

Death and dying of bishops in Merovingian times – Gregory of Tours and his *Decem Libri Historiarum*

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Abstract

Gregory of Tours, the most important writer in 6th-century Gaul, demonstrates within his Ten Books a clear understanding both of the bishop's office and of dying, death and afterlife. In the tradition of the Bible and the patristics, especially Ambrose and Augustine, Gregory uses descriptions of death, especially cases of episcopal death, to underline his point of view. Furthermore, Gregory uses concepts of a "good" and a "bad" death to stress the bishop's position compared to other groups like the Merovingian kings. The Ten Books present almost 100 descriptions of episcopal death, examples of "good", "bad", also "realistic" cases of death, but no orthodox bishop, according to Gregory's own evaluation, dies a "bad", a cruel or unworthy death.

Keywords: Bishop, Death, Gregory of Tours

Zusammenfassung

Gregor von Tours gilt als der bedeutendste Geschichtsschreiber des Fränkischen Reiches im 6. Jahrhundert. Innerhalb seiner Zehn Bücher Geschichte offenbart er ein klares Verständnis des bischöflichen Amtes auf der einen, aber auch über die Vorstellung von Sterben, Tod und Nachleben auf der anderen Seite. In der Tradition der biblischen Überlieferung und der patristischen Literatur, dabei sind insbesondere Ambrosius und Augustin zu nennen, legt Gregor einen großen Stellenwert auf Todesschilderungen, insbesondere von Bischöfen, um seinen Ansichten bezüglich des bischöflichen Amtes besonderen Nachdruck zu verleihen. Er nutzt Konzepte eines „guten“ und „schlechten“ Todes, um die besondere Position des Bischofs in der damaligen Gesellschaft herauszustellen als Vermittler zwischen den Lebenden und den Heiligen. Die herausgehobene Stellung der Bischöfe wird insbesondere innerhalb ihrer Todesschilderungen deutlich, vor allem im Vergleich mit denen anderer Personengruppen, vor allem der merowingischen Könige. In den Zehn Büchern finden sich beinahe 100 Schilderungen von bischöflichen Todesfällen, es gibt darüber hinaus Beispiele von „guten“, „schlechten“, aber auch „realistischen“ Todesfällen, doch stirbt kein rechtgläubiger Bischof, gemäß dem Urteil Gregors, eines „schlechten“, eines grausamen und unwürdigen Todes. Die Todesschilderungen sind damit weit mehr als nur die Zusammenführung weitbekannter Topoi.

Stichworte: Bischof, Tod, Gregor von Tours

I Introduction

“Mankind has always been aware of death, but historiography started to deal with it very late and contextlessly to life. Actually, historical research has only recently dedicated to death but in a way that seems to be quite modern. This has led to an enormous amount of research.”¹ Dieter von der Nahmer underlines the relationship of history and death in a few words, but not without referring to the quickly growing, currently almost innumerable mass of relevant publications. It is not only the perception of death, which aroused the historian’s interest. Particularly the importance of death in medieval times has been analysed many times.² This text also focuses on death in the middle ages, but rather than giving a general overview, I would like to examine one specific group that has not been investigated so far: the bishops. The episcopacy in the Early Middle Ages “originates from ancient times and is virtually the only continuing office”³ in the Frankish Empire. The importance and influence of that office remains unaffected in the course of the following centuries. Because of that, bishops are an ideal subject with refer to the analysis of death in the Middle Ages. The reigns of the Merovingian kings frame it temporally.

Information and very lively descriptions of a bishop’s death in Merovingian times are to be found, amongst hagiographical sources, in the work of Gregory, bishop of Tours. His Ten Books are in the scope of interest of this paper. However, Gregory was not in uncharted waters neither with his imagination of death, dying and afterlife nor with his episcopal ideal. Hence, it is necessary to focus on biblical and patristical traditions to work out basic ideas of death and afterlife. After that, I’m going to explain, why Gregory uses so much descriptions of bishops’ deaths in his Ten Books. After all I will provide a short conclusion, followed by a perspective beyond Merovingian times.

II Dying and death in the Bible and patristics

In the Old Testament, death does not play an important role compared with life on earth.⁴ In contrast to that death and its overcoming are the core of the New Testament. In the OT the perspective of an afterlife is only implied, if at all (cf. Dan. 12, 2-3). According to the NT, the possibility of overcoming death is an undoubted fact as one can judge from John 11, 25-26: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, / and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”⁵ In this passage two aspects are of importance: There is a realistic prospect of an afterlife alongside Jesus Christ, but it is necessary to live a good, a holy life.⁶ The NT presents prototypes of a “good” and a “bad” death, which will be significant during the whole middle ages. There are no precise criteria leading to a “good” or a “bad” death. These will be developed in the following centuries.⁷ But the previous passage very clearly demonstrates what is necessary to enter heaven: a holy life and unbroken believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus, who died for mankind and took the original sin from them, appears in a two-sided role: as redeemer and as judge.⁸ The best example of a “bad” death is Judas Iscariot, who can be seen as a prototype for a bad death. The bible may give a very vivid description (Acts 1, 18). He hung himself and “he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out”. This is not the first occurrence of the motif of a broken body, which is taken as a negative criterion for a bad death. This motif will be formative for the next centuries.⁹

The differentiation between a good and a bad death as well as the imagination of an afterlife with a godly person aren’t “inventions” of the bible. Nonetheless, the Bible

exerts huge influence on the understanding of Christianity in early Christendom until the times of Gregory of Tours. One of the earliest writers who dealt with questions concerning dying and death was the archbishop of Milan, Ambrose. In his tract, significantly named *De bono mortis*, Ambrose examines if and why death can be seen as a benefit or an evil. In the beginning, Ambrose underlines his goal unmistakably. He is going to prove that death is not an evil but a benefit for humanity.¹⁰ Like the late antique philosopher Origen, Ambrose differentiates between three forms of death: 1) the death of sin, 2) the mystical death, 3) the earthly death.¹¹ The first form of death leads inevitably to punishment in hell. The mystical death means the rapture of soul and its separation from the fleshly body already during lifetime. The soul is just oriented to one goal: blessedness. The third form, the separation of body and soul, acts as a midway. Similarly, Ambrose rates the death of sin as bad (*mala*) whereas the mystical death is seen as good (*bona*). The separation of body and soul is somewhere between these two positions (*media*).¹² Nevertheless, Ambrose considers a soul's separation from body virtually as a benefit. Qualification, once again, is a holy life in combination with the neglect of earthly goods. Once again, it is obvious what has to be done to receive a "good" death.

In contrast to Ambrose's opinion, the separation of body and soul can be seen as a benefit, stands Augustine, probably the best known of the late antique church fathers. He has worked out his ideas, next to many other texts, especially in his main work *De civitate Dei*. Augustine does not negate the differentiation between a "good" and a "bad" death. No one has to be worried about death in case he led a good life before. Due to that, nobody should think about the point of death. It is the place, someone will reach afterlife, which should be in someone's mind's eyes. In conclusion, like Ambrose, a moral life can be seen as the highest benefit for a person.¹³ In the 13th Book of The City of God Augustine specifies his outlook on dying and death.¹⁴ Following Ambrose, Augustine also differentiates three forms of death.¹⁵ But death, according to Augustine, has to be understood as punishment. A life led without any form of sin does not prohibit death.¹⁶ In contrast to platonic ideas or opinions of early Christian theologians (like Ambrose), Augustine neglects any form of mercy in connection with death. Death is not the release of soul from the prison called body. Augustine concludes: Physical death is not good for anyone. Physical death is punishment because body and soul, connected with each other for a whole life, are separated violently.¹⁷

III Gregory of Tours – *Decem libri historiarum*

Gregory of Tours wrote his texts in the spheres of Ambrose and Augustine. The previous chapters dealt with the theoretical and philosophical discourses concerning dying and death. Gregory of Tours and his Ten Books mark the beginning of the historiographical description of the bishop's death. Besides, due to quantitative as well as qualitative criteria, Gregory's work marks a climax, unsurpassed for centuries. Gregory lived a century after the end of the West-Roman Empire. Subsequently, the whole, from now on former, Empire had been affected by massive geopolitical changes. After the downfall of the Empire, the episcopacy occupied vacant positions to reorganize structure and power. Bishops represented their cities both as clerical and profane leaders. How the episcopacy managed to increase its power and influence and became the climax of a senatorial career in the *gallia* is uncertain, even though there is not a lack of theories.¹⁸ But we are not interested in the rise of the bishops, but rather in

Gregory's understanding of the episcopal office. So how did Gregory characterise it? Numerous times he defines orthodoxy to be the most important moral implication, which finally leads to the communion with Jesus Christ. Bishops act as mediators between saints in heaven and the people on earth, they enable human beings to reach afterworld.¹⁹ The distinguished position of bishops in Gregory's opinion is important to understand his texts and his descriptions of dying colleagues.

To begin with, we need to examine how Gregory defines dying and death. Unlike Ambrose (*De bono mortis*) or Augustine (*De cura pro mortuis gerenda*) he has not written a special text about that, but his Ten Books offer enough hints and images to extract Gregory's opinion. In his 10th book, Gregory describes a conflict between a priest and himself. The priest, poisoned by the sadduceean heresy (*Sadduceae malignitatis infectus veneno*²⁰), denies resurrection under reference to 1 Moses 3, 19 ("for you are dust, and to dust you shall return"). Gregory tries to refute the priest's view and, in turn, also quotes Moses (1 Moses 4, 10: "And the Lord said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground'.") Concerning Gregory's argumentation, it becomes hence apparent, that souls survive the fleshly death and wait for resurrection.²¹ Gregory refuses further objections from the priest and emphasises that everyone, the good as well as the ungodly, have to be resurrected to suffer their deserved punishment.²² This passage leads to another aspect. Gregory explicates that holy persons have to wait in heaven until Last Judgement (*qui defuncti sunt sancti, caelum, ut credimus, retinet*) while the ungodly suffer at an infernal place (*peccatoris in illo infernali carcere usque ad iudicium retineri*). Hence, Gregory is part of a long tradition, leading back to Tertullian. Ambrose, Augustine as well as Gregory's contemporary, pope Gregory "the Great", are convinced of an interim between death and Last Judgement. A biblical motivation can be found in the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus (Lucas 16, 19-31). After death, the rich man is send to hell, whereas Lazarus is send to heaven. The rich man realises his sins and pleads Lazarus might bring him relief. Gregory refers to that biblical story in his dispute with the sadduceean priest. Therefore, Gregory differentiates between a "good" and a "bad" death and concretises the existence after death.

The interest shall now be concentrated on the descriptions of bishops' deaths in Gregory's Ten Books.²³ In the previous part, Gregory's position towards dying, death and afterworld has been demonstrated. Particularly with regard to the Bible and the patristics it has been stressed that Gregory's understanding of death based on many other beliefs. In addition, he underlined his own understanding of the bishop's office as a mediator between heaven and earth. Because of this understanding, bishops have to be seen on the same, perhaps even on a higher level than the Merovingian kings. It is possible to illustrate the subject with a number. Gregory describes almost 100 episcopal cases of death, which includes the bishops of Rome but excludes arian bishops. Gregory mentions the respective successors in about 60 cases. The annalistic form is hereby rarely used: Bishop X dies, it follows bishop Y. Interestingly, Gregory very often gives additional information about a bishop's life, the circumstances of his death and, sometimes, his burial and the place of his grave. Besides, Gregory does not hesitate to use descriptions of death with a negative character.

It is possible to divide Gregory's death reports into three categories: The first category contains legendary martyrs from the times of persecution. Gregory mentions them in his first book. The second category includes bishops who died before the beginning of Gregory's episcopacy. The third category contains the bishops who died during that time. First we need to deal with the martyrs, of which Gregory mentions 19.

Of course, he cannot recount their lives based on his own experience and therefore he has to rely on preserved narratives. For this reason, his descriptions seem very short and legendary. In contrast to the later episcopal descriptions Gregory broadens his horizon beyond the borders of the Frankish Empire. Parts of his first book include reports about martyrs from Rome, Jerusalem and Antioch. Mostly, Gregory describes the martyrdom without any details, but some examples are a bit longer. Saturninus of Toulouse was tied to the heels of an angry bull and dragged downwards from a castle.²⁴ Privatus of Javols (in the south of Lyon) refused to sacrifice to idols and was knocked down and died a few days later.²⁵ Last but not least, the most impressive story. Quirinus of Sisak (today Croatia) was bound a millstone around his neck and thrown into a river. However, he did not drown, the millstone swam. But Quirinus was not delighted about this wonder and asked Jesus Christ to not prohibit his martyrdom. Thereupon Quirinus died.²⁶ Given these examples, it is not possible to conclude anything concerning realistic or that is to say natural cases of death.

The second category shall be focused now. The examination of bishops who died before the beginning of Gregory's episcopacy (everybody who died after the time of persecution and before the year 573) shall be based on geographic analysis first. Gregory mentions 44 bishops who represent ten sees. It is not surprising that 19 of the 44 mentioned bishops relate to Tours, Gregory's see. Another 14 belongs to the city of Clermont-Ferrand, which is not surprisingly, either. Gregory was born there in the year 538 or 539.²⁷ Additionally, Gregory refers to two bishops each from Langres and Lyon. All in all 44 bishops are mentioned, all of which 37 are connected with Tours, Clermont-Ferrand, Langres and Lyon. It seems, as if there could be a connection between Gregory and these cities. Indeed, Gregory was related to bishops from all four sees. Gregory almost preens himself on his relationship to 13 out of 18 former bishops of Tours.²⁸ It seems that Gregory gives precedence in his description to bishops, who are related to Tours, his birthplace Clermont-Ferrand or, in general, his family over bishops of other sees. One example of these 37 bishops shall be further examined. Sidonius, bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, suffered from a fever and died. His congregation gathered around his bed and asked him to protract his death.²⁹ Wishes like that can be found very often, for example in the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius Severus. At the end of Sidonius' life, the Holy Ghost blessed him. Obviously, he died a "good" death, although there aren't further details. Why is it important to underline this fact? Before the death of Sidonius Gregory describes another case. Two priests opposed Sidonius and beset him. But God's punishment hit one of the priests when he visited the lavatory and died (*spiritum exalavit*). Like Arius, the "father" of Arian heresy, who should have died at a lavatory as well, his bowels were supposed to have gushed out like it happened in the case of Judas' death (*non minoris criminis hunc reum esse quam Arrium illum, cui similiter in secessum fuerunt interna deposita per partis inferioris egestum*).³⁰ The other priest survived Sidonius and became bishop of Clermont-Ferrand. Before long, a man told this bishop about a vision he had seen. He, the man, had stood next to God's throne and had seen the first priest's trial. Sidonius had been there, too, and he had preferred an indictment against the priest. Thereupon, the priest has been send to hell. Now it is up to him, the bishop, to answer these crimes. But should he remain silent, he shall die a cruel death (*Si tacueris, morte pessima morieris*). After this episode, the second priest, who had become bishop, died as well. The first one died like Arius, the second like Simon Magus, as Gregory pronounced. But both led a miserable existence in hell after their death.³¹ This episode is remindful of the fable with Lazarus and the rich man: Sidonius, a godly person, died after a holy life while his opponents, the two heretics, were

punished by God and died a cruel death. It is the first time that Gregory confronts the “good” with the “bad” death. This antithesis can be found very often in Gregory’s Ten Books, to sign a good Christ with a good death, in contrast enemies of Christendom with a cruel one.

The episode about Sidonius and the two priests reveals a clear intention. On the other side, with all due caution, it is possible to examine common, trivial, realistic cases of death. Tetricus of Lyon, Gregory’s great-uncle, got a shock,³² according to Gregory’s report. Obviously, Tetricus suffered a stroke. It would be easy to interpret this as a punishment by God, but it is not possible to find any hints in Gregory’s text leading to this interpretation. Tetricus’ successor, Sylvester, another relative of Gregory, did not die of old age, either. He rather suffered from falling sickness for a long time. Due to another attack Sylvester lied down unconsciously and moaning for two days and before he could take his consecration as bishop. He died on the third day.³³ A godly intervention seems possible. It is not unusual to see an episcopal candidate die before his consecration, which means, according to the “real” Christians, obviously unworthy. But there is no prove to put Gregory in charge of this interpretation. Loss of consciousness and moaning are not characteristics of a “bad” death but symptoms of epilepsy. These two examples demonstrate very clearly that the description of death must not be identified as a “bad” death automatically, if it deviates from typical or topical structures. Gregory demonstrates realistic cases of death, which result from common diseases.

What is about the bishops who died during Gregory’s episcopacy? In fact, the results are similar, even if there is another geographical separation. There are 35 reports about episcopal cases of death, representing 25 sees. Many examples demonstrate a “good” death however there are also accounts of “realistic” deaths. The first category is represented by Martin of Braga. Gregory introduces him as highly educated. No one was equivalent to him. After a long episcopacy and many good deeds he went home to God (*plenus virtutibus migravit ad Dominum*). Many people are said to have been crying after his death (*magnum populo illi faciens planctum*).³⁴ In contrast to Martin, Domnolus of Le Mans died from icterus and pains caused by stones (*morbo regio calculoque*) after 22 years as bishop. Obviously, he suffered from gallstones. On the one hand, the “bad” death seems to be a problem, while on the other hand he includes himself perfectly into Gregory’s work. The case of Pappolus of Langres can demonstrate this. According to Gregory’s account Pappolus, who has done many unethical things, was disciplined in a vision by his predecessor Tetricus and died after that. There is no doubt that this is to be characterised as a “bad” death. Let’s see the details. Gregory does not negate Pappolus’ crimes, neither does he wish to intensify these events. In fact, he does not want to criticise his brothers in office (*Qui multa, ut asserunt, egit iniqua, quae a nobis praetermittuntur, ne detractores fratrum esse videamur*).³⁵ Gregory hesitates to say something negative about other bishops. So is it still a “bad” death Pappolus died from? There is no prove for this assumption. Pappolus was disciplined in a vision, but that is rather a cleaning than a punishment. After that, Pappolus refused to eat and drink and died after three days. The number is probably not a coincidence. The cause of death is not God’s revenge but an internal hemorrhage (*cum sanguine ore proicerit*). It is not possible to interpret the verb (*exspirare*) in a negative context. The death after three days may represent the realistic circumstances but it is very remindful of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day. It seems as if Pappolus has cleaned himself (in cooperation with his predecessor Tetricus) and therefore could enter heaven on the third day. After all, Pappolus was translocated to

Langres where he was buried (*exinde elatus, Lingonas est sepultus*).³⁶ That's not the end of an unworthy bishop or an example of a "bad" death.

IV Conclusion and perspective

Gregory's Ten Books have been analysed according to many different aspects. The descriptions of the episcopal deaths are just one but a very profitable subject. Gregory's descriptions seem arbitrary, but it is possible to learn a lot about Gregory's opinion towards the bishop's office and towards dying, death and afterworld. Very often, we are confronted with the dichotomy of a "good" and a "bad" death. It are not the orthodox bishops who suffer a "bad", a negative, a cruel death, even if their lifetime and their work would have intended another ending.

It is not possible to go beyond Gregory's work in this text. But a short perspective demonstrates Gregory's outstanding position and the outstanding position of his Ten Books concerning the descriptions of bishops' deaths. During the Merovingian time, two more chronicles have been written: a chronic of the so called Fredegar and the *Liber historiae Francorum*. Both almost do not register any episcopal cases of death. In the Carolingian annals, the episcopal death vanishes more or less completely. At the end of the 10th century, the bishop's death finds his way back into historiographical texts and reaches its climax in the chronicles and annals written during the investiture context, 500 years after Gregory of Tours.

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Abbreviation list

CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
HZ Historische Zeitschrift
MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica
SS rer. Merov. S

¹ “Der Tod war wohl immer im Bewusstsein der Menschen, aber die Geschichtswissenschaft hat ihn spät, freilich aus dem Lebenszusammenhang isolierend, zu ihrem Thema erhoben. Eigentlich erst die neuere Geschichtswissenschaft hat sich dem Tod als einer Erscheinung in der Geschichte gewidmet, doch in einer Weise, die man fast modisch nennen müsste, so dass die Literatur unübersehbar geworden ist.” Dieter von der NAHMER, *Der Heilige und sein Tod. Sterben im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013, p. 9. However, he also states, that “der Tod als Gegenstand historiographischer Bemühungen wieder in den Hintergrund getreten ist”.

² Cf. Philippe ARIÈS. *Geschichte des Todes*. München: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verlag, ¹¹2005; Arno BORST et al. (eds.) *Tod im Mittelalter* (Konstanzer Bibliothek 20). Konstanz: UVK Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1993; Edelgard E. DUBRUCK; Barbara I. GUSICK (eds.) *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages* (Studies in the Humanities. Literature – Politics – Society 45). New York: Lang 1999; Werner GOEZ. *Die Einstellung zum Tode im Mittelalter*, in: *Der Grenzbereich zwischen Leben und Tod. Vorträge gehalten auf der Tagung der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Hamburg am 9. und 10. Oktober 1975* (Veröffentlichungen der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Hamburg). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976, pp. 111-153; Otto Gerhard OEXLE. *Die Gegenwart der Toten*. In: BRAET, H.; VERBEKE, W. (eds.) *Death in the Middle Ages* (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia I, 9). Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983, pp. 19-77; Norbert OHLER. *Sterben und Tod im Mittelalter*. München/Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1990.

³ The episcopacy is “eine aus der Antike stammende und praktisch einzige weiterwirkende Einrichtung” in the Frankish Empire. Georg SCHEIBELREITER. *Der Bischof in merowingischer Zeit* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung 27). Wien/Köln/Graz: Böhlau, 1983, p. 12.

⁴ Cf. Gion CONDRAU. *Der Mensch und sein Tod. Certa moriendi condicio*. Zürich: Kreuz-Verlag, ²1991, p. 181; Margot PENNINGTON. *Memento mori. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Todes*. Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag 2001, p. 41 and Wolfgang SCHOBERTH. „Mitten im Leben ...“. Systematisch-theologische Bemerkungen zur Wahrnehmung des Todes im Mittelalter. In: KNAEBLE, S.; WAGNER S.; WITTMANN, V. (eds.) *Gott und Tod. Tod und Sterben in der höfischen Kultur des Mittelalters* (bayreuther forum TRANSIT. Kulturwissenschaftliche Religionsstudien 10). Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011, pp. 291-308, p. 293.

⁵ Also John 5, 24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” or 1 Thess. 4, 14 “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep”.

⁶ This imagination refers to ideas of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. Even the smallest hope for an existence in afterlife postulates a life on earth according to some categories. In Christian society, a holy life is the key to enter paradise. A life in sin offers no possibility for an afterlife in heaven, but leads to an endless existence in hell. See Rom. 6, 23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Here death seems to be enough to punish sinner, no word about eternal punishment, fire or pain.

⁷ Cf. ARIES. L’homme devant la mort.

⁸ To this discrepancy cf. Samuel G. F. BRANDON. The Judgment of the Dead. The Idea of Life After Death in the Major Religions. New York: Scribner, 1967, pp. 98f.

⁹ Cf. Norbert SCHNITZLER. Der Tod des Judas. Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie des Selbstmordes im Mittelalter. In: LÖTHER, A. (ed.) Mundus in imagine. Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter. Festgabe für Klaus Schreiner. München: Fink, 1996, pp. 219-245, p. 227.

¹⁰ “[...] *faciliorem viam putamus de bono mortis conficere aliquid.*” (Ambr. bon. mort. 1, 1 [cf. Sancti Ambrosii opera 1 (CSEL 32/1), ed. SCHENKL, K., Wien, 1897, pp. 701-753], p. 703).

¹¹ “*Sed mortis tria sunt genera. Una mors peccati est, de qua scriptum: anima quae peccat ipsa morietur [Ez. 18, 4]. Alia mors mystica, quando quis peccato moritur et deo vivit, de qua ait apostolus: consepulti enim sumus cum illo per baptismum in mortem [Rom. 6, 4]. Tertia mors, qua cursum vitae huius et munus explemus, id est animae corporisque secessio.*” (Ambr. bon. mort. 2, 3, S. 704). Cf. Christian GASTGEBER. Tod und Totenklage – der Standpunkt der Kirchenväter. In: GASTGEBER, C.; FROSCHAUER, H.; HARRAUER, H. (eds.) Tod am Nil. Tod und Totenkult im antiken Ägypten (Nilus 8). Wien: Phoibos-Verlag, 2003, pp. 45-56, p. 52; VON DER NAHMER. Der Heilige und sein Tod, p. 306 and John C. CAVADINI. Ambrose and Augustine *De bono Mortis*. In: KLINGSHIRN W. E.; VESSEY, M. (Eds.) The Limits of Ancient Christianity. Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus. Ann Arbor: The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1999, pp. 232-249, p. 233.

¹² “*Advertimus igitur quod una mors sit mala, si propter peccata moriamur, alia mors bona sit, qua is qui fuerit mortuus iustificatus est a peccato, tertia mors media sit.*” (Ambr. bon. mort. 2, 3, p. 704).

¹³ “*Nunc satis sit commemorare Platonem determinasse finem boni esse secundum virtutem vivere et ei soli evenire posse, qui notitiam Dei habeat et imitationem nec esse alia mob causam beatam.*” (Aug. civ. VIII, 8, p. 225 [Sancti Aurelii Augustini, De civitate dei libri I-X (CCSL 47), ed. DOMBART, B.; KALB, A. Turnhout 1955]). Consequently, it is necessary to recognise and imitate God to life a morally life.

¹⁴ Cf. CAVADINI. Ambrose and Augustine, p. 232: “Yet book 13 retains a certain unity, focused around the question of whether death should be considered a ‘good’.” Cavadini tries to prove (p. 237), that Augustine has known Ambrose’s tract *De bono mortis* before writing his 13th book. According to this assumption, Augustine could be influenced by Ambrose especially in questions concerning death.

¹⁵ “*Mors igitur animae fit, cum eam deserit Deus, sicut corporis, cum id deserit anima. Ergo utriusque rei, id est totius hominis, mors est, cum anima Deo deserta deserit corpus.*” (Aug. civ. XIII, 2, p. 385). Cf. CAVADINI. Ambrose and Augustine, p. 237. In Augustine’s opinion, souls are immortal, so they will never stop existing or feeling. Therefore, their death does not mean to lose existence, but to be excluded from God and redemption. According to Augustine, death means the separation of two components, which need each other. Otherwise, death wouldn’t be punishment. Cf. Clara HARTMANN. Der Tod in seiner Beziehung zum menschlichen Dasein bei Augustinus. Paderborn: Verlag des Winfriedbundes, 1932, p. 171. Ibidem, pp. 171-175 to Augustine’s categories of death.

¹⁶ Augustine arguments with the first generation of mankind and the original sin. Adam’s and Eve’s disobedience changed human character and established death as a part of life. “*Cur enim esset ulla poena in quibus non essent ulla punienda? Quapropter fatendum est primos quidem homines ita fuisse institutos, ut, si non peccassent, nullum mortis experientur genus; sed eosdem primos peccatores ita fuisse morte multatos, ut etiam quidquid <de> eorum stirpe esset exortum, eadem poena teneretur obnoxium. Non enim aliud ex eis, quam quod ipsi fuerant, nasceretur. Pro magnitudine quippe culpae illius naturam damnatio mutavit in peius, ut, quod poenaliter praecessit in peccantibus hominibus primis, etiam naturaliter sequeretur in nascentibus ceteris.*” (Aug. civ. XIII, 3, p. 386f.). Cf. HARTMANN. Der Tod, p. 171; also Donald X. BURT. Augustine on the Authentic Approach to Death – Augustinianum 28, 3 (1988), pp. 527-564, p. 535f.: “He [= Augustine] admits that we can gain merit from a noble death but he adds that the dying process in itself is good for no one” (quote p. 535).

¹⁷ “*Quapropter quod attinet ad corporis mortem, id est separationem animae a corpore, cum eam patiuntur qui morientes appellantur, nulli bona est. Habet enim asperum sensum et contra naturam vis ipsa, qua utrumque divellitur, quod fuerat in vivente coniunctum atque consertum [...].*” (Aug. civ. XIII, 6, p. 389). Plato valued the human body as an incomplete vessel. Inside, the soul is imprisoned. Due to that, the separation of soul and body has to be considered, in Plato’s view, as “good” (Ambrose followed this view). Augustine interprets this separation as an act of violence. Two components, which belongs together, are separated against their wishes. Also CAVADINI. Ambrose and Augustine, p. 238: “Although the Platonic vocabulary of separation is intact, it is recontextualized into a paradigm of integration. Death is not essentially or simply a separation of soul from body, but a disintegration of the human being as a whole, and in that sense, a kind on annihilation that cannot be good.” This new interpretation has to be connected with the concept of fleshly resurrection. In Augustine’s argumentation, fleshly resurrection gets an important meaning: reunification of body and soul. Due to that, death can be glorious for them anyway, who had completed a morally life.

¹⁸ Cf. SCHEIBELREITER, Bischof; Martin HEINZELMANN. Bischof und Herrschaft vom spätantiken Gallien bis zu den karolingischen Hausmeiern. Die institutionellen Grundlagen. In: PRINZ, F. (ed.) Herrschaft und Kirche. Beiträge zur Entstehung und Wirkungsweise episkopaler und monastischer Organisationsformen (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 33). Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1988, pp. 23-82; Friedrich PRINZ. Der fränkische Episkopat zwischen Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit. In: HAVERKAMP, A.; HEIT, A. (eds.) Friedrich Prinz. Mönchtum, Kultur und Gesellschaft. Beiträge zum Mittelalter. Zum sechzigsten Geburtstag des Autors. München: Beck, 1989, pp. 199-231; Bernhard JUSSEN. Über ‘Bischofsherrschaften’ und die Prozeduren politisch-sozialer Umordnung in Gallien zwischen ‘Antike’ und ‘Mittelalter’ – HZ 260 (1995), pp. 673-718; Bernhard JUSSEN. Zwischen Römischem Reich und Merowingern. Herrschaft legitimieren ohne Kaiser und König. In: SEGL, P. (ed.), Mittelalter und Moderne. Entdeckung und Rekonstruktion der mittelalterlichen Welt. Kongressakten des 6. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes in Bayreuth 1995. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1997, pp. 15-29.

¹⁹ Cf. Martin HEINZELMANN. Gregor von Tours (538-594). „Zehn Bücher Geschichte“: Historiographie und Geschichtskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994, pp. 109 and 141.

²⁰ Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. X, c. 13, p. 496.

²¹ “*Unde liquido apparit, vivere animas post egressum corporis atque resurrectionem futuram intentis vultibus praestulare.*” (Gregorii Turonensis Opera. Tomus 1: Libri historiarum X, lib. X, c. 13 (MGH SS rer. Merov. 1,1), ed. KRUSCH B.; LEVISON W., Hannover 1937-1951, p. 496). Of course, Gregory underlines his belief in the immortal soul in the preface to his first book, yet. His credo includes the consubstantiality of Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the immortality of soul. But souls do not participate in god (*Credo animam immortalem, nec tamen partem habere Deitatis*). Cf. Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. I, preface, pp. 3-5 (quote p. 4).

²² “*Nec enim potest iudicium fieri, nisi prius resurgant mortui, quia, sicut illos, qui defuncti sunt sancti, caelum, ut credimus, retinet, – de quorum sepulchris saepius virtus illa procedit, ut de his caeci inlumentur, clodi gressum recipiant, lyprosi mundentur et alia sanitarum beneficia infirmis petentibus tribuantur, – ita credimus et peccatoris in illo infernali carcere usque ad iudicium retineri.*” (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. X, c. 13, p. 498).

²³ In Gregory’s books you also may find descriptions of death of other personal group’s members as well, particularly members of the Merovingian dynasty. It is not possible to include them here, but it would be necessary to confront these descriptions with the bishops’ death in a major study.

²⁴ “*Hic [= Saturninus] vero tauri fontes vestigiis allegatus ac de Capitulio praecipitatus, vitam finivit.*” (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. I, c. 30, p. 23). Saturninus should have known about his martyrdom in advance. He prayed that an inhabitant of Toulouse should never become bishop of this city. Until the time of Gregory, as he says, Saturninus’ wish has become true.

²⁵ “*Sed dum oves suas ut bonus pastor lupis tradere non consentit, daemioniis immolare compellitur. Quod spurcum ille tam exsecrans quam refutans, tamdiu fustibus caeditur, quoadusque putaretur exanimis. Sed ex ipsa quassatione, interpositis paucis diebus, spiritum exalavit.*” (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. I, c. 34, p. 26).

²⁶ “*Eo tempore Quirinus Sisciensis ecclesiae sacerdos gloriosum pro Christi nomine martyrium tulit, quem, ligato ad collum molare saxo, in fluminis gurgite sevitia inpulit paganorum. Igitur cum cecidisset in gurgite, diu super aquas divina virtute ferebatur, nec sorbe bant aquae, quem pondus criminis non praemebat. Quod factum admirans multitudo populi circumstantes, dispecto furore gentilium, ad liberandum properant sacerdotem. Haec ille cernens, non passus est, se a martyrio subtrahi, sed erectis ad caelum oculis ait: Iesu domine, qui gloriosus resedis ad dexteram Patris, ne patiaris me ab hoc stadio*

removeri, sed suscipiens animam meam, coniungere me tuis martyribus in requiae sempiterna dignare. *Et his dictis reddidit spiritum. Cuius corpus a christianis susceptum venerabiliter sepulturae mandatum est.*" (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. I, c. 35, p. 26).

²⁷ Cf. Georg BUCHNER. Einleitung. In: Gregor von Tours: Zehn Bücher Geschichten, Ed. Buchner, G. Vol. 1 (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe 2,1). Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1955, p. X.

²⁸ "[*Q*]uⁱⁿque episcopos reliqui omnes, qui sacerdotium Turonicum susceperunt, parentum nostrorum prosopiae sunt coniuncti." (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. V, c. 49, p. 262). For Gregory's familial connections cf. BUCHNER, Einleitung, p. X.

²⁹ Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. II, c. 23, p. 68.

³⁰ Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. II, c. 23, p. 68. See Alice LEROY-MOLINGHEN. La mort d'Arius – Byzantion 38 (1968), p. 105-111.

³¹ "*unus Arii sortiretur mortem, alius tamquam Simon Magus apostoli sancti oratione ab excelsa superbiae praeceps allideretur. Qui non ambiguntur pariter possidere tartarum, qui simul egerunt nequiter contra sanctum episcopum suum.*" (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. II, c. 23, p. 68f.).

³² "*Consenescente beato Tetrico ecclesiae Lingonicae sacerdote, cum Lampadio diacono, quem creditorem habuit, deicisset et frater meus, dum pauperibus, quos ille male spoliaverat, opitulare cupiens, consensisset in eius humilitatione, odium ex hoc incurrit. Interea beatus Tetricus a sanguine saucitur. Cui cum nulla medicorum fomenta valerent, conturbati clerici et a pastore utpote destituti, Mundericum expetunt.*" (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. V, c. 5, p. 200).

³³ "*Qui vero, ut benedictionem episcopalem Lugduno accipiat, iter parat. Quae dum aguntur, ipse, quia iam diu epilepticus erat, ab hoc morbo correptus, asperius ex sensu factus et per dies duos assiduae dans mugitum, tertia die spiritum exalavit.*" (Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. V, c. 5, p. 201).

³⁴ Cf. Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. V, c. 37, p. 243.

³⁵ Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. V, c. 5, p. 202.

³⁶ Gregorius Turonensis, Libri Historiarum X, lib. V, c. 5, p. 202.