



HAL
open science

Amputation Metaphors and the Rhetoric of Exile: Purity and Pollution in Late Antique Christianity

Eric Fournier

► **To cite this version:**

Eric Fournier. Amputation Metaphors and the Rhetoric of Exile: Purity and Pollution in Late Antique Christianity. Hillner, Julia; Enberg, Jakob; Ulrich, Jörg. Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity, Peter Lang, pp.231-249, 2016, Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity, 17. hal-02572756

HAL Id: hal-02572756

<https://hal.science/hal-02572756v1>

Submitted on 13 May 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Éric Fournier

Amputation Metaphors and the Rhetoric of Exile: Purity and Pollution in Late Antique Christianity¹

Abstract: As episcopal banishment became the normative sentence for bishops in the 4th century, a rhetoric of exile came to express the symbolic understanding of this measure through amputation metaphors. Blending three older strands (philosophical, religious, and political) of medical metaphors, this discourse continued a traditional concern for purity and pollution in Roman religion.

At the conclusion of the council of Chalcedon, in 451, the assembled bishops found Dioscorus of Alexandria guilty of crimes, unrepentant, and deposed him. In application of this sentence, Dioscorus was sent into exile at Gangra, where he would spend the rest of his life.² The assembled bishops thus wrote to Valentinian III and Marcian to communicate their decisions:

Serious diseases need strong medicines and wise physicians. For this reason therefore the Lord of the universe placed your piety in charge of the diseases of the world as an expert physician, so that you should treat them with appropriate remedies; and you, most Christian ones, accepted the divine decree and have expended expert care on the churches before everything else, devising the medicine of harmony for the bishops. [...] Therefore [Dioscorus] has been appropriately stripped of the priesthood by the ecumenical council and formally deprived of episcopal dignity, in order to provide a sobering example of discipline for those who might try to commit similar offences, since the divine laws themselves declare openly, 'Drive out the wicked person from among yourselves' (1 Cor 5:13). What could be worse than committing such outrages – trampling on the divine canons, filling the whole world with storm and tempest, dividing the members of the church, and arming them against one another? When someone sees a limb

-
- 1 This chapter benefited immensely from the insightful comments of generous scholars and friends: Hal Drake, Julia Hillner, Maijastina Kahlos, Bertrand Lançon, who also shared important ancient references, and Wendy Mayer, who not only provided key modern references, but also suggested significant improvements to the main argument. I thank each of them for their important contributions, but alone am responsible for the remaining errors and the point of view expressed herein.
 - 2 Simp., Ep. 4 and 7 ascribe responsibility to Marcian for Dioscorus' exile, on which see P. Blaudeau, *Quand les papes parlent d'exil: L'affirmation d'une conception pontificale de la peine d'éloignement durant la controverse chalcédonienne (449–523)*, in: id. (ed.), *Exil et relégation: Les tribulations du sage et du saint durant l'antiquité romaine et chrétienne (I^{er}–VI^{es}. ap. J.-C.)*, Paris 2008, 273–308 (279f.).

in the grip of incurable disease and infecting the whole body, he will turn to the physician, who will apply the knife and amputate the diseased part in order to confer health on the rest of the body.³

Passages such as this one, evoking amputation metaphors, are quite common in contexts of episcopal banishment. It is this rhetoric of exile, the “discourse of displacement” and its late antique transformations, which the present chapter analyzes through a study of these metaphors.⁴ But amputation metaphors were not used in a vacuum. They were in fact part of a much wider phenomenon, a system of metaphors built around medical imagery, as the bishops of Chalcedon attest (diseases, medicines, physicians, etc.). While amputation metaphors might, at first sight, give the impression that they represented excessively harsh coercive measures, it is important to situate them within their wider system of medical metaphors. In this larger context, they signified a measure of last resort that systematically followed attempts at milder healing measures. We observe this tension between the desire to heal the disease/offender and the necessity to amputate the infected part that resisted milder remedies in the letter from Chalcedon. Indeed, there is an obvious contrast between the first part of the passage, in which the bishops insist on the “medicine of harmony,” and the second part, in which they “amputate the diseased part in order to confer health on the rest of the body.” In light of the argument presented earlier in this volume, that Constantine was opposed to coercion, used synods of bishops to settle Christian disputes, and exile as the harshest measure of discipline, the present chapter argues that this system of medical metaphors constituted a symbolic representation of the process adopted by Constantine: when the church body was ill, the emperor-physician

3 *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* 3.98 (trans. R. Price / M. Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, TTH, Liverpool 2005, 111f.). On the council and its context, see: H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford 2001, 570–584; M. Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Empire*, Berkeley 2005, 310–322; and E. Watts, *Theodosius II and His Legacy in Anti-Chalcedonian Communal Memory*, in: C. Kelly (ed.), *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2013, 269–284.

4 Cf. J.F. Gaertner, *The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, in: id. (ed.), *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond*, Mn.S 283, Leiden 2007, 1–20. For a definition of ‘metaphor’, see R.A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, Berkeley ²1991, 100: “Changing a word from its literal meaning to one not properly applicable but analogous to it; assertion of identity rather than, as with Simile, likeness.” See further J.P. van Noppen, *La pratique de la métaphore: How to do Things with Metaphor*, in: RBPH 68 (1990), 527–530.

first used “the medicine of harmony” by organizing synods to heal it, but in last resort amputated the diseased part to prevent spreading the infection.⁵

Whereas the previous chapter on “Constantine and Episcopal Banishment” attempted to establish Constantine’s policy in settling ecclesiastical disputes in the Christian Church, by analysing case studies to determine the reasons that justified the adoption of exile as the best sentence to discipline bishops, the present chapter analyses the discourse that underpinned such policy. It seeks to understand the mental universe in which medical metaphors represented episcopal banishment, to map out the symbolic understanding of such policy through metaphors, and to explain the conception of exile shared by both bishops and emperors from the point of view of *l’histoire des mentalités*. In order to do so, this chapter situates the symbolic understanding of banishment within the framework of a much older and traditional concern for purity and pollution, in which religion and politics were naturally intertwined, a form of what is labeled in contemporary scholarship as ‘boundary maintenance.’⁶ This approach adopts the framework of analysis popularized long ago by Mary Douglas and applied insightfully by Jack Lennon in his recent work on an earlier period of Roman history.⁷ It also dovetails recent analyses of

-
- 5 As the bishops of Chalcedon explained, they first attempted to mend the ways of those responsible for such pollutions, before resorting to deposition. *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* 3.98 (trans. Price / Gaddis, 2005, 111): “...if by fitting repentance he had accepted the remedy from this ecumenical council.” See *infra*, *Constantine and Episcopal Banishment: Continuity and Change in the Settlement of Christian Disputes* for Constantine’s use of exile against bishops.
- 6 Boundary maintenance: T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*, Philadelphia 2009, 24. Pollution: M.Y. Perrin, *The Limits of the Heresiological Ethos in Late Antiquity*, in: D.M. Gwynn / S. Bangert (eds.), *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, LAA 13, Leiden 2010, 201–227; Cf. R. Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*, Oxford 1983; G.E.R. Lloyd, *In the Grip of Disease: Studies in the Greek Imagination*, Oxford 2003, 12f.; H. Niehr, *JHWH als Arzt. Herkunft und Geschichte einer alttestamentlicher Gottesprädikation*, in: BZ 35 (1991), 3–17; M.L. Brown, *Israel’s Divine Healer*, Grand Rapids 1994; W. Cutter, *Midrash & Medicine: Healing Body and Soul in the Jewish Interpretive Tradition*, Woodstock 2011, for examples of this tradition in earlier civilizations.
- 7 M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, New York 1984. J.J. Lennon, *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge 2014; *id.*, *Pollution, Religion and Society in the Roman World*, in: M. Bradley (ed.), *Rome, Pollution and Propriety: Dirt, Disease and Hygiene in the Eternal City from Antiquity to Modernity*, Cambridge 2012, 43–58. Cf. R. Firth, *Banishment and Exile. Reflections on a Tikopia Practice*, in: *Paideuma* 24 (1979), 247–258.

medical metaphors as “contagion and removal” and “social hygiene” in late antique exilic contexts.⁸

It is tempting to see the roots of this late antique Christian phenomenon in the reign of Constantine, because for the first time it was possible to identify the Roman emperor as the metaphor’s physician.⁹ By contrast, the present chapter highlights the earlier traditions against which this phenomenon must be set, which blended together three intertwined strands (philosophical, religious, and political) that deployed similar metaphors in related ways. In this system of metaphors, the Church is seen as a human body.¹⁰ According to one variant, sickness threatens the body of the Church, in which case the “medicine of harmony” (synods) will attempt to heal this sickness/immorality by restoring health to the Church body. In another variant, impurity portends to pollute the Church, and the pollutant must be expelled or amputated in order to restore purity to the body. These two variants of the metaphor are often intertwined, as in the letter from Chalcedon, in this case representing a progression from milder to harsher remedy. It seems a significant phenomenon, however, that bishops and theologians tend to use the amputation metaphor more often, to advocate stern measures against heretics. Constantine, by contrast, did not seem (as far as can be determined) to use the amputation metaphor, which might indicate that he privileged conciliation and accommodation to harsher measures of settlement. In other words, it seemed more important to him to cure the Church body and attempt to heal the source of disease and pollution as well, through the milder “medicine of harmony,” than maintain the purity of a body that would be diminished by the amputation of limbs.¹¹ Eventually, Christian authors will deploy this rhetoric of exile in one variant or the other, adapting it to their intentions and purposes.

8 D. Washburn, *Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284–476 CE*, New York 2013, 53–64; and J. Hillner, *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2015, 101f. 213–216, for “social hygiene”.

9 So Washburn, 2013, 58, despite his mention of earlier traditions. Cf. M. Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity*, London 2009, 58–63; L. Pietri, *Introduction*, in: *Eusèbe de Césarée: Vie de Constantin*, SC 559, Paris 2013, 87.

10 Derived from the notion that the body of Christ represents the Church, already embedded in several NT passages: e.g. Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12.25–27; Eph 3:6; Col 1:18.24.

11 This accords well with Constantine’s policy as presented infra: *Constantine and Episcopal Banishment: Continuity and Change in the Settlement of Christian Disputes*. See esp. Socr., h.e. 1.10, on Acesius.

The Christian strand of this discourse is most obvious in the words of Ambrose of Milan, written at the end of the 380s, in which he aptly summarized the Christian concept of penitential discipline and its medicinal purpose:¹²

It is a distressing thing to have to amputate any part of the body, even if it is gangrenous, and it is normal to treat it for a long time to see if it can be cured with medicines; if it cannot, then a good physician will cut it off. In the same way, it is always the earnest desire of a good bishop to heal members of the church body who are sick, to eliminate ulcers which are spreading, and to cauterize this or that part rather than cut it off – but, as a last resort, if a part cannot be cured, he will cut it off, at great distress to himself.¹³

Such amputation metaphors were not new, but belonged to a wider system of medical metaphors going back to at least Plato.¹⁴ The notion of “disease of the soul” (*noson psyches*) was a popular idea for Stoic philosophers that Cicero and Seneca were instrumental in transferring to Latin writers.¹⁵ The basis for such images was evidently medical knowledge, as Cornelius Celsus’ recommendation, in cases of gangrene, makes clear: “But it still happens sometimes that none of these remedies is effectual, and in spite of everything this canker spreads. In such circumstances there is one sad but solitary remedy

12 I.J. Davidson, *Ambrose: De Officiis*, Oxford 2001, 1.3–5 (date) and 2.788 (penitential practices). See Hillner, 2015, 69f., for a discussion based on the *Dioskalia*.

13 Ambr., Off. 2.27,135 (ed. and trans. Davidson, 2001, 1.342f.): *Cum dolore amputatur etiam quae putruit pars corporis, et diu tractatur si potest sanari medicamentis; si non potest, tunc a medico bono absciditur. Sic episcopi adfectus boni est ut optet sanare infirmos, serpentina auferre ulcera, adurere aliqua, non abscidere; postremo, quod sanari non potest, cum dolore abscidere*. Cf. P. Saint-Roch, *La pénitence dans les conciles et les lettres des papes des origines à la mort de Grégoire le grand*, Vatican City 1991; J.G. Mueller, *L’Ancien Testament dans l’ecclésiologie des Pères. Une lecture des Constitutions Apostoliques*, IPM 41, Turnhout 2004; N.B. Molineaux, *Medici et Medicamenta: The Medicine of Penance in Late Antiquity*, Lanham 2009, is mostly historiographical.

14 Although Plato himself did not use amputation metaphors. On this topic, see D.S. Allen, *The World of Prometheus: The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens*, Princeton 2000, esp. 245–280.

15 Cf. Cic., Off. 1.136 (cited by Davidson, 2001, 2.788). Overview in G.B. Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity*, Baltimore 2005, 29; Hillner, 2015, 25–44. See further M. Dornemann, *Krankheit und Heilung in der Theologie der frühen Kirchenväter*, STAC 20, Tübingen 2003; P.J. van der Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*, Cambridge 2005.

to secure the safety of the rest of the body, that is to cut away the limb which is gradually dying.”¹⁶

For early Christians, the New Testament provided another important source of medical imagery. Luke 5:31 (“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick”) led to the extremely popular conception of Christ as a physician (*Christus Medicus*), which was to become a ubiquitous image in patristic writings.¹⁷ Additionally, Matt 5:30 presented a Christian version of the amputation metaphor, by reporting Jesus as saying: “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” It is thus the blending of these two traditions, philosophical and religious uses of medical metaphors, which we find at play in Ambrose’s text, a prescriptive guide for the good behaviour of priests and clerics. If we add the influence of other passages such as the one evoked by the bishops of Chalcedon to justify exclusion of heretics, ‘Drive out the wicked person from among yourselves’ (1 Cor 5:13), it is only natural, therefore, that bishops would use such images in the context of councils and their condemnation of ecclesiastical foes.

In 416, for example, the bishops assembled at the council of Carthage thus wrote to Innocent of Rome about Pelagius: “it was agreed that the judgment was unequivocal by which the assembled bishops thought that the pronouncement of the bishops at that time had excised this great wound from the Church.”¹⁸ In his response, Innocent naturally picked up on the

16 Cels., *De Medicina* 5.26,34D (trans. W.G. Spencer, *Celsus, On Medicine* 2, Books 5–6, LCL 304, Cambridge 1938, 104–106): *Solent vero nonnumquam nihil omnia auxilia proficere ac nihil minus serpere in cancer. Inter quae, miserum sed unicum auxilium est, ut cetera pars corporis tuta sit, membrum, quod paulatim emoritur, abscidere*. On Celsus, see P. Mudry, *Pour une rhétorique de la description des maladies: l'exemple de «La médecine» de Celse*, in: Pallas 69 (2005), 323–332. See also P.R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, Notre Dame 2010, for a prominent example of Christian adaptation of this theme.

17 E.g. J. Carcopino, *L'invocation de Timgad au Christ médecin*, in: RPARA 5 (1928), 79–87; H. Schipperges, *Zur Tradition des 'Christus Medicus' im frühen Christentum und in der älteren Heilkunde*, in: *Arzt und Christ* 11 (1965), 12–20; G. Dumeige, *Le Christ médecin dans la littérature chrétienne des premiers siècles*, in: RACrist 48 (1972), 129–138; id., *Le Christ médecin*, in: DSp 10 (1978), 891–901; M.-A. Vannier, *L'image du Christ médecin chez les Pères*, in: B. Pouderon / V. Boudon-Millot (eds.), *Les Pères de l'Église face à la science médicale de leur temps*, Paris 2005, 525–534. Cf. Ferngren, 2005, 30. For an early modern development of this tradition, see S. van der Geest, *Christ as a Pharmacist: Medical Symbols in German Devotion*, in: *Social Science & Medicine* 39 (1994), 727–732.

18 Aug., Ep. 175.1 (CSEL 44, 654; trans. R. Teske, *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st century 2: Letters*, New York 2001, 3.135): *Quia illo tempore episcopali iudicio excisum hoc tantum uulnus ab ecclesia uideretur, nihilo*

image and compared Pelagius' ideas to "a pestilential venom," the pollutant from which bishops would attempt to protect their flock, before invoking the preferred medicine to purify the Church:¹⁹

We must, therefore, heal this quickly so that the accursed disease does not attack the souls over a longer time. Just as when a doctor [...] sees a wound with gangrene and applies plasters and other remedies in order to remove by them the wound that has the body with its infection, he cuts off the infected part with a knife so as to keep the rest whole and intact. We must, therefore, cut away the wound that has attacked an entirely pure and healthy body that lest, if it be removed later, the remains of this evil settle in the inner organs and be impossible to extract.²⁰

Innocent's use of the metaphor and its related images clearly conveys his concerns for purity and pollution, which are also manifest further in the same letter. While presenting a strong claim for Roman primacy in his reply to the African bishops, Innocent writes: "Following him (Peter), we know how to condemn what is evil and to approve what is praiseworthy. [...] From this see the other churches learn what they should teach, whom they should absolve, and whom a stream fit for clean bodies should avoid like those persons filthy with a foulness that cannot be purified."²¹ That amputation,

minus tamen id communi deliberatione censuimus. Cf. Quodvultdeus, Accend. 18.6 (CCSL 60, 457).

19 This is also the main idea in Epiphanius' Panarion, the title of which is itself a medical metaphor (medicine chest). On Epiphanius, see Y.R. Kim, *Bad Bishops Corrupt Good Emperors: Ecclesiastical Authority and the Rhetoric of Heresy in the Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, in: StPatr 47 (2010), 161–166; and id., *Epiphanius of Cyprus: Imagining an Orthodox World*, Ann Arbor 2015. For analysis of heresy as disease in Epiphanius, see J.R. Lyman, *The Making of a Heretic: The Life of Origen in Epiphanius Panarion 64*, in: StPatr 31 (1997), 445–451.

20 Innocent's reply to the council of Carthage is included among Augustine's letters as Aug., Ep. 181, quote at 181.3 (CSEL 44, 704; trans. Teske, 2001, 3.162): *Sanandrum ergo celerius, ne longius execrandus animis morbus inserpat, ut si medicus, cum uiderit huius terreni corporis aliquem esse languorem. Magnum suae artis aestimat documentum, si cito quis illius interuentu desperatus euadat, uel, cum putre uulnus asperexit, adhibet fomenta uel cetera. Quibus illud possit, quod natum fuerat, uulnus obduci, ac, si id manens sanari non poterit, ne corpus reliquum sua tabe corrumpat, ferro amputet, quod nocebat, quo reliquum integrum et seruet intactum. Praecidendum id ergo est, quod uelut puro sanoque nimium corpori uulnus obrepsit, ne, cum tardius abstergitur, in ipsis paene uisceribus huius mali non exhaurienda post sentia considat.*

21 Aug., Ep. 181.1 (CSEL 44, 702f.; trans. Teske, 2001, 3.161): *Quem sequentes tam mala iam damnare nouimus quam probare laudanda [...] nisi ad huius sedis notitiam perueniret, ut tota huius auctoritate, iusta quae fuerit pronuntiatio,*

understood here as the symbolic representation of excommunication, was the best solution to remove the pollution caused by Pelagius and to restore the purity of the Church is made explicit in his conclusion: “Let the infected wound be removed from the healthy body, therefore, and after the effluvium of the raging disease is removed let the uninfected parts go on with a greater degree of caution, and let the purified flock be cleansed of this contagion of the sick animal.”²²

Ambrose’s amputation metaphor was thus part of a Christian adaptation of this ancient medical knowledge, the medical metaphor, which was so pervasive amongst late antique Christian writers that it was deemed a *topos*.²³ The point of this Christian medical metaphor was to present all that is undesirable to Catholic Christianity (pagans, Jews, atheists or heretics) as disease, and everything that is good (God, Christ, and, by extension, Scripture and clerics) as remedy.²⁴ This significant phenomenon is already well known.²⁵

firmaretur indeque sumerent ceterae ecclesiae, uelut de natali suo fonte aquae cunctae procederent et per diuersas totius mundi reigones puri capitis incorruptae manarent, quid praecipere, quos abluere, quos uelut in caeno inmundabili sordidatos mundis digna corporibus unda uitaret.

- 22 Aug., Ep. 181.9 (CSEL 44, 712; trans. Teske, 2001, 3.164): *Separetur ergo a sano corpore uulnus insanum remotoque morbi saeuientis afflatu cautius, quae sunt sincera, perdurent et grex purior ab hac mali pecoris contagione purgetur.*
- 23 So much so that Bertrand Lançon coined the term ‘nosomonde’ to identify it: *Attention au malade et téléologie de la maladie: le «nosomonde» chrétien de l’antiquité tardive (IV^e–V^e siècles)*, in: Pouderon / Boudon-Millot (eds.), 2005, 217–230; See also Rufinus’ original use of the metaphor, in his preface to his translation of Eusebius’ h.e. (GCS 9.2, 951; trans. P.R. Amidon, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia. Books 10 and 11*, Oxford 1997, 3).
- 24 On pagans as pollution, see M. Kahlos, *Polluted by Sacrifices: Christian Repugnance at Participation in Sacrificial Rituals in Late Antiquity*, in: S. Katajala-Peltomaa / V. Vuolanto (eds.), *Religious Participation in Ancient and Medieval Societies. Rituals, Interactions and Identity*, Rome 2013, 159–171. On Jews as pollution, see P. Lanfranchi, *Des paroles aux actes. La destruction des synagogues et leur transformation en églises*, in: M.F. Baslez (ed.), *Chrétiens persécuteurs. Destructions, exclusions, violences religieuses au IV^e siècle*, Paris 2014, 311–335 (331–335).
- 25 D.W. Amundsen, *Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity*, in: *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 56 (1982), 326–350; M.D. Grmek, *Les vicissitudes des notions d’infection, de contagion et de germe dans la médecine antique*, in: G. Sabbah (ed.), *Textes médicaux latins antiques*, Saint-Étienne 1984, 53–70; B. Lançon, *Maladies, malades et thérapeutes en Gaule du III^e au VI^e siècle*, Paris 1990 (Diss. Sorbonne, 1990), 632–652; id., *Magna Theriaca. La médecine dans la pensée des lettrés chrétiens de l’Antiquité tardive (4^e–6^e siècles)*, in: M.E. Vazquez Bujan (ed.), *Tradición e innovación de la medicina latina de la Antigüedad y de la alta edad media* Santiago de Compostela 1994, 331–341; id., *Medicina carnalis, medicina*

Indeed, scholars have devoted specific studies to the use of such metaphors in numerous Patristic writers, such as Cyprian,²⁶ Lactantius,²⁷ Ambrose,²⁸ Gregory of Nazianzus,²⁹ John Chrysostom,³⁰ Augustine,³¹ Jerome,³² pontifical

-
- spiritualis. Réflexions sur l'absorption de la médecine charnelle par la médecine spirituelle dans l'Antiquité tardive*, in: J.-N. Corvisier / C. Didier / M. Valdher (eds.) *Thérapies, médecine et démographie antique*, Artois 2001, 193–202.
- 26 D. Grout-Gerletti, *Le vocabulaire de la contagion chez l'évêque Cyprien de Carthage (249–258): de l'idée à l'utilisation*, in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Maladie et maladies dans les textes latins antiques et médiévaux*, Brussels 1998, 228–246.
- 27 M.J.L. Perrin, *Médecine, maladie et théologie chez Lactance (250–325)*, in: Pouderon / Boudon-Millot (eds.), 2005, 335–350.
- 28 R. Passarella, *Ambrogioe la medicina: le parole e i concetti*, Milan 2009, although focused more on the reality of medical knowledge than metaphors.
- 29 Although not the specific topic of her study, see S. Elm, *The Diagnostic Gaze: Gregory of Nazianzus' Theory of Orthodox Priesthood in his Oration 6 "De pace" and 2 "Apologia de fuga sua"*, in: S. Elm / É. Rébillard / A. Romano (eds.), *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire / Orthodoxy, Christianity, History*, Rome 2000, 83–100 (94–97 about Or. 2).
- 30 See H.J. Frings, *Medizin und Arzt bei den griechischen Kirchenvätern bis Chrysostomus*, Phil. Diss. Bonn 1959; U. Bachmann, *Medizinisches in den Schriften des griechischen Kirchenvaters Johannes Chrysostomos*, Diss. Düsseldorf, 1984. Cf. W. Mayer, *Medicine in Transition: Christian Adaptation in the Later Fourth-Century East*, in: G. Greatrex / H. Elton (eds.), *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, Farnham 2015, 11–26, with references; C.L. de Wet, *The Priestly Body: Power-discourse and Identity in John Chrysostom's De sacerdotio*, in: *Religion & Theology* 18 (2011), 1–29. Cf. Sizgorich, 2009, 24.
- 31 R. Arbesmann, *The Concept of 'Christus Medicus' in St. Augustine*, in: *Tr* 10 (1954), 1–28; S. Poque, *Le langage symbolique dans la prédication d'Augustin d'Hipone*, Paris 1984, 1.176–190; D. Doucet, *Le thème du médecin dans les premiers dialogues philosophiques de saint Augustin*, in: *Aug(P)* 39 (1989), 447–461; T.F. Martin, *Paul the Patient. Christus Medicus and the "Stimulus Carnis" (2 Cor 12:7): A Consideration of Augustine's Medicinal Christology*, in: *AugStud* 32 (2001), 219–256; I. Bochet, *Maladie de l'âme et thérapeutique scripturaire selon Augustin*, in: Pouderon / and Boudon-Millot (eds.), 2005, 379–400; S.A. Reid, *"The First Dispensation of Christ is Medicinal": Augustine and Roman Medical Culture*, Ph.D. Diss. University of British Columbia, 2008 (unpublished).
- 32 A.S. Pease, *Medical Allusions in the Works of St. Jerome*, in: *HSCP* 25 (1914), 73–86; B. Lançon, *Maladie et médecine dans la correspondance de Jérôme*, in: Y.-M. Duval (ed.), *Jérôme entre l'Occident et l'Orient*, Paris 1988, 353–366.

letters,³³ as well as by less famous or unorthodox writers.³⁴ But most studies of this rhetorical image focus on its non-Christian origins, its theological message, the soteriological concepts they conjure, as well as the medical practices that they reflect. By comparison, the penitential procedures that Ambrose's metaphor evoke, and that are also found in monastic rules, have been neglected.³⁵ In the context of exile, however, and the secular enforcement of such penitential procedures (excommunication or deposition) for bishops in particular, scholars have only recently noticed the popularity of the metaphor.³⁶

The popularity of the medical metaphor, however, was not limited to Christians.³⁷ Another important Roman tradition was to consider the emperor, and especially imperial legislation, as divine remedy.³⁸ Thus Dio Cassius reports a speech of Livia in which she attempts to convince Augustus to be merciful toward Pompey's grandson Cornelius, and not punish him with death despite fomenting a plot against Augustus. In stating her case for leniency, Livia makes an analogy with physicians (*Hist.* 55.17), that they "very rarely resort to surgery and cautery, desiring not to aggravate their patients' maladies, but for the most part seek to soothe diseases by the application of fomentations and the milder drugs," and then explicitly argues that "the minds of men,

33 C. Pietri, *L'hérésie et l'hérétique selon l'Église romaine (IV^e-V^e siècles)*, in: Aug 24 (1987), 867-887; P. Blaudeau, *Symbolique médicale et dénonciation de l'hérésie: le cas monophysite dans les sources pontificales de la seconde moitié du V^e siècle*, in: Pouderon / Boudon-Millot (eds.), 2005, 497-524.

34 See M. Scopello, *Images et métaphores de la médecine dans les écrits manichéens coptes*, and D. Meyer, *Médecine et Théologie chez Philostorge*, both in: Pouderon / Boudon-Millot (eds.), 2005, 231-252. 427-449.

35 Cf. Basil of Caesarea, *Regulae fusius tractatae* 28, cited in M. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, Oxford 2003, 124; and Aug., Reg. 4.8 for a similar, but not as developed, medical metaphor. Cf. *Didascalica* 2.20 and 2.41, on which see Hillner, 2015, 69f.

36 G. Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society*, Cambridge 2004, 30f.; Gaddis, 2005, 146; M.V. Escribano, *El uso del vocabulario médico en las leyes del "Codex Theodosianus"*, in: *La cultura científico-naturalista nei Padri della Chiesa (I-V sec.)*. XXXV *Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana*, 4-6 maggio 2006, SEAug 101, Rome 2007, 605-626; ead., *The Social Exclusion of Heretics in Codex Theodosianus XVI*, in: J.-J. Aubert / P. Blanchard (eds.), *Droit, religion et société dans le Code Théodosien*, Geneva 2009, 39-66 (45-51); Washburn, 2013, 53-64; and Hillner, 2015, 101f. 213-216.

37 See, e.g., J. Efron, *A Perfect Healing to All Our Wounds: Religion and Medicine in Judaism*, in: S. Elm / S.N. Willich (eds.), *Quo Vadis Medical Healing: Past Concepts and New Approaches*, Berlin 2009, 55-67.

38 See Hillner, 2015, 94. Cf. Greg. Tur., *Hist.* 9.21, for survival and transformation of this tradition.

however incorporeal they may be, are subject to a large number of ailments which are comparable to those which visit their bodies.” Arguing for the use of gentle words, forgiveness, and persuasion over compulsion, she finally concedes: “I do not mean by this that we must spare all wrongdoers without distinction, but that we must cut off the headstrong man, the meddlesome, the malicious, the trouble-maker, and the man within whom there is an incurable and persistent depravity, just as we treat the members of the body that are quite beyond all healing.” She concludes, interestingly, by advocating for banishment and confinement.³⁹ This passage not only implies that the emperor is the medicine, but also specifies that patients’ health is the good physician’s main goal, who will therefore attempt milder medicines before using more extreme ones such as surgery and cauterization.⁴⁰

The vocabulary of infection and contagion was similarly deployed, in the early Empire, against other imagined sources of pollution, such as foreign cults, actors, philosophers, astrologers, and Jews. In such contexts, Roman authorities deployed a “politics of exclusion” that made strong statements of boundary maintenance, policing what they considered as ‘Roman’ and ‘un-Roman,’ in which the discourse took precedence over the government’s specific actions.⁴¹ Such discourse was also part of a traditionally Roman paternalistic attitude toward all groups other than Roman male elites, expressed through institutions such as the *paterfamilias* and patronage.⁴² In Roman culture, the emperor represented the embodiment of these notions, not only as the *paterfamilias* and the supreme patron of all Romans, but also as *pontifex maximus*, keeper of the *pax deorum*, and, most importantly, *pater patriae*.⁴³ It was the emperor’s responsibility, as father of the country, to educate his children, keep them safe, and promote their health.⁴⁴ Pursuing this trend, in Diocletian’s Price Edit of 301, the tetrarch’s chancery also presented measures against inflation as “remedies discovered in this hope,

39 Dio Cassius 55.14–22 (trans. E. Cary / H.B. Foster, *Cassius Dio, Roman History* 6: Books 51–55, LCL 83, Cambridge 1917, 436–441).

40 Cf. Tac., Ann. 3.54,1 for a similar, although less developed, passage. Christians will pick up on this tradition: Hil., Psal. 13.3; Eus. Gall., Hom. 33.3; Sid. Ap., Ep. 8.10,2.

41 See the insightful study of B. van der Lans, *The Politics of Exclusion. Expulsions of Jews and Others from Rome*, in: M. Labahn / O. Lehtipuu (eds.), *People under Power: Early Jewish and Christian Responses to the Roman Empire*, Amsterdam 2015, 33–77.

42 R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, Cambridge 2011.

43 A. Schniebs de Rossi, *Del «Diu filius» al «pater patriae»: la paternalización del poder en tres textos latinos*, in: *Phaos* 2 (2002), 139–166; R. Marino, «*Pater patriae*»: *simbolo e potere*, in: *Hormos* 6–7 (2004–2005), 215–240.

44 Cf. Hillner, 2015, 94, for late antique aspects of this notion.

that [...], caught in the most serious crimes, humanity would itself change its ways.”⁴⁵ Similarly, the anonymous orator who delivered a *gratiarum actio* (speech of thanks) to Constantine for his help with a relief fund to the town of Autun compared him to a physician: “as doctors pre-eminent in their skill do not disdain to inspect the wounds which they treat, so may you now listen for a little while to the burdens of the Aedui which you have relieved.”⁴⁶ Here, the author of this panegyric characterized the Emperor Constantine according to the traditional Roman understanding of their ruler as a provider of divine remedy, undoubtedly a consequence of the ruler cult that Romans devoted to their emperors.

Already immersed in this imperial tradition, as its living embodiment, Constantine was also evidently aware of the Christian understanding of Christ as ‘*medicus*,’ since he himself used the image in his *Oratio ad Sanctos*.⁴⁷ Unsurprisingly, therefore, because Constantine became a supporter of the Christian Church from 312 onward, it is during his reign that we observe the first application of the political (imperial) strand of the medical metaphor to episcopal banishment, understood as a necessary measure to preserve the purity of the faith and the health of the Empire. This strand was blended with the already enmeshed earlier (philosophical and religious) traditions of the medical metaphor; the main novelty was that the emperor now presented himself as a physician delegated by the Christian God to watch over the Empire’s health. This change can also be seen as a transformation of the traditional duty of the Roman ruler to preserve the *pax deorum*, in the new context set up by Constantine’s sponsoring of Christianity. But the paternalistic view of the Emperor as *pater patriae* was not yet altered.⁴⁸ Admittedly, there is no explicit evidence of amputation metaphors applied to specific cases of exiled bishops under Constantine, nor did Constantine ever use the amputation metaphor himself. But his use of medical metaphors in cases that led to eventual clerical exile makes them pregnant with meaning, along with his use of the polarizing

45 Preamble 50–53: *paene sera prospectio est, dum hac spe consiliis molimur aut remedia inventa cobibemus, ut –quod expectandum fuit per iura naturae– in gravissimis deprehensa delictis ipsa se emendaret humanitas*. See S. Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, AD 284–324*, Oxford 2000, 205–215. Cf. Washburn, 2013, 56f., for further references.

46 Pan. Lat. 5.5 (ed. and trans. C.E.V. Nixon / B. Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*, Berkeley 1994, 558. 272): *Sed tamen quaeso, imperator, iniunge patientiam sensibus tuis ut, quemadmodum praestantes scientia medici non aspernantur uulnera inspicere quae sanant, ita nunc tu paulisper audias Aeduorum labores quos sustulisti*. Cf. Aus., Grat. Actio 76.

47 Const., Or. 11.14 (GCS 7.1, 169), on which see R. Turcan, *Constantin en son temps: Le baptême ou la pourpre?*, Paris 2006, 234f.

48 It is still in Constantine’s titulature, as reported by Eus., h.e. 8.17,4.

language of purity and pollution, which together constituted a likely first step toward the use of amputation metaphors to represent the exile of bishops.

The first sign of this change is Constantine's use of the word 'madness' (μαῦνία) to characterize the dissident African Christians, the so-called Donatists, in his letter to Caecilianus of Carthage.⁴⁹ Throughout the documents relevant to this quarrel, early in his reign, Constantine presents unity as the goal and dissension as evil.⁵⁰ This concern for healing, purity and pollution, is obvious in the emperor's reply to the synodal letter of Arles (314), in which he opposed the light of God to "those whom the malignity of the devil seemed to have diverted by his contemptible persuasion from the exceeding brilliance of the catholic religion."⁵¹ Constantine also expressed the notion of divine remedy in a 'Letter to the Provincials of Palestine,' following his victory over Licinius. Striving to erase the consequences of the 'Great Persecution' in the East, Constantine used the medical metaphor to describe the persecution in theological terms: "when such and so grave a wickedness oppresses humanity, and when the state is in danger of utter destruction from a sort of pestilential disease and needs much life-saving medical care, what relief does the Divinity envisage, what escape from the horrors?"⁵² Thus Constantine presented himself as the divine remedy to heal the empire from the disease of persecution.⁵³ Despite his rejection of persecution and coercion, the emperor professed a clear preference for Christianity, which he considered "a cure for moral illness": "if any prevents himself from being cured, let him not blame it on someone else; for the healing power of medicines is set out, spread openly to all."⁵⁴

These notions all came together clearly when the disputes surrounding the ideas of Arius erupted. Thus Eusebius reports that when Constantine heard of it, "he was shocked to hear of this, and tried to think of a cure for the evil," for "the whole of Libya was labouring under these things like a diseased

49 Eus., h.e. 10.6,5 (SC 55, 111); cf. J.-L. Maier (ed. and trans.), *Le Dossier Du Donatisme 1: Des Origines a La Mort De Constance II (303–361)*, TU 134, Berlin 1987, 134f. See also Optat., app. 3: *uesano furore uanis criminationibus*. Cf. C. Gill, *Philosophical Therapy as Preventive Psychological Medicine*, in: W.V. Harris (ed.), *Mental Disorders in the Classical World*, CSCT 38, Leiden 2013, 339–360.

50 See, e.g., Eus., h.e. 10.5,24.

51 Optat., app. 5 (CSEL 26, 209; trans. M. Edwards, *Optatus: Against the Donatists*, TTH, Liverpool 1997, 189): *quos malignitas diaboli uidebatur a praeclarissima luce legis catholicae miserabili sua persuasione auertisse*.

52 Eus., v.C. 2.28,1 (trans. A. Cameron / S.G. Hall, *Eusebius. Life of Constantine*, Oxford 1999, 105, along with commentary, 239–242).

53 Eus., v.C. 2.28,2.

54 Eus., v.C. 2.59 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 114; 247 for the quote). Cf. Kahlos, 2009, 61.

body, and with it the other parts, the provinces beyond, were catching the disease.”⁵⁵ Eusebius is clearly following the emperor’s own words on the matter, in this case, and not putting words in his mouth. For in the ‘Letter to Alexander and Arius,’ which Eusebius inserted immediately following this comment, Constantine summed up his career up to this point with the following words:

My first concern was that the attitude towards the Divinity of all the provinces should be united in one consistent view, and my second that I might restore and heal the body of the republic which lay severely wounded. [...] When an intolerable madness had seized the whole of Africa because of those who had dared with ill-considered frivolity to split the worship of the population into various factions, and when I personally desired to put right this disease, the only cure sufficient for the affair that I could think of was that, after I had destroyed [Licinius], who had set his own unlawful will against your holy synods, I might send some of you to help towards the reconciliation of those at variance with each other.⁵⁶

In writing these words, Constantine was invoking and blending the three strands, philosophical, religious, and political/imperial; and for the first time he was applying these notions to the Roman emperor as physician in a Christian context.

For him, a disease of the soul, a madness has plagued the Church and thus threatened the peace of the empire. God sent him, the emperor, in order to apply divine remedies, “providing like a doctor what would help to save each one,” and for Constantine this meant first and foremost using the “medicine of harmony” mentioned by the bishops of Chalcedon. This is what the emperor mentions explicitly in the last line of this passage, as he intends to send bishops so that they bring “reconciliation of those at variance with each other.” As a good physician, Constantine thus prescribes the mild medicine of discussion and persuasion in order to bring back the Church’s health. Only when this fails, will he in turn prescribe a stronger medicine, the synods and the potential condemnation of the offenders (the disease), in order to heal the empire of this sickness, to restore unity and purity.⁵⁷ What remained was to enforce the synod’s preferred healing method, and to cut off the source of pollution, which he did by exiling Arius and those who refused to subscribe to the Creed of Nicaea.⁵⁸

55 Eus., v.C. 2.61,2 and 2.62 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 115).

56 Eus., v.C. 2.65,1 and 2.66 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 116). See further v.C. 2.68,1.

57 Eus., v.C. 3.21,3 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 131).

58 Philost., h.e. 1.9a and 1.10 for exile (GCS 21, 10f.). Cf. Socr., h.e. 1.8,33 and 1.9,4; Gel., h.e. 2.33,5; Soz., h.e. 1.2,4f.; Thdt., h.e. 1.7,8. Euzoius: Gel., h.e. 3.15,1–5, and *Urkunden* 29 (Socr., h.e. 1.25,7 and 1.26,2) and 30 (Soz., h.e. 2.27,6).

Constantine also expressed these ideas, following the council of Nicaea (325), in a letter to the Alexandrian church preserved by Socrates:

Arius alone, beguiled by the subtlety of the devil, was discovered to be the sole disseminator of this mischief, with unhallowed purposes, first among you, and afterwards among others also. Let us therefore embrace that judgment which the Almighty has presented to us: let us return to our beloved brethren from whom a shameless servant of the devil has separated us: let us go with all zeal to the common body and our own natural members. [...] Wherefore let no one vacillate or linger, but let all with alacrity return to the undoubted path of truth; that when I shall arrive among you, which will be as soon as possible, I may with you return due thanks to God, the inspector of all things, for having revealed the pure faith.⁵⁹

In this document, Constantine identified Arius as the pollutant that prevented proper worship and concluded with an exhortation to return to the pure faith. What stood in the way of this goal was Arius, the source of the disease. Excluding from the communion of Christians the obstacle to unity, and exiling the pollutant by imperial enforcement of the synod's decisions, constituted the remedy, here implied rather than explicitly mentioned, as the bishops of Chalcedon would later do. But the expression of these ideas in the context of Arius' banishment is highly significant, and revealing of the way that Constantine and his Christian advisors understood such exile and its meaning.

In ordering the burning of Arian books and the death penalty for those who would hide them, Constantine deployed another form of purification.⁶⁰ This was a prelude to a far more coercive trend by which Christians used the medical and amputation metaphors to justify their own persecution of what they considered as pollutants.⁶¹ But this does not mean that he had changed

59 Socr., h.e. 1.9,17–25, quotes from 1.9,21f. and 25 (SC 477, 120–122; trans. J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church to A.D. 337*, London 1963, 371f.).

60 Socr., h.e. 1.9,30f. On book burning, see D. Sarefield, *Bookburning in the Christian Roman Empire: Transforming a Pagan Rite of Purification*, in: H.A. Drake (ed.) *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, Aldershot 2006, 287–296; id., *The Symbolics of Book Burning: The Establishment of a Christian Ritual of Persecution*, in: W.E. Klingshirn / L. Safran (eds.) *The Early Christian Book*, Washington 2007, 159–173; and M.V. Escribano Paño, *La quema de libros heréticos: el silencio imperativo de las voces disidentes en el s. IV d.C.*, in: AHAM 44 (2012), 125–142. Magical books suffered a similar fate: W. Speyer, *Büchervernichtung und Zensur des Geistes bei Heiden, Juden und Christen*, Stuttgart 1981; and J.B. Rives, *Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime*, in: CIA 22 (2003), 313–339.

61 See Eus., v.C. 3.18,2–4, along with T.D. Barnes, *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire*, Chichester 2011, 125, on Jews. Cf. P.R.L.

his mind regarding the exclusion of those whom he considered a source of pollution endangering the purity of the Church. Quite the opposite. When confronted with further quarrels among Eastern bishops, notably about the succession to the see of Antioch, he maintained a deferential attitude in supporting the use of synods to solve the issues. In the words of Eusebius, “once more the Emperor’s patience, in the manner of a saviour and physician of souls, applied the medicine of argument to those who were sick.”⁶² Tellingly, this was once again in the context of a bishop, Eustathius, who had been exiled.⁶³ Similarly, in his ‘Letter to the Synod of Tyre,’ in 335, Constantine writes:

I therefore urge you [...] to come together without delay, to constitute the Synod, to defend those in need of help, to bring healing brothers at risk, restore to concord members at variance, and to correct what is wrong. [...] Finally it should be your Holiness’ task, by unanimous verdict, pursuing neither enmity nor favour but in accordance with the ecclesiastical and apostolic canon, to discover the proper remedy for the offenses committed.⁶⁴

Unsurprisingly, the proper remedy that the bishops assembled at Tyre preferred was the exclusion of the bishop they considered as the main source of pollution, Athanasius, who was eventually banished to Trier as a result.⁶⁵

Toward the end of his reign, Constantine’s policy might have taken a turn toward coercion regarding heretics. It is in this context that we find his harshest use of the medical metaphor, and the closest he came to using the amputation metaphor: “how venomous the poisons with which [their] teaching is involved, so that the healthy are brought to sickness. [...] Protracted neglect allows healthy people to be infected as with an epidemic disease. Why do we not immediately use severe public measures to dig up such a great evil, as you might say, by the roots?”⁶⁶ His view of these deviant Christians was still strongly couched in the language of purity and pollution:

Brown, *St. Augustine’s Attitude to Religious Coercion*, in: JRS 54 (1964), 107–116; R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (rev. ed.), Cambridge 1988, 133–153 (chap. 6: *Coge Intrare: The Church and Political Power*); Gaddis, 2005, 146; and Kahlos, 2009, 111–125, on Augustine’s fundamental role in this process. Cf. Flavius Marcellinus’ *Edictum Cognitoris*, in: *Gesta Conlationis Carth.* (SC 224, 972–978).

62 Eus., v.C. 3.59,3 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 147).

63 See the commentary on this passage in Cameron / Hall, 1999, 305; and R.W. Burgess, *The Date of the Deposition of Eustathius of Antioch*, in: JThS 51 (2000), 150–160.

64 Eus., v.C. 4.42,1 and 5 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 169).

65 Ath., apol. sec. 87; h. Ar. 5.8; Socr., h.e. 1.35; Soz., h.e. 2.28,14.

66 Eus., v.C. 3.64,1 and 4 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 152).

The best thing would be for as many as are concerned for true and pure religion to come to the Catholic Church and share in the sanctity of that by which you will also be able to attain the truth. But let there be wholly removed from the prosperity of our times the deception of your perverted thinking, by which I mean the polluted and destructive deviance of the heretics and schismatics. It is in keeping with our present blessedness, which under God we enjoy, that those who live in good hopes should be led from all disorderly error into the right path, from darkness to light, from vanity to truth, from death to salvation.⁶⁷

Constantine's "curative measure", in this case, was to ban such heretical assemblies, both private and public, and to confiscate their places of worship and properties.⁶⁸ In the present context, the confiscation of places of assembly considered as impure was also a measure of healing that aimed to restore the purity of the faith, which therefore followed the logic expressed through the system of medical metaphors.

It seems, furthermore, that these medical metaphors, as well as the language of purity and pollution that such metaphors often evoked, represented the emperor's thinking about the best way to implement his religious policy. In his dealing with recalcitrant or wayward bishops, this meant enforcing their removal from the pure community of orthodox Christians, through exile. This is the most obvious meaning of his use of the medicinal imagery and his conception of his own role as the physician delegated by the supreme physician, God himself, *omnipotens medicus*. This concern to exclude pollutants from the community of believers, in order to maintain the purity of the faith that was, in his mind, pleasing to God, is most obvious in his last letter regarding the dissident African Christians. In 330, Constantine wrote that "there is no doubt that heresy and schism proceeds from the devil, who is the fount of evil," before adding that "when people are infected by the evil of an impious mind, it is necessary that they should separate from our society."⁶⁹ These words clearly express the same notion that the image which amputation metaphors conjure, viz. that of removal of the Church body's sick part, the source of pollution.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that such 'amputations', excommunication and/or deposition enforced with exile, were the strongest and harshest remedies that Constantine, as physician of Christians, was willing to dispense for bishops, the highest ranking Christian clerics. Indeed, systematically throughout his reign, the emperor first attempted to use the 'medicine

67 Eus., v.C. 3.65,2 (trans. Cameron / Hall, 1999, 152).

68 Eus., v.C. 3.65,1 and 3.

69 Optat., app. 10 (CSEL 26, 214; trans. Edwards, 1997, 198f.): *non dubium est hae- resis et schisma a diabolo, qui caput est malitiae, processisse; [...] qui malo impiae mentis infecti sunt, necesse est a nostra societate dissideant.*

of argument' and the 'medicine of harmony', before resorting to synods and their potential consequences, which could eventually lead to exilic amputation. His own actions, as well as his use of the medical imagery, show that Constantine was more interested in healing the whole body of Christians, including the sick limbs, rather than preserving its purity. In this regard, the main difference between exile and amputation, its metaphorical expression, is the irreversibility of the latter, whereas exiles could be recalled. That Constantine recalled the bishops initially condemned to exile in both of the main Christian controversies of his reign shows that he was mainly concerned with healing the whole Church, including those he considered as the source of contagion, disease, and pollution, and regarded destruction of the pollutant as too extreme. In 321, for instance, faced with the stout resistance of the dissident Christians of North Africa, Constantine recalled their exiled bishops and preached tolerance and patience in a letter to the Catholic bishops of Africa in which he mentioned that they could only wait for divine remedy to restore peace within the Church.⁷⁰ Similarly, the emperor eventually recalled Arius and his partisans following their willingness to adopt the theological consensus supported by Constantine at Nicaea.⁷¹

If it remains unclear when exactly the amputation metaphor came to be used outside of episcopal writers to represent the exile of bishops, during the fourth century, it was obviously in wide usage by the fifth century, as the examples presented at the beginning of this chapter attest. It thus seems that medical metaphors evolved in tandem with the establishment of exile as the typical sentence with which to discipline bishops under Constantine, for it is in the emperor's own writings that we observe the redeployment of similar Christian and imperial discourses using medical metaphors blended together for the first time, and particularly in contexts that led to episcopal exiles enforced by the Roman emperor. These already intertwined strands coalesced to form a view of the world in which Christian orthodoxy represented the purity that God desired. Rejection of this truth, or deviation from it, constituted pollutants that threatened the body of the Church, according to another important Christian metaphor. As the bishops of Chalcedon explained, they first attempted to mend the ways of those responsible for such pollutions.⁷²

70 Optat., app. 9 (CSEL 26, 213): *uerum dum caelestis medicina procedat, hactenus sunt consilia nostra moderanda, ut patientiam percolamus et, quicquid insolentia illorum pro consuetudine intemperantiae suae temptant aut faciunt, id totum tranquillitatis uirtute toleremus.*

71 See P. Van Nuffelen, *Arius, Athanase et les autres: dimensions juridiques et politiques du retour d'exil au IV^e siècle*, in: P. Blaudeau (ed.), 2008, 149–175; and T.D. Barnes, *The Exile and Recalls of Arius*, in: *JThS* 60 (2009), 109–129.

72 *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* 3.98.

But faced with a lack of repentance, the danger of contagious disease, they applied the necessary bitter medicine, which excluded the source of pollution, through excommunication or deposition, in order to restore the purity of the Church body.⁷³ But bishops needed imperial enforcement of their decisions, in the form of exile. Hence the convergence of medical and amputation metaphors to represent situations of Christian conflicts, in both Christian writers and imperial discourse, which constitutes a new development that started to emerge under Constantine and his successors.

⁷³ See, already, Tert., Paenit. 10.10. Cf. the later Eusebius Gallicanus, Hom. 45.2f. (CChr.SL 101, 535–537). On the latter, see L.K. Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success: The Eusebius Gallicanus Sermon Collection and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul*, Notre Dame 2010.