The Letter Collection of Ruricius of Limoges

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will discuss the organization of the letter collection of Ruricius, bishop of Limoges from ca. 485 to 506/7. Ruricius' two-book collection (found in a *unicum*, the *Codex Sangallensis* 190) contains a variety of conventional letter types, set within the specific and complex socio-cultural setting of late 5th to early 6th century Gaul in transition. Ruricius' collection complements the three other major extant Gallo-Roman letter collections of this period, those of Sidonius Apollinaris, Avitus of Vienne, and Ennodius of Pavia. Yet, as a result of Ruricius' scanty references to contemporary historical circumstances, his letter collection has traditionally received less attention in studies of letter collections and late 5th century Gaul. However, the value of his letters as a late-antique letter collection for literary study is promising.

The aim of this thesis is to engage with the letters of Ruricius and consider them from the perspective of a letter collection with potentially deliberate principles of organization. This is particularly pertinent for the 18-letter Book I, which shows clear signs of deliberate organization by Ruricius. Furthermore, there are compelling hints of deliberate organization in the 65 letters of Book II. This thesis will investigate both Books I and II. Through an analysis of the collection's organizational principles, themes and imagery, and Ruricius' self-presentation, we will investigate Ruricius' presentation of his journey from secular aristocrat to bishop in Book I and his epistolary persona of bishop and guide in Book II.

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INTRODUCTION

Ruricius' Letter Collection

This thesis will examine the letter collection of Ruricius, bishop of Limoges from ca. 485 to 506/7.[1] Ruricius' letters are collected in two books of unequal length, containing 83 letters in total.[2] Book I contains 18 letters, while the second contains 65 letters, which is the equivalent of four conventional books.[3] The letter collection is only found in a *unicum*, the *Codex Sangallensis* 190. The manuscript also contains 13 letters written to Ruricius by 7 different authors, one notably being Faustus of Riez.[4] Mathisen identifies the first book as containing letters dating to between ca. 470 and ca. 485-490, arranged into a rough chronological progression forward in time, beginning with letters from the 470s and concluding with letters from the later 480s.[5] The second book is much less chronological in nature and Mathisen points out that the later letters, 2.49-64, were likely written before 496 but that letters 2.33-36 can be dated to 506.[6] Mathisen suggests that Book II includes 3 sections of chronological groups: 2.1-20 deal with ca. 485-500; 2.21-40 deal with after ca. 495; and 2.41-65 are a 'leftover' group.[7]

Ruricius' collection was written in the same period as several other prominent collections from Gaul, including the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris, Avitus of Vienne, and Ennodius of Pavia. However, Ruricius has received comparatively little attention in scholarship.[8] The publications on

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[1] For contextual information on Ruricius and his period and region, see the extensive introduction to Mathisen 2011.
[2] Mathisen 2011: 52. See footnote 14.
[3] Mathisen 2011: 51-52. Mathisen discusses how the number of letters in Book II varies between 63, 64, and 65. This thesis will follow Mathisen and the others with 65; see Mathisen 2011: 57 for 'four conventional books' considering Sidonius' 11-25 letters per book.
[4] For discussion of the *Codex Sangallensis* 190, which contains Ruricius' letter collection, see Mathisen 1998 ("*Codex*").
[5] Mathisen 2011: 56.
[6] Mathisen 2011: 57. Note that Mathisen's dates are in ranges in many cases.
[7] See Mathisen 2011: 56-59 for his hypothesis and reconstruction.
[8] There are only 31 entries for Ruricius in l'*Année Philologique*.

his collection are few despite their authors pointing out the value and interest of Ruricius' collection and calling for further study.[9] Focused literary analyses of Ruricius' letters are particularly few in number. The current thesis is intended to contribute to the existing work on Ruricius' letter collection as an analysis of the organizational and literary aspects of the collection. In this introduction, we will outline the structure of the present thesis' investigation of Ruricius' collection, then discuss the state of scholarship on ancient letters as well as Ruricius' letters specifically.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis will treat Book I in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 will analyze the organizational principles present in Book I, while Chapter 2 will focus on Ruricius' use of themes and imagery. Together, Chapters 1 and 2 will propose that Ruricius presents a deliberate arc of his conversion to the religious life in Book I, using both addressee/topic and artistic organization. Chapter 3 will investigate Ruricius' presentation of his epistolary persona in Book II, analyzing the five largest clusters of letters within Book II: 2.1-5 to Namatius and Ceraunia; 2.8-11 to Aeonius and Pomerius; 2.24-28 to Constantius, Apollinaris and Ommatius; 2.32-37 to Agricola, Caesarius, Sedatus and Parthenius and Papianilla; and 2.49, 2.55-58 to Aprunculus. In these five clusters, Ruricius' epistolary persona is presented as a bishop and guide, focused on mutual benefit and reciprocal relations with his addressees. Ruricius also encourages the reader to interpret his bishop persona in Book II as the successful continuation of his arc of conversion in Book I through references to Book I, suggesting the possibility that Book II contains Ruricius' plans for subsequent books to follow Book I.

[9] See Mathisen 2011: 2-3 and Moussy 2000: 85.

Scholarship on Ancient Letters[10]

Ancient letters have been read and studied since antiquity, when they were imitated for style and form as well as mined for historical information.[11] The sheer number and variety of ancient letters which have survived from a wide range of periods and geographical areas throughout antiquity contribute much material for discussion amongst scholars. While scholars have been primarily interested in using letters for documentary historical data since the 19th century and into the present day, in the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st there has been a noticeable turn towards their literary aspects, moving towards a broader understanding of the genre.[12]

This literary turn in ancient letter studies encompasses a number of points of discussion, such as the approach to and conceptualization of letters, touching notably on questions of genre, definition and classification. Not only has this new focus been applied to individual letters, but there has been much recent scholarship focused on letter collections, and many studies have been carried out on the 'genre' quality and nature of the letter collection itself as well as the corpora of individual authors from Cicero into late antiquity. Scholars have also recently focused on different aspects of letters beyond the literary aspect, including topics such as the materiality of letters, letter-writing instruction and theory, and the socio-cultural context of letters.[13] Ultimately, the

[10] It should be noted that scholarship pertaining specifically to New Testament letters and Early Christian letters will not be treated extensively here (unless the publication is influential for broader epistolary studies) given that this scholarship is not relevant to the thesis topic on the letter collection of Ruricius.
[11] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1.
[12] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1.
[13] Publications on these subjects will not be included in this discussion given that the current thesis focuses on the organization and thematic presentation of Ruricius' collection. Suggested reading: for studies on ancient theorists of letters and manuals, see Malherbe 1988 and Poster 2007; for studies on materiality in ancient letters, see Williams 2014 and Sarri 2018; for socio-cultural discussions, see Mathisen 1981, 1998 ("*Codex*"), 2001, and 2011 on 5th to 6th century Gaul or, for this approach in a different area and time period, see Howard 2013 on the socio-cultural function of letters of the Cappadocian Fathers in the 4th century Greek East.

development that we see in scholarship has been towards a more functional approach to letters, emphasizing their literary aspect as opposed to their documentary aspect and setting aside overly rigid categorizations in favour of a broader and more fluid view of letters.[14]

A name which is frequently cited in ancient letter studies is Adolf Deissmann, influential in New Testament scholarship.[15] He is most often referred to for his contribution to the difficult issue of how we can define and categorize ancient letters, an issue which continues to be discussed in publications to the present day. In his *Light from the Ancient East: the New Testament illustrated by recently discovered texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (first published 1909), Deissmann introduces an influential distinction between the 'real' letter (*Brief*) and the 'literary' letter (*Epistel*). [16] In his conception, the 'real' letter is a private document lacking in artistry or convention, whereas the 'literary' letter is public and written by authors consciously interested in imbuing them with conventional and literary elements.[17]

In subsequent work, Stanley K. Stowers – another influential scholar in ancient letter studies – noted that this binary has been highly influential among New Testament scholars and has been difficult to overcome despite being criticized.[18] However, Stowers spends some time refuting Deissmann's binary, mentioning several limitations including the suggestion that Deissmann's contrast of natural letters vs. conventional letters is a product of ideas attributable to the writings of 19th and early 20th century Romanticism, disproven by more recent theories of a conventional aspect to all human activity.[19] Stowers is a prominent representative of the movement away from

[14] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 2; Stowers 1986: 23-27.
[15] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1-2 mentions him first in their discussion of scholarship on letters; Stowers 1986: 17 calls him a 'dominant figure'.
[16] Deissmann used these papyri documents to formulate ideas on the genre and circumstances of New Testament letters and used this binary distinction to argue that the letters of Paul were 'real' letters.
[17] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 2; Stowers 1986: 18.
[18] Stowers 1986: 18; Knight 2002: 4 also discusses criticism of Deissmann.
[19] Stowers 1986: 19-20.

19th century views towards an approach to letters which emphasizes the importance of the functional aspects and social context of letters – the broader aspects of ancient letters which a too narrow focus can obscure from modern scholars.[20] His discussion of the variety of types of letter as well as his discussion of scholarship on letters, in particular his criticism of Deissmann's distinction between real and literary letters given that all letters are literature and contain stylized conventions, are referenced by many subsequent authors who tackle the issue of genre and definition in this field, representing the now largely undisputed position in scholarship against a Deissmann-like binary in considerations of ancient letters.[21]

In the more recent literary and functional approach, rigid definitions and categories have given way to a more fluid understanding of letters and less focus on genre and 'watertight' definitions.[22] An example of this more fluid understanding of letters is the movement towards recognition of the impossibility of accepting ancient letters as presenting unbiased, documentary evidence and the role of fiction and conventional rhetoric in every letter, even those not deliberately fictional or consciously literary.[23]

In the discussion of genre in ancient letters, scholars have taken a variety of positions, from the abolition of the distinction between letter and other genres[24] to the approach that considers letters as genre and attempts to determine a functioning definition of the letter. Building on this trend toward a less-restrictive but still useful definition of the letter in his *Greek and Latin Letters: An Anthology with Translation* (2003), Michael Trapp is considered one of the foremost scholars

[20] Stowers 1986: 18-22.
[21] Knight 2002; Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017; Trapp 2003. A great number of discussions on genre and definition will contain some reference to dismissal or advancement past Deissmann.
[22] Gibson and Morrison 2007: 15-16; Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 2; also, see introduction Trapp 2003: 1-47.
[23] Knight 2002: 2-3; Stowers 1986: 19-20; Trapp 2003: 3-4.
[24] Gibson and Morrison 2007: 3; Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1. See Derrida 1987.

of the literary turn in ancient letter scholarship in the Anglo-American tradition.[25] Definition of letters, classification of letters, and whether or not they should be considered a 'genre' or not, are subjects that are discussed in almost every introduction to any publication on ancient letters. It is also almost universally acknowledged that it is a difficult, even potentially impossible, subject to ever truly resolve. Trapp devotes a significant part of his introduction to this subject, as he attempts to consider letters as their own literary genre and to provide a stable definition for them.[26] He demonstrates the difficulty of determining a specific definition as a result of the great diversity contained within the body of ancient letters.[27] There are several stumbling blocks involved in attempting to label or classify the diversity of letters, such as the issue of categorization based on the function of letters or their classification based on context and content[28] given that letters as literary artefacts come in an immense diversity in form, function, and convention which defies easy classification. Trapp ends up settling for a loose system – categorization in part by function, by theme, and by context – aimed primarily at demonstrating the range of the functions of the letter as well as its diversity while still demonstrating its adherence to a particular type, and therefore genre.[29]

Ruth Morello and A. D. Morrison's *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography* (2007) collection continues the literary trend in scholarship, collecting a series of case studies which focus on the use of epistolary tradition and convention and choice of letter types.[30] This collection also demonstrates another trend in more recent letter scholarship of the 21st

[25] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1.
[26] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1; Trapp 2003: 1-5.
[27] Trapp 2003: 1-5.
[28] Trapp 2003: 3-5.
[29] Trapp 2003: 47. Trapp is referenced by recent collections as being a foundational voice in the study of ancient letters and genre considerations and they build on his attempt, cf. Morello and Morrison 2007: v; Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 1.
[30] 'Abstract' in Morello and Morrison 2007.

century – an interest in the letter collection as literary genre, and as an essential level of interpretation and consideration for understanding ancient letters.[31] It also seeks to provide an interdisciplinary view on letters, bringing experts in a variety of fields together – including fields such as philosophy and medicine – in order to study the insights into various cultural, social and technical practices of different periods of antiquity which can be provided by certain letters.[32] This trend emphasizes the intertextual relations of letters to other genres as well as the importance of the letter collection providing guidance on what to read as a letter.[33] The trend moves toward broader and looser conceptualizations of letters, allowing for greater appreciation of the diversity and complexity, such as in their intertextuality and constitution as corpora. As an example of the literary trend, Jennifer Ebbeler's contribution to this collection demonstrates that closer examination of the use of rhetorical convention in letter correspondence can clarify theories about the meaning contained in the letters, showing the need for interpretation of literary and rhetorical elements for meaning.[34]

Hodkinson's chapter "Better than Speech: Some Advantages to the Letter in the Second Sophistic" is one important contribution to this collection, mentioned by Sogno, Storin and Watts (2017), which continues the discussion on the issue of genre, this time with regard to 'literary' letters and 'literary' letter collections, examining the manipulation of genre conventions and the collection in the creation of meaning in the letters of Alciphron and Aelian of the Second Sophistic.[35] We can see in this extensive discussion that the issue of genre continues to be an active

[31] 'Abstract' in Morello and Morrison 2007.
[32] 'Abstract' in Morello and Morrison 2007.
[33] Gibson and Morrison 2007: 15-16.
[34] Ebbeler 2007: 302. Ebbeler's "Mixed Messages: The Play of Epistolary Codes in Two Late Antique Latin Correspondences" discusses epistolary conventions in two sets of correspondence, that of Ausonius and Paulinus of Nola and that of Augustine and Jerome.
[35] Hodkinson 2007: 284-285.

one in scholarship on ancient letters, characteristic of the literary trend in scholarship. In his first section 'Genre', Hodkinson provides his stance on the question of how applicable genre is in the case of ancient letters. He argues that letters should be considered a genre with unifying themes and motifs which is wide and flexible enough to include other genres within itself, such as treatise, and not just a style or form applied to other genres.[36] He goes on to discuss how the literary letter collection can also usefully be considered a genre and that it is comparable to the poetry book in its creation of meaning, necessitating a second level of reading and interpretation to understand the author's full meaning.[37]

The letter collection as genre has been a prominent topic of recent scholarship on ancient letters within the last two decades. Roy Gibson's article, "On the Nature of Ancient Letter Collections" (2012), is an important contribution to the study of letter collections and movement away from earlier views of letters solely as historical documents, and it is often cited by subsequent discussions of letter collections. Gibson's main point in this article, which Bronwen Neil describes as 'groundbreaking' in her introductory essay to the collection *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity* (2015),[38] is to provide a corrective to the trend in modern thinking which associates letter collections with historical or biographical narration and chronological ordering.[39] His central negative point is that there is no clear connection between ancient letter collections and historical or biographical narration.[40] The long-standing editorial

[36] Hodkinson 2007: 285-286.
[37] Hodkinson 2007: 287-288.
[38] Neil 2015: 4.
[39] Gibson 2012: 56-57.
[40] Gibson 2012: 57.

trend of re-arranging antique and late-antique letter collections into chronological order is now perceived as obscuring the intended purpose(s) of ancient letter collections.[41]

The dominant non-chronological organizational principles identified by Gibson in ancient collections, based on the study of sample collections[42], include addressee/topic, arranged according to same addressee, same loose topic, or both in combination,[43] and artistic variety, with subtle, artistic links between adjacent and juxtaposed letters and books, as well as the combination of overall chronological movement between books and lack of chronological order within books.[44] Gibson also observes that collections often do not respect one method of organization throughout and certainly do not observe strict chronological ordering.[45] Non-chronological ordering techniques were a positive choice in ancient letter collections and Gibson suggests three potential purposes of ancient letter collections: cultural preference for non-chronological ordering, comparable to non-chronological ordering in Latin poetry; didactic purposes; and organization by category in a fashion similar to Suetonian biographical or encomiastic generic elements.[46]

Ultimately, Gibson indicates in his conclusion that each collection demands an individualized study given the many varying factors which differ among them. Gibson's argument against chronological re-arrangement of letter collections and the positive choice of non-chronological principles has been echoed in many subsequent works, though some offer minor corrections or suggestions, as we will see below.

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[41] Gibson 2012: 57-58.
[42] Gibson 2012 founded his study on Cicero (*ad Atticum* and *ad Familiares*), Pliny, Seneca, Symmachus, Fronto, Ambrose, Sidonius, Augustine, Paulinus of Nola, and Jerome. He indicates (58) that his is merely a 'first exploratory foray into a vast field'.
[43] Gibson 2012: 64.
[44] Gibson 2012: 68-69.
[45] Gibson 2012: 64-69.
[46] Gibson 2012: 71-73.

This interest in studying letter collections can be seen in edited collections which have been put together on the subject, such as *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity* (2015). Bronwen Neil's introductory chapter, mentioned above, is the first of a two-part introduction, the second being the following chapter by the collection's other editor, Pauline Allen. Neil indicates that the collection seeks to trace the trajectory of letter collections from classical Greco-Roman antiquity through to late antiquity – a significant span of time – and that it is the "first multi-authored study of classical, New Testament and late-antique letter collections, crossing the traditional divide between these disciplines by focusing on Latin and Greek epistolary sources."[47] Neil's introductory chapter seeks on the one hand to comment on Gibson's 2012 article – specifically suggesting certain correctives to some of Gibson's points.[48] She suggests that Gibson's implication of continuity of certain types of letters between the 1st and 4th centuries CE in collections should take into consideration the new episcopal developments in letter types, such as dogmatic or pastoral letters, and other principles of organization of late-antique letter collectors.[49] She also indicates that methodological challenges remain, such as the public aspect of late-antique letters, typologies of letters (hybridization), and authenticity.[50]

Therefore, in the second part of the introductory remarks to *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*, Allen sets out to establish guidelines for assessing compilation techniques and to identify the rationales of the letter collections from late antiquity,[51]

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[47] Neil 2015: 3.
[48] Neil 2015: 4.
[49] Neil 2015: 7-8. Neil also suggests that fictional correspondences are chronologically organized because it is easier to assign dates to fictional letters than to non-fictional ones. This remark seems to overlook that Gibson's suggestions are that non-chronological principles of organization were a positive choice based potentially on cultural preference, seeming to suggest that it was a negative choice based on the difficulty of assigning dates to non-fictional correspondence.
[50] Neil 2015: 11-15. Neil also underlines the opportunities for social history which this study represents: "letters remain an unparalleled and largely untapped resource for the **social** historian" (15), indicating the importance of socio-cultural studies of letters, although this falls outside the focus of the current study.
[51] Allen 2015: 18, although she indicates the complexity and impossibility of determining rationales in some cases).

that is attempting to determine the motivations and circumstances of letter collections being put together. She sets out four types of letter collections: deliberate/authorial collections, later intentional collections, collections with mixed transmission, and collections made by post-enlightenment editors. The typology is meant to signal the issues involved in the study of late-antique letter collections,[52] such as gaps in the material available to us (many letters have not survived to the present day) as well as dependence on what modern editors present to us and artificial collections, etc.[53] Authorship and processes of compilation, literary meaning and complexity of collections, obscured by 19th century editing techniques and chronological re-arranging are now at the forefront of the studies.[54]

Her concluding statements suggest that in light of the many difficulties in determining rationales for why letters were collected it is necessary to consider early Christian letter collections on an individual basis to assess the specific reason(s) of each, reprising the conclusion of Gibson.[55] The study of motives in letter collections – as to why they were collected, why they were organized in the way they were, who was responsible for collecting them, etc. – is still a major topic of discussion, for example in the *Late Antique Letter Collections* 2017 collection which we will discuss next.[56]

Another clear product of the growing interest in the letter collection is *Late Antique Letter Collections: A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide* (2017) which, as its title suggests, is meant to provide an introduction to readers to both individual letter collections and to the broader subject of the genre of the letter collection. The collection consists of 27 chapters, each by a

[52] Allen 2015: 18-19.
[53] Allen 2015: 31-32.
[54] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 2.
[55] Allen 2015: 33-34.
[56] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 4-5.

different scholar on a major letter collection from the 4th to 6th century, from the Emperor Julian to Cassiodorus and Papal letter collections. The chapters look at the textual history of the collections, the motivations and circumstances of collection and transmission of their collections (to the extent that this is possible), as well as the literary meaning invested in the collection and its historical circumstances.[57]

The introduction to this collection by its editors Cristiana Sogno, Bradley K. Storin and Edward J. Watts situates its collective position as firmly a part of the literary trend and taking a more fluid view of genre. It also indicates its position that the letter collection can be considered its own literary genre and that its organization was a significant part of the creation and transmission of meaning to the reader of the letters, as the reader would have to engage in the macro-textual dimension as well as the individual letters within the greater collection.[58] This volume also advances the idea that the genre of letter collection came into its fullest development in Late Antiquity and was characteristic of this period, offering several potential reasons for this, such as increase in bureaucracy.[59]

Questions of how to consider genre in relation to letters are ongoing, attempts at definitions and clarification of terminology still necessary. Scholarship has arrived at an agreement that the nature of letters must be taken to be fluid and broad in their diversity and that obsession with strict genre and classification will not be fruitful. Instead, the focus is on demonstrating the range of ancient letters as well as leaving room for many lines of inquiry into the letters and the phenomenon of letter-writing. For example, the acknowledged diversity of types and functions of

[57] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 11.
[58] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 2 cites Formisano 2016 for discussion of 'macrotextuality'. The point is discussed in Hodkinson 2007 with regard to literary letters.
[59] Sogno, Storin and Watts 2017: 2-3, 6-7.

letters, as well as the trend in scholarship tending towards a more functionalist approach, have led to many studies focusing on particular types of letters and what they can tell us about certain social, cultural, and even religious and technical aspects of ancient society in different contexts.[60] Scholars place themselves in various positions using their definitions and approaches to letters, but all are situated within a sophisticated study of the sociological, functional, literary, rhetorical facets of ancient letters. One of the more recent products of this trend is the interest in the letter collection as a literary genre possessed of its own necessary level of meaning and diversity.

Scholarship on Ruricius' Letters

The current thesis will be discussing the letter collection of Ruricius of Limoges from a literary standpoint, situated within the overall trend of ancient letter studies in this direction, analyzing the organization and themes of his letters and investigating Ruricius' overall literary message in the collection. Studies on Ruricius, however, prove to be quite limited – particularly when compared to the much more extensive work done on the other major collections of 5th c. Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris in particular.[61] Attempts to increase scholarly interest in Ruricius' letters have taken a broad view, pointing out the variety of approaches open to different scholars and concentrating on the letter collection – how it came to be collected, the identity of the editor, and its organizational principles.[62]

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[60] For example, Shanzer 2001 highlights social practices and attitudes towards fasting, feasting and the sending of food as gifts through the festal letters and 'letters accompanying gifts of food' found in episcopal letter collections; Furbetta 2015 concentrates on the structure and functions of recommendation letters in the collections of Sidonius and Ruricius for the 5th century, Avitus of Vienne and Venantius Fortunatus for the 6th century, and Desiderius of Cahors for the 7th century.

[61] Early work done on Ruricius can be traced to the 1950s: Hagendahl 1952 and Duchein 1955.

[62] Mathisen 2011: 51-61 (see also Mathisen 2017); Moussy 2000: 87 discusses Yvonne Bontoux's remarks on organization.

Moving away from a perceived overemphasis on Sidonius Apollinaris' letters to the detriment of the many other examples of letter writing in the period between 420 and 520 CE in Gaul (around 475 letters by 45 Gallic writers), Mathisen widened his view in order to study previously unnoticed patterns of correspondence in a variety of Gallic letter writers, namely the overlap of literary ties and family ties in this period in Gaul, as well as to clarify the familial relationships of major Gallic figures of the period in the four major corpora which survive from the late 5th century: Sidonius, Ruricius, Avitus and Ennodius.[63] Following this, Mathisen discusses the monastic literary-family circle of Lérins, which produced the next most significant amount of letters and was active earlier in the fifth century. He concluded that literary and epistolographic activity in Gaul in this period was tied to a family-literary circle which was organized around one figure of particular literary reputation, Eucherius for the Lérins circle and Sidonius for the former circle.[64] In the 5th c., Gallo-Roman aristocrats attempted to retain previous social order in a changing environment, which is reflected in their letters with themes such as maintenance of friendship amongst elites and literary interests/pursuits, which reveal an attempt to maintain some continuity with previous, familiar structures.[65] Family ties and the descendants of these literary circles might be an important factor in the preservation of their letters for later audiences.[66] This article's investigation of literary circles in 5th century Gaul is important to contextualizing the letters of Ruricius and his contemporaries and determining their social function and importance. It also provides an important step in the development of secondary scholarship on 5th century epistolography, specifically setting out to broaden the viewpoint from a narrow focus on Sidonius to a larger pool of evidence in order to investigate patterns and shared characteristics.

[63] Mathisen 1981: 95.
[64] Mathisen 1981: 107.
[65] Mathisen 2001: 101-102.
[66] Mathisen 1981: 108.

Family and private archives might be the key to understanding the preservation or Ruricius' letters, as we see in the next important contribution of Mathisen to the study of Ruricius and his corpus: his 1998 article, "The *Codex Sangallensis* 190 and the Transmission of the Classical Tradition during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages." The *Codex Sangallensis* 190 is the only manuscript which contains Ruricius' letters, as well as letters of Faustus of Riez and Desiderius of Cahors. It was written at an undetermined location in the late 8th or early 9th century. Mathisen sets out to reconstruct how the contents of the *Sangallensis* came to be brought together, preserved and used. He hypothesises that the collection began in Ruricius' private archive and was preserved and expanded in Desiderius' time when more documents were added to it. And, by the 9th century, it had ended up in area of St. Gallen where it was cited in the literary circle of bishops of Constance.[67] Mathisen explores theories about the many aspects of the *Sangallensis* which are uncertain – including its index, its provenance, how Ruricius' letters were collected, how Desiderius' letters were collected, how the model of the *Sangallensis* ended up in St. Gallen, its purpose.[68] Because of its status as a *unicum*, the *Sangallensis* is the only physical form in which we know Ruricius' letters and it is important to our perception of the literary construction of the corpus. Mathisen completes his study of Ruricius with a translation of the entire body of letters into English with an extensive introduction and notes, also discussion of the style and content of the letters, bringing together an important amount of contextual information and analysis.[69]

Claude Moussy[70] discussed several noteworthy points about the collection, such as the diversity of addressees (though most were located in southern Gaul), including family, friends,

[67] Mathisen 1998 ("*Codex*"): 163.
[68] Mathisen 1998 ("*Codex*"): 167.
[69] Mathisen 2011 (first ed. 1999). The repetition of ideas and even whole passages is noticeable among several works of Mathisen.
[70] Moussy 2000.

Visigothic officials, property-owners, priests, and bishops; the variety of subjects and types of letters included in the collection, such as the recommendation letter, the familiar letter, the administrative letter, amongst others while lacking the dogmatic letter (treating theological debates specifically) and the historical letter (letters providing documentary evidence for historical events); and the organization of the two books of the collection, which are not internally chronological and provide potential evidence that Ruricius organized them deliberately according to principles of theme and artistic variety. Moussy provides remarks on the tone, humour, and style found in the letters, particularly the use of rhetorical devices such as isocola, antitheses, and homeoteleutes, as well as the educated style and vocabulary used by Ruricius throughout his collection, the use of clausulae, and the metre of the one poem in the collection, which all contributes to discussion of the literary aspect of the collection.[71]

Ruricius did not make much reference to contemporary historical events and circumstances, and, given the past approach to epistles, this aided in the prevalent neglect he suffered in scholarship in favour of other authors with more historical data. Although the works on Ruricius are few, there are several points of analysis which are often mentioned. Frequently, we find the indication that Ruricius is important for socio-cultural reconstruction, an area Mathisen is particularly engaged in. Particularly from the perspective of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy in this period of transition and increasing 'barbarization' of Gaul, Ruricius' letters provide evidence on how members of this elite attempted to preserve and maintain their identity and usual activities.[72] Prominent themes, such as friendship and episcopal duties, provide evidence for the social

[71] Moussy's chapter is a useful introduction to the various points of interest for study to be found in Ruricius, particularly with regard to his Latin prose and verse style, which does not seem to be discussed frequently in scholarship, although Hagendahl 1952 seems to have discussed rhetorical and language details.
[72] Mathisen 2011: 52-53.

preoccupations and experience of members of Ruricius' circle.[73] It also provides a letter collection which can contribute to study of different organizational principles and collection circumstances, as the collection may reflect deliberate ordering on the part of Ruricus.[74]

Much of the work which has been carried out so far has attempted to validate and encourage further study into the many literary and social aspects of Ruricius' collection. This thesis, placing itself in the overall literary focus in the study of ancient letters, seeks to contribute to this earlier scholarship and will investigate the organization and literary aspects of Ruricius' letter collection.

[73] Mathisen 2011: 53.
[74] Mathisen 1998 ("*Codex*"): 173; Mathisen 2011: 56-57; Moussy 2000: 87.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORGANIZATION OF BOOK I

We will begin this chapter by summarizing the remarks made by Claude Moussy, Yvonne Bontoux, and Ralph Mathisen on Ruricius' collection and its organization. We will then proceed to an analysis of Book I, in which we will review the suggestions made by Mathisen and Moussy/Bontoux and we will propose our interpretation of Ruricius' Book I, building on existing remarks on Ruricius' collection, and contributing to scholarly consideration of this collection.

Existing Remarks on Organization

In order to provide an overview of the existing remarks on the organization of Ruricius' collection, we will begin with Claude Moussy's rather brief remarks in his chapter on Ruricius and his collection, which depend heavily upon the remarks of Yvonne Bontoux, before moving on to the more extensive discussion of Mathisen's several publications.

In a single paragraph, Moussy presents his summary remarks on the organization of the letters, couched within a longer discussion of the diversity presented by the letters included in the collection, in terms of type of letter, length, addressee.[75] His first remark is that the letters are not in chronological order. He indicates that Book II is generally later in time than Book I, treating the period in which Ruricius was bishop of Limoges whereas Book I is generally before he became bishop, but that the internal organization of the books does not respect strict chronological ordering.[76] These brief remarks can be compared to Gibson's arguments on organization – that non-chronological ordering was a positive choice in ancient letter writers and that there is no

[75] Moussy 2000: 87.

[76] Moussy 2000: 87. Note that Moussy considers all of Book I (except for the final two letters) to be dated before 485 and Ruricius' becoming bishop. This is not quite how Mathisen has it, as he considers 1.15 and 1.16 to potentially be written when Ruricius has just become bishop. See the introductory notes to 1.15 and 1.16 in Mathisen 2011: 126-128.

evidence to connect ancient letter collections to chronological ordering.[77] As many subsequent studies on ancient letter collections have gone on to support this position, we can see how the lack of strict chronological ordering in Ruricius is largely characteristic of many ancient letter collections. However, we should keep in mind the overall progression forward in time which we find between Ruricius' two books, a feature sometimes found used in conjunction with non-chronological organizational principles in a loose and flexible form.[78]

Moussy then moves from these remarks to a citation of Bontoux's statements on Ruricius' organization, which highlight Ruricius' literary and artistic tendency to implement "une certaine variété et un enchaînement délibéré" with regard to his themes.[79] Such artistic arrangement has been identified by Gibson as one of his alternative non-chronological organizational principles, that of "artful variation and significant juxtaposition" (see Introduction).[80] In his explanation of this pattern, Gibson draws upon Pliny as a model of this organizational technique. He indicates that Pliny avoided the addressee/topic organization and rather created an arc of thematic unity and design. In order to alert the reader to the necessity of reading for the elements of a deliberate design, Pliny created deliberate markers at the beginning and ending of his collection: Clarus is the first addressee in the collection and Fuscus is the last addressee of Book 9 (light to dark).[81] Gibson notes Pliny's use of symmetry in subject matter and motifs as well as creating links between juxtaposed letters, all contributing to the overall design of the collection, in which meaning is created both at the level of the collection and within the book-units which make up the

[77] Gibson 2012: 56-57.
[78] Gibson 2012: 64. Gibson also notes this overall chronological progression in his discussion of the letter collections of Sidonius Apollinaris and Pliny the Younger (69).
[79] Mousy 2000: 87 citing Bontoux 1996: 29.
[80] Gibson 2012: 67-69.
[81] Gibson 2012: 68. See Barchiesi 2005 and Marchesi 2008, whom he cites as also discussing this feature.

collection.[82] In sum, the Plinian model has a macro-level progressive chronology overall but a lack of chronological order within each book, as well as an emphasis on deliberate artistic design between letters within books and between books through thematic links, juxtaposition, balance, etc.[83] Gibson also notes other later letter writers who seem to have taken Pliny as a model in the organization of their own collections – such as Ambrose and Sidonius Apollinaris.[84] Sidonius closely echoes Pliny's use of markers: the first letter of his collection is addressed to Constantius and the final letter of his ninth book is addressed to Firminus, creating an arc from 'the constant one to the firm one' and echoing Pliny's markers with names beginning with C and F.[85] The continued use of the Plinian corpus as a model supports a theory that Ruricius also took this model under consideration from others' examples, likely Sidonius' given their seemingly close relationship.[86]

Moussy also remarks on the placement of the two letters of Faustus of Riez[87] at the beginning of Book I, indicating their importance.[88] Moussy's suggestion is that this decision was made in order to pay homage to Faustus as a spiritual guide to Ruricius.[89] While Faustus certainly was an important spiritual guide to Ruricius, the decision to place the two letters addressed to

[82] Gibson 2012: 68.
[83] Gibson 2012: 69.
[84] Sidonius Apollinaris was a Gallo-Roman aristocrat and bishop whose letter collection has received significant attention. For historical and contextual work on Sidonius and his letters, see Sivan 1989; Harries 1994; and Mratschek 2016. For specific work on Sidonius' letters, see Waarden 2010; Gibson 2013; Kelly and Waarden (eds) 2013; Denecker 2015; Hanaghan 2017 and 2019.
[85] Gibson 2012: 69.
[86] Gibson 2012: 68-69. Mathisen 2011 and elsewhere in his work on Gaul and Ruricius as well as Moussy 2000: 99 discuss the relationship between Sidonius and Ruricius. Sidonius was a family relation and guide to Ruricius and is an important addressee in Book I.
[87] Faustus of Riez was a prominent 5th c. theologian and a guide to Ruricius in Book I. For historical and contextual work on Faustus, see Weigel 1938 and Mathisen 1989. For studies on specific aspects of Faustus and his theology see, Nodes 1988; Smith 1990; Prévot 2009; and Gasti 2010.
[88] Moussy 2000: 87.
[89] Moussy 2000: 87.

Faustus at the beginning appears to also contribute to Ruricius' overall design of Book I, and we will return to this point in the following section.

Compared to Moussy's remarks, Mathisen's remarks on organization in his introduction to his translation of Ruricius' letter collection are more extensive. He begins by pointing out that a first-time reader of Ruricius may come away with the impression that there is no significant organizational structure to the collection, particularly when faced with the second book.[90] However, Mathisen indicates that there are discernible patterns which indicate some degree of organization and deliberate placement.[91] Mathisen begins with Book I and singles it out as showing the most evidence for deliberate organization as a unit in itself, even suggesting that it may have circulated before ca. 490.[92] He supports this by observing that the 18 letters contained in this collection represent a conventional number for a book of letters when compared to other examples from this period, such as Sidonius, and that the letters within are generally similar in length, with an average of around 30 lines and none over 50 lines.[93] He also notes that the organizational pattern of Book I is reflected in the organization of the letters written to Ruricius, both beginning with letters to/from Faustus.[94] He also points out the general chronological progression forwards in this book, which is not the case in the second book.[95]

Mathisen's specific remarks on the organizational patterns of Ruricius' letters in Book I add to those made by Moussy and Bontoux. While Moussy's remarks identify artistic variety organization, Mathisen identifies another method of arrangement in Ruricius' collection:

[90] Mathisen 2011: 56.
[91] Mathisen 2011: 56.
[92] Mathisen 2011: 57.
[93] Mathisen 2011: 57, 59.
[94] Mathisen 2011: 57.
[95] Mathisen 2011: 56-57.

addressee and topic.[96] He also specifically remarks on the book-end quality of the first and final letters: Ruricius adopted the religious life in the first two letters to Faustus and, in the final letter addressed to his son Ommatius, his son is doing the same.[97] In fact, the addressee/topic pattern identified by Mathisen is another of the alternative non-chronological patterns of organization suggested by Gibson along with artistic variety organization.[98] Gibson combines addressee and topic into a single organizational pattern, given that they often are used together and are difficult to separate in practice, and Mathisen notes that they are both at work in Book I.[99] Gibson also notes that the topic/addressee pattern can often be accompanied by chronological movement forwards, but that it is not systematically ordered along chronological lines, once again apparent in Ruricius' Book I.[100] Gibson notes that, from his sample, there is a tendency that continues into late antiquity for topic/addressee pattern of organization, found in Cicero, Fronto and Symmachus and continuing in the collections of Jerome, Augustine, Paulinus of Nola – and Ruricius would fall within this later antique group.[101]

Moussy and Mathisen have several points in common. Both note that the books do not respect strict chronology. However, both Moussy and Mathisen remark on the degree of chronological progression forwards, within Book I and between Books I and II, and Mathisen uses chronological considerations in part to form his theory of dossiers intended to be second and third books making up Book II (see Mathisen's theory of Book II's organization at the beginning of Chapter 3). Both also mention the placement of Faustus at the beginning of Book I, though in

[96] Mathisen 2011: 56.
[97] Mathisen 2011: 56-57.
[98] Gibson 2012: 64-67.
[99] Gibson 2012: 64.
[100] Gibson 2012: 64, 67.
[101] Gibson 2012: 66-67. Gibson discusses Seneca's letters to Lucilius earlier (61), noting that there is a narrative progression and an (unobtrusive) chronological scheme.

making two different points. Moussy suggests that this was an homage paid to Faustus as a spiritual guide and mentor to Ruricius, while Mathisen notes how this provides a beginning 'book-end' to Book I and how it mirrors the organization of the letters sent to Ruricius, both having Faustus at the beginning, and Mathisen reflects on how these things indicate deliberate organization on the part of the editor.

Their differences stem from their common remark that the primary organizational pattern does not seem to be chronology – as it so rarely is in ancient letter collections – though chronological progression is a factor in the collection. Moussy provides Bontoux's remarks on variety and thematic patterns, which suggest organization along the lines of Gibson's artistic variety and significant juxtaposition; Mathisen, on the other hand, suggests a pattern more along the lines of Gibson's addressee/topic organization. From these two considerations of the organizational patterns in Ruricius, we see the importance of paying attention to the meaning of a deliberate organization along a non-chronological pattern or a combination of different patterns.

Analysis of Book I

I would like to propose a similar overall deliberate design in Ruricius as Gibson remarks on in the letter collections of Pliny and Sidonius.[102] Ruricius, as his mentor Sidonius and Sidonius' model Pliny before him with their Clarus-Fuscus arc/Constantius-Firminus arc, may have left a marker of his overall design in the beginning and ending of his collection, prompting his audience to re-read with the 'hermeneutical burden' of uncovering the deliberate design set for them.[103] In Ruricius' case, this arc traces his conversion to the religious life, beginning with his appeal to the authority of a well-recognized religious figure, Faustus of Riez, to aid him in his beginning into

[102] Gibson 2012: 68.
[103] Gibson 2012: 68-69.

the religious life and ending with his becoming bishop and encouraging his son along the same path of the religious life. This was a common theme in Gaul in this period, with a trend of elite Gallo-Romans demonstrating heightened interest in a religious ideal and even entering the clergy.[104] It is a noteworthy detail that many studies which discuss Ruricius note the prominent place of moral and spiritual reflection in Ruricius' collection.[105] Throughout Books I and II, it seems that often no matter what type of letter Ruricius is writing, there is always room for some spiritual content, be it in a chastising food-gift letter to his son Constantius or in a letter to a friend announcing that he sent a glassworker. This can perhaps be explained by Ruricius' overall design, meant to present his journey in the religious life to the reader.

In this section, we will explore several aspects of Ruricius' collection which support this proposed interpretation. First, we will discuss how Ruricius' letters provide indications of his overall design and communication of this to his reader, looking at one of the examples of artistic variety organization, the book-ends 1.1-2 and 1.18 of Book I, as well as what chronological organization we can find in Book I. We will then discuss the addressee/topic organization highlighted by Mathisen. Ruricius' use of artistic variety organization through theme and imagery will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2.

Artistic Variety Organization: The Book-Ends

Mathisen has already remarked upon the beginning and ending letters of Book I, calling them book-ends in that Ruricius is entering the religious life in the first two letters to Faustus and his son Ommatius is doing the same in the final letter.[106] He also remarks on the mirroring in the

[104] Mathisen 1981: 101; Moussy 2000: 86 for remarks on the *conversi*.
[105] Moussy 2000: 99; also, Shanzer 2001: 223 mentions his moralizing in food-related epistles. However, Ruricius notably lacks any dogmatic letters or positions on theological debates in his collection.
[106] Mathisen 2011: 56-57.

ordering of the letters sent to Ruricius.[107] This parallel suggests deliberate placement and places an obligation on the reader to look more closely for meaning in the book as a whole, just as in Sidonius, who just so happens to have been a mentor figure for Ruricius and therefore a significant influence on him. In order to do this, let us begin by looking at these book-end letters more closely.

The first two letters are addressed to Faustus of Riez, a prominent religious figure in fifth-century Gaul.[108] In these two initial letters, Ruricius emphasizes Faustus' fame, wisdom and authority, which his name would likely have to some extent already evoked in the reader given that he was well-known. A reader would at least have recognized the name. Considering this, Ruricius' motivation for selecting these letters to place at the beginning of Book I likely included Faustus' fame and authority as a religious figure and guide. His purpose in these two letters is prevailing upon Faustus to provide him spiritual guidance and, following Mathisen's dating of these letters to 475-77, Ruricius was not yet bishop and would be in the earlier stages of considering the religious life. Therefore, these letters mark the beginning of Ruricius' serious consideration of embarking on the religious life and consist of him making the first steps of calling upon the guidance of an establishing authority figure.

Turning now to the final letter, Ruricius, a bishop in this letter, which Mathisen dates to 480-490, writes to his son Ommatius and encourages him in his progress in the religious life.[109] Ommatius is the only son who figures in Book I, Ruricius' other sons only appearing in Book II,[110] and this may be explained by the fact that Ommatius was the most successful in his religious endeavors: he became a priest at Clermont and eventually bishop of Tours.[111] Ruricius uses his

[107] Mathisen 2011: 57.
[108] Mathisen 2011: 87.
[109] Mathisen 2011: 131.
[110] See Chapter 3, sections 3 and 5 for Ommatius and other sons (Constantius, Eparchius) in Book II.
[111] Mathisen 2011: 131

letter to provide Ommatius with some brief remarks on spiritual guidance, focusing on the theme of keeping focus on God and not wavering in the pursuit of a pious life.

The topical connection between letters 1.1-2 and 1.18 is clear – they discuss themes of spiritual guidance and someone is embarking on the religious life in all of them. But beyond this general connection, the relationship between the contents and themes of the letters provides indication of the intentions of the author for the reading of the collection as a whole. In the first two letters, Ruricius is the writer of the letter, the beginner desiring guidance and support from an authority with experience in the religious life. In the last letter, Ruricius is once again the writer of the letter but is this time writing to his son, who is in the same position as he was in the first letters, a beginner who can benefit from religious guidance from an established figure with experience in the religious life. The shift in Ruricius' self-presentation from first to last letters shows Ruricius trading places – his son adopts Ruricius' initial role of beginner and Ruricius adopts Faustus' role of established authority, passing his experience down to his son, who is in a clear position as subordinate and receiver of wisdom (mentee) as Ruricius' religious and biological son.

The parallel situations of the first and last letters draws the reader's attention to them, prompts a closer look at their interrelationship, and then Ruricius' contrasting self-presentation, from beginner to bishop and mentor, and points to a clear question: what happened between these two points? How did Ruricius move from the starting line, asking for help from a spiritual guide, to becoming a spiritual guide in his own right? This is the arc which the collection outlines for the reader: the journey of Ruricius in his pursuit of the religious life from a beginner to a bishop.

Chronology

A look at the chronology of the letters in Book I also provides support for this interpretation.[112] In general, there is a chronological progression forward in time – we move from 475-77 in the first two letters to 480-490 in the final letter. The letters do not observe strict chronological ordering within the book, but we do see this overall movement from earlier letters, in the early 470s, to later in the final four letters, the mid to late 480s.[113] If the intention of the organization of the letters is to describe the arc of Ruricius' development and maturation in the religious life from starting point to establishment as religious authority, then it seems significant that the overall chronological movement forward supports this – with the final letters after Ruricius became bishop (post 485) and the majority before moving towards his attainment of the post of bishop. We can compare this to Book II's lack of overall chronological movement forward in the same clear manner as Book I, as well as Gibson's remarks, that chronological movement was not necessary or at all inevitable as a choice in ancient letter collections, to evaluate this as a deliberate choice.

If this is the case and Ruricius' intention with Book I was as a presentation of his religious journey and development, then the next question is how did he present this, what organizational principles did he use and what do they tell us? In order to explore this, we will take another look at Mathisen's suggestion of addressee/topic and Moussy and Bontoux's suggestion of artistic variety (in Chapter 2).

[112] Using dates as presented in Mathisen 2011.
[113] Mathisen 2011: 56.

Addressee/topic organization

We will begin with Mathisen's addressee/topic suggestion. In his discussion, Mathisen outlines the following elements of addressee/topic ordering in Book I:[114]

1-2 Two Letters to Faustus of Riez

3-10 – Letters relating to literature and learning

- 3-5 – Three letters to Hesperius on teaching and literature
- 6-8 – Book borrowing (to Nepotianus, Bassulus, and Sidonius)
- 8-9 – Two letters to Sidonius regarding literature and learning
- 10 – Mythological topics (to Lupus)

12-14 – Three letters to Celsus, a childhood friend and likely relative

15-17 – To distinguished persons (Aeonius, Sidonius, Julianus Pomerius) the first and third of them being from Arles

18 – To his son Ommatius, another family member

This outline demonstrates the clustering of letters to the same addressee and on the same general topic present in Book I. Clearly, the organization by both addressee and topic is flexible and not observed in a strict manner. We can see several examples of this: 1.8 and 1.9 to Sidonius are grouped together but 1.16 to Sidonius is separated from the others; 1.15-17 may all be to distinguished persons but they treat different topics,[115] just as 1.3-10 treating topics relating to literature and learning vary in their specific topics and 1.12-14 to Celsus treat different topics.[116] Compared to the addressee/topic organization found in Cicero and discussed by Gibson as an

[114] Reproduced from Mathisen 2011: 56 (and slightly emended to indicate addressees where they are not indicated in the original). The original leaves out 1.11 to Freda but this letter can be included in the cluster of letters relating to literature and learning.

[115] 1.15 laments the death of Aeonius' predecessor as bishop of Arles, Leontius, and seeks to initiate a friendly connection between them; 1.16 is a jocular letter to Sidonius; and 1.17 is a reflection on the spiritual journey to Julianus Pomerius.

[116] 1.12 reflects on living a spiritual life and announces the glassworker which Ruricius has sent to Celsus; 1.13 is a continuation of the discussion of spiritual life in 1.12; and 1.14 is a jocular letter about a gift of a horse which Ruricius sends to Celsus along with an invitation to a festival.

example of this method of organization, Ruricius provides a less obvious structure and thus less obvious meaning in his addressee/topic organization in Mathisen's outline of it.[117]

Mathisen does not propose a literary message or intention behind the topic/addressee organization. Therefore, we will review Mathisen's outline and discuss the potential literary meaning that it holds.[118] We have already discussed the initial two letters to Faustus and the final letter to Ommatius, identifying their parallel book-end quality and suggestion of an arc of meaning relating to Ruricius' journey into the religious life. The following three letters, 1.3-5, are addressed to Hesperius, a rhetor, and Mathisen indicates they were likely all written around the same time.[119] They predate Ruricius' becoming bishop and are dated to 475-480.[120] They also present a significant break with the topical and thematic content of the Faustus letters which began the collection. These three letters discuss the education of Ruricius' sons, the exchange, editing and commenting of each others' literary work and they notably lack the references to religious themes or extended moralizing and spiritual sections present in the Faustus letters. Ruricius' metaphors here focus more on literary activity and ability. This is understandable given the different addressees and reasons for the letters – clearly letters addressed to a distinguished bishop about spiritual guidance would have a greater focus on the spiritual than letters addressed to one's sons' teacher and literary exchange partner. But the decision to place these letters, spiritual versus secular, one after the other in clusters of addressee seems unlikely to have been done at random.

[117] Gibson 2012: 65. Compared to Gibson's discussion of Cicero's Book 16 on Tiro.
[118] Mathisen 2011: 87. Mathisen mentions in his introductory remarks to 1.1: "Both considerations attest the importance that Ruricius attributed to this correspondence, which documents his spiritual journey from pious layman to bishop." However, Mathisen does not develop this idea in detail.
[119] Mathisen 2011: 106.
[120] Mathisen 2011: 106-107.

We then find letters 1.6 and 1.7, both addressed to religious figures – Nepotianus is a priest and Bassulus a bishop – and discussing book exchange. They are therefore connected to the preceding three letters to Hesperius by their general topic, all relating in slightly different ways to literature and teaching. What distinguishes these two letters from those to Hesperius, however, is their specific focus on book exchange and their greater emphasis on spiritual and religious topics. Once again, this is entirely in keeping with the different addressees, but it is interesting to note the progression from heavily spiritual first two letters, largely secular three letters on literature and learning, to two letters once again on literature and leaning but with notable spiritual content. The topics culminate in the letters 1.8-9, the middle of the Book I, which are both addressed to Sidonius Apollinaris, a famous bishop and author.

The letters 1.8-9 are particularly noteworthy, in that they are addressed to Ruricius' most famous and distinguished correspondent and seem to be dated the earliest in the collection: 1.8 seems to have been written before Ruricius began his consideration of the religious life in 470-475; and 1.9 seems to have been written perhaps around the time the first two letters to Faustus were written, at the beginning of Ruricius' journey into the religious life, in 472-476. We see here a return to the starting point which the first two letters represent, a reflection back to the time when the journey on the path of the religious life was just beginning which we encountered in 1.1-2. 1.8-9 are connected to the preceding letters on book exchange in that 1.8 focuses on book exchange and its etiquette, while also making some references to spiritual teaching and reflection. 1.9 then follows with a specific focus on desiring to enter the religious life and to learn from an authority.

We then have two letters which round off the group relating to literary, teaching, and book exchange topics, 1.10-11. 1.10 is addressed to Lupus, likely an orator and poet who was a friend to Sidonius, and 1.11 is written to Freda, an unknown person of secular occupation. Both discuss

literary topics, 1.10 discusses friendship themes and mythology and 1.11 discusses literary pursuits. And, as with the three letters to Hesperius, there is much less emphasis on religious or spiritual themes, concluding this group linked through topic with a parallel to the secular focus of its beginning. This section involves a sandwiching of four letters which demonstrate Ruricius' early interest in the religious life (1.8 and 1.9) and his interest in religious teachings within the context of typical aristocratic activity of book exchange (1.6 and 1.7) between letters of typical aristocratic literary activity (1.3-5 and 1.10-11). The image which this section suggests is of an emerging interest and eagerness for the religious life out of the midst of a typical Gallo-Roman aristocrat's life and activities. Therefore, considering this interpretation of 1.3-11, this cluster may be understood to be the beginning of the arc of Book I with the two Faustus letters at the beginning providing an introduction to the arc.

Directly following the 1.3-11 section, we have a group of three letters to Celsus, a friend and possible family relation, 1.12-14.[121] There is discussion of spiritual topics as well as discussion of more everyday topics, including Ruricius sending a glassworker to Celsus, inviting Celsus to a festival, and a jocular letter involving the gift of a horse. These letters, as all before them, were written before Ruricius became bishop, but they include specific discussion of themes relating to the religious life, including metaphors on how to conduct the religious life and prayer. There is even a repeated image of the religious life as sea journey which connects letters 1.12 and 1.13. Therefore, following on the 1.3-11 section of emerging interest in the religious life, these letters to Celsus present us with a cluster of letters to the same addressee connected with repeated themes in which Ruricius is pursuing the goal of the religious life before becoming bishop. The letters are a mixture of everyday aristocratic concerns and activity and specific reflection on and interest in

[121] Mathisen 2011: 56.

how to live a religious life. This cluster represents the next stage in the arc of Ruricius' pursuit of the religious life, in which he is engaged in religious life and reflection but not yet bishop.

The next and final cluster is letters 1.15-17. Mathisen groups these letters together as all being addressed to important figures, with two of the three being from Arles.[122] While this is true, it is also possible to group these letters together as the next stage in Ruricius' pursuit of the religious life, as they all seem to have been written in the period directly after Ruricius became bishop. The first of this group, 1.15, likely takes place just after Ruricius has become bishop. It begins as a consolatory message about the death of Bishop Aeonius' predecessor as bishop of Arles, Leontius, and ends with a polite and formal request to establish ties of friendship. In sharp contrast to the preceding letter, 1.16 is a familiar letter sent to Sidonius, a joke letter which testifies to the close relationship between the two. Letter 1.17, gathered together with the preceding two by Mathisen as being to distinguished figures, is addressed to Julianus Pomerius who wrote several theological works and supported Faustus' views on the soul.[123] Ruricius seems to have been influenced by Pomerius as a spiritual guide following his interest in Faustus.[124] Mathisen also notes that 1.17 may have been written around the same time as 1.15 to Aeonius, indicating that it is also in the initial period of his becoming bishop. Letter 1.17 is a serious letter once again, in which Ruricius describes his journey in the religious life at length, indicating the amount of trials he has dealt with. The letter gives an impression of his level of experience and therefore his authority in the religious life. Importantly, 1.17 is the first letter in which Ruricius calls himself bishop in the salutation.[125] Given the progression from initial formal request for friendship to a bishop, the joking familiar letter to an established religious authority, and a final serious letter on the religious

[122] Mathisen 2011: 56.
[123] Mathisen 2011: 129, introductory note to 1.17.
[124] Mathisen 2011: 129, introductory note to 1.17.
[125] Mathisen 2011: 130.

life in which he calls himself bishop for the first time, these three letters give the impression of the newly-minted bishop Ruricius beginning to get a feel for his role, establishing ties, assuming his responsibilities, becoming comfortable in his role and finally using the title of bishop.

However, beyond its role in this cluster, the contents of 1.17 are particularly important, as is its placement as second-to-last letter in Book I. In it, Ruricius provides a description of the religious journey he has experienced now that he has attained the position of bishop. This could provide an effective conclusion to Ruricius' collection and its arc from emerging interest and beginner in the religious life to bishop with experience and authority. But 1.17 is not the concluding letter – it is followed by the book-end letter to Ommatius in which Ruricius takes on the role of authority which Faustus held in 1.1-2. Therefore, it is possible to interpret the letter to Ommatius as a conclusion or ending point to the arc of Book I, just as the Faustus letters provide an introduction or starting point to the arc. In 1.18, Ruricius has assumed the role of bishop completely and established himself through 1.17 as an authority with the experience to advise others, which is demonstrated in 1.18.

Having approached the addressee/topic organization of Book I from the perspective of an arc of Ruricius' religious life, below is a proposed interpretation of Mathisen's framework:

1-2 – **Introduction/Starting point**: Ruricius the beginner

1-2 – Letters to Faustus requesting spiritual guidance, entering the religious life

3-11 – **Emerging Interest**: emerging interest in the religious life in the midst of usual elite activity of literary pursuits and books exchange. Sandwiched within secular clusters is a core of four letters: two letters to religious figures which mix secular book exchange with some religious themes and two letters to Sidonius from the very beginning of Ruricius' interest in the religious life.

3-5 – Letters to Hesperius, mainly secular themes: teaching of sons and exchange of literary projects

6-7 – Letters to religious figures (Nepotianus and Bassulus): increased religious themes, book exchange and teachings

8-9 – Early letters to Sidonius: book exchange and religious life/teaching/learning

10-11 – Letters to secular persons (Lupus and Freda): literary and mythological topics

12-14 – **Pre-bishop cluster**

12-14 – Letters to Celsus: everyday topics as well as specific reflection on the religious life

15-17 – **Bishop cluster**: assuming his role, becoming an authority

15 – Letter to Aeonius; formal, consolation and request for friendship

16 – Letter to Sidonius: familiar, jocular letter

17 – Letter to Pomerius: serious, description of his religious journey (**Conclusion of arc**)

18 – **Conclusion/Ending point**: Ruricius the authority

18 – Ommatius

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed our interpretation of the organization of Ruricius' Book I as a presentation of the arc of his religious journey: his beginning in the religious life and attainment of the position of bishop. We discussed the suggestions of two scholars who study Ruricius in detail on his organizational principles, Mathisen's addressee/topic and Moussy/Bontoux's artistic variety. We were able to uncover some indication of both of these two organizational principles at work in Book I, working in tandem, and how their meaning can be interpreted as an arc of Ruricius' religious life from beginning to attaining the post of bishop. The addressee/topic organization outlined by Mathisen reveals a distinct progression of Ruricius' journey which is supported by aspects of artistic variety organization, such as the presence of bookends, as well as overall chronological movement forward. In the following chapter, we will discuss in detail Ruricius' use of theme and imagery, specifically natural and agricultural imagery, food and medical imagery, and the error and judgement theme, to create his epistolary persona which once again contributes to the arc of his religious life in Book I.

CHAPTER 2
THEME AND IMAGERY IN BOOK I

In Chapter 1, we discussed the organizational principles which are present in Ruricius' Book I: topic/addressee and artistic variety. The topic/addressee organization of Book I suggests a deliberate thematic arc which depicts Ruricius' conversion to the religious life, moving from a secular aristocrat to a bishop. In addition to topic/addressee, the artistic variety organizational principle and the development of Ruricius' epistolary persona also contribute to the arc of conversion of Book I, supporting and adding further nuance to the depiction of Ruricius' interest and eventual conversion to the religious life. We will examine the nature of the development of Ruricius' persona through a prominent topic in the content of Book I: literary activity.

Literary activity

Many letters in Book I contain some discussion of aristocratic literary activity (at least eight of the eighteen), all appearing before the point where Ruricius becomes bishop, which can be identified between letters 1.14 (end of the 'Pre-bishop' cluster) and 1.15 (beginning of the 'Bishop' cluster). As identified in Chapter 1, literary activity is one of the principal themes of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster (letters 1.3-11) [126] which depicts Ruricius' interest in the religious life emerging from a typical aristocratic life and activity. Literary activity was a widespread, recognizable aristocratic activity and was used by Ruricius to represent his secular, aristocratic life in the depiction of his progress towards the religious life.[127]

There are several themes and images in these literary activity letters which are repeated, both throughout the literary activity letters in the 'Emerging Interest' cluster and in some cases

[126] See Chapter 1 for list of clusters and discussion.
[127] For studies on aristocratic literary activity in late-antique Gaul, see in particular Mathisen 1981, 1993 and 2003; also see for example Wood 1992; Schwitter 2020.

also appearing in the surrounding letters 1.1-2 and 1.12-18. It is possible that the repetition of certain themes throughout the collection may be explained as Ruricius having favourite expressions, such as his emphasis on agricultural themes of soil, seed and water and more general interest in nature for imagery and theme.[128] However, the repetition of theme seems to have a deliberate purpose in Book I: it supports and adds further nuance to the thematic arc of conversion.

In Chapter 1, we looked at the use of book-end letters, an instance of artistic variety organization, which contributed to the structure of the conversion arc in Book I. In this chapter, we will investigate Ruricius' use of artistic variety organization in more detail, particularly the use of theme and imagery. We will examine three main types of imagery and theme which are developed in the literary activity letters of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster: natural and agricultural imagery, food and medical imagery, and the error and judgement theme. We will examine how these themes and images are developed in the literary activity letters of the cluster, how they are used in non-literary activity letters, and how they depict Ruricius' persona to the reader and contribute to the overall conversion arc.

Section 1: Natural and Agricultural imagery

Natural and agricultural imagery is one of the most important types of imagery found in Book I: it is found in twelve letters (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.17, 1.18); it is spread throughout the collection (appearing first within the first three letters, 1.1 and 1.3, and appearing throughout including the final letter, 1.18); and it is complex and developed, taking up a significant portion of the letter in the cases of 1.5, 1.10, and 1.17. This imagery appears to have

[128] Mathisen 2011: 55 identifies a number of "favorite metaphors" including "the irrigation of parched soil, the seeking of subterranean channels, and the assaying of gold" as well as agricultural metaphors for literary works and aspects of judgement – all of which will be treated in this chapter.

been deliberate given its development from secular metaphor to religious metaphor through the letters it appears in, mirroring the overall conversion arc as it follows its own arc of development. In addition, all the natural imagery presents Ruricius' persona as requiring outside aid until the end of the Book, providing nuance to Ruricius' transition from secular aristocrat interested in the religious life to authority as a bishop.

We will go through the imagery found in the literary activity letters of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster first and then discuss related images in the surrounding letters and overall meaning. We begin with the three letters addressed to Hesperius, 1.3-1.5, at the beginning of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster. These letters are connected by their literary activity content – but also by the fact that they all contain natural imagery.

In 1.3, in which Ruricius discusses his own writing and Hesperius' role as teacher to his sons, we find two natural images: water and gemstones/gold. In the latter half of the letter, Ruricius discusses Hesperius' teaching his sons and describes the task with the images of springs, channels and running water: [129]

> Likewise, unless the industry of the seeker (*appetitoris*) most diligently excavates the enclosed channels of running water and the cavity for the flow covered by the land (*aquarum manantium uenas et obductum terra fluenti alueum*), the ripples of liquid will not flow (1.3).[130]

Hesperius is the 'seeker' who is discovering and releasing the ability of Ruricius' sons, which is currently closed up inside them (*manantium*, *obductum terra*), through his instruction. The image

[129] Throughout the thesis, all quotations of Ruricius' letters will be primarily in English translation with selected Latin included within brackets where appropriate for discussion, as well as full Latin text in footnote. All English quotations will be taken from the Mathisen 2011 translation with indications of Book and letter number. In addition, all scriptural identifications within the quotations are taken from Mathisen 2011. Latin text from *Fausti Reiensis Praeter sermones pseudo eusebianos opera : accedunt Ruricii Epistulae.* Text edited by A. Engelbrecht. CSEL 21. Prague: F. Tempsky, 1891.

[130] *saeptas etiam aquarum manantium uenas et obductum terra fluenti alueum nisi diligentius eruderauerit appetitoris industria, laticis unda non fluet*.

of water is used in several ways in Book I, this is only one instance, but 1.3 introduces two important ideas which recur. First, the water represents talent and ability here, and, in a related sense, it represents wisdom and knowledge elsewhere. Second, the water is closed off and unable to flow without the intercession of a 'seeker', a knowledgeable teacher or master. Another passage of 1.3, which combines an image of water with the analogy of gemstones and gold, also includes these ideas:

> I have chosen you as the stimulator and shaper of my noble jewels, you as the assayer of gold, you as the discoverer of hidden springs (*te repertorem aquae latentis elegi*), you, who know how to restore the gems concealed in stones to their unique excellence: amid such worldly confusion they would indeed lose their nobility if they did not have you as an example. Similarly, gold, mixed in with the vilest sands, unless it is washed in water and smelted in fire with the skill of the craftsman, can retain neither its splendor nor its worth (1.3).[131]

In this passage, Ruricius casts Hesperius as the 'discoverer of hidden springs', another instance of the hidden or enclosed water image described above. The gemstone and gold analogies are similar: Ruricius' sons are gemstones and gold, which represent their ability and 'excellence', but they are concealed in stone or corrupted by sand in their natural state. Hesperius is cast as the craftsman, the possessor of skill and knowledge, who is capable of interceding and perfecting Ruricius' sons, taking them out of the rock or purifying them of the sand.

In the 'Emerging Interest' cluster of literary activity letters, water imagery also occurs in 1.10 to Lupus. At the beginning of 1.10, Ruricius is developing the epistolary commonplace of chastising and being chastised for not sending frequent letters.[132] There are two instances of water imagery. The first is Ruricius' characterization of Lupus' eloquence as dew:

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[131] *te elicitorem et formatorem lapillorum nobilium, te rimatorem auri, te repertorem aquae latentis elegi, qui sciris abstrusas lapidibus gemmas propriae reddere generositati, quae utique in tanta rerum confusione amitterent nobilitatem, si indicem non haberent. aurum quoque harenis uilibus mixtum nisi artificis sollertia eluatur acquis, ignibus eliquetur, nec splendorem poterit retinere nec meritum.*

[132] For discussion of *amicitia* in letter exchange, see for example Cambron-Goulet 2017; Knight 2002; Morello 2007; Schwitter 2020.

> I received the letter of Your Magnanimity, in which you deign to make the excuse that it is for lack of a carrier that you rarely sprinkle me with the dew of your eloquence (*ut me rarius eloquentiae tuae rore respergas*) (1.10).[133]

The association between eloquence and water here supports the association in 1.3 between water and talent and ability. The second instance of water imagery in 1.10 is Ruricius' characterization of his own eloquence as a drying channel, in contrast with Lupus:

> I have no doubt that you utter this in irony, such is the eloquence of your wit, for not only are you awash with letter-carriers but you also know that, just as the course of a drying channel in the summer months trickles rather than flows, I suffer from a poverty of speech and the sterility of a meagre talent (*et me sciatis laborare egestate sermonis ac sterilitate exilis ingenii velut aestiuis mensibus arentis venae cursum sudare, non fluere*) (1.10).[134]

This passage also includes the idea of Ruricius' sterility (*sterilitate*), a frequent and important idea in Book I. The water imagery in 1.10 reinforces the interpretation of 1.3.[135] Water in 1.3 represents ability, which in that letter was latent and closed within his sons, requiring a capable teacher to find and allow to flow, in other words to teach and refine. In 1.10, water is once again associated with ability, in this case, Lupus' and Ruricius' literary eloquence. Lupus' eloquence is a dew which he can sprinkle through his letters, whereas Ruricius' is a dry and sterile channel that does not flow as a result of the summer season.

The placement of these letters in the overall organization of the cluster is significant. In Chapter 1's discussion of organization, the 'Emerging Interest' cluster was identified as having a core of religious interest letters (1.6-1.9) and two secular activity sections on either side (1.3-5 and 1.10-11). Both the Hesperius letters, 1.3-5, and 1.10 are on secular sides of the cluster and are about aristocratic literary activity. Thus, the images of enclosed water and sterility and dryness,

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[133] *Accepi litteras magnanimitatis tuae, quibus excusare dignaris, quod, ut me rarius eloquentiae tuae rore respergas, baiuli faciat inopia…*

[134] *quod uos per ironiam, ut est leporis uestri facundia, iactasse non ambigo, cum et uos abundetis tabellariis et me sciatis laborare egestate sermonis ac sterilitate exilis ingenii uelut aestiuis mensibus arentis uenae cursum sudare, non fluere.*

[135] Mathisen 2011: 120. See footnote 3, in which Mathisen also notes the association between 1.10 and 1.3 and 1.5. Also noted in letters 1.3 (p. 108, footnote 24) and 1.5 (p. 111, footnote 4).

i.e. ability and knowledge latent and inaccessible, are associated with Ruricius' secular persona. The cause of the inaccessibility of knowledge is obstruction in 1.3 and seasonal conditions in 1.10 – both possible to correct through intercession or the change of seasons. The sterility and the possibility of correcting it are developed in other letters of this 'Emerging Interest' cluster.

Natural imagery is connected to secular literary activity in 1.4, the second of the Hesperius cluster, where we find an agricultural image. Ruricius is discussing a positive review which Hesperius gave of something Ruricius wrote, displaying his modesty by chastising Hesperius for being untruthful in his glowing praise. He uses an agricultural image to illustrate this idea:

> Just as the farmer's (*cultoris*) stamina appears greater when, faced with dry and fallow terrain (*in ieiuno atque otioso caespite*), he either overcomes the defiance of the tenacious clods with the oft-repeated furrowing of his plow or enriches the excessive infertility (*ariditatem nimiam*) by the spreading of manure, in order to produce through his industry an abundant harvest that nature denied to the soil, thus you likewise have enriched the poverty of my letter by means of the richness of your eloquence… (*ita et tu egestatem epistulae meae eloquentiae tuae ubertate ditasti*) (1.4)[136]

Agricultural imagery, especially imagery relating to soil and infertility, is repeated elsewhere in Book I. Here, in 1.4, Ruricius' literary efforts are the infertile soil (*ieiuno atque otioso caespite*, *ariditatem nimiam … egestatem epistulae meae*) and Hesperius is the farmer (*cultoris*) with the plow and the manure capable of (with enough work) improving the field. The above passage contains two important ideas which are developed in Book I. First, Ruricius' efforts are represented as infertile soil, difficult to cultivate/fertilize with ability or knowledge. As in 1.3 and 1.10, we see the idea of Ruricius' sterility of knowledge and ability. Second, there is the idea of a farmer attempting to plow or seed or fertilize this soil, which is parallel with the possibility of correcting sterility in the water imagery above, through an intercessor attempting to perfect the imperfect

[136] *sicuti in ieiuno atque otioso caespite magis strenuitas cultoris apparet, cum aut rebellionem glaebarum tenacium repetita saepius inpressione uomeris domat aut ariditatem nimiam stercoris aspersione fecundat, ut fructuum copiam, quam soli natura negat, industria producat, ita et tu egestatem epistulae meae eloquentiae tuae ubertate ditasti…*

natural state of the student. Once again, as in 1.10's water imagery, sterility is associated with Ruricius' secular persona and activity given that the Hesperius letters are also on a secular side of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster and 1.4 deals exclusively with secular literary concerns.

A similar agricultural image is found in 1.7 to Bassulus. Ruricius is discussing material which Bassulus has sent to Ruricius to read and the teaching which Bassulus has provided him with but indicates that Bassulus' teaching will have to be combined with prayer in order to improve Ruricius:

> But because your seed cannot thrive in my sterile and brushy ground (*sed quoniam semen uestrum in terra sterili et dumosa non proficit*), inasmuch as it is suffocated by overgrowing brambles, and lest the vine-master decide to prune me, whom he oversees in vain so continually, like that unfruitful little fig tree, fend off a harsher sentence by praying, until my fruitless bitterness is enriched, as if with manure, by the fertility of your teaching (*donec doctrinae uestrae pinguedine tamquam stercore amaritudo infructuosa dulcescat*). (1.7)[137]

Letter 1.7 is one of the core of the 'Emerging Interest' letters, where emerging religious interest is displayed. The agricultural metaphor is similar but presented differently in the secular literary letter 1.4 and the religious literary letter 1.7. In 1.7, Ruricius is once again associated with sterile land, unable to be fertilized or bear fruit. However, in this instance, Ruricius himself is the infertile soil. Bassulus, a priest who is presented as Ruricius' teacher, is contrasted with him, this time not as a farmer attempting to plow and manure the sterile soil, but Bassulus' teaching is represented as the seed and manure itself. The change shifts the focus from Ruricius' literary production to Ruricius' own religious instruction and religious life. At the beginning of the core in 1.7, Ruricius' aptitude for religious knowledge and life is as difficult and closed off as eloquence and talent in the water imagery.

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[137] *sed quoniam semen uestrum in terra sterili et dumosa non proficit, utpote quod sentibus supercrescentibus suffocatur, ne sicut infructuosam illam ficulneam me iubeat dominus uineae, quem tanto tempore nequiquam expectat, abscidi, uos seueriorem sententiam orando differte, donec doctrinae uestrae pinguedine tamquam stercore amaritudo infructuosa dulcescat.*

We return to the last of the Hesperius letters. In 1.5, the entire letter is dominated by natural imagery. Ruricius is writing to Hesperius to encourage him to write something and send it to him. Ruricius uses a metaphor of flowers and seeds to discuss the writings which Hesperius promised and failed to send him:

> You promised, dearest son, that you would send me some blossoms from the twig (*aliquos de ramusculo… flosculos destinares*) that you appropriated to be changed and transmuted from bitterness into domestic delectableness, by whose fragrance I would recognize what hope of hope I ought to have: whether the flowers themselves promise seeds or the seeds themselves, on the other hand, fruits of their own quality; and again likewise, whether the fruits can become softened by your simmering and satisfy the hearts of listeners with the sweet nourishment of eloquence. (1.5)[138]

In this passage, Ruricius casts the literary production of Hesperius (which appears to be inspired from something he borrowed from Ruricius – the 'twig' that was 'appropriated' and 'changed'?) as 'blossoms'. He also discusses seeds: whether Hesperius' literary efforts ('flowers') will yield seeds or if the seeds themselves are possible literary productions which Hesperius can refine through his eloquence. Ruricius' use of the image of flowers and seeds once again brings in the idea of sterility vs. fertility, which was present in his agricultural imagery in 1.4 and 1.7, as well as in 1.10. Hesperius, the master who is able to teach Ruricius' sons and enrich Ruricius' writings (infertile soil) through his praise, here is associated with fertility through his literary activity being represented as seeds which blossom into flowers and as fruits which can be nourishing. Hesperius is a master, a potential guide to uncovering and refining Ruricius' (and his sons') abilities in the secular literary arena – Bassulus, and others as we shall see, continue this master/disciple relationship in the religious arena.

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[138] *Spoponderas, fili carissime, ut mihi aliquos de ramusculo, quem ex amaritudine in domesticum saporem uertendum transferendumque susceperas, flosculos destinares, quorum odore cognoscerem, quam spem spei gerere deberem, utrumnam ipsi flores germina aut rursus ipsa germina fructus sui qualitate promitterent idemque iterum fructus utrum possent te excoquente mitescere et dulci eloquentiae cibo audientium corda satiare.*

In the final passage of 1.5, below, Ruricius provides an extended description of the renewal of spring after the desolation of winter and the religious connotations of such a transformation.

> For, indeed, at this time [spring] the restored appearance of the whole world is renewed, and whatever in it hitherto was dingy with dirt, congealed with chill, hardened with ice, disfigured by barrenness, or prematurely dead through dryness emerges in the image of resurrection, so that human weakness might learn to recognize the invisible in the visible and the future in the present, and, putting aside despair, comprehend the hope of the coming better age. Now, indeed, the earth having conceived after being mated as if by a virile seed in hidden channels, in this way in the springtime opens for birth the veins that had been enclosed by sterile stiffness. And hence it produces everything, whatever is sweet with delights, whatever is pleasant to eat, whatever is useful to use, whatever is necessary for sustenance, whatever is pleasurable to behold, whatever is pleasing to smell, whatever is alluring to touch… Therefore, your endeavor has a most appropriate season, during which the apathy of the spirit, at last deterred, whets the dullness of the heart; and, if it is unable to declaim among men, at least let it rush to bellow among the cattle or to chatter among the birds. (1.5)[139]

The recurring idea of sterility vs. fertility appears once again in this passage and is further developed. Ruricius begins with a description of the sterility and 'barrenness' of winter, using a list of increasing intensity:

> … whatever in it hitherto was dingy with dirt, congealed with chill, hardened with ice, disfigured by barrenness, or prematurely dead through dryness…[140]

In the preceding letter 1.4 as well as elsewhere, Ruricius has associated himself and his literary efforts with sterile soil. In this passage, Ruricius himself can be associated through the idea of sterility and barrenness with the winter. However, Ruricius contrasts this description of sterile

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[139] *hoc namque tempore cuncti orbis species rediuiua reparatur et, quicquid in eo situ squalidum, frigore turbidum, glacie concretum, nuditate deforme, ariditate praemortum hactenus fuit, ad instar resurrectionis emergit, ut discat humana fragilitas de uisibilibus inuisibilia et de praesentibus futura cognoscere et spem uenturae melioris aetatis deposita desperatione percipiat. nunc etiam tellus sterili rigore conclausas quasi uirili semine ita uerno tempore concepto occultis maritata meatibus uenas laxat ad partum. et hinc, quod deliciis suaue, quod esui dulce, quod usui utile, quod uictui necessarium, quod uisui iocundum, quod olfactui gratum, quod tactui blandum, omne producit. siquidem haec est illa temperies, quae mundi nascentis materiam quasi adhuc in incunabulis teneram gremio quodam clementissimae altricis conplexa nutriuit, ne substantiam nullo labore duratam aut aestiuus feruor exureret aut hiemalis algor extingueret aut uentorum flabra portarent. habet itaque susceptus tuus conuienientissimum tempus, quo animi socordia tandem aliquando detestata hebetudinem cordis exacuat et, si inter homines declamare non potest, saltim inter pecudes clamare aut inter uolucres garrire festinet.*

[140] *… quicquid in eo situ squalidum, frigore turbidum, glacie concretum, nuditate deforme, ariditate praemortum hactenus fuit…*

winter with the fertility of spring, drawing the reader's attention to this contrast through the parallelism of the descriptions, both using a list of increasing intensity:

> … hence it produces everything, whatever is sweet with delights, whatever is pleasant to eat, whatever is useful to use, whatever is necessary for sustenance, whatever is pleasurable to behold, whatever is pleasing to smell, whatever is alluring to touch.[141]

This change in seasonal circumstances recalls 1.10, in which the sterility of Ruricius' stream was a result of summer, something which could be corrected through the change in seasons. Here, in 1.5, this very correction is taking place.

Winter and spring are not just contrasted in this passage, but they are connected through the idea of transformation. In between these contrasting descriptions, Ruricius characterizes the transformation from winter to spring in religious terms, as imitating the resurrection and instructing humanity in faith:

> …. emerges in the image of resurrection, so that human weakness might learn to recognize the invisible in the visible and the future in the present, and, putting aside despair, comprehend the hope of the coming better age.[142]

In general, the religious association of the renewal of spring in this passage introduces an overtly religious element into 1.5, the last of the secular letters before the beginning of the religious core of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster, contributing to the intertwining secular and religious themes of the cluster. Beyond this, Ruricius comments on his epistolary persona's transformation through this passage. If Ruricius is the sterile winter in this passage then he is the 'visible' and the 'present' which indicates that an 'invisible', 'future' state of fertility is certainly in his future, a 'coming better age'. This future spring can be interpreted as Ruricius' adoption of the religious life and becoming bishop, the culmination of the thematic arc of Book I. The passage, with its references

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[141] *Et hinc, quod deliciis suaue, quod esui dulce, quod usui utile, quod uictui necessarium, quod uisui iocundum, quod olfactui gratum, quod tactui blandum, omne producit.*

[142] *… ad instar resurrectionis emergit, ut discat humana fragilitas de uisibilibus inuisibilia et de praesentibus futura cognoscere et spem uenturae melioris aetatis deposita desperatione percipiat.*

to ‘human weakness’ and the necessity of ‘recognizing’ the ‘invisible in the visible’, alerts the reader to look closely at the letters and discern the thematic arc of religious conversion and persona progression within Book I.

Ruricius also describes the mechanism of the transformation from winter to spring: fertilization.

> Now, indeed, the earth having conceived after being mated as if by a virile seed in hidden channels, in this way in the springtime opens for birth the veins that had been enclosed by sterile stiffness.[143]

Looking back to 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, and 1.10, there have been several other instances of the ideas of seed fertilizing the soil and hidden channels. The ideas of fertile seed, farmers, and plows are associated in the letters with masters, teachers – those possessing knowledge, skill and ability in literary or religious domains. Hidden channels can be associated with the hidden springs of 1.3, in which the latent ability of Ruricius’ sons is likened to hidden springs and gemstones which Hesperius, as master/teacher, can discover, release and refine. Therefore, in this passage, Ruricius as sterile winter soil will be fertilized and released/refined by the knowledge and teaching of his masters in religious matters, such as Faustus, Sidonius and others. It is through the process of teaching and inspiration from masters/teachers that Ruricius will achieve the transformation from secular aristocrat to bishop. This is reinforced by the ending of 1.5:

> Therefore, your endeavor has a most appropriate season, during which the apathy of the spirit, at last deterred, whets the dullness of the heart…[144]

The apathy of the spirit and dullness of the heart refer to Ruricius’ secular aristocratic status before his religious transformation and journey, as he elsewhere describes this state in negative terms,

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[143] *Nunc etiam tellus sterili rigore conclausus quasi uirili semine ita uerno tempore concepto occultis maritata meatibus uenas laxat ad partum.*

[144] *Habet itaque susceptus tuus conuienientissimum tempus, quo animi socordia tandem aliquando detestata hebetudinem cordis exacuat…*

such as illness (see following section). The deterring of apathy and whetting of the heart indicate that Ruricius' journey is beginning.

In 1.11 to Freda, we find another discussion of Ruricius' barrenness, again characterizing his literary efforts as in 1.3. This imagery has a clear parallel in 1.5 but the image is presented differently. This can be explained by the fact that 1.11 is a secular literary activity letter at the end of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster, whereas 1.5 is just before the religious core. In 1.11, Ruricius is discussing writings which he sent to Freda at his request.

> Because you desired to graft the ineptitudes of my barrenness (*deserti nostri*) to the charm of your grove, I have sent, as you enjoined, shoots from my fir trees (*transmisi… abietum plantas*), which are sure to please not by their beauty but by their length, admirable not for their fruits but for their peregrination, unfitted for use but delightful in charm, because, when they have taken root, they will provide, in the thickness of your Cevennian shadows, an oceanic coolness in the summer heat (1.11).[145]

The similarity to 1.5 is in the metaphor of plants being sent for writings, here it is shoots from fir trees (*transmisi… abietum plantas*) sent from Ruricius to Freda and in 1.5 it was blossoms from a twig (*aliquos de ramusculo… flosculos destinares*) meant to be sent from Hesperius to Ruricius. The idea of Ruricius' sterility appears once again in this passage in reference to his secular literary activity, as in 1.3, 1.4 and 1.10. The association of sterility with Ruricius' literary production is therefore repeated in the first two letters of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster and the final two, reinforcing the structure of the cluster as a core of religious interest within sides of secular concerns.

In letters which do not contain discussion of literary activity, we also find natural imagery contributing to the conversion arc. The idea of Ruricius' sterility is referenced in less developed

[145] *Quoniam amoenitati nemoris uestri etiam deserti nostri ineptias uoluistis adiungi, transmisi, sicut iniunxistis, abietum plantas non specie, sed proceritate placituras, non fructibus, sed sui peregrinatione mirabiles, non usu aptas, sed amoenitate iocundas, quippe quae cum coaluerint, crassitudine umbrarum Ceuennarum frigus oceani sint aestatibus praebiturae…*

instances in both 1.1 and 1.9, both in a religious context. In these letters, Ruricius asks for religious mentorship and he refers to his current state as sterile and dry. In 1.9, the peak of the emerging religious interest in the 'Emerging Interest' cluster, the first sentence references sterility:

> Your recent pronouncement and the longstanding affection of Your Piety has allured me so much that, desiring to partake in your learning, as much as my sterile little talent (*sterili ingeniolo*) can, I dare to cause injury yet again to your ears with my ineptitudes. (1.9)[146]

And in 1.1, the first letter to Faustus asking for mentorship at the head of the collection, Ruricius characterizes himself as dry soil. As in 1.7, Ruricius himself and his ability are presented as sterile and dry, not his literary efforts or other work. In 1.1, Ruricius himself is sterile in religious knowledge and life and requires enrichment.:

> For this reason, my lord, I hope that you will pray for me ceaselessly and that, however many times you deign to drench the dryness of my soil (*arditatem terrae meae*) with the showers of your eloquence… (1.1)[147]

In these two instances in 1.1 and 1.9, Ruricius is explicitly interested in embarking on a religious life and is asking for guidance from established religious authorities. The ideas of Ruricius' religious sterility and the intercession of religious mentors is the culmination of the development of the agricultural imagery in Book I, present in the letters 1.1-1.2 and 1.9 which represent the culmination of his emerging interest in the religious life, his plea for mentors to begin his religious journey.

Finally, in the last letter of Book I, 1.18 to Ommatius, the agricultural image re-appears, and the development of this image reaches its conclusion. Ruricius as bishop is giving his son, also

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[146] *Ita me recens praedicatio et antiqua dilectio uestrae pietatis inlexit, ut audeam auribus uestris ineptiis meis facere saepius iniuriam, dum uestram, quantum sterili ingeniolo conceditur, adtingere cupio disciplinam.*

[147] *Quam ob rem spero, domine mi, ut pro me indesinenter oretis et, quoties dignati fueritis ariditatem terrae meae eloquentiae uestrae imbre perfundere…*

pursuing the religious life, advice and encouragement. He uses the same image of soil and plow as 1.4 (and 1.7):

> But, holding the plow handle, you should not look back, contrary to the will of the Lord, and cause the furrow to lose its linear straightness. (1.18)[148]

In 1.4, Ruricius' literary efforts were the infertile soil and Hesperius, as teacher, was the farmer with the plow, attempting to cultivate and enrich the sterility associated with Ruricius. A similar image in 1.7 had Ruricius himself as infertile soil which Bassulus' teachings were attempting to fertilize. In both instances, Ruricius was the sterile soil and required intercessors with knowledge and ability to attempt to act upon him and improve him. Here, at the end of Book I, in which Ruricius has reached the culmination of the arc of conversion and become a bishop, Ruricius is himself an authority, an intercessor, who can give advice actively to his son on the religious life. He advises Ommatius to hold the plow and keep it straight as he plows – here Ruricius and Ommatius are active participants in the religious life in contrast to Ruricius' passive, sterile state earlier in Book I.

Section 2: Food/Drink Imagery and Medical Imagery

In a similar manner to natural imagery, food and drink imagery (in letters 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, and 1.9[149]) is associated with secular literary letters and shifts its meaning and presentation in the emerging religious interest letters. It adds support and nuance to the conversion arc: depicting religious teachings as nourishment and elaborating on Ruricius' conversion process through his relationship with this food. While the images themselves vary, Ruricius' vocabulary uses a small

[148] *… sed neque stiuam tenens contra domini sententiam retro respicias, ut directum lineae sulcus amittat…*
[149] 1.4 to Hesperius shares some food vocabulary describing Hesperius' praise (*sale, melle, sapori*) in its first line but it is not developed beyond this.

number of similar words to draw the reader's attention to the ideas of taste and satiety such as: *gustus*, *daps*, *sapor*, *satietas*.

In 1.5, Ruricius uses food imagery for the first time, along with natural imagery. In this letter, Ruricius is discussing the writings which Hesperius promised to send him, using natural imagery as seen in the previous section:

> You promised, dearest son, that you would send me some blossoms from the twig that you appropriated to be changed and transmuted from bitterness into domestic delectableness (*domesticum saporem*), by whose fragrance I would recognize what hope of hope I ought to have: whether the flowers themselves promise seeds or the seeds themselves, on the other hand, fruits of their own quality; and again likewise, whether the fruits can become softened by your simmering (*fructus utrum possent te excoquente mitescere*) and satisfy the hearts of listeners with the sweet nourishment of eloquence (*dulci eloquentiae cibo audientium corda satiare*) (1.5).[150]

Hesperius' eloquence and writings are presented as nourishment, through language such as *domesticum saporem* and *dulci eloquentiae cibo*, which is used to describe Hesperius' efforts. This food image is further supported by the discussion of the writings as *germina*, *flores*, *fructus*, the stages of a tree bearing fruit which can nourish, from seeds, to flowers, and, eventually, to fruit. The fruit can be simmered and can satisfy listeners, verbs associated with cooking and eating. Thus, at the beginning of 1.5, the food imagery is applied to secular aristocratic literary activity.

The next instance of food imagery is in 1.6. It is more developed and overlaps with illness imagery. Ruricius is discussing books (of religious content) which he borrowed from Nepotianus:

> Tantalized rather than refreshed by an excessively slight taste of them, I was unable to become satiated because of the worries of our age (*quorum ego gustu admodum tenui pellectus potius quam refectus ad satietatem propter sollicitudines saeculi peruenire non potui*). Indeed, just as the stomach, when it is burning with the heat of fevers (*cum febrium ardore decoquitur*), neither accepts previously pleasant foods when they are proffered nor desires them after they have been removed, thus the spirit also, exhausted by worldly cares and anxieties, neither desires spiritual feasts that are lacking nor seizes those that are served or notices those that have been digested (*ita et animus mundanis anxietatibus curisque*

[150] See footnote 138 for full Latin.

> *confectus spiritales dapes nec desiderat absentes nec carpit appositas nec sentit infusas*) (1.6).[151]

Here we have the next step in the transition from secular to religious: food imagery is being used in the context of book exchange, a literary activity of the elite, but also with religious content. This supports the thematic development of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster. The food imagery also provides nuance to Ruricius' persona and conversion. Two important ideas are introduced by this passage: the idea of satiety and the idea of unwillingness. In the beginning of the passage, Ruricius indicates that he was not satiated by the 'slight taste' (*quorum… gustu admodum*) of the books because of the 'worries of our age' (*sollicitudines saeculi*). While the 'worries of our age' is ambiguous,[152] it could refer to Ruricius' secular life and concerns, just as the later reference to 'worldly cares and anxieties' (*mundanis anxietatibus curisque*). The idea that a slight taste of religious teachings was not enough to satisfy Ruricius re-appears in 1.8 to Sidonius, as we shall see below. Given the position of 1.6 at the start of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster's core, Ruricius' emerging religious interest is only just beginning. Therefore, the slight taste of religious teaching refers to Ruricius' nascent interest in the religious life – it is 'slight' and 'tantalizing' because he has only just begun his path to the religious life and has not given himself wholly over to it yet – and his lack of satiety at this taste suggests his pursuit of further engagement in the religious life. The references to secular concerns as preventing satiety and exhausting the spirit also suggest that Ruricius is contrasting his secular aristocrat state with the religious life to which he is beginning to aspire.

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[151] *quorum ego gustu admodum tenui pellectus potius quam refectus ad satietatem propter sollicitudines saeculi peruenire non potui. sicut enim stomachus, cum febrium ardore decoquitur, dulces sibi antea cibos nec oblatos recipit nec requirit ablatos, ita et animus mundanis anxietatibus curisque confectus spiritales dapes nec desiderat absentes nec carpit appositas nec sentit infusas.*

[152] Mathisen 2011: 112, footnote 1 notes this ambiguity and some possible interpretations.

Another idea in 1.6 which re-appears in 1.8 is unwillingness. In the above passage, Ruricius describes the exhausted spirit rejecting or not noticing 'spiritual feasts' (*spiritales dapes*), i.e. religious teachings, and compares this spiritual state to the physical state of illness in which it is difficult to eat or appreciate food: exhaustion (*animus… confectus*) and fever (*cum febrium ardore decoquitur*). Ruricius' spiritual state as a secular aristocrat is therefore similar to someone who is ill, unable to appreciate or consume that which is nourishing because of his sickness.[153] Ruricius' pre-bishop, secular life is associated with sickness and unwillingness to eat in other letters, particularly in letters in which he has embraced the religious life. Illness and medical imagery also serve to establish Nepotianus as a religious guide to Ruricius, discussed in more detail later in this section.

In the 'Emerging Interest' cluster, 1.8 is at the centre of the core and it is a letter concerning literary activity (book copying and exchange) set before and in contrast to 1.9 to Sidonius, in which Ruricius professes his serious engagement upon the religious life and asks for a mentor. The food imagery which appears in 1.8 supports this position in the thematic development of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster. Ruricius develops the idea of satiety in this letter. The first instance of food imagery is in Ruricius' description of the book which he copied before securing Sidonius' permission:

> For, because until now I had tasted few morsels from the feast of this work, so much did it tempt me with the tempting taste of its flavor (*nam cum de dapibus ipsius adhuc pauca libassem, taliter me gustu inlecebrosi saporis inlexit*), that as an imitator, in some way, of the first parent, having precipitately ignored the Lord, I desired to attain satiety (*satietatem*), and I heeded more the cajoling of a tempter that the authority of a master (1.8).[154]

[153] Possible allusion to I Corinthians 3:2.

[154] *nam cum de dapibus ipsius adhuc pauca libassem, taliter me gustu inlecebrosi saporis inlexit, ut primi quodammodo parentis imitator domino repente contempto ad satietatem studuerim peruenire magisque consilium suadentis quam imperium dominantis audierim.*

Ruricius uses the metaphor of food for this work, describing it as a feast, taste, flavour, and the action of eating. His vocabulary and addressee suggest the book he is describing was religious content (reference to the Lord and first parent, later reference to Sidonius providing him with spiritual nourishment (see below)). As in 1.6, Ruricius had only a slight taste of the whole work, found it tempting and then desired satiety. Unlike in 1.6, Ruricius desired to pursue and then directly did pursue this satiety by copying the work, even without Sidonius' permission, a demonstration of his pursuit of religious teaching – a step further than 1.6, in which he only remarked on his lack of satiety. The vocabulary, including words such as feast and flavour, supports the contrast with 1.6 in which Ruricius was unwilling to eat.

The idea of Ruricius' unwillingness to eat is mentioned directly in 1.8 in another instance of food imagery, but Ruricius indicates Sidonius' role as mentor in helping him past it. Ruricius' use of prosopopeia, in which the book he copied speaks to him, includes food imagery:

> You know the feelings of our shared lord toward you, how on various occasions he hastens to perfect you, how this good shepherd (*bonus pastor*) customarily dishes out spiritual nourishments (*spiritales cibos*) to you even when you are unwilling (*etiam inuito*) (1.8).[155]

The italicized sections highlight the food imagery: Sidonius is the shepherd who provides spiritual nourishment (*spiritales cibos*) – religious teaching – to Ruricius even when he is unwilling. Notably, Ruricius' representation of Sidonius as shepherd (*bonus pastor*) who improves him echoes Ruricius' representation of his teachers in his natural imagery, who were the active parties attempting to plow and fertilize the passive Ruricius. We see that the idea of Ruricius being at times unwilling to receive spiritual teaching is repeated from 1.6 as well as the role of a master who is available to provide spiritual nourishment despite this unwillingness. The importance of

[155] *nosti erga te communis domini uoluntatem, quam diuersis occasionibus te elimare contendat, quam tibi etiam inuito spiritales cibos soleat bonus pastor ingerere.*

mentors and teachers in Ruricius' progress in the religious life is emphasized in both natural and food imagery.

The next letter, 1.9 to Sidonius, is the climax of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster: Ruricius decides to follow the religious life. Food and drink imagery appears in this letter but Ruricius presents his relationship with the food differently compared to 1.6 and 1.8: he describes in detail his desire to eat a lot. Ruricius professes his desire to learn religious teachings and explicitly asks for a master, in this case Sidonius himself:

> I desire, therefore, My Lord, I desire, I say, to be replenished by your nourishment, to drink at your fountain, to be satiated by your feasts, to be fattened at your banquets (*desidero itaque, domine mi, desidero, inquam, tuis cibis refici, tuo fonte potari, tuis repleri dapibus, tuis epulis saginari*): if any guest at your table, with you serving, did not taste this fare with the tip of his tongue, but gulped it down, craving it with the innermost parts of his spirit, and departed in order to ponder it later in the privacy of his heart, he would begin to burst forth with incessant belches in praise of the omnipotent lord, replenished in his heart although starving in his mouth, while satiated he is hungry and being hungry he is satiated, to be satiated yet more in rebirth (*refertus corde, ore ieiunus, dum satur esurit et saturatur esuriens, magis in regeneratione saturandus*). Nor can nourishment be lacking whose fodder is in your word. Therefore, through your patronage, provide that I shall merit being a partaker in these delicacies… (*nec deesse poterit cibus, cuius pastus in uerbo est. ut ergo harum deliciarum particeps esse merear, uestris patrociniis obtinete...)* (1.9).[156]

In the above passage, religious instruction – particularly Sidonius' – is presented as food and drink: *cibis*, *fonte*, *dapibus*, *epulis*. This recalls the 'spiritual feasts' (*dapes*) of 1.6 and 1.8, of which Ruricius only gained slight tastes. Not so in 1.9, in which the imagery points in the opposite direction, to eating a lot: for example, Ruricius contrasts tasting with the tip of the tongue with gulping the food down and bursting into belches. This is a final step into engagement with religious teachings and the religious life: Ruricius is fully engaged on the religious path.

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[156] *desidero itaque, domine mi, desidero, inquam, tuis cibis refici, tuo fonte potari, tuis repleri dapibus, tuis epulis saginari, quas si quis distribuentibus uobis non summo ore libauerit, sed totis animae uisceribus adpetens conuiua sorbuerit atque intimo pectoris postmodum easdem ruminaturus absconderit, incipiet adsiduis ructationibus in laudem domini omnipotentis erumpere refertus corde, ore ieiunus, dum satur esurit et saturatur esuriens, magis in regeneratione saturandus. nec deesse poterit cibus, cuius pastus in uerbo est. ut ergo harum deliciarum particeps esse merear, uestris patrociniis obtinete…*

The idea of satiety is taken a step further in 1.9. In 1.8, Ruricius desired to be satiated and pursued this by copying the book without permission. However, in 1.9, Ruricius develops the idea of satiety at length, using vocabulary like replenished, satiated, fattened as well as the contrast between being satiated in spirit while starving in body: "… replenished in his heart although starving in his mouth, while satiated he is hungry and being hungry he is satiated, to be satiated yet more in rebirth." He equates Sidonius' teaching and patronage with being satiated with spiritual teachings and this time asks for Sidonius' patronage in order to have this, rather than acting without permission. The path to satiety is the religious life with a religious mentor and that is what Ruricius is finally pursuing in 1.9.

The idea of unwillingness which appeared in 1.6 and 1.8 is no longer present in 1.9. Instead, the opposite is emphasized: Ruricius is desperate to have this spiritual food. He repeats *desidero* twice and in asking for Sidonius' patronage asks to merit being able to eat the spiritual nourishment. Ruricius has left the secular life behind and is fully earnest in pursuing the religious life.

In letters surrounding the 'Emerging Interest' cluster, in which Ruricius is pursuing the religious life, he also uses food/drink imagery. In 1.1, in which Ruricius is addressing Faustus as a spiritual mentor, similarly to how he addressed Sidonius in 1.9, some similar food/drink images occur. For example, Ruricius uses drink imagery:

> I then might extinguish the thirst that I have acquired by reading your treatises, gulping more greedily in your very presence, whence they gush forth. (1.1)[157]

In this passage, Faustus is the source from which spiritual teachings 'gush forth' as Sidonius was a fountain. The idea of hunger/thirst/temptation being aroused from books as well as the desire for

[157] *… ut sitim, quam opuscula uestra legendo concepi, ipse praesens, unde illa manarunt, uberius hauriens restinguerem…*

satiety through mentorship also appears here. Just as in 1.9, the idea of unwillingness or lacking satiety is not present, instead Ruricius indicates his eagerness and direct pursuit of satiety through the image of gulping greedily.[158] In both 1.1 and 1.9, Ruricius is committed to pursuing the religious life and is seeking mentorship from his addressees. The food/drink imagery reflects Ruricius' commitment through its descriptions of eating and drinking a lot and eagerly, supporting the structure of the arc of Ruricius' religious life in Book I.

Imagery associated with illness and medicine is also used in conjunction with food/drink imagery. The theme appears less frequently than the others we have discussed, only present in 1.1, 1.2, and 1.6. However, this theme reinforces some of the ideas developed in the natural and food imagery, such as the secular state being something to correct as well as the need for guidance and religious teachings. We have already seen an instance of the combined themes of food and illness/medicine in 1.6. There is a further passage relating to illness and medicine in 1.6:

> You also have fulfilled the duty of a diligent physician by sending to a sick man medication that is suited to such weariness (… *et seduli medici implestis officium, ut tali taedio laboranti medicamenta congrua mitteretis*). Even if I am unable to regain my health through it on account of my own negligence, you nevertheless will reap a reward from a just paymaster… (1.6).[159]

Once again, in the above passage several important ideas are present and reinforced. First, Ruricius is representing his current state as a 'sick man' (*laboranti*). Given the position of 1.6 in the 'Emerging Interest' arc, Ruricius is currently a secular aristocrat whose interest in religious life and teachings is just beginning. It is this state of non-religious life that Ruricius is representing as illness, something that needs to be changed and cured, moving to a preferred state of heath/religious life. Second, Nepotianus as a mentor in religious teachings is cast as a 'diligent

[158] Drink imagery, specifically thirst, is also used by Ruricius in 1.17 in his description of his onerous spiritual journey.
[159] … *et seduli medici implestis officium, ut tali taedio laboranti medicamenta congrua mitteretis. quibus etsi propter neglegentiam meam ego non valeo consequi sospitatem, uos tamen percipietis a iusto repensatore mercedem…*

physician' (*seduli medici*) who is sending Ruricius medication and caring for his health, which draws a parallel with mentors/teachers being represented as farmers and seed in the natural imagery. Nepotianus as physician is being represented as a figure of authority who has the key to improving Ruricius' state of being. The medication is referring to the books and teachings, of religious nature, which Nepotianus sent. Medication, like food, is a metaphor for religious teaching, the cure by means of which Ruricius will be changed from secular aristocrat (sick) to religious life/bishop (health). And in this passage, Ruricius suggests that, while he requires mentors and teachers to guide him, he himself is also an important part of making this life change, by referring to his own negligence as an obstacle to regaining his health.

Illness and medicine imagery is also present in 1.1 and 1.2, letters to Faustus in which Ruricius is committed to beginning the religious life and is asking for religious mentorship. In 1.1, first there is an instance of combined food and illness imagery:

> … you will not, as you now do, ignorant of my infirmity, lay before me tempting and delightful dishes, but those which are more austere and appropriate to my illness, because temptations convey no benefit to the simpleton (1.1).[160]

In the context of Ruricius' plea to Faustus to offer him religious mentorship in this letter, Ruricius' infirmity and illness can be once again associated with his secular, pre-religious life state. Further illness and medical imagery occur later in the letter:

> Nor, certainly, should Your Sanctity fear that the right hand of a caresser will be more welcome to my wounds than that of a surgeon, because I know that I cannot cure them myself and, in addition, by the gift of God, I now feel that they have become gravely putrescent… I beg, therefore, with a prayer of supplication, that, like the most skilled physicians, you who, helped by the grace of God, daily heal the innumerable and varied illnesses of the sick, likewise send from that treasury of your innermost recesses, whence

[160] *… non mihi, sicut nunc fecistis adhuc meae infirmitatis ignari, delicatos et dulces cibos, sed austeriores et aegritudini meae congruos suggeratis, quia non expediunt stulto deliciae…*

> you customarily bring forth new and old cures, medications that you know to be appropriate for my malaise (1.1).[161]

Ruricius' pre-religious life is likened to wounds and malaise in the above quotation. Faustus is represented as a surgeon and a skilled physician who is accustomed to curing the ill. In addition, Ruricius asserts that his wounds have become putrescent by the gift of God, which suggests that the worsening of his condition is a benefit as it forces him to seek mentorship and aid from Faustus. As in 1.6, Ruricius indicates that he knows he cannot heal his wounds solely by himself and requires Faustus' medication. However, Ruricius does not mention his own role in 'curing' his current state unlike in 1.6, where he mentions his own negligence possibly hindering his recovery. In 1.1 Ruricius has already made the choice to seriously pursue the religious life – his role is completed, and he now needs a mentor.

The last letter which contains illness imagery is 1.2 to Faustus. The imagery appears within Ruricius' development of his request for spiritual guidance:

> You have both in the error of your disciple that which you can correct, and in the weakness of your lamb that which you can cure. And it is up to your power and judgement whether you choose to rip open the putrescence of my sore with the severity of steel, or to heal it with the mildness of your medications. Regardless, I will unflinchingly embrace whichever cure you choose (1.2).[162]

The above passage repeats the imagery of 1.1. Faustus is the wielder of the cure: he cures, rips, heals, chooses. Ruricius is the sufferer of a putrescent wound in his secular life. And the cure, be it ripping with steel or mild medications, refers to Faustus' ability to provide Ruricius with spiritual guidance and teaching so that he can transition to a religious life.

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[161] *sane nec uereatur sanctitas uestra, ne uulneribus meis gratior sit fouentis dextera quam secantis, quia ea nec a me posse curari et tamen grauiter conputruisse domino donante iam sentio… supplici itaque prece deposco, ut de illo thesauro penetralium uestrorum, unde noua et uetera proferre consuestis, peritissimi utpote medici, qui languentium innumeras et uarias argitudines cotidie gratia dei adiuuante sanatis, languori quoque meo, quae conuenire cognoscitis, medicamenta mittatis.*

[162] *habes et in discipuli errore, quod corrigas, et in ouiculae languore, quod sanes. potestatisque et iudicii tui est, utrum uelis ulceris mei putredinem ferri rigore rescindere an medicamentorum lenitate curare. ego tamen, utram elegeritis, curationem amplectar intrepidus…*

Overall, the food imagery provides a supporting metaphor for Ruricius' religious conversion arc. This imagery develops in the literary activity letters of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster and also appears in some surrounding letters. Food is a metaphor for religious teaching which Ruricius desires and pursues more and more over the course of the arc. The illness imagery, though less frequent, also reinforces the conversion arc, particularly through the characterization of his secular state as one of illness requiring the aid of a doctor and cure.

Section 3: Error and Judgement

Error and judgement, the final theme featured in the literary activity letters that we will consider here, also supports and elaborates on the conversion arc. Ruricius characterizes his secular life and activity as error and emphasizes the necessity of judgement and correction to resolve this error. Nine letters include this theme and language, both within the 'Emerging Interest' arc and in surrounding letters, to a greater or lesser degree of development: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, and 1.17. We will begin by examining the letters of the 'Emerging Interest' arc, which contains the majority of the letters with this theme, 1.3-1.9, and the deliberate development of this theme over the course of this cluster.

The first two letters of the 'Emerging Interest' arc, 1.3 and 1.4 of the Hesperius cluster, contain language of error and judgement. In 1.3, Ruricius mentions judgement twice, both instances in the context of secular literary activity and education. In the first instance, Ruricius is describing his writing project:

> And piety, the governess of all, through whom rigid things are bent… fulfilling her work even in me, has unbarred my inarticulate mouth, drawing me forth from the safest retreat

> of silence to public and frightening judgement (*ad publicum formidandumque iudicium*), and compels me, in a life already old, to undergo something new (1.3).[163]

And in the second instance, Ruricius is concluding his description of Hesperius' tasks as Ruricius' sons' tutor:

> Therefore, it now is up to you yourself to answer equally to your own expectation and to my judgement (*nostro… iudicio*), lest either you appear to have presumed falsely or I to have chosen thoughtlessly (*ne aut tu praesumpsisse inlicite aut nos inconsiderate elegisse uideamur*) (1.3).[164]

In both instances, judgement is associated with secular literary activity: concerning Ruricius' literary projects and classical education for his sons. Who are the judges and who are the judged in the two instances? In the first, it is the elite literary community who will read and judge Ruricius' writing as their peer. In the second, Ruricius himself is the judge, monitoring Hesperius for error in his role as teacher. The presentation of judgement in 1.3, at the beginning of the arc, introduces two ideas which will be developed over the course of the arc. First, judgement is frightening (*formidandusque iudicium*) and may result in revealing error (presumed falsely, chosen thoughtlessly). Secondly, it is necessary to work in order to avoid error. Ruricius develops both these ideas throughout the cluster.

In 1.4, themes of judgement and error are developed more fully – it is the central point of the letter. Ruricius is chastising Hesperius for having committed an error in judgement in praising some writings of Ruricius:

> Although [Hesperius' words] excel in every skill of speaking and reasoning, they nevertheless seem to contradict themselves only with regard to their judgement (*iudicio*), for when, following either the path of rhetoric or the feeling of affection, you hasten to attribute greatness in merit to my little pages… you have departed from the standard of the upright judge (*a norma recti iudicii declinasti*)… if you rather make [the letter/writings]

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[163] *… et illa dominatrix omnium pietas, per quam flectuntur rigida… etiam in me opus suum peragens os elingue reserauit producens me ex tutissimo silentii recessu ad publicum formidandumque iudicium et in uita iam ueteri noua subire conpellit…*

[164] *tuum ergo nunc, tuum est in his omnibus et opinioni tuae et nostro pariter respondere iudicio, ne aut tu praesumpsisse inlicite aut nos inconsiderate elegisse uideamur*.

> public, it will generate shame both in me on account of the false praise and in you on account of your error in judgement (*iudicii errore*) … Therefore, if you have any belief in me, if you have any concern for us both, conceal that volume unworthy of memory, most worthy of oblivion, if you desire both that I obtain fame as an orator through your judgement (*ad arbitrium tuum*) and that you obtain a reputation as an upright judge (*et te probati iudicis obtinere personam*) (1.4).[165]

In the above passage, judgement and error are once again associated with secular literary activity, namely exchange and critique of writing between Hesperius and Ruricius. Hesperius is the judge and Ruricius' writings the judged. However, Hesperius has committed an error in his judgement, falsely praising Ruricius' work. The public is now the judge (if the piece of writing is not concealed) and may condemn both Ruricius and Hesperius for this false praise. Once again, as in 1.3, public judgement of literary activity is frightening and the error could lead to consequences, in this case Hesperius losing his reputation as a capable judge. Therefore, the error must be avoided – although in this case, since it has already been committed, concealed.

However, in 1.6, the characterization of judgement and error changes. There are two instances of error and judgement vocabulary in this letter which bring this theme into association with religious life and teachings. The first instance is in Ruricius' comments on the religious texts which Nepotianus sent:

> Enriched by a wealth of sacred testimonies, outstanding in authority, and blazing with light, they easily both illuminate the minds of the faithful, and expose and overcome the error of the unfaithful (*et infidelium errores detegant atque conuincant*) (1.6).[166]

In this passage, the error has to do with faith. The above description is notable for its representation of teaching and authority used to overcome errors in faith – the same idea occurs in 1.7. Following

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[165] *qui cum omni dictionis et rationis arte praemineant, solo tamen a se uidentur discrepare iudicio. dum enim paginulae meae non laudi aptae, sed uituperationi ineptia rusticitatis aptatae maiora meritis tribuere festinas et sequeris uel declamationis cursum uel diligentis affectum, a norma recti iudicii declinasti… si uero protuleris, incutiat et mihi de falsa laude et tibi de iudicii errore uerecundiam… itaque si quid mihi credis, si quid utrique consulis, indignum memoriae, obliuione dignissimum uolumen absconde, si uis et me ad arbitrium tuum oratoris famam et te probati iudicis obtinere personam.*

[166] *… qui sacrorum testimoniorum ubertate locupletes, auctoritate praestantes, luce fulgentes facile et fidelium mentes inluminent et infidelium errores detegant atque conuincant.*

this description, Ruricius uses the food and illness theme to indicate that he did not attain satiety with these religious texts and teachings. The illness image and the lack of satiety with regard to these texts suggest that Ruricius was not able to overcome his errors of faith completely. In this way, both themes of food/illness and error combine to present Ruricius' progress in the pursuit of the religious life in 1.6: he has begun to work towards a religious life but there is still much work and development necessary. The second instance of error and judgement vocabulary confirms this:

> Even if I am unable to regain my health through [the medication/religious texts sent by Neptotianus] on account of my own negligence (*propter neglegentiam meam*), you nevertheless will reap a reward from a just paymaster (*uos tamen percipietis a iusto repensatore mercedem*), who customarily returns benevolent gratitude in exchange even for ingratitude (1.6).[167]

Ruricius has not attained health through the medication provided, i.e. he has not overcome his secular life for a religious life. But Nepotianus, a priest and a diligent mentor to Ruricius will receive reward from God, who is a "just paymaster", for doing his duty and trying to help Ruricius. In Ruricius' depiction, justice is on the side of the religious life, with God and Nepotianus, whereas the error and negligence is on the side of the 'unfaithful', the current state of Ruricius himself in 1.6.

Ruricius continues to use the error and judgement theme to present his own state as that of a student in need of a master in the religious life in the following letter, 1.7. Ruricius comments on reading material, most likely religious in nature, which Bishop Bassulus has sent him:

> As long as you send material to be read and you correct what has been neglected, you arouse esteem by esteeming, and whatever you proclaim with words you demonstrate with examples. (1.7)[168]

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[167] *quibus etsi propter neglegentiam meam ego non valeo consequi sospitatem, uos tamen percipietis a iusto repensatore mercedem, qui etiam pro ingratis grates beniuolas referre consueuit.*

[168] *… dum legenda transmittitis et neglecta corrigitis, dilectionem diligendo prouocatis et, quod praedicatis uerbis, docetis exemplis*.

The reference to error in the above passage is that Bassulus will correct Ruricius in his study of the religious material and teaching he provides. Once again, error and judgement are associated with religious teaching. Ruricius is presented as the student, a person who is subject to religious error; Bassulus, like Nepotianus, is the upright judge who is able to correct Ruricius and is not accused of error (in contrast to Hesperius in 1.4). Also, the idea of correction in 1.7 is surrounded by positive descriptions of teaching – esteem by esteeming, demonstrating by examples – which suggests that error and judgement are not frightening in this context, but rather a part of learning (in contrast with 1.3 and 1.4).

In letters 1.8 and 1.9 to Sidonius, the error and judgement theme in the 'Emerging Interest' cluster reaches its most developed form. In 1.8, Ruricius sends Sidonius a stylized and joking letter confessing an error – having copied a book without Sidonius' permission – and submitting himself to Sidonius' judgement. Ruricius begins the letter with the theme of judgement and error:

> I recall that I have heard very often when you are preaching that in no way can we be cleansed of iniquities unless we confess our sins with a contrite conscience. Indeed, who is able I would not say to obtain but even to seek pardon, unless he joins to his moans a confession of error, because error requires pardon, not pardon error? I, recognizing this to be very valid, have not hesitated to report to Your Piety my recently committed crime, lest that which now, if I speak out, has a chance of pardon, might later, if I am silent, produce blame (1.8).[169]

In the above passage, Ruricius discusses the nature of error. He indicates that error must be confessed in order to receive pardon and the confession should be quick and timely – otherwise the error might rather receive blame. The idea of confession of error is framed by the first sentence which refers to Sidonius' preaching and the confession of sins – therefore connected to religious

[169] *Praedicantibus uobis saepius audisse me recolo nullatenus ab iniquitatibus nos posse purgari, nisi fuerimus crimina nostra conscientia conpungente confessi. quis enim, non dicam consequi, sed uel quaerere queat indulgentiam, nisi deplorationi confessionem erroris adiungat, quia error indulgentiam, non indulgentia requirit errorem? quod ego ualde uerum esse cognoscens facinus meum nuper admissum pietati uestrae indicare non distuli, ne, quod modo prodente me spectat ad ueniam, tacente postmodum pertineret ad culpam.*

confession and pardon of sins despite this letter being about the literary practice of book exchange and copying. In this way, there is a combination of Ruricius' secular aristocratic activities and religious concerns in this letter, supporting the position and role of 1.8 at the climax of the cluster. The representation of blame in the above passage continues that of 1.6 and 1.7: error does not have to be feared, avoided and concealed, but rather can invite pardon, correction and understanding if handled in a religious context of teaching or confession. And in 1.8, Ruricius is actively seeking this pardon for his error in book copying.

Judgement is discussed in the final sentences of the letter:

> … I hurriedly undertook to copy it [the book], and now it hangs in your judgement whether I ought to return the original or, such as it is, the transcribed version. I, in any event, will freely accept the penalty that you impose, because I believe that your judgement is my remedy, and I consider your sentence to be a cure, not a punishment (1.8).[170]

In the above passage, Sidonius is the judge and is making two judgements. The first judgement is whether Ruricius should send the original or transcribed version of the book in question, a judgement that is associated with aristocratic book exchange and copying. The second judgement is on repercussions for Ruricius' copying without permission, if there are to be any. Once again, secular and religious topics are combined in 1.8, reflecting the position of Ruricius' persona at this point in the cluster and overall arc of conversion. The second judgement is associated with medical imagery, being characterized as a remedy and a cure (*remedium*, *medellam*) as opposed to a punishment (*poenam*). Therefore, in 1.8, judgement of error is something to be sought out as a remedy, something that incites positive change, as opposed to something to be feared and avoided as in 1.3 and 1.4.

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[170] *… ad exemplandum eum festinus accessi, quem nunc utrum, sicut est, transcriptum an paratum reddere debeam, in uestro pendet arbitrio. ego tamen libens multam, quam intuleritis, excipiam, quia remedium meum uestrum credo esse decretum et sententiam uestram medellam duco esse, non poenam.*

In 1.9, Ruricius is committed to beginning a religious life and is asking for a mentor. The combined secular and religious elements of 1.8 shift to solely religious as Ruricius' persona reaches this religious climax. Following the food imagery of 1.9, the error and judgement theme occurs in the final sentence of the letter:

> Restore this errant sheep from the pastures of the world to the folds of the Lord, for I have faith that by your intercession it is possible for one who merits being your disciple to become a lamb. (1.9)[171]

The above brief passage is heavily associated with religious life and guidance, more so than any of the previous letters. Sidonius is represented as a necessary guide, a shepherd, similar to the religious teachers Nepotianus and Bassulus in 1.6 and 1.7, but also similar to the judge whose sentences are a cure in 1.8. Ruricius casts himself as an 'errant sheep', someone requiring guidance to restore to the correct path, and explicitly represents correction as moving from secular life (*a pascuis saeculi*) to the religious life (*ad caulas dominicas*). The error of secular life in this final context of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster is something that requires intercession and guidance to fix and Ruricius is actively seeking out the admission of this error and the guidance to overcome it and achieve the religious life.

Other letters around the 'Emerging Interest' cluster also include the error and judgement theme.[172] In 1.1 and 1.2 to Faustus, Ruricius uses the vocabulary of error and judgement, heavily associated with religious vocabulary, to present the same image as in 1.8 and 1.9: error is Ruricius' current state, a secular aristocrat, which he wants to leave in favour of the preferred, correct state, the religious life, which requires religious guidance and mentorship. Faustus is presented as the

[171] *… errantemque ouem a pascuis saeculi ad caulas dominicas reportate, quia confide, quod intercessionibus uestris fieri possit agnus, qui uester meruerit esse discipulus*.

[172] We will not include instances where language of error/fault and judgement is not used extensively, such as 1.17 in which a biblical quotation in the first sentence includes 'fault' but this idea is not continued and developed.

judge or shepherd and Ruricius as being in error and begging for Faustus' judgement and intercession. For example, a passage from the beginning of 1.2:

> Until now, my lord, impious negligence and negligent impiety have possessed me to such an extent that I do not know what in myself I should especially accuse, and I cannot find anything that I should primarily excuse. Indeed, should I attempt to present my defense "to busy myself with wicked deeds," [Psalms 140.4] I would be adding another sin to my sin without the proceedings of a trial… awaiting now only a paternal sentence for the fault of torpor I would become liable, truly, to a divine judgement for the avenging of falsehood… I prefer, therefore, to seek pardon by a confession as simple as it is suppliant, rather than to double my transgressions.
>
> Thus, you, best father, chosen shepherd, have me as a spontaneous confessor of my iniquity. You have both in the error of your disciple that which you can correct, and in the weakness of your lamb that which you can cure. And it is up to your power and judgement… (1.2).[173]

The above passage is similar to 1.8 in its discussion of confession and pardon versus blame. The passage is also similar to 1.9 in its presentation of Faustus and Ruricius in the roles of mentor and supplicant, as well as the explicit desire to join the religious life and religious mentorship. However, the language is more heavily legal and religious in its vocabulary, lending a formal tone which is appropriate given the position of these two letters at the head of the collection which announce the conversion arc to the reader.

In 1.1 and 1.2, Ruricius is eager to confess his error and receive judgement and correction, i.e. join the religious life. He emphasizes judgement as a theme in the letters. Ruricius desires the outcome of judgement, be it harsh or lenient. For example, in 1.1:

> I therefore prefer, moreover, to have a just man reprove me with the rebuke of pity, rather than to have "the oil of a sinner anoint my head." [cf. Psalms 140.5][174] (1.1).[175]

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[173] *Ita me hactenus inpia neglegentia et neglegens impietas possederunt, ut, quid, domine mi, in me potissimum accusem, nesciam et, quid in me primum excusem, non inueniam. si enim argumentationem aliquam ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis exhibere temptauero, adiciam peccato sine iudicii recordatione peccatum… paternam nunc tantum expectans de segnitiae noxa sententiam, diuinae uero pro mendacii ultione subiciar… malo itaque tam simplici confessione quam supplici ueniam petere, quam peccata geminare.*
Habes ergo, pater optime, pastor egregie, me culpae meae spontaneum confessorem. habes et in discipuli errore, quod corrigas, et in ouiculae languore, quod sanes. Potestatisque et iudicii tui est…

[174] Mathisen 2011: 89, footnote 18.

[175] *et ideo eligo, ut me iustus misericordiae increpatione corripiat, quam caput meum oleum peccatoris inpinguet.*

And in 1.2:

> Thus, that most indulgent father in the evangelist received his son, the squanderer of his anticipated substance, with a joyful embrace, more ready to rejoice in his return than to find fault with his error…. But in fact, the pardon of paternal clemency alone is not sufficient… (1.2).[176]

In both 1.1 and 1.2, a major theme used by Ruricius is the consideration of judgement. His desire to confess and receive judgement and correction is in contrast with the presentation of judgement in 1.3 and 1.4 to Hesperius, in which judgement was frightening and to be avoided. In 1.1, Ruricius even uses language which rejects the avoidance of judgement:

> Afterwards you may extend a censorious approval to those who betrayed me, who, in the manner of human nature, shackled by excessive affection and avoiding judicial verity, embrace falsity for the sake of love.
>
> *… postmodum proditoribus meis censorium praebeatis adsensum, qui more humani ingenii affectu nimio praepediti et a ueritate iudicii declinates incurrunt pro amore mendacium*. (1.1).

This statement is in direct contrast with 1.4. Thus, the initial Faustus letters, which officially establish the arc of conversion for the reader from the very beginning of the collection, reject the situation in 1.4, in which Ruricius is dealing with the falsity and error of his secular aristocratic life, represented by the rebuke to Hesperius for his 'error in judgement' in praising Ruricius' work. This rebuke was very likely not genuine, rather a display of modesty on Ruricius' part. However, in the development of the theme of judgement and error in Book I, the characterization of Hesperius' secular judgement of Ruricius' literary activity being erroneous contributes to the overall contrast between secular life as error on the one hand and religious life and guidance as the preferable, 'correct' state on the other hand.

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[176] *Sic ille euangelii indulgentissimus pater filium praeceptae substantiae decoctorem laeto suscepit amplexu promptior gaudere de reditu quam inputare de lapsu… quin etiam paternae clementiae uenia sola non sufficit…*

In Book I, judgement is frightening and erroneous in the context of secular literary activity. In 1.3, the prospect of public judgement is frightening to Ruricius but he is also a judge of Hesperius' ability as a teacher of his sons. In 1.4, the judge, Hesperius, is in error and that error will have negative repercussions for them both. The error must be concealed or avoided. However, Ruricius is not the one explicitly or solely in error in either instance. In the religious letters, this changes. The judgement comes to be sought out and Ruricius is in error but seeking correction and guidance, even submitting to harsher judgements, as in the Faustus letters. Thus, we see a progression from the secular letters in which Ruricius is a judge but also fearful of judgement and Hesperius is an erroneous judge to the religious letters in which Ruricius is in error seeking judgement. Ruricius' final state – in error and seeking judgement – as well as his desire for confession and guidance at the climax of the 'Emerging Interest' cluster and in the initial Faustus letters depict Ruricius' persona as ready to embrace the religious life with the help of religious mentors and leave his secular life behind.

Throughout Book I, the error and judgement theme supports the conversion arc by characterizing Ruricius' secular activities as erroneous and the religious life as the 'correct' option, as well as presenting judgement in secular affairs to be feared and mistrusted while in religious matters it is to be desired. The theme moves from the erroneous secular aristocratic life of the Hesperius letters, to the religious teaching and correction of error in 1.6-1.7, to the desire for confession and guidance in 1.8 and 1.9, also present in 1.1 and 1.2.

Conclusion

Book I's arc of Ruricius' journey from secular aristocrat to religious life is reinforced by Ruricius' use of artistic variety organization in Book I, namely through the use of natural imagery, food/drink and medical imagery, and error and judgement themes. Ruricius presented his secular

state as sterile and unrefined, as a lack of satiety and illness, and error using these three themes. Ruricius depicts himself seeking out correction for these states through fertilization, satiation, medicine, and correction or judgement. He also emphasized the importance of mentors, who can refine or fertilize his sterility or provide food, medicine, correction or judgement – all of which represent providing religious guidance. The use of themes and imagery supports the organizational structure identified in Chapter 1, particularly in the 'Emerging Interest' cluster (1.3-11), the largest cluster in Book I which depicts Ruricius' commitment to a religious life emerging from his typical secular aristocratic lifestyle.

At this point, having theorized at length on Book I and its organization and meaning, the next question comes inevitably to mind. What about Book II? Book II is much longer than Book I at 65 letters – the length of four average books – and shows some rudimentary organization (see the beginning of Chapter 3 for Mathisen's suggestions). One initial observation comes from Gibson's discussion of organizational principles which we applied to our interpretation of Book I: the artistic variety principle involves internal lack of chronological order within books but a macro-level chronological movement forward between books, as observed in the collections of Pliny and Sidonius. The importance of considering the macro-level organization of the collection has been noted and proven by scholars,[177] and even in a two-book collection we must be aware of how these books are placed in relation to each other. In Ruricius' collection, we do find a chronological movement forward from Book I, with most of the book including letters which date to before Ruricius became bishop, to Book II, which dates to the period after Ruricius has become bishop, though it lacks internal chronology.

[177] Such as Hodkinson 2007.

Given that Book I has a chronological movement forward and depicts Ruricius' religious life from beginner to becoming bishop, could Book II be an illustration of Ruricius' religious life and journey after becoming bishop? Mathisen suggests some level of organizational intent in Book II, potentially plans for second and third books to follow Book I. Perhaps the intention was to continue the depiction of Ruricius' religious life with Book I serving as the first chapter. In 1.17 we see that even as bishop, Ruricius' religious journey continued, the journey not ending with attaining the position. In Book II there is a wide variety of letters, everything from letters fulfilling his duties as bishop, such as intervening in disputes, to consolation letters and letters of spiritual guidance, to familial relationships such as chastising his sons. Ruricius' self-presentation and intentions in Book II will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3
THE EPISTOLARY PERSONA OF BOOK II: RURICIUS AS BISHOP AND GUIDE

In our analysis of Book I, we looked at the organization of the letters (Chapter 1) and analysed the themes which contributed to an overall thematic arc of Ruricius' conversion to the religious life (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, we will begin by summarizing Mathisen's theories on Book II then we will analyze five major clusters of letters for Ruricius' presentation of his relationships with his addressees as well as with his own position and roles.

Mathisen's Theory: Book II in Three Parts?

Mathisen theorizes on the organization of Book II which presents more of a challenge to interpret.[178] Book II contains 65 letters and is therefore much longer than a conventional book.[179] As noted above, these letters are not in chronological order, unlike the rough movement forward found in Book I.[180] However, despite outward appearances, Mathisen argues that there are discernible organizational patterns that suggest that there was deliberate ordering of the letters.[181] Mathisen identifies indications of 'dossiers' in Book II: groups of letters to the same addressee and groups of letters written on related topics – which is essentially the same set of patterns he identified in Book I, arrangement by topic/addressee.[182]

Beyond this pattern of organization, Mathisen also examines how patterns in the salutations and farewells suggest a degree of organization. While Book I presents a consistent form of salutation (beginning with name and description of recipient in the dative followed by 'Ruricius'

[178] Mathisen 2011: 57.
[179] Mathisen 2011: 57. Book I is 18 letters long; Sidonius' nine books between 11 and 25 letters long.
[180] Mathisen 2011: 57. We have already indicated Gibson's work on non-chronological ordering being a positive choice (Chapter 1). Therefore, Book II's lack of obvious chronological movement in a direction does not necessarily pose a serious problem.
[181] Mathisen 2011: 57.
[182] Mathisen 2011: 57.

– and 'episcopus' in the final two letters), Book II presents some variation: 2.1-2.20 follow the same pattern as Book I (recipient in the dative followed by 'Ruricius [episcopus]') but 2.21 and thirty letters of the forty-four after this point change the salutation to Ruricius' name in front and the recipient in the dative following.[183] Furthermore, Mathisen identifies the group 2.21-40 as having distinguishing features which lead him to consider it as a group: letters in this group have several examples of salutations which add 'salutem' or 'suo salutem' to the end and are the only group of letters to include farewells.[184] These farewells are in the short form – 'vale', 'ora pro me', and 'opto bene agas' rather than the more fulsome long farewells – and appear to have been written in Ruricius' own hand as autograph subscriptions in the original letters.[185] Mathisen, while acknowledging the possibility that this group is the only one with farewell salutations as a result of copyist editing in the *Codex Sangallensis* 190, works from the hypothesis that they were originally only in this group.[186] This group is also the latest chronologically, many dated to post-495, and therefore represent Ruricius' style in its most developed form.[187]

From the basis of these observations on distinguishing features, Mathisen comes to his theory of three-part organization of Book II. Mathisen's theory is also built on chronological considerations.[188] As mentioned above, Mathisen indicates that 2.21-40 is made up of Ruricius'

[183] Mathisen 2011: 58.
[184] Mathisen 2011: 58. Letters 2.21, 26-31, 41 have this type of salutation, including '(suo) salutem'. As for farewells: 'Vale' is included in 2.28, 30; 'Ora pro me' is included in 2.22, 29, 34-36, 38, 40; 'Opto bene agas' is included in 2.32, 37, 39.
[185] See Mathisen 2011: 58 for discussion of long/short farewells and the use of uncial or semi-uncial script for these farewells in the *Sangallensis* to show that they had been originally written in 'another hand' (Ruricius' rather than a secretary) in the exemplar manuscript. Also see the following for salutation and subscription in late antique letter writing: Deléani 2006; Mathisen 1998 ("*Et manu papae*"); Petitmengin 1983.
[186] Mathisen 2011: 59.
[187] Mathisen 2011: 59.
[188] Chronological speculation is a major element of Mathisen's theory of the three-part division, yet there is very little certainty when it comes to chronology in Ruricius' letters. They are not dated. They do not make reference to many datable events, though they do give indications of datable events in some cases – such as Sidonius' death, the death of bishop Aeonius of Arles in 502, the council of Agde in 506. The only method of dating is speculation derived from the indications found in the contents of the letters themselves, which in many cases is not easy – for example, some of Mathisen's dating suggestions are in long ranges, such as 2.44 to Bishop Ambrose between 485 and 506, a 21-year

latest letters, from post-495, and that Book I's letters are dated from 470-485/490. These two ranges lead him to conjecture – with some corroborating evidence from a few letters which can be dated – that 2.1-20 can be dated in between to 485-500.[189] Therefore, Mathisen's hypothesis on Book II is that it is made up of three dossiers of conventional book length (around 20 letters): two planned books to follow Book I which Mathisen calls "pseudo-Book II" (2.1-20) and "pseudo-Book III" (2.21-40) and a final section (2.41-65) which Mathisen describes as being made up of remnants of the planned organization, but which include some indications of grouping.[190] Mathisen concludes his discussion of Book II by indicating that there are elements of organization in this book and that this may indicate plans of two books to follow Book I and potentially a filing system.[191] Mathisen speculates that the suggestions of organization which we find may go back to Ruricius himself, a later compiler bringing together dossiers found in Ruricius' archive, just as Book I suggests that it was organized to some extent by Ruricius himself.[192]

Analysis of Five Major Clusters

Book II is not as clearly intentional nor as tightly organized as Book I. Nevertheless, there are compelling signs of intentional organization, particularly in the larger groups of letters in Book II. In the present chapter, we will examine the largest groups linked by topic or addressee for indications of Ruricius' persona construction. We will examine the following groups: 2.1-5 to Namatius and Ceraunia; 2.8-11 to Aeonius and Pomerius; 2.24-28 to Constantius, Apollinaris and

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range, and one letter is not given a suggestion at all, 2.45 to Hispanus. Even Mathisen's explanation of the chronological justification for his theory of pseudo-books II and III is made in ranges.

[189] Mathisen 2011: 59.

[190] Mathisen 2011: 59. Also, it can be noted that, in Mathisen's theory, Book I begins with 1.1 to Faustus (gladness) and pseudo-book III ends with 2.40 to Victorinus (victor). Considering Gibson's artistic organization, these addressees could indicate deliberate placement, indicating the successful span of Ruricius' journey in the books, which could lend support to Mathisen's theory.

[191] Mathisen 2011: 61.

[192] Mathisen 2011: 61.

Ommatius; 2.32-37 to Agricola, Caesarius, Sedatus and Parthenius and Papianilla; and 2.49, 2.55-58 to Aprunculus. All these groups total four or more letters and are linked through common addressees, clearly related topics and themes or both. Ultimately, an analysis of the groups reveals Ruricius' focus on presenting his epistolary persona as that of a bishop and a guide, in both familial and religious matters.

The groups which we will examine in this chapter are based on some of Mathisen's 'dossiers', groups of letters which he identified in Book II as organized by 'addressee' or 'related issues/circumstances'.[193] The following dossiers were identified by Mathisen based on addressee organization: 2.1-5 to Namatius and Ceraunia, 2.8-9 to Aeonius of Arles, 2.10-11 to Julianus Pomerius, 2.18-19 and 2.34-35 to Sedatus of Nimes, 2.24-25 to Constantius, 2.26-27 to Apollinaris, 2.55-58 to Aprunculus of Clermont and 2.61 and 2.63 to Vittamerus. The following dossiers were identified based on related issues/circumstances: 2.26-28 and 2.33-40. The organization by addressee is self-evident and there are letters in Book II which are related by topic, such as 2.57-58 which both discuss punishment for Eparchius (one of Ruricius' sons) - but Mathisen's examples of letters related by 'issues or circumstances' are related by other details than contents. 2.26-28 are related by all being sent to Clermont and 2.33-40 are related by all being dated to 506, all being sent to or relating to bishops of Provence and paralleled by 4 extant letters to Ruricius.

We have decided to revisit Mathisen's ideas with a focus on Ruricius' self-presentation as well as topic and thematic connections between letters. We have altered the dossiers proposed by Mathisen, considering addressee as well as topic and thematic connections between letters, instead

[193] See Mathisen 2011: 57 for discussion of the 'dossiers'.

of the 'related issues/circumstances' category, which has led to the merging of certain groups or additions to existing groups: 2.1-5 has remained the same, but groups such as 2.8-11 or 2.24-28 have resulted from the merging of some of the dossiers identified by Mathisen based on topical and thematic connections. Some of Mathisen's identified dossiers, like 2.61 and 63 to Vittamerus, were not included in the groups to be examined in this chapter as a result of the connections not leading us to a large group (not four or more). Ultimately, the five groups which we will examine in this chapter are the largest groups of letters based on topic/theme and addressee organization in Book II.

The current chapter will not be considering thematic connections and arcs across the whole of Book II as in Chapter 2 on Book I because thematic content is not present in the same degree of intentionality and complexity in Book II. There is no overall, coherent arc. However, the major clusters of Book II reveal Ruricius' presentation of his relationships with different addressees, his presentation of his own roles, and his use and adjustment of themes over several letters with different addressees and situations. From this analysis of the presentation of relationships, we can discuss Ruricius' presentation of his persona in the clusters and overall plans for Book II.

Section 1: 2.1-5 to Namatius and Ceraunia

Summary

Letters 2.1-5 are all addressed to Namatius and Ceraunia, a married couple, with the final letter of the group, 2.5, addressed to Namatius alone.[194] The Namatius-Ceraunia letter group charts an arc in the friendship and family relations of Ruricius, Namatius and Ceraunia in which Ruricius progresses from family and *amicus* to bishop in his relations with the addressees:

[194] See Mathisen 2011: 133, introductory note to 2.1 for remarks on Namatius and Ceraunia.

- 2.1 and 2.2 are concerned with a marriage between one of Ruricius' sons and a daughter of Namatius and Ceraunia.
- 2.3 and 2.4 are both *consolationes*, 2.3 on the death of a son of Namatius and Ceraunia and 2.4 on the death of the daughter concerned in the marriage arranged in 2.1-2.
- 2.5 is a short, *amicitia* letter addressed solely to Namatius

The two central roles to Namatius and Ceraunia which Ruricius displays in 2.1-5 are 'family connection/*amicus*' and 'religious guidance'. While 2.1 and 2.2 are focused on the marriage and Ruricius' role as familial and aristocratic *amicus*, these roles are made to co-exist with the role of bishop within the consolation letters, 2.3 and 2.4, and they even come into conflict. Over the course of the cluster, Ruricius operates a change in his role: he emphasizes family bonds and friendship in 2.1-2 but indicates the end of these bonds and a switch to the role of bishop in 2.3-4, which is further consolidated by the subsequent letters to each individually (2.15, 50, and 62) in which Ruricius calls himself bishop in the salutations.

Analysis

Ruricius uses the same form of salutation in every letter (2.5 has this same salutation in the singular, addressed to Namatius alone):

> Ruricius, to his sublime lords and most steadfast brethren in Christ the Lord, Namatius and Ceraunia
>
> *Dominis sublimibus et in Christo Domino devinctissimis fratribus Namatio et Cerauniae Ruricius*

2.1-5 forms a clear group with the same addressees and salutations signaling that they belong together. The use of the term "brethren" (*fratribus*) also highlights Ruricius' role of family

connection and *amicus* in this case, supported by the vocabulary used by Ruricius in the bodies of the letters, including *germanitas*, *soror*, *parentes*, and his repeated discussion of family ties (as we shall see below). In the rest of Book II, the subsequent letters to Ceraunia (2.15, 2.50) and Namatius (2.62) are each addressed to either Ceraunia or Namatius individually, never together, and all have different salutations. However, Ruricius uses his title bishop in each of them.

> 2.15: Bishop Ruricius to a venerable mistress and magnificent daughter in Christ, Ceraunia
>
> *Dominae venerabili et in Christo Domino magnificandae filiae Cerauniae Ruricius Episcopus*

> 2.50: Bishop Ruricius to Ceraunia, Greetings
>
> *Ruricius Episcopus Cerauniae salutem*

> 2.62: Bishop Ruricius to his brother Namatius
>
> *Ruricius Episcopus fratri Namatio*

Within the 2.1-5 group, Ruricius refers to his addressees and their relationship in terms which emphasize their friendship and familial bonds. He repeats several terms when addressing Namatius and Ceraunia: Your Brotherhood (*uestra germanitate*) (2.1); brethren (*fratres*) (2.4); most steadfast brethren (*fratres deuinctissimi*) (2.3); my finest brethren (*fratres optimi*) (2.3, 2.4); dearest brethren (*carissimi fratres*) (2.4 several times); Your Inseparable Brotherhood (*indiuiduae germanitati uestrae*) (only in 2.2); bond of our brotherhood (*uinculum germanitatis nostrae*) (2.4); Namatius and Ceraunia are also called parents (*parentes*), particularly in 2.4; and Ceraunia is referred to as venerable sister and venerable sister in Christ (*in Christo domino*/*uenerabilis soror*) (both in 2.4). Other terms employed by Ruricius include: lords of my heart (*domini pectoris mei*) (2.3); friends (*amicos duos*) (2.1); Your Magnanimity (*magnanimitate uestra*) (2.1). The emphasis in the terms he ascribes to his addressees is clearly on a close familial connection primarily.

Ruricius' use of words referring to their family ties, such as *germanitas*, as opposed to language which was also frequently used by bishops in a religious context, such as *frater*, indicates to the reader Ruricius' intention to establish familial ties with his addressees.

Ruricius appears to be of a lower rank compared to the aristocrats Namatius and Ceraunia in 2.1 and 2.2, which are largely aristocratic in subject (the marriage of their children). This inequality is discernible in aspects of the vocabulary used. Ruricius uses the verb *debeo* frequently, eight times in the five letters (twice in 2.2 and four times in 2.4 and once in 2.3 and 2.5), indicating an overall tone of service. He also indicates that Namatius and Ceraunia ordered things to be done a certain way in the arrangement of the marriage contract.[195] Therefore, Ruricius' emphasis on brotherhood, familial bonds and the sharing of grief and affection is an epistolary construction which serves to set Ruricius on equal terms with Namatius and Ceraunia in the letters, in order to balance out the indications of inferior station. After 2.1 and 2.2, Ruricius emphasizes his position as bishop and religious advisor to the pair in 2.3-4. In the subsequent individual letters (2.15, 2.50, and 2.62), Ruricius names himself bishop in the salutation, which effectively asserts his authority. Ultimately, throughout the group, Ruricius changes his role in his relationship to Namatius and Ceraunia from family friend to bishop.

Ruricius presents the strength of his familial tie to Namatius and Ceraunia through the terms he uses for his addressees and in how he presents their relationship throughout the letters, particularly 2.1 and 2.2, including the idea of bonds tying them together, physical separation (an obstacle often overcome by their bond) and emotional closeness. In 2.1, he refers to their

[195] "… as you requested and was fitting and proper, everything has been examined, passed along, and confirmed." (2.2); *… atque omnia, sicut iussistis et dignum ac debitum fuit, inspecta, tradita, firmata significo.*

relationship as bindings which he willingly accepts, a stance which he also expresses towards his spiritual guide, Faustus, in 1.1:

> … by whose fetters I rejoice that I have been bound, by you, and shackled by such chains I exult, and I desire to be constrained by rather than loosened from, their bindings, which I trust secure you as well (2.1).[196]

In addition, physical distance and visiting between them is a theme which appears in every letter. Most often the distance is overcome by their bonds of friendship, allowing them to be together emotionally and through correspondence,[197] but it can also be an obstacle between them, such as in 2.3 when Ruricius states that he would have come to console Namatius and Ceraunia in person if not for the weather.[198] Ruricius' familial and *amicitia* connection to Namatius and Ceraunia is expressed through intense, shared emotional experience. The shared emotional experience is so strong that Ruricius presents them as skirting the edge of becoming the same person: parts of them live within the others to the point that Ruricius cannot recognize himself in himself alone, their grief is in common, their regard and love mutual, to praise one is to praise them all.[199]

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[196] *… cuius ego uinculis conligatum a uobis esse me gaudeo et talibus catenis uinctus exulto obstringique me earum nexibus magis cupio, quam resolui, quibus et uos constrictos esse confido*.

[197] For example: "… our correspondence, as a mediator, might render us a kind of shared presence: it is sent forth and not lost, it is bestowed and yet retained… it is kept whole in each of our hearts, because, like the divine word, it is relinquished and does not depart…" (2.5); *… ut reddat nobis quandam praesentiae portionem sermo mediator, qui emittitur et non amittitur, tribuitur et habetur… integer utriusque corde teneatur, quia uerbi more diuini traditur et non egreditur…* The presentation of presence/absence is an epistolary *topos*, see Bieringer 2015.

[198] Two examples: "For this reason, indeed, if such a great intemperateness of the weather permitted, I would come to console you myself, in place of this letter." (2.3); *unde etiam, si aurarum tanta intemperies permisisset, ad solandos uos pro epistulis ipse uenissem.*

"Very often, dearest brethren, I have resolved, because of the most bitter misfortune of our common grief, to write to you or to come to you, but always has my bodily infirmity restrained me from setting out on the journey and the excessive grief of my heart detained me from my epistolary duty." (2.4); *Saepius, carissimi fratres, per communis luctus acerbissimum casum uobis scribere aut ad uos uenire disposui, sed semper me et ab itineris procinctu infirmitas corporis et ab epistulari officio nimius dolor cordis retraxit.*

[199] "Ancient savants have said that two friends have a single soul, which I claim and affirm is especially true, for after my departure from Your Brotherhood I feel that I have been divided and I realize that part of me has remained behind with you… And because I cannot find myself in myself, I return to you and seek myself in your presence, and there I realize that however much of myself I have left with you, this much of you I have taken with me." (2.1); *Antiqui sapientes amicos duos unam animam habere dixerunt, quod ualde uerum esse ego praedico proboque. nam postquam a uestra germanitate discessi, diuisum esse me sentio partemque meam uobiscum resedisse cognosco… et cum me in me non inueniam, apud uos me ad uos reuersus inquiro atque ibidem. quantum mei uobis reliquisse, tantum uestri mecum abstulisse conspicio.*

In the beginning of 2.2, in which Ruricius discusses a meeting with a mediator called Postuminus[200] about the marriage contract, he does not use any familial terms or references to their relationship, unlike in the surrounding letters 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4, before his first mention of their brotherhood:

> Therefore, I have given these words to him as he returns with the favour of the divinity… with which I, in your absence, proclaim a profuse greeting to Your Inseparable Brotherhood (*indiuiduae germanitati uestrae*). And I mentally anticipate my journey and the sight of you (*iter meum uestrumque conspectum mente praeuenio*) … (2.2).[201]

In this one passage, Ruricius includes a number of the common ideas associated with familial/amicitial relations, some of which are mentioned above: absence/physical separation; inseparability; the *germanitas*; the mental presence which overcomes physical distance; and the prospect of a visit. In addition, Mathisen notes how 2.4 uses legal terminology to describe the bond between Ruricius and Namatius and Ceraunia, adding a legal and aristocratic aspect to their bond of familial and amicitial closeness.[202]

Ruricius' presentation of his 'bond of brotherhood' with Namatius and Ceraunia therefore has several facets: familial and *amicitia* as well as that of an aristocratic alliance. However, there is another aspect of Ruricius' presentation of relationships in 2.1-5: Ruricius also appears in the role of bishop. Ruricius expresses a change in his role from family friend to bishop, particularly in the consolation letters 2.3 and 2.4.

Ruricius' transition of roles is expressed in 2.3 through his use of a Christian image: that of members of a body, which is used to refer to community and the Church:

> … I believe that I will be present in your grief, because according to the divine words, "If one member suffers all suffer together" [1 Corinthians 12:26] in the body. We, indeed, not

[200] See Mathisen 2011: 134, footnote 4 to 2.2.
[201] *itaque eo propitia diuinitate remeante non, quia necessariae essent, sed, quia ipse uoluit, dedi, quibus indiuiduae germanitati uestrae salue largissimum desiderans dico et iter meum uestrumque conspectum mente praeuenio…*
[202] Mathisen 2011: 138, footnote 6 to 2.4. Terminology such as *vinculum*, *pignus*, and *depositum*.

> only are part of the same body through our faith in Christ, but we are also joined by the union of our children (2.3).[203]

Ruricius employs an image often used to represent the Church in order to describe their family relationship, which allows him to introduce his episcopal authority in his relationship with Namatius and Ceraunia, given that he is a bishop and therefore would be the overseer of the 'church' in this image. The introduction of a relationship based on religious faith suggests the shift in Ruricius' role towards religious advisor and bishop in their relationship.

Consolation is a duty which is shared by both the roles of aristocratic relation and bishop. In 2.4, Ruricius discusses at length the bonds of brotherhood being "shattered" by the death of his daughter-in-law:

> For along with a daughter I also have lost my brethren, to whose affection (*affectu*) I was accustomed, in whose closeness (*coniunctione*) I exulted. The bond of our brotherhood, dearest brethren, has been shattered… and therefore I lament the solace of a great many family ties that have been lost to me by means of this single family tie (2.4).[204]

Ruricius' lament of the destruction of the bond provides an opportunity to describe its strength through details like calling Namatius and Ceraunia 'dearest brethren' even as he is stating that the bond of brotherhood has been shattered. Both letters 2.3 and 2.4 describe the familial connection through Ruricius' repeated reference to their 'common grief' (*dolorem communem* in 2.3 and *communis luctus* and *nimius dolor cordis* in 2.4) over their son's death (in 2.3) and daughter's death (in 2.4). Ruricius also refers to their mutual love (*mutuo amore*) in 2.3 and mutual regard (*mutuae caritatis*) in 2.4 as a basis for his sympathy for their grief. In 2.4, Ruricius associates their bond with affection (*affectu*) and closeness (*coniunctione*) all in the context of the loss of this

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[203] *… planctibus uestris interesse me credo, quia secundum diuinam sententiam, quod patitur unum membrum, omnia membra conpatiuntur un corpore. nos enim non solum fide concorporamur in Christo, sed etiam filiorum coniunctione conectimur.*

[204] *nam cum filia et fratres amisi, quorum me solabar affectu, quorum me coniunctione iactabam. disrumptum est, fratres carissimi, uinculum germanitatis nostrae… et ideo in unius necessitudinis gradu complurium mihi necessitudinum solatia sublata suspiro.*

connection. In this letter, he stresses the loss of family ties with Namatius and Ceraunia along with the loss of their daughter, repeating *amitto* (3 times), *disrumptum est*, *ablatus est*, and *perdidi* in reference to their familial connection.

The shift away from familial connection is also expressed through Ruricius' paternal feelings toward the daughter. Ruricius describes the daughter as being his own daughter, having been born to Namatius and Ceraunia but that he cared for, explicitly associating her loss with the loss of his posterity and family, an aristocratic concern:

> Indeed, I have lost a daughter, whom I rejoiced that I had nurtured and you had begotten, I have lost the solace of my life, the hope of my posterity, the delight of my family, the joy of my heart, the light of my eyes (2.4).[205]

Ruricius uses a quotation of the *Aeneid* to describe his grief, specifically the ekphrasis of the doors of Carthage and Daedalus' grief as he works,[206] in another indication of paternal loss. The use of the *Aeneid* in particular is a choice typical of the aristocratic literary elite:

> For whenever I attempted to direct my mind to writing, immediately my senses shuddered… just as the poet said, showing paternal piety over the loss of a son:
>
> Twice he attempted to depict his misfortunes in gold,
> Twice the paternal hands dropped… (2.4)[207]

However, in contrast with this quotation from the *Aeneid*, a typical aristocratic reference, Ruricius includes a quotation of the psalms in the following sentence:

> Or rather, as I say, because "my spirit refuses to be consoled." [Psalms 76.3] (2.4)[208]

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[205] *Perdidi enim filiam, quam et me suscepisse et uos genuisse gratulabar, perdidi uitae solatium, posteritatis spem, decus familiae, cordis gaudium, lumen oculorum.*
[206] Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.32-33.
[207] *nam si quando ad scribendum animum sum conatus intendere, statim sensus horruit… sicut dixit ille paternam indicans de filii amissione pietatem :*
Bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro,
Bis patriae cecidere manus…
[208] *… uel quod potius a me dicitur, quoniam negabat consolari anima mea.*

The shift from quotations from the *Aeneid* to the psalms indicates that Ruricius, Namatius and Ceraunia share a learned aristocratic connection, but that Ruricius is shifting the focus from his empathy as family and *amicus* to his role as bishop and advisor. The description of the destruction of their bonds, although it evokes the previous strength of the bonds, also suggests a shift from the initial relationship (familial *amicus*) to a new dynamic in which Ruricius is a bishop and religious advisor who eventually corresponds with each individually.

Ruricius signals his change in role through changes in tone in 2.3 and 2.4. In 2.3, his tone moves from the emotion of a close friend and family member, with terms and vocabulary such as grief, mutual love and being joined emotionally, to spiritual direction, by means of an abrupt change of tone: "But what are we doing, my finest brethren?" (2.3).[209] At this point, he assumes the role of bishop, providing the advice and religious exhortation of a consolation: he includes religious examples (such as Job) and develops the theme of needing to avoid excessive grief. Ruricius' awareness of the co-existence of his two roles, aristocratic family/friend and bishop, is clear in one of the closing sentences:

> Therefore, lords of my heart, I have presumed to write to you so that I might assuage somehow our common grief at least with the divine eloquence, for I knew that I could not mitigate it with my own words (2.3).[210]

Ruricius assumes the role of bishop in order to console Namatius and Ceraunia through the divine word, which he can provide as bishop, and which he deems more effective than his own word as an aristocratic friend who is also experiencing their devastation and grief.

Ruricius employs a change in tone from grief and mourning to spiritual guidance in 2.4 as well, while also using vocabulary to contrast the roles of family *amicus* and bishop. In addition to

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[209] *Sed quid facimus, fratres optimi…*

[210] Mathisen's translation emended. *haec ergo, domini pectoris mei, scribere uobis idcirco praesumpsi, ut dolorem communem, quem sciebam, quod uerbis meis mitigare non poteram, uel diuinis eloquiis utcumque moderarer.*

mourning the death of the daughter, Ruricius also laments the loss of their family ties in 2.4 – all personal losses and feelings of grief characteristic of his role as aristocratic friend and family. Ruricius then contrasts his roles of family *amicus* and bishop by indicating his struggle to effectively assume his episcopal role:

> But why, forgetful of duty yet mindful of friendship (*inmemor officii, memor gratiae*),[211] under the impulse of grief do I go forth and… reopen the wound that for a time had been somewhat healed over, and why do I, who wish you in turn to be consoled by the divine promise, not find consolation myself? (2.4)[212]

The words "forgetful of duty yet mindful of friendship" contrast Ruricius' co-existing roles as aristocratic family/friend and bishop: he is experiencing waves of grief over the death of a family member and the loss of family ties, yet he is still aware that he is meant to be consoling Namatius and Ceraunia with this advice as bishop to avoid excessive grief and trust in the Lord and afterlife.

Ruricius employs a change of tone in 2.4, as in 2.3, moving from his internal struggle to giving religious advice and consolation in the middle of the third paragraph, using an abrupt transition sentence:

> Putting aside for a moment our present concerns, therefore, let us think rather of the future, so that those whom the present weakens, the future may strengthen (2.4).[213]

Ruricius continues his religious discussion until the end of the letter, using some of the same ideas as 2.3, for example discussing Job, as well as having the daughter herself counsel the parents against excessive mourning.

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[211] Mathisen's translation emended.

[212] *sed quo inmemor officii, memor gratiae dolore inpellente progredior et tempore aliquatenus uulnus obductum rediuiua recordatione tamquam noua sectione rescindo et, qui consolari uos potius per diuina promissa cupiebam, consolationem ipse non capio?*

[213] *discedentes ergo paululum de praesentibus rursum futura cogitemus, ut, quos infirmant praesentia, futura corroborent.*

Conclusion

Ruricius' persona appears with two roles, as *amicus* and bishop, in the main cluster of 2.1-5. Ruricius depicts himself both as a close friend/family member and as a bishop, a religious advisor, as well as the resultant conflict and negotiation of these roles. Ruricius operates a transition from family *amicus* (possibly of lesser aristocratic status) to bishop, a figure of authority throughout the cluster. Ruricius expresses this transition through the use of images, such as the family being likened to the Church through the image of 'members of a body', with Ruricius as the bishop with authority over this 'body'; the contrast between his use of a quotation from the *Aeneid* in close proximity to a psalm in his consolation; and changes in tone from emotion to spiritual direction in the consolation letters 2.3 and 2.4. Following this cluster, Ruricius remains on good terms with both but only addresses them separately, indicating the weakening of the cohesive family bond and turn towards individual friendships with Ruricius' role as bishop more firmly emphasized.

Section 2: 2.8-11 Aeonius and Pomerius

Summary

Although letters 2.8-9[214] addressed to Aeonius[215] and 2.10-11 addressed to Pomerius[216] were grouped separately by Mathisen according to addressee, we have grouped the two pairs together in a four-letter group based on shared topic and theme. First, the letters 2.9 to Aeonius and 2.10 to Pomerius are connected by a theme of visiting and 2.9 even mentions Pomerius and his potential visit in its final lines, connecting it to the pair of Pomerius letters immediately following.[217] The strong connection between 2.9 and 2.10 draws 2.8 and 2.11 into a larger topic/addressee group through shared addressees, supporting the connection between the two addressee pairs. Additionally, letters to Aeonius and Pomerius were placed close together at the end of Book I, 1.15 and 1.17 respectively, in the final cluster. This may encourage readers to see a connection between the pairs of letters to these two addressees.

- 2.8 to Aeonius is an ecclesiastical recommendation letter for a priest named Possessor.

[214] See Mathisen 2011: 146, footnote 8. In the manuscript, there is no salutation for a letter 2.9 and the last line of 2.8 is left largely empty after *e patria*. Other editors (Krusch, Engelbrecht, and Demeulenaere) place a lacuna at the end of 2.8 and suggests the salutation and (perhaps) some text has been lost. Mathisen's hypothesis is that no text has been lost (that 2.8 is a coherent text and its abrupt ending does not mean lost text – he suggests haste). He indicates that the first line of 2.9 begins with a capital letter in the manuscript, which is usually at the beginning of letters, and that enough space is left after *e patria* to include the salutation for the following letter on this line, which he notes occurs elsewhere in the manuscript. Based on these considerations, Mathisen suggests that the scribe merely forgot to include the salutation to letter 2.9, which he suggests could have been *Eiusdem alia* as elsewhere in the manuscript in cases of multiple letters in a row to the same addressee. We find this explanation convincing and will consider 2.8 and 2.9 as complete and separate letters to Aeonius.

[215] Aeonius was bishop of Arles, a metropolitan and prestigious church, see Mathisen 2011: 126 introductory note to 1.15 for brief remarks on Aeonius and Arles. For further reading on Arles, see for example Stouff 2005.

[216] Julianus Pomerius was a rhetor and author of religious treatises who wrote a guidebook, *De vita contemplativa* (dated to the end of the fifth c. to early sixth c.) Pomerius has not been extensively studied, for example there are only 16 entries in l'*Année Philologique*. Only translations of his work exist (in English 1947 in French 1995, see bibliography), no recent edition and few studies. For examples of discussion, see Hanaghan 2021 and Timmerman 2014.

[217] Mathisen 2011: 146, 149, 151. Mathisen suggests 2.9 and 2.10 were sent together to Arles and that 2.11 was not written long after.

- 2.9 to Aeonius is an *amicitia* letter in which Ruricius expands on conventional pleasantries, mentioning his own recent visit to Aeonius and Pomerius, and concluding by asking Aeonius to send Pomerius along to visit him.
- 2.10 to Pomerius is a direct invitation to visit.
- 2.11 to Pomerius is a letter discussing brotherhood between Christians and the nature of Christ.

Ruricius presents his relationships with both Aeonius and Pomerius as friendships with religious men who are identified as his teachers, a relationship already affirmed by the fact that a letter to each of these addressees is found in Book I, where Ruricius addresses several spiritual mentors. Student-teacher letters were a common sub-genre in classical and late-antique letter exchange, in which one correspondent adopts the epistolary persona of teacher who gives instruction and the other of student who receives instruction.[218] However, Ruricius' relationship with each 'teacher' is presented with different dynamics and each is established by Ruricius' choices in vocabulary and theme. Aeonius is presented as a teacher, a spiritual superior to Ruricius, whereas Pomerius is presented as a spiritual *frater*, someone who passed through the same journey of conversion as Ruricius himself in Book I, although Ruricius does identify Pomerius as a teacher once at the end of 2.9 to Aeonius. Yet, despite these nuances, Ruricius includes several elements which bind the letters together: establishing a common basis of ecclesiastical community, *amicitia* language and an overarching theme of mutual profit. Thus, Ruricius indicates to the reader that both relationships share a common basis, both are relationships in which Ruricius is a bishop corresponding with ecclesiastical colleagues, but that there are differences in how he relates to

[218] See Ebbeler 2007 for a discussion of father-son relationships in letter exchange, of which student-teacher is considered a permutation, and analysis of this epistolary relationship in the letters of Ausonius and Paulinus.

each. In the context of these relationships, Ruricius is able to present himself as a capable bishop as well as maintaining the epistolary role of student in his correspondence with Aeonius and *frater* with Pomerius.

Analysis

In the salutations and the vocabulary used to describe their relationships, Ruricius establishes the basis of ecclesiastical and spiritual community among himself, Aeonius and Pomerius while also indicating a difference in the dynamics of the two relationships. There are two different salutations in this group, one for each addressee.[219]

> 2.8: Bishop Ruricius to a sanctified and apostolic lord, and a patron for me before others to be esteemed personally by worship and affection in Christ the Lord, Bishop Aeonius
>
> *Domino sancto et apostolico ac mihi prae ceteris in Christo Domino cultu affectuque peculiarius excolendo patrono et papae Aeonio Ruricius Episcopus*
>
> 2.10: Bishop Ruricius to the lord of his spirit and a lord to be esteemed with his innards in Christ, Pomerius[220]
>
> *Domino animae suae et in Christo Domino uisceribus excolendo Pomerio Abbati Ruricius Episcopus*[221]

The only other letter in the collection addressed to either Aeonius or Pomerius is 2.16 to Aeonius, which repeats the same salutation as 2.8.

Looking at the vocabulary used in these salutations, the emphasis is on religious terms for both Aeonius and Pomerius: Aeonius is called a 'sanctified and apostolic lord', Pomerius is called 'lord of his spirit' and Christ is referenced in each salutation. The religious positions of all parties

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[219] The second letter to each has its salutation replaced by short formulations indicating that they are to the same person. Beginning in letter 2.11, salutations in letters placed next to each other and addressed to the same addressee are replaced in several instances by shortened indications, such as '*item epistula domni Ruricii'*. See Mathisen 2011: 151, introductory note to 2.11.

[220] Mathisen's translation with emendation. Also cf. Neri 2009 (Italian translation of Ruricius' letters) who treats *uisceribus* as 'with the deepest affection'.

[221] Mathisen 2011: 149, footnote 1 to 2.10. Mathisen calls this salutation (also found in 1.17) 'curious'. *Viscus* only appears in salutations in 1.17 and 2.10 to Pomerius and only 8 other times in the entire collection.

are stated in the salutations as well: Ruricius is Bishop, Aeonius is Patron and Bishop, and Pomerius is Abbot. Aeonius receives the additional title of *patronus* which indicates a relation of protection between him and Ruricius. The patronage of Aeonius can be explained by the fact that Aeonius is bishop of Arles, which is a metropolitan church of higher standing than Ruricius' church.[222] By contrast, Pomerius' position as abbot does not place him in a superior position to Ruricius. Nevertheless, Pomerius is clearly an important correspondent on religious topics for Ruricius, as seen in 1.17 which is the only letter in Book I to give an overarching reflection on Ruricius' religious journey. Pomerius was the author of several treatises, of which we have *De vita contemplatiua*, which had likely gained him a reputation of authority on spiritual matters, a position which explains the tone and contents of Ruricius' letters to him.[223]

Beyond the salutations, Ruricius' letters to Aeonius address him in religious terms: Your Apostlehood (*apostolatum uestrum*) and Your Sanctity (*sanctitas uestra*) in 2.8, two terms which repeat the adjectives used in the salutation; Ruricius repeats the term Your Sanctity (*sanctitas uestra*) in 2.9 as well as Your Most Sincere Piety (*sincerissimam pietatem uestram*). Contrastingly, Ruricius refers to himself as My Humility (*humilitatem meam*) in 2.8 in the same sentence that he refers to Aeonius as Your Sanctity, modestly placing himself in a lower position.

Through this expression of ecclesiastical hierarchy in the letters to Aeonius, Ruricius places both Aeonius and himself within the context of their position as bishops and in a community of priests. Ruricius begins 2.8 by discussing the nature of the bishop's duty of recommendation:

> However often any individuals… are compelled to seek out sanctified and apostolic men (*sanctos aut apostolicos uiros*), whose good deeds of compassion, services of good deeds, and life of services commend them, and who are made known by the fame of all their virtues, these individuals, when they seek solace for their distress in correspondence, confer

[222] See footnote 166.
[223] See footnote 167.

> a favour upon **us**, and although their distress troubles us **(***beneficium conferunt desiderio nostro et, cum sit illorum labor noster dolor*), nevertheless… it thus turns out that the need[224] of the petitioner benefits the bestower (*ut egestas petentis sit largientis utilitas*) (2.8).[225]

There are several indications that the "sanctified and apostolic men" indicates Aeonius and Ruricius as bishops since already the vocabulary of the salutation applies the adjectives 'sanctified' and 'apostolic' to Bishop Aeonius; Ruricius also uses the pronoun 'us' twice when referring to these men. In this passage, Ruricius also refers to himself and Aeonius as being in the position of 'bestower' (*largientis*) who aids 'the need of the petitioner' (*egestas petentis*). The reflection on the authority of bishops and their responsibility towards petitioners also highlights Aeonius' authority and responsibility towards Ruricius as a student. The mutual exchange expressed by "the need of the petitioner benefits the bestower" echoes the mutual roles of Aeonius as teacher and Ruricius as recipient of knowledge in the following letter 2.9, in which Ruricius characterizes his learning as Aeonius' recompense for providing teaching (see below). In this way, Ruricius creates a parallel between the relationship between bishop/petitioner with teacher/student in 2.8 and 2.9, which conveys a hierarchical aspect to his relationship with Aeonius.

The indications of hierarchy and verticality that are present in the terms used for Aeonius are not present with Pomerius. Ruricius' manner of addressing Pomerius in 2.10-11 also establishes religious community but shows a different emphasis. Instead of hierarchical ecclesiastical community, he creates a sense of spiritual fraternity with Pomerius. Ruricius uses standard Christian terms of address, some similar to those used for Aeonius: Your Piety (*pietati uestrae*) (2.10), Your Charity (*caritati tuae*) (2.10), and Your Reverence (*uenerationi tuae*) (2.11).

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[224] Mathisen's translation with emendation.

[225] *Quotienscumque sanctos aut apostolicos uiros, quos misericordiae opera, operum merita, meritorum uita commendat atque omnium uirtutum fama disseminat, aerumnarum mole depressi coguntur expetere, dum litterarum solacium quaerunt labori suo, beneficium conferunt desiderio nostro et, cum sit illorum labor noster dolor, fit tamen… et ita fit, ut egestas petentis sit largientis utilitas.*

However, Ruricius indicates the communion between himself and Pomerius in 2.10 by using the term Your Like-Mindedness (*uestra unanimitate*)[226] and beginning the letter with the notion of 'friends' (*amicos*). Ruricius also emphasizes a bond of brotherhood between himself and Pomerius: he calls Pomerius "brother Pomerius" (*fratrem Pomerium*) at the end of 2.9, he identifies himself as "your desiring brother" (*desiderantem fratrem*) in 2.10 and discusses his reasoning for applying the term brother to Pomerius throughout most of 2.11, which underlines the significance of the term. Ruricius indicates that both Pomerius' age (older than Ruricius) and rank (lower than Ruricius) are technically unsuited to the term 'brother'. Ruricius concludes:

> And therefore, according to this apostle, seeing that we are "all one in Christ" [Galatians 3:28] we most correctly are called brothers, both because one womb of the sacred font brought us forth and because, with the spirit giving life, the same breasts of mother church suckled us. And for this reason I likewise write to you as brother, both because I know that, with the favour of God, you have converted your spirit <from> secular activities to the eternal blessedness… (2.11)[227]

Just as Ruricius establishes a context of a community of priests and bishops through his terms of address in 2.8-9 to Aeonius, Ruricius uses the term 'brother' here to establish them both within a community of the faithful, rather than priests and bishops specifically. He insists again on the idea of communion between himself and Pomerius through the quotation from Galatians 3:28 as well as the image of mother church giving birth to them both and suckling them.

By concluding on Pomerius' conversion from a secular life to the religious life, Ruricius indicates the similarity that justifies calling Pomerius brother. Ruricius develops this idea of leaving the secular life behind through an allusion to the parable of the merchant who sold

[226] Mathisen's translation with emendation.
[227] *et ideo iuxta eum apostolum, quoniam omnes in Christo unum sumus, fratres rectissime nuncupamur, quia nos et unus uterus sacri fontis effudit et eadem ubera matris ecclesiae spiritu uiuificante lactarunt. simulque idcirco frater scripsi, quia et deo propitio a saeculi actibus ad aeternam beatitudinem te animam conuertisse cognoui…*

everything and obtained a pearl,[228] and contrasts Pomerius' past secular life and current pursuit of a contemplative life: "He both glorified you with such things in the secular world and hastened to propel you into his kingdom" (2.11).[229] Ruricius concludes his letter with an exhortation to continue pursuing a spiritual life. The topic of a journey from a secular to a religious life is also present in 2.8 when Ruricius discusses the priest Possessor, whom Ruricius is recommending to Aeonius in this letter,[230] again recalling the arc of Ruricius' journey from secular to religious in Book I.

Despite the different dynamics between Ruricius and these two addressees, both are presented under the guise of "teachers" through several techniques that allow for comparison. Ruricius identifies both Aeonius and Pomerius as teachers in 2.9. Ruricius describes his relationship with Aeonius as an exchange of affection and teaching:

> … my profit and your affection, my affection and your profit (*profectui nostro et affectui uestro, affectui nostro et profectui uestro*). My profit and your affection because your teaching (*doctrina uestra*) is my learning (*eruditio nostra*) and my letter is the conveyance of your desire, and, on the other hand, your profit and my affection because my learning (*eruditio nostra*) is your recompense (*merces uestra*) and the timely conveying of my longing for you is embodied in the affection of my words (2.9).[231]

In this passage, Ruricius embodies the role of student, receiving the teaching and learning from Aeonius, and Aeonius embodies that of teacher, giving teaching and profiting through gratification at his student's improvement. Pomerius is also identified as a teacher at the very end of 2.9, just before 2.10 addressed to Pomerius, as Ruricius requests that Aeonius send Pomerius to visit:

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[228] New Testament pericope: the precious pearl of Matthew 13:45-46. See Mathisen 2011: 153, footnotes 19-20 to letter 2.11.

[229] *…ecce te et his dignauit in saeculo et prouehere festinat in regno.*

[230] Possessor: "… he became a possessor of Paradise when he ceased to be a possessor of secular property." (2.8)

[231] *… profectui nostro et affectui uestro, affectui nostro et profectui uestro. profectui nostro et affectui uestro, quia doctrina uestra eruditio nostra est et epistola nostra conlatio desiderii uestri est, et rursus profectui uestro et affectui nostro, quia eruditio nostra merces uestra est et temporaria conlatio desiderii uestri nostri est sermonis affectus.*

> Moreover, in this way too you will be able to have no small compensation if through his teaching (*doctrina ipsius*) my rusticity gains some increase in its fear of God. (2.9)[232]

While Ruricius does refer to Pomerius teaching him here at the end of 2.9, in the letters addressed to Pomerius he does not reference teaching in their exchange, rather emphasizing spiritual fraternity.[233] The language of 2.9 suggests a chain of authority connecting Aeonius, Pomerius and Ruricius. At the beginning of the letter, Ruricius describes letters and exchanges between himself and Aeonius, and at the end of the letter, Aeonius is sending Pomerius to Ruricius. Aeonius is the source of the knowledge and Ruricius is the recipient of knowledge, which is conveyed through either letters or through Pomerius, suggesting a connection among all three.

Ruricius' use of the language of desire also establishes both addressees as *amicitia* connections.[234] In 2.9 to Aeonius, Ruricius uses the term *affectus* six times to describe their relationship as well as words like *desiderium*, *amor* and *dilectio*.[235] Ruricius' means of addressing Aeonius to establish an *amicitia* bond are also found in his letters to Pomerius. Ruricius uses the language of affection and love in his request for Pomerius to visit him, also using terms like *affectus, amor, dilectio* in 2.10.[236] Thus, both relationships contain epistolary affection and amicitial language.

Furthermore, the amicitial language provides a common theme tying the two relationships together: the theme of presence and absence. At the end of 2.9, Ruricius indicates that, when Pomerius comes to visit him, Aeonius will be with them in spirit:

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[232] *sed et inde non paruum fructum habere poteritis, si rusticitas nostra doctrina ipsius aliquid in dei timore profecerit.*
[233] See Ebbeler 2007: 319 on Augustine's presentation of 'spiritual fraternity' in his correspondence with Jerome. Also, see Canellis 2006 on spiritual friendship.
[234] See Ebbeler 2007 and Knight 2005 for discussion and examples of erotic language in *amicitia* correspondence, particularly in the Ausonius-Paulinus correspondence.
[235] 2.8-9 to Aeonius: *affectus* 7 occurrences; *desiderium* 3 occurrences; *dilectio* 2 occurrences; *amor* 1 occurrence.
[236] 2.10-11 to Pomerius: *affectus* 3 occurrences; *dilectio* 2 occurrences; *amor* 1 occurrence.

> And you should not think that he departs from you (*a uobis discedere*) if he comes to me (*ad me accesserit*), because here, not only will he find you in me (*inueniet in me*), but you also will come with him (*cum eo*), we trust, in spirit, leaving your body behind. (2.9)[237]

Here Ruricius develops the theme of closeness in spirit despite physical distance, in which parts of Ruricius would be left within his friends and parts of them would remain within him. This theme appeared in 2.1-5 to Namatius and Ceraunia as well as in Book I.[238] Ruricius insists on vocabulary which refers to place, underlining the theme of presence in spite of physical absence: *a uobis*/*ad me*; *in me*; *cum eo*. We see this same idea repeated earlier in the letter:

> … to whatever extent I am unable subsequently to receive the precious gifts of your blessed mouth, I nevertheless possess your presence within the recesses of my mind (*intra mentis meae arcana*) and in the mirror of my heart (*in speculo mei cordis*) I gaze upon your form…There, indeed, I secretly converse with you, as is the custom of Your Piety… there I kiss you with the lips of my mind (*labiis mentis*) and embrace you with the arms of my heart (*manibus cordis*). (2.9)[239]

Ruricius describes how he retains the image of Aeonius in his mind and heart and is able to converse and cherish him there when they are physically separated. The imagery of physical affection, kiss, embrace, through the mind and heart (terms which are both used twice in the passage above) reinforce the presentation of multiple people residing in one body, representing their connection from a distance. Ruricius presents both Pomerius and Aeonius as friends through this theme of esteem and affection shared within multiple bodies in spite of distance.[240]

Ruricius' use of amicitial elements, such as the theme of absence and vocabulary of affection and love, and references to Book I in his letters to Aeonius combines their teacher-student

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[237] *nec eum a uobis discedere, si ad me accesserit, iudicetis, quia et uos hic inueniet in me et cum eo uos residente corpore, ut confidimus, corde uenietis.*

[238] For example, in 1.15 to Aeonius: "Even if I never enjoyed the sight of the exterior man, I nonetheless delighted in the grace of the interior… those who are dear see each other in no place better than the heart…"

[239] *… quamlibet nulla deinceps sancti oris munera pretiosa perciperem, praesentiam tamen uestram intra mentis meae arcana possideam et effigiem uestram in speculo mei cordis intuear… Illic enim uobiscum ex consuetudine pietatis uestrae secretius conloquor… illic uos labiis mentis exosculor et manibus cordis amplector.*

[240] Another example in 2.9: "… it happens that true esteem, which is nourished in my innards by the living portrayal of your aspect…" (*uera dilectio, quae in uisceribus meis uiua uultus uestri figuratione nutritur*)

relationship with friendship. While in Book I, Ruricius uses the imagery of satiety and thirst to frame himself as a student seeking guidance from religious guides, such as Faustus and Sidonius, here the same metaphor is used in conjunction with the theme of absence, enabling Ruricius to present Aeonius both as a teacher and an *amicus*.[241] In 2.9, Ruricius develops the theme of being unable to satiate himself, framing the theme in terms of sensuality and longing, which stresses the affection which Ruricius wants to associate with his epistolary relationship with Aeonius:

> Thus, indeed, during those few days, which your affection made for me both few and most fleeting, when my gaze not only was unable to be satiated through contemplating you but even was aroused more by the sight because I longed for you even when you were present and sought you even when we were together… (2.9)[242]

He also uses natural imagery of water and a spring:

> … you watered my senses with the purest spring of a kind heart… (2.9)[243]

As seen above, in 2.9, Ruricius explains that he has kept Aeonius within himself and continues to seek guidance from him there, using sensual imagery:

> … There, indeed, I secretly converse with you, as is the custom of Your Piety, there indeed I deliberate upon the formulation of a better life (*uitae melioris*), there I kiss you (*exosculor*) with the lips of my mind and embrace you (*amplector*) with the arms of my heart. (2.9)[244]

Ruricius associates sensual imagery (*exosculor*, *amplector*) and intimacy with the mind, heart and conversation on the subject of 'a better life', referring to religious guidance. Therefore, in 2.9, the language of desire and sensuality is combined with the same imagery used to discuss Ruricius' relations with his religious guides in Book I, such as water and conversing with the other within

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[241] See Chapter 2, section 2 for satiety and thirst in Book I.

[242] *ita enim paucis diebus, quos mihi uere et paucos et breuissimos uester fecit affectus, dum contemplatione uestra non solum satiari noster nequit, uerum etiam uidendo magis exardescit intuitus, cum uos et desideraremus praesentes et adhuc coram positos quaereremus…*

[243] *… sensus nostros fonte purissimo benigni pectoris inrigastis…*

[244] *Illic enim uobiscum ex consuetudine pietatis uestrae secretius conloquor, illic etiam de uitae melioris institutione pertracto, illic uos labiis mentis exosculor et manibus cordis amplector.*

oneself.[245] Aeonius is an episcopal colleague and a guide to Ruricius, at least in this epistolary relationship, while also being presented as an *amicus* through the affection and intimacy invested in the imagery and vocabulary.

In 2.10-11, Ruricius presents his epistolary relationship with Pomerius as a friendship with a brother in spite of rank and age, someone who has followed the same path that Ruricius did in Book I. As we see in Ruricius' discussion of the term brother, Ruricius shows a tendency to quote and discuss religious texts and knowledge in 2.10-11, appropriate for his addressee Pomerius, who was a religious scholar. In the opening passage of 2.10, Ruricius repeats the opening passage of 2.1 on friends sharing a soul but alters it to the standpoint of religious scholars:

> Secular savants have said that two friends have a single soul, which I, in fact, certify to be true with ecclesiastical testimony where it says: "The spirit and heart of those who believe is one," [Acts 4.32] one, that is, in charity, not in number, and in simplicity of faith, not in the soleness of person. This, therefore, I proclaim and approve, for since the time when I departed from Your Like-Mindedness I feel that I have been halved and I recognize that part of me has remained with you, nor, in your absence, do I believe that I am whole, and, when I do not find myself in myself, having returned to you I seek myself in you and there I see that however much of myself I have left with you, this much of you I have taken away with me.[246] (2.10)[247]

In this way, Ruricius presents Pomerius as a friend, as Namatius and Ceraunia were presented. Aeonius is presented as a friend through the theme of presence and absence, which Ruricius used in the letters to Namatius and Ceraunia, further supporting this parallel. Ruricius' allusion to Cicero's *Laelius* in his comment on friends sharing a single soul[248] is in 2.10 immediately followed

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[245] In Book I, see 1.1, 1.15, 1.16 for interior vs. exterior presence theme; 1.1, 1.9, 1.17 for water images.
[246] Mathisen's translation with emendation. Cf. opening of 2.1, quoted in section 1 of this chapter, footnote 159.
[247] *Sapientes saeculi amicos duos unam animam habere dixerunt, quod ego etiam ecclesiastico testimonio uerum esse confirmo, quo ait : credentium autem erat anima et cor unum, unum utique caritate, non numero, et fidei simplicitate, non singularitate personae. hoc ergo praedico proboque. nam ex quo a uestra unanimitate discessi, diuisum esse me sentio partemque meam uobiscum resedisse cognosco nec absentibus uobis integrum esse me credo et, cum me in me non inueniam, apud uos me ad uos regressus inquiro atque ibidem quantum mei uobis reliquisse, tantum uestri mecum abstulisse conspicio.*
[248] See Cicero, *Laelius de amicitia*, 81 : *qui et se ipse diligit et alterum anquirit, cuius animum ita cum suo misceat ut efficiat paene unum ex duobus*. Mathisen 2011: 149 footnote 2 notes this commonplace.

by a scriptural quotation supporting the same idea. The combination of the two references indicates the transition from secular to religious life and that this transition is not necessarily complete, given that Ruricius uses both a secular and scriptural reference rather than just a scriptural one. The indication of an ongoing conversion to the spiritual life is perhaps in reference to Pomerius, as Ruricius encourages him to continue his religious life at the end of 2.11.[249] Ruricius indicates that the quality of the *amicitia* he shares with Namatius and Ceraunia and Aeonius and Pomerius, despite their differing social categories as bishops, clerics and converts, are the same through the similarity in their presentations. Furthermore, he tends to eliminate the social distinctions which separate them: in 2.1-5, Ruricius emphasized his authority as bishop in order to place himself in an equal or superior position to the socially superior aristocratic couple; here, in 2.8-11, Ruricius associates himself with Aeonius, whose bishopric is higher in the ecclesiastical hierarchy than his own, as a friend, and he associates himself with the learned author of religious treatises, Pomerius, by way of their similar journey from secular to religious life.

Along with *amicitia*, both relationships are characterized by Ruricius' use of language of mutual exchange or profit. Ruricius associates the idea of exchange with the affection and teaching between himself and Aeonius in paragraph 1 of 2.9 (quoted above, p. 94) as he explains that he wished to send a letter but was prevented by circumstances. Ruricius outlines his and Aeonius' relationship as being driven by 'profit' or exchange in the form of a teacher-student relationship, in which Ruricius is the student gaining instruction and Aeonius the teacher gaining gratification from teaching, as well as 'affection' through their desire and longing to hear from each other.[250]

[249] 2.11: "… I recommend this in you, that committed and accepting of the costs you should take pains for this labor, and as a strenuous builder apply yourself thus to the building of that turret which the Lord in the Gospel ordered to be built, so that your adversaries might have something to lament regarding its perfection rather than something to ridicule regarding its incompletion."

[250] The relationship of mutual profit and desire in this passage can be connected to the opening passage of 2.8, in which Ruricius reflects on the mutual gain of the petitioner-bestower relationship in the duty of ecclesiastical

The theme of reciprocity is supported by the chiastic constructions of this passage, which illustrates the reciprocal nature of their relationship: my profit and your affection, my affection and your profit (*profectui nostro et affectui uestro, affectui nostro et profectui uestro*); your teaching is my learning (*doctrina uestra eruditio nostra est*)… my learning is your recompense (*eruditio nostra merces uestra est*). The use of the term *merces* for recompense, also suggests a reference to the salary of a teacher, paid by the lesson, reinforcing the association of the student-teacher relationship with profit.

In the final line of 2.9, Ruricius returns to the idea of loss and gain through the theme of presence and absence: he indicates that if Aeonius sends Pomerius to him, Aeonius will not lose Pomerius' company because Aeonius will be in both Ruricius and Pomerius, spiritually; and he indicates that Aeonius will find "no small compensation" (*non paruum fructum*) in Ruricius' improvement through Pomerius' teaching. Ruricius also uses the verb *profecerit*, which has the same root as *profectus*, supporting the idea of profit and exchange in his teacher-student relationships.

Similarly, Ruricius frames his relationship with Pomerius in terms of affection, profit and reciprocity:

> … to come as quickly as possible to your desiring brother, with this objective, both to pay off the debt (*debitum*) you incurred and to assuage our mutual affection (*mutuum… affectum*), because positioned face-to-face I will provide for you an equal benefit (*aequalem… gratiam*), from contemplating me and speaking with me (*de nostra contemplatione et conlocutione*), and, if you esteem me as I esteem you, there will be as much return to Your Charity by me as you yourself bestow upon me. (*si, ut diligeris, diligis, a me retribuetur caritati tuae, quantum tu meae ipse detuleris*) (2.10)[251]

recommendation, as well as Ruricius' reference to 'mutual esteem' as a motivator for Aeonius to take up Posessor's case (2.8).

[251] *… ad desiderantem fratrem [si] desiderans quantocius uenire festinato beneficio et promissum soluturus debitum et mutuum mitigaturus affectum, quia coram positi aequalem uobis gratiam de nostra contemplatione et conlocutione praestabimus tantumque, si, ut diligeris, diligis, a me retribuetur caritati tuae, quantum tu meae ipse detuleris.*

Ruricius balances the imagery of debt, benefit and return, with mutual affection. Ruricius' chiastic constructions support the theme of reciprocity, as seen above in 2.9: if you esteem me as I esteem you, there will be as much return to Your Charity by me as you yourself bestow upon me (*si, ut diligeris, diligis, a me retribuetur caritati tuae, quantum tu meae ipse detuleris*). However, in contrast with the letters to Aeonius, where profit was both affection and a teacher-student dynamic in which Ruricius received learning and Aeonius profited in gratification in Ruricius' improvement, the relationship with Pomerius operates on an exchange of affection, but the teacher-student dynamic is subtly transformed into discussion and mutual contemplation. Ruricius does identify Pomerius as someone who provides teaching to him at the end of 2.9 but in the letters to Pomerius he does not reference teaching in their exchange. Pomerius may be a different kind of teacher than Aeonius to Ruricius, still engaged in reciprocal exchange of teaching and affection with Ruricius but, considering the dynamics of spiritual fraternity between them, the exchange and teaching is less formal, not framed within a strictly hierarchical relationship, and therefore not referred to as bestowal of *doctrina* in the letters to Pomerius but rather mutual esteem, contemplation and discussion.[252]

Conclusion

Ruricius presents two *amicitia* connections to religious men in 2.8-10 who both act as teachers but are presented with different dynamics. The difference in dynamics can be explained in part by the positions of the two correspondents. In 2.8-9 to Aeonius, Ruricius presents a friendship which has a teacher-student dynamic, in which Ruricius presents himself mostly in the subordinate position given Aeonius' status as bishop of Arles. In 2.10-11, Ruricius presents a

[252] Reciprocity in relationships also appears elsewhere in Book II. We also find this idea of reciprocity of friendship in 2.1-5, in the theme of parts of oneself being shared with friends even if they are at a distance but not being lost to oneself. The reciprocity in teacher-student relationships also appears later in Book II, for example in 2.24-28.

friendship with Pomerius, an author of religious treatises, in which Ruricius presents Pomerius and himself without the verticality present in the Aeonius letters, as spiritual *fratres*, despite the differences in age and rank separating them. The fact that Ruricius identifies Pomerius as a teacher in 2.9 to Aeonius but does not mention teaching in the letters to Pomerius indicates that Ruricius' emphasis was not on Pomerius as a formal teacher. Instead, Ruricius emphasizes the justification of Pomerius as brother and mentions Pomerius' trajectory from secular life to religious life, similar to Ruricius' own in Book I, suggesting Ruricius' own attempt to build his status and authority as bishop.

Ultimately, despite the difference in dynamics, Ruricius' relationships with both men share common presentations of ecclesiastical community, *amicitia* and the theme of reciprocity. The circularity present in Ruricius' description of relationships contributes to his own transitioning epistolary persona. Ruricius presents an image of himself as a bishop who both understands his role well and is able to fulfill his duties (2.8 reflection and recommendation) as well as a bishop who is able to discuss religious topics fluently and exhort others along the path of the religious life (2.11 to Pomerius). He is able to move from his epistolary role as bishop, a 'bestower', to an epistolary role of student, a 'petitioner', to a role of spiritual *frater*, in his relationships with Aeonius and Pomerius, all the while engaged in a reciprocal give and take relationship with his addressees.

Also, given the presence of both Aeonius and Pomerius in Book I, 1.15 and 1.17, in the final cluster in which Ruricius was transitioning into the position of bishop, 2.8-11 provides comment on Ruricius' career as bishop and his relationships with his religious guides now that he is a bishop, a follow-up to the arc of Book I. The connections to the thematic arc of Book I are significant in this group. The secular vs. religious life theme appears in two instances, with Possessor and

Pomerius, recalling Ruricius' own journey from secular to religious life in Book I. The themes of hunger vs. satiety, water, and judgement also make reference to the themes of Ruricius' desire for religious guidance in Book I. These links suggest that Ruricius' journey as a student of the religious life is not over now that he is bishop but continues to co-exist with his other roles.

Section 3: 2.24-28 Constantius, Apollinaris and Ommatius

Summary

Mathisen identified 2.24-25 to Constantius and 2.26-27 to Apollinaris as groups of letters organized by shared addressee. Mathisen also identifies 2.26-28 as related by circumstances: all the letters were sent to Clermont.[253] We have grouped the letters 2.24-28 together because they are all connected by their theme of fatherhood. The letters are all addressed to sons: Constantius and Ommatius are Ruricius' sons, while Apollinaris is Sidonius' son.[254] The letters to Apollinaris are located in between the letters to Constantius and Ommatius, drawing them into the group and introducing a counterpoint to the father-son relationship presented in the Constantius and Ommatius letters. All the letters (except 2.25) are *amicitia* letters that share a theme of visiting. The group includes the following letters:

- 2.24-25 to Constantius (Ruricius' son) are both reprimands for Constantius' unreligious way of life.
- 2.26-27 to Apollinaris (Sidonius' son) discuss family-literary topics: 2.26 discusses the writings of Sidonius Apollinaris, some of which Ruricius and Apollinaris are

[253] Mathisen 2011: 57.
[254] See Mathisen 2011: 183 introductory note to 2.26 for brief remarks on Apollinaris. For further reading, see Prévot 2004.

editing;[255] and in 2.27 Ruricius complains of not receiving letters from Apollinaris, reminding him of his epistolary duty.

- 2.28 to Ommatius (another son of Ruricius)[256] indicates a recent visit to Ommatius and discusses their bonds of friendship.

Ruricius develops the theme of fatherhood in this group, presenting an aspect of his role as bishop intersecting with familial responsibilities to his sons. He insists upon his role as a spiritual father with the responsibility of guiding his sons towards the religious life, a mentorship role. In the middle of the group, letter 2.26 to Apollinaris, Ruricius associates himself with Apollinaris by claiming Sidonius as their common father and lord (*Sollium enim nostrum domnum patremque communem*), connecting the theme of the current group 2.24-28 to Book I's thematic arc given Sidonius' prominent role as one of Ruricius' spiritual guides in Book I. The group acts as a mirror of Ruricius in Book I, as he attempts to guide his sons towards the same path to the religious life. He develops this theme along with that of reciprocity in *amicitia* and student-teacher relationships which we saw in the previous cluster, 2.8-11 to Aeonius and Pomerius.

Analysis

In his relationship with his son Constantius, Ruricius presents himself as a stern spiritual father who is attempting to bring his errant son back to the correct path. In contrast, he is the benevolent mentor of Ommatius, who has successfully started on the religious path. In between, Ruricius refers to his own past as student with Sidonius as guide, connecting the two contrasting religious experiences of his sons with his own.

[255] See Mathisen 2011: 183. Introductory note on 2.26 for discussion of this editing activity.
[256] Ommatius took up the religious life, in contrast to Constantius' debauchery, and was the addressee of 1.18, the only son to receive a letter in Book I.

Ruricius indicates the differences in his approaches to his addressees in the salutations. Constantius' characterization as the errant son is indicated by the salutation that Ruricius addresses to him, which sets him apart from Apollinaris and Ommatius:

> 2.24[257]: Bishop Ruricius to his Son Constantius
> *Filio Constantio Ruricius Episcopus*
> 2.26[258]: Ruricius to his (dear)[259] Apollinaris, Greetings
> *Ruricius Apollinari suo salutem*
> Ruricius to his (dear) Ommatius, Greetings
> *Ruricius Ommatio suo salutem*

Although he is writing to his son, Ruricius uses his title 'Bishop' in the letters to Constantius which emphasizes his authority over fatherly affection, whereas he does not include this title in the letters to Apollinaris or Ommatius. Ruricius specifies Constantius' position as his son (*filio*) and does not employ the affectionate *suo* and greetings (*salutem*), whereas Ruricius expresses greater warmth by including both the possessive and greetings in the salutations to Apollinaris and Ommatius.

Ruricius depicts himself mainly as Constantius' spiritual guide in 2.24-25 as he seeks to correct Constantius' excesses and encourage him towards a religious life. Ruricius' purpose as spiritual father is clear in his use of religious vocabulary: he contrasts Constantius' current lifestyle of debauchery, presented through the evocation of Bacchus, Liber and associated visual imagery, with the correct path, which is with the Lord and parents (i.e. Ruricius):

> … it is good occasionally to retreat from such things and spend time more with the Lord than with Liber, and to pay attention to parents rather than to melodies… (2.24)[260]

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[257] The salutation of 2.25 is replaced by *eiusdem alia*.
[258] The salutation of 2.27 is replaced by *item eiusdem alia*.
[259] Mathisen's translation emended.
[260] *… quia bonum ist ab his, dum perualde feruet adulescentia, aliquoties respirare et magis domino uacare, quam Libero, parentibus quoque operam dare, quam cantibus…*

Ruricius is writing as spiritual father, condemning excesses and transgressions while promoting the religious life. Ruricius employs the same juxtaposition in 2.5:

> … you promised me something different, that you would worship Him, not Iacchus. (2.25)[261]

Ruricius' relationship with Constantius is at once that of father and spiritual guide trying to bring his son back to the correct path, and the contrast between Iacchus and Him clearly illustrates Ruricius' spiritual purpose behind his reprimands.

Furthermore, Ruricius' vocabulary when discussing other topics, such as Constantius' broken promises, and his proposed solutions to Constantius' behaviour illustrate the primarily spiritual nature of Ruricius' rebuke of Constantius. In 2.25, Ruricius references oaths:

> With what effrontery do you seek that promised (*promissa*) by me, when you have violated your own oaths (*sacramenta*)? (2.25)[262]

Ruricius uses *sacramenta* in this passage to refer to the oaths Constantius has violated, which frames Ruricius' reprimands of Constantius and his lifestyle within the context of faith. While Ruricius called Constantius *filio* in the salutation, suggesting his role as father, Ruricius is writing to Constantius specifically from the role of bishop, condemning his excesses and attempting to convince him to begin a more religious life.

Ruricius reflects upon measures to encourage change in Constantius' behaviour and, in 2.24, proposes concrete action:

> …I direct that tomorrow, which will be the fourth celebration, you hasten to fast with me at Briva, and in a timely manner, which I do not at all think you are planning to do. (2.24)[263]

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[261] *Aliud mihi deo teste promiseras, quod ipsum deberes colere, non Ia[cch]um…* (the CSEL text reads *Ianum*)
[262] *quo ore a me promissa perquires, cum tu sacramenta uiolaueris?*
[263] *… moneo, ut crastino, quod erit quarta feria, Briuae, temporius tamen, quod te facturum minime credo, mihi ieiunus occurras.*

Ruricius' response to Constantius' lifestyle in 2.24 is to order Constantius to participate in fasting with him and religious celebration in order to encourage him to change. In 2.25, Ruricius reflects on how he needs to carry out his role:

> Whence you will discharge to my promise, as long as I know that you serve your own appetite, lest I seem to encourage the activity, whose manner I rebuked, and lest I serve as a stumbling-block (*scandalo*) for one to whom I should be an example. (2.25)[264]

Ruricius' role as spiritual father to Constantius is expressed through his use of his authority to correct Constantius' behaviour through religious activity in 2.24 and his desire to serve as an example in 2.25. In both letters, Ruricius attempts to find an effective approach to guiding Constantius, which is a role Ruricius also played in 1.18 with his other son Ommatius, in both cases encouraging them toward the religious life. Therefore, we see the intersection of Ruricius' roles as father and spiritual father or bishop in his mentorship of Constantius and Ommatius on living a moral or religious life.

The theme of profit and reciprocity, seen in 2.8-11, is also present in Ruricius' letters to Constantius. Ruricius protests being accused of violating his promises when Constantius himself has violated his oaths. Ruricius also indicates that he will not be fulfilling promises to Constantius so long as Constantius continues to serve his own appetites. We see that the relationship of reciprocity is not functioning in 2.24 and 25: Constantius is acting selfishly with the resources provided by Ruricius, rather than fulfilling his end of the relationship by working on his religious life, and therefore Ruricius is forced to take action and stop fulfilling his own promises to Constantius. The idea of profit and debt is also present in 2.28 to Ommatius, for all that Ruricius has expended on him, but it mostly insists on gratitude for spiritual guidance.

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[264] *unde dabis ueniam meae promissioni, quamdiu te huic seruire cognouero passioni, ne confirmare uideamur factum, cuius reprehendimus pactum, et simus scandalo, cui esse debemus exemplo.*

Ruricius' discussion of fatherhood with Ommatius_in 2.28 contrasts with the letters to Constantius because of the sons' diverging religious experiences: Ommatius is pursuing the religious life and has already been given advice and encouragement from Ruricius the bishop in 1.18, establishing his career in the mind of the reader. In 2.28, Ruricius presents himself in the role of father as an indispensable part of Ommatius' entry into the religious life. Ruricius presents the value of the role of father above that of an old friend (which he identified as the friend of highest value). This value is associated with Ruricius as a 'biological' father to Ommatius but more so as a 'spiritual' father. Ruricius lists all the things he has provided for Ommatius as his father, many of them related to the religious life:

> And if a friend is not to be abandoned, by how much more a father, who taught you, who nourished you, who with the help of the Lord brought you all the way to the priesthood, to whom is owed, perhaps, even the enjoyment of the light, according to the divine pity. (2.28)[265]

Ruricius emphasizes his role as spiritual father in this passage. He indicates that he provided life, education and guidance to Ommatius. Ruricius even claims responsibility for guiding Ommatius to the religious life and priesthood, which connects to Book I's thematic arc in which he became bishop through the guidance of spiritual 'fathers', such as Sidonius and Faustus. Ruricius implies that Ommatius owes him "even the enjoyment of the light, according to the divine pity", that is eternal life. Ruricius thus takes credit not only for giving Ommatius life as a carnal father, but for giving life as a spiritual father.

However, this impression of debts of gratitude is softened by the end of the letter, at the point when Ruricius uses the second person singular twice to address Ommatius (*beatitudini tuae*, *unanimitatem tuam*), notable given that he uses the second person plural in all other instances in

[265] *quodsi amicus relinquendus non est, quanto magis pater, qui erudiit, qui nutriuit, qui adiuuante domino ad sacerdotium usque perduxit, cui fortasse etiam iuxta diuinam misericordiam lucis istius debetur usura.*

the letter. Ruricius ends the letter by explaining to Ommatius that he is not writing in order to accuse him of a fault but to a son whom he wishes to see pure within the religious life:

> But I write this to Your Beatitude (*beatitudini tuae*) not, so to speak, blaming you for anything or finding fault, but as to a dearest son, whom I want to walk in this world without any blemish of impiety, and to appear both pure and immaculate on that day of judgement in the presence of God and His angels and the congregation of all the flesh. (2.28)[266]

Ruricius' stated hope for his son is to live a successful religious life and achieve salvation. Ruricius embodies the role of bishop in his goal to guide Ommatius (and Constantius) to the Church and religious life and ultimately to salvation. The success of his sons in the religious life is an implied reimbursement of the debt owed to Ruricius' teaching, which recalls the reciprocal student-teacher and bishop-petitioner relationships presented in 2.8-11.

2.28 to Ommatius contrasts with 2.24-25 to Constantius in that Ommatius is the fulfillment of Ruricius' hopes for his children and a friend while Constantius is someone Ruricius works to improve. Nevertheless, Ruricius indicates that he wants the same thing for both of them in these letters: that they should be pure in the religious life, the same goal that Ruricius worked for and achieved for himself in Book I. Ruricius embodies the role of bishop, spiritual guide, in both cases but must take a different approach in each case to pursue that goal: a friend and encouragement to Ommatius and a firmer guide and example to Constantius.

The letters 2.26-27 to Apollinaris are placed between the letters to Constantius and Ommatius. Ruricius' letters to Apollinaris are amicitial and, although not addressed to one of Ruricius' own sons, the use of the affectionate *suo* in the salutation brings the relationship into association with Ruricius' relationship with Ommatius. Furthermore, in 2.26, Ruricius writes on

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[266] *Sed haec ego beatitudini tuae scribo non quasi aliquid inputans aut exprobrans, sed ut filio carissimo, quem sine ullo naeuo cupio in hoc mundo inpietatis incedere et purum atque immaculatum in illo die iudicii coram deo et angelis eius ac congregatione carnis totius apparere.*

the subject of fatherhood, which also connects the letters to Apollinaris to the rest of the group. Ruricius discusses Apollinaris' relationship with his father in the context of literary talent. However, Ruricius uses his discussion of Apollinaris' position as son and inheritor of Sidonius' literary talents to emphasize his own connection to Sidonius from Book I's thematic arc, in which Ruricius was a spiritual 'son' and Sidonius was one of his spiritual 'fathers'. By referencing his own development in the religious life and aid of religious fathers, Ruricius creates an additional layer of meaning to this group in that his role as spiritual father to Constantius and Ommatius, whose letters are positioned on either side of the Apollinaris letters, is a reflection of his own journey in Book I.

For example, Ruricius uses some of the same water imagery from Book I in his discussion of Apollinaris' position as inheritor of Sidonius' talents, which references Ruricius' own position as a spiritual mentee of Sidonius:

> You have been endowed with these good things[267] not so much by instruction as by nature, because a stream bursting forth from a fountain, even if it advances by flowing and acquires fullness by flooding, nevertheless also owes its merit to the source from which it receives its name (… *quae bona uobis non tam doctrina contulit, quam natura, quia riuus de fonte prorumpens, licet fluendo proficiat et plenitudinem currendo conquirat, auctori tamen, unde sumit uocabulum, debet et meritum.*) (2.26).

Ruricius uses natural imagery in this passage, in this case comparing Apollinaris to a stream (*riuus*) which originated from Sidonius' fountain (*fonte*). Water imagery was frequent in Book I, used to represent knowledge and guidance, and Ruricius even applied it to Sidonius in Book I: in 1.9, Ruricius writes to Sidonius of his desire to drink at his fountain (*desidero… tuo fonte potari*…). Ruricius uses similar water imagery to Book I, namely Sidonius as a source (a fountain as a source for a stream, a fountain as a source from which to drink), to present Sidonius as a source of

[267] Mathisen's translation emended.

knowledge for both Apollinaris and Ruricius: Apollinaris owes his eloquence and virtues to his father, who was the source of his life and education, while Ruricius also owes his religious life to Sidonius, who acted as one of his main religious guides in Book I. Apollinaris and Ruricius are both inheritors of Sidonius' *fonte*, who is presented as their 'shared lord and father'[268] earlier in the same letter. Thus, Ruricius recalls his own journey as spiritual mentee in Book I for the reader in between his correspondence with his two sons in which he is the spiritual mentor.

The presentation of the past teacher-student dynamic between Ruricius and Sidonius is reinforced in another instance in 2.26 by the emphasis on Ruricius' current position of spiritual father:

> I hasten, therefore, if the Lord will grant support to your dutiful directive, to examine this work, created in your presence, and to change from a teacher to a pupil (*effici discipulus de magistro*), because it is not shameful for me at this age nor is it an annoyance to exercise the industry of a pupil so long as I gain the mastery of a chosen discipline. Indeed, anyone at all ought to learn before teaching, because one too quickly adopts the haughtiness of the scholar unless one initially has endured the servitude of the student. (2.26)[269]

Ruricius is a teacher/guide himself now, and he insists on the value of having been a student before becoming a teacher in order to draw direct attention to the thematic arc of his own progress between Book I and Book II.

To further evoke the previous student-teacher relationship between himself and Sidonius, Ruricius uses the same language of affection and passion to write of Sidonius that he used for his religious guides in Book I, as well as for Aeonius in 2.9.

> Just as reading him restores my past affection (*affectum*) for him, it likewise, because of the obscurity of his locutions, does not fire my own talent: let us awaken, if you please, with its own sparks and with puffing breaths, this little flicker of love (*caritatis*) itself,

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[268] Mathisen's translation emended. *Sollium enim nostrum domnum patremque commune.*

[269] *hunc ergo, si dominus piae definitioni uestrae tribuetur fautor, effectum uobis praesentibus percensere festino et effici discipulus de magistro, quia non me pudet etiam in hac aetate nec piget discipuli adripere industriam, dummodo affectatae artis consequar disciplinam. prius enim quilibet debet discere quam docere, quia praepropere doctoris usurpat supercilium, nisi discipuli susceperit ante famulatum.*

> which is glowing, so to speak, in the midst of the embers of forgetfulness after so great a space of lengthy time and let us sometime drench it with sweet tears, whereby, soaked by this shower, the more that flicker is moistened the more it flares up, because flames erupt, rather than subside, through an abundance of tears and desires (*desideriorum*) and affections (*affectuum*). (2.26)[270]

Ruricius uses vocabulary such as "affection", "love", and "desires" to describe his feelings for Sidonius. These words were also used towards religious guides in Book I as well towards as Aeonius in 2.9, but also to familial ties such as Namatius and Ceraunia, which reflects the combination between family relation and spiritual guide that characterizes this cluster. Ruricius also uses imagery of fire and tears in this passage, characterizing love as a flicker among embers which can be developed into a flame by tears, desires and affection.

Flame was used in Book I,[271] specifically to represent Faustus' spiritual guidance and inspiration: Faustus ignites a flame from the embers of charity in Ruricius' spirit through eloquence and scriptural teachings. The parallel imagery of rekindling flicker into flame of love (*caritatis igniculum*) describes both Faustus' (1.1) guidance and (the memory of) Sidonius' (2.26) guidance (*suscitastis* 1.1, *excitemus* 2.26), while Ruricius' latent disposition is described as the embers (*fauillis*/*fauillas*) of his sleeping soul (1.1) or of forgetfulness (2.26). The similarity in the wording of the metaphor reinforces the dynamic of Ruricius as student-turned-teacher and Sidonius as past guide. Ruricius makes reference to his previous role as spiritual son to Sidonius in Book I to indicate to the reader that his current role as spiritual father to Constantius and Ommatius is a reflection of his own development in the religious life in Book I. As in 1.18, the final letter in Book I to Ommatius, Ruricius' role of mentor and that of his addressee as mentee

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[270] Mathisen's translation emended. *cuius lectio, sicut mihi antiquum restaurat affectum, ita prae obscuritate dictorum non accendit ingenium, quamlibet ipsum post tam longi temporis spatium caritatis igniculum scintillis suis inter obliuionis fauillas utcumque relucentem nonnumquam et suspiriosis flatibus excitemus et interdum dulcibus nobis fletibus inrigemus, quo tamen ille imbre perfusus, quanto magis inficitur, tanto magis incenditur, quia per lacrimarum copiam desideriorum atque affectuum crescit flamma, non deficit.*

[271] Mathisen 2011: 88, footnote 6 to 1.1. Mathisen notes the analogy between 1.1 and 2.26 and lists other letters where Ruricius uses a similar image: 2.55, 62, 64.

illustrates Ruricius' culmination as bishop after his religious journey of Book I and his work leading others to this path.

Conclusion

The main theme present in these letters is fatherhood, particularly spiritual fatherhood and guidance. The letters' arrangement indicates a deliberate progression: to Constantius and Ommatius, Ruricius is a bishop guiding his sons towards the religious life, not yet successfully in the case of the former and successfully in that of the latter. In between these letters, Ruricius includes letters to his previous mentor's son, referencing his own relationship to Sidonius as a spiritual 'son' in Book I. Ruricius depicts himself in direct response to Book I: he is now the spiritual father after having been the spiritual son in Book I. Ruricius' attempts to guide Constantius and Ommatius to the religious life are a mirror of Ruricius' own journey in Book I in which he is now in the role of father and religious guide. The progression culminating in successful friend and guide to Ommatius indicates Ruricius' own culmination as successful bishop, but his rhetorical return to the role of student in 2.26 indicates that he still embodies the epistolary persona of student in certain letters, such as with Aeonius and Pomerius in 2.8-11. The theme of reciprocity in relationships of *amicitia* and mentorship is also present in 2.24-27, in the debts owed to Ruricius by Constantius and Ommatius for Ruricius' mentorship, which they can repay through successful religious lives and salvation.

Section 4: 2.32-37 – Agricola, Caesarius, Sedatus, Parthenius and Papianilla

Summary

Letters 2.32-37 are connected by an overall theme of travel: the travels of Ruricius' family members and Ruricius' own inability to travel to the Council of Agde. Furthermore, within this

context, Ruricius' involvement in arranging the travels of his family members, his grandson Parthenius and Parthenius' wife Papianilla, illustrates a family role, while in his role as bishop, Ruricius deals with the aftermath of his absence from the Council of Agde in 506. Ruricius as a familial guide is superior to certain of his addressees, like Parthenius and Papianilla, in authority and experience, while Ruricius as a bishop must negotiate his relationships with two other bishops. While the travel theme runs through all the letters of the section, the family and bishop roles are displayed in a deliberate alternating arrangement: the family role dominates 2.32, 34, and 36-37 while the bishop role dominates 2.33 and 35. Ultimately, Ruricius' role as bishop overlaps with his family role, allowing him to make recommendations for his family members, underlining the centrality of his role as bishop and guide to his overall epistolary persona.

- 2.32 is addressed to Agricola,[272] who was related to Ruricius through the marriage of his daughter Papianilla and Ruricius' grandson Parthenius. Ruricius complains in the letter of his inability to travel to meet Agricola and his family in person.
- 2.33 is addressed to Bishop Caesarius on the subject of Ruricius' absence from the Council of Agde
- 2.34 is a recommendation letter addressed to Bishop Sedatus for several travelling family members who are unnamed.
- 2.35 is addressed to Bishop Sedatus also on the subject of Ruricius' absence from the Council of Agde
- 2.36 is a recommendation letter for Parthenius, to Bishop Caesarius

[272] See Mathisen 2011: 190-192. Introductory note to 2.32 and footnotes for discussion of family relations. Avitus was the son of the emperor Avitus, brother of Papianilla, Sidonius' wife, and father of a daughter named Papianilla, who married Ruricius' grandson Parthenius. The letter includes religious exhortation and concludes with salutations to family members, seemingly to Agricola's daughter (Papianilla) and his wife

- 2.37 is addressed to both Parthenius and Papianilla, which salutes them on their journey and counsels them to heed their elders. This concludes the family arc of Parthenius and Papianilla's travel(s) either with other family members (2.34) or alone/separately (2.36).

Analysis

The travel theme binds all the letters of 2.32-37 together and is manifested in two ways: Ruricius' own inability to travel and the travels of his family members, Parthenius and Papianilla. 2.32 joins these two aspects, as Ruricius expresses his inability to travel and visit Agricola and his wife, Papianilla's parents:

> For the purpose of beholding her [Agricola's wife][273], if I had the ability to get about, my will to see you would be most immediate, so that I could regard her with my exterior eyes (*exterioribus*), she whom I gaze upon with my interior eyes (*interioribus oculis*) through the memory of our bond, for the sake of the intimacy of our very affinity. (2.32)[274]

Ruricius contrasts his ability to see Agricola's wife spiritually (through 'interior eyes') but not physically (through 'exterior eyes'), to emphasize his spiritual bonds over his bodily infirmity, which is preventing him from physically travelling. After this introduction within family matters, Ruricius' inability to travel is central to his letters 2.33 and 2.35 to Caesarius and Sedatus on the subject of his absence from the Council of Agde. He then goes back to the spiritual counterpart of his invalidity in 2.37 to Parthenius and Papianilla, as he describes himself accompanying them after their departure spiritually rather than physically:

> After Your Piety departed, I felt that I was halved, because I know that my greatest part, that is the interior man (*interiorem hominem*), has travelled with you even as my body remains (*residente corpore*) here. (2.37)[275]

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[273] See Mathisen 2011: 192, footnote 20.

[274] *ob cuius agnitionem, si facultas esset ambulandi, erat uoluntas promptissima uos uisendi, ut, quam interioribus oculis pro adfinitatis ipsius coniunctione iugi recordatione conspicimus, etiam exterioribus cerneremus.*

[275] *Postquam pietas uestra discessit, dimidium esse me sentio, quia maximam mei partem, hoc est interiorem hominem residente corpore uobiscum ambulasse cognosco…*

In addition to reiterating the image of one soul within two bodies borrowed from Cicero's *Laelius*, as in 2.32 Ruricius is visiting and accompanying others as they travel only as an 'interior man', while his body remains at home, which underlines his physical inability to travel.

The two letters on Ruricius' absence from the Council of Agde (which emphasize his bishop role), 2.33 and 2.35, are embedded within the letters which emphasize his family role as a result of Ruricius' deliberate chiastic and alternating organization. Caesarius and Sedatus are the addressees of the bishop theme letters on the Council of Agde as well as the addressees of the recommendation letters. Their letters are arranged in a chiastic order: 2.33 to Caesarius, 2.34 to Sedatus, 2.35 to Sedatus and 2.36 to Caesarius. These letters to Caesarius and Sedatus also alternate in topic: 2.33 (inability to travel to Council of Agde), 2.34 (recommendation), 2.35 (inability to travel to Council of Agde), 2.36 (recommendation). Both the patterns in the addressees and content encourage the reader to pay attention to and compare these letters. Ruricius is able to combine the idea of his own inability to travel with the travel of his family members and avoid ending the cluster with his absence from the council.

Within the group connected by travel, Ruricius includes two co-existing roles: bishop and familial guide. He utilizes his network as a bishop in favour of his family, while he also illustrates the negotiation and careful maintenance of relationships that his role as bishop requires. In the recommendation letters 2.34 and 2.36 to Sedatus and Caesarius, Ruricius is recommending his travelling family members. The sequence of the letters encourages the reader to come away with the impression that the travels of Parthenius and Papianilla were successful with the help of Ruricius' guidance, given that the recommendation letters 2.34 and 2.36 referencing their travels and arranging for the aid of bishops Caesarius and Sedatus conclude with 2.37 in which Ruricius

pleasantly wishes Parthenius and Papianilla well on their journey while reminding them of the part Ruricius played in arranging things for them.

In the two letters concerning the Council of Agde, 2.33 and 2.35, Ruricius uses amicitial language but his responses to the concerns of Caesarius and Sedatus over his absence are different and reveal his management of two different relationships with fellow bishops. Ruricius' relationship with Caesarius is characterized by Caesarius' superior position as bishop of Arles,[276] as well as by an implication of division (as we shall see in the tone of 2.33 and the vocabulary of 2.36). The *amicitia* elements in the letters to Caesarius appear to be performative, necessary in order for Ruricius to gain Caesarius' forgiveness in 2.33 and his aid for Parthenius in 2.36. On the other hand, Ruricius' relationship with Sedatus, bishop of Nimes,[277] is characterized rather by a theme of trust and an *amicitia* relationship which includes literary and gift exchange as well as spiritual exchange comparable to 2.9 to Aeonius.

The difference in Ruricius' relationships with Caesarius and Sedatus is clear primarily in how Ruricius responds to their concerns over his absence from the Council of Agde. In 2.33 to Caesarius, Ruricius uses the majority of the letter[278] to respond to Caesarius' displeasure at Ruricius' absence from the Council. Ruricius justifies his absence as the result of illness but also includes some jabs at Caesarius and assertions of his own authority and status. For example, Ruricius reprimands Caesarius by reminding him how Ruricius looked when they met in Bordeaux previously, noting his illness and implying a rebuke that Caesarius would question his absence or his justification while being aware of his illness:

[276] On Caesarius, bishop of Arles, see for example Klingshirn 1994; the several articles in Themed edition: the world of Caesarius of Arles in *Early Medieval Europe* 26 (2018).
[277] On Sedatus, bishop of Nimes, see Bianco 1992.
[278] Out of 22 lines of text – around 18 are part of Ruricius' response to his absence from the council.

> Indeed, you yourself can recollect how wearied you saw that I was at Bordeaux, and this in winter, when I normally am stronger than usual. (2.33)[279]

Ruricius also tells Caesarius to send notice of an event in advance because his letters come late, another rebuke, adding here as well references to the severity of his illness:

> For this reason, I hope all the more that you will deign to pray for me and <if> you wish me to come at another time, as you hint, if God grants me life, you might warn me earlier through your man because I point out that your letters come to me only very late. (2.33)[280]

Ruricius continues by indicating the offense to his status:

> I ought not to be informed by them later than others, if not for the sake of my dignity (*dignitate*), at least for the sake of my age (*aetate*), I who, perhaps, as I might imprudently say, used to merit being courted, because if for others the authority of their cities enhances their name, for me the humbleness (*humilitas*) of my city does not detract from my authority (*auctoritatem*) – if indeed it is much better and much more outstanding to know a city by its bishop than a bishop by his city. (2.33)[281]

Ruricius asserts his authority in this passage, pointing out that he is the elder between them, as well as making two pointed comments about Caesarius and the bishopric of Arles. First, Ruricius states that he once merited being courted which is a possible reference to Ruricius being asked to vote in the election for the bishop of Arles after Aeonius' death, an election which resulted in Caesarius gaining the position.[282] Second, Ruricius states that his authority is not lessened by the *humilitas* of his city but rather improved given that it is better to know the city by the bishop, implying that Caesarius' authority stems from the high status of his city, Arles.[283] Caesarius' decision to rebuke the elder Ruricius for his absence is a result of Caesarius' higher status as bishop

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[279] *ipsi etenim recolere potestis, quam fessum me Burdigala uideritis et hoc hieme, quando esse soleo fortior solito…*
[280] *unde magis spero, ut pro me orare dignemini et, <si> ad tempus aliud, quod intimatis, si deus uitam cesserit, uenire uultis, nobis per hominem uestrum maturius indicetis, quia litteras uestras ad me modo tardissime uenisse significo…*
[281] *… quibus, etsi non pro dignitate, uel pro aetate non debemus tardius quam alii commoneri, qui fortasse, ut minus prudens dicam, merebamur ambiri, quia, si aliis nomen urbium praestat auctoritas, nobis auctoritatem demere non debet urbis humilitas, siquidem multo melius multoque eminentius est ciuitatem de sacerdote, quam sacerdotem de ciuitate notescere.*
[282] See Mathisen 2011: 189, introductory note to 2.31. The letter in which Ruricius' opinion is sought out is 2.31, immediately preceding 2.32 to Agricola, the beginning of this group.
[283] Mathisen 2011: 195, footnote 16 to 2.33 for this suggestion.

of Arles. Therefore, Ruricius' response is influenced by an awareness of and commentary on their respective cities and statuses.

While Ruricius includes several rebukes to Caesarius in his response, he nevertheless includes elements of *amicitia* correspondence in 2.33, particularly in the first five lines. In the context of this letter, these *amicitia* elements are performative, meant to contribute to Ruricius' justification for his absence. For example, at the beginning of 2.33, Ruricius is polite and begins the letter as *amicitia* correspondence: he establishes himself, Caesarius and Capillutus within a community of priests by calling Capillutus, the man who carried the letter to him, 'our brother and fellow-priest'; he writes that the letter sent by Caesarius brought his presence with it, a theme Ruricius has used in other familial and *amicitia* correspondence;[284] and he writes that he hastily wrote the current reply in order to "reimburse the duty of kindness that is owed to Your Beatitude" referring to the duty of friends to frequently write and reply to letters. The latter example also contains the language of exchange that we have seen in previous letters.[285] Thus, Ruricius' opening words present Caesarius as an amicitial bishop correspondent but given the offended tone of Ruricius' response to Caesarius' concerns over his absence from the Council, these *amicitia* elements appear to be performative, balancing out the jabs at Caesarius and illustrating the negotiation necessary in a relationship between bishops of different statuses.

Furthermore, in 2.36, the recommendation letter to Caesarius, Ruricius also uses amicitial language in a performative sense. For example, Ruricius again includes the common idea of the duty between friends to send letters frequently:

[284] See discussion of presence/absence theme above, pp. 80-81, 95-98.
[285] See discussion of the theme of debt/profit, pp. 99-101, 107-109.

> We who seek out occasions for writing reciprocally to each other because of our mutual affection ought not to disregard them when they are offered, so that our correspondence, as a mediator, might confer upon us a kind of shared presence… (2.36)[286]

Ruricius repeats the idea expressed in 2.5 to Namatius and develops the idea of letters as shared presence which benefits both and diminishes neither of the correspondents.[287] The elements of *amicitia* in 2.36 support Ruricius' aim to gain Caesarius' aid for his relatives, just as the elements of *amicitia* at the beginning of 2.33 were included to balance Ruricius' response to Caesarius' rebuke and present his justification for his absence. The goal of the amicitial language to support the recommendation would be appropriate given the difference in their statuses as bishops and the lack of close friendship between them.

Consequently, the letter also includes language suggesting a divide between Ruricius and Caesarius, which Ruricius is attempting to overcome. He insists on the theme of physical distance and division while at the same time he places emphasis on the role of correspondence and friendship in mitigating the distance between them:

> … so that our correspondence, as a mediator, might confer upon us a kind of shared presence… and it is not detached, when, as if detached, it is whole in each of our hearts, because, like the divine word, it is relinquished and does not depart… (2.36)[288]

> … nor should the intervening distances of territories impede the tenderness of our love, because those who love each other in the Lord, who is present everywhere, should not be thought to be disparate in body, for they are equally joined in the same spirit. (2.36)[289]

Given Ruricius' tone in 2.33 to Caesarius, his insistence on the theme of *amicitia* overcoming distances in the recommendation letter suggests an attempt to bridge the division between himself

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[286] *Qui occasiones scribendi nobis inuicem pro mutua caritate inquirimus, oblatas praetermittere non debemus, ut conferat nobis quandam praesentiae portionem sermo mediator…*

[287] Cf. "We who seek out an opportunity for writing by right of our family tie ought not to disregard one when it is offered, so that our correspondence, as a mediator, might render us a kind of shared presence…" (2.5)

[288] *… ut conferat nobis quandam praesentiae portionem sermo mediator… nec tamen diuiditur, cum quasi diuisus integer tamen utriusque corde teneatur, quia uerbi more diuini traditur et non egreditur…*

[289] *… nec inpediant affectui amorum nostrorum spatia interiecta regionum, quia, qui in domino, qui praesens est ubique, se diligunt, non credendi sunt disparati corpore, cum per et in eo mente iungantur.*

and Caesarius, whereas the letters to Sedatus provide an example of a relationship with a bishop with whom he has closer ties of *amicitia*.

The symmetry in the letters to Caesarius and Sedatus encourages the reader to compare the differences in the way that Ruricius approaches Caesarius and Sedatus. While Caesarius is a higher-ranking bishop with whom Ruricius must negotiate, Sedatus is a closer *amicus*, a *familiaris* as reveals the difference in tone compared to 2.33. Only the first half of 2.35 is devoted to discussion of Ruricius' absence. Ruricius gives the same justification for his absence to Sedatus as he did to Caesarius – contrasting his illness with his desire to attend and indicating that the summer climate would be too much for him to withstand – but he frames his presentation in a friendlier manner: there are no jabs against Sedatus, Ruricius contrasts his illness with Sedatus' health in a potentially flattering or amusing contrast, and he indicates his strong belief that Sedatus believes that Ruricius was truly ill and will forgive him:

> Because various infirmities of the limbs resist the desires of my spirit, while you are excessively robust, I am impeded by the weakness of a worn-out body; whereas four feet belonging to another are hardly able to bear your weight, my own two are scarcely able to sustain even me without exhaustion. As a result, I cannot fulfill our shared desires. Indeed, with the Lord as my witness, if I but had the strength I would have come to the scheduled synod with all eagerness, but the necessity of weakness inhibited me from the intention of the planned journey, because I can hardly tolerate the atmosphere of that region especially at this time. Which I have faith that you believe and I do not doubt that the perverse ascribe to something else. (2.35)[290]

Ruricius indicates that he trusts Sedatus to believe his justification and accept his absence, whereas he asserted his authority and rebuked Caesarius in turn in 2.33. Ruricius moves on from his absence from the Council to other topics after the first paragraph of 2.35, concluding with, "Therefore, with

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[290] *... quod desideriis animorum nostrorum diuersa membrorum resistit infirmitas, dum uos nimietate robusti, nos tenuitate exesi corporis inpedimur, dum uos alieni et quattuor pedes ferre nequeunt ponderosos, me etiam proprii et duo sustinere prae defectione uix possunt? quo fit, ut implere communia uota nequeamus. ego enim, testis est dominus, quod, si ualuissem, ad synodum condictam omni auiditate uenissem, sed me a dispositi itineris uoluntate necessitas imbecillitatis inhibuit, quia aeres regionis illius praesertim hoc tempore ferre non poteram. quod et uos ita credere confido et prauos ad aliud deriuare non dubito.*

these things sufficiently discussed…" [291] The fact that Ruricius can consider the matter 'sufficiently discussed' and move on in this letter, unlike in 2.33 to Caesarius in which the majority of the letter was focused on the absence, supports the impression of his friendlier response to Sedatus.

The second half of the letter consists of a description of a gift horse which Ruricius is sending to Sedatus. The gift exchange suggests their close friendship to the reader, as does the literary aspect as two earlier letters to Sedatus, 2.18-19, included literary exchange.[292] Ruricius also reflects on friendship in 2.35: friends forgive easily whereas people who dislike each other do not,[293] a reflection which underlines for the reader the contrast between Ruricius' presentation of his relationship with Caesarius of 2.33 (requiring performative *amicitia* and negotiation of status) and that with Sedatus of 2.35 (friendly, joking, forgiving).

The presentation of Sedatus as a close *amicus* is supported by 2.34, the recommendation letter to Sedatus. Ruricius uses some of the same performative language referring to their affectionate relationship as in the recommendation letter to Caesarius (2.36), such as the idea that the love and affection accorded to those he recommends is also accorded to himself. Also, Ruricius uses language not used in the letter to Caesarius, such as heart (*pectus*) in three instances. Although Ruricius uses language that reinforces the *amicitia* bond between the pair, he also adds a new dimension to their relationship: a teacher-student dynamic established through similar imagery and

[291] *His itaque sufficientur…*
[292] Ruricius sends a poem (the only one in the collection) to Sedatus. However, there are no other letters addressed to Caesarius in the collection, perhaps another indicator of their lack of close friendship.
[293] "Indeed, the intensity of absolute affection is so great that nothing is displeasing in a friend, although wickedness in a friend ought to displease more. And it is for this reason that men's judgement is influenced by affection or hatred, so that they do not evaluate accurately." (2.35); *tanta est enim integri uis amoris, ut in amicum nil displiceat, cum magis malum displicere debeat de amico. et hinc illud est, quod iudicia hominum aut amore praepediuntur aut odio, ut recta non proferant.* The idea of judgement being skewed is repeated from Book I.

vocabulary to Book I and 2.9 to Aeonius. Images, already developed in Book I, of thirst/water and belching, as well as the language of desire, establish their bond:

> Whereas my spirit, thirsting for you (*animus uos sitiens*), frequently seeks an opportunity for writing to you, the lord of my heart, once in a while, occupied in lengthy meditation, it discovers a suitable bearer, through whom it might both shatter the long silences and demand spiritual delicacies (*sibi spiritales delicias postularet*) for itself, desiring to sprinkled with the dew of your tongue (*oris uestri cupiens rore respergi*). (2.34)[294]

In the above passage, the images of spiritual delicacies and the dew of the tongue both appear in Book I: spiritual delicacies, *spiritales cibos* (1.8), *cibus*, *deliciarum* (1.9); dew, *eloquentiae tuae rore respergas* (1.10). Also, the reference to thirsting for Sedatus is similar to thirst in Book I, which represents the desire for spiritual guidance: in 1.1 to Faustus (*ut sitim, quam opuscula uestra legendo concepi, ipse praesens, unde illa manarunt, uberius hauriens restinguerem*) and in 1.9 to Sidonius (*desidero… tuo fonte potari*). Thirst is developed in 2.34 with scriptural quotations, which further associates the image of thirst and water with desire for spiritual guidance and the religious life, as well as indicating Ruricius' progress as a bishop, showing his more extensive use of scripture in his development of the theme of thirst/water than in Book I:

> Concerning this thirst, I believe, the sanctified psalmist used to say, "For you, my soul is like a land without water" [Psalms 142.6]; it longs to extinguish the dryness of the body with the temperate intoxication, of course, of that water, concerning which our Lord in the Gospel deigned to exclaim, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." [John 7.37-38] Indeed, the Lord himself offered this water to the Samaritan, that is, to the church gathered from the gentiles, saying, "The water that I will give him shall become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." [John 4.14] (2.34)[295]

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[294] *Dum scribendi uobis, domnis pectoris mei, animus uos sitiens occasionem frequenter inquirit, aliquando diuturna meditatione pertractans repperit idoneum portitorem, per quem et silentia longa disrumperet et sibi spiritales delicias postularet oris uestri cupiens rore respergi.*

[295] *de qua, credo, siti sanctus psalmista dicebat : anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi, illa nimirum aqua ariditatem corporis sui restinguere sobria ebrietate desiderans, de qua dominus noster in euangelio clamare dignatur : si quis sitit, ueniat et bibat. flumina enim aquae uiuae de uentre eius fluuent. hanc aquam Samaritanae etiam idem dominus offerebat, hoc est ecclesiae ex gentibus congregandae dicens : aquam, quam ego dabo, fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in uitam aeternam.*

Ruricius also uses the imagery of taking in spiritual nourishment and belching out praise for the Lord which appeared in Book I, specifically in 1.9 to Sidonius:[296]

> If any of the faithful drinks this water, not just with a taste only with the tip of the tongue, but like an eager guest soaks it up with all the innards of the spirit, immediately he bursts forth in praise of the omnipotent Lord and begins to belch out what he drank… (2.34)[297]

Thus, in 2.34, Ruricius makes clear reference to the vocabulary and overall imagery of Book I, from letters 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10, once again taking on a student persona with another bishop, in this case with Sedatus as teacher.

The teacher-student epistolary personae are also supported by Ruricius' use of language of desire in 2.34, similar to the language used in 2.9 to Aeonius, which involved a teacher-student exchange:

> But, forgetful of myself, greedy for you (*auidus tui*), as if conversing with you (*tecum conloquens*) on such matters and thence burning ardently in desire of you (*inde in desiderium tui uehementius perardescens*), hastening to quench my thirst as if with a kind of rivulet of affection, pondering inscrutable and inaccessible matters, why do I not consider why I speak, who I am to speak, and with whom I speak? But piety, which affection arouses, will, I trust, give pardon, because "love endures all things." [1 Corinthians 13.7] (2.34)[298]

In this passage, Ruricius repeats the image of thirst and water in a different context. In Book I, water represents religious guidance and knowledge but, in the above passage, water refers to affection which in turn arouses piety. Ruricius also frames their relationship as one of desire and

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[296] Cf. "… if any guest at your table, with you serving, did not taste this fare with the tip of his tongue, but gulped it down, craving it with the innermost parts of his spirit, and departed in order to ponder it later in the privacy of his heart, he would begin to burst forth with incessant belches in praise of the omnipotent lord…" (1.9); *… quas si quis distribuentibus uobis non summo ore libauerit, sed totis animae uisceribus adpetens conuiua sorbuerit atque intimo pectoris postmodum easdem ruminaturus absconderit, incipiet adsiduis ructationibus in laudem domini omnipotentis erumpere…*

[297] *hanc aquam si quis fidelis non gustu tantum summo tenus ore libauerit, sed totis animae uisceribus adpetens conuiua sorbuerit, protinus in laudem domini omnipotentis erumpet et hoc incipiet ructare, quod biberit…*

[298] *sed quid ego oblitus mei, auidus tui quasi de huiuscemodi rebus tecum conloquens et inde in desiderium tui uehementius perardescens restinguere sitim meam uelut quodam dilectionis riuulo festinans inscrutabilia et inaccessa pertemptans, quid loquar, qui loquar, cui loquar, non considero? sed dabit, ut confido, ueniam pietas, quam committit affectus, quia caritas omnia sustinet.*

affection as he did in 2.9, using vocabulary of longing and desire, *inde in desiderium tui uehementius perardescens* (2.34), *uerum etiam uidendo magis exardescit intuitus, cum uos et desideraremus praesentes*… (2.9); as well as mentioning the role of conversation, *tecum conloquens* (2.34); *uobiscum… secretius conloquor* (2.9). Thus, in the same way as 2.9 to Aeonius, the language of desire to Sedatus characterizes their *amicitia* connection as affectionate, close and with an aspect of guidance from Sedatus to Ruricius through the epistolary teacher-student roles.

Ruricius presents an *amicitia* relationship with Sedatus in both 2.34 and 2.35 but also includes *amicitia* elements in his letters to Caesarius, which appear to be performative with a view to achieving Ruricius' goals in 2.33 and 2.36. Ruricius' role of bishop involves maintenance of relationships not only with other bishops as seen in 2.33-36, but also acting as a religious guide to laypersons which we see in the beginning and ending letters of the cluster, 2.32 and 2.37. In 2.32 to Agricola, the first letter of the group, the ongoing theme of familial connections is established. Ruricius concludes the letter with a paragraph referencing their aristocratic family connections, in which he uses vocabulary of affection and familial connections through marriage and children. In addition to their familial connection, another aspect of the relationship presented in 2.32 is that of Ruricius as guide and mentor to his family. Ruricius' position as great-gradparent (*proauus*) (2.32) of the family credits him with the authority of the elders and reinforces his role as bishop and spiritual guide. In the salutation, Ruricius calls himself 'Bishop' and Agricola 'Magnificent Son' alongside his aristocratic 'Illustrious Lord', and more than half of the letter is devoted to exhorting Agricola to continue to pursue the religious life:

> … it now remains to certify in your heart the conversion that you profess in your garb, and that this change in your clothing be felt also in your spirit… Indeed, the sinner will weep on the day he is converted; then he will be saved, as long as, according to the saying of the sanctified apostle Paul, just as we demonstrated hitherto that our bodies served the world and iniquity for the sake of iniquity, thus we now show that our members serve justice in

> sanctification; nor, fearing God, should we be, so to speak, flaunting one thing with our words while having something different in our character… (2.32)[299]

Agricola is in the same position as Ruricius was in Book I: in the process of pursuing the religious life as well as experiencing illness, a condition that Ruricius relates to spirituality, as God causes illness to encourage conversion. The image connects Agricola's physical illness and conversion to Ruricius' spiritual illness in Book I, and his own journey.[300] While Agricola is seeking the religious life in 2.32, Ruricius is now in the position of spiritual guide, as both an aristocratic *amicus*, with familial bonds and part of the same community of conversion as Agricola, and a religious guide, more advanced than Agricola given that he has already carried out the process of entering the religious life in Book I and attained the position of bishop.

Ruricius acts as both practical and spiritual guide to his family members. In both recommendation letters, Ruricius carefully maintains and negotiates his relationships with Caesarius and Sedatus, so that they aid his family members practically, utilizing the connection of *amicitia* he has established with them:

> And likewise I commend with particular cajolery even a portion of my body, by means of whom I deliver these words to you, so that you might demonstrate how completely you love me by how you treat them. I think that they will be dearer to you because they bear part of me to you with themselves. Whatever affection you deign to expend upon them, know that you confer it upon me… (2.34)[301]

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[299] *superest, ut nunc conuersionem, quam protulistis in ueste, probetis in corde et haec commutatio inter indumentum uestrum habeatur et animum… peccator enim, qua die conuersus ingemuerit, tunc saluus erit, dummodo iuxta sancti apostoli Pauli sententiam, sicut exhibuimus hactenus corpora nostra seruire saeculo et iniquitati ad iniquitatem, ita nunc exhibeamus membra nostra seruire iustitiae in sanctificationem, nec simus quasi timentes deum aliud sermonibus praetendentes, aliud habentes in moribus…*

[300] See Chapter 2, section 2 on illness/medical themes.

[301] *simulque etiam partem corporis mei, per quam uobis has trado, peculiari insinuatione commendo, ut in illis, quam me diligatis integre, conprobetis. quos uobis eo arbitror fore cariores, quia meam uobis secum deferunt portionem. quibus quicquid dignati fueritis dilectionis inpendere, nobis uos conferre cognoscite…*

> And therefore, with the departure of my dearest grandson Parthenius I have not delayed sending this letter through him and commending him at the same time. You should know that you accord to me whatever affection you deign to bestow upon him. (2.36)[302]

In order to put forward his family's progress on the spiritual road, Ruricius uses a religious metaphor to support his recommendation to Sedatus in 2.34, which also establishes him as guide to his family members:

> Whatever affection you deign to expend upon them, know that you confer it upon me, that is, if, according to the sanctified apostle, the least member shares in suffering with the greatest, and the greatest doubtless rejoices in the well-being of the least. And thus, it ultimately happens that when all the members are settled unceasingly in peace and quiet, the head, as the guide and ruler of the whole body, rejoices. All the members of the body are instructed to observe by means of the head, with the prophet saying, "The eyes of a wise man are in his head," [Ecclesiastes 2.14] which another prophet clearly explained, saying, "My eyes are always on the Lord, because He plucked my feet from the snare," [Psalms 24.15] and again, "I lifted my eyes to You, who dwell in heaven." [Psalms 122.1] (2.34)[303]

Ruricius presents the family members he is recommending as the 'least member' of the 'body' – as members of the family, clients and laypeople in the Church. Ruricius himself is the 'greatest' part and the 'head' – both the bishop and the guide of the family. He indicates that affection given to them is as affection given to himself, they share in suffering and joy, which indicates his role as a familial guide who intercedes for their interests. Ruricius also indicates that the members of the body all observe through the head and quotes scripture indicating that the eyes of the wise man are in the head and are directed towards the Lord and the other members of the family observe the

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[302] *Ideoque ueniente illo dulcissimo meo nepote Parthenio has per ipsum dare non distuli, ut et meam uobis praesentiam litteris exhiberem et ipsum pariter commendarem. cui quicquid dignati fueritis dilectionis inpendere, nobis uos praesentare noueritis.*

[303] *quibus quicquid dignati fueritis dilectionis inpendere, nobis uos conferre cognoscite, quia, si iuxta sanctum apostolum minus membrum maiori in dolore conpatitur, et maius procul dubio in minoris prosperitate laetatur. et ita demum fit, ut omnibus usquequaque membris in pace et quiete conpositis caput, totius corporis rector utpote et dominator, exultet. in quo capite omnia membra iubentur aspicere dicente propheta : sapientis oculi in capite eius, quos alius propheta euidenter exponit dicens : oculi mei semper ad dominum, quia ipse euellit de laqueo pedes meos, et iterum : ad te leuaui oculos meos, qui habitas in caelo.*

Lord through the head – this represents Ruricius as religious guide to his family.[304] The religious metaphor is continued in the final paragraph:

> … let us lift up our hands to the Lord in fruitful works and may he Himself deem it suitable to be our head and may we deserve to cling to our head as useful members of His body… (2.34)[305]

In this passage, Ruricius uses the metaphor of head and members of body to refer to the community of the faithful with the Lord as the head, establishing Ruricius as at once the religious guide (head) of his family members and a part of the community of faithful (member) looking to the Lord for ultimate guidance.

As bishop and elder in the family, Ruricius is a religious guide and a practical aid to his family, helping on their journey, both on land and towards eternal life. In 2.37 to Parthenius and Papianilla, the final letter of the group, Ruricius reinforces his role as religious guide through giving spiritual advice:

> … so that you might be mindful of my words, I suggest that it is certain that you will be able to profit in good things, under the direction of God, according to the observation of Solomon, (*quia certum est uos iuxta Salomonis sententiam posse in bonis deo dirigente proficere*) if the counsels of your elders are heeded both in affection and in practice (*si seniorem consilia et amori habeantur et usui*). (2.37)[306]

Ruricius advises his younger relatives using the tone of a bishop (*quia certum est uos iuxta Salomonis sententiam posse in bonis deo dirigente proficere*), but, at the same time, he also establishes himself as a family leader by advising Parthenius and Papianilla to listen to elders in affection and practice (*si seniorem consilia et amori habeantur et usui*). Ultimately, Ruricius' role

[304] The same metaphor is present in 2.3 to Namatius and Ceraunia although less developed.
[305] *…manus nostras operibus fructuosis extollamus ad dominum et ipse caput nostrum esse dignetur et nos adhaerere capiti nostro utilia corporis sui membra mereamur…*
[306] *… ut uerborum meorum memores sitis, admoneo, quia certum est uos iuxta Salomonis sententiam posse in bonis deo dirigente proficere, si seniorem consilia et amori habeantur et usui.*

as familial guide overlaps with his role as bishop and serves to underline the responsibilities and importance of Ruricius' bishop role.

Conclusion

The overlapping responsibilities in the group of letters, to his bishop connections, to his family members, illustrate the interconnected network of relations utilized by Ruricius the bishop in order to act as a successful guide to his family members in this instance. His letters to Caesarius and Sedatus present Ruricius as a member of the community of bishops, a position which necessitates the negotiation of his role and status compared to the others in order to ensure his ability to call upon their aid. To Caesarius, Ruricius utilized performative *amicitia* in order to maintain a connection which was strained by divisive tension and the higher status of Caesarius as bishop of Arles. Ruricius' relationship with Sedatus is presented as a closer *amicitia* maintained by literary and gift exchange and elements of the common student-teacher dynamic. Ruricius the bishop also embodied the role of guide, in this case to familial relations, both practically and spiritually. He acted as guide to Agricola in his spiritual journey of conversion, as well as both practical and spiritual guide to Parthenius and Papianilla in their travels, using his authority and carefully maintained connections as bishop. The theme of travel ties these two overlapping roles together into a connected segment which illustrates the various interests and connections which Ruricius as bishop drew together into any one task, such as aiding Parthenius and Papianilla in their travels.

Section 5: 2.49, 2.55-58 – Aprunculus[307]

Summary

The final major group we will look at is 2.49 and 55-58 to Aprunculus, a group connected by addressee and identified by Mathisen. As he did in 2.24-28 and 2.32-37, Ruricius depicts himself both in his role as bishop and in his role as father/familial guide. He once again illustrates his maintenance of connections to other bishops, in this case to Aprunculus, bishop of Clermont,[308] through performative *amicitia* and the theme of mutuality and exchange. Additionally, Ruricius once again uses his connections as bishop to help guide and aid his family members, in this case interceding on behalf of his son Eparchius who is characterized as someone requiring Ruricius' and Aprunculus' guidance in the religious life.

- 2.49 addressed to Aprunculus, but located before the cluster 2.55-58, is a friendship/epistolary relationship letter similar to 2.55 and looks ahead to this group, establishing the relationship between the two bishops in the mind of the reader.
- 2.55 is a friendship/epistolary duty letter addressed to Aprunculus, reinforcing the epistolary connection between the two.
- 2.56 is a commendation letter for a priest Maxentius.
- In 2.57, Ruricius writes to Aprunculus interceding on behalf of his son Eparchius for an unspecified misdeed.
- In 2.58, Ruricius replies with advice on the discipline of Eparchius, which a letter from Aprunculus sought, and approves of the methods Aprunculus has already employed

[307] Notable in these letters is Ruricius' repeated reference to the mechanics of correspondence, how letters were exchanged, the obstacles, the situations, which goes hand-in-hand with the theme of duty and exchange which we have already identified. In every letter, Ruricius notes who carried the letter and in 2.55 he notes from whom he received the letter he is responding to; he also explains the situation of 2.57 being sent before he received a letter from Aprunculus on the matter which prompted him to send 2.58 with an updated response.
[308] Mathisen 2011: 221 introduces Aprunculus as the successor of Sidonius as bishop of Clermont.

(temporary excommunication), a polite letter in response to Aprunculus' handling of the discipline of his son.[309]

Analysis

In the salutations of 2.49, 2.55-58, Ruricius deliberately presents himself in a subordinate position in relation to Aprunculus, despite being a fellow bishop at the time.

2.49: Bishop Ruricius to Bishop Aprunculus
Aprunculo Episcopo Ruricius Episcopus

2.55: Ruricius to Bishop Aprunculus, Greetings
Ruricius Aprunculo Episcopo Salutem

All the following letters 2.56-58 have their salutations replaced by indications that they are addressed to the same person.[310] In the salutation of 2.49, both Ruricius and Aprunculus have their title, Bishop. However, in 2.55, Ruricius does not include the title bishop for himself in the salutation, although he does for Aprunculus. Mathisen notes that this lack of 'bishop', when Ruricius must have been one, indicates Ruricius' deliberate choice to present himself in a subordinate position to Aprunculus.[311] Ruricius is thus a bishop in the position of client, presenting himself as subordinate because the final two letters of the cluster are intercessions on behalf of his son. In a client position, Ruricius can placate Aprunculus before interceding on Eparchius' behalf as well as associating himself with Eparchius' position, i.e. under Aprunculus' guidance.

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[309] See Mathisen 2011: 229-230, introductory note to 2.58 and footnote 8.
[310] Mathisen 2011: 226 suggests that the replacement of all the following salutations in 2.56-58 (with *item alia Ruricii ad ipsum episcopum, item ad ipsum, item alia Ruricii ad ipsum*) indicates that these three letters were drafts. Mathisen, as throughout Book II when salutations are replaced, reconstructed the salutation from the previous: in this case, repeating 2.55's salutation for 56-58. It is a possibility that Ruricius repeated the same salutation in all of 2.55-58, as in 2.1-5, in the final drafts or even in these copies but the salutations were omitted by the copyist.
[311] Mathisen 2011: 226 indicates that Ruricius must have been bishop because he was a bishop when Sidonius, Aprunculus' predecessor, was still bishop of Clermont.

Ruricius' use of Christian terms of address serves to bind these letters together as a coherent and recognizable cluster. Ruricius refers to Aprunculus as Your Sanctity (*sanctitatem uestram*/*sanctitatis uestrae*) and Your Apostlehood (*apostolatum uestrum*/*apostolatui uestro*) in 2.49, 2.55 and 2.58. He repeats Your Apostlehood (*apostolatui uestro*) in 2.56 and Your Sanctity (*sanctitatem uestram*) in 2.57, and in these two letters adds Your Beatitude (2.56 *beatitudini uestrae*) and Your Piety (2.57 *pietatem uestram*) respectively. Letter 2.58, the most important of the cluster given its topic, is distinguished by the use of the term Your Brotherhood (*germanitatem uestram*) (the first time he has used this term for Aprunculus[312]) while Ruricius emphasizes Aprunculus' authority by downplaying his own, referring to his humility (*humilitatem meam*). The terms may have been used by Ruricius to link the letters together: every letter is linked by one repeated term, the two beginning letters 2.49 and 2.55 as well as the final letter 2.58 have Your Sanctity and Your Apostlehood while the middle letters alternate, 2.56 has Your Apostlehood and 2.57 has Your Sanctity.

This cluster depicts both Ruricius as bishop (in the position of client) and Ruricius as a holder of family obligations, the same combination that we have seen in the majority of the previous clusters (2.1-5, 2.24-28, 2.32-37). In 2.55-58, we see how these two roles are balanced in a single affair involving Ruricius' son Eparchius and his fellow bishop Aprunculus. There is a progression in the appearance of Ruricius' roles: the beginning letters 2.49, 2.55-56 illustrate Ruricius' maintenance of his connection and epistolary friendship to Aprunculus, with the recommendation letter 2.56 specifically highlighting the role of bishop and foreshadowing Ruricius' intercession for Eparchius in the following letters; then, in 2.57-58, Ruricius adds the

[312] Mathisen 2011: 229, footnote 2 to 2.58. Mathisen suggests the use of *germanitas* suggests a possible familial tie, perhaps through Ruricius wife's (Hiberia) family.

role of family head to the roles of bishop and epistolary *amicus*, in which he must utilize his position as bishop and connection to Aprunculus in order to intercede on Eparchius' behalf. Ruricius' ongoing effort to maintain connections within the community of bishops and utilize them to aid his family members is clear by the presence of the theme of exchange and mutuality in these letters.

To express the connection between himself and Aprunculus, Ruricius uses vocabulary of affection and exchange in terms that we have seen frequently in the other major groups, even repeating some of the same wording as previous letter groups. In 2.49, Ruricius writes:

> The affection of mutual love (*mutui amoris affectus*) compels me to send letters to Your Sanctity, indivisible from me (*indiuiduam mihi*), solely for that reason, even if an opportune occasion does not present itself… I ask how, in your opinion, you fare, with the favor of God, because you yourself know that your good health is my happiness. I hope that, when the aforementioned fellow returns, with the blessing of the divinity, you will reassure me, whom you see concerned <for> your welfare, about your activities. (2.49)[313]

Ruricius emphasizes affection and goodwill between them which has motivated him to write and ask for news. Several common terms appear once again: affection (*affectus*), mutual love (*mutui amoris*), the theme of closeness despite separation (*inidiuiduam mihi*). Ruricius emphasizes the idea of mutuality of affection in the vocabulary of Book II in general: in the entire collection, Ruricius employs the term *affectus* 53 times, *amor* 29 times and *mutuus* 24 times but only uses an expression of mutual feeling once in Book I (*mutuae passionis* in 1.3), with the rest appearing throughout Book II, indicating Book II's focus on establishing reciprocal ties, particularly within the community of bishops. The use of the term *communis* is also most frequent in Book II: it appears 21 times in the collection with 20 of the instances in Book II, referring to common feeling

[313] *Exegit mutui amoris affectus ad indiuiduam mihi sanctitatem uestram sola ex causa litteras destinare, etiamsi non se occasio oportuna porrigeret… quam ex sententia deo fauente ualeatis, inquiro, quia ipsi nostis incolumitatem uestram nostram esse laetitiam, sperans, ut redeunte praefato nos reddatis de uestris actibus propitia diuinitate securos, quos uidetis esse <de> prosperitate sollicitos.*

(*communis luctus* in 2.4 and 2.46, *amicitia communis* in 2.20), duty (*gratiae communis officium* in 2.56), and to common lords such as Sidonius (*Sollium enim nostrum domnum patrem que communem*) in 2.26 and God (*communi Domino*) in 2.52, 2.55, and 2.64.

Ruricius specifically emphasizes mutuality of relations in his letters to Aprunculus: the expression *amor mutuus* only appears in 2.3, 2.49 and 2.57 to Aprunculus. The emphasis on mutuality suggests Ruricius' use of performative technique in his epistolary *amicitia* with Aprunculus given that the term *mutuus* is often used to express relationships which are not close or as part of the theme of reciprocal relations: it is used for the common Christian sentiment of *mutua caritas*, in letters to addressees with whom Ruricius is not especially close, such as *mutua passio* to Hesperius (1.3), or who hold a higher social position than he does, such as *mutua dilectio* to Aeonius (2.9) and Aprunculus once again in 2.56.

As an expression of epistolary *amicitia*, Ruricius also returns to the theme of health and news of health through letters when he asks after Aprunculus' health here, which also occurred in 2.32 to Agricola. The vocabulary of affection is also present in 2.55:

> … that we now, at last, deserve to meet for a while and see each other (*ut iam tandem aliquando in unum uenire et nos uidere mereamur*), so that the affection (*caritas*), which, according to the lordly observation, unfortunately cools in our breasts through absence, might be revived again from its sleeping cinders (*sopitis cineribus*) through our presence, and so that the reborn flame of our ancient love (*nouis flatibus ueteris amoris*) might be rekindled by our living voices as if by new breaths, a flame that by custom and by virtue of the fire of Him (*ignis illius*) whom the Lord sent to earth both burns away the thorns of our negligence and idleness by the force of potent nature and illuminates the shadows of a slumbering heart. (2.55)[314]

[314] *… ut iam tandem aliquando in unum uenire et nos uidere mereamur, ut caritas, quae secundum sententiam dominicam in pectoribus nostris per absentiam, quod peius est, refrixit, per praesentiam iterum in sopitis cineribus suscitetur et uiuis uocibus quasi nouis flatibus ueteris amoris rediuiuum reparetur incendium, quod more atque uirtute ignis illius, quem dominus misit in terram, et spinas neglegentiae nostrae atque desidiae ui naturae potentis exurat et tenebras dormientis cordis inluminet.*

In this passage, Ruricius repeats the theme of wishing to visit, terms like affection and love, as well as the image of fire, which was used in 1.1 and in 2.26.[315] As in 2.26, flame represents love, and Ruricius indicates that the flame needs to be maintained by presence in order to thrive from sleeping embers.

Ruricius' maintenance of a connection of epistolary *amicitia* with Aprunculus is supported by the theme of exchange and duty in both 2.49 and 2.55, a common *topos* in letter writing and seen elsewhere in the collection:

> The affection of mutual love (*mutui amoris affectus*) compels me to send letters to Your Sanctity, indivisible from me… (2.49)[316]
>
> Just as I received the letter of Your Sanctity through the Venerable Gentleman (*uir uenerabilis*) Eulogius with pleasure, thus I sent mine gladly when he returned. I forward with it the duty of salutation owed to Your Apostlehood (*quibus apostolatui uestro debitum dependo sospitationis officium simulque deposco*) … (2.55)[317]

Ruricius indicates the idea of mutuality and exchange in his epistolary relationship with Aprunculus through these references to receiving/sending, duty, and the mutuality of affection motivating his letters. The performative nature of this epistolary *amicitia* can be discerned in Ruricius' use of the verb *dependo* (to pay a debt) with the terms *debitum*… *officium* on either side of it, indicating an obligation beyond friendship. The performative *amicitia* clearly shows Ruricius' connection to Aprunculus, as in Ruricius' correspondence with bishop Caesarius (in 2.32-37) and his predecessor Aeonius (2.8-9). Therefore, through Ruricius' use of vocabulary of affection and the theme of exchange/duty, the reader sees a connection of polite *amicitia* correspondence between bishops.

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[315] See pp. 111-112. Also, Mathisen 2011: 227, footnote 8 to 2.55 notes this.
[316] See footnote 303.
[317] *Sicut litteras sanctitatis uestrae per uirum uenerabilem Elogium cum gratulatione suscepi, ita has eodem redeunte libenter emisi. quibus apostolatui uestro debitum dependo sospitationis officium simulque deposco…*

In the recommendation letter 2.56, Ruricius introduces the combination between the roles of bishop and epistolary *amicus*. Ruricius begins with a reflection on the nature of both recommendation and friendship, similar to 2.8 to Aeonius[318]:

> The persistence of suppliants supplements the duty of reciprocal benevolence in us (*in nobis gratiae communis officium*), so that whatever we ought to do because of the affection of mutual esteem, we do because of the demand of external necessity (*externae necessitatis*), while we grant (*tribuimus*) to the petition of another what we know is owed (*debere*) to our own affection. As a result, this necessity for a letter was pleasant, a natural result of our relationship, and was not <in fact> extorted by the misfortune of a postulant (*ut haec litterarum necessitudo esset ex uoluntate necessitudinis iocunda, non uero calamitate deplorantis extorta*). Moreover, just because I neglect the spontaneous courtesy of writing, at least I ought not to pass it by when it is offered. (2.56)[319]

In this passage, Ruricius shows that his correspondence with Aprunculus is based on duty (in this letter, the duty of recommendation) and that their epistolary friendship is performative, an expected style of presentation among ecclesiastical aristocrats. Ruricius reflects in this passage that the existence of suppliants is beneficial as it provides an opportunity to Ruricius to write to Aprunculus, to fulfill his duty of *amicitia* correspondence at the same time as fulfilling the duty of recommendation. We see the exchange theme clearly present in this passage of 2.56 in several uses of a vocabulary of exchange. Ruricius mentions the reciprocal duty of *amicitia* correspondence and indicates two reasons for fulfilling it: affection of mutual esteem and the external need of a petitioner. These two reasons are ostensibly contrasted in the text, correspondence ought to be sent

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[318] 2.8 to Aeonius reflected on the characteristics of bishops (compassion, good deeds, virtues, etc.) and how the misfortune of postulants benefits bishops because it gives them an opportunity to express kindness and a good deed in recommending them; 2.56 to Aprunculus, Ruricius once again reflects that the external need of the petitioner provides him with an opportunity to fulfill his duty of friendship. Both indicate that recommendation letters are beneficial to bishops.

[319] Cf. the idea of taking the opportunity of writing when it is offered 2.5, 2.27, 2.34.
Adsiduitas supplicantum supplet in nobis gratiae communis officium, ut hoc, quod facere debeamus per mutuae dilectionis affectum, faciamus per externae necessitatis imperium, dum alienae tribuimus petitioni, quod propriae debere nos cognoscimus caritati, ut haec litterarum necessitudo esset ex uoluntate necessitudinis iocunda, non uero calamitate deplorantis extorta. tamen, quia spontaneam scribendi neglegimus gratiam, saltim praetermittere non debemus ingestam.

for affection but is actually sent for external duty. Nevertheless, they are also equated with each other in the end result, in that the letter that is granted to the petitioner is also what is owed to Aprunculus as an epistolary friend. Ruricius denies that the letter was sent solely out of duty to the petitioner but ends up admitting that he has fallen behind in spontaneous correspondence and required this letter of recommendation to send something to Aprunculus. In 2.56, bishop duty and *amicitia* duty reciprocally support each other: when Ruricius falls behind in his *amicitia* duty of correspondence in 2.56, he uses his duty as a bishop to catch up with it again. In this way, this recommendation letter after the epistolary *amicitia* letters 2.49 and 2.55 establishes the combination between epistolary friendship and bishop duty which indicates that the epistolary friendship between Ruricius and Aprunculus, as in the case of Caesarius, was not close, but rather based on duties as bishops and epistolary politeness.

Performative *amicitia* is key to Ruricius' approach in letters 2.57-58, in which he and Aprunculus deal with Ruricius' son Eparchius and his problems. The theme of mutuality and exchange is also present in 2.57, which is written like a recommendation letter, repeating the form and some themes of 2.56 but this time combining bishop duty with family duty. Ruricius presents himself in his role as head of his family, as in 2.24-28 and 2.32-37:

> Our sons Ommatius and Eparchius have sent to me letters full of tears and lamentation, begging in particular that I serve as intercessor with Your Sanctity because of our son Eparchius' own foolishness, and trusting that you are bound to deny me nothing because of our mutual regard (*amore mutuo*) (2.57)[320]

Both sons direct their petition to Ruricius, just as petitioners come to Ruricius as bishop in the many other recommendation letters included in Book II, highlighting Ruricius' roles as religious leader and familial leader. Just as in other recommendation letters (such as 2.8, 2.34 and 2.36), the

[320] *Filii nostri Ommatius et Eparchius ad me litteras plenas lacrimis et deploratione miserunt specialiter deprecantes, ut apud sanctitatem uestram pro ignorantia ipsius filii nostri Eparchii intercessor exsisterem, confidentes, quod pro amore mutuo nihil nobis negare deberetis…*

theme of exchange and mutuality of affection is present. Ruricius calls upon the *mutuus amor* established in the previous letters 2.55-56 to prompt Aprunculus to grant his request and to be lenient with Eparchius. By his appeal to the *mutuus amor*, Ruricius employs the connection that he has cultivated as bishop with Aprunculus through the performative *amicitia* and epistolary relations seen in 2.49, 2.55-56.

Ruricius presents his relationship as bishop and father in these letters, two roles that influence one another and culminate in an emphasis on Ruricius and Aprunculus providing Eparchius with religious guidance in 2.58. Ruricius refers to Aprunculus as Your Brotherhood (*germanitatem uestram*), the only time Ruricius refers to Aprunculus in this manner, emphasizing his theme of family. Ruricius also reflects on both the roles of bishop and father in this letter:

> For the rest, let pity (*misericordia*) follow severity (*seueritatem*), with the result that you might receive with the gentleness of a father (*lenitate patris*) the one whom you chastised by your episcopal authority (*auctoritate pontificis*); and invoking that Gospel teaching it is fitting for us to follow and imitate in all things the one who not only clemently granted pardon to the son, the waster of paternal substance, confessing his sin, but even freely yielded his original good standing… I am certain that Your Apostlehood has acted for this reason: you exclude from the mother a son who is a bit infirm so that, after a little while, you will have restored him to her recovered, and you punish in the present one over whom you desire to rejoice in eternity. (2.58)[321]

In this final paragraph of 2.58, Ruricius contrasts the roles of bishop and father, invoking "pity" (*misericordia*) and "the gentleness of a father" (*lenitate patris*) in opposition to "severity" (*seueritatem*) and chastisement by "episcopal authority" (*auctoritate pontificis*). Ruricius had already approved Aprunculus' punishment by episcopal authority in the beginning of the letter and now recommends that pity should follow the punishment, indicating that both the roles of episcopal

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[321] *superest seueritatem misericordia subsequatur, ut recipiatis lenitate patris, quem corripuistis auctoritate pontificis, et iuxta illum euangelicum inuocantes, quem nos per omnia et sequi et oportet imitari, qui filio paternae substantiae decoctori et facinus confitenti non solum ueniam clementer inpertiit, uerum etiam pristinam gratiam libenter indulsit… quod et apostolatum uestrum propterea fecisse certus sum, ut paululum infirmantem filium excluderetis a matre, ut eum ipsi post modicum restitueretis incolumem et eum contristaretis ad tempus, de quo gaudere concupiscitis in aeternum.*

authority and paternal clemency are necessary to resolve Eparchius' situation. However, the mention of *misericordia*, a Christian virtue, frames the situation as primarily a case of providing guidance to a member of the Church. The combination of the two approaches also indicates Ruricius' dual motives in his roles as father and bishop: obtain leniency and guidance for Eparchius as well as set an example and truly cure a constituent of the church. Similar to the combination of roles in 2.24-28 involving Ruricius' other sons, this cluster also showcases Ruricius in the combined role of father and guide towards the religious life. The personification of the Church as mother from whom the son is excluded contributes to the combination of the family and bishop themes by superimposing family relations onto religious relations.

References to Book I support Ruricius' self-presentation as a man who has progressed along the path of religious life to become bishop, begun in Book I. Ruricius uses the parable of the prodigal son to support his case for the employment of pity and clemency for Eparchius (2.58),[322] which he developed in 1.2 to Faustus in the context of Faustus' treatment of Ruricius' "iniquity" (his secular life). In 1.2, Ruricius indicated that he would accept punishment from Faustus in order to be saved and that paternal pardon is not enough to produce change.[323] We see in 2.58 a return to the same theme in reference to Eparchius' case. As Ruricius is advocating the use of pity after

[322] "… and invoking that Gospel teaching it is fitting for us to follow and imitate in all things the one who not only clemently granted pardon to the son, the waster of the paternal substance, confessing his sin, but even freely yielded his original good standing…" (2.58); *... et iuxta illum euangelicum inuocantes, quem nos per omnia et sequi et oportet imitari, qui filio paternae substantiae decoctori et facinus confitenti non solum ueniam clementer inpertiit, uerum etiam pristinam gratiam libenter indulsit…*

[323] "Neither will I avoid the slap of a fatherly right hand, provided that I obtain a portion of the promised inheritance, nor will I pay heed to what punishment there is for me in the whip, but to what portion I might have in the will…" (1.2); *... nec paternae ictum dexterae declinabo, dummodo portionem promissae hereditatis adipiscar, neque adtendam, quae mihi poena sit in flagella, sed quem habeam *** in testamento.*; "But in fact, the pardon of paternal clemency alone is not sufficient, insofar as it cherishes with embraces, insofar as it soothes with kindness, unless it also generates bountiful gifts." (1.2); *quin etiam paternae clementiae uenia sola non sufficit, quod ulnis fouet, quod gratia permulcet, nisi et munera larga multiplicet.*

punishment, he incorporates another idea which was introduced in Book I, in a letter to Sidonius (1.8)[324], that confession is its own cure and invites pardon (2.58 and 2.57).

Other echoes of Book I occur in this cluster, such as the medical imagery of curing an ill with the sword (1.2 to Faustus with reference to Ruricius' own spiritual malady, and 2.58).[325] The repetitions once again emphasize the progress that Ruricius has made since the beginning of Book I: Ruricius was then the languishing individual begging Faustus to cure him, but now he is consulting with fellow bishops on how best to cure others, both his son and the church at large. The contrast serves to emphasise the progress Ruricius has made and his success but also links Eparchius' current position as priest to Ruricius' previous journey on the religious life. Eparchius, like Constantius and Ommatius in the 2.24-28 cluster, is a son who requires guidance and aid from Ruricius, who has successfully reached a position of religious guide after experiencing the journey himself. However, his case overcomes Ruricius' fatherly authority and requires the intervention of another bishop, Aprunculus, who was in charge of direct ecclesiastical guidance over Eparchius.

Conclusion

Overall, this section 2.55-58 illustrates two of Ruricius' main roles: bishop and father/familial guide. There is a progression from Ruricius' maintenance of his epistolary

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[324] "I recall that I have heard very often when you are preaching that in no way can we be cleansed of iniquities unless we confess our sins with a contrite conscience… I, recognizing this to be very valid, have not hesitated to report to Your Piety my recently committed crime, lest that which now, if I speak out, has a chance of pardon, might later, if I am silent, produce blame." (1.8); *Praedicantibus uobis saepius audisse me recolo nullatenus ab iniquitatibus nos posse purgari, nisi fuerimus crimina nostra conscientia conpungente confessi… quod ego ualde uerum esse cognoscens facinus meum nuper admissum pietati uestrae indicare non distuli, ne, quod modo prodente me spectat ad ueniam, tacente postmodum pertineret ad culpam.*

[325] "And it is up to your power and judgement whether you choose to rip open the putrescence of my sore with the severity of steel, or to heal it with the mildness of your medications." (1.2); *potestatisque et iudicii tui est, utrum uelis ulceris mei putredinem ferri rigore rescindere an medicamentorum lenitate curare*;

"… because, at the same time that you have inflicted pain upon a single desperate individual through the application of the spiritual sword in order to return him to health, you have brought sanity to many who were languishing." (2.58); *… quia, dum uni indesperato per admonitionem gladii spiritalis pro reddenda salute intulistis dolorem, multis contulistis languentibus sanitatem.*

connection to Aprunculus in 2.49 and 2.55-56 and the introduction of his role as father/guide in 2.57-58, which causes some conflict with Ruricius' role as bishop. The section illustrates Ruricius' management of more than one set of responsibilities at once: 2.56 shows epistolary *amicitia* duty and bishop duty being handled at once and 2.57-58 shows family and bishop roles influencing one another. Ruricius balances the roles and emphasizes his authority as bishop as he intercedes for Eparchius. Ruricius also repeats themes from Book I and develops them, illustrating his progress as a bishop and the religious journey of Eparchius, another of his sons following the same path.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered five major groups of letters in Book II, connected by addressee, topic and thematic connections: 2.1-5, 2.8-11, 2.24-28, 2.32-37, and 2.49, 2.55-58. In 2.1-5, Ruricius presented himself as an aristocratic and familial *amicus* to Namatius and Ceraunia, transitioning to the role of bishop and religious guide. Ruricius then showcases his connections to two prominent colleagues in 2.8-11: Aeonius, bishop of Arles, and Julianus Pomerius, a religious scholar, both of whom were identified as teachers by Ruricius. However, Ruricius presented differing dynamics in each relationship: a teacher-student relationship with Aeonius and spiritual *frater* with Pomerius, in order to more closely associate himself with each. Ruricius presents himself both as spiritual guide and past student in 2.24-28. He presented himself as a spiritual father and mentor to two of his sons, Constantius and Ommatius, approaching his mentorship of each differently but aspiring to guide both to the religious life and salvation. Ruricius included reference to his own journey as a spiritual son/mentee to Sidonius Apollinaris in Book I in his letters to Sidonius' son, Apollinaris. Once again appearing as a guide in 2.32-37, Ruricius illustrates the overlap between the roles of familial guide and bishop as he maintains connections with bishop colleagues and uses those connections and his authority to guide family members in

both spiritual and practical matters. In 2.49, 2.55-58, Ruricius once again presented himself as both bishop and familial guide, balancing authority and supplication in order to advocate on behalf of his son and ensure he received religious guidance.

Ruricius' main self-presentation in each cluster is as a bishop and guide, particularly to family members. Ruricius emphasizes his position as bishop within a community of bishops, particularly in his careful maintenance of epistolary connections to a variety of fellow bishops, some requiring negotiation (Caesarius), others more intimate (Sedatus), and all involving epistolary personae (performative *amicitia*, teacher-student roles). Ruricius repeatedly uses the theme of presence through amicitial bonds in spite of physical separation in the clusters, often using the image of one soul in two bodies taken from Cicero's *Laelius*, which illustrates his focus on maintaining connections with a network of correspondents despite distance. As a guide to his family members, Ruricius uses his connections as a bishop to gain practical aid for family members as well as providing religious guidance in the form of consolation and guidance and/or exhortation on the religious life. This guidance and emphasis of his role as bishop asserts his authority among family members just as the negotiation and balancing in his correspondence with fellow bishops maintains his authority amongst them, even in cases when he is of lower status. Mutuality and exchange is a theme which appeared in every group and which defines Ruricius' engagement with his addressees and his own roles. While Ruricius embodied the role of student, guide, supplicant, bestower in various instances in his correspondence as bishop, his epistolary relations always reflect the mutual benefit which Ruricius is aiming to achieve.

Ruricius also made references to Book I and his spiritual journey from secular to religious life. He encourages the reader to view the self-presentation in these clusters as the resultant bishop persona after Book I's journey from aristocrat to bishop. His presentation of his authority and

social success in the community of bishops and as a guide to family members tells the reader that Ruricius has succeeded. The self-presentation in these clusters shares several themes, overall emphasis on Ruricius' role as bishop and guide, and references to Book I. These elements suggest that Ruricius may have had an outline or idea of subsequent organization for book(s) to follow Book I.

CONCLUSION

Ruricius' collection contains compelling evidence that it was intentionally organized in order to present Ruricius' religious journey to external readers, i.e. those reading the collection rather than individual letters. The preceding investigation suggests that both Books I and II contribute to the deliberate presentation of Ruricius' religious journey, although Book II does not appear to be finished. Although the presence of organizational principles such as topic/addressee and artistic variety in the collection had been noted by scholars investigating the collection, such as Claude Moussy, Yvonne Bontoux and Ralph Mathisen, our thesis revisited their suggestions of organization and presented a new interpretation of Ruricius' intentions. In our analysis of Book I, we interpreted the topic/addressee organization as an arc of Ruricius' journey from secular aristocrat to religious convert and ultimately to bishop. We also identified artistic organization of themes and images in Book I, including natural and agricultural imagery, food and medical imagery, and the error and judgement theme, which support the arc of secular to religious life in Book I by presenting Ruricius' secular state as increasingly undesirable and the religious life as increasingly desirable as the arc progresses, as well as the importance of spiritual guides.

While Book I is generally considered to be an organized unit, it has often been thought that Book II, because of its much larger number of letters and less clear outline, was not organized with deliberate intention by Ruricius. It nevertheless contains hints of organization. Taking Mathisen's observations as a starting point, we looked at five major clusters of letters in Book II which contain evidence of being deliberately organized groups, which overall emphasize Ruricius' role as spiritual guide and his connections with other bishops. These clusters are 2.1-5 in which Ruricius transitioned from familial *amicus* to spiritual guide; 2.8-11 in which Ruricius associated himself with prominent figures, Aeonius of Arles and Julianus Pomerius, through amicitial relationships

with differing dynamics; 2.24-28 in which Ruricius acted as spiritual guide to his sons and recalled his own period of spiritual mentorship under Sidonius; 2.32-37 in which Ruricius utilized carefully maintained connections to other bishops, Caesarius of Arles and Sedatus of Nimes, in order to act as a practical and spiritual guide to his family members; and 2.49, 2.55-58 in which Ruricius once again corresponded with a bishop, Aprunculus of Clermont, in order to act as a guide to his family, in this case to intercede on his son Eparchius' behalf and ensure his religious rehabilitation. Within these clusters, Ruricius uses the social position of his addressees and the themes developed in their correspondence to construct the epistolary persona of a successful bishop, both as a correspondent with his fellow bishops and as a guide to his family members. Ruricius also references Book I's journey toward spirituality in several instances in these clusters, both through direct references to similar imagery and through his self-presentation as a religious guide to his sons and family members, which supports the idea that his epistolary persona as spiritual guide in the letters of Book II was intended as a sequel to Book I.

Ancient letter collections are often difficult to study as there are a multitude of factors which must be taken into account and certain details are often unclear. The motives, degree of deliberate organization and who is responsible for the organization of the collection is not always documented. In the case of Ruricius, the *unicum* character of the manuscript further complicates the study of the collection, as there is no possibility for comparison with other witnesses. How can we be certain that the organization of the two books is not the product of a later scribe working from a copy of Ruricius' archives? These are some of the most troublesome questions complicating the interpretation of the meaning of an ancient letter collection.

Our study has shown that the deliberate choices and organization in Book I provide enough material to hypothesize an intention on Ruricius' part. While it cannot be excluded that a later

writer, such as Desiderius,[326] or a scribe edited the collection into its current form, the personal journey which is outlined by the letters and which is clearly meant to be recognized by the reader, implies that Ruricius himself planned the collection. For example, Book I's natural imagery and other themes reflect the same progression from secular life to desire for religious instruction in the 'Emerging Interest' cluster (1.3-11) as the topic/addressee organization. The intimate alignment of topic/addressee and imagery/theme in Book I to convey the same arc indicates the author's own hand in selecting, editing and organizing Book I. Additionally, Book II contains abundant clues of Ruricius' construction of an epistolary persona to follow Book I. Following the spiritual journey towards bishopric traveled in Book I, recognizable clusters of letters refine and develop the image of successful bishop and guide. While the overall size of Book II indicates that the organization was not completed by Ruricius, the existence of these clusters points out core groups of letters with a consistent epistolary persona of a successful bishop around which further books could have been developed and which would act as logical sequels to Book I's arc. Our analysis of the letters has thus given substance to Mathisen's hypothesis of Ruricius' projected, but unfinished, collection of letters in three (or four) books.[327] However, our understanding and division of the books does not completely coincide with his.

The current thesis places itself among the relatively small number of studies on Ruricius' letter collection. This collection presents an opportunity for study under the many lenses of epistolary studies, from the organization and literary features of the collection to the social aspects. Further study on Ruricius' collection is in order. For example, there is still call for further investigation into Book II and its overall organization and purpose. Additionally, given the lack of

[326] For discussion of Desiderius of Cahors and his letters, see Mathisen 1998 ("*Codex*") and 2013.
[327] See beginning of Chapter 3 for Mathisen's theory of two-pseudo-books and a 'left-over' group in Book II.

focused literary studies on this collection, there is call for investigation into Ruricius' language, such as his use of rhetorical and literary devices. Furthermore, additional study of Ruricius' letters from the perspective of social history could shed further light on aristocratic bishops of this time and aspects of their relations and networks, both in what Ruricius writes about and what he does not, particularly in this collection notable for its lack of historical data or letters on theological issues.

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