

THE MANY MARTINS OF VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS.
VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS' MARTIN-POEMS AS INSTANCES
OF INDIVIDUAL APPROPRIATION AND LITERARY OFFERS
OF RITUAL-LIKE EXPERIENCE

LOS MUCHOS MARTINES DE VENANCIO FORTUNATO.
LOS POEMAS DE MARTÍN DE VENANCIO FORTUNATO COMO EJEMPLOS
DE APROPIACIÓN INDIVIDUAL Y OFERTAS LITERARIAS DE UNA
EXPERIENCIA SIMILAR AL RITUAL

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this article are (1) to show the variety of characterizations of Saint Martin in the poetic texts by Venantius Fortunatus, mainly his *Carmina*, (2) to explain this variety from the historical contexts of different poems, and (3) to describe the effect that it might have had on the readers of the collection of poems in the interplay between literature and ritual. Saint Martin is characterized in a wide array of ways in Fortunatus' occasional poems, which does not provide a congruent picture of the saint, but seems to serve the needs

RESUMEN

Los objetivos de este artículo son (1) demostrar la variedad de caracterizaciones de San Martín en los textos poéticos de Venancio Fortunato, principalmente en sus *Carmina*, (2) explicar esta variedad a partir de los contextos históricos de los diferentes poemas y (3) describir el efecto que tal diversidad puede haber ejercido en los lectores de la colección poética con respecto a la interacción entre la literatura y el ritual. San Martín es caracterizado de maneras muy diversas en los poemas ocasionales de Fortunatus, lo que

of particular audiences, who are presented with a version of Saint Martin tailor-made for them. The readers of the *Carmina* as a unified collection of many such poems are forced to reconcile the different characterizations with each other and with their own expectations about the saint. As they do so, they can have an experience similar to the social experience of members of a congregation in the cult of Saint Martin.

no genera una imagen coherente del santo, pero parece atender las necesidades de públicos específicos, a quien se les presentan versiones de San Martín hechas a medida. Los lectores de los *Carmina* como una colección unificada de muchos poemas se ven obligados a conciliar las diferentes caracterizaciones entre sí y con sus expectativas sobre el santo. Al hacerlo, viven una experiencia similar a la experiencia social de los miembros de una congregación perteneciente al culto de San Martín.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetics of Reception; *Carmina*; Cult of the Saints; Individual Appropriation; Resonance; Saint Martin; Venantius Fortunatus.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Apropiación individual; *Carmina*; culto de los santos; estética de la recepción; resonancia; San Martín; Venancio Fortunato.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Venantius Fortunatus (*ca.* 530 – *ca.* 600 CE), poet of occasional *carmina* and one hagiographical epic, and composer of at least seven saints' lives in prose and possibly other theological works,¹ has produced many poetic texts on the life of Saint Martin, among which his *opus magnum* of more than 2000 verses but also poems as short as his supposed inscription for the *secretarium* of the saint in Tours, which comprises only 24 verses.² The quick glimpse of the saint in the poem and his sparkling portrait in the epos naturally differ, but not only due to their different lengths. Astonishingly, Fortunatus' 37 different poetic characterizations of the saint³ are far from providing a congruent picture of Martin. Rather, they are forming a varied kaleidoscope of aspects, attributes and associations, some of which are easily relatable to the traditional image of the saint, starting from the *vita* and dialogues of Sulpicius Severus, some hardly at all. While the fact that Martin can have very different appearances in Fortunatus' poems is an obvious truth, we will strive to discover which socio-religious dynamics might have led to the different depictions of the same saint finding entry

1. See Ehlen, 2011, pp. 12-36 for an introduction to the poet's life and times (German) with the remarks of Roberts, 2012, p. 756; see also: Reydellet, 2002, pp. VII-XXVIII (French) and Roberts, 2017, pp. VII-XX (English); an entire monograph on the poet as a historical figure: George, 1992. See also Meyer, 1901, pp. 6-30; Koebner, 1915, pp. 10-119; Godman, 1987, pp. 1-37.

2. On Saint Martin in *Carm.* and *Mart.* see Vielberg, 2006, pp. 98-107; Roberts, 2009, pp. 187-243 with a focus on compositional technique. For Saint Martin in Fortunatus and other authors see Vielberg, 2006; Labarre, 1998 and 2019.

3. *Mart.*; *Carm.* praef. 6; I 2; 4-7; 16; II 13; III 1-3; 6-7; V 1-4; 9; 11; 14; VI 5; VIII 1; 3; 11-12; 15; 20; X 6-7; 10-12a; 14; 17; 19; App. 19; App. 21. All of these are given as in the editions of Quesnel, 2002, and Reydellet, 2002; 2003; 2004, throughout the paper.

into the poetic imagination of one poet, and how this wide array of the saint's appearances is shaping the experience of Fortunatus' readers.

In this paper, we are therefore first going to look at different appearances of Martin as an example for individual appropriation in the Lived Ancient Religion approach,⁴ if the poems are read as expressions of their historical context. This shall be scrutinized in a particularly noteworthy example of flux in different depictions of the same episode from Saint Martin's life in Fortunatus' poetic oeuvre (chapter 2). In a second step, we are going to look at the poems from the perspective of the *Carmina* as a published collection. In this case the experience of the collection's readership is much different from that of the "original"⁵ addressees, as they are offered not only one but many appropriations of the saint at the same time. While we will catalogue the many different Martins of Venantius Fortunatus, we are going to grasp this experience with recourse to Wolfgang Iser's Aesthetics of Reception (chapter 3).⁶ One particularity of Fortunatus' Martin poems is that they are strongly intertwined with the religious sphere of the cult of the saint. This, and the dialogic nature of the reader-text interrelation we will have discovered in the preceding step, opens the Martin-poems in the *Carmina* collection to a new religious reading with the help of Hartmut Rosa's concept Resonance.⁷ The Martin *Carmina* as a whole, we are arguing, are potentially recreating the socio-religious experience of members of a congregation in the cult of Saint Martin (chapter 4).

First of all, in order to add some meat to the theoretical bones of our endeavor, a particularly prominent example of the saint's varying appearances shall begin our round of inspections of the many Martins of Venantius Fortunatus.

4. Rüpke and Degelmann, 2015; Albrecht *et al.*, 2018.

5. Certainty on whether or not the "original" versions were any different from the published versions, which we have, is of course ultimately unavailable to us; for the same problem in Cicero's letters, see Steel, 2005, pp. 43-47; in letter collections in general see Wulfram, 2008, pp. 23-36 and Müller, 2018b, p. 9. We think it is highly unlikely that Fortunatus would have invented the kind of poems we find in his collection from scratch (i.e. without an "original" occasion related to each poem). For all we know, the *Carmina* were collected and circulated, possibly in different stages, mainly by the author himself (George, 1998b; Wood, 2018, pp. 52 and 58) or, concerning some of the later books, by somebody else from the poet's personal archive relatively soon after his death; for an overview, see also Reydellet, 2002, pp. LXVIII-LXXI and Roberts, 2017, pp. VIII and XIX, n. 2. Anyway, the readers of the collection would take the texts and their addressees, many of which but not all are known also from other sources, to be authentic; for a perspective on the *Carmina* with a focus on prosopography see George, 1995; Roberts, 2009, pp. 244-319; and Pucci, 2010.

6. Iser, 1984.

7. Rosa, 2016.

2. THREE VERSIONS OF THE MIRACULOUS GEM-COVERING OF SAINT MARTIN'S ARMS (*MART. IV 305-330; CARM. I 5; X 10*) AS A HISTORICAL EXAMPLE FOR INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS APPROPRIATION

One episode from the life of Saint Martin stands out, as it appears quite differently in three different texts of Venantius Fortunatus. This example can therefore, and maybe best of all, shed light on Fortunatus' characterization of the saint in his different accounts. In all versions of the life of Martin, also those of other writers,⁸ the saint's hands or arms are reported to have been covered by radiant gem stones during a church service. The testimony of this story is ascribed to Arborius, a magistrate of Tours. In his epic performance, Fortunatus expands Arborius' vision into a prime example of Jewelled Style.⁹ The miracle is not only enlarged, but the connec-

8. Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* III 10, 6; Paul. Petr., *Mart.* V 695-708.

9. Ven. Fort., *Mart.* IV 305-330: *Nobile quin etiam ex praefecto Arborius effert / signum quod vidit se teste fidelis in urbe. / Inmaculata deo cum dona inponeret arae / et pater attonitus ceremonia diva sacraret / munera vel Christi benediceret ore sacerdos / inposita altari rata corporis atque cruoris, / emicuit subito manus alma decore superbo, / nobilium vario lapidum splendore coruscans. / Undique visa rotae spargens radiatile lumen, / brachia purpureis vibrantia fulgura gemmis, / lumen et ad solis radians lux fulva metallis. / Credula quo potius fierent miracula rerum, / vir simul ipse potens se tunc Arborius inquit / gemmarum gravium crepitantem audisse fragorem. / Sic geminante fide iusti pia dextera fulsit / inque loco manicae micuit translata zmaragdus. / O Martine decens, lapidum velamine compta, / quam nova palla tibi cuius textura coruscans, / trama topazos erat rutilans et stamen iaspis / et tunicae insignes currunt pro vellere gemmae! / Quae manus artificis cataclizica fila rotavit? / Quis fuit hic opifex ubi lana hyacinthina currit? / Quis potuit rigidas torquere ad licia gemmas? / Haec venerando magis poterunt quam fando referri. / Quid secreta petis nec in abdita luminis intrans? / Est homo, quod stupeas ubi nectit gratia telas.* "Yes, also Arborius reports from the time of his prefecture a noble sign, which he truly saw with his own eyes in the city. When the inspired bishop laid down immaculate offerings for God on the altar and celebrated the holy solemn rite and blessed as a priest in his words of Christ that were laid on the altar, as is agreed His body and His blood, suddenly his caring hand shone forth with superb adornment, as it sparkled with the varying splendour of valuable gemstones. On all sides it was seen scattering radiant light like in a circle, flashes that set his lower arms in vibrant motion from the purple gems, and a golden light was seen radiating in its quality similar to the light of the sun from the minerals. To make these miracles of all things more credible, the same powerful man Arborius says that he has at the same time heard the cracking noise from the heavy gemstones. Thus, by twofold witness, the pious hand of the just man was shining and in place of the sleeve twinkled a transformed emerald. O righteous Martin, adorned with a cover of gemstones, what kind of a new cloak do you have, whose texture is shining bright, whose weft was a red topaz and whose warp a jasper, and instead of wool marvellous gems produce the tunic! What kind of an artist's hand spun the encrusted strings? Who was this artist? Where does crocus coloured wool come from? Who could turn the hardy gemstones into strings for weaving? These things could rather be told through venerating bewilderment than through speech. Why do you strive for secrets,

tion between the vision and the miracle story that stands on the preceding position, which is strong in the versions of Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus of Périgueux,¹⁰ is severed. The miracle's position in its context is thereby strengthened.¹¹ Otherwise, Fortunatus' first depiction of the miracle stays true to the facts given by Sulpicius Severus and again by Paulinus of Périgueux.

This constancy is changed on two occasions when one looks at the depictions of the same miracle in Fortunatus' *Carmina*. The story is retold in Fortunatus' poem for the *secretarium* of St. Martin in the vicinity of Tours Cathedral.¹² Here, the story of the miraculous gem-covering is brought in close relation with another story about the saint (*Carm.* I 5, 7-20):

*Hic se nudato tunica vestivit egenum
dum tegit algentem, plus calet ipse fide.
Tum vili tunica vestitur et ipse sacerdos
processitque inopi tegmine summus honor.
Qui tamen altaris sacra dum mysteria tractat,
signando calicem, signa beata dedit.
Namque viri sacro de vertice flamma refulsit
ignis et innocui surgit ad astra globus
ac brevibus manicis, fieret ne iniuria dextrae,
texerunt gemmae qua caro nuda fuit:
brachia nobilium lapidum fulgore coruscant
inque loco tunicae pulchra zmaragdus erat.
Quam bene mercatur qui dum vestivit egenum,
Tegmine pro tunicae brachia gemma tegit.*

“Here, having stripped himself of it, he clothed a poor man with his tunic:¹³ while he clothed one man freezing, he is becoming warmer by his faith. Then he got dressed

when you cannot enter in the mysteries of light? Man, there is much for you to wonder at, where grace is weaving textures”. Cf. Roberts, 2010.

10. Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* III 10, 5; Paul. Petr., *Mart.* V 695-698; for introductions and notes to the two texts see Petschenig, 1888; Fontaine and Dupré, 2006; Labarre, 2016.

11. Labarre, 1998, p. 106.

12. For the location see Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* II, 1, 2; cf. Pietri, 1983, pp. 363 and 825.

13. Like in the earlier versions, *nudato* does not need to be understood as “completely undressed” but rather together with *tunica* in the ablative, which refers *apokoinou* as well to *vestivit*, as “stripped of his tunic” (but still dressed with his cloak). Nevertheless, the idea of Martin being undressed (*nudato*), and therefore cold, appears to be more drastic here than in Sulpicius' dialogues, where it is explicitly mitigated by the explanation that the diacon on seeing him did not understand that Martin was not properly dressed, because he was still covered with his cloak: Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* II 1, 7.

in a cheap tunic, and he a bishop, and goes on, the highest honour, in a vile garment. Nonetheless, as he handles the holy sacraments of the altar, when drawing a cross at the chalice, he himself gave forth miraculous signs. Because from the top of the holy man's head a flame started, and a globe of unharmed fire rose to the stars, and, to make sure that no injustice would be done to his hand, gems covered for his short sleeves where his flesh was bare: his arms shone with the glow of valuable gemstones, and in the place of his tunic there was a beautiful emerald. How well did he barter whom, when he clothed a poor man, a gemstone covers his arms instead of the garment of his tunic!"

The miracle of the gem-covering is combined with the story of Martin's generosity towards a poor man at the cathedral in Tours and the miraculous appearance of a globe of fire from the saint's head during the following church service (Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* II 1, 1 – II 2, 2). The combination of the two stories in this poem is remarkable, as it shifts the weight of the story from the altruistic stance of the saint, which is recognized by God but left unrewarded, towards the glorious reward already in this world. This can best be grasped in the closing distich of the episode (19-20), which contrasts the garment Martin gives away with the one he is given by God, and calls the whole procedure "a good deal" (*quam bene mercatur*).

Another *carmen* shows this shift as clearly: Fortunatus' poem on the oratory of Artanne, in the region of Tours,¹⁴ gives, in a list of saints who can be venerated in the place, a short version of, again, the miracle of the gem-covering in relation to the clothing of the pauper (*Carm.* X 10, 15-20):

*Martinusque sacer, retinet quem Gallicus orbis,
cuius Christum operit dimidiata clamis,
se tunica spolians nudum qui vestit egenum,
unde datae sibi sunt alba topazus onyx,
quae meruere aliqui hoc in corpore cernere sancti,
gemmarumque sonus quod patefecit opus.*

"And the holy Martin, whom the Gallic country holds, whose halved cloak covers the Christ, who, robbing himself of his tunic, clothed a poor man, for which reason he was given pearl, topaz and onyx, which some have deserved the privilege to see in the very body of the saint, and which fact the sound of the gems has revealed".

14. Cf. Pietri, 1983, p. 826 for the location.

Here, the miraculous gem-covering has replaced the miracle of the fiery globe entirely. The effect is the same: Martin's charitable deed is paid back immediately with "pearl, topaz and onyx". How can the remarkable changes of the renditions of the same episode of Saint Martin's life between Fortunatus' epic and his poems be explained? Fortunatus' rendition of the episode in his epic is more similar to the versions by Paulinus of Périgueux and Sulpicius Severus. Even though Fortunatus expands the episode and cuts its logical dependency on the preceding episode, the basic elements and, importantly, the order and the borders of the different episodes stay unchanged. It is unquestionably an interest of the epic text to be recognizably a descendant of the tradition of Sulpicius Severus' saint's life.

For the poems on the saint's *secretarium* in Tours and his place of worship in Artanne in the vicinity of Tours, other considerations come into play. Most visibly in the second poem, Martin is given a stronger miracle with a local focus on Tours. The different episodes the poem merges into one provide each a different aspect that is meaningful for the context: the episode of Martin's gift of his tunic to the poor man can be placed in all versions clearly in the surroundings of the cathedral of Tours.¹⁵ It is otherwise a prime example of Martin's charitable virtue, highly reminiscent of the most emblematic story about the saint – the dividing of his cloak in Amiens. The comparison between the two episodes is made explicit in the rendition of the episode in Fortunatus' epic, where the clothing of the pauper in Tours is given as a heightening of the dividing of the cloak in Amiens, as the earlier deed of Amiens had the saint retain half of his garment while in Tours he gave it up completely to the poor man.¹⁶ While the charitable deed of Tours appears to be more virtuous in comparison to the charitable deed of Amiens, connecting the story with Arborius' vision of the gemstones heightens the idea of divine retribution already in this world: the saint, who gives away his tunic, is given a better tunic by God. Even though divine recognition for the saint's deed is already present in the earlier version of the story in the miracle of the fiery globe, the identity of the object given and the object received makes the idea of divine intervention on behalf of the virtuous human being particularly visible.

The changes in the same story in the two *carmina* in comparison to the epos and the tradition of Sulpicius Severus' saint's life have the following effect: they strengthen

15. Sulp. Sev., *Dial.* II 1; Paul. Petr., *Mart.* IV 21-95; Ven. Fort., *Mart.* III 24-73.

16. *Mart.* III 65-68: *Tegmine pro nudi cupiens procedere nudus / nec partiris opem sed totum cedis egen- ti, / haec tua sola putans, petitus si nulla negasses, / ut magis esses inops, inopi dum cuncta dedisses.* "As you wish to go undressed for the clothing of an undressed man, you do not share your wealth but give it entirely to the one in need, as you only believe this to be your share, if, when asked you do not refuse anything, so that you will rather be helpless, when you give everything to a helpless man".

the aspect of the divine reward in the world in a saint's legend that was formerly mainly concerned with altruistic behaviour for its own sake, although recognized by God and the community. These changes are applied to a story that is, already in the epos and the tradition of the *vita*, (1) unquestionably connected to the location of Tours, (2) constructed as a heightening of the saint's most emblematic story, the dividing of his cloak in Amiens. The *Carmina*-version of the story is therefore particularly well adapted to serve the needs of the clergy of Tours, for whose wishes the poems, possibly inscriptions, for the *secretarium* of Tours and the oratory of Artanne, were tailored.¹⁷ They show Martin as a successful negotiator with God, rather than a mere idealist, whose virtuous deeds are generously rewarded. The connection to Tours and its surroundings is particularly strong. Readers of the two *carmina* are encouraged to find in Martin a powerful entity which provides heavenly interventions in this world and in Tours the logical place, where to address this entity.

The two different characterizations of the saint in the epic and the two *carmina* show how the poet caters for different needs depending on the context of his work. The epic poem needs to be in tune with the traditional rendering of the story to please well-read audiences. The occasional poems connected to places can deal with the story more freely, but show the events in a way that strengthens the position of the local commissioners of the poems. The phenomenon here observed is a poignant example of individual religious appropriation, as defined in the Lived Ancient Religion approach.¹⁸ While undoubtedly referring to shared knowledge and a generally shared narrative about Saint Martin, Venantius Fortunatus is taking the freedom to adapt his rendition of the episode to the needs of his respective addressees. In this case, and as we will see in the following chapter, Fortunatus is using the mechanics of individual religious appropriation to cater, as far as we can see, not so much for his own but for the particular individual or group religious needs of others.

This chapter has given a poignant historical example for individual religious appropriation in Fortunatus' Martin-poems as source material for the interests of the clergy of Tours in the characterization of the saint. In the next chapter, we are shifting

17. On the interplay of religious literature and politics in the Francia see Brennan, 1997; Labarre (forthcoming); on the connection of the family of Gregory of Tours with the cult of the saint see Wood, 2002. On Fortunatus as a political poet in his time see George, 1998a, pp. 227-228. Artanne (modern Artannes-sur-Indre), 20 km away from Tours, clearly is a different place from Tours; the highlighting of a miracle of Saint Martin with a strong local connection to Tours also in Artanne points to the successful exportation of the idea of the special connection between the saint and his city to the surrounding areas by the clergy of Tours.

18. Albrecht *et al.*, 2018, pp. 570 and 573.

our perspective to the literary sphere. Having said this, nearly all of the examples that follow, if considered through the eyes of a historian, would work just as well as further historical examples of individual religious appropriation, which shall not prevent us from using them quite differently.

3. THE MANY MARTINS OF VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS. A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE AND A CATALOGUE

In the preceding chapter, two of Fortunatus' poetic descriptions of Saint Martin have been analyzed with a focus on the perspectives of the supposed historical addressees of the poems. The *Carmina* where these, and all the following poems, stem from, have, at least for the greater part, been published as a collection by Venantius Fortunatus during his lifetime.¹⁹ Although Fortunatus probably collected, arranged and published poems he had sent to specific addressees before,²⁰ the reading experience of a reading audience of a collection of poems is quite different from that of the (explicit) addressee of a single occasional poem on an occasion. Focusing on the poetic characterizations of Saint Martin in the poems, it can be stated that a specific addressee, such as the clergymen of Tours, who supposedly commissioned the *carmina* treated in the last chapter, would find in "their" poems characterizations that were tailored to their individual needs or preferences. A general audience does not share in this privilege. Much more than that, they are confronted with a wide variety of saint's depictions tailor-made for somebody else, which are not only not congenial to them but also incongruous one to the other.

Before we delve deeper into the implications of this text-reader situation, we are going to prove the mixed nature of the different characterizations of Saint Martin and provide a catalogue of representative examples, starting from the ones least conspicuous, working towards the most particular ones.²¹

19. See *supra* n. 4.

20. See *supra* n. 4.

21. This catalogue of characterizations of Saint Martin in the *Carmina* does not claim to be a systematic overview over characterizations of the saint or saints in general or the sources for these characterizations; for such see for example Saxer, 1986; van Uytvanghe, 1987 and 1998. It also does not provide a detailed analysis of the cultural implications of the different views on Saint Martin in the 6th cent., but only wants to show the variety of characterizations in the *Carmina*; the order of the categories is therefore not meant to be understood as an evaluation of attributes of Saint Martin in general but only internal to the *Carmina* from "merely conventional and very common" to "rather singular and specific to a particular occasion".

3.1. MARTIN AS A PROVIDER OF DIVINE GOODWILL

Martin's least noteworthy appearances seem to be instances when Martin is referred to most generally as a provider of divine goodwill or direct intervention.²² This is the case for example in *Carm.* V 11, where Martin, together with the Holy Cross, is called upon for having provided the poet with a safe journey from Tours to Poitiers, even though the road was frozen over.²³ The choice of the Holy Cross and the saint is connected with the two places, Martin being the former bishop of Tours, and Poitiers famously holding Gaul's only relic of the Holy Cross. This leads to a second category of Martin's appearances in Fortunatus' poetic oeuvre.

3.2. MARTIN AS A LOCAL PATRON

Often the saint simply represents his former episcopal see, the city of Tours, the region of Touraine or Gaul as a whole. Examples for this use of the saint in the *Carmina* are among the most numerous.²⁴ Of these, Martin's mention in Fortunatus' poem to Bishop Martin of Braga can be given as fittingly as any other. In a list of regions and their respective saints, meant to position the contemporary Martin among the other regional patrons as a newly found patron for Iberian Gallaecia, Martin of Tours stands as patron for Gaul.²⁵ Similarly, in Fortunatus' poem for the *adventus* of Gregory, the accession to the episcopal see in Tours by the Auvergnese is described as a gift by Julian of Brioude, a famous Auvergnese saint, to Saint Martin.²⁶ While the first two categories border on mere figures of speech with little or no content value attached to them, the following offer deeper insight in the way Martin is used to create meaning in Fortunatus' poetry.

22. The power of saints might be a more independent force in the eyes of their late antique/early medieval followers than would appear to later Christians, see Brown, 2015, pp. 107-113.

23. *Carm.* V 11, 7-8: *Sed crucis auxilio, Martini operante patrono, / perveni ad matres salvus, opime pater.* "But with the help of the cross and with the efficacy of our patron Martin / I have arrived safe at our mothers', my caring father". Similar examples are *Carm.* praef. 6; App. 19, 3-4; App. 21, 13-14.

24. *Carm.* praef. 6; III 3; 6-7; V 2-3; 14; VI 5; VIII 3; 11; 15; X 14; 17; App. 21.

25. *Carm.* V 2, 15-16: *Ne morer adcelerans, Martini Gallia prisci / eccellente fide luminis arma capit.* "I am speeding things up, so I do not cause delay: Gaul, by the outstanding faith of the earlier Martin, takes on the arms of light". Other than this poem proposes, Martin's patronage for all of Gaul seems to have been contested by other saints' cults, some of them dearer to the ruling Merovingians. Postulating Martin as a patron of all of Gaul in the 6th cent. CE likely follows a particular agenda of the clergy of Tours. Cf. van Dam, 1993, pp. 24-27.

26. *Carm.* V 3, 11-12: *Martino proprium mittit Iulianus alumnum / et fratri praebet quod sibi dulce fuit.* "Julian sends his own foster child to Martin and presents to his brother, what was dear to himself".

3.3. MARTIN AS AN IMAGE OF THE IDEAL BISHOP

The bishop-saint is often presented as an ideal image for a bishop, most of the time for a bishop of Tours.²⁷ This third category of course overlaps with the second in its connection to the place. The range in the quality of the connections between the addressees and the exemplary bishop vary widely, though. Many poems give Martin as an example for other bishops in a stereotypical fashion. In this way, one of the laudatory poem-letters to bishop Eufronius of Tours, Gregory's predecessor, assures the bishop that he has been put in charge of his see by Martin due to his general fitness to follow in the saint's footsteps.²⁸ Other poems, however, put emphasis on particular aspects of Martin's episcopate to address living bishops in particular circumstances: In Fortunatus' poem to Bishop Gregory for the case of the abbess Leuovera during the nuns' revolt of 589,²⁹ Gregory is expressly asked to maintain order in the monastery of Sainte-Croix to match the example of Saint Martin (*Carm.* VIII 12, 5-8):

*Tu tamen, alme pater, pietatis amore labora
ut sacer antistes, culmina cuius habes,
unde repraesentes Martinum in tempore sacrum,
cursibus atque fide dando salutis opem.*

"You, though, caring father, work hard out of your love for piety like the holy bishop, whose high office you are holding, so that you will bring Martin, the man holy in eternal time, back into being by giving the help of your goodness through your haste and your belief".

The logic of the passage lies in the assumption that Bishop Saint Martin, out of his practical-mindedness maybe, if he had still been in charge, would have helped the abbess of Sainte-Croix swiftly. Gregory, if he wants to match Martin as archbishop of his diocese, needs to act as swiftly. The comparison with the saint here aims at a very particular set of traits, practical-mindedness and swiftness, both of which are none of the characteristics the saint is usually acclaimed for. The traits are, though, the ones Fortunatus wants to evoke in his addressee.

27. *Carm.* I 16; III 1-3; 6; V 1-2; 4; 9; 14; VIII 12; 15; 20; X 11-12a. See Ehlen, 2011, pp. 66-87 for an exemplary interpretation of *Carm.* V 1.

28. *Carm.* III 3, 23-24: *Martinus meritis hac vos in sede locavit / dignus eras heres, qui sua iussa colis.* "Martin has put you in your place due to your merits; you were a worthy heir, as you honor his orders".

29. Cf. Greg. Tur., *Franc.* IX 39; X 15-16.

Another example for a particular use of Saint Martin in relation to his episcopate can be found in Fortunatus' *abecedarium* to Bishop Leontius of Bordeaux. Leontius had been threatened with an attempt by one of his presbyters to overturn his episcopate.³⁰ The poem in favor of the bishop in charge stresses the incompatibility of a bishop's honors and the ambition to acquire them.³¹ This statement is underlined by a list of known Church Fathers and bishops, among them Saint Martin, who did not actively pursue their episcopate (*Carm.* I 16, 37-40):

*Karus sacerdos ordinem
Hilarius non ambiit,
Martinus illud effugit,
Gregorius vix sustulit.*

"Our dear Bishop Hilarius did not ask for this rank, Martin fled it, Gregory hardly suffered it".

Martin fits in this list as he is reported to have accepted his episcopate only under pressure from the mob of Tours and having resisted the honor for quite a while also afterwards.³² Hilarius and Martin clearly make the list, as they are the most famous saint-bishops of Gaul.³³ Gregory of Nazianzus is famous for his speech on his episcopate, in which he defends himself for having run away from the burden of church leadership as he at first hadn't deemed himself capable of bearing it.³⁴ The Cappadocian of the 4th cent. is a natural example for the poem's case, as his speech on his episcopate prominently defined the virtues of the ideal bishop and used "resistance to the election out of humility", a *topos* in the narrated lives of bishops.³⁵ However, the poem chooses one particular aspect of Martin's life, which is otherwise not attested in the *Carmina*, to strengthen the case of its addressee Leontius and delegitimize the rebellious presbyter.

30. *Carm.* I 16, 5-16.

31. *Carm.* I 16, 33-36: *Ineptus est quis ipse se / praeferre vult ecclesiae. / Nam rem sacratam sumere / electio divina sit!* "Unfit is he who wants to put himself at the head of the church. Because the taking on of sacred offices shall happen by divine choice!"

32. Sulp. Sev., *Mart.* IX.

33. Unquestionably, they are also the ones closest to the later bishop of Poitiers and client of Gregory of Tours.

34. Greg. Naz., *Or.* II.

35. The earliest example we are aware of is Pontius' life of St. Cyprian, *Pont., Cyp.* V.

3.4. MARTIN AS AN EXAMPLE FOR GENEROSITY

While humble resistance to the episcopal office appears only once in Fortunatus' different characterizations of the saint, other narratives figure more prominently. The fourth category shows Martin as an example for generosity, usually connected with the emblematic story of the division of the cloak.³⁶ Also, this most typical representation of the saint comes in various shades, three of which shall be presented here. In a quite unremarkable sense, which is reminiscent of the general uses of the saint in the first two categories, Martin can stand as a point of reference for all acts of generosity. In a letter of thanksgiving to his patron Gregory, Fortunatus employs the saint to compare Gregory's generosity towards him with that of the saint (*Carm.* VIII 20, 1-2):

*Munifici reparans Martini gesta, Gregori,
textit ut ille habitu nos alis ipse cibo.*

“Renewing the deeds of charitable Martin, o Gregory, like he covered somebody with his garment, you nourish me with food.”

The poet feels nourished by his patron because he has been awarded a piece of land from Gregory's domain (*agellum*), which shall in the future guarantee the poet's well-being. The tertium comparationis in this case is the act of giving and the charitable intention of the giver. The things given and the station of the receivers differ to a great extent, as Martin gives his own clothes to a poor man, while Gregory gives a piece of land to a fellow member of the clerical elite, the poet. Still, the poet manages to adapt the diverging facts into one narrative of charitable giving.³⁷

In another example, Martin's kind of charity is mirrored more closely by the addressee of the poem. Count Sigoald is praised for his successful project of organized almsgiving to the poor for the sake of young King Childebert II. A first discourse explains the logic of Martin's generosity without naming the saint.³⁸ Having proven

36. *Carm.* I 2; 7; II 13; III 1; VIII 20; X 10; 17; App. 19.

37. *Carm.* 8, 20, 5-8: *Ut clamidem ille prius, sic tu partiris agellum, / ille tegendo potens tuque fovendo decens, / ille inopem antiquum relevans, tu, care, novellum: / fit dives merito paupere quisque suo.* “As he earlier his cloak, so you divide your land, while he, helpful as he covers, and you, decent as you nourish, while he relieved a helpless man in old times, you, my friend, the same just now: both become rich by the merit of their poor man”.

38. *Carm.* X 17, 1-20; specially: 11-14: *Divitibus plus praestat egens quam dives egenti: / dat moritura cibi, sumit opima Dei, / dans terrae nummum missurus ad astra talentum, / ex modicis granis surgat ut alta seges.* “The poor gives more to the rich than the rich to the poor: he gives ephemeral goods of nour-

himself a follower of the saint in the truest sense by his charitable acts, Sigoald is now coming to Tours to pray and thereby bring the favor of the saint to his king.³⁹

Yet one last instance of Martin as an example for charity gives the most creative employment of the charitable saint so far. The poem in honor of the basilica dedicated to the saint by Basilius and Baudegunde shows Martin's overflowing generosity put in relation to the overflowing river that graciously gave way for the church of the saint.⁴⁰ We therefore find Martin's exemplary generosity applied in more conventional but also more creative ways, but seemingly always adaptable to the particular goals of each specific poem.

3.5. MARTIN AS HEALER

Another area of expertise of the saint are his healing powers. Like his generosity, this attribute of the saint is used in very different contexts. All of them seem to have relatively little to do with contexts of healing. The seemingly most fitting depiction of the saint as healer is given in Fortunatus' poem about the basilica dedicated to the saint by Bishop Leontius, where a local healing cult or a biographical reference to the *euergetes* may have played together with Martin's mention. The saint is shown as capable of healing leprosy but apparently as an example for his miracle working in general.⁴¹ Similarly, Martin's healing powers are given as an example of the saint's power, this

ishment, he receives the riches of God, as he spends a coin on the Earth, to send a heavenly talent to the stars, to the effect that from few seeds a high crop will grow".

39. *Carm.* X 17, 27-30: *Hinc ad Martini venerandi limina pergens / auxilium domini dum rogat ipse sui / et dum illuc moderans rex pro regione laborat, / ut precibus sanctus hunc iuuet, illud agit.* "As he goes on from there to the doorstep of venerable Martin and while he asks himself for the help of his master, so that the saint will help the king with his prayers, while at the same time the king is working elsewhere in his moderate way for the good of the empire, [the saint] does just this".

40. *Carm.* I 7, 3-4, 9-10: *Pulchra per angustos ut surgeret aula meatus, / etsi mons vetuit, praebuit unda locum. / [...] Sic, Martine, tuus honor amplius ubique meretur / ut loca nulla negent, quo tibi festa sonent.* "So that a beautiful church can rise in a narrow valley, even if the mountain forbid, the flood offered the space. [...] In this way, Martin, your full honour is everywhere deserved, so that no places refuse you, that your holidays sound forth".

41. *Carm.* I 6, 7-10: *Martini meritis et nomine fulta coruscant, / quem certum est terris signa dedisse poli. / Qui leprae maculas medicata per oscula purgans / pacis ab amplexu morbida bella tulit.* "[The church] glows brightly built in the merits and name of Martin, of whom is known for sure that he gave signs of heaven on earth. He, who drives away the blemishes of leprosy by means of healing kisses, won deadly battles with peaceful embrace".

time *post mortem*, in the poem to Bishop Gregory on the freeing of a young girl.⁴² Here, the reference is given only in the description of the place where the young girl came from and gives an example of the saint's charity, now to be emulated by the current bishop of Tours.⁴³

Interestingly, Martin's healing powers are also used as a personal reference to the poet in the *Carmina*. In the epilogue of Fortunatus' *Vita Martini*, the poet informs his recipients that he has originally come to Tours to redeem a vow he had once made to Saint Martin, as a young man still in Italy, for the healing of his eyes.⁴⁴ The reference in the *carmen* for the freeing of a young girl, where Saint Martin is presented as one who can restore eyesight, is thus also a reference to the same healing event in Fortunatus' (public) life, showing the helpfulness of the saint most credibly in the words of one who knows from his own experience. The significance of this implicit use of the poet's public persona can best be grasped with the toolset of Wolfgang Iser's *Aesthetics of Reception*: The poem (*Carm.* X 12a) does not state *expressis verbis* what we have just inferred. The inferring on any informed reader's part, though, is as surely inscribed in the text, as the information about the saint's reliability as a healer of blind people is a strong argument for the freeing of the girl only if brought forward by one who is himself a living proof of this reliability.⁴⁵ The text is using information that it does not provide to create meaning in cooperation with the reader, who is invited to fill the blank spots – *Leerstellen* – of the text.⁴⁶ In *Carm.* X 12a, Bishop Gregory is

42. For the importance of healing and exorcism as proofs of a saint's power in the cult of the saints in general, see Brown, 2015, pp. 106-128.

43. *Carm.* V 14, 1-8: *Cum graderer festinus iter, pater alme Gregori, / qua praecessoris sunt pia signa tui, – / quod fertur convulsa iacens radicitus arbor / Martini ante preces exiluisse comis; / quae fidei merito nunc stat spargendo medellas, / corpora multa medens, cortice nuda manens – / fletibus huc lugent genitor genetrisque puellam / voce implendo auras et lacrimando genas.* "As I am walking hastily on the way, my caring father Gregory, where the sacred signs of your predecessor are – because they say that a tree that was turned over from its root and lying about, had, in the face of Martin's prayer, sprung back up with its foliage; this same [tree] stands now, thanks to the merit of faith, to share out medecin, as it heals many bodies staying behind with its bark peeled off –, a father and mother mourn their daughter with sighs in this very place, filling the air with their wailing and wetting their cheeks with tears".

44. *Mart.* IV 686-687.

45. The order of publication of *Mart.* and *Carm.* X cannot be determined with certainty. It appears likely, though, that the epic poem could have been published already in the 570s (Quesnel, 2002, pp. XV-XVII), *Carm.* X not earlier than the 590s (George, 1998b, p. 36).

46. Cf. Iser, 1984, pp. 79 and 286.

appealed to to work the same wonder as the saint and cure the eyesight of the girl's father by taking steps towards her freedom and thereby stopping him from crying.⁴⁷

Logically related to the theme of healing is the resurrection of the dead.⁴⁸ Although this is, like the theme of healing, well attested in the saint's life,⁴⁹ it features only twice in the characterizations of Martin in the *Carmina*. This is especially noteworthy because resurrections are not a common capacity of saints, but rather a size of miracle reserved for Christ only. If Martin is said to perform resurrections, this would clearly distinguish him from other saints as a particularly effective *imitator Christi* (see *infra* 3.6.). Consequently, the *carmen* to Martin of Braga names this ability of the saint as an example of Martin's greatness that raises the expectations also towards the homonymous bishop.⁵⁰ The other example⁵¹ shall be treated below under the heading of Martin's depiction as a close follower of Christ (see *infra* 3.6.). The relative paucity of wonders of resurrection in the characterizations of Saint Martin by the *Carmina* in spite of their potential to lift Martin above other saints attests to the uneven distribution of characteristics taken from the lives into the poems. Martin is not characterized as in the saint's life, but according to the needs of the poems.

3.6. MARTIN MODELLED ON CHRIST

A sixth group of poems shows Martin as the possessor of virtues that are otherwise only ascribed to Christ.⁵² Although *imitatio Christi* is a common frame for saints' descriptions, these poems show Martin in an unusual way that exceeds the expres-

47. *Carm.* X 12a, 5-10: *Hic igitur gerulus genitam flens impie demptam, / captivam subolem tempore pacis habens, / Martinique pii successor honore, Gregori, / qui pater es populi, hanc, rogo, redde patri. / Iugiter ille sacris meritis inluminat orbos: / orbato hanc patri redde videndo diem.* "This letter bearer, therefore, cries for his daughter, who has been wrongly condemned. As you have his captive child in the eternity of your peace, Gregory, successor in honor of pious Martin, you who are a father to your people, give her back, I beg you, to her father. Time and time again he has enlightened people robbed of their sight by his sacred gifts. Give this father who is robbed of his child back, that he can see his daylight".

48. van Dam, 1993, pp. 109-114 shows the relationship between the resurrection of all humans in their flesh at judgement day and saintly miracles of healing as preparatory cleansings/preservations of the bodies for this day (cf. Moss, 2011). He does not mention the individual miracles of resurrection of Saint Martin, but it is easy to extend his argument about healings also to these resurrections as a kind of healing.

49. Sulp. Sev., *Mart.* VII 2.

50. *Carm.* V 1, 10.

51. *Carm.* X 11.

52. *Carm.* I 6-7; V 1; X 7; 11.

sions of worship that have been addressed under the earlier categories. The Christ-like characterization of the saint seems to come with particular reasons to have him characterized this way. In two poems Martin is presented in ways that are strongly reminiscent of Christ at Easter: In the poem for the *convivium* with the royal tax collectors at Tours, Christ and the saint are brought together by the convergence of the time of Christ, Easter, and the place of the saint, an unspecified “hall of heavenly Martin” around Tours, and, respectively, the table of the saint.⁵³ Time and place work together to make the unquestionable importance of Christ and the possibly contested importance of the saint merge into one. In the context of the meeting with the tax collectors this must have been important as Martin’s special status was usually given as reason for the exemption of Tours from royal taxes.⁵⁴ It is therefore, as we hinted at above (3.5.), also no coincidence that Martin is depicted as one who can resurrect the dead just after a passage saying the same about Christ.⁵⁵

An even further adaptation of Christ-specific attributes to Saint Martin is found in Fortunatus’ poem for Saint Martin’s Day for Brunichild and Childebert II. The coming of the saint with the morning light is modelled on Christ’s coming on Easter Sunday.⁵⁶ Even more conspicuous is the depiction of Martin’s omnipresence as an immaterial heavenly being crucified on the world (*Carm.* X 7, 9-10):

*Hunc Oriens, Occasus habet, hunc Africa et Arctus:
Martini decus est quo loca mundus habet;*

“East and West are his stations, South and North: the glow of Martin is everywhere where there are places in the world”

53. *Carm.* X 11, 7-12 and 31-32: *Ecce dies, in quo Christus surrexit ab imo / [...] Additur hic aliud, quod Martini aula beati / emicat haec ubi nunc prandia festa fluunt [...]. [...] quos invitavit Martini mensa beati, / sumite gaudentes quod dat amore dies.* “See the day, when Christ resurrected from the depth [...]. Here another thing is added: This hall of heavenly Martin shines brightly, where now the festive supper is brought on [...] you, whom the table of heavenly Martin invites, take up with joy what this day provides out of love”. For suggestions for the exact place compare Reydellet, 2004, p. 88 and Pietri, 1983, pp. 424-425.

54. Greg. Tur., *Franc.* IX 30.

55. *Carm.* X 11, 7-16: [...] *et revomunt multos Tartara fracta viros* (10) / [...] *qui pie restituit defuncta cadavera vitae* (15) / [...]. “[...] and the overpowered hell spews out many men [...] he [*scil.* Martin] who has brought lifeless corpses back to life [...]”.

56. *Carm.* X 7, 3-4: *ecce supervenit venerandi in saecula civis / Martini meritis luce perenne dies.* “See, the day of Martin, venerable citizen in eternity due to his deeds, comes upon us with perennial light”. Similar depictions of light in the context of the coming of Easter morning see *Carm.* III 9, 5-8, 39-42, 61-66, 75-76.

The description of Martin's omnipresence in the world forms a cross with the beam going from East (*Oriens*) to West (*Occasus*) and the trunk from South (*Africa*) to North (*Arctus*). The beam is an axis from O to O, the trunk an axis from A to A, reminding of Christ's famous "I am the Alpha and the Omega,"⁵⁷ which is often depicted with the cross.⁵⁸

The poem shows Martin on Martin's Day conspicuously similar to Christ on Easter Sunday morning. The assimilation of the saint to Christ is happening in both poems in a similar context. Both poems address the Merovingian kings and queens of Austrasia, Tours' far-away rulers, or their representatives.⁵⁹ In as much as Martin's special patronage over all of Gaul was a contested fact and therefore a particular project of the clergy of Tours,⁶⁰ it could be deemed useful to depict the saint as particularly close to Christ when addressing the kings.

3.7. MARTIN'S MERIT

The seventh light from which the saint is made to shine on the contexts of the *Carmina* is Martin's merit. *Meritum Martini* is a recurring phrase in Fortunatus' Martin poems,⁶¹ not only for the alliteration but also for the concept of Martin's superior virtue. Again, this theme is taken up both stereotypically but also with creative renovation. In the short poem in honor of Gregory's anniversary in his office as bishop for example, the poet uses the *meritum Martini* to strengthen the bishop in his duties towards his flock⁶² – do it like Martin did of old! Here, the poem is using Martin's merits in a context that is most conducive to a traditional reading of the saint's merit: Martin was a good bishop, therefore, by imitation of Martin's hard work, Gregory can be a good bishop as well.

57. Apc., XXII 13: *ego A et Ω primus et novissimus principium et finis*.

58. It is noteworthy that the o-words come before the a-words in the text in an apparent reversal of the quote; possibly the recipients are meant to identify the presence of alpha and omega with the cross only after they have identified and imagined the cross. Such an interest in the shift of levels of meaning (here: from the level of the text to the level of the geometrical shape) is reminiscent of the intexts in Fortunatus' figure poems.

59. *Carm.* X 7, 61 and 67; 11, 25.

60. van Dam, 1993, pp. 24-27.

61. *Carm.* I 4, 2; III 2, 5; V 4, 1; X 19, 19.

62. *Carm.* V 4, 1-2: *Martini meritis per tempora longa, Gregori, / Turonicum foveas pastor in urbe gregem*. "With the help of Martin's merits, Gregory, you shall take care of the flock of Tours as shepherd for a long time!"

The other example takes Martin's merits to a quite different context and therefore must narrow its *tertium comparationis* to a much narrower breadth: in his gratulatory letter-poem to Galactorius for his recently acquired countship, the poet argues with the merit of the count and compares him, quite specifically in the nature of his merit, to Saint Martin (*Carm.* X 19, 1-2; 17-20):

*Venisti tandem ad quod debebaris, amice,
ante comes merito, quam datus esset honor. [...]
Hoc et in ecclesia Christo tribuente refertur:
de exorcista aliquo pontificalis honor.
Egregius merito Martinus testis habetur,
qui fuit ante sacer, quam sacra iura daret.*

“You have finally arrived at the rank that was owed to you, my friend, you, who was count by merit, before he had been given the honor. [...] This can also be said when it comes to the church, with Christ sharing out the offices: from an anybody exorcist on to the honor of a bishop! Martin, noble because of his merit, can be taken as a witness for this, who was a holy man, before he laid down the sacred oaths”.

Martin and Galactorius are similar only in that they had both already been worthy of the office they are holding before they were given it. The *meritum Martini* usually applied as a certain set of virtues of a bishop is here applied freely to serve the needs of the praise of the count.

The list of examples, apart from being an interesting account of the versatility of Saint Martin in Fortunatus' poetry, can show two things: (1) the variety of different characterizations of the saint the recipients of the collection are confronted with, but also (2) that in many instances the meaning of the texts is not restricted to what the text says *expressis verbis*. We have hinted at this phenomenon in the example of *Carm.* X 12a, where the topic of the healing of the eyes guides the reader to take account of the personal involvement of the poet (see *supra* 3.5). Another example would be the discourse about richness and generosity in *Carm.* I 7 applied to Saint Martin and applied to the stream that generously gave way for the saint's church to be built; the reader has to add information about Saint Martin and the nature of his richness, which is not *expressis verbis* in the poem, to make the poem meaningful (see *supra* 3.4). By far the best example to see the interplay of text and reader at work is the last poem in our catalogue, *Carm.* X 19, the praise of Count Galactorius.

Again Wolfgang Iser's Aesthetics of Reception can help to understand the complicated operation this poem makes in its different readers' minds: in the first twelve verses, Galactorius is praised as a statesman and military commander, both for feats he has already accomplished, the offices of *defensor*, judge and count, and the title of duke he can still hope for.⁶³ The initial statement of the poem, that Galactorius was one who had been worthy of the countship already before he got it (vv. 1-2), is put to practice on the office of duke: five entire verses (out of twelve dealing with his *cursus honorum*) are dedicated to the imagination of what Galactorius will achieve when he will be duke. This imagination of Galactorius as duke is entirely given in consecutive clauses, depending on *debet et ipse potens* – “[The king] must do this, as it is in his power, so that...”. The countship that this poem celebrates is shown as just another step in a succession of ranks and titles the unfolding of which is shown to be from the beginning set in motion by the king, serves entirely for the good of the nation, and seems to be already fixed. The text, in what Wolfgang Iser calls *Kontingenz* (“contingency”),⁶⁴ works against the judgement of the implicit reader: Galactorius is shown as a man who is hastening from one title of honor to the next, so that the achievement he has just made is shown to serve only as a step to the next. The laudatory poem of his countship actually focuses on his imaginary merits as duke. In as much as the readers are guided to see in the poem's praise a reflection of the view of the one praised, he must appear as a careerist for whom every position only matters as a step to the next, who is never in the now and only in the potentials. Yet, the poem says *expressis verbis* that exactly this hustle through offices is service to king, country and community in the best sense. This contingency reaches its peak when Saint Martin is introduced. Saint and count are made equal in their *meritum*, an act of particular

63. *Carm X 19, 1-12: Venisti tandem ad quod debebaris, amice, / ante comes merito quam datus esset honor. / Burdegalensis eras et, cum defensor, amator: / dignus habebaris haec duo digna regens. / Iudicio regis valuisti crescere iudex, / fama que quod meruit regia lingua dedit. / Debet et ipse potens, ut adhuc bene crescere possis, / praestet ut arma ducis, qui tibi restat apex, / ut patriae fines sapiens tuearis et urbes, / adquiras ut ei qui dat opima tibi, / Cantaber ut timeat, Vasco vagus arma pavescat / atque Pyrenaeae deserat Alpīs opem.* “You have finally arrived at the rank that was owed to you, my friend, you, who was count by merit, before he had been given the honour. When you were *defensor* of Bordeaux you were at the same time its lover: you were deemed worthy, as you ruled in these two honorable duties. By the judgement of the king you have been found strong enough to grow to the office of judge, and what you had earned in the opinion of the people the kingly tongue has given you. Also he must, as he has the power to do it, so that you can advance unto your momentary station, so that he can give you the arms of a duke, he who alone remains as your better, so that you wisely protect the confines of the fatherland and its cities, so that you acquire for him, who gives you glorious spoils, that the Cantabrian fears the arms of war, that the Basque shudders at the thought of them and deserts his refuge in the Pyrenees”.

64. Iser, 1984, p. 109.

creativity as has been stated above. Otherwise, the difference between the ambitious count and the saint, who could only be brought to accept the office of bishop by force, would appear unbridgeable. In bringing the two together, the poem rather than answering them, opens up questions that would appear relevant to Galactorius and the elites of the Francia in general: To what extent is Galactorius' career a contribution to the common good? To what extent is it based on his relationship with God? The poem, through the creative use of Saint Martin, opens up a discourse on elite roles and the applicability of the saint as model in its readers' minds.

The recipients of the *Carmina*-collection,⁶⁵ in contrast to the experience of the "original" addressees, are not encountering characterizations of Saint Martin tailor-made for them, but a multitude of Martins fitted to the needs of other individuals. At the same time, the structures inviting readers to follow avenues of understanding that differ from the evaluations expressed in the poems seem to be also inscribed in the texts. As we are going to argue in our last chapter, this dialogic relationship of text and readers is given a particular edge because of the religious content of the poems.

4. THE RITUAL CONTEXT OF FORTUNATUS' MARTIN POEMS AND THE COLLECTION OF POEMS AS A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PRACTICE GROUND

The occasional poems of Venantius Fortunatus stand in a particular continuum and tension to certain ritual practices that shall be quickly hinted at in the beginning of this chapter. A few introductory remarks from the point of view of ritual theory might give a framework to this.⁶⁶ For Roy Rappaport there is a distinctive difference

65. This readership is certainly far from being a homogenous group, especially as Merovingian, Carolingian, also modern readers, could be imagined. The thoughts that are expressed in the final chapter (see 4.) work from the assumption that the readers are culturally similar enough to the "original" addressees to accept them as peers in the cult of Saint Martin. Such readers are close enough to the implicit readers (Iser, 1984, pp. 55-66 and 257-66) of the *Carmina*-collection, whom this paper tries to construct; implicit readers are a model that might not have had an exact historical counterpart at any time. We think it is likely, though, that some of the readers we can grasp through the manuscripts and the deduced earlier existence of the collection since Fortunatus' life time (see *supra* n. 4) are similar enough to these model readers for the model to be interesting; it is neither possible nor intended by the methods of this paper to prove the existence of a particular group of historical readers. For the reception of the *Carmina* through the Middle Ages see also Roberts (2009, pp. 325-329). For the various concepts of readers see Willand, 2014.

66. Rappaport, 1999.

between what is said during a ritual and the ritual itself, so that for him ritual and myth are not one and the same.⁶⁷ When looking at Fortunatus' Martin poems from the angle of ritual theory, we have to say clearly what the ritual is that these texts stand in relation to and what this relation is.

The cult of Saint Martin is one of many saints' cults in late antique Gaul, whose importance varies at different times from only local to encompassing all of Gaul.⁶⁸ In the yearly circle of these cults, special focus lies on the saints' feast days, *dies natales*, usually the day a saint left his earthly existence behind to start a new life in heaven. In the case of Saint Martin, eventually, two days share the honor to be celebrated in the saint's name, his *dies natalis* on 11 November and 4 July, when the saint was said to have ascended the episcopal throne and, in the age of Perpetuus, Saint Martin's new church had been inaugurated in Tours.⁶⁹ On these days, pilgrims would come to the saint's shrine or church and *cenae* and *convivia* would be held in the saint's honor as we know for example from Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola.⁷⁰ For these occasions, saints' lives were publicly read, as can be learned from a sermon of Saint Augustine following such a reading.⁷¹ These saint's lives would tell the life story of the saint, usually in a fashion typical of the genre.⁷² Neither the occasional poems by Venantius Fortunatus nor his hagiographical epos are such readings, but they are nonetheless highly dependent on the ritual readings on saints' days in their culture.⁷³

The occasional poems that thematize the saint fall into various categories, most of them being letters, one of them being destined for an inscription, some for convivial contexts. Although they obviously vary, they all add to the same discourse about the saint as well as the ritual readings at the saint's days. Apart from that, they could also be assigned to ritual practices that are again dependent on the main ritual of the saint's days. Roy Rappaport, referring to a conference paper by Roger Abrahams, points out a continuum of rather informal ritual practices to "elaborate rituals", with the most spontaneous ones being as subtle as ritualized greetings and the most formalized as fixed as religious ceremonies.⁷⁴ The different categories of Fortunatus' oc-

67. Rappaport, 1999, pp. 38 and 50.

68. Farmer, 1991; van Dam, 1993; Labarre, 2012b; Maurey, 2014.

69. Farmer, 1991, pp. 22-24; van Dam, 1993, p. 19;

70. Prud., *Perist.* XII; Paul. Nol., *Carm.* XIV 44-85; XX 63-300; XXVII 543-595. Cf. Kirsch, 2004, I/1, p. 21.

71. August., *Serm.* 280. Cf. Berschin, 1986, pp. 102-105.

72. Berschin, 1986, pp. 16-32.

73. For a close analysis of the relationship between his *vitae* and Fortunatus' occasional poetry, see Labarre, 2012a.

74. Rappaport, 1999, pp. 34-36.

casional poems could be seen as ritual texts belonging to those lower orders of rather informal ritual practices such as aristocratic letter exchange, individual visits to holy places, or *convivia*. As much as this is true,⁷⁵ with regard to Saint Martin's appearances in the poems, their being part of the context of the main saint's day ritual shall alone be relevant for us.⁷⁶

Although Roy Rappaport distinguishes between rituals and similar but different performances,⁷⁷ in all that matters for us, talking about Saint Martin, be it in letters, inscriptions, *convivia*, or during a reading in church on the saint's day, has to start from the same foundations and feeds into the same discourse about the saint, obviously to different people, depending on who is or is not present or addressed. Rappaport's argument of distinguishing strongly between rituals and ritual-like social practices is laid out exemplarily in his comparison of ancient Greek cult practices and ancient Greek drama.⁷⁸ The difference between the two is seen by him in the fact that (1) audiences in theatres do not take part in the action but only watch while members of a congregation in a cult practice do take part; (2) actors in theatres only act while performers in a ritual perform "in earnest".⁷⁹ The same difference on the level of participation could be assumed for Fortunatus' occasional Martin poems, if we compare them to the truly ritualized readings of saints' lives in the saint's day ritual, as long as we look at them in their historical, occasional setting (see 2.). Quite to the contrary, for the readers of Fortunatus', the bishop's, collection of poems, the different ways Martin is presented to different explicit addressees becomes a collection of examples, each an offer to identify with the respective addressee and to connect to the saint in the light of one particular situation. The nature of the poems as visibly addressed and their number and the variations between them force the readers of the collection to engage much more critically

75. With a similar approach by Catherine Bell Michael Roberts identifies Fortunatus' poems as "second-level rituals or rituals in words": Bell, 1992, p. 41; Roberts, 2009, p. 322, n. 6.

76. The expressed aim of Rappaport's work seems to be to close the term "ritual" to too broadly interpreted applications, Abraham's continuum of lower order "rituals", or at least to make clear that his interest is restricted to the most obvious kinds of ritual. We concur with Rappaport in this aim, as any definition of ritual that already includes most practices is a useless category.

77. Rappaport, 1999, pp. 39-43.

78. Rappaport, 1999, pp. 39-43.

79. We are not necessarily agreeing with Rappaport's characterization of Greek drama; we are interested in Rappaport's model as a model of ritual in general, not whether or not it is really applicable to his examples.

with every single poem. With this in mind, the concept of “religious communication”, as applied by Jörg Rüpke, can provide valuable insights into the poems.⁸⁰

Religious communication includes not only the religious practitioners and the divine being(s) they communicate with, but also the religious public, who will always judge the success and appropriateness of any religious action.⁸¹ In the case of Fortunatus’ Martin poems, the different roles belonging to this model are not obvious to ascribe to. Martin, Christ or God surely stand on the side of the divine being. Sender and public are more difficult to determine. To start from the original occasion before the collection, Fortunatus would qualify as the sender of messages about and of course also to the saint, Christ or God. The explicit addressee of the poem would then stand in the place of the religious public. This makes sense for the poet, as is shown in the main part of this paper, who is adapting his communication to and about the saint to be fitting to the situation of his explicit addressees. In the case of the collection, the text functions as an offer to different readers to engage with it. Stressing the role of the reader, as we have shown in the last chapter, the Aesthetics of Reception can help to explain how these offers might be detected in the texts. On the one hand, the “*Erwartungshorizont*” (horizon of expectation) of Hans Robert Jauß⁸² might provide a frame, on the other hand, the concept of the implicit reader by Wolfgang Iser⁸³ can show how the role of the reader is inscribed in the text and how the informed reader has to fill the gaps left open to gain the full meaning. Venantius’ readers are potentially brought into the position of an accomplice observer to the poet’s religious communication. They are at the same time, though, also in the position to judge the appropriateness of the poet as religious communicator: at least in one of the examples we have provided, the praise of Count Galactorius, the reader is led by the text to question the appropriateness of the communication (see 3.7). But it works also the other way around: if the reader is a religious practitioner in the cult of the saint himself and reacts to what he is reading, the religious communication of the poet, a rather prestigious one, puts the sense of religious appropriateness, the reader’s relationship to the saint, to a crucial test. The poet, of course not the historical poet but the poetic I of the poem,

80. Rüpke, 2016, pp. 121-138. Rüpke uses pagan examples; Fortunatus’ ancient Christian setting is not, as far as Lived Ancient Religion is concerned, fundamentally different.

81. Rüpke, 2016, pp. 124-128; Albrecht *et al.*, 2018, pp. 574-575, stressing the medial, communicative and locative dimensions of narrations.

82. Jauß, 1970. This can be complemented by the concept of “wide reading”, cf. e.g. Baßler, 2005.

83. Iser, 1979 and 1984. For the use of the concept in the context of religious texts compare Rüpke, 2015; for the narrative strategies to direct emotions compare for example Hillebrandt, 2011.

therefore, becomes a representative of the religious public to gauge the individual religious feeling of the reader. This makes clear how the (re-)reading of Fortunatus' Martin poems can stand in place of the public reading during the ritual for the religious reader, as far as the social experience is concerned.

This social quality of the collection of poems deserves closer consideration. The conceptualizations of the social, next to the object-related and the abstract-spiritual having its share in the working of a ritual, as expressed in Hartmut Rosa's theory of Resonance, can provide a framework here.⁸⁴ The experienced social quality of the different poems lies not only between the readers and the poetic/epistolary I but also between the readers and the explicit addressees of the poems. The different depictions of the saint in connection with the explicit addressees are (1) inviting the readers to agree or disagree with certain characterizations but (2) are also showing the attributes of the saint in a social context. What is fitting for one addressee need not be fitting for another. This can be both experienced through identification with the one or the other position but also in a view from above. This interaction with the different poems can therefore inspire disagreement but also empathy in the readers. Hartmut Rosa has described especially this dynamic of disagreement and empathy – he speaks of forgiveness (*Verzeihung*) – in the context of friendship, which he calls “[a] resonant wire to the social world out there” (*Resonanzdr[aht] zur Sozialwelt da draußen*).⁸⁵ The possibility for a “resonant wire” (*Resonanzdraht*) between the readers and the explicit addressees, who are of course not friends of the readers in any sense, is provided by the extraordinary and effectively unreal experience of “reading somebody else's letter”.

This social experience plays together with a second factor: the undoubtedly religious nature of the argument. As has been shown especially for the poem to count Galactorius (see 3.7.), the implicit readers are driven by the compositional tactics of the poem to question the explicit stance of the poetic I on the applicability of Saint Martin to Galactorius' situation. The ensuing conflict between the recipients and the poetic I and the assumed interest of the explicit addressee Galactorius, which we have tried to grasp with Wolfgang Iser's concept of contingency, is endowed with particular urgency because of the religious nature of the argument. What we have here revisited for the example of the poem to Galactorius can be similarly applied to other poems. What Martin is and is not, is never a light matter! The experience of the readers has thus, in the terms of Hartmut Rosa, potential for

84. Rosa, 2016, pp. 73-75, 331-514.

85. Rosa, 2016, pp. 358-362. The English translation is taken from James C. Wagner, Rosa, 2019, p. 213.

resonance also because it gives the readers an occasion to feel their strong evaluations (*Starke Wertungen*) questioned or affirmed.⁸⁶ The readers who feel touched or shaken by the explicit or implicit statements about Saint Martin are experiencing themselves as religious actors.

Religious and social experiences are two lines of experiences that congregants in a ritual would also have.⁸⁷ The religious and social experience of reading the Martin *carmina* makes the reading of the *Carmina* to their reading audiences, with the *carmina* as a mimetic device that invites the reader to immerse themselves in it, into an approximation of the experience of the congregation of Martin believers in the rituals of the cult of the saint. The reading of the Martin *carmina* is ritual-like from the aspect of the individual experience of every reader in comparison to the experience of every individual congregant.

5. CONCLUSION

The various characterizations of the saint throughout the *Carmina* show how the poet caters to different needs depending on the context of his work. The epic poem needs to be in tune with the traditional rendering of the story to please well-read audiences. The occasional poems connected to places can deal with the story more freely, but show the events in a way that strengthens the position of the local commissioners of the poems. The observations that have been made on the different descriptions of Martin all through the *Carmina* and in the case of the miraculous gem-covering are, first of all, poignant examples of individual religious appropriation. Fortunatus uses the mechanics of religious individualism to cater for the particular situations his addressees are in.

From a literary approach to the *Carmina* as a published collection destined to be read as a whole, new insights could be gained into the experience of its readers. Behind the historical readings of the individual Martin *carmina* in their supposed historical context lies a scheme of reading oriented to the readers of the Martin texts in the collection.⁸⁸ The many different texts recreate a socio-religious context between the I, the explicit addressees, the readers and the saint, within which the readers can immerse themselves into an experience very similar to that of a congregant in the Cult of Saint Martin. The Martin *carmina* are therefore literary offers of ritual-like experience.

86. Rosa, 2016, pp. 188, 225-235.

87. Hartmut Rosa names these experiences as two (of three) axes that play a role in resonant self-world relationships: diagonal (social) and vertical (religious): Rosa, 2016, pp. 73-75.

88. See *supra* n. 46 for a brief discussion of the different readers.

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