

THE CHRONOLOGY OF JEROME'S EARLY YEARS

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JEROME, it appears, completed his studies at Rome in summer 366.¹ He then went to Trier where he decided to pursue the ascetic way. Subsequently he left from Aquileia for the East, and from Antioch he retreated into the desert around Chalcis. His departure from the West has not been placed before 372² nor his actual retreat before 374.³ Yet there is immediate cause to question this dating.

In the prologue to *In Epist. ad Gal.* 3 Jerome refers thus to the vow made in his famous dream (cf. *Epist.* 22.30): *nostis enim et ipsae, quod plus quam quindecim anni sunt, ex quo in manus meas numquam Tullius, numquam Maro, numquam gentilium litterarum quilibet auctor ascendit.* The commentary on Galatians was written just before the commentary on Ephesians (1. *prol.*). In the *Apology*, dated to 401,⁴ Rufinus places the latter work *ante quindecim fere annos* (1.39). Evidently he looks to 386 after Jerome's settling at Bethlehem.⁵ Since Rufinus was at Jerusalem at this time,⁶ his dating may be trusted. Moreover, in a context where he emphasizes Jerome's lengthy allegiance to Origen, it would be against

These books are cited throughout by author's name and page number: P. Antin, *Essai sur saint Jérôme* (Paris 1951); F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris 1922); G. Grützmacher, *Hieronymus: eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig 1901); J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: his Life, Writings and Controversies* (London 1975); P. Monceaux, *Saint Jérôme: sa jeunesse* (Paris 1932); F. X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): his Life and Works* (Washington 1945); A. Penna, *S. Gerolamo* (Rome 1949); A. Schöne, *Die Weltchronik des Eusebius* (Berlin 1900); M. Testard, *Saint Jérôme: l'apôtre savant et pauvre du patriciat romain* (Paris 1969).

The works of Jerome and Rufinus are cited after the following editions: *In Abacuc*, ed. M. Adriaen in CSSL 76A; *In Abdiam* and *In Ionam*, ed. M. Adriaen in CSSL 76; *Epistulae*, ed. I. Hilberg in CSEL 54-56; *In Hiezechielem*, ed. F. Glorie in CSSL 75; *Die Chronik des Hieronymus*, ed. R. Helm in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, Band 7; *De viris illustribus* ed. G. Herding (Leipzig 1924); *Liber contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum, Adversus Jovianum libri duo, Apologia adversus libros Rufini* (*In Ruf.*) in PL 23; *Commentaria in Evangelium S. Matthaei, Commentaria in Epistolam ad Galatas, Commentaria in Epistolam ad Ephesios* in PL 26; *Liber Job* in PL 28; *Rufinus Opera*, ed. M. Simonetti in CSSL 20; containing *Apologia contra Hieronymum* (*Apol.*), *Apologia ad Anastasium* (*Ad Anast.*), *Praefationes in libros Origenis*.

¹See A. D. Booth, "The Date of Jerome's Birth," *Phoenix* 33 (1979) 346-353.

²For this date see Murphy 23 n. 108; Kelly 36.

³Schöne 238 and Murphy 23 n. 108 suggest 374, Kelly 46 "late summer or early autumn of 374, or early 375." Cavallera 2 "Regesta," Monceaux 129 f. (cf. 120) and Testard 23 give 375.

⁴Cf. Murphy 139. This date is the latest possible; see below, 243.

⁵For the date see below, n. 32.

⁶At least he was based at Jerusalem at this time; see below, 250.

his interest to age this commentary unnecessarily; had it been written towards 390, Rufinus could well have written *ante decem fere annos*. So it may be accepted that the commentaries on Ephesians and Galatians belong to 386. In turn Jerome's words *plus quam quindecim anni* seem to place his dream no later than 370. Since it occurred at the earliest in the year after his arrival in the East,⁷ his departure from the West should not then postdate 369.

This conclusion is corroborated by Jerome's placing his retreat right after graduation from the school of rhetoric (*Epist.* 52.1.1 f.; cf. 125.12.1; *In Abdiam Prol.*):

dum essem adulescens, immo paene puer, et primos impetus lasciuientis aetatis heremi durtia refrenarem, scripsi ad auunculum tuum, sanctum Heliodorum, exhortatoriam epistulam plenam lacrimis querimoniisque et quae deserti sodalis monstraret affectum. sed in illo opere pro aetate tunc lusimus et calentibus adhuc rhetorum studiis atque doctrinis quaedam scolastico flore depinximus.

Puberty was recognized to begin at the age of fifteen⁸ and its *primi impetus* were associated accordingly with the years in which rhetoric was studied.⁹ Jerome's advice to the young monk Rusticus (*Epist.* 125.1.4) does show that the impulses of the years immediately following the study of rhetoric might still be regarded as "primary." But if Jerome, aged eighteen, left the rhetor in summer 366, he ought still to have retreated before the end of the 360s.

This dating can be confirmed and refined through a revision of the dating of Rufinus' arrival in Egypt, and it is this task that the first section of the present study will address. The revised chronology will clash with accepted datings in the lives of Melania the Elder, Evagrius

⁷Jerome had the dream in the middle of Lent (*Epist.* 22.30.3) at a time when he had access to the library which he had transported from the West, and was still intending a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; cf. Kelly 41. The dream, therefore, could scarcely be situated in the year of his departure for the East. That it did in fact occur at Antioch in the year after his arrival will be confirmed below, 258.

⁸Cf. John Chrys. *Vainglory* 52 f., 76.

⁹Pliny looks for a rhetor to guide an adolescent *in hoc lubrico aetatis* (*Epist.* 3.3.4), and Ausonius states that as a rhetor it was his duty to lead *vesticipes motu iam puberis aevi / ad mores artesque bonas fandique vigorem* (*Epist.* 22.73 f.; cf. *Prof.* 11.6 ed. Peiper). Augustine (*Conf.* 2.5 f.) reports the onslaught of puberty in his sixteenth year when he should have progressed to rhetoric. Paulinus of Pella's progress to rhetoric was interrupted by illness when he was aged fifteen (*Euchar.* 113–126). Leisure begot a waywardness which was compounded by the arrival of puberty (156 ff.): *iam prope sero calens aevi pro tempore nostri / in nova prorupi iuvenalis gaudia luxus, / quae facile ante puer rebar me posse cavere*. From line 176 it appears that puberty arrived in his eighteenth year, but clearly to his mind (and ancient thought in general) the urges should have been felt at age fifteen when his pursuit of pleasure began.

of Antioch and Basil of Caesarea. These conflicts will be treated in subsequent sections. Finally Jerome's conversion to the ascetic way and retreat must be reexamined in light of the new dating of his departure from the West.

SECTION I: THE DATE OF RUFINUS' ARRIVAL IN EGYPT

(i) *Comparative dating of the arrivals of Jerome and Rufinus in the East*

Jerome was at Antioch when he received news of Rufinus' arrival in Egypt. In the letter which he then addressed to Rufinus he reveals that he had reached that city during summer (*Epist.* 3.3.1). Now, at the time of writing Jerome has been there long enough to suffer serious illness, to endure the deaths of two friends (*ibid.* 2) and to receive several successive reports of Rufinus' presence in Egypt. The first of these was brought by Heliodorus, who apparently had accompanied Jerome to Antioch and had returned thither after a visit to Jerusalem.¹⁰ Since Jerome wrote *Epist.* 3 in mid summer (2.3), it cannot have been written before the year after his arrival at Antioch. At this time Rufinus was fresh from baptism (*Epist.* 4.2.2) which he had received at Aquileia (*Ruf. Apol.* 1.4), presumably at Easter. So his departure from the West must be placed at the earliest in the year following Jerome's; indeed Jerome's description of Rufinus' arrival as *inopinati gaudii . . . nuntiata felicitas* would make it difficult to believe that both left Aquileia in the same spring.¹¹ If Rufinus left the West in 372, as Murphy thinks,¹² then Jerome's departure cannot postdate 371. But if the former left in 371, as G. Rauschen

¹⁰It is thought that Heliodorus and Jerome met in the East after separate travel; cf. Cavallera 1.33 n. 2; Monceaux 99; Penna 22; Kelly 35. Jerome's statement *Sanctus frater Heliodorus hic adfuit* (*Epist.* 6.2.1) does not prove (*pace* Cavallera) that Heliodorus did not accompany Jerome on his journey east; in the context Jerome toys with the legal expression *testem adesse*. Nor can it be held that Jerome left the West suddenly and so alone (see below, n. 66). Since the prologue to *In Abdiam* reveals that Jerome and Heliodorus formulated plans to retreat at Trier, it need not be doubted that they travelled east together. A pilgrimage to Jerusalem was intended as a prelude to retreat (*Epist.* 5.1.1; 22.30.1), but at Antioch sickness impeded Jerome's progress. Heliodorus persevered, but by the time he had returned to Antioch he had decided against retreat (cf. *Epist.* 14).

¹¹Murphy 23 n. 108, who dates Rufinus' departure 372/3, has Jerome depart in 372 and arrive at Antioch in 374. On this reckoning Jerome did not receive news about Rufinus until 375, more than two or three years after the latter's baptism. Yet at *Epist.* 4.2.2 he writes: *ille modo lavit*. Kelly 36 f. has Rufinus leave in 372/3, and Jerome leave in 372 and arrive in 373. The news about Rufinus will not have reached Jerome before 374 and again the gap of more than a year between Rufinus' baptism and *Epist.* 4 jars with Jerome's *modo*.

¹²Murphy 23 n. 108; 42; *Traditio* 5 (1947) 67; cf. Kelly 36; it is odd that the point in question has escaped notice.

reckoned,¹³ then the latter left no later than 370. In fact Rufinus' statements about the length of his sojourn in the East indicate an earlier date for his departure from the West.

(ii) *The duration of Rufinus' absence from the West*

When Rufinus returned to the West he stopped first at Rome and then proceeded to Aquileia. On his arrival at Rome, so he reports, he disparaged his ability to translate thus (*Apol.* 1.11): *nullum dicebam me usum huiusmodi operis habuisse, et ad Latinum sermonem tricennali iam pene incuria torpuisse*. And he places his return to Aquileia *post triginta fere annos* (*Ad Anast.* 1; cf. *Apol.* 1.4). Had the figure thirty contained marked exaggeration, Jerome, who was acquainted with the chronology, might have pilloried Rufinus on this account in *In Ruf.* 2.2 (cf. 3.6). Since, however, Jerome accepts the round figure of thirty years both for his absence from the West and from Aquileia,¹⁴ it may be taken to represent with fair accuracy the periods involved.

Rufinus' return to the West is dated to spring or summer 397 and his return to Aquileia to fall 398 or spring 399.¹⁵ If he did not leave until 372, then he will have been absent from the West for twenty-five years and from Aquileia for about twenty-seven. These figures do not square well with the thirty years mentioned by Rufinus and Jerome. And Rufinus' returns cannot be dated sufficiently later to allow a departure in 372, or even in 371.

(iii) *A terminus ante quem for Rufinus' return to Aquileia*

At *In Ruf.* 3.38 Jerome places *Epist.* 81, a response to a complaint from Rufinus, *ante hoc circiter triennium*. When he sent this letter to Rome, he knew that Rufinus was already at Aquileia. It followed *statim* (*In Ruf.* 1.12) *Epist.* 84, which Jerome places a *biennium* before *In Ruf.* 1.24. At *In Ruf.* 2.2 he describes Rufinus as *biennio Aquileiae sedens*. If the first two books were sent in 401 and the third in 402, as is believed,¹⁶ then Rufinus' return to Aquileia might be placed readily in 399. There is cause, however, to revise the dating of these works.

¹³*Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche* (Freiburg 1896) 386 f.

¹⁴At *In Ruf.* 2.2 Jerome thrice places Rufinus' return to Aquileia *post triginta annos*. At 3.6 *quid per triginta annos in Oriente profeceris* sets his absence from the West at thirty years.

¹⁵Cf. Cavallera 2.34 f.; Murphy 81 f., 111, 138; Kelly 209 f., 235 f.; P. Nautin, "Études de chronologie hiéronymienne (393-397)," *REAug* 18 (1972) 212 f.; cf. 20 (1974) 263-268.

¹⁶Cf. Cavallera 2.41: "La date de cette première *Apologie* de Jérôme est incontestablement 401;" Nautin, *REAug* 18 (1972) 212: "Il est établi sans contestation possible que les livres I et II du *Contra Rufinum* de Jérôme sont de 401 et le livre III de 402." Contrast, however, Grützmacher 68; his argument is developed below.

At *In Ruf.* 2.23 Jerome remarks that *ante annos ferme decem* he was asked to compose the *De viris illustribus*. This work, as he reveals at its start and finish, was completed in the fourteenth year of Theodosius, that is, between 19th January 392 and 18th January 393.¹⁷ Had it been written at the start of 392, then the first two books against Rufinus might be dated to 401. But its composition must be placed around the end of that year.

In the prologue to *In Ionam* Jerome states that some three years have elapsed (*triennium circiter fluxit*) since he composed the *De viris illustribus* and *Epist.* 60, a threnody on Nepotianus. The latter was written in or towards summer (*Epist.* 77.1.1): *quartae aestatis circulus volvitur, ex quo . . . Nepotiani scribens epitaphium*.¹⁸ Since *Epist.* 60 contains mention of the death of the prefect Rufinus, dated by Socrates (*HE* 6.1.4) to 27th November 395, it was not written before late spring or summer 396. And since it was written within a *triennium* or so of early January 393, its composition cannot postdate 396. Now, since *Epist.* 60 was composed in or towards summer 396, the *De viris illustribus* cannot have been composed in the first half of 392, for the *triennium* would then become a *quadriennium*. It will be allowed, however, that *circiter triennium* may always signal towards three and a half years; and, in a context where Jerome emphasizes his industry, it will not surprise if he has included among his productions of the past three years or so one written some forty months ago. Thus it is quite possible (for example) that Jerome wrote *Epist.* 60 in May 396 and the *De viris illustribus* in December 392.

The first two books against Rufinus, written some ten years after the *De viris illustribus*, should be assigned then to 402.¹⁹ Since Jerome in-

¹⁷Nautin insists that the work belongs later in 393; cf. *REAug* 20 (1974) 281. He reasons that Jerome counts the imperial years not from the emperor's election but from the following 1st January. Thus Jerome would disregard the period from 19th January to 31st December 379. T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian* (Oxford 1971) 235 f., rightly objects. Kelly (174 n. 23) remarks: "A date late in 393 is harder than one late in 392 to reconcile with Jerome's statement in 401 (*Apology*, 2, 23) that he had written *Famous Men* 'almost ten years ago'." Even the dating of the first two books against Rufinus to the following year will not allow the *De viris illustribus* to have been written late in 393.

¹⁸If *aestatis* is certain, then Jerome is writing in summer. But, as Barnes (above, n. 17) points out, he may have written *Epist.* 60 in spring. Nautin's criticism (above, n. 17) does not banish this possibility.

¹⁹Some confirmation for this dating may be adduced from the defence of the commentary on Ephesians at *In Ruf.* 1.22: *Decem et octo ferme anni sunt, ex quo istos dictavi libros, eo tempore quo Origenis nomen florebat in mundo*. If Jerome counts from the date of completion of this work (ca 387), a figure which seems somewhat precise must be dismissed. If, however, this work, like the commentary on Ecclesiastes and the translation of Didymus, had been begun at Rome—at least to Jerome's recollection here—before Damasus' death in December 384, then Jerome, writing in 402, could claim an elapse of some eighteen years.

dicates that Rufinus returned to Aquileia a *biennium* before their despatch, there may seem cause to place his return in 400. It will be remembered, however, that *biennium* may signal between eighteen and thirty months and that the sailing season, during which the books were sent (*In Ruf.* 3.10), extended from mid March to November.²⁰ So the *terminus ante quem* for Rufinus' return provided by the present dating will be fairly fluid until the period signalled by *biennium* and the date of despatch of these books are determined.

(iv) *The dates of despatch of the books against Rufinus and the date of his return to Aquileia*

From *Epist.* 97 it is clear that Jerome sent to Rome translations of two paschal letters of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, in successive years while Anastasius was bishop of Rome.²¹ Anastasius had been succeeded by Innocentius by 15th February 404, as the latter's second letter shows.²² At *In Ruf.* 3.16 Jerome states: *duas, synodicam et paschalem, eius [Theophili] contra Origenem illiusque discipulos, et alias adversum Apollinarium et eundem Origenem, per hoc ferme biennium interpretatus sum*. Reference to translation of a second paschal letter is detected in *alias*.²³ But Jerome appears to separate major encyclicals from more occasional correspondence. Since he did not write *duas paschales*, it may be inferred that he had translated but one paschal letter at the time of writing. Since he sent a translation of a second paschal letter at the latest *primo vere* 403 (*Epist.* 97.1.1), the despatch of the third book against Rufinus cannot postdate the close of the sailing season for 402.

Since the first two books were sent in 402, the third book cannot have been sent any earlier. So, within the sailing season for that year, the duration of Rufinus' residence at Aquileia changed from a *biennium* to a *triennium*. The chronology involved may then be reconstructed thus:

²⁰For these dates cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (London 1964) 2.843.

²¹The considerations adduced below preclude placing Innocentius' ordination on 22nd December 401 after L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*² (Paris 1955) 1.CCXL f. The *Martyrologium hieronymianum* (below, n. 28) suggests 21st December, which was a Sunday in 402. This year is given by Prosper Tiro's *Chronicle*. But this dating, accepted by several scholars, is impossible, for to 403 belongs the transmission of Jerome's translation of a second of Theophilus' paschal letters (see below), which was sent while Anastasius lived. His death is perhaps to be placed in December 403, although it must be admitted that late April, the date given by the *Liber Pontificalis*, is not now impossible, for Jerome sent his translation right at the start of the sailing season (*Epist.* 97.1.1).

²²(In *PL* 20) *ad fin.*: *data XV kalendas Martii, Honorio augusto vi et Aristoneto cons.*

²³Cf. Cavallera 2.42.

Rufinus' return to Aquileia October/November 399²⁴

Interval of about 29 months

Despatch of the first two books March/April 402

Interval of about a further 6 months (i.e., 35 months after Rufinus' return)

Despatch of the third book September/October 402

(v) *Some confirmation of the present chronology from a terminus ante quem for Rufinus' departure from Rome for Aquileia*

It is clear from Jerome's words at *Epist.* 127.9 f. that Rufinus left Rome before the death of Pope Siricius, from whom he obtained a letter of communion (*In Ruf.* 2.21, 24). Siricius' epitaph sets the duration of his episcopate at some fifteen years: *ter quinos populum qui rexit in annos*.²⁵ His first letter shows that he had succeeded Damasus by 10th February 385.²⁶ Damasus was certainly in office in 384 (cf. Symmachus *Epist.* 10.21) and, since Jerome makes no mention of his death in correspondence after 9th September 384,²⁷ it seems probable that he was still alive in fall of that year. So it may be accepted that he died on December 10th and was buried on December 11th, the dates given by the *Martyrologium*

²⁴Rufinus completed his translation of the first half of the *Periarchon* during Lent and worked on the remainder at a more leisurely pace (*Praef. in librum* 3). It may not have been finished, therefore, until June. Eusebius, however, stole draft sheets (*Apol.* 2.48): *meos vero non codices, sed schedulas imperfectas inemendatas*; cf. Jerome *Epist.* 83; *In Ruf.* 3.20. So these may have been sent to Jerome before the completion of the whole work and may have arrived by June. (Eusebius had left the East before Easter [below, 224] and the sailing time from Palestine to Rome might be so little as three weeks; cf. Pall. *HL* 54.) So Jerome's reply, a literal translation of the *Periarchon* and the public letter, *Epist.* 84, may well have arrived by the close of the sailing season for 399, despite doubts to the contrary; cf. Nautin, *REAug* 18 (1972) 213. At *In Ruf.* 3.10 Jerome jibes: *libri enim tui quos limasti per triennium, disertiores sunt?* He had complained of Rufinus' limited circulation of his apologetic works (*In Ruf.* 1.1, 4, 15). There is no reason to imagine, as does Kelly 251, that "with typical caution Rufinus circulated it [the *Apologia*] privately among friends before publishing it." He had sent his works to those he thought should read them, and so had published already as widely as he desired. But Jerome will count the *triennium* from the despatch of *Epist.* 84, which reached Rufinus at Aquileia (*Apol.* 1) and prompted his *Apologia*, to his receipt of this work in summer 402. Since at *In Ruf.* 3.38 he places *Epist.* 81 *ante hoc circiter triennium*, it seems fair to assign this letter with *Epist.* 84 to fall 399. They may have arrived in the same package within weeks of Rufinus' departure from Rome.

²⁵Cf. Duchesne (above, n. 21) CCL, 217.

²⁶(In *PL* 13) *ad fin.*: *data tertio Idus Februarias, Arcadio et Bautone consulibus.*

²⁷The date of the last imperial communication with Praetextatus (*Cod. Iust.* 1.54.5), who died as consul-elect for 385. Jerome refers to his death at *Epist.* 23.2 f. and 39.3.7, but does not mention any papal decease here or in other letters from this period; cf. Cavallera 2.22 f.

hieronymianum.²⁸ Thus Siricius' election is dated with some confidence to December 384. The phrase *ter quinos . . . in annos* then places his death towards the end of 399; again there is no apparent reason to distrust the *Martyrologium*, which places his death on November 24th and burial on November 26th.²⁹ Hence it appears that Rufinus did indeed leave Rome no later than fall 399. If the length of Rufinus' stay at Rome can now be calculated, the date of his return to the West can be established.

(vi) *The duration of Rufinus' stay in Rome and the date of his arrival there*

Speaking of his reconciliation with Rufinus before the latter's departure from the East, Jerome asks (*In Ruf.* 3.33): *ergo ideo in Anastasi immolato agno dexteris iunximus, ut tuas Romae schedulas furaremur? Immolato agno* is taken to refer to Easter;³⁰ hence Rufinus' arrival at Rome is placed in late spring or early summer. In the prologue to the third book of his translation of Origen's *Periarchon*, Rufinus states that he completed the first part of this work during Lent and the remainder at a more leisurely pace. He was engaged thus when Eusebius, who was to purloin unrevised draft sheets of the translation, arrived from the East; in the prologue to *In Matth.* Jerome places Eusebius' departure *imminente iam Pascha* and at *In Ruf.* 3.24 *post annum vestrae navigationis*. So, if Rufinus left after Easter of one year, he cannot have begun work on the *Periarchon* before Lent of the following year. If his return to Aquileia is placed in fall of the latter year, then he will have spent some seventeen months at Rome. *Immolato agno*, however, may refer not to Easter but to communion;³¹ so this expression need not tie Rufinus' departure to spring. And Jerome's information about Eusebius' voyage need mean no more than that Eusebius sailed towards Easter in the year after Rufinus' departure. It will be allowed, therefore, that Rufinus may have arrived at Rome towards the close of the sailing season and that his sojourn there may not have exceeded twelve months. Thus fall 398 appears a

²⁸Cf. H. Delehaye, *Commentarius perpetuus in Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Brussels 1931) *ad loc.* The *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 21) also places his *depositio* on 11th December.

²⁹The *Liber Pontificalis* (above, n. 21) reports a vacancy of thirty-one days after Damasus' death, thus placing Siricius' election in the second week of January 386. It places his death on 22nd February 400. Duchesne (CLX f.) points out that the vacancy-figures are untrustworthy. And the date of death may have been chosen to allow his episcopate a clear fifteen years. Hence there is no cause to distrust the *Martyrologium*. Prosper Tiro in the *Chronicle* places Anastasius' election under 398. But he also places Zosimus' election, which belongs to 417 (cf. Seeck, *Regesten* 334) under 416, and Innocentius', which belongs to 403 (see above, n. 21) under 402.

³⁰Nautin, *REAug* 18 (1972) 213; Kelly 209.

³¹Cf. H. Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, trans. B. L. Woolf (London 1950) 3.293 f.

possible date for his return to the West. And Jerome provides cause to accept this as the actual date of Rufinus' return.

(vii) *Evidence from Jerome for dating to 398 Rufinus' departure from the East*

Jerome wrote the *Contra Iohannem* while his excommunication by John was still in effect. It had been raised before Rufinus' departure. At *C. Ioh.* 41 Jerome remarks that John has roused himself to attack *post annos tredecim*. Jerome will count from his own arrival at Jerusalem, which cannot be placed before winter 385.³² Since it is in his interest to accord John the lengthiest silence possible, he will count to the moment of his writing the *C. Ioh.* rather than to the start of the quarrel with John or the composition of John's apology. Nautin has argued that Jerome here counts by consular years from 385; thus *post annos tredecim* signals 397.³³ Since he takes *immolato agno* to refer to Easter, he assigns the *C. Ioh.* to the early months of that year. An earlier date surely seems impossible. Since, however, *immolato agno* may refer to communion, a later date in that year is admissible; Jerome's expression *ante paucos menses circa dies Pentecostes* in section 42 permits placement of the work in fall. If, moreover, *post annos tredecim* is taken to signify an elapse of about thirteen years, then fall 398 is indicated; the phrase need cause no great perplexity even if Jerome's arrival at Jerusalem is placed, as well it may be, at the start of 386.³⁴

³²Jerome left Rome after the death of Damasus (December 384; see above) and in the month of August (*In Ruf.* 3.22). He met with Epiphanius on Cyprus, travelled thence to Antioch, where he met with Paulinus, and then entered Jerusalem *media hieme et frigore gravissimo* (*In Ruf.* 3.22).

³³*REAug* 18 (1972) 213–215.

³⁴The *C. Ioh.* does not appear to have been circulated widely (cf. Cavallera 2 note L) or finished fully, although Nautin, *REAug* 20 (1974) 264 f., argues that the work is as complete as Jerome ever intended. It may be that Jerome was working on it in September 398 when reconciliation with John and Rufinus was effected. Jerome may have shown the work to Rufinus then before his departure. It is always possible, however, that any apparent echoes of Jerome's words in the *C. Ioh.* by Rufinus result rather from conversation either with Jerome or his Roman supporters where like terminology was sure to be employed (Cavallera dismisses too readily this possibility). In any case, no reason emerges not to date Rufinus' departure to the close of the sailing season for 398.

Acceptance of this date necessitates revision of the dating of certain other events. At *C. Ioh.* 1 and 14 Jerome states that he is responding to John after a *triennium* of silence. The second passage (14) refers to the first reported signs of John's hostility during Epiphanius' visit to Jerusalem (*ibid.* 11), that is, to the visible start of the conflict. It is a fair assumption, therefore, that Jerome dates his silence from this point rather than from the ordination of Paulinian, as has been thought. Epiphanius' arrival in Jerusalem must not then be dated later than fall 395. Nautin, *REAug* 19 (1973) 72, has argued that his visit coincided with the Festival of the Dedication in September, but it appears unnecessary to assume that any festival was being celebrated. It is thought that Epiphanius returned to Cyprus in the year of his visit to Jerusalem and journeyed back to the monastery at Besanduc in the following year, where he ordained Paulinian.

(viii) *Probable dates for the departures of Jerome and Rufinus from the West*

If Rufinus returned to the West in fall 398 (a later date is surely impossible), then he may well have sailed for Egypt in spring 369; thus *triginta fere annos* will represent thirty and a half years,³⁵ and *tricennali iam pene incuria*, an expression which precludes placing his departure in 368, twenty-nine and a half years. Jerome, it will be remembered, arrived in the East at least one year before Rufinus. So, on the present reckoning, his arrival at Antioch will not postdate summer 368. And to date it earlier would be difficult. For Jerome will not have completed his studies at Rome before summer 366,³⁶ and his residence at Trier, his visits in northern Italy and his arrangements for departure could scarcely be compressed into six months or so. So spring 368 appears the probable date for Jerome's leaving the West.

(ix) *Confirmation of the proposed dating from the age of Paulinian, Jerome's brother*

At *Epist.* 82.8.1-3 Jerome reveals that Paulinian has reached, or is about to reach, the age of thirty. This letter predates the reconciliation of Jerome with John and Rufinus' departure for Italy. If the latter were placed in spring or early summer 397, then this letter could not postdate early 397. In this case Paulinian, whose birth would be placed in 367, would have been an infant at the time of Jerome's leaving the West. But such was scarcely the case.

At *Epist.* 14.2.2 f. Jerome, fresh in his retreat, writes to Heliodorus to encourage him to desert his home likewise. He urges him to ignore

Paulinian's ordination did take place in the year after Epiphanius' arrival at Jerusalem (*Jerome Epist.* 51.1.7), but it seems unnecessary to inflict two separate journeys upon the aged bishop. If, as Nautin argues, he had to be in Salamis to officiate at the solemnities of Lent and Easter, he may have wintered at Besanduc, and received and ordained Paulinian in January or February of 396. To this period too must be assigned his public letter against John. At *Epist.* 57.2.1-3 Jerome places this *ante hoc ferme biennium* and his translation of it eighteen months ago. So *Epist.* 57 will have been sent in fall 397. If Paulina's death is dated to late 395 after Ch. Favez, *La consolation latine chrétienne* (Paris 1937) 26 n. 1, then Jerome's *Epist.* 66, where he describes himself as *serus consolator, qui per biennium tacui* (1), may have been sent in fall 397 before *Epist.* 57; hence no need to postulate any interruption in the *biennium* of silence; contrast Nautin, *REAug* 20 (1974) 267 n. 71; cf. *Augustinianum* 18 (1978) 547 f.

³⁵For *fere* = "about" rather than "almost" cf. *ThLL* 6. 496 f.

³⁶Cf. Booth (above, n. 1). Jerome was studying *grammaticae* in summer 363. He progressed to the rhetor around the time he assumed the *toga virilis*, as was usual in the fourth century. His study of rhetoric cannot then have begun before fall 363 when the school-term recommenced. At this stage he will have been aged no more than fifteen or sixteen. Students usually devoted three years to rhetoric, and Jerome's proficiency in this subject gives no cause to suppose that he gave to it less time than was normal. Thus the end of the school-term in summer 366 appears the earliest possible date for his graduation from the rhetor.

family-ties, *licet parvulus ex collo pendeat nepos, licet sparso crine et scissis vestibus ubera, quibus nutrierat, mater ostendat, licet in limine pater iaceat*. If an infant *nepos* deserves mention in such a situation, no less does an infant brother (cf. *Epist.* 3.4.2). Yet at *Epist.* 22.30.1 Paulinian is not mentioned: *cum ante annos plurimos domo, parentibus, sorore, cognatis et, quod his difficilior est, consuetudine lautioris cibi propter caelorum me regna castrassem* . . . A ready deduction is that Paulinian was not yet born when Jerome left for the East.³⁷ If this is so, then his birth must postdate spring 368. In turn *Epist.* 82 and Rufinus' return cannot predate 398. Since Rufinus cannot have left the East after fall 398, the letter cannot be later. So Paulinian will have been born in 368, or possibly early in 369, and Jerome's departure cannot postdate 368.³⁸

SECTION II: THE DATE OF MELANIA'S ARRIVAL IN EGYPT

Melania arrived in Egypt before Rufinus (cf. Jerome *Epist.* 3.3.2; 4.2.1). But her voyage to the East has been assigned to 372 or 373, because certain pieces of evidence seem to suggest that she spent but little time in Egypt before following to Diocaesarea the confessors exiled thither after the death of Athanasius (dated to spring 373).³⁹ This dating, however, cannot withstand scrutiny.

(i) *The evidence of Palladius*

Palladius (*HL* 46) specifies that it was only after the return of the exiles from Diocaesarea to Egypt that Melania established herself at

³⁷Cavallera's suggestion (1.4 n. 7) that Paulinian is omitted because he has already joined Jerome at Rome at the time of writing is not persuasive, for Jerome would surely have listed all family members from whom he had severed himself on his departure. P. Hamblenne, *Latomus* 28 (1969) 1087 n. 2, suggests that Paulinian was a half-brother. Since he misguidedly places Jerome's birth in 330/1 after Prosper Tiro, he must postulate this relationship or have Jerome's mother give birth when she cannot have been aged less than about fifty. Paulinian was born when Jerome was in his late teens or earliest twenties and his sister was in her teens (*Epist.* 7.4). It is not impossible, therefore, that Paulinian was a half-brother, although this supposition is not necessary. It will not be argued, however, that Jerome has omitted him for that reason. For the collocation *domo, parentibus, sorore, cognatis* invites inclusion of a step-brother, had he existed.

³⁸This entry in the *Chronicle* under 368 may point to Jerome's presence at Antioch in that year: "Libanius Antiochenus rhetor insignis habetur." Libanius was no obscure figure at Antioch from the mid 350s but he probably did not come to Jerome's notice until his arrival in that city. So in the tumultuous composition of the *Chronicle* it seems not unlikely that he has selected for Libanius' *floruit* the year of his own arrival at Antioch.

³⁹Cf. C. Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius* (Cambridge 1898–1904) 2.227; E. Schwarz, "Palladiana," *ZNTW* 36 (1937) 166 n. 9 and 10; Murphy 35–37; *Traditio* 5 (1947) 67; Kelly 99 n. 35.

Jerusalem. This return should be placed late in 377 (see below, 253). Now Palladius (*ibid.*) states that Melania spent twenty-seven years in her foundation on the Mount of Olives before returning to the West.⁴⁰ Paulinus of Nola writes of her return (*Epist.* 29.6): *sanctam ipsam ex Hierusalem post quinque lustra remeantem excepimus*. It will be allowed, therefore, that Palladius may have arrived at his figure by inclusive reckoning. In this case he assigns her return to 403. Now at *HL* 54.1 he places the total duration of her absence from the West at thirty-seven years; such is the most natural interpretation of his words.⁴¹ If this figure was computed by inclusive reckoning, Palladius will date Melania's arrival in Egypt to 367.

On the present reconstruction Melania spent six or seven years in Egypt before going to Palestine. Such a lengthy stay might be thought to square poorly with Palladius' own narrative at *HL* 46:

κατέπλευσεν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδειαν. κάκειθεν διαπωλήσασα τὰς ὕλας καὶ εἰς χρυσὸν κατακερματίσασα εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῆς Νιτρίας, τοῖς πατράσι περιτυγχάνουσα . . . καὶ ἐχρόνισε παρ' αὐτοῖς ἕως ἡμισυ ἔτους ἀνὰ τὴν ἔρημον κυκλεύουσα καὶ ἱστοροῦσα πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους. μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο τοῦ αὐγουσταλίου Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐξορίσαντος Ἰσίδωρον . . . καὶ δώδεκα ἐπισκόπους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους, εἰς τὴν Παλαιστίνην περὶ Διοκαισάρειαν οἷς ἠκολούθησεν αὕτη ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων χρημάτων ὑπηρετουμένη.

The brief visit paid by Melania to the fathers encourages the assumption that the whole duration of her stay in Egypt was similarly brief; the sequential pointers *κάκειθεν* and *μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο* do not discourage this view. But otherwise Palladius does race through the span of Melania's life. It will be admitted, therefore, that *μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο* may signal a considerable elapse of time. And unless it does so, Palladius will be inconsistent with himself.

(ii) *Jerome and Rufinus on Melania's journey to the East*

Melanium, nobilissima mulierum Romanorum, et Marcellini quondam consulis filia, unico praetore tunc urbano filio derelicto Hierosolymam navigavit. Ubi tanto virtutum praecipueque humilitatis miraculo fuit, ut Theclae nomen acceperit. (Jerome *Chron.* s.a. 374)

⁴⁰His statement that Rufinus and Melania gave hospitality for twenty-seven years is not exact, for Rufinus was not there for so long. But Palladius is not guilty of any gross error; the foundation in which both were involved provided hospitality for this period. So his figure as applied to Melania need not be distrusted.

⁴¹For other interpretations, which do seem forced, see Butler (above, n. 39) 2.227; Schwarz (above, n. 39) 166 f.; Murphy (above, n. 39) 73–75; G. J. M. Bartelink, *Palladio: la Storia Lausiaca* (Milan 1974) 387 f.

Etiam nec illud eius admirabile factum silendum est, ne pudorem incutiamus audientibus, quod Marcellini consulis neptem, quam Romanae nobilitatis primam, parvulo filio Romae derelicto, Ierosolymam petisse, et ibi ob insigne meritum virtutis Theclam nominatam, in ipsis Chronicis suis scripserat, post id de exemplaribus suis erasit, cum actus suos vidisset districtioris disciplinae feminae displicere. (Rufinus *Apol.* 2.29)

These passages might likewise engender the impression that Melania's stay in Egypt was so brief as to be negligible. But a comparison of their content gives cause to reject any such notion.

Jerome records three salient facts: Melania was high-born; she sacrificed family-ties for the ascetic way; in 374 she sailed to Palestine, where she settled at Jerusalem. (A conflation of the dates of her voyage and settlement need cause no surprise.) He does not say that she sailed from Rome in that year, which he surely knew was not the case. *Unico praetore tunc urbano filio derelicto* is an economical way to say "whose only-surviving son, whom she had left formerly, was at that time urban praetor."⁴² Rufinus clearly refers to Melania's departure from Rome. But he alters the expression concerning her son, Publicola, to *parvulo filio Romae derelicto*.⁴³ Both Palladius and Paulinus confirm that the child was *parvulus* at that time and in need of a guardian.⁴⁴ The urban praetorship, however, was held after assumption of the *toga virilis*.⁴⁵ So Rufinus and Jerome refer to different occasions.

Melania was married young, *in teneris adhuc annis* says Paulinus (*Epist.* 29.8). Widowed at the age of twenty-one (Pall. *HL* 46), she left for the East soon thereafter (Pall. *ibid.*; Jerome *Epist.* 39.5.4 f.). If she arrived in Egypt in 367, she will have been born ca 345 and married ca 359. So Publicola will have been no more than about eight years old on her departure. But he can have been aged about fifteen in 374 and may have assumed then an office for which he had been designated years in advance.⁴⁶

⁴²This interpretation is surely preferable to the emendation of *praetore* to *praetori* or *unico praetore tunc urbano* to *unico praefecto tunc urbano* (Schwarz [above, n. 39] 166 n.).

⁴³In another context Rufinus might have castigated Jerome for an entry which is potentially misleading. Here, however, he takes issue with Jerome's spite, not his accuracy; thus *filia* is corrected to *neptis* without comment.

⁴⁴Palladius may mitigate the truth when he asserts that she had one appointed. Paulinus (*Epist.* 29.9) speaks as though she simply abandoned Publicola.

⁴⁵A. Chastagnol, "Observations sur le consulat suffect et la préture du bas-empire," *RH* 219 (1958) 238, finds that this office was normally held between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. Although he remarks that tenure at an earlier age was possible, he points to no praetor younger than fifteen. It is modern reconstructions of Melania's life that would make Publicola an exception; cf. 247 n. 7. See following note.

⁴⁶*Cod. Theod.* 6.14.13.2 (May 361) mentions the designation of praetors ten years in advance at Constantinople and this rule was operative at Rome by August 372; *ibid.*

In sum, there is no reason not to date Melania's arrival in Egypt to 367 after the figures provided by Palladius, who was, it will be remembered, a friend of hers.

(iii) *Possible confirmation of the present chronology from a dating of Rufinus' journey to Palestine*

Rufinus describes thus his suffering in the turmoil which followed the death of Athanasius (*Ad Anast.* 2): *quamvis igitur fides nostra persecutionis haereticorum tempore, cum in sancta Alexandrina ecclesia degeremus, in carceribus et exiliis, quae pro fide inferebantur, probata sit.* Jerome questions whether Rufinus was actually imprisoned or exiled (*In Ruf.* 2.3): *pudet me apertissimi mendacii; quasi carceres et exilia absque iudicum sententiis irrogentur.* But it will not be denied that Rufinus at least followed the Alexandrian clergy and monks into exile at Diocæsarea, as did Melania. If it may be assumed that he left Egypt at or around the same time as did she, then a confirmation of the present chronology follows.

Rufinus states that he spent six years in Egypt, then, after an interval, a further two (*Apol.* 2.15). Now Jerome chides (*In Ruf.* 3.18): *et gloriaris te ab adolescentia Theophili fuisse auditorem et discipulum: cum et ille antequam episcopus fieret, pro humilitate sibi insita, nunquam docuerit, et tu, postquam hic episcopus factus est, Alexandriae non fueris.* Since Theophilus' election is dated to 385, Rufinus' sojourns in Egypt must predate that year. Since Palladius (*HL* 46) indicates that Rufinus installed himself at Jerusalem at the same time as Melania, that is, late in 377, these sojourns could not be placed easily after that date. And if he left Egypt in 374, the date given by Jerome for Melania's departure, he must have spent some six years there previously.⁴⁷ His arrival in Egypt will then be fixed to spring 369, the earliest date possible, and his depar-

21.1. If it was in effect at Rome through the 360s, a boyhood praetorship seems an unlikelyhood.

⁴⁷It is possible that Rufinus left Egypt with Melania. If Melania sailed from Rome late in 367 (cf. Jerome *Epist.* 39.5 *ad fin.*) and, after ordering her affairs at Alexandria, spent six months with the fathers in Nitria, it will not surprise that a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was postponed until 369. On arrival Rufinus met Melania and the pair then planned to make this trip together (Jerome *Epist.* 4.2.1; 5.2.1). If these plans matured, the visit will have been so brief as not to count for a break in Rufinus' six-year period in Egypt.

Jerome has been thought to show that Rufinus' arrival coincided with the exile of the Egyptian clergy after Athanasius' death (*Epist.* 3.2.1): *rursum suspensam voto nutantemque mentem quidam Alexandrinus monachus, qui ad Aegyptios confessores et voluntate iam martyres pro plebis fuerat transmissus obsequio, manifestus ad credulitatem nuntii auctor inpulerat.* But early in 365 Valens deposed all bishops who had been reinstated under Julian (*Hist. Aceph.* 15). Athanasius regained his position, but not all were so fortunate. Peter, Athanasius' ejected successor (in Theodoret *HE* 4.19 *ad fin.*),

ture to fall 374, his six-year stay extending for an actual five and a half years.

SECTION III: EVAGRIUS AND BASIL

The dating of Jerome's arrival at Antioch to summer 368 and Rufinus' arrival in Egypt to spring 369 clashes with the accepted dates for Basil's accession to the episcopate (370) and Evagrius' return to Antioch (372).⁴⁸ These conflicts must now be resolved.

(i) *Comparative dating of Jerome's arrival at Antioch and Evagrius' return*

Having recounted to Rufinus the toils of his travel to Antioch, Jerome remarks (*Epist.* 3.3.2): *nunc uno et toto mihi lumine Evagrio nostro fruor, cui ego semper infirmus quidam ad laborem cumulus accessi*. That Jerome accompanied Evagrius is held no longer; their respective points of departure, Jerome from Aquileia and Evagrius from Rome (see Basil *Epist.* 138.2, cited below) do not encourage this view; moreover, Jerome's words *cui . . . accessi* suggest that he joined Evagrius at Antioch. It is assumed usually that Evagrius was already there when Jerome arrived.⁴⁹ But Jerome may record sufferings before he found refuge with Evagrius (cf. *Epist.* 3.3.1 f.: *perdidi . . . abstraxit. nunc . . . fruor*). So it must be allowed that Jerome's arrival may predate Evagrius' return.

(ii) *Evagrius' embassy to Basil*

Basil reports that the returning Evagrius acted as a papal emissary (*Epist.* 138.2):

ὁ πρεσβύτερος Εὐάγριος, ὁ υἱὸς Πομπηϊανοῦ τοῦ Ἀντιοχέως, ὁ συναπάρας ποτὲ ἐπὶ τὴν Δύσιν τῷ μακαρίῳ ἀνδρὶ Εὐσεβίῳ, ἐπανήκει νῦν ἐκ τῆς Ῥώμης ἀπαιτῶν ἡμᾶς ἐπιστολὴν αὐτὰ τὰ παρ' ἐκείνων γεγραμμένα ἔχουσιν αὐτολεξεῖ (ἀνεκόμισε δὲ ἡμῖν εἰς τοῦπίσω τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν, ὡς οὐκ ἀρέσαντα τοῖς ἀκριβεστέροις τῶν ἐκεί).

mentions κληρικὸς τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ διατρίβοντας ἅμα σπουδαίους μονάζουσι who tried to win the emperor's favour for the plight of his party but were exiled farther to Neocaesarea in Pontus. These clergy had been there before the turmoil which erupted after Athanasius' death, presumably from 365. So Jerome's Alexandrine monk may have been visiting these confessors.

⁴⁸Reconstructions of the negotiations between Damasus and the East have canonized this dating; cf. M. Richard, "Saint Basil et la mission du diacre Sabinus," *AnalBoll* 67 (1949) 178–202, especially 197–200; E. Amand de Mendièta, "Basil de Césarée et Damase de Rome," in J. N. Birdsall and R. W. Thompson (edd.), *Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of R. P. Casey* (New York 1963) 127 f.; W.-D. Hauschild, *Basilius von Caesarea, Briefe*: Zweiter Teil (Stuttgart 1973) 14 f.

⁴⁹Cf. Cavallera 1.27; 2.12; Monceaux 104; Penna 23; Kelly 38.

The *ποτέ/νυν* antithesis assures that Evagrius is returning now for the first time to the East. As presbyter Basil was the authoritative right hand of his weakly predecessor, the bishop Eusebius, from 365 to the latter's death (Greg. Nanz. *Or.* 43.53). It is not impossible, therefore, that at the time of writing *Epist.* 138 Basil has not yet gained the episcopate; hence no obstacle against placing Evagrius' return in the later 360s.⁵⁰ If, however, the ecclesiastical concerns voiced in this letter do show that Basil writes as bishop, then a problem arises: Evagrius' return must postdate Basil's election, which is assigned commonly to fall 370.⁵¹ This dating now attends scrutiny.

(iii) *The present dating of Basil's election*

Basil died before completing his ninth year as bishop (Greg. Nanz. *Epist.* 119.45; Greg. Nyss. *Vita Macr.* 14), and his death is placed on 1st January, his festival day. Now Gregory of Nyssa dates thus participation in a council after Basil's death (*ibid.* 15 *ad init.*): ἐνατος ἦν μετὰ τὸ πάθος τοῦτο μὴν ἢ μικρὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦτο καὶ σύνοδος ἐπισκόπων κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχου πόλιν ἡθροίζετο, ἧς καὶ ἡμεῖς μετέσχομεν. His attendance indicates that this council took place after the recall of the bishops dethroned under Valens; so too does that of Eulogius who succeeded Barses, the bishop of Edessa who had been exiled.⁵² If the recall is placed either close to Valens' death (August 378) or under Gratian, and Eulogius' election is dated to March 379, then this council cannot have met before spring 379. If, moreover, Basil died on 1st January, then it must be dated to September or October 379 and his death to 1st January 379. Since his election took place towards winter (Greg. Nanz. *Epist.* 42 *ad fin.*) it must be placed in fall 370.⁵³

⁵⁰The other events mentioned at *Epist.* 138.2 cannot be dated securely: Eustathius was so constantly involved in squabbles that this incident cannot be identified positively; the date of the death of Faustinus is unknown; the date of the organization of Lycaonia depends upon the date assigned this letter and not vice versa; cf. Jones (above, n. 20) 2.1457 n. 10.

⁵¹This date was established by Maran, *Vita S. Basilii Magni*, PG 29 (1857) LVII-LIX, after Tillemont, and is supported by the dating of Basil's death to January 1st 379 by Rauschen (above, n. 13) 476 f. It has been accepted by subsequent scholars without question; cf., e.g., M. M. Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie zu den Schriften Gregors von Nazianz* (Bonn 1960), "Basilius 11" 40 n. 44. E. Schwartz, however, adopts 369; cf. *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin 1960) 4.53.

⁵²Damasus *Epistle* 2 frg. 2 (in *PL* 13; ed. E. Schwartz, *ZNTW* 35 [1936] 23) records the subscriptions to Damasus' letter *Confidimus igitur* by *inter alios* Meletius of Antioch, Eusebius of Samosata, and Eulogius at a council at Antioch. Eusebius was exiled under Valens and was dead by 381; cf. P. Maraval (ed.), *Vita Macr.*, in *Sources chrétiennes* 178, 191 n. 4. Hence *termini* for the council. In turn it seems certain that this was the council attended by Gregory of Nyssa.

⁵³The ancillary reasons adduced to support this dating lack substance: (i) nothing in *Epist.* 48 places Basil's election a few months before Demophilus' at Constantinople;

(iv) *A revised dating of Basil's election*

Socrates (*HE* 5.2.1), Sozomen (*HE* 7.1.3), and Theodoret (*HE* 5.2.1) mention an edict of Gratian which permitted the return of those exiled by Valens. Rufinus (*HE* 2.13) and Jerome (*Chron.* s.a. 378), however, state that Valens lifted the banishments, and Socrates (*HE* 4.35, 38) also mentions this action. It appears, therefore, that Valens revoked the penalties and Gratian confirmed this measure which had been placed in uncertainty by Valens' death.

Valens' action is associated with his leaving Antioch to face the Goths. Jerome places it in 378, doubtless the year in which many exiles returned. The *Chronicle of Edessa*, however, places the recall late in 377. This date, which has been challenged, appears trustworthy.

The relevant section of the *Chronicle* reads in I. Guidi's translation:⁵⁴

Anno 684, mense hazirān (junio), die nona, migravit ex hoc saeculo Mār Ephrem sapientissimus. Mense ēlūl (septembri) ejusdem anni, ecclesia Edessae populus excessit propter Arianorum insectationem.

Anno 689, mense ādār (martio), migravit ex hoc saeculo Mār Barsē Edessae episcopus.

Eodem anno, die 27 kārūn qēdēm (decembris) postliminio reversi Orthodoxi ingressi sunt et occupaverunt edessenam ecclesiam recuperatam.

Per idem tempus factus est Mār Eulogius episcopus, anno nimirum quo Theodosius magnus imperare coepit. Et ipse quidem Mār Eulogius aedificavit aedem s. Danielis, quae postea aedes Mār Domitii appellata fuit.

The Edessene year 689 runs from October 377 to September 378.⁵⁵ The reoccupation of the church by the orthodox is then dated to 27th

(ii) at *De viris illustribus* 106 Jerome does place Basil's death under Gratian. But it is rash to assign his death, therefore, to the interval between Valens' death and Theodosius' election. Such accuracy should not be expected from Jerome; his choice of expression may be whimsical or may reveal that he is unsure of the exact date of Basil's death. In section 105 he places under Valens the death of Ephraem who composed a funeral oration on Basil; (iii) Theodoret (*HE* 4.30) has Arintheus rebuke Valens at Constantinople in 378 for his persecution. Since Basil (*Epist.* 269) consoles Arintheus' widow, it is held that Basil's death cannot antedate 378. Theodoret, however, maintains that God punishes Valens through the Goths for his religious policy and has Valens ignore salutary advice from all quarters up to his end. But in fact the emperor had already relaxed his measures against the Orthodox at this stage; see below. So Theodoret's anecdote involving Arintheus is not unimpeachable evidence that the latter was alive in 378. Ammian, it may be noted, does not mention him in his rather full narrative (31.7–13), and there is no necessity to identify this Arintheus with the praetorian prefect addressed in *Cod. Iust.* 11.11.3.

⁵⁴*CSCO Scriptores Syri* ser. 3 vol. 4 (Leipzig 1893) 3–11.

⁵⁵Cf. L. Hallier, *Untersuchungen über die edessenische Chronik* (Leipzig 1892) in O. Gebhardt and A. Harnack (edd.), *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristliche Literatur* 9 (Leipzig 1893) 39. For the sources of the *Chronicle* mentioned below cf. Hallier 48–58.

December 377. In turn it may be inferred that Valens relaxed their persecution late in 377.⁵⁶ Hallier (102), however, rejects this dating for two reasons: he places the return of the exiles under Gratian; he maintains that the order of the entry shows that their return really postdates Barses' death and thus claims that 27th December 378 is indicated. The first objection has been answered above, and the second is not cogent. Since the *Chronicle* is based upon a list of bishops (many entries are in fact notices of election and death), it need not surprise that the entry *anno* 689 begins with an obituary and then mentions a previous event. It may be noted, moreover, that Hallier would have Barses die in exile. Theodoret (*HE* 4.15 *ad fin.*) places his death at Edessa after the recall.

The date of Eulogius' election now calls for examination. *Per idem tempus* and *nimirum* suggest an imprecise knowledge on the part of the compiler. Since his major source was a list of bishops and their constructions, it may be suspected justly that he has based his dating of Eulogius' election on the date of the inception of the church of St Daniel; otherwise an odd gap emerges between Barses' death and Eulogius' election which Theodoret (*ibid.*) implies followed swiftly. To place Eulogius' election in March 378 is, therefore, neither difficult nor unreasonable. So the council at Antioch, which was attended by Gregory of Nyssa and Eulogius, can have taken place in 378 after Barses' death in March and after the recall late in the previous year.

Gregory of Nyssa, in the oration which seems to have been delivered on the establishment of Basil's festival (1 f., 23–26), emphasizes the justice of commemorating Basil after the Apostles, but nowhere states that Basil died on January 1st. If the date of his festival is honorific, June 14th, recorded as his *natalis* by Usuard and the martyrology of Adon, may be the actual date of his death.⁵⁷ The council of Antioch may then have met after Easter 378, some six months after the recall and about ten months after Basil's death on 14th June 377. His election may then be placed late in 368 or early in 369.

(v) *Basil's election, Evagrius' return, the death of Eusebius of Vercelli*

Evagrius brought a response to a letter written by Basil to the bishop of Rome. If Basil wrote this letter as bishop, it may have arrived early in 369 and Evagrius may have brought the response in summer of that year (cf. Jerome *Epist.* 3.2.2).⁵⁸ If Evagrius returned to Antioch in summer 369, Jerome may have arrived a year previously.

A few words about the date of the death of Eusebius of Vercelli may

⁵⁶So e.g. Seeck, *Regesten* 249; Lietzmann (above, n. 31) 4.33.

⁵⁷J. Dubois, *Le martyrologe d'Usuard* (Brussels 1965) 246; the martyrology of Adon (with Usuard) in *PL* 123.

⁵⁸For the possibility of such a sequence see above, n. 20 and n. 24.

be inserted here. From Basil's use of *μακάριος* it has been inferred that Eusebius died before Evagrius' return to the East; indeed it is assumed that Evagrius left on or soon after his passing.⁵⁹ And since Jerome's eastward journey has been placed in the early 370s, so too have these events.

In the *Chronicle* Jerome assigns Eusebius' death to 369. If he died early in that year Evagrius can have left after his death and reached Antioch by summer. But Evagrius need not have left after his death; Eusebius may have died in the period between his departure and Basil's writing *Epist.* 138. Again, the epithet *μακάριος* does not prove absolutely that Eusebius was dead at this time. Basil uses this term often of the deceased, but he does describe Gregory of Nyssa, arraigned for peculation and deposed from his throne by the Arians, as *τοῦ μακαρίου ἐπισκόπου* (*Epist.* 225). So he could well describe Eusebius who had suffered exile and had participated in the Council of Confessors at Alexandria as *μακάριος* in his lifetime.⁶⁰

If Evagrius returned in 369 and Jerome's date for Eusebius' death is accepted, then this latter consideration does not really affect the chronology. It does remove, however, an impediment to the possible placement of Evagrius' return in 368, if in *Epist.* 138 Basil may be believed to write as presbyter. In this case the journeys of Evagrius and Jerome can have fallen in the same year.⁶¹

⁵⁹Cf. above, n. 49; Maran (above, n. 51) LIV: "Hunc enim appellat Basilius, qui hunc titulum non solet nisi mortuis deferre;" the translation by R. J. Deferrari, *St. Basil: the Letters* 2 (London 1928) 323: "with Eusebius of blessed memory." Prosper Tiro in his *Chronicle* places Eusebius' death under 370, but Jerome's dating, mentioned below, is more trustworthy. It is accepted by Ch. Pietri, *Roma Christiana* (Rome 1976) 732.

⁶⁰Cf. his description of the exile of the Egyptian bishops as *στάδιον . . . τῶν μακαρίων ἀγωνισμάτων* (*Epist.* 265.1); he consoles thus monks harassed by the Arians (*Epist.* 257.1): *ὅτι ἐν καιρῷ νομιζομένῳ εἰρηνεύεσθαι ἐκτήσασθε ἑαυτοῖς μακαρισμὸν τὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκομένων ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀποκείμενον*. Cf. *Epist.* 129.2; 223.2. Examples of the application of *μακάριος* to the living are collected by L. Dinneen, *Titles of Address in Christian Greek Epistolography to 427 A.D.* (Washington 1929) 82.

⁶¹At *Epist.* 1.15.1 f. Jerome writes: *en quo me gestorum ordo protraxit! iam enim ad Evagrii nostri nomen advenimus. cuius ego pro Christo laborem si arbitrer a me dici posse, non sapiam, si penitus tacere velim, voce in gaudium erumpente non possim. quis enim valeat digno canere praeconio Auxentium Mediolanii incubantem huius excubiis sepultum paene ante quam mortuum, Romanum episcopum iam paene factionis laqueis inretitum et vicisse adversarios et non nocuisse superatis?* Cavallera (2.12 f.) inferred that Auxentius' death, which Jerome places in the *Chronicle* under 374, must have preceded Evagrius' departure from the West. Murphy (36 n. 34) argued, however, that Rufinus' testimony invalidates this inference, for the latter, who arrived in the East after Jerome, witnessed the turmoil which followed the death of Athanasius, dated to spring 373 (*HE* 2.4; *Ad Anast.* 2). But the validity of this argument has rested on the assumption that Evagrius arrived before Jerome. It is now certain that *sepultum paene antequam mortuum* must mean "buried, so to speak, while yet alive." Recently Pietri (above, n. 59) 804 n

SECTION IV: JEROME'S CONVERSION TO THE ASCETIC WAY AND RETREAT

It has been thought that seven or more years elapsed between Jerome's decision to retreat and actual retreat; hence vacillation in his resolve and stages in his conversion have been detected.⁶² The present chronology however, allows the single and decisive conversion that Rufinus implies at *Apol.* 2.9.

After completing his studies at Rome Jerome may have visited his home at Stridon, but otherwise his progress to Trier appears to have been direct. Since he will have left the rhetor in summer 366, he should have reached Trier by the start of 367.⁶³ It was doubtless Jerome's intention to embark upon an official career,⁶⁴ but, influenced perhaps by recent baptism,⁶⁵ he soon decided to retreat. So, in the course of 367, he and

has inferred from Jerome's words: "Le polémiste semble indiquer qu'Evagre a quitté l'Occident, peu de temps avant la mort d'Auxence." But once the above interpretation is accepted no such inference is necessary; nor indeed will the present chronology permit it, for Evagrius' return and Jerome's arrival cannot be separated by three to five years. The help given to Damasus *iam paene factionis laqueis inretitum* may refer to some role played by Evagrius in securing from Valentinian in October 367 an edict to eject Ursinus from Rome; *Coll. Avell.* 1.11 (in *CSEL* 35). The business about Auxentius may refer to Evagrius' involvement in the councils which met in Northern Italy and at Rome (*ex rescripto imperiali*). They have been dated between 368 and 373 (cf. Richard [above, n. 48] 179 n. 1) but they need not be dated after 368. Jerome may have met Evagrius acting as papal ambassador at Trier in 367 and the latter will have brought the letter *Confidimus igitur* (in *PL* 13; ed. E. Schwartz, *ZNTW* 35 [1936], 19 f.) to Basil in 368 or 369 (for Evagrius as carrier see Richard *ibid.* 199). Acceptance of this chronology necessitates a revision of constructions of the negotiations between Damasus and Basil, but that project is outside the scope of the present study.

⁶²Cf. Grützmacher 150; Cavallera 37; Monceaux 119, 129–131; Penna 24; Kelly 30, 41.

⁶³367/8 had been proposed tentatively as the date of his arrival; cf. Cavallera 2 "Regesta;" Antin 42; Testard 20; Kelly 25.

⁶⁴At *In Epist. ad Gal.* 1.2.11 f. Jerome records: *aliquoties cum adolescentulus Romae controversias declamarem, et ad vera certamina fictis me litibus exercerem, currebam ad tribunalia iudicum* . . . Hence it appears that he pursued a *tirocinium fori* after the fashion recommended by Quintilian (10.5.19; cf. 12.11.5–7) and followed by Tacitus (*Dial.* 2.1; cf. 34). And since he went to Trier after completion of his studies (*Epist.* 3.5.2; 5.2.3), it is fair inference that he wanted to be called to the bar of the praetorian prefect. Such ambition was neither uncommon nor un-Christian (cf. the example of Ambrose; Paul. *Vita A.* 5) and, as is suggested often, Jerome's parents probably foresaw such a career when they sent their son to Rome for his education.

⁶⁵Cavallera (2.17) thought that the first *In Abdiam*, described in the prologue to the extant commentary, which was composed in 396 (see Booth [above, n. 1] 348 n. 15), was written at Antioch in 375. So he referred the thirty years of service to God which Jerome mentions in this prologue to the interval between his baptism and the composition of the second commentary. Thus he placed the baptism in 366. But the thirty years clearly refers to the period between the composition of the commentaries (see Booth, *ibid.* 350) and so gives no such indication of the date of Jerome's baptism.

Heliodorus will have planned the journey to the East on which they embarked in spring 368.⁶⁶ They had intended a pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Cavallera (1.16) and others (Monceaux 63; Antin 35 f.; Testard 19) have detected a reference to baptism at *In Ruf.* 3.39: *sed fac me errasse in adulescentia, et philosophorum, id est gentilium, studiis eruditum, in principio fidei ignorasse dogmata Christiana, et hoc putasse in apostolis, quod in Pythagora et Platone et Empedocle legeram. In principio fidei* is thought to place his baptism during study of philosophy which he is believed mistakenly (see Booth, *ibid.* 349 f.) to have pursued after rhetoric at Rome. But the phrase, repeated from *Epist.* 84.6.3, refers rather to the period after his conversion and arrival in the East when he had acquired sufficient facility in Greek to study Origen (*ibid.* 2-3; *In Ruf.* 3.40; *Ruf. Apol.* 2.9). Indeed elsewhere Cavallera writes of the passage in question (2.7): "il vise les années 380-382." So again no indication of the date of Jerome's baptism is forthcoming.

Jerome provides a *terminus ante quem* for his baptism where he recalls for Damasus that he received the vestment of Christ at Rome (*Epist.* 15.1.1; 16.2.1). Since he does not mention that Damasus was then bishop of Rome, it is inferred justly that he was baptized before Damasus' election; so at the latest, Easter 366. Indeed if Jerome left Rome soon after the end of school-term in summer 366, a later date appears impossible, for there is no record of his returning to Rome before leaving for the East.

It is rather odd that Jerome, at that time uncommitted to a religious or ascetic career, should have received baptism; cf. Kelly 23 and note, e.g., the examples of Rufinus (*Apol.* 1.4; Jerome *Epist.* 4.2.2) and Augustine (*Conf.* 9.14). During his studies, however, he did show, to use Kelly's phrase (23), "a positively oriented Christianity." He was recognized as a Christian by his classmates in the *schola grammatices* in summer 363 (*In Abacuc* 2, 3.14) and he records pilgrimages to the catacombs at this stage in his studies (*In Hiez.* 12.40.5-13). It seems likely that the adolescent Jerome, about to leave Rome after years of attachment to the Christian community there, felt the need to forge a decisive link with his spiritual past before embarking upon a secular career. In this case his baptism should be assigned to Easter 366. His words at *Epist.* 84.9.3 *illam senex tenebo fidem, in qua puer renatus sum* need not of course mean that he was baptized in boyhood. At *In Ruf.* 1.15, where this common *puer/senex* antithesis recurs, *puer* describes Jerome as a student of rhetoric, that is, aged between fifteen and eighteen. Once baptized Jerome will have been warned sternly to guard purity of mind and body in his adolescent years when sexual desires were recognized to be rampant (cf. Augustine *Conf.* 2.6-8 and above, n. 5). And the carnal sins to which he confesses, whether committed in thought or deed before or after baptism, will have troubled his conscience and prompted the conversion at Trier. (For a sensible case for the reality of Jerome's sexual indulgences at Rome see Kelly 21. A glance at *Epist.* 125.7.2, Paulinus of Pella *Euchar.* 154-175 and Augustine *Conf.* 2.7 will remind that as a rule the adolescent male would be active sexually.)

⁶⁶It is thought that Jerome left the West suddenly and amid controversy. But his departure was clearly planned. He describes it thus to Rufinus (*Epist.* 3.3.1): *postquam me a tuo latere subitus turbo convolvit, postquam glutino caritatis haerentem inopia distraxit avulsio, tunc mihi caeruleus supra caput adstitit imber, tunc maria undique et undique caelum. tandem in incerto peregrinationis erranti, cum me Thracia, Pontus atque Bithynia totumque Galatiae vel Cappadociae iter et fervido Cilicum terra fregisset aestu, Syria mihi velut fidissimus naufrago portus occurrit.* As Kelly remarks (36 n. 2) "'in incerto peregrinationis erranti' does not mean 'wandering uncertain of my destination', but 'wandering exposed to the uncertainties of travel'." In a context where Jerome poses as a tempest-tossed hero too much should not be read into *turbo subitus* either. Since he

before their actual retreat, but ill-health detained Jerome at Antioch where he had arrived in summer 368. It was there that he had his famous dream in the middle of Lent 369. And soon afterwards, Heliodorus, returning from Jerusalem, brought news that Rufinus had arrived in Egypt and was intending to visit the holy city. Jerome then wrote *Epist.* 3 to Rufinus and sent it with a covering letter (*Epist.* 4) to Florentinus at Jerusalem; the latter was to transmit *Epist.* 3 to Rufinus on his arrival there. Florentinus' reply to Jerome, which occasioned Jerome's *Epist.* 5, presumably belongs to 369. Now, between despatch of *Epist.* 4 and 5 Jerome had retreated into the desert. So his retreat may be dated to fall 369.

The ill-health which had held Jerome at Antioch also impeded his retreat. At *Epist.* 3.5.2 f. this delay provides opportunity for a laudatory contrast of Bonosus with himself. But *Epist.* 2, which may be a polite refusal to join Theodosius' community, reveals that Jerome's resolve to retreat did not waver: he has the will but not the ability, and his health is presumably the impediment. That he did manage to retreat within fourteen months or so of his arrival at Antioch shows no inordinate

quotes Vergil *Aen.* 3.194, the "suddenness" of the separating storm may be simply a reminiscence of *Aen.* 3. 196 f.: *continuo venti volvunt mare magnaue surgunt / aequora, dispersi iactamur gurgite vasto*. To leave his friend Rufinus caused regret, which Jerome has translated into rending violence, but it is not to be believed that his departure was forced suddenly upon him; contrast Grützmacher 146 f.; Cavallera 1.24; Monceaux 91 f.; Antin 49; Testard 22; Kelly 33 f.

Elsewhere too conflict has been attached too readily to Jerome's departure. In *Epist.* 11 *ad virgines Haemonenses* Jerome's purpose is to complain that his many letters have gone unanswered (with *totiens vobis tribuenti officium* cf. *Epist.* 7.7.1; 12.3). He attributes the cause to his own worthlessness (cf. *Epist.* 7.2.3), but makes a claim for some response. The extravagance of his expression makes the depth of his hurt hard to assess, but should not conjure some serious breach which occurred before his departure. The same is true for *Epist.* 12. Jerome's vilification of Lupicinus (*Epist.* 7.6) does not attest any overt squabble before he left the West either. And too much may be made of the references to the *incessabilis inimicus* (*Epist.* 16.2.1) and the *Hibera excetra* (*Epist.* 6.2.2). The former appears to be simply a personification of trials and tribulations (with its context cf. Basil *Epist.* 2.1), the latter of adverse talk caused by his leaving home (cf. *Epist.* 14.2); *Hibera* in this case will be an ornamental epithet suggested perhaps by Horace *Epodes* 5.21 or even by Livy's words about Hispala (evoking Hispalis) *illius excetrae delenimentis et venenis* (39.11.2). The ill-will between Jerome and his aunt (*Epist.* 13) may have been caused by his departure, but this is not certain. The fact that his pubescent sister was allowed to begin a religious life (*Epist.* 6.2.1; 7.4) at this time may suggest that the family as a whole was well disposed towards his venture.

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hesitation. So, although Heliodorus changed his mind about retreat (*Epist.* 14), there is no evidence that Jerome had any second thoughts.

As noted at the outset of this study, Jerome himself places his conversion and retreat right after the completion of his studies at Rome. It has now been shown that he does not compress chronology unduly. For the decision to retreat followed within a year his graduation from the rhetor, and the departure from the West, the dream, and the actual retreat followed within two years this decision. Born late in 347 or early in 348, Jerome will have been aged twenty-one at the time of his retreat. So his statements about the control of puberty's first urges thereby involve no incomprehensible exaggeration.

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