. Cf. Pierre-Thomas Camelot, "Les traités 'De virginitate' au IVE siècle," *Études carmélitaines* 31 (1952): 273–92.

¹⁵² Cf. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 60–68, who identifies differences in tone and function in Ambrose's multiple treatises on virginity. For McLynn, however, virginity serves, by and large, as a diversionary tactic because of Ambrose's unpreparedness to assume the episcopacy. Cf. Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie*, 225–36. Though Madec mentions the role that simplicity of faith plays in Ambrose's works, he omits consideration of simplicity connected to virginity or chastity.

¹⁵³ Ambr. *Virg.* 1.3.10 (PL 16: 191), 1.4.15 (PL 16: 193). This is likely Ambrose's first work as bishop. See Ambr. *Virg.* 2.6.39 (PL 16: 218), where Ambrose mentions that, as a bishop for not even three years, "though untaught by experience," he had "learned much" from the virgins' way of life (*Haec ego uobis, sanctae uirgines, nondum triennalis sacerdos munuscula parauit, licet usu indoctus, sed uestris edoctus moribus*).

¹⁵⁴ Ambr. *Virg.* 1.5.21 (PL 16: 194–95), 1.12.62–63 (PL 16: 205–6), 2.4.22 (PL 16: 212–13).

¹⁵⁵ Ambr. *Virg.* 3.3.13 (PL 16: 223): *Vocis uirginitas prima signetur, claudat ora pudor, debilitatem excludat religio, instituat consuetudo naturam. Virginem mihi prius grauitas sua nuntiet pudore obuio, gradu sobrio, uultu modesto, et praenuntia integritatis anteeant signa uirtutis*. See *Luc.* 7.196 (CSEL 32/4: 371), where celibacy is prized above marriage for its *integritas*; and Ambr. *Luc.* 8.9 (CSEL 32/4: 395), where he maintains that virginity's signal virtue is *integritas*.

The passage is striking for a number of reasons. For one, modest and praiseworthy bodily comportment serves as a bellwether of virginal virtue. Here too we see Ambrose attaching shyness, modesty, gait, and presentation as aspects of womanly *grauitas*. It is, in sum, the seriousness of activity that bespeaks an inward intention steadfast in faithfulness and devotion; the aligning of these makes a true virgin.

Integritas also has the function of negating the effects of sin and slander. In Ambrose's neglected treatise *On Widows*, he contends that a virgin's character, and not her body, has first claim on her. *Integritas* aids her in denying defamation, which in fact is characteristic of the virtue *in se* and not particular to its presence among virgins.¹⁵⁶ Christ's *integritas* is described in similar ways: he "became for us a malediction so that benediction might absorb malediction; that integrity might absorb sin; that forgiveness might absorb judgment; and that life might absorb death" (Cf. Gal. 3:13).¹⁵⁷ Here, in rather striking terms, Ambrose notes integrity's ability to "absorb" sin. Later in the same passage, Ambrose makes his case that since we bear Christ's death within our bodies (Cf. 2 Cor. 4:10), Christ's life should be manifest in our lives, expanding further the reach of *integritas*. "It is not therefore our life we live," Ambrose writes, "but Christ's life, a life of innocence, a life of chastity, a life of simplicity and of all the virtues."¹⁵⁸ *Integritas*,

¹⁵⁶ Ambr. *Vid.* 4.26 (PL 16: 242): *Virgo enim, licet in ea quoque maior sit morum praerogatiua quam corporis, calumniam tamen integritate carnis abiurat.*

¹⁵⁷ Ambr. *Fug.* 7.44 (CSEL 32/2: 198): *Vt benedictio absorberet maledictionem, integritas peccatum, indulgentia sententiam, uita mortem.* Ambrose's argument recalls Galatians 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." See also *Iac.* 1.6.24 (CSEL 32/2: 19), where Ambrose mentions the *uita beata* "absorbs grief" (*absorbet dolorem*); *Ios.* 7.39 (CSEL 99–100), where Ambrose writes that the present age "will be absorbed by the one to come;" *Iob* 1.1.1 (CSEL 32/2: 211), where a godly spirit "should absorb" the "many disturbances" (*multas perturbationes*) of this life; *Psal.* 118 9.3 (CSEL 62: 190–91), where the grace of love "absorbs fear;" *Psal.* 118 17.5 (CSEL 62: 379), where David is saddened but not "absorbed by grief."

¹⁵⁸ Ambr. *Fug.* 7.44 (CSEL 32/2: 198): *non ergo iam nostrum illam uitam, sed Christi uitam uiuimus, uitam innocentiae, uitam castimoniae, uitam simplicitatis omniumque uirtutum.*

innocentia, *castitas*, and *simplicitas* comprise a family of terms; each denotes single-hearted sincerity and uncomplicated purity.

Integritas in particular points to a moral ideal uncompromising in the face of sin and unbothered by worldly snares. It bespeaks a chaste disposition that is simple, straightforward, unadorned, and disaffected with the temptations of the present age, thus recalling Eden's original innocence. In *On the Patriarchs*, Ambrose identifies virgins as *exempla integritatis*, who "to some degree, shine with the flashing of supernal light" (*supernae lucis fulgore resplendeant*).¹⁵⁹ Agnes of Rome (d. 304), a young chaste martyr, outstrips her pagan counterparts because she is said to have triumphed over more adversity and is even "more confident in her constancy" (*constantia confidentior*).¹⁶⁰ These virgins' upstanding character and internal stability again point to the inviolability of the virtues that, once secured, steady the soul and inform human action.¹⁶¹ Elsewhere

¹⁵⁹ Ambr. *Patr.* 3.12 (CSEL 32/2: 131).

¹⁶⁰ Ambr. *Virg.* 1.4.19 (PL 16: 191). See Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie*, 39–40, which argues that throughout *De uirginibus* Ambrose presents the Christian virgin as the angel of earth, lauding her as a living *exemplum*, a category that would have been seen as paradoxical. On the Christian virgin as living *exemplum*, see Ambr. *Virg.* 2.5.35 (PL 16: 216–17).

¹⁶¹ *Virg.* 2.4.22 (PL 16: 212), where Ambrose recounts the story of an unnamed Antiochene virgin who had no desire to be seen in public—conspicuous in her diffidence. When the virgin's first customer, a soldier appears, he cloaks her in his military garb rather than taking advantage of her. The soldier confesses his intentions of saving the virgin from defamation, willing too to be martyred in the process. Ambrose records the virgin *becoming* a soldier, while the soldier *became* a virgin. There are multiple mentions of this episode in secondary literature. Ariel Bybee Laughton, "Virginity Discourse and Ascetic Politics in the Writings of Ambrose of Milan" (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 2010), 94, 114–15; Virginia Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 134–35; Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 242–44; Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 47; Maud Burnett McInerney, *Eloquent Virgins: The Rhetoric of Virginity from Thecla to Joan of Arc* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 71–73; Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 85–88; Colish, "Ambrose of Milan on Chastity," 57–59; Jean Doignon, "La première exposition ambrosienne de l'exemplum de Judith (*De uirginibus* 2.2.24)," in *Ambroise de Milan, XVI^e centenaire de son élection épiscopale*, ed. Y.-M. Duval (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 220–28.

Mary is named the *imago uirginitatis*, the *exemplum* who allows a great number of virtues to shine forth.¹⁶²

Ambrose draws on several of gospel statements to support his calls to simplicity; foremost is Jesus' counsel to be "as wise as serpents, yet simple as doves" (Mt. 10:16).¹⁶³ Ambrose interprets Matthew 10:16 with several different ends in view. In *The Prayer of Job and David*, he identifies Job as serpent-like and shrewd, while David is identified as ingratiating and innocent.¹⁶⁴ Rather than depict the two as conflicting ideals, Ambrose notes how Job's and David's affects work together, referring to Matthew 10:16 as the ideal for balancing shrewdness and simplicity.

A more extensive explanation of the text comes in his work *On Mysteries*, where Ambrose explores the relationship between baptism and simplicity with reference to the

¹⁶² Ambr. *Virg.* 2.2.15 (PL 16: 210). See Ambr. *Psal.* 118 5.3 (CSEL 62: 84; trans. Riain, 55), where Ambrose indicates that Mary is light like the cloud accompanying Israel because of her "virginal integrity. Light too, because she sought not to please the world, but to please God. Light because she did not conceive in sin, but became fruitful by the overshadowing of the Spirit. She brought forth her child not in sin but in grace." *Leuis erat secundum uirginitatis integritatem; leuis erat quae non homini quaerebat placere, sed domino, leuis erat quae non in iniquitate conceperat, sed spiritu superueniente generabat nec in delicto, sed cum gratia parturibat.* See Charles William Neumann, *The Virgin Mary in the Works of Saint Ambrose*, Paradosis 17 (Fribourg: University Press, 1962), 64–66.

¹⁶³ For references to this verse in Ambrose's corpus, see *Abr.* 2.8.59 (CSEL 32/1: 613); *Aux.* 21 (CSEL 82/3: 95); *Hex.* 5.7.17 (CSEL 32/1: 152), 5.14.49 (CSEL 32/1: 177); *Fid.* 3.16.130 (CSEL 78: 154); *Fug.* 7.40 (CSEL 32/2: 195), 9.58 (CSEL 32/2: 207); *Inst.* 1.4 (PL 16: 306), 17.112 PL 16: 332); *Iob* 4.1.1 (CSEL 32/2: 267); *Luc.* 2.74 (CSEL 32/4: 80), 2.92 (CSEL 32/4: 94–95), 9.34 (CSEL 32/4: 451); *Myst.* 4.25 (CSEL 73: 98–99); *Psal.* 118 6.15–17 (CSEL 62: 115–17), 14.38 (CSEL 62: 323–24); *Psal.* 36.10 (CSEL 64: 76–77), 37.8 (CSEL 64: 142); *Virgin.* 12.70 (PL 16: 284). Ambrose also uses others of Jesus' statements, regarding deception and simplicity, like Matthew 5:37 ("let your yea be yea, your nay be nay..."), 8:20 ("Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests..."), and Luke 9:58 ("Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests...").

¹⁶⁴ Ambr. *Iob* 4.1.1 (CSEL 32/2: 267): *Multi quidem deplorauerunt infirmitatem fragilitatis humanae, excellentius tamen ceteris sanctus Iob et sanctus Dauid. Ille superior directus uehemens acer et quasi grauibus exasperatus doloribus maiore coturno: hic blandus et placidus atque mansuetus, mitiore affectu, ut uere quem imitandum sibi proposuit cerui imitaretur affectum. Nec te moueat, si tantum prophetam ferae similitudine uidear praedicare, cum legeris ad apostolos dictum: 'Estote astuti sicut serpentes, simplices sicut columbae.'* See also *Luc.* 2.74 (CSEL 32/4: 80), where the Jews are said to have had "natural prudence" (*prudentiam naturalem*); and *Luc.* 9.34 (CSEL 32/4: 451), where Matthew 10:16 is quoted to support dealing shrewdly with heretics.

Spirit's descent in the "likeness" (*species*) of a dove at Jesus' baptism.¹⁶⁵ The mention of the dove recalls Noah sending out an actual, that is, a "true dove" (*uera columba*; Gen. 8:8–12), which raises for Ambrose a potential objection: How can the Noahic narrative be a foreshadowing of what is to come if Noah sent out a "true dove" (*uera columba*) and only a "likeness" (*species*) of a dove descended upon Jesus? Ambrose responds that nothing is more real than the Godhead (*diuinitas*), which "remains" (*manet*) forever, and thus, the physical ("true") creature (dove) is not the reality, but only a likeness.¹⁶⁶ Likewise, those baptized into the name of the Godhead are to be simple "not in likeness . . . but in truth."¹⁶⁷

Ambrose's use of "remains" (*manet*) here recalls John 14:10—that the Father "remains" with the Son and the Son with the Father—a verse contested throughout anti-monarchian and anti-homoian debates.¹⁶⁸ The verse, as we noted earlier, prompts consideration of Jesus' visible *opera* and invisible *diuinitas*. Ambrose's seemingly passing reference to the verse here is intended not only to point to the eternity of the

¹⁶⁵ Ambr. *Myst.* 4.25 (CSEL 73: 99). Cf. *Luc.* 2.92 (CSEL 32/4: 94–95): *Quare sicut columba? simplicitatem enim lauacri requirit gratia, ut simus simplices sicut columbae. Pacem lauacri requirit gratia, quam in typo ueteri columba quondam ad illam arcam, quae sola fuit diluuii immunis, aduexit. Docuit me cuius typus columba illa fuerit, qui nunc descendere dignatus est in specie columbae, docuit in illo ramo, in illa arca typum fuisse pacis et ecclesiae, quod inter ipsa mundi diluuii spiritus sanctus ad ecclesiam suam adferat fructuosam. Docuit etiam Dauid, qui prophético spiritu cernens baptismatis sacramentum ait: quis dabit mihi pinnas sicut columbae?* Ambrose could be read as requiring simplicity in order to be baptized, depending on how the verb *requiro* is taken, whether as a prerequisite or a resulting demand. I take *requiro* here as the resulting demand of baptism, read in accord with the passage in *On Mysteries*. See also Geir Hellemo, *Adventus Domini: Eschatological Thought in 4th Century Apses and Catecheses* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 121–24; Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 215–16.

¹⁶⁶ Ambr. *Myst.* 4.25 (CSEL 73: 99). Ambrose later cites Philippians 2:8 ("being found in human form, he humbled himself...") and John 5:37 ("you have never heard his voice nor seen his form"), which indicate both that Christ was found in the *species* of humanity and that no one has seen the Father's *species*, respectively.

¹⁶⁷ Ambr. *Myst.* 4.25 (CSEL 73: 99). Cf. Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue*, 154–55, which mentions the passage but nothing of the unique vocabulary.

¹⁶⁸ E.g., Tert. *Prax.* 24.7–8 (CCSL 2: 1195). See also See Heine, "Christology of Callistus," 61–63, 68–71, 75–78.

Father abiding with the Son, but, I would argue, also to foreground the visual logic that recurs throughout his theology. Here, Noah's dove, while appearing "true" (*uera*), portends a "likeness" (*species*) of a dove that is, in fact, truer than the *uera columba* of Genesis. The logic might initially strike us as backwards: Noah's physical dove is actually a *likeness*, and the likeness of a dove from Matthew's gospel is actually *truer than the physical dove*. Ambrose completes the analogy with respect to true simplicity. True simplicity is distinguished not only by concrete expressions of virtue. True simplicity is to reside deep within, and, as we saw, is rooted in pro-Nicene allegiance.

Conclusions

This final chapter has argued that, for Ambrose, the distinctiveness of Christian virtue lies in its simplicity. These calls to simplicity did the double service of dismissing non-Nicene theology and theologians and serving as moral ideal. To demonstrate this double point, we first examined Ambrose's dismissal of homoian representatives at the Council of Aquileia. The Council's proceedings, we noted, depict Palladius and Secundianus as initially diffident, only to write them off as deceptive in presenting their non-Nicene theology. Such perfidy betrayed inner disturbance and theological misstep and should be rejected by true Christian adherents.

Against those who would write off Ambrose's conciliar arguments as power grabs and dramatically non-theological, I next analyzed a portion of Ambrose's elegy of Satyrus, where he lauds his late brother's simplicity. The first quality of simplicity I noted was its connection to childlikeness and innocence. Such a call to childlike innocence and virginal purity went beyond the imitation of a child or virgin, but tapped

into the source of virtue—the Child—who is, as Ambrose says, the “beginning of virtue” (*principium uirtutis*).¹⁶⁹ Language of *principium*, we noted, interjects Ambrose into a longstanding philosophical debate over the *principia*—the sources and measures—of virtue.

Ambrose also depicts Satyrus as shining with a “semblance of perfect virtue, and with a mirror of innocence of habits,” a description that recalls both Ambrose’s doctrine of rival images and the importance of enacted virtue for disclosing holy habits.¹⁷⁰ The simple’s innocent habits, Ambrose contends, contrast with her dissenters’ equivocating jargon and argumentative ornamentation; the Christian is to be dovelike in her simplicity, neither duplicitous nor deceptive. For Ambrose, then, simplicity of word and deed disclosed an inner stability and holy intention only Christian exemplars could instill. These exemplars, renown for their simple virtue, had a corner on the “beginnings” of moral excellence. These exemplars ultimately depend on the Son, the true *principium* of virtue.

That Jesus is the “beginning” means two things for Ambrose. Jesus is first the source of virtuous human action, which makes Jesus divine since God alone paints virtue in the soul. Thus, when Christians act simply, their virtue points to the true roots of virtue itself. Secondly, *principium*, we also noted, functioned as standard. Since Jesus is the first expression of virtue, he represents the standard according to which all action is to be assessed. And so, as truly simple, the Son sets the standard for our earthly pursuits of simplicity. The inverse, however, is also true for Ambrose: if one is not truly simple, he is

¹⁶⁹ Ambr. *Fid.* 3.7.52–53 (CSEL 78: 127).

¹⁷⁰ Ambr. *Exc.* 1.51 (CSEL 73: 237).

not connected to the Son. Such a claim was wielded early and often by fourth-century Nicenes to winnow dissenters from their ranks and to demarcate normative Christian belief and expression. Ambrose follows suit, depicting his specific opponents, the homoians, as devious and vicious. In so doing, he is able to distinguish pro-Nicene virtue from its non-Nicene counterfeits, linking simple virtue to orthodoxy and vice to all things non-Nicene.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing has reconsidered the ways in which Ambrose's theology holds together by means of a "visual" logic. Ambrose's *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 1.5–1.9 has served as our organizing passage and, I have claimed, represents the heavy lifting this visual logic performs. There, in exegeting Luke 1:2, Ambrose comments on both the "eyewitnesses" and "ministers of the Word;" the former comment animates Ambrose's Christological reflections, while the latter dictates analysis of human action. Both Christological and moral elements operate by means of this visual logic, that works indicate nature. This is a unique crystallization of Ambrose's theological innovation, an innovation that I have traced in the chapters above.

In Ambrose's Christological reflection I have argued that the general contours of this visual logic follow the script that the concrete works of the Son disclose the invisible divinity (or power) that the Father and Son share. In Chapter One, I showed that Latin precedents to Ambrose (Tertullian, Novatian, Hilary, and Marius Victorinus) use a common collection of scriptures which foreground this visual logic. Though separated by history, location, and station, these four precedents help lay for us the distinctly Latin theological ground Ambrose trod. Chapter Two presents Ambrose in the same exegetical traditions as his Latin forebears, hard at work using similar scriptures, to make the case for the Son's shared divine power with the Father. This Christological reflection is held up against homoianism, which staked its claim on many of the same texts.

Against non-Nicene theologians who argued for multiple powers based on differing divine revelations, Ambrose maintains a pro-Nicene theology that there is a

single, invisible power that the divine persons share. If it is the case that there is a single divine power, then, Ambrose says, the divine persons are unified in their operation.

Against other non-Nicenes, Ambrose can thus make the related point that the relationship of the Father and Son is non-bodily. Texts from John's gospel which tell of Jesus's works proving his divinity, as well as references to Jesus as the image of God, fund Ambrose's pro-Nicene polemic.

I have further argued, following *Exposition* 1.5–1.9, that Ambrose's moral theology operates by means of a similar visual logic. Throughout Ambrose's counsel to priests and catechumens, for instance, we have seen the importance of concrete virtuous human action for discerning unseen moral motivation. How a priest walked proved critical for discerning his intent and theological allegiance. While these statements could be seen as a rhetorical smokescreen to garner political authority, I have contended that Ambrose's purpose is moral and theological: to read an individual's action made sense of his moral standing.

That this moral counsel shows evidence of a similar visual logic as his Christology, I have maintained, is no coincidence but the necessary conclusion drawn from Ambrose's doctrine of the image of God. In Chapter Three, I showed that Ambrose's doctrine of the image of God hinges on a unique gloss of Isaiah 49:16 ("Behold, Jerusalem, I have painted thy walls"). From this verse, Ambrose argues for God as the Painter, and thus Source, of all good human works, and that the well-painted soul is the one in which a semblance of divine operation shines. This latter phrase, which I took up in Chapter Four, offers explanation for why human action follows the character of its divine source.

Chapter Five considered Ambrose's call to simplicity as the distinct Christian content of virtuous human action. This call to simplicity, I have argued, was consistent throughout his career, discerned over a variety of contexts. We saw Ambrose upholding the moral ideal of "simple" word and deed in both his two-part elegy for his late brother and in his exchanges with Palladius and Secundianus at the Council of Aquileia in 381 CE. I have pointed to Ambrose's explanations of exemplars (virgins, Hebrew patriarchs, etc.) as offering insight into the functional content and the effects of simplicity. Ambrose reiterates that the faithful have a unique corner on this content and these effects because they are childlike in their simplicity, following after the Child, a claim Ambrose supports with reference to Isaiah 9:6. As Child, Ambrose contends, Jesus is the "beginning" (*principium*) of virtue, further drawing on a variant of Isaiah 9:6 ("...and the *principium* shall be upon his shoulders").

In depicting his homoian opponents as un-simple, deceptive, and duplicitous, I have argued, Ambrose weds his theological heritage and his traditional Roman education. In other words, what Ambrose offers us is a distinctly Latin pro-Nicene moral theology that pairs orthodoxy with virtue.¹ This conclusion charts a third way between Neil McLynn's Ambrose, a savvy politician masked as a theologian, and Warren Smith's Ambrose, a contemplative Greek sort who owes his theological contribution to most (if not *all*) things Hellene.

¹ The aligning of orthodoxy and virtue supports Ayres' conclusion about the so-called "'portability' of ascetic practice and literature." See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 343. "When non-Nicene theology is seen to result both from a failure to maintain appropriate attention to the mysteriousness of God and from an inappropriately trained soul, it is not surprising that in the homilies of many pro-Nicene authors there is a conscious attempt not simply to encourage people to join ascetic communities, but to encourage those who continue to live within non-sexual-renunciating families to adopt practices that stem from ascetic contexts."

The truth of the matter is that both McLynn and Smith give us necessary portraits of Ambrose's complex persona as bishop in the functional capitol of the Roman Empire. McLynn cleverly paints a portrait of Ambrose so carefully edited and so self-aware that he cannot be trusted. Ambrose's theology, for McLynn, likewise cannot be trusted, only treated as rhetorical artifact to help reconstruct Ambrose's public aplomb. In sum, McLynn's Ambrose is too Roman to be theological. Smith's Ambrose is different, pious and aiming for the flight of the immaterial soul. The Hellenistic writing is on the wall: Smith's Ambrose baptizes Greek philosophical and theological sources for the crafting of his orthodox program of catechesis and *askesis*. In sum, Smith's Ambrose is too much of a Greek to be Roman, at least Roman in the ways McLynn proposes.²

I agree with McLynn that Ambrose was politically savvy, using his rhetorical tools to leverage social and political renown, but I have also argued that this savvy and rhetoric do not and should not trump Ambrose's theological innovation. I agree with Smith that Ambrose used his facility with Greek sources, both theological and philosophical, for pious ends, but I have also made the case that Ambrose remained Latin and Roman at heart. Plato, Philo, and Origen might feature prominently, but so do Quintilian, Cicero, Tertullian, and Hilary, sources from the canon of Ambrose's education.

² These competing portraits are unsurprising in view of Peter Brown's depiction of Ambrose as a two-faced man. See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 69–78. Brown names Ambrose as a power-savvy “man of action” with a soft spot for the Song of Songs (at 73). It was this latter Ambrose—contemplative and “other-worldly,” with an abiding appreciation of Greek sources—who mentored a young Augustine. Such an emphasis on the immaterial, coming from someone with such immense political clout, was jarring for Augustine. For the most part, scholarship has traveled along the fault line Brown identifies to describe *either* Ambrose's political leverage *or* his Hellenistic sampling.

This dissertation has thus cast Ambrose's rhetorical tools and training in light of his theology and his theology in light of his rhetorical tools and training. What I have identified in both Ambrose's education and theology is a common logic that visible works disclose invisible nature. In his teaching on Christian virtue, Ambrose transformed the ideals of the virtuous orator: outwardly a statesman and inwardly at rest. I have shown this dynamic to be similar to Ambrose's trinitarian theology: that the Son's *opera* manifest his divine status and indicate his shared invisible power with the Father. In short, I have argued that Ambrose judged his understanding of God the Trinity to be related to his understanding of virtue and the good by means of a visual logic, a logic he found in both his Latin Christian tradition and in his Roman rhetorical tradition.

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