

PARADOSIS

*Contributions to the History of Early Christian Literature and Theology*

XXXVII

RICHARD SEAGRAVES

# PASCENTES CUM DISCIPLINA

A Lexical Study of the Clergy  
in the Cyprianic Correspondence

1993

UNIVERSITÄTSVERLAG FREIBURG SCHWEIZ



PARADOSIS

*Etudes de littérature et de théologie anciennes*

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XXXVII

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FONDÉE PAR

OTHMAR PERLER

ÉDITÉE PAR

DIRK VAN DAMME – OTTO WERMELINGER

RICHARD SEAGRAVES

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## PREFACE

Much has been written about the many diverse aspects of Cyprian of Carthage during the past century, but to my knowledge there has never been a lexical study devoted specifically and solely to his clergy. In this book I address that need. In addition to the examination of the technical terms concerning the clerics, a complementary investigation focuses upon other concepts which seem essential to Cyprian in the concept and in the exercise of his pastoral mission at Carthage: *justitia*, *auctoritas*, *potestas*, but primarily those of *disciplina* and *diligentia*.

The present work is the revision of a thesis that was accepted by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland early in 1992. I am very grateful to Professor Dirk Van Damme for his having first suggested this topic, and thereafter for his kind supervision, and also to Professor Otto Wermelinger for his many helpful comments and suggestions.

Many others have helped me, but in particular I must mention Professors A. J. Th. Eisenring of the University of Fribourg; Peter Hinchliff of Christ Church, Oxford; Graeme C. Clarke of the Australian National University, Canberra; George Berthold of St Anselm College, Manchester, New Hampshire, and especially Dr. Georg Luck of Johns Hopkins University.

The technical advice and professional assistance of Dr. Flavio Nuvolone of the Theology library at Fribourg and of Mr. Jürgen Tomasi of the University of Innsbruck have been invaluable. I admire the efficiency of the research librarians Gabriele König and Brigitt Humpeler of the Landesbibliothek of Vorarlberg in Bregenz, Austria; also that of the staff at the Stiftsbibliothek in St. Gallen, Switzerland. Professor Hermann Zeller, S.J. of the University of Innsbruck and Mr. Christoph G. Zinser of the University of Munich have also kindly helped me to obtain pertinent literature.

I am also grateful to Josef and Vera Bügler-Szász, to Dr Lothar Hess, to Karl Ricklin and to the other members of the Friends of Wettingen Abbey, all of Wettingen, who have contributed to the publication of this book.



# ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers (Westminster, Md: 1946 - )
Aug.	Augustinianum (Roma: 1961 - )
CCL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout: 1953 - )
CP	Classical Philology (Chicago: )
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. (Vienna: 1865 - )
CTC	Cyprien, Traités: Concordance, ed. P. Bouet, Ph. Fleury, A. Goulou, M. Zumghedau, [Alpha-Omega Reihe A: Lexika, Indizes Konkordanzen zur klassischen Philologie, LXVII] (Hildesheim - Zürich - New York: 1986)
DACL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie. (Paris: 1907 - 1953)
DS	H. Denzinger - A. Schönmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum, 36th ed., (Freiburg i. Br.-Barcelona-Rome: 1976)
DSp	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, publié sous la direction de M. Viller et J. de Guibert. (Paris: 1932 - )
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique. (Paris: 1903-1970)
Dig.	Digesta seu Pandectae, Justinian
EEC	Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. A. Di Berardino, tr. A. Walford. (Cambridge: 1992)
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. (Leipzig - Berlin: 1897 - )
HE	Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History, tr. K. Lake [Loeb series] (London: 1980)
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae: Inscriptiones Phocidis, Locridis, Aetoliae, Acarninae, Insularum Maris Ionii, ed. W. Dittenberger (1897)
ILS	H. Dessau, Inscriptiones Latinae selectae, III, 2 (Berlin: 1914)
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum (Münster: 1958 - )
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History. (London - Cambridge: 1950 - )
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies. (Oxford: 1 - 50: 1899-1949; ns: 1950 - )
LTK	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, 2. ed. (Freiburg i.Br.: 1957-1965)
MD	La Maison-Dieu (Paris: 1945 - )
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hannover: 1926 - )
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus . . . series graeca, accurate J.P. Migne. (Paris: 1857-1866)
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus . . . series latina, accurate J.P. Migne. (Paris: 1844-1864)
PLS	Patrologia latina, supplementum, ed. A. Hamman (Paris: 1958-1971)
PRE	Paulys Real-Encyclopädie, ed. G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, K. Mittelhaus, K. Ziegler. (Stuttgart: 1.Reihe, 1, 1894 - 21, 1963; 2.Reihe, 1, 1914 - 10, 1972; Suppl. 1, 1903 - 15, 1978; index 1980)
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (Stuttgart: 1950 - )
RB	Revue Bénédictine (Maredsous: 1890 - )
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique (Louvain: 1900 - )
RQ	Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte (Freiburg im Br.: 1887 - )
RSR	Recherches de science religieuse (Paris: 1910 - )
RTAM	Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale (Louvain: 1929 - )
SC	Sources chrétiennes (Paris: 1941 - )
SP	Studia Patristica (Berlin: 1957 - )
TA	Traditio Apostolica
TLL	Thesaurus Linguae Latinae. (Leipzig: 1900 - )



<b>TRE</b>	Theologische Realenzyklopädie. (Berlin: 1974 - )
<b>TWNT</b>	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. (Stuttgart: 1933 - 1979)
<b>ZKG</b>	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte (Stuttgart: 1877 - )
<b>ZKT</b>	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie (Wien: 1876 - )

## CYPRIAN'S WORKS

<i>De bon. pat.</i>	<i>De bono patientiae</i>
<i>Ad Demet.</i>	<i>Ad Demetrianum</i>
<i>De dom. or.</i>	<i>De dominica oratione</i>
<i>Ad Donat.</i>	<i>Ad Donatum</i>
<i>Ad Fort.</i>	<i>Ad Fortunatum</i>
<i>De hab. virg.</i>	<i>De habitu virginum</i>
<i>De laps.</i>	<i>De lapsis</i>
<i>De mort.</i>	<i>De mortalitate</i>
<i>De op. et el.</i>	<i>De opere et eleemosynis</i>
<i>Ad Quir. 1</i>	<i>Ad Quirinum, liber 1</i>
<i>Ad Quir. 2</i>	<i>Ad Quirinum, liber 2</i>
<i>Ad Quir. 3</i>	<i>Ad Quirinum, liber 3</i>
<i>De unit.</i>	<i>De ecclesiae catholicae unitate</i>
<i>De zel.</i>	<i>De zelo et livore</i>
<i>ep.</i>	<i>epistula</i>

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# INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is Caecilius Cyprianus, also called Thascius, the martyr and bishop of Carthage during the middle of the third century, and his clergy. Cyprian was most likely born in Carthage during the first decade of the third century and came from a family and background that prepared him to become a teacher of rhetoric at Carthage.<sup>1</sup> It has been claimed that Cyprian very probably was of senatorial rank.<sup>2</sup> He became a Christian later in life, owing in large part to the instruction which he received from the presbyter Caecilianus. It is extraordinary that, less than two years after his conversion, Cyprian was chosen Bishop of Carthage by the Christians there, though not without opposition from some of the local clerics. Nevertheless, his efforts withstood this resistance, and he went on to leave his personal mark on the structure and operation of the hierarchy in the Church.

Although he is not a member of the traditional quartet of the early great Church Doctors in the West, Cyprian is nonetheless a figure of immense importance to the Church. He did not stand on the threshold of the initial development of the hierarchy in the Church; at his entry into the Church the ecclesiastical structure of bishop, presbyter, and deacon had already been well established.<sup>3</sup> Hence, that interesting question will not be examined here.

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<sup>1</sup> On the life and work of Cyprian, see: V. Saxer, "Cyprian of Carthage," EEC (Cambridge: 1992), vol. 1, 211-212; T. Baumeister, "Der heilige Bischof. Überlegungen zur *Vita Cypriani*," SP 18,3, (1989), 275-282; U. Wickert, "Cyprian" in: Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte, hrsg. v. M. Greschat, Band 1: Alte Kirche (Stuttgart: 1984), 158-175; M. Bévenot, "Cyprian von Karthago," TRE 8 (1981), 246-254. On his secular career, see: H. Montgomery, "Saint Cyprian's Secular Heritage," Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to Rudi Thomsen (Aarhus: 1988), 214-223; G.W. Clarke, "The secular Profession of St. Cyprian of Carthage," Latomus 24 (1965), 633-638.

<sup>2</sup> T. Osawa, Das Bischofseinsetzungsverfahren bei Cyprian (Frankfurt a. M. - Bern: 1983), 181-182, and n. 42 at 181; H. Chadwick, "The Church of the Third Century in the West," The Roman West in the Third Century, ed. A. King and M. Henig, part i (London: 1981), 7; "Cyprian of Carthage, the first bishop of probably senatorial rank"; Th. Eschenburg, Über Autorität (Frankfurt a. M.: 1965), 3, maintains that Cyprian is "aus dem römischen Beamtenadel."

<sup>3</sup> G. Dix, "The Ministry in the Early Church c. A.D. 90-140," in K.E. Kirk, The Apostolic Ministry (London: 1946), 190; J. Fellermayr, Tradition und Sukzession im Lichte des römisch-antiken Erdenkens (München: 1979), 108, 204-207, 218f, 240ff, 321f; H. Kraft, "Dalla 'chiesa' originaria all'episcopato monarchico," Rivista di Storia

Cyprian did, however, contribute much to the structural hierarchy which he found in the Church as he assumed his see at Carthage. He adopted the Ignatian theme of obedience to the bishop and the Irenaeian theme of apostolic succession, but he proceeded to reverse the rôles of these two concepts as interpreted by Irenaeus. According to Cyprian, the succession of the Church is based on the succession of bishops.<sup>4</sup>

If we wish to learn about the essence and activity of the professional leaders of the early Church and the structure of their hierarchy, Cyprian is an excellent source for our research, since he was a vigorous and epoch-making leader of the Church at Carthage. In witness of this fact, one may observe the many initial and original accomplishments of this bishop. Cyprian, for example, is the first Christian bishop to have been martyred in North Africa, the first Christian to be the subject of a biography which is still extant,<sup>5</sup> the first person in the Church to formulate the concept that the eucharist is our sacrificial offering of the body and blood of Our Lord to God,<sup>6</sup> the first Christian theologian to compose thematically a treatise on the Church, the *De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate*, and he was also the first to develop the concept of the Church as *Mater Ecclesia*.<sup>7</sup>

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e Letteratura Religiosa 22 (1986), 411-438; R.M. Hübner, "Die Anfänge von Diakonat, Presbyterat und Episkopat in der frühen Kirche" in: *Das Priestertum in der Einen Kirche*, A. Rauch u. P. Imhof (Hg.). (Aschaffenburg: 1987), 45-89; T. P. Rausch, *Authority and Leadership in the Church* (1989), 55-56.

<sup>4</sup> M. F. Wiles, "The Theological Legacy of St. Cyprian," *JEH* 14 (1963), 144. See *ep.* 32.1: "inde per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio et ecclesiae ratio decurrit ut ecclesia super episcopos constituatur et omnis actus ecclesiae per eosdem praepositos gubernetur"; E.G. Jay, "From Presbyter-Bishop to Bishops and Presbyters. Christian Ministry in the Second Century: a Survey," in: *Second Century* 1 (1981), 125-162. On succession *vs.* participation of bishops: E.L. Mascall, "Collegiality, Reunion and Reform: 1," *Theology* 69 (1966), 201-208.

<sup>5</sup> The *Vita* by his deacon, Pontius, ed. Hartel, (Wien: 1871), xc-cx; Wiles (1963), 139; G.S. Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian* (London: 1968), 35.

<sup>6</sup> *ep.* 63.17: "passio est enim Domini sacrificium quod offerimus." See M.-B. v. Stritzky, "Erwägungen zum Decischen Opferbefehl und seinen Folgen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Beurteilung durch Cyprian," *RQ* 81 (1986), 1-25, at 11: "Da er [Cyprian] der erste Kirchenschriftsteller ist, der in einem seiner Briefe [*ep.* 63] eine zusammenhängende Abhandlung über die Eucharistie vorgelegt hat" See also: Wiles (1963), 148; Walker (1968), 38.

<sup>7</sup> See H. v. Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: 1953), 295; J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity*, (Washington, D.C.:

Not only is Cyprian the earliest writer to ascribe a *primatus* to Peter,<sup>8</sup> but he was also the first to enunciate the principle of the unilateral authority of bishops, our first witness for the ecclesiastical use of the term, "the college (of bishops),"<sup>9</sup> and the first writer to maintain that a bishop is responsible only to God.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he is the first author to make the transition from universal sacerdotalism of the New Testament to the particular sacerdotalism of a later age.<sup>11</sup> Thus, it seems appropriate to focus our attention: (1) on the clergy at Carthage under Cyprian's innovating leadership and (2) on this bishop's own understanding of the clergy.

The aim of the following thesis is to explore, by means of investigating his own writings and those of certain contemporaries, Cyprian's concept of the various members of the clergy at Carthage. What was Cyprian's view of the office of bishop, of presbyter, of deacon, of subdeacon, of lector, of exorcist, of acolyte in the Church at Carthage? Was there a rank of *fossor* there? What were the qualities and duties required of each of these grades in the clergy at his time? What were the specific themes which motivated Cyprian and his clerics in their ministry? How did he view and use the general terms which designate the clergy in the society of the late Roman Empire in North Africa? These are the questions we seek to

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1943). Novatian in Rome is the first educated author of theology in Latin: Clarke II, 119; d'Alès, *Novatian* (Paris: 1925) and R.J. Simone, *The Treatise of Novatian The Roman Presbyter on the Trinity* (Rome: 1970); Gültow (*Tübingen*: 1975).

<sup>8</sup> Walker, (1968), 26. On the interpretations of this *primatus*, see: H. Koch, *Cathedra Petri*. Neue Untersuchungen über die Anfänge der Primatslehre (Gießen: 1930); M. Bévenot, "St. Cyprian and the Papacy: Musings on an Old Problem," *Dublin Review* 228 (1954), 161-168; M. Maccarrone, "'Cathedra Petri' und die Idee der Entwicklung des päpstlichen Primats vom 2. bis 4. Jahrhundert," *Saeculum* 13 (1962), 278-292; T.G. Ring, *Auctoritas bei Tertullian, Cyprian und Ambrosius*. [Cassiciacum, 29] (Würzburg: 1975), 93-110; M. Bévenot, "Cyprian's Platform in the Rebaptism Controversy," *Heythrop Journal* (1978), 123-142.

<sup>9</sup> cf. *ep.* 55.1.1. See also Ch. Munier, "Authority in the Church," *EEC* (1992), 103-104; V. Saxer, *Vie liturgique et quotidienne à Carthage vers le milieu du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Vatican: 1969), 87; Walker (1968), 84, n. 39; also *ep.* 59.5.2.

<sup>10</sup> M. Bévenot, "A Bishop is Responsible to God Alone (St. Cyprian)," *RSR* 39/40 (1951/52), 397-415 at 398. See also *ep.* 59.2: "actum est de episcopatus vigore et de ecclesiae gubernandae sublimi et divina potestate." In *ep.* 71, the final words clearly indicate that the ultimate decision rests with the individual bishops. See also *ep.* 3.1, *ep.* 57.5.2, *ep.* 69, *ep.* 72.3.2, *ep.* 73.26.1, *Sent. episc.* 87 *praefatio*, *de unit.* 4.

<sup>11</sup> Wiles, (1963), 144. See Walker (1968), 33f. and 92, n. 41.



answer in our research. With the answers thus obtained, we hope to grasp better Cyprian's contribution to the "significant development in the understanding of the nature of the ministry itself."<sup>12</sup>

The method used in this lexical study is primarily a re-examination of the text of the letters in the Cyprianic collection in order to discover the thought and practice of Cyprian with respect to his clergy at Carthage. To investigate the specific terms relating to the clergy of Carthage and their ministry, I have produced with the aid of the computer and the Oxford Micro-OCP programme a concordance and an *index verborum* of the letters in the Cyprianic correspondence. This has provided a comprehensive and accurate means to determine and examine Cyprian's vocabulary as it relates to and reveals his comprehension of the clergy at Carthage in the middle of the third century.

In order to reveal Cyprian's understanding of the clerical status of his era, I have studied the entire collection of his correspondence. In particular, scrutiny has been focused on passages in the letters which discuss or are concerned with the clergy in general as well as with individual clerics. For each clerical grade, from bishop to the lower ministers, the general plan comprises: (1) a consideration of the terminology used and its origin; (2) the method of appointment and installation; (3) the rôle or functions of the cleric; and (4) the qualities and traits desired and required in the cleric. In the consideration of each clerical rank, attention has been directed to the various terms used to describe the particular rank, where there is more than one. The context of the various apposite passages has also been studied to discover Cyprian's thinking in the categories of clerical appointment, function, and qualities at Carthage.

The present work has two main divisions. The first treats of the various members in the Carthaginian clergy, as discussed above. The second investigates the two concepts and ideals which form the basis and motivation for Cyprian's pastoral activity at Carthage: those of *disciplina* and *diligentia*. These key concepts are examined in Chapter IV. Each of these two terms has been classified according to its specific meanings, after every use of the term has first been considered in its context.

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<sup>12</sup> Wiles (1963), 148.

This objective can best be realised by a reconsideration of the functions of every bishop (*pastor, sacerdos, doctor* and *iudex*) as given in Chapter I, yet in Chapter VI attention is focused on these rôles as applied to Cyprian's own pastoral activity. By learning about his fundamental theory and practice as bishop, we also become aware of the principles and methods Cyprian used, as well as those which he wished all the members of his clergy at Carthage to use.

The text of the Cyprianic correspondence used has of necessity been that of Hartel.<sup>13</sup> Early in 1991 Brepols, the publisher of the series *Corpus Christianorum*, announced that the new critical edition by Dr G. F. Diercks was in preparation, but it has not been published at the time I completed this study. The subdivision of sections and subsections in the letters is that as used by Canon Bayard and Dr. G. W. Clarke. The text of Cyprian's treatises used has been that of the critical edition in the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*.<sup>14</sup> The text of *de habitu virginum* and of *Quod idola dii non sint* is that in Hartel's edition of 1868.

English versions of the letters are, unless otherwise indicated, those of Dr Clarke.<sup>15</sup> The English translation of the treatises *de lapsis* and *de ecclesiae catholicae unitate* by M. Bévenot has been consulted and used.<sup>16</sup> For the remaining ten treatises, the English version is taken from the edition of Professor R. J. Deferrari.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> CSEL, vol. iii. pars ii ed. Hartel (Wien: 1871). I use the version of Johnson Reprint Company Limited (London: 1965). Full title in Sources below.

<sup>14</sup> CCL, vol. iii (Turnhout: 1972). Full title in Sources below.

<sup>15</sup> The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage, translated and annotated by G.W. Clarke, vols. 1 - 4., in the series ACW, 43, 44, 46, 47. (New York and Ramsey, NJ: 1984 - 1989), referred to as Clarke I, Clarke II, Clarke III and Clarke IV. I am grateful to Dr. Clarke and his publishers, Paulist Press, for permission to use his translations and other materials.

<sup>16</sup> Cyprian: *De Lapsis* and *De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate*, text and translation by Maurice Bévenot, S.J. [Oxford Early Christian Texts] (Oxford: 1971).

<sup>17</sup> Saint Cyprian. Treatises. Tr. and ed. Roy J. Deferrari. (Washington, DC: 1958). I use the reprinted version of 1977.

# PROLEGOMENA

Before proceeding to the investigation of our primary task, it will be well to consider the actual state of research on the issue of Cyprian and his clergy at Carthage by a review of some of the major monographs during these last hundred years. In addition, attention will be focused on the general terms which Cyprian employs in reference to the clergy. In the subsequent chapters the specific terms associated with the various clerical ranks will be the subject of our investigation.

## A. STATUS QUAESTIONIS

The excellent monograph of the youthful Otto RITSCHL in 1885 has two main divisions.<sup>1</sup> The first deals with Cyprian's ecclesiastical efficacy. The second, with the constitution of the Christian church at Carthage as drawn from the Cyprianic correspondence. His thesis presents the situation of Cyprian's rule as Bishop there from the standpoint of church law and church morality. Although certain details respecting the members of the clergy appear *passim* in the first part, it is in the second that RITSCHL begins the final section of some thirty pages by discussing the distinction between the clergy and the laity. It is also in this section that he treats of the bishop, presbyter, deacon and the lower clerics (213-237). The author makes the important point that the cultic and leadership rôles of the bishop are not to be separated in the consciousness of Cyprian (220), and indeed that both these rights are in correlation to each other (226). RITSCHL accentuates the point that our knowledge of Cyprian and his views on episcopacy often derive from the Bishop's own expression and is therefore only subjective (215).<sup>2</sup> But that is precisely the knowledge we seek in this study. We wish to learn what Cyprian thinks about the clergy of his diocese.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Edward White BENSON, devoted thirty years toward the end of his life to prepare

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<sup>1</sup> O. Ritschl, *Cyprian von Karthago und die Verfassung der Kirche* (Göttingen: 1885).

<sup>2</sup> Ritschl's argument is not compelling in the following points: a.) it is probable that the rite of imposition of hands was usual at the ordination of all the various clerics (170); b.) all bishops were at that time chosen from the presbyters (184); and c.) *sacerdos* sometimes means presbyter (231).

this comprehensive study on the life work of Cyprian.<sup>3</sup> The author states that he undertook this study of Cyprian, who "shewed how men might gravely dissent without one wound to peace," with a view to the unity of the Church. In some passages it seems as if BENSON emulates Pontius in his eulogistic comments about Cyprian; however, one must also acknowledge the painstaking historical scholarship of the author. His is a chronological account of the Christian life and literary works of Cyprian, always well documented. First and foremost for Cyprian, according to BENSON, the bishop is the sacrificing priest (33). Even though the author discusses the legacy of clerical appeals regarding the law of the *lapsi* (230-235) and makes other occasional comments on the members of the clergy at Carthage, he presents us with a well-modulated study of the times and works of Cyprian. All the same, he does not focus sharply or systematically upon questions touching the clergy under Cyprian. BENSON's work, however, a monumnetal accomplishment in its global and thorough treatment, remains a classic today and still merits the attention and the admiration of students of Cyprian.

In 1914 the eminent Paul MONCEAUX published a compact but interesting volume on Cyprian, but it has the disadvantage for us that he seldom mentions the clergy serving under Cyprian.<sup>4</sup> The author has many good things to state about Cyprian, but he does not focus his comments on the clergy at Carthage. A far more serious monograph by MONCEAUX had appeared earlier.<sup>5</sup> This is a thorough and comprehensive study of the life and times of Cyprian with an especial emphasis on various pertinent documents and inscriptions. MONCEAUX also investigates the inauthentic works sometimes alleged to be from the pen of Cyprian. Toward the end of this work is a brief section on Cyprian's concept of the hierarchy (335-338) and his understanding of his own rôle as bishop (341-346). Yet there is no systematic discussion of the clergy at Carthage by this renowned historian.

Several years later, in 1922, Adhémar D'ALÈS brought to light his study on the theology of Cyprian in the series *Bibliothèque de*

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<sup>3</sup> E.W. Benson, *Cyprian. His Life. His Times. His Work.* (London: 1897).

<sup>4</sup> P. Monceaux, *Saint Cyprien. Évêque de Carthage.* (Paris: 1914).

<sup>5</sup> P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, tome deuxième: *Saint Cyprien et son temps* (Paris: 1902; reprint: Bruxelles: 1963).

*théologie historique*.<sup>6</sup> This author presents the theology of Cyprian with an emphasis on ecclesiology and the sacraments, followed by a brief section dedicated to the Christian life at Carthage. D'ALÈS makes reference to the capacity of presbyters and even deacons to receive the *exomologesis* of a penitent (273, 281); he contrasts the meaning of *exomologesis* for Tertullian, as a public profession of penitence and voluntary expiation, and that of Cyprian, for whom *exomologesis* was primarily made to the priest, indicating penitence and only secondarily as satisfaction offered to God (276). In his chapter on the sacrament of Order, the author refers to *ordinatio clerica* and *ordinatio ecclesiastica* (305); also to *ordinatio iusta et legitima*, which includes the requisite qualities of episcopal candidates and the participation of all the people in the election of the bishop (306). D'ALÈS further discusses briefly the deacon (309-312), presbyter (313-315), subdeacon (316), acolyte and exorcist (317), and finally the lector (318). Because of the design of this study, the author does not enter into a deeper consideration of the clergy.

In 1926 appeared a valuable volume dedicated solely to Cyprian.<sup>7</sup> Hugo KOCH provides a study which contains a detailed and excellent discussion of the *Bußfrage*, in particular with respect to the *lapsi*, in the thought and practice of Cyprian (211-264). In an appendix KOCH argues that Cyprian knew of no sacrament of penance (282), but it is abundantly clear from his own statements that this rite included a confession of sins and their remission through the agency of the bishop. Other than this section, the monograph contains no detailed elaboration of the hierarchy and the individual grades of the clergy at Carthage.

Just prior to World War II, Xavier S. THANI NAYAGAM composed and defended a dissertation concerning Cyprian at the University *de Propaganda Fide* in Rome. Owing to the upheaval caused by the war, its initial publication was in 1947.<sup>8</sup> This appears to be the first monograph which treats of the clergy under Cyprian in a specific and systematic manner. The author's approach is an historical one.

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<sup>6</sup> A. d'Alès, *La théologie de Saint Cyprien*. (Paris: 1922).

<sup>7</sup> H. Koch, *Cyprianische Untersuchungen*. [Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte hrg. v. K. Holl und H. Lietzmann] (Bonn: 1926).

<sup>8</sup> X.S. Thani Nayagam, *The Carthaginian Clergy during the Episcopate of Saint Cyprian*. (Colombo: 1947). I have used the American edition published at Tuticorin, South India in 1950.

His thesis provides us with a general overview and summary of the various clerics who worked at Carthage during the middle of the third century. Recent scholarship has rendered untenable some statements made by THANI NAYAGAM.<sup>9</sup> We may question with Professor FREND, for example, the high probability claimed by the author (at p. 2) that Carthage had been evangelized by missionaries from Rome in the early years of the second century.<sup>10</sup> The thesis in general, however, remains of interest because of certain archeological points made and the brief catalogue describing some of Cyprian's clerics at Carthage.<sup>11</sup>

In 1953 Hans VON CAMPENHAUSEN published his study of ecclesiastical office and its accompanying spiritual power.<sup>12</sup> This monograph begins with a discussion of the position and powers of Christ and the apostles, as well as that in the individual churches evangelized by Paul. After two illuminating chapters on tradition and succession, and on prophets and teachers (both respecting the second century), CAMPENHAUSEN next presents the reader with certain controversies in the West over the question of the sacrament of penance. It is here that he refers to the beginnings of a clerical discipline (236-241) and the doctrine of Tertullian on this issue (243-249). The final two major chapters discuss the position of Origen and that of Cyprian. Thus, it is in chapter 11 that one can learn the

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<sup>9</sup> G. Schöllgen, "Sportulae. Zur Frühgeschichte des Unterhaltsanspruchs der Kleriker," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 101 (1990), 1-20; at 3, n. 11, S. gives his general appraisal of Thani Nayagam's study as "*fehlerhaft*".

<sup>10</sup> W.H.C. Frend, "The *Seniores Laici* and the Origins of the Church in North Africa," *JTS* 18 (1961), 280-284, where F. speaks about the sacerdotalism of African bishops which bears a resemblance in outlook to that of contemporary Christians in Syria, and of "a Jewish or Judaeo-Christian environment out of which the North African Church developed in the second century A.D." In a later article, "Jews and Christians in Third Century Carthage," (Paris: 1978), 185-194, Frend states, at 187, that the argument of T.D. Barnes, *Tertullian, a Historical and Literary Survey* (Oxford: 1971) goes too far in rejecting a Jewish background for the origins of Christianity in North Africa. B., at 64, would admit only of an eastern origin. M. Walsh, *Christen und Caesaren: Die Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, (Freiburg - Würzburg: 1988), 146-148 relates the close connection of Christians in Alexandria with Jerusalem and Palestine.

<sup>11</sup> Some inaccuracies appear in Thani Nayagam's thesis; e.g., at 53, where he suggests that there were *ostiararii* at Carthage; at 55, an anachronistic reference to terce, sext, none and vespers at Carthage; at 85, that the lector Aurelius "in the meantime" sat with the presbyters (*ep.* 39.5.2).

<sup>12</sup> Campenhausen (1953).

author's views on Cyprian's concept of the office of bishop, the unity of the episcopate and the meaning of episcopal authority for the members of the local church (292-322). Because he must deal with the first three centuries of the Church's history, the author can only devote this one chapter to Cyprian; it presents primarily Cyprian's views of the bishop, and rarely considers the subordinate clerics.

G.S.M. WALKER, of the University of Leeds, in 1967 composed his ecumenical study in which he investigates afresh the churchmanship of Cyprian. As in the case of BENSON, this was the author's final book, and it appeared posthumously in 1968.<sup>13</sup> The author shows his deep grasp and understanding of Cyprian, when he remarks that "ardent love for his flock forms the keynote of all that Cyprian did and wrote" (p. 9). After comparing and contrasting him to his earlier contemporary Tertullian, WALKER states that, whereas Cyprian "relied on sacramental grace and the inspiration of the clergy," Tertullian emphasized his doctrine of the priesthood of all Christians, (16) a doctrine to which Cyprian does not refer. The author devotes one chapter to the primacy of Peter and another to the collegiality of bishops. In the latter, WALKER indicates that Cyprian follows Clement of Rome "in equating bishops with Old Testament priests, but made presbyters, and not deacons, the equivalent of Levites;" Cyprian writes of all the clerical ranks except that of the *ostiarius* (36). The author astutely observes that Cyprian accentuates the authority of the bishop more than his preaching and sacramental functions (40). This is indeed both a concise and a well-written study of Cyprian's ecclesiology as seen from an ecumenical point of view, but the discussion of the Carthaginian clergy is relatively meagre.

Next in 1974 appeared a biography of Cyprian by Peter HINCHLIFF, who is a native of South Africa.<sup>14</sup> This is perhaps the most readable monograph on Cyprian of all those consulted in the course of my research. The author, who in 1992 became the Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, presents his biography of Cyprian in an arresting yet easy-flowing style. "The story of Cyprian's life," he writes (p. 4), "is the story of how the cold disciplinarian became the hero of Christian Carthage." These two

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<sup>13</sup> Walker (1968).

<sup>14</sup> P. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage and the Unity of the Christian Church*. (London: 1974).

descriptions of Cyprian point directly to the ultimate conclusion of this thesis: his use of *disciplina* to discharge his duties as Bishop of Carthage.<sup>15</sup> This brief but penetrating study is replete with discussions of *disciplina* and of Cyprian's relationship with his clergy, but, in accord with HINCHLIFF's stated purpose, technical issues and detailed precisions likely to interrupt the flow of his story are omitted.<sup>16</sup>

Michael M. SAGE declares that his volume on Cyprian, published in 1975, seeks to combine secular and church history.<sup>17</sup> The author essays to do this in the first chapter, treating of the population, ethnic and languages groups, the economic and political situation, and changes effected by the Romans in North Africa, together with the persecutions endured by Christians from 180 to well into the first half of the third century. SAGE makes the point that the revolt of 238 and its aftermath preceded Cyprian's conversion by only a few years. In this atmosphere of instability, states the author, becoming a Christian provided one way by which one could learn to "cope with this new and hostile world."<sup>18</sup> (47) SAGE discusses Cyprian's earlier career, conversion and election as bishop at great length in chapter three.<sup>19</sup> Chapter four also blends well the secular and ecclesiastical situation when the Decian persecution occurred. In general this is a broad study in which the main emphasis is on the person of Cyprian and his activities, just as the title suggests. There is almost no extended discussion of the clergy, their structure, appointment and qualities.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hinchliff (p. 40) says about Cyprian: "His watchword was 'discipline' in these early years."

<sup>16</sup> Among the many details of interest recorded are: e.g., at 30: the clergy are full-time workers and fully salaried; at 32: the clergy were not high in social status nor well-educated; at 57: Cyprian encourages his clergy to practice humility.

<sup>17</sup> M.M. Sage, Cyprian [Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Ltd. Patristic Monograph Series, No. 1] (Cambridge, Mass.: 1975).

<sup>18</sup> Sage, 47. One must bear in mind, however, that the persecution of Maximinus in 235 did not extend to Africa, which enjoyed a religious peace from 213 until 250: see Monceaux, (1902), vol. II, 4.

<sup>19</sup> At p. 100, Sage names the presbyter who guided the catechumen Cyprian as Caecilius rather than Caecilianus, thus following Jerome rather than Pontius; see *Vita Cypriani*, 4.1, 4.3

<sup>20</sup> At pp. 17-20, Sage refers briefly to the clergy and the laity.



The Australian scholar, Graeme W. CLARKE, has produced, during the period 1984 to 1989, his English translation and commentary on the letters in the Cyprianic correspondence.<sup>21</sup> At pages 39 to 44 in volume I, we find an initial and specific discussion of the clergy who served under Cyprian, including a table which sets forth the known clerics according to their rank. CLARKE states his general purpose in the Introduction of volume III thus: "my focus has been to elucidate the social and ecclesiastical setting of this correspondence." (p. 30) In each of the four volumes CLARKE presents for the reader a chronology of the letters as an aid in reading them in their proper order. This translation, together with the commentary, is the result of exhaustive and comprehensive research and study over a period of fifteen years. The notes to the individual letters always provide the fullest possible literature and sources for further investigation. His valuable commentary on the letters in the Cyprianic collection embraces every possible aspect to be drawn from them, including lucid and astute comments on the clergy at Carthage in each of the four volumes.

In addition to these general works on Cyprian, there have appeared during the past quarter-century three other studies which aim toward a more specific goal. The first of these is the monograph of Victor SAXER, which was published in 1969.<sup>22</sup> In this excellent and searching liturgical study, the author in Chapter I builds the basis for the monograph by a careful examination of the Church and of Roman Africa, and he repeats the comment of MONCEAUX that the mid-third century was for the Church in Africa "une époque de vie intense."<sup>23</sup> At that period, according to SAXER, Roman Africa had already begun to be Christian Africa. The ensuing chapters of this work are meant to confirm the truth of that claim. The valuable Chapter III discusses the church hierarchy, the following chapters discuss in great detail the liturgical aspects of initiation, penance and the eucharist. While references to the clergy are dispersed throughout the book, Chapter III remains the most important section on the clergy at Carthage.

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<sup>21</sup> G.C. Clarke (1984-1989).

<sup>22</sup> V. Saxer, (1969).

<sup>23</sup> Saxer (1969), 27 and n.71, citing Monceaux (1902), II, 3.

Two years later appeared the study by the Portuguese scholar Albano VILELA on the collegiality of *prêtres* in the third century.<sup>24</sup> The author states that the subject of his research is the *presbyterium* attached to a local church in union with their bishop.<sup>25</sup> He discusses in depth the clergy under Cyprian (259-273), the *presbyterium* (273-287), episcopal elections (304-310), *presbyteri doctores* (310-314), sacramental practice (314-322), emoluments and marriage of presbyters (326-329). In his twelve chapters the author investigates Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, the Syrian church, Tertullian and Hippolytus. Only Chapter IX is dedicated to Cyprian and his clergy.<sup>26</sup> This is a very valuable section, but clearly only a part of VILELA's overall thesis.

In the same series appeared six years later the important study on the origin of the hierarchy by Alexandre FAIVRE.<sup>27</sup> This is a thorough presentation of the sources which shed light on the origin of the *cursus clericorum*, including the works attributed to Hippolytus, the anonymous *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, the *Didascalia*, and the *Statuta ecclesiae antiquae* from the fifth century. In Part Two, the author surveys the situation of the clergy from the aspect of Church councils, but the section on African Councils (242-258) focuses upon events much later than the time of Cyprian. Part Three is dedicated solely to developments in the Church at Rome. There are several references to Cyprian's letter, principally at pp. 306-307, where in footnotes the author considers the lector, acolyte, exorcist and subdeacon at Carthage. Yet the fact remains that Cyprian and his clergy play but a small rôle in this important monograph.

In conclusion, one cannot omit to mention four very useful works in the realm of lexical and stylistic studies on Cyprian as an author. These are the volumes by E.W. Watson, Canon L. Bayard, Harry Janssen, and the joint venture of Josef Schrijnen and

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<sup>24</sup> A. Vilela, *La condition collégiale des prêtres au III<sup>e</sup> siècle* [Théologie Historique, 14] (Paris: 1971).

<sup>25</sup> Vilela (1971), 17.

<sup>26</sup> I do not agree with Vilela's claims at 278 and 282-285 that *sacerdos* can include *presbyter*.

<sup>27</sup> A. Faivre, *Naissance d'une Hiérarchie: Les premières étapes du cursus clérical* [Théologie Historique, 40] (Paris: 1977).

Christine Mohrmann,<sup>28</sup> These are comprehensive and excellent works, and I have frequently drawn from them in the course of my research. But all four are general in nature and extent, and I am aware of no lexical study dedicated exclusively to the subject of the clergy at Carthage under Cyprian.

## B. GENERAL TERMS USED FOR THE CLERGY

Just as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian before him, Cyprian clearly distinguishes between the status of the laity and the clergy.<sup>29</sup> It was Clement of Alexandria, who at the end of the second century for the first time used the substantive *laïkός* to indicate a type of Christian.<sup>30</sup> By the time of Tertullian, the fundamental distinction between the cleric and the layman was firmly established in the church in Africa.<sup>31</sup>

On a few occasions Cyprian refers to the non-clerical members of his diocese and of the Church elsewhere by the term, *laicus*.<sup>32</sup> He speaks in a letter to Cornelius of the duties imposed upon the laity

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<sup>28</sup> E.W. Watson, "The Style and Language of St. Cyprian," *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica*. Essays chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism, volume IV (Oxford: 1896), 189-324; L. Bayard, *Le Latin de saint Cyprien* (Paris: 1902); J. Schrijnen and C. Mohrmann, *Studien zur Syntax der Briefe des hl. Cyprian [Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva. Studia ad sermonem latinum Christianum pertinentia, f. quintus]* (Nijmegen: 1936); H. Janssen, *Kultur und Sprache. Geschichte der alten Kirche im Spiegel der Sprachentwicklung von Tertullian bis Cyprian*. (Nijmegen: 1938).

<sup>29</sup> For a careful and informative discussion of the origin of the term *laicus*, see A. Faivre, "Naissance d'un laicat chrétien: Les enjeux d'un mot," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 33 (1986), 391-429; also: I. de la Potterie, "L'origine et le sens primitif du mot «laïc»," in: *La vie selon l'Esprit (Unam Sanctam 53)*, (Paris: 1965), 13-29. Origen is thinking of the O.T. distinction in his homily on Joshua, 17.3: "Sed interim ut vacare possint, laicorum uti ministeriis debent."

<sup>30</sup> Faivre (1986), 392; also at 405, F. states: "... en *Stromates III [III, 12.9]*. Là, pour la première fois, le terme «laïc» est indiscutablement appliqué à une catégorie de chrétiens." Clement's text reads: "*Ναὶ μὴν καὶ τὸν τῆς μίᾳς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα πάνν ἀποδέχεται, καὶν πρεσβύτερος ἤ, καὶν διάκονος, καὶν λαϊκός, ἀνεπιλήπτως γάμψ χρώμενος*."

<sup>31</sup> Faivre (1986), 406. Tertullian, *de exhort. cast.*, VII, 3: "Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesiae auctoritas et honor per ordinis consessus sanctificatos deo. Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consessus, et offers et tinguis et sacerdos es tibi solus; scilicet ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici."

<sup>32</sup> Cyprian employs *laicus* in *ep.* 52.12, 55.5, 55.11.3, 59.13.5, 65.3.3, 67.6.2, 72.2.1, and 81.1.3; the term also appears at *ep.* 30.5.3 and 31.6.2. *Laicus* is not found in any of Cyprian's tracts.

as well as those upon the bishops.<sup>33</sup> Cyprian couples Christian bishops and laity in one other passage; that occurs in his very last to his charges at Carthage, when he advises them that the proconsul will shortly be promulgating the imperial sanctions against both bishops and laity.<sup>34</sup>

In *ep.* 55 Cyprian quotes a passage from a letter which he has received from the imprisoned confessors at Rome. They write that they agree that, once peace is restored, there must be a conference of all bishops, presbyters, deacons, confessors and laymen to deal with the problem of the *lapsi*.<sup>35</sup>

Cyprian uses *laicus* most frequently to express the status of repentant members of the clergy who have lapsed. One passage in the letter to Stephen in Rome concerns two categories of *lapsi*: (1) former presbyters and deacons and (2) those who have received ordination as clerics at the hands of heretical bishops. Both classes of penitents can only be readmitted to communion in the Church as laymen.<sup>36</sup> The other four cases concern bishops who have lapsed: the two Italians Evaristus and Trofimus, the African Fortunatianus, and the Spaniard Basilides.<sup>37</sup>

Cyprian also calls the laity *plebs* and *populus*. Of these two terms, *plebs* predominates as his preferred expression, and it is frequently paired with *clerus*.<sup>38</sup> In five instances he uses *plebs* in a

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<sup>33</sup> *ep.* 59.13.5.

<sup>34</sup> *ep.* 81.1.3.

<sup>35</sup> *ep.* 55.5; the letter from the confessors is *ep.* 31, where at section 6.2 we read "et ipsis stantibus laicis," who should be included at such a conference; *ep.* 30.5.3, the letter from the Roman presbyters and deacons, also contains an agreement for such a conference.

<sup>36</sup> *ep.* 72.2.1: "eos quoque hac condicione suscipi cum revertuntur, ut communicent laici." See also *epp.* 64.1.1 and 65.1.1 on lapsed clerics.

<sup>37</sup> *ep.* 52.1.2 on Evaristus, *ep.* 55.11.3 on Trofimus, *ep.* 65.3.3 on Fortunatianus, and *ep.* 67.7.2 on Basilides. Evaristus eventually became an apostate; Trofimus was guilty of schism and Basilides of blasphemy, Fortunatianus is charged with greed and sacrilege. See Clarke II, 273-274, III, 318-319, and IV, 152-153.

<sup>38</sup> Of the 89 uses of *plebs* in the correspondence, all but one are those of Cyprian. *Plebs* is found joined to *clerus* in *epp.* 15.4, 25.2.3, 45.2.5, 45.4.2, 51.1.2, 62.3.2 and 68.2.1. Three times in *ep.* 67 (at 4.2, 4.4 and 5.1) Cyprian stresses that the laity must be present at clerical elections by the phrase "plebe praesente." Cyprian uses *plebs* in his tracts 24 times, half of which were citations from scripture. On *plebs et clerus* see:

quotation from the Old Testament and accordingly it there means "people of God,"<sup>39</sup> but in all its other numerous occurrences Cyprian intends the Christians who are not clerics. He uses *populus* to indicate the Christian laity far less frequently than *plebs*.<sup>40</sup> For the clergy in general, however, Cyprian has a wide variety of terms and expressions. We will next consider these.

### I. *clerus* and *clericus*

The comprehensive terms which Cyprian employs to describe the clergy as a class are *clerus* and its associated noun and adjective, *clericus*.<sup>41</sup> In pagan antiquity Homer had used κλήρος to indicate "lot" (H.175); also Herodotus used the term to mean "lot" (III.83); he also employs the term to mean "a piece of ground divided by lot" (II.109). Later, Demosthenes used it to denote "inheritance" (Or.

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Janssen (1938), 60; Saxer (1969), 72-76; Vilela (1971), 259-261; and Faivre (1977), *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> Isaiah 43:21 is cited in *ep.* 63.8.1; Isaiah 48:21 in *ep.* 63.8.2. Cyprian quotes Exodus 22:28 in *ep.* 3.2.1, 59.4.3 and 66.3.3; in each case it is an internal citation within Acts 23:5. Acts 1:15 is quoted in *ep.* 67.4.2, and Acts 6:2 in *ep.* 67.4.3. On Isaiah, see M.A. Fahey, Cyprian and the Bible (Tübingen: 1971), 207-208; on Exodus, Fahey, 77; on Acts, Fahey, 408-409.

<sup>40</sup> Of the total 52 uses of *populus* in the correspondence, 48 are by Cyprian and ten of these are used by him in quoting sacred scripture. These citations refer to the people of God in the OT: Ps 44:11 in *ep.* 75.14.1 (by Firmilian); Wisdom 3:8 in *ep.* 6.2.1; Jeremiah 23:32 in *ep.* 63.18.2; Isaiah 29:13 twice in *ep.* 67.2.1 and 74.31; and Deut. 17:13 four times in *ep.* 3.1.1, 4.4.2, 59.4.1, and 66.3.2. The single quotation from the NT, Apoc. 17:15, at *ep.* 63.12.2 does not refer to the Christian laity. On the citation from Apocalypse, see Fahey, 549; on Deuteronomy, Fahey, 92-93; on Psalms, Fahey, 138; on Wisdom, Fahey, 173-175; on Isaiah, Fahey, 201; on Jeremiah, Fahey, 220. Curiously, the ratio is inverse between *plebs* and *populus* in Cyprian's tracts. *Populus* appears in them 120 times, but this includes 68 citations from scripture and 12 uses by Cyprian which specifically refer to the Jewish people of the OT

<sup>41</sup> *clerus* appears 44 times in the correspondence, all but 4 of which are uses by Cyprian: 14 to his clergy at Carthage (*ep.* 14.1.1 [twice], 16.2.3 [twice], 19.2.2, 29.1.1, 29.1.2 [twice], 32.1.1, 34.4.1, 39.1.1 [twice], 40.1.1, 40.1.2); 6 to Cornelius in Rome (*ep.* 45.2.5, 45.4.2, 51.1.2, 52.2.3, 59.18.1, 59.19); 6 to the clergy in Rome (*ep.* 20.2.1, 20.3.1, 20.3.2, 27.3.2, 27.4, 35.1.2); 5 to other bishops (*ep.* 25.1.2, 41.2.2, 55.5, 62.3.2, 68.2.1); 4 to martyrs and confessors (*ep.* 13.7, 15.1.2 [twice], 15.4); 2 to the community in Carthage (*ep.* 17.2.1, 17.3.2); and once each to the clergy at Furni (*ep.* 1.1.2), the clergy in Spain (*ep.* 67.6.3), and to the anonymous *lapsi* (*ep.* 33.1.2). *clericus* appears 9 times as a noun: *ep.* 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 5.1.2, 29.1.1, 43.3.2, 55.8.4, 59.9.4, 80.1.1; and 5 times as an adjective: *ep.* 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 9.2.2, 38.1.1 and 38.2.1. Watson (1896), 261, states that *clericus* is common as a substantive, but rare as an adjective, whereas the actual statistics are: 9 times as a noun and 6 times as an adjective.

43.3).<sup>42</sup> Of the 129 uses in the Septuagint, *κληρος* can mean "lot" (e.g., in Jon 1:7, Jos 18:11), "ground lot" (1 Esdr 4:56, Num 16:14), as also "inheritance" (Jos 17:4, Num 33:53f).<sup>43</sup> Yet in later Jewish literature, in the New Testament and among Apostolic writers the word has acquired a two-fold meaning, namely: "lot" and "the definite and individual part of a person."<sup>44</sup> Also in the New Testament *κληρος* means primarily "lot" (as in Mk 15:24, Acts 1:26), but more particularly, "the portion which has been divided and bestowed upon someone" (e.g. Acts 1:17; 8:21; 26:18; Col 1:12; Ignatius, Eph 11.2, Tr 12.3, R 1:2, Phld 5.1).

*Κληρος* had been used in connection with the Levites (LXX Deut 18:2), and its transition as applied to the Christian clergy seems natural. We see this usage already in the second century author, Astrampsychus;<sup>45</sup> also later in the *Codex Justinianus*<sup>46</sup> and in the *Novellae* of Justinian.<sup>47</sup> *Κληρικός* as a substantive also came to mean in the second century and later a cleric in the modern sense of Christian cleric or clergyman.<sup>48</sup> Harnack maintains that the first use of the Greek word *κληρικός* in its special technical meaning of clergy or clergyman was by Hippolytus, and its cognate Latin form *clericus* by Tertullian.<sup>49</sup>

Cyprian uses *clericus* with a certain degree of ambivalence, whether as a noun (9 occurrences) or as an adjective (5 uses).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See TWNT 3 (1938), 757.

<sup>43</sup> See TWNT 3 (1938), 758-60.

<sup>44</sup> See TWNT 3 (1938), 760-1.

<sup>45</sup> In his *Oracula* 98.7, ed. R. Hercher: 1863.

<sup>46</sup> *Codex Justinianus*. 1.3.38.2, ed. P. Krüger, *Codex Juris Civilis*, ii<sup>9</sup> (Berlin: 1915).

<sup>47</sup> *Nov.* 6.1.7, ed. R. Schoell and W. Kroll, *Codex Juris Civilis* iii<sup>4</sup> (Berlin: 1905).

<sup>48</sup> See Astrampsychus, *Oracula*, 66. and *Cod. Just.* 1.1.3.2 (plural) and elsewhere.

<sup>49</sup> A. Harnack, *Verfassung und Recht der alten Kirche* (Leipzig: 1910), 82. Cited in Janssen (1938), 45-46. "ist Tertullian der erste lateinische Zeuge der in nächster Zeit allgemein geläufigen Bedeutung des Wortes, 'die Geistlichkeit'" (p. 46), where Janssen gives the only two passages in Tertullian's works which (in Janssen's view) testify to this meaning of *clerus*: viz., (1) *de Fuga*, II (Oehler ed. I. 481): "Quod nunquam magis fit, quam cum in persecutione destituitur ecclesia a clero"; and (2) *de monogamia*, 12 (Oehler ed. I. 781): "adeo, inquit, permisit apostolus iterare conubium, ut solos qui sunt in clero monogamiae iugo adstrinxerit."

<sup>50</sup> See Watson (1896), 261: "*clerus* as a common noun is very common, e.g. 466.10 [= ep. 1.1.2], 689.13 [= ep. 69.19]; as an abstract it is absent. *clericus* is common as a

Three times in *ep.* 1, in which he cites the precedent of a canon in an earlier synod of bishops in North Africa that forbade clerics from acting as *tutor* or *curator*, Cyprian includes bishops with the other grades in the designation *clericus*. And twice as an adjective, *clericus* apparently applies also to bishops (*epp.* 1.1.2, 9.2.2). The first instance in the latter category refers to promotion by clerical ordination, which would in theory apply to bishops, presbyters and deacons. The second case concerns *epistulae clericae*, which were — at least in the Cyprianic correspondence — composed by bishops as well as by others.

Yet, on the other hand, concerning Cyprian's use of adjectival *clericus* in two instances in *ep.* 38, it seems doubtful whether he intended to include the bishop in the term. The first concerns the appointment of Aurelius as lector, for whose admission it is Cyprian's policy normally to consult his clergy and people (*ep.* 38.1.1); the second refers to further ranks of promotion in future in Aurelius' career (*ep.* 38.2.1). There it seems that Cyprian had in mind advancement to deacon and to presbyter; he hardly would have been thinking of Aurelius' eventual elevation as bishop. Furthermore, the phrase "*sacerdotio honorati et in clerico ministerio constituti*" in *ep.* 1.1.1 clearly addresses a dichotomy of two distinct classes: those honoured as bishop and those appointed to clerical ministries, viz. presbyters, deacons and the inferior grades of the clergy. It is noteworthy that Cyprian patently includes acolytes (*ep.* 59.9.4) and lectors (38.1.1) in his understanding of *clericus*. Thus on balance, his usage of the term *clericus* as adjective is a mixed and shifting one.<sup>51</sup>

The same is true in his use of *clericus* as an epithet or a substantive. Again there are three uses of it in *ep.* 1, in which the prohibition of clerics to act as *tutor* or *curator* applies to bishops as well as to the other grades of clergy. Cyprian glosses this basic statement, saying that such activity is inconsistent with individuals who are "*sacerdotio honorati et in clerico ministerio constituti*" (*ep.* 1.1.1).

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substantive, naturally for the most part in the pl.; as an adjective it is rare, *cl. ministerium* 465.11 [= *ep.* 1.1.1], *ordinatio*, 466.10 [= *ep.* 1.1.2], *epistula*, 489.18 [= *ep.* 9.2.1] "

<sup>51</sup> See, in general, art. by H. Spelthahn on *clericus* and *clerus* in TLL, vol. 3, col 1339-1341.

The other six uses of the noun, *clericus*, by Cyprian appear in circumstances which seem to preclude the inclusion of the bishop. In the summer of 250, in a letter to his clergy at Carthage, he avers to his own practice of writing *per clericos* (ep. 29.1.1). This may refer to Cyprian's use of clerical secretaries and/or clerical messengers.<sup>52</sup> These might include presbyters, as Primitivus, sent to Cornelius at Rome (ep. 44.2.2), subdeacons, such as Mettius (epp. 45.4.3, 47.1.2), and acolytes, as Nicephorus (epp. 45.4.3, 49.3.1), who had been despatched on similar missions. But it is more than doubtful whether Cyprian would have included a bishop in his concept of a clerical secretary or messenger.

In the same passage of this letter (ep. 29), he explains that many of his clergy were absent from Carthage.<sup>53</sup> Here, the *clericus* is not expressed, but understood by the use of *nostros*, which follows upon the phrase *per clericos* discussed above. It seems that he has in mind the other ranks of clergy, excluding himself or other bishops.

Twice Cyprian refers to the clergy at Rome by using *clericus*. In his letter to his people in Carthage during March 251, he lists the persons and groups who have agreed to delay disciplinary measures until they meet in council. He names himself first (*nos*) and later all the bishops in Africa and elsewhere; between the two he cites the cooperation of the confessors and clergy at Rome on this ban. The "et clericis urbicis" surely must refer to all the clergy at Rome except the bishop, who is included elsewhere in the sentence. In the letter to Antonianus (c. 250 or 251), Cyprian states that "almost all of the clergy" gave favourable witness for Cornelius at his election (ep. 55.8.4). Since the approbation of the bishops present follows in the next sentence,<sup>54</sup> the bishop is excluded here by Cyprian's use of *clericus*.

When Cyprian refers to his own clergy at Carthage in three letters, in each case he appears to mean by *clericus* every rank and

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<sup>52</sup> On clerical messengers, see Clarke II, 107-109, 232, 253-4, 276, 278. Other examples: subdeacon Herennianus and the acolytes Lucanus, Maximus and Amantius in ep. 77.3.2.

<sup>53</sup> Such as the subdeacons Philumenus and Fortunatus, together with the acolyte Favorinus in ep. 34.4.1.

<sup>54</sup> "de sacerdotum antiquorum et bonorum virorum collegio," *ibid*.



each and every individual of the clergy, excluding himself.<sup>55</sup> Thus, his use of *clericus* as a noun or epithet is inconsistent and equivocal, as is the case in his use of the adjective, *clericus*. Let us now consider the way Cyprian employs the noun, *clerus*.

The substantive, *clerus*, as used by Cyprian, can denote either an individual cleric or the collective noun for clergy. Does he include the bishop in this term? He patently excludes the bishop in the four instances where he refers to the imposition of hands at clerical ordination<sup>56</sup> and in *ep.* 33.1.2, where he states that the Church has been established upon the bishop, the clergy and the faithful. Nor does the bishop seem to be included in *clerus*, when Cyprian speaks of *clerum et martyres et confessores* (*epp.* 17.3.2, 25.1.2), nor in *clero et confessoribus* (*ep.* 20.2.1). The same appears to be true for the eight occurrences of *clerus et plebs*.<sup>57</sup>

Yet in three other letters he seems to include the bishop in the term. The first case is at *ep.* 1.1.2: "This [the divine ordinance in the Old Testament] is the arrangement and rule which applies to our clergy even today." Thus, bishops must also refrain from distracting secular occupations. The second and third instances which we find concern the fact of sitting among the clergy at their assemblies.<sup>58</sup> There too, the bishop is of course included. However, in all the other 20 passages wherein Cyprian refers to *clerus*, the bishop apparently is not included.<sup>59</sup>

One can observe a similar usage of *clerus* and *clericus* in the works of Augustine. Even though, according to Elisabeth Paoli, the term *clericus* is not a keyword in his vocabulary, Augustine's use of *clericus* in more than 180 passages in his works does not seem

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<sup>55</sup> *ep.* 5.1.2: funds distributed "apud clericos," *ep.* 59.9.4: refers to Felicianus; *ep.* 80.1.1: all the (other) clergy were restrained at Carthage.

<sup>56</sup> *epp.* 15.1.2, 16.2.3 (twice), 17.2.1, where *clerus* means the presbyters only.

<sup>57</sup> *epp.* 15.4, 19.2.2, 45.2.5, 45.4.2, 51.1.2, 59.19, 62.3.2, 68.2.1.

<sup>58</sup> *epp.* 40.1.1 and 59.18.1. In this latter letter there may be a rare instance of a classical echo in Cyprian: "in cleri nostri sacrum venerandumque *congestum simulacra* adque idola cum *aris* suis transeant"; in Seneca, *Dial.* 2.12.2: "harenae *congestu simulacra* domuum excitant." Also, in Lucan, 9.988: "erexit *congestu* caespitis *aras*."

<sup>59</sup> *epp.* 13.7, 14.1.1 (twice), 15.1.2, 20.3.1, 20.3.2, 27.3.2, 27.4, 29.1.1, 29.1.2 (twice), 32.1.1, 35.1.2, 39.1.1 (twice), 41.2.2, 45.4.2, 52.2.3, 55.5, 59.19. The *cleri* in *ep.* 67.6.3 is probably a corruption; it should read *clerici*: "ab ordinatione autem clericis adque sacerdotali honore prohiberi." *Clerici* is the reading in MS C (= Parisin. 12126, ix. s.)

unimportant.<sup>60</sup> Paoli indicates that Augustine seldom uses the term *clerus*.<sup>61</sup> Cyprian's usage was just the opposite: he uses *clerus* in forty passages, and *clericus* only fourteen times. Where Cyprian and Augustine do agree, however, is in the fact that their most frequent use of *clericus* and *clerus* is in their correspondence, rather than in their treatises.<sup>62</sup>

Cyprian's description of the Christian community as composed of the *clerus* and the *plebs* was continued by Augustine. On the other hand, in connection with the Conference of Carthage of 411, Augustine includes both bishops and presbyters in the term *clericus*.<sup>63</sup> Thus, similar to Cyprian's usage, Augustine sometimes uses *clericus* to include the bishop, sometimes it includes presbyters and deacons, and at other times it indicates the lower grades of the clergy. One new development during the period from Cyprian to Augustine is the use of the abstract noun *clericatus* to denote the clergy, for Cyprian does not use this term in his extant writings.<sup>64</sup>

## II. *minister* and *ministerium*

Cyprian employs the word *minister* very seldom.<sup>65</sup> In *ep.* 65, it refers to a servant of the devil, but the other six uses are positively ecclesiastical. Three times *minister* is coupled with *sacerdos* (*epp.* 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 72.2.2), and since *sacerdos* is restricted to the bishop, the *minister* in these passages must denote presbyter, deacon and the lower clergy. In *ep.* 3.3.1, the *ministri* are clearly deacons, and in *ep.* 34.4.1 the statement about the precedent concerning the *ministros ecclesiae* follows immediately after Cyprian's announcement of the

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<sup>60</sup> E. Paoli, "Clericus dans l'oeuvre d'Augustin: aspects philologiques et contexte historique," *Euphrosyne*, n.s. 20 (1992), 323, n.1. Paoli refers to the concordance by P. Ruff, *Augustinus-Lexicon* (Würzburg: 1986).

<sup>61</sup> Paoli (1992), 323, n. 1, where P. states that Augustine employs *clerus* a dozen times, excluding the 31 times it occurs in *Enarratio in Ps.* 67, where A. comments on the passage, "si dormiatis in medios cleros."

<sup>62</sup> See Paoli (1992), 324. Cyprian uses *clerus* once in *de unit.* 17 and never employs the term *clericus* in his treatises.

<sup>63</sup> Paoli (1992), 325, 327.

<sup>64</sup> See Paoli (1992), 325 for references to Augustine's use of *clericatus*.

<sup>65</sup> It appears eight times in the correspondence, seven of which are those by Cyprian: *epp.* 1.1., 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 3.3.1, 34.4.1, 65.4.2, 72.2.2. The non-Cyprianic passage is in *ep.* 21.3.1. See Watson (1896), 260, n. 1 on *minister* in Cyprian.

return of the repentant subdeacons and acolyte. One of Cyprian's uses of *minister* is not clear (*ep.* 1.1.1):

. . . ne quis de clericis et Dei ministris tutorem vel curatorem testamento suo constituat.

The *clerici* includes the bishop and other ranks of the clergy, and *minister* seems to indicate the ranks of presbyter and below. One possible explanation may be that *clerici et ministri* is an example of hendiadys in Cyprian's style.

Examination of the cognate noun, *ministerium* reveals the same situation.<sup>66</sup> Every use of the term refers to ecclesiastical service or functions, including the three addressing the service in the temple in the Old Testament. Cyprian once speaks of his own rôle (*sed officium meum* in connection with the customary service (*sollemni ministerio*) which he would like to have performed, were it possible (*ep.* 12.1.1). Then, in Nemesianus' letter to Cyprian late in 257, the author praises the *ministerium* of Cyprian and that of Quirinus (*ep.* 77.3.2). In these two passages in the correspondence the *ministerium* is that of a bishop. The others deal with deacons,<sup>67</sup> a lector, an acolyte and a layman.<sup>68</sup> In two letters the apparent dichotomy between *sacerdotium* and *ministerium* is striking:

sacerdotio honorati et in clerico ministerio constituti  
(*ep.* 1.1.1), and:

ne quis ad altaris ministerium vel ad sacerdotalem  
locum obreperet. (*ep.* 67.4.4)

This ambiguity further appears in one of Cyprian's letters to his clergy in the late summer of 250, in which he acknowledges and regrets the insufficiency of the clergy still in Carthage to perform their daily tasks (*ep.* 67.4.4). In commenting on *ep.* 29.1.1, Clarke calls attention to this example of Cyprian's sometimes enigmatic

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<sup>66</sup> *ministerium* occurs 14 times in the correspondence, all but two of which are by Cyprian: *ep.* 1.1.2 (tribe of Levi); 3.1.2, 69.8.1 (both about Chore, Dathan, Abiron) refer to the ministry in the Old Testament. Those about Christian ecclesiastical ministry are: *ep.* 1.1.1, 3.1.1, [23.3.1], 29.1.1, 34.4.2, 39.1.1, 43.1.1, 67.4.4, 69.6.3, 69.8.1, and [77.3.2]. The first non-Cyprianic use (in *ep.* 77) refers to the ministry of Cyprian; the other (in *ep.* 21), to the work of Lucianus in prison.

<sup>67</sup> *ep.* 3.1.1, 3.3.1, 34.4.2, and 43.1.1.

<sup>68</sup> *ep.* 34.4.2 (acolyte), *ep.* 39.1.1 (lector), and *ep.* 21.3.1 (layman).

style in the phrase: "paucos vero qui sunt vix ministerium cotidianum operis sufficere." This suggests both works of mercy (*operis*) and, at the same time, other administrative and liturgical duties.<sup>69</sup>

### III. *ordo*, *ordinatio*, and *ordinare*

Thus far we have discussed the basic distinction between the laity and the clergy by looking at the terms *laicus*, *plebs*, *populus*, *clerus/clericus*, and *minister/ministerium*. In order to understand better the terminology that refers to the clergy at Carthage, it is essential to consider the terms *ordo*, *ordinatio* and *ordinare*.<sup>70</sup> It is common knowledge that *ordo* is related to the verb *ordiri* (= to weave), and that while *ordo* in its technical meaning was weaving, the more common meanings of *ordo* as a row or alignment, or as a group or a class are also found in the writings of both pagan and ecclesiastical authors.<sup>71</sup>

Among the citizens of Rome in the republic there were three classes or *ordines*: the senatorial, the equestrian and the plebeian. Yet it was primarily with reference to the first two groups, when the *ordines* were discussed.<sup>72</sup> And alongside the frequently found

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<sup>69</sup> See Clarke II, 109, n.6: "The phrasing *ministerium cotidianum operis* is a typical piece of rich Cyprianic ambiguity, *operis* being suggestive above all of works of mercy and charity . . . , whilst *ministerium* brings with it overtones of (subordinate) administrative duties as well as of strictly liturgical functions."

<sup>70</sup> See P. van Beneden, *Aux origines d'une terminologie sacramentelle: ORDO, ORDINARE, ORDINATIO* dans la littérature chrétienne avant 313 [*Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*, f. 38] (Louvain: 1974) for an excellent presentation of the use of these terms prior to 313. For a more comprehensive discussion of these terms, see the article by B. Kübler in *PRE*, 18.1, s.v., cc. 930-934, continued in *PRE*, SpBd vii, c. 792-797 by Sachers; also the articles on *ordo* and *ordinatio*, *ordinare*, *ordior*, *ordo* by U. Kendel in *TLL*, t. 9 (1981), c. 932-965; also Janssen (1938), 51-53; A. Michel, art. "ordre, ordination," *DTC*, 11 (Paris: 1931), c. 1193-1405; Watson (1896), 246, 261.

<sup>71</sup> A. Ernout et A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, 4. éd., J. André (Paris: 1985), s.v., 467-468. Also on *ordo*, see: Watson (1897), 216; Bayard (1902), 180; Koch (1926), 25; Janssen (1938), 51; P. van Beneden, "Ordo. Über den Ursprung einer kirchlichen Terminologie," *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969), 161-176; Vilela (1971), 268; and A. Coppo, "Vita cristiana e terminologia liturgica à Cartagine verso la metà del III secolo," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 85 (1971), 70-86, to whose analysis I am particularly indebted.

<sup>72</sup> Suetonius, *Aug.*, 15: "scribunt quidam trecentos ex dediticis electos utriusque ordinis, ad aram Divo Iulio exstructam Idibus Martiis hostiarum more mactatos; Velleius Paterculus, *Hist. Rom.*, II, 100,5: "Scipio alique minoris nominis utriusque ordinis viri."

phrase *senatus populusque*,<sup>73</sup> appeared also *ordo et populus* and *ordo et plebs*.<sup>74</sup> *Ordo*, as used in the Roman empire, means essentially a system of graduated ranks or an order of precedence.<sup>75</sup>

We see some examples of how *ordo* was used in the second and third centuries by inspection of contemporary authors, such as the jurists Gaius, Paulus and Scaevola,<sup>76</sup> who continued the connotation of this term as used by earlier authors.<sup>77</sup> The common meaning of "class" or "group" appears frequently. In particular, we note the usage of *ordo* by Cicero as synonymous with *collegium*.<sup>78</sup> The technical term *ordo*, as opposed to terms such as *honor* and *dignitas*, always indicates a collective signification of the word.<sup>79</sup> We know through the works of Tertullian that this usage continued among Christians in Carthage in the years immediately before Cyprian.<sup>80</sup>

It has been claimed that Cyprian never used the term *ordo*,<sup>81</sup> but in fact he employs this term in several passages in both his correspondence and in his treatises.<sup>82</sup> While in three passages *ordo*

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<sup>73</sup> See the citations in H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones latinae selectae* (= *ILS*), III, 2 (Berlin: 1914), s.v., p. 674.

<sup>74</sup> *ordo et populus*: *ILS* iii, 676; *ordo et plebs*: *ILS* nn. 6573, 441, 1197.

<sup>75</sup> H. Löhken, *Ordines Dignitatum* (Köln: 1982), 10.

<sup>76</sup> Gaius, *Inst.* 1.178: "lege Julia de maritandis ordinibus;" Julius Paulus, *Dig.* 16.1.30; Scaevola, *Dig.* 34.1.16.1. All three with the sense of an "order" or "class."

<sup>77</sup> Pliny, *Ep. Traj.*, 10.4 (3) .2 "petieram ut illum in amplissimum ordinem promoveret." Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.48: "audita Puteolanorum legationes quas diversas *ordo plebs* ad senatum miserant."

<sup>78</sup> Cicero, in *Verrem* II, 2.6.17: "si cuiquam generi hominum sive Siculorum sive nostrorum civium, si cuiquam ordini sive aratorum sive pecuariorum sive mercatorum probatus sit."

<sup>79</sup> P.-M. Gy, "Remarques sur le vocabulaire antique du sacerdoce chrétien," *Lex Orandi* 22 (1957), 125-160, at 129.

<sup>80</sup> For example with respect to the *ordo viduarum* in *ad uxorem* I.7.4: "quantum detrahant fidei, quantum obstrepant sanctitati nuptiae secundae, disciplina ecclesiae et praescriptio apostoli declarat, cum digamos non sinit praesidere, cum viduam adlegi in ordinem nisi univiram non concedat."

<sup>81</sup> V. Saxer, in his review of Vilela (1971) in *Vetera Christianorum* 9 (1972), 108-115.

<sup>82</sup> *ep.* 16.2.3: "et secundum disciplinae ordinem ad exomologesin veniant. . ."; *ep.* 17.2.1: "'quando oporteat ad haec per ordinem pervenire.'"; *ep.* 63.4.1: "qui *ordo* utique hic est de sacrificio illo veniens et descendens quod Melchisedech sacerdos Dei summi fuit. . ."; *ep.* 74.10.3: "ad originem dominicam et ad evangelicam adque apostolicam traditionem revertamur et inde surgat actus nostri ratio unde et *ordo* et

is used with the meaning of system or procedure,<sup>83</sup> in five others Cyprian intends *ordo* in the sense of class. Of this latter group, three are quotations from Psalm 109:4, "sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech."<sup>84</sup> The remaining two uses of *ordo* also seem to mean a class of priests. In his letter to Caecilius, the Bishop of Biltha, in which he gives his doctrine on the eucharistic sacrifice, Cyprian first quotes this passage from Psalm 109 and then continues:<sup>85</sup>

And this order is doubtless that one which derives its source and origins from that sacrifice of Melchisedech, for Melchisedech was a priest of the most high God, he did offer bread and wine, and he blessed Abraham. And who is more truly a priest of the most high God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered sacrifice to God the Father and made the very same offering as Melchisedech had done, viz. bread and wine, that is to say His own body and blood?"

This letter concerns the celebration of the eucharist according to the practice and abuses found in Cyprian's province, and accordingly it addresses those who preside at the eucharist. The order of priests (*ordo sacerdotum*), which had its origin in Melchisedech and which reached its apogee in the New Testament period in Jesus Christ, continues in the priesthood of Cyprian and his contemporary fellow-bishops. Certainly then, Cyprian, when he uses the term *ordo* in the above cited passage, means the status of priest which derives from the ancient and mysterious priest-king Melchisedech.<sup>86</sup>

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origo surrexit."; *ad Quir.* 1.20: "qua nascitur Samuhel non secundum generandi ordinem, sed secundum misericordiam Dei. . ."

<sup>83</sup> *ep.* 16.2.3: (on penitents) "et secundum disciplinae ordinem ad exomologesin veniant."; *ep.* 17.2.1: (on the correct procedure to receive *lapsi*) "quando oporteat ad haec per ordinem pervenire"; *ad Quir.* 1.20: (process or system) "qua nascitur Samuhel non secundum generandi ordinem, sed secundum misericordiam Dei"

<sup>84</sup> *ep.* 63.4.1, *ad Quir.* 1.8 and 1.17.

<sup>85</sup> *ep.* 63.4.1: "qui ordo utique hic est de sacrificio illo veniens et inde descendens quod Melchisedech sacerdos Dei summi fuit, quod panem et vibum optulit, quod Abraham benedixit. nam qui magis sacerdos Dei summi quam Dominus noster Iesus Christus, qui sacrificium Deo patri optulit et optulit hoc idem quod Melchisedech optulerat id est panem et vinum, suum scilicet corpus et sanguinem."

<sup>86</sup> The familiar citations are in Ps 109:4, Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, and 7:17.

Cyprian clearly states the hereditary relationship between Melchisedech, Christ and the bishop of the Christian church. Since it is the bishop who acts *vice Christi*,<sup>87</sup> Cyprian intends the direct descent from Christ and Melchisedech to his own class of priesthood (*ordo sacerdotum*). The order of Melchisedech's priesthood was contrasted with the Levite priesthood and accordingly was a hieratic class separate and different from that of the Levite priesthood. The phrase in Ps 109:4 is "*κατὰ τὴν τάξιν*," i.e. according to the order or class, and not "*ἐν τῇ τάξει*," in the character of, or as the type of someone.<sup>88</sup> It is true that the sacrifice of Christ had been prefigured in the sacrifice of Melchisedech, but this sacrifice is performed in each case by a priest (*sacerdos*), and the priesthood of Christ and of the bishop is referred back to its origins to the class of priesthood which Melchisedech had exercised.

The second occurrence of *ordo* as a class of priests appears in his letter to Pompeius, the bishop of Sabrata, wherein Cyprian discusses the necessity of exemplary conduct by the bishops. He next adds:<sup>89</sup>

quod et nunc facere oportet Dei sacerdotes praecepta divina servantes, ut si in aliquo nutaverit et vacillaverit veritas, et ad originem dominicam et ad evangelicam adque apostolicam traditionem revertamur, et inde surgat actus nostri ratio, unde et ordo et origo surrexit.

Clarke was at first tempted to construe *ordo* in this passage (*ep.* 74.10.3) as equivalent to *ordo noster* / *ordo sacerdotalis* / *episcoporum*, but he demurred since he could not identify any other parallel passages in Cyprian where he uses *ordo* in the sense of clerical status.<sup>90</sup> We have noted that in certain passages in which Cyprian writes *ordo*, it is clearly a synonym for system or procedure.<sup>91</sup> But,

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<sup>87</sup> This phrase occurs in *ep.* 59.5.1 and 63.14.4.

<sup>88</sup> On *τάξις* as equivalent to *ordo* in a hierarchical sense, see Beneden (1969), 165-6.

<sup>89</sup> *ep.* 74.10.3: "Those bishops of God who would be faithful to His divine precepts ought now to act in like manner. If in any respect the truth has grown faltering or shaky, we must go back to the Lord as our source, and to the tradition of the Gospels and the apostles. Let our conduct draw its rules from the same source from which our beginnings and our precepts took their rise."

<sup>90</sup> Watson (1896), 261, states that *ordo* in this passage means clergy as hierarchy, but van Beneden (1969), 172-173, challenges this view. See Clarke IV on *ep.* 74.10.3.

<sup>91</sup> These are in *ep.* 16.2.3, 17.2.1, *ad Quir.* 1.20.

in view of the precedent in *ep.* 63.4.1, it seems appropriate to interpret the *ordo* here as the episcopal class or order. Cyprian discusses in *ep.* 74 the conduct of bishops, whose priesthood derives from the high priesthood of Jesus Christ, and then urges that their status and their own programme of action should emerge from the same source (i.e. our Lord and the gospel tradition which was received from the apostles), from which the origin of their clerical class had issued.

In Cyprian's view, the bishops follow Christ, the *summus sacerdos*, and they are successors to the apostles, who were the first bishops. In the Old Testament such a priesthood as that of Melchisedech would be considered with the class of levites. Although van Beneden has argued that Cyprian did not use the term *ordo* with this traditional meaning of class,<sup>92</sup> in view of the foregoing it still seems permissible to understand the usage of *ordo* both in *ep.* 63 and *ep.* 74 as indicating a specific class of priesthood.

The *ordo* of earlier Roman usage has by the time of Tertullian become the term meaning the *ordo sacerdotalis /ecclesiasticus*, i.e. the clerical class. Tertullian sees the admission of persons, whether widows or clerics, into a particular *ordo* or class exactly as his non-Christian contemporaries and predecessors used the phrase *adlegere in ordinem* in reference to the evaluation, selection, appointment and admission of candidates into various positions, civil<sup>93</sup> and religious<sup>94</sup>.

Cyprian, on the other hand, does not use the classical phrase employed by Tertullian, *adlegere in ordinem*, to express the selection and admission of a person into the *ordo* of clerics; his term is *ordinare*. And while Cyprian uses the verb *ordinare* primarily to designate the admission of bishops to a position and a status in their own professional *ordo* together with their fellow bishops,<sup>95</sup> on

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<sup>92</sup> v. Beneden (1974), 46-49.

<sup>93</sup> Suetonius, *Julius* 80,2: "Peregrinis in senatum allectis libellus propositus est;" *Claudius*, 24,1: "libertinorum filios in senatum adlegisse docuit."

<sup>94</sup> Livy, *ab urbe cond.*, x.6.6: "Rogationem ergo promulgarunt ut, cum quattuor augures, quattuor pontifices ea tempestate essent placeretque augeri sacerdotum numerum, quattuor pontifices, quinque augures, de plebe omnes, adlegerentur."

<sup>95</sup> E.g., *epp.* 44.2.1, 55.24.2, 59.5.2, 66.1.2 (twice), 67.4.2, 67.4.4, 66.9.1, 67.5.1, 68.2.1, 69.3.2,



occasion he employs *ordinare* for the installation and appointment of presbyters, deacons and lectors.<sup>96</sup>

Cyprian uses the verb *ordinare* only with respect to the church hierarchy. Beneden considers his usage of this verb under three categories of its meaning: a) the installation in a definite church office, b) installation in an unspecified clerical rôle, and c) the act of investiture whereby the candidate takes formal possession of his office.<sup>97</sup> In one study van Beneden maintains that Cyprian uses *ordinatio* with the sense of *ordo* or class in two passages: *ep.* 33.1.1 and 38.2.1.<sup>98</sup> Yet the usual interpretation of these two passages whereby *ordinatio* means appointment seems preferable. In the first case *episcoporum ordinatio* refers to the appointments of bishops over the years, and in the second case Cyprian alludes to the future promotions of Aurelius (*clericæ ordinationis ulteriores gradus*). It is prudent to bear in mind, however, that, in the works of Cyprian, the verb *ordinare* and its associated noun *ordinatio* are not equivalent to the modern terms, to ordain and ordination. Today these terms connote far more the ritual ceremony rather than the aggregation of a candidate into an *ordo clericus*.

#### IV. *gradus* and *locus*

The clerical order, according to Cyprian, comprises several degrees among its members. This individual position of each cleric Cyprian expresses by use of the term *gradus*, which is rare in his vocabulary. At least on one occasion, Cyprian uses *gradus* with the connotation of taking a firm position,<sup>99</sup> and he uses the term in general to mean a degree or step in a series, such as the first degree of blessedness,<sup>100</sup> or the second degree of glory promised to all

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<sup>96</sup> Presbyters and deacons in *ep.* 72.2.1 (*ordinati*), and lectors in *ep.* 38.2.2 (*ordinari, ordinatum*). For a very complete treatment of the three terms, *ordo, ordinare* and *ordinatio*, one should refer to the monograph by P. van Beneden in n. 70 above.

<sup>97</sup> v. Beneden (1974), 65. v. B. finds 19 uses of *ordinare* in Cyprian; I can find only 16 in the correspondence (of which 14 are by Cyprian and 2 by Firmilian) and one in *de zelo*, 6. I cannot find *ordinare* in *ad Quir.* II.27, to which v. B. refers at 63.

<sup>98</sup> v. Beneden (1969), 173-174.

<sup>99</sup> *ep.* 28.2.1: "stare firmo gradu et in hac acie quae evangelium conatur inrumpere." See the extensive article on *gradus* by Ulrich Knoche in the TLL, t. 6 (1934), c. 2134-2164.

<sup>100</sup> *ep.* 59.13.4: "primus felicitatis gradus est non delinquere, secundus delicta cognoscere."

faithful Christians,<sup>101</sup> or even a step in the ascent to the heights of salvation.<sup>102</sup> In two passages Cyprian speaks of certain confessors; praising those who gained a further degree of glory by upholding *disciplina*,<sup>103</sup> and regretting others who fell from the degree of glory which they had previously enjoyed.<sup>104</sup>

Certain uses of *gradus* by Cyprian refer specifically to a clerical rank. In the two passages in which *gradus* is joined with *locus*, Cyprian by the latter appears to mean (episcopal) see, and by the former, rank or dignity of the particular bishop. Thus in the first case, by the phrase "*loci et gradus mei condicio*",<sup>105</sup> Cyprian refers to the current circumstances affecting his own episcopal see at Carthage and his own two-fold dignity as bishop of the city and metropolitan of his area in North Africa. Similarly, in the other passage where these two terms are coupled,<sup>106</sup> *locus* there clearly means see, for Cyprian refers to the *locus Fabiani*, which he explains as *locus Petri* or the see of Peter, thereby stressing the succession of Fabian to the see of Peter. The see of Peter, according to Cyprian, is the renowned episcopal see at Rome. His usage is thus in accord with that in the secular sphere of the Roman empire that considered *gradus* as a term of social rank and *locus* (along with *ordo*) as one of status.<sup>107</sup>

And in this second case, the phrase *gradus cathedrae sacerdotalis* again refers to the special dignity and authority of the

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<sup>101</sup> *de laps.* 3: "primus est victoriae titulus gentilium manibus adprehensum Dominum confiteri; secundus ad gloriam gradus est cauta secessione subtractum Domino reservari."

<sup>102</sup> *de unit.* 21: "quicquid ante finem fuerit, gradus est quo adfastigium salutis ascenditur, non terminus quo iam culminis summa teneatur."

<sup>103</sup> *ep.* 28.2.1: "ecce alius gloriae vestrae sublimis gradus, ecce iterum cum confessione geminatus promerendi Dei titulus. . ."

<sup>104</sup> *ep.* 56.1: "postmodum cum apud proconsulem poenis gravibus excruciantur, vi tormentorum subactos esse et a gradu gloriae ad quam plena fidei virtute tendebant diutinis cruciatibus excidisse, . ."

<sup>105</sup> *ep.* 12.1.1; see Clarke I, 248, where he suggests that these two terms may refer to Cyprian's ecclesiastical status and his civil position as *persona insignis*.

<sup>106</sup> *ep.* 55.8.4: "cum Fabiani locus id est cum locus Petri et gradus cathedrae sacerdotalis vacaret."

<sup>107</sup> P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: 1970), 228.

incumbent there. In another passage *gradus* appears regarding a bishop. This concerns Cornelius, who reached the office of bishop after passing through all the ranks in the *cursus clericorum*.<sup>108</sup>

The two remaining uses of *gradus* are in Cyprian's two letters about the promotion of Aurelius and Celerinus to the lectorate. In the case of Aurelius, he is so enthusiastic about the new lector, that he considers him worthy of promotion to further ranks (*ulteriores gradus*) as he ascends the clerical *cursus*. For the other recently appointed lector, Celerinus, Cyprian also foresees the possibility of a future higher rank (*ulterior gradus*). Thus *gradus* indicates the rank of each of the clerics on their upward path of promotion in their local church, and this usage of *gradus* in connection with the clergy became standard in North Africa.<sup>109</sup> It is clear from the two cases of Cornelius and Aurelius that *gradus* represents a temporary stage on the clerical ladder of promotion.

Like most of his earlier and contemporary authors, Cyprian employed *locus* in a variety of ways.<sup>110</sup> In some cases this term indicates a physical or geographical location, such as a specific city or town in the Roman empire,<sup>111</sup> or even some unnamed localities in which rivers had suddenly appeared,<sup>112</sup> a desolate area,<sup>113</sup> shoals endangering ships at sea,<sup>114</sup> and certain locations outside Africa.<sup>115</sup> In two passages Cyprian refers to the raised lectern used by the lector as a *locus altior*,<sup>116</sup> but in both cases perhaps Cyprian

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<sup>108</sup> *ep.* 55.8.2: "non iste [Cornelius] non subito pervenit, sed per omnia ecclesiastica officia promotus . . . ad sacerdotii sublime fastigium cunctis religionis gradibus ascendit." Cyprian never uses *cursus* in connection with *cursus honorum*.

<sup>109</sup> Evidence for the continuation of this tradition by Augustine appears in his *contra litteras Petiliani libri iii*, 43 (CSEL 52), 97: "qui vel episcopi vel huicuscemodi gradus clerici fuerunt." See also Paoli (1992), 325, n. 14.

<sup>110</sup> See the comprehensive study of *locus* by G. Kuhlmann in TLL, 7 (Leipzig: 1979), c. 1575-1604. Also see Vilela (1971), 286-7 and Clarke I (1984), 165, n.3 and 273-4, n. 2.

<sup>111</sup> Hadrumetum in *ep.* 48.1; Curubis in *epp.* 76.1.1, 77.2.2.

<sup>112</sup> *ep.* 63.8.1 (rivers in places previously without water) and *ep.* 63.11.1 (churches or dioceses).

<sup>113</sup> *ep.* 58.4.1 and *ep.* 77.2.2; also the dark prison cell at Rome in *ep.* 37.2.1

<sup>114</sup> *ep.* 4.2.2.

<sup>115</sup> *ep.* 66.7.2.

<sup>116</sup> *ep.* 39.4.1 and 39.5.2.

intended a double meaning: referring to their promotion as clerics. Sometimes *locus* is used in cases of simple enumeration<sup>117</sup> and in reference to literary passages.<sup>118</sup> Occasionally, Cyprian uses *locus* to signify a substitution for someone in the place of another.<sup>119</sup>

Yet in many phrases the use of *locus* by Cyprian pertains to the position or status of the bishop or other cleric, and sometimes to the episcopal see.<sup>120</sup> The status or position of the bishop finds expression by *locus* in several passages, such as in the letter to Rogatianus concerning his delinquent deacon, who had forgotten the position of his bishop as well as his own duties.<sup>121</sup> Cyprian himself attests to his own concern for his lofty and respected status, which, together with the fear of God, has prompted him to act in fulfilment of his obligations as bishop.<sup>122</sup>

*Locus* also refers to the status or station of presbyters and other clerics. Because of the severe disturbances caused by the Decian persecution, Cyprian informs us, many of the clerics, which would include both the faithful and the delinquent, have not yet returned to resume their positions in Carthage.<sup>123</sup> In this passage he writes *multi adhuc de clero*, and this phrase surely includes deacons as well as presbyters.<sup>124</sup> In the case of the presbyter Numidicus, Cyprian writes that this cleric will doubtless receive a greater position of responsibility (*ad ampliorem locum religionis suae*) upon the bishop's return from his self-imposed exile. The term is further used in

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<sup>117</sup> As in *epp.* 4.2.1, 55.3.1, 55.24.1, and in *ep.* 74.8.1, where the meaning is: "in this case".

<sup>118</sup> *epp.* 11.5.2, 55.18.2, 55.22.2, 59.3.2, 59.12.2, 62.1.1, 62.2.1, 63.8.4, 63.10.3, 63.14.2, 63.18.2, 63.18.3, 65.1.2, 69.11.1, 73.4.1, 73.9.1, 73.22.1, 74.4.1.

<sup>119</sup> E.g. in *epp.* 50.1.2 (Zetus replaced Evaristus as bishop), 59.6.1, 63.12.2 (gentiles replaced the Jews), 67.4.1 (in place of Judas the apostle), 67.5.2 (in place of Sabinus), 68.3.1, and 68.5.2 (in place of Marcianus).

<sup>120</sup> See Garnsey (1970), 228, on *locus* as a term of status.

<sup>121</sup> *ep.* 3.1.1: "diacono tuo conquestus es quod inmemor sacerdotalis loci tui et officii ac ministerii sui oblitus."

<sup>122</sup> *ep.* 15.1.1: "sollicitudo loci nostri et timor Dei compellit. . ." Other examples in which *locus* refers to the status or position of the bishop occur in: *epp.* 16.3.2, 33.2.2, 41.2.1, 55.8.3, 55.11.3, 67.4.4, and 74.8.1.

<sup>123</sup> *ep.* 34.4.1: "cum multi adhuc de clero absentes sint nec locum suum vel sero repetendum putaverint. . ."

<sup>124</sup> *Contra*: Vilela (1971), 286, where he denies that the deacon enjoyed a *locus*.

several of Cyprian's letters with reference to the status of penitents.<sup>125</sup>

### v. *honor and dignitas*

Membership in an *ordo*, both civil and ecclesiastical, and the possession of *gradus* or *locus* normally results in the reception of *honor* and *dignitas* for the office-holder. Frequently the two terms are closely aligned, and at times seem treated as equivalents.<sup>126</sup> Although Cicero defines *dignitas* as: "*dignitas est alicuius honesta et cultu et honore et verecundia digna auctoritas*," others saw *auctoritas* as an expression of a man's *dignitas*.<sup>127</sup> *Dignitas* is permanent and inheritable; Garnsey remarks that a decurion served for life, and that in the time of Severus this office passed to his son.<sup>128</sup> Its four main meanings were: (1) the office itself, (2) the prestige derived from the office, (3) the rank in society given that office, and (4) the quality of life of the office-holder.<sup>129</sup> These four meanings could easily apply also to *honor*. In the *cursus honorum*, as one ascended in the civil ranks, one gained more *dignitas* and *honor* with each promotion. The situation seems to be the same in the *cursus* followed by the clerics at Carthage, since Cyprian on several occasions writes about these advancements and their associated increased perquisites. In political life only he who possessed *dignitas* could officially participate in it and expect advancement.<sup>130</sup> It is interesting to observe that the politics of the Roman empire were essentially those of a monarchy, and it is precisely this form of government which Cyprian emphasises in his direction of the church at Carthage.

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<sup>125</sup> *ep.* 55.21.1: "et in totum paenitentiae locum contra adulteria cluserunt", and in *ep.* 56.2.1: "non tamen debere nos eis et veniae locum cludere adque eos a paterna pietate et a nostra communicatione privare." On *locus* further see Bayard (1902), 180; Vilela (1971), 286-287.

<sup>126</sup> Löhken (1982), 2-3.

<sup>127</sup> Cicero, *de inv.* 2.166: "Dignity is honourable prestige. It merits respect, honour, and reverence." Translation by Garnsey at p. 224, n. 1; see J.P.V.D. Balsdon, "*Auctoritas, Dignitas, Otium*," *Classical Quarterly* n.s. 10 (1960), 45.

<sup>128</sup> Garnsey (1970), 225.

<sup>129</sup> Garnsey (1970), 224. The first and third senses indicate the concrete and specific, while the second and fourth, the abstract.

<sup>130</sup> Löhken (1982), 4.

Cyprian employs the term *honor* frequently in his works.<sup>131</sup> Tertullian uses *honor*, as he does *clerus* and *ordo*, as a collective noun to indicate the church authorities,<sup>132</sup> but Cyprian does not follow Tertullian in this particular usage. Cyprian prefers to employ this term either in a concrete meaning, to indicate a position of dignity in the church, or in the abstract, by which he intends to convey the concept of esteem or respect.<sup>133</sup> Yet both Tertullian and Cyprian in their use of *honor* with reference to the leaders in the Church seem to have been influenced by contemporary legal usage.<sup>134</sup>

Even if Cyprian at times uses *honor* in senses not connected with the church,<sup>135</sup> the great majority of his many uses have an ecclesiastical connotation. First and foremost in his usage of *honor* in an abstract sense, he speaks of the honour due to God.<sup>136</sup> When he refers to the dignity of the Church in general, *honor* appears in five passages.<sup>137</sup> Among the uses of *honor* in an abstract sense for specific persons, the bishop from the others is found rather frequently,<sup>138</sup> while the *honor* appropriate to the laity appears only once.<sup>139</sup> What is somewhat surprising is that references to the

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<sup>131</sup> The term occurs in 124 passages: 88 in the correspondence and 36 in his tracts; three uses in the letters are non-Cyprianic; there are also 11 quotations from sacred scripture included in the total. On *honor* as used by Cyprian, see Janssen (1938), 153-154; Vilela (1971), 287. For a detailed study of the term *ordo*, see the article by Frederik Mehmél in TLL, t. 6.3 (Leipzig: 1947), c. 2916-2931.

<sup>132</sup> *De monog.* 12: "ne vel ipse honor aliquid sibi ad licentiam quasi de privilegio loci blandiatur." See Janssen (1938), 49.

<sup>133</sup> Janssen (1938), 53.

<sup>134</sup> H. Montgomery (1988), 217; P.-M. Gy, "Remarques sur le vocabulaire antique du sacerdoce chrétien," *Lex Orandi* 22 (1957), 125-160; A. Beck, *Römisches Recht bei Tertullian und Cyprian*. (Halle: 1931), 158-164.

<sup>135</sup> E.g., once in *ep.* 73.19.1 he speaks of the *honor* due to a father, and at *ep.* 58.8.1 he writes of the esteem sought by a gladiator in the arena before the emperor.

<sup>136</sup> *epp.* 58.4.2, 58.5.2, 59.5.3, 59.13.5, 67.8.1, 73.19.1, 74.8.2 (5 times), 74.8.3, and 76.1.3.

<sup>137</sup> At *epp.* 2.1.2, 10.5.2, 58.8.2, 73.11.2, and 81.1.2.

<sup>138</sup> At *epp.* 3.2.3, 15.1.2, 16.3.2, 17.2.1, 36.3.3, 41.2.1, 44.2.1, 57.3.2, 58.5.1, 61.1.1, and 61.3.1. L.R. Palmer, *The Latin Language* (London: 1961), 196, refers to *honorati* as the new Christian term for officeholders.

<sup>139</sup> *ep.* 19.2.2: "... plebe, quibus et ipsis pro fide et timore suo honore habendus est"

*honor* due to confessors is greater than that of martyrs and even of bishops.<sup>140</sup>

When Cyprian uses *honor* as a concrete term to indicate a position of dignity in the Church, it is the bishop who is most prominent.<sup>141</sup> He once refers to the *honor* of the college of bishops.<sup>142</sup> But in addition he employs this term with reference to presbyters,<sup>143</sup> and in one case to presbyters and deacons.<sup>144</sup> It appears that Cyprian also includes lectors in this concrete sense of *honor*, as he does in *locus*, but this is possible only if Cyprian indeed intends a double meaning, when he writes about the lectors Aurelius and Celerinus.<sup>145</sup>

The basic notion of *dignitas* signifies the prestige of recognition and honour given to a person, yet in Roman legal language *dignitas* often has the meaning of official position, rank, dignity.<sup>146</sup> Cyprian employs *dignitas* for official position when he refers to the insignia of consuls, proconsul and magistrates and to the heavenly office of Moyses and Maximus (both passages in *ep.* 37.2.1), but it is with reference to the bishop that he uses *dignitas* in this sense more frequently.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, he employs *dignitas* to indicate the

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<sup>140</sup> For the martyrs: *epp.* 16.1.1, 20.3.2 and 28.1.2, for the confessors *honor* is at *epp.* 6.3.1, 10.1.1, 10.5.2, 13.1, 13.3.2, 13.5.2, 14.2.2, 28.2.4, 37.1.2, 37.2.1, 37.4.1, 37.4.2, 38.1.2, 38.1.3, 38.3.1, 39.3.1, 39.3.2, 39.4.3, 39.4.1, 46.1.1, 54.1.3, 60.1.1, and 76.2.5.

<sup>141</sup> *epp.* 3.3.3: "fungeris contra eum potestatem honoris tui"; 33.1.1: *episcopi honorem et ecclesiae suae rationem disponens in evangelio*"; 55.24.4: *episcopi nec potestatem potest habere nec honorem qui episcopatus nec unitatem voluit tenere*"; 59.4.1: *"non solum fratribus sed et sacerdotibus quibus honor tantus de Dei dignatione conceditur"*; 67.6.3: *"ab ordinatione autem cleri adque sacerdotali honore prohiberi"*; 68.5.1: *"beatorum martyrum Cornelii et Lucii honor gloriosus"*; 69.3.2: *"ordinatione successit et quem praeter sacerdotii honorem martyrio quoque Dominus glorificavit"*; 73.2.1: *"dummodo teneamus ipsi potestatis nostrae honorem et rationis ac veritatis firmitatem"*; 73.2.3: *quia et honorem cathedrae sacerdotalis Novatianus usurpat."*

<sup>142</sup> *ep.* 73.26.2.

<sup>143</sup> *epp.* 39.5.2 and 40.1.3.

<sup>144</sup> *ep.* 72.2.1: *"nec debere eos [presbyteri aut diaconi] revertentes eadem apud nos ordinationis et honoris arma retinere."*

<sup>145</sup> *ep.* 39.1.2.

<sup>146</sup> W. Dürig, "*Dignitas*," *RAC* 3 (1957), cc. 1024-1035, at c. 1028. Classic is the study by H. Drexler, *Dignitas*, Göttinger Universitätsreden 15 (1945).

<sup>147</sup> *epp.* 48.4.1, 61.1.1, 61.2.3, 67.8.1.

prestige of the Church (*ep.* 59.9.2, 59.18.1, 72.1.1), of martyrs and confessors,<sup>148</sup> and of Roman knights (*ep.* 80.1.2). In this last case the threatened loss is of prestige and legal status. Cyprian also uses *dignitas* with the meaning of quality of life with reference to the confessors Aurelius (*ep.* 38.1.3) and Celerinus (*ep.* 39: sections 1.2, 3.2, 3.3, 5.2). Once again, it is instructive to observe the recurrence of the terms *disciplina* and *diligentia* in or near many of the passages in which Cyprian treats *dignitas* and *honor*.<sup>149</sup>

In Roman imperial usage the term *honor*, and also *dignitas*, acquired a technical meaning in the hierarchy of civil functionaries.<sup>150</sup> By the eventual adoption of these terms by the Church, they were accordingly applied also to the officials in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

From this brief overview of *honor* and *dignitas*, together with the foregoing sections, we can note that by the influence of Cyprian *clerus* became the standard technical term to designate the officials of the Church. It thereby replaced the *ordo* and *honor* of Tertullian.<sup>151</sup> Yet there was a residual use of both these terms in the writings of Cyprian in his references to the members of the clergy at Carthage. Because of his firm concept of his own office as bishop, Cyprian, as patron, expected to receive honour and respect from his clients, both clerical and lay. Therefore *honor* and *dignitas* retain their importance as a key concepts when Cyprian speaks of his office and the Church in general.<sup>152</sup> It seems plausible to argue that Cyprian uses *honor* in a concrete sense to indicate the position of honour and dignity in the Church not only for the bishop, but also for the presbyters, deacons, lectors and possibly consecrated virgins.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *ep.* 10.5.2, 51.1.2, 54.2.2, 58.8.1, 61.2.1).

<sup>149</sup> E.g. *dignitas* and *disciplina* appear at *ep.* 38.1.3, 59.9.2; *dignitas* at *ep.* 37.2.1 and *disciplina* at *ep.* 37.4.2 (twice); *dignitas* at *ep.* 67.8.1 and *disciplina* at *ep.* 67.9.1 (twice). *Honor* and *disciplina* appear in the same passage in the following: *ep.* 2.1.2, 14.2.2, 19.2.2, 28.2.4, 37.4.2, 38.1.3, 74.8.3.

<sup>150</sup> On this issue see H. Löhken (1982) and P. Garnsey (1970).

<sup>151</sup> Janssen (1938), 54.

<sup>152</sup> Montgomery (1988), 219.

<sup>153</sup> *ep.* 62.2.3: "membra Christo dicata et ad aeternum continentiae honorem pudica virtute devota."



## VI. *officium* and *condicio*

The final two terms relating to the clergy in general are *officium* and *condicio*. *Officium* is rarely used by Cyprian.<sup>154</sup> The term in the plural number (*officia*) occurs twice in the correspondence, and in each case it is with the verb *promovere*.<sup>155</sup> In the first instance, Cyprian instructs Caldonius and Herculanius to conduct a survey of the Christians at Carthage in order to ascertain the pertinent facts of their age, circumstances and merits. Armed with this information, he intends to appoint to positions of church service those who are suitable, humble and meek. The second case concerns Cornelius' promotion as bishop after having served in all the clerical positions at Rome. Thus, it is clear that the meaning which Cyprian intends in these two passages is that of "position among the officials in the church."

The same sense of *officium* appears in the case of Aurelius, who begins his career in the position of a lector (*ep.* 38.2.1), and in the affair of a delinquent deacon, who had forgotten the position and the duties which he had in the church (*ep.* 3.1.1). But when Cyprian speaks of his own *officium* at the end of his famous letter on the eucharist, by the formula "congruit . . . ipsi loco adque officio sacerdotii nostri," he appears to mean "it is incumbent . . . upon our very position and duty as bishop."<sup>156</sup> Also, in the only other passage in which Cyprian refers to his own *officium*, the term there has the sense of duty, when he urges the presbyters and deacons during his absence to fulfil his obligations at Carthage.<sup>157</sup> There are two passages in the letter which the presbyters Moyses and Maximus sent to Cyprian, which refer to the *officium* of the Bishop of

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<sup>154</sup> For a detailed study of this term see the article by Oomes in TLL, t. 9.2 (Leipzig: 1981), c. 518-527. Cyprian uses *officium* in seven passages: *epp.* 3.1.1, 12.1.1, 38.2.1, 41.1.2, 55.8.2, 58.2.1; the last of these uses is a citation from John 16:2-3. The presbyters Moyses and Maximus use this term twice in their letter to Cyprian (*ep.* 31.6.1). *Officium* also appears four times in Cyprian's tracts, but in each case a citation from the New Testament: John 16:2-3 in *ad Fort.* 11 and *ad Quir.* 3.16; and 2 Cor. 9:12 in *de op. et el.* 9 and in *ad Quir.* 3.1.

<sup>155</sup> *ep.* 41.1.2: "omnes opto me nosse et dignos quosque et humiles et mites ad ecclesiasticae administrationis officia promovere"; *ep.* 55.8.2: "non iste [sc Cornelius] ad episcopatum subito pervenit, sed per omnia ecclesiastica officia promotus".

<sup>156</sup> *ep.* 63.19.

<sup>157</sup> *ep.* 12.1.1.

Carthage, and in both of these instances *officium* means "duty" or "obligation".<sup>158</sup>

In summary, one can say that Cyprian uses the term *officium* when related to the clergy with at least two meanings: the first that of position or office among the officers of the Church, and the second that of duty or obligation. The first sense is used of the bishop, deacon, lector and the prospective candidates for the clergy; the second is found only with reference to Cyprian as bishop. Yet it is conceivable that Cyprian might very well have used both these meanings of *officium* in connection with all the ranks of his clergy at Carthage.

The other term, *condicio*, is found in a number of contexts.<sup>159</sup> In legal parlance it was an abbreviation for *condicio personae*, and thus often concerns the status or personal condition of an individual. *Condicio* is a variant in some cases for *qualitas* and *dignitas*;<sup>160</sup> it is also a term which can mean simply circumstances or situation; or even a legal condition or status. Fifty years ago U. Brasiello distinguished between *condicio* and *status* on the one hand, and *dignitas* on the other.<sup>161</sup> He viewed *condicio/status* as personal condition or capacity, and *dignitas* as social condition or esteem. Although Garnsey finds that this distinction is not completely pervasive, it can help one to understand the terms better, especially since, according to Justinian, *status* is not at all synonymous with *dignitas*.<sup>162</sup>

Cyprian uses *condicio* with three distinct and varied meanings. In his most frequent usage, *condicio* is equivalent to the circumstances of a situation.<sup>163</sup> The second meaning is that of a specific legal position in society, and it appears three times in the

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<sup>158</sup> *ep.* 31.6.1: "quodammodo semper exhibuisti, quod in nulla officii tui parte quasi aliquis desertor claudicasti." Also in the same subsection: "ecce aliud gaudium nostrum, quod in officio episcopatus tui. . ."

<sup>159</sup> Garnsey (1970), 225.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* *Qualitas* occurs in Cyprian's letters only twice: *ep.* 64.3.2, where *qualitas* refers to one's age and size; *ep.* 15.3.1, where *delictorum genera et qualitates* concerns the kinds and gravity of sins.

<sup>161</sup> U. Brasiello, *La repressione penale in diritto romano* (Napoli: 1939), 552ff.

<sup>162</sup> Garnsey (1970), 227, n. 1; also see Justinian, *Institutiones*, 1.16.5.

<sup>163</sup> Examples are in *epp.* 5.1.1, 6.1.1, 12.1.1, 58.13.1, 73.17.2.

correspondence.<sup>164</sup> *Condicio* in the third sense means personal capacity, nature, character, or even one's health. There is one example of this last meaning in the letter of March, 351, to the bishops Caldonius and Herculanus, referred to above, in which Cyprian instructs his colleagues to ascertain the ages, merits, and *condiciones* (personal capacities or characters) of various Christians at Carthage.<sup>165</sup>

In or near many of these passages that contain *condicio*, Cyprian refers to *disciplina* and *diligentia*.<sup>166</sup> This seems to add support for the view that he constantly reflects and acts on these two important concepts.

Henrik Löhken has recently applied certain sociological principles to the political structure of the Roman empire.<sup>167</sup> In this study the author applies further theories, in which one can conceivably envision this vast array of Roman officials as actors on a fictive stage as they proceed to perform their respective "rôles".<sup>168</sup> The stage is the space or area in which the officials are said to act out their rôles. This spacial language is appropriate to some of the terms discussed above, especially in the case of *gradus* and *locus*. These two terms have their linguistic origin in words which denote space: *gradus*, for example, derives from the term meaning "pace" or "stride", which then eventually became "step" (as a step on a ladder or stair-case) with the connotation of ascent; *locus* basically signifies "place" or "location", which developed into the word for "position" of authority (or of service) that a person holds. Again, the familiar notion of vertical hierarchy is evident here, since one position is inevitably superior or inferior to another one. These two

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<sup>164</sup> In *epp.* 55.13.2, 59.18.3, 72.2.1.

<sup>165</sup> *ep.* 41.1.2.

<sup>166</sup> E.g., in *ep.* 5.1.1. appear all three terms: *condicio*, *disciplina*, *diligentia*; in *ep.* 12.1.1 are both *condicio* and *diligentia*; at *ep.* 55.13.2 *condicio* occurs and later at *ep.* 55.28.2 we find *diligentia*, while *disciplina* appears three times in this letter; at *ep.* 59.18.3 is *condicio*, while *disciplina* occurs four times in the letter; moreover, *condicio* is at *ep.* 73.17.2, while *disciplina* is at *ep.* 73.14.2; at *ep.* 41.1.2 are both *condicio* and *diligentia*.

<sup>167</sup> Löhken (1982).

<sup>168</sup> Löhken adopts the system of N. Luhmann, *Funktionen und Formen formaler Organisationen* (Berlin: 1972), and develops it with respect to the political structure of the Roman empire.

terms are clearly spacial terms in accord with the system described by Löhken.<sup>169</sup>

Some of the other terms above might also be considered as technical terms in this spacial language. When taken as concrete nouns indicating an official position of authority, the three terms *honor*, *dignitas* and *officium* may well be thought of as occupying a certain area or space in which the currently serving officials (actors) perform their rôles on the stage of the Roman political scene. The system of prestige and gradations in official positions was equally applicable to the Christian Church, whose organisation resembled that of the state.<sup>170</sup> This is all the more significant in the case of the church officials who were resident in and acting on the stage at Carthage, where Cyprian provides evidence for his understanding of the various ranks of clerics there as persons (actors) whose expectations consist of upward mobility by promotion to the higher grades in a vertical hierarchy of positions or ranks.<sup>171</sup>

During the century after Cyprian's execution the usage of these terms at Carthage and elsewhere in North Africa became common. It appears that the majority of these general terms which denote the clergy were still in common use in the Church in this area from the time of Cyprian to that of Augustine. Evidence for this fact is in a letter of Augustine to the presbyters Saturninus and Eufhratas, a letter revealing Augustine's view of the clergy.<sup>172</sup>

This completes our review of the various terms which Cyprian used with respect to the clergy in general. In the next and succeeding chapters we will examine the specific terms.

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<sup>169</sup> See Löhken (1982), 69.

<sup>170</sup> Löhken (1982), 35: "Ein zweiter sehr wichtiger Differenzierungsfaktor mit ganz ähnlichen Folgewirkungen war die Chrisliche Kirche, deren Organisationsform sich zusehends derjenigen des Staates anglich."

<sup>171</sup> E.g. at *ep.* 39.5.2, where Cyprian announces his intention to promote both Aurelius and Celerinus to presbyters in future: "ceterum presbyterii honorem designasse nos illis iam sciatis." At *ep.* 39.4.2 Cyprian foresees the possibility of promotion for Celerinus: "viderit an sit ulterior gradus ad quem profici in ecclesia possit."

<sup>172</sup> Paoli (1992), 326-327, remarks in reference to this letter: "En quelque lignes, Augustin utilise les termes d'*ecclesiastica officia*, *gradus*, *ministerium*, *conservus* pour signifier comme allant de soi les charges propres au clergé et les services qui lui incombent."

# CHAPTER I

## CYPRIAN'S CONCEPT OF THE BISHOP

In order to grasp exactly how Cyprian understands the various members of the Christian clergy at Carthage, each clerical rank will be considered in turn, beginning with his concept of the bishop.

### A. TERMS USED

#### I. The various Terms for Bishop

Cyprian uses the following terms with reference to the bishop: *sacerdos*, *episcopus*, *praepositus*, *pastor*, *antistes*, *iudex*, and *gubernator*, but primarily the first two terms. In general, he has a preference for *sacerdos* over *episcopus*, but when he refers to the Christian bishop, the terms *sacerdos* and *episcopus* are nearly equal in frequency (122 uses v. 123).<sup>1</sup> Although some commentators have argued that the Bishop of Carthage occasionally used *sacerdos* to designate also the presbyter, it is clear that, except in the cases

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<sup>1</sup> Cyprian uses *sacerdos* 172 times out of a total 174 in the letters, and *episcopus* 123 times out of a total 150; *sacerdos* is used 48 times with reference to the OT priest, once for Christ as *summus sacerdos* (ep. 63.14.4), and once for pagan priests (ep. 65.2.1). On the other hand, Cyprian shows a preference for *episcopatus* (28 times out of a total 31) over *sacerdotium* (21 times from a total of 22 uses: *pace* Clarke, II, 217, n. 10. Cyprian employs the adjective *sacerdotalis* 26 times, but never uses *episcopalis*. 43 of the 47 uses of *praepositus* in the correspondence refer to the Christian bishop; Cyprian uses the term 40 times, all but twice in the sense of the Christian bishop; the two exceptions: ep. 66.6 (leader of bees and brigands) and ep. 3.1.2 (OT leader). Non-Cyprianic uses of *praepositus* refer to Roman clergy non-bishop delegates (ep. 8.1.1 and ep. 21.3.2) and Jewish pastors of the OT (ep. 8.1.1): see Clarke I, 210, n. 10; also Watson, 259. The word *pastor* occurs 27 times, 20 uses of which refer in metaphor to the Christian bishop as shepherd, with the remaining 7 uses from biblical citations; Cyprian uses the term *pastor* in this sense 18 times from the total 20 in the correspondence. For *antistes*, 5 of the 6 uses by Cyprian (from a total of 7) refer to the Christian bishop, while the other use refers to Zacharias as an OT priest of God. Of the 26 occurrences of *iudex*, 10 times the term indicates God or Christ as judge, 8 times it is "judge" in *sensu communi*, 5 times it represents the Jewish judges from Deut. 17:12, and only three times does it refer to the Christian bishop: in *ep.* 59.5.1; 59.18.1; and 66.3.2. All 3 uses of *gubernator* by Cyprian refer to the Christian bishop: *ep.* 59.6.2; 61.1.2; and 66.5.1. Noteworthy is Cyprian's list of these terms in *ep.* 66.5.1: "ecce iam sex annis nec fraternitas habuerit episcopum nec plebs praepositum nec grex pastorem nec ecclesia gubernatorem nec Christus antistitem nec Deus sacerdotem." See also Ritschl, 212-238, at 219; Thani Nayagam, 61; d'Alès, 303-313 at 310. Benson, 33, and d'Alès, 310 n.7, remind us that Pontius in his *Vita* refers to Cyprian as "Christi et Dei pontifex" and "Dei pontifex ille".

where he intends the Jewish priest of the Old Testament, Cyprian always means the Christian bishop when he writes *sacerdos*.<sup>2</sup> Neither *princeps* nor *pontifex* are used with reference to the bishop, although the latter, in the mind of Cyprian, appears to suggest a direct connection between the *pontifex* of the Old Testament and the Christian bishop of the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Cyprian frequently calls his fellow bishops *collega*,<sup>4</sup> *coepiscopus* and *consacerdos*.<sup>5</sup>

## II. The Meaning of *sacerdos* as used by Cyprian

It will be instructive at this point to examine the texts proposed by some commentators as evidence that Cyprian sometimes uses *sacerdos* to mean *presbyter*.<sup>6</sup>

### The Case of Numidicus: *ep.* 40

Much has been written about the inclusion of the *presbyter* Numidicus by Cyprian among the *presbyters* currently at Carthage.<sup>7</sup> Some have assumed that this *presbyter* had been ordained as such in

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<sup>2</sup> The texts upon which various authors have argued for the extension of the words *sacerdos* by Cyprian to include *presbyter* are: (a) *ep.* 1.1.1, (b) *ep.* 40.1.2, (c) *ep.* 61.3.1, (d) *ep.* 67.4.3, and (e) *ep.* 72.2.2. Watson (1896), Vilela (1971) and Laurance (1984) argue for all passages: (a) to (e); Janssen (1938) adopts (a), (b), (c) and (e); Ritschl (1885): (c) and (e); Brightman (1918) and d'Alès (1922): (b) and (c); Saxer (1969): (a) and (c); Gryson (1973) and van Beneden (1974): only (d). For particulars, see: Ritschl, 231; Watson, 258 n.1; Brightman, 396; d'Alès, 139; Janssen, 84-86; Saxer, 84-86; Vilela, 282-5; Renaud (1971), 37 n.1; van Beneden (1974), 81 n. 61 and 107 n. 110; Bevénot (1979), 421-423; Clarke II, 198-199.

<sup>3</sup> In *epp.* 3.2.1, 59.4.3 and 66.3.3, Cyprian cites St Paul (Acts 23: 4f), who in turn cites Exodus 22:28, where the *princeps* refers to a leader of the Jewish people. Of the other 4 uses of *princeps*, 2 refer to the emperor, one to Felicissimus, and one to "the princes of this world" (Eph 6:12f). On the connection between the O.T. *pontifex* and the Christian bishop, see Walker (1968), 37, and Clarke III, 242-3, n. 17.

<sup>4</sup> The 80 uses of *collega* by Cyprian, from a total of 87 occurrences in the correspondence, apply only to bishops.

<sup>5</sup> *Coepiscopus* is used 25 times by Cyprian: *epp.* 17.3.2, 44.1.2, 48.2.1 (twice), 48.4.1, 55.1.1, 55.6.2, 55.8.1, 55.21.1, 55.24.2, 55.24.4, 59.1.1, 59.5.2, 59.9.1 (twice), 66.7.2, 67.1.1, 68.1.1, 68.2.1, 71.1.1, 71.4.1, 71.4.2, 72.1.3, 73.26.2, 76.0. *Consacerdos*, 3 times: *epp.* 55.7.3, 55.8.2 and 60.1.1.

<sup>6</sup> The texts are those listed in n. 2 above.

<sup>7</sup> Benson, 33 n.3; Clarke II, 198-199 n.6 & n. 7 and 195-197; M. Lods (1958), 70-71; O. Bârlea (1969), 277-282; Test. DNJC (1899), 93-94; *Didascalia Ap.* (1929), 161-162; Turner (1912), 117; Dix (1946), 223-224; Campenhausen (1953), 298.

another diocese and that he now has become a member of the presbyterate at Carthage.<sup>8</sup> That Numidicus had been a presbyter in another diocese has been questioned. Yet, as a confessor who was almost a martyr with his wife, ordination as a presbyter was not necessary.

Perhaps the solution to this difficult passage is that Numidicus earned his clerical status by his confession, in addition to the divine revelation Cyprian received concerning him, and he was promoted directly to the presbyterate either in his own region or at Carthage. In the *Traditio Apostolica*, Hippolytus clearly says that a confessor might become a deacon or presbyter without the usual ceremony of imposition of hands:<sup>9</sup>

confessor autem, si fuit in vinculis propter nomen Domini, non imponetur manus super eum ad diaconum vel presbyteratum. Habet enim honorem presbyteratus per suam confessionem. Si autem instituitur episcopus, imponetur ei manus.

The *dignatio divina* of *ep.* 40.1.1 shows that it was by divine grace Cyprian enrolled Numidicus into his clergy<sup>10</sup>. Clearly then, Numidicus was a Christian in Carthage, or elsewhere in North Africa, when he was almost burnt to death. Appropriate reasons, apart from Cyprian's divine guidance, now support this jurisdictional act of Cyprian: Numidicus' confession and virtue, the defection of certain presbyters at Carthage, and the need to restore the strength of the church there (*redintegrato ecclesiae suae robore*).

As Bârlea points out, the incorporation of a confessor into the presbyterate without ordination could be effected only by the bishop

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<sup>8</sup> Dix (1946), 280: Cyprian announces in *ep.* 40 "that the presbyter Numidicus is henceforward 'to take his seat with our clergy', and that the promotion is justified by the facts that Numidicus is a 'confessor' and has been a presbyter in another church." The phrase "ut Numidicus presbyter adscribatur presbyterorum Carthaginensium numero et nobiscum sedeat in clero" probably should be translated: "that Numidicus should be joined as a presbyter to the number of Carthaginian presbyters and sit with us in the clergy."

<sup>9</sup> B.Botte (ed), *La Tradition apostolique de saint Hippolyte*, 5<sup>e</sup>. éd. (1989), 28; M. Lods (1958), 70-71 and W.H. Frere (1921) in Swete (ed), 289-292; H.-M. Legrand, "The Presidency of the Eucharist According to the Ancient Tradition," *Worship* 53 (1979), 426-7. See n. 54 below.

<sup>10</sup> This same phrase appears also in *ep.* 61.1.1.

with his own act of jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> This executive act is what Cyprian clarifies in *ep.* 40. Bârlea maintains that the authority to celebrate the eucharist was not recognised for presbyters in the third century.<sup>12</sup> He then suggests that the tendency of the gradual delegation of this authority to presbyters ought to have induced Cyprian to require ordination also for confessors as a prerequisite for reception into the presbyterate.<sup>13</sup> The question is, however, whether he did or not. It is certainly not recorded in the case of Numidicus here, nor in the cases of Moyses and Maximus (*ep.* 31.5), Urbanus and Sidonius (*ep.* 49.2), the other confessors who became presbyters.

Cyprian gives the reason for the survival of Numidicus as two-fold: (a) to enable the Lord to join this presbyter to the clergy at Carthage ("ut eum clero nostro Dominus adiungeret") and (b) to honour this band of clerics with (future) glorious bishops ("et copiam gloriosis sacerdotibus adornaret"). By the second element, Cyprian indicates that the choice of a future bishop, namely Numidicus, will add esteem to their group at Carthage. That the *sacerdotibus* refers to bishops, and not to presbyters, is clear from the very next sentence, which forecasts the promotion of Numidicus: "et promovebitur quidem, cum Deus permiserit, ad ampliorem locum religionis [*v.l.*: regionis] suae..." The variant reading of *regionis suae*, even though found only in the eleventh century manuscript B and various editions, is apt here, and perhaps the possible clerical error resulted from the "-li-" of *ampliorum* two words earlier reappearing accidentally in *regionis* as *religionis*.<sup>14</sup> The puzzling use of the plural *sacerdotibus* may simply be a distributive, an emphatic or a collective plural.<sup>15</sup>

#### b) The Letter to Lucius, Bishop of Rome: *ep.* 61

In this letter, written during the last quarter of 253,<sup>16</sup> Cyprian congratulates the bishop of Rome on his double honour of becoming a confessor and a bishop. At section 3.1 of this letter we find

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<sup>11</sup> Bârlea (1969), 281.

<sup>12</sup> *ib.*, 282.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> See Clarke II, 199 n.7, and Vilela, 282-283.

<sup>15</sup> See Schrijnen and Mohrmann (1936), 61-66, and (1937), 140-141.

<sup>16</sup> See Clarke, II, 273.



Cyprian's interpretation of the reason for the recent unexpected persecution of the Church at Rome. In this way, according to Cyprian, the Lord indicated which was His Church, who was its one bishop, and who were the presbyters associated with the bishop there.

ut ad confundendos haereticos et retundendos ostenderet  
Dominus quae esset ecclesia, qui episcopus eius unus  
divina ordinatione delectus, qui cum episcopo presbyteri  
sacerdotali honore coniuncti.

It is true, as Vilela indicates,<sup>17</sup> that the *presbyteri* are united with the bishop's sacerdotal honour, but it is the *honor sacerdotalis* of the bishop, not that of the presbyters.<sup>18</sup> This passage cannot be used as evidence that Cyprian uses *sacerdotalis* for presbyters.

### c) The Case of Bishops Basilides and Martialis: *ep.* 67

Here Cyprian considers in 255/256 the case of the errant bishops in the dioceses of Legio-and-Asturica and of Emerita. To enhance his argument, Cyprian refers to the great care taken by the apostles in the ordination of bishops (Acts 1:15) and of deacons (Acts 6:2). In this entire section he deals only with the two grades of clergy, the deacon and the bishop. It is not only in the ordination of bishops ("nec hoc in episcoporum tantum et sacerdotum [ordinationibus]"), but also in that of deacons ("sed et in diaconum ordinationibus") that we notice the rule which the apostles observed. The phrase, "in episcoporum . . . et sacerdotum [ordinationibus]" is an emphatic, rhetorical pleonasm denoting the two important functions of a bishop in administration and in liturgy.<sup>19</sup> This phrase can also be a case of hendiadys. It is clear that Cyprian means only the bishops and deacons in *ep.* 67.4.3, because in the very next section he speaks only of deacons and bishops, and not to presbyters.<sup>20</sup> We can also detect his chiasmic arrangement of bishops and deacons at 4.3,

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<sup>17</sup> Vilela, 284.

<sup>18</sup> In only two other letters does the phrase "sacerdotali honore" occur: (1) *ep.* 59.4.3, the honour of the Jewish priest, and (2) *ep.* 67.6.3, which refers to the bishop.

<sup>19</sup> See Excursus A on this phrase.

<sup>20</sup> H. Achelis, *Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Bd. II (Leipzig: 1912), 203, states that "die beiden spanischen Städte Legio VII gemina und Asturica Augusta einen gemeinsamen Bischof gehabt hatten. Aber dann wird wohl eine von ihnen von einem selbständigen Presbyter regiert gewesen sein."

followed by deacons and bishops in 4.4. There is no place for the presbyter in this tightly constructed rhetoric.

#### d) The Reconciliation of heretical Clergy: *ep. 72*

In May or June 256, Cyprian wrote to Stephen in Rome concerning two issues: heretical baptism and heretical clergy. It is in the second of these that appears the sentence: "oportet enim sacerdotes et ministros qui altari et sacrificiis deserviunt integros adque immaculatos esse." (*ep. 72.2.2*). Vilela, among others, has argued that by the phrase, *sacerdotes et ministros*, Cyprian means presbyters and deacons.<sup>21</sup> Immediately after this sentence of the text, the bishop of Carthage cites as his authority three statements from the Old Testament: Lev. 21:17, Exod. 19:22 and Exod. 30:20-21.<sup>22</sup> In the only two other passages in his correspondence in which he uses the same three texts together, the first concerns Fortunatianus, the renegade bishop of Assuras (*ep. 65.2.1*), and the other deals with the lapsed bishops Basilides and Martialis of Spain (*ep. 67.1.2*). In *ep. 72.2.2*, Cyprian refers to heretical bishops (*sacerdotes*) and other clergy (*ministri*). In addition, in the only two other passages where Cyprian uses the phrase, *sacerdotes et ministros*, in his letter to the Christians at Furni (*ep. 1.2.1, 1.2.2*), Cyprian clearly refers to the bishops (*sacerdotes*) and the other clergy (*ministri*) at the altar of God.

#### e) The Letter to the Church at Furni: *ep. 1*

At the beginning of this letter, Cyprian gives the rationale for the prohibition of clerics' involvement in mundane pursuits. Those who are serving in the *sacerdotium* or in the *ministerium clericum* should devote their time and energy exclusively to accomplish their duties as leaders and ministers of the Church.<sup>23</sup> Once again, Vilela attempts to marshal the following text from *ep. 1.1.1* to support his

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<sup>21</sup> Vilela, 282-3.

<sup>22</sup> Fahey (1971), 82: "As with his application of Lev 19:32a which he transferred from its Jewish cultic context to apply to the Christian community, so Cyprian also cites Lev 21:17, a cultic OT prohibition, as binding on Christian priests. This Leviticus text is connected in Cyprian's writings with the prohibitions of Exod 19:22 and Exod 30:20b-21a." Cyprian cites Exod 19:22 and Exod 30:20f in *ep. 65.2.1* and again in *ep. 72.2.2*.

<sup>23</sup> See W. Eck, "Handesltätigkeit christlicher Kleriker in der Spätantike," *Memorias de Historia Antigua* 4 (1980), 127-137, esp. 129.

argument for the inclusion of presbyter in the technical term, *sacerdos*:<sup>24</sup>

quando singuli divino sacerdotio honorati et in clerico ministerio constituti non nisi altari et sacrificiis deservire et precibus adque orationibus vacare debeant.

Without an explicit statement by Cyprian that he means *presbyter* by his use of the term *sacerdos*, we have no right to assume that he does so.

A further question is the meaning of *honorati* here: instead of "honoured," might it not also mean that bishops who received their *honoraria* and support from the Church ought to refrain from undertaking worldly occupations and pursuits which would possibly bring them further financial or other emoluments?<sup>25</sup> Yet the only other use by Cyprian of *honorati* in the correspondence, at *ep.* 58.10.1, means "honoured" in its usual sense.

In addition to the five foregoing texts, one can approach the solution of the question regarding *sacerdos* as presbyter by analysing *ep.* 59. This letter, which Cyprian wrote to Cornelius in the summer of 252, concerns the status of the pseudo-bishop Fortunatus. The bishop of Carthage clarifies to his colleague in Rome that it was only five pseudo-bishops, not 25 authentic bishops, who consecrated Fortunatus. Also in this letter, Cyprian clearly distinguishes the *presbyteri* from the *sacerdotes* or *episcopi*:

si eorum qui de illis priore anno indicaverunt numerus cum presbyteris et diaconis computetur, plures tunc adfuerunt iudicio et cognitioni quam sunt idem isti qui cum Fortunato nunc videntur esse coniuncti. (*ep.* 59.15.1)

Bévenot deftly demonstrates that here the presbyters and deacons are not included among those who passed judgement in the year before;<sup>26</sup> they had no voice in the *censura sacerdotum* of *ep.* 59.14.2. "Only the bishops," explains Bévenot, "(called '*episcopi*' [*ep.*

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<sup>24</sup> Vilela, 284-285, and see Clarke I, 155, n. 11.

<sup>25</sup> see Bayard (1902), 181. *honorati* also appears in *de bono patientiae* 10.199 and in *de mortalitate* 17.298, in both cases in its usual sense of "honoured".

<sup>26</sup> Bévenot (1979), 422.

59.9.1] or '*sacerdotes*' [ep. 68.2.1]) passed judgement, not the presbyters or deacons."<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, we read in ep. 55.8.2, a letter of Cyprian to the bishop Antonianus, the phrase: *sacerdotii sublime fastigium*. Cyprian was referring to the elevation of Cornelius as bishop of Rome, after having served in every clerical grade leading up to that "lofty pinnacle."<sup>28</sup> In the only other use of *fastigium* in the correspondence (ep. 76.1.3), Cyprian refers only to Nemesianus and the other eight bishops addressed in the letter. If we extend the *sublime fastigium* to the presbyters (who are secondary addressees following *item*), then it must be also extended to the deacons and the laity with these bishops confined in the mines. Hence, the phrase *sacerdotii sublime fastigium* refers only to the bishop.<sup>29</sup>

When we consider that of the total 25 uses of *sacerdotalis* by Cyprian in the collection of his letters, all but four of these refer to the bishop<sup>30</sup> we can all the more appreciate the cogency of Bévenot's judgement that by *sacerdos* Cyprian always means bishop.<sup>31</sup>

In 1957, when P.-M. Gy discussed the evolution of the term *sacerdos* as it applies to bishops and presbyters, he observed that the history of this technical term from the fifth to twelfth centuries had been studied very little.<sup>32</sup> He indicated that the modern view which

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> see Clarke III, 173 n.32.

<sup>29</sup> *fastigium* appears twice elsewhere in Cyprian's works: (1) *de bono patientiae* 18.341: "Job examinatus est et probatus et ad summum fastigium laudis patientiae (sic) et virtute proventus." and (2) *de unitate eccl.* 21.497 (concerning the rank of Confessor: "gradus est quo ad fastigium salutis ascenditur."

<sup>30</sup> The other 4 passages refer to the Jewish priest of the O.T.: ep. 3.2. 1, ep. 59.4.3, ep. 66.3.2, and ep. 66.3.3 The OT priest is for Cyprian an analogue of the Christian bishop. J.D. Laurance, "Priest" as Type of Christ, (New York: 1984), 198-200, submits as evidence of his theory that *sacerdos* = *presbyter* all the texts discussed above and ep. 19.1 and *de unit.* 13. L. states at 198, n. 365, that Watson is undecided on this; yet Watson (1896), 258, states: "There are, I think only five passages where *presbyter* can be the meaning of *sacerdos*" Seventy-five years later, Vilela repeats these same five cases, as does now Laurance. J.E. Huther's view in Cyprian's *Lehre von der Kirche* (Hamburg u. Gotha: 1839) that the term *sacerdos* does not include *presbyter* is followed later by Bernard (1918), Saxer (1969), Bévenot (1979), Clarke (1984).

<sup>31</sup> Bévenot (1979), 423.

<sup>32</sup> Gy (1957), 125-145, esp. 133-145.

understands *sacerdos* as referring only to priests was established as early as the twelfth century, when the scholastic treatises on the sacraments first appeared.

In a concise *résumé* Gy concludes with the following three points:<sup>33</sup> (1) In the eleventh century, *sacerdos* was applied normally to the presbyter, even though it could be applied in theory to the bishop. (2) During the Carolingian period, *sacerdos* was applied normally to the presbyter and to the bishop, but more often to the presbyter. (3) From the second half of the fourth century to the sixth, *sacerdos* normally designated the bishop: *sacerdos* was equivalent to *episcopus*. But even in this period, *sacerdos* was occasionally applied to the presbyter in his eucharistic authority.<sup>34</sup> Thus, we can see that the denotation of *sacerdos* as bishop, which Cyprian used, lasted for three centuries.

## B. INDISPENSABILITY OF THE BISHOP

According to Cyprian, the bishop is essential to and in the Church. In his letter to the pompous Puppianus, Cyprian explains this principle in the following passage:

even when a whole host of proud and presumptuous people may refuse to listen and go away, the Church herself does not go away from Christ, and that in his view the Church consists of people who remain united with their bishop, it is the flock that stays by its shepherd. By that you ought to realise that the bishop is in the Church and the Church is in the bishop, and whoever is not with the bishop is not in the Church.<sup>35</sup>

There is, as it were, a certain sort of hypostatic union between the bishop and the Church both in concept and in reality. In

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 144-5.

<sup>34</sup> An example of this appears at the end of this period in the Rule of St Benedict, ch. 62: *si quis abbas presbyterum vel diaconem ordinari petierit, de suis elegat qui dignus sit sacerdotio fungi.*" See also: ch. 60: *"si quis de ordine sacerdotum in monasterio se suscipi rogaverit"*

<sup>35</sup> *ep.* 66.8.3: *"etsi contumax ac superba obaudire nolentium multitudo discedat, ecclesia tamen a Christo non recedit, et illi sunt ecclesia plebs sacerdoti adunata et pastori suo grex adhaerens. unde scire debes episcopum in ecclesia esse et ecclesiam in episcopo et si quis cum episcopo non sit in ecclesia non esse."*

discussing the essential unity of the catholic church in his letter to Antonianus (*ep.55.24.2*), Cyprian states:<sup>36</sup>

There is one church founded by Christ but it is divided into many members throughout the world; likewise, there is but one episcopate but it is spread amongst the harmonious host of all the numerous bishops.

For Cyprian, it is the union of these two hypostases of bishops and church which results in the true and complete Church of Christ. Both elements must be present. It is of interest in this respect to note that, in his treatise on the unity of the Church, Cyprian again couples the two essentially constitutive notions of episcopate and church:<sup>37</sup>

Episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. Ecclesia una est quae in multitudinem latius incrementa fecunditatis extenditur: quomodo solis multi radii sed lumen unum, et rami arboris multi sed robur unum tenaci radice fundatum, et cum de fonte uno rivi plurimi defluunt, numerositas licet diffusa videatur exundantis copiae largitate, unitas tamen servatur in origine.

Cyprian employs here in his description of the singular unity of the church and the bishops the same three similes which Tertullian had used to describe the unique relationship which subsists in the divine Trinity: the sun, the source and the tree.<sup>38</sup> Hence, Cyprian

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<sup>36</sup> *ep. 55.24.2*: "et cum sit a Christo una ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra divisa, item episcopatus unus episcoporum multorum concordi numerositate diffusus." Note the chiasmic use of "una ecclesia . . . episcopatus unus."

<sup>37</sup> *de unit. 5*: "The authority of the bishops forms a unity, of which each holds his part in totality. And the Church forms a unity, however far she spreads and multiplies by the progeny of her fecundity; just as the sun's rays are many, yet the light is one, and a tree's branches are many, yet the strength deriving from its sturdy root is one. So too, when many streams flow from a single spring, though their multiplicity seems scattered abroad by the copiousness of the welling waters, yet their oneness abides by reason of their starting-point."

<sup>38</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Praexan* 8: "prolatum divinus filium a patre, sed non separatim: protulit enim deus sermonem. . . sicut radix fructicem et fons fluvium et sol radium. . . nihil tamen a matrice alienatur, a qua proprietates suas ducit;" *id. 22*: "inseparatos duos esse . . . individuorum duorum." See also Tertullian, *Apol.* 21: "cum radius ex sole porrigitur, portio ex summa; sed sol erit in radio, quia solis est radius, nec separatur substantia sed extenditur;" and Koch (1930), 63-65.

steadfastly maintains that the bishop and the Church are mutually essential one to the other.<sup>39</sup>

This is true both in the theoretical and the practical sphere. Thani Nayagam notes that "the entire organisation of clergy and laity depended on the bishop both in doctrine and practice."<sup>40</sup> It is the Lord, says Cyprian, who regulates the dignity of his bishops and the structure of his Church.<sup>41</sup> In this same letter (*ep.* 33), Cyprian proceeds to remark that the bishops are the successors of the Apostles, from one generation of bishops to the present. This is how he envisions the structure of the Church; this is why he sees the bishops as the only ones empowered to govern the Church.<sup>42</sup> He has made a notable advance beyond the thought of Clement and Tertullian; without the bishop there is no church, and without the Church there is no bishop.<sup>43</sup>

Cyprian maintains the position that the Church is founded upon the bishops,<sup>44</sup> and not *vice versa*. Not only is the glory of the Church equivalent to the glory of the bishop, but, because of his pre-eminent position in the Church, it is only fitting and proper that the bishop should merit the greater share of rejoicing in this glory of the Church.<sup>45</sup> This is true precisely because of the greater responsibility

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<sup>39</sup> *ep.* 66.8.3, and see H.-M. Legrand, "The Presidency of the Eucharist According to the Ancient Tradition," *Worship* 53 (1979), 424-5.

<sup>40</sup> Thani Nayagam (1950), 61.

<sup>41</sup> *ep.* 33.1.1: "Dominus noster, cuius praecepta metuere et servare debemus, episcopi honorem et ecclesiae suae rationem disponens" Clarke II (1984), 145, remarks: "The bishop is the essential pivot in the Church's structure; the Church cannot be a Church without him."

<sup>42</sup> *ep.* 33.1.1: "inde per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio et ecclesiae ratio decurrit ut ecclesia super episcopos constituatur et omnis actus ecclesiae per eosdem praepositos gubernetur."

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, and see Campenhausen (1953), 297: "weil er [Cyprian] an dem Recht seiner Herrschaft nicht zweifeln kann und weil ihm die Erfahrungen, die er macht, die Notwendigkeit der bischöflichen Autorität nur immer von neuem bestätigen. Es gibt keine Ordnung und darum auch keine Einheit und Heiligkeit der Kirche ohne ein für ihre Leitung verantwortliches Amt. Dazu ist es begründet, und darin liegt sein unabänderliches Recht und sein göttlich-theologischer Sinn." See also: Achelis (1912), 35: "Ohne den Bischof war eine Gemeinde nicht zu regieren."

<sup>44</sup> *ep.* 33.1.1, and see n. 2 in Introduction *supra*.

<sup>45</sup> *ep.* 13.1.1: "nam cum gaudere in hoc omnes fratres oportet, tunc in gaudio communi maior est episcopi portio, ecclesiae enim gloria praepositi gloria est."

placed upon the bishop, who, as successor to the Apostles, has inherited the mandate of Christ to tend his flock.<sup>46</sup> It is the bishop, furthermore, who is responsible primarily at the crucial and essential stage of admission of members into the Church at their baptism;<sup>47</sup> this significantly underscores the essential indispensability of the bishop.

This is further seen in Cyprian's insistence on the unity of the Church: there must be only one faith of the one Lord and but one holy spirit in the one church with only one bishop as its unique shepherd.<sup>48</sup> The lack of any one of these constituent members of the union will vitiate the whole.<sup>49</sup> The bishop is, and remains, "the *unique organ of the Holy Spirit*" in the local Church.<sup>50</sup>

This concept seems in harmony with Mascall's argument in 1966, that the notion of succession of bishops, "in the sense of *substitution*, must be discarded in favour of the theory of *incorporation*."<sup>51</sup> Cyprian calls the episcopate the college of bishops, and Mascall describes its structure as more akin to "a living body differentiated into organs than like that of a committee composed of individual members."<sup>52</sup> This seems to be what Cyprian means by his famous *dictum*: "Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur," which Mascall prefers to translate as: "The

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* "One God, one Christ, one Bishop!" was a slogan during the Novatianist schism in Rome in 251: Chadwick (1980), 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Sent. Episc.*, 17: "Iesus Christus . . . potestatem baptizandi episcopis dedit." See: B. Botte, "Caractère collégial du presbytériat et de l'épiscopat," *Etudes sur le sacrement de l'Ordre* (Paris: 1957), 97-124, esp. 104, where Botte stresses that "pas d'initiation chrétienne complète sans l'évêque: la confirmation lui était réservée -- c'était la discipline normale en Occident -- ou du moins il fallait du saint-chrême béni par lui." See also *ep.* 73.9.

<sup>48</sup> *ep.* 34.5.2: "Deus unus est et Christus unus et una ecclesia et cathedra una super Petrum Domini voce fundata." See on the *cathedra Petri*, *de unit.*, 4. The case of coadjutor bishops is an exception to the rule. The first known example is that of Alexander, contemporary of Origen, who was chosen to assist Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem: Eusebius, *HE*, 6, 11, 1-3. See B. Botte, "«Presbyterium» et «Ordo episcoporum»," *Irénikon* 29 (1956), 5-28, at 9, n.1. We have no evidence, however, that Cyprian was familiar with the concept or existence of auxiliary bishops.

<sup>49</sup> *ep.* 49.2.4 and *ep.* 65.5.1.

<sup>50</sup> Dix (1925), 42.

<sup>51</sup> E.L. Mascall, (1966), 201-208, at 204.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 205-206.



episcopate is one thing of which each part is drawn together by the others into the whole."<sup>53</sup> The bishop is dispensable neither at the level of the local church nor at that of the Church universal.

The necessity and indispensability of the bishop in the Church also flows from the long-accepted thinking — among pagans as well as in the Judeo-Christian tradition — which places great emphasis and value on the concept of heredity and its impact on the human race. The concept and fact of heredity is axiomatic to the continuing existence of men, and because Christians are human beings, heredity has an important bearing and influence on the Church. And since this notion affects the Church, it also concerns the bishops.

Josef Fellermayr in 1979 presented his masterful study of this issue. Specifically, he treats of tradition and succession in light of ancient Roman thought concerning heredity and inheritance.<sup>54</sup> The author traces the usage and importance of the term *hereditas* among pagan authors, as well as in sacred scripture and in the writings of the Church Fathers. He amply demonstrates the force which this concept and fact had upon the Christian Church.

Among these writers we find Cyprian, who faithfully supports the concept and fact of *hereditas* in the Church. It is of interest, however to note that in the correspondence he uses the term *hereditas* only once and *heres* only twice, and that in all three cases he is citing passages from sacred scripture.<sup>55</sup>

The context of the letter to Antonianus, in which the quoted term *hereditas* appears (ep. 55), contains the argument by Cyprian that Novatian and his errant followers are guilty of idolatry. For this reason, they are in danger of not partaking in the heritage

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, citing *de unit.*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> J. Fellermayr, Tradition und Sukzession im Lichte des römisch-antiken Erbes (1979). See also the article by F. on "*Hereditas*" in RAC Bd. 14 (Stuttgart: 1988), c. 626 - 648; also W. Selb, "Erbrecht" in JAC, Jg. 14 (Münster Westfalen: 1971), 170 - 184; and also the article by H. Kornhardt on "*Hereditas*" in TLL, vol. vi (1936-1942), c. 2630-2643 and K.'s article on "*Heres*" in TLL vol. vi, c.2645-2656.

<sup>55</sup> In ep. 55.27.1, *hereditas* appears in a citation of Eph 5:5: "Omnis fornicator aut immundus aut fraudator, quod est idolatria, non habet *hereditatem* in regno Christi et Dei." *Heres* occurs in epp. 6.2.1 and 58.1.3; in both cases in a citation of Rom 8:16: "Sumus filii Dei: si autem filii, et heredes Dei, coheredes autem Christi, siquidem compatiamur, ut et conmagificemur."

destined for those who are faithful to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, i.e. entering the kingdom of God and Christ. Of the two uses of the term *heres* the first is addressed to the imprisoned confessors Sergius and Rogatianus (*ep.* 6). This letter is a missive in which Cyprian encourages these confessors to endure their present sufferings in order to partake in their future inheritance as "filii et heredes Dei" (Rom 8:16). His second use of *heres* (again in a citation of Rom 8:16) occurs in *ep.* 58, the letter to the laity in Thibaris written in May, 253. This is another case of Cyprian's desire to remind Christians to remain steadfast in their faith and thereby gain their glory as "heredes Dei," especially in view of the impending persecution.

In his treatises Cyprian employs the term *hereditas* three times; in two of these (*de unit.* 24 and *de op. et el.* 19) with the meaning of "aeterna beatitudo," and in the third (*ad Donat.* 10) in a base and totally secular connotation. Cyprian uses the term *heres* four times in his treatises to indicate "*filius*" or "*haeres Christi*": in *de mort.* 16, *de op. et el.* 19 (twice), and in *de unit.* 24. *Heres* is also found as a scriptural citation in two other treatises: *ad Fort.* 8 and *ad Quir.* 3.16; in both instances the scriptural source is Rom 8:16. Thus, Cyprian seems to show a decided preference for this verse from *Romans*, which he cites twice in his letters and twice in his treatises. He uses this verse to stress to his community the idea that they are sons and heirs of God, and as such that the kingdom of heaven is their inheritance as Christians.

## C. BECOMING A BISHOP

In what way and by what means does a person become a Christian bishop? The ultimate source of this eminent status in the Church is, according to Cyprian, God and God alone. The process of becoming a bishop is not a human manoeuvre. The Bishop of Carthage states firmly and unequivocally: it is God alone, and not any human agency, who makes (*facit*),<sup>56</sup> and appoints (*constituit*),<sup>57</sup> the bishop; selects (*eligit*),<sup>58</sup> and ordains (*ordinat*)<sup>59</sup> the bishop.

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<sup>56</sup> *ep.* 66.1.1: "post Deum iudicem qui sacerdotes facit"; *ep.* 3.1.2: "sacerdotes Dei ab eo qui sacerdotes facit vindicari"; *ep.* 3.3.1: "si nos aliquid audere contra Deum possumus qui episcopos fecit."

<sup>57</sup> *ep.* 66.1.2: "a Deo ac per Deum sacerdotes eius in ecclesia constituentur"; *ep.* 59.6.2: "Christus, qui sacerdotes aut constituit aut protegit."; *ep.* 66.4.1: "ut etiam qui non credebant Deo episcopum constituenti". The first and third examples provide

In addition to the use of these verbs just mentioned, Cyprian teaches that the bishops obtain their status in the hierarchy of the Church by the operation of the judgement (*iudicium*), not of men, nor of human institutions, but rather of God, of the judgement of God and of Christ.<sup>60</sup> In *ep.* 66.1.1, he refers to "God the judge" who creates bishops: "post Deum iudicem qui sacerdotes facit."

Not only does Cyprian clearly state that God makes bishops, but he also firmly emphasises this fact by the observation that God is fully conscious of the ordination of a *sacerdos*; after citing Mt 10:29 on God's awareness of the sparrow falling to the ground, with his pointed rhetoric he continues: "et probet maiestas eius et veritas sine conscientia et permissu Dei etiam minora non fieri, tu existimes sacerdotes Dei sine conscientia eius in ecclesia ordinare." ("Thus the God of majesty and truth thereby establishes that even things of the least consequence do not come to pass without the

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forms of *constituere* which are cases of *hapax legomena*; *constituit* occurs 10 times in the correspondence.

<sup>58</sup> *ep.* 3.3.1: "apostolos id est episcopos et praepositos Dominus elegit"; *ep.* 49.2.4: [Cornelius to Cyprian, quoting the confessors:] "Cornelium episcopum sanctissimae catholicae ecclesiae electum a Deo omnipotente et Christo Domino noscimus."; *ep.* 55.8.3: "et modestus et quales esse consuerunt qui ad hunc locum divinitus eliguntur" The forms of the verb in the last two citations are examples of *hapax legomena*. *ep.* 67.2.2: "in ordinationibus sacerdotum non nisi immaculatos et integros antistites eligere debemus"; *ep.* 67.3.2: "quando ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi." In *ep.* 48.4.2, Cyprian combines the two verbs: "Dominus qui sacerdotes sibi in ecclesia sua eligere et constituere dignatur." *ep.* 61.3.1: "quis episcopus eius unus divina ordinatione delectus" is an example of *deligere*.

<sup>59</sup> *ep.* 61.3.1: "quis episcopus eius unus divina ordinatione delectus."; *ep.* 66.1.2: "tu existimes sacerdotes Dei sine conscientia eius in ecclesia ordinari"; *ep.* 66.9.1: "si maiestatem Dei qui sacerdotes ordinat Christi cogitaveris"; *ep.* 68.2.1: "qui episcopo Cornelio in Catholica ecclesia de Dei iudicio et cleri ac plebis suffragio ordinato"; *ep.* 67.5: "praepositus ordinatur". The forms of the verb in the last three examples are cases of *hapax legomena*. See also: van Beneden (1974) *passim* for an extensive study of the technical term "*ordinare*" and its associated forms and nouns.

<sup>60</sup> *ep.* 43.1.2: "contra suffragium vestrum et Dei iudicium"; *ep.* 55.8.1: "sed de Dei iudicio qui episcopum [eum] fecit"; *ep.* 59.5.2 (twice): "nemo post divinum iudicium ut putet sine Dei iudicio iudicare" In *ep.* 66.2.2 *testimonium* is twice coupled with *iudicium Dei*. See J. Speigl, "Cyprian über das iudicium Dei bei der Bischofseinssetzung," RQ 66 (1974), 30-45. In general, on Cyprian's concept and use of *iudicium* and related terms, see T. Osawa (1983). For God and Christ: *ep.* 55.8.4: "factus est autem Cornelius episcopus de Dei et Christi eius iudicio"; *ep.* 66.1.1: "sed de Dei et Christi iudicio iudicare"; *ep.* 66.5.2: "iudicium Dei et Christi in acceptum referat"

knowledge and leave of God. . . [if] you hold the view that bishops of God can be appointed in His Church without his knowledge.") (*ep.* 66.1.2)<sup>61</sup> While the *voluntas Dei* or the *iudicium Dei* is the ultimate source of the creation and installation of a bishop to a particular church, this decision of God is normally expressed through the participation of intermediaries: the laity and clergy of the locality, as well as neighbouring bishops.

### I. Three essential requirements

In a monograph written in 1962, W. Telfer succinctly observes that there are three things needed for a new bishop legally, validly and properly to enter upon his episcopal office and occupy his *cathedra* and assume the full *potestas* in the diocese: a vacancy, an election and an installation.<sup>62</sup> He then indicates that the only possible six ways by which, in his considered judgement and estimation, a vacancy to a specific diocese could conceivably and properly occur: death,<sup>63</sup> translation,<sup>64</sup> deposition,<sup>65</sup> incapacity,<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Fahey, 299-300 remarks that this verse, Mt 10:29, "receives in Cyprian's writings a most unusual exegesis. Twice [*ep.* 66.1.2 and 59.5.2] he relates Mt 10:29 to the worthiness of bishops and asserts that anyone questioning the worthiness of duly elected bishops is actually questioning God's Providence, in a letter addressed to Pope Cornelius, he stresses sacerdotal (episcopal) authority and is shocked that some Christians were disobedient toward their bishop." On *ep.* 66.1.2, F. adds that here "Cyprian takes issue with [Florentius Puppianus] for criticizing and judging bishops, despite the fact that it is God who makes bishops (*qui sacerdotes facit*)."

<sup>62</sup> Telfer (1962) 187, also 188-211.

<sup>63</sup> An example occurs in *ep.* 59.6, where Cyprian writes: "quando episcopus in locum defuncti substituitur;" see also O. Ritschl (1885), 181-182; and *ep.* 69.5.

<sup>64</sup> For example, the case of Alexander, Bishop in Cappadocia, in the time of Septimius Severus (193-211); Alexander later became bishop of Aelia-Jerusalem: Eusebius, HE 6.11.2. Also, Eusebius from Berytus to Nicomedia and Eustathius from Berroea to Antioch. The fact that translations occurred before the Council of Nicaea is clear from canon 15 of that synod, which forbade them not because they were wrong in principle, but because of abuses. See Dix (1946), 199, n.1; also Telfer (1962), 190; also S.L. Greenslade, *Shepherding the Flock* (London: 1967), 34: "translation to another see was disliked and for long rare, though opposition to it was gradually worn down on grounds of expediency."

<sup>65</sup> The cases of the former bishops Basilides and Martialis in Spain: *ep.* 67.1.1; also Bishops Iovinus and Maximus, condemned, deposed first by nine colleagues, and later condemned and excommunicated by the full Council of Carthage in 251: *ep.* 59.10.1; also ex-Bishop Fortunatianus: *ep.* 65.1. See: E. Vacanard, "Déposition des évêques," *Revue du clergé français* 55 (1908), 388-402; also: Clarke IV, 147, n. 10.

the creation of a new diocese, or the refusal of the *plebs* to accept his ministry among them.<sup>67</sup>

This last case rests on a principle which goes to the very essence of the concept of the bishop's office. Pope Celestine in 428 formulated this basic notion *in nuce*: "Nullus invitis detur episcopus."<sup>68</sup> But even before him, Cyprian had expressed this principle in *ep.* 67, a synodal letter which addressed episcopal claims and claimants in two dioceses of Spain. In sections 4 and 5 of this letter, he explicitly requires the presence of the people both at the election and at the installation of a bishop.<sup>69</sup>

Cyprian describes the entire process of episcopal election in his letter to the Numidian bishop Antonianus (*ep.* 55). There the main theme is the election and installation of Cornelius at Rome. Cyprian asserts (1) that the see was vacant by the martyrdom of Fabian, (2) that the vacancy cannot be disputed, since Novatian's counter-consecration had not then taken place, (3) that the worthiness of Cornelius was testified by the bishops who came together and by a majority of the assembled people.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Such as Paul of Samosata, who probably replaced Demetrianus at Antioch, while the latter was a prisoner of the Persians: see Telfer, 188, n. 3, but also compare the report of Demetrianus' death in Eusebius, *HE* 7.27.

<sup>67</sup> As in *ep.* 67, e.g., 67.1.1: "legimus litteras vestras significantes Basilidem et Martialem episcopatum gerere et sacerdotium Dei administrare non oportere." and *ep.* 67.9.1: "propter quod integritatis et fidei vestrae religiosam sollicitudinem, fratres dilectissimi, et laudamus pariter et probamus quantum possum adhortamus litteris nostris, ne vos cum profanis et maculatis sacerdotibus communicatione sacrilega miscatis, sed integram et sinceram fidei vestrae firmitatem religioso timore servetis." See also the *Gesta apud Zenophilum*, 10, (CSEL 26, 185-97; PL 8, 724-42), where we learn that at the election of Silvanus of Cirta, the people, when they heard his name read, shouted: "Alius fiat, exaudi Deus!"; then the people refused to accept him with the words, "civem nostrum volumus; ille traditor est!": see H. Achelis (1912), 416.

<sup>68</sup> *ep.* 4 in PL 50, 430-436.

<sup>69</sup> *ep.* 67.4.1: "ut sacerdos plebe praesente sub omnium oculis deligatur et dignus atque idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio conprobetur"; *ep.* 67.5.1: "ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas ad eam plebem cui praepositus ordinatur episcopi eiusdem provinciae proximi quique conveniant et episcopus deligatur plebe praesente" See also: P. Granfield, "Episcopal Elections in Cyprian: Clerical and Lay Participation," *Theological Studies* 37 (1976).

<sup>70</sup> *ep.* 55.8.4: "et factus est [Cornelius] episcopus a plurimis collegis nostris qui tunc in urbe Roma aderant, qui ad nos litteras honorificas et laudabiles et testimonio suae praedicationis inlustres de eius ordinatione miserunt. factus est autem Cornelius episcopus de Dei et Christi eius iudicio, de clericorum paene omnium testimonio, de

Kötting indicates that it is from this letter to Bishop Antonianus that we learn for the very first time that a candidate for the episcopacy was required to serve in all the clerical grades leading up to bishop.<sup>71</sup> This may be possible, and it may even be true, but the section in *ep.* 55.8.2 which he cites as his evidence states that Cornelius had served in every clerical rank prior to his election as bishop at Rome, not that this was obligatory, either for Cornelius or for any other clerical candidate advancing in the hierarchy of the Church.<sup>72</sup> Achelis notes the canons of two councils in the fourth century which specify a certain clerical *cursus* to be followed.<sup>73</sup> Faivre indicates in his conclusion that this situation was formalised at the end of the fourth century and that this became obligatory during the transition from the fifth to the sixth century.<sup>74</sup> Some other commentators, however, maintain that Caius, who was a native of Dalmatia and who was bishop of Rome from 283 to 296, lists the various clerical grades needed before a candidate might become a bishop, but the genuineness of this letter has been seriously questioned.<sup>75</sup>

Cornelius himself, moreover, gives us his own personal version of the circumstances surrounding Novatian's claim to be bishop of Rome. This account is found in his letter to Fabius of Antioch,

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plebis quae tunc adfuit suffragio, de sacerdotum antiquorum et bonorum virorum collegio, cum nemo ante se factus esset, cum Fabiani locus id est cum locus Petri et gradus cathedrae sacerdotalis vacaret."; resumé cited from Telfer (1962), 193.

<sup>71</sup> B. Kötting, "Bischofsamt und Bischofswahl" in: *Fragen der Kirche heute* (Würzburg: 1971), 111-122, at 115 [= *Ecclesia peregrinans*, I (Münster: 1988), 467-479].

<sup>72</sup> *ep.* 55.8.2: "non iste ad episcopatum subito pervenit, sed per *omnia ecclesiastica officia* promotus et in divinis administrationibus Dominum saepe promeritus ad sacerdotii sublime fastigium *cunctis religionis gradibus* ascendit."

<sup>73</sup> Achelis (1912), 32, n. 1: "Siricius an Himerius von Tarraco, (a. 385), c. 13: 'Die kirchliche Laufbahn ist diese: Lektor oder Exorzist, Akoluth, Subdiakon, Diakon, Presbyter, Bischof.' and Sardica (a. 343), c. 10(13): 'Niemand soll Bischof werden, der nicht vorher Lektor und Diakon oder Presbyter gewesen ist' [der griechische Text sagt: Lektor, Diakon und Presbyter].

<sup>74</sup> Faivre (1977), 412.

<sup>75</sup> Caius, *ep. ad Felicem episcopum*, vi: "Illud tamen nos statuantes vobis et omnibus servare mandamus, ut ad ordines ecclesiasticos sic ascendant in Ecclesia; qui ordinari merentur, id est, si quis episcopus esse meretur, sit primo ostiarius [sic], deinde lector, postea exorcista, inde sacretur acolythus, demum vero subdiaconus, deinde diaconus, et postea presbyter, et exinde, si meretur, episcopus ordinetur." in PL, 5. c. 190 A; see remarks of Coustant, *ibid.*, 181-184.

which is recorded by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi. 43. The fatal flaw of Novatian's election and consecration is that they occurred in a clandestine way.<sup>76</sup> One can see by this that the presence and participation of the people was vitally important for the validity of episcopal election and installation.

For the third and final element, the installation of a bishop after he has been duly elected, Hippolytus in his *Traditio Apostolica* is our earliest extant source.<sup>77</sup> He states that, after the election ("episcopus ordinetur electus ab omni populo"), in the presence of the assembled people and clergy, the candidate who is to be made a bishop receives the imposition of hands ("imponant super eum manus et praesbyterium adstet quiescens").<sup>78</sup> After the prayer to invoke the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, the new bishop receives the kiss of peace from all present and then continues, as president, at the eucharist (TA, iv., 6-12 in Dix).

The bishops from nearby churches by their presence and active participation in the rite testify to their approbation of the election of the candidate and his inclusion in the fellowship of the episcopate. The laity and clergy had given their *testimonium* on the candidates' qualifications and suitability, but the final *iudicium* was reserved for the decision and judgment of the neighbouring bishops.<sup>79</sup> In his letter to Stephen in Rome, Cyprian states in graphic terms that "our body of bishops is at once so generously large and yet so tightly bound together by the glue of mutual concord and by the bond of

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<sup>76</sup> It is ironical that Novatian refers to the full participation of bishops, presbyters, deacons, confessors and laity in serious assemblies of the Church: *ep.* 30.5.3, also see *ep.* 31.6.2.

<sup>77</sup> The attribution of *Traditio Apostolica* to Hippolytus has been questioned: see M. Vidal art. in DSp, f. 82 (Paris: 1985), c. 2078; and *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (1983), n.1737; and n. 1870: "adhuc sub iudice lis est." But see now A.G. Martimort, art. "Tradition Apostolique," DSp 15 (1991), c. 1133-1146, where he maintains the authorship of and attribution to Hippolytus.

<sup>78</sup> *Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Dix (1937), 2.3. It is only in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (viii, 4.6) of the fourth century that the gospel-book is placed upon the candidate's head. On the terminological problem of "imposition of hands," see L. Mortari (1969), 33-50. Also see: TA, c. 2; Stam (1969), 19.21; Saxer (1969), 97-8. Cyprian emphasizes the imposition of hands in the ceremony of the ordination of the Spanish bishop, Sabinus: *ep.* 67.5.2. C. H. Turner, in JTS 24 (1923), 496-504, discusses the ambiguity of the terms *χειροτονεῖν* and *χειροθεσία* in the later treatises *Ap. Const.* and *Ap. Canon.*

<sup>79</sup> Kötting, *ibid.*

unity."<sup>80</sup> The new bishop has now become a member of the College of Bishops, a term which Cyprian himself originated.<sup>81</sup>

Telfer argues well that in the pertinent passages in the New Testament and in the *Traditio Apostolica* of Hippolytus there is no clear precedent for the candidate to kneel as he receives the imposition of hands.<sup>82</sup> Whether he were standing, sitting or kneeling at that early stage is of comparatively little importance; the truly essential fact was the imposition of hands on the candidate.<sup>83</sup>

## II. The laying on of hands

Laying-on of hands in the New Testament is clearly a gesture when giving a blessing; for example when Our Lord blesses the children in Mark 10:16, and also when accompanying an act of healing, as in that by Jesus in Mark 6:5 and by his disciples in Mark 16:18. But hands are also laid on a candidate to confer a ministry; examples are found in the case of the Seven in Acts 6:1-6; also in 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:16. Both of these last citations refer to Timothy's "ordination" whereby he received the special divine grace to accomplish his new status. The verse at 1 Timothy 5:22 may also refer to an early form of ordination. W. G. Kümmel sheds light on this particular situation as found in the Pastorals:<sup>84</sup>

. . . in Tit 1:5 *πρεσβύτεροι* clearly indicates an office. Since, however, in Tit 1:5, 7 *πρεσβυτέρους* shifts over

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<sup>80</sup> ep. 68.3.2: "copiosum corpus est sacerdotum concordiae mutuae glutino atque unitatis vinculo copulatum."

<sup>81</sup> See n. 9 in the Introduction.

<sup>82</sup> Telfer (1962) 199-200.

<sup>83</sup> See Telfer (1962), 198, n.1; also the study of terms involved in the imposition of hands by C.H. Turner, "*χειροτονία, χειροθεσία, ἐπίθεσις* (And the Accompanying Verbs), JTS 24 (1923), 496 - 504. See also: J. Coppens, *L'imposition des mains* (Paris: 1925); J.E. Stam (1969), 17-21; A. Coppo (1971), 70-86; C. Vogel, "*Chirotonie et chirothésie*," *Irenikon* 45 (1972), 7-21 and 207-238; J. Lécuyer, *Le sacrement de l'ordination* (Paris: 1983); J. K. Coyle, "The Laying on of Hands as Conferral of the Spirit," *SP* 18.2 (1989), 339-354. L. Wasilowski in his 1927 Fribourg dissertation states in his *Brevis Conspectus*, 2: "Ordinatio illa consistit in visibili transmissione potestatis fundendi vice Christi. Iteratur per eandem ope impositionis manus episcopi illa actio ipsius Christi, de qua constat ex Jo 20:22-23." *Pace* Wasilowski, but there is no *impositio manuum* in his citation of John; only the fact that Jesus breathed upon his apostles in saying "Receive the Holy Spirit!"

<sup>84</sup> W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: 1982), 381.



into τὸν ἐπίσκοπον, and since the superintendent rôle in 1 Tim 3:4f and 5:17 is expressed in a similar manner for both the bishop and the elder, the Pastorals apparently mean by ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος the same office, which is not yet monarchic, so that the change to the singular τὸν ἐπίσκοπον in Tit 1:7 is explained on the basis of assuming a bishop's rule. Since, therefore, the Pastorals know only presbyter-bishops and in addition deacons (1 Tim 3:18, 12), the office of presbyter-bishop is a matter of a civic post which has its claim to pay (1 Tim 3:1, 5:17). According to 1 Tim 5:22, installation in this office takes place through ordination by the laying on of hands on the part of Timothy, who was himself ordained by the presbyters (1 Tim 4:14), which in turn corresponds to the installation of the presbyters by Titus (Tit 1:5).

But these examples of laying-on of hands found in the New Testament for a precedent only in the sense that the structure of the Church is still evolving and looks forward to the ordinations of members of the future monarchic hierarchy. Nevertheless, the practices indicated in certain sections of the New Testament concerning the installation of individuals in their ecclesiastical office and ministry give us a background and preview of ordination as it developed in the Christian Church. As will be seen in the next section, Cyprian combined this ritual which derived from Jewish practice with *ordinatio*, a technical term drawn from Roman law.

### III. Influence of Roman law and practice on Church elections

Although some commentators have on occasion held that the origins of Christianity in Africa are more likely to be found in Asia Minor, the influence of Roman life and Roman institutions upon pagans and Christians in northern Africa was undoubtedly present and exerted an immense, powerful and lasting influence.<sup>85</sup> The development of Latin as a special Christian dialect went hand-in-hand with the further evolution of Roman legal terminology and its application by Cyprian and other ecclesiastical leaders throughout

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<sup>85</sup> W. Telfer. "The Origins of Christianity in Africa." SP 4 (Berlin: 1961), 512-517; Frend (1961), 280-284, E. Herrmann, *Ecclesia in Re Publica* (Frankfurt a.M. - Bern - Cirencester: 1980).

the Roman empire to the institutions of the Church.<sup>86</sup> E. Herrmann judges that Cyprian was in a better position to apply these terms than his predecessor Tertullian.<sup>87</sup> Cyprian agreed with Tertullian that the basis for the Christian Church is the *lex fidei* and that its official clergy, like Roman magistrates, have rights, such as the *ius docendi* and the *ius offerendi*.<sup>88</sup>

Like his counterparts in civil magistracies, Cyprian further aimed at maintaining the highest standards in the election and installation of bishops. These ordinations must be *iusta et legitima* (ep. 67.4.2) and based on the *potestas elegendi et recusandi* of the *plebs*.<sup>89</sup> *Ordinare* is the *technicus terminus* for installation in the imperial service, as well as the associated terms *iudicium*, *suffragium* and *testimonium*.<sup>90</sup> Cyprian, in his turn, employs all these terms with respect to the election and installation of the Christian bishop: he mentions the *suffragium plebis*, the *testimonium clericorum*, and the *iudicium Dei*.<sup>91</sup>

One should regard with caution Herrmann's emphasis on the rule for a candidate (such as Cornelius in ep. 55) to ascend the *cursus* by a promotion at every stage, just as was the case for civil magistrates.<sup>92</sup> Cyprian himself is an example of a bishop who was elected bishop, from the rank of presbyter, within two years of his conversion and baptism, and who could not have had sufficient time to have served in all the lower clerical ranks.

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<sup>86</sup> Herrmann (1980), 43. A. Beck (1931), at 135 remarks: "die Termini *administratio ecclesiae*, *administratio religiosa*, *fungi*, *mandare* sowie *episcopatum gerere* sind ebenso der Sprache des römischen Staats- und Sakralrechts entnommen wie die von Tertullian schon verwendete, von Cyprian aber nun ins Zentrum gerückte Kennzeichnung des Priesteramtes als *sacerdotium*." See the description of Christian Latin in the chapter by L.R. Palmer (1961), 181-205.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> A. Beck, (1931), 64-67; Tertullian, *exh. cast.* 7.3 (CCL. 2, 1024-1025): "differentiam inter ordinem et plebem consistit ecclesiae auctoritas et honor per ordines concessus sanctificatos deo."

<sup>89</sup> ep. 67.3.2; Herrmann (1980), 43.

<sup>90</sup> See Herrmann (1980), 44 for full documentation of the use and requirements of Roman law in this respect.

<sup>91</sup> ep. 55.8.4: "factus autem Cornelius episcopus de Dei et Christi eius iudicio, de clericorum paene omnium testimonio, de plebis quae tunc fuit suffragio."

<sup>92</sup> Herrmann (1980), 45-46.

Apart from the requirement for the candidate for the episcopacy to be *dignus et idoneus* (ep. 67.4.1), age was a major consideration. We can detect this even in the case of the young confessors Aurelius and Celerinus, whom Cyprian promoted to the rank of lector, but their youthful age prevented them from the status of presbyter<sup>93</sup>; *a fortiori* in the case of that of bishop the age of the candidate was of paramount importance. This same concern was shared by those responsible for the promotion of candidates to various civil magistracies.

Herrmann indicates that opinion concerning the *suffragium populi* at episcopal elections is divided.<sup>94</sup> Some maintain that it is a real electoral right,<sup>95</sup> while others see it as a formal right of nomination (or *acclamatio*),<sup>96</sup> or as a mere right of nomination.<sup>97</sup> This author sees the deprivation of the popular vote in the African *municipia* as reflected by the similar deprivation of the vote for the *populus* in the contemporary Christian church in Africa.<sup>98</sup> Yet she points out that the *suffragium populi* at the time of Cyprian could still play a decisive rôle in joining in with the clerics, such as occurred in the case of rejecting two Spanish bishops (ep. 67) and in the case of electing Cornelius at Rome (ep. 68.2.1: "et clerici ac plebis suffragium").

Takeo Osawa remarks that, with one exception (ep. 55.8), Cyprian uses *suffragium* reciprocally with *testimonium*.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the term *suffragium* is never employed with respect to God or bishops, whereas *testimonium* appears in conjunction with God,

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<sup>93</sup> *epp.* 38.1.2, 38.2.1; 39.5.2. Herrmann (1980), 49, identifies the lower ranks of the clerics with the term "ultiores gradus", a usage I cannot find in Cyprian's works. Perhaps she had reference to the "ulteriores gradus" of ep. 38.2.1, where the term refers to future and higher *gradus* available to the newly appointed lectors.

<sup>94</sup> Herrmann (1980), 46.

<sup>95</sup> J. Straub, "Zur Ordination von Bischöfen und Beamten in der christlichen Spätantike," *Mullus, Festschrift für Th. Klauser*, 1 (1964), 336-345.

<sup>96</sup> C. Andresen, *Die Kirchen der alten Christenheit* (Berlin: 1971), 141.

<sup>97</sup> M. Meslin, "Kirchliche Institutionen und Klerikalisierung in der frühen Kirche," *Concilium* 5 (1969), 513, A. Beck, (1931), 156 ff. See also Herrmann (1980), 46-49 on this issue.

<sup>98</sup> Herrmann (1980), 48.

<sup>99</sup> Osawa, (1983), 47.

bishops and the Christian community.<sup>100</sup> However, this latter term is never used of the laity alone.<sup>101</sup> Among pagan contemporaries *suffragium* was an already well attested concept in Roman law, but prior to the time of Cyprian it was not used with respect to the election of the Christian bishop. Cyprian is the first person in the Church who consistently used *suffragium* (to indicate the participation of the Christian community) in the formulation of the installation of the bishop.

Cyprian employs the term *suffragium* generally in the sense of support by the Christian community, particularly in the process of electing a bishop, as a recommendation and approval by the laity of the local community. In his usage, it is the equivalent of an *acclamatio*, as observed among contemporary pagans in their civil elections.<sup>102</sup> But it is also possible, in Cyprian's view, for the local clerics together with the laity to provide this support through *suffragium*.<sup>103</sup>

It is important to bear in mind the gradual erosion and weakening of the *suffragium populi* in Roman elections. What had been a formidable right in the Republic had gradually evolved into a nominal usage in the Empire. Cyprian and his contemporary Christians would easily and naturally adapt this usage observed in the civil process into their own governmental procedures.

Osawa goes into greater detail in his investigation of the connection between the terminology and practices in Roman imperial elections and in church elections. The notions of *iudicium*, *suffragium*, *testimonium* and *consensus* were constantly and everywhere present in the conduct of the elections in the Roman empire in Cyprian's time.<sup>104</sup> *Iudicium* was the highest decision in the process and in general exercised by the emperor. *Suffragium* had two meanings: the first was that of the people and the other

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<sup>100</sup> Osawa (1983), 49-51.

<sup>101</sup> Evidence for this is found at *ep.* 55.8.4 (given above in n. 91), where the distinction between the *suffragium plebis* and *testimonium clericorum* is clearly made by Cyprian.

<sup>102</sup> Osawa here appears to agree with Andresen, as opposed to Straub and Meslin.

<sup>103</sup> *epp.* 59.5, 59.6; 67.4-5.

<sup>104</sup> The following remarks are based in large part on the account in Osawa, 169-185.

that of the authorities (*suffragatores*).<sup>105</sup> The *Suffragium* of the senate (which had a real effect on the election) could be either written, oral or even by acclamation during a session of the senate, while the *suffragium* of the people at their assemblies was a mere verbal acclamation. *Consensus* generally gave expression to the attitude or position of the Senate, but the term might also be applied to the *suffragium* of the people. In reality, *consensus* and *suffragium* were ineffectual, since the citizens in the Roman empire had already been excluded from the political scene.

The similarities of the civil system of elections to the selection, election and installation of the Christian bishops are at once apparent. The *iudicium* at the election of a bishop was an essential element with the greatest efficacy and was exercised by God or his deputies the bishops from nearby churches. This *iudicium* was based on an evaluation of the support given to the candidate by *suffragia* and *testimonia*. The concept *suffragium* concerned only the local community, in particular the laity; the *suffragium* at both episcopal and civil elections was accomplished in each instance by an acclamation. It was this acclamation which Cyprian adopted from the procedure of secular elections and introduced into episcopal elections. Thus, Cyprian recognises *suffragium* as (1) an acclamation and (2) support for the candidate, when he speaks of the electoral process in general.

In the imperial elections the emperor examined these *suffragia* of the senators and then announced his decision (*iudicium*). In like manner, in church elections the neighbouring bishops evaluated the general support (*suffragium*) emanating from the local community as well as the proposals (*testimonium*) of the local clerics, at which point the bishops declared their common decision (*iudicium*). The distinction in civil elections between the two meanings of *suffragium* is likewise visible in the case of episcopal elections, in which Cyprian assigns the act of *suffragium* to the local people, whereas in civil elections *suffragium* could well apply to both senators and people. Since Cyprian places such a high regard for the *suffragium populi*, his thought seems to have identified the *suffragium* in the church elections with the earlier Republican value and force of *suffragium* as exercised earlier by Roman citizens.

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<sup>105</sup> In the first case, *suffragium* was a substitute or synonym for *suffragatio*, the act performed by the *suffragatores*.

The concept *testimonium* in Cyprian consistently has the meaning of positive evidence or support which is given for the benefit of the candidate. According to him *testimonium* can come from bishops, clerics or God, but never from the laity in the local community alone. The separation between the *testimonium* of the clerics and the *suffragium* of the laity in the outlook and in the doctrine of Cyprian is clear and deliberate.<sup>106</sup> Yet in its second meaning, *suffragium* (not as acclamation, but as a general support) could be interchangeable with *testimonium*. In the area of Roman imperial elections, *testimonium* indicates the eulogy of the emperor or of the senators in support of the candidate. Likewise, in the electoral process, which Cyprian describes, *testimonium* has the sense of support or recommendation, which may come from God, the bishops or the local clerics. Thus *testimonium* was not a function of the Christian laity nor of the ordinary Roman citizen; in both spheres *testimonium* was regarded as superior to *suffragium*.

The notion of *consensus* in connection with episcopal elections was consistently a supplementary one, which acknowledged the newly elected person as bishop. The college of bishops, as represented by the nearby bishops, was responsible for this act of recognition and acceptance. Its concrete expression was the rite of laying on of hands. It is interesting that Cyprian combines this rite, which originates from Jewish practice, with the term for the entire procedure, *ordinatio*, which is drawn from the practice and terminology of Roman civil institutions.

It is evident from the studies of Herrmann and Osawa that the technical language used in the election of contemporary civil officials in the thought of Cyprian is an important analogy and model for the election and installation of bishops.<sup>107</sup> Herrmann rightly calls attention to the importance of Cyprian's use of *suffragium*, and Osawa proceeds to explain the true value of Cyprian's transformation of this term into its specifically Christian connotation. Because of its narrower focus, Osawa goes more deeply into the technical terms, *iudicium*, *testimonium*, *suffragium* and *consensus* and how Cyprian uses them to describe the elements in an episcopal election. Yet the work of both Herrmann and Osawa

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<sup>106</sup> See *ep.* 55.8.4, cited above.

<sup>107</sup> Herrmann (1980), 42-52; Osawa (1983), 64-65.

elucidates the fact that Cyprian has obviously borrowed these technical terms from the Roman imperial society in which he lived, and he applied these terms and concepts to the analogous events in Christianity.<sup>108</sup>

## D. THE RÔLE OF A BISHOP

Cyprian uses all the major terms to express the various facets which comprise the activity in the rôle of a bishop. He clearly includes them in his concept of a bishop at work. We have noted above that his use of *sacerdos* and of *episcopus* is practically equal. Yet, after due consideration, it seems that in his own practice, and consequently in his own mind, the aspect of *episcopus* — in the common sense of an administrator of discipline and good order: an overseer in the ancient pagan meaning of the term — receives a decided emphasis.<sup>109</sup> In Cyprian's view and conviction, the Christian Bishop must be to an eminent degree a *pastor*, *sacerdos*, *doctor*, and a *iudex* among the people subject to him.<sup>110</sup> This section will indicate briefly the duties which, according to Cyprian, all bishops were obliged to fulfil. In chapter VI below, the same categories will be reviewed in greater depth with a special application to Cyprian's own performance as Bishop of Carthage and the principles which he followed in the execution of these duties.

### I. *Pastor*

While Cyprian does not quote the *locus classicus* in the New Testament of the *Bonus Pastor* (Jn 10:11-12), yet he does cite the conclusion of that passage (Jn 10:16) to maintain in *ep.* 69.5.1 that "erit unus grex et unus pastor."<sup>111</sup> The other five biblical uses by Cyprian of the term *pastor* are all drawn from the Old Testament.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Osawa (1983), 126-169; 171-185.

<sup>109</sup> See Chapter IV on *disciplina et diligentia* below.

<sup>110</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these rôles, see Chapter VI below.

<sup>111</sup> The positive approach of the *Bonus Pastor* appears only in the letter to Cyprian from the clergy at Rome in *ep.* 8.1.2. On Jn 10:16, see Fahey, 389-390; there F. states: "Cyprian [in *de unit.* 8] uses the words of Jesus, 'Et erunt unus grex et unus pastor,' to describe the unity of the Church." This same comment applies in *ep.* 69.

<sup>112</sup> Jerem 3:15 in *ep.* 4.1.2 and the twice-repeated passage of Ezek 34:3-6, 10, 16 in *ep.* 57.4.4 and in *ep.* 68.4.1. On Jerem 3:15, see Fahey, 221 and n. 37 in Chapter IV below. On the passage from Ezekiel, see Fahey, 231: "This quotation from Ezek 34 played an important rôle in the history of penance in North Africa. Cyprian interprets this

In the conciliar letter 57 to Cornelius, written in April 253, Cyprian refers to the evil shepherd as described by the prophet Ezekiel. Cyprian in this case takes a negative approach, by which he urges bishops not to emulate such an evil shepherd, otherwise on the final Judgement Day God will reproach such negligent bishops for their malfesance in the execution of their pastoral duties.<sup>113</sup>

If bishops do not perform their duty of maintaining order and instructing the ignorant, they run the risk, in Cyprian's graphic phrase, of becoming butchers rather than the shepherds they ought to be (*ep.* 15.2.1). Bishops must also be on their guard against devious and unscrupulous individuals, who attempt to alienate the people from their bishop, which is equated with separating sheep from their shepherd.<sup>114</sup>

Cyprian has the following advice in *ep.* 71.2.2 for Quintus, a bishop in Mauritania. In the event some of the flock having lapsed or gone astray into schism or heresy, the bishop as true shepherd should be prepared to welcome back the sheep which had been abducted or had strayed. The Bishop of Carthage repeats this theme soon afterwards, in August-September 256, in a letter to Bishop Pompeius (*ep.* 74.12). In times of crises, such as during the persecution of Christians and their relegation to the penal mines at Sigus and elsewhere in Numidia, Christians will, in the opinion of Cyprian, benefit greatly if they emulate the good example of their *pastores*. Cyprian's advice is all the more poignant, considering that he sends it to the Christians suffering in Numidia from his own place of exile at Curubis.<sup>115</sup>

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citation as an exhortation to the bishops to see to it that their 'sheep' are brought to repentance for their sins. . . Verses 10, 16b ('propterea . . . cum iudicio') are used in the testimony that 'The old shepherds would cease and new ones would take their place.' (*ad Quir.* i.14)." This passage from Ezekiel is also cited in *epp.* 57.4.4 and 68.4.1; allusions to it are found in *epp.* 8.1.1 and 55.15.1.

<sup>113</sup> *ep.* 57.4.3: "in die iudicii quod pastores creditas et commissas nobis oves nec curare in pace nec in acie voluerimus armare" See also *ep.* 57.5.2. *ep.* 59.14.2: "et singulis pastoribus portio gregis sit adscripta quam regat unusquisque et gubernet rationem sui actus Domino redditurus."

<sup>114</sup> *ep.* 66.8.3: "et illi sunt ecclesia plebs sacerdoti adunata et pastori suo grex adhaerens."

<sup>115</sup> *ep.* 76.1.4, written sometime after his trial of August 30, 257 and subsequent banishment to Curubis. For details on Cyprian's pastoral care, see *infra* chapter II, C. The Rôle of the Presbyter and the Deacon, I.a. Pastoral Care.



## II. *Sacerdos*

G. W. Clarke sees a crescendo in Cyprian's neat catalogue in *ep.* 66.5.1, which describes the rôle of the bishop: moving from the administrative facets (*episcopus*, *praepositus*), to the supportive (*pastor*, *gubernator*), and ending in the hieratic (*antistes*, *sacerdos*).<sup>116</sup> This appears in Cyprian's personal letter to Puppianus in early 254. It is useful to compare this list with the briefer list which Cyprian included in his letter to Lucius in Rome toward the end of 253. There, in *ep.* 61.1.2, Cyprian congratulates Lucius the Confessor as he returns to Rome as shepherd to his flock (*gregi pastor*), helmsman to his ship (*navi gubernator*), and ruler to his people (*plebi rector*). Here the metaphors describing the rôles of the bishop seem to have approximately equal emphasis.

Cyprian sees clearly his emphatic duty as bishop to act as *sacerdos vice Christi*. It is his rôle to follow in the footsteps of Christ at the eucharist. It is necessary for the bishop to obey Christ and to repeat the sacred rites of the eucharist (*ep.* 63.14.1):

nam si in sacrificio quod Christus optulit non nisi  
Christus sequendus est, utique id nos obaudire et facere  
oportet quod Christus fecit et quod faciendum esse  
mandavit.

The bishop as *sacerdos* fulfils a sacred obligation; if he is faithful to this commitment to the gospel and precepts of Christ, he remains invincible: "*sacerdos Dei evangelium tenens ut Christi praecepta custodiens occidi potest, vinci non potest.*" (*ep.* 59.17.1)

## III. *Doctor*

Of the total eight occurrences of *doctor* in the correspondence, six are used by Cyprian. The other two instances appear in *ep.* 77, written in 258 by the four Numidian bishops to Cyprian, and the *doctor* found there applies to Cyprian himself. This was a farewell letter to Cyprian, who, the bishops say, has been their teacher and example for many years, but especially more recently when Cyprian taught them the correct stance to take as confessors for Christ.

But the six uses of *doctor* by Cyprian extend to a variety of meanings, nuances and circumstances: Christ as teacher (*ep.* 63.1.1),

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<sup>116</sup> Clarke, III, 330.

a catechist (*ep.* 73.3.2), a teacher of pride, i.e. Novatian (*ep.* 60.3.1), an anonymous teacher of acting (*ep.* 2.1.1), and two classes of clerical *doctores* (*ep.* 29.1.2). Perhaps it was his humility which prevented Cyprian from calling himself a *doctor*. Neither did he call any other bishop *doctor*, but it is very significant that the Numidian bishops in their eulogistic letter addressed him with this revered title.<sup>117</sup>

While Cyprian seems diffident about using the term *doctor* for himself or for other bishops, he is firm and clear in his conviction that bishops have a duty to teach. In writing to Pompeius, Bishop of Sabrata, in August or September of 256 about the baptism controversy, Cyprian refers to St Paul's admonition that a bishop should be gentle and docile.<sup>118</sup> He then continues:

Now, a man is teachable if he is meek and gentle and patient in learning. It is thus a bishop's duty not only to teach; he must also learn. For he becomes a better teacher if he makes daily progress and advancement in learning what is better.<sup>119</sup>

Earlier Cyprian clearly emphasised, this obligation to teach:<sup>120</sup>

Our duty is clear: we must hold fast to the faith and truth of the Catholic Church, we must continue to teach it, and by the means of all the commandments of the Gospels and the Apostles we must set forth the nature of the order and unity ordained by God.

Cyprian teaches that all Christians must observe the discipline of the Church. This is especially true for the bishops (*praepositi*), who should provide the people with a good example not only by their words, but also in their own comportment.<sup>121</sup> He is ever alert to protect this doctrine, as he had done in an earlier letter to Cornelius at Rome (*ep.* 52), when the five Novatianists in the "gang of criminals" arrived in Carthage. Fortunately on the same day,

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<sup>117</sup> Clarke III, 187, n. 62 on a rare instance of Cyprian's use of the rôle of the bishop as teacher: *ep.* 55.14.1: "episcopo tractante".

<sup>118</sup> 1 Tim 3:2ff., *ep.* 74.10.1, see Clarke IV, 245, n. 34, and literature given there.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *ep.* 73.20.2.

<sup>121</sup> Clarke I, 59f.: *ep.* 4.3.3.

Cyprian received a letter from Cornelius, which clarified the truth of the matter. At once, the Bishop of Carthage began to disseminate (*docere*) the true facts about the former bishop Evaristus and his heresy.<sup>122</sup>

Cyprian frequently praises the teaching of bishops, such as Cornelius (*ep.* 60.2. 1), Stephen (*ep.* 74.4.1) and Nemesianus (*ep.* 76.6.1). It is not surprising, therefore, that Moyses and Maximus, in *ep.* 31.1.3, so eloquently praise Cyprian, in turn, as a teacher:<sup>123</sup>

The Lord will repay you reward for this kindness of yours . . . Sometimes greater glory may overflow on to the teacher who has given instruction than on to the person who has offered himself as a ready pupil. . .

#### IV. *Iudex*

*Audientia episcopalis* is the technical term for the bishop's court, but it appears nowhere in the Cyprianic correspondence.<sup>124</sup> There is no direct evidence that at Carthage, as in contemporary Syria, the bishop, assisted by his presbyters and deacons, heard cases brought before him every Monday, but such a possibility cannot be excluded. Nevertheless, Cyprian acted overtly as a judge over matters pertaining to the Church at Carthage and elsewhere.

The noun *iudex* in its various forms occurs twenty-seven times in the entire correspondence, and although Cyprian employed the term in twenty-three instances, it is in only four passages that he uses *iudex* with reference to the bishop.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *ep.* 52.1.2: "nam cum pridie istic venisset haereticae pravitatis nocens factio ipsa iam perdita et alios qui sibi consenserint peritura, postero die Niceforus cum vestris litteris supervenit, quibus et didicimus et docere adque instruere ceteros coepimus Evaristum de episcopo iam nec laicum remansisse, cathedrae et plebis extorrem et de ecclesia Christi exulem per alias longe provincias oberrare"

<sup>123</sup> *ep.* 31.1.3: "non minus honorandus est qui monuit quam qui et exhortatori paruit, nisi quoniam nonnumquam magis gloriae cumulus redundat ad eum qui instituit quam ad eum qui se docibilem discipulum subministravit. hic enim fortassis hoc quod exercuit non habuisset, nisi ille docuisset."

<sup>124</sup> For the *audientia episcopalis* see H.Chadwick (1980) 6, n. 11 and the extensive literature cited there, and more recently the article by Ch. Munier, "Audientia episcopalis," EEC (Cambridge: 1992), 97.

<sup>125</sup> The other uses are distributed as follows: 8 times for God or Christ as judge: 3.2.2, 4.3.2, 16.2.2, 55.19.1, 58.8.1, 59.1.2, 62.2.1, 66.1.1. Five uses are in quotations from sacred scripture: 3.1.1, 4.4.2, 10.4.3, 43.7.1, and 66.3.2. Twice with reference to

Cyprian wrote *ep.* 59 to Cornelius in Rome during the summer of 252 about the affair of the pseudo-Bishop Fortunatus. Men such as this one, he says, exhibit disrespect for God and his appointed leaders in the Church, the bishops. This disrespect in turn leads them directly into heresy. In such a context Cyprian refers to the authentic bishop in the Church, the one bishop and judge, who for the time being rightfully acts as *sacerdos et iudex vice Christi*.<sup>126</sup> In the same letter (*ep.* 59.18. 1), Cyprian writes to Cornelius about the *dignitas ecclesiae*, the *maiestas plebis fidelis*, and stresses the necessity for the bishop of the *auctoritas ac potestas sacerdotum*. This is the source of the function of the bishop as *iudex*.

In early 254, Cyprian sent a lengthy letter to Florentius Puppianus in reply, apparently, to an abusive letter from the latter. Once again, the loss of respect for God's appointed leader at Carthage has resulted in the impudent presumption of Puppianus to attempt to judge Cyprian. The first two uses of *iudex* in this letter, both in *ep.* 66.3.2, are really an echo of the principle found in *ep.* 59.5.1, namely that the bishop, appointed by God, has jurisdiction over the Church and its members as *iudex ad tempus datus vice Christi*. The third instance of *iudex* in this letter is the vehicle for Cyprian's lethal irony, for he remarks that "it would indeed be foolish of me to want to sit in judgement upon you, since you have already set yourself up as judge over us." (*ep.* 66.10. 3).

Patently, then, Cyprian's view on the bishop as *iudex* is seen in his statements and actions as he administers his judicial authority in a variety of ways: particularly in cases of excommunication and other disciplinary action against his clergy and laity<sup>127</sup> and his denial of suffrages for the dead (*ep.* 1). Clarke calls our attention to how basic "to Cyprian's conception of the functions of a bishop is the rôle of *iudex*."<sup>128</sup> This is attested particularly in *ep.* 34 to his clergy, where he stresses his conviction that all such judicial processes in

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Novatian: 55.26.1 and 59.18.1. Once each for an O.T. judge (59.4.1), for Puppianus (66.4.2), and the presumptuous, anonymous person in 59.5.2.

<sup>126</sup> *ep.* 59.5.1; see Clarke III, 243, n. 18 and the literature cited there. Laurance (1984) focuses on "Sacerdos vice Christi" in his revised dissertation at Notre Dame University, published in 1984.

<sup>127</sup> *epp.* 3.3.3, 4.4.1, 34.1, 34.3.2, 36.4.1, 41.2.1, 52.3, 55.4.3, 59.1.1, 68.2.2, 68.4.3, and see Clarke I, 166, 177, and literature cited there.

<sup>128</sup> Clarke IV, 167, n.12.

the Church must be scrupulously fair and just at every stage of the proceedings.<sup>129</sup>

## E. THE QUALITIES OF A BISHOP

It is striking that in the Cyprianic correspondence the only cardinal virtues that Cyprian specifically mentions are Justice and Fortitude.<sup>130</sup> The theological virtues fare better, with a decided emphasis on *fides*: 270 uses, as compared with 20 for *spes* and 48 for *caritas*.

Throughout the entire correspondence we find Cyprian's advice, comments, exhortations concerning the virtues and qualities, which, in his mind, are necessary for a bishop. These should be such as would enable the bishop to perform his basic duty: to ensure peace and tranquillity for all.<sup>131</sup> Bishops should not become, like the rebel presbyter Novatus, an enemy of tranquillity (*tranquillitatis adversarius*, *ep.* 52.2.1).

### I. The Catalogue in *ep.* 55

In *ep.* 55.8.3, Cyprian presents a catalogue of virtues which he expects to find in a bishop: like Cornelius, the bishop in Rome, and hence successor to Peter, he should be gentle, meek, modest, virginally chaste, humble and self-effacing, among his other virtues.<sup>132</sup> In the same letter we find that bishops also ought to be circumspect, so

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<sup>129</sup> *ep.* 34.4.1: "desiderastis quoque ut de Philumeno et Fortunato hypodiaconis et Favorino acolutho qui medio tempore recesserunt et nunc venerunt quid mihi videatur rescribam. cui rei non puto me solum debere sententiam dare, cum multi adhuc de clero absentes sint nec locum suum vel sero repetendum putaverint et cognitio haec singulorum tractanda sit et limanda plenius, non tantum cum collegis meis, sed cum plebe ipsa universa. expensa enim moderatione liberanda et pronuntianda res est quae in posterum circa ministros ecclesiae constituat exemplum."

<sup>130</sup> *justitia* 16 times, *fortitudo* 5 times. The form *prudens* appears once, but the noun *temperantia* not even once; yet there are 6 uses of the verb *temperare*. Cyprian in his other works does not use *temperantia*, but 7 instances of the verb *temperare* do occur.

<sup>131</sup> *ep.* 43.4.2: "et cum paci et tranquillitati episcopus providere in omnibus debeat."

<sup>132</sup> *ep.* 55.8.3: "tunc deinde episcopatum ipsum nec postulavit nec voluit sed quietus alias et modestus et quales esse consueverunt qui ad hunc locum divinitus eliguntur, pro pudore virginalis continentiae suae et pro humilitate ingenitae sibi et custoditae verecundiae non ut quidam vim fecit ut episcopus fieret, sed ipse vim passus est ut episcopatum coactus exciperet."

that they "[as bishops] should take care in judging the actions [which their] colleagues, men of moderation and sobriety, have taken."<sup>133</sup>

Earlier in this letter (*ep.* 55.2.2) he praises Cornelius' anxious concern for the faith (*pro sollicitudine fidei anxie curas*). Faith is, accordingly, the essential basis of all the other virtues and qualities of a bishop. He praises Cornelius for his "courage, resoluteness of spirit, steadfastness of faith" (*virtus, robur animi* and *firmitas fidei*: *ep.* 55. 9.1). The bishop needs this strength of character and soul, but Cyprian further urges that bishops avoid becoming "over-rigid, harsh, callous, hard-hearted, and unyielding."<sup>134</sup> Rather, they should consider and adopt the *pietas* and the *clementia* of the Lord. Cyprian also advises bishops against pride and arrogance and a total disregard for meekness and humility (*ep.* 55.25.1); bishops ought to be merciful and compassionate like the Lord:<sup>135</sup>

We have no alternative but to recognise the sorrows of those who bewail sin, we have no right to deny the fruits of repentance to those who grieve.

In this passage Cyprian states that the mercy of God should be dispensed *per sacerdotes eius*. This is an example of the bishop acting as *sacerdos vice Christi*.

## II. The Virtues in *ep.* 59

Just as it had been the case of *ep.* 55, a major theme in a subsequent letter to Cornelius in Rome (*ep.* 59), the famous letter in which Cyprian discusses the shame and scandal surrounding the appointment of a Novatianist pseudo-bishop at Carthage, is that of *fides* and *virtus*:

We must preserve unshakeable strength of faith, and a courage that is unyielding and unassailable in order to withstand all the battering and assaults from the waves

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<sup>133</sup> *ep.* 55.7.3.

<sup>134</sup> *ep.* 55.25.1.: "non acerbi adeo nec duri nec in fovendis fratribus inhumani esse debemus nec adeo inmites et pertinaces."

<sup>135</sup> *ep.* 55.29.1: "quod si invenimus a paenitentia agenda neminem debere prohiberi et deprecantibus adque exorantibus Domini misericordiam secundum quod ille misericors et pius est per sacerdotes eius pacem posse concedi, admittendus est plangentium gemitus et paenitentiae fructus dolentibus adque exorantibus non negandus."

that come in roaring against us, beating them off with all the firmness of some opposing rock.<sup>136</sup>

Cyprian praises Cornelius for his spirit of church discipline and his strict exercise of episcopal authority (*ecclesiasticae disciplinae et sacerdotalis censurae*: ep. 59.1.1). Bishops must maintain this high standard of *censura*; there is never a sufficient reason to abandon it (ep. 59.3.1). Yet *censura* should be tempered with a certain caution, patience and understanding. All who approach the bishop have the right to expect and receive "the help of our forbearance, leniency and compassion."<sup>137</sup> In this way the bishops act in their care of Christians in accord with the bountiful mercy of the Lord, who is their teacher in humility, tolerance and suffering.<sup>138</sup>

### III. *Fides et Veritas*

*Veritas* and *Fides* are often and closely associated in the mind of Cyprian. Indeed, it seems at times that these two ideas are almost identical, or at least parallel, for him. Frequently he couples the two words within one phrase.<sup>139</sup> It is not surprising that Cyprian associates, and at times seemingly identifies, *fides* and *veritas*, for Irenaeus of Lyons had already done the same with the terms *regula fidei* or, in his preferred phrase, *regula veritatis*.<sup>140</sup> Irenaeus conceives of his *regula veritatis*, not as the baptismal *symbolum* or confession of faith, nor as the content of sacred scripture, nor even the doctrinal tradition of the Church; it was belief in God. For Irenaeus, *regula veritatis* means truth itself, and by truth, the content of divine revelation in the history of salvation.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> ep. 59.2.3: "manere apud nos debet, frater carissime, fidei robor immobile et stabilis adque inconcussa virtus contra omnes incursus adque inpetus oblatrantium fluctuum velut petrae obiacentis fortitudine et mole debet obsistere."

<sup>137</sup> ep. 59.16.3: "nec ecclesia istic cuique cluditur nec episcopus alicui denegatur patientia et facilitas et humanitas nostra venientibus praesto est."

<sup>138</sup> cf. ep. 58.3.1: "Dominus humilitatis et tolerantiae et passionis magister." See also ep. 68.3.2: "pastores utiles et misericordes."

<sup>139</sup> See e.g., *epp.* 52.1.2., 67.6.1, 67.8.3, 71.2.3, 73.20.2, 73.22.2, 73.22.3 (twice). Firmilian does the same 3 times in ep. 75.

<sup>140</sup> A. Beck (1930/1967), 25; J. Quasten, art. "Regula fidei," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 8 (1963), 1102; B. Hägglund, "Die Bedeutung der «regula fidei» als Grundlage theologischer Aussagen," *Studia Theologica*, 12 (Lund: 1958), 4-19.

<sup>141</sup> Hägglund (1958), 18-19.

Tertullian places a greater emphasis on these terms, and no doubt because of his own legal mind, he accentuates the normative and legally binding aspect of the *regula fidei*. For Tertullian, this term is not concerned with the prescriptions of moral law, or the *regula disciplinae*, but rather it represents the doctrine necessary for salvation.<sup>142</sup> The *regula fidei* in Tertullian's view is exactly the same as the entire content of belief together with the teaching of Christ and of the apostles. There are three features of the *regula fidei* according to his interpretation: (1) it is divinely established and given; (2) it has priority over other doctrines, and therefore true, since it precedes other doctrines and heresies; and (3) it is total and complete within itself. The *regula fidei* embraces the entirety of truth.<sup>143</sup> Hence, the *regula fidei* in the understanding of Tertullian is the unique, unchanging and true content of belief and knowledge of God and salvation.

Cyprian, in his turn, focuses on the terms *fides* and *veritas*, and he, like Tertullian, recognises in the *regula fidei* its divine origin, its totality, and its scriptural content.<sup>144</sup> In fact, he provides a definition of *traditio* including its constituent elements deriving from the doctrine of Christ, scripture and the apostles.<sup>145</sup>

Cyprian emphasises the truth which is to be found in faith in numerous passages. A striking example is that in the synodal letter which Cyprian and thirty-one other bishops sent to Januarius and seventeen other colleagues in Numidia on the issue of rebaptism of repentant heretics. Cyprian and his fellow bishops stress the fact that it is their "duty to impart that faith and truth and unity by means of all the sacred ceremonies of divine grace" to all those who abandon their error and now "acknowledge the true faith of the one and only Church."<sup>146</sup> In the letter to his colleague Jubaianus

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<sup>142</sup> On Tertullian's position, see Hägglund (1958), 19-29.

<sup>143</sup> Tertullian, *de anima* 2.7: "Quod a Deo discitur, totum est."

<sup>144</sup> *ep.* 73.8.1: "nec hoc, frater, carissime, sine scripturae divinae auctoritate proponimus ut dicamus certa lege ac propria ordinatione divinitus cuncta esse disposita."

<sup>145</sup> *ep.* 74.2.2: "unde est ista traditio? utrumne de dominica et evangelica auctoritate descendens, an de apostolorum mandatis adque epistulis veniens?"

<sup>146</sup> *ep.* 70.3.3: "debemus et eis qui de errore et pravitate venientes agnoscunt unius ecclesiae veram fidem, dare illis per omnia divina gratiae sacramenta unitatis et fidei veritatem."



Cyprian once again states firmly that bishops "who preside over the faith and the truth must not deceive or mislead those who come to faith and truth."<sup>147</sup> The juxtaposition and repetition of *fides et veritas* from the viewpoint of the bishops and from that of those coming to the faith is striking and rhetorically effective. Equally impressive is the repetition of *caelum* and its cognates in the phrases *regnum caelorum* and *disciplinis caelestibus*.

The notions of *disciplina* and *diligentia* seem omnipresent in Cyprian's thoughts. We can detect this in various passages in which he discusses *fides et veritas*. In one instance, in the letter to the Roman confessors Moyses and Maximus, the term *disciplina* appears twice in a discussion of faith and truth.<sup>148</sup> When Cyprian uses the metaphor of the shipwreck of truth and faith (*veritatis ac fidei naufragum*) in one of his letters to Cornelius,<sup>149</sup> *disciplina* appears in the following section, and *diligentia* is the third word in the letter. Another example with reference to *diligentia* occurs in one of his letters to the Roman clergy.<sup>150</sup>

And in an earlier letter, he compliments Stephen, "knowing as we do your true piety and faith" (*pro religionis tuae et fidei veritate*).<sup>151</sup> One can observe the combination of *veritas* and *fides* in his

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<sup>147</sup> ep. 73.22.3: "quapropter qui fidei et veritati praesumus, eos qui ad *fidem et veritatem* veniunt et agentes paenitentiam remitti sibi peccata deprecantur, decipere non debemus et fallere, sed correctos a nobis ac reformatos ad regnum caelorum *disciplinis* caelestibus erudire." The *fides-veritas* combination occurs 4 times in this letter: at ep. 73.20.2 and 73.22.2 in the phrase, "fides et veritas ecclesiae", and twice in the phrase, "fides et veritas" at ep. 73.22.3.

<sup>148</sup> ep. 37.42: "quid enim petitis de indulgentia Domini quod non inpetrare mereamini? qui sic Dominis mandata servastis, qui evangelicam *disciplina* sincero *fidei* vigore tenuistis, qui incorrupto honore virtutis cum praeceptis Domini et cum apostolis eius fortiter stantes nutantem multorum fidem martyrii vestri *veritate* solidastis. *vere* evangelii testes et ver martyres Christi radicibus eius innixi, super petram robusta mole fundati, *disciplinam* cum virtute iunxistis."

<sup>149</sup> ep. 52.1.2; *disciplina* is at ep. 52.2.4. and *diligentia* at ep. 52.1.1.

<sup>150</sup> ep. 27.3.2: "sed et quid mihi Caldonius collega pro integritate et *fide* sua scripserit quidque ego ei rescripserim . . . ut sciretis elaborare circa *diligentiam* nostram et veritate ipsa *veritate* disceretis." In another passage which focuses on *veritas et fides*, ep. 43.3.1, occurs the adverbial form, *diligentius*.

<sup>151</sup> ep. 72.3.1: "credentes etiam tibi pro religionis tuae et fidei veritate placere quae et religiosa pariter et vera sunt." Note the skilful rhetorical balance of *religionis* - *religiosa* and *veritate* - *vera*. The phrase *fidei veritate* is in this letter at ep. 72.1.2 and 72.3.1, also in ep. 69 at sections 12.3 and 16.2.

compliment. This is a virtuous disposition which is fitting for bishops, the clergy, and all Christians alike.

We find this neat, chiasmic maxim in the letter to the bishop Pompeius (*ep.* 74.9.2): "Manemus in veritate et veritas in nobis manet." Cyprian frequently formulates principles and other important statements, as he does here, in chiasmic form. In the very next words following this maxim (*ea quae sunt vera teneamus*) we can see the connection between *fides* and *veritas*, for the things we hold to be true are those which we believe. In this same letter, Cyprian provides Pompeius with an episcopal code of conduct.<sup>152</sup>

The blessed apostle Paul foresaw this when he wrote to Timothy the admonition that a bishop should not be wrangling or quarrelsome but gentle and teachable. Now, a man is teachable if he is meek and gentle and patient in learning. It is thus a bishop's duty not only to teach: he must also learn. For he becomes a better teacher if he makes daily progress and advancement in learning what is better.

"Let us follow the truth," Cyprian urges to his fellow-bishop Pompeius, "in the knowledge that truth is victorious."<sup>153</sup> And it is always the duty of the bishop to maintain his "constantia in defendenda veritate." (*ep.* 76.1.3).

#### IV. The Valedictory Description in *ep.* 76

It is obvious that in *ep.* 76 Cyprian devoted much thought and great effort to the formulation and expression of his conception of the principal characteristics of the Christian bishop. This was a valedictory letter during the last year of Cyprian's life to Nemesianus and eight other bishops, who were surrounded by clergy and faithful, all condemned to hard labour at the mines in Numidia. We find here one of the rare uses of *salutem aeternam* in the epistolary formula of greeting.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *ep.* 74.10.1.

<sup>153</sup> *ep.* 74.9.2: "propter quod relicto errore sequamur veritatem scientes quia . . . veritas vicit."

<sup>154</sup> The only other two uses are in *ep.* 79: from the Christians suffering at the mines in Sigus, and in *ep.* 77, which is also addressed to Cyprian: from Nemesianus and 3 other condemned bishops. See also Clarke IV, 280.

Subsection 1.3 in this letter is remarkable for its structure and subtle details of composition. Cyprian must have made this expression of his views a labour of intensity and delight. It will be helpful to examine this text, in order to appreciate the art and style of Cyprian, but also the value with which he regarded the contents.<sup>155</sup>

quae quidem vobis, fortissimi ac beatissimi fratres, pro  
merito religionis ac fidei vestrae accidisse non miror, ut  
vos sic Dominus ad gloriarum sublime fastigium  
clarificationis suae honore provexerit, qui semper in  
ecclesia eius

- custoditae fidei tenore viguistis,  
conservantes firmiter dominica mandata,  
in simplicitate innocentiam,  
in caritate concordiam,  
10 modestiam in humilitate,  
diligentiam in administratione,  
vigilantiam in adiuvandis laborantibus,  
misericordiam in fovendis pauperibus,  
in defendenda veritate constantiam,  
15 in disciplinae (se)veritate censuram.

In the phrases beginning at *in simplicitate* in line 8 down to *severitate censuram* in line 15, we can detect Cyprian's elaborate statement moulded into a chiasitic construction: lines 8 and 9 correspond with lines 14 and 15 with their initial *in* with the ablative case, while lines 10 to 13 begin with an accusative followed by *in* with the ablative. The first three lines (8 to 10) refer to the bishop's innocence, charity and modesty: they are all of a personal nature. The next three concern altruistic qualities which express service to others. The penultimate phrase in line 14, the bishop's constancy in defence of the truth, is again personal, whereas the last quality in

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<sup>155</sup> *ep.* 76.1.3: "Considering your meritorious piety and faith, I find no cause for wonder, most blessed and valorous brethren, that these events should now have befallen you and that the Lord should have thus honoured and ennobled you by raising you up onto the loftiest eminence of glory. For all along you have strenuously maintained within His Church the tenacity and integrity of your faith, steadfastly preserving the prescriptions of the Lord, observing innocence in simplicity, harmony in charity, modesty in humility, and zeal in the service of others. You have shown yourselves vigilant in bringing aid to the suffering, merciful in bringing relief to the needy, unyielding in coming to the defence of the faith, and rigorously strict in upholding the discipline of the Church."

line 15 once more relates to the bishop's connection with the other Christians whom he serves and rules. The personal traits concern the bishop himself; the others, his effect on others.

Assonance and alliteration in this passage are striking, especially words with initial c, d, f, m, and v. The last two lines are almost identical as regards alliteration, and in number of syllables they are identical.<sup>156</sup>

Particularly striking is the position of two of Cyprian's favourite concepts regarding episcopal comportment: the personal *diligentia* at line 11 and at line 15 *disciplina*, which affects all Christians. Clarke calls attention to the special virtues here stressed by Cyprian: constancy and tenacity, dutifulness and obedience, harmony and charity, discipline and rigour.

#### v. The Eulogy to Cyprian in *ep. 77*

In *ep. 77.1.1* we see a list of his own virtues; the author is florid in his description of Cyprian:<sup>157</sup>

es enim omnibus hominibus  
in tractatu maior, in sermone facundior,  
in consilio sapientior, in sapientia simplicior,  
in operibus largior, in abstinentia sanctor,  
in obsequio humilior, et  
in actu bono innocentior.

These are the traits of Cyprian, as he cares for his flock at Carthage. Are not all these attributes but a fusion of his principles of *diligentia* and *disciplina*? Cyprian's *innocens anima* (*ep. 77.2.2*) and the outstanding virtues with which it is filled provide the perfect model for other bishops to emulate.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> H. Hagendahl, *Von Tertullian zu Cassiodor. Die profane literarische Tradition in dem lateinischen christlichen Schrifttum* (Göteborg: 1983), 30-31, notes similar stylistic tendencies, such as antithesis, rhyme, parallelism, equal syllabic count and rhythmic clausula, in Cyprian's *ad Donatum*, 2: "non deserta, sed fortia/ nec ad audientiae popularis inlecebram/ culto sermone fucata, / sed ad divinam indulgentiam praedicandam / rudi veritate simplicia."

<sup>157</sup> *ep. 77.1.1*: "For there is no man your match in teaching, none more eloquent in language, more wise in counsel, more penetrating in wisdom, more generous in charity, more saintly in abstinence, more humble in obedience, more selfless in virtuous conduct."

<sup>158</sup> See *ep. 77.2.3, 77.3.1, 77.3.2, 78*.

## EXCURSUS A:

### The Reading in *ep. 67.4.3*

nec hoc in episcoporum tantum et sacerdotum, sed et in diaconorum ordinationibus observasse apostolos animadvertimus.

In Chapter I (The case of bishops Basilides and Martialis), it is maintained that Cyprian discusses here only two classes of clerics: the bishop and the deacon. The phrase, "nec hoc in episcoporum tantum et sacerdotum," in Cyprian's mind and in his syntax is a unit.<sup>1</sup> This is an example of a particular trait in his style of composition: the position of the *tantum* within the unit of the section of syntax which precedes the allied phrase introduced normally by *sed* or *sed et*.

In the correspondence, the combination of *non tantum*, followed by the responsive *sed et* appears 36 times. In 26 passages the *non tantum* are not separated, but Cyprian departs from this standard usage in four notable cases; there is one by Firmilian (*ep. 75*):

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|---------------------|--|
| <i>ep. 10.4.4:</i>  | non sic est ut servos suos <i>tantum</i> spectet, sed ipse |
| <i>ep. 34.4.2:</i>  | se a divisione mensurna <i>tantum</i> contineant           |
| <i>ep. 59.13.1:</i> | non consensione <i>tantum</i> nostra, sed et               |
| <i>ep. 67.4.3:</i>  | hoc in episcoporum <i>tantum</i> et sacerdotum, sed et     |
| <i>ep. 75.1.1:</i>  | non unam <i>tantum</i> regionem tenentes, sed              |

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<sup>1</sup> The combination of *non tantum sed et* appears 54 times in the treatises of Cyprian, which includes four citations from sacred scripture. It is instructive to note that in the 50 Cyprianic uses of this phrase, in eleven cases he reverts to his alternative style of inserting the *tantum* within a unit of thought and grammatical syntax.

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>De bon. pat. 6.102:</i> | Dominus et Deus noster <i>tantum</i> verbis docuit, sed     |
| <i>Ad Demet. 3.55:</i>     | putasne tu <i>tantum</i> posse                              |
| <i>De dom. or. 8.103:</i>  | nec dimitti sibi <i>tantum</i> unusquisque debitum postulat |
| <i>De dom. or. 19.350:</i> | cibum nobis <i>tantum</i> petamus et victum                 |
| <i>Ad Donat. 5.89:</i>     | nostrum <i>tantum</i> sitiatur pectus et pateat.            |
| <i>Ad Donat. 15.319:</i>   | potest <i>tantum</i> in melius corpore formari              |
| <i>De hab. virg. 15.2:</i> | virgines <i>tantum</i> aut viduas sed et nuptas puto        |
| <i>De laps. 6.105:</i>     | non iurare <i>tantum</i> temere sed adhuc etiam peierare    |
| <i>Ad Quir. 3 T.16:</i>    | caelestia <i>tantum</i> et spiritalia cogitare debere       |
| <i>De unit. 19.468:</i>    | hic qui lapsus est sibi <i>tantum</i> nocuit,               |

In each instance, *tantum*, normally after a negative, is inserted in a particular unit of syntax. In *ep.* 67.4.3 it refers to the ordinations of bishops, described by the two-fold administrative and cultic aspects, on the one hand, and, on the other, the ordinations of deacons. Cyprian's argument in this letter proceeds from his interpretation of two scriptural passages: the first concerns the ordination of a bishop (Matthias in Acts 1:15) and the second, the ordination of deacons (Acts 6:2). He is discussing the procedure followed by the apostles in the election and installation of bishops and of deacons. He employs the pleonasm *episcopus* and *sacerdos* at *ep.* 67.4.3 to indicate the bishop. Moreover, in the next section of this letter (*ep.* 67.4.4) Cyprian treats only of bishops (*ad sacerdotalem locum*) and deacons (*ad altaris ministerium*), and not of presbyters.

Cyprian's train of thought in section four of this letter is the following:

- It is by divine authority and tradition that the *sacerdos* (bishop) should be judged worthy and elected in the presence of all in the community. (*ep.* 67.4.1)

- This was the practice in the time of the Old Testament, when God commanded that his priest (*sacerdos*) should be appointed in the synagogue in the presence of all. (Here one must remember that Cyprian considered the Christian bishop as the successor to the Jewish priest.) It was also the practice under the New Testament to conduct this rite of election and installation in the presence of all the community, e.g. at the election of Matthias as bishop to replace the apostle Judas (Acts 1:15). (*ep.* 67.4.2)

- Cyprian then adds the case of the election of the deacon to that of the bishop, and he cites Acts 6:2 to indicate that in this case also the community must be present. (*ep.* 67.4.3)

- The reason for the necessity of the careful and precise observance of this rule at these rites is to avoid the admission of anyone unworthy as deacon (*ad altaris ministerium*) or as bishop (*ad sacerdotalem locum*). (*ep.* 67.4.4)

It is evident, therefore, that throughout this fourth section of the letter Cyprian discusses only the election and installation of the bishop and the deacon, not the presbyter. It was only long after Cyprian that *sacerdos* came to mean presbyter also, and it is necessary to remember Cyprian's consistent usage of the term

*sacerdos* to mean the bishop and not the presbyter.<sup>2</sup> An aid to the correct interpretation of the sense of *sacerdos* as bishop in this passage is provided by Cyprian's own singular and particular syntax, as described above. It is clear that Cyprian wishes that all ordinations of bishops, presbyters and deacons be accomplished in the presence of the laity, but in this passage he refers only to that of the bishop and of the deacon.

## EXCURSUS B:

### The Reading in *ep.* 45.4.2

Hartel prints in his edition at this section):

".. ad clerum *istic* non et ad plebem scripseram..."

It is a letter to Cornelius, in which he refers to copies of correspondence which he had sent to his clergy and people. The *non* in the text is perplexing.<sup>3</sup> A comparison of this phrase with others written by Cyprian and which contain *istic* appears to shed light on to the problem.

- ep.* 28.2.4    martyribus *istic* honoratis...
- ep.* 45.2.1    et plebi *istic* universae
- ep.* 48.2.2    nullo ecclesiarum *istic* consistentium consensio
- ep.* 59.9.3    nomina episcoporum *istic* constitutorum
- ep.* 60.1.2    non potest quanta *istic* exultatio fuerit
- ep.* 62.4.1    et fraternitatem *istic* universam

Cyprian uses the word *istic* 26 times in the correspondence, and we can note that in the above six cases he tends to separate a noun and its adjective by means of *istic*. Thus, the reading "ad clerum *istic* nostrum et ad plebem" would concur in this pattern employed by Cyprian.

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<sup>2</sup> See M. Bevenot, "*Sacerdos* as Understood by Cyprian," *The JTS* 28 (1979), 413-329, for a more detailed discussion of this issue; also instructive is the argument in Gy (1957), 124-145.

<sup>3</sup> See Clarke II, 243-244, n. 32. Furthermore, *nostrum* rather than *non* is the reading found in MS R (= Reginensis 116) of the ninth century.

## CHAPTER II

### CYPRIAN'S CONCEPT OF THE PRESBYTER AND THE DEACON

Immediately beneath the bishop in the hierarchy at Carthage were the presbyters and deacons. This chapter will focus upon these two clerical grades.

#### A. TERMS USED

Cyprian used various terms to describe his clergy. The general terms have been discussed above in the *Prolegomena*; we will now consider the specific terms by which he describes his two senior clerics.

##### I. presbyter and conpresbyter

The technical terms in currency which designated the ministries and attendants of the temple and synagogue in the Old Testament and those of pagan rites passed during the second century A.D. into the terminology of Christian institutions and writers.<sup>1</sup> Homer, Philo, Josephus and the Septuagint had already used the term *πρεσβύτερος* as an honorific designation of an elder.<sup>2</sup> This could, in Jewish and Christian literature, denote a person to be honoured because of advanced years or because he held an office. In 1 Tim 5:1-2, *πρεσβύτερος* indicates age, but elsewhere in the Pastoral letters it is the *terminus technicus* for the office-holder in the church community.<sup>3</sup>

Gradually, *πρεσβύτερος* became the title of the minister in the early Church, who had a certain authority and who deserved respect

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<sup>1</sup> See, in general, R.R. Noll, *On the Origins of the Ministerial Priesthood*, Diss. Strasbourg (1970).

<sup>2</sup> See Bornkamm art. in TWNT, 6 (1959), 651-683, at 679 B. remarks: "Für die Stellung und Funktion der 'Älten' bei Clemens Alexandrinus und seinen Vorgängern hat man mit Recht auf die etwa gleichzeitige Ausbildung der Lehrsukzession im Rabbinat als Analogie verwiesen und die Presbyter-Aussprüche nach Art der rabbinischen 'Vatersprüche' verstanden. Auch für die christlichen Alexandriner ist das Nebeneinander von unmittelbarer Schriftlektüre und Berufung auf die mündliche Tradition der Väter wie schon für Philo charakteristisch." See also B.'s note 190 at 679 (after citing *Vita Mos* I.4): "Über die Formeln, mit denen Philo solche Traditionen einführt vergleiche E. Bréhier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon* (1908), 55f."

<sup>3</sup> TWNT, 6 (1959), 666.



and honour from the entire community. Bornkamm asserts that the appearance of the *Constitutio Apostolica* of Hippolytus and the Syrian *Didascalia* in the first half of the third century provided a specific watershed in the development of this term, which by then denoted a highly respected leader in the Church.<sup>4</sup>

The presbyter was naturally associated with his colleagues, who also were presbyters, in their joint activity and common goals. This was the *presbyterium*. In Christian literature this *presbyterium* (τὸ πρεσβυτέριον) had these two meanings: either the highest Jewish authority at Jerusalem (τὸ συνέδριον) or the council of Elders of Christian communities.<sup>5</sup> St. Ignatius states that the *presbyterium* is the council of the bishop. (Phld 8.1).

Cyprian uses the word *presbyterium* three times.<sup>6</sup> The first instance, *presbyterii honorem*, occurs in a letter from Cyprian to his presbyters, deacons and laity in February 251, concerning the appointment of the confessors Celerinus and Aurelius to the rank of *lector* (ep. 39.5. 2). There the *honor* has a collective sense. Vilela lists similar collective uses of *honor* by Cyprian: "honore consessus nostri" (ep. 40.1.3), "sacerdotali honore coniuncti" (ep. 61.2.1) and "collegii honor" (ep. 73.26.2). There are other examples as well.<sup>7</sup> When Cyprian announces the appointment of both Celerinus and Aurelius, he adds specific details concerning the emoluments which they are to receive: they are to receive as *lectores* the same *sportulae* and *divisiones mensurnae* as for the presbyters.<sup>8</sup>

In mid-251, Cyprian sent to Cornelius the second letter, in which *presbyterium* occurs, where he clearly expresses his concept of the presbyters forming a regular, collective group at Carthage: "hic

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<sup>4</sup> See TWNT 6 (1959), 680. *Didascalia Apost.* II.28.4: nam et ipsi tamquam apostoli et conciliarii honorentur et corona ecclesiae; sunt enim consilium et curia ecclesiae.

<sup>5</sup> Bornkamm, TWNT 6 (1959), 654.

<sup>6</sup> Not 6 times, as in Vilela, 264. The word appears 6 times in the total correspondence: 3 times used by Cyprian: *epp.* 39.5.2, 45.4.1, 52.3; twice by Cornelius: *ep.* 49.2.1, 2.2; and once by Caldonius: *ep.* 24.1.1.

<sup>7</sup> *epp.* 2.1.2: "pudor et honor ecclesiae"; 20.3.2: "honor martyribus"; 57.3.2: "episcopatus nostri honor"; 59.4.3: "de sacerdotali honore et auctoritate"; 66.3.2: "sacerdotalem honorem servari"; 67.6.3: "sacerdotali honore"; 69.3.2: "praeter sacerdotii honorem"; 81.1.2: "honor ecclesiae nostrae".

<sup>8</sup> See Excursus C, Clerical Emoluments at Carthage, *infra*.

ad presbyterium" (ep. 45.4.1). He distinguishes here the five rebellious presbyters from the loyal *presbyterium*. And in the third letter, the price which Novatus must pay is both expulsion from the *presbyterium* and excommunication (ep. 52.3).

Cornelius elucidates the function and the procedures of the *presbyterium* in a letter to Cyprian sent in July, 251 (ep. 49).<sup>9</sup> First of all the repentant Roman confessors Urbanus and Sidonius, led by Maximus the presbyter, appear with their petition for reinstatement in the Church at a preliminary enquiry by members of the *presbyterium* at Rome (s. 1.3).

During this hearing the presbyters were able to interrogate the petitioners. Later, Cornelius decided to convoke a *plenum* of the *presbyterium* together with certain bishops then in Rome; he thus explains this stage of the proceedings: "The purpose of the meeting was to form a clear proposal of the manner in which we ought to treat their cases and to ratify it by unanimous agreement."<sup>10</sup>

The petitioners then appeared in person before the bishop and the assembled *presbyterium* and received the judgement of this ecclesiastical court, by which they were pardoned (s. 2.2). Cornelius hastens to add that the results of their session should be published to the laity (s. 2.3). Similar procedures were possible in the sessions of the *presbyterium* at Carthage.

Watson reminds us that the terms *presbyter*, *presbyterium*, and *conpresbyter* have no variant in Cyprian;<sup>11</sup> this is in stark contrast with the several terms used for the bishop, as recorded above in Chapter I. He used *presbyterium* only three times, but the noun, *presbyter*, is ubiquitous; it is one of his favourite words,<sup>12</sup> which he uses with respect and love.<sup>13</sup> Yet Watson's judgement regarding a variant for the term *conpresbyter* requires a modification. This word

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<sup>9</sup> See Clarke II, 265, for an astute comparison of the procedures described in ep. 49 with the legal presentation of a *libellus* to the emperor.

<sup>10</sup> ep. 49.2.1, Clarke II, 77f. Observe the "*unanimous decision*".

<sup>11</sup> Watson (1896), 259-60.

<sup>12</sup> Out of a total 88 occurrences of *presbyter* in the correspondence, 76 uses are by Cyprian (including 28 times referring to the addressees of the epistles).

<sup>13</sup> In the letters to his own clergy at Carthage Cyprian always refers to his presbyters and deacons as "*fratres carissimi*" at least once in each letter.

appears 13 times in the Cyprian correspondence,<sup>14</sup> but in four cases the orthography employed is *compresbyter*.<sup>15</sup> Whether this is a real variant, or the result of scribal error, is unclear. It is possible that Cyprian used both spellings of the word; we need only consider the minimal frequency of his use of *atque* (15 times), as compared with his preferred use of *adque* (180 times).<sup>16</sup>

*Compresbyter* is equivalent to the Greek *συμπρεσβύτερος* in the works of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, a contemporary of Cyprian, who died *ca.* 264.<sup>17</sup> In three of his eleven uses of *compresbyter*, Cyprian emphasises the prerogative of the presbyters to sit in council with the bishop. In the first of these, Cyprian reports the reaction of the participants of a council at Carthage, which included Cyprian, some other bishops then in the city and his fellow presbyters, upon learning of the violation of a canon enacted at an earlier synod of North African bishops:

Graviter conmoti sumus ego et collegae mei qui praesentes aderant et compresbyteri nostri qui nobis adsidebant. (ep. 1.1.1)

The second occurs in Cyprian's letter to Cornelius mid-251 referring to Novatian who had earlier participated in the *presbyterium* at

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<sup>14</sup> *ep.* 1.1.1, 7.2, 14.4, 24.0, 41.0, 44.2.2, 45.2.5, 48.1, 49.1.3, 55.2.1, 71.1.1 (twice), 76.0; all by Cyprian except *ep.* 24 and 49.

<sup>15</sup> *ep.* 41.0, 44.2.2 (both by Cyprian); 24.0 (Caldonius), and 49.1.3 (Cornelius).

<sup>16</sup> Bayard (1902), 11 notes that *adque* instead of *atque* exists in the Monument of Ancyra, II.25, IV.30, and that this orthography was frequent in Africa and at Carthage: CIL VIII.828, 1027, 2530, etc. Cyprian uses the *atque* spelling only 8% as opposed to *adque* (92%); the total uses of *adque* in the complete correspondence is 184 times, and 29 uses of *atque*. See the remarks of Bayard at 13-14 on the assimilation and non-assimilation in words combined with *con* and *com*.

<sup>17</sup> Dionysius, *epistula adv. Germanum episcopum*, 4, ed. Feltoe (1904), 28: "ἦκον πρὸς Αἰμιλιανὸν οὐ μόνος. ἤκολούθησαν δὲ μοι συμπρεσβύτερός τέ μου Μάξιμος, καὶ διάκονοι Φαῦστος καὶ Εὐσέβιος καὶ Χαίρημων." On uses of this word during the Valerian persecution see ap. Eusebius, HE 7.11.3, 7.5.6, and 7.20 (to his clergy at Alexandria); and on its use with reference to the solidarity of bishop to bishop, presbyter to presbyter, church to church, see C.L. Feltoe, *ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΩΣ*: Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria (Cambridge: 1904), 48. On Dionysius see: W.A. Bienert, *Dionysius von Alexandrien. Das erhaltene Werk* [Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur, 2] (Stuttgart: 1972) and, also by Bienert, *Dionysius von Alexandrien. Zur Frage des Origenismus im dritten Jahrhundert* [Patristische Texte und Studien 21] (Berlin and New York: 1978).

Rome: "conpresbyteri tecum consistentis" (ep. 45.2.5). And, in ep. 71.1.1, Cyprian describes the situation at the council at Carthage in 255: "quod . . . plurimi episcopi cum conpresbyteris qui aderant censuerimus ut scires." This was the council at Carthage with the least number of bishops in attendance (32) during Cyprian's entire episcopate: there were at least 21 bishops absent.<sup>18</sup> It seems that Cyprian bolstered the authority of this council by referring to the presence of the presbyters who attended it as well, even though the latter had no active voice in the proceedings.<sup>19</sup> We know from other letters that the presbyters customarily sat with their bishops.<sup>20</sup>

In four letters Cyprian attests to the fact that presbyters acted as emissaries and messengers. These concern the presbyter Primitivus on missions to Cornelius in Rome,<sup>21</sup> Quintus, who was a presbyter of Bishop Antonianus in Numidia,<sup>22</sup> and Lucianus, a presbyter of Bishop Quintus in Mauritania.<sup>23</sup> In three other letters the term *conpresbyter* indicates the rank of the addressees, twice used by Cyprian and once by Caldonius.<sup>24</sup>

In two letters to his clergy, Cyprian refers once to Rogatianus in January/February 250, as the *conpresbyter* with whom he had entrusted funds for the poor and needy during his absence from Carthage.<sup>25</sup> Later, in early April 250, he mentions the letter which four fellow presbyters had sent him.<sup>26</sup> The only other use of *conpresbyter* is in Cornelius' letter of July, 251, in which he recounts the appearance of the repentant confessors Urbanus and Sidonius before the *conpresbyteri* assembled at Rome.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Maier (1973), 22.

<sup>19</sup> See Clarke IV, 208, n.4; and Clarke I, 150, n. 3.

<sup>20</sup> *epp.* 39.5.2, 40.1.1, 40.1.2, 40.1.3, 45.2, 59.19.1. See also *Gesta apud Zenophilum*, CSEL 26, 186f., on clerical seating; see: Watson (1896), 263; "Afrique (archéologie de l')", 672-3; Telfer (1962), 201; Vilela (1971), 274-81.

<sup>21</sup> *epp.* 44.2.2 and 48.1.

<sup>22</sup> *ep.* 55.2.1, and see Clarke III, 164-5, n.1.

<sup>23</sup> *ep.* 71.1.1, and see Clarke IV, 207, n. 1, and *epp.* 72.1.3, 73.1.1.

<sup>24</sup> *conpresbyter* is in *epp.* 24.0 and 41.0, whereas *conpresbyter* occurs in *ep.* 76.0.

<sup>25</sup> *ep.* 7.2.

<sup>26</sup> *ep.* 14.4.

<sup>27</sup> *ep.* 49.1.3.

We observe the confidence and trust which Cyprian, Cornelius and other bishops placed in their presbyters. It is also important to remember that many bishops had themselves first been ordained presbyters. They were all presbyters, while of course the bishop subsequently had been elevated to the highest rank in the organisation of the clergy. The bishops call presbyters *conpresbyteri* because of their mutual status as presbyters.

## II. *diaconus*

Since Herodotus, the Greek tragedians and others used the term *διάκονος* with the meaning of servant or messenger, in connection with the verb, *διακονέω*.<sup>28</sup> H. W. Beyer calls attention to the special denotation of this verb, in comparison with other verbs of service, that it signifies the completely personal character of the service rendered to another person.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, pagan authors used the noun *διάκονος* to indicate service at table,<sup>30</sup> messenger,<sup>31</sup> attendant or presiding officer in a temple or religious guild which was officially recognised by the civil authorities,<sup>32</sup> and in inscriptions in Arcania in the second and first centuries B.C., and in Troezen in the third century B.C.<sup>33</sup> Major classical authors use *διάκονος* to mean servant,<sup>34</sup> administrator,<sup>35</sup> cook, and wine merchant.<sup>36</sup>

In the Septuagint the noun rarely occurs, and then only in its profane sense.<sup>37</sup> The concept of *διάκονος* with reference to God first

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<sup>28</sup> For the verb in the sense of service at table, see: Herodotus, 4.71f., Aristophanes, *Ach.* 1015ff., Diodorus Siculus 5.28.4; in a broader sense of caring for subsistence, see Sophocles, *Phil.* 285f.

<sup>29</sup> TWNT, Vol. 2 (1935), 81.

<sup>30</sup> Xenophon, *Hiero* 1f., Demosthenes 59.33, Herodotus 4.71.

<sup>31</sup> Aeschylus, *Persae* 942; Sophocles, *Phil.* 497.

<sup>32</sup> *Insch. Magnesia* 109, 217 = *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Meander*, ed. O. Kern (Berlin: 1902).

<sup>33</sup> IG 9 (1) 486: *Inscriptiones Graecae: Inscriptiones Phocidis, Locridis, Aetoliae, Acarniae, insularum maris Ionii*, ed. W. Dittenberger (1897).

<sup>34</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 7.7: 1149a27; Lucian, *Alexander* 5 (second century A.D.).

<sup>35</sup> Demosthenes, 59.42, Aristophanes, *Aves* 70f.

<sup>36</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* 518bc.

<sup>37</sup> Beyer, TWNT, Vol 2, 91: v.g., Esther 1:10; 2:2; 6:3, 5; in Prov 10:4a the fools are the servants of the wise [only in LXX].

appears in Josephus and in Epictetus. Josephus frequently uses *διάκονος* in its usual meaning;<sup>38</sup> in *Ant.* 8:354, however, as a servant (pupil) of the Rabbi. In *Bell. Iud.* 3:354, Josephus calls himself *διάκονος θεοῦ*. Epictetus reveals the cultic activity of pagan deacons, such as the presentation of offerings and blessings.<sup>39</sup> Beyer indicates that, among Christian deacons, the original conception of service at table remains.<sup>40</sup> The Christian deacon's foremost task was his care for and service of others in the community; gradually his function extended to specific activity at divine services.<sup>41</sup>

Latin authors adapted the term *διάκονος* in Latin as *diaconus*, although in the Vulgate the Greek term is translated by *minister*. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* lists some of the occurrences of *diaconus* in Latin literature, but the earliest example given there is from Tertullian.<sup>42</sup> Yet we know that the term occurs in Greek, for example, in the *Didache* (15.1), in *Prima Clementis* (42:1ff.), and also in the *Traditio Apostolica* of Hippolytus. On the other hand, the meaning of *διάκονος* is not always identical in the usage of these earlier authors. Thus, the denotation of this term as used in the *Didache* and in *Prima Clementis* is not equivalent to the more specific meaning found in the *Traditio Apostolica*. Nevertheless, Christians in the first and second centuries used the term *διάκονος* with diverse meanings.<sup>43</sup> We know of Latin translations of the *Didache* in the third century.<sup>44</sup> Cyprian follows this usage in the

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<sup>38</sup> v.g. in *Ant.* 6:52; 7:201, 224; 11:185, 255.

<sup>39</sup> See also further references in Epictetus and various inscriptions dealing with the activity of deacons in TWNT, Vol. 2, 92.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> See 1 Clement 42:1ff; also *Didache* 15:1 ("elect for yourselves bishops and deacons.").

<sup>42</sup> Tertullian, *haer.* 1: "hic de septem diaconibus fuit," in TLL, vol. 5, pars prior (Lipsiae: 1909-1934), 944, where most of the citations are from authors of the fourth and fifth centuries, such as Optatus, bishop of Milevis in Numidia (c. 366), Ambrosiaster (c. 370), and Epiphanius (315-413). See also H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. H.S. Jones (Oxford: 1968) s.v. at p. 398.

<sup>43</sup> Mt 20:26, 22:13, 23:11; Mk 9:35, 10:43; Jn 2:5, 2:9, 12:26; Rm 13:4 (twice), 15:8, 16:1; 1 Cor 3:5, 6:4, 11:15 (twice), 11:23; Gal 2:17; Eph 3:7, 6:21; Ph 1:1; Col 1:7, 1:23, 1:25, 4:7; 1 Th 3:2; 1 Tim 3:8, 3:12, 4:6

<sup>44</sup> For two Latin translations of the *Didache*: J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. 1 (1951), 37-38: a ninth century codex of Melk; also Cod. Monac. lat. 6264 of the eleventh century. Perhaps there were earlier Latin translations as well.

tradition of Hippolytus and Tertullian. In the Cyprianic correspondence, *diaconus* occurs 67 times, all but 7 uses are by Cyprian.<sup>45</sup> The entry for *diaconus* in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*<sup>46</sup> indicates that the declensions used were fluid, a commixture of the second and the third. Cyprian's use is similar. In general, he employs forms of the second declension for *diaconus*, but there are three exceptions. In the case of the plural in the nominative, dative and accusative cases, Cyprian uses forms, in a considerably eclectic manner, from both the second and the third declensions.<sup>47</sup>

Cyprian uses the cognate noun, *diaconium*, diaconate in English, only once: in *ep.* 52.1.2 with reference to Nicostratus, who had lost his rank in the diaconate. Nowhere in any of his works does Cyprian employ any of the following possible cognates: *diaconalis*, *diaconatus*, *diaconia*, *diaconicus* or *diaconissa*.

A scholar from Australia, John N. Collins, has recently proposed that the Greek term *διάκονος* does not refer to "servant", but rather "emissary" or "authorized representative."<sup>48</sup> Such a radical theory is certain to evoke theological discussion and might very well alter this area of ecclesiology. Perhaps the solution will be found, as it is frequently, by a middle course. The aspect of table service has possibly been unduly accentuated, and one would do better to stress, instead, the service or ministry of the deacon. This ministry can well be performed by the person who is an authorized representative. Religious and formal language usage may have very well

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<sup>45</sup> Used by Cyprian: *diacones* (3 uses): *epp.* 32.1.2; 80.1.2; 80.1.4. *diaconi* (9 uses, all nom. pl.): 3.3.1 (twice), 15.1.2, 17.2.2, 32.1.1, 43.1.1, 48.2.1, 55.4.2, 72.2.1. *diaconibus* (19 uses, all dat. pl, except for *ep.* 20.2.3, which is abl. pl.): 1.0, 5.0, 7.0, 9.0, 11.0, 12.0, 18.0, 19.0, 20.0, 20.2.3, 26.0, 27.0, 29.0, 32.0, 34.0, 35.0, 38.0, 40.0, 76.0. *diaconis* (10 uses, abl. pl.): 5.2.1, 14.3.1, 16.3.2, 55.5, 59.15.1; dat. pl.: 14.0, 16.0, 39.0, 81.0. *diaconorum* (1 use): 67.4.3. *diaconos* (4 uses, all acc. pl.): 3.3.1, 4.3.3, 15.1.2, 48.1. *diaconum* (7 uses, all acc. s.): 3.1.1, 3.3.2, 4.1.1, 4.4.1, 18.1.2, 52.2.3 (2 uses). *diaconus* (2 uses, nom. s.): 5.2.1, 44.1.1. *diacono* (5 uses): 3.1.1, 3.3.4, 34.1, 67.0, 73.9.1.

<sup>46</sup> vol. V, *pars prior*, (Leipzig: 1907-1934) c. 943.82-85.

<sup>47</sup> nom. pl.: *diaconi* (9 times) with *diacones* (twice). dat.pl.: *diaconis* (4 times) with *diaconibus* (19 times). acc. pl.: *diaconos* (4 times) with *diaconibus* (19 times), acc. pl. *diaconos* (4 times) with *diacones* (once). For the dative in both declensions, all but one *diaconibus* are found as addressees in the *inscriptio* of the letter. In one of the two cases of *diacones* as nom. pl., there is a variant reading of *diaconi* in the 9th century MS G (Codex Sangallensis 454). On the three parts of the salutation in a Latin letter, see C.D. Lanham, *Salutatio* Formulas in Latin Letters to 1200 (München: 1975), 7.

<sup>48</sup> J. N. Collins, *Diakonia*. (New York: 1990).

influenced the evolution of *διακονία* as a term among Christians, but the other normal connotations of the word as used by their contemporaries played an important part as well. Nevertheless, Collins' theory may explain further the close association of the bishop and his deacons.

## B. BECOMING A PRESBYTER AND A DEACON

### I. Presbyter

It would seem logical to look to Cyprian's earlier contemporary at Carthage, Tertullian, for a description and an explanation of the process of becoming a presbyter and a deacon in North Africa, but the search is not fruitful. R. Gryson points out that Tertullian uses the terms *adlectio* and *adlegere* in connection with accession to Church orders.<sup>49</sup> Such language was current among contemporary pagan society to indicate the incorporation into an *ordo*, such as the senate. To try to grasp the situation in third century, therefore, it would be useful to consider the practice of Rome, as described in the *Traditio Apostolica*, as above in chapter I in the case of episcopal ordination.<sup>50</sup>

Hippolytus presents the ceremonies and liturgy of the presbyter's ordination in chapter 7 of the *Traditio Apostolica*, and that of the deacon in chapter 8. Perhaps Cyprian was familiar with the *Traditio Apostolica*, and one might speculate that he had a copy of it in Greek, or perhaps a Latin translation.

Chapter seven of the *Traditio Apostolica* on the ordination of presbyters first describes the ritual act of the imposition of hands by

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<sup>49</sup> R. Gryson, "Le sacerdoce chrétien d'après saint Cyprien," RHE 68 (1973), 354f.

<sup>50</sup> On the presbyter see: H. Leclercq, art. "Presbyter" in DACL 14b (1948), c. 1717-1721; A. Michel, art. "Prêtre," DTC 13a (1936), c.138-162; Thani Nayagam (1950); G. Bardy et al. (edd), Prêtres d'hier et d'aujourd'hui (Paris: 1954); B. Botte, Irenikon (1956), 5-24; B. Botte, "Caractère collégial du presbytérat et de l'épiscopat," Études sur le sacrement de l'ordre (Paris: 1957), 97-124; Gy (1957), 125-145; G. Bornkamm, "πρέσβυς, πρεσβύτερος, etc" TWNT 6 (1959), 651-683; V. Saxer (1969); Noll (1970); J. Martin, Die Genese des Amtspriestertums in der Frühen Kirche [Quaestiones disputatae 48] (Freiburg: 1972); P. Nautin, "L'évolution du ministère au ii.<sup>e</sup> siècle," Revue de droit canonique 23 (1973), 47-58; G.H. Luttenger, "The Priest as a Member of a Ministerial College," RTAM 43 (1976), 5-63; Faivre (1977); E.G. Jay, (1981), 125-163; M. Vidal, "Presbytérat," DSP 12 (1985), c. 2069-2106; A. Rauch & P. Imhof (Aschaffenburg: 1987).



the bishop on the candidate presented to him.<sup>51</sup> But in the only four instances in which Cyprian uses the technical term, "imposition of hands," it is in reference to the sacrament of penance and *exomologesis*, but not to the ordination of clerics.<sup>52</sup> The fact that Cyprian was in the tradition of Hippolytus is evident in his letter on the Spanish question in connection with the proper celebration of ordinations. Cyprian asserts that "we should diligently preserve that pertaining to divine teaching and apostolic observance, a practice maintained by us and throughout every province."<sup>53</sup>

In the prayer over the candidate for the presbyterate in *Traditio Apostolica*, ch. 7, there occur the verbs, *adiuvare* and *gubernare*. These two verbs may appear as an echo in Cyprian. Usually he uses the verb *gubernare* (11 uses in all) with reference to bishops, but once, at *ep.* 15.1.2, he applies it to presbyters and deacons, who directed (*gubernarent*) the Confessors in prison at Carthage by scriptural precepts. There is also evidence in *ep.* 18.1.1 that the presbyters and deacons shared in the governance of the church.<sup>54</sup> Cyprian uses the other verb, *adiuvare*, ten times out of a total fourteen occurrences in the correspondence.<sup>55</sup> In four of these ten uses of *adiuvare* by Cyprian, they are consistent with the purpose of the ordination of a presbyter, as used in the *Traditio Apostolica*. In *ep.* 2.2.2 and 13.7, it is a question of financial aid from church funds and collections: the first to aid the former actor, the second reports aid sent by the local clergy and laity at Carthage to the

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<sup>51</sup> For background see: O. Knoch, "Die Funktion der Handauflegung im Neuen Testament," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 33 (1983), 222-235; Bårlea (1969), 210-252.

<sup>52</sup> *ep.* 16.2, 17.2.1, 18.1, and 71.2.2; the example in *ep.* 18.1 is the celebrated case of allowing even a deacon, in emergencies where no presbyter is available, to preside at the rite of *exomologesis*.

<sup>53</sup> *ep.* 67.5.1: "propter quod diligenter de traditione divina et apostolica observatione servandum est et tenendum quod apud nos quoque et fere per provincias universas tenetur, ut adordinationes rite celebrandas ad eam plebem cui propositus ordinatur episcopi eiusdem provinciae proximi quique convenient et episcopus deligatur plebe praesente. . ." Could Cyprian have been thinking of Hippolytus' *Traditio Apostolica*, as he wrote these lines?

<sup>54</sup> "cum fraternitatis nostrae vel utilitas vel necessitas sic utique gubernetur, si a vobis instructi rerum gerendarum consilium limare possimus."

<sup>55</sup> Participles: *ep.* 52.4.1, 55.18.2, 76.1.3, 79.1.1. Infinitives: *ep.* 2.2.2, 13.7, 18.1.2, 19.2.1, 57.3.3, 69.8.1. Imperative: *ep.* 38.2.2. Finite verbs: *ep.* 75.19.2, 75.23.2, 76.4.2 (*ep.* 75 being by Firmilian).

presbyter Rogatianus. There is a very close connection between the use by Hippolytus and that by Cyprian in *ep.* 38.2.2; in this letter, sent to the presbyters and deacons of Carthage, the Bishop urges his clergy to support by their prayers and in other ways the recently appointed lector, Aurelius. The fourth use of *adiuvare* in this sense appears at *ep.* 76.1.3, where Cyprian praises the bishops, priests and deacons in the mines for their vigilance in aiding the suffering (*vigilantiam in adiuvandis laborantibus*. . .). In addition, the phrase "ministremus in simplicitate cordis" in *Traditio Apostolica* 7 may have caused a distant echo in one of Cyprian's letters to his presbyters and deacons, which chides them for their lack of *simplicitas* in the fulfilment of their clerical ordination.<sup>56</sup>

The process prior to the ordination of a presbyter included his nomination and selection. In the late summer of 250 in one of his pastoral letters to his clergy at Carthage, in connection with the appointment of Optatus as lector, Cyprian openly refers to the serious scrutiny to which the candidate was customarily subjected.<sup>57</sup> He also indicates that before definitive appointment, each of the candidates underwent a certain period of probation:

quos iam pridem communi consilio clero proximos  
feceramus. (*ep.* 29.1.2)

For the actual ceremony of ordination to the clergy, technical terms similar to those used in connection with episcopal ordination, such as *facit*, *constituit*, and *ordinat*<sup>58</sup> also apply to the clerics beneath the rank of bishop.

As early as the winter of 251, Cyprian states with clarity and firmness his usual practice of making clerical appointments in his diocese at Carthage; there is no doubt that this is a communal affair with the participation of his clerics and the laity:

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<sup>56</sup> *ep.* 11.1.2: "simplicitatis et fidei negligentes."

<sup>57</sup> *ep.* 29.1.2: "examinantes an congruerent illis omnia quae esse deberent in his qui ad clerum parabantur"; and see: Gryson (1973), 386, also see *ep.* 41.1.2.

<sup>58</sup> See ch. I, 3. Becoming a Bishop, above. Cyprian uses *constituere* in the appointment of lectors in *ep.* 29.1.2 and in *ep.* 39.5.2, and with regard to deacons in *epp.* 3.3.1 and 52.2.3. He uses *ordinare* concerning a lector in *ep.* 38.2.2. While there is no direct use of these technical terms in the case of the ordination of a presbyter in Cyprian's letters, the fact that he does so for the lesser ranks of the clergy leads to the conclusion, *a fortiori*, that the terms were also used in the case of presbyters.

in ordinationibus clericis, fratres carissimi, solemus vos ante consulere et mores ac merita singulorum communi concilio ponderare. (ep. 38.1.1)

We note three things in this statement: first, the scrutiny of the candidate for the clergy normally occurs in advance of the ceremony of promotion; second, the ones consulted include the entire community, i.e., the clerics and the laity; and thirdly, the purpose of their assembly is to discuss and weigh the character and qualities of the candidate, and to determine if he is acceptable to all in the community. It is in effect a corporate decision of the local church<sup>59</sup>, but the principal responsibility remains with the bishop.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, we have clear and strong evidence from Cyprian about the procedure prior to the actual ceremony of ordaining a presbyter. But at the ordination itself, were the laity also present along with the bishop and the clerics? Chapter seven of Hippolytus' *Traditio Apostolica* is altogether silent about this aspect in the ordination of a presbyter, but we have seen above Cyprian's assertion that the laity are present at the selection (ep. 67.4.1) and at the ordination (ep. 67.4.2 and 67.5.1) of a bishop.<sup>61</sup> Cyprian provides no information about those present at the ordination of a presbyter; nevertheless, it would seem probable that everyone in the Church community participated.<sup>62</sup> This probability is strengthened by the fact that the fourth century Roman prayer at the presbyter's ordination corresponds to that in Hippolytus at the beginning of the third century.<sup>63</sup>

One other possible way of entry into the presbyterate is that a presbyter, who has been ordained elsewhere, might be admitted into another diocese. After centuries of development in the tradition and practice of the Church, this method today is described as incardination. Some commentators hold that a possible example of this is

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<sup>59</sup> See R. Gryson, RHE 68 (1973), 356

<sup>60</sup> ep. 41.1.2: "ut etiam nunc ego, cui cura incumbit. . ."

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter I, C. Becoming a Bishop; also Straub (1964), 339-340; also Gryson (1973), 357.

<sup>62</sup> Vilela (1971), 276, considering *epp.* 39 and 40, maintains that the clergy and people were involved in the choice of new clerics.

<sup>63</sup> P.-M. Gy, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*. 58 (1974), 599-617, at 606.

the situation in Cyprian's letter to his clergy, in which he announces the inclusion of the presbyter Numidicus in the presbyterate of Carthage, but it is more likely that he was received into the ranks of presbyters at Carthage directly.<sup>64</sup>

## II. Deacon

Hippolytus states in Chapter eight of the *Traditio Apostolica* that the deacon is ordained, after having been selected as in the other ranks, by the ceremony of the bishop's imposition of hands.<sup>65</sup> Yet it specifies further that it is only the bishop who imposes his hands, and not the others present. The reason for this is that the deacon is not ordained to participate in the priesthood, but rather to serve the bishop, to whom he is directly subject in obedience.<sup>66</sup>

This is in accord with the view of Cyprian that the deacon is ordained to be subordinate to the bishop, and to aid him.<sup>67</sup> In his letter to Bishop Rogatianus, Cyprian expressly refers to the power and authority of the bishop over his own deacons: "cum pro episcopatus vigore et cathedrae auctoritate haberes potestatem qua posses de illo statim vindicari." (ep. 3.1.1) Cyprian insists that the deacon should remember that it was our Lord chose his own Apostles, i.e. bishops, yet it was the latter who "established deacons to assist the Church and themselves, in their office of bishop."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See the discussion above in Chapter I: The case of Numidicus: ep. 40; also see the extensive literature on this question given in Clarke II, 186-187.

<sup>65</sup> TA, 8: "Diaconus vero cum ordinatur, eligatur secundum ea quae praedicta sunt, similiter inponens manus episcopus solus sicuti praecipimus."

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.: "in diacono ordinando solus episcopus inponat manus, propterea quia non in sacerdotio ordinatur, sed in ministerio episcopi, ut faciat ea quae ab ipso iubentur."

<sup>67</sup> On the deacon see: H. Leclercq, art. "diacre," DACL 4 (1920, cc. 738-746; J. Forget, art. "Diacres," DTC 4 (1939), c. 703-731; K. Braun, "Diakon: Gedanken zur 6. Weihestufe des neutestamentlichen Priestertums," Theologisch-Praktische Quartalsschrift 95 (1947, 265-283; A. Hamman, "Le diaconat aux premiers siècles," MD 36 (1953), 151-172; J. Lécuyer, art. "Diaconat," DSp, 3 (1957), c. 799-817; J. Colson, La fonction diaconale aux origines de l'Église. (Tournai: 1960); J. G. Davies, "Deacons, Deaconesses and the Minor Orders in the Patristic Period," JEH 14 (1963), 1-15; L. Vischer, "Le problème du diaconat," Verbum Caro 69 (1964), 30-51; A. Hamman, Vie liturgique et vie sociale. (Paris: 1969), esp. 67-149; V. Saxer (1969), 80-81; S. Charalambidis, "Le service des tables" in Le diaconat. [églises en dialogue, no. 11] (Tours: 1970), 9-49.

<sup>68</sup> ep. 3.3.1: "meminisse autem diaconi debent quoniam apostolos id est episcopos et praepositos elegit, diaconos autem post ascensum Domini in caelos apostoli sibi constituerunt episcopatus sui et ecclesiae ministros." Clarke notes (at II, 168) that

If the deacon is disobedient, then, says Cyprian, the bishop ought to exercise the full power of his office and punish the recalcitrant deacon accordingly.<sup>69</sup> We have seen the emphasis which Cyprian placed on the deacon's duty of obedience to his bishop. It is possible that even during his episcopate at Carthage, he required a written as well as verbal oath or promise of such obedience. There is one example extant of such an oath to a bishop made about fifty years after the martyrdom of Cyprian.<sup>70</sup>

The procedures of selection, probation and appointment of the deacon at Carthage in the mid-third century must have been similar to those of the presbyter, as discussed in the preceding section.

## C. THE RÔLE OF THE PRESBYTER AND THE DEACON

### I. Presbyter

It appears that the earliest extant historical witness for the presbyterate in the Christian Church is in the Acts of the Apostles and had its origin in the community at Jerusalem.<sup>71</sup> Reception of clerical candidates into the college of presbyters during the first two centuries of the Church was considered a sacramental act.<sup>72</sup> The basic position and status of the presbyter was one of member in the

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"Cyprian's schema leaves undetermined whether in his view the first presbyters were to be considered as chosen by Christ or by the Apostles; he never clarifies the question." Although Cyprian interprets the origin of the deacon as the circumstances found in Acts 6:2, this view is today challenged by various scholars, e.g., R.E. Brown, "*Episkope* and *Episkopos*: the New Testament Evidence," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980), 322-338 at 326.

<sup>69</sup> *ep.* 3.3.3: "quod si ultra te contumeliis suis exacerbaverit et provocaverit, fungeris contra eum potestatem honoris tui, ut eum vel deponas vel abstineas." See Clarke I, 285, n. 9.

<sup>70</sup> J.R. Rea and P.J. Siepesteijn (edd.), *Corpus Papyrorum Raineri V*, griechische Texte II, n. 11 (Wien: 1976), 24-26.

<sup>71</sup> W. Rordorf, "La théologie du ministère dans l'Église ancienne," *Verbum Caro* 18 (1964), 86. See: Acts 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22; 16:4; 21:18; and Nautin (1973), 47-58, at 48.

<sup>72</sup> R. Zollitsch, *Amt und Funktion des Priesters*. (Freiburg: 1974), 270: "Die Einsetzung in das Presbyteramt erfolgt von Anfang an durch Handauflegung. Sie ist nicht nur ein Einsetzungsgestus, sondern wird mit dem Judentum als Ordination zum Amt und als Übertragung der Gabe des Geistes an den Ordinanden verstanden. In diesem Sinn ist sie schon von ihrem Ursprung her als sakramentaler Akt anzusprechen." This passage is cited by O. Knoch (1983), 222-235, at 234, n. 35. See also J. Coppens, *Le sacerdoce chrétien, ses origines et son développement* [An.Lov.V, 5] (Leiden: 1970).

group of presbyters who aided, advised and supported the leader of the local church.<sup>73</sup> At *ep.* 14.3.1, where he chides the laity who have refused to be ruled by the presbyters and deacons ("nec a diaconis aut presbyteris regi posse"), Cyprian stressed the fact that these clerics shared in the direction of the church. Hence, in third-century Carthage, the presbyterate was not only the principal advisory body to the bishop, but it was also clearly subject to him. Cyprian admonishes presbyters who failed to give the submission due to their bishop as a shocking and scandalous innovation, unknown to his predecessors.<sup>74</sup>

G.H. Lutzenberger considers the prayer over the ordinand to the presbyterate, as given by Hippolytus in *Traditio Apostolica* 7,<sup>75</sup> and remarks that

it is noteworthy that no specific functions are cited for the presbyter; he was merely ordained so that, with the other presbyters, he might govern the people; and for this, he was to receive the gift of counsel. Again, the presbyters formed a senate collegially leading the People of God.

As noted above, Cyprian tells us that the presbyters sat in council with him (*ep.* 1.1.1). In Cyprian's terminology, the presbyter has a definite position in the society of the Church, a specific status (*locus*); in his letter to his clergy in May 250, he regrets that some of his presbyters had forgotten the meaning of this status.<sup>76</sup> Errant presbyters could lose that status, if they proved themselves grossly

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<sup>73</sup> H.J. Schultz, "Das Priestertum nach dem Zeugnis der altkirchlichen Ordinationsliturgien," in *Das Priestertum in der Einen Kirche: Diakonat, Presbyterat und Episkopat*. (Aschaffenburg: 1987), 100: "Der Presbyter ist vor allem Mitglied des Presbyteriums."

<sup>74</sup> *ep.* 16.1.2: quod enim non periculum metuere debemus de offensa Domini, quando aliqui de presbyteris nec evangelii nec loci sui memores, sed neque futurum Domini iudicium neque nunc sibi praepositum episcopum cogitantes, quod numquam omnino sub antecessoribus factum est, cum contumelia et contemptu praepositi totum sibi vindicent? See also *ep.* 15.1.2, another reference to his predecessors.

<sup>75</sup> Lutzenberger (1976), 5-63.

<sup>76</sup> *ep.* 16.1.2: "quando aliqui de presbyteris nec evangelii nec loci sui memores" The "sacerdotalis loci tui et officia" of *ep.* 3.1.1 is clearly the *locus* of the bishop and the *ministerium suum* applies to the deacon of Rogatianus; the use of *locus* is that of the bishop, not the presbyter, in *epp.* 12.1.1, 15.1.1, 40.1.3, 41.2.1, 55.8.3, 63.19. See also Vilela (1971), 286-7.

unworthy of their rank.<sup>77</sup> The first known concrete example of a dismissed presbyter is Valens of Philippi; we learn about him in Polycarp's letter to the Philippians (11.1), approximately one century before the time of Cyprian.<sup>78</sup>

Among the duties and functions of the presbyter at Carthage were those of pastoral care, teaching, liturgy, and participation at councils and synods. We will consider each of these facets of the presbyter in turn.

### a) Pastoral Care

One paramount concern of Cyprian was that of the welfare of the people under his care.<sup>79</sup> This is evident from reading through his correspondence. Since the presbyter was his assistant, he naturally directed him to ensure that the hungry and needy in the congregation were given the necessary aid. This included the distribution, as ordered by Cyprian, of food and funds for charity.

Cyprian urges his clergy in April 250, during his absence, to be generous in the care of the poor faithful Christians at Carthage.<sup>80</sup> Early in the correspondence Cyprian suggests the possibility for other churches, which are unable to feed and clothe the impoverished, to send them to Carthage (*ep.* 2.2.3).

During the Decian persecution, Cyprian is naturally concerned about providing aid to the Christians in prison for their faith. He specifically refers to this duty to care for prisoners in four letters during the persecution.<sup>81</sup> In one of these letters (*ep.* 12), Cyprian

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<sup>77</sup> H. Campenhausen (1953), 299: "wer sich durch Abfall, Ungehorsam oder sonstiges Versagen seines Amtes unwürdig zeigt, hat seine geistlichen Fähigkeiten verloren. Er muß abgesetzt werden, und keine Spur seiner früheren Auszeichnung bleibt zurück" The cases in *epp.* 65.2, 67.3, 70.2, cited by Campenhausen, all refer to former disgraced bishops. *ep.* 72.2.1 concerns apostate presbyters and deacons who lost their clerical status.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>79</sup> Walker (1968), 9: "ardent love for his flock forms the keynote of all that Cyprian did or wrote."

<sup>80</sup> *ep.* 12.2.2: *pauperibus quoque, ut saepe iam scripsi, cura ac diligentia vestra non desit, his tamen qui in fide stantes et nobiscum fortiter militantes Christi castra non reliquerunt: quibus quidem nunc maior a nobis et dilectio et cura praestanda est.* See also: *epp.* 5.1.2 and 14.2.1.

<sup>81</sup> *epp.* 5.1.2, 12.1.2, 15.1.2, 20.2.2.

praises the zeal with which Tertullus cares for the burial of those who died in prison. He also expresses his considerable concern for the poor, sick, needy, widows, distressed; those in prison as well as other Christians remaining at Carthage.<sup>82</sup>

Cyprian is also concerned about the welfare, clothing and provisions of the confessors after they were released from prison (*ep.* 13. 7; 14.2.2); he urges his clergy to provide him with an assessment of the critical situation and needs of the Christians in Carthage (*ep.* 18.1.1), including any foreigners who may be in need (*ep.* 7.2).

Financial details towards this relief occur in several letters.<sup>83</sup> In two letters we learn of Cyprian's contributing his own funds (*epp.* 5; 13). In *ep.* 5 Cyprian despatches to his clergy funds that had been collected precisely for this sort of emergency.<sup>84</sup> We see in *epp.* 30.5.1 and 78.1.1 the grateful and positive response from those in prison or in the mines, who had benefited from the charitable efforts of Cyprian and his clergy.

The aid was not all financial; the spiritual aspect of assistance and comfort provided was even more important for the suffering. Twice Cyprian praises his presbyters and deacons for their efforts and devotion in giving guidance and counsel to the needy.<sup>85</sup> In three other letters he refers specifically to the activity of his presbyters and deacons in this respect.<sup>86</sup> From these we learn that the presbyters and deacons visit the prisoners not only to bring material

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<sup>82</sup> *epp.* 7.2, 12.2.2, 13.7, 14.2.1, 18.1.1.

<sup>83</sup> *epp.* 5.1.2, 7.2, 13.7, 41.1.2, 62.1.2, 62.3.1, 62.3.1, 76.1.1, 78.1.1.

<sup>84</sup> *ep.* 5.1.2: quantum ad sumptus suggerendos, sive illis qui gloriosa voce Dominum confessi in carcere sunt constituti, sive his qui pauperes et indigentes laborant et tamen in Domino perseverant, peto nihil desit, cum summula omnis quae redacta est illic sit apud clericos distributa propter eiusmodi casus, ut haberent plures unde ad necessitates et pressuras singulorum operari possint.

<sup>85</sup> *ep.* 19.1: legi litteras vestras . . . quibus scripsistis salubre consilium vestrum non deesse fratribus nostris, ut temeraria festinatione deposita religiosam patientiam Deo praebeant, ut quando in unum per eius misericordiam venerimus, de omnibus speciebus secundum ecclesiasticam disciplinam tractare possimus"; *ep.* 43.1.1: "Virtus fidelissimus . . . sed et diaconi boni viri et ecclesiasticae administrationi per omnia obsequia devoti, cum ceteris ministeriis plenam vobis praesentiae suae diligentiam praebeant et exhortationibus adsiduus singulos corroborare sed et lapsorum mentes consiliis salubribus regere et reformare non desinant."

<sup>86</sup> *epp.* 15.1.2, 17.2.2, 20.2.2.



aid, but especially spiritual succour, such as gospel instruction, counsel, guidance, and reassurance in their faith. Indeed, Cyprian asks, what finer service for the church leaders (*praepositi*) is there than the application of zeal and solicitude in healing? (*ep.* 68.4.1) The spiritual aspect of these clerical efforts appears in all of the letters in this category, wherein pastoral care is explicit, as can be seen in his correspondence from *ep.* 15 in May 250 to the much later *ep.* 78 in 258.<sup>87</sup> It is striking, but not unexpected, that the majority (about 70%) of these letters concerning pastoral care were written and despatched during Cyprian's absence in the Decian persecution (250 - 251). Only six of these letters date from 253 to 258.

Cyprian is keenly aware of the serious obligation placed upon him and upon his presbyters and deacons, viz. to be diligent concerning "this people of ours here, the people who are with us now and have been committed to our care by the grace of God" (*ep.* 66.7.2). The remarkable and satisfying result of his efforts and those of his clerics is observed in the fact that "the glory of our charity and faith keeps growing all the greater" (*ep.* 60. 3.1).

Collateral to this spiritual and material assistance given by the presbyters and deacons in the performance of their duties as clerics, there was the general administration of the affairs of the church at Carthage. During his enforced absence, Cyprian delegated this administration to the presbyters and deacons who were still resident and working in the city.<sup>88</sup> One important part of the administration was the delivery of official church documents, including the pastoral and other letters of Cyprian. He was insistent on sending only clerical messengers on these missions.<sup>89</sup>

The administration performed by presbyters and deacons at the request of Cyprian was a matter of delegation, an example of which we find in the letter of March 250, establishing a commission of two bishops and two presbyters to act for Cyprian in the diocese. The metropolitan area was extensive, and doubtless he needed to deploy

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<sup>87</sup> *ep.* 15.1.2; 17.2.2; 18.1.1; 19.1; 20.2.2; 30.5.1; 41.1.2; 43.1.1; 55.29.1; 59.15.2, 3; 60.3.1; 62.1.2; 66.7.2; 68.1.2; 76.1.1; 78.1.1.

<sup>88</sup> *ep.* 14.2.1; 14.2.2.

<sup>89</sup> *ep.* 29.1.1, 80.1.1; and see Clarke I, 225, n. 15. In *ep.* 47.1.2, Cyprian adds the precaution of requiring his envoy to read the letter (*ep.* 46) upon its delivery. The presbyter Primitivus was the messenger in at least two instances: *ep.* 44.2.2 and 48.1.

his presbyters and other clergy in the most efficient manner possible. This letter also indicates to the reader that Cyprian was trying with particular energy to recruit candidates for his depleted clergy at Carthage: "I desire to be informed about them all and to advance everyone who is suitable, humble and meek to the duties of the ecclesiastical office."<sup>90</sup>

S.L. Greenslade relates that a bishop such as Cyprian was still personally responsible for the administration of his flock, although the seminal development of the later parish-system had already begun.<sup>91</sup>

Cyprian, though quite an autocrat in some ways, disliked taking any step, even in times of great emergency, without the approval of his presbyters. They could also do particular pieces of work for him as and when he wished. We know that by the third century they were sent sometimes to live in the villages, conducting services and behaving like parish priests. Yet at first they were not parish priests as we understand it. They were sent on recall, the areas were not marked out and regularly staffed as parishes, and the clergy were much restricted, especially in that they did not baptise or administer discipline. Approximation to a parochial system was going on all the time, and this became normal in the end, roughly by the sixth century; but the pastoral unit of the early Church was the bishop's diocese, then often called *parochia*. In that area he was the minister of the word and sacrament and the pastor.

Although some of the presbyters lived in the city either at the centre of the diocese working with the bishop, others possibly fulfilled specific pastoral and administrative missions in more distant sections of the diocese.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *ep.* 41.1.2: "omnes opto me nosse quosque et dignos et humiles et mites ad ecclesiasticae administrationis officia promovere."

<sup>91</sup> S.L. Greenslade (1967), 36, where at n. 5 G. refers to G.W.O. Addleshaw, *The Beginnings of the Parochial System* (St Anthony's Press, n.d.).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 38. See also: S.L. Greenslade, "The Unit of Pastoral Care in the Early Church," *Studies in Church History*, II, ed. G. J. Cuming (London: 1965).

## b) Teaching

Cyprian's contemporary, the presbyter Origen, engaged in teaching the faith to Christians, and he frequently associated presbyters with this mission of the bishop.<sup>93</sup> We know that presbyters under Cyprian taught Christian doctrine, for he speaks of the *presbyteri doctores* and the *doctores audientium* in *ep.* 29.1.2.<sup>94</sup> Vilela perceives two distinct categories of teaching priests.<sup>95</sup> The first, the *presbyteri doctores*, are examiners of candidates for the clergy, while the others, the *presbyteri audientium*, instruct catechumens.<sup>96</sup> Cyprian rarely uses the term *catecuminus*. In fact, the term appears only in *epp.* 8.3.1, 73.22.1, 73.22.1, and in *Ad Quirinum* 3.98. Watson further indicates that Cyprian never uses *proselytus* nor *catechista*.<sup>97</sup>

It appears that in the judgement of Cyprian the catechists worked among receptive catechumens, who were eager to learn the faith:

neque enim difficile est doctori vera et legitima  
insinuare ei qui haeretica pravitate damnata et ecclesi-  
astica veritate conperta ad hoc venit ut discat, ad hoc  
discit ut vivat. (*ep.* 73.3.2)

The presbyter Caecilian who instructed Cyprian in the tenets of Christianity (*Vita Cypriani* 4) must have been a *presbyter doctor* or at least a *doctor audientium*.

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<sup>93</sup> Origen, *Comm.Cant.* 3, GCS. 33, 189: "qui verbo Dei praesunt presbyteri," see also Origen, *id.*, GCS 33, 177: "Et puto quod convenienter hi, qui episcopatum bene ministrant in ecclesia, trabes dici possunt, quibus sustentatur et tegitur omne aedificium vel ab imbrum labe vel ab ardoribus solis. Secundo autem horum loco tigna presbyteros opinor appellari et trabes quidem dici cypresseos, quibus et fortitudo robustior et odoris suavitas inest, per quod et in operibus solidum et in doctrinae gratia flagrantem designat episcopum. Similiter autem et tigna cedros appellavit, ut per hoc incorruptionis virtutis et odoris scientiae Christi plenos designaret debere esse presbyteros." Also see: Origen, *Hom.Lev.* 6.6; *Hom. Jos.* 4.2; Saxer (1969), 82f, Vilela (1971), 134, Vidal (1985), c. 2079.

<sup>94</sup> Not *ep.* 29.2.2 as given in Saxer (1969), 82, n. 48. See also Saxer, 78f, Vilela (1976), 102ff, Vilela (1977), 312-4, and Clarke II, 111-113, esp. 112, nn. 11 and 12.

<sup>95</sup> Vilela (1977), 312-3.

<sup>96</sup> Vilela (1977), 312, n.7, citing Batiffol, *L'Église naissante et le catholicisme*. 6<sup>e</sup> éd. (Paris: 1913), 403. See also: O. Ritschl (1885), 233.

<sup>97</sup> Watson (1896), 263; also 196.

In a letter of May 250 to confessors and martyrs, Cyprian reveals what he expects as the standard procedure. The presbyters and deacons in the metropolis should normally instruct the Christian laity in the law of the gospel and the prescriptions of scripture: that was their clear duty of long standing.<sup>98</sup>

### c) Liturgy and Sacraments

Cyprian is our earliest source among Church authors for the daily celebration of the eucharist among the early Christians;<sup>99</sup> he also testifies to the eucharistic celebration in the morning,<sup>100</sup> and that communion was under both species of bread and wine.<sup>101</sup> That the presbyters and deacons participated in the concelebration of the eucharist at the beginning of the third century is evident from chapter 4 of the *Traditio Apostolica*.<sup>102</sup>

Illi vero offerant diacones oblationem, quique imponens manus in eam cum omni praesbyterio dicat gratias agens: Dominus vobiscum.

After describing the presbyters as worthy of the honour given to the Apostles and as the "Crown of the Church," the contemporary Syrian treatise the *Didascalia Apostolorum* proceeds to prescribe the details of the celebration of the eucharist: "and let the bishop's throne be set up in their midst, and let the presbyters sit with him."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> ep. 15.1.2: "et credideram quidem presbyteros et diaconos qui illic praesentes sunt monere vos et instruere plenissime circa evangelii legem, sicut in praeteritis semper sub antecessoribus nostris factum est." (emphasis added).

<sup>99</sup> ep. 57.3.2: "non paenitet pacem concessisse tam fortibus, immo episcopatus nostri honor grandis et gloria est pacem dedisse martyribus, ut sacerdotes qui sacrificia Dei cotidie celebramus hostias Deo et victimas praeparemus." (emphasis added). See: H. Hammerich, "Der tägliche Empfang der Eucharistie im 3. Jahrhundert," ZKG 84 (1973), 93-95.

<sup>100</sup> ep. 63.15.1 and especially ep. 63.16.2: "nos autem resurrectionem Domini mane celebramus."

<sup>101</sup> ep. 58.1.2.

<sup>102</sup> TA, Botte ed. (1963), 10. See also the convincing arguments by B. Botte, "Note historique sur la concélébration dans l'Église ancienne," MD 35 (1953), 9-22; and Luttenberger (1976), 5-63. Vilela (1969), 396, notes the concelebration of the eucharist in Africa at the beginning of the third century by reference to the *Passio ss. Perpetuae et Felicitatis*.

<sup>103</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. Connolly (1929), 90, and *ibid.*, 119-120.

At least on one specific occasion Cyprian refers expressly to the concelebration of the eucharist by the presbyters on occasions when the bishop is the principal celebrant. After the penitents receive absolution of their sins and *exomologesis*, including reception of the imposition of hands by the bishop and clerics, they are to receive the Eucharist.<sup>104</sup> In *ep.* 76.3.1, Cyprian further indicates that the bishops who are prisoners in the mines under Valerian had not had the possibility of celebrating the eucharist.<sup>105</sup> If they had had the opportunity to do so, then presumably the presbyters there present would have also concelebrated with them.

While Cyprian was in his secret retreat during the Decian persecution, his concern for his flock was as intense as and he delegated authority to his presbyters to celebrate the eucharist in his absence. It is in *ep.* 5.1.1, that he delegates his duties in general to the presbyters and deacons in Carthage, as he urges them to continue their own functions as well.<sup>106</sup> Specifically, in *ep.* 5.2.1., he instructs the presbyters in turn (i.e., individually) to celebrate the eucharist in the prisons at Carthage, and that each presbyter should have a deacon with him at the eucharist.<sup>107</sup> This letter is "the first

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<sup>104</sup> *ep.* 16.2.3: "et offertur nomine eorum, et nondum paenitentia acta, nondum exomologesi facta, nondum manu eis ab episcopo et clero inposita, eucharistia illis datur." It is true that the terms *concelebrare* and *concelebratio* do not appear in the letters, and perhaps Vilela (p. 322) is overly cautious in saying: "que cette célébration ait été une 'concélation' avec la participation des prêtres, reste de l'ordre de l'hypothèse." Yet Cyprian addresses his presbyters and deacons in *ep.* 12.2.1: "oblaciones et sacrificia ob commemorationem eorum, quae cito *vobiscum* Domino protegente *celebrabimus*". See Dix (1946), 219 on the presbyter as concelebrant with the bishop; also Ruch (1928), c. 938 and Martimort, DSp 15 (1991), c. 1138.

<sup>105</sup> Saxer (1969), 83, comments on this passage thus: "Mais surtout le prêtre offre le sacrifice. Comme les prêtres emprisonnés ne peuvent plus le faire, ceux qui jouissent encore de leur liberté doivent s'arranger pour l'offrir à tour de rôle au cours de leurs visites aux prisonniers: «Maintenant les prêtres de Dieu n'ont pas la possibilité d'offrir et de célébrer les sacrifice [*sic*] divins, que d'autres prêtres le fassent auprès des confesseurs». Certains prêtres, par ignorance, par faiblesse, ou par vaine gloire, abusent de leurs pouvoirs en offrant le sacrifice pour les *lapsi*: S. Cyprien les blâme vigoureusement, non pas d'avoir célébré le sacrifice eucharistique, mais d'y avoir admis les *lapsi*, de l'avoir offert pour eux, de leur avoir donné l'eucharistie, alors que leur faute les avait exclus de la communion des fidèles."

<sup>106</sup> This general delegation is also in *ep.* 14.2.1 to his presbyters and deacons: "vice mea fungamini circa gerenda quae administratio religiosa deposcit."

<sup>107</sup> *ep.* 5.2.1.: "ita ut presbyteri quoque qui illic apud confessores offerunt singuli cum singulis diaconis per vices alternent. . ."

written testimony concerning the celebration of a Eucharist by presbyters without the bishop."<sup>108</sup>

These are examples of individual celebration of the eucharist by presbyters in a positive context during Cyprian's absence. But we also learn of the practice of individual celebrations without the bishop, even when Cyprian was in Carthage. Such a usage seems to be normal and acceptable in ordinary circumstances; but in *ep.* 16 certain presbyters had erroneously and without authorisation reconciled some of the *lapsi*. Thereupon Cyprian threatens to suspend temporarily the faculty of these presbyters to celebrate.<sup>109</sup> The fact that certain presbyters gave the eucharist without his authority to the *lapsi* aggravated Cyprian, but these are other examples of possible celebrations without the necessary presence of the bishop.<sup>110</sup>

In view of the status of the development of the sacramental system at this stage of the early Church, it should not startle us that we find reference to only five sacraments in the Cyprianic correspondence nor in the various treatises of which he is the author; Cyprian refers to the sacraments of baptism, confirmation,<sup>111</sup> penance, the eucharist. While he refers to various stages of the appointment and installation of clerics, he does not describe order as a specific sacrament. There is no reference to the sacraments of matrimony and extreme unction.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> H.M. Legrand, "The Presidency of the Eucharist According to the Ancient Tradition," *Worship* 53 (1979), 413-418 at 424. Also see: G. Dix, *Jurisdiction in the Early Church: Episcopal and Papal* (Rpt. London: 1975), 31, n.3; and Dix (1946), 220 on the presbyter who celebrates the eucharist in the absence of the bishop.

<sup>109</sup> *ep.* 16.4.2; Clarke I, 291, n. 33 traces the progression of a threatened suspension as here to a later threat of provisional excommunication in *ep.* 34.3.2, and finally to the threat of actual excommunication in *ep.* 55.4.3.

<sup>110</sup> *ep.* 15.1.2, 34.1 (Gaius Didensis); also *ep.* 72.2.1 implies that presbyters will have faculties to offer the sacrifice; see Clarke IV, 217, n.11.

<sup>111</sup> See *ep.* 72.1.2; and *ep.* 73.21.3, both of which contain the passage: "sacramento utroque [sc. baptismo et confirmatione] nascantur." Martimort (1991), c. 1141: "C'est l'évêque ou ses prêtres qui baptisent, assistés par les diacres." Clarke IV, 205, n. 19 doubts that confirmation is here intended. See also: Bareille (1907), c. 1026-1058 and Ligier (1973), *esp.* 95-161.

<sup>112</sup> See Vilela (1971), 314, Saxer (1969), 175, and d'Alès (1922), 322-323. Saxer notes how firmly Cyprian condemns adultery: see *epp.* 55.26-27, *ep.* 59.1, and *de bon. pat.* 14 on adultery. Yet Cyprian in his other works does refer to Christian marriage, but his approach is moral and legal rather than sacramental. See *Ad Quir.* 3.62: "matrimo-

The ordinary dispenser of the sacrament of penance is the bishop at Carthage, yet Cyprian from his hidden retreat assures the clergy at Carthage that they need not await his return for the administration of the sacraments. He clearly states that presbyters have the authority to hear the confessions of penitents, and in the absence of presbyters even the deacons have this license. This is Cyprian's statement on this very important principle:<sup>113</sup>

I see that there is as yet no opportunity for me to come to you and summer has already begun, a season which plagues with constant and serious illnesses. It is my view, therefore, that we must bring some relief to our brothers. In the case of those who have received certificates from the martyrs and can, consequently, be helped by those martyrs' privileged position before God, should they be seized by some sickness or dangerous illness, they need not wait for our presence, but they may make confession of their sins before any presbyter in person, or if a presbyter cannot be found and their end is coming fast, even before a deacon. In this way, after hands have been laid upon them in forgiveness, they may come to the Lord with that peace which, in their letter to us, the martyrs requested should be granted to them.

This pardon by God through the agency of the clergy extends both to major and minor sins in conformity with the tradition

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nium cum gentilibus non iungendum". *Ad Quir.* 3.63: "gravius delictum esse fornicationis." *Ad Quir.* 3.90: "uxorem a viro non recedere aut, si recesserit, innuptam manere." *de laps.* 6: "Iungere cum infidelibus vinculum matrimonii, prostituere gentilibus membra Christi." Also see Saxer, 325-6; and in general: C. Munier, *Ehe und Ehelosigkeit in der Alten Kirche*, tr. A. Spoerri (Bern: 1987).

<sup>113</sup> *ep.* 18.1.2: "quoniam tamen video facultatem veniendi ad vos nondum esse et iam aetatem coepisse, quod tempus infirmitatibus adsiduis et gravibus infestat, occurrendum puto fratribus nostris, ut qui libellos a martyribus acceperunt et praerogativa eorum apud Deum adiuvari possunt, si incommodo aliquo et infirmitatis periculo occupati fuerint, non expectata praesentia nostra apud presbyterum quemcumque praesentem, vel si presbyter repertus non fuerit et urgere exitus coeperit, apud diaconum quoque exomologesin facere delicti sui possint, ut manu eis in paenitentiam inposita veniant ad Dominum cum pace quam dari martyres litteris ad nos factis desideraverunt. See Clarke I, 298, n. 7 and the bibliography there listed, also see Saxer (1969), 174f. See Dix (1946), 220 and Vilela (1969), 395 on the delegation of presbyters and deacons in the sacrament of penance.

accepted in the third century.<sup>114</sup> With reference to the *peccata minora*, Cyprian describes the rite in two letters.<sup>115</sup> Throughout the correspondence there is testimony about the reconciliation of penitents guilty of *maiora peccata*, such as apostasy and schism.

D. B. Capelle lists the four essential elements of the process of reconciliation for penitents at Carthage:<sup>116</sup>

- penitence, including prayer and contrition;
- *exomologesis*, or a confession with explicit admission of fault;
- imposition of hands by the bishop and the clerics with a declaration giving the penitent access again to:
- participation in the Eucharist.

#### d) Participation in Councils and Synods

In addition to their participation in the local church council of Cyprian at Carthage, the presbyters also attended major African synods convened at the metropolitan city. At the beginning of the very first letter in the collection, which concerns the issue of the presbyter Geminus Victor acting as a civil guardian, Cyprian indicates that the presbyters play a basic and essential rôle in diocesan councils: "compresbyteri nostri qui nobis adsidebant." Presbyters appear in *ep.* 4, a synodal document, as present, and the protocol of the Council in September 256 notes their presence there.<sup>117</sup>

In *ep.* 29 to his clerics, Cyprian refers back to a diocesan council in which they had agreed to appoint Saturus and Optatus as probationary clerics: "...quos iam pridem communi consilio clero proximos feceramus" (*ep.* 29.1.2). In a later letter, of early 251, to his presbyters and deacons, he remarks that it is his normal custom to consult them prior to clerical appointments (*ep.* 38.1.1). The next

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<sup>114</sup> Tertullian, *de Paen.* 10.8.

<sup>115</sup> *ep.* 16.2.3: "cum in minoribus peccatis agant peccatores paenitentiam iusto tempore, et secundum disciplinae ordinem ad exomologesim veniant, et per manus impositionem episcopi et cleri ius communicationis accipiant." *ep.* 17.2.1: "cum in minoribus delictis, quae non in Deum committuntur, paenitentia agatur iusto tempore et exomologesis fiat, inspecta vita eius qui agit paenitentiam, nec ad communicationem venire quis possit, nisi prius illi ab episcopo et clero manus fuerit imposita."

<sup>116</sup> D.B. Capelle, "L'absolution sacerdotale chez s. Cyprien," *RTAM* (1935), 221-234 at 227.

<sup>117</sup> Achelis (1912), 420.



letter alludes to the eventual promotion of Celerinus and Aurelius, taking their seats in the presbyterate, the seat would apply to liturgical functions as well as to the diocesan councils.<sup>118</sup>

For the extensive and spreading problem of the issue of the *lapsi*, Cyprian proposes a solution taken in common by the bishops, presbyters and deacons, and ultimately with the approval of the laity.<sup>119</sup> Later, in mid March of 251 and in early 252, when Cyprian was annoyed by abuses of certain presbyters, he attempts to restrict completely their participation in councils.<sup>120</sup>

At the Synod of 255, the presbyters are not named, but in a personal letter to Quintus concerning the synod, Cyprian assures the bishop that they were indeed present.<sup>121</sup> Not only the presbyters of Carthage could attend the major and minor councils there, but also those presbyters from other dioceses then present in the capital. In a pastoral letter to his clergy in the autumn of 250, Cyprian from his hidden retreat urges actions to be taken in council among themselves, as well as with any visiting bishops, presbyters and deacons present.<sup>122</sup> We also see that even the laity could attend these councils (*ep.* 45.2.1f).

A final remark concerns the precedence of the presbyters. Cyprian makes it abundantly plain that the presbyter ranks before the deacon in Carthage. He does this by the order in which he addresses or refers to his two senior clerics. The presbyter as second

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<sup>118</sup> *ep.* 39.5.2; see Clarke II, 194, n. 26; and also: *ep.* 40.1.1 which announces that Numidicus is taking his seat in the presbyterate at Carthage.

<sup>119</sup> Vilela (1971), 335; *ep.* 16.4.2: "...acturi et apud nos et apud confessores ipsos et apud plebem universam causam suam." *ep.* 17.3.2 to the people on the same issue. *ep.* 19.2.2: "ut praepositi cum clero convenientes praesente etiam stantium plebe disponere omnia consilii communis religione possimus. *ep.* 26.1.2: "quae res cum omnium nostrum consilium et sententiam spectet."

<sup>120</sup> *ep.* 43.5.4 (not 43.3 as in Vilela) to the people: "pereant sibi soli qui perire voluerunt, extra ecclesiam soli remaneant qui de ecclesia recesserunt, soli cum episcopis non sint qui contra episcopos rebellaverunt, coniurationis suae paenas soli subeant qui olim secundum vestra suffragia, nunc secundum Dei sententiam coniurationis et malignitatis suae subire meruerunt." See *ep.* 55.4 on excommunication.

<sup>121</sup> *ep.* 71.1: "de qua re quid nuper in concilio plurimi coepiscopi cum *compresbyteris* qui *aderant* censuerimus. . . ."

<sup>122</sup> *ep.* 32.1.2. Clarke I, 150-151 gives a list of visiting bishops and presbyters, such as in *ep.* 59.15.1 and 71.1.1.

in rank and the deacon as third was definitely and firmly established within a century of Cyprian's death, as the testimony of Optatus of Miletus demonstrates.<sup>123</sup> But in the practice and the convention then operative at Carthage the confessors were very highly venerated, and that probably explains why the precedence of presbyters is secondary to that of confessors and martyrs in *ep.* 8.3.3. We see the same preference given to martyrs and confessors before presbyters and others in *Hermas*.<sup>124</sup> Against this order of precedence, Clarke contrasts the order given in the milieu at Rome as: bishops, presbyters, deacons, confessors and laity.<sup>125</sup> But he also notes the alternative precedence at Carthage as given by Cyprian as (in ascending order) confessors, *clerici urbici*, *universi episcopi* (*ep.* 43.3.2).

## II. Deacon

It is ironical perhaps that the actual origin of the concept of the activity required to be performed in the position and in the official status of the *διάκονος* is historically prior to that of the *ἐπίσκοπος*,<sup>126</sup> but in the passage of time and in the development and evolution of these two offices in the early Church, the deacon eventually became subordinate to his bishop. Such are the vagaries of history. That the functions of the deacon are essentially and patently to fulfil the general rôle of an assistant is evident from the writings of Christian authors such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, *Hermas*, Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, as well as the anonymous authors of the *Didache* and the Syrian *Didascalia Apostolorum*.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Optatus of Miletus, V.10 (CSEL 26, p. 15). See also Paoli (1992), 329.

<sup>124</sup> *Hermas*, *Visio* 3.1.8f; 3.2.1.

<sup>125</sup> *ep.* 30.5.3; see Clarke I, 218, n. 31.

<sup>126</sup> Hübner (1987), 58.

<sup>127</sup> See Colson (1960), 83-112. On Irenaeus, C. notes at p. 97: "Chez saint Irénée, il y a un texte qui serait révélateur du parallélisme établi par le christianisme entre *lévites* et *diacres*: «his vero qui in lege, sacerdotalem et ministerialem actum praebebat (verbum Dei)». Le grec de ce passage nous a été gardé par *Anastase le Sinaïte* (question 144), malheureusement avec une lacune pour le terme même qui est ici en question. Cependant F. Sagnard lit d'après la conjecture Mohrmann: «τοῖς δὲ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ἱερατικῇν <καὶ διακονικῇν> τάξιν ἀπένειμεν.» Justin Martyr discusses the rôle of the *διάκονος* in distributing the eucharistic bread, wine and water to those present, and later to those absent: *Apol.* I, 65, 5 and 67, 5.

## a) Service to the Bishop and Presbyters

Cyprian maintained the theory that the Christian diaconate had its origin in the scene recorded in Acts 6:1ff (*ep.* 3.3.1).<sup>128</sup> He emphasises the extremely close bond between the bishop and the deacon and at the same time the subordination of the latter to the former. As we have seen above, the third letter in the collection is a commentary on the relationship between the two members of the clergy and the mutual status of each. The main duty of the deacon is to serve his bishop, and in so doing he also serves the Church.<sup>129</sup>

This position of Cyprian is consistent with the two-fold duty of the deacon which is given in chapter 8 of the *Traditio Apostolica*: namely, that the deacon's function is one of service to the bishop and to the Church. There is an echo in *ep.* 3 of some of the keywords in *Traditio Apostolica*, ch. 8: the terms, *ministerium*, *episcopus* and *ecclesia* occur in both documents. The correspondence between the two can be seen by considering both texts.<sup>130</sup>

The bond between the deacon and his bishop at Carthage in the third century was thus a very firm one, which entailed the two working in very close harmony. It is probable that Cyprian required a formal oath of loyalty and of obedience at, or subsequent to, the ordination of a deacon. There is one such document, on papyrus, referred to earlier in this chapter (at B. II "Becoming a Deacon") from North Africa, about fifty years after Cyprian.<sup>131</sup>

A discussion of the power to punish a delinquent deacon has been discussed above. The only known rebellious deacons in the correspondence are Augendus (*ep.* 41.2 2), Felicissimus (*ep.* 52.2.3), and the anonymous deacon of Gaius Didensis (*ep.* 34.1).

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<sup>128</sup> This passage in Acts 6 should be considered in connection with the earlier passage in Acts 1 on the election of Matthias to replace the apostle Judas. The main point of both passages is the necessity of clerical elections in the presence of the people. For further discussion, see Fahey, 408-409 and Clarke I, 168-169, n. 17.

<sup>129</sup> *ep.* 3.3.1: "diaconos apostoli sibi constituerunt episcopatus sui et ecclesiae ministros" See Clarke I, 168, n. 17, where C. stresses that the deacon is the assistant to the bishop and *not* to the presbyter. See also *ep.* 52.2.3. At Clarke II, 289, n. 15, C. observes that the deacons should be at the disposition of the bishop.

<sup>130</sup> The fact that the deacon is subordinate to the power of the bishop receives emphasis in both TA, 8 and in *epp.* 3.1.1 and 3.3.3.

<sup>131</sup> See n. 71 *supra*.

The deacon, moreover, also worked closely with presbyters. We see the demonstration and explanation of this situation in at least three letters in the collection. In the first case, Cyprian commends the joint punitive decision taken by his deacons and presbyters to exclude the delinquent presbyter Gaius Didensis and his equally delinquent deacon (*diacono eius*) from communion with them.<sup>132</sup> This excommunication sheds light upon the close cooperation between presbyters and deacons. In the second letter, he relates to Cornelius that the presbyter Novatus had usurped the prerogative of his own bishop and misappropriated the services of Felicissimus, whom he directed to act as his own deacon.<sup>133</sup> Cyprian, in line with his concept of the loyalty of the deacon to himself, is obviously offended and angry at the impertinence done without his knowledge or his approval (*nec permittente me nec sciente*).

The third testimony of the co-operation between presbyters and deacons occurs in *ep.* 5.2.1. In this letter Cyprian from his forced and hidden retreat directs the presbyters to celebrate the offering, i.e. the eucharist, for the imprisoned confessors, with the individual presbyters. Furthermore, he specifies that on every occasion the eucharist is offered the presbyter should be "accompanied each [= presbyter] by a different deacon."<sup>134</sup> Even in view of these regulations and potential delegations by the bishop one must bear in mind that the bishop remained primarily responsible. Nevertheless, we have firm and convincing evidence that deacons in Carthage were assistants to presbyters as well as to the bishop, to whom their service was primarily due.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *ep.* 34.1: see full discussion in Clarke II, 155-157, n.2. Even if the maximum number of deacons at Carthage was the traditional seven, it still seems possible that many of them worked with different presbyters, while maintaining their primary allegiance to the bishop.

<sup>133</sup> *ep.* 52.2.3: "ipse est qui Felicissimum satellitem suum diaconum nec permittente me nec sciente sua factione et ambitione constituit et cum sua tempestate Romae quoque ad evertendam ecclesiam navigans similia illic et paria molitus est" See Clarke II (1984), 290. Could not "sua factione" mean his own rebellious group?

<sup>134</sup> "ita ut presbyteri quoque qui illic apud confessores offerunt singuli cum singulis diaconis per vices alternent"

<sup>135</sup> See J. Forget, art. "Diacres," DTC, 4 (1939), c. 712, where he cites Justin, *Apol.* I, 65-67. Also J. Lécuyer, art. "Diacre," DSp, 3 (1957), c. 809. L. notes that in the following century Jerome in *epistula ad Evangelum* writes that it was the normal rule for the deacon to assist the presbyters, "partout, où l'évêque le juge opportun."

## b) Liturgy and Sacraments

That the deacons as well as the presbyters actually delivered sermons can be seen from Cyprian's hope that both these ranks of the clergy would provide the laity in Carthage "with advice and instruction in the law of the gospel."<sup>136</sup> He adds in this letter (*ep.* 15.1.2) that such preaching and instruction has been the usual practice at Carthage during the period of his predecessors in office.<sup>137</sup> The instruction here referred to could well include teaching catechumens as well as the baptised laity, in addition to preaching homilies on the gospel.

The New Testament records that Philip administered the sacrament of baptism (Acts 8:38), and Cyprian refers to this scene in *Ad Quirinum* III, 43.<sup>138</sup> Being the traditionalist he was, Cyprian no

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<sup>136</sup> *ep.* 15.1.2: "et credideram quidem presbyteros et diaconos qui illic praesentes sunt monere vos et instruere plenissime circa evangelii legem, sicut in praeteritis semper sub antecessoribus nostris factum est, ut diaconi ad carcerem commeantes martyrum desideria consiliis suis et scripturarum praeceptis gubernarent." For possible examples of preaching by deacons in the New Testament, see Acts 7:2-53 (Stephen) and 8:5 (Philip). Also: *ep.* 16.3.2: "ante reditum nostrum, ante ipsum paene martyrum excessum, communicent cum lapsis et offerant et eucharistiam tradant, quando etiam si martyres per calorem gloriae minus scripturam contemplantes contra legem Domini plus aliquid cuperent, a presbyteris et diaconis suggerentibus admoneri deberent, sicut semper in praeteritum factum est." These examples are submitted in view of Cyprian's apparent identification of the seven of Acts 6 with the same status as his own deacons.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* The following remarks of Clarke, at I, 158-159, on *ep.* 1.2.1, are instructive: "Note the deeply embedded legalistic appeal for precedent to be found in the past. For the appeal, cf. *ep.* 15.1.2, 16.1.2, 55.21.1, 63.17.2, 68.5.1, 70.1.2, 71.4.1, and Cyprian was acutely aware that rulings of his might become "in posterum exemplum" (*ep.* 34.4.1). This attitude towards past decisions, sanctioned by *antecessores*, no doubt contributed to the collision between Cyprian and his opponents over the baptismal controversy; Cyprian was committed to the tradition which he had inherited from the past." See *ep.* 67.5.1; see also: J. Lécuyer, *DSp.* 3 (1957), c. 808.

<sup>138</sup> "In Actibus apostolorum: Ecce aqua: quid est quod me impediat tingi? tunc dixit Philippus: si credis ex toto corde tuo, licet." Even though Philip was not a deacon in the later ecclesiastical sense, perhaps Cyprian did think anachronistically of Philip as a deacon. We should not forget that Cyprian seems to equate the seven in Acts 6 with the deacons of his own day. In *ep.* 3.3.1 we read: "Meminisse autem diaconi debent quoniam apostolos id est episcopos et praepositos Dominus elegit, diaconos autem post ascensum Domini in caelos apostoli sibi constituerunt episcopatus sui et ecclesiae ministros." Fahey, 413 remarks: "The eunuch's question to Philip and Philip's answer (Acts 8:36-37a), . . . offered Cyprian the only proof-text for the testimony that 'He who truly believes can receive (baptism) at once.' (*Ad Quir.* iii, 43; 151.5). Cyprian's text of Acts contained verse 37, the baptismal gloss.

doubt thought it proper for a deacon to assist the bishop and presbyters at the sacrament of baptism. However, the bishop was at this time primarily responsible for the administration of the sacrament of baptism, assisted by the presbyters and deacons available in the diocese.<sup>139</sup>

As indicated above in Chapter I, the principal agent in administering the sacrament of penance was the bishop, in accordance with the testimony of Clement of Rome and Hippolytus. In Carthage during Cyprian's episcopate this was the case, but in his absence, or even in the absence of a presbyter, the deacon had express authority, in the specific cases of dying penitents, to accept the confession of their sins and to reconcile them again to the Church by the ceremony of imposition of hands, which was an essential part of the sacrament of penance.<sup>140</sup>

The situation of the deacon in the sacrament of penance has given rise to many theories. J. Colson interprets this action by the deacon as the bestowal of sacramental absolution, but this judgement has been disputed by numerous commentators.<sup>141</sup>

Justin describes the sequence of the eucharistic liturgy in Rome in his invaluable treatise *Apologia I pro Christianis*, which is extremely helpful for us to learn the actual historical procedures of

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<sup>139</sup> See H. Leclercq, art. "Diaconie," DACL 4 (1920), c. 742. Also: *ep.* 16.2.3: "et secundum disciplinae ordinem venient, et per manus impositionem episcopi et cleri ius communicationis accipiant." The *cleri* here includes deacons and presbyters. On the bishop as principal minister of baptism, see *Sent. Episc.*, 17: "Iesus Christus potentiam baptizandi episcopis dedit."

<sup>140</sup> *ep.* 18.1.2: "si incommodo aliquo et infirmitatis periculo occupati fuerint, non expectata praesentia nostra apud presbyterum quemcumque praesentem, vel si presbyter repertus non fuerit et urgere exitus coeperit, apud diaconum quoque exomologesin facere delicti sui possint, ut manu eis in paenitentiam imposita veniant ad Dominum cum pace quam dari martyres litteris ad nos factis desideraverant."

<sup>141</sup> J. Colson (1960), 115. J. Forget, in his article "Diaconie," DTC, 4 (1939), c. 713 disagrees. Colson further notes, 115-116, that the practice of a deacon's reconciling penitents continued into the 13th century. Indeed, Odon de Sully, Bishop of Paris, (d. 1208) wrote: "Item prohibetur stricte ne diaconi ullo modo audiant confessiones nisi in *arctissima necessitate*; claves enim non habent nec possunt absolvere." *Statuta dioec.*, PL 212, c. 68 (emphasis added). It was the Council of Poitiers in 1280 which clearly denied to deacons the power to absolve sins: Mansi, Concil. 24, c. 383. See also Vilela, o.c., 266, and P. Laurain, De l'intervention des laïcs, des diacones, et des abbesses dans l'administration de la Pénitence (Paris: 1897); G. Dix, Jurisdiction in the Early Church: Episcopal & Papal (Reprint: London: 1975), 40 - 41; Saxer, o.c., 81.

the rites of the liturgy prevalent in Rome at this early date<sup>142</sup> It is evident from this source in Rome one century prior to Cyprian, that the deacon distributed the consecrated bread, wine-and-water to those who were to communicate. Dom Prudentius Maran notes that, although Justin was at Rome, he appears to describe the liturgical rite of the eucharistic ceremony as used in the eastern territories of the Church, where the deacon distributed both consecrated wine and bread to the individual members of the faithful.<sup>143</sup> Cyprian describes in graphic terms the fact that his deacons normally dispensed the chalice during the eucharist. In his tract, *de lapsis*, he relates an incident which occurred in his own presence.<sup>144</sup> A little girl who had partaken in an earlier idolatrous sacrifice refused to accept the chalice, which the deacon presented to her; after the deacon had poured some of the contents of the chalice into the girl's mouth, she began to choke and to vomit.

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<sup>142</sup> Justin, *Apol.*, I. 65, ed. E.J. Goodspeed (Göttingen: 1915; reprint: 1950), 74: 3. ἔπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστώτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ χράματος, καὶ οὗτος λαβὼν αἶνον καὶ δόξαν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὅλων διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἀναπέμπει καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατηξιῶσθαι τούτων παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πολὺ ποιεῖται· οὐ συντελέσαντος τὰς εὐχὰς καὶ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν πᾶς ὁ παρὼν λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων· Ἀμήν. 4. τὸ δὲ Ἀμήν τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ φωνῇ τὸ Γένοιτο σημαίνει. 5. εὐχαριστήσαντος δὲ τοῦ προεστώτος καὶ ἐπευφημήσαντος παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ οἱ καλούμενοι παρ' ἡμῖν διάκονοι διδόασιν ἐκάστῳ τῶν παρόντων μεταλαβεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ εὐχαριστηθέντος ἄρτου καὶ οἶνου καὶ ὕδατος καὶ τοῖς οὐ παροῦσιν ἀποφέρουσι. This action is repeated at s. 67.5, ed. Goodspeed, 75: καὶ ἡδιάδοσις καὶ ἡ μετάληψις ἀπὸ τῶν εὐχαριστηθέντων ἐκάστῳ γίγνεται, καὶ ἡτοῖς οὐ παροῦσι διὰ τῶν διακόνων πέμπεται. But, as Clarke notes (III, 289), this is controversial evidence; see for further details the monograph of L. W. Barnard, *St Justin* (Cambridge: 1967), 177.

<sup>143</sup> There is a liturgical note in Migne, PG, 6, c. 427, n. 82: "φιλήται". Quamvis S. Justinus hanc *Apologiam* Romae scripserit, ritus tamen Ecclesiae Orientalis in scribendo sequitur, et sancti osculi tempus, non ut in Latina Ecclesia proxime ante communionem, sed, ut est in *Constitu. apost.* lib. VIII et apud Cyrill. *Cat. myst.* 5, constituit. Ob eandem causam diaconis, qui in Ecclesia Latina calicem tantum distribuebant, utriusque speciei distribuendae munus committit.

<sup>144</sup> Cyprian, *de Lapsis*, 25: "Ignorantiae igitur obreptum est ut sacrificantibus nobis eam [= puellam] secum mater inferret. Sed enim puella mixta cum sanctis, precis nostrae et orationis inpatiens, nunc ploratu concuti, nunc mentis aestu fluctuabunda iactari, velut tortore cogente quibus poterat indicis conscientiam facti in simplicibus adhuc annis rudis anima fatebatur. Ubi vero sollemnibus adimpletis calicem diaconus offerre praesentibus coepit, et accipientibus ceteris locus eius advenit, faciem suam parvula instinctu divinae maiestatis avertere, os labiis obdurantibus premere, calicem recusare. Perstitit tamen diaconus et reluctanti licet de sacramento calicis infudit. Tunc sequitur singultus et vomitus"

The practice in the church at Rome was for the deacon to distribute the sacrament to those present at the eucharist, and later to those who were absent.<sup>145</sup> There is no direct evidence in the Cyprianic correspondence of this function of the deacon at Carthage, but it may be inferred in the general duties proper to the presbyters and the deacons referred to in *ep.* 5.1.1: "I therefore ask you, in accordance with your faith and devotion, to discharge in Carthage not only your duties but mine as well, ensuring thereby that discipline and zeal are fully maintained." And later in this same letter (at *ep.* 5.2.1), where Cyprian directs his clerics to celebrate the eucharist among the confessors in prison,<sup>146</sup> we can safely conclude that the function of the deacon included at least the administration of the chalice during the eucharist. Also, in *ep.* 67.4. 4, one can best interpret the phrase "*altaris ministerium ecclesiae*" as applicable to the deacon in addition to the presbyter for their ritual activity at the altar during the eucharist.<sup>147</sup>

### c) General Duties

The deacon, as well as other clerics, acted as an official messenger of episcopal and other church letters and documents. Cyprian's general rule is a mandatory use of clerics to deliver his correspondence: "*oportuit me per clericos scribere*" (*ep.* 29.1.1). Clarke points out that it was not only in cases of letters sent overseas, but also in local deliveries in his province that this rule applied.<sup>148</sup> These couriers were persons in whom Cyprian placed great trust and confidence, for he considered it a very serious violation if church documents were tampered with or altered fraudulently.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Justin, *ibid.* see also Lécuyer, o.c., col. 813, where he observes a double "dispensation" by the deacon: (1) at the eucharist, and (2) in various acts of benevolence to the poor and needy in the Church.

<sup>146</sup> And after their discharge from prison; see *ep.* 14.2.1, "*vice mea fungamini*".

<sup>147</sup> See *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 56 & 57 for duties of deacons at the eucharist.

<sup>148</sup> Clarke II, 109, n.4, where he refers in general to H. Leclercq, "*poste publique et privée*," DACL 14 (1948), 1633ff. See *ep.* 80.1.1, a letter to Successus, a neighbouring bishop.

<sup>149</sup> *ep.* 59.9.4; 49.3.1; *ep.* 9.2.2: "*perquam etenim grave est, si epistulae clericae veritas mendacio aliquo et fraude corrupta est.*" See Clarke I, 225, n. 15, where C. notes the strong language used in this passage. See also *ep.* 47.1.2; 80.1.1.



We learn that deacons were in control of church funds from a statement in *ep.* 52.1.2 concerning the case of the deacon Nicostratus, who was deprived of this financial control as a result of his own malfeasance. Not only did he misappropriate church funds, but he also embezzled funds belonging to widows and orphans.<sup>150</sup>

Care of orphans and widows, the ill, the poor and needy, the imprisoned has been an essential element in the service which the Christian church from its origin has rendered.<sup>151</sup> Watson argues well that this service, *diakonia*, for Cyprian was *administratio* in Latin. He refers to Cyprian's text of 2. Cor 9: 12 being *administratio* for the Greek instead of the *ministerium* which is found in the Vulgate.<sup>152</sup>

Cyprian employs the substantive *administratio* qualified by three adjectives. In *ep.* 14.2.1 to his clergy at Carthage, the phrase is *administratio religiosa*; shortly after its appearance, in the same section, he explains that this activity is the care and counsel for the poor and needy, including confessors, in the diocese. *Administratio ecclesiastica* is a second phrase used; it denotes also a general ministry of care for those in the Church. Cyprian uses it to mean the ministry to the church both at Rome and at Carthage (*ep.* 35.1.1). Its use in one passage is applied specifically to deacons.<sup>153</sup> He even uses *administratio ecclesiastica* once regarding candidates for the clergy, who are destined to this church ministry (*ep.* 41.1.2). Cyprian also employs once the phrase *administratio sancta*; this occurs in *ep.* 52.1.2, a letter to Cornelius in mid 251, when he refers

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<sup>150</sup> *ep.* 52.1.2: "Nicostratum quoque diaconio sanctae administrationis amisso, ecclesiasticis pecuniis sacrilegia fraude subtractis et viduarum ac pupillorum depositis denegatis non tam in Africam venire voluisse quam conscientia rapinarum et criminum nefandorum illinc ab urbe fugisse." See also *ep.* 50.1.2 for more details about the misdeeds of Nicostratus.

<sup>151</sup> The comment of Saxer (1969), 81, that there is no evidence in Cyprian's correspondence that deacons were involved in the care of the poor and needy seems to disregard Cyprian's repeated references to this basic duty of deacons. See: *ep.* 5.1.2, 7.2, 14.2.1, 41.1.2, 43.1.1. Cyprian testifies in *ep.* 19.1 to the fact that presbyters and deacons had reported to him in writing about their activity succouring the laity in need at Carthage.

<sup>152</sup> Watson, o.c., 260, n.1. For Cyprian's use of this verse from Corinthians, see Fahey, 467-468.

<sup>153</sup> *ep.* 43.1.1: "sed et diaconi boni viri et ecclesiasticae administrationi per omnia obsequia devoti"

to the case of Nicephorus, who had lost his ministry of service as a deacon.

The third combination is *administratio divina*, which occurs twice in the correspondence. Of these, the first is in the very first letter in the collection, where Cyprian states the fundamental principle that *all* clerics in general must not be distracted from their sacred and spiritual duties.<sup>154</sup> The other use of *administratio divina* appears in the letter to his colleague Antonianus in early 252, in which Cyprian remarks on the commendable fact that Cornelius had in fact served in each of the clerical grades up to presbyter, and that he had often served the Lord *in divinis administrationibus* (ep. 55.8.2), prior to becoming bishop at Rome.

What is the meaning of this last phrase, "in divinis administrationibus Domini saepe promeritus"? Clarke interprets it to extend to the various ministries in the clerical career of Cornelius, while Watson holds that the phrase applies to Cornelius only in his acts as a presbyter.<sup>155</sup> In view of Cyprian's use of *celebrandis divinis lectionibus* (ep. 38.2.1) in the case of the lector Aurelius, it seems appropriate to subscribe to Clarke's view that the functions meant are those over the entire clerical career of Cornelius.

Cyprian uses the verb, *administrare*, three times. In his letter on the Spanish question, *administrare sacerdotium Dei* has a ritual connotation; he is referring to the celebration of the eucharist (ep. 67. 1.1). And in his synodal letter on baptism of 254/255, He writes "administramus sacerdotium eius in ecclesia," again in a ritual sense (ep. 70.3.3). The third use of this verb, in a letter to Cornelius in mid-251, lacks this ritual element and means simply Cyprian's ministry of his diocese as bishop (ep. 48.4.2).

#### d) Deacons at Councils

Gregory Dix maintains that Cyprian invited only bishops to the councils,<sup>156</sup> yet deacons and presbyters did participate in church

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<sup>154</sup> ep. 1.1.2: "ut qui in ecclesia Domini ordinatione clerica promoventur in nullo ab administratione divina avocentur."

<sup>155</sup> Clarke III, 37; Watson (1896), 260, n.1. But Watson is in error when he contends that *ecclesiastica* is the only epithet applied to *administratio* with respect to the lower clergy; he overlooks *divina* and *sancta*.

<sup>156</sup> G. Dix, o.c., 56.