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## **Sexual Depravity, Doctrinal Error, and Character Assassination in the Fourth Century**

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# The 1991 Winifred E. Weter Faculty Award Lecture

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SEXUAL DEPRAVITY, DOCTRINAL ERROR, AND CHARACTER ASSASSINATION  
IN THE FOURTH CENTURY: JEROME V.S. PRISCILLIAN

by

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This lecture is dedicated to my students at Seattle Pacific University who continue to challenge and inspire me.

In the history of doctrine the fourth century certainly stands forth as one of the most polemical and decisive in Church History. In the East the Arian controversy gripped the minds and emotions of the Church from the Emperor to the layperson in the marketplace debating Trinitarian formulas. The West also became the stage of debate concerning the Trinity. As the Arian controversy raged primarily in the eastern provinces, the West witnessed its own heretical outbreak in the person of Priscillian. The Priscillianist affair in Spain spilled well beyond the Pyrenees into France. As in the Arian dispute, Priscillian attracted the attention of the Imperial authorities, the major ecclesiastics of his day, and the laity. Contemporary sources indicate that Priscillianism was the major heretical group in Spain, one that allegedly embodied the teachings of the Gnostics and Manichaeans. Monastic asceticism was also making its initial appearance in the Iberian Peninsula, and Priscillian was one of numerous ascetics who had a wide following of both men and women. The Priscillianist controversy ended tragically with Priscillian's execution at the hands of the Emperor in 385/86 and the significance of the event has been noted by W.H. Frend "for the first time, a Christian had been condemned to death on what appeared to be a religious issue."<sup>1</sup> Yet Priscillianism has attracted less attention from modern historians than have other heresies.

Inasmuch as one appreciates the research on Priscillian up to now, it seems consistently to focus only upon two major areas of scrutiny: his heterodoxy and the trial and execution.<sup>2</sup> This research has been crucial for our understanding of Priscillianism, yet there is a need to explore the topic from new perspectives that will enable us to have a clearer perception of Priscillian and of his teachings. Such research requires a 'new'

reading of the sources that takes into consideration their internal polemical orientation and the intent of those who wrote them.

Priscillian was accused widely of both moral and doctrinal lapses. The sources do not always consistently repeat the same improprieties, but the negative outlook does appear without fail. Modern researchers in like manner attribute to Priscillian all of the accusations that are mentioned in the sources, and it is done oftentimes in surprisingly uncritical fashion. Given the polemical nature of the sources and the temperament of the writers, are we wise to dismiss any possibility of vendetta or exaggeration? As polemical sources are they guided by satire, metaphor, and type so as to "create" the heretic the writers wished to project? I am not prepared to dismiss outright every incrimination made against Priscillian, but I do question the testimony of his accusers, the accuracy of the facts, and whether the idea of the heretic that has been transmitted down to the present day accurately reflects the real Priscillian of the fourth century. A recent study by Raymond Van Dam brilliantly alerts us to these concerns about Priscillian and of the reading of primary sources in general.<sup>3</sup>

My central purpose in this article is not to deny or affirm the charges against Priscillian, yet our findings will shed much light on these matters as well. What I wish to engage is the typological and theological concepts used by Jerome in his letter against Priscillian. This study will also enable us to gain a better understanding of the process followed by Jerome to make a 'heretic.'

The focus is a letter written by Jerome to a person named Ctesiphon approximately in 415, or about three decades after Priscillian's execution. Jerome

primarily discussed Pelagianism, but also addressed the heresy of Priscillian. The content of the letter is most revealing about Jerome's methodology in confirming the heretical nature of Priscillian's teachings. In the letter Jerome displays ingenious use of patristic sources, including numerous imaginative theological arguments on his part. The letter in general has received limited commentary from modern researchers, and little to none concerning the section within the letter that addresses Priscillian. Modern studies on Priscillian often either refer to the letter without any critical scrutiny, or as yet one more proof of the unorthodox teachings of this sect. Finally, Jerome's stature in the Church is also reason enough to turn our attention to this most colorful writer of the patristic age.

One of the most insightful studies on Jerome's writings is that by David S. Wiesen, St. Jerome as a Satirist, a work that sheds considerable light on the polemical style of Jerome's work. Of Jerome's character, Wiesen's observation is telling: "Among all the writers of his day St. Jerome was uniquely suited by his learning as well as by his temperament to combine the inherited body of pagan satire with a new and vigorous Christian satiric spirit into a literary attack on the vices of society and of personal enemies."<sup>4</sup>

Professor Wiesen observed that Jerome's satire was governed by "his own proud and irascible nature," and often accompanied with violent exaggerated language.<sup>5</sup> We are also cautioned that Jerome was a very complex individual and that, "Jerome's satiric pictures as accurate descriptions of the society of his day," are not to be accepted at face value.<sup>6</sup> These observations are germane to our understanding of the letter and of Jerome's comments on Priscillianism. The satire, exaggeration, and the irascible attitude

of Jerome, including the inaccurate description of Priscillian, all point to a necessary re-reading of Jerome's remarks. In his book Professor Wiesen did refer to the letter about which he maintained that its tone was "remarkably calm." This might be so in comparison to other works by Jerome, yet I propose that he was more "subtle", and no less vicious, irascible, and vigorous against Priscillian.<sup>7</sup>

Jerome initiated his remarks about Priscillian in section three of the letter to Ctesiphon.<sup>8</sup> Having just dealt with Manichaean doctrines, he associated the Priscillianists with this sect, since every major source did not distinguish either sect.<sup>9</sup> Priscillian was accused of teaching doctrines that espoused not only an exclusive perfection and wisdom, but also of encouraging sexual cavorting with women. Furthermore, these comments by Jerome are followed by a quote from Virgil, which reads: "The almighty father takes the earth to wife; pouring upon her fertilizing rain, That from her womb new harvest he may reap."<sup>10</sup>

Priscillian is held culpable of Gnostic affinities, which could be traced to Basilides, an early Gnostic; so Jerome would have us believe. The significant contemporaneous sources made no distinctions between the Priscillianists and Gnostic-Manichaean teachings within Spain.<sup>11</sup> Jerome's intent here was to establish a spiritual affiliation between the two sects, a concept he expounded further in the letter. The final irrefutable proof of Priscillian's error offered by Jerome was the ultimate fate of the founder of the sect. Jerome boasted with great confidence, accompanied by a distinct tone of self-righteousness, that Priscillian had been condemned "by the entire world and put to death by the secular sword."<sup>12</sup> Jerome's selective memory of these events depart



significantly from the tradition he invoked to support his view of Priscillian.<sup>13</sup>

In section four of the letter, Jerome resumed his attention to Priscillian citing several references from Scripture. As with most of the letter, Jerome creatively interwove key scriptural passages to buttress his arguments. A noteworthy theme is Jerome's devastating attack upon women. He focused only upon those who had been led astray by heresy, not just by Priscillian, but also by all previous heresiarchs. The first of the scriptural references is a combination of Ephesians 4:14 and 2 Timothy 3:6-7. Jerome concentrated on the image of weak women who were easily led astray by false male teachers. It is prudent at this juncture to point out that Jerome did not have only one view of women, anymore than he did of men.<sup>14</sup> In Ephesians 4:14 the writer used the plural "we" and the reference to men is in the universal sense of the term. What is certain is that women are not singled-out as the main perpetrators of false doctrine. In 2 Timothy 3:6-7 the writer gave heed to "weak-willed" women, yet these passages are to be viewed within a broader context. The verses preceding and following this section address males and females engaged in spiritual and carnal depravity. The entire section begins with the all inclusive "people," but it is men who violate, control, sway, and lead women astray. Jerome preferred to focus on a "type" of woman that male heretics were able to lead astray. Jerome's combined passages read : "silly women burdened with sins, carried about with every wind of doctrine, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."<sup>15</sup>

Jerome did not conclude here; rather he continued undeterred with a paraphrase of 2 Timothy 4:3, which also reveals some interesting exegetical twists. Inspired by these

passages from Scripture, he rephrased them in the letter, now to shift the focus upon vulnerable men who listen to these women primarily because they are "men with itching ears who know neither how to hear nor how to speak."<sup>16</sup> Men are now those who are vulnerable to the enticement of the heretical women. In context, the Scripture referred to men in a gender free fashion, and Jerome obviously departed from this sense to chastise specifically males. The 'hearing' and 'speaking' Jerome mentioned was intended to convey the inability of heretics to hear the voice of Christ, an allusion to the words of Christ in the Gospel of John 10:4-5. Heretics do not hear the voice of Christ, neither do they speak his truth. As in the case of women Jerome only singled out men who are vulnerable to spiritual deception.

Jerome's prefatory remarks also include a reference from the Old Testament found in Ezekiel 13:10-16.<sup>17</sup> False prophets are guilty of mixing old mire with a new form of [weak] cement. Furthermore, those who foster error are consciously whitewashing falsehood in order to lead people astray. Priscillian is a type of cement that has brought all error together. The passages in Ezekiel speak prophetically of a cleansing that God will send in the form of 'overflowing showers'; one that will tear down the edifice of falsehood.<sup>18</sup> Jerome perceived his role, so it seems, as the prophet of God's cleansing power to bring down the errors of Priscillian.

Jerome closed the section on Priscillian with two scriptural references from the New and the Old Testaments, respectively. He quoted 2 Thessalonians 2:7 focusing on the warning "Now also the mystery of iniquity is working,"<sup>19</sup> alerting his readers that Satan and heretical teachers were alive and well in his own day as they had been in

apostolic times. It is the duty of all believers to be spiritually alert, on guard against the onslaught of the enemies of Christ, who continually attempt to seduce everyone spiritually. Jerome, with prophetic condemnation, concluded with an admonition and quote from Jeremiah 17:11. In his own words:

"Men and women in turn 'lay snares for each other till we cannot but recall the prophet's words 'the partridge has cried aloud, she has gathered her young which she had not brought forth, she unrightfully gets riches; in the midst of her days she shall forsake them, and in the end she shall be a fool.'"<sup>20</sup>

Firstly, in his initial statement, the culpability for spiritual error was evenly leveled at both men and women. Succinctly heretics are spiritually barren, abandoned, and in the end fools. The reference to Jeremiah served well his purposes to establish the deviancy of Priscillian and his followers, whom he charged of:

- (a) Spiritual kidnapping - 'quae non peperit'
- (b) Illegitimate riches - 'faciens divitas suas, non cum iudicio'
- (c) Not true devotion - 'In dimidio dierum derelinquet eas'  
[Unlike Christ who promised never to abandon his sheep, John 10:11-15].
- (d) Their fate is foolishness - 'et novissimum ejus erit insipiens'

The scriptural references cited by Jerome are strategically located at the beginning and end of the Priscillian section. The cardinal focus of Jerome's polemic is the material that we find couched between these scriptural references. Let us now turn our attention to the heart of Jerome's arguments, which he expounded in the form of a heresiarchical list.

Jerome listed in the letter heretics that had preceded Priscillian; however, the list concludes with the spiritual error of Priscillian. It is well known that the Church Fathers frequently compiled lists of heretics in the form of pamphlets for circulation in the Church.<sup>21</sup> Key areas of investigation for us are: why Jerome singled out only a select few of the heretics for his own list? Does the order of the list, or placement of the heretics, follow a certain logical scheme that advanced Jerome's argument, or are they simply randomly brought together in the letter? Of the heretics that Jerome did include, what deeper spiritual meaning do they signify, if at all, other than face value identification by the reader, or are we to interpret them typologically or metaphorically? Lastly, how does each sect correspond to the actual charges against Priscillian as found in the major sources other than Jerome, whether the charges are accurate or based upon rumor, vendetta, or misinformation.<sup>22</sup> One feature about Jerome's list that sets it apart from all previous ones is the inclusion of a parallel list of 'heretical women' for every male heretic mentioned.

From Jerome's prose narrative the following list with accompanying accusations can be extracted.

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Accusation</u>
<i>Simon Magus</i>	<i>Helena</i>	<i>A sect</i>
<i>Nicolas of Antioch</i>	<i>Bands of Women</i>	<i>uncleannes</i>
<i>Marcion</i>	<i>a woman (unidentified)</i>	<i>mindsnares</i>
<i>Apelles</i>	<i>Philumena</i>	<i>false doctrine</i>
<i>Montanus</i>	<i>Prisca/Maximilla</i>	<i>pervert churches</i>

<i>Arius</i>	<i>Constantia</i>	<i>lead world astray</i>
<i>Donatus</i>	<i>Lucilla</i>	<i>polluting baptism</i>

At this juncture with Agape/Elpidius an exception appears where Jerome altered the gender of the list, per respective columns, to look like this,

<i>Agape</i>	<i>[Elpidius]</i>	<i>Spiritual blindness</i>
<i>Priscillian</i>	<i>Galla and her sister<sup>23</sup></i>	<i>Zoroaster/magic</i>

The deeper meaning of each heretic, including their corresponding error, lies in the patristic sources from which Jerome carefully selected so as to hurl a devastating blow against the Priscillianist sect.<sup>24</sup>

Jerome initiated his list with a direct reference to Simon Magus, and for good reason. In all of the heretical lists that we have Simon Magus consistently tops the list of Christian heresies. What is also taught in the tradition is that Simon Magus was believed to be the 'spiritual father' of all heretics. Some sources such as the so-called Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Hippolytus's Refutation of all Heresies, and the Commonitorium written by Vincent of Lérins explicitly state that all subsequent heretics either derive from Simon or are his 'successors.'<sup>25</sup> The Pseudo-Tertullian called Simon Magus the "first" of all heretics. All of the heretics Jerome alluded to are understood to be pseudo-"spiritual successors" of Simon, and they all are spiritually embodied in Priscillian. The idea that Simon was the spiritual father of error is firmly upheld in the patristic lists, although often they may not specifically resort to the same language.<sup>26</sup>

The position of both Simon and Priscillian at opposite ends of the list is not

incidental. Both Simon and Priscillian appear as the Alpha and Omega of heresy, for all other heresies in between are ultimately traceable to Simon. Jerome was quite conscious of the fact that in the New Testament it was the Apostle Peter that confronted, rebuked, and silenced Simon Magus.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Simon the "rock" crushed by his apostolic authority the other Simon, the 'magician', the anti-apostle who established a parallel pseudo-apostolic succession.<sup>28</sup> Again, the sources are clear on this encounter between Peter and Simon, notably Eusebius of Caesarea; and in Priscillian we possess, spiritually speaking, an enemy of the apostles - and no less than the Apostle Peter - the one chosen by Christ to build his Church. Jerome in one stroke condemned Priscillian and advanced Petrine supremacy.<sup>29</sup> That Priscillian was considered by some to be the conglomeration of all previous heresies, thrown together, so to speak, is attested in a letter that Pope Leo I wrote against the Priscillianists.<sup>30</sup> In the preface to his lengthy critique of Priscillianism, the pope expressed his anguish over a heresy which combined the error of all previous heretical teaching. He warned: "Indeed, if all the heresies which have arisen before the time of Priscillian were to be considered diligently, hardly any error will be found by which this impiety has not been infected."<sup>31</sup> Jerome selected then those heretics that in one way or another represented the variety of Priscillians' errors, those traceable back to the chief of them all, Simon Magus.

Simon Magus is also accused of being intimated with a certain woman named Helena, who allegedly was his co-partner in propagating perverse doctrines.<sup>32</sup> Priscillian was accused first of leading women astray into doctrinal error, and second of cavorting with these women in orgiastic fashion.<sup>33</sup> The heretical women in their turn led others,

male and female, into believing the erroneous teaching of Priscillian. The patristic reference to Helena brought a deeper moral dimension to Jerome's commentary on Simon Magus.<sup>34</sup> Jerome insultingly referred to Helena as a 'harlot', along with all of the sexual improprieties that accompany such accusations. Irenaeus portrayed Helena as a woman created by the mind of Simon, and he seemed to have meant this quite literally. He also states that both were worshipped by their followers as Jupiter and Minerva, respectively.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, those who followed them built statues in their honor, and they made liberal use of love potions on each other, presumably to engage in illicit sexual activities.<sup>36</sup> Patristic writers were able to embody in Helena the sex, magic, and idolatry repeatedly associated later with the Priscillianists. Hippolytus added nothing new about Helena and her activities with Simon, for he merely repeated all that we have previously found in both Irenaeus and in Justin Martyr.<sup>37</sup> Finally, it is important to point out that nowhere in Jerome or in other sources is it ever posited that the women who accompanied the male heretics were themselves establishing or participating in a "female succession" of heretics. The doctrine of any form of apostolic succession, even in its pseudo-heretical form, is definitely confined to males. Women were culprits along with male heretics, but in most cases they were perceived as dependent on the male. In the end both were just as equally damned to eternal perdition.

Although Jerome remained faithful to the patristic tradition in regard to Nicolas's strict succession from Simon Magus there are some unique aspects to the 'spiritual' typological meaning that Jerome wished to convey to his readers.<sup>38</sup> Jerome's principal focus on Nicolas is in the moral realm instead of doctrinal error. Jerome did not ignore

the moral dimension in Simon but his attention there was more on Simon as originator of doctrinal error. With Nicolas, Jerome did not bypass the doctrinal concerns altogether, but it is abundantly clear that Nicolas embodies a "type" of all future moral heretics. Jerome's brief statement concerning Nicolas clues the reader into what he hoped to teach about this heretic, namely that he is the "deviser of all uncleanness."<sup>39</sup> As Simon is the font of doctrinal error, Nicolas is the wellspring of immorality. Jerome believed that immorality amongst the heretics was in spirit passed on in the 'succession' every bit as much as doctrinal error. It is in a sense in their spiritual blood to act immorally not until such time as they are redeemed and brought into the fold of orthodoxy.

The patristic commentary on Nicolas enlightens us to what Jerome alluded to. It was widely believed that Nicolas was one of seven deacons appointed by the apostles at Jerusalem, and it was Irenaeus who established this tradition.<sup>40</sup> In his Against Heresies, he accused Nicolas and his followers of leading lives, "of unrestrained indulgence," which also included idolatry.<sup>41</sup> According to Irenaeus, the Apocalypse of John allegedly singled out Nicolas and the Nicolaitans for their immorality. Clement of Alexandria is less sure whether Nicolas actually founded the sect of the Nicolaitans.<sup>42</sup> Clement reported an incident, which he doubted to be true, that is apparently the source of all of these rumors.<sup>43</sup> Nicolas allegedly brought his wife to the apostles, to whom he offered her up in marriage. Then he also encouraged his wife to "abuse the flesh," which Clement understood to mean Nicolas's renunciation of his own passions, and that he did not wish to serve two masters. Clement continued by pointing out that Nicolas never married again, his daughters remained virgins, and that even his son remained chaste.<sup>44</sup> Eusebius



of Caesarea repeated Clement's information in his Historia, and Epiphanius derived much of his own documentation from these sources.<sup>45</sup> The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles specifically taught that Nicolas was a spiritual "successor" of Simon Magus.<sup>46</sup> In the latter tradition, Isidore of Seville in the Etymologies opted for the morally lapsed view of Nicolas. Isidore repeats his appointment by Peter as deacon in Jerusalem, and he uncritically repeated the doubtful story that Nicolas gave up his wife to be seduced by the apostles.<sup>47</sup>

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

Jerome associated Nicolas with the companionship of "bands of women", a view that ignored a good portion of patristic writers, notably Clement but borrowed heavily from Irenaeus.<sup>48</sup> This view of Nicolas cavorting with numerous women is consistent with the alleged behavior of Priscillian, especially in Sulpicius Severus and Pope Leo I.<sup>49</sup> Sulpicius did single out specific women who were supposedly sexually involved with Priscillian, such as Procula, who allegedly became pregnant and had an abortion.<sup>50</sup> In other places, Priscillian is depicted in what were apparently sexual orgies which included nude liturgical services. These allegations are echoes of the somewhat obscure Adamite sect frequently mentioned in some heretical lists.<sup>51</sup> Such rumors seems to have been

behind the conciliar prohibition at the Council of Zaragoza (380) that women should stay away from other men [Priscillianists].<sup>52</sup> At the outset Jerome, established the two major foundations upon which the remaining heresiarchical structure rests, and he found his pillars in Simon and Nicolas.

Jerome proceeded with Marcion and an unidentified woman that collaborated with him to deceive men, particularly at Rome.<sup>53</sup> Marcion certainly represented more than a male who cavorted with questionable women, for he was better known for his role in the debates over the Canon of the New Testament, and its relationship with the Old Testament. Let us consider firstly the 'woman' identified by Jerome and what the patristic tradition said of her and other related matters.

Irenaeus mentioned Marcion, within the context of other heretics, whom he also accused of being disciples and successors of Simon Magus. Concerning any immoral behavior with women, or of employing female emissaries, he is completely silent.<sup>54</sup> The sources which intimate Marcion with women are Epiphanius and the Pseudo-Tertullian wherein the latter work reported that Marcion was "excommunicated because of a rape committed on a certain virgin".<sup>55</sup> Jerome's belief that Marcion sent a woman to Rome to deceive men is equally isolated and is not corroborated by any previous or contemporary writers. In this manner Jerome was able to maintain both the male heretical successions and the parallel list of female "followers." The male line with Marcion is based firmly on a well established growing tradition; whereas the female line is more the imagination of Jerome, and one that certainly modified the story of the virgin related by Epiphanius and the Pseudo-Tertullian. I believe that Jerome's reference to

Rome is an allusion to St. Peter, symbolically pitting Marcion against the "Chief of the Apostles."<sup>56</sup>

There is more, typologically speaking, to consider about Marcion and for what he was best known, the debate over the Canon of Scripture. According to the tradition, Marcion had rejected the Old Testament as inconsistent with the spirit and message of the New Testament; furthermore his selection of the latter testament was to be found within an even narrower corpus of gospels and epistles. The dialogue over the Canon should be placed within the framework of the fourth century in which Priscillian flourished. As far as Jerome was concerned the question of the Canon was a closed topic settled by the Church in earlier times. We in modern times are well aware that such was not the case; perhaps the case of Priscillian is a good indicator that for many it was still a matter of discussion, and a dialogue filled with controversy. Jerome spoke for what was rapidly emerging as the consensus Catholic view of the Canon, whereas Priscillian - as Jerome saw him - was the symbolic Marcionite vestige who would violate the Scripture as found in both testaments. There is a consistent litany of charges levelled against Priscillian for his use of apocryphal or non-canonical books.<sup>57</sup> For Jerome the Canon consisted of those books which he included in the Vulgate. The reference to apocryphal works seems to point to Priscillian's own writings and perhaps Gnostic gospels and epistles.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately our sources do not provide a single title of the non-canonical books used by Priscillian. The First Council of Braga (561) whose primary agenda was to deal with an apparently strong persistent Priscillianism in Galicia, referred to these books:

It is not proper to recite in church psalms composed by laymen nor to read books that are outside the canonical books of the New and Old Testament.<sup>59</sup>

The use of apocryphal sources in part helps us to understand why often the Priscillianists were called Gnostics.<sup>60</sup>

The subject of the Canon was continued with vigor by Jerome in the section on Apelles and the prophetess Philumena, about whom he says, "Apelles possessed in Philumena a companion in his doctrines."<sup>61</sup> The parallel with Jerome's earlier comments about Simon and Helena is striking.

Tertullian in several works directed his attention to Apelles and Philumena. Firstly, he established the heretical lineage, that Jerome found useful in his polemic. Tertullian in his On Prescription Against Heretics taught that Apelles had been a disciple of Marcion, but that Apelles forsook continence; thus precipitating a schism between them, a story he repeated in the On the Flesh of Christ.<sup>62</sup> In the former work Tertullian identified the woman as being from Alexandria, and in both works he says that Apelles forsook her in order to take up an affair with Philumena, whom he colorfully calls "an enormous prostitute," and in either case both were illicit unions.<sup>63</sup> It is rather surprising in view of what the Pseudo-Tertullian Against All Heresies said about Marcion earlier that he appears as more sexually continent than Apelles. The Pseudo-Tertullian was not consistent here, although most of the remaining sources do repeat the continence of Marcion.<sup>64</sup> It is also here that we are introduced to the spiritual dimension of this heresy. Pseudo-Tertullian, after alerting the readers to the carnality of these heretics, continued to call Philumena a prophetess that apparently seduced Apelles.<sup>65</sup> Jerome

who was well acquainted with this commentary knew that Ctesiphon would readily make the spiritual associations between them and the Priscillianists.

To continue, however, it was Hippolytus who elaborated the spiritual dimension of Apelles and Philumena in his work Refutation of all Heresies. Apelles "devotes himself to the discourses of a certain Philumena as to the revelations of prophetess," and he "is in the habit of devoting his attention, to a book which he calls 'Revelations' of a certain Philumena, whom he considered a prophetess."<sup>66</sup> The reference to a prophetess and a book called 'Revelations' is clearly an issue directly related to the question of Canon. Again, as far as Jerome was concerned there were no other books outside of the Vulgate Canon that could be legitimately called upon as authoritative, much less apostolic. Add to all of these concerns the woman, Philumena, the 'enormous prostitute' (as Tertullian called her), the mediatrix of these prophecies. Jerome had about as tight a case against this heresy as any orthodox zealot could ever wish for, and the connections he was making with Priscillian require little imagination on our part.

The moral impropriety of Apelles and Philumena, along with the prominent role of the latter, are similar to practices associated with Priscillian. The question of the Canon in relation to Philumena's book of 'Revelations' is certainly reflected in the apocryphal books associated with Priscillian. Jerome also maintained the succession of heretics since it was widely believed that Apelles had been a disciple of Marcion. Jerome did depart from the patristic commentary in how he depicted the relationship between Apelles and Philumena. Jerome spoke of Philumena as an "associate" of Apelles, whereas, in Hippolytus, Apelles is virtually led and spellbound by Philumena.<sup>67</sup> The

relationship Jerome espoused was more consistent with the Priscillian tradition as depicted in other sources. Priscillian is never spoken of as being led or swayed by women, he was in every sense the 'man' in charge.<sup>68</sup> Jerome obviously desired to maintain at this juncture a line of male heretics assisted by women who propagate the message of their male teachers. The one seeming exception in this scheme, Agape, will be considered shortly.

In Montanus Jerome arrived at the end of what he called "ancient history," and in numerous ways he continued to challenge the question of extra-biblical revelation as before with Marcion and Apelles. Jerome singled out both spiritual and moral lapses, calling Montanus "that mouthpiece of an unclean spirit," who was also guilty of leading astray "two wealthy and high born ladies, Prisca and Maximilla."<sup>69</sup> Montanus allegedly used the two women to bribe and sexually pervert many churches.<sup>70</sup> In summary, Jerome alerted his readers that the Montanists gave women a prominent role, claimed to have additional messages from God, and much more besides.

As with Apelles and Philumena, the primary practice of the Montanists that Jerome focused upon was their self-proclaimed belief that God spoke to them directly as he had done with the apostles. Tertullian in A Treatise on the Soul reported that a Montanist woman claimed to receive visions, to talk to angels - even Jesus himself - and to be able to discern people's hearts.<sup>71</sup> Hippolytus taught that Montanists preached a message which they believed superceded that given by Christ.<sup>72</sup> Apollonius in Concerning Montanism, accused Montanist women of leaving their husbands, taking gifts and money, lending on interest; and if that were not enough, a weakness for expensive

clothes, jewelry, including an appetite for gambling.<sup>73</sup>

Asterius Urbanus (c.232) related what was widely believed to be the tragic fate of these heretics. According to Asterius, Montanus and Maximilla hanged themselves, apparently led by what he called 'a maddening spirit.'<sup>74</sup> The same story was repeated by Eusebius, although with a tinge of doubt, yet undaunted he also concluded that both died and ended their lives like the traitor Judas.<sup>75</sup> A revealing observation by Eusebius is his belief that there were no successors to Montanus and Maximilla, perhaps an affirmation that the age of canonical uncertainty had come to an end with their deaths.<sup>76</sup>

Jerome revealed some of his views on the Montanists in Letter 41, wherein he targeted the prophetic-revelation message of this sect. He commenced with a reference to the "Day of Pentecost" as a unique event that in itself was a fulfilled final event.<sup>77</sup> Apparently, if we are to believe Jerome, the Montanists claimed a somewhat similar outpouring of the Spirit, which de facto made their message equal to the apostles, if not superior.<sup>78</sup> The True Church, continued Jerome, was inaugurated at Pentecost, and it is from those apostles only that legitimate successors proceed.<sup>79</sup> Jerome qualified his previous statements, where he affirmed that he did not oppose prophecy, only that type which claimed to supercede the revelation of Scripture.<sup>80</sup> He fully agreed with previous commentators who attacked the Montanist claim of an exclusive fullness of apostolic knowledge not possessed or received by anyone else.

The parallels that Jerome desired to make between the Montanists and Priscillianists seemed to be the following. Earlier in section three of Letter 133, Jerome said Priscillianists "are rash enough to claim for themselves the twofold credit of

perfection and wisdom," and this claim is made by other writers.<sup>81</sup> When Priscillian was blamed for leading women astray, these were usually socially high born and wealthy, like Prisca and Maximilla. Sulpicius Severus similarly attributed to the Priscillianists bribery and other forms of irresponsible uses of money to buy influence and power.<sup>82</sup> The 'unclean spirit' that spoke through Montanus was Jerome's way of establishing the satanic origins of both Montanists and Priscillianists. The prominent role of women in both sects we need not belabor; suffice it so say that Jerome maintained fully intact the parallel list of male and female heretics. Equally significant was the widely held tradition that Montanus and Maximilla committed suicide and died a tragic death, as all heretics, figuratively speaking, ultimately do. In both incidents the heretics met death and Jerome's statement that Priscillian was "condemned by the whole world and put to death by the secular sword" should be interpreted within this framework. And from this point onward Jerome turned his attention to heretical groups that flourished in his own words, "to times nearer to our own," and so he set his sights upon Arius.<sup>83</sup>

Arianism in Jerome's day was a heresy that still raged in the East and one contemporaneous with Priscillianism. Jerome blamed Arius for leading the world astray, and also for "beguiling the Emperor's sister."<sup>84</sup> This sister was Constantia, who exemplified yet another "high born woman," led astray by a heretic. Briefly told, Constantia was deceived by a presbyter in the royal palace, who was, in a sense, a "closet" Arian, one who believed that Arius had been misrepresented and unjustly condemned at Nicaea. It seems the presbyter persuaded Constantia of Arius' innocence, then she in turn made efforts to convince her brother, the Emperor, to reconsider Arius'



condemnation.<sup>85</sup>

Jerome was intent on associating Priscillian with the Arian heresy especially its Trinitarian theology. It was exceedingly desirable, if not crucial, for Jerome to establish a 'heretical' link between Priscillian and Arianism, the most explosive theological confrontation of the Church in the fourth century.<sup>86</sup> After all, every major writer in the East and most in the West devoted reams to the topic.<sup>87</sup> Jerome's direct association of Arius with Priscillian does not harmonize with the major contemporary sources, notably Sulpicius Severus and the Council of Zaragoza (380), for in neither is Priscillian ever specifically called an Arian.

Such associations were creatively made in the latter sources, such as, the First Council of Braga (561) and the letter of Pope Leo 1.<sup>88</sup> At the First Council of Braga Arius is not specifically mentioned by name in relation to Priscillian, but such an omission is not insurmountable. The initial four canons that condemn Priscillian addressed his Trinitarian doctrine, and if what they relate is accurate, they are without question Arian views.<sup>89</sup> I have noted elsewhere that Arianism, which had been pervasive in Galicia prior to the council, is not mentioned specifically in the least. The bishops, as I have argued, believed that Arianism was dead, at least officially, since the Suevic monarchy no longer claimed to be followers of Arianism.<sup>90</sup> In Galicia bolder claims for the eradication of heresy, both Arian and Priscillianist, were announced at the Second Council of Braga of 572. In the opening speech it was declared "Through the help of Christ's grace there is no doubt about the unity and orthodoxy of the faith in this province."<sup>91</sup> It was alarming enough to admit to the possibility of one heresy in that

province [Priscillianism], it was quite another matter to affirm any Arianism, particularly in view of its most recent official extirpation. In the four canons of the First Council of Braga Priscillian was associated with numerous heretics, they are all 'safely' in the distant past, however.<sup>92</sup>

A letter of Pope Leo I is cited specifically by the bishops at the First Council of Braga (561), and it appears to have been the singular major document used against the Priscillianists.<sup>93</sup> The pope mentioned these by name in regard to the Trinity: Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, and Photinus, all later identified at the Council. He pressed further on the Trinity to refute Priscillian when he said, "In this they also pursue the Arian's mistake." We are to understand "also" as a reference to an earlier section in the letter where Pope Leo I had already dealt point by point with Priscillianist Trinitarianism.<sup>94</sup> The bishops gathered at Braga chose not to mention Arianism specifically as found in Leo's letter.

What does all of this tell about Jerome and the Arian section of the letter? It means that he was not far off base when he associated Priscillian with Arius; although, he did depart from other fourth century writers in making such a bold connection between both heretics. Constantia did not occupy a central role in Arianism, but for Jerome's purposes she became an important feminine connection with the preceding male heretics and their female companions.

Jerome moved on to address the Donatists. Donatus and Lucilla are blamed for "defiling with his polluting baptism many unhappy people in Africa," and what that baptism entailed theologically is what Jerome wanted to bring to the surface.<sup>95</sup> The

Donatist debate centered upon the legitimacy of bishops, who had lapsed during persecution and then after the persecution lifted asked to be reinstated to their previously held ecclesiastical offices. The Donatists argued against the traditores [bishops] who cooperated with the Imperial authorities in handing over religious books. The Donatist church emphatically required re-baptism as a necessary prerequisite to mend the treasonous past of the traditores; the Catholics argued otherwise on all of these points.<sup>96</sup> I have reduced the complexities of Donatism to single out those areas that Jerome could have associated with Priscillian. Four areas that served Jerome's intent would have been: the concept of traditores: the illegitimacy of bishops; the sectarian nature of Donatism; and the role of Lucilla.

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

The second issue in Donatism focuses upon the illegitimacy or legitimacy of bishops. The posture of the Donatists rejected in toto the ecclesiastical structure of the Catholics, for that matter of any other 'church' as well. A major episode in Priscillian's

career was his consecration as bishop of Avila.<sup>97</sup> Priscillian was consecrated by bishops who had abandoned Catholic orthodoxy to pursue him as their leader. The emergence of a parallel Church, accompanied with its own episcopacy was a major concern of Sulpicius Severus.<sup>98</sup> Priscillian could not claim any apostolic legitimacy as a bishop, nor could those who were consecrated by him, nor any self-styled successors after his death. Jerome would have Ctesiphon recall that the only succession these bishops belonged to was the pseudo-apostolic one inaugurated by Simon Magus. Jerome apparently really believed, in the spiritual sense, that there existed an antiapostolic succession parallel to that of Apostles. In both successions it is the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the Evil One that propagate them, respectively. Like the Donatists, the Priscillianists do not have any theological apostolic foundation to legitimize the existence, maintenance, or propagation of their church. Priscillian seemed to have required re-baptism, as the Donatists had done, but the canons of the First Council of Toledo (400) do not specify what distinguished the rite of baptism of the Priscillianists and Catholics.<sup>99</sup>

An important corollary concept often invoked in such debates between Catholics and heretics before and after this era had to do with the sectarian nature of heretics. Jerome deliberately mentioned Africa not just for geographical accuracy; rather, to draw attention to the parochial nature of this sect, which unlike Arianism had a more limited following. Moreover, this explains further Jerome's reference to "the world" in his Arian entry, whereas, such a universal affirmation did not hold true for the Donatists.<sup>100</sup> In the final analysis, not a single heresy could claim universal acceptance, an argument frequently voiced by the Catholics. Jerome applied such a judgment to this local sect in

Spain. Although Priscillian did claim a following in Gaul, the Priscillianists could never in good faith claim universal acceptance. The frequent allusions to St. Peter via Simon Magus, the reference to Rome, and the sectarianism of this sect that are couched in Jerome's letter were intended to pit Priscillian in opposition to the universal church, a position pressed increasingly by the bishops of Rome.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, as with Arius and Constantia, Lucilla did not occupy a very significant place in the Donatist debate. We do know that she was a noble woman from Carthage and a strong supporter of the Donatists against the Catholics.<sup>102</sup> Jerome did not fail to make the connection between Lucilla and the women who followed Priscillian.

At the end of section four Jerome finally focused upon the Iberian Peninsula, where "In Spain the blind woman Agape led the blind man Elpidius into the ditch"<sup>103</sup> Agape, the woman, is the primary culprit who led Elpidius astray into spiritual blindness. Another unique aspect about them is that neither is found in any other heretical lists. Jerome apparently borrowed his information from Sulpicius Severus. Sulpicius created a nexus between the Gnostics and Priscillian, a link that by his own admission was "not at all easy to explain."<sup>104</sup> According to Sulpicius, a Gnostic Marcus of Memphis was the first to introduce Gnosticism into the Iberian Peninsula, and Agape and Elpidius were his first pupils. They, in turn, allegedly were the teachers of Priscillian.<sup>105</sup> Jerome mentioned Agape, rather than Marcus, because she provided a direct contemporary association of Gnosticism with Priscillian as well as being an example of a woman who is out of place pretending to be a teacher of men.

Of Agape and Elipidius we know nothing else, but of Marcus there is plenty in the

patristic sources, and Jerome knew that Marcus would have been recognized as the Gnostic heretic 'behind' Agape. In a letter to Theodora, Jerome commented more about Marcus, citing Irenaeus as the major source for this information.<sup>106</sup> He erroneously called Marcus a disciple of Basilides, but in the remainder of his exposition Jerome was consistent with the previous commentaries on Marcus. Jerome accused Marcus of misleading unlearned men and high-born women, and of engaging in unlawful intercourse, concerns similarly voiced by Epiphanius.<sup>107</sup> The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles called Marcus a spiritual successor of Simon Magus and Hippolytus reported that Marcus even allowed women to offer up the Eucharist.<sup>108</sup> Jerome mentioned Agape in order to explain the irrefutable spiritual link with Gnosticism via Marcus of Memphis. In so far as Jerome's purposes are concerned Marcus also confirmed the illicit sexual behavior of heretics, the sexually loose women heretics tend to attract, the seduction of weak-minded uneducated men, and lastly but no less important, the unbroken succession with Simon Magus. Agape was given, on the surface, the dubious pre-eminent role of deceptress who led Elpidius into the 'ditch'. Jerome continued, nevertheless, the remaining narrative with the emphasis upon the masculine succession as he introduced Priscillian as one who followed Elpidius.<sup>109</sup> Jerome gave Agape only indirect credit for being a teacher of Priscillian, but instead singled out Elpidius as the principal mentor.

In the concluding entry Jerome said that Priscillian, was "a zealous devotee of Zoroaster and a magician before he became a bishop. A woman named Galla seconded his efforts and left a sister to perpetuate a second heresy of a similar form."<sup>110</sup> The

censure of Zoroastrianism associated Priscillian with Elpidius, who as disciple of Marcus would have learned the magical arts. Jerome's fixation on Priscillian's previous profession as a magician is well-founded, or at least consistent with other testimony, whereas no other writer attributed Zoroastrianism to Priscillian. Sulpicius Severus reported the magical occultic background of Priscillian, and it was one of several essential offenses that permitted the Emperor Maximus to arrest, try, and execute Priscillian at Trier in 385.<sup>111</sup> Jerome boasted earlier in the letter that the "whole world" justly punished Priscillian by death with the secular sword. That Priscillian was rejected by all of the major ecclesiastics and that he was put to death is absolutely true. Jerome deliberately, however, chose not to clarify essential details found in Sulpicius Severus, such as the unanimous revulsion expressed by Martin of Tours, Pope Damasus, and Ambrose of Milan concerning the audacious behavior of the Emperor. Martin of Tours even implored the Emperor not to shed blood. According to Sulpicius, the Emperor delayed the trial until the aging Martin of Tours had passed away.<sup>112</sup> The disgust was also hurled at the bishops Hidacius and Ithacius, Priscillian's main accusers, about whom Sulpicius remarked "that the accusers were as displeasing to me as the accused."<sup>113</sup> Ambrose of Milan expressed shockful objection at the inhumane treatment of other Priscillianist bishops who were spared execution. Moreover, he likewise voiced intense disapproval of bishops who encouraged or condoned the processing of clerics, even if they were heretics, in secular courts.<sup>114</sup>

Of the woman Galla and her sister we know absolutely nothing else. What Jerome mentioned here is all that we possess, for they are absent in the entire corpus of

the sources.<sup>115</sup> Sulpicius Severus identified two women named Euchrotia and her daughter Procula, but not one by the name Galla.<sup>116</sup> We should not rule out the possibility that Jerome may have provided us with the specific identity of a female follower of Priscillian. Just what the second heresy of kindred form was is also unknown, for Jerome did not expound.<sup>117</sup> I maintain that one of Jerome's messages here was to affirm the continued proliferation of heretical teachings. He closed the letter with the words from Scripture as found in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 "Now also the mystery of iniquity is working," a forceful affirmation that the spirit of Simon Magus was alive and well in Priscillian.<sup>118</sup> It was Vincent of Lérins who expressed these thoughts so well:

"a quo vetus ille turpitudinum gurges usque in novissimum Priscillianum continua et occulta successione manavit."

From whom the old stream of disgrace [heresy] flows and persists in uninterrupted and secret succession in the most recent [heretic], Priscillian.<sup>119</sup>

### Conclusion

There is an enormous amount of research to be done on this and other related subjects. This study has shown the following: First, the genius of Jerome as a masterful polemicist is confirmed throughout, notably in his judicious selective use of works by previous and contemporary writers. Jerome did depart at critical junctures from previous heretical lists so as to advance his own arguments. Jerome, more explicitly than any contemporary writer about Priscillian, went beyond the usual accusations in that he established more extensive heretical links between Priscillian and all previous heresies.



Jerome followed quite traditionally a somewhat strict historical chronological order of heretics, with a few interesting departures, such as the case of Agape. In so far as the lists of heresies are concerned, Jerome chose wisely, shrewdly, and tactfully from a wide variety of 'heretical' lists to develop a critique of Priscillian. And we appreciate this even more when one is cognizant that Augustine's work On heresies alone lists 88 heresies. Second, his polemical works, on account of their intent and genre, are accompanied by a profound use of symbolic, metaphoric, and typological language. This requires caution in using such works and accepting uncritically their claims at face value only. Third, that modern researchers need to initiate a new, judicious, intense, and critical analysis of all Priscillianist sources, a task this study did not intend to accomplish. That Jerome had a limited first-hand acquaintance with Priscillian should be reason enough to suggest the strong possibility of misinformation, rumor, and vendetta, as Raymond Van Dam has convincingly demonstrated for Augustine.<sup>120</sup> Fourth, the study sheds light on Jerome's complex attitude towards women, which involves more than his own personal reflections since they are also an expression of widely held opinions concerning the diverse yet limited role of women in the fourth century Church. The most notable limitation is the belief voiced by Jerome that feminine participation in apostolic succession was spiritually not possible, and this position excluded women from the highest offices of the church hierarchy.

Finally, what this study has not confirmed is the moral or doctrinal error of Priscillian. If anything it has led me to the conclusion that most of what was attributed to Priscillian, especially in the moral realm, is not true, rather it is an unhappy example of

an oft-repeated tragedy in human history: of individuals unjustly swept away by social and political forces greater than themselves. In my mind Sulpicius Severus insightfully captured the overall transcendent tragedy of Priscillian: "all things seem to be disturbed and confused by the discord of the bishops, while everything was corrupted by them through their hatred, partiality, fear, faithlessness, envy, factiousness, lust, avarice, pride, sleepiness, and inactivity...the people of God, and all of the virtuous were exposed to mockery and insult".<sup>121</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. The Rise of Christianity. Philadelphia, Fortress, 1984. p. 713; For Priscillian in general consult the groundbreaking study by Henry Chadwick, Priscillian of Avila. The Occult and the charismatic in the early church. Oxford, 1976; An enlightening study is the more recent one by Raymond Van Dam, "The heresy of Priscillian", chapter 5 in his book, Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 8. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1985. pp. 88-114. For the most complete bibliography on Priscillian up to 1984 see Alberto Ferreiro, The Visigoths in Gaul and Spain A.D. 418-711: A Bibliography. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1988. pp. 197-203.
2. Examples of this somewhat limited focus are those by: Manuel, Sotomayor y Muro "El Priscilianismo": in Historia de la Iglesia en España: La iglesia en la España romana y visigoda (siglos 1-VIII). (ed.) Ricardo García Villoslada. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Maior 16. Madrid, 1979. pp. 233-272; The more recent doctoral dissertation by Juliana Cabrera, Estudio sobre el priscilianismo en la Galicia antigua. Universidad de Granada, 1983.
3. "'Sheep in Wolves' Clothing': the Letters of Consentius to Augustine," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 37, 4 (1986): 515-535. Of related interest, Josep Amengual i Batle, "Informacions sobre el Priscilianisme a la Tarraconense segons L'Ep. 11 de Consenci (any 419)." Pyrenae 15-16 (1979-1980) 319-338. And, Augustine, Contra Mendacium ad Consentium, MPL 40: especially, 517-539.

4. St. Jerome as a Satirist: a study of Christian thought and letters. Cornell University Press, 1964. pp. 6-7.
5. Ibid, pp. 11-12.
6. Ibid, p. 165.
7. Ibid, p. 177.
8. The Migne edition numbers this letter 132, rather than 133, as found in the English translation of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. 6; For the Latin edition consult MPL 22: 1147-1161. On Ctesiphon, J.N.D. Kelly observed, 'We have no certain clue to Ctesiphon's identity, but Jerome's jibes at his 'religious illustrious house' where the 'heretic' holds forth, and at people who supply him with money, suggest that he was one of Pelagius's wealthy lay supporters.' Jerome: His life, writings, and controversies. New York: Harper and Row, 1975. p. 314. The author does not address Jerome's commentary on Priscillian at all in this work.
9. A few examples are: Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 70, 'Priscillianistae, quos in Hispania Priscillianum instituit maxime Gnosticorum et Manichaeorum dogmata permixta sectantur,' Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 46. Aurelii Augustini Opera, Pars XIII, 2. Turnholti, 1969. p. 333.= MPL 42:44; Prosper of Aquitaine, in the Chronicum integrum, pars secunda, "Ea tempestate Priscillianus episcopus de Gallecia, ex Manichaeorum et Gnosticorum dogmate, haeresim nominis sui condidit," MPL 51:584; Sulpicius Severus explained how Gnosticism entered Spain, Historia sacra, chapter 46, MPL 20:155; Finally, Isidore of Seville in the

Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum, 8.5.54 observed -

'Priscillianistae a Priscilliano vocati, qui in Hispania ex errore Gnosticorum et Manichaeorum permixtum dogma conposuit,' in San Isidoro de Sevilla.

Etimologias. vol. 1 (Libros 1-X). edición bilingüe, (ed. José Oroz Reta, et al).

Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 433. Madrid, 1982. pp. 698-701. [hereafter cited

as San Isidoro de Sevilla] Noteworthy is Filastrius of Brescia, who alluded to the

Priscillianists without referring to them specifically by name, Diversarum hereseon

liber, chapter 84, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 9. Turnholti, 1957, pp. 253-

254.

10. "Tum pater omnipotens foecundis impribus aether Conjugis in gremium laetae descendit; et omnes Magnus alit, magno commixtus corpore, factus" - Virgil, Georg. 2 MPL 22:1150.
11. "Qui quidem partem habet Gnosticae haereseos, de Basilidis impietate venientem," MPL 22:1150; Here Jerome did not draw directly from Sulpicius Severus, who attributed the arrival of Gnosticism to Marcus of Memphis, Agape, and Helpidius, see Historia, chapter 46, MPL 20:155.
12. "Quid loquor [al. loquar] de Priscilliano, qui et saeculi gladio, et totius orbis auctoritate damnatus est?" MPL 22:1150-51; The full account is found in Sulpicius Severus, but especially, 'Gestis ad palatium delatis, censuit imperator Priscillianum sociosque ejus capitis damnari oportere,' and also 'At tum per Maximum accusator apponitur Patricius quidam, fisci patronus: it eo insistente Priscillianus capitis damnatus est, unaque cum eo Felicissimus et Armenius, qui nuper a

- catholicis, cum essent clerici, Priscillianum seculi desciverant; Latronianus quoque et Euchrotia gladio perempti.' Historia, chapter 51, MPL 20:158.
13. It is abundantly evident that the trial and execution were received with outrage and remorse by the leading members of the Church, see again, Sulpicius, especially Historia, chapter 50, MPL 20:157-158, and Sulpicius's own lamentation in chapter 51, 20:158-160.
  14. Once again, David S. Wiesen reminds us that Jerome's most loyal supporters were women, Jerome as a Satirist, p. 164.
  15. "Quid volunt miserae mulierculae oneratae peccatis, quae circumferuntur omni vento doctrinae, semper discentes et nunquam ad scientiam veritates pervenientes." MPL 22:1152.
  16. "et caeteri muliercularum socii, prurientes auribus, et ignorantes quid audiant, quid loquantur, qui vetustissimum coenum, quasi novam suscipiunt temperaturam." MPL 22:1152-1153.
  17. "qui: Juxta Ezechielem, liniunt parietem absque temperamento, et superveniente veritatis pluvia, dissipantur?" MPL 22:1153.
  18. The allusion to the "Sermon on the Mount" in the Gospel of Matthew is prominent here, Matthew 7:24-27.
  19. "Nunc quoque mysterium iniquitatis operatur," MPL 22:1153.
  20. "Duplex sexus utrumque supplantat, ut illud Propheticum cogamur assumere: Clamavit perdix, congregavit quae non peperit, faciens divitias suas, non cum iudicio. In dimidio dierum derelinquet eas, et novissimum ejus erit insipiens,"

MPL 22:1153.

21. Essential are those by: Irenaeus, Contra haereses. libri quinque, MPG 7:431-1224; Constitutiones Apostolicae, MPG 1:509-1156; Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis, MPG 8:685-1382 and MPG 9:9-602; Epiphanius of Salamis, The Panarion. (Book 1, Sects 1-46). Frank Williams (trans.) Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987. and Epiphanius, Anacephalaeosis, MPG 42:833-886; Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies. Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 5. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1975. pp. 9-162 [hereafter cited as ANF]; Augustine, De haeresibus. CCSL, 46. pp. 283-358; = MPL 42:21-50; Vincent of Lérins, Commonitorium primum, MPL 50: 630-686; Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber. CCSL, 9. pp. 227-ff; Isidore of Seville, Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum in San Isidoro de Sevilla, pp. 692-702.
22. Other relevant sources crucial to Priscillian studies are, Pope Leo I, Letter 15, MPL 54:677-695; Pope Vigilius, Letter 2, MPL 69:15-20; Pope Innocent I, Letter 3, MPL 20:485-494; Montanus of Toledo, Letter 1, MPL 65: 51-58; Jerome, De viris illustribus, chapter 121, MPL 23:750; Augustine, Contra Mendacium ad Consentium, MPL 40:517-539; Augustine, Letter 237, MPL 33:1034-1038; Paulus Orosius, Ad Aurelium Augustinum. Commonitorium de errore Priscillianistarum et Origenistarum. CSEL, 18. Vindobonae, 1889. pp. 151-157; Isidore of Seville, El De viris illustribus. Carmen Codoñer Merino (ed.) Salamanca, 1964. p. 135. Council of Zaragoza I (c. 380). in Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos. José Vives (ed. et al). Barcelona-Madrid, 1963. pp. 16-18; In the same volume, Council of

- Toledo I (c. 400), pp. 28-31; Council of Braga I (c. 561), pp. 65-71 [Hereafter cited at Concilios Visigóticos]; Braulio of Zaragoza, Letter 44, MPL 80: 693-694.
23. "Cui juncta Galla non gente, sed nomine, germanam huc illucque currentem, alterius et vicinae haereseos reliquit haeredem." Jerome, Letter 132(3)MPL 22:1153.
24. Jerome more than any other contemporary writer of Priscillian went beyond the Manichaeian-Gnostic association, although not everyone after him followed closely the arguments he brings forth in the letter. For example, Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 70, CCSL, 46. p 333 = MPL 42:44. The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, spoke of a succession of all heretics from Simon Magus, MPG 1:923-930; Vincent of Lérins well after Jerome mentions the succession, but Jerome provided in the letter the 'specific heretical links' between Simon and Priscillian, Commonitorium primum, MPL 50:671. See also notes 21 and 22.
25. "Postea alii quoque aliorum absurdorum dogmatum auctores exstiterunt, Cerinthus, Marcus, Menander, Basilides, et Saturnilus", The title of this specific chapter is; 'Quinam successerint Simonis impeitati, et quas haereses induxerint,' Constitutions of the Holy Apostles" MPG 1:923-926; 'Quis ante magum Simonem, apostolica districtione percussus a quo vetus ille turpitudinum gurges usque in novissimum Priscillianum continua et occulta successione manavit auctorem malorum..' Vincent of Lérins, Commonitorium primum, MPL 50: 671; Hippolytus voiced the opinion, 'And we shall also prove this his [Simon] successors, taking a starting-point from him, have endeavored [to establish] similar opinions under a



change of name' Refutation of all Heresies, ANF, 5. p. 74. Eusebius of Caesarea also taught "Sane hunc Simonem haereticae pravitatis principem atque auctorem fuisse accepimus. Unde ad nostram usque aetatem quicumque ejus sectam profitentur, cum se Christianam religionem plenam modestiae et sanctitatis amplecti simulaverint' Historiae ecclesiasticae, book 2, chapter 13, MPG 20:170. And in Pseudo-Tertullian, Adversus omnes haereses, Tertulliani Opera pars II opera Monastica. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 2.2. Turnholti, 1954. p. 1401.

26. The absence of specific language pointing to "succession" or "successors" of Simon Magus is readily evident in many early works on heresy, notably those by: Irenaeus, Contra haereses, chapter 23, MPG 7:670; Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 1. CCSL, 46 p. 290 = MPL 42:25-26; Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 29, CCSL, 9, p. 228. They all gave Simon heretical primacy by positioning him first on their list of Christian heresies. Epiphanius of Salamis in the Panarion offers a more extensive dialogue on Simon and he used explicit language, but one that is still shy of the language that we find in the Constitutions or in Vincent of Lérins. Epiphanius said of Simon, 'Simon Magus's makes the first sect to begin in the time since Christ,' p. 57 and on his comments on Menander he said, 'He was originally a Samaritan, but at some time became a pupil of Simon's' p. 62; The only 'succession' in Epiphanius is in regard to the Gnostics. In the Anacephaleosis, after he briefly listed the sects from Simon to the Nicolaitans, he then opened the Gnostic entry with these words, 'Harum

- Gnostici successores haeresum,' MPG 42: 855; see also Eusebius, Historia, book 1, chapter 7, MPG 20:315.
27. Acts of the Apostles 8:9-25.
28. The idea of pseudo-apostolic succession is implicit in the heretical lists, particularly the early ones in general, but the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, voiced the precise language on this concept, that Jerome implicitly infused into his own list. The Constitutions taught, "Atque hoc pacto prima et impiissima Simonianorum haeresis recepta est Romae. Sed et per reliquos pseudoapostolos diabolus operabatur,' MPG 1:931. Helena is found prominently in the writings of Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Filastrius of Brescia; however not in the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Vincent of Lérins, Augustine, nor later in Isidore of Seville.
29. Most of the sources remain true to the account in the 'Acts of the Apostles", but Eusebius used expressions like no other to describe the confrontation between Simon Peter and Simon Magus, for example, he called Simon and his followers lepers, 'qui more parentis sui in Ecclesiam tanquam pestis aut lepra quaedam irrepentes gravissimum damnum inferunt iis quibus pessimum illud et immedicabile venenum quod mentibus occultas instillare potuerint, Historia, book 2, chapter 1, MPG 20; 138; Eusebius devotes chapter 13 of the Historia to the origins of Simon, then, in chapter 14 he turns to Peter's ministry at Rome. Simon is called the greatest enemy of the Apostles; 'Hunc igitur tantorum scelerum auctorem atque architectum Simonem daemon virtutis inimicus, et hominum saluti

infestissimus his temporibus in medium produxit, ut magnis et admirabilibus Servatoris nostri apostolis par adversarius consisteret,' MPG 20:170. Finally Eusebius depicted Peter as the greatest of all Apostles who vanquished Simon Magus, 'benigna et clementissima Dei providentia fortissimum et maximum inter apostolos Petrum et virtutis merito reliquorum omnium principem ac patronum Romam adversus illam generis humani habem ac pestem perducit,' MPG 20:171.

30. In the letter Pope Leo I did not spare colorful graphic language to expose the depravity of the Priscillianists, 'qualis in regionibus vestris de antiquae pestilentiae reliquiis errorum morbus exarserit. Nam et epistolae sermo, et commonitorii series, et libelli tui textus eloquitur Priscillianistarum fetidissimam apud vos recaluisse sentiam. Nihil est enim sordium in quorumcumque sensibus impiorum, quod in hoc dogma non confluerit: quoniam de omni terrenarum opinionum luto multiplicem sibi faeculentiam miscuerunt: ut soli totum biberent quidquid alii ex parte gustassent.' MPL 54: 678-679.
31. "Denique si universae haereses quae ante Priscilliani tempus exortae sunt diligentius retractentur, nullus pene invenietur error de quo non traxerit impietas ista contagium : quae non contenta eorum recipere falsitates qui ab Evangelio sub Christi nomine deviarunt, tenebris se etiam paganitatis immersit, ut per magicarum artium profana secreta et mathematicorum vana mendacia, religionis fidem morumque rationem in potestate daemonum, et in effectu siderum collocarent." MPL 54: 679.
32. "Simon Magus haeresim condidit Helenae meretricis adjutus auxilio," Jerome,

Letter 132(3), MPL 22: 1153; The sources that do mention Helena are: Epiphanius, The Panarion, pp 58-60; see also Anacephalaeosis, MPG 42: 855; Justin Martyr, Apologia prima, chapter 26, MPG 6:367; Irenaeus, Contra haereses, chapter 23, MPG 7:671-678; Tertullian, De anima, chapter 34, CSEL, 20. pp. 358-360. Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia, chapter 13, MPG 20:170; Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, ANF, 5, pp. 80-81; Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 29, CCSL, 9. p. 229.

33. Sulpicius Severus reported the sexual deviancy of Priscillian in the Historia notably in chapter 48, 'Inde iter coeptum ingressi, turpi sane pudibundoque comitatu, cum uxoribus atque alienis etiam feminis, in queis erat Euchrotia, ac filia ejus Procula: de qua fuit in sermone hominum, Priscilliani stupro gravidam partum sibi graminibus abegisse,' MPL 20:156; and in chapter 50, '...causam praefecto Evodio permisit, viro acri et severo, qui Priscillianum gemino iudicio auditum, convictumque maleficii, nec diffitentem obscenis se studuisse doctrinis, nocturnos etiam turpium feminarum egisse conventus, nudumque orare solitum, nocentem pronuntiavit, redegitque in custodiam, donec ad principem referret. Gestis ad palatium delatis, censuit imperator Priscillianum sociosque ejus capitis damnari oportere,' MPL 20: 158; Jerome echoed these sentiments: "soli cum solis clauduntur mulierculis, et illud eis inter coitum amplexusque," MPL 22: 1150; Pope Leo I chastised the Priscillianists, too: 'Videbant enim omnem curam honestatis auferri, omnem conjugiorum copulam solvi, simulque divinum jus humanumque subverti,' MPL 54:679-680. Also his remarks in chapter 7, 54:683-684. And 'Quod

autem de Manichaeorum foedisimo scelere, hoc etiam de Priscillianistarum incestissima consuetudine olim compertum multumque vulgatum est,' 54:689. In the last chapter of the letter Pope Leo I summarized the moral and doctrinal lapses, 54: 691. Finally, the Council of Braga (561) made the same accusations in canons 11 and 15, in Concilios Visigóticos, pp. 68-69.

34. Helena is found prominently in the writings of Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, Eusebius, and Filastrius. In the case of the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Augustine, Vincent of Lérins, and Isidore of Seville, the omission of Helena can be explained in part by their brevity and focus. Neither of these works attempts to go into great detail, especially Augustine, Vincent, and Isidore. We must also not rule out the possibility that the writers did not feel compelled to repeat every single detail about Simon Magus. There is the conscious selective reporting on the part of each writer, as well as, their own attempt to contribute to a developing tradition.
35. "Hic Helenam quamdam ipse a Tyro civitate Phaenices quaestuarium cum redemisset, secum circumducebat, dicens hanc esse primam mentis ejus conceptionem, matrem omnium, per quam initio mente concepit angeles facere et archangelos, Contra haereses, MPG 7:671.
36. "Igitur horum mystici sacerdotes libidinosi quidem vivunt, magias autem perficiunt, quemadmodum potest unusquisque ipsorum," Contra haereses, MPG 7:672.
37. Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, ANF, 5, 80-81; and for a summary of Simon's doctrines, p. 143.

38. "Nicolaus Antiochenus omnium immunditiarum repertor, choros duxit femineos, Jerome, Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
39. "Omnium immunditiarum repertor," is a character trait that is consistently repeated in the sources, and it seems to have been the principal focus of the overwhelming negative tradition associated with the name of Nicolas. Some convey only that Nicolas had been a deacon, chosen by the apostles, and who subsequently fell into doctrinal error for example.
40. "Nicolaitae autem magistrum quidem habent Nicolaum, unum ex VII qui primi ad diaconium ab apostolis ordinati sunt," Irenaeus, Contra haereses, chapter 26. MPG 7:687. Pseudo-Tertullian, Adversus omnes haereses, CCSL 2.2, pp. 1402-1403.
41. "qui indiscrete vivunt. Plenissime autem per Joannis Apocalypsin manifestantur qui sint, nullam differentiam esse docentes in moechando, et idolothyton edere. Quapropter dixit et de iis sermo: Sed hoc habes quod odisti opera Nicolaitarum, quae et ego odi," Contra haereses MPG 7:687. The bishop of Seville closed his observations with the Apostle John's condemnation of Nicolas, a clear scriptural reference to the Nicolaitans in the Apocalypse.
42. Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis, book 3, chapter 4. MPG 8:1130-1131. The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, likewise cast doubt over the connection between Nicolas and the Nicolaitans, 'quales qui nunc falso nomine dicti Nicolitae,': MPG 1:927; Epiphanius did not question this tradition, for in the Anacephalaeosis he taught "Nicolitae a Nicolao illo derivatisunt," MPG 42: 855. In the latter tradition Nicolas is credited with the foundation of the sect, for

example, Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 5, 'Nicolaitae a Nicolao nominati sunt' CCSL, 46. p. 291. = MPL 42:26; Filastrius of Brescia seemed to have adopted a neutral position - whether by intent is difficult to ascertain, - since he focused only on the 'person' rather than the 'sect', 'Videamus et Nicolaus Antiochenus aduena qua est deceptus amentia,' Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 33, CCSL, 9, p. 231. Isidore of Seville followed the Augustinian tradition faithfully in Spain, Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Chistianorum. 8. 5. 5. in San Isidoro de Sevilla, pp. 693-695.

43. "Cum autem de dicto Nicolai loqueremur, illud praetermisimus: Cum formosam, aiunt, haberet uxorem, et post Servatoris assumptionem ei fuisset ab apostolis exprobrata zelotypia, in medium adducta muliere, permisit cui vellet eam nubere. Aiunt eim hanc actionem illi voci consentaneam quae dicit, quod << carne abuti oporteat>> Proinde ejus factum et dictum absolute et inconsiderate sequentes, qui ejus haeresim persequuntur..." Stromateis, chapter 4, MPG 8:1130-1131.
44. "impudenter effuseque fornicantur Ego autem audio Nicolaum quidem nulla unquam, alia, quam ea, quae ei nupserat, uxore usum esse; et ex illius liberis, filias quidem consenuisse virgines, filium autem permansisse incorruptum," Stromateis, chapter 4, MPG 8:1131.
45. Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia, book 3, chapter 29, MPG 20:275-278; Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion, pp. 77-82. And in the Anacephalaeosis, MPG 42: 855. Some convey only that Nicolas had been a deacon, chosen by the Apostles, and who subsequently fell into doctrinal error. For example, see Hippolytus, Refutation of

- all Heresies, ANF, 5. p 115. Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 5. CCSL, 46. p. 291-292. = MPL 42:26; Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, CCSL, 9. pp. 231-232.
46. Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, MPG 1:927.
47. "qui propter pulchritudinem relinquens uxorem, ut qui vellet eam uteretur"  
Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum 8.5.5. in San Isidoro de Sevilla, p. 694. The bishop of Seville closed his observations with the Apostle John's condemnation of Nicolas, a clear scriptural reference to the Nicolaitans in the Apocalypse. Ibid, "Quos Iohannes in Apocalypsi inprobat dicent (2.6): "Sed hoc habes quod odisti facta Nicolaitarum."
48. Jerome, Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
49. See note 39 above.
50. "cum uxoribus atque alienis etiam feminis, in quibus erat Euchrotia, ac filia ejus Procula: de qua fuit in sermone hominum, Priscilliani stupro gravidam partum sibi gramini abegisse," Sulpicius Severus, Historia, chapter 48, MPL 20:156.
51. Sulpicius referred to nude prayer services, 'nudumque orare solitum,' Historia, chapter 50, MPL 20:158. We should recall that Jerome also specifically mentioned this practice, 'soli cum solis clauduntur mulierculis, et illud eis inter coitum amplexusque decantant...,' Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1150. The sect of the Adamites is rather obscure, what is readily evident from this study is the fact that most heretical sects were accused of nudity, sexual liberties, and other related practices. Augustine included the sect in his list, "Adamiani ex Adam dicti cujus imitantur in



paradiso nuditatem, quae fuit ante peccatum. Unde et nuptias aversantur, quia nec priusquam peccasset Adam, nec priusquam dimissus esset de paradiso, cognovit uxorem. Credunt ergo quod nuptiae futurae non fuissent si memo peccasset. Nudi itaque mares feminaeque conveniunt, nudi lectiones audiunt, nudi orant, nudi celebrant sacramenta, et ex hoc paradysum suam arbitrantur

Ecclesiam," De haeresibus, chapter 31. CCSL, 46. pp. 304-305. = MPL 42:31.

And in Epiphanius, Anacephalaeosis, MPG 42: 863-866, and also Panarion, 41:954-958.

52. "Ut mulieres omnes ecclesiae catholicae et fideles a vivorum alienorum lectione et coetibus separentur, vel ad ipsas legentes aliae studio vel docendi vel discendi convenient, quoniam hoc Apostolus iubet. Ab universis episcopis dictum est: Anathema futuros qui hanc concilii sententiam non observaverint," canon 1, Concilios Visigóticos, p. 16.
53. "Marcion Romam praemisit mulierem, quae decipiendos sibi animos praepararet," Jerome, Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
54. Irenaeus, Contra haereses, chapter 27, MPG 7:687-689.

The same is true of the testimony found in Hippolytus and Eusebius who did not intimate that Marcion had misbehaved with any women. Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, ANF, 5, p. 146. Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia, chapters 10-11, MPG 20:327-331. Augustine, Filastrius of Brercia, and Isidore of Seville likewise did not connect Marcion with any female followers. Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 22, CCSL, 46. pp. 299-300. = MPL 42:29. Etymologiarum VIII, De

- haeresibus Christianorum, 8.5.21, in San Isidoro de Sevilla, p. 695. Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 44, CCSL, 9. p. 236.
55. Pseudo-Tertullian, Adversus omnes haereses. CCSL, 2.2. p. 1408. Epiphanius, Anacephalaeosis, chapter 9, MPG 42:862.
56. "Marcion Roman praemisit mulierem" Jerome, Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153. A tantalizing element in Irenaeus and Eusebius is the specific inclusion of Rome and the papacy in their entries on Marcion. In Irenaeus, Cerdo and Marcion are together, and the text begins, 'Et Cerdon antem quidam ab iis qui sunt erga Simonem occasionem accipiens, cum venisset Romam sub Hygino,' Contra haereses, chapter 27, MPG 7: 687. Eusebius quotes Irenaeus on these matters as his chief source, Historia, chapters 10-11, MPG 20: 327-331.
57. Irenaeus singled out this issue, too, Contra haereses, MPG 7:688. Filastrius of Brescia also commented on Marcion's canonical preferences, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 44, CCSL, 9. p. 236. Also relevant is his entry, chapter, 88 pp. 255-256. Sulpicius Severus did not mention apocryphal books anywhere in his narrative, yet elsewhere the references to such books are abundant. Some of the testimony includes Pope Leo I, in an indirect reference to tampering with the holy books, "per ipsos doctrinae Priscillianae Evangelium subditur Christi, ut ad profanos sensus pietate sanctorum voluminum depravat, sub nominibus prophetarum et apostolorum non hoc praedicetur quod Spiritus sanctus docuit, sed quod diaboli minister inseruit" MPL 54: 680, see also cols. 687-688. Augustine devoted an entire letter to Ceretius to this topic, Letter 237, MPL 33: 1034-1038;

and De haeresibus, chapter 70, CCSL, 46. pp. 333-334. = MPL 42:44. There are allusions in Vincent of Lérins, Commonitorium primum. chapter 25, MPL 50: 672. More explicitly at the First Council of Toledo (400), 'Et cum accepisset chartulam, de scripto recitavit: Omnes libros haereticos, et maxime Priscilliani doctrinam, iuxta quod hodie lectum est,' and in the same council, 'nullis libris apocryphis aut novis scientiis, quas Priscillianus composuerat involutum....quaecumque contra fidem catholicam Priscillianus scripserat cum ipso auctore damnasse,'" Concilios Visigóticos, pp. 29, 30-31 and 33, also the First Council of Braga (561), Concilios Visigóticos, pp. 69, 73. A modern relevant study is that by B. Vollmann, Studien zum Priszillianismus. St. Ottilien, 1965.

58. Jerome addressed the use of extra-biblical sources and the writing of books by the Priscillianists in several works, and in some cases indirectly, such as, his Commentariorum in Esaiam. Libri XII-XVIII. CCSL, 73A, S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars 1,2 A. Turnholti, 1963. p. 735. Another indirect citation is in Praefatio S. Hieronymi in Pentateuchum, MPL 28:180-181. Also, but more directly, in De viris illustribus: of Priscillian, 'edidit multa opuscula,' of Latronius, 'Exstant ejus ingenii opera, diversis metris edita,' of Tiberianus, who when accused of being a Priscillianist, wrote an apology, that he later rescinded, 'Apologeticum tumenti compositoque sermone,' chapters 121, 122, 123. MPL 23:750-751.
59. Canon 12, p. 73, note in the same council, canon 17 which was directed at Priscillian, "Si quis scribturas, quas Priscillianus secundum suum depravarit errorem vel tractatos Dictinii quos ipse Dictinius antequam converteretur....,"

Concilios Visigóticos, p. 69.

60. The references are numerous and it would be redundant here to cite them all. In Sulpicius Severus there is a comment by him wherein he calls the Priscillianists, the Gnostics, "Quo comperto, Gnostici diffisi rebus suis, non ausi iudicio certare sponte cessere qui episcopi videbantur: caeteros metus dispersit," Historia, chapter 47, MPL 20:156.
61. "Apelles Philumenem suarum comitem habuit doctrinarum." Jerome Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153. A rather startling gap in the testimony on this sect is the absence of Philumena, for example. Epiphanius, Panarion, pp. 340-346 and Anacephalaeosis. MPG 42:862; Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 23, CCSL, 46. p. 300. = MPL 42:29. and Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 47, CCSL 9, p. 237. Isidore of Seville, Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum, 8.5.12. in San Isidoro de Sevilla, p. 695.
62. "Si et Apellis stigma retractandum est, - tam non vetus et ipse quam Marcion institutor et praeformatur eius est -: lapsus in feminam desertor continentiae Marcionensis ab oculis sanctissimi magistri Alexandriam secessit. Inde post annos regressus, non melior nisi tantum qua iam non Marcionites, in alteram feminam impigit, illam virginem Philumenem" De praescriptione haereticorum. chapter 30, CSEL, 70, p. 37 in the same work, chapter 33, pp. 41-42.; also his, De carne Christi, chapter 6, CSEL, 70, p. 203 in the same work chapter 8, pp. 212-214. Tertullian referred to Apelles and Philumene in, Adversus Marcionem Tertulliani Opera, pars 1., chapter 3, 11. and chapter 4.17, CSSL, 1. Turnholti, 1954. pp. 521-

- 523 and 585-588. And, De anima, chapters 23, 26, CSEL, 20. pp. 335-336; 362-363.
63. "postea vero immane prostibulum et ipsam," De praescriptione haereticorum, chapter 30, CSEL, 70, p. 37. Eusebius added little to the previous commentary in general, but he too did not spare language on Philumena, he said, "virginis cuiusdam daemoniacae nomine Philumenaе responsis inductus" Historia, book 5, chapter 13, MPG 20:459.
64. See note 54 above.
65. "Philumenes cuiusdam puellae, quam quasi prophetissam sequitur," Pseudo-Tertullian, Adversus omnes haereses, CCSL, 2.2 p. 1409.
66. Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, ANF, 5. book, 7, chapter 26, p. 115 and book 10, chapter 16, p. 147.
67. Jerome used "comitem habuit" to describe their relationships, such an association is certainly not reflected in most of the sources, Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
68. Especially in the Historia of Sulpicius Severus "Is ubi doctrinam exitialibem aggressus est, multo nobilium pluresque populares auctoritate persuadendi et arte blandiendi allicuit in societatem. Ad hoc mulieres novarum rerum cupidae, fluxa fide, et ad omnia curioso ingenio, catervatim ad eum confluebant, Historia, chapter 46, MPL 20:155.
69. "Montanus immundi spiritus praedicator, multas Ecclesias per Priscam et Maxmillam nobiles et opulentas feminas, primum auro corruptit: deinde haeresi polluit. Dimittam vetera, ad viciniora transcendam," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.

- Augustine, De haeresibus, chapters 26 and 27, CCSL, 46. pp. 302-303. = MPL 42:30-31.
70. In Sulpicius the charge of bribery is singled out as yet another of the moral lapses of the Priscillianists. Some examples in the Historia are, "Largiendo et ambiendo ab imperatore cupita extorquerent," chapter 48, MPL20: 156-157: "Verum Ithacio ad resistendum non animus, sed facultas defuit: quia haeretici corrupto Volventio proconsule vires suas confirmaverant," chapter 49, MPL20: 157: "Ac de omnibus ad imperatorem refert, ut haereticis viam ambiendi praecluderet...Igitur haeretici suis artibus, grandi pecunia Macedonio data, obtinent ut imperiali auctoritate praefecto erepta cognito Hispaniarum," chapter 49, MPL 20: 157.
71. "est hodie soror apud nos revelationum charismata sortita, quas in ecclesia inter dominica sollemnia per ecstasin in spiritu patitur: conuersatur cum angelis, aliquando etiam cum domino, et uidet et audit sacramenta, et quorundam corda dinoscit et medicinas desiderantibus submittit," De anima, chapter 9, CSEL, 20:310.
72. Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, book 8, chapter 12, ANF, 5. p. 123. Also, Epiphanius, Anacephalaeosis, MPG 42:863 and Panarion, MPG 41:855-879.
73. "Ostendimus igitur has principes prophetissas simul ac spiritu impletae sunt, viros suos dimisisse" and also "Dic mihi, tingitne capillos propheta? an stibio oculos linit? an studet ornari? prophetane tabula ludit et tesseris? an pecuniam locat fenori? ingenue fateantur ac respondeant, ipsos acta esse convincam," Ex libro adversus Cataphrygas, MPG 5:1382, 1386.

74. "Imo longe alio mortis genere interiisse dicuntur Montanus et Maximilla. Ambo enim, ut fama est, ab insano spiritu incitati, laqueo sibi gulam fregerunt non quidem simul, sed suae quisque mortis tempore: atque ita instar proditoris Judae vitam finierunt." Fragmenta ex libris III contra Montanistas ad Abercium Marcellum, MPG 10:150.
75. Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia. book 5, chapter 16, MPG 20:470.
76. Ibid, again Eusebius was repeating Asterius Urbanus.
77. "in quibus Salvator noster se ad Patrem iturum, missurumque Paracletum pollicetur. Quae in quod promissa sint tempus, et quo completa sint tempore, Apostolorum Acta testantur," Letter 41, MPL 22:474-475.
78. Hippolytus shared this opinion, Refutation of all Heresies. book 8, chapter 12, ANF, 5. p. 123. Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 49, CCSL, 9. p. 238.
79. There is a rich tradition on the biblical exegesis of 'Babel and Pentecost' see my "Linguarum diversitate: 'Babel and Pentecost' in Leander's homily at the Third Council of Toledo" in Actas del XIV Centenario del Concilio III de Toledo 589-1989. Toledo 10-14, May, 1989. (in the press). Jerome, Letter 41, MPL 22:475.
80. Jerome, Letter 41, MPL 22:475. Isidore of Seville referred to the alleged Montanist belief that they possessed a superior revelation, "Hi adventum Spiritus Sancti non in Apostolis, sed in se traditum adserunt," Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum. 8.5.27. in San Isidoro de Sevilla, p. 696. Augustine repeated with no innovation the corpus of earlier writers, De Haeresibus, chapters

- 26 and 27, CCSL, 46. pp. 302-303. = MPL 42:30-31.
81. "verbum perfectionis, et scientiae tibi temere vindicantes," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1150.
82. See note 70 above.
83. "Dimittam vetera, ad viciniore transcendam," Letter 132(3), MPL: 22:1153.
84. "Arius, ut orbem deciperet, sororem principis ante deceptit," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
85. Socrates Scholasticus, Historia ecclesiastica. book 1, chapter 25, MPG 67:147-150.  
 Sozomen, Historia ecclesiastica. book 2, chapter 27, MPG 67:1010-1014.  
 Constantia is not mentioned in Epiphanius, Anacephalaeosis, MPG 42:870.  
 Augustine, De Haeresibus, chapter 49, CCSL, 46. pp. 320-321. = MPL 42:39.  
 Isidore of Seville, Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum. 8.5.43 in San Isidoro de Sevilla, p. 698. Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 66, CCSL, 9. p. 244.
86. The literature on Arianism is enormous. For an introduction in a broader context and with detailed current bibliography see, W.H. Frend, The Rise of Christianity. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1984.
87. In the West two early prominent commentators on the Trinity were: Hilary of Poitiers, De Trinitate, MPL 10: 9-472. Augustine, De Trinitate, MPL 42:400-416.
88. Pope Leo I, Letter 15, MPL 54:678-695. First Council of Braga (561), Concilios Visigóticos, pp. 65-77.
89. First Council of Braga (561), Concilios Visigóticos, pp. 67-68.



90. "The Missionary Labors of St. Martin of Braga in 6th Century Galicia," Studia Monastica, 23, 1 (1981) 19-20.
91. "Et quia opitulante Christi gratia de unitate et rectitudine fidei in hac provincia nicil [sic] et dubium," Concilios Visigóticos, p. 79.
92. For example "sicut Sabellius et Priscillianus dixerunt," canon 1, p. 67; "Sicut Gnostici et Priscillianus dixerunt," canon 2, p. 67; "Sicut Paulus Samosatenus et Fotinus et Priscillianus dixerunt," canon 3, p. 67; "Sicut Cerdon, Marcion, Manizeus et Priscillianus [dixerunt]," canon 4, in Concilios Visigóticos, p. 68.
93. "Credo autem vestrae beatitudinis fraternitatem nosse, qui[a] eo tempore [quo] in his regionibus nefandissima Priscilliana sectae venena serpebant, beatissimus papa urbis Romae Leo, qui quadragesimus fere extitit apostoli Petri successor, per Turibium notarium sedis suae ad synodum Galleciae contra inpiam Priscilliani sectam scripta sua dixerit," First Council of Braga (561), Concilios Visigóticos, p. 66.
94. "Quod blasphemiae genus de Sabellii opinione sumpserunt, ..." Quod utique non auderent dicere, nisi Pauli Samosateni et Photini..." And more directly on the Arian affiliation, "In quo Arianorum quoque atu agantur errori," Letter 15, MPL 54:681.
95. "Donatus per Africam, ut infelices quosque foetentibus pollueret aquis, Lucillae opibus adjutus est," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153. Consult also, Augustine, Litteras Petiliani Donatistae, book 1, MPL 43:546. S. Optati Milevitani. Libri VII, book 1, chapter 16-20, CSEL, 26. pp. 18-22.

96. Consult the seminal study by, W.H.C. Frend, The Donatist Church, 2nd ed. Oxford, 1971.
97. "Interim Instantius et Salvianus damnati iudicio sacerdotum, Priscillianum, etiam laicum, sed principem malorum omnium, una secum Caesaraugustana synodo notatum, ad confirmandas vires suas episcopum in Abilensi oppido constituunt: rati nimirum, si hominem acrem et callidum sacerdotali auctoritate armassent, tutiores fore sese," Sulpicius Severus, Historia, chapter 47, MPL 20:156.
98. Sulpicius described graphically the deep division Priscillianism caused, even well after his execution, "Ac inter nostros perpetuum discordiarum bellum exarserat, quod jam per quindecim annos foedis dissensionibus agitatum, nullo modo sopiri poterat," Historia, chapter 51, MPL 20:159. Eusebius added to the all these deviant practices the charge that Marcus was "remarkably skilled in magic acts." Isidore of Seville in De viris illustribus mentioned Marcus specifically in his entry on Priscillian, whereas Augustine, Pseudo-Tertullian, and Filastrius of Brescia did not contribute any novelties on Marcus.
99. The reference to baptism is in canon 18, "Si quis in his erroribus Priscilliani secta sequitur vel profitetur, ut aliud in salutare baptismi contra sedem sancti Petri faciat, anathema sit," Concilios Visigóticos, p. 28.
100. Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
101. In the First Council of Braga (561), the bishops gathered specifically pointed out that Pope Leo I was [about or approximately - Latin - Fere] the fortieth successor of St. Peter "beatissimus papa urbis Romae Leo, qui quadragesimus fere extitit

apostoli Petri successor," Concilios Visigóticos, p. 66. Also in Canon 18 of the First Council of Toledo (400) it is expressed specifically that Priscillian is in direct opposition to St. Peter, Concilios Visigóticos, p.28.

102. Lucilla is not reported at all by Augustine, Filastrius of Brescia, nor by Isidore of Seville. Augustine's entry on the Donatists is one of his lengthiest, De haeresibus, chapter 69, CCSL 46. pp. 331-333. = MPL 42:43-44. Filastrius devoted very little space to the Donatists, Diversarum hereseon liber. chapter 83, CCSL, 9. p. 253. Isidore is very brief, Etymologiarum VIII, De haeresibus Christianorum, 8.5.51. in San Isidoro de Sevilla, p. 698.
103. "In Hispania Agape Elpidium, mulier virum, caecum caeca duxit in foveam, Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
104. "Sed quibus ibi initiis coaluerit, haud facile est disserere, Historia, MPL 20:155.
105. "Primus eam intra Hispanias Marcus intulit Aegypto profectus, Memphi ortus. Hujus auditores fuere Agape quaedam non ignobilis mulier et rhetor Elpidius," Historia, MPL 20:155.
106. Letter 75, chapter 3, MPL 22:687-688.
107. "quod Marcus quidam de Basilidis Gnostici stirpe descendens, primum ad Gallias venerit...maximque nobiles feminas, quaedam in occulto mysteria repromittens, hoc errore seduxerit: magicis artibus, et secreta corporum voluptate, amorem sui concilians" Letter 75, chapter 3, MPL 22: 687-688. Epiphanius, who borrowed fully from Irenaeus, devoted significant commentary to this sect. Of Marcus he said, "He succeeded Secundus, Epiphanes, Ptolemy, and Valentinus, but was moved to

- gather a larger crowd of scum. For he attracted female and male dupes of his own..." Panarion, chapter 34, p. 211. Again, the primary source for the entire tradition was Irenaeus, Contra haereses, chapters 13-15, MPG 7:577-628.
108. Chapter 8, MPG 1:923-926. Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, chapter 35. ANF, 5. p. 92. Eusebius added to all of these deviant practices the charge that Marcus was "remarkably skilled in magic arts." He said "Alium praeterea quemdam nomine Marcum eodem tempore exstitisse scribit, magicarum praestigiarum peritissimum," Historia, book 4, chapter 11, MPG 20:330. Isidore of Seville in De viris illustribus mentioned Marcus specifically in his entry on Priscillian, whereas Augustine, Pseudo-Tertullian, and Filastrius of Brescia did not contribute any novelties on Marcus. "in quo detestanda Priscilliani dogmata et maleficiorum eius artes libidinumque eius probra demonstrat: ostendens, Marcum quemdam Menpheticum, magiae scientissimum," De viris illustribus, Carmen Codoñer Merino (ed.) p. 135. Augustine, De haeresibus, chapter 14, CCSL, 46, p. 296. = MPL 42:28. Filastrius of Brescia, Diversarum hereseon liber, chapter 42, CCSL, 9. p. 235. The Pseudo-Tertullian, Adversus omnes haereses, focused only on doctrinal error, CCSL, 2.2 pp. 1407-1408.
109. "successoremque qui Priscillianum habuit," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
110. "Zoroastris magi studiosissimum, et ex mago Episcopum, cui juncta Galla non gente, sed nomine, germanam huc illucque currentem alterius et vicinae haereseos reliquit haeredem," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
111. Sulpicius believed Priscillian had learned the occultic arts as an adolescent, "Sed

idem vanissimus, et plus justo inflatior profanarum rerum scientia: quia et magicas artes ab adolescentia eum exercuisse creditum est," Historia, chapter 46, MPL 20:155, for the execution see, chapters 50 and 51: 157-158.

112. "Namque tum Martinus apud Treveros constitutus, non desinebat increpare Ithacium, ut ab accusatione desisteret; Maximum orare, ut sanguine infelicium abstineret; satis superque sufficere, ut episcopali sententia haeretici iudicati Ecclesiis pellerentur; novum esse et inauditum nefas, causam Ecclesiae iudex saeculi iudicaret. Denique quoad usque Martinus Treveris fuit, dilata cognitio est; et mox discessurus egreria auctoritate a Maximo elicit sponsonem, nihil cruentum in reos constituendum" Historia, chapter 50, MPL 20:158. Pope Leo I, in like manner as Jerome, uncritically spoke of Priscillian's execution, nor did he even hint about the uproar against these unfortunate events by the leading members of the Church in that era, "Merito patres nostri, [emphasis mine] sub quorum temporibus haeresis haec nefanda prorupit, per totum mundum instanter egere ut impius furor ab universa Ecclesia pelleretur: quando etiam mundi principes it hanc sacrilegam amentiam detestati sunt, ut auctorem ejus cum plerisque discipulis legum publicarum ense prosternerent," Letter 15, preface, MPL 54:679.
113. "Ac mea quidem sententia est, mihi tam reos quam accusatores displicere. Certe Ithacium nihil pensi, nihil sancti habuisse definitio: fuit enim audax, loquax, impudens, sumptuosus, ventri et gulae plurimum impertiens. Hic stultitiae eos usque processerat, ut omnes etiam sanctos viros, quibus aut studium inerat

- lectionis, aut propositum erat certare jejuniis, tamquam Priscilliani socios aut discipulos, in crimen arcesseret," Historia, chapter 50, MPL 20:157.
114. Letter 30 (Maur. 24) chapter 12, in Sancti Ambrosii Opera, pars decima. Epistulae et Acta, Tom. I. Epistularum Libri I-VI. CSEL 82. Vindobonae, pp. 214-215. and also in Letter 26, MPL 16:1042-1043.
115. Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
116. Historia, chapter 48, MPL 20:156.
117. "et vicinae haereseos reliquit haeredem," Letter 132(3), MPL 22:1153.
118. Ibid.
119. Commonitorium primum, MPL 50:671.
120. See note 3 above.
121. "Et nunc, cum maxime discordiis episcoporum turbari aut misceri omnia cernerentur, cunctaque per eos odio aut gratia, metu, inconstantia, invidia, factione, libidene, avaritia, arrogantia, somno, desidia essent depravata....inter haec plebs Dei et optimus quisque probro atque ludibrio habebatur." Historia, chapter 51, MPL 20:159-160.