

# 1 | An Introduction to Prudentius: A Spanish Poet for the Martyrs

Written in heaven are the names of two martyrs. Christ has entered them there in letters of gold, while on earth He has recorded them in letters of blood. For this the land of Spain has the fortune to be held in honour through all the world.

*Peristephanon* 1: Emeterius and Chelidonius<sup>1</sup>

This book was set in motion by my reading two poems by Prudentius written at some time during the last years of the fourth century AD or the early years of the fifth. These poems contained ekphraseis of wall paintings illustrating the *passiones* of the martyrs Cassian and Hippolytus displayed at their shrines in Italy.<sup>2</sup> Prudentius’ emotional experiences at the tombs and the paintings’ inspirational effect on him prompted me to examine the poems’ historical context and the background of this Hispano-Roman Christian author, writing when ideas about the representations of martyrs in art and literature were still in their infancy and visual culture in Hispania was still dominated by non-Christian imagery. The poems were included in the *Peristephanon*: a collection of fourteen poems celebrating the lives and deaths of martyrs. Prudentius’ dedication to his Christian belief, to martyr veneration, and to his country is encapsulated by the words, quoted above, honouring the saints Emeterius and Chelidonius who were martyred in Prudentius’ home town of Calagurris (Calahorra). This patriotic praise of Spanish martyrs substantiates my proposal that the poet initially directed his work to an audience located in Hispania. Prudentius’ identity as a Hispano-Roman Christian is demonstrated in the choice of saints he commemorated in the *Peristephanon*: five were from Italy, the centre of the

<sup>1</sup> *Peristephanon* (henceforth *Perist.*) 1: 1–4, ed. and tr. H. Thomson, *Prudentius*, 2 vols, LCL (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1949 and 1953), 99; ‘Scripta sunt caelo duorum martyrum vocabula, aureis quae Christus illic adnotavit litteris, sanguinis notis eadem scripta terries tradidit. Pollet hoc felix per ordem terra Hibera stemmate’, Prudentius, *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, CCSL 126, ed. M. Cunningham (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966). This Latin text is used throughout the book for Prudentius’ works.

<sup>2</sup> *Perist.* 9 and 11; although in modern times ekphrasis is considered to be a description of a work of art, it was defined by the *Progymnasmata*, the rhetorical books of instruction, as aiming ‘to place a subject before the eyes’. R. Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 17–19.

Roman Christian empire in the West, and, more importantly, thirty-eight Spanish saints in total are celebrated within six of the poems. In the same way that Prudentius' poetry emphasized his Spanish roots I have followed suit in emphasizing his Spanish background.

My aim has therefore been to place the collection of *Peristephanon* poems within the fabric of Prudentius' life and times and that of his audience in Hispania, exploring the social, cultural, and religious affiliations of this group. Prudentius' mission to encourage the Christian commitment of his audience will be seen against the backdrop of ever-present fears which permeate his verses concerning heresy, the frailty of orthodox belief, and the recrudescence of pagan worship.<sup>3</sup> I investigate the transmission of ideas and influences which informed Prudentius' writing – as well as the influence of Hispania itself – including the emergence of the cult of martyr worship and its reception in Hispania, and the acceptance of imagery as an instrument for Christian propagation and its relationship to the visual experiences which the poet described in his poems for Cassian and Hippolytus.

## Methodology and Sources

Earlier studies on Prudentius do not, in general, focus upon the poet's Spanish background and identity. These studies have often been classicists' readings of his work, where emphasis has been placed by scholars on the form, language, and construction of his poetry, and on his debt to Latin classical authors, such as Vergil and Horace.<sup>4</sup> This book departs from these

<sup>3</sup> 'Pagan' is used to describe non-Christian worship, as this was the word employed by Prudentius himself. See *Cathemerinon* (henceforth *Cath.*) 11, 87: 'pagana gens' and *Contra Symmachum* (henceforth *C.Symm.*) 1, *Praefatio*, 6: 'gens pagana'.

<sup>4</sup> Works emphasising these aspects of Prudentius' poetry include: A.-M. Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); M. Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation: Prudentius and Classical Mythology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); M. Roberts, *Poetry and the Cult of the Martyrs: The Liber Peristephanon of Prudentius* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); L. Rivero García, *La poesía de Prudencio* (Caceres: Universidad de Huelva Publicaciones, 1996); M. Lühken, *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus: Zur Vergil- und Horazrezeption des Prudentius (Hypomnemata)* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002); C. Witke, 'Recycled Words: Vergil, Prudentius and Saint Hippolytus', in R. Rees (ed.), *Romane Memento: Vergil in the Fourth Century* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 128–40; M. Mastrangelo, *The Roman Self in Late Antiquity: Prudentius and the Poetics of the Soul* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); M. Malamud, *Hamartigenia: The Origin of Sin* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2011); A. Dykes, *Reading Sin in the World: The Hamartigenia of Prudentius and the Vocation of the Responsible Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); G. O'Daly, *Days Linked by Song: Prudentius' Cathemerinon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

traditional approaches by combining archaeological and art historical evidence with written sources. It thus sets the poet in a broader context that acknowledges the importance of material culture, as well as literary culture and socio-cultural networks. This interdisciplinary methodology has not been applied in depth before to Prudentius and his writing nor as an approach to contemporaneous writers.<sup>5</sup> Any material evidence (mainly artistic) that has been viewed as relevant to the poet's work has focused on his itinerant presence in Italy, rather than in his native Hispania.<sup>6</sup> Examining the material culture and visual record of fourth- and fifth-century Hispania itself contributes to a more complete picture of the physical, cultural, and religious landscape in which Prudentius and his audience lived, and thus increases our understanding of the opinions and attitudes expressed by him in his poetry. Although Prudentius' audience was initially located among a cultured elite of his homeland, his work indicates an anticipated audience in Southern Gaul.<sup>7</sup> While Prudentius' own words provide the backbone of our written evidence, other textual evidence from fourth and fifth-century Hispania is limited, and therefore recourse has been made to the more available written sources of Southern Gaul, particularly those pertaining to elite lives. Nonetheless, this book is concerned with Prudentius and Hispania and that is where its focus lies.

The material record of late fourth- and early fifth-century Hispania, as we shall see in Chapter 2, indicates a wealthy and cultivated elite living in often elaborate and richly decorated villas, but there are few signs that they were securely Christian in their beliefs. This is demonstrated by the dearth of archaeological evidence for churches (or even intra-*domus* shrines) in both rural and urban areas, and extant written evidence which shows concerns among fourth-century Spanish churchmen about continuing pagan

<sup>5</sup> L. Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). This brings together literary texts and archaeological remains to understand how early Christians (in general rather than a single author) engaged with image and architecture.

<sup>6</sup> For example, R. Pillinger, *Die Tituli Historiarum oder das sogenannte Dittochaeon des Prudentius* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980); L. Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2004), ch. 6; L. Gosserez, 'Les images divines de Prudence et l'art paléochrétien', *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 4 (1998), 337–53; the cover of Malamud's *Origin of Sin* is illustrated with an image of Adam and Eve from a fourth-century sarcophagus found in Rome. This overlooks the existence of the same image which appears on the fourth-century *Receptio Animae* sarcophagus found in Zaragoza (see Figure 5.15).

<sup>7</sup> Southern Gaul here, and in future references, approximates to the fourth-century provinces of Novempopulana, Narbonensis I and II, Viennensis, and the southern part of Aquitania. Prudentius celebrates Paulus of Narbonne and Genesius of Arles, together with his Spanish martyrs, in *Perist.* 4.34–6.

worship.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in spite of Prudentius' enthusiastic advocacy for the worship of martyrs, there is little physical evidence, such as shrines, for their veneration in Hispania and Southern Gaul. It is also apparent from examining the artistic record that, far from being informed on Christian iconography as praised by Prudentius in *Peristephanon* 9 and 11, the visual experience of the Hispano-Romans continued to be represented by non-Christian imagery in their surroundings, thus demonstrating the possibility of acceptance, if not worship, of pagan gods.

Based on such evidence, there is no certainty that Prudentius' audience were practising Christians. In the light of this, the reason why Prudentius felt such a need to propagate his faith through his verses becomes apparent. I consequently propose that, in order to carry out this mission, Prudentius adopted the role of 'villa-poet', bringing his Christian message to the elite who occupied the great villas, where he was 'part and parcel of their status apparatus' (as will be elucidated further in Chapter 2).<sup>9</sup> In this role Prudentius, through the dissemination of his poems, would have participated in the social and literary rituals of the Spanish aristocratic class within its network of patronage and *amicitia*. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to place these connections in the context of his attachment to his fortunate *terra Hibera* and to acknowledge how essential it was to him that this should be a Christian Hispania.<sup>10</sup>

This book has not been approached from the point of view of a classicist, although I recognize the importance of his classical heritage to Prudentius when creating a body of inspirational and didactic verse which could also give pleasure to a cultured and educated audience – both Christian and non-Christian. Moreover, I also acknowledge the relatively neglected Christian authors of fourth-century Hispania who furnished an indigenous literary culture for the edification and enlightenment of Prudentius and his co-religionists. However, although weight has been given to Prudentius' classical literary background in this book, there have already been substantial studies which have made significant contributions to our knowledge of the poetic structure of his

<sup>8</sup> Pacianus, *Paciani Barcinonensis Opera quae extant*, CCSL 69B. In *De Paenitentibus* 1.3, he complained of the continuing celebration of the pagan festival of the Fawn (Cervulus); Himerius of Tarragona sought papal advice on apostates who had returned to idolatry, *Siricius, Epistolae et Decreta*, Ep. 1 (*Siricius papa ad Himerium episcopum Tarraconensem*), 3, 4, PL 13.1136.

<sup>9</sup> K. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 179–80.

<sup>10</sup> *Perist.* 1.4.

*Peristephanon* poems, although it is more than twenty years since these were produced.<sup>11</sup>

Anne-Marie Palmer's book was the first major monograph, and still the most comprehensive, on the *Peristephanon*. Earlier Prudentian scholarship had concentrated on the *Psychomachia*, his allegorical epic of vice and virtue, the most popular of Prudentius' works in the Middle Ages.<sup>12</sup> At the heart of Palmer's work lies a discourse on Prudentius' debt to classical authors such as Vergil, Horace, and Ovid and the significance of his incorporation and imitation of their words in his poems.<sup>13</sup> Palmer's work, however, also provides a valuable analysis of the various sources, such as earlier martyr *acta*, for the stories of the saints in the *Peristephanon*. Palmer also highlights the contribution that these poems can make to our knowledge of martyr cults in the poet's period.<sup>14</sup>

Michael Roberts' book similarly emphasized Prudentius' importance in advertising the cult of the saints; Roberts also signalled his intention to set the poems in the context of Late Antique culture and spirituality, particularly with reference to the sanctity of a martyr's shrine.<sup>15</sup> He acknowledged, as I must, the debt to the inspirational work of Peter Brown on the growth of the martyr cult phenomenon during the fourth century.<sup>16</sup> However, the Late Antique culture which Roberts aimed to contextualise was represented for him predominantly by classical texts. Although he touched on the visual

<sup>11</sup> Palmer, *Prudentius*; Roberts, *Poetry*; Malamud, in *A Poetics of Transformation* examined both the *Peristephanon* and the *Psychomachia*. Her book traced models in classical literature and mythology which Prudentius used in both of these works, emphasising the relationship between the saint Hippolytus and the story of the doomed Greek youth Hippolytus.

<sup>12</sup> For example, M. Smith, *Prudentius' Psychomachia: A Reexamination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); S. Nugent, *Allegory and Poetics: The Structure and Imagery of Prudentius' Psychomachia* (Frankfurt; New York: P. Lang, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> Palmer, *Prudentius*, chs 4–6; Prudentius' debt to these authors is a recurring theme among classicists, from the eighteenth-century Richard Bentley's *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus* to, more recently, C. Witke, 'Recycled Words'; see also n. 4 above.

<sup>14</sup> Palmer, *Prudentius*, chs 7, 8; P. Castillo Maldonado, 'Angelorum Participes: The Cult of the Saints in Late Antique Spain', in K. Bowes and M. Kulikowski (eds), *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 151–88, on Prudentius as a source for the martyr cults, esp. pp. 179–85; see ch. 3 for discussion of Prudentius as a reliable source for these cults.

<sup>15</sup> Roberts, *Poetry*, 1–5. Roberts places a strong emphasis on Prudentius' choice of complex language, noting the effectiveness of his use of polysemy used to express the 'indeterminacies of time and place' which occurred at the sacred spaces at the shrines, 194–6.

<sup>16</sup> Roberts, *Poetry*, 7; P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 3. Brown's oft-quoted proposition that 'the graves of the saints were privileged places where Heaven and Earth met' is exemplified by Prudentius' reference to the tombs of Emeterius and Chelidonius. 'Hic locus dignus tenendis ossibus visus deo' – 'This place has seemed to God worthy to keep their bones.' *Perist.* 1.5.

culture in Italy that lay behind the Cassian and Hippolytus poems, he did not make any connection with the visual culture which existed in the poet's own native land. A more recent full-scale Anglophone study on Prudentius by Marc Mastrangelo returned exclusively to the poet's literary constructs, usefully proposing that Prudentius synthesised Roman pagan history with biblical narratives, in an intertextual dialogue, to present a Christian salvation history with the martyrs as new epic heroes.<sup>17</sup> Mastrangelo's Prudentius thus continues to be defined by his Roman identity – he is a *vir Romanus*, albeit a Christian one.

Prudentius is today known as one of the earliest and finest of the Christian poets. He has attracted scholarly attention in Spain, his homeland: most Anglophone studies, however, like those of Palmer, Roberts, and Mastrangelo, overlook the relevant Spanish primary and secondary sources. By contrast, this book utilises Spanish-language resources, in particular evidence from archaeological and art historical researches.<sup>18</sup> Until more recently access to current Spanish Late Antique scholarship has proved difficult for anyone unfamiliar with Iberian languages.<sup>19</sup> Bowes and Kulikowski's volume *Hispania in Late Antiquity*, however, did much to remedy this situation.<sup>20</sup> It presented an up-to-date synthesis of developments in the history and archaeology of the period in a series of essays in English, accessing Spanish scholarship, many by Spanish writers. These essays explore topics ranging from cities and villas to religion and the economy. In the introduction to this book the editors point out that until more than twenty-five years ago, Spanish historiography centred on issues of Spanish

<sup>17</sup> Mastrangelo, *The Roman Self*, 1–7. This book also discusses the *Psychomachia*; Prudentius' use of intertextuality to create a fresh form in the *Cathemerinon* and *Apotheosis* poems is also recently examined in C. Heinz, *Mehrfache Intertextualität bei Prudentius* (Frankfurt, Oxford: P. Lang, 2007); C. O'Hogan, 'An Intertextual Journey in Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 9', *Mnemosyne*, 67 (2014), 270–88, on Prudentius' Roman journey and its intertextual relationship to the travels of Aeneas.

<sup>18</sup> For example, research centred around Prudentius' home town of Calagurris; U. Espinosa Ruiz, *Calagurris Iulia* (Logroño: Ayuntamiento de Calahorra, 1984); *Calahorra: bimilenario de su fundación: actas del I Symposium de Historia de Calahorra* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1984).

<sup>19</sup> Access to Spanish speakers outside of Spain can still be problematic as many publications are regional, with the national *Archivo Español de Arqueología* (AEspA) proving the exception, although in Portugal the situation is more centralised, S. Keay, 'Recent Archaeological Work in Roman Iberia (1990–2002)', *JRS*, 43 (2003), 146–211. This article contains useful comparatively recent sources for Iberian archaeological research; there are now Spanish journals available online, such as *Kalakorikos*, a local journal focusing on the history and archaeology of Calahorra.

<sup>20</sup> K. Bowes and M. Kulikowski (eds), *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005).

Catholicism and nationality. It focused on the Visigoths as a way of confirming a Spanish Catholic identity. The study of Roman history between early imperial Hispania and the invasions of AD 409 by Sueves, Alans, and Vandals was neglected and seen as a period of decline. Archaeological sites were often dug with reference to historical dates, destruction layers being frequently attributed to textually attested third-century invasions and the so-called 'third-century crisis' or to fifth-century invasions, while emphasis tended to be placed on art and architecture. This has now changed and the quality of excavations and publication standards has substantially increased.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of these developments, the methodological approach employed in this book has not yet been incorporated into other studies of Prudentius – an approach essential in order to understand the poet and his works. A true picture of the poet cannot be painted without accessing the material evidence from fourth- and fifth-century Hispania which provides the background to his life.

## Prudentius on Himself

Aurelius Prudentius Clemens' rural residence was most likely located near to the town of Calagurris, which lies beside the river Ebro in northern Spain.<sup>22</sup> Here in the bountiful Spanish countryside he claimed to lead an ordered existence, bound by Christian observance.<sup>23</sup> Although travels as an imperial bureaucrat and as a pilgrim may have taken him away from his home periodically, he seems to have been settled there permanently later in life. We cannot know, however, if Prudentius' settled existence was challenged by the invasions of Hispania by the forces of the usurper Constantine and those of the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans, c.AD 409.<sup>24</sup> The

<sup>21</sup> For example, S. Maloney and J. Hale, 'The Villa of Torre de Palma (Alto Alentejo)', *JRA*, 9 (1996), 275–94. 1950s and 60s archaeology had focused on this villa's mosaics. However, re-excavation post-1987 informed on construction techniques and rural economic functions previously unexplored, and utilised modern dating methods; in contrast, at the fourth-century villa El Ruedo (first excavated 1989–90), although containing an important statuary collection, initially a holistic view was taken of this complex rural settlement, D. Vaquerizo Gil, 'La villa romana de El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba), paradigma de asentamiento rural en Baetica', in C. Fernández Ochoa, V. García-Entero, and F. Gil Sendino (eds), *Las villae en el occidente del Imperio: arquitectura y función: IV Coloquio Internacional de Arqueología en Gijón* (Gijón: Trea, 2008), 261–83.

<sup>22</sup> See pp. 12–13 below.

<sup>23</sup> *Cath.* 3.41–80 in particular describes the gathering of crops and fruits of the field. The *Cathemerinon* poems were composed to be read diurnally and seasonally.

<sup>24</sup> Orosius, *Historiarum adversum Paganos, Libri VII.* 40–1, CSEL 5; *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of*



poet wrote a preface to his collected works which can be dated to AD 405. There is no indication that Prudentius survived long after that time, since it is unlikely that he could have avoided some reference to these invasions in any subsequent poems, or perhaps even to the sack of Rome in AD 410.<sup>25</sup> His only specific mention of the troubles which dogged the empire during his lifetime is a eulogistic report of the Roman victory over the Goths at Pollentia in AD 402.<sup>26</sup> In fact, it is noticeable that throughout his work there is little awareness of the political and hostile events which were taking place around him (or perhaps he chose not to make poetic capital of them).<sup>27</sup> The focus and purpose of Prudentius' poems were always to praise the Christian God and to spread His message to an audience centred in the poet's Spanish homeland, and probably in adjacent Southern Gaul.

Prudentius' proselytising sentiments are most clearly and succinctly set out in the *Praefatio*, which also contains the most conspicuous, if sparse, autobiographical information that the poet has chosen to give to us.<sup>28</sup> Often the overture to any study of Prudentius has been through allusion to the contents of the *Praefatio*, as a means of trying to contextualise him.<sup>29</sup> Before considering the content of this poem, however, I prefer to question this tradition and begin by looking at the *Epilogus*: the piece which normally concludes his collection of poems.<sup>30</sup> The *Epilogus* hints subtly at Prudentius' view of his world and begins with these verses:

To God the Father he who is devout, faithful, guiltless and pure, offers the gifts of his conscience which the blessed soul within him has in plenty; another again cuts his wealth short to give a living to the needy. For my part I dedicate my swift

*the Roman Empire*, ed. and tr. R. Burgess (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 15–17, at AD 409–11, 82–3. Albeit partial, the Christian Orosius describes the defence of Spain by Didymus and Verinianus on behalf of Emperor Honorius and the devastation of property and people subsequent to these invasions. Similarly, Hydatius writes about 'the barbarians who had entered Spain and pillaged it'.

<sup>25</sup> J.-L. Charlet, 'Aesthetic Trends in Late Latin Poetry (325–410)', *Philologus*, 132.1 (1988), 74–85, 74; Palmer, *Prudentius*, 31.

<sup>26</sup> *C. Symm.* 2, 696–720.

<sup>27</sup> *Prudence*, ed. and tr. M. Lavarenne, Collection Budé, 4 vols (Paris: "Les Belles Lettres", 1990), vol. III, 90, notes 'l'habitude de notre poète d'éviter l'actualité dans le choix de ses sujets'.

<sup>28</sup> *Praefatio* (henceforth *Praef.*), 1–21.

<sup>29</sup> Palmer, *Prudentius*; I. Lana, *Due capitoli Prudenziiani: la biografia, la cronologia delle opere, la poetica* (Rome: Editrice Studium, 1962); Lavarenne, *Prudence*; Malamud, *Poetics*.

<sup>30</sup> Of the more-or-less complete extant manuscripts, the *Epilogus* is the final poem in the collection in the MSS families Ae, Ab, and Ba, except where these are partial, as in copies in Paris (Codex Parisinus Latinus 8084) and the Ambrosian Library. In the family Bb it follows verses from the *Cathemerinon* or the *Peristephanon*. Discussion of the form of the editions of the collection are given by the following: Cunningham; Lavarenne, *Prudence*; J. Bergman, *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina*, CSEL 61.



iambics and quick-running trochees, for I lack holiness and am not rich enough to relieve the poor.<sup>31</sup>

With these words Prudentius confesses that he is unable to serve God as a saint-like figure or a moneyed lay person. He is insufficiently self-denying to join the church as a priest or monk, like contemporaries such as Jerome or Martin of Tours, or to adopt the life promoted by them of worldly renunciation and ascetic seclusion. On holy days Prudentius fasted to purify and strengthen a mind and body polluted by overindulgence.<sup>32</sup> After the fast, however, he returned to the abundant fruits of the field provided by God for man's enjoyment.<sup>33</sup> He does not seem to have subscribed to the diet of herbs and bread and a little fish advocated by Jerome.<sup>34</sup> The time-honoured Roman pleasure in food seems to point to a more worldly existence at Prudentius' Spanish villa than the ascetic community life proposed for him by some scholars – for him 'the Christian way of life, although austere in certain respects, is fully compatible with much traditional Roman practice.'<sup>35</sup>

As Kim Bowes has pointed out, in her recent exploration of Christian domestic worship in Late Antiquity, however, a growing number of elites were pursuing villa-based ascetic regimes.<sup>36</sup> In Spain Jerome's correspondents, Lucinius and his wife, Theodora, lived on their estate in chaste piety.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile Priscillian attracted a group around him who followed the ascetic demands of his teaching.<sup>38</sup> These followers were drawn from noble families including bishops and also commoners, probably those attached

<sup>31</sup> *Epilogus* (henceforth *Epil.*) 1–10: 'Inmolat patri deo pius fidelis innocens pudicus dona conscientiae quibus beata mens abundat intus. Alter et pecuniam recidit, unde vicitent egeni. Nos citos iambicos sacramus et rotatiles trochaeos sanctitatis indigi nec ad levamen pauperum potentes', tr. Thomson, 373.

<sup>32</sup> *Cath.* 7.6–19, e.g. excesses of 'vini atque somni'.

<sup>33</sup> *Cath.* 8, 'The Hymn after Fasting', celebrates the pleasure of eating – '[we] enjoy amply loaded tables, keen pleasure fills us', tr. O'Daly, *Days*, 235, 15–16; in *Cath.* 3.36–85, God is praised for providing food for man's enjoyment, 'fruenda patent homini', 84; Prudentius' apparent distaste for animal meat could be related to the animal carnage he described in pagan sacrifices. See C. Symm. 1.451–4, for example.

<sup>34</sup> Jerome, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi, Epistulae*, CSEL 55, as recommended in his letter to Laeta, *Ep.* 107.10: 'cibus eius holuscum sit et similia raroque pisciculi'.

<sup>35</sup> K. Bowes, "'Une coterie espagnole pieuse': Christian Archaeology and Christian Communities in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Hispania", in Bowes and Kulikowski, *Hispania*, 189–258. At 254 Bowes refers to Charlet and Evenpoel; O'Daly, *Days*, 239, referring to the enjoyment of food described in *Cath.* 8.

<sup>36</sup> Bowes, *Private Worship*, on estate asceticism, 152–7.

<sup>37</sup> Jerome, *Ep.* 75.2, to Theodora praising her chaste marriage to Lucinius.

<sup>38</sup> H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 70–3 on the teachings of Priscillian.

to the estates of their *domini*.<sup>39</sup> Sulpicius Severus set up an ascetic project at Primuliacum, near Narbonne, and similarly, Paulinus gathered a like-minded ascetic community together near the martyrrium he built for St Felix at Nola.<sup>40</sup> Although the details of Prudentius' religious lifestyle are unclear, he participated in the structured rituals of worship he set out in the *Liber Cathemerinon*: his prayers written to be said or sung at specific times of the day or year.<sup>41</sup> These villa-based devotions did not seem to require clergy, although it is apparent from the late fourth-century Council of Toledo that estates could maintain their own clergy.<sup>42</sup> In Prudentius' case, even if his daily religious life revolved around his own household, it would seem that he belonged to a larger Christian community, led by Valerianus, probably his bishop in Calagurris. This was the *venerande sacerdos* to whom he addressed his poem on Hippolytus, recommending that the martyr's feast day be included in this Hispanic community's yearly festivals.<sup>43</sup>

Although, therefore, Prudentius appears to have been part of some kind of Christian community, his words imply that he was insufficiently affluent to make substantial donations to the church and its dependants, in spite of elsewhere recommending that others should be giving lavishly to the poor.<sup>44</sup> Euergetic urges, such as supporting the construction and maintenance of public baths and other buildings, or the erection of statues honouring local worthies, had operated as a prestige currency for the Hispano-Romans of earlier times. To what extent these urges were replaced

<sup>39</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Sulpicii Severi: Libri Qui Supersunt, Chroniconum*, CSEL 1. *Chron.* 2.46.5–7; Bowes, *Private Worship*, 182–3.

<sup>40</sup> Paulinus of Nola, *Sancti Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani, Epistulae*, CSEL 29. Their lifestyles were shown in Paulinus' letters, for example, *Ep.* 1.1.6–10; *Ep.* 5, 6; *Ep.* 19.4; *Ep.* 23.6–8; *Ep.* 24.9.

<sup>41</sup> The *Cathemerinon* poems set out daily prayers for: (1) cockcrow, (2) morning, (3) and (4) before and after eating, (5) lamplighting, and (6) before sleeping. There are also prayers for: (7) and (8) before and after fasting, (9) all hours, (10) the burial of the dead, and (11) and (12) Christmas and Epiphany.

<sup>42</sup> *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, ed. and tr. (Sp.) J. Vives (Barcelona: CSIC, Instituto Enrique Flóres, 1963), Concilio de Toledo I, AD 397–400, 19–33. Canon 5 refers to clergy attached to a 'place where there is a church, either in castelli or a vicus or villas' – 'in loco in quo est ecclesia aut castelli aut vicus aut villae', 21.

<sup>43</sup> *Perist.* 11.179: *Perist.* 11.233–6. The bishop-led community was most likely at Calagurris, Prudentius' home town (see below at pp. 12–13), since a baptistery was located there according to Prudentius. *Perist.* 8 is entitled 'de loco in quo martyres passi sunt nunc baptisterium est Calagorra'. A bishop called Valerianus of Calagurris appears in a later addition to Jerome's *de viris illustribus* according to J. Madoz, 'Valeriano, obispo Calagurritano, escritor del siglo v', in *Historia Sacra*, 3 (1950), 131–7; Zaragoza has also been suggested as his see as a 'Valerius' was at the church council there in AD 380. See, for discussion, M. Cunningham, 'The Nature and Purpose of the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius', *Sacris Erudiri*, 14 (1963), 40–5.

<sup>44</sup> *Cath.* 7.216–20, following the words of Matthew 19.21 – if you wish to be perfect, sell everything you possess and give to the poor.