

HISTORIOGRAPHIE CONTEMPORAINE SUR LA RELIGION  
VANDALE ET BYZANTINE (1785-2020)

# Contemporary Historiography on Christianity in Vandal and Byzantine Africa (1785-2020)

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## Abstract

The present chapter examines the historiography of Vandal and Byzantine religion from *ca.* 1785 to the present. Until relatively recently, extended studies of post-Roman North Africa were scarce. The works of Charles Diehl (1896) and Christian Courtois (1955) are striking exceptions within a field primarily interested in earlier periods of North African history. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Vandals were primarily viewed for their military and political activity, rather than their religious policies, and Byzantine Africa was generally presented as a coda to Roman and early Christian periods of occupa-

## Résumé

Ce chapitre examine l'historiographie de la religion vandale et byzantine depuis 1785 environ jusqu'à nos jours. Jusqu'à une époque relativement récente, les études approfondies sur l'Afrique du Nord post-romaine étaient rares. Les travaux de Charles Diehl (1896) et de Christian Courtois (1955) sont des exceptions dans un domaine qui s'intéresse principalement aux périodes antérieures. Au cours du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les Vandales étaient principalement considérés pour leur activité militaire et politique, plutôt que pour leur politique religieuse, et l'Afrique byzantine était généralement présentée comme

tion. The dramatic expansion of archaeological and philological scholarship in the latter part of the twentieth century had an important effect upon the understanding of these groups, but it is only in the last twenty years that detailed scrutiny of the later periods of pre-Islamic North Africa have become widespread.

## Keywords

Byzantine Africa, Vandal Africa, Charles Diehl, Christian Courtois, Pères Blancs.

une coda des périodes d'occupation romaine et des premiers chrétiens. L'expansion spectaculaire de la recherche archéologique et philologique dans la dernière partie du XXe siècle a eu un effet important sur la compréhension de ces groupes, mais ce n'est qu'au cours des vingt dernières années que l'examen détaillé des périodes ultérieures de l'Afrique du Nord préislamique est devenu courant.

## Mots-clés

Afrique byzantine, Afrique vandale, Charles Diehl, Christian Courtois, Pères Blancs

NORTH AFRICA IN THE VANDAL AND BYZANTINE PERIODS (439-533 and 533-698 CE) has always been a somewhat esoteric area of study, both for scholars working on the ancient Maghreb and for those interested in the early medieval world more broadly. Although a great deal of important work has been published since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is only in the last twenty years that a significant volume of scholarship has been focused directly on the period, and even now dedicated studies of Byzantine Africa remain scarce. The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries have featured in many broad surveys of Christian Africa but have rarely been accorded a central role in their own right. As a result, the historiography of this period – and specifically of religion in this period – is somewhat fragmented and discontinuous.

The religious trajectories of Vandal and Byzantine Africa were ostensibly very different: modern scholarship has sometimes framed the former as a period of persecution by the “Arian” Vandals over their “Nicene” subjects, and the latter as a reintegration of the region into the orthodox world of the eastern empire, but the shortcomings of these simplifications have always been recognized, as we shall see. While the two periods were often very different, their study has often followed similar trajectories. Both have been influenced profoundly by an increased appreciation for late antique texts, and especially by the expansion of post-classical archaeology. Crucially, both have benefitted from the recognition that the world of African Christianity did not simply end with the death of Augustine of Hippo in 430, and that there were strong continuities from the Roman period into the Vandal, and (no less importantly) from the Vandal into the Byzantine.

The present chapter gathers together these different strands. It is organized roughly chronologically into three parts. The first considers scholarship from the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> – that is, broadly the period of the French colonial occupation of the Maghreb. This briefly discusses approaches to post-Roman African history at this time, and the somewhat complex position of the Vandal and Byzantine periods in specifically Christian narratives. The second section considers the work of Christian Courtois (1912-1956), perhaps the single most important scholar who has worked on this field, and the intensification of scholarship that came after him in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These decades witnessed a dramatic expansion in publications on late antique Africa, the compilation of important synthetic studies and (especially) new critical editions of key Christian texts. The final section considers the far greater proliferation (and internationalization) of work on Vandal and Byzantine Christianity since around the turn of the millennium. Thanks

to a range of important historical and archaeological projects, and the further publication of crucial Christian texts, post-Augustinian Africa is now much better integrated into the scholarship on the wider world of late antiquity.

## 1. From the French Revolution to the Second World War

North African history between the death of Augustine and the Arab conquests was not extensively studied in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Grand histories of the end of the Roman Empire by authors like Jean-Baptiste Dubos or Edward Gibbon rarely paid much attention to the territories south of the Mediterranean, preferring to focus on the more familiar lands to the north. This is not to say that Vandal Africa was ignored entirely. In 1785, Konrad Mannert's *Geschichte der Vandalen* provided an important narrative of the group from its earliest prehistory to the end of the Vandal kingdom<sup>1</sup>. The discussions of the Vandals written over the next century and a half more or less followed Mannert's narrative template. In most, particular emphasis was placed upon the European prehistory of the Vandal "people", with correspondingly little attention paid to their history within Africa<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the best-documented episodes in the Vandal kingdom – the persecutions under King Huneric (477-484), described in Victor of Vita's contemporary *Historia Persecutionis* – are often treated only tangentially within these studies, where they are addressed at all. In Felix Papencordt's 1837 work, for example, only seventeen pages are devoted to the religious history of the group; Ludwig Schmidt's 1903 monograph is similarly more concerned with religious and military history than with religious topics<sup>3</sup>. While Mannert, Papencordt and Schmidt all note the importance of the Arian church to Vandal royal power in this period, this basic point is not interrogated closely. Instead, the violent invasions of the Vandals across Gaul and the rise to prominence under their great king Geiseric (ca. 425-477) are emphasized as the defining features of Vandal identity. Indeed, a significant historical tradition is simply represented by short biographies of that king, with particular emphasis on political and military success<sup>4</sup>.

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1. K. Mannert, *Geschichte der Vandalen*, Leipzig, 1785.

2. On these emphases see esp. R. Steinacher, "Vandalen im frühneuzeitlichen Ostseeraum. Beobachtungen zur Rezeption antiker ethnischer Identitäten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert", in K. Strobl (ed.), *Die Geschichte der Antike aktuell: Methoden, Ergebnisse und Rezeption*, Klagenfurt, 2005, 279-298 and A. Merrills, "The Origins of 'Vandalism'", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 16.2, 2009, 155-175.

3. F. Papencordt, *Geschichte der vandalischen Herrschaft in Afrika*, Berlin, 1837, 269-287; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Wandalen*, Leipzig, 1903, 184.

4. Compare for example F. Martroye, *Genséric. La Conquête Vandale en Afrique et la Destruction de l'Empire d'Occident*, Paris, 1907; P. Bigelow, *Genesic. King of the Vandals and first Prussian Kaiser*, New York, 1917; E.-F. Gautier, *Genséric Roi des Vandales*, Paris, 1929; H.F. Blunck, *König Geiserich. Eine Erzählung von Geiserich und dem Zug der Wandalen*, Hamburg, 1937; H.W. Quast, *Geiserich. Vandale ohne Vandalismus*, Augsburg, 1987; H. Gourdin, *Genséric. Soleil barbare*, Paris, 1999; and now I. Hughes, *Geiseric: The Vandal who Sacked Rome*, London, 2017.

From this perspective, the Vandals were presented with the glamorous frisson of destructive barbarism, with little extensive discussion of their religious activities.

The European framing of Vandal history may have done little to illuminate the religious history of 5<sup>th</sup>-century North Africa, but the scholarly advances of this period remain important. Ferdinand Wrede's linguistic study of the Vandalic language, for example, is still an important point of reference and a valuable source on the linguistics and onomastics of the group<sup>5</sup>. The Vandals also benefitted from the philological revolution in German scholarship at this time. The *Historia Persecutionis* of Victor of Vita was edited by Karl Halm for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in 1879 and by Michael Petschenig for the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* in 1881, the first modern scholarly editions of that text<sup>6</sup>. These works prompted modern translations into German and French over the years that followed and a critical study by Wilhelm Pöttsch in 1887<sup>7</sup>. Scholarly editions of several other crucial texts were produced at the same time including the *Laterculum Regum Vandalorum*, an African Christian chronicle, and the Byzantine-period chronicle of Victor of Tunnuna<sup>8</sup>.

The single most important study of Byzantine Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – and arguably also in the period since – was Charles Diehl's *L'Afrique Byzantine* of 1896. Written at the request of the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres to provide a history of the Byzantine occupation from the texts, inscriptions and archaeology, and hence to complement the same scholar's study of the Exarchate of Ravenna which had been published in 1888, Diehl's work was originally envisaged as a temporary measure in the expectation that a fuller history of the period would shortly be written<sup>9</sup>. Although other scholars did publish on Byzantine Africa over the years that followed, including an important articles by Charles Saumagne on Justinian's patronage of the African church, no further attempt was made to summarise the period as a whole<sup>10</sup>. As with many of the Vandal histories written at around the same time, Diehl's emphasis is particularly upon political and military matters, and the two principal poles for the composition of his work are imperial edicts of 534 on the one hand, and the massive standing remains of Byzantine fortifications on the other. But his scholarship also ranged beyond these lodestones, and he drew extensively on emerging archaeological materials. His short chapter on the religious tensions of Justinianic Africa includes extensive reference both to the theological texts relating to the so-called "Three Chapters" controversy of the 540s and 550s (many of which were critically understudied at the time of Diehl's work), and to the developing field of Christian archaeology within North Africa itself<sup>11</sup>.

5. H. Wrede, *Über die Sprache der Wandalen*, Strasbourg 1886.

6. K. Halm, *MGH, AA*, 2, 1879; M. Petschenig, *CSEL*, 7, 1881.

7. W. Pöttsch, *Viktor von Vita und die Kirchenverfolgung im Wandalenreiche*, Döbeln, 1887.

8. Both edited in T. Mommsen, *MGH, AA*, 11, 1894.

9. C. Diehl, *L'Afrique Byzantine : histoire de la domination byzantine en Afrique (533–709)*, Paris, 1896; C. Diehl, *Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne (568–751)*, Paris, 1888.

10. C. Saumagne, "Étude sur la propriété ecclésiastique à Carthage d'après des nouvelles 36 et 37 de Justinien", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 22, 1913, 77–87.

11. C. Diehl, *L'Afrique Byzantine... op. cit.*, n. 9, 408–449.

The colonial occupation of North Africa from 1830 prompted a new interest in the Christian history of the region, and stimulated ground-breaking archaeological investigation. While the majority of this attention focused on the earliest centuries of Christian activity, Vandal and Byzantine churches were also investigated, and soldiers and clerics were among the most enthusiastic investigators<sup>12</sup>. While secular histories and archaeologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rarely paid attention to later occupation, and instead sought in the towns, defences, and agricultural improvements of the high imperial period the antecedents for modern occupation, the Christian discourse was rather broader. Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine may have been the focus of most attention, but the martyrs of the Vandal period and the champions of the Byzantine church were also given their due. Stefano Antonio Morcelli's three volume *Africa Christiana* of 1816-1817, for example, discussed the church from its origins in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century down to the 11<sup>th</sup>, and noted the importance of the Justinianic conquest to Christianity in the region, even as it passed over the Vandal interregnum rather swiftly. This model was followed by his many translators and imitators<sup>13</sup>. Antoine-Adolphe Dupuch in his *Essai sur l'Algérie chrétienne* of 1848, and Anatole Toulotte in his *La Géographie de l'Afrique Chrétienne* of 1888 both expanded Morcelli's framework with reference to recent archaeological discoveries, including several churches which were certainly Byzantine in date<sup>14</sup>. In due course, Toulotte's work was further expanded by Joseph Mesnage in 1912<sup>15</sup>.

Christian archaeology followed similar emphases. While mostly concerned with evidence from the third and fourth centuries, later periods were not ignored. Dupuch sponsored extensive excavation from his bishopric of *Iulia Caesarea* (Algiers) from 1838, including work on the basilica at Tipasa<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, Louis-Adrien Berbrugger and Louis Moll excavated a number of late Christian sites across Algeria, among them the important 5<sup>th</sup>-century church at *Castellum Tingitanum* and the Byzantine complex at *Theveste*<sup>17</sup>. This intensified following the foundation of the Missionary Society of Algeria – the Pères Blancs – by Charles Lavigerie in 1868, and the establishment of their mission on the Byrsa Hill in Carthage<sup>18</sup>. Under Alfred Louis Delattre, the Pères Blancs catalysed archaeology in Carthage in the period before the

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12. Overviews: P.A. Février, *Approches du Maghreb Romain*, Aix-en-Provence, 1989, 23-65; D.J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity. Experiencing the Roman Empire*, Princeton, 2011, 43-74; M. Greenhalgh, *The Military and Colonial Destruction of the Roman Landscape of North Africa*, Leiden, 2014; B. Effros, *Incidental Archaeologists. French Officers and the Rediscovery of Roman North Africa*, Ithaca, NY, 2018.

13. S.A. Morcelli, *Africa Christiana*, Brescia, 1816-1817.

14. A.-A. Dupuch, *Essai sur l'Algérie chrétienne*, Turin, 1848; A. Toulotte, *La Géographie de l'Afrique Chrétienne*, Montreuil, 1888.

15. J. Mesnage, *L'Afrique chrétienne. Évêches et ruines antiques*, Paris, 1912.

16. W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity. A History*, London, 1996, 51-64.

17. W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology...*, *op. cit.*, n. 16, 58-61.

18. W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology...*, *op. cit.*, n. 16, 62-73; J.D. O'Donnell jr., *Lavigerie in Tunisia. The Interplay of Imperialist and Missionary*, Athens, GA, 1979.

first world war<sup>19</sup>. Again, much of the focus of this work was on earlier periods, but later sites were also examined. Delattre in particular worked on a number of later Christian basilicas in Carthage including those at Bir Ftouha and Dermech, and helped establish an appreciation of the Byzantine period in the material culture of the city<sup>20</sup>. Although the relationship between Christian and secular archaeology was frequently tense in this period, the scale of this work ensured its integration into the grand synthetic surveys of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. Stéphane Gsell's *Atlas archéologique d'Algérie* includes many later churches (some of which he excavated himself), and the second volume of his *Monuments antiques de l'Algérie* includes a long discussion of Christian archaeology, including some from the fifth and sixth centuries<sup>21</sup>. Paul Gauckler's surveys of Tunisian archaeology at around the same time also integrated Christian material, some of which dated from the Vandal and Byzantine periods<sup>22</sup>.

In spite of this work, wider surveys of Classical North Africa still had a tendency to stop with the Vandal conquest, if not before. While grand projects often aspired to synthesize the history of the region down to the Arab conquest and beyond, such goals were rarely accomplished. Gsell's own *Histoire Ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord* ends at the time of the Roman occupation (although volume 5 on indigenous society does make good use of Byzantine period textual sources). More strikingly, Paul Monceaux's projected eight volume history *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne. Depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion Arabe*, only ran to seven volumes in its final form and ended with Augustine on the Donatist controversy, thereby omitting entirely the last two and a half centuries of the pre-Islamic period and belying the scope of its title<sup>23</sup>. The most significant exception to this rule was Charles-André Julien's substantial *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord*, which was first published in 1930 to commemorate the centenary of the French colonial occupation. That work drew upon the work of Schmidt, Diehl and (for the early Islamic period) E.-F. Gautier in creating a coherent survey of the region from prehistory to the present<sup>24</sup>. Outside this work, however, detailed discussions of fifth-, sixth- and seventh-century religion in North Africa tended to be restricted to isolated studies, or to relatively brief asides in works otherwise focused on later Roman, early medieval, or Byzantine history<sup>25</sup>.

19. J. Freed, "Le Père Alfred-Louis Delattre (1850-1932) et les fouilles archéologiques de Carthage", *Histoire, Monde et Cultures Religieuses*, 4.8, 2008, 67-100; J. Jansen, "Karthago und die Pères blancs", in C. Trümpler (ed.), *Das grosse Spiel: Archäologie und Politik zur Zeit des Kolonialismus (1860-1940)*, Cologne, 2008, 538-549.

20. R. Bockmann, *Capital Continuous. A Study of Vandal Carthage and Central North Africa from an Archaeological Perspective*, Wiesbaden, 2013, 98-105.

21. S. Gsell, *Les monuments antiques de l'Algérie*. 2 vols, Paris, 1901; S. Gsell, *Atlas Archéologique de l'Algérie*, Paris and Algiers, 1911.

22. Esp. P. Gauckler, *L'Archéologie de la Tunisie*, Paris, 1896.

23. P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne. Depuis les origines jusqu'à l'invasion Arabe*, 7 vols., Paris, 1905-1927.

24. Ch.-A. Julien, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord*, Paris, 1930.

25. See for example the study of Fulgentius by G.-G. Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence de Ruspe*, Paris, 1929 and the important study of the Three Chapters controversy by W. Pöschmann, "Imperium, ecclesia universalis, Rom:



## 2. Christian Courtois and the Later 20th Century

If Charles Diehl continues to cast a long shadow over the study of Byzantine Africa, Christian Courtois holds a similar position with respect to the Vandals. Prior to his untimely death in a car accident in the summer of 1956, Courtois wrote a ground-breaking analysis of the work of Victor of Vita, an produced important edition and commentary on the late-5<sup>th</sup> century Albertini Tablets, (with Louis Leschi, Charles Perrat and Charles Saumagne), and oversaw an expanded second edition of the first part of Julien's *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord*<sup>26</sup>. Courtois' greatest contribution, however, was undoubtedly his 1955 monograph *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, which remains perhaps the best single study of that topic, and a major monument in the study of pre-Islamic Africa<sup>27</sup>. Despite a full treatment of Vandal prehistory, Courtois' was an essentially North African study which situated the kingdom of the Hasdings firmly in the landscape of the Maghreb. *Les Vandales* included sensitive analyses of later Roman society and of the emergence of "Berber" polities, as well as a thorough assessment of the functioning of the Vandal state. Courtois' understanding of Vandal religious policy was similarly nuanced, and explored the importance of Arianism to the changing political authority of the Hasding kings, as well as the erosion of clear boundaries between "Vandal", "Roman", "Arian" and "Catholic"<sup>28</sup>.

The only significant weakness of Courtois' work was its rather superficial engagement with the archaeological scholarship, which was in a somewhat moribund state during the post-war period. This was to change dramatically in the generation that followed, and the flourishing of excavation and later field survey across Africa helped revive interest in the later history of the church. Synthetic analyses were published which emulated the ambition and vision of Gsell or Gauckler, but incorporated a greater degree of modern sensitivity to context and dating, as well as a wider range of material. Most relevant for our purposes – and still essential – are the massive collaborative surveys of the Christian basilicas of Algeria (with a second volume on Tunisia published in 2014), and Yvette Duval's similarly wide-ranging overviews of the saints' cults as they are attested in the archaeology, epigraphy and texts from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the 7<sup>th</sup><sup>29</sup>. Each of these placed welcome emphasis on post-Roman, (and especially Byzantine) material. New excavation campaigns were also ongoing, with impor-

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Der Kampf der afrikanischen Kirche um die Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts", in E. Seeberg, R. Holzmann and W. Weber (eds.), *Geistige Grundlagen römischer Kirchenpolitik*, Stuttgart, 1937.

26. C. Courtois, *Victor de Vita et son oeuvre*, Algiers, 1954; C. Courtois, L. Leschi, C. Perrat and C. Saumagne (eds.), *Tablettes Albertini: actes privés de l'époque vandale (fin du Ve siècle)*, 2 vols., Paris, 1952.

27. C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, Paris, 1955.

28. C. Courtois, *Les Vandales...*, *op. cit.*, n. 27, 275-310.

29. I. Gui, N. Duval and J.-P. Caillet, *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord, I. Inventaire des monuments de l'Algérie*, 2 vols., Turnhout, 1992; F. Baratte, F. Bejaoui, N. Duval, S. Berraho, I. Gui and H. Jacquest, *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord, II. Inventaire des monuments de la Tunisie*, Bordeaux, 2014; Y. Duval, *Loca sanctorum Africae. Le culte des martyrs en Afrique du IVe au VIIe siècle*, Rome, 1992.



tant implications for the understanding of the regional church, especially in later periods<sup>30</sup>. This increasing volume of excavation, combined with new sensitivity to dating enabled by the revolution in ceramic analysis in particular, allowed Vandal and Byzantine Africa to be appreciated as phases in the gradual evolution of a Christian region, rather than as distinct temporal periods to be set aside (or ignored).

The greatest developments in Christian archaeology were in Carthage, under the auspices of the UNESCO Save Carthage campaign from 1972-1992, and the implications of this work are still being felt. The campaign saw multiple teams return to the excavation of a city that had been comparatively neglected since the work of the Pères Blancs at the start of the century<sup>31</sup>. Late antique phases were a particular area of focus for the new excavations, particularly around the circular monument in the centre of the city and at the Avenue Habib Bourguiba in the south. This work continued into the 1990s, and is still in the process of publication<sup>32</sup>. New reappraisals complemented the initial excavations of the Pères Blancs at Damous el Karita<sup>33</sup>, Mcidfa<sup>34</sup>, Bir el Knissia<sup>35</sup>, and Bir Ftouha<sup>36</sup>, and further campaigns uncovered other late churches in the centre of the city including the “Carthagenna” Basilica<sup>37</sup> and (most recently) the Bir Messaouda Basilica<sup>38</sup>. Even before this expansion, historians appreciated the importance of this work for the understanding of Vandal and Byzantine rule in Carthage, and a material dimension again became central to discussions of these periods<sup>39</sup>. Similar reappraisals of the Christian archaeology of provincial cities like *Ammaedara* and *Sufetula* have nuanced this picture still further<sup>40</sup>. Increasingly, the Christian occupation of such centres is

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30. Archaeology in this period is summarized in N. Duval, “Quinze ans de recherches archéologiques sur l’antiquité tardive en Afrique du Nord. 1975-1990”, *Revue des Études Anciennes*, 92, 1990, 349-387 and *idem*, “Vingt ans de recherches archéologiques sur l’antiquité tardive en Afrique du Nord. 1975-1993”, *Revue des Études Anciennes*, 95, 1993, 583-640.

31. See esp. L. Ennabli, *Carthage: une métropole Chrétienne*, Paris, 1997 and W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity...*, *op. cit.*, n. 16, 313-317.

32. Summarized in R. Bockmann, *Capital Continuous...*, *op. cit.*, n. 20, 88-108.

33. H. Dolenz, *Damous el-Karita. Die österreichisch-tunesischen Ausgrabungen der Jahre 1996 und 1997 im Saalbau und der Memoria des Pilgerheiligtums Damous el-Kartita in Karthago*, Vienna, 2001.

34. L. Ennabli, *Les inscriptions funéraires chrétiennes de Carthage, II. La Basilique de Mcidfa*, Rome, 1982; L. Ennabli, *Carthage...*, *op. cit.*, n. 31, 133-135.

35. S.T. Stevens (ed.), *Bir el Knissia at Carthage. A Rediscovered Cemetery Church*, Portsmouth, RI, 1993.

36. S.T. Stevens, A.V. Kalinowski and H. VanderLeest, *Bir Ftouha. A Pilgrimage Church Complex at Carthage*, Portsmouth, RI, 2005.

37. L. Ennabli, *La Basilique de Carthagenna et le Locus des Sept Moines de Gafsa*, Paris, 2002.

38. R. Miles and S. Greenslade (eds.), *The Bir Messaouda Basilica. Pilgrimage and Transformation of an Urban Landscape in Sixth Century Carthage*, Oxford and Philadelphia, 2020.

39. F.M. Clover, “Carthage and the Vandals”, in J.H. Humphrey (ed.), *Excavations at Carthage, VII*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1982, 1-22; A. Ben Abed and N. Duval, “Carthage, la capitale du royaume et les villes de Tunisie à l’époque vandale”, in G. Ripoll and J. M. Gurt (eds.), *Sedes regiae (ann. 400 – 800)*, Barcelona, 2000, 163-218.

40. See R. Bockmann, *Capital Continuous...*, *op. cit.*, n. 20, 200-214, 227-37.

understood as a process of continual (and often uneven) transformation, rather than of sudden change at the time of the Vandal (or Byzantine) occupation.

Understanding of the more peripheral regions of post-Roman North Africa was also transformed in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the implications of this scholarship are still being felt in the twenty-first. A number of important studies by J.B. Ward-Perkins, R.B. Goodchild and Joyce Reynolds addressed the spread of Christianity in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, both through much more systematic appreciation of the archaeology and the reappraisal of the fragmentary textual and epigraphic data<sup>41</sup>. Although Christian remains are relatively scarce in these regions compared with the rich pickings further west, the implications of this work are considerable, particularly in thinking about the relationship between Christianity and earlier religions, and the church building programme under Justinian in the 540s and 550s<sup>42</sup>. Similar progress was made in the understanding of Mauretania Tingitana and the far west of Mauretania Caesariensis, which culminated in Noé Villaverde Vega's important survey of 2001<sup>43</sup>. Although Vandal and Byzantine power was only sporadically felt in this part of the Maghreb, and may have been limited to Septem (Ceuta) and a few other coastal garrisons, this work highlighted the importance of the region not least through its later connection to the ideology of imperial conquest, and later advances into Spain<sup>44</sup>. Christian archaeology of this region in this late period remains relatively slight, but the discovery of 5<sup>th</sup>-century basilical church at Septem illuminates the religious topography of that city under the Vandals<sup>45</sup>. This church seems to have fallen out of use under the Byzantines, but references in Procopius demonstrate the continued importance of church building in that city at the time of the reconquest<sup>46</sup>.

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41. See esp. J.B. Ward-Perkins, and R.G. Goodchild, "The Christian antiquities of Tripolitania", *Archaeologia*, 95, 1-83; J.B. Ward-Perkins, R.G. Goodchild and J. Reynolds, *Christian Monuments of Cyrenaica*, London, 2003 and the collected papers in R.G. Goodchild, *Libyan Studies*, London, 1976.

42. D. Roques, "Procopé de Césarée et la Cyrénaïque du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.", *Rendiconti dell'Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti*, 64, 1993-1994, 393-434; J. Reynolds, "Byzantine Buildings, Justinian and Procopius in Libya Inferior and Libya Superior", *Antiquité Tardive*, 8, 2000, 169-176. On comparable treatments of earlier cultic practice (and later relations with Christianity), see for example, V. Brouquier-Reddé, *Temples et cultes de Tripolitaine*, Paris, 1992.

43. N. Villaverde Vega, *Tingitana en la antigüedad tardía, siglos III-VII : autoctonía y romanidad en el extremo occidente mediterráneo*. Madrid, 2001, esp. 321-345.

44. D. Bernal Casasola and J.M. Pérez Rivera, "La ocupación bizantina de Septem. Análisis del registro arqueológico y propuestas de interpretación", in *V Reunión de Arqueología Cristiana Hispánica (Cartagena, 1998)*. *Actas*, Barcelona, 2000, 121-133.

45. E.A. Fernández Sotelo, *Basilica y necrópolis tardorromanas de Ceuta*, Ceuta, 2000. On Christian remains as a whole, see É. Lenoir, "Monuments du culte chrétien en Maurétanie Tingitane", *Antiquité Tardive*, 11, 2003, 167-79 and P.A. Février, "Aux origines du christianisme en Maurétanie césarienne", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Antiquité*, 98, 1986, 935-77.

46. Crisply summarized in D. Bernal Casasola and F. Villada Paredes, "Acerca del Frouirion Bizantino de Septem: Entre Procopio, Gozalbes y la Arqueología", in Sabino Perea Yébenes and Mauricio Pastor Muñoz (eds), *El Norte de África en Época Romana*, Madrid and Salamanca, 2020, 413-445.

Philological scholarship relating to Vandal and Byzantine Africa was also transformed in the later-20<sup>th</sup> century, not least through the proliferation of reliable textual editions and detailed studies of these works. Various volumes of the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* covered the substantial religious corpus of Fulgentius of Ruspe<sup>47</sup>, works attributed to Quodvultdeus of Carthage<sup>48</sup>, and the Byzantine-period texts of Verecundus<sup>49</sup>, Primasius<sup>50</sup>, and Facundus<sup>51</sup>. The same series also included compilations of texts relating to the African Church councils from 345-525<sup>52</sup>, and anonymous and pseudonymous religious writing from the same period, much of which may be dated to the Vandal period<sup>53</sup>. Important editions were also published in other series, including a text and translation of Quodvultdeus', *Liber Promissionum* for *Sources Chrétiennes*, and Antonio Isola's critical study of Fulgentius' writing<sup>54</sup>. Isola also examined Vandal Africa through the sermons of the period and brilliantly demonstrated the value of these neglected sources for the understanding of social and political – as well as religious – history<sup>55</sup>.

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also saw a scattering of other publications on different aspects of the history of Vandal and Byzantine Africa in a range of languages, although the principal emphasis was not always religious. Hans-Joachim Diesner's short history of the Vandal kingdom primarily discussed social and economic factors in its functioning and collapse, and referred only briefly to religious schism<sup>56</sup>. In 1981, Denys Pringle and Jean Durliat produced independent studies of Byzantine military policy in North Africa, each of which also reflected on the role played by the church in the consolidation of imperial power in the region<sup>57</sup>. At around the same time, Salvatore Puliatti interrogated the Justinianic legislation which marked the establishment of the imperial administration in Spring 534, and subsequently the religious laws which helped to sustain it<sup>58</sup>. Other publications were similarly religious in focus. Several scholars interrogated the survival of the imperial cult in Vandal

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47. Ed. J. Fraipoint, *CCSL*, 91-91A, Turnhout, 1961, 1968.

48. Ed. R. Braun, *CCSL*, 60, Turnhout, 1976.

49. Ed. R. Demeulenaere, *CCSL*, 90A, Turnhout, 1976.

50. Ed. A. W. Adams, *CCSL*, 92, Turnhout, 1985.

51. Ed. J.-M. Clément and R. van der Plaetse, *CCSL*, 90A, Turnhout, 1974.

52. Ed. C. Munier, *CCSL*, 149, Turnhout, 1974.

53. Various editors, *CCSL*, 91A, Turnhout, 1961.

54. Ed. R. Braun, *SC*, 101-2, Paris, 1964; A. Isola, *Fulgenzio di Ruspe. Salmo contro i vandali ariani*, Turin, 1983.

55. A. Isola, *I cristiani dell'Africa vandolica nei sermones del tempo (429-534)*, Milan, 1990. Cf. also S.T. Stevens, "The Circle of Bishop Fulgentius", *Traditio*, 38, 1982, 327-341.

56. H.-J. Diesner, *Das Vandalenreich. Aufstieg und Untergang*, Stuttgart, 1966, 79-84, 137-140.

57. D. Pringle, *The Defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab Conquest*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1981; J. Durliat, *Les Dédicaces. D'ouvrages de défense dans l'Afrique Byzantine*, Rome, 1981 and the comments in P.A. Février, "Approches récentes de l'Afrique byzantine", *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 35, 1983, 25-53.

58. S. Puliatti, *Ricerche sulla legislazione 'regionale' di Giustiniano. Lo statuto civile e l'ordinamento militare della prefettura Africana*. Milan, 1980 and cf. also S. Puliatti, "I privilegi della chiesa africana nella legisla-

North Africa, for example, as evidence both for the survival of municipal traditions into the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and the willingness of the Hasding kings to appropriate some of the symbols of imperial power within their own rule<sup>59</sup>. Robert Markus and Jean Durliat published a number of important studies on the role of bishops within the effective functioning of the Byzantine administration in Africa, and on the religious policies which guided the administration of the province as a whole<sup>60</sup>. Markus also examined the survival of strong Christian traditions in the African countryside, not least through the apparent “Donatist” revival attested in Gregory I’s letters of the later-sixth century<sup>61</sup>. The relationship between the African Church and Papacy from the time of Tertullian was also considered by Werner Marschall, with important reflections on the fifth and sixth centuries<sup>62</sup>. Byzantine Africa was also the subject of several important studies by Averil Cameron, which addressed numerous aspects relating to the Christian history of the region<sup>63</sup>. These include a helpful overview of the extant sources, and extended discussion of the role of the Three Chapters controversy in eroding local support for imperial power<sup>64</sup>.

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zione di Giustiniano e di Giustino II”, in *Estudios en homenaje al profesor Juan Iglesias*, 3, Madrid, 1988, 1577-1597.

59. A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, “Les survivances du culte impérial dans l’Afrique du nord a l’époque Vandale”, in *Mélanges d’histoire ancienne. Offerts a William Seston*, Paris, 1974, 87-118; F.M. Clover, “Emperor Worship in Vandal Africa”, in G. Wirth, K.-H. Schwarte and J. Heinrichs (eds.), *Romanitas-Christianitas: Untersuchungen zur geschichte und Literatur der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Berlin, 1982, 663-674; F.M. Clover, “Le culte des empereurs dans l’Afrique vandale”, *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*, 2.15-16. 1984, 121-128; N. Duval, “Culte monarchique dans l’Afrique vandale: culte des rois ou culte des empereurs?”, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 30, 1984, 269-273.

60. J. Durliat, “Les attributions civiles des évêques byzantins: L’exemple du diocèse d’Afrique (533-709)”, in *Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress (Wien 4.-9. Oktober) Akten 2.2*. Vienna, 1982, 73-84; J. Durliat, “Évêque et administration municipale au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in C. Lepelley (ed.), *La fin de la cité antique et le début cité médiévale*, Bari, 1996, 273-86; R.A. Markus, “Carthage – Prima Justiniana – Ravenna. An Aspect of Justinian’s ‘Kirchenpolitik’”, *Byzantion*, 49, 1979, 277-302; R.A. Markus, “Country Bishops in Byzantine Africa”, in L.R.D. Baker (ed.), *The Church in Town and Countryside*, Oxford, 1976, 1-15; R.A. Markus, “The Imperial Administration and the Church in Byzantine Africa”, *Church History*, 36, 1967, 18-23; R.A. Markus, “Additional Note on Justin II’s privileges for the Ecclesiastical Province of Byzacena”, *Byzantion*, 49, 1979, 303-308.

61. R.A. Markus, “Donatism: the Last Phase”, *Studies in Church History*, 1, 1964, 118-126; R.A. Markus, “Reflections on Religious Dissent in North Africa in Byzantine Period”, *Studies in Church History*, 3, 1966, 140-149.

62. W. Marschall, *Karthago und Rom*, Stuttgart, 1971, esp. 204-220.

63. Collected in A. Cameron (ed.), *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium*, Aldershot, 1996.

64. A. Cameron, “Byzantine Africa: The Literary Evidence”, in J.H. Humphrey (ed.), *Excavations at Carthage... op. cit.*, n. 39, 29-62; A. Cameron, “Gelimer’s Laughter: The case of Byzantine Africa”, in F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (eds.), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, Madison, 1989, 171-190; A. Cameron, “The Byzantine reconquest of N. Africa and the Impact of Greek Culture”, *Graeco-Arabica*, 5, 1993, 153-165.

Study of post-Augustinian religious life was also supported by the publication of a number of crucial works of reference in this period. The first volume of André Mandouze's *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire* is devoted to Africa from 303-533. While the exclusion of the later Byzantine period is to be regretted, it remains an essential starting point for studies of the church in the Vandal period, and an invaluable companion to the secular emphasis of the later volumes of the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*<sup>65</sup>. Jean-Louis Maier's detailed survey of the bishoprics of Vandal and Byzantine Africa was also an important compilation, which drew upon epigraphy and conciliar records in particular, and superseded Mesnage's earlier work on the same topic<sup>66</sup>. Synthetic bibliographies and gazetteers also helped to gather together ongoing archaeological work across Africa, and a number of conferences, round tables and journals ensured that new scholarship on the Vandal period and after gained a wide audience. Although the overwhelming majority of scholarly activity was still focused on the earliest centuries of Roman Africa, later periods were not completely neglected, and important foundations were laid for a renaissance in the study of this period at the time of the millennium<sup>67</sup>.

### 3. Historiography since 2000

Scholarly interest in Vandal and Byzantine North Africa has expanded spectacularly over the last twenty years. A dramatic increase in research activity and publication has transformed understanding of many aspects of the region's history, including its religious past. Interest in Vandal Africa in particular was reflected in a number of new books which examined the period as a whole<sup>68</sup>. Conspicuously, many of these came from outside the traditional Francophone heartland of Ancient North African studies, and were consequently shaped by wider currents in the historiography of the late antique and early medieval world, as much as the established traditions of the French approaches. As a result, studies of post-Augustinian Africa have become increasingly polyglot and the interactions between different scholars, working in different fields, have been enormously important. An increasing number of conferences, edited volumes, and journal special editions have been devoted to the Vandals and

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65. A. Mandouze (ed.), *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire. I. Afrique (303-533)*, Paris, 1982.

66. J.-L. Maier, *L'épiscopat de l'Afrique Romaine, Vandale et Byzantine*, Rome, 1974.

67. See for example the bibliography of late antique contributions to *Africa Romana* compiled by S. Fialon, "Antiquité tardive et christianisme africain dans L'Africa Romana: un bilan historique", *L'Africa Romana*, 20, 2016, 1145-1183.

68. See esp. M.E. Gil Egea, *África en tiempos de los vándalos*, Alcalá de Henares, 1998; N. Francovich Onesti, *I Vandali. Lingua e storia*, Rome, 2002; G.M. Berndt, *Konflikt und Anpassung. Studien zu Migration und Ethnogenese der Vandalen*, Husum, 2007; A. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals*, Oxford and Malden, 2010; J.P. Conant, *Staying Roman*, Cambridge, 2012; K. Vössing, *Das Königreich der Vandalen*, Darmstadt, 2014; R. Steinacher, *Die Vandalen*, Stuttgart 2016; R. Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal North Africa*, Berkeley, 2018.



their world<sup>69</sup>. No less significant is the appreciation of the fundamental role played by North Africa in the functioning of the later Roman state. If Dubos and Gibbon could all but ignore the region in their histories of decline and fall, Chris Wickham's seminal survey of the same period in 2005 accorded a central role to the Vandal capture of Carthage and the collapse of the imperial economy<sup>70</sup>. While most of this activity has been connected to the Vandal period, edited collections and isolated monographs have also considered Byzantine North Africa and the transition to the early Islamic period<sup>71</sup>.

Within this expanding field, the most important individual scholar was undoubtedly Yves Modéran, who passed away in 2010. Modéran's best-known work is certainly his monumental study of Moorish North Africa in late Antiquity, which also provided a nuanced reappraisal of the principal historical sources of early Byzantine Africa, and some important reflections on the social importance of Christianity across the region<sup>72</sup>. Yet his contributions to the understanding of Church activities in the heartland were scarcely less significant. Several important articles reflected on the nature and extent of the Arian persecutions under the Vandals, the structure of the Arian church, and its central political function within the state<sup>73</sup>. Modéran also published a typically bravura survey of the early Byzantine church at the time of the Three Chapters controversy<sup>74</sup>. Sadly, a monograph on the Vandals was left unfinished at the time of his death, and the draft sections which were published did not include the chapters on the African church<sup>75</sup>.

Scholarship on this period has been greatly helped by the further expansion of secure textual editions. Serge Lancel's edition and French translation of Victor of Vita's *Historia*

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69. Volumes 10 (2002) and 11 (2003) of *Antiquité Tardive* were dedicated to post-Roman Africa. Cf. also A.H. Merrills (ed.), *Vandals, Romans and Berbers*, Aldershot, 2004; G.M. Berndt and R. Steinacher (eds.), *Das Reich der Vandalen und seine (Vor-) Geschichten*, Vienna, 2008; V. Aiello (ed.), *Guerrieri, mercanti e profughi nel Mare dei Vandali*, Messina, 2014; É. Woolf (ed.), *Littérature, politique et religion en Afrique vandale*, Paris, 2015.

70. C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, Oxford, 2005.

71. S.T. Stevens and J.P. Conant (eds.), *North Africa under Byzantium and Early Islam*, Washington DC, 2016; P. Pentz, *From Roman Proconsularis to Islamic Ifriqiyah*, Göteborg, 2002; W. Kaegi, *Muslim Expansion and Byzantine Collapse in North Africa*, Cambridge, 2010; R. Bockmann, A. Leone and P. von Rummel (eds.), *Africa-Ifriqiya. Continuity and Change in North Africa from the Byzantine to the Early Islamic Age (Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano – Terme di Diocleziano, 28 February – 2 March 2013)*, Wiesbaden, 2020.

72. Y. Modéran, *Les Maures et l'Afrique Romaine*, Rome, 2003.

73. Y. Modéran, "L'Afrique et la persécution vandale", in L. Pietri (ed.), *Nouvelle Histoire du Christianisme, des origines à nos jours, III*, Paris, 1998, 247-278; Y. Modéran, "Les frontières mouvants du royaume vandale", in C. Lepelley and X. Dupuis (eds.), *Frontières et limites géographiques de l'Afrique du Nord antique*, Paris, 1999, 252-256; Y. Modéran, "Une guerre de religion: les deux Églises d'Afrique à l'époque vandale", *Antiquité Tardive*, 11, 2003, 21-44; Y. Modéran, "La *Notitia provinciarum et civitatum Africae* et l'histoire de l'Afrique vandale", *Antiquité Tardive*, 14, 2006, 165-185.

74. Y. Modéran, "L'Afrique reconquise et les trois chapitres," in C. M. Chazelle and C. Cubitt (eds.), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*, Turnhout, 2007, 39-82.

75. Y. Modéran, *Les Vandales et l'Empire Romain*, Arles, 2014.



*Persecutionis* for Budé in 2002 was particularly influential, and this was complemented by the German translation and edition of Konrad Vössing<sup>76</sup>. Lancel's publication catalysed a developing interest in that historian and informed a number of major studies that followed, among them Tankred Höwe's consideration of the Christian apologetics of that text<sup>77</sup>. Equally noteworthy, however, have been treatments of the text itself, including reflections on Victor's own origins and background, the intended function of the *Historia*, and its value as a historical source<sup>78</sup>. Lancel's volume also contains new editions of the anonymous *Passio Beatissimorum Martyrum* and the *Notitia Provinciarum*, a list of the dioceses of Africa and their incumbents which is conventionally associated with the Carthage Council of 484. The *Notitia* has long been a fundamental text in studies of the African episcopate, and Lancel's copious notes are an invaluable companion to the same scholar's publication of the episcopal lists from the Carthage Council of 411<sup>79</sup>. This edition also prompted a renewed interest in the form and function of the text itself, and its importance for the understanding of the scale of the persecutions of 483-484<sup>80</sup>.

Other religious writers of the Vandal period have also benefitted from the publication of new editions and translations of certain works, and these too have prompted fresh interpretation. Scholars have drawn particularly on the works attributed to Quodvultdeus, bishop of Carthage at the start of the Vandal period, and Fulgentius of Ruspe who was a prominent spokesman towards its end<sup>81</sup>. Although the *CCSL* editions of their works remain standard, many of Fulgentius' moral and didactic letters have been translated into French and English<sup>82</sup>. In 2016, Antonio Isola published a new edition of the *Vita Fulgentii* for *CCSL*, in which he also challenged the traditional attribution of that work to Ferrandus of Carthage,

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76. S. Lancel (ed. and tr.), *Victor de Vita. Histoire de la persécution vandale en Afrique*, Paris, 2002; K. Vössing (ed. and tr.), *Victor von Vita Kirchenkampf und Verfolgung unter den Vandalen in Africa*, Darmstadt, 2011.

77. T. Höwe, *Vandalen, Barbaren und Arianer bei Victor von Vita*, Frankfurt am Main, 2007.

78. See, for example, D. Shanzer, "Intentions and Audiences: History, Hagiography, Martyrdom and Confession in Victor of Vita's *Historia Persecutionis*", in A.H. Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers...*, *op. cit.*, n. 62, 271-290; É. Fournier, "Éléments apologétiques chez Victor de Vita: Exemple d'un genre littéraire en transition", in G. Greatrex and H. Elton (eds.), *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, Aldershot, 2015, 105-117; H. Inglebert, "Les interventions divines dans les textes narratifs catholiques à l'époque vandale", in É. Wolff (ed.), *Littérature, politique et religion en Afrique vandale*, Turnhout, 2015, 127-136.

79. Ed. S. Lancel, *SC*, 194, 195, 224, 373, Paris, 1972-1991.

80. Compare Y. Modéran, "La *Notitia*...", *op. cit.*, n. 66 and T. Höwe, *Vandalen...*, *op. cit.*, n. 70, 81-90 and cf. also É. Fournier, "Victor of Vita and the Conference of 484: A Pastiche of 411?", *Studia Patristica*, 62, 2013, 395-408.

81. R. González Salinero, *Poder y conflicto religioso en el norte de Africa : Quodvultdeus de Cartago y los Vándalos*, Madrid, 2002; D. Van Slyke, *Quodvultdeus of Carthage : the Apocalyptic Theology of a Roman African in Exile*, Strathfield, 2003; D. Vopřada, *Quodvultdeus: a Bishop Forming Christians in Vandal Africa*, Leiden, 2020.

82. Ed. D. Bachelet, *SC*, 487, Paris, 2004; tr. R. Eno, *Fulgentius. Selected Works*, Washington, DC, 1997; tr. R.R. McGregor and D. Fairbairn, *Fulgentius of Ruspe and the Scythian Monks*, Washington, DC, 2013.

arguing instead that it was written by Redemptus of Thelepte<sup>83</sup>. The range and richness of Fulgentius' writing also inspired a collection of papers edited by Antonio Piras in 2010, and including discussions of his political and episcopal importance, as well as his theology<sup>84</sup>.

Less familiar authors and texts have also stimulated important work. The *Passio Sanctae Salsae* is a tantalizing text, probably written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and concerning the voluntary martyrdom of a fourteen-year old in *Tipasa* during the later 4<sup>th</sup> century. A new edition and French translation of the text is included in an edited collection of 2015, along with a number of important studies on the historical and archaeological context of the *Passio*<sup>85</sup>. The *Disputatio Cerealis contra Maximinum*, written as a statement of Trinitarian doctrine by the bishop Cerealis has been edited by I Baise, and has been investigated for the light that it casts on the theological arguments associated with the Council of 484<sup>86</sup>. Vigilius of Thapsa was another champion of the Nicene cause at the same council, and may have been one of the authors behind the *Liber Fidei Catholicae* preserved in the *Historia Persecutionis*<sup>87</sup>. Pierre-Marie Hombert has also been tireless in his investigation of the pseudonymous and anonymous religious tracts of the period, including studies of the *Solutiones obiectionum arrianorum*, and critical editions of several texts for *CCSL*<sup>88</sup>. Other significant editions include that of an anonymous commentary on *Job*, which has been plausibly dated to an Arian cleric of the later Vandal period by Leslie Dossey<sup>89</sup>. Recent publications by Sabine Fialon and Robin Whelan have done much to reveal the importance of these texts to the understanding of religious conflict and intellectual exchange within the Vandal kingdom<sup>90</sup>.

The Christian poetry of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries has also seen extensive work. The publication of new Budé editions of the poetry of Dracontius in the 1990s prompted new interest in that poet, including analysis of the explicitly Christian compositions *De Laudibus Dei* and the *Satisfactio*<sup>91</sup>. Other studies have considered the possible implications of Dracontius' non-Christian writing, and have interpreted his mythological work as polemical, and not simply

83. Ed. A. Isola, *CCSL*, 91F, Turnhout, 2016.

84. A. Piras (ed.), *Lingua et ingenium : studi su Fulgenzio di Ruspe e il suo contesto*, Cagliari, 2010. Cf. also T.S. Ferguson, *Visita nos : Reception, Rhetoric and Prayer in a North African Monastery*, New York 1999.

85. S. Fialon and J. Meyers (eds.), *La Passio sanctae Salsae (BHL 7467). Recherches sur une passion tardive d'Afrique du Nord*, Bordeaux, 2015, 234-267.

86. I. Baise, "La *Disputatio Cerealis contra Maximinum* (Constantinople 813, CE): Tradition manuscrite et édition critique", *Révue Benedictine*, 116, 2006, 262-286.

87. R. Whelan, *Being Christian...*, *op. cit.*, n. 68, 77, n. 111 (with references).

88. Ed. P.-M. Hombert, *CCSL*, 87A, Turnhout 2009; Ed. P.-M. Hombert, *CCSL*, 90B, Turnhout, 2017; P.-M. Hombert, "Les *Solutiones obiectionum arrianorum*: Une oeuvre authentique de Vigile de Tapse. Édition intégrale, traduction et commentaire", *Sacris Erudiri*, 49, 2010, 202-241.

89. K.B Steinhauser, *CSEL*, 96, Vienne, 2006; L. Dossey, "The Last Days of Vandal Africa. An Arian Commentary on Job and its Historical Context", *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 54.1, 2003, 60-138.

90. S. Fialon, "Arianisme 'vandale' et controverse religieuse: le cas de la *Disputatio Cerealis contra Maximinum*", in É. Wolff (ed.), *Littérature...*, *op. cit.*, n. 78, 137-155; R. Whelan, *Being Christian...*, *op. cit.*, n. 68.

91. *De Laudibus Dei*: ed. C. Moussy and C. Camus, Budé, Paris, 1985-1988; *Satisfactio*: ed. C. Moussy, Budé, Paris, 1988. See esp. the collected essays in É. Wolff (ed.), *Littérature...*, *op. cit.*, n. 78 and now K. Pohl

as a reversion to secular themes<sup>92</sup>. Latin poetry survived the collapse of the Vandal kingdom, and represents an important historical source on the early Byzantine period in Africa. Corippus' epic *Iohannis*, written to commemorate military victories over the Moors between 546-548 is perhaps the clearest example of this, and new editions of the eight books of his epic are steadily being published<sup>93</sup>. Thanks to this, the Christian themes of his work – and the importance of his representation of Moorish paganism – are increasingly appreciated<sup>94</sup>. Corippus may also have published poetry on explicitly Christian themes, and his contemporaries certainly did<sup>95</sup>. Verecundus of Iunca's *De Paenitate* is perhaps the most striking example. The standard edition of that poem remains that of Roland Demeulenare for *CCSL*, but it has recently been translated into English by Greg Hays<sup>96</sup>.

New editions of other Christian writing from Byzantine North Africa lag some way behind those from the Vandal period, but here too philological scholarship has provided a platform upon which historical (and archaeological) analysis have been able to build. Important recent work has focused on the Three Chapters controversy which formed a principal point of dispute between sections of the African church and the imperial authorities in the 540s and 550s. Anne Fraïsse-Bétoulières's edition and translation of Facundus of Hermiane's massive *Pro Defensione Trium Capitulorum* has made an important contribution to this scholarship, not least through its substantial historical introduction<sup>97</sup>. Short studies by Yves Modéran and Leslie Dossey provide important reappraisals of this episode, and reveal the extent to which recalcitrant African bishops were more concerned with policing the boundaries of their theological authority than with articulating provincial resistance

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(ed.), *Dichtung zwischen Römern und Vandalen Tradition, Transformation und Innovation in den Werken des Dracontius*, Stuttgart, 2019.

92. For example L. Gosserez, "Lekphrasis de Cupidon dans le *Médée* de Dracontius", in É. Wolff (ed.), *Littérature...*, *op. cit.*, n. 78, 305-322.

93. See esp. P. Riedlberger, *Philologischer, historischer und liturgischer Kommentar zum 8. Buch der Johannes des Goripp*, Leiden, 2010, and most recently B. Goldlust (ed.), *Corippe. Johannide, Livre 4*, Paris, 2017.

94. See esp. Ch.O. Tommasi Moreschini, "Between Dissent and Praise, between Sacred and Secular: Corippus against the African background of the Three Chapters Controversy", *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, 53, 2017, 201-230; Ch.O. Tommasi Moreschini, "Classicismo e cristianità nella poesia africana dell'età vandolica e bizantina", in *Motivi e forme della poesia cristiana antica tra scrittura e tradizione classica*, Rome, 2008, 893-912; Ch.O. Tommasi Moreschini, "Persistenze pagane nell'Africa del VI secolo: la Iohannis corippea e la questione dei *dii mauri*", in M. Marin and C. Moreschini (eds.), *Africa Cristiana. Storia, religione, letteratura, Morcelliana*, Brescia, 2002, 269-301, and the collected papers in B. Goldlust (ed.), *Corippe, un poète latin entre deux mondes*, Lyon, 2015.

95. Cf. H. Hoffmann, "Corippus as Patristic Author?", *Vigiliae Christianae*, 43, 1989, 361-377.

96. G. Hays, "Sounds from a Silent Land: The Latin Poetry of Byzantine North Africa", in S.T. Stevens and J.P. Conant (eds.), *North Africa under Byzantium...*, *op. cit.*, n. 71, at 289-293.

97. Ed. A. Fraïsse-Bétoulières, SC 471, 478, 479, 484, 499, Paris, 2002.

to imperial rule, as had sometimes been assumed<sup>98</sup>. This sense of a confluence between African Christianity and the wider currents of the Mediterranean has also been drawn out in Michael Maas's critical study of Junillus Africanus' *Instituta regularia divinae legis*, and important reinterpretations of the work of Liberatus of Carthage by Mischa Meier and Philippe Blaudeau<sup>99</sup>. Also important in this context is recent work on the *Chronicle* of Victor of Tunnuna, at once a participant within the debate and an essential commentator on it, and the editions of Antonio Placanica (with Italian translation and extensive notes), and Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann are essential<sup>100</sup>.

Recent study of the Christian history of Byzantine Africa has also extended beyond the voluminous writing generated by the Three Chapters dispute, with the result that the subtleties (and contradictions) of this period are starting to come into focus. Wolfgang Kaiser's brilliant reappraisal of the legislation of Justinian and Justin II has done a great deal to clarify the church structures of the period, and particularly the challenge the long-standing assumption that Africa was beset by inter-provincial rivalries<sup>101</sup>. His work has shown that provinces remained essential within the organization of the church, but that struggles for influence between the bishop of Carthage and the primates of Numidia and Byzacena are likely to have been the exception rather than the rule. Issues of primacy also relate to the study of Roman influence within Africa. This had been an issue throughout the history of African Christianity, but continued to come to the fore, not least through the interventions of Leo I in the Mauretanian church in the mid fifth century, and of Gregory I in Numidia and Byzacena during the later 6<sup>th</sup><sup>102</sup>. Important scholarship has reflected on the position of Africa within wider networks of saints' cults across the Mediterranean, and the degree to which the Vandal and Byzantine occupations changed these patterns<sup>103</sup>. Rather fewer texts relate to 7<sup>th</sup>-century African Christianity, but those that do have also been the subject of important work. The influential eastern theologian Maximus the Confessor was in North Africa from the mid 620s and continued to produce texts in opposition to contemporary Monotheletism from his exile. Editions, translations and studies of Maximus' writing are now increasingly

98. Y. Modéran, "L'Afrique reconquise...", *op. cit.*, n. 74; L. Dossey, "Exegesis and Dissent in Byzantine North Africa", in S.T. Stevens and J.P. Conant (eds.), *North Africa under Byzantium...*, *op. cit.*, n. 71, 251-268.

99. M. Maas, *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean*, Tübingen, 2003, 119-235; M. Meier, "Das Breviarum des Liberatus von Karthago. Einige Hypothesen zu seiner Intention", *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, 14, 2010, 130-148; P. Blaudeau, "Liberatus de Carthage ou l'historiographie comme service diaconal", *Augustianum*, 50, 2010, 543-565.

100. Ed. and tr. A. Placanica, *Vittore da Tunnuna Chronica*, Florence, 1997.

101. W. Kaiser, *Authentizität und Geltung spätantiker Kaisergesetze. Studien den Sacra Privilegia concilii Vizaceni*, Munich, 2007.

102. S. Adamiak, *Carthage, Constantinople and Rome*, Rome, 2016; compare Y. Duval, "Grégoire et l'Église d'Afrique", in J. Fontaine, R. Gillet and S. Pelliotrand (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand*, Paris, 1986, 129-158.

103. Cf. J.P. Conant, "Europe and the African Cult of Saints, circa 350-900: An Essay in Mediterranean Communications", *Speculum*, 85, 2010, 1-46; J.P. Conant, "Sanctity and the Networks of Empire in Byzantine North Africa", in S.T. Stevens and J.P. Conant (eds.), *North Africa under Byzantium...*, *op. cit.*, n. 71, 201-214.

widespread, due in no small part to the tireless efforts of Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen<sup>104</sup>. The other significant text relating to religious life in the 7<sup>th</sup> century is the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* which relates the experiences of a Jewish merchant in Carthage at this time, and is generally read as an authentic account of imperial religious policy<sup>105</sup>.

Recent archaeological work, like textual scholarship, built upon the foundations laid in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also expanded considerably. This has allowed understanding of the fabric of early Byzantine Christianity to extend beyond somewhat simplistic models derived from Procopius' panegyric *Buildings*, and that text too has been the subject of important work<sup>106</sup>. The somewhat piecemeal nature of archaeological publication, and the international backgrounds of the teams involved, means that keeping up with ongoing research is often challenging. Of enormous help here are the wide-ranging discussions of Anna Leone on the transforming cities of North Africa, and of Ralf Bockmann on the archaeology of the Vandal kingdom<sup>107</sup>. Also invaluable have been regular summaries of recent archaeological discoveries, particularly by Fathi Bejaoui<sup>108</sup>. The value of integrating textual, epigraphic and archaeological scholarship is increasingly becoming apparent in discussions of this period. This is illustrated particularly clearly by Christine Hamdouné's extraordinary survey of the Mauretania provinces in late antiquity, where these inter-disciplinary approaches have been particularly valuable in illuminating the religious landscape<sup>109</sup>.

Contemporary understanding of sectarian disputes between the different churches of Vandal and Byzantine Africa clearly illustrates the value of combining archaeological and textual sources, and the new perspectives that this can bring. This has been helped in no small part by an increased sensitivity to the situatedness of doctrinal affiliation, and an appreciation that sectarian affiliations like "Arian" (or "Homoian") and Nicene ("Homoousian" or

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104. P. Allen and B. Neil (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford, 2015; P. Allen and B. Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions: Documents from Exile*, Oxford, 2002. See also T.T. Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor*, Oxford, 2008.

105. V. Déroche, "Préface de la réédition", in G. Dagron and V. Déroche (eds.), *Juifs et chrétiens en Orient byzantin*, Paris, 2010, 15-16. Contra P. Speck, "Die Doctrina Jacobi nuper Baptizati", in *Beiträge zum Thema. Byzantinische Feindseligkeit gegen die Juden im frühen siebten Jahrhundert*, Bonn, 1997, 435-439.

106. Cf. M. Vallejo Girves, "Funcionalidad politico-ideológica de las edificaciones religiosas en el Africa de la *Renouatio Imperii* justiniana", *Polis*, 7, 247-264.

107. A. Leone, *Changing Townscapes in North Africa from Late Antiquity to the Arab Conquest*, Bari, 2007; A. Leone, *The End of the Pagan City*, Oxford, 2013; R. Bockmann, *Capital Continuous...*, *op. cit.*, n. 20.

108. F. Bejaoui, "Recherche archéologique à Thelepte et ses environs. Note sur les récentes découvertes", in F. Bejaoui, *Histoire des Hautes Steppes: Antiquité-Moyen-Âge*, Tunis, 2003, 147-161; F. Bejaoui, "Les Vandales en Afrique: Témoignages archéologiques. Les récentes découvertes en Tunisie", in G.M. Berndt and R. Steinacher (eds.), *Das Reich der Vandalen...*, *op. cit.*, n. 69, 197-212.

109. C. Hamdouné, *Ad fines Africae Romanae: Les mondes tribaux dans les provinces maurétaniennes*, Bordeaux, 2018, esp. 271-327. Compare F. Baratte and F. Bejaoui, "La société ecclésiastique dans les hautes steppes tunisienne à la fin de l'antiquité: le témoignage de l'archéologie", *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 154.1, 2010, 93-125.



“Catholic”) were much less clear-cut than was once assumed<sup>110</sup>. More detailed understanding of the changing groundplans of a range of different churches from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries demonstrates clearly the essential point that liturgical differences were not reflected the physical form of the churches themselves. That is to say, an “Arian” church cannot be distinguished from a “Nicene” one simply through excavation. But this is certainly not to say that services – or the experience of worship – were indistinguishable. This has led scholars to reflect in increasing detail on the extent to which doctrinal affiliations could be expressed through shifts in internal architecture, or through the deposition of privileged relics.<sup>111</sup> This also connects to other forms of differentiation which survive less well in the archaeological record, including the dress of worshippers, or the language in which their services were conducted<sup>112</sup>. The few traces that exist of Vandalic as a language, for example, may all be connected in different ways to liturgical practice (even the fragment of the “drinking song” commemorated in the *Latin Anthology* may in fact relate to the eucharist)<sup>113</sup>. In this sense, archaeology and philology in combination have opened up dramatic new vistas for scholarship. Recent work has also helped put theological debate back at the centre of Vandal studies. The considerable corpus of texts which document the doctrinal controversies of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries are no longer seen as an embarrassing irrelevance to the “real” business of secular history, but rather as a focal stage upon which a variety of social and political identities were worked out.

## 4. Conclusion

The Vandal and Byzantine periods have always been something of a peripheral area in the study of classical North Africa and of late Antiquity more broadly. Until very recently, relatively few extended studies were devoted to the field, and it sometimes stood outside wider scholarly currents. It is striking, for example, that the period was only occasionally invoked in the expansive scholarship of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century colonial occupation, and was all but ignored in the post-colonial reappraisals of the later 20<sup>th</sup>. Only since the millennium have wider historiographical approaches been applied systematically to the study of Vandal and Byzantine Africa, but the results have been remarkable. The last twenty years have witnessed an unprecedented scale of scholarship on post-Roman North Africa, much of which has been concerned with the religious history of the region. The systematic examination, publication and criticism of major textual sources has brought with it an important reassessment of some of the basic principles of religious life in this period. So too has an increasingly sophisticated appreciation of the material record. Certain aspects of African religious history remain much

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110. Discussed in detail in R. Whelan, *Being Christian...*, *op. cit.*, n. 68.

111. A.M. Yasin, “Beyond *spolia* : architectural memory and adaptation in the churches of late antique North Africa”, in S.T. Stevens and J.P. Conant (eds.), *North Africa under Byzantium...*, *op. cit.*, n. 71, 215-236.

112. See esp. P. von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus. Kleidung und Repräsentation spätantiker Eliten im 4 und 5 Jahrhundert*, Berlin and New York, 2007.

113. N. Francovich Onesti, *I Vandali...*, *op. cit.*, n. 68, 140-141.



better studied than others – the Vandal persecutions and the Three Chapters controversy are well attested in the textual record and remain disproportionately represented in modern scholarship too – but even here, discussion has not remained static. It is to be hoped that these advances will continue over the next twenty years, and that hitherto neglected fields and texts will receive the attention that they deserve.