

# CITIZENSHIP IN ANTIQUITY

## Civic Communities in the Ancient Mediterranean

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## Chapter 48

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# CHRISTIAN RECONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND FREEDOM IN THE LATIN WEST

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# CHRISTIAN RECONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND FREEDOM IN THE LATIN WEST

*Els Rose*

## Introduction

The impact of Christianity on citizenship in the late Roman and post-Roman world cannot easily be overestimated.<sup>1</sup> Notions of citizenship and civic participation underwent fundamental changes in antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The concept of citizenship itself had lost much of its legal and political relevance since the early third-century *Constitutio Antoniniana* had granted citizenship to ‘nearly all free-born residents’ (Ando 2016: 7; cf. Besson in this volume). Citizenship and the *locus* where civic rights and duties were enjoyed became subject to new definitions (Besson 2020; Brélaz 2021). Examples of such new definitions are found in late Roman imperial legislation codified in the first half of the fifth century CE, in which process the imprint of Christianity is clearly visible: the laws collected in Book XVI of the Theodosian code introduced baptism and loyalty to Nicaean orthodoxy as prerogatives for the full enjoyment of Roman citizenship.<sup>2</sup>

The present chapter examines the presence of Latin civic vocabulary in narrative and performative texts in which saints figure as role models for the Christian faithful. The re-use of this ancient vocabulary, inherited from Roman and biblical discourses, will show a repeated process of Christian reconceptualizations of the community as *civitas*, and of the members of that community – with their privileges and obligations – as *cives*. The chapter will, by its choice of sources, highlight the early Medieval West, which is rarely taken into account in the history of citizenship (Rose 2021). The scholarly discussion tends to summarize Christianity’s impact on post-classical citizenship by concentrating on the discourses of philosophy and theology and their two main protagonists, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) (Arthur 2008), which leaves the period of the early Middle Ages undiscussed. Moreover, the chapter will focus not on theoretical treatises but on the performative sources of Christian cultic worship, particularly hagiography and liturgical prayers. Just as the material city changed fundamentally in its geographical layout and location through the lasting presence of a saint’s bodily remains,<sup>3</sup> the narrative and cultic texts commemorating a

saint's life show a *longue durée* process in which new generations added new layers to various re-imaginings of the city, citizens, and citizenship.

The focus in this chapter will be first (Section "Miracles in the city gate") on Sulpicius Severus' *Life of Martin*, one of the earliest Latin *Lives* of a saint-non-martyr, and in many ways the model example of Latin hagiography (Stancliffe 1983: 6; Ristuccia 2018: 158). Martin's performance in the city gates of Amiens and Paris, transforming outsiders into participants in the civic community, invites us to tease out the profile of this saint as a liminal *persona* (Turner 1969: 94–130). In the "Performing and mediating *libertas*" and "Performing *libertas*: the evidence in liturgical sources" sections, the focus will be on the saints' embodiment of one particular civic virtue, namely *libertas*. We will take this as a case study to uncover Christian reconceptualizations of this ancient civic concept in hagiography (Section "Performing and mediating *libertas*") and in liturgical texts in commemoration of saints (Section "Performing *libertas*: the evidence in liturgical sources").

### Miracles in the city gate

The figure of the Christian saint takes a special position in the triple relation of city, citizen, and citizenship. Portrayed as living outside the city, the earliest saints whose *Lives* were committed to writing were told to shun the city, while the city and its obligations did not let them go (*Life of Anthony* 14, 44). Clare Stancliffe's monumental study of Sulpicius' *Life of Martin* brings into focus the special position of Martin of Tours among his fellow bishops in fourth-century Gaul. A foreigner by birth, an outsider in terms of education, and an exception because of his outlook on political and ecclesiastical matters, the famous bishop of the metropolitan *civitas* Tours is profiled in Sulpicius' work as an alien to the late Gallo-Roman civic elite. Stancliffe links this 'marginal position' to Martin's identification with people of low societal status, such as the beggar of Amiens (*Life* III.1–5) and the leper of Paris (*Life* XVIII.3–5; Stancliffe 1983: 350–352). In the following, I propose a re-reading of these two passages, focussing on the role of the city gate in both stories as a liminal space that separates those in the city, participating in its civic life, from those outside the city, without access to the civic community.

### *Clothing the naked: Life of Martin III.1–5*

The scene of Martin clothing the naked beggar has become the most famous part of Sulpicius' *Life*. The oldest iconography of the scene, as depicted, for example, in an early eleventh-century Fulda Sacramentary (c.975) (Figure 48.1) stresses the civic character of Martin's exemplary act of charity by placing the saint in the city gate of Amiens (*Life* III.1; Fontaine 1967: 256). Martin, depicted against a shining yellow background, is literally in the spotlight when he encounters the beggar, positioned in the *porta civitatis* as an outsider. In this liminal space between inside and outside, between belonging and expulsion, Martin shares his cloak with the naked man. By doing so, Martin performs one of the acts of civic benefaction, 'fused' with Christian charity (Salzman 2017: 76), that a bishop of his time was supposed to perform.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, Martin is seen to perform this act long before he was elected bishop, even before he was baptized. The position of the celebrated 'charity of St Martin' early in the saint's life enables Sulpicius to make Martin's election to the episcopate plausible from the start.

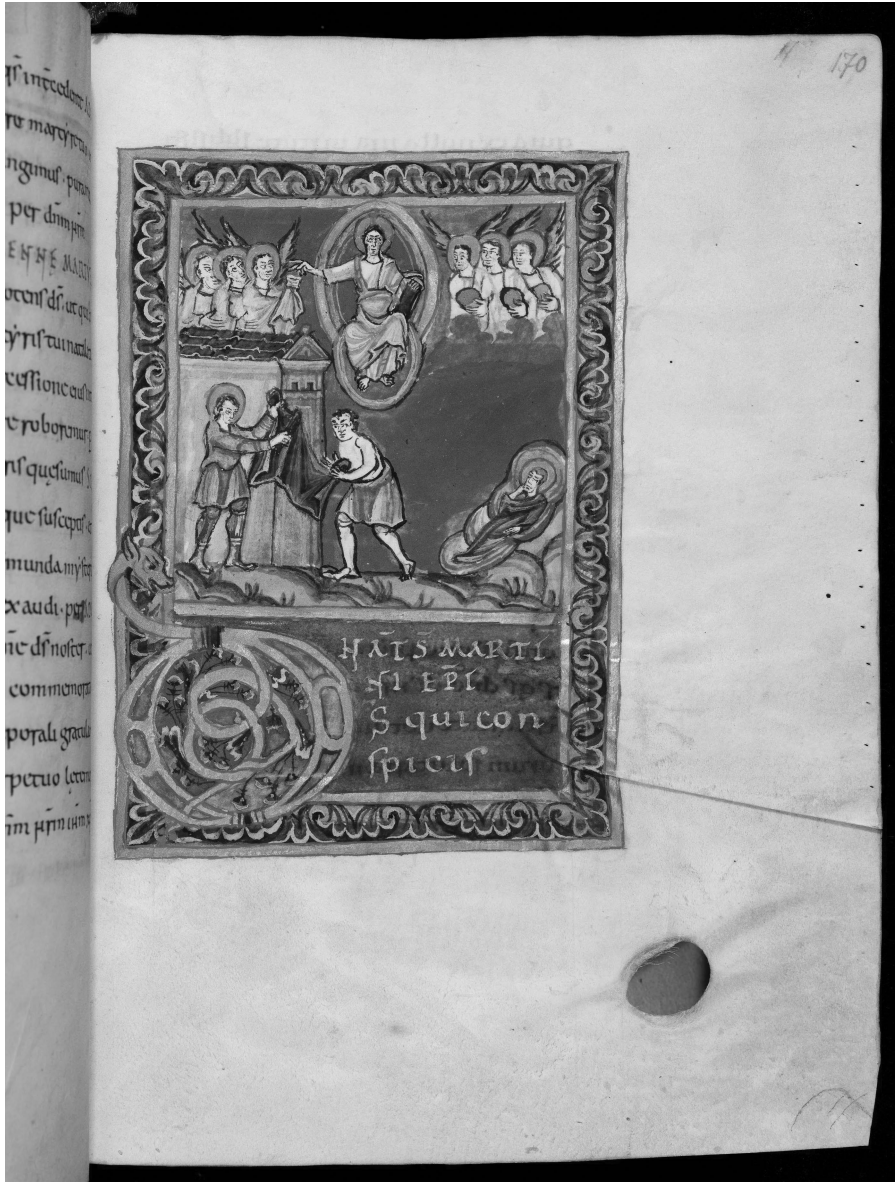


Figure 48.1 MS Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek MSc.Lit.1, f. 170r. Image courtesy of Bamberg National Library.

Immediately after the division of the cloak, the beggar disappears from the scene. Sulpicius' first concern is the derogatory reaction of the bystanders, scorning Martin, now half-naked himself, for his un-citizenlike appearance. Their sceptical response is overwritten by the dream vision in the next passage, where Christ appears in the same cloak that Martin shared with the beggar. Sulpicius' focus is now entirely on the saint and the deeper meaning of his act of charity. The vision, a heavenly reward for Martin's

charity, prefigures the saint's investment with the episcopal robes – a custom of which Sulpicius was critical (Miller 2014: 16; Burton 2017: 158–159). According to Sulpicius, Martin qualifies best for the episcopal office by fulfilling the evangelical commandment to clothe the naked (Matthew 25, 40) and, by doing so, restoring the beggar's access to the civic community.

### ***Kissing the leper: Life of Martin XVIII.3–5***

The miracle story in *Life* XVIII.3–5 of Martin healing a leper by kissing him is commonly read as a parallel to the beggar scene in Ch. III.<sup>5</sup> It is important to place the two scenes in the entire structure of the 27 chapters of the *Life*. The two scenes describing Martin's exceeding charity, in Ch. III as a catechumen, in XVIII as a bishop, form, as in a narrative triptych, the two side panels around the central pane (Ch. 12–15) presenting Martin's iconoclastic conversion of the pagan heartlands of his diocese (Burton 2017: 204).<sup>6</sup>

At the city gate of Paris, bishop Martin encounters a leper, the biblical archetype of isolation from the civic and ritual community (Carmichael 1993: 838). Sulpicius presents the intimacy of this encounter, with Martin kissing (*osculatus*), blessing, and cleansing<sup>7</sup> the outcast. At first sight, the biblical frame seems to be dominant, where Luke 17, 11–19 narrates Christ's curing ten lepers, of whom only the Samaritan returns to give thanks.<sup>8</sup> As in Amiens, the setting in the city gate marks the leper as an outsider, an anti-citizen. After the intense encounter with Martin, the spotlight is now fully on the person cured of the horrible illness. While the beggar of Amiens immediately disappeared from view to give the stage to Martin, in this episode we follow the cleansed leper into the city of Paris, entering the ritual space where Christian citizens perform their cult. In the previous passage of the same chapter, the church was already presented as a public space (Burton 2017: 229). This is underlined once more when the leper is seen to participate in the public ritual of the Eucharist, summarized by the technical term referring to this core Christian ritual: *gratias agere*, to give thanks (Blaise 1966: 201). Through his encounter with Martin, the former outcast received access to the circle where those baptized celebrated their religious cult in the heart of the *civitas* (Ristuccia 2018: 180) and participated in the civic *and* Christian community.

### **Performing and mediating *libertas***

Martin's double act of charity forms the side panels of Sulpicius Severus' narrative triptych depicting Martin's *Life*, as we have seen. Two other scenes have a similar structural function. A bit closer to the inner panel depicting Martin's destruction of pagan cults are two narratives in which the saint is presented as practising and mediating free speech, one performed before he was baptized and the other as a bishop. In the third episode to be discussed in this section, we will examine Martin's approach to freedom as an antonym to slavery (Lavan 2013: 75–80).

### ***The saint as embodiment of free speech***

Freedom to express oneself in writing or speaking, as one of the sub-categories of the complex Roman concept of *libertas*, is among the forms of civic freedom related to,

though never fully overlapping with, ancient citizenship.<sup>9</sup> To speak freely in the face of rulers is also a biblical virtue that we find embodied by Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles (Arena 2018: 651; Wood 2018).

Sulpicius' saint Martin has long been recognized as a representative of this biblical virtue of speaking up before kings and rulers (Psalm 118/119: 46), in his relation to the emperor ('the tyrant') Julian (*Life of Martin* 4.4; Burton 2017: 23, 168) and Maximus (*Life of Martin* XX.1–7).<sup>10</sup> Sulpicius' *Life* includes two relevant and well-known stories that portray Martin's commitment to *libertas dicendi* (freedom of speech). In Ch. IV. 4–5, when Martin was still serving in the military, he himself embodied this form of freedom. Sulpicius emphasizes Martin's courage when he decides to become a *miles Christi* and, therefore, refuses to carry the weapons that kill (Fontaine 1967: 260).

In Ch. XVIII.2, Martin mediates the same freedom of speech to a person possessed by an evil spirit (Fontaine 1967: 292). Here, he does not speak up himself but enables someone else to practise this civic virtue to the benefit of the entire community. The citizens of Trier are troubled by rumours of an imminent barbarian attack upon their city. Thereupon, Martin asks a man possessed by an evil spirit to tell whether the stories are true. They are not, the man confesses *in media ecclesia* – and upon this public confession (Fontaine 1967: 860; Burton 2017: 229), the city is set free (*civitas liberata est*). Although Fontaine treats this story as the third element in a 'trptych' of exorcisms delivering three men from evil spirits,<sup>11</sup> it is important to note that the story in XVIII.1–2 does not tell whether the possessed person is liberated, only that the city is set free. Burton, therefore, reads this episode as a political narrative, where Sulpicius presents Martin as 'the good statesman' (Burton 2017: 229).

### ***The saint providing freedom from servitude***

Now that we have recognized Martin as a practitioner and mediator of *libertas dicendi*, we will examine how this model saint furthered other forms of freedom, namely freedom from servitude. To this end, we will study *Life of Martin* II.5, again an episode from Martin's life before baptism. While the acceptance of slavery was common among most early Christian theologians, ecclesiastical authorities, and Christian ascetics (Kitchen 2005: 140), Sulpicius describes Martin here as abstaining from his right, as the son of a higher military official, to own several slaves (Fontaine 1967: 459) and contenting himself with only one servant (Fontaine 1967: 254). Sulpicius describes Martin as treating this single servant as an equal, serving him in cleansing rituals before sharing his meal with him. This passage is most commonly read against the biblical background of John 13 where Christ, washing his disciples' feet, inverted the roles of master and servants. Several textual elements, including lexical parallels (Burton 2017: 156), justify this reading. Fontaine finds the hermeneutic key to the passage in the sequence of washing first and then sharing food (Fontaine 1967: 460). Although the example that Martin aims to imitate is without doubt biblical, reading this passage only against the background of John 13 does not do full justice to the text, where no feet are washed but boots.<sup>12</sup> An early rewriting of Sulpicius' text by the late fifth-century Paulinus of Périgieux accentuates Martin's act as liberating the slave and granting him a position that, as Paulinus emphasizes, noblemen would envy.

Paulinus versified Sulpicius' *Life* between 461 and 470 (Labarre 1998: 20) at the request of bishop Perpetuus of Tours (461–491). While other rewritings of Sulpicius' hagiography omit the episode described in VM II.5, such as Venantius Fortunatus'

versification of the late sixth century (Corpet 1849; Quesnel 1996), Paulinus reflects on the relationship between Martin and his *servus* extensively. In 11 verses, the reader's attention is drawn to the happy (*felix*) slave 'set free' (*solutus*):

He barely allowed one companion to go with him,  
not fettered by work, but a slave only in name.  
O happy man, to whom such a graceful condition prepared  
such a yoke that noble men could vie with you for your fate  
in a spirit of competition – if only they were allowed to serve. You are constrained  
to the harsh law of birth and now set free from that law.  
For the saint in self-sacrifice submits himself to you and serves you.  
The same dress; the shared abundance of a sober meal.  
He is the first to serve, so that not even the most diligent observer might recognize  
the slave placed before his master.<sup>13</sup>

Following Paulinus, we read this story not so much as an allusion to the pedilavium in John 13, but rather as a narrative altercation with late Roman social reality, profiling the rare master who treated his servant as an equal and took the slave's role. What the passage has in common with John 13 is this inversion of roles. Paulinus' reading, however, presents even more explicitly than the Gospel story an actual performance of freeing the slave, obviously born in slavery but now freed.<sup>14</sup> Through Paulinus' rewriting, this passage in the *Life of Martin* stands out as an example of late Roman hagiography as 'subversive' literature (Herrin 1987: 7; Kitchen 2005: 129), with Martin changing the 'social status' (Kitchen 2005: 131) of the unnamed slave. By choosing this focus of liberation, Paulinus portrayed Martin as similar to rare Christian ascetics abstaining from the possession of slaves in Late Antiquity. Famous is the example of the ascetic woman Marcrina who liberated her household servants to share the ascetic life with her, as described by her brother, bishop Gregory of Nyssa (*Life of Macrina* 7).<sup>15</sup> Likewise, sharing the same way of dressing (*idem habitus*<sup>16</sup>) and a sober meal refer to the monastic life that Martin chose to share with his former slave.

Re-reading *Life of Martin* II.5 through contemporary interpreters sheds new light on the character of the Christian saint as a liminal *persona* (Turner 1969), a figure on the threshold between civic life and its opposites. While previous scholars applying Turner's concept mainly took the saint as the 'liminal figure' (Coleman 1987: 205–225; Elliott 1987: 168–180), the *Life of Martin* and its early rewritings raise the question of who the liminal figure is, in the end. Martin, or the man born under the law of enslavement and now freed from that law? Martin, or the kissed leper, participating in the ritual community of citizens? Martin or the naked beggar? Martin is depicted by Sulpicius as a prisoner of the military life forced on him, as himself a person 'deprived of freedom' (Fontaine 1967: 458–459). Martin, 'betrayed' by his own father, was 'imprisoned and chained by the military oaths' (Fontaine 1967: 254). Paulinus teases out the strenuous relation with the veteran-father, whom he depicts as a *proditor*, 'handing over' his son, (I.29; Labarre 2016: 134), so that Martin becomes a 'captive soldier'. Yet Paulinus stresses that only Martin's body is bound, while his heart is free to resist the vices typical of the *militia saeculi* (I. 35–42; Labarre 2016: 136).

In this pluriform change of social roles, where the captive officer liberates the slave, the full paradox of the Christian saint comes to the fore. Himself a captive, he becomes the mediator of freedom. Martin granted outsiders access to the civic community and its benefits, while he rejected the city as a dwelling place for himself both before and after he was elected bishop of Tours.<sup>17</sup> Martin's act of charity in *Life* 3, parting with the

proper clothing, can likewise be read as an act of giving up participation in the civic community while transforming others into members of that community. Likewise, by taking upon himself the yoke of slavery, the saint is able to liberate the slave. Thus, the salvific, Christ-like character of the saint (Rose 2004: 127–128), offering to others what he himself gave up in self-sacrifice (Kitchen 2005: 147), enables those who encountered the saint to cross the threshold.

As we have seen in the previous two sections, the late Roman saint Martin in the narratives of Sulpicius and Paulinus embodies civic virtues as much as he is a mediator of civic participation and liberation, to the benefit of citizens (*cives*) and the community as a whole (*civitas*). The next section will show that such complex use of citizenship discourse was not limited to hagiography.

### **Performing *libertas*: the evidence in liturgical sources**

Liturgical prayers for saints' feasts provide another corpus to bring into focus the Christian 'appropriation and revalorization' (Burton 2017: 160) of civic vocabulary and the role of the saints in profiling the civic community in new ways. In what follows, the key word *libertas* forms a persuasive case study,<sup>18</sup> traced in prayers for saints' feasts that echo the narrative traditions studied in the previous sections. The focus will be on cathedral liturgy, where the congregation joined the clergy in the celebration of Sunday and feast-day Masses.<sup>19</sup>

A search for the key word *libertas* through the digital corpus of late antique and medieval Latin liturgical prayers in celebration of saints (Moeller 1971–1979; 1980–1981; Moeller et al. 1992) indicates one specific category of saints as the embodiment of freedom: the apostles and apostle-like saints. In itself, this is not surprising. The liturgical cult commemorates the apostles for their missionary work, bringing the Christian message to the world (Matthew 28, 19–20). To highlight this, the composers of liturgical prayers made ample use of hagiographic traditions in which the replacement of ancient cults by the exclusive Christian religion is central. In hagiographic narratives on the individual apostles (the so-called 'apocryphal Acts of the apostles'), this transition is framed in terms of 'liberation': the ancient cult is invariably presented as one of dependency and oppression, while Christianity, represented by the apostle, is introduced as liberation. The object of this liberation through the saintly apostle is, crucially, not the individual soul but the *civitas*, the entire civic community (Rose 2017b).

As we will see in the following three examples, *libertas* as enacted by the apostles and apostle-like saints operates on several levels: social, particularly the inversion of the roles of master and slave; political, especially the apostle's privilege and duty to speak up against a secular ruler; and spiritual, in the sense of liberation from sin that purifies the community and enables it to fulfil its cultic duties.

### ***Reconceptualizing public office***

The earliest Western saint-non-martyr labelled *vir apostolicus* is Martin of Tours (Burton 2017: 27–28). By examining *libertas* in Martin's liturgical cult, the close link between apostolicity and freedom comes into sharp focus. In the previous sections, we encountered Martin in various enactments and mediations of *libertas*, among which was the master-slave episode in *Life of Martin* II.5. This scene is rarely referred to in



the liturgical prayers for Martin, which are largely dominated by the saint's famous act of charity in sharing his cloak with the naked beggar and his fight against the Arians (Oury 1961). Only in the Old Hispanic liturgy in commemoration of Martin's episcopal ordination does the image of Martin rejecting the traditional role division of slave and master occur. This early medieval liturgical tradition, preserved in eleventh-century manuscripts and in the early modern printed codices of Toledo (Boynton 2015), celebrated not only Martin's *natale* on November 11, but also his episcopal ordination on August 11 (*Cathedra Martini*; Oury 1961: 644–645). This feast-day is exceptional for various reasons.<sup>20</sup> First, its prayer texts are not limited to Martin's apostolic qualities in the traditional wording that we find already in Sulpicius' *Life*, describing Martin as *vir apostolicus* and sharing in the 'dignity of the apostles' (Férotin 1911/1995 no. 888: 398). The prayers grant Martin concrete apostolic properties, most notably the apostolic authority to forgive sin (Férotin 1911/1995 no. 891: 399). Among the 12 apostles, Peter was exclusively endowed with this authority (Matthew 16, 19). Martin's equality with Peter is expressed even more remarkably in the final blessing of this Mass, which portrays Martin as having received the keys of the heavenly kingdom (Férotin 1911/1995 no. 892: 400). Likewise, Martin's episcopacy is put on par with Peter's in the unusual title of this feast: *Cathedra Martini* (Férotin 1911/1995 nos. 887 and 892: 398, 399) – a title most commonly reserved for Peter's Chair celebrated on February 22 (Harnoncourt and Auf der Maur 1994: 137). In several ways, this remarkable set of prayers singles out Martin as truly an 'apostolic man'.

In more specific detail, the Old Hispanic prayers position Martin's authority in the paradox of the ascetic attitude with which Martin exercised his episcopacy. Seeking the seclusion from civic duties (no. 884: 396) and longing for the isolated hiding places of the desert (no. 886: 397), he was elected for this public office of serving the people (no. 886: 397). In this emphasis on the ascetic authority (Rapp 2005) with which Martin served the community of his diocese, the prayer texts approach the civic office of the bishop in religious tones of humility and obedience. The prayers echo *Life of Martin* II.5 where the saint, still under secular arms, was already a priestly bishop in his heart (no. 888: 397); where the office of bishop made him accept the form of a slave (Philippians 2, 7); and where his interpretation of the episcopal office was not 'domination', but 'servitude', and 'obedience' rather than 'power'.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the prayer highlights how Martin, in imitation of Christ, took upon himself the role of a slave, as narrated in *Life of Martin* II.5, to fulfil his public office, thereby fundamentally redefining the public and civic office of the bishop that dominated his age (Stancliffe 1983). Moreover, the prayer sheds new light on the hymn of obedience sung in Paul's Letter to the Philippians 2, 5–11, which is often interpreted as a purposefully Christian affirmation, if not propagation of slavery.<sup>22</sup> The Old Hispanic Prayer, conversely, underlines the elevation central in this passage, emphasizing the liberation that comes as an answer to the humiliation enacted not by the slave but by the master:

For he did not accept the public office of the episcopacy in order to exercise power, but he understood it as the acceptance of the form of a slave. For he was so formed by the example of his Lord and Saviour, that the undefiled liberty of divine election remained in him.<sup>23</sup>

In the Old Hispanic Prayer, clearly, the apostle-bishop was meant to subvert the institution of slavery by enacting it rather than confirming it without question.

### ***Freedom of speech in the liturgical cult of the apostles***

The earliest preserved Latin liturgical prayers commemorating the apostles themselves also verbalize the political aspects of freedom that we encountered in the previous sections, especially freedom of speech. Late antique theologians saw the right and duty to speak freely in the face of rulers as an ‘apostolic freedom’, as Irene van Renswoude has pointed out in her discussion of Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315–367) and his work *Against Constantius*. Hilary insists on the *libertas apostolica* that the bishop inherited from the apostles (Rocher 1987: 176; van Renswoude 2019: 50). Hilary was also aware that *libertas dicendi* often comes with a price, and explicitly connected speaking up to a ruler with martyrdom (Rocher 1987: 166; van Renswoude 2019: 41).

This theme is present in the liturgical prayers for many apostles, beginning with Peter and Paul. The urban patron saints of Rome exercised their frankness in the face of the emperor Nero, and this formed the direct cause of their martyrdom (Rose 2021).

*Libertas dicendi* and martyrdom are linked in similar ways in the prayers for Mass in honour of the apostle Andrew. Andrew’s preaching ‘with a free voice’ (*libera voce*) is connected immediately with his death on the cross in an eighth-century Frankish prayer for this Mass (Dumas 1981, no. 1667: 216). The act of speaking freely is linked not only to Andrew’s death, but also to his *conversatio*: the apostle witnesses Christ both with his ‘way of life’ as a preacher and in his death as a martyr.

The prayer in celebration of Andrew presents the apostle as an imitator of Christ through his life and his way of dying, but it does not make explicit how or if the faithful in their turn should follow the apostle’s example. The latter aspect does come to the fore in the liturgical commemoration of the apostles James and John in a late seventh-century collection of prayers for Mass located in Burgundian Autun (Rose 2005, no. 41: 366; Rose 2017a, 130–131). The apostolic prerogative of speaking up in the face of the powerful of this age is rooted in biblical discourse (Psalm 118/119, 46), presented as mediating between the faithful and God, paving the way for the prayers of the faithful towards a divine response.

The exemplary nature of the *libertas apostolica* is most emphatically expressed in a Mass for Thomas in the later medieval liturgy of Spain, where the increasing influence of Rome led to the composition of new service books in the reformatory eleventh century. One of those is the Sacramentary of Vich, compiled in 1038, which also brings in Psalm 118/119, 46 as the central notion of the apostle’s duty to speak freely (*libera voce*) in the face of secular rulers. The prayer takes matters one step further in actualizing the preaching of the apostle Thomas as narrated in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*: the apostle is explicitly presented as a role model (*exemplis eius*) for the faithful (Olivar 1953, no. 751: 109).

### ***Freedom from sin***

In the apocryphal narratives that underlie many liturgical prayers, the apostle is portrayed as a liberator from local cults, as we have seen above. One of the most outspoken examples of this is the apostle Bartholomew, whose cult was first introduced in the West with the arrival of his relics to the island of Lipari south of Italy around the year 580 CE, spreading from there through the European mainland. Most early medieval liturgies commemorate how Bartholomew ‘liberated’ the people in his mission area (India) from the local cult, presented as an oppressive system where the godhead

strikes his followers with illnesses only to free them again upon their sacrifice (Rose 2009: 90–98). The prayers translate this ‘act of liberation’ into the apostle’s authority to liberate from sin, which the congregation now prays for in a liturgical actualization of the apocryphal narrative. The sinful soul is compared with the pagan temple; the liberation of the temple from the ancient cult paves the way to redemption from sin (Férotin 1911/1995 no. 843: 375). The direct object of liberation is defined as those involved in performing the sacrifice of Mass, so that they become free from sin. This ritual purity makes the liturgical sacrifice of the Eucharist effective and will purify the hearts of all faithful who participate in it (Férotin 1911/1995 no. 845: 376).

### *A ‘free voice’ for all Christians*

So far, our focus has been on saintly apostles and apostle-like saints as the embodiment of new, Christian interpretations of civic and religious (spiritual) forms of freedom. In the examples taken from the liturgical prayer tradition, we have already seen that spiritual freedom is shared with the entire Christian community. The (apostolic) saint is commemorated as a role model of free speech that should incite the faithful to imitation, and as a mediator of spiritual freedom for all faithful.

That the apostolic prerogative of free speech was shared with all baptized Christians becomes clear from a fifth-century commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, composed by bishop Chromatius of Aquileia (c. 400), which circulated widely in the early Middle Ages as part of pre-baptismal catechesis. The text is found in early Carolingian handbooks for pastoral care (van Rhijn 2022) and late eighth-century Frankish service books for cathedral Mass (e.g., Dumas 1981, no. 553: 72). The instruction of baptismal candidates or, in the case of infant baptism, their (god)parents, included an explanation of the Lord’s Prayer as one of the core texts that a new Christian had to learn by heart (Lemarié 1969: 91). Once baptized, the new faithful took on their role in the performance of the Mass, which included the recital of this prayer until well into the first millennium (Rose 2017a: 70–71). Chromatius taught the baptismal candidates of his congregation and of generations after him throughout the Frankish realm to pray through these words ‘boldly’ and in all ‘freedom of speech’:

Therefore, the Word of God and the Wisdom of God, Christ our Lord, taught us this prayer, so that we may say: Our Father in heaven. This is the voice of freedom, which is full of faith.<sup>24</sup>

Chromatius seems to play with the Roman concept of *libertas dicendi* and the Latin term *fiducia* which occurs in the Vulgate as the most common translation where the Greek New Testament has *parrhesia* (van Renswoude 2019). *Libertas dicendi* was no longer only a civic virtue inherited from Rome, but it also became a core Christian virtue. At the beginning of this section, we saw that in Roman political discourse, freedom is a matter of the community (*civitas*) and the citizen (*civis*). We see now that this remains valid in a Christian reconceptualization of *libertas*, where a new, theological interpretation of freedom affects both the community and its members. The individual members are addressed in Chromatius’ pre-baptismal catechesis, whereas in another sermon his use of *libertas* also concerns the wider political entity of ‘*gentes*, cities, provinces and, in the end, the entire world’ (Chromatius of Aquileia, *Sermones* 19; Lemarié 1971: 28). Like his contemporaries (Ristuccia 2011), Chromatius adapted

his language to his audience to make his sermons accessible and persuasive (Lemarié 1969: 59; McEachnie 2018: 467–468). In this attempt, he also used civic language to express his theology in terms familiar to his audience and recognizable for them in the daily reality that they brought to church. Through this process, Chromatius as well as the anonymous prayer texts above present Christian reconceptualizations of existing civic concepts. *Libertas* is now a Christian virtue, linked to the privileges that a post-Roman Christian acquired through baptism and membership of the church. It also becomes a Christian *duty*, as all Christians participating in the cult of Mass were expected to join in the congregational recitation of the Lord's Prayer, their communal expression of freedom and faith.

### **Conclusion**

In the transitional period of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, profiles of the citizen and citizenship were redefined with the help of ancient terms filled with new meaning and along new lines of inclusion and exclusion drawn according to Christian definitions of civic belonging. From the fourth century onwards, the civic community came to bear the hallmarks of a religious definition of who belonged and who did not belong. To be qualified as a citizen one depended on one's religious affiliation, and baptism became a crucial requisite to participate in civic rights and privileges.

We have encountered the Christian saint, primarily the apostles and those most closely cast in their mould, as a role model for this new profile of citizen and civic community. The saint embodied civic virtues, among which *libertas* stood out as one of those virtues that served the civic community (*civitas*) through its members (*cives*). The Christian conception of *libertas* in its social (freedom of the community and its members from external dominion) and political form (freedom to speak out in front of a ruler) was not a mere response to Roman political conceptualizations of freedom. Nor did it follow a purely biblical programme of frankness of speech necessary to safeguard religious freedom and to further spiritual liberty from sin. Rather, the performative discourses that we encountered in saints' lives and the liturgical cult of saints show a mixture of Roman and biblical discourses, in which the religious and the political increasingly overlap. A new form of community developed, in which Christian conceptions of virtue and community fed political outlook and actions, while leadership was more and more commonly performed in accordance with this Christian programme of community. Freedom worked on several levels as a core value and virtue to be performed by all.

With the examination of the liturgical tradition, the question arises as to how and to what extent Christian cultic practices modified social practices and divisions of roles. As is well attested, Christian theologians and leaders generally accepted slavery as a common social phenomenon in Roman society and, in large measure, the biblical thought-world. The baptismal candidates who entered the church with Chromatius' catechesis as their primer left it after Mass to return to a daily reality of slaves serving masters and masters dominating slaves, both in Chromatius' fifth century and in the early medieval communities that inherited his baptismal catechesis (Wickham 2005: 259–263). While free voice counted as an exclusive privilege and duty for all those seeking membership of the Christian community, speaking up to the godhead in the confined ritual space of communal worship was not the same as freedom to speak in the political domain. However, with this emphasis on speaking up to the godhead as the highest authority, in which all Christians were called to participate – even speechless

infants whose pre-baptismal confession was mediated by parents or godparents – a seed of the existential search for freedom was sown in every new member of the church. With baptism came a mode of thinking *in terms of* freedom from the start, to be continuously cultivated and performed by each named member within the context and to the benefit of the community. The image of Christianity as promoting submission and ‘quietism’, for which Annelien de Dijn sees an origin precisely in the late and early post-Roman period (de Dijn 2020: 118), does not do full justice to the centrality of the concept of freedom in performative texts of the first millennium of Christianity (Brague 2016). Freedom is an example of how civic virtues were Christianized in the post-Roman world, giving shape to new patterns of civic belonging and new agency in the performance of citizenship.

### Editions of texts

- Athanasius, *Life of Anthony*, in G.J.M. Bartelink (ed.) (1994) *Athanase d’Alexandrie, Vie d’Antoine*, Sources chrétiennes 400 (Paris)
- Chromatius of Aquileia, *Sermones*, SChr 154 and 164, in Lemarié (1969, 1971)
- Cicero, *De officiis*, in W. Miller (transl.) (1913) *Cicero, On duties*, LCL 30 (Cambridge MA)
- Hilary of Poitiers, *Liber in Constantium imperatorem*, in Rocher (1987)
- James of Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, in Maggioni (1998)
- Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum*, in Férotin (1911/1995)
- Life of Macrina*, in Maraval (1971)
- Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, in B.O. Foster (ed.) (1919) *Livy History of Rome Books 1–2*, LCL 114 (Cambridge, MA)
- Missale Gothicum*, in Rose (ed.) (2005)
- MS UB Göttingen, Cod. Ms. Theol. 321
- Paulinus of Périgueux, *De vita sancti Martini libri sex*, in Labarre (1996), SChr 581; cf. Petschenig, M. (ed.) (1888) *Poetae christianae minores*, CSEL 16 (Vienna) 14–159
- Richer of Metz, *Vita sancti Martini* (BHL 5634), in Decker (1886)
- Sacramentarium Gellonense*, in Dumas (1981)
- Sacramentarium Vicennense*, in Olivar (1953)
- Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi*, in C. Halm (ed.) (1866) *Sulpicii Severi libri qui supersunt*, CSEL 1 (Vienna) 152–216
- Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Martin*, in Fontaine (1967)
- Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita sancti Martini*, in Corpet (1849); Quesnel (1996)

### Notes

- 1 This chapter was written as part of the project NWO VICI-Rose 277-30-002 *Citizenship Discourses in the Early Middle Ages, 400–1100*, funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research NWO. I thank my colleagues in this project for their valuable comments on a first draft of the chapter.
- 2 Salzman (1993); Lo Nero (2001); Humfress (2008); Flierman and Rose (2020).
- 3 Rosenwein (2009: 46); Brown (1981); van Dam (1993).
- 4 Fontaine (1967: 121); Brown (2002, 2012); Allen et al. (2009).
- 5 Fontaine (1967: 867); Stancliffe (1983: 351–352); Burton (2017: 229–230).
- 6 Based on this structure of Sulpicius’ *Life*, I see Martin’s iconoclasm as the very heart of Sulpicius’ portrayal of the saint, *pace* Wood, who marginalizes Sulpicius’ interest in Martin’s missionary work (Wood 2001: 28).

- 7 Purification (*emendatio*) as cleansing from disease and sin (Fontaine 1967: 867; Burton 2017: 230: ‘the language is cultic, not primarily medical’).
- 8 Fontaine (1967: 866) refers to Luke 7, 12, the story of the dead son of the widow of Nain who is carried to the necropolis outside the city.
- 9 TLL s.v. *libertas*, 7.2.1314.28 (TLL consulted online at <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html> [last accessed 14 January 2021]); *libertas* as a complex political concept in Rome affects both individuals (Cic. *Off.* 1.70) and communities (Livy *Hist.* 37.54). For an individual it covers ‘the sum of civic rights granted by the laws of Rome’ (Wirszubski 1950: 7).
- 10 Burton (2017: 235–236); also in Sulpicius, *Dialogi* III.11; van Renswoude (2019: 139–140).
- 11 XVII.1–4, XVII.5–7 and XVIII.1–2; Fontaine (1967: 832–862).
- 12 Although many interpreters state that the servant’s feet are washed, not his boots: Burton (2017: 97): ‘and he, the master, in turn acted as slave to him, to the point of taking off his shoes and rubbing **him** down’. The same in Mönnich (1962: 18); Nissen and Rose (1997: 29). Likewise, the twelfth-century rewriting of the *Vita Martini* by Richer of Metz: *pedum tergens vestigia* (Decker 1886: 6). James of Voragine, in his *Legenda aurea*, follows Sulpicius more closely: *et calceamenta sepius detrahebat atque tergebat* (Maggioni 1998: 1133). Fontaine translates: ‘...en general, c’était lui qui lui retirait ses chaussures, lui encore qui les nettoyait’ (Fontaine 1967: 255).
- 13 Paulinus of Périgueux, *De vita sancti Martini libri sex*, I, 1. 43–53: *Unum progressus socium sibi vix sinit ire / Non opere adstrictum, sed solum nomine servum. / O felix, cui tale jugum tam grata paravit / Conditio, ut de sorte tua contendere tecum / Nobilium possint certantia vota virorum, / Si liceat servire tamen; sed tu quoque duram / Cogeri ad legem nascendi lege solutus. / Nam tibi subiecti servit devotio sancti: / Idem habitus, parcae communis copia mensae. / Hic prior obsequiis, ne saltim noscere possit / Praelatatum domino quaevis sollertia servum.* Edition with French translation: Labarre (2016: 136–138); English translation is mine.
- 14 The Latin allows us to read at the same time ‘freed from the law’ and ‘freed by the law’, i.e., the Christian religion presented as *lex*: Ristuccia (2019); Ando (2018).
- 15 Edition with French translation: Maraval (1971: 165). See also Lenski (2021); Harper (2016).
- 16 On *habitus* as referring to both ‘way of life’ and ‘way of dressing’, also in the more narrow monastic context since the late fourth century CE, see Burton (2017: 162).
- 17 *Life of Martin* VI.5, VII.1, X.1–9; Burton (2017: 186).
- 18 On Christian liturgy as a means to further a late antique city’s *libertas*: Ristuccia (2018: 50–51).
- 19 On the civic character of monastic liturgy, see Birkedaal Bruun and Hamilton (2016); Malone (2016).
- 20 The fifth-century triple feast-day of Martin’s episcopal ordination, the translation of his relics, and the dedication of the new basilica in Tours was universally celebrated on July 4 (Maurey 2014: 42).
- 21 *non dominatio ... sed servitus, et obsequium potius quam potestas.* No. 888: 398.
- 22 de Wet (2018). Particularly De Wet’s argument that Paul’s hymn furthered a ‘habitus and hexis’ of subjugation because the congregants ‘may have included gestures of bowing and kneeling’ (p. 41) one-sidedly emphasizes the servitude of Philippians 3, 7 and passes over the exultation in v. 9, echoed by the *libertas* emphasized in the Old Hispanic prayer.
- 23 Férotin (1911/1995 no. 888: 398): *Quia non occasione exercende potestatis suscepit principatum sacerdotii; sed formam serui suscepisse cognouit: ipsius Domini et Saluatoris formatur exemplo, ut maneret in eo diuine electionis intemerata libertas.*
- 24 Chromatius of Aquileia, *Sermones* 40; Lemarié (1971: 226): *Ergo dei sermo et dei sapientia, christus dominus noster, hanc orationem nos docuit, ut ita oremus: pater noster qui es in caelis. Haec libertatis uox est et plena fiducia.*

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