Writing to survive: A commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters Book 7, volume 1: The episcopal letters 1-11

van Waarden, J.A.

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Letter 9 Address

The Address in Bourges

Introduction

1 A unique document

The address to the community of Bourges on the occasion of the nomination of a new bishop in the year 470 AD is the only example we have of Sidonius’ oratorical skills. He will have addressed his flock on numerous occasions, and other audiences before that, but there is no trace of any collection of sermons or public addresses. Through this unique speech Sidonius wanted to be remembered as a public speaker, manipulating an audience and giving proof of his leadership in an exemplary oratorical style. Within the compass of what might be called, in a sense, his memoirs – the episcopal letters of book 7 –, it is the supreme piece of evidence for his effective involvement in ecclesiastical and political affairs during his episcopate, and a self-portrait of the gentleman-bishop mirrored by his nominee, Simplicius.188

Because it was so important to him, Sidonius undoubtedly refashioned the speech for publication, just as he did with the letters.189 But just how much refashioning went into it? The obvious answer, that we do not know, does not mean that a reasonable guess is impossible. We can draw on probability when trying to estimate what differences – if any – there are between the original and the published version.

For one thing, as a trained public speaker, with a thorough rhetorical education and two decades of experience in the field, lately as praefectus urbi, Sidonius was no doubt capable of performing with sophistication, as the speech requires. Not for nothing was he complimented on his eloquence already in his own day and remembered for it afterwards.190

188 For the general idea, it is worth while to compare the oration ‘On the Death of Theodosius I’ in the tenth book of Ambrose’s correspondence (CSEL 73: 369-401). It is one of the documents which, in the dossier-like, ‘autobiographical’ tenth book, illustrate Ambrose’s ideals – in this case of the good emperor. For a convenient overview of Ambrose’s letters, see Liebeschuetz 2004 (on the basis of Zelzer’s introductions to parts 2 and 3 of her edition in CSEL); for the oration p. 101.

189 Ep. 1.1.1 ut ... omnes [i.e. litteras] retractatis exemplaribus enucleatisque uno volume includam, ‘[you ask me] to collect all my letters in one volume after revision and correction of my copies’. See Köhler 1995: 104 ad loc. on the practice of keeping copies and revising them for publication, which we already know from Cic. Att. 16.5.5.

190 We see him in action in Rome amidst loud applause in Ep. 1.9.7 me in comitio vel inter rostra contentionante. He is complimented on his eloquent and effective preaching by his friends Claudianus Mamertus (in Sidon. Ep. 4.2.3 doctrinam ... copiosius infundis) and Ruricius (Ruric. Ep. 1.8.1 – his sermons affect one’s conscientia –, and 1.9.1 and 3 – they testify to his own pietas and kindle the hearer’s religious fervour). Even allowing for a due measure of flattering, we feel that these writers went out of their way to mention this aspect as being conspicuous in the whole of, what Avitus in the next generation called, Sollii opus illustre (Ep. 51 p. 81 l. 1 Peiper). Gregory of Tours tells us that his extraordinary command of language enabled him to speak on whatever subject he wanted, even
Secondly, this address differs from many of the letters in its greater straightforwardness and less complicated train of thought. As Stevens 1933: 12 f. put it: ‘It has cohesion and logical arrangement, and presses forward to the conclusion without repetition or vagueness’. In short, it feels like a real speech and fits the occasion exactly. As Wes 1992: 261 said: ‘The speech is a small masterpiece of rhetorical and diplomatic skill’.

In its style it shares the conventions we know from the letters. It avoids, however, complexities for complexities’ sake. The introduction has a functional amount of well-wrought periods and circumlocutions to bring home the intricacy of the subject matter and create the momentum for the decision to be accepted. The idiom employed belongs to the sphere of *verecundia* and *urbanitas*, modesty and self-denigration. Then the pace is increased. The exposition and argumentation rely on the rhetorical convention indicated for character sketches. The style becomes more and more breathless in an intoxicating sing-song of corresponding and opposing, rhyming and assonant *cola* and *commata*. We also know this register from the correspondence. Thus, what we have here, stylistically, is very much Sidonius. But it is striking in what a lively and purposeful way the linguistic means are applied, obviously designed to be heard and to persuade. Again, it feels like a real speech.

The process of refashioning has left intact the essence of the original, in outlay as well as, to a considerable extent, in wording.

### 2 Audience

Gualandri was puzzled by the fact that the speech is stylistically so elaborate, and concluded that it can hardly have been intended for the ordinary people, but was aimed at the clerus present.\(^{191}\) Fernández López pointed out the contradiction, that Sidonius in the introductory letter begs forgiveness for the lack of historical examples and all kinds of rhetorical embellishment in the speech, whereas what we get is exactly that.\(^{192}\)

I am sure, however, that the audience at this hotly debated issue in Bourges consisted of all sections of the population. We know from other episcopal elections to what degree of vehemence all the townspeople could be involved\(^{193}\), and Sidonius himself in the introductory letter calls his public ‘the people at large’: *orationem, quam videor ad plebem* *Biturigis in ecclesia sermocinatus*, ‘the speech which I am supposed to have delivered to the people in the church in Bourges’ (7.9.1).

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\(^{191}\) Gualandri 1979: 14: ‘l’unica orazione giuntaci ... è forse, nella sua complessa elaborazione stilistica, più diretta al clero riunito per l’occasione che non al popolo incolto.’


\(^{193}\) See the procedure of episcopal elections as outlined in the Introduction to letter 5, section 4 *The election and consecration of bishops*. 

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The answer to the question raised is that the address appeals to the educated as well as the more modestly schooled, or even illiterate, in the audience. For one thing, its overall structure is perfectly clear, and the judgements it pronounces are straightforward and resolute. The truth is not covered up, nor are essentially simple matters stated in a complicated way. What we get at the outset is a great deal of ceremoniousness and modesty. Everybody was used to this and did not expect anything else. The body of the speech is to a large extent a concatenation and accumulation of craftily contrived interrelating commata, which testify to the inventiveness of the word artist Sidonius, are thrilling to those who, like him, revelled in stylistic impromptus and knew the academic rules for a laudation, but are above all in their repetitiveness a very direct form of verbal hypnosis for everybody present. It appeals to what has been called the ‘ear-mindedness’ of antiquity.\(^{194}\)

### 3 Genre and layout

- **Genus deliberativum and demonstrativum**

  The type of persuasive discourse to which the speech to the community of Bourges belongs, is essentially deliberative (*genus deliberativum*). The question is who should be nominated as the next bishop of Bourges. There is a host of candidates and the post is fiercely contended. Bourges has pledged that it will follow Sidonius’ decision, but to pave the way for his nominee he has to make a case for the acceptability, and indeed the inevitability, of his choice. The alternatives are turned down successively as being impossible, and the speech concludes with an ample display of the qualities of the nominee, which takes on the character of ceremonial discourse (*genus demonstrativum*).\(^{195}\)

- **Layout**

  The layout of the address is as follows:

  **Exordium sect. 5-7**

  The function of an *exordium*, viz. to render an audience amenable to the speaker’s argument – which is the case *si benevolum, attentum, docilem fecerimus* (in the words of Quint. *Inst*. 4.1.5) – is fully exploited by Sidonius.

  His first concern in the tense atmosphere of this eagerly awaited gathering is to get the audience’s attention (*attentum*) in a relaxed and natural way. He does so by telling an

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\(^{194}\) G.L. Hendrickson, ‘Ancient Reading’, *CJ* 25 (1929) 182-196, uses the term on p. 191. An intermediary cultural stratum is postulated by Banniard 1992: 422: ‘il existe encore dans la Gaule des années 470 une catégorie culturelle moyenne, intermédiaire entre l’élite sénatoriale et le commun des citoyens’. He adduces as an example the public enthusiasm (*omnis Galliae coetus*) at the complex panegyric on the new consul in the theatre in Arles in 449 (8.6.5-7). ‘Comme les maîtres de l’Antiquité [i.e. Cicero, Virgill], Sidoine a réagi avant tout à une esthétique auditive’ (p. 424). When discussing a sermon by Augustine which is in the same style as we see in Sidonius’ *contio*, Auerbach 1958: 28 uses the phrase ‘praktische Gebrauchsrhetorik’. The issue of what has been called ‘vertical communication’, i.e. the intelligibility of Latin to illiterate or barely literate audiences, is discussed in several volumes of the series *Latin vulgaire – Latin tardif*, lately in vol. 8 (2008) 381-91 (F. Biville) and 463-71 (M. van Acker).

\(^{195}\) *Genus deliberativum*: Lausberg §§ 224-38, *genus demonstrativum*: Lausberg §§ 239-54. For the connection between both *genera*, see Lausberg §§ 224 and 243.
anecdote about Pythagoras who had his disciples sit, listen and remain silent during the first five years of their apprenticeship. ‘To talk about what you understand is okay, but it is even better to keep silent regarding matters you do not know about.’

This leads immediately to the main function of this introduction, which for Sidonius is to be accepted and trusted as a mediator. The audience must be well disposed (benevolum) towards him so that the precarious meeting will be successful. The speaker underlines the fact that, like the Pythagorean neophytes, it would have been better if he had kept quiet. He is fairly new to the bishopric himself and is speaking in the presence of an experienced colleague (probably Agroecius of Sens whom he had invited in letter 7.5). He would have preferred to be educated by so many of his eminent listeners (boni) first. He is so badly in need of the intercessory prayer of his audience. Bourges must have been mistaken in asking him ....!

All the while, Sidonius tightens his grip on the audience by repeatedly informing (docilem) them that he has been commissioned to decide upon the choice of a new bishop and that Bourges has promised to obey his decision. From the start, the relative positions are clearly, and cleverly, defined.

**Narratio:** a *Anticipatio* sect. 8-15, b *Propositio* sect. 16

The narratio here is more than a statement of fact for which the proofs will be adduced subsequently. Actually, the central statement is confined to section 16, and is preceded by a lengthy argumentation which – in the form of an account of the reactions Sidonius has encountered or foresees – refutes *a priori* the objections his choice might provoke. For long stretches it is an argumentation in the negative as to why only his candidate meets the requirements.

After an introductory section we can distinguish three parts, diminishing in length. Each of these three parts in its turn includes a digression.

− Introduction sect. 8

With the first word (primum) Sidonius immediately characterizes the considerations which follow as preliminary. ‘Before I am going to tell you about my choice, you have to know first the host of objections each possible course of action will provoke. I am sorry to say that a lot of well meaning people are thus frustrated by a handful of troublemakers.’ A further hint of captatio benevolentiae: who in the audience would not flatter himself by belonging to the well meaning people?

− ‘Could it be a monk?’ sect. 9-11

*Si quempiam nominavero monachorum ...* Each of the three alternatives is introduced by the conjunction *si*. ‘If I nominate a monk, critics will say he may be good regarding religious affairs, but not regarding politics’ (section 9). The same perverse type of reasoning is possible for any quality one might attribute to a candidate. It is quite easy to contend the reverse of anything positive, and call

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humility ‘a loser’s mentality’, confidence ‘haughtiness’, and so forth (digression: sections 10-11).197

- ‘Could it be a cleric?’ sect. 12-13

Si clericum dixero ... ‘If I nominate a cleric, we will immediately have problems concerning precedence. As if automatically the eldest prelate should get the job. We are looking for quality first’ (section 12). One should not generalize, however. There are a lot of qualified candidates, but only one can become bishop (digression: section 13). Severe criticism of certain clerics is balanced by complimenting the candidates in general on their ‘papability’.

- ‘Could it be a public servant?’ sect. 14-15

Si militarem dixero forte personam ... Here Sidonius directs the possible objection towards himself (his candidate is a public servant, actually). ‘People may say I am biased, because I was a public servant myself’ (section 14). He then proclaims earnestly, on oath and citing the biblical story of Peter who condemned Simon ‘the magician’ for offering money to acquire the apostles’ healing power, that he is not looking for money nor for any personal benefit, but that his candidate is simply the best and the most suitable one for Bourges in the given circumstances (digression: section 15).

This crucial section leads up to the propisitio proper, section 16, which reveals Simplicius as the man Sidonius has in mind, the finest candidate with regard to political requirements as well as with regard to the church.

Argumentatio sect. 17-24

After the argumentation in the negative in the anticipatio in sections 8-15, there now follows a positive evaluation, and indeed a full-blown laudatio, of Simplicius’ qualities, to prove the claim Sidonius has made concerning his suitability. The discourse takes on the character of the genus demonstrativum, and duly follows the rules laid down by the rhetoricians for praising people, as will be shown in greater detail below.

The formulation creates carefully contrived variety. First we have three sections beginning with si again, then a section which for a moment pretends to be the final one (postremo), followed by a section in the form of a praeteritio (paene transieram). The ensuing sections announce their content in the first words, vir and uxor respectively. A lively discussion of Sidonius’ expertise is inserted in between: dicit aliquis.

The layout is as follows:

- Ancestors

Si natalibus servanda reverentia est ... sect. 17. Praise of Simplicius’ ancestors.

- Standing and career

197 The message of sections 10-11 is of a general nature, it is not limited to the group of the monks, as Fernández López 1994: 63 f. (‘la mala interpretación ... de las buenas cualidades, enumeradas, pues, con exhaustividad, de un monje’) thinks.
Si vero personam suam ... pensemus ... sect. 18. Simplicius' rank in the town, his age and his talent.

Si humanitas requirenda est ... sect. 19. Simplicius' sociability, his political experience and his faith.

Postremo iste est ille ... sect. 20. Simplicius once miraculously escaped from barbarian captivity. His modesty when he was nominated for the episcopacy on an earlier occasion.

Paene transieram ... sect. 21. Simplicius, surpassing Moses and Solomon, has built a church with private means.

- Character

Vir est namque ... sect. 22. A catalogue of Simplicius' virtues. It gives rise to a digression in the next section.

- Digression: Sidonius is well informed

Dicit aliquis ... sect. 23. How does Sidonius know all this? He appears to have known Bourges for a long time already. With its character of captatio benevolentiae this section complements section 15 on Sidonius' trustworthiness.198

- Wife and sons

Uxor illi ... sect. 24. Finally Simplicius' wife and two sons are mentioned honourably.

Peroratio sect. 25

Solemn statement of the nomination of Simplicius, with the invocation of the Holy Trinity and Bourges' written promise. The audience is invited to applaud as a sign of consent.199

4 Laudatio: ancient theory and this portrait

Antique rhetorical theory concerning the laudatio, and its opposite vituperatio, is known to us in Latin from Quint. Inst. 3.7.10-18 and Prisc. Rhet. 7 (Halm p. 556; = Ps. Herm. Prog. 7).200 It is treated by Lausberg §§ 239-48 in the context of the genus demonstrativum. The laudatio occurs either as an independent epideictic discourse, e.g. a funeral oration, or as part of a discourse in the two other genera, iudiciale and deliberativum (§ 243). This is the case regarding the portrait painted of Simplicius in the argumentatio. My analysis of this portrait against the background of ancient theory will follow the scheme in Lausberg § 245.201

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198 Fernández López 1994: 64 calls this section ‘una curiosa Recusatio’. The word recusatio – which she employs throughout her book with the meaning ‘expression of humility’ – seems out of place here. Sidonius is manifestly self-confident.

199 For a somewhat different analysis of the speech, see Fernández López 1994: 63 f.

200 Greek theory of panegyrics is found in the treatise (actually two) which has come down to us under the name of Menander Rhetor (third/fourth century AD; Rhet.Gr. 3: 329 ff.) and the one attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (probably second/third century AD).

201 The scheme is convenient as a comprehensive survey. It is a conflation of the theory in Quintilian and Pseudo-Hermogenes/Priscian.
It is outside the scope of this introduction to discuss the history and range of the epideictic genre in Latin literature. Panegyric prose acquires momentum during the empire and is at its height in Late Antiquity. Descriptions like the one we have here abound, concise as in Pliny’s laudatory letters (Ep. 1.10.5-8 is one out of many) or extensive as in the Panegyrici Latini. Laudations in Sidonius’ correspondence include among others Ep. 1.2 (Theodoric) and 2.1 (Seronatus). There is also the reverse, the portrait of a villain (‘Gnatho’), 3.13. Sidonius excelled in verse panegyrics, on the emperors Anthemius, Maiorianus and Avitus (Carm. 2, 5, 7 respectively). His renown in this field lasted well into the twelfth century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laudantur homines</th>
<th>Simplicius</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I) ex tempore quod ante eos fuit, speciatim:</td>
<td>17 natalibus, familiae dignitatem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cathedris, tribunaliubis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) e genere (patria, maioribus, parentibus)</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) ex auguris (oraculis)</td>
<td>18 personam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II) ex tempore quo ipsi vivunt, speciatim:</td>
<td>18 litters vel ingenium (certat natura doctrinae)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) ex animo, i.e. ex virtutibus circa res gestas</td>
<td>19 fidei imbutus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) vel sequendo aetatis gradus</td>
<td>20 sacerdotium (honorari parentum maluit dignitate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gestarumque rerum ordinem, laudando:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- (in primis annis) indolem,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- (in pueritia) disciplinam,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- (in ceteris aetatis) opera</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) vel dividendo laudem in species virtutum, laudando:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- fortitudinem,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- iustitiam,</td>
<td></td>
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<td>- continentiam,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- ceteras virtutes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) enumerando res gestas quas quis fecisse dicitur:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- aut primus aut certe cum paucis,</td>
<td>19 legationis (non semel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- supra spem aut expectationem,</td>
<td>20 carceris divinitus claustra patuerunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- aliena potius causa quam sua (e.g. divini servitii causa),</td>
<td>21 ecclesiam extruxit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- (si fuerit sanctus Christianus) enumerando miracula ab eo perpetrata</td>
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As is clear from this analysis, Sidonius faithfully adheres to the layout for a laudatio. The chronological aspect (A.a) is not very prominent, the focus is on the virtutes and res gestae as such (A.b, A.c). In view of Simplicius’ qualifications as a future bishop, one should notice that specifically Christian virtues play a secondary role. He imbibed his belief at home, and God once made him escape miraculously from barbarian captivity. Most important is his building activity for the church, already as a young man, which went contrary to the financial interests of his family. It surpasses what Moses and Solomon had done in this respect.

The portrait has certain parallels with the portrayal of the merchant Amantius (letter 7.2), which is one of the structural elements in book 7. The magistrate and the merchant are opposites in the mind of the reader, the latter as the distorting mirror in which the grandee is reflected. See my comments on sect. 17 aut cathedris, 21 iuvenis miles and vel tenacitas senum, and 22 gratiam non captat. On Amantius’ role in book 7, see the Introduction to letter 2, section 1 Overview, and General Introduction, par. 5.4.3 The structure and meaning of book 7.

We conclude this section with an interesting counterpart to Sidonius’ speech. It is the sermon by Avitus of Vienne on the occasion of the ordination of a bishop, Homily 16, of which two fragments have been preserved (MGH AA 6/2 pp. 124 f., ed. Peiper). It is remarkable how different it is from Sidonius. Avitus knew Sidonius well and might have been expected to bring him a tribute of imitatio, but preferred an explicitly biblical tone for the occasion, focusing on the moral qualifications required of a clergyman by 1 Tim. 3.1-7. Nevertheless, he provides some parallels: a discussion of the importance of the ancestry of a bishop (which, for Avitus, does not count: Homil. 16.1 p. 124 l. 1 ff. neque ... Petrus ... origine placuit natalium, sed fine meritorum), the condemnation of simony (with an explicit reference to Simon the Magician, 16.2 p. 124 l. 29), and a colometric section, which stresses the need for the golden mean in a bishop (16.2 p. 125 l. 13 ff. si districtus esse voluerit, legat non percussorem; si humanus, non violentum; etc.).

\[20^3\] A description in which this method is applied by Sidonius, is e.g. Ep. 1.2.2-3 (king Theodoric), even to the minutest detail of the body: minime rugosis genibus, ‘his knees which are completely free from wrinkles’.
5 Style

The address in Bourges is a clear proof of Sidonius’ oratorical talent – and has often been regarded positively by his later readers. From the sixteenth century, I cite, e.g., the assessment by Baronius, Annales Ecclesiastici, a. 472, n. 19: extant de his ab eodem Sidonio datae ad diversos episcopos litterae, itemque ipsa ab eo tunc habita concio, quam quidem, quanta polleret dicendi facundia, si legeris, admiraberis.

I have tried to give a first approximation of the technical background of this admirable feat. Stylistically the speech relies to a high degree on an endless concatenation of cola and commata, and the masterful handling of rhythm and variation, resulting in a musically intoxicating sing-song. My analysis is presented in Appendix G.

Commentary

Title

Contio, ‘address’: incipit contio LMTFP: explicit incipit concio C. contio edd. The suggestion could be that Sidonius’ original had this title, but, actually, we cannot go beyond the observation that the medieval scribes used the word to mark the transition from the letter to the address.

The noun contio, ‘public speech’ (this meaning found since Cic. Att. 7.8.5), does not belong to Sidonius’ extant vocabulary. We find the verb contionari three times, Carm. 16.125 (a sermon in church), Ep. 1.9.7 (a speech to the people’s assembly from the rostra) and 9.3.5 (religious as well as profane oratory). In 1.11.15 contionator means ‘demagogue’. The speech in Bourges is called oratio by Sidonius himself in 7.9.1 orationem, quam videor ad plebem Biturigis in ecclesia sermocinatus. This is the word he uses elsewhere too.

Section 5

refert historia saecularis, dilectissimi,

refert, ‘tells’: In classical Latin the verb in first position in the sentence focuses on the verbal act: ‘I’m going to tell you something …’. This seems to be also the case here. Compare e.g. 1.7.1 angit me casus Arvandi, ‘I’m terribly upset by the case of Arvandus’, and 7.2.1 oneras … verecundiam meam (see my comment ad loc.). Knoth 2006: 229-39 (corpus 100 BC-125 AD) distinguishes two further possibilities of ‘verb initial’: the verb can have the function of topic itself, or it introduces the topic. Cf., respectively, 1.10.1 accepi … litteras tuas (the topic is the reception of the letter) and 7.6.1 sunt nobis … amicitiarum vetera iura (the topic is old friendship). Compare the circumspect account of Bolkestein 1996 (corpus Cicero and Caesar) who says that verb initial in classical Latin often carries so-called verum-focus: ‘indeed’, ‘actually’ (as an answer to the implicit question: ‘Is it indeed (not) the case?’).

For a survey of opening sentences in Sidonius in relation to the themes of the letters, see General Introduction, sect. 5.3 Classification and analysis.

historia saecularis, ‘profane history’, as opposed to historia sacra or historia spiritualis. The collocation is also found in Hier. in Ezech. 8.27 Persas fuisse fortissimos ... et sacra et saecularis
narrat historia, and Alc. Avit. Hom. 7 p. 117 l. 5 quendam Parthicum regem saecularis historia refert ... lacrimasse. Cf. Aug. c. Faust. 17.4 et in historia quidem rerum saecularium talis narrationis referiuntur exemplo; sed non opus est, ut ex alio genere litterarum vel nostros admoeneam vel istum refellam. Note the explicit demarcation by Augustine of this ‘different (= non-Christian) literary genre’, alio genere litterarum. Cf. also Alc. Avit. Ep. 51 p. 80.21 libellos quos ... de spiritalis historiae gestis etiam lege poematis lusi, which alludes to Avitus’ poetic version of Genesis and Exodus, Spiritalis Historia.

One may wonder why Sidonius, at this crucial starting point of his address, took the risk of introducing an example from the profane world, viz. pagan philosophy. A reference to pagan philosophy might offend any pious elements in the audience, or fuel the enmity of the opportunists among his listeners. It is a sign of strength that he, from the outset, shows himself as he is, broadminded, cultivated and aloof from petty criticasters. The agenda will be set by him. On the blending of profane and Christian culture, see General Introduction, sect. 3.3.2 Social conventions and Christianity.

dilectissimi, ‘beloved’: Syn. carissimi, Greek ἀγαπητοί. This is the usual form of address in the Christian sociolect. God is love, that is why Christians should love each other: cf. 1 Ioah. 4.5 carissimi, diligamus nos invicem, quia caritas ex Deo est, and e.g. Rom. 16.8 salutate Amphilanum dilectissimum mihi in Domino. In patristic literature the standard form of address is fraters dilectissimi (or dilectissimi fratern) and/or fraters carissimi (or the other way round). Dilectissimi and carissimi on their own are less common (dilectissimi occurs no earlier than Paul. Nol. Ep. 34.1). Their use and frequency seem to be largely a question of the individual taste of the author. All six variants abound in Augustine (carissimi fratern least), in his sermons, treatises and letters. Cyprian frequently uses dilectissimi fratern, fraterni dilectissimi and fraterni carissimi, has only three instances of carissimi, and none of dilectissimi and carissimi fratern. Here, too, neither the genre nor the persons addressed seem to be decisive (although Conway 1957: 95 f. detected a slight preference for dilectissimi when addressing the laity and carissimi when addressing the clergy in Cyprian). To mention two other instances: Ambrose in general seems to avoid these formulas and has only relatively few of them. Fraters dilectissimi and fraters carissimi are used indiscriminately in the orationes de excessu fratern Satyri. Finally, Quodvultdeus in his sermons has a marked, almost exclusive, sympathy for dilectissimi.

Dilectissimi here and carissimi, to the same audience, below in section 20, are the only examples of this use of the Christian form of address by Sidonius. But compare 8.13.4 nobis propter quae supra scripsi carissimus habetur, ‘he is very dear to me for the reasons I stated above’ (about a Jew, after the story of his conversion), and 9.6.1 viguit pro dilectissimo nostro ... apud Christum tua sanctitas intercessionis effectu, ‘your Holiness has prevailed effectively with Christ on behalf of our beloved X’ (about a not otherwise specified member of the community who has finally married lawfully), where the terms also define the men in question as members of the church.

quendam philosophorum discipulis advenientibus prius tacendi patientiam quam loquendi monstrasse doctrinam

quendam philosophorum, ‘a certain philosopher’: His identity does not matter or is left out for tactical reasons, cf. e.g. Hier. in Eph. 2.4.17 ff. (PL 26: 505a) nam et quidam philosophorum ἀναλγησίαν, id est, indoloriam praedicavit. Cf. formulations like Tert. Resurr. 14 hinc et ille nescio quis haereticorum: ... etc.
The philosopher in question is Pythagoras. The neophytes in the Pythagorean community were closely observed and judged as to their suitability to be admitted as full members. They had to keep silent for up to five years and listen to the discussions of the initiated and to the instructions of the master himself, who remained hidden behind a curtain. Hence they were called ἀκουστικοί (according to Gel. 1.9.4); cf. the parallel in the Christian church, where the catechumens could be called audientes, Cypr. Ep. 18.2.2. The fact is proverbial, cf. e.g. Serv. Aen. 10.564 nam Pythagorica virtus est quinquennale silentium.

The characteristic introduction is mentioned by two of his Greek biographers (third century AD), Diog. Laert. 8.10 πενταετίαν θ’ ἡσύχαζον [sc. οἱ μαθηταί], μόνον τῶν λόγων κατακούοντες καὶ οὐδέτεροι Πυθαγόραν ὀρόστησε εἰς ὁ δοκιμασθείειν, Jambl. Vit. Pyth. 72 μετά δὲ τούτο [after three years of ignoring them] τοῖς προσιοῦσι προσέτατε σιωπὴν πενταετὴν, ἀποπειρώμενος πῶς ἐγκρατείας ἔχουσιν, ὡς χαλεπώτερον τῶν ἄλλων ἐγκρατευμάτων τούτῳ, τὸ γλώσσης κρατεῖν. (Porph. Vit. Pyth. 37 only mentions the distinction between μαθηματικοί and ἀκουσματικοί. The second category was only taught the basic ideas. Further on, in sections 19 and 27 Porphyry discusses the importance of silence in general for the Pythagoreans.)

According to our Latin sources Aulus Gellius and Apuleius (second century AD) the period of being silent and listening (res ... rerum omnium difficillimas, Gellius says, and Jamblichus: χαλεπώτερον τῶν ἄλλων ἐγκρατευμάτων τούτῳ, 72) differed according to the ability of the candidates: Gel. 1.9.3 ff. tum qui exploratus ab eo idoneusque fuerat, recipi in disciplinam statim iubebat et tempus certum tacere: non omnes idem, sed alios aliud tempus pro aestimato captu sollertiae. ... sed non minus quisquam tacuit quam biennium, Apul. Flor. 15 nihil prius discipulos suos docuit quam tacere, primaque apud eum meditatio sapienti futuro linguam omnem coercere. ... non in totum aevum tamen vocem desuescebant, nec omnes pari tempore elingues magistrum sectabantur, sed gravioribus viris brevi spatio satis videbatur taciturnitas modificata, loquaciores enim vero ferme in quinquennium velut exilio vocis puniebantur.

Thus, there is a discrepancy between the Greek and the Latin biographical tradition regarding the number of years the novices had to remain silent. Gellius and Apuleius allow a shorter period of silence for the more serious candidates, ranging from two to five years. Diogenes Laertius and Jamblichus, however, do not distinguish between more or less talented disciples and say that a five year term was applied to all. Sidonius combines both. Everybody, he says, had to refrain from speaking for five years (mutum quinquennium). He allows for a difference in talent (celeriora quorumpiam ingenia), but these quicker wits were not rewarded with a shorter period of silence. Even (etiam) they had to endure it, which means that the more talented had to learn to be modest and did not enjoy advantages in spite of their greater gifts.

This looks like an independent interpretation, or else a different branch of the tradition. Sidonius also mentions the introduction period in Carm. 15.51 f. assertit hic Samius post docta silentia lustri / Pythagoras etc., ‘here Pythagoras of Samos declares, after a learned silence of five years’. This introduces a passage (51-78) on Pythagoras’ ideas. The passage is discussed by Courcelle 1948: 241 who calls it ‘un paragraphe long et précis’ with a survey of Greek philosophy by a certain Cels(in)us as its source, ‘ce manuel, dont la trace se retrouve chez plusieurs écrivains gaulois’. For this shadowy Cels(in)us see Courcelle on pp. 179-81.

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Neo-Pythagoreism was en vogue in Sidonius’ circle. See e.g. how the ‘Life of Apollonius the Pythagorean’ circulated (Ep. 8.3.1). For this issue, see General Introduction, par. 3.4.2 Philosophy.

Guthrie 1962: 151 seems to be right when he says that ‘the famous Pythagorean silence was of two kinds’, the silence in general – as in any mystery cult – about ἄρρητα/ἀπόρρητα, and the silence under discussion here, of the applicants in their first years. Von Fritz in RE 24: 192.58 ff., however, takes both together.

For further reading and recent literature see DNP 10: 656 ff. s.v. ‘Pythagoreische Schule’.

As to philosophorum: the terms philosophus and philosophia in Sidonius designate a broad range of knowledge (of which professional philosophy is only a small part), hence ‘scholar’ and ‘learning’. E.g., in Ep. 5.2.1 he calls his friend Claudianus Mamertus peritissimus Christianorum philosophus, because he has mastered all the ‘Muses’: grammatica, oratoria, arithmetica, geometrica, musica, dialectica, astrologia, architectonica and metrica. In Ep. 0.22.3 music, geometry, arithmetics and astronomy are membra philosophiae, ‘branches of science’. See Hebert 1988: 527.

prius tacendi patientiam quam loquendi monstrasse doctrinam, ‘taught patient silence prior to the art of speaking’: Notice the hyperbaton loquendi ... doctrinam. As often, collocations like tacendi patientiam and loquendi doctrinam arise out of the stylistic constraint of parallelism, and have no specific antecedents. Cf. the opposite, e.g. Stat. Silv. 5.5.27 f ira tacendi / impatiens, ‘rage, unable to keep silent’.

et sic incipientes quosque inter disputantium consectaneorum cathedras mutum sustinuisse quinquennium,

incipientes, ‘beginners’, ‘novices’, ‘neophytes’, as discussed by Mossberg 1934: 73 f. Cf. Blaise s.v. incipiens, TLL 7/1: 913.55 ff. The substantivated part. praes. is found in Quint. Inst. 1.2.26 incipientibus atque adhuc teneris, but is mainly late, from the second half of the fourth century onward. See e.g. Cassian. Conl. 9.1.5 velut incipiens atque novicius. Sidonius uses it one more time, below in sect. 7 quod iniunxistis incipienti consummata iudicia. The noun incipientia, ‘state of a beginner’, ‘novitiate’, is subsequently found since Ruric. Ep. 2.40.4 profectioni vestrae et illorum incipientiae.

consectaneorum cathedras, ‘the seats of the members’: We find consectaneus, ‘follower’, ‘disciple’, ‘adherent of the same school (literary, philosophical, etc.)’, four times in Sidonius: 1.1.2 for one who practises Fronto’s oratorical style, 3.6.2 vos consectanei vestri Plotini dogmatibus inhaerentes (philosophy), 7.14.9 where Sidonius proclaims himself a disciple of his pious and learned addressee. The word is rare; it occurs only two more times in Augustine, e.g. Civ. 10.27 consectaneus tuus platonicus Apuleius. The classical form is consectarius (Cicero).

Cathedra is a significant word both in letter 9 and in the address, where it is used three more times (sect. 2, 17 and 24) to indicate the episcopal throne and office. In sect. 24 it also denotes the chair of a professor of literature. There is no indication that in the Pythagorean school the initiates were necessarily seated (and the novices remained standing?). Rather, the vivid consectaneorum cathedrae is coined for the occasion by the author to indicate the authority of these philosophers, and to point ahead to the authority which backs Simplicius. For the association with philosophy (though with a quite different point of view), cf. Sen. Dial.
10.10.1 solebat dicere Fabianus, non ex his cathedrariis (‘professional’) philosophis, sed ex veris et antiquis.

**mutum sustinuit quinquennium**, ‘remained silent for five years’: Sustinere ‘to endure’, ‘live through’, of something requiring an effort, is very rarely used of time; for this extension of the meaning cf. Cassiod. Hist. 12.4.5 quia neque parvulum tempus sustinens ad talia verba descendit. (also Inst. 1.5.5, 1.8.14). Sidonius characteristically has his own way of combining words, see General Introduction, sect. 6.2 Style: ‘Archaisms, rare words, neologisms’.

Quinquennium is similar to the words used by the other writers: πενταετίαν (Diogenes Laertius), σιωπὴν πενταετῆ (Jamblichus; Sidonius mutum quinquennium), non minus ... quam biennium (Gellius), and quinquennium (Apuleius). In Sidonius the word is not exclusive to this speech (he uses it four more times elsewhere), and therefore it unfortunately provides no further clue as to his sources (see above on quendam philosophorum).

ut etiam celeriora quorumplum ingenia non liceret ante laudari quam deceret agnosci.

Even the quicker wits among the neophytes had to wait before they were allowed to speak and receive their due praise. First they had to learn to deserve to be appreciated.

celeriora ... ingenia, ‘brighter talents’, only paralleled by Aug. Civ. 7 praef. ingenia celeriora atque meliora. More often celeritas ingenii, e.g. Nep. Eum. 1.3 vincebat enim omnes cura, vigilantia, patientia, calliditate et celeritate ingenii. See my comment on 7.1.3 celer ... decurristi.

deceret agnosci, ‘it was proper for them to be appreciated’, is construed parallel to liceret laudari, but deceret is possibly more significant than that. In the Pythagorean tradition, beside self-control, modesty and propriety were much valued, cf. Jambl. Vit. Pyth. 94 τοῦτον μὲν ὅν ἐν τῷ λαμβάνειν τὴν ὑπόμνησιν ἐσκοτεῖ ἐπεί εἰσαι αἰδήμονες ... ἐπείτα ἐκεῖνοι ἐσκοτεῖν, ‘first in the trial period he examined whether they could keep silent ... after that, if they appeared to be modest etc.’ Loyen’s translation ‘avant d’avoir eu le temps de les connaître’ ignores deceret, and hence does not understand agnosce properly.

Agnoscere here means ‘to acknowledge’, ‘appreciate’, cf. e.g. Cic. de Orat. 2.362 cum humanitatem et facilitatem agnoscemus tuam. TLL 1: 1359.63 ‘ad probandi, approbandi notionem accedit’. Cf. Köhler 1995: 127 ad 1.2.1 dignus agnosci. See also below, sect. 19 panem ... agnovit.

ita fiebat, ut eosdem post longam taciturnitatem locutos quisque audire coeperat, non taceret quia, donec scientiam natura conbiberit, non maior est gloria dixisse quod noveris quam siluisses quod nescias.

I follow Anderson, Loyen and Bellès in not punctuating between taceret quia. I translate: ‘Thus it happened that nobody who suddenly heard these (pupils) speaking after their long silence did fail to say: “Until nature has absorbed knowledge, it is not an advantage to say what you know rather than be silent about what you don’t know”’. All the initiates who are present at the ‘coming-out’ of the novices comment complacently on the truth of their maxim that speaking is not even silver, and silence definitely gold – until you know what you are talking about. They are enthusiastic about the quality of what the novices say after they have absorbed the teachings for five years.
Note the meaningful sequence created in the first part of the sentence: *taciturnitatem – locutos – audire – non taceret*. First the novices are silent, then they speak. Next, the experts hear them, and do not keep silent, i.e. comment on the benefit of silence for beginners.

Luetjohann, Mohr and Shackleton Bailey 1982: 170 preferred to punctuate after *taceret* (Luetjohann and Mohr a semicolon, Shackleton Bailey a comma). In that case *non taceret* means ‘they could not keep silent’, i.e. they could not repress applause and comment. The *quia … nescias* part is not their comment, but the comment and recapitulation by the omniscient narrator, who will next (in section 6) apply these to his own situation.

With regard to both interpretations, the conjecture *tacere placeret* by Mommsen is unnecessary.

*post longam taciturnitatem*, ‘after a long silence’: For the collocation cf. 9.3.6 *longum taciturus, ut discam.*

*quisque*, ‘anyone who’, ‘whoever’, = *quicumque, quisquis*: See OLD s.v. 9: ‘in later use perhaps partly through confusion with *quisque*’. For different cases of *quisque*, see my comment on 7.5.4 *cum … quisque sufficitur.*

*audire coeperat*, ‘heard them for the first time’ or ‘suddenly heard them*: *Coeperat* adds an ingressive aspect to the infinitive. In many cases in later Latin it functions as a marker of the perfect tense. See my comment on 7.1.2 *coepit initiari.*

*donec scientiam natura combiberit*, ‘until nature has absorbed knowledge’: It is an ancient motif for *natura* to be paired with *scientia/doctrina/disciplina*. Here the idea is that nature must be perfected by nurture. The maturing of the disciple’s talent occurs through his being educated while listening to the initiated. (In other cases the idea is that nature and nurture are rivals.) *Natura - doctrina* is a second theme, after *cathedra*, which prepares the listener/reader for the characterization of Simplicius in the rest of the speech: sect. 18 *si litteras vel ingenium conferamus, certat natura doctrinac.* See my comment ad loc., where the opposition and its history are treated more fully.

*Combiberit*, ‘has absorbed’, ‘has become inbued with’ (teaching, habits, etc.), cf. e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 3.9 (*puer*) *iam infici debet iis artibus* (‘studies’) *quas si dum est tener combiberit, ad maiora veniet parator*. Cf. *hauire* and the like, e.g. Vitr. 3.3.9 *fontes unde posteri possent hauire disciplinarum raciones*. For Sidonius see the funerary poem for Claudianus Mamertus, *Carm.* 30.4-7 (= *Ep.* 4.11.6) *triplix bibliotheca ... / ... / quam totam monachus virente in aevo / secreta bibit institutionem,* ‘three literatures … all of them as a monk in his prime he absorbed in his unobtrusive studies’ (Anderson), and the age-old image for poetical inspiration in *Carm.* 23.208 f. *tunc, hac mersus aqua, loquacis undae / pro fluctu mage litteras bibisti* (Consentius as a poet inspired by Hippocrène). The image of drinking in knowledge is very popular in later Latin literature, both in religious (the word of God as a fountain, etc., esp. in typological exegesis) and in profane contexts (instruction as a source), cf. e.g. Ambr. *Noe* 19.70 *sapientiae pociulum hauirtur* and *aqua doctrinae caelestis*, Ps. *Firm.* *Zacch.* *cons.* 2.1.8 *de illustrium voluminibus huiusmodi hauirre doctrinan*, and also Paul. *Petric.* *Mart.* 4.352 ff., Alc. *Avit.* *Ep.* 3.57 p. 87 l. 2.

*dixisse ... siluisse*, ‘to say … to keep silent’: By using the perfect instead of the present tense, Latin acknowledges the fact that the action belongs to the past. *Gloria* is its result. See KS 1: 134 and Köhler 1995: 226 ad 1.6.4 *promovisse ... latuisse.*
Cf. cognate Hier. Ep. 130.17 cum loqui nesciant, tacere non possunt. The maxim recurs in medieval citations by Guilbert of Nogent (1055-1124), De vita sua 1.5 [lacuna] prius enim, ait doctor idem, quam scientiam natura combiberit, non maioris est gloriae dixisse quod noveris, quam tacuisse quod nescias, and John of Salisbury (1115/1120-1180), Metalogicon 2.8 sed nec verborum copia perpetuo laudem habet. ut enim ait Sidonius: ‘non est maior gloria dixisse quod noveris, quam siluisse quod nescias’. (For the continuation of the citation by Guilbert of Nogent, see below, sect. 6 discentis obsequium ... docentis officium.)

In a speculative article on the ancient and medieval sources of Wittgenstein’s famous seventh proposition, ‘Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen’, Arduini 2001 goes all the way back to Dionysius the Elder fr. 6 ἢ λέγε τι σιγῆς κρεῖσσον ἢ σιγήν ἔχε, ‘either say something which is better than silence or keep silent’ (Snell TrGF 1.244), and formulates the hypothesis that Sidonius may have known this quote through the Anthology of Stobaeus (book 3, ch. 34, sayings 7 and 8; ed. Wachsmuth-Hense 2: 683), and that the book could have been in his library: ‘da un uomo di cultura quale egli era è assai probabile che l’opera del suo quasi coetaneo Stobeo non gli fosse estranea’ (p. 489). As Arduini herself admits, this is highly speculative. If it could be proved, it would add a substantial argument to the much debated case in favour of Sidonius’ knowledge of Greek, and the presence of Greek originals in his library. See General Introduction, sect. 2.3 Works with note 15, and par. 3.4.2 Philosophy with note 42.

Parallel commata dixisse quod noveris and siluisse quod nescias round off this first section.

Section 6

at nunc mediocritatem mean manet longe diversa condicio,
‘But now the situation confronting my mediocre person is quite different’


mediocritatem mean, ‘my mediocre self’: See my comment on 7.8.1 mediocritatis meae.

manet, ‘to await’, ‘confront’: Cf. e.g. Pl. Mos. 50 meum bonum me, te tuum maneat malum. The same verb, but with dative, Caes. Arel. Serm. 230.3 sacerdotibus autem domini longe alia manet condicio, but For longe diversa condicio cf. Symm. Ep. 1.95.1 longe enim diversa condicio est fortuiti quam affectati silentii.

The triple m in mediocritatem mean manet emphasizes the situation.

cui per suspiriosas voragines et flagitiorum volutabra gradienti professionis huiusce pondus impactum est;

The responsibility of the episcopate weighed heavily on Sidonius. He had only just entered upon his task, when he fell dangerously ill. When he wrote about this to his uncle Apollinaris, it was in terms of great despondency. He felt weighed down by his conscience, utterly unworthy of this office, like a barren fruit tree (Ep. 5.3.3). To a letter of congratulation by bishop Lupus he replied in what comes close to a fit of depression, brooding over his sinfulness, ‘a ball of earth crumbling with guilt’, and, again, the burden on his back (Ep. 6.1). Harries 1994: 169 f. has made a case for the historical and psychological reality behind the
theatricality which is a product of its age – and rightly so: ‘For Sidonius himself, the experience, some years after his baptism by Faustus, had something of the intensity of a second conversion.’ And, after all, he was only in the first year of his episcopate (see Bellès 3: 53 n. 101 ad loc.). See General Introduction, sect. 2.2 Life.

per suspiciosas voragines et flagitiorem volutabra, ‘through pools of sighs and sloughs of iniquity’: The vortex of problems the author is confronted with, is forcefully represented by the vertiginous choice of words, which for better effect even renounces easy parallelism. The collocations are unique to this phrase, but I think we can trace its remote ancestor, viz. Cic. Ver. 3.23 is erit Apronius ille qui ... immensa aliqua vorago est aut gurges vitiorum turpitudinumque omnium, ‘it will be Apronius, that immense yawning chasm, that pool of vice and debauchery’. Apronius was the ruthless right hand of Verres to whom he was dear because of his very impurity and inhumanity. The metaphor is used by Sidonius in the same way. Its evident connotation is the sinfulness in which a recently converted Christian – and a fortiori a bishop who has just been consecrated – is involved, and from which he may hope to be delivered by doing penance.

Suspiriosus, occurring five times in the correspondence, qualifies situations of repentance and imploring God’s mercy; see my comment on 7.6.4 suspiriosis ... ululatis.

Vorago is also found in 3.2.3 viarum voragines (‘deteriorated roads’, ‘sloughs’). OLD s.v. defines: ‘A deep hole or chasm, watery hollow. Transf. of any person or thing with an unlimited appetite, capacity, or sim.’, esp. with greed, gluttony, etc. The Christian twist to the metaphor is a pool of vice in which the sinner is steeped, e.g. Ambr. in Psalm. 39.2.1 iam demersi tenebamur nostrorum voragine peccatorum.

Volutabrum, ‘a haunt of pigs, etc.’, ‘a wallow’ (OLD s.v.): Here only in the correspondence. Found since Verg. G. 3.411 volutabris pulsos silvestribus apros. Flagitiorem volutabrum turns up in slightly different guises in Christian writers, e.g. Ambr. Hex. 3.1.4 volutabra libidinum. Vorago, volutabrum and pigs are combined in Arnob. Nat. 7.17 (pigs making sacrifices to men, as if they were gods) cum ad ultimum porculi caenum vobis profunderent ex volutabris horrentibus, lutosis et voraginibus sumptum?

gradienti, ‘making my way’: This connotation of gradi usually in difficult or serious situations, cf. e.g. Verg. A. 6.633 pariter gressi per opaca viarum. Sidonius uses it two more times in his poetry: Carm. 5.545 quicquid gradior, and 24.8 sed sensim gradere, q.v. Santelia 2002: 67.

professionis huiusce pondus, ‘the weight of this office’: Viz. of the episcopate. Sidonius expresses himself in the same words to his uncle, 5.3.3 utpote cui indignissimo tantae professionis pondus impactum est. In 6.1.5 we have quantum meas deprimat oneris impositi massa cervices. For professio see my comment on 7.5.1 utriusque professionis ordinibus.

impactum est, ‘has been thrust, forced upon’: The pressure brought to bear on him to accept the episcopacy is a recurrent theme: 4.3.9 impactae professionis (q.v. Amherdt 2001: 159), 5.3.3 pondus impactum est, 6.1.5 oneris impositi massa, 6.7.1 indignissimo mihi impositum sacerdotalis nomen officii. Pressure, or even force, was not unusual, as emotions ran high at episcopal nominations. The most famous case is perhaps the election of Ambrose of Milan (who, incidentally, was among the first aristocrats in the West to hold a bishopric, see Salzman 2002: 133); see below. Among the cases Sidonius himself describes, we have, besides 4.24.4 nuper impacto sacerdotio (the nomination of a priest), 4.25.3 iunctis repente manibus arreptum.
nihilque tum minus quam quae agebantur optantem supplicantemque sanctum Iohannem, the forced nomination, at the hands of the presiding bishops (!), of the monk John as bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône. See the chapter on the election and consecration of bishops in the Introduction to letter 5.

Notice the soundplay on p which adds a decisive note to the statement professionis huiusce pondus impactum est.

et prius quam ulli bonorum reddam discentis obsequium, cogor debere ceteris docentis officium

bonorum, ‘the elite’: The boni are the exclusive company made up of the leading citizens. The political, economical and cultural dominance of this aristocracy is strengthened by its sense of moral superiority. The rich and mighty feel infinitely aloof from the mass of the people, and think they are always in the right. For a short introduction see Amherdt 2001: 191 ad 4.5.2 bonorum, with references to Kaufmann 1995: 148 n. 394 and Mathisen 1993: 11. Anderson’s translation ‘any righteous man’ can be misleading, because to modern ears it might suggest a moral distinction, whereas boni is a class distinction in the first place, the idea of moral superiority being implicit in the class privileges. For boni see also 7.2.5 en 7.8.3.

ceteris, ‘the rest of the people’: The multi of 1.11.6 iste ... multorum plus quam bonorum odia commovit.

discentis obsequium ... docentis officium, ‘the allegiance of a learner … the duty of an instructor’ (Anderson): The same train of thought as in 5.3.3 ante compulsus docere quam discere. For Sidonius the task of telling others what they should do comes too soon, as he himself could do with some tuition first. Compare Ambrose’s situation: Ambr. Off. 1.4 raptus de tribunalis atque administrationis infidis ad sacerdotium, docere vos coepi quod ipse non didici, ‘dragged away [see above at impactum est] from the courts of law and the insignia of imperial administration, I have now suddenly got to teach you what I have not learned myself’. As a possible inspiration one might think of Plin. Ep. 8.14.24 sed quid ego similis docenti? cum discere velim, an sententias dividi an iri in singulas oportuerit, ‘but I should not be the one giving instruction, when I really wanted to learn whether the two sentences [i.e. of death and banishment] should have been subsequently divided, or voted on seperately’ (transl. Betty Radice, Harmondsworth, 1963).

A variant of the topos is found e.g. in 6.1.5 (after mentioning the oneris impositi massa weighing on his neck) ut is pro peccato populi nunc orare compellar, pro quo populus innocentum vix debet impetrare si supplicet, ‘I have to pray now for the sin of the people, whereas on my behalf even a sinless person could scarcely expect to be heard’. Cf. the continuation of the just cited phrase in 5.3.3 et ante praesumens bonum praedicare quam facere, ‘and presuming to preach goodness before doing it’ (Anderson), like a tree without fruits.

For an example of the motif discere – docere in one of Sidonius’ medieval admirers, the above cited Guilbert of Nogent, see his De vita sua 1.5, where he recalls his youth and tells about a terribly incompetent, and violent, teacher, who ‘forced me to learn what he himself was unable to teach’, dum ipse me cogeret discere, quae docere nequiverat.

Officium, together with debere, belongs to the vocabulary of social obligations, as e.g. 2.8.3 debeas enim consolationis officium duorum civium domibus afflictis, ‘for you owe the duty of consolation to the afflicted families of two fellow-citizens’ (Anderson). Cf. Symm. Ep. 9.114
officiorum vices diu opto debere, ‘I hope to owe mutual duties for a long time’. It is wise to be unassuming about one’s role as a docens, see e.g. Symm. Ep. 3.43 ego amici functus officium admonentis potius quam docentis personam recepi.

adicitur huic impossibilitati pondus pudoris, quod mihi peculiariter paginae decretalis oblatu pontificis eligendi mandatis arbitrium coram sacrosancto et pontificatu maximo dignissimo papa;

impossibilitati, ‘impossibility’: A hapax for Sidonius, the word is found since Apul. Met. 6.14 sic impossibilitate [viz. of her task] ipsa mutata in lapide>Psyche. For nouns in –tas in later Latin, see my comment on 7.1.2 animositati nostrae.

pondus pudoris, ‘the weight of diffidence’: To the pondus professionis is added the pondus pudoris (notice the same alliteration). Pudor is the socially desirable reaction to the presence of his eminent colleague-bishop who had come to supervise the election. For a definition of pudor see my comment on 7.5.2 officii … pudorem. For pondus pudoris, attested not before Sidonius’ time, cf. e.g. Caes. Arel. Serm. 236.2 sub grandi pudoris pondere humilitatis mea conscientia contremescit. For similar phrases see e.g. 1.11.2 publici furoris … pondus, 2.13.5 pondus imperii, 8.10.4 gloriae falsae pondere, 9.2.3 negotii praecepti pondus.

mihi peculiariter, ‘to me of all men’ (Anderson): Peculiariter, ‘especially’, is found since the first century AD, where it is a favourite of Pliny the Elder.

paginae decretalis oblatu, ‘by handing over your written resolution’: Sidonius had received the written confirmation from the people of Bourges that they will accept his choice – the document called earlier 7.5.1 decreto civium (see my comment a.l.). This is legal terminology in accordance with the chapter De legatis in the Theodosian codex, e.g. Cod. Theod. 12.12.11 si quis vel civitas vel provincia vel corporis alicuius ita prosequi desideria voluerit, ut non omnia mandata litterarum decretorum (decretarum Mommsen) auctoritate demonstrat, inauditus ac sine effectu remeare protinus iubeatur (see Loyen 3: 192 n. 45).

pontificis eligendi mandatis arbitrium, ‘you have given me a free hand to choose a bishop’: Sidonius may be very ceremonious and modest in this captatio benevolentiae, he is at the same time very resolute about the mutual obligations, and his leading role in the process. At the very end of the speech Sidonius will remind his audience of their oath: 7.9.25 et quia sententiam parvitatis meae in hac electione valituram esse iurastis … coram sacrosancto … papa, ‘in the presence of a saintly bishop’: The bishop must be Agroecius of Sens whom Sidonius had invited in letter 5.

The element of mentioning the authority in whose presence one makes one’s appearance is also found in e.g. Carm. 1.25 audacter docto coram Victore canentes, ‘singing recklessly in the presence of the learned Victor’ (it is bold for Sidonius to recite his panegyric in the presence of Anthemius’ quaestor sacri palatii Victor).

For sacrosancto see my comment on 7.1.6 sacrosanctae informationis. Papa is almost always used in the vocative, except here and in 2.10.2 studio papae Patientis. Does this suggest a certain intimacy? See Appendix E.

pontificato maximo, ‘episcopacy’: Also in 8.14.2 qua morum praerogativa pontificatu maximo ambo fungamini (both brothers were bishops).
qui cum sit suae provinciae caput, sit etiam mihi usu institutione, facundia privilegio, tempore aetate praestantior,

**suae provinciae caput**, ‘the number one of his province’: As bishop of Sens Agroecius was the metropolitan of the province Lugdunensis quarta, and hence surpassed Sidonius in rank. For *caput* see 7.5.3 *Senoniae caput es*, with comment.

**usu institutione facundia, privilegio tempore aetate**, ‘experience, education and eloquence, prerogative, seniority and age’: The same interpretation in Näf 1995: 163. I propose to depart from the tradition among modern editors, and punctuate, not three times two, but two times three nouns, so that there is a neat division between internal advantages, due to personal training, and external claims to superiority, outside one’s personal influence. Compare a similar series as to content (the three external qualifications coming first in the list) in a letter written about the same time: 6.3.1 *cum nostra mediocritas aetate vitae, tempore dignitatis, privilegio loci* [Anderson: ‘exceptional standing’], *laude scientiae, dono conscientiae vestrae facile vincatur*, etc. For an analysis of asyndetic sequences of words, see Appendix F. Two times three (a) and three times two (b) are both relatively rare: (a) 2.2.7 *Paros Carystos Proconnesos, Phryges Numidae Spartiae*, and 4.9.2 *in equis canibus accipitribus instituendis spectandis circumferendis*; (b) 1.5.10 *theatra macella, praetoria fora, templa gymnasia* (note how the division in pairs is created by the combination each time of a shorter and a longer word, as in two other cases, which, however, after a sequence of three times two, have got a ‘tail’: 2.6.1 *opportunus elegans, verecundus sobrius, parcus religiosus* (…), and 5.7.3 *Narcissus Asiaticus, Massa Marcellus, Carus Parthenius* (…)). The technique is called (tri)geminatio, see Van den Hout 1999: 324 ad 135, 13-15. See also General Introduction, sect. 6.2 *Style*: ‘Sequences’.

For *usus*, ‘practice’, compare 9.12.2 *quisnam enim ignoret cunctis aut artificibus aut artibus maximum decus usu venire?: ‘practice makes perfect’. For *institutio* (three times in books 1 and 2) e.g. 2.11.2 *gerulos litterarum de disciplinae tuae institutione formatos* (Anderson: ‘trained according to the principles of your system’). The terms *privilegium, tempus* and *aetas* are explained by their respective attributes in 6.3.1.

ego deque coramque metropolitano verba facturus, et provincialis et iunior, pariter fero imperiti verecundiam, procacis invidiam.

**deque coramque**, ‘about and in the presence of’: About (*de*) the new metropolitan, of Aquitanica prima, to be elected, in the presence of (*coram*) Agroecius, metropolitan of Lugdunensis quarta.

**et provincialis et iunior**, ‘provincial bishop and younger’: Sidonius was but a provincial bishop, although Clermont ranked as the first diocese among the *comprovinciales* of Aquitanica prima, as Sirmond remarks. The words *provincialis* and *iunior* are chiastically linked to, respectively, *invidia* and *vereundiam*. As no more than a provincial he might arouse irritation because of his presumption, as a junior he feels diffident because of his lack of experience.

**pariter fero imperiti verecundiam, procacis invidiam**, ‘I feel at once the diffidence of ignorance and the stigma of presumption’ (Anderson): See the previous lemma. Note the subtly uneven construction: *imperiti* is gen. subj., *procacis* gen. obj. Procax, procacitas, is exactly the opposite of any introverted bashfulness, it is boisterous and extrovert, as in 9.11.4
procacitas recitatoris, ‘brashness on the part of an author’, opposed, as being more successful, to trepidatio, ‘nervousness’. For invidia + gen. see my comment on 7.6.3 sub vanitatis invidia.

Section 7

sed quoniam vestro sic libitum errori, ut ipse prudentia carens prudentem vobis in cuiusque personam bona multa concurrant sub ope Christi episcopum exquiram,

Section 7 might seem superfluous after section 6, but it is not. In section 6 attention was paid to Sidonius’ inexperience and its consequences in the presence of the metropolitan. Now that this is taken for granted and accepted (sed), the next step is to win over the public. Section 7 directs the attention towards Sidonius’ inexperience and its consequences for the public.

sed, ‘but o.k.’, ‘well’: Since this is the situation, please realize what a burden it is to me, and pray for me.

vestro sic libitum errori, ‘you are so misguided as to desire’: The abstract errori is daring. Elsewhere libet is always construed with the dative of a person, e.g. tibi, cuique, regi; at most we have animo, e.g. Sulp. Sev. Dial. 1.3.2 libuit animo adire Carthaginem. For the use of abstracta in later Latin, see my comment on 7.1.2 animositati nostrae.

ut ipse prudentia carens prudentem vobis ... episcopum exquiram, ‘that I select a wise bishop who lack wisdom myself’: The dilemma is: ‘Physician, heal thyself’. The author conveys this by applying the figure of paronomasia, prudentia – prudentem (Hagendahl class 3; see my comment on 7.1.6 et accidisse prior).

in cuiusque personam = et cuius in personam, ‘and in whose person’.

bona multa, ‘many qualities’: This requirement is met by Simplicius, about whom Sidonius had heard plurima bona (7.8.3).

sub ope Christi, ‘with Christ’s help’: See my comment on 7.1.1 sub ope Christi.

noveritis huiusmodi assensu multum me honoris, plus oneris excipere.

huiusmodi assensu, ‘this kind of vote’: Anderson translates correctly: ‘your united decision’, after some doubt expressed in the note ad loc.: ‘“the cordial acceptance of the proposal”, or Sidonius’ acceptance of it?’ This doubt is unnecessary. Assensus is the t.t. for the approbation by people or senate for a proposal, cf. e.g. Cic. Brut. 185 volgi assensu et populari adprobatione, Liv. 5.9.7 cum omnium assensu comprobata oratio esset.

multum... honoris, plus oneris, ‘a great honour, a greater burden’: The same topos in Ep. 9.2.1 quae tamen litterae plurimum nobis honoris, plus oneris inponunt, and Carm. 33.14 (= Ep. 7.17.2 v.14) est tibi delatus plus onerosus honor. Outside Sidonius e.g. Liv. 22.30 plebei scitum quo oneratus sum magis quam honoratus. For the saying onus est honos, ‘noblesse oblige’, see Otto 1890: 167 # 828 honos. In social intercourse, any service rendered creates an obligation, cf. e.g. Ep. 9.11.2 illam mihi fuisse plus oneri quam praecontentis caritatem, ‘your kind attention has been more of a burden to me’. For the term honor, esp. in the fifth and sixth centuries, see Gradowicz-Pancer 1996.
primore loco grandem publicae opinionis sarcinam penditote,
primore loco, ‘above all’, ‘especially’: As Ep. 3.6.3 quod primore loco fieri par est, 4.9.1 primore loco, quod etc., 8.4.1 primore loco, quod etc.

publicae opinionis sarcinam, ‘the burden of being judged in public’: Cf. sect. 6 pondus pudoris. For the collocation (with a different nuance) cf. Cic. Att. 6.1.18 nos publicam prope opinionem secati sumus, ‘I have fairly closely followed the general opinion’. For the idea cf. Sidon. Ep. 1.1.3 in portu iudicii publici, ‘in the harbour of public judgement’, there in a context of literary criticism.

Sarcina is metaphorical of the weight of what others think about you, or you about yourself, cf. 3.9.1 sed et ipsi sarcinam vestri pudoris inspicimus, ‘however, I am a direct witness of the conscientiousness which weighs on you so heavily’ (Anderson).

penditote, ‘please consider’, lit. ‘weigh’: Plays on the literal meaning of sarcina, ‘rucksack’, ‘load’. The so-called ‘future imperative’ or ‘imperative II’ is used for an operation which has to take place in the not-immediate future, and only under certain conditions. Hence its importance in law texts and technical manuals. As Risselada 1993: 128 puts it: ‘The directives that are found in both of these text types are not aimed at immediate and unconditional realization of the action by every person confronted with them, but are to be realized only by partial persons and under particular circumstances’. The imperative II – primarily early Latin; in the classical age mainly in regulations and juridical jargon – enjoyed some popularity with later archaizing authors; see my comment on 7.8.3 scitote. Apart from esto, ‘granted’, memento(te) and scito(te) – forms which remained in use, petrified, to avoid monosyllabic sci, or because of the exceptional perfect stem of memini – we also find 5.17.11 ignoscitote in Sidonius’ prose

Penditote is almost a hapax, in fact one of only two occurrences in the whole of Latin literature. Perhaps Sidonius found his inspiration for it – and the collocation sarcinam penditote – in that other occurrence of penditote, viz. Cic. Ver. 2.4.1 (is what Verres has done the conduct of a compulsive collector or is it robbery?) ego quo nomine appelliem nescio. rem vobis proponam, vos eam suo, non nominis pondere penditote, ‘I don’t know what to call it. I’ll give you the facts. Then it is for you to decide on it according to its real weight, not that of its name’. (Is it a coincidence that this is again a Verrine oration, as above sect. 6 per suspiriosas voragines?) Note the strict sequence: proponam for the immediate future, penditote for the reaction of the audience which is to follow later. This is the classic way, cf. e.g. Pl. Pseud. 647 tu epistulam hanc a me accipe atque illi dato. Sidonius seems to have lost this feeling for the sequential character of the future imperative. We may conclude that he uses these verb forms to achieve euphony: penditote here to lend more weight to the injunction, ignoscitote in 5.17 as the last word of the letter.

The imp. praes. pendite does exist, but is a hapax: Luc. 8.276 vos pendite regna, ‘it is for you to weigh the kingdoms’. For the imp. fut. see LHS 2: 340 f., Ernout 169, Löfstedt 1956, 2: 38 and 55 f., and especially Risselada 1993: 122-38.
quod iniunxistis incipienti consummata iudicia atque ab hoc rectum consilii tramitem postulatis, in quo recolitis adhuc nuper erratum.

iniunxistis incipienti, ‘you have enjoined a beginner’: The words are coupled through assonance. Iniungere is a standard member of the iubes-pareo motif: ‘you have asked a judgement from me; well, I am going to pronounce it (implicit in what follows’).

consummata iudicia, ‘impeccable judgments’: Consummata is opposed to incipienti, found since Seneca, e.g. Sen. Nat. 6.5.3 nulla res consummata est dum incipit. For the phrase cf. Symm. Rel. 38 p. 310 l. 21 iudicatio consummata.

rectum consilii tramitem, ‘the right way of decision making’, ‘the straight path of wisdom’ (Anderson): Gualandri 1979: 117 ranks it among the concrete metaphors, influenced by biblical, figurative language, ‘congenial to Sidonius’ talent’. She compares 5.16.3 nec animum tuum a tramite communium gaudiorum ... terror exorbitat, ‘the menace does not even divert you from the path of shared delight’, 9.9.2 a regula Sallustiani tramitis detortus. Compare phrases with orbita, ‘track’, ‘path’: 4.10.2 nos vestustae loquacitatis orbitas recurremus, ‘I will once more follow the track of my usual talkativeness’, 6.9.2 si quis tamen vestrae correptionis orbitam non reliquit. The word rectum is answered by erratum scil. tramitem, ‘the wrong way’ (or erratum substantivated, ‘shortcoming’, ‘sin’).

postulatis, ‘you ask’: Anderson suggested the possibility of postulastis, ‘you have asked’.
Loyen accepted the suggestion in his text. The emendation is entirely unnecessary (despite iniunxistis, on a line with recolitis), and the manuscripts have no trace of it.

adhuc nuper, ‘until recently’: There are four more instances, all from later Latin: Sidon. Ep. 8.6.5 audivi eum adulescens atque adhuc nuper ex pueru, Rufin. Orig. Princ. 1.4.1 reparet ea, quae adhuc nuper amissa sunt, Alc. Avit. Ep. 46 p. 76 l. 4 solutus a vobis adhuc nuper populus captivus, and Ven. Fort. Vita Sev. 7 inpetrare, quod eius beneficiis adhuc nuper actum sit.

igitur quia vobis id fuit cordi, obsecro, ut quales nos fide creditis, tales intercessione faciatis atque dignemini humilitatem nostram orationibus potius in caelum ferre quam plausibus.

fuit cordi, ‘thought it important’: The same as libitum previously.

ut quales nos fide creditis, tales intercessione faciatis, ‘to make me by prayer what you believe me to be on trust’, i.e. make your belief come true. The speaker goes all the way, not only to thank the audience for their trust in him, but to beseech them humbly to bring about its realization by their prayer. Fide credere is a common phrase, e.g. Cypr. Ep. 73.19.1 hoc Christianus, hoc Dei servus potest aut mente concipere aut fide credere aut sermone proferre?, Ambr. Abr. 1.3.21 (Abraham) rationem non quaesivit, sed promptissima fide credidit, Aug. Ep. 147.3 quamvis hoc fide credatur, quod non videtur.

intercessione, ‘intercession’, ‘prayer’, probably also in 8.14.8 si nobis tribuere dignemini raris intercessionibus salutem, ‘if you condescend to confer salvation on me by occasional intercessions’, and certainly so 9.6.1 viguit pro dilectissimo nostro ... apud Christum tua sanctitas intercessionis effectu (both addressed to bishops). Six more occurrences in Sidonius concern secular interventions.
For an example where – as here – the whole of the community is asked to pray for somebody, and its context of sin and repentance, see Caes. Arel. Serm. 67.3 et tamen, fratres carissimi, hic ipse, qui tam fideliter compuncto corde et contrito paenitentiam petit, sic de intercessione totius populi debet esse securus, ut tamen totis viribus cum dei adiutorio de sua sit salute sollicitus. In the same way the reader can be asked by the author to assist him in writing, see Cassian. Conl. praeef. 4 vestrum igitur est conatus nostros piis orationibus adiuver.

in caelum ferre, ‘take to the sky c.q. heaven’: Plays on the usual ‘praising to the skies’ and ‘dedicating to heaven’, and also on the opposition to humilitatem. Cf. Carm. 16.109 f. fratribus insinuans quantos illa insula plana / miserit in caelum montes, ‘telling the brothers how many eminences [‘mountains’: bishops and priests] that flat island [Lérins] has sent soaring to the skies’ (Anderson). The usual metaphor is seen in 1.9.8 ad astra portare ... eloquentiam, ‘to extol my eloquence’.

plausibus, ‘with applause’: Viz. by applauding his decision which he is going to inform them of now. This thought, and even its last word, which rounds off the Exordium, will recur at the very end of the speech, when everything has been said: vos autem de viro ... consonate (see comment there). Here the applause is allegedly rejected, there it is expressly solicited.

Plausibus is a striking variant of the usual laudibus, cf. e.g. Curt. 5. 8.10 nulla erit tam surda posteritas, nulla tam ingrata fama, quae non in caelum vos debitis laudibus ferat, Liv. 2.49.1 Fabios ad caelum laudibus ferunt.

Forcefully, the two paired members, fide creditis ... intercessione faciatis, and orationibus ... plausibus conclude the Exordium. Now the audience is prepared for the real thing.

It goes without saying that in sentences like this one we may safely assume a fair amount of redaction for publication.

Section 8

primum tamen nosse vos par est, in quas me obloquiorum Scyllas et in quos linguarum, sed humanarum, latratus quorundam vos infamare conantum turbo coniecerit.

primum, ‘first of all’, ‘before we go on’, announces the preliminary considerations, with which Sidonius paints in vivid colours the objections he has met or foresees. Of course, the vast majority of his audience is innocent of this miserable obstruction, he says. He isolates the opposition by presenting it as a spiteful minority against an overwhelming number of right-minded people, and by attributing to it, not a different opinion, but a criminal intent. Character assassination is an effective, if unpleasant, means to any orator’s ends, and so it is here.

nosse vos par est, ‘you must know’ : Cf. 5.7.7 scire vos par est.

obloquiorum Scyllas et ... linguarum, sed humanarum, latratus, ‘Scyllas of slander and barking tongues – human ones –‘: Two metaphors intertwine: One, the monster Scylla, awaiting the mariners driven towards it by the storm (turbo), represents the difficulties an author has to endure on the sea voyage, which is the publishing of his work. Two, barking dogs represent the voices of jealous critics and opponents. The link is the fact that Scylla has
a series of barking, doglike heads. See the same combined metaphor in 1.1.4 contenti versuum felicius quam peritius editorum opinione, de qua mihi iampridem in portu iudicii publici post lividorum latratuum Scyllas enavigatas sufficientis gloriae ancora sedet, ‘content with the reception of my poems, which good luck surely helped to recognition rather than skill of mine. Such fame as I have should be to me an anchor cast in the haven of safe repute. I ought to be content with it after the envious snarls of all the Scyllas which my ship has passed’ (Dalton).

For metaphors of the sea used for writing see Curtius 1948: 138-41; e.g. writing poetry is vela dare (Verg. G. 2.41). Note the shift in connotation which the sea metaphor has acquired in Sidonius, who applies it, not so much to inspiration and the writing itself, as to publishing and the trouble with criticism. In his world, every word, every gesture is designed for effect. What readers say is all-important. This extreme susceptibility to criticism is like a raw nerve in late antique cultural life. See also General Introduction, sect. 3.3.2 Social conventions and Christianity.

For barking as unsympathetic criticism, cf. e.g. Cypr. Ep. 45.2.5 (as a reaction to the attack on pope Cornelius) quae religiosam simplicitatem sonabant nec ullis maledictorum et conviciorum latratibus perstrepebant, ‘(writings) which sounded the note of religious simplicity and did not produce the din of the barking of reproaches and injury’, Hier. in Mich. 2 praef. ut ad huiuscemodi latratum (scil. invidorum) claudatis aures, and Sidonius’ use of oblatrator, ‘yapper’, ‘snarler’, in Ep. 1.3.2 and 4.22.6 (see ad loc. Köhler 1995: 172 and Amherdt 2001: 467 f.).

Our phrase and Ep. 1.1.3-4 are discussed at length by Gualandri 1979: 105-07. See also Köhler 1995: 114-18 ad loc. To the references these scholars provide, I add Avitus of Vienne in two phrases which echo Sidonius. Alc. Avit. Carm. 4 (= Hist. spirit. 4) 500 f. obloquis vanos sufflant mendacia ventos, / sed clausam vacuo pulsant impune latratu, ‘by their criticism the lies cause treacherous winds to blow, but they collide against the ark [of the church] without doing harm by their idle barking.’ In this passage (v. 493-501) the church, at sea in a hurricane, is threatened by the Charybdis of Judaism and buffeted by the billows of Greek philosophy. For the link with Sidonius, cf. comment Hecquet-Noti 2005: 94-96 ad loc.

The second passage recalls Sidonius’ own experience. It is from the letter Avitus wrote to Sidonius’ son Apollinaris about his father, which contains an unidentifiable citation from Sidonius: Alc. Avit. Ep. 51 p. 80 l. 12 f. virum saeculo militantem minus inter arma quam inter obloquia periclitari, ‘that the man acting in this world is less at risk in war than among detractors’. Avitus continues: exemplum a Sidonio meo ... quantum clericus perpeti possit, adsumo, ‘I take an example from my Sidonius of how much a cleric can suffer’ (transl. Shanzer-Wood). Both sides of Sidonius’ career are remembered, as an imperial official – the difficulties he encountered there are an exemplum to his son –, and as a cleric – an exemplum to Avitus himself. It is a résumé of the situation in which Sidonius finds himself in Bourges. For the link, see Shanzer and Wood 2002: 344 n. 10, and Piacente 2001.

Obloquium, ‘criticism’, ‘reproach’, ‘slander’, is found since the fifth century AD, cf. e.g. Cassian. Inst. 5.29 virus obloquii (after detractationis verbum). Cf. the current address, sect. 12 in obloquendo celeres. Obloquii in this sense is also late, cf. e.g. Ps. Aug. Sern. 117.5 si quis ... detrahere ... consuevit et aliorum actiones obloqui. See also Engelbrecht 1886: 470. Obloquium/obloqui only here in Sidonius, who will have had this word in mind as a fundamental characteristic of the attitude of his opponents: protest instead of obedience.
The plural Scyllae as in 1.1.4 (see above) for a class of monster, cf. e.g. Cic. N.D. 1.108 quae (res) numquam ... fuerunt neque esse potuerunt, ut Scyllae, ut Chimaerae. In the Carmina we encounter the singular two times, in 9.165 and 11.68. For Scylla’s barking (from a different part of its anatomy), cf. Cat. 60.2 Scylla latrans infima inguinum parte.

Sed humanarum Sidonius takes his time to explain to the listeners how he applies the metaphor. For this characteristic phenomenon in late antique authors, of explaining the images they use, see Köhler 1995: 117 ad 1.1.4 in portu iudicii publici. Cf. Gualandri 1979: 106 f.: ‘Nulla ... è lasciato all’intuizione del lettore’, and General Introduction, sect. 6.2 Style: ‘Realistic’ metaphors’. Cf. 5.5.3 novus Amphion in citharis, sed trichordibus, temperandis.

quorundam vos infamare conantum turbo, ‘the headwind of some individuals who try to bring discredit upon you’: This isolates the culprits (quorundam) and at the same time compliments the majority of the audience (vos) on their reputation. Turbo, ‘gush of wind’, ‘storm’, for the violence of adversity or malignity, cf. e.g. 4.12.1 nuntiorum turbinibus adversis, 5.6.1 ne quam tibi calumniam turbo barbaricus ... concinnaret.

Warmington in his note on this sentence heard ‘a sort of barking – a deliberate effect by Sidonius’ in the Latin, if spoken. The succession of par, quas, Scyllas, linguarum, humanarum, latratus, quorundam, infamare, conantum contains a great many a-sounds, indeed. Yet it is difficult to decide whether the effect was intended.

est enim haec quaedam vis malis moribus, ut innocentiam multitudinis devenustent scelera paucorum,

quaedam vis, ‘a strange sort of power’: For a parallel to the idea Savaron referred to Cypr. Ep. 14.3.2 sed ita gerere ut per paucorum pravos et malos mores multorum et bonorum confessorum gloria honesta maculetur (see Bellès 3: 55 n. 106).

cum tamen e diverso bonorum raritas flagitia multorum nequeat excusare virtutibus communicatis.

e diverso, ‘in contrast’, ‘on the other hand’: See my comment on 7.5.5 e diverso.

bonorum raritas, ‘a sprinkling of good people’ (Anderson): This is a case of genitive ‘inversus’, equivalent to rari (pauci) boni. Cf. my comment on 7.1.5 orationum frequentia. The phrase does not provide a characteristic of the class of the boni, as Amherdt 2001: 191 ad 4.5.2 thought (‘ils sont peu nombreux’). Bonorum raritas is opposed to scelera paucorum: a minority of good people is no match for the evil majority; a minority of bad people, however, can easily spoil an innocent majority. See Semple in note 2 ad loc.

excusare virtutibus communicatis, ‘absolve by sharing their virtues’: For excusare see OLD s.v. 5 ‘to declare free from blame of liability, absolve, excuse’, e.g. Sen. Con. 10.3.1 sic sibi satisfieri ne victor quidem voluit; excusavit victos, quin restituit, ‘not even the winner wanted to be satisfied in this way: he absolved the losers, and even restored them’, Ulp. Dig. 29.5.1.34 excusantur ... servi qui auxilium tulerunt sine dolo malo.

Section 9

First category: the monks. Perhaps Sidonius begins with the monks because a nomination from that category in this case was least probable, but it may also be because of their prestige
and influence. Besides, anyone with a religious vocation per se has precedence over even the most highly placed layman (see 7.12.4 praestantior ... computatur honorato maximo minimus religiosus). Gaul had never been short of monks, and Sidonius’ own environment – and indeed he himself – had been profoundly influenced by their spirituality. See General Introduction, sect. 4.1 Organisation.

si quempiam nominavero monachorum, quamvis illum, Paulis, Antoniis, Hilarionibus, Macariis conferendum, sectatae anachoreseos praerogativa comitetur,

Sidonius evokes some of the desert fathers, as he had done in his Euchariston ad Faustum episcopum, Carm. 16.91-115, where he describes how his mentor Faustus has led the life of a desert monk and visited the homeland of these great models: anachoreta, ... / qua nunc Helias, nunc te iubet ire Iohannes, / nunc duo Macarii, nunc et Paphnutius heros, / nunc Or, nunc Ammon, nunc Sarmata, nunc Hilarion, / nunc vocat in tunica nudus te Antonius illa, / quam fecit palmae foliis manus alma magistri.

Courcelle 1948: 236 f. surely had too narrow a perception of the function of the reference to these monks: ‘L’usage qu’il [i.e. Sidonius] fait des grands Cappadociens ou des Pères du désert un usage purement littéraire, comme celui qu’il va faire des artistes ou des philosophes grecs.’ Rhetorical schooling, a highly stylized form, a traditional line of thought, do not exclude, but include real life in Late Antiquity. See General Introduction, par. 3.3.2 Social conventions and Christianity, and 6.4.3 ‘Formalized’ prose. What the contemporary audience was meant to understand here was that the summit of religious fervour and moral integrity was being addressed. De Vogüé 2003: 360 has pointed out that it is curious, at first sight, that all the monks cited here are hermits, not coenobites, who would seem to be better suited to a pastoral task. Hence, the greater prestige of anachoresis is evident. An authentic, trustworthy monk, who would be able to cope with the pontificate, might sooner be found among the anchorites.

Sidonius probably read Athanasius’ Life of Anthony in the Latin translation of Evagrius of Antiochia, and Jerome’s Lives of Paulus and Hilarion. What he knows about the other hermits (Or, Ammon, Paphnutius, both Macarii) may come from Rufinus’ Historia monachorum. See Courcelle loc. cit. and Prévot 1997: 228 f.

Paulis, Antoniis, Hilarionibus Macariis, ‘men like ....’: The plural indicates the class. St. Paul the Hermit, of Thebes, died ca. 340. He is traditionally the first Christian hermit. Saint Anthony of Egypt lived 251?-356. Saint Hilarion, ca. 291-371, is the founder of the anchoritic life in Palestine. Saint Macarius of Alexandria, who died ca. 394, was an Egyptian hermit. His namesake is Saint Macarius of Egypt, the Great, ca. 300–ca. 390, who founded a colony of monks in the desert of Scetis, which became one of the chief centres of Egyptian monasticism.


sectatae anachoreseos praerogativa, ‘the special claim of having pursued the life of a hermit’: The solitary life (anachoresis) is more prestigious than the communal life (coenobium), according to Cassian. Conl. praef. 4 tanto enim profundioris navigationis periculis fragilis ingenii cumba iactanda est, quantum a coenobiis anachoresis et ab actuali vita, quae in congregationibus exercetur, contemplatio dei, cui illi inaestimabiles viri semper intenti sunt, maior actuque sublimior est. Cf. Cassian. Inst. 5.36, 8.17, Conl. 18.3, Bened. Reg. 1: solitary life is psychologically demanding, it should be preceded by training in a monastery.

Sectatae, ‘pursued’, ‘searched for’, in Sidonius repeatedly of intensely pursuing a goal, e.g. 5.2.1 sectatae philosophiae, 6.1.4 sectandae nobis humilitatis, 7.2.5 pudicitiam ... sectari (see my comment ad loc.). Loyen rightly translates ‘assidûment suivie’, and Dalton’s paraphrase ‘austerities’ hits the mark.

The occurrence of the word anachoresis is confined to Cassianus’ Conlationes, and the glossaries (see Gualandri 1979: 146 n. 14, in her chapter on the ‘technical’ character of the Greek words in Sidonius). Anachoretes is more widely used, by Sidonius in Carm. 16.79.

For praerogativa with genitive, cf. 1.1.2 temporum suorum meritorumque praerogativam, ‘the well-earned right to the foremost place in his own age’ (Anderson), and 8.14.2 morum praerogativa ‘moral pre-eminence’ (Anderson). The word is used no fewer than 19 times in the correspondence, which is illustrative of the competitive society Sidonius lived in.

aurae ilico meas incondito tumultu circumstrepitas ignobilium pumilionum everberat conquenterum:

aurae ... meas ... murmur everberat, ‘the noise assails my ears’: The phrase is found as early as Pl. Am. 333 vox auris ... verberat. It recurs in the first century AD, e.g. Luc. 7.25 nullas tuba verberet aures, Tac. Ag. 41.4 sermonibus ... auris verberatas, and then as late as the fourth/fifth cent., e.g. Aus. Ep. 11.28 auresque sermo verberet, Amm. 14.11.4 cum haec ... eius aures everberarent, and Sidon. Ep. 1.3.2 ille ... oblatarorum aures rauci voce praeconis everberat. Cf. Aug. Mag. 7.20 ad auris verberationem. Also of light, e.g. V. Max. 7.6.2 oculos verberavit. Everberare is the slightly more energetic alternative.

circumstrepitas is proleptic: ‘(my ears) which consequently become surrounded’, = undique: Once more in the correspondence, of the sound of rustling leaves in autumn, 4.15.3 autumnus iam diem breviet et viatorum sollicitas aures foliis toto nemore labentibus crepulo fragore circumstrepit. This is a subtle sound for once, whereas in most cases, as in our phrase, it is disturbing or ribald, e.g. Tac. Hist. 2.44.1 multo adhuc die vallum ingressum clamore seditiosorum et fugacium circumstrepitur, Apul. Apol. 75 prorsus diebus ac noctibus ludibrio iuventutis ianua calcibus propulsata, fenestrae canticis circumstrepitae.

ignobilium pumilionum, ‘ignoble dwarfs’: Pumilio, ‘dwarf’, seems to have been considered a bookish, if autochthonous word, as distinct from the popular greccism nanus, νᾶνος, according to the discussion in Gel. 19.3.2 tum Fronto Apollinari: ‘fac me,’ inquit ‘oro, magister, ut sim certus, an recte supersederim “nanos” dicere parva nimis statura homines maluerimque ut sordidum ese verbun et barbarum credebam’, and 4 ‘docuit’ inquit ‘nos Apollinaris “nanos” verbun Graecum esse.’ Cf. Gel. 16.7.10 and gloss in Pomp. Gramm. 5.165.11 Keil pomilio dicitur nanus;

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cf. Pomp. Fest. de Verb. Sign. p. 184 l. 25 Lindsay: ‘nanus is a grecism’. There are no known other instances of the pejorative, figurative use of the word, as in our phrase (nor, for that matter, of nanus/nana).

‘hic qui nominatur’, inquiunt, ‘non episcopi, sed potius abbatis complet officium et intercedere magis pro animabus apud caelestem quam pro corporibus apud terrenum iudicem potest.’

complet officium, ‘fills the part’: The present tense is colloquial, instead of the future, which is required by logic: ‘he is going to fill the part, not of a bishop, but rather of an abbot’. Complere/implere officium, ‘to hold an office’, ‘fill a part’, ‘discharge a task’, is later idiom for classical officio/munere fungi. In Sidonius cf. 7.2.10 ecce parui et oboedientis officium garrulitate complevi, cf. 6.12.9 igitur si mandati officii munia satis videor implesses, ex legato nuntius ero, and 7.14.10 complevi ipse personam religiosi. Cf. e.g. Greg. Tur. Franc. 5.36 quo officio completo [scil. comitatus], ecclesiae sociatur, clericusque factus, ordinatur episcopus, (with gen.) Symm. Ep. 3.8 officia circa nos mutuae adfectionis implere, Ennod. Opusc. 4 p. 188 l. 21 interea dum velut obsignatum monachi in universis implet officium. The word officium can be left out, e.g. 4.9.3 nullo generi vivendi monachum complet, ‘in his new way of life he behaves like a monk’ (found in Sidonius alone), with implere since Vell. 2.95.3 implere censorem. See my comment in 7.2.10 officium … complevi.

pro animabus, ‘for the souls’: Animabus occurs here only in Sidonius. Animis occurs three times, from animus (Carm. 2.245, 7.224, Ep. 8.6.11). To distinguish related masculine and feminine nouns the ending -abus was used already in old Latin, e.g. filiis filaibusque. See LHS 1: 281. Animabus comes later. It occurs in Tertullian, e.g. Anim. 39 in sua corpora revertentibus animabus. In the Vetus Latina, Matth. 11.29, the Itala has animis, but the Afra animabus. The Vulgata has undoubtedly contributed to its popularity among Christian writers. It has animabus seventeen times, of which nine times in pro animabus. Note the title of Augustine’s De duaibus animabus.

For the coupling of animabus – corporibus cf. e.g. Claud. Mam. Anim. 1.23 nam sicut de corporibus ibi vel ibi esse propter localitatis necessitatem congrue dicitur, ita de animabus.

The ending -abus survived into medieval Latin, see Harrington 1997: 20.


sed quis non exacerbescat, cum videat sordidari virtutum sinceritatem criminatione vitiorum?

sed quis non exacerbescat, ‘really, who could help being exasperated’ (after Anderson): The function of sed is to mark the protest in the reaction, something like ‘but that is unbelievable!’ or ‘how disgusting!’ . In terms of linguistics, sed here marks a contrast on the ‘interactional’ level of discourse, which may involve objections, protests, corrections, etc., labelled ‘rebuttal’ by Kroon 1995: 214.

The only parallel to this phrase is Apul. Mag. 85.3 quis tam est mitis quin exacerbescat?, which might be its model.
Vincent of Beauvais, ca. 1190-1264, was inspired by this passage for a chapter in his De morali principis institutione, destined specifically for the king of France, Louis IX, and Thibaud, king of Navarre – a work he finished shortly before he died. It copies this phrase and the ensuing section 10 with some slight modifications (it is interesting to see how particularly the complex formulation of the final colometric pair (si eum ... arguitur) was obviously too much for Vincent, who simply wrote: si bene pascentem gulosus). The fragment is as follows, cap. 19.55 ff.: (XIX. DE HIS QVI DETRAHVNT PRINCIPIS BONITATE.) .... Hinc et Sydonius avernensis in Epistolari suo, libro V [sic]: ‘Quis,’ inquit, ‘non exacerbescat cum videat sordidari virtutem criminatione viciorum? Si eligimus humilem vocatur abiectus, si erectum superbus, si minus institutum propter impericiam creditur irridendus, si aliquatatem doctum propter scientiam clamatur inflatus, si severum tamquam crudelis horretur, si indulgentem facilitate culpatur, si simplicem despicitur ut brutus, si acri vitatur ut callidus, si diligentem supersticiosus decernitur, si remissum negligens iudicatur, si quietum ignavus, si abstinentem avarus, si bene pascentem gulosus.’ (CC CM 137, ed. R.J. Schneider, 1995, p. 96). This reference (one out of five from Sidonius’ correspondence) – hitherto unnoticed by commentators of Sidonius – is a further proof of his authority in the Middle Ages, not only as a stylist, but also on account of his moral lessons. (Vincent’s citation from Ep. 1.8.3, Mor. Princ. Inst. 24.51 f. non grandis alicui datur gloria in deteriorum collocacione, can be added to the comment ad loc., deteriorum collacione, in Köhler 1995: 265.)

sordidari, ‘to be (morally) soiled, sullied’: In this figurative sense not before 300 AD, e.g. Lact. Inst. 5.19.34 quanto satius est mentem potius eluere, quae malis cupiditatibus sordidatur. Cf. Sidon. Ep. 3.13.11 his conscientia quoque sordidatissima est.

virtutum sinceritatem, ‘moral integrity’, ‘singleness of heart’ (Dalton), or (gen. inv.) ‘honest virtues’: The phrase is only resumed in Beda in Luc. 4.12 sic nimirum simulatio cuius senel animum imberet tota virtutum sinceritate et veritate fraudabit. Cf. V. Max. 2.6.8 cum summa et animi et corporis sinceritate. For the theological implications of ἁπλότης, sinceritas, see Joseph Amstutz, Haplotes. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Studie zum jüdisch/christlichen Griechisch, Bonn, 1968. See also RGG 4: 650-54 ‘Tugenden’.

Notice the concluding chiasmus virtutum sinceritatem – criminatione vitiorum.

Section 10

Sections 10 and 11 are an excursus, after the reaction of the criticasters to the possible nomination of a monk in sect. 9, as to how this kind of reasoning works. The final sentence of section 11 returns to the point of departure – the monk: monasterialibus disciplinis –, and points forward to the next two themes with popularium and clericorum.

What Sidonius so eloquently and meticulously criticizes, is the rhetorical trick which is based on what Quintilian has called, after Aristotle, quaedam virtutibus ac vitiis vicinitas, ‘the affinity – in a way – between good and evil’. One can give a negative twist to positive qualities (that is what the opponents do here), or vice versa, embellish less nice ones. This second option is all right, Quintilian argues, but the first one the orator will avoid, except in the national interest, because – he says – an orator is a vir bonus! The passage reads as follows: Quint. Inst. 3.7.25 idem praepicit illud quoque, ... quia sit quaedam virtutibus ac vitiis vicinitas, utendum proxima derivatione verborum, ut pro temerario forte, pro prodigo liberalem, pro avaro parcum vocemus: quae eadem etiam contra valent. quod quidem orator, id est vir bonus, numquam faciet, nisi forte communi utilitate ducetur.
Savaron provides us with an interesting citation from Zeno of Verona (‘egregius est Zenonis Veronensis sermo de livore et invidia’, as he says) which contains a similar enumeration to the one Sidonius gives here. In comparison, the latter’s artful formulation stands out. Regrettably, the provenance of the citation is unknown. See Bellès 3: 56 n. 110.

si eligimus humilem, vocatur abiectus; si proferimus erectum, superbire censetur;

si: Every alternative in section 10 is introduced by si, followed by the first person plural ‘we/I’, eligimus and proferimus at the beginning, and producimus at the end. In between similar verbs should be understood. For another series of si-clauses – at a more brisk pace – cf. 3.13.3 f. si invitetur, excusans; si vitetur explorans; etc.

tvocatur, ‘he is called’: Note the string of synonyms for ‘to call’ and ‘to reject’ in this and the next section.

abiectus, ‘undistinguished’: E.g. Cic. Deiot. 30 vestram familiam abiectam et obscursam e tenebris in lucem evocavit. See Kaufmann 1995: 258 n. 810: ‘Ähnlich wie pauper in Ep. 3.9.2 und 4.7.2 bezeichnet abiectus ... den aufgrund seiner sozialen Stellung weitgehend einflußlosen Mann.’ Abiectus is on the pejorative side, ‘servile’, see Köhler 1995: 331 ad 1.11.16. Anderson’s ‘spiritless’ is beside the point. Cf. 3.9.2 gerulus epistularum humilis obscurus despicabilisque ... abiectus rusticus, peregrinus pauper.

erectum, ‘confident’, ‘bold’, cf. e.g. 8.6.11 (proud hounds hunting lamely) iacentibus animis pectoribus erectis, ‘their spirits low, their bearing bold’ (see note Anderson ad loc.).

si minus institutum, propter imperitiam creditur irridendus; si aliquatenus doctum, propter scientiam clamatur inflatus;

aliquatenus, ‘to a certain degree’, ‘more or less’, with adj, e.g. Sen. Nat. 7.27.2 quare omnes stellae inter se dissimilem habeant aliquatenus faciem.

clamatur = vocatur, ‘is named’: Already in Cic. Ac. frg. 20 Academicus ... ab eis ... insanus ... clamabitur. For Sidonius see Ep. 4.23.1 eum dignum abdicatione ... clamans. A late example is Cassiod. Var. 6.17 si quid minus dixerit, inimicus asseritur, redemptus clamatur. See TLL 3: 1253.74.

inflatus, ‘puffed up’, ‘conceited’: E.g. Cic. Tusc. 3.19 inflatus et tumens animis in vitio est. The MSS have inflatus MC: inflandus M*LNT. Although there is good authority for inflandus, the reading is unlikely to be correct. Vincent of Beauvais in his copy read inflatus (see earlier on sect. 9 sed quis non exacerbescat).

si severum, tamquam crudelis horretur; si indulgentem, facilitate culpatur;

tamquam, ‘as’ = (vel)ut: See my comment on 7.2.9 tamquam ignotum.

facilitate, ‘laxity’ (Anderson), ‘négligent’ (Loyen): Facilitas may have either a positive slant, ‘good nature’, ‘indulgence’, or a negative one, as here, ‘negligence’, ‘frivolity’. To give one example of each, cf. e.g. Cic. Mur. 66 si illius comitatem et facilitatem tuae gravitati severitatique asperseris, and Tac. Hist. 1.12 hiantes in magna fortuna amicorum cupiditates ipsa Galbae facilitas intendebat. Another example of the unfavourable meaning in Sidonius is Ep. 5.9.1 in
Constantino inconstantiam, in lovino facilitatem, in Gerontio perfidiam, singula in singulis ... crimina (Anderson: ‘pliability’).

si simplicem, despicitur ut brutus; si acrem, vitatur ut callidus;

simplicem ... brutus, ‘guileless ... stupid’ (Anderson), cf. e.g. Hier. *in Psalm.* 131 l. 71 (Christus) non invenit locum inter homines, ... *sed in praepe, inter iumenta et bruta animalia, et simplices quosque et innocentes,* and idem adv. Ruf. 3.14 l. 43 nec in tantum abutare simplicitate lectoris et sic omnes qui tua scripta lecturi sunt brutos putes ut etc. Simplicitas is a Christian virtue.

acrem ... callidus, ‘intelligent ... cunning’: For acer see my comment on 7.6.6 *acer animis* ‘acutely intelligent’. Anderson doubted whether acer could mean ‘clever’ of a person and printed calidus ‘hot-headed’, thereby destroying the contrast with the preceding dicolon. Shackleton Bailey 1982: 170 rightly defended calidus with a reference to TLL 1: 358.49 ff. For pejorative callidus, ‘crafty’, ‘cunning’, cf. e.g. Pl. Am. 268 *me malum esse oportet, callidum, astutum admodum.*

si diligentem, superstitionis decernitur; si remissum, negligens iudicatur;

diligentem ... superstitionis, ‘careful ... finicking’: Quintilian called the excess of diligens curiosus, ‘fussy’: Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.55 *ut a diligenti curiosus et religione superstitionis distat.*

superstitionis, ‘finicky’, ‘too scrupulous’: Out of twice superstitionis and three times superstitionio in Sidonius’ correspondence, only this instance is definitely not connected with religion. The connotation of ‘scrupulous’ is almost totally absent up till and including the second century AD, with the exception of Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.14 *parum superstitionis devinctumque illis legibus,* ‘not scrupulous enough and blindly adhering to those laws’. Only after that do we find ‘too scrupulous’, ‘overdone’, e.g. Hier. *Ep.* 52.12 *sint pura, casta, simplicia, moderata, non superstitionis ieiunia.* See Blaise s.v. ‘scrupuleux à l’excès’, ‘exagéré’.

si sollertem, cupidus; si quietum, pronuntiatur ignavus;

cupidus, ‘self-seeking’ (Anderson), ‘greedy’ (Loyen): In the correspondence we find both cupidus and cupiditas three times, mostly of avarice (except 8.3.5 *cupidum scientiae continentem pecuniae*).

ignavus, ‘lazy’: Cf. 7.14.10 *amas, ut comperi, quietos; ego et ignavos.*

si abstemium producimus, avarus accipitur; si eum qui prandendo pascat, edacitatis impetitur; si eum qui pascendo ieiunet, vanitatis arguitur.

Being abstemious is opposed to dining more or less lavishly. The second member of this paired opposition is paired itself (si ... pascat, si ... ieiunet). It was simplified by Vincent of Beauvais in his borrowing (see above on 10 *sed quis non exacerbescat*).

qui prandendo pascat ... qui pascendo ieiunet, ‘who receives people while enjoying a good meal himself ... who does not eat himself when receiving others’: For the defining subjunctives see KS 2: 296.
Pascere, ‘to receive’, ‘entertain’, ‘feed’, e.g. 4.9.1 mensa non minus pascens hospitem quam clientem, 8.12.7 quid multa? veni ut aut pascaris aut pascas. Cf. the epitaph of Alcimus Avitus l. 15 pascit ieiunus (MGH AA 6/2: 186). This type of host is the Christian ideal for the rich, to practise ascesis while feeding the needy, cf. e.g. Ep. 6.2.1 Eutropia matrona, quod ad nos spectat, singularis exempli, quae parsimonia et humanitate certantibus non minus se ieiuniis quam cibis pauperes pascit, ‘matron Eutropia is a shining example as far as I am concerned: frugality and kindness rival in her; she feeds herself with fasting no less than she feeds the poor with food’. Cf. Carm. 16.107 f. (addressing his friend, bishop Faustus, and praising his ascetism) vix coctos capture cibos abstemius aevum / ducis et insertis pinguis ieiunia psalmis, ‘you scarcely take cooked food, you live a life of self-denial and you make your fasts fat with streaks of psalms’. See also Salvian’s invective against those who fasted, not to help the poor, but to increase their legacy (Salv. Eccl. 4.30). For the abl. gerundii instead of a present participle, see LHS 2: 380 (already so in Livy and Vitruvius; the gerund increasingly supersedes the participle, and its use is widespread from the third century onward).

**edacitas impetitur**, ‘is charged with gluttony’: Probably archaic and colloquial at first (Pl. Per. 59, then in Cicero’s personal correspondence), edacitas, ‘voracity’, ‘gluttony’, is found regularly from the second century AD onward, when Christian moralists had a lot to say about it.

**Impetere**, ‘attack’, ‘assail’, is a rare word in the poetry of the silver age, in which it has its literal meaning. The figurative meaning, ‘blame’, ‘accuse’, is later Latin, with gen. criminis only Cassiod. Var. 4.23.3 criminis cuius impetuntur. Sidonius uses the verb once more, in a context which is at the same time literal and figurative, 3.13.10 quas domorum nequiverit machinis apertae simultatis impetere, cuniculis clandestinae proditionis impugnat, ‘if he fails to batter any families by the engines of open enmity, he will assail them with the mines of secret treachery’ (Anderson).

### Section 11

libertatem pro improbitate condemnant; verecundiam pro rusticate fastidiunt;

**libertatem ... improbitate**, ‘outspokenness ... effrontery’ (Anderson): In this section some of the key words of the code of conduct in Sidonius’ day are reviewed. Improbitas (five times in the correspondence) is the property of one who oversteps the boundaries of politeness towards someone else by approaching him uninvited or in an inopportune way, cogn. impudentia, arrogantia, cf. e.g. 5.3.1 obsequium alloquii impudentis iteramus. cuius improbitas vel hinc maxime dinoscitur, quod tacetis, ‘I send you once more the homage of a shameless letter. The effrontery of it is obvious from the very fact that you keep silent.’ Cf. 4.2.4 quod non das amico esurienti dabis improbo pulsatori, the shameless knocker at the door of Luke 11.5-10.

**condemnant**, ‘people condemn’: The verb forms in the main clause change from ‘he’ (the nominee) in section 10 to ‘they’ (the critics).

**verecundiam ... rusticate**, ‘reserve ... clumsiness’: Verecundia is another key concept in social intercourse: ‘respect’, ‘modesty’, ‘restraint’, cf. my comment on 7.2.1 oneras ... verecundiam meam, and 7.6.3 reatus verecundiam. The word appears her for the second time. It had been introduced in sect. 6 of the speaker himself: ‘embarrassment’, ‘caution’. The embarrassment
of a novice there, the reserve of – possibly – an arrivé here. For the opposite contumacia see 5.4.1 non … contumacia sed verecundia, ‘not arrogance but embarrassment’.

Rusticitas/rusticus is a negative concept in Sidonius: ‘boorishness’, ‘illiteracy’. See Kaufmann 1995: 221-68 ‘Gebildete und Ungebildete’. Amherdt 2004 highlights its going contrary to Sidonius’ political ideal; the rusticus is ‘un homme qui ne met pas à profit ses talents’ (p. 386).

That rusticitas and verecundia – in other authors – are not necessarily opposites, is apparent from such phrases as Sen. Con. 7.8.10 adulescentem verecundum natura et rustici pudoris, and Plin. Ep. 1.14.4 quae multum adhuc verecundiae, frugalitatis atque etiam rusticitatis antiquae retinet ac servat.

rigidos ob austeritatem non habent caros; blandi apud eos communione vilescent;

rigidos ... austeritatem, ‘strict … austerity’: For rigidos, ‘strict’, see my comment on 7.4.3 qui se ambientibus rigidum reddit. Austeritas, ‘severity’, ‘austerity’, one time only in Sidonius, occurs since the first century AD, e.g. Quint. Inst. 2.25.5 non austeritas eius [sc. magistri] tristis ... sit. The MSS waver between ob austeritatem LNT: ab austeritate MCFP.

blandi ... communione vilescent, ‘the kind are despised because of their affability’: For blandus, ‘kind’, my comment on 7.4.2 blanditias. Communio, ‘accessibility’, is the keyword of letter 4. See my comment on 7.4.1 sanctae communionis.

Vilescere, ‘to become cheap’, ‘lose its value’, four times in the correspondence, e.g. below in sect. 22, where it is said of Simplicius: non indiscreta familiaritate vilescens, ‘he does not make himself cheap by indiscriminate familiarity’ (Anderson). The verb occurs since the fourth century, Ambr. in Psalm. 118.31 p.413.1.22 (the pride of youth) tunc humilitas quasi vilescit, abiecta contemnitur. Cf. Ruric. Ep. 1.11 quia saepe per abundantiam pretiosa vilescunt, and Sidonius himself, Ep. 2.10.4 sic nostra, quantula est cumque, tubis circumfusa potioribus stipula vilescit, ‘my modest flute sinks into insignificance when compared to superior trumpets’.

ac sic, utrolibet genere vivatur, semper hic tamen bonarum partium mores pungentibus linguis maledicorum veluti bicipitibus hamis inuncabuntur.

Reaches the conclusion: people of standing can try for all they are worth, in whichever direction, malevolent critics will always grind them down.

hic, ‘in this situation’: Viz. when a nominee for the bishopric is proposed. Anderson in his note complains: ‘That troublesome Sidonian “hic” again!’ He translates – correctly I think –: ‘on such an occasion’. Loyen strikes a metaphysical note: ‘ici-bas’. Others do not even translate it, and Bellès’ ‘aquí’ is not particularly helpful.

bonarum partium mores, ‘the conduct of the good people’: Compare the bonorum raritas and the malis moribus in sect. 8: the good are always in the minority, threatened by the overwhelming odds of the bad. It is no coincidence that bonae partes often means ‘ruling class’, as in 2.4.3 bonarum partium viros, ‘men belonging to the upper class’, and 2.13.5 partium certe bonarum pars magna, ‘an absolutely indispensable member of the leading class’, cf. 3.11.1 cuncti nostrates idemque summate viri optimarum ... exactissimarumque partium. The ruling class
is also morally good. Class privilege and moral superiority coincide in Roman black-and-white society with its unbridgeable divide between classes.

**pungentibus linguis maledicorum**, ‘the pricking tongues of the scandalmongers’: The insinuating words, *linguae*, of the critics leave the hooks of suspicion in their victims. Their words are like stabbing weapons, or, in this strange but forceful metaphor, their tongues are stabbing weapons. *Pungens lingua* is encountered only in Greg. M. Moral. 22.24 *si neglexi exhibere quod foveat, iuste in querelam prosiliens eorum lingua me pungat.* *Pungere* of something which sticks in one’s mind, e.g. Pl. Trin. 1000 *meum ille pectus pungit aculeus, quid illi negoti fuerit ante aedis meas*, Cic. S. Rosc. 6 *hunc sibi ex animo scrupulum qui se dies noctesque stimulat ac pungit ut evellatis postulat. Aculei*, ‘needles’, are said to be left by a forceful speaker in his audience: V. Max. 8.9.ext.2 (by Pericles) *inque animis eorum, qui illum audierant, quasi aculeos quosdam relinqui*, Plin. Ep. 1.20.18 *relinquere ... aculeum in audientium animis is ... potest, qui non pungit, sed infigit*.

*Lingua maledicorum* and *lingua maledica* are common expressions: V. Max. 8.9.ext.2 *vetereis comoediae maledica lingua*, and in patristic literature, e.g. Aug. Ep. 78.7 *inter linguas maledicorum*.

Cf. Amherdt 2001: 468 on 4.22.6 *qui ... fixi* about the biting teeth of jealousy.

**veluti bicipitibus hamis inuncabuntur**, ‘will, as it where, be caught by the two-barbed hooks’: For *veluti* see my comment on 7.3.1 *sicuti iniungis*.

The hooks are two-barbed because, thanks to their perverse reasoning, the bad are always right: if their victim is ‘friendly’ they call him ‘weak’, if he is ‘stern’ ‘overbearing’, etc. This figurative use of *biceps*, ‘ambiguous’, is a later development, e.g. Apul. Fl. 18 *biceps illud argumentum*, ‘that dilemma’, and in the phrase *biceps laqueus*, e.g. Aug. in Psalm. 57.11 *talem bicipitem laqueum quasi capiendo Domino posuerunt* (whatever choice the Lord would make, he would be trapped).

For *hamus* cf. the figurative use of *hamatus* in 4.3.2 *propter hamata syllogismorum puncta.* *Inuncare*, which for Sidonius is a hapax, is before him also very rare. We find it first in Lucilius (second century BC), then in Col. 7.3 (*lana* tanto *magis obnoxia est rubis, quibus velut hamis inuncata pascentium tergoribus avellitur*) (the danger of thorn bushes to sheep, whose wool gets ripped off by the thorns), then in Apul. Apol. 30.9 *instrumenta ... hamis inuncanda, ‘tools ... to be caught on anglers’ hooks’, who also has Fl. 2 *aquila ... cernens ... unde ungubibus inuncet vel agnum incuriosum vel leporem meticulosum*. Finally there is Paul. Nol. Carm. 23.269. The verb therefore seems to be a literary speciality, reintroduced from every day (anglers’?) language into prose by Apuleius. The phrase *hamis inuncabuntur* will stem directly from him. Cf. Claud. Stil. 2 (= 22.138) *illa voluptatum multos innexuit hamis*, and Sidon. Ep. 9.9.15 *syllogismis tuae propositionis uncatis volubilem tergiversantum linguam inhamantibus*, ‘the barbed syllogism of your argument will hook the glib tongues of the casuists’ (Anderson). In the latter example a hook is driven *through* a tongue instead of the tongues being like hooks themselves in the current phrase. For this variation technique, see General Introduction, sect. 6.2 *Style*.
inter haec monasterialibus disciplinis aegre subditur vel popularium cervicositas vel licentia clericorum

**inter haec**, ‘in these circumstances’: Viz. the inveterate mechanism of negativism in (church) politics, which is averse from authority, and *a fortiori* from its stern and demanding version, monkhood. So back to the monks (*si quempiam nominavero monachorum*).

**monasterialibus disciplinis aegre subditur**, ‘is averse from monastic discipline’: The collocation *monasteriales disciplinae* is found since the fifth century: Gelas. *Ep*. 9.2 (PL 59 : 49a) *ut si quis ... monasterialibus disciplinis eruditus ad clericale munus accedat, imprimis eius vita praeteritis acta temporibus inquiratur*, Ps. Petr. Chrys. Serm. 107 1.15 *quamadmodum igitur sanctitatis regulae disciplinis monasterialibus inbutus exercet?* It is not for everyone to be able to endure monastic discipline: Cassian. *Coen*. 4.3.2 *scint enim eum sub monasterii disciplina diuturnum esse non posse*. Hence, the canonical rule *Decret*. Grat. 2.20.3.4 *monasterialibus disciplinis nullus subiciatur invitus*, ‘nobody must be subjected to monastic discipline against his will’.

**popularium cervicositas**, ‘the obstinacy of the laymen’: *Populares*, ‘laymen’, as in 4.11.4 *clericos opere, sermone populares ... consolabatur*, 7.8.4 *disponentur sacerdotibus, popularibus manifestabuntur*, where see my comment.

*Cervicositas* is a hapax in absoluto, see the list in Gualandri 1979: 180. The noun turns up again in the twelfth century in Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione* 4.2 *protervia et cervicositas Romanorum*. Sidonius derives it from *cervicosus*, which is popular in ecclesiastical Latin for the people’s revolt against the Law of God, especially of the Jews, since Ambrosiast. *in Tit.* 1.14 (*Iudaei*) *post tanta signa prodigiorum et legem editam inreverentes diffidentesque et cervicosi inventi sunt*. Ultimately its parentage is Hebrew expressiveness, e.g. *Ex*. 32.9 *cerno quod populus iste durae cervicis sit*, ‘I see that this people is hardnecked’ (my translation). Cf. Gualandri 1979: 109-24. Sidonius will have coined the phrase *popularium cervicositas* after this biblical topos. He applies the same image in 4.22.6 *proterere ... cervices vituperorum seu supercurrere*, ‘to trample upon or run over the necks of criticasters’.

**licentia clericorum**, ‘the unruliness of the clerics’: The expression is without precedent. What made the clerics so typically unruly? For the answer we should probably look at the notorious difficulty to keep the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, which is apparent from the canons of the councils of the time. The council of Agde (506 AD) is a good illustration (Conc. Gall. 1: 189 ff.). Its intention is clear right from the start: canon 2 contumaces (cf. Sidonius’ *licentia*) *vero clerici, prout dignitatis ordo permiserit, ab episcopis corrigantur*, ‘let unruly clerics be corrected by the bishops – taking into account their rank’. Canon 4: whoever keeps money he gets from his parents for himself, must be excluded from church. Canon 5: he who steals from the church, must communicate elsewhere. Canon 8: a cleric who abandons his office, must be excommunicated. Canon 10: clerics may meet no women on a regular basis, except their family. Canon 20: clerics who let their hair grow, will be shorn by force; on the decency of their clothes a careful watch will be kept. Canon 38: clerics may not travel outside the diocese without permission of the bishop (the same goes for monks, who – if words don’t help – will get a sound beating). Canon 39: clerics are forbidden to go to weddings and other parties with singing and dancing. Apparently there was plenty of unruliness, but never was it so pointedly formulated as here by Sidonius.
With Anderson (‘the clergy in their unruliness’) and Loyen (‘l’indocilité des clercs’), I think this is the right translation. The alternative: ‘authority’, ‘power’, as in Cypr. Ep. 3.3.4 sacerdotali licentia, would not tally with the context.

The final words of the chapter on monks (sect. 9-11) are deftly moulded into a chiastic parallelism, popularium cervicositas – licentia clericorum. Note that the subject is thus postposed for a stylistic reason.

Section 12

si clericum dixero, sequentes aemulantur, derogant antecedentes.

The problem with clerics – a minority of them, as the speaker hastens to add – is their clinging to seniority. They expect to be promoted irrespective of their merits, without regard for the interest of the church, but solely on account of their length of service, even if they will soon be old and decrepit.

Not the monks, not the officials hereafter, but the clerics must endure Sidonius’ criticism, probably because the toughest resistance to the licence he has, to nominate his own candidate, is found in those quarters (sect. 3 presbyterorum sane paucis angulatim fringultientibus). After all, the presbyters are natural candidates for the bishopric.

sequentes ... antecedentes, ‘juniors ... seniors’: The opposition is about rank coupled with age, as is apparent from the context (diuturnitatem, aetatem). For sequi and antecedere in the rat race for power, cf. 1.6.4 cum eos, quos esset indignum si vestigia nostra sequerentur, videris dolens antecessisse, ‘when you realize with remorse that men in whose case it would have been a scandal if they came after you, instead have overtaken you’ (the addressee will regret to have to give precedence to younger or poorer people who are better equipped for politics than he is). Cf. Cic. Inv. 2.66 aetate aut sapientia aut honore aut aliqua dignitate antecedentes reveremur et colimus.

Seniority is important in a hierarchical society. I give two examples which fall within the scope of book 7. One, in the circle of the family. In this address, Simplicius himself will be complimented soon by the speaker on his having given precedence to his father and father-in-law in becoming bishops at an earlier occasion (sect. 20 honorari parentum ... dignitate).

Two, in a broader social context. The trader/letter-bearer Amantius infallibly chose the right conduct to become accepted in Massilian society: grandaevos obsequiis ... obligare (7.2.4). For the overriding importance of seniority in the episcopacy, see Mathisen 1990.

Yet, when it comes to having the right man in the right place, seniority alone is not enough: 8.7.1 ubi etiam illorum praerogativa, qui contra indolem iuniorum sola occasione praecedentis aetatis intumescebant?, ‘where is the privileged position of those who, merely on the score of seniority, proudly sought to suppress the spirit of the younger generation?’ (Anderson). And, to return to Simplicius, because he was working for a good cause – the building of a church –, he had every right to resist pressure from the older generation (below sect. 21 iuniores v. tenacitas senum).

aemulantur ... derogant, ‘are jealous of him ... belittle him’: Derogare alqm. or absolute, ‘to detract from’, ‘disparage’, is documented in TLL 5/1: 640.14 ff. Mossberg 1934: 70 analyses Sidonius in particular. Cf. e.g. Ep. 1.3.2 qui transit derogantes, ‘when a man has risen over the
heads of backbiters’ (Anderson), and compare Rufin. Orig. in Num. 7.1 derogantes et ... maliloquos.

For a somewhat similar thought cf. 3.8.2 aut suspicere praeteritos (‘men of the past’) aut despicere praesentes.

nam ita ex his pauci, quod reliquorum pace sit dictum, solam clericatus diuturnitatem pro meritis autumant calculandam, ut nos in antistite consecrando non utilitatem velint eligere sed aetatem, solam clericatus diuturnitatem pro meritis, ‘only length of service, instead of merits’.

autumant, ‘are of the opinion’: The verb autumare, ‘to say’ and ‘to think’, mainly, but not exclusively, occurs in Comedy and then in later, archaizing, authors. In Sidonius we have Carn. 15.88 deos sic autumat ortos, and Ep. 5.4.1 nisi praeter aequum autumno, plus Ep. 4.2.4 uti ego autumno (author Claudianus Mamertus; see Amherdt 2001: 105 f. ad loc.). See Engelbrecht 1886: 443, Mannheimer 1975: 155 s.v. autumno, and Gualandri 1979: 173 n. 98.


utilitatem, ‘suitability’: This connotation is different from the two other instances in Sidonius, Ep. 3.5.1 and 4.22.6 (‘utility’, ‘interest’). But cf. 2.8.1 utilis mater, ‘a good mother’, 4.9.1 servi utiles, ‘capable slaves’. We find it from time to time since Ov. Am. 2.10.28 utilis et forti corpore mane fui, (after a night of sexual intercourse) ‘I was fresh and feeling strong in the morning’. Cf. Greg. Tur. Franc. 2.12 novi … utilitatem tuam, quod sis valde strinuus, ‘I know your worth, that you are very brave’, and ibid. 4.3 utilem atque habentem virum, ‘a distinguished and rich husband’.

tamquam diu potius quam bene vivere debeat accipi ad summum sacerdotium adipiscendum pro omnium gratiarum privilegio decoramento lenocinamento.

This sentence is an elaboration on solam ... diuturnitatem pro meritis ... calculandam, to drive home the bizarre consequences of neglecting merit. Diuturnitas is extended to diu potius quam bene vivere, pro meritis to no less than pro ... lenocinamento.

diu potius quam bene vivere, ‘living long rather than living well’: Not quite adequately, Geisler in his appendix of loci similes, p. 370, followed by Otto 1890: 376 # 1925 vivere 1, refers to Pl. Trin. 65 ut diu vivitur, bene vivitur, ‘je länger man lebt, desto besser’ (or, with the MSS, ut bene vivitur, diu vivitur, ‘plus l’on est heureux, plus l’on vit longtemps’ (transl. Ernout in Budé edition)). The additional reference to Seneca’s ethics, provided by Bellès 3: 57 n. 113, is more to the point: Sen. Ep. 77.20 vita non quam diu, sed quam bene acta sit, refert, ‘it is important, not how long, but how well a life has been lived’. Cf. also Sen. Dial. 10.7.10 non est itaque quod quemquam propter canos aut rugas putes diu vivisse: non ille diu vixit, sed diu fuit. For a variant in Sidonius, cf. 3.13.3 (about a parasite) laudabilem proferens non de bene vivente sed de bene pascente sententiam (living well opposed to eating well).

pro omnium gratiarum privilegio decoramento lenocinamento, ‘instead of the prestige, the beauty and the appeal of all the qualities required’: Gratiae means ‘gifts’, ‘good qualities’. For this later use of the plural cf. 8.13.2 hasce tot gratias … transcendere, ‘to surpass all these
qualities’. Both Sidonian instances can be added to those provided by TLL 6/2: 2224.3 ff. ‘pluralis A2 qualitas (amoenitas, iucunditas, caritas) rerum, de diversis commodis’.

To pious ears in the audience omnium gratiarum may have had the overtones of the Christian usage, gratiae meaning ‘gifts of God’, ‘gifts of grace’, ‘charismata’, cf. e.g. Aug. Gest. Pelag. 14.32 non enim auferimus gratiarum diversitatem, sed dicimus donare deum ei qui fuerit dignus accipere omnes gratias, sicut Paulo apostolo donavit (against Pelagius: all charismata for everybody, or varying according to the individual), cf. ibid. 35.63 omnes virtutes et gratias (notice the synonym virtutes) and Hier. Ep. 78.14 aliud est enim unam et aliud omnes gratias possidere. See the discussion below, on 14 diversorum charismatum proprietate.

For a discussion of the triple structure privilegio decoramento lenocinamento, see above on sect. 6 usu institutione facundia. Lenocinamento is one syllable longer than the two preceding words; see my comment on sect. 22 below.


Decoramentum is very rare. It is attested twice in Sidonius (also Ep. 5.10.2 praetervolantia corporis decoramenta) and in Tert. Cult. fem. 2.12 maritalibus et matronalibus decoramentis.

Lenocinamentum, ‘appeal’, ‘charm’, is a hapax not mentioned by Gualandri 1979. Sidonius has no doubt used it to conform with decoramentum. The usual form is lenocinium (not in Sidonius).

et ita quipiam, in ministrando segnes, in obloquendo celeres, in tractatibus otiosi, in seditionibus occupati,

These and the following qualifications come in doubly contrastive pairs: ministrando-obloquendo plus segnes-celeres, tractatibus-seditionibus plus otiosi-occupati, caritate-factione plus infirmi-robusti. The concluding pair has parallel plus contrast: conservatione-assertione plus stabiles-nutantes. This contrived equilibrium points to redaction for publication.

in ministrando segnes, ‘slow in their ministry’ (Anderson): Ministrire, Greek λειτουργεῖν, ‘to accomplish the functions of a priest’, e.g. Hebr. 10.11 et omnis quidem sacerdos praesto est quotidiem ministram. See Blaise s.v. 4. Cf. ministerium, ‘ecclesiastical office’, in 7.6.7 minorum ordinum ministeria, and my comment.

in obloquendo celeres, ‘object’, ‘argue’: Obloqui, ‘to know best’, is opposed to ministrire, ‘to do one’s duty’. See above sect. 8 obloquiorum Scyllas, with comment.

in tractatibus otiosi, ‘slow in discussions, negotiations’, which might lead to unity. Cf. 5.7.4 in tractatibus coeleae, ‘in discussions snails’ (Anderson). For tractatus see 7.6.6 tractatuum consiliorumque successum, and 7.8.1 e tractatu tuo, with my notes. Also below sect. 18 and 23. Anderson’s ‘preaching’ and Loyen’s ‘sermons’ are beside the point here.
in seditionibus occupati, ‘engaged in sowing discord’: Internal discord in the past had led to dangerous situations for the commonwealth, as every Roman knew, and (in) seditionibus occupatus recurs several times in this context, e.g. Hor. Carm. 3.6.13 f paene occupatum seditionibus / delevit urbem Dacus et Aethiops. Seditio, ‘strife’, lit. ‘getting apart’, is opposed to tractatus, ‘working together’.

in caritate infirmi, in factione robusti, in aemulationum conservacione stabiles, in sententiarum assertione nutantes,

in caritate infirmi, ‘unsteady in love’: For caritas = amicitia see my comment on 7.4.4 ut non habeat vestra caritas finem. It is opposed to factio ‘partisanship (implying unfair practices)’ (definition OLD s.v. 4b).

in aemulation ... nutantes, ‘stable in maintaining rivalries, wavering in sticking to opinions’: This fourth colometric pair has an extra noun for broader impact. It is a variant of the preceding pair, in chiastic order: caritate becomes sententiarum assertione, factione becomes aemulationum conservazione.

Conservatio, a common word, but only here in Sidonius, cf. e.g. Ennod. Ep. 1.13 ubi sunt illa sanctae conscientiae tuae in conservacione amoris (‘in maintaining friendly relations’) veneranda penetralia? Conservare next to aemulatio is almost a contradictio in terminis: conservare usually goes with notions like ordo (Cic. de Orat. 2.354) and dignitas (id. Planc. 10).

Assertio + gen., ‘confirmation’, ‘assertion’, is a later development, cf. e.g. Aug. Ep. 57.3 non ipsam dico sententiam sed eius assertionem, id. Ep. 143.10 assertores eius sententiae, ‘supporters of this opinion’. The message is that these people are opportunistic, they change opinions according to their varying alliances. The point is missed both by Anderson and Loyen, who translate ‘expression of opinion’. However, these people have no problem expressing their opinions – in fact, they are good at expressing them, but the opinions are no good.

nituntur regere ecclesiam, quos iam regi necesse erit per senectam

regere ... regi, ‘control ... be controlled’: They aspire to uphold the church, but will need to be upheld themselves soon because of old age. This paronomasia (Hagendahl class 3; see my comment on 7.1.6 et accidisse prius) gives an unexpected turn to the well known wordplay on regere-regi, e.g. Sen. Dial. 4.15.4 nemo autem regere potest nisi qui et regi (i.e. who cannot obey, is not fit to command); see Otto 1890: 295 f. # 1514 s.v. regere.

necesse erit LNTM*: necesse est MCFP.

To pious listeners – perhaps to Sidonius himself – the words in this section also have a Paulinian ring. The attitude of the clerics rebuked by Sidonius is in fact the exact opposite of what the apostle admonished his congregations to do, e.g. Rom. 13.13 ambulemus ... non in contentione et aemulatione, ‘let us behave with decency ... no quarrels or jealousies’, Eph. 4.2 cum omni humilitate et mansuetudine cum patientia subportantes invicem in caritate.

Section 13

Now follows a short digression which confronts the audience with the inevitable fact that one, and only one, can become the new bishop. There is so much ambition, and often justified, but consensus is clearly impossible.
sed nec diutius placet propter paucorum ambitus multorum notare personas:

**sed**, ‘enough’: The speaker interrupts himself.

**ambitus**, ‘intrigues’, ‘machinations’: Cf. e.g., out of ten occurrences in the correspondence, *Ep* 1.2.9 *ubiquest litigiosus fremit ambitus*. The plural is exceptional, and separately listed by TLL 1: 1861.28 ‘nom. plur.’ [sic].

**multorum notare personas**, ‘to stigmatize many people’: The circumlocution *multorum ... personas (= multos)* is dictated by the equilibrium with *paucorum ambitus*. For the phrase cf. Greg. M. Moral. 20.35 *quam multorum personas in se significet ostendit*, (about Job) ‘he showed how his example represented the situation of many people’.

hoc solum astruo, quod, cum nullum proferam nuncupatim, ille confitetur repulsam, qui profitetur offensam.

The gist of the reasoning here is: ‘I’ve signalled a tendency towards complacency and jealousy among your clerics. I mention no names. If anyone of them shows himself offended all the same, he rules himself out as a candidate (because not taking offence is a core quality for candidates, as I have just argued).’ See also Anderson’s excellent note ad loc.

Geisler 1887: 370, following Savaron, indicates a possible imitation of Cic. Man. 37 *vestra admurmuratio facit, Quirites, ut agnoscere videamini qui haec fecerint; ego autem nomine neminem; quare irasci mihi nemo poterit nisi qui ante de se voluerit confiteri*.

**astruo**, ‘I affirm’, ‘contend’: The meaning of the verb underwent a development from ‘to add’ in earlier authors to the turning point in Pliny the Younger, e.g. Plin. *Ep* 3.2.5 *magni aestimo dignitati eius aliquid adstruere*, ‘I deem it important to contribute [or: to state] something to [c.q. about] his dignity’. Later, especially Christian, authors employ the verb in the latter meaning. Thus Sidonius in all of the five occurrences in his correspondence. Cf. below sect. 24 *constanter adstruxerim*. See TLL 2: 979.6.

**repulsam ... offensam**, ‘(electoral) defeat ... insult’: Both common nouns, which recur in Sidonius too, but the collocation is unique. Note an equal number of syllables, and the paronomasia *confitetur – profitetur* (Hagendahl class 2).

sane id liberius dico, de multitudine circumstantium multos episcopales esse, sed totos episcopos esse non posse;

**sane id liberius dico**, ‘listen, to put it very plainly’: *Sane* intensifies the situation, as if to say: ‘I understand that some of you are touchy. Sorry, they disqualify themselves. Once and for all (*sane*), I am going to be very clear about this.’ See Risselada 1994: 334-36 ‘representational *sane*’. See below sect. 24 *sane*.

Loyen translates the phrase in this way: ‘en toute franchise’. Anderson’s diffident ‘rather frankly’ seems to read an element of excuse into the comparative: ‘Sorry, perhaps I am too outspoken, but …’. I do not think that is the right tone in this case. Sidonius is very confident.

The collocation is in general use, e.g. Hor. Serm. 1.4.103 ff liberius si / dixerō quid, si forte iocosius, hoc mihi iuris / cum venia dabis.

episocopales, ‘of episcopal quality’, ‘eligible as a bishop’: Used in this way (‘papabili’) only here – a creative consequence of the play with episcopos. The adjective also in 7.6.10 episcopali ordinatione.

totos, ‘all’ = omnes: See my comment on 7.9.3 dum publice totos singuli cavent. There, as here, it is followed by omnes.

Is an association intended with Matth. 20. 16 multi sunt enim vocati, pauci autem electi?

et, cum singuli diversorum charismatum proprietate potiantur, sufficere omnes sibi, omnibus neminem.

diversorum charismatum proprietate, ‘the possession of different gifts’: Charisma, ‘gift’, is among the Christian ‘technical’ graecisms in Sidonius (here only), see Gualandri 1979: 146 n. 15. Charisma are defined in ODCC as ‘the blessings, spiritual and temporal, bestowed on every Christian for the due fulfilment of his vocation. In a narrower sense, the word is used esp. for the supernatural graces which individual Christians need to perform the specific tasks incumbent on them in promoting the spiritual advancement of their fellows’. The apostle Paul enumerates them in 1 Cor. 12. Right from the beginning, the emphasis has been on the diversity of spiritual gifts which contribute to the one ‘body’ of the community and Christ. Cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 12.4 divisiones vero gratiarum sunt, idem autem Spiritus, ‘there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit’, Cypr. Testim. 3.32 sed unusquisque proprium habet charisma a deo, alius sic, alius autem sic, Hier. in Eph. 2 c. 511 l. 34 iuxta apostolum diversa esse charismata, alium habere prophetiam, alium genera linguarum, etc. See above on sect. 12 omnium gratiarum.

proprietate potiantur, ‘possess the ownership’: A somewhat laborious paraphrase; cf. 7.11.1 contemplatione potiatur, ‘enjoys the vision’. For potiri in the sense of frui, uti, see OLD s.v. 4 about experiences, states, etc. See also 7.11.1 contemplatione potiatur, and my comment.

Proprietias, eight times in the correspondence, is found since Seneca and Suetonius. The collocation with potiri is found only here and Sidon. Ep. 3.1.4 (Gothi) modo invidiosi huius anguli etiam desolata proprietate potiatur – there with full force of ‘laying hands on’.

sufficere omnes sibi, omnibus neminem, ‘all satisfy the conditions in their own eyes, nobody in the eyes of all’: For this use of the so-called dativus iudicantis, see LHS 2: 96. This meaning of sibi sufficere must be distinguished from ‘to be self-sufficient’, e.g. Sen. Ep. 9.3 sed tamen et amicum habere vult [viz. sapiens] et vicinum et contubernalem, quamvis sibi ipse sufficiat.

Section 14

The third and last group of possible candidates is introduced, the laymen who, as public servants, made their mark on diplomacy and the imperial chancellery as well as on town life. Until a few months ago, Sidonius was one of these militares viri. From this group the new bishop will appear to have been recruited. That is why Sidonius – differently from what he
had done in the case of the monks and the clergymen – mentions the objections not against the group, but against himself.

si militarem dixero forte personam, protinus in haec verba consurgitur:  
si dixero ... forte, “suppose I nominate”: Forte reinforces si for exactly the alternative which will be chosen.

militarem ... personam, ‘a politician’, ‘a member of the government service’: Cf. 7.2.3 militia, with my note. Depending on the context militaris in other cases may mean ‘military’, as it does in fact in the rest of Sidonius, e.g. 3.8.2 nobilium virorum militariumque, ‘men of noble birth and military experience’ (Anderson). Militari vir is in use since Liv. 10.24.4 for ‘serviceman’. For the paraphrase with persona ‘personality’, cf. 7.4.2 pontificali ... personae, with my note. There, more than here, the idea of ‘position’, ‘dignity’, is central. Cf. persona + gen., e.g. Ambr. in Psalm. 118 litt. 16 c. 13 personam divitis non recepi, ‘a rich man I have not welcomed’.

in haec verba consurgit, ‘all will rise to their feet saying’ (Anderson): Cf. 4.6.1 consurgere in quaerimonias, ‘to burst into complaints’. Since Phaed. 5.7.28 in plausus consurrectum est. See also Plin. Pan. 54.2 in venerationem tui theatra ipsa consurgent.

'Sidonius ad clericatum quia de saeculari professione translatus est, ideo sibi assumere metropolitanum de religiosa congregatione dissimulat;

de saeculari professione translatus est, ‘was transferred from a secular profession’: For professio see 7.5.1 utrisque professionis ordinibus, 7.8.3 licet neccum nostrae professionis, and 7.9.6 professionis huiusce pondus, with notes. It returns in 7.9.16 vel actu vel professione.

Transferre, ‘to bring (a person, etc.) over (to a new course of action, situation, etc.)’ (OLD 7): E.g. Cic. Sul. 77 vos nunc P. Sullam, iudices, ... ex hoc amicorum numero .. in impiorum partem ... transferetis?, (refl.) de Orat. 2.85 ut se ... ad altit studium transferat, admonebo. Because I know of no passive-reflexive use (transferri = ‘to switch to’?), I prefer Anderson’s translation ‘was transferred’ to Loyen’s ‘est passé’. Sidonius adheres to the version that he had been nominated not altogether of his own free will. See above sect. 6, comment on impactum est.

sibi assumere, ‘to take for himself’: Because, as bishop of Clermont, Sidonius will have the metropolitan of Bourges as his own metropolitan.

de religiosa congregacione, ‘the ranks of the clergy’ (Anderson): The collocation is slightly unusual, probably brought about by the preceding de saeculari professione. There is only one formal parallel, which however denotes the religious community, ‘God’s people’, viz. Ambr. in Psalm. 118: 11 dicit ergo congregatio religiosa vel sancta anima. Cf. Ex. 16.2 et murmuravit omnis congregatio filiorum Israhel. Congregatio elsewhere in Sidonius denotes a monastic community: 7.17.4 ut Abbas sit frater Auxanius supra congregationem, and 9.3.4 de palaestra congregationis heremitidis.

dissimulat, ‘is reluctant to’, ‘refuses’: Blaise s.v.: ‘(avec inf.) négliger de, ne pas vouloir’. TLL 5/1: 1483.32 ‘i.q. neglegere, neglegentem esse, non respicere’, might have been more to the point for this late use of the verb. It is quite usual in Sidonius, cf. 2.12.1 quod invitanti tibi in piscationem comes venire dissimulo, and 5.3.1, 8.8.2, 9.9.6, 9.11.7. Cf. e.g. Symm. Ep. 9.25 facio officium meum, si quando te cultu salutationis inpertio, nec dissimulo referre grates, Aug. Conf. 5.19
non dissimulavi eundem hospitem meum reprimere, ‘I did not refrain from withholding this same guest of mine’.

natalibus turget, dignitatum fastigatur insignibus, contemnit pauperes Christi.’

As Stevens 1933: 2 remarked: ‘Detractors are seldom entirely astray about a man’s character.’ Of course, birth and career were of crucial importance to Sidonius personally, as one can gather, for instance, from his letter of congratulation to his wife on the promotion of Ecdicius and the longed-for promotion of his own line, 5.16.4.

natalibus turget, ‘prides himself on his lineage’: The collocation only here. Turgere occurs three times in the correspondence, but only here is it ‘to boast’. Cf. 7.4.3 viderit, qua conscientiae dote turgescat, with comment. The application is to follow soon, of his mirror-image, Simplicius, sect. 17 si natalibus servanda reverentia est.

Note how the verb shifts from the final position (turget), to the middle one (fastigatur; intervening in hyperbaton), to the front (contemnit).

dignitatum fastigatur insignibus, ‘is aloof because of his honours list’: For fastigare, see also 3.6.3 qui statum celsitudinis tuae ... titulorum parilitate fastigat (‘crows’). As Giannotti 2000: 154 ad 3.6.3 remarks, Sidonius must have had a soft spot for the word and its cognates. Cf. Carm. 2.4 f diademate crinem / fastigatus, ‘with a diadem surmounting your hair’ (additional wordplay there on fastu, ‘pride’, and fastis, ‘list of consuls’), and the adjective fastigatissimus, ‘highest’, ‘eminent’, which occurs three times. Compare the noun fastigium in e.g. 2.3.1 qualiter honorum tuorum crescat communione fastigium, and 7.4.2 quod sacerdotii fastigium non frangitis comitate. For this later development (after ca. 400 AD) of fastigare in a metaphorical way, see TLL 6/1: 325.31 ff. ‘in altum ducere’.

The lectio facilior fatigatur in TC (s s.l. add. T¹) shows how antiquated the word must have seemed to the medieval scribes.

contemnit pauperes Christi, ‘he looks down on the poor of Christ’: In the Old Testament the poor, with other vulnerable groups, had been the object of special care, e.g. in the words of Ambr. in Psalm. 118 litt. 16 c. 13 hoc est ergo feci iudicium et iustitiam: in iudicio non contempsi pauperem, non oppressi viduam, personam divitis non recepi, in omnibus operibus iustitiam reservavi. Consequently, a central theme in the preaching of Jesus had been poverty v. wealth. He had blessed the poor, for they were heirs to the kingdom of God: Luc. 6.20 beati pauperes, quia vestrum est regnum Dei, cf. Matth. 5. In Paul’s theology the dialectic of Christ’s poverty, viz. his becoming man and renouncing the privileges of his divine nature, is the origin of salvation for the faithful, the source of their ‘wealth’, cf. 2 Cor. 8.9 quoniam propter vos egenus factus est [sc. Iesus Christus], cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divate esseis.

The phrase pauperes Christi is first found in Ambr. Sermo c. Aux. (= Ep. 75a) 33 habeo aerarios, aerarii mei pauperes Christi sunt, hunc novi congregare thesaurum, ‘I have treasures. My treasures are the poor of Christ. This treasure I know how to collect’ (in the struggle for church property with the Arians the community itself, the ‘poor’, is the real capital). I even suppose the phrase has been coined by him as a rallying cry in his struggle against both the Arians and the wealthy courtiers who preferred to continue the established social order. This struggle between the rich and the poor is the explicit theme of his De Nabuthae, which in its first section says: non unus Nabuthae pauper occisus est; cottidie Nabuthae sternitur, cottidie
pauper occiditur, and in the second: nescit natura divites, quae omnes pauperes generat. Christian ‘communism’ will tip the scales to the advantage of Catholic orthodoxy and vouchsafe the coherence of the Christian community. It is the same sensibility as seen e.g. in the Hymn to Lawrence by Prudentius which thematizes poverty at length: the governor claims the riches of the church, Lawrence brings him the poor instead (Prud. Perist. 2.45-328). (For a more reserved attitude towards Ambrose’s presumed siding with the poor, see McLynn 1994: 243-51.)

Occurrences of *pauperes Christi* range from Augustine to Venantius Fortunatus, through Prosper of Aquitaine, Hilarius of Arles, Leo the Great, and specially Cassiodorus and Caesarius of Arles. The great majority of the examples are from homilies. The habitat of the phrase is obviously the gathering of the community. In our case, too, it is the decisive argument between the community and the bishop.

A comprehensive article on poverty and its biblical and theological implications is LThK 1: 1005 ff. s.v. Armut. Brown 2002 argues that in the years 300-600, as the horizon widened from the town to the world, traditional charity to poor fellow-believers in the local Jewish and Christian communities came to be regarded as a public service on the scale of the empire. The traditional euergetès had not taken special notice of the poor; the bishop as representative of the oecumenical church did: ‘… the Christian bishop was held by contemporaries to owe his position in no small part to his role as the guardian of the poor’ (p. 1). See also Harries 1994: 217.

**Section 15**

*quapropter inpraesentiarum solvam quam non tam bonorum caritati quam maledicorum suspicioni debeo fidelum.*

‘That is why now I am going to give you my word, which I am obliged to give, not so much because of the support of the good people, but because of the suspicion of the slanderers.’

*solvam ... fidelum*, ‘I am going to keep my word’, in this context almost ‘I am going to give a guarantee’ (thus Anderson and Loyen). See TLL 6/1: 669.77 s.v. *fides* with examples.

*caritati*, ‘warm feelings’, ‘support’: *Amicitia* under the aspect of sympathy. See my comment on 7.4.4 *ut non habeat vestra caritas finem*.

*vivit spiritus sanctus, omnipotens deus noster, qui Petri voce damnavit in Simone mago cur opinaretur gratiam benedictionis pretio sese posse mercari,*

*vivit spiritus sanctus*, ‘as the Holy Spirit lives’: The reading *vivit* of all the manuscripts has been disputed by some editors: *iuuet* Wilamowitz *novit* Leo *ut vivit* coni. in adn. Anderson, but it is undoubtedly correct, as was seen by Löfstedt 1956, 2: 266 n. 3 and 474 f. It is a Hebraism for swearing an oath which spread in later Latin from biblical language. Its typical form is *vivit ... quia/quoniam* e.g. 1 Sam. 29.6 *vivit Dominus, quia rectus es tu*, ‘as the Lord lives, you are an upright man’. Cf. e.g. Greg. Tur. *Vit. patr. 17.3 vivit Dominus, Deus meus, quia ... numquam te derelinquam*. In Sidonius’ literary style it is obvious that the *quia*-clause can be replaced by an acc. cum inf.: *here me ... nec pecuniae favere nec gratiae, sed ... virium ... competentissimum credidisse*, ‘as the Holy Spirit lives: I do not side with money or influence,
but have come to the conclusion that this man is the most competent’. Because of this Löfstedt omitted the brackets, printed a colon after *fidem*, and a comma after *mercari*. I follow his proposal.

The Holy Spirit is invoked, because the following episode from the life of the apostle Peter concerns the bestowing of the Spirit through the laying on of the apostles’ hands. It is told in *Act. 8.14-24*. Peter and John visited the converts in Samaria, who had been baptized, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. When one Simon, who ‘had swept the Samaritans off their feet with his magical arts’ (v. 9), ‘saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands’ (v. 18), he asked them for this power to be his also, and offered money for it. Peter sternly rebuked him: ‘God’s gift is not for sale’, *Petrus autem dixit ad eum: pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem, quoniam donum Dei existimasti pecunia possideri* (v. 19 f).

For simony, see my comment on 7.5.2 *pretio oblato*. This biblical *exemplum* is one of the *historica pondera* which Sidonius had said he had not used in the speech when he sent it to Perpetuus (7.9.2). See the Introduction to this address, section 2 *Audience*.

*omnipotens deus noster*, ‘our almighty God’: As the Arians did not regard the Holy Ghost as being God in the unique sense in which God the Father is God, and He alone (LThK 1: 981 ff. s.v. ‘Arius’, ‘Arianismus’); Khaled Anatolios, ‘Discourse on Trinity’, in CHC 2: 431-459; cf. CHC 2: 57 for Gothic Christianity), this is a statement of unadulterated Catholicism in the face of the Arians present in the audience. Sidonius does this one more time, below in section 25 *in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*, where see my comment. In 381 AD the council of Constantinople had defined the divinity of the Holy Ghost. For eastern Christendom this meant the end of the Trinitarian controversy, but in the West final acceptance did not come about till the sixth-seventh centuries, due to the influx of Germanic peoples with an Arian confession.

Cf. in the same vein 9.9.14 *ineffabilem dei patris ... cum sancti spiritus aeternitate sapientiam*.

*Simone mago*, ‘in the case of Simon the magician’: This is an example of *in ‘relativum et limitativum, ‘in the case of*, cf. 7.5.3 *in habitatione ... in religione*, with my comment. Cf. a slightly different connotation in 7.1.4 *in illo ardore*, ‘in spite of that heat’.

*cur opinaretur*, ‘because he thought’ or ‘(the fact) that he thought’: For this use of *cur* cf. 1.1.2 *cur ... imitaretur*, q.v. Köhler 1995: 108 f.: ‘*Cur* mit folgendem Konjunktiv steht bei Sidonius, wie bei anderen späten Autoren, öfter für kausales *cum* oder faktisches *quod*, vgl. LHS II, S. 541. Allen Stellen gemeinsam ist die Wiedergabe eines subjektiven Grundes als einer fremden Meinung, die Sidonius nicht unbedingt billigt.’

*gratiam benedictionis*, ‘the grace of benediction’: The benediction comes from God’s grace, and is at the same time *gratis*, not to be had *pretio*, which follows. The phrase is found since Tert. *Idol. 55*.

*me in eo, quem vobis opportunum censui, nec pecuniae favere nec gratiae*,

*pecuniae favere nec gratiae*, ‘do not side with money or influence’: The collocation with these specific nouns is coined by Sidonius. Cf. other nouns in e.g. Cic. *Lig. 8 cuius ego industriae gloriaeque favo ... propter propinquam cognitionem*. Notice the shift in meaning of *gratia*, when compared with the preceding *gratiam benedictionis*. 
sed statu satis superque trutinato personae temporis, provinciae civitatis, virum, cuius in consequentibus raptim vita replicabitur, competentissimum credidisse.

**status satis superque trutinato**, ‘after having weighed more than sufficiently the nature of …’: For status see my comment on 7.1.3 statu urbis exinanito.

*Satis superque*, which is found since Cat. *Carm.* 7.1 f. *quaeis quot mihi basiationes / tuae Lesbia sint status satis superque*, does not occur elsewhere in Sidonius, but cf. 5.15.1 *satis abunde probavi*.

*Trutinare*, ‘to weigh’, is found once, the noun *trutina*, ‘scales’, two times in Sidonius. After an isolated occurrence in the first century AD, Pers. 3.82 *exporrecto trutinantur verba labello*, the verb gained some modest popularity not earlier than the fourth century, in esp. Symmachus, Ambrose and Jerome. The metaphor of the scales of justice is clearly present in 8.7.2 *ad trutinam iudicii principalis*, ‘the scales of the emperor’s judgement’. Cf. Symm. *Ep.* 3.74 *multa in te virtutum natura congesssit; quae si quis trutinet pensiere iudicio*, etc. Sidonius is about to pronounce his judgement, the choice of precisely this verb creates the right atmosphere.

*personae temporis, provinciae civitatis*, ‘his person, the times, this province (Aquitanica Prima), this town (Bourges)’: For *tempus/tempora*, ‘current circumstances’, cf. 1.1.1 *prout eas causa, persona, tempus elicuit*, 4.5.2 *de temporum statu* (‘the present state of affairs’, Anderson) *iam nihil ut prius consulo*, and 7.11.1 *si ratio temporum regionumque pateretur*. Cf. Cic. *Cat.* 1.2 *o tempora, o mores*.

*in consequentibus*, ‘in the words that follow’ (Anderson): Cf. 1.9.7 *carmen ipsum loquax in consequentibus charta deportat*, ‘this garrulous sheet carries you the poem itself added at the tail-end’ (Anderson). This meaning occurs since the first quarter of the fourth century AD, Lact. *Ep.* fragm. 2 (CSEL 2/1 p.156.1.13) *in consequentibus deinceps variaverunt* (the writers of comedy ‘further on’ in their plays applied a variety of metres). Hil. *Trin.* 7.33, cited by Köhler 1995: 277, is another early example. Cf. also Ambr. *Fid.* 4.3 *et in consequentibus addidit: qui se tradidit* etc..

*raptim*, ‘quickly’, is inserted to keep the attention of the audience: ‘I won’t be long’.

*vita replicabitur*, ‘(whose) life will be recalled’: See 7.7.2 *si prisca replicarentur*, and my comment.

*competentissimum*, ‘most competent’: *Competens* is late, since Apul. *Mund.* 30 p. 358. See Amherdt 2001: 291 ad 4.11.4 *competenti praeconio*.

**Section 16**

The dénouement, and the *propositio* of the speech. The delivery of this section requires special attention. One can easily imagine some stage directions in Sidonius’ copy. At first sight, a complex period like this one is not suitable for this emotional moment suprême. But on closer inspection, it is carefully articulated. The name of Simplicius is uttered straightaway, without more ado. After it comes a calculated pause, as the speaker looks the audience straight in the eyes, long enough to let the first impression settle, but short enough to prevent people from ventilating their opinions; then going on tentatively: ‘until now yours, but presently ours’, he underlines the choice and its consequences; then, after a short pause, giving the public its due, to anticipate protests: ‘with your – and God’s – permission’. So: ‘he
will be one of us bishops’. Not satisfied with that, to make sure that his conception will dominate the public’s mind, the speaker adds: ‘He is the right man in the right place, is a decent chap, has a lot of experience and is acceptable to state and church alike.’ Well, who could reasonably protest against such a candidate? The proof of it is yet to be given, but the first blow is half the battle.

benedictus Simplicius, hactenus vestri iamque abhinc nostri, modo per vos deus annuat, habendus ordinis comes,

benedictus Simplicius, ‘the blessed Simplicius’: About Simplicius see my notes on 7.8.2 Simplicium, spectabilem virum, and below on sections 17 parentes ipsius and 20 tam socero quam patre postpositis.

The function of benedictus is debated. Some opt for ‘blessed be’ (Loyen, Bellès), others take it to be a title, ‘the blessed Simplicius’ (Anderson; compare Dalton’s ‘on whom a blessing already rests’). The latter solution seems to me the right one. By using the title benedictus for the layman Simplicius, Sidonius anticipates his new vocation. Benedictus is a title for bishops, cf. e.g. Tert. Pud. 13 bonus pastor et benedictus papa (still alive), Paul. Nol. Ep. 4.1 munere benedicti et venerabilis nobis episcopi nostri Alypii (who has just brought Paulinus books from Augustine), Greg. Tur. Franc. 3.16 benedictus Tetradius episcopus (dead). So O’Brien 1930: 165 ‘lower clergy exclusively’ is not right (cf. e.g. Paul. Nol. Ep. 26.1 diaconus tibi frater benedictus, Greg. Tur. Franc. 5.7 benedictus Senoch presbiter).

hactenus vestri iamque abhinc nostri ... habendus ordinis comes, ‘until now belonging to your ranks, but from now on to be considered one of us’: In this context nostri ordinis is the clerical order, vestri ordinis is the collective of the (lay) townspeople (see my comment on 7.5.1 utriusque professionis ordinibus). Martindale (PLRE 2: 1015), however, more specifically takes vestri ordinis as the town council: ‘Native of Bourges, of whose ordo he was a member’. This does not seem plausible to me; rather did the senatorial honorati gradually replace the town council (see Liebeschuetz 2001: 127). See below on ordinis comes.

Abhinc, ‘from now on’, cf. e.g. Pac. Trag. 12 se ... ad ludos iam inde abhinc exerceant. The word can also mean ‘ago (back from the present)’. Sidonius applies both: 4.4.1 cunque abhinc retro iuvenes eramus (past), 4.16.2 quin potius ipse iure abhinc uberi praeconio non carebis (future), 9.9.3 venisti, et quidem talis, qualem abhinc longo iamdiu tempore desidera nostra praestolabantur (past).

Ordinis comes, ‘member of the class’, is possibly a little word play on titles like comes primi ordinis, ‘senior official’, but in itself has no technical meaning here. See PLRE 2: 1015 Simplicius 9: ‘He ranked as a vir spectabilis by 470 ... and possibly bore the title “comes”, although the use of the word in SA Ep. 7.9.16 ... is not technical.’ Heinzelmann 1976: 105 n. 42 expressly mentions Simplicius as an example of the ordination of a bishop who had been a comes, which – he says – was no exception in the Gaul of the fifth and sixth centuries (he mentions Arbogastes and others). However that may be, real proof cannot be found for the title in the current phrase.

The collocation ordinis comes is special, because comes + gen. usually means ‘participant in an activity, in emotions etc.’, e.g. Cic. Prov. 25 me ... comitem esse sententiae vestrae, not in a group.

modo per vos deus annuat, ‘if God grants it through your assent’ (Anderson): See also 1.4.3 modo me actionibus iustis deus annuens et sospitem praestet et reducem, 5.9.4 si deus annuit. The
same verb also in pagan usage, e.g. Ov. Met. 8.352 precibus deus adnuit. A formulation like this, with words like per vos, does not exist elsewhere.

ita utrique parti vel actu vel professione respondet, ut et respublica in eo quod admiretur et ecclesia possit invenire quod diligat.

vel actu vel professione, ‘by his practice and his profession’: Much the same as ‘in principle and in practice’, cf. Salv. Gub. 3.10. 51 hic est enim, inquis, eorum [traders, officials, soldiers] actus quae et professio, ac per hoc nihil mirum est si agunt quod profitentur (their deeds are in conformity with their professions: stealing, deceiving, pillaging). For actus cf. 8.14.1 etsi necdum vester vultus aspectus, tamen actus inspectus est, ‘although I have not yet seen your face, I have seen your conduct’, and three further occurrences in the correspondence, but all of them plural, ‘deeds’.

For professio see above, sect. 14. Cf. Aug. Conf. 3.11. 60 quia vita a professione discordans abrogat inlustris tituli honorem per indignorum actuum vilitatem, ‘because his life is at variance with his profession, he does not deserve the title illustris due to the baseness of his despicable deeds’.

respondet, ‘suits’, ‘harmonizes with’: cf. e.g. Plin. Ep. (Tra.) 10.58.6 philosophum ... professioni suae etiam moribus respondentem. In Sidonius cf. 2.2.12 respondentes poculis potiones, ‘the drinks that are suited to the cups’ (Anderson), 4.4.3 si respondet iudicio meo, ‘if he answers to my opinion of him’ (Anderson). Cf. below 24 respondere illam feminam sacerdotis utriusque familiae.

in eo ... invenire quod diligat, ‘find in him something to love’: Cf. Cass. Var. 10.14 l. 17 (letter by king Theodahad to the senate) habetis principem, qui pietatis studio optet in vobis invenire quod diligat.

Section 17

si natalibus servanda reverentia est, quia et hos non omissendos evangelistae monstravit

natalibus, ‘birth’, ‘descent’: Discussing ‘the turning inward of the Gallic aristocracy, as the Roman power became more distant and ineffectual’, when ‘“senatorial” families competed for power and influence in their small communities’, Harries 1994: 180 f. mentions the emphasis on birth: ‘Admirers of bishops with prestigious families were not slow to advertise the fact, while claiming to reject its importance.’ A nice example of this ambivalent attitude is Paul. Nol. Ep. 29.7, where Paulinus, after having praised Melania for the fact that she had piously renounced every bit of her consular birth, starts afresh with the words: opinor autem et hoc ad cumulum divinae gratiae pertinere, quod sanctitatem laudandum de laudibus generis praedicare ordior.

I have argued in the introduction that, according to rhetorical precepts, the laudatio always had to start with a laus generis; if one did not wish to follow this rule an explanation was necessary, as appears from Jerome’s rigorous refusal in his epitaph on Nepotianus to boast about his ancestry, Hier. Ep. 60.8 praecepta sunt rhetorum ut maiores eius qui laudandum est et eorum altius gesta repetantur ... ego carnis bona quae semper et ipse contemptis in animae laudibus non requiram, nec me iactabo de genere, id est de alienis bonis: boasting about one’s ancestry is boasting about other people’s merit; praise should not be about the ‘flesh’ but about the soul.
A different course is to avow the rhetorical precepts, but to state that the real motivation for Christians to include a genealogy is the gospel of Luke. See Paul. Nol. Ep. 29.7 non a rhetorici institutis magis quam de evangelicis exemplis. However, Petrus Chrysologus (fifth cent.), felt no difficulty in simply presenting the rhetorical rules as normative for the evangelist (Petr. Chrys. Serm. 89.3). For both see below.

From Sidon. Ep. 4.25.2 (about one of the candidates for the episcopal elections in Chalon-sur-Saône) quorum hic antiquam natalium praerogativam reliqua destitutus morum dote ructabat, we gather that aristocratic birth is one thing, but you have to live up to it. Sidonius’ ideal of the Christian aristocrat is the conversus who nevertheless manages to continue living a privileged life: 4.9.3 novoque genere vivendi monachum complet non sub palliolo sed sub paludamento, ‘as a new way of life he behaves like a monk, not wearing a habit but a general’s cloak’. See General Introduction, sect. 3.3.2 Social conventions and Christianity.

servanda reverentia, ‘one has to pay respect (to)’: The phrase servare reverentiam + dat., ‘to pay respect to’, spread on a modest scale in later Latin, cf. e.g. Ambrosiast. (Ps. Aug.?) Quaest. test. 118.3 lob, qui ... creatori reverentiam pia devotione servavit, ‘Job who piously honoured his Creator’, Alc. Avit. Ep. 2.46 p.75 l.7 dum parentibus ... futilem reverentiam servant. Sidonius elsewhere has the usual construction, without dative, ‘to keep up respect’, 7.6.2 servata ceterorum tam reverentia quam pace pontificum, cf. 9.11.5 adde, quia etiam in hoc ... reverentiae tuae meritorumque ratio servata est.

quia et nos non omittendos evangelista monstravit plerique codd.: quia hos non omittendos [sic] et evangelista monstravit C. C transposes et, inadvertently probably.

(nam Lucas laudationem Iohannis aggressus praestantissimum computavit, quod de sacerdotali stirpe veniebat, et nobilitatem vitae praedicaturus prius tamen extulit familiae dignitatem)

Lucas: Luc. 1.5 runs, in the chapter on the birth of John the Baptist: fuit in diebus Herodis regis Iudaeae sacerdos quidam nomine Zaccharias de vice Abia et uxor illi de filiabus Aaron et nomen eius Elisabeth. Both on his father’s and his mother’s side, John had a pedigree of priests. The same evangelical authority is cited in the passages we have just mentioned, by Paul. Nol. Ep. 29.7 sed hunc ordinem [viz. beginning a laudatio with the person’s ancestry] non a rhetorici institutis magis quam de evangelicis exemplis usurpari doctissimus Lucas mihi testis est, qui baptistae beati meritum ab originis claritate detexit, and by Petr. Chrys. Serm. 89.3 hinc est quod evangelista, ut extollat Iohannis gloriam Zachariae patris, Elizabeth matris genus dicit, etc. Näf 1995: 163 n. 121 also compares Paul. Nol. Carm. 6.27-32, and in n. 122 for ‘Priesterstammbäume’ refers to Sidon. Ep. 2.4.1, 4.13.4, 8.14. See General Introduction, ch. 6.2 Intertextuality.

praestantissimum computavit, ‘counted it a signal distinction’ (Anderson): Praestantissimus is already classical, among others in Cicero, and often used of persons, ‘eminent’, ‘distinguished’. Thus Sidonius has e.g. 1.7.6 Auxanium, praestantissimum virum, 2.4.1 avo ... praestantissimo sacerdote. The neuter is found in 8.13.2 praeterea his hoc praestantissimum bonis fama superaggerat.

Computare + double acc., ‘regard as’, ‘think’, is later usage; see my comment on 7.7.2 populos computare.
parentes ipsius aut cathedris aut tribunalibus praesederunt.

**parentes ipsius**, ‘his ancestors’: We know only of his father, probably called Eulodius (also: Eulogius), for whom see below in sect. 20 tam socero quam patre postpositis. Bishop Eulodius had died (7.5.1 summo viudata pontifice) and left the vacancy now to be filled by his son. The bishoprics, increasingly claimed by senatorial families, tended to become family assets, cf. e.g. 4.13.4 sacerdotis pater filiusque pontificis. See further my comment on 7.8.2 Simplicium, spectabilem virum.

**aut cathedris aut tribunalibus praesederunt**, ‘presided over dioceses or courts of law’: Cathedra of the office of a bishop as in sections 2 and 24. Cathedris praesederunt, lit. ‘presided over episcopal offices’, is a little zeugmatic, influenced by tribunalibus; one expects something like the common phrase Cypr. Ep. 69.3.1 ecclesiae praesidere. To be the son of a bishop is an advantage, cf. 4.13.4 sacerdotis pater filiusque pontificis, and its context. For tribunalibus praesederunt, cf. 8.6.5 cum pater meus praefectus praetorio Gallicanis tribunalibus praesideret.

The reader who has read letter 2, recognizes the motif of ancestry in the lowly Amantius and the distinguished Simplicius: 7.2.3 in clericali potius quam in Palatino decursa comitatu. See the Introduction to the current address, section 4 Laudatio.

**in lustris in utraque conversazione prosapia aut episcopis floruit aut praefectis:**


**prosapia**, ‘lineage’, ‘family’, is an archaic, and for a long time, exotic noun. Its distribution is: Plautus twice, Cato once, Sallust once, Suetonius once, Apuleius eight times, Ammianus five times, Christian authors since Tertullian, often in Ennodius. See Mannheimer 1975: 171 s.v. prosapia. Sidonius uses it three times, in his correspondence only: 5.16.3 ampliatos prosapiae tuae titulos, and 8.7.3 licet hactenus e prosapia industri computaret. Quintilian discouraged its use because of its antiquated character: Quint. Inst. 1.6.40 nec utique ab ultimis et iam oblitteratis repetita temporibus, qualia sunt ‘topper’ et ‘antegerio’ et ‘exanclare’ et ‘prosapia’ et Saliorum carmina vix sacerdotibus suis satis intellecta.

**floruit** LMTCP: claruit P²F. Florere + abl. ‘to excel in’, ‘to have an abundance of’, TLL 6/1: 918.61 ff. ‘familiaribus sim.’, e.g. Cic. Phil. 9.4 (familia) poste viris fortissimis floruit.

**praefectis**, ‘prefects’: PLRE 2: 418 Eulodius, referring to this passage: ‘The family had numbered praetorian prefects among its ancestors and was therefore senatorial’.

ita semper huiusce maioribus aut humanum aut divinum dictare ius usui fuit.

**aut humanum aut divinum dictare ius**, ‘administer either human or divine justice’: For humanum and divinum defining ius, cf. e.g. Liv. 1.18.1 (Numa) consultissimus vir ... omnis divini atque humani iuris. See TLL 6/3.3085.36 ff.

*Dictare ius* is an exception, for the phrase is always *dictare iura*, ‘to prescribe the laws’, ‘lay down the conditions’, in prose as well as in poetry, cf. e.g. Sil. 6.693 dictantes iura Latinos, Aug. Serm. 52.9 recito, inquam, Paulum dictantem pacis iura, non litis. In Sidonius Carm. 5.562 qui dictat modo iura Getis. Perhaps rhythm and/or sound dictated the preference for *ius* here.
But cf. *ius dicere*, ‘to administer justice’, e.g. Cic. *Att*. 5.15.1 *quippe ius Laodiceae me dicere, cum Romae A. Plotius dicat!*

**usui fuit**, ‘has been the custom’ (not: ‘was useful’): For the final dative with *esse* superseding the predicative nominative, see Löfstedt 1956, 1: 194-99 and LHS 2: 99 f. with my comments on 7.2.3 *impedimentum* and 7.8.2 *praepedimento*. Incidentally, neither scholar discusses *usui*. For Sidonius we have 1.4.3 *ne adhuc pueris usui foret, ... reiciebatur*, ‘Daß dies schon bei den noch Jungen in Gebrauch kommen solle, wurde ... stets zurückgewiesen’ (Köhler 1995: 53, without a remark), 6.6.2 *est enim tibi nimis usui*, ‘it is quite habitual for you’, 8.10.1 *esse tibi usui pariter et cordi litteras granditer gaudeo*, ‘I rejoice greatly that literary pursuits are both profitable and congenial to you’ (Anderson), but probably better: ‘... that you practice literature and like it’. Parallel to these occurrences, the correspondence has instances of *usui esse* meaning ‘to be useful’, like e.g. 1.5.2 *mihi ... publicus cursus usui fuit*, ‘I used the public post service’, and 4.2.1 *quae ... usui mihi esse possent*, ‘which might be of use to me’.

**Section 18**

**si vero personam suam tractatu consiliosiore pensemus, invenimus eam tenere istic inter spectabiles principem locum**

**personam suam**, ‘his personality’: This is the transition from his ancestors to Simplicius’ own person. For *suam = eius* see my comment on 7.6.6 *pectori suo*.

**tractatu consiliosiore**, ‘with more than careful consideration’: For *tractatus* see above on sect. 12 *in tractatibus otiosi*.

*Consiliosus* is also found in 1.1.1 *sicuti es in his quae deliberabuntur consiliosissimus*, ‘for you are a most competent advisor in the matters about to be discussed’ (Anderson). The adjective is a neologism of the elder Cato (*fragm. inc.* 42 Jordan), according to Gel. 4.9.12 ‘disciplinosus’, ‘consiliosus’, ‘victoriosus’, *quaes M. Cato ita affiguravit*. It recurs in *Front. Ep.* 2.1.21 *cum multa eiusmodi consiliosa* (*instructive*) *exempla in historiis et in orationibus lectitares*. See Van den Hout 1999: 303 f. ad 128.5, ‘fruitful of wise suggestion’. This scholar on p. 618 f. ad 272,7 ranges it with the traces which have been brought forward as proof of the fact that Sidonius had read Fronto’s letters, and which – according to him – lack all conclusive force. For this problem cf. 7.9.3 *angulatim fringultientibus*, with my comment. See also Mannheimer 1975: 26 (‘Als typisch für den altlateinischen Prosastil Catos kann auch die Verwendung von langen Wörtern gelten, denen eine gewisse Schwere anhaftet’) and 72 (Her remark that Fronto borrowed the word from Cato, because he talks about Cato not long after, is unfounded: Cato is cited there as an authority on military matters, not on language.). After this, *consiliosus* vanishes from our sight, to re-emerge in Sidonius’ twelfth century admirer, John of Salisbury, who uses it no fewer than four times, e.g. *Policraticus* 1 prol. *nichil ergo consiliosius est captatoribus gloriae quam litteratorum et scribentium maxime gratiam promereri*.

Anderson’s guess *trutina* to replace *tractatu* (note 1 a.l.) seems to me unnecessary, because *tractatu* makes excellent sense, on condition that one realizes that it is used with its later meaning ‘thought’, ‘consideration’. As to *consiliosiore*, he takes it to mean ‘more prudent’, viz. than the urging of his family distinctions. Quite the contrary, Sidonius thinks it only natural to mention any glorious ancestry he can lay his hands on. The comparative here means ‘even
more careful than usual’, almost ‘very careful’ (see above on 13 sane id liberius dico), cf. LHS 2: 162.

**pensemus**, ‘weigh’, ‘consider’: In the correspondence also in 8.4.3 meminisse nostra post mortem non opuscula sed opera pensanda, ‘remember that after our death not our works but our deeds will be judged’. There is also pensitare: 4.14.4 proinde si futura magni pensitas, scribe clerico, si praesentia, scribe collegae.

**istic**, ‘here’: In Bourges. For *iste = hic* in later Latin, see my comment on 7.1.6 populus iste.

**inter spectabiles principem locum**, ‘the first place among the spectabiles’: For the title spectabilis see my note on 7.8.2 Simplicium, spectabilem virum. The reading principem is subject to some doubt. The manuscripts are divided as follows: principem LN: principes N\^1MTCF. Spectabiles principes, however, is not supported by any other author, whereas the play on first – second (the spectabiles are senators of the second rank) is typically Sidonian, e.g. 7.12.4 qui primus fuerit in secunda [sc. mensa] (the ‘first guest at the second table’ is less important than the last one at the first).

**sed dicitis viro Eucherium et Pannychium inlustres haberi superiores:**

viro ... haberi superiores, ‘are held to rank higher than this man’: Viro (referring to Simplicius) is dative, cf. 1.9.1 quod habet huic eminenti scientiae conscientiam superiorem, ‘that he has a conscience which surpasses his brilliant erudition’ (Anderson). Cf. also 7.12.4 prior ... ei, and 7.14.8 sicut inferior est caro vitae, sic vita rationi. See Engelbrecht 1898: 301.

The MSS waver: viro LN: viros N\^1T (ros s.l. add. N\^1): vero C: iure Mommsen (item Mohr et Anderson): spectabili viro Wilamowitz: isti viro in adn. coni. Anderson. As the evidence for viro is strong, and there are no cogent arguments to read viros, I read viro. Modern editors have either followed LMN viro: Luetjohann Loyen Bellès, or adopted Mommsen’s iure: Mohr Anderson.

Mossberg 1934: 49 f. has made an interesting case for viros, thus reading viros Eucherium et Pannychium inlustres, ‘the viri illustres E. and P.’. The title is either viri inlustris or inlustris vir; it occurs several times in Sidonius (1.11.13 vir inlustris Gratianensis, etc.). In addition, he argues, a hyperbaton noun-adjective (or possessive pronoun) enclosing (two) names is possible, cf. 7.6.9 taceo vestros Crocum Simpliciumque collegas. LHS 2: 691 showed themselves convinced by Mossberg, while advocating further research on the hyperbaton in nominal groups (which I support warmly). Shackleton Bailey 1982: 170 f. admits that Mossberg may well have been right to advocate viros, but correctly opposes Mossberg’s other argument, viz. that a noun (viro) instead of a pronoun (ei) is unidiomatic in this kind of phrase, with several proofs of the contrary from book 7 alone: below sect. 22 vir est namque ..., 7.13.2 deus bone, quae viro censura cum venustate ..., and 7.17.1 cum ... quid viro vellet lacrimis indicibus ostenderet.

As a result, his reading is eventually also viro. I think that Mossberg’s reading must be rejected on account of these parallels for vir(o) as well as the fact that vir inlustris, as a title, seems never to occur in hyperbaton – in contrast with cases like 5.2.1 librum ... inlustrem.

(The same holds true for vir clarissimus and vir spectabilis.)

**Eucherius, vir illustri** (not the bishop, Eucherius of Lyon), probably from the Auvergne, will later be complimented by Sidonius in a letter (*Ep*. 3.8, from 472/3 AD Loyen, 471/474 AD Martindale) on his military actions, which regrettably had not met with official recognition. The letter suggests that these actions had taken place somehow in relation to the devastating
activities of a *natio foederatorum*. Was it in the defence of Clermont? Or against the Burgundians? Whatever the case, Eucherius was among those men ‘who show fighting qualities which surpass both our hopes and our opponents’ calculations’ (Anderson), *supra vel spem nostrae vel opinionem partis adversae* (sect. 2). He was executed by count Victorius, governor of the Auvergne for the Visigothic king, before 479/80 AD (Greg. Tur. *Franc.* 2.20). Mathisen 1993: 103 supposes a causal relation with his failure to become a bishop, which left him without ‘life insurance’. See Stroheker 1948: 168 # 121, Loyen 2: 223 n. 26, PLRE 2: 406 *Eucherius* 4, Kaufmann 1995: 300 # 35.

**Pannychius**, *vir illustris*, probably from the Auvergne, and also among Sidonius’ correspondents. In *Ep*. 5.13 (474 AD Strohker, Oct./Nov. 474 AD Loyen), he is warned by Sidonius of the arrival of Seronatus, the *vicarius septem provinciarum*, who advocated a policy of support for the Visigoths (see 7.7.2 *Seronatum barbaris provincias propinantem*, and my comment). Perhaps he held an office at the time of the letter, cf. *contra lites iurgiosorum, si quae moventur, pactio[nibus] consule, contra tributa securitatibus*, ‘proceed against any possible lawsuits of the quarrelsome with agreements, against tributes with receipts’ (5.13.4); Mathisen thinks this is the office of *comes civitatis* in Bourges. See Stroheker 1948: 198 # 276, Loyen 2: 238 n. 40, PLRE 2: 829 (cf. Mathisen 1982: 380), Kaufmann 1995: 328 # 75.

Notice how Sidonius, judging by the letters just cited, remained in cordial contact with these men, although in Bourges he passed them them over for nomination.

*quod hactenus eos esto putatos, sed praesentem iam modo ad causam illi ex canone non requiruntur, qui ambo ad secundas nuptias transierunt.*

**hactenus ... sed ... iam modo ... non**, ‘till now ... but ... at this very moment ... not any longer’; *iam modo*, an emphatic ‘now’, ‘immediately’, is rare. As far as Sidonius is concerned, we see it only here in his correspondence. We have Pl. *Truc.* 443 f. *ego isti non munus mittam? iam modo ex hoc loco / iubebo ad istam quinque perferri minas*, Cic. *Rab. Post.* 5 stulte, *quis negat, aut quis iam modo id quod male cecidit bene consultum putarit?*, Ov. *Met.* 13.888 *iam modo caeruleo nitidum caput exere ponto, / iam, Galatea, veni*. Then we have patristic authors, e.g. Aug. in *Psalm*. 88.2.12 *iam modo nemo insultat Christianis, aut si insultat, non publice insultat.*

**esto**, ‘granted’; The remaining two occurrences in the correspondence, *Ep*. 1.6.4 *esto, multiplicatis tibi spumabunt musta vinetis*, 8.6.11 *esto, sit indulgentia dignum*, do not have the a.c.i. we see here. For this construction cf. e.g. Lucr. 2.907 *esto iam posse haec aeterna manere*, and Hor. *Ep*. 1.1.81.

**praesentem ... ad causam**, ‘for the present purpose’ (Anderson): Notice the hyperbaton which highlights *praesentem*.

**ex canone non requiruntur**, ‘they are not wanted according to the canon’ (Anderson), ‘ils ne répondent plus désormais aux exigences des livres saints’ (Loyen): The New Testament is explicit about second marriages: 1 Tim. 3.2 *oporet ergo episcopum* [= leader of the community] *irreprehensibilem esse, unius uxoris virum* (it is generally agreed that this does not mean ‘polygamy’). The prohibition was never disputed by the church. I mention only two contemporary examples: The Gallic bishops Lupus and Euphronius in a letter forbade second marriages for all clerics, even for the lowest rank of sexton, which the addressee of their letter did permit (Conc. Gall. 1: 140 f.). So did pope Gelasius, some twenty years later, in a pastoral letter to Southern-Italic bishops, Gelas. *Ep*. 9.2 f. (PL 59: 49a-c) *ut si quis ...*
monasterialibus disciplinis eruditus ad clericale munus accedat, imprimis eius vita praeteritis acta temporibus requiratur, ... si secundam non habuit fortassiuxorum, ... si curiae iam probatur nexibus absolutus ....

Gelasius continues to say that in the case of a layman taking orders these conditions have to be examined even more closely. In fact, a candidate from this category could only be nominated after a considerable interval, and preferably only in case of war and a severe shortage of clerics. (This regulation received canonical status in the Decr. Grat. 1.55.1 which altogether ruled out men with a past in politics: vel bigamus ... vel curiae vel publicarum nexibus rerum implicatus.) It is worthwhile to take notice of the fact that at the date of pope Gelasius’ letter, the last decades of the fifth century, and from the Roman point of view at least, next to a second marriage (bigamus), one of the major impediments to a clerical career was involvement in civil administration (curiae ... nexibus). Is it tactical opportunism in this matter, that causes Sidonius to use the argument of second marriages against the men he wants to exclude, but, when it comes to his own candidate, makes him keep quiet about the tricky problem of involvement in civil administration? The discussion, somehow or other, must have reached Gaul also. In that case the Gallo-Roman clerus did not make a fuss of something for which the nobility had no use.

But what exactly does ex canone mean in the current phrase? It is true that this prohibition of bigami was constitutionalized in canonical regulations, see e.g. Decretum Gratiani 15.1 can. 1. See Griffe 2: 225 who discusses the problem tackled here by Sidonius. He speaks of an irrégularité canonique, followed by Loyen 3: 192 n. 51 ad loc. See already Sirmond ad loc. (col. 578d): ‘Bigami enim episcopi esse per canones non possunt; ac ne clerici quidem ullius gradus, ex canone primo synodi Valentiae, et aliis passim: quanquam variant in inferioris gradus ordinibus, prout diversus locorum mos fuit.’ However, there is no warranty for taking ex canone to mean ‘according to the canons of the councils’ or ‘… to canon law’ in antiquity. TLL 3: 274.44 advocates the generic meaning ‘praecepta vitae religiosae’ for the current phrase and e.g. Cassian. Inst. 2.2.1 diversis in locis diversum canonem ... institutum totque ... typos ac regulas ... usurpatas. But the great majority of the occurrences which it cites are in the plural. The alternative I prefer is ‘according to the Scriptures’, as e.g. in Aug. Ep. ad Cath. 17.44 ex canone divinorum librorum. But, admittedly, ex canone without an explicative genitive is rare. There is only one late instance, Ven. Fort. Vita Germ. 75 tertia noctis hora ingreditur ecclesiam, non est egressus ulterius psallentum ab ordine, donec, clariscente die, decantatis sollemniter, universus consummaretur cursus ex canone ['the complete book of psalms according to the Bible'], and there the ellipsis is easily completed from the context.

Non requiruntur = non desiderantur, ‘they are not the ones we are looking for’, cf. e.g. Cic. Div. Caec. 18 eius legis ... a populo Romano ... severi custodes requiruntur, ‘the people of Rome look to find men who will maintain this law strictly’.

ad secundas nuptias transierunt, ‘have married a second time’: This is the usual phrase, cf. e.g. Conc. Gall. 1: 141 l. 31 ff. nam iam ecclesiae obsequis aggregatos ad secundas nuptias transire non patimur.

si annos ipsius computemus, habet efficaciam de juventute, de senectute consilium.

si annos ipsius computemus, ‘if we consider his age’: Cf. Mart. 6.70.7-11 at nostri bene computentur anni ...: infantes sumus et senes videmur.
efficaciam ... consilium, ‘energy ... wisdom’ (Anderson): Cf. 5.20.1 laudo efficaciam, suspicio prudentiam, ‘I praise your efficiency, I look up to your common sense’. The parallel indicated by Geisler (p. 370) is only distantly related, 3.2.1 quam te blandum pueri, comem iuvenes, gravem senes metiebantur, ‘how winning the children considered you, how friendly the adults, how serious the elders’. Efficacia and effica, ‘active’, ‘successful’, occur a number of times in the correspondence (four and eight times respectively), cf. e.g. 3.8.1 vir efficacissime, and are attested (efficax) since Cic. Fam. 8.10.3 nosti Marcellum, quam tardus et parum efficax sit, itemque Servium, quam cunctator, and (efficacia) since Celsus and Livy, so Blaise’s classification for efficacia ‘Plin. et postcl.’ is not right.

PLRE 2: 1016 concludes: ‘He was apparently middle-aged at the time’. But we must allow for the rhetorical convention which aims at persuasion rather than chronology.

si litteras vel ingenium conferamus, certat natura doctrinae.

si litteras vel ingenium conferamus, ‘if we consider his culture and his talent’: For litterae cf. e.g. 1.6.2 gymnasiun litterarum, and the comment ad loc. by Köhler 1995: 221. For the juxtaposition with ingenium cf. e.g. Front. Ep. 1.1.2 industrius vir est, ... ingenio libero ac liberali, ... litterarum studio et bonarum artium elegantia mihi ad [lacuna]. Conferre, ‘to discuss’, ‘debate’, as e.g. Cic. Att. 2.17.1 haec ... conferemus tranquillo animo (OLD s.v. 13).

certat natura doctrinae, ‘nature vies with learning’: In Sidonius’ formulations ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’ are competing, but equally necessary, qualities of a gentleman. Innate talent is a great asset, its indispensable perfection achieved by education makes it even better. See e.g. 7.9.5 donec scientiam natura combiberit (nature brought to perfection by education), 7.14.8 ita si quae sunt, quae sola naturali sapientia vigent, hae peritarum se meritis superveniri facile concedunt (education surpasses nature), and 8.10.1 quamquam in epistula tua servet ... natura facundiam, peritia disciplinam (education on a par with nature). In a formulation of self-effacement, nature may be conceived as a shortcoming whereas knowledge creates perfection, cf. 7.3.2 quae doctissimo examini tuo naturali garrulitate deblaterat (see my comment ad loc.).

The Greek discussion on τέχνη v. φύσις was taken up by the Roman rhetorical theorists. The institutio is divided into the three traditional aspects of ingenium/natura (natural talents), ars/doctrina (instruction) and exercitatio (exercise). One gets a good impression of this teaching from passages such as Cic. de Orat. 1.113-33 and Quint. Inst. 2.19 (discussion on the relative importance of talent and instruction: sect. 1 scio quaeriri etiam naturan plus ad eloquentiam conferat an doctrina; talent is indispensable: sect. 2 natura etiam sine doctrina multum valebit, doctrina nulla esse sine natura poterit; but perfection ultimately depends on instruction: sect. 2 consummatos [sc. rhetores] autem plus doctrinae debere quam naturae putabo).

For the history of the problem see the commentary on Cicero’s Pro Archia Poeta 15 by Vretska 1979: 129-32, and on Horace’s Ars Poetica 408-18 by Brink 1971: 394-400.

In the complimentary atmosphere of Late Antiquity the emphasis of the topos tends to be on natura, one’s inalienable innate nobility, not on doctrina, acquired and somehow less presentable. Both talent and upbringing (and money!) are necessary: Symm. Or. 7 p. 338 l. 28 dedit natura Synesio bonos mores, pater optimas disciplinas, fortuna commodas facultates, Ennod. Ep. 7.22 homo, quem nec infecundum natura protulit nec infabricatum doctrina derelliquit. But the greatest compliment to anyone is to say that his accomplishments are not acquired, but stem from nature: Auson. Epigr. 114.30-34 Schenkl doctrina non hoc praestitit / ...: / natura munus hoc
tibi / deusque donum tradidit, Ruric. Ep. 2.26 quae bona vobis non tam doctrina contulit quam natura.

Section 19

si humanitas requirenda est, civi clerico peregrino, minimo maximoque, etiam supra sufficientiam offertur

si humanitas requirenda est, ‘if it comes to inquiring about his generosity’: Humanitas ‘humanity’, ‘kindness’, in the sense of ‘care’, ‘help’, ‘generosity’, ‘hospitality’, is frequent in Sidonius (nine times). It reaches out to the poor, and has its complement in the frugality of the giver, cf. e.g. 2.10.2 per uberem munificentiam in pauperes humanitatemque, 4.9.1 (at home with Vettius) mensa non minus pasces hospitem quam clientem; humanitas grandis grandiorque sobrietas. Cf. 6.12.3 sic semper humanum, sic abstemium iudicari. It is part of the profile of the ideal patronus, whom we met in Ep. 7.4 about the approachable bishop. Cf. already Cic. de Orat. 2.362 cum humanitatem et facilitatem agnoscimus tuam. It is pre-eminently a requisite of a bishop, among whose tasks it is to take care of the poor, cf. 4.2.3 (to Sidonius the bishop himself) cum tua operis in usus inopum prodigis, q.v. Amherdt 2001: 104 (see also above on sect. 14 pauperes Christi).

Requirenda, ‘to inquire about’, ‘investigate’, cf. e.g. Cic. de Orat. 3.199 si habitum ... orationis requiritis, ‘if you want to know the kind of speech it is’. In Sidonius cf. Ep. 1.2.2 (in the portrait of Theodoric) si forma quaeratur, ‘take first his appearance’ (Anderson).

civi clerico peregrino: ‘to the citizens, whether lay or cleric, and to the foreigners’: The foreigners are the longe positi of Ep. 7.4.3, ‘the people who live far away’, outside the direct sphere of interest of the patronus – who proves himself exceptionally useful by taking care of them as well. See my comment on 7.4.3.

supra sufficientiam, ‘more than strictly needed’: The phrase is unique.

et suum saepius panem ille potius, qui non erat redditurus, agnovit.

‘and more than once that man of all people savoured his bread who was not going to return it.’ In the concise paraphrase by Dalton: ‘Entertaining those most of all who are least likely to return his kindness’.

For the biblical background of this ideal of munificence without recompense, see e.g. Luc. 6.27 ff., esp. 30 omni autem petenti te tribue et qui aufert quae tua sunt ne repetas, and 34 et si mutuum dederitis his a quibus speratis recipere quae gratia est vobis?

suum = eius, viz. Simplicii: See my comment on 7.6.6 pectori suo. The current instance must be added to the list of this phenomenon in Grupe’s Index verborum et locutionum in Luetjohann’s edition, p. 481 s.v. suus.

saepius ... potius, ‘more than once ... preferably’.

agnovit, ‘acknowledged’, ‘appreciated’, e.g. Plin. (Tra.) Ep. 10.89 agnosco vota tua, ‘thanks for your congratulations’.
si necessitas arripiendae legationis incubuit, non ille semel pro hac civitate stetit vel ante pellitos reges vel ante principes purpuratos.

Sidonius is careful not to talk politics except in guarded terms. Bourges was in a delicate situation, definitely in the sphere of influence of the Visigoths, but temporarily freed of their direct grip on the town (see Introduction to letter 5, ch. ‘Date’). He only says Simplicius is an experienced negotiator at the imperial and the barbarian courts, and, further on, that he has been a prisoner or a hostage of the barbarians. See Griffe 2: 73 f.

**necessitas ... incubuit**, ‘the necessity arose’: Often in cases of war, famine etc., as e.g. Ambr. Ep. 5.24.8 si necessitates temporum et extraordinariae incubuerint exactiones, Oros. Hist. 1.2.16 apud Athenienses ... imminente periculo ... ubi necessitas incubuit, postpositis privatis causis atque odis in commune consultitur. Cf. Lact. Inst. 2.1.9 at vero si qua necessitas gravis presserit, tunc deum recordantur: si belli terror ..., si morborum ... vis ..., si ... siccitas ..., si saeva tempestas, si grando .... The occurrences are generally late, but in the first century AD we already have Fron. Aq. 117.3 ex conpluribus regionibus, in quam necessitas incubuerit.

**arripiendae legationis**, ‘to undertake an embassy’: Anderson translates ‘an urgent embassy’, Loyen ‘assumer brusquement’. This is somewhat exaggerated. Stat. Theb. 1.100 f arripit extemplo ... notum iter ad Thebas, is cited by OLD s.v. arripio 6a as a case for the meaning ‘to make a rapid start (on a journey)’, but already in this – early and isolated – example extemplo is added for clarity. The verb in later Latin, since Claud. in Eutrop. 2 (= 20).406, is simply ‘to set out (a journey, etc.)’, esp. with *iter, viam*, see TLL 2: 643.34 ff. There is no parallel for the collocation with *legatio*.

**non ... semel** is a litotes: ‘more than once’.

**pellitos reges ... principes purpuratos**, ‘kings dressed in skins ... emperors dressed in purple’: *Pellitus*, ‘clad in skins’, effectively contrasted with *purpuratus*, ‘clad in purple’. But ‘*pellitus* ist Synonym für *barbarus* unabhängig von der Kleidung’, Köhler 1995: 139 f. says in her comment on 1.2.4 pellitorum turba satellitum. Cf. the other occurrences in Carm. 5.563, 7.219, 7.349, and Ep. 5.7.4. For *pellitus* applied to the Goths, cf. also Ov. Pont. 4.10.2, Claud. in Ruf. 2 (= 5).85, Get. (= 26) 481. See Colton 2000: 218 f.


In his chapter on Sidonius’ portrayal of Avitus as an envoy, Gillett 2003: 111 mentions the current passage in passing with regard to the qualities required to be an ambassador. For a general account of the selection, the interests at stake, and the embassies themselves, see ibidem pp. 220-72. Rapp 2005: 264 f. adduces it when she discusses the role of the bishop ‘as advocate for his city’ as well as ‘pastor of his flock’: ‘Obviously, a man’s prior experience in activating his social network and conducting negotiations with rulers was a useful and desirable qualification for this aspect of his episcopate’ (p. 265). She compares the embassy of Synesius of Cyrene to the emperor Arcadius. Such missions were not only very honourable, but also provided a great service to the town, especially if the ambassador himself paid the considerable expenses (travelling expenses, accommodation and bribes) (p. 261).
Rousseau 2000: 257 has pointed out the parallel with Sidonius himself who had also been an ambassador to barbarian kings and to the emperor. For the parallel Sidonius construes between himself and Simplicius, see General Introduction, par. 5.4.3 The structure and meaning of book 7.

si ambigitur quo magistro rudimentis fidei fuerit imbutus: ut proverbialiter loquar, domi habuit unde disceret.

**rudimentis fidei fuerit imbutus**, ‘was introduced to the basics of faith’: *Fuerit imbutus = sit imbutus*, cf. LHS 1: 342 ‘Aus der Umschreibung mit *sum* bildet sich die Umschreibung mit *fui* heraus …… Im späteren vulgären Latein is dies die üblichere Form.’

For *rudimentis (alcs. rei) imbutus* cf. Vell. 2.129.1 *quibus praeceptis instructum Germanicum suum imbutumque rudimentis militiae secum actae domitorem recepit Germaniae*. Rudimenta fidei, ‘apprenticeship/basics of faith’, occurs since the third century, Pont. *Vita Cypr. 2.4 inter fidei suae prima rudimenta*. Sidonius has also 3.5.3 *lactantis infantiae rudimenta*, and 6.7.2 *clericalis tirocinii … replantis rudimenta.*

**ut proverbialiter loquar**, ‘to use a proverb’: The adverb *proverbialiter* in Sidonius also 2.6.1 *proverbialiter celebre est saepe moram esse meliorem*. Adverbs in -(i)ter are a feature of later Latin, see my comment on 7.7.1 *ioculariter*. For the phrase cf. Ambr. in Luc. 3.50 *quod proverbialiter dicitur*, Amm. 29.2.25 *quod dici proverbialiter solet*.

**domi habuit unde disceret**, ‘he had someone to learn from at home’: This is a citation from Ter. Ad. 413. Jerome cites the same proverb, Hier. *Ep. 60.10 avunculum pontificem deserere non audebit, tota in illo cernens exempla virtutum, domique habens unde disceret*. See Otto 1890: 120 # 573 s.v. *domus* 2.

Together with another citation from Terence (*Eun. 107 Samia mihi mater fuit*) in 2.2.2, and the passage where Sidonius relates that he is reading the *Hecyra* with his son (4.12.1), this citation proves Sidonius’ familiarity with Terence who was a standard author, together with Cicero, Sallust and Virgil. See Amherdt 2001: 311 f. ad 4.12.1 *Terentianae Hecyrae* for further reference. See my Introduction to *Ep. 7.2*, section 5 *A touch of comedy: ‘Fabula Attica’*. Proverbs are among the epistolary conventions: see General Introduction, par. 5.1.2 *Epistolary characteristics*. See General Introduction, sect. 6.1 *Intertextuality*.

**Section 20**

postremo iste est ille, carissimi, cui in tenebris ergastularibus constituto multipliciter obserata barbarici carceris divinitus claustra patuerunt

Notice the dense succession of multisyllabic nouns, adjectives, participles and adverbs, in twisted word order, to convey the constriction of prison and the immense relief at liberation. This is all the more striking, as the preceding sections had a brisk colometric lay-out (see the analysis of this speech in Appendix G).

The scene harks back to the prototype of apostolic liberation, the story from the Acts of the Apostles when Peter and the others have been arrested by order of the High Priest, but miraculously escape from prison, *Act. 5: 17-26*. The imprisonment and liberation are described as follows: (18-20) *et iniecerunt manus in apostolos, et posuerunt eos in custodia publica.*
angelus autem Domini per noctem aperiens ianuas carceris, et educens eos, dixit: ite, et stantes loquimini in templo plebi omnia verba vitae huius. The police are sent to inspect the premises, and report: (23) carcerem quidem invenimus clausum cum omni diligentia, et custodes stantes ante ianuas: aperientes autem neminem intus invenimus.

In the background there are overtones from Old and New Testament prophecies of liberation from the darkness of captivity and death, see Matth. 4: 16 populus qui sedebat in tenebris lucem vidit magnum et sedentibus in regione et umbra mortis lux orta est eis (= Is. 9: 2, cf. Psalm. 106: 10).

The archetypical character of these visions of liberation is demonstrated by the presence of the same features in Platonically inspired thought as found e.g. in Cicero’s assertion that suicide, under certain conditions, is permitted: Cic. Tusc. 1.74 vetat enim dominans ille in nobis deus iniussu hinc nos suo demigrare; cum vero causam iustam deus ille dederit, ut tunc Socrati, nunc Catoni, saepe multis, ne ille me Deus Fidius vir sapiens laetus ex his tenebris in lucem illam excesserit, nec tanen ille vincula carceris ruperit - leges enim vetant -, sed tamquam a magistratu aut ab aliqua potestate legitima, sic a deo evocatus atque emissus exierit.

postremo ... carissimi, ‘finally, beloved listeners’: Postremo, ‘finally’, to continue in section 21 with paene transieram: a rhetorical device to vary an enumeration and hold the attention. It is further dressed up with carissimi (repeated from sect. 5 dilectissimi). By addressing his audience directly, he focuses their attention on something new. Receptivity is kindled anew so that the ensuing miracle story will receive maximum notice.

**in tenebris ergastularibus constituto**, ‘when he was confined in a dark prison’: Ergastulum is the place where unmanageable, chained slaves had to spend the night, then also ‘prison’, ‘captivity’ in general. See BNP 4.64 f. s.v. ergastulum. The noun is found in Sidonius in 1.7.11 lautumis aut ergastulo. The adjective ergastularis is late and rare, only Alc. Avit. Hom. 21 p. 137 l. 37 solvat nunc ... ergastularium reliquias vinculorum, Greg. Tur. Gloc. conf. 86 (an abbot) qui vivens saepve homines vinculo diabolicum constituiet et post obitum ad sepulchrum suum ergastulari catena revinctos liberos meritis suis abire permisit, and idem Vit. patr. 11 dum illa ergastularis contritionis revinctio paradisi ianuam patefacit (for this Christian shift to a figurative meaning, cf. e.g. Hier. Ep. 22.7 illud miserrimae carnis ergastulum).

Constitutus, ‘being’, ‘finding oneself’: See Mossberg 1934: 69 and my comment on 7.4.2 coram positio. For its inconspicuous, even redundant, character, cf. the formulation of the above cited text from the Gospel of Matthew in Chromat. in Matth. 15.2 qui in regione umbrae moritis sedent constituiri. For the collocation with in tenebris, cf. such authors as Ambr. lob 3.6.16 locutus enim illa sum tamquam in tenebris constitutus et recordanti illa mihi cor conpungebatur, Arnob. Iun. ad Greg. 9 ostendo foveas [‘pits’] in tenebris saeculi constitutas, in quas incauti runt, et neglegentes incurrunt (incidentally, the title of the work itself is Liber ad Gregoriam in palatio constitutam).

**multipliciter obserata**, ‘heavily bolted’: Multipliciter, ‘in many different ways’, is found since Sal. Rep. 2.10.5. The meaning of multiplex/multipliciter develops from ‘composite, etc.’ towards ‘robust’, ‘urgent’, ‘enormous’, e.g. Ven. Fort. Carn. 3.2 filium vestrum Aventium pro me multipliciter [‘cordially’] supplico salutari, Avit. Ep. 3.74 quod multipliciter [‘greatly’] miror. In Sidonius cf. e.g. 4.15.1 epulum multiplex, ‘a copious meal’, 8.11.2 tam multiplicis bibliothecae, ‘such a rich library’. For the adverb in -(i)ter see my comment on 7.7.1 loculariter. Compare multiplex with the use of multifarius: my comment on 7.2.1 multifaria laude.

**barbarici ... divinitus**, ‘barbarian ... by divine agency’: Thanks to their position these words oppose the prison (carceris) and its being opened (claustra patuerunt). The use of divinitus
instead of cælitus avoids the alliteration carceris cælitus claustra: see my comment on 7.1.3 civitas cælitus tibi credita.

As Loyen 3: 192 n. 54 remarks, the prison was probably a Visigothic one; thus also Mathisen 1984: 167 f.: ‘Others who remained in Visigothic Aquitania continued to face the prospect of economic ruin or worse … The Goths first confiscated the property of the mediocres and then not only attempted to do the same to the nobiles, but also imprisoned them to boot.’ For the ransoming of captives, see 7.7.6 parate … capiendis redemptionem. Simplicius may have been taken captive, but may also have been a hostage to guarantee a treaty (see Mathisen 1993: 34 f.: ‘the giving of hostages … seems to have been a practice common to both sides’). That all this was no rhetorical exaggeration was demonstrated by Mathisen 1984 ibidem, cited by me in the discussion of 7.7.6 est moritura libertas.

isti, ut audivimus, tam socero quam patre postpositis ad sacerdotium duci oportere vociferabamini;

tam socero quam patre postpositis, ‘passing over his father-in-law as well as his father’: On an earlier occasion the people had already acclaimed Simplicius as their new bishop, thereby passing over his father and father-in-law, Eulodius/Eulogius and Palladius, but he had let them go first. (Compare my comments on sect. 17 parentes ipsius above, and on 7.8.2 Simplicium, spectabilem virum.)

According to the eleventh century diptych which preserves the names of the archbishops of Bourges – trustworthy ‘jusqu`à preuve du contraire’, as Duhesne 2: 23 says – the thirteenth in order was Palladius, the fourteenth Eulodius, the fifteenth Simplicius (the attribution of these names to resp. Simplicius’ father-in-law and father results from combining this list with Sidonius’ data). In that case, it was Simplicius’ father who had died and left the vacancy now to be filled by his son. See PLRE 2: 418 Eulodius: ‘It is probable that Eulodius was in fact Simplicius’ father’. Stroheker 1948: 219 # 363, however, sees Simplicius as the successor of Palladius – probably inadvertently. For Eulodius as his father, cf. already Gallia christ. 2: 8.

ad sacerdotium duci oportere vociferabamini, ‘you shouted repeatedly that he should be brought to the priesthood’: Both the unusual collocation ad sacerdotium duci as the verb vociferari testify to the violent character of that occasion, like other episcopal elections, see the Introduction to letter 5, section 4 The election and consecration of bishops, and my comment on sect. 6 above, impactum est.

quo quidem tempore plurimum laudis domum rettulit, quando honorari parentem maluit dignitate quam propria.

quidem gives focus to quo tempore: ‘that time’, not ‘but’ as Anderson and Loyen translate. The phrase quo ... rettulit is forward oriented. The particle quidem prepares for a second, contrastive, element (marked by autem e.g.), which is here implicit. ‘That time it was great he let others go first, but now it is his turn.’ For quidem refer to Solodow 1978.

honorari parentem maluit dignitate quam propria, ‘he preferred to be honoured by the dignity of his family rather than by his own’: Of course, members of the older generation, and especially one’s parents, come first. The next generation participates in the increased status of its ancestors (see Köhler 1995: 178 ad 1.4.1 posteris gloria). Moverover, it is a compliment not to be (too) eager for power, cf. e.g. Carm. 2.210 f. (Anthemius who let Leo go
first as an emperor) *sed vobis nulla cupidio / imperii, Carm. 7.510 (about Avitus) invitum plus esse
decet*, ‘your reluctance becomes you all the more’.

**Section 21**

In this extensive section, Simplicius is praised for his church building activity. ‘The fifth
century witnessed a public building explosion,’ as Loseby 1992: 149 wrote; ‘a great number
of Christian buildings were erected in and around cities.’ In the process of ‘transition of the
community from the classical town to the Christian church’ (Brown 1985: 237), ‘the neglect of
public structures was offset by an increase in private and ecclesiastical building. The
structures associated with the old, pagan way of life ... were replaced in their function as
social centers by the churches that were now increasingly erected in prominent spots, often
with the active encouragement and financial support of bishops’ (Liebeschuetz 2001: 10). In
Sidonius’ circle we have e.g. the bishops Patiens of Lyon (6.12.4 *per te plurimis locis basilicarum
fundamenta consurgere*), Perpetuus of Tours (4.18.4 *basilicam sancti ... Martini Perpetuos ...
multum priori quae fuit hactenus capaciorem novavit*; see Introduction to letter 9, section 3
Address) and Mamertus of Vienne (7.1.7 *tibi soli concessa est ... solida translatio*; Greg. Tur. *Itul.
2 Mamertus ... aliam basilicam ... construxit*; see Introduction to letter 1, section 3 Address).
Sidonius’ own cathedral in Clermont had just been erected by his predecessor Namatius. For
the bishops and their building programs, see General Introduction, par. 4.3.4 Sidonius’ church.

The section is adorned with *exempla*, and, among rhetorical ‘embellishments’, the figure of
*praeteritio*. On the fact that this contradicts the author’s announcement in the accompanying
letter (‘no embellishments’), see the Introduction to this speech, section 2 Audience. The
*exempla* are deployed by way of a *comparatio a minore ad maius*: an event from the past of
undeniable importance is surpassed by the event, or the person, the speaker is talking about
(Quint. *Inst. 8.4.9 amplificatio ... quae fit per comparationem, incrementum ex minoribus petit*). It is
specially suited to the *genus demonstrativum*. See Lausberg: 222 f., § 404.

**paene transieram, quod praeteriri non oportuerat.**

For this phrase cf. 6.9.3 *paene omiseram, quod minime praeterevendum fuit*.

**oportuerat**, ‘ought’: The pluperfect instead of the perfect *oportuit* already in Cicero, e.g. *Mur.
51 erupit e senatu triumphans gaudio quem omnino vivum illinc exire non oportuerat*. For this
phenomenon cf. *LHS 2: 320 f*. In 5.14.2 Sidonius uses *oportuit*. He has no comparable
*debuerat*, but 5.2.2 *debuit*, ‘ought’.

**sub Moyse quondam, sicut psalmographus ait, «in diebus antiquis,» ut tabernaculi foederis forma consurgeret,**

The story of the funding and the building of the tabernacle is told in detail in *Exod. 35-39*:
‘The whole community of the Israelites went out from Moses’ presence, and everyone who
was so minded brought of his own free will a contribution to the Lord for the making of the
Tent of the Presence and all its service, and for the sacred vestments’ (35.20 f.). ‘Moses said to
the Israelites, “Mark this: the Lord has specially chosen Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the
tribe of Judah. He has filled him with divine spirit, making him skilful and ingenious, expert
in every craft, and a master of design”’ (35.30-32). ‘Moses summoned Bezalel, Aholiah, and
every craftsman to whom the Lord had given skill and who was willing, to come forward
and set to work. They received from Moses every contribution which the Israelites had
brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary’ (36.2 f.). See General Introduction, sect. 6.1 Intertextuality.

sicut psalmographus ait, «in diebus antiquis»: ‘as the Psalmist says: “In days of old”’: For sicut see my comment on 7.3.1 sicuti iniungis.

The noun psalmographus, ‘psalmist’, the presumed author of the book of Psalms (traditionally king David), is found since Ps. Tert. adv. Marc. 3.130. Sidonius uses it only here. After his advanced introduction to Christian belief under the guidance of Faustus and Claudianus Mamertus in the years leading up to his episcopate, Sidonius will have been more than familiar with the psalter, given the close contacts of his circle with monastic environments like Lérins. For the fact that in the cloisters the psalter was known by heart, see Riché 1962: 156 f.

«In diebus antiquis» is a citation from Psalm 43.1-2 Deus, auribus nostris audivimus, / patres nostri annuntiaverunt nobis: / opus quod operatus es in diebus eorum, / et in diebus antiquis (Bellès 3: 60 n. 126 is needlessly puzzled by the provenance of the citation). The phrase provides an ‘atmospheric’, Old Testament adjunct of time. See General Introduction, sect. 6.1 Intertextuality.

tabernaculi foederis forma, ‘the structure of the Tent of the Meeting’: The tabernaculum foederis, as e.g. in Ex. 31.7, also tabernaculum testimonii, ‘Tent of the Tokens’, e.g. Num. 17.7, is the portable shrine said to have been constructed under Moses’ direction during the time when the Jewish people wandered in the wilderness. See ODCC 1573 s.v. ‘Tabernacle (Jewish).

Forma, ‘shape’, ‘structure’ of buildings, like e.g. Ov. Fast. 6.265 f. forma tamen templi, quae nunc manet, ante fuisse / dicitur (see TLL 6/1.1070.40 ff.). (Here not the t.t. from architecture, ‘design’, ‘plans’, e.g. Cic. Q. fr. 2.5.3 magis ... cerni iam poterat [domus] quam quantum ex forma iudicabamus.) The iunctura with consurgit is a bold one. By tabernaculi forma, instead of simply tabernaculum, attention is drawn towards the visual and physical aspect of building the tabernacle. Note the alliteration foederis forma.

totus Israel in eremo ante Beselehelis pedes oblaticii symbolam coacervavit impendii.


ante Beselehelis pedes, ‘before the feet of Bezalel’: After Moses had collected the contributions for the construction of the tabernacle, he gave the money to the craftsmen under the direction of Bezalel, who went to work accordingly. But the people took to visiting the workshop, bringing even more gifts. This evidently hindered the craftsmen in their work, for they went to Moses, and said: ‘The people are bringing much more than we need’ (Exod. 36.5 plus offert populus quam necessarium est). Therefore Moses told the people to stop: ‘What was there already was more than enough for all the work they had to do’ (7 eo quod oblata sufficerent et superabundarent).

The relatively unknown figure of Bezalel (the architect, rather than his principal Moses) is brought to the fore here because of his similarity to Solomon (not Solomon’s architect, Hiram), both paragons of wisdom, which forms the base of their activities. Cf. Exod. 36.1 fecit ergo Beselehel et Hooliab et omnis vir sapiens quibus dedit Dominus sapientiam et intellectum ut
scirent fabre operari quae in usus sanctuarii necessaria sunt et quae praecepit Dominus. When Bezalel is mentioned in patristic literature, it is for his wisdom (e.g. Ambr. Noe 3.7 and Psalm. 118.3.21, Vincent. Ler. Comm. 22 l. 22, Rufin. Orig. Is. l. 16), and the parallel with Solomon is explicitly drawn in Aug. (Evodius) Ep. 158.12 peto quoque, ut, quot modis sapientia dicatur, ostendas mihi, ut sapiantia deus, ut sapiantia animus sapiens, quo modo dicitur ut lux, ut sapiantia Beselhel, qui fabricatus est tabernaculum vel unguentarium, ut sapiantia Salomonis vel si qua est alia, et quid invicem distent.

The formulation ante Beselhelis pedes (which is not in Exodus) may be an echo of ante pedes apostolorum, ‘before the feet of the apostles’, Act. 4.34 f. quotquot enim possessores agrorum aut domorum erant, vendentes afferebant pretia eorum quae vendebant, et ponebant ante pedes apostolorum.

oblatii symbolam coacervavit impedii, ‘heaped the contribution of their voluntary gift’: Oblaticius, ‘(freely) offered’, only here and Cod. Theod. 6.2.16.4 <aurum oblat>icium ... persolvant [senatores imperatoris]. See TLL 9/2: 73.73.

Symbola, ‘contribution’, is originally the contribution of each participant to a common meal (in Comedy and since Gellius, e.g. Pl. Cur. 474 symbolarum conlatores, Gel. 7.13.12, Apul. Pl. 2.7). Sidonius also has 4.3.6 morum ac studiorum linguae utriusque symbolam iure sibi vindicat, ‘he claims with good right the joint resources of his character and of his acquaintance with Greek and Latin lore’ (Anderson) (but there is a v.l. symbolum, advocated by Amherdt). In later Latin it is a business term, ‘contribution to a joint venture’, cf. Ambr. Symb. 2 et maxime ‘symbolam’ negotiatoris dicere consuerunt, quando conferunt pecuniam suam, et quasi ex singulorum conlacione in unum constipata integra et inviolabilis conservatur, ut nemo fraudem conlationi facere conetur, nemo negotiationi.

Coacervavit: see the above cited passage from Exodus concerning the munificence of the people. There was enough, indeed, more than enough. The verb, and the idea of plenty, is echoed below, as the wealth of the queen of Sheba cumulaverit, ‘increased lavishly’, the riches Solomon already had.

Impendium, ‘expenditure’, ‘payment’, is already classical. Sidonius has also 7.17.2 totum apparatum supercurrentis impedii (‘the overmounting cost’, Anderson), and 8.12.6 modo sit eventilando par animus impedio (‘its [i.e. the larder’s] contents’, Anderson).

Salomon deinceps, ut templum aedificaret in Solymis, solidas populi vires in opere concussit,

Solomon’s building of the temple is described in the first book of Kings, chapter 6. See General Introduction, sect. 6.1 Intertextuality. It is not unusual for benefactors, bishops or others, who built a new church, to be compared to Solomon. Perpetuus, the very addressee of this letter, had been complimented by Sidonius only a few years before on building a new basilica for St Martin in Tours: Ep. 4.18.5 (= Carm. 31) v. 13 f. [aedes] quae Solomoniaco potis est configere templo / septima quae mundo fabrica mira fuit, ‘[a church] which can compete with Solomon’s temple which was the world’s seventh wonder’ (see Amherdt 2001: 415 ad loc.). Cf. Ven. Fort. Carm. 2.10.1 f. si Solomoniaci memoretur machina templi, / arte licet par sit, pulchrior ista fide.

in Solymis, ‘in Jerusalem’: (Hierosolyma) is the geographical name of the town. See my comment on 7.6.4 spiritalem Jerusalem.
solidas populi vires in opere concussit, ‘shattered the unbroken strength of the people in the building of it’: For solidas vires, ‘the unbroken strength’, cf. e.g. Verg. A. 2.638 ff. ‘vos o, quibus integer aeci i sanguis’ ait ‘solidaeque suo stant robore vires, / vos agitate fugam’.

Anderson translated concussit – rightly, I think – with ‘shattered’, whereas Loyen has ‘mobilisa’, ‘mobilized’. Anderson devotes his note 6 ad loc. to the question: ‘What is the meaning of concussit? Whipped up? ransacked? taxed to the uttermost? strained? The words which follow seem to show that vires here means “resources,” “means,” in money or kind, not physical strength.’ He is not right in saying that no Israelites were employed, only foreigners and the allied Tyrians, for 1 Kings 5: 13 runs: ‘King Solomon raised a forced levy from the whole of Israel amounting to thirty thousand men’ to fetch and prepare the building materials (contrary to 2 Chron. 8.9; Loyen 3: 192 n. 57: ‘Sidoine cite de mémoire’). The fact that the building of the temple was on such a grand scale surely exhausted the reserves of the land. That is why the windfalls from Ophir (Solomon’s privateering brought in ‘four hundred and twenty talents of gold’ (1 Kings 9.28), and from Sheba were so welcome. Moreover, the verb concutere means, ‘to damage’, ‘harass’, rather than ‘to mobilize’, also in later authors, like fourth century Aur. Vict. Caes. 13.3 cunctae gentes, quae inter Indum et Euphratem amnes inclitos sunt, concussae bello. Nevertheless, ‘to mobilize’ occurs in, e.g., Petr. 124 l. 288 tu concute plebem, and Amm. 27.4.1 arma concussit in Gothos. My preference here is determined by grammar (‘to mobilize’ would entail in opus instead of in opere), by the context (the windfalls from abroad could not prevent the domestic economy from being exhausted), and by style (Sidonius prefers oppositions like solidas – concussit, ‘sound’ – ‘wrecked’). Watt 1999: 14 unnecessarily ventured the conjecture consumpsit.

quamvis Palaestinorum captivas opes et circumiectorum regum tributarias functiones australis regnae Sabaitis gaza cumulaverit.

Palaestinorum captivas opes, ‘the annexed wealth of the Palestinians’: Cf. Sil. 15.263 f. postquam perfectae laudes hominumque deumque, / captivae spectantur opes digestaque praeda. Also Ennod. Opusc 2 p. 59 l. 28 (I would have liked to perfect the work much more) dum captivam orationem exigit imperiosa necessitas, ‘but the speech was claimed and I was obliged to deliver it’. Captivas opes is echoed by tributarias functiones.

circumiectorum regum tributarias functiones, ‘the taxes paid by the surrounding kings’: Solomon subjugated all of the alien tribes in his territory: 2 Paral. 8.7 f. omnem populum .. qui non erant de stirpe Israel ... subiugaviit Salomon in tributarios. Hiram king of Tyre, in an alliance from which Solomon profited most, put at his disposal his natural resources, his workforce and his sailors (1 Kings 5.1 ff., 9.10 ff.).

Tributarias functiones, ‘tributary dues’ (Anderson), cf. Salv. Gub. 5.35 si quando enim ... minuendas in aliquo tributarias functiones postestates summae existimaverint. Otherwise singular, cf. e.g. Cassiod. Var. 4.36 providentissimi principis est graviter inminutis relinquere tributarium functionem. This use of functio, ‘(payment of) tax’, is later Latin, often in juridical literature, cf. e.g. Cod. Iust. 3.12.6.6 in quindecim autem paschalibus diebus ... annonariae functionis ... differatur exactio, ibid. 10.22.3 neque de praeterito ad illationem functionis tributariae coartetur. See Heumann-Seckel s.v. fungi 1 functio 1c.

australis reginae Sabaitis gaza, ‘the treasure of the southern queen of Saba’: Australis can also be taken to define gaza, ‘the treasure from the south’ (thus Anderson) – which provides a neat distribution of the attributes. In 1 Kings 10.1-13 and 2 Chron. 9.11-12 the story is told of
the queen who ‘heard of Solomon’s fame and came to test him with hard questions’. Then, amazed at his wisdom, ‘she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones’ (1 Kings 10.1 and 10). In the books of Kings and Chronicles she is called Regina Saba. In Matth. 12.42 = Luc. 11.31 she is Regina Austri, cf. e.g. Ambr. in Luc. 7.1. 996, and passim.

The queen of Saba is introduced by Sidonius to bring to mind the fabulous wealth of king Solomon, which came from a number of sources, whereas – as he will go on to contend – Simplicius, a private person and still a minor, completely on his own, did the same, did more, in fact, when he built a house for the Lord. However, the queen of Saba is not related to the building of the temple as such: she came after its completion to visit it (1 Kings 10.4 = 2 Chron. 9.3).

The adjective Sabaitis is a creation of Sidonius’, and remained a hapax, see Gualandri 1979: 176 n. 109.

Gaza, ‘treasure, esp. of an eastern monarch’ (OLD): Discussing the word in the Pervigilium Veneris, v. 6, and treating Sidonius’ use of it, Fernández López 2005: 1124 stresses its Virgilian connections, but the noun is in general use, also in prose, e.g. Cic. Man. 66 ab auro gazaque regia manus ... cohibere. Cf. Verg. A. 1.119 Troia gaza, Luc. 7.742 Eoas ... gazas. The Loeb edition has a misprint here: gazae.

hic vobis ecclesiam iuvenis miles, tenuis solus, adhuc filius familias et iam pater extruxit,

ecclesiam, ‘church’: Which church is uncertain, but I think it probable that it is the cathedral itself. Vobis ecclesiam ... extruxit, accompanied by an eloquent gesture from the speaker at the building in which they are gathered, comes to mean: ‘This church of yours here was built by him’.

Local tradition points to one of Bourges’ collegiate churches, the Chapitre du Saint-Oûtrille du Château, according to DHGE 10: 182: ‘L’église du Château, au dire de son dernier prieur, Moreau-Desormeaux, avait été fondée en 380 sous le vocable de saint Pierre et de saint Paul. A la fin du IVe siècle, elle reçut des reliques de saint Julien, évêque du Mans, dont elle prit alors le nom. Vers 473, l’archevêque de Bourges, Simplicius, y ayant installé des clercs de la cathédrale, on le considéra comme le fondateur du chapitre. Au début du VIIe siècle, l’archevêque saint Oûtrille [Latin: S. Austregisilus] ... accorda de si nombreuses faveurs aux chanoines qu’après sa mort ils ... substituèrent au nom de saint Julien celui de saint Oûtrille.’ But Prévot and Barral i Altet 1989: 21-22 in their discussion of the churches of Bourges doubt the tradition: ‘C’est en tout cas sans preuve que la tradition locale attribue à Simplicius la construction d’un sanctuaire au Château, le futur Saint-Oûtrille, où l’on vénérera sa tombe au XVIe siècle.’ Perhaps, they say, Simplicius had paid for the alterations to the cathedral of St Stephen, the ecclesia apud Bituricas urbem prima of Greg. Tur. Franc. 1.31, which were executed simultaneously with the construction of Clermont cathedral under Namatius (bishop 446-62). But in that case, would Sidonius not have exploited so prestigious a fact: ‘Si elle avait été construite par Simplicius, n’aurait-il pas saisie l’occasion de la faire admirer à ses auditeurs?’ This may be true, but in Sidonius’ idiom ecclesia more than once denotes a town’s cathedral: 3.1.2 ecclesiam Arverni municipioli, 9.3.5 Lugdunensis ecclesiae dedicatae (the same as 2.10.2) and – not forgetting – in the letter accompanying the current speech, 7.9.1 Biturigis in ecclesia.
juvenis miles, tenuis solus, adhuc filius familias et iam pater, ‘as a young man, a civil servant, of modest means, on his own, still a minor but already a father’: There is a striking parallel with the letter-bearer Amantius in 7.2.7 adulescens, solus tenuis peregrinus, filius familias et e patria patre non solum non volente verum et ignoro discendens. See my comment there.

Miles, ‘junior civil servant’, cf. 4.24.6 haec reposcam clericus ab aegro, quae vix petissem miles a sospite, with comment by Amherdt 2001: 499 f. Public servants in the lower ranks were called milites, cf. e.g. Cod. Theod. 14.11.1 agentes in rebus ad palatinos aliosque milites inferioris militiae. See TLL 8: 943.66 ff.

Tenuis: For the topos of the promising young man who – although as yet of modest means – spends lavishly for a good cause, cf. Carm. 5.149 (the future emperor Majorian) pauper adhuc iam spargit opes.

Et iam pater: His children – as he was a minor – were subject to the patria potestas of his own father. Consequently he built the church against all odds, even at the cost of rebelling against his father.

Simplicius’ merit in building this church in Bourges is supposed to be a greater feat than the one which Moses and Solomon achieved. This kind of exuberant praise belongs to the conventions, cf. e.g. Ep. 6.1 in which Sidonius deems bishop Lupus equal to Moses and James, and addresses him as if he were the Lord himself.

nec illum a proposita devotio suspendit vel tenacitas senum vel intuitus parvulorum, et tamen fuit morum factura quae taceret.

a proposita devotio suspendit, ‘not allowing to interfere with the sacred task he had set before him’ (Anderson): Instead of proposita, T reads propositi – ‘fortasse recte’, Luetjohann judged, but the correspondence presents several parallels of the adjective propositus, ‘intended’, ‘planned’: 4.6.4 propositae litis, 9.4.1 propositae sedulitatis, 9.16.4 proposito ... ordine. So already Cic. Off. 3.6 nunc ad reliquam partem propositae divisionis revertamur.

For devotio see 7.1.6 ‘piety’, 7.7.3 ‘devotion’, ‘loyalty’, and comment.

Suspendere a(b), ‘to withhold’, ‘exclude from’, is later Latin after 400 AD (the classical meaning is ‘to make dependent on’, OLD s.v. 2), cf. e.g. Petr. Chrys. Serm. 127.7 unde etiam quos suspenderit a crimine, avidiores reddit ad crimen. See Blaise s.v. 4 ‘tenir à l’écart, priver, suspendre, interdire’, with examples from the sphere of ecclesiastical sanctions, e.g. Cassian. Inst. 2.16 si quis pro admissō qualibet delictō fuerit ab oratione suspensus.

vel tenacitas senum vel intuitus parvulorum, ‘the close-fistedness of the elder generation and the thought of their children’: In the complex tenax/tenacia/tenacitas the meaning ‘holding on to’, ‘stubbornness’, also includes ‘avarice’, ‘niggardliness’. The elder generation is proverbially stubborn, and, in certain circumstances, very parsimonious, cf. e.g. Pl. Capt. 289 tenaxne pater est eius? immo edepol pertenax, Cic. Cael. 36 patre parco ac tenaci. In this respect also, Simplicius is like Amantius, whose father would not let him have the money, 7.2.3 pater istius granditer frugi et liberis parum liberalis quique per nimiam parsimoniam iuveni filio plus prodesse quam placere maluerit.

Intuitus parvulorum, ‘consideration for his little ones’ (Anderson, and Loyen too). Cf. Sidon. Ep. 4.7.2 intuitu nostri, ‘on account of me’, 7.11.2 intuitu paginae praesentis, ‘from regard for
this letter’ (Anderson). (The fourth occurrence in the letters means ‘gaze’, ‘eye’, 4.12.4 caecutiret intuitu.) Warmington in note 2 was a little doubtful: ‘Is this “the sight of his little ones” or “the thought of,” “regard for”?, but intuitus acquires the meaning ‘consideration’, ‘interest’ from the second century onward, possibly first in the jurists in the phrase intuitu + gen., ‘in consideration of’, which is virtually equivalent to causa + gen. See TLL 7/2: 97.32 i.q. cura, respectus, ratio sim.’. Cf. e.g. Ven. Fort. Mart. praef. 1.1 apud pietatis animum quod opere minus inscribitur dilectionis intuitu dilatatur, ‘a benevolent reader completes what a book lacks out of love’.

The children are a further parallel to Amantius’ situation. Only when she has grandchildren, does Amantius’ mother-in-law realize the paucity of the dowry, and how much Amantius has coaxed out of her, ultimately in the interest of his children (7.2.8 tunc demum de mancipiorum sponsaliciae donationis paucitate maerere, quando iam de nepotum numerositate gaudebat).

tamen, ‘nevertheless’: Despite the fact that overcoming so many difficulties might have entitled him to some complacency, he remained modest and silent.

morum factura, ‘moral make-up’ (Anderson): The phrase is unique. For factura, ‘the make or fashion (of a thing)’ (OLD s.v. 2), cf. Gel. 13.30.2 quando facies sit forma omnis et modus et factura quaedam corporis totius. Sidonius also has Carm. 15.108 f. mortales quarta deinde / respiciat factura suos, ‘then the fourth creation concerns his fellow-mortals’ (about the Platonic hypostases).

Section 22

vir est namque, ni fallor, totius popularitatis alienus

namque, ‘that is’: Further explains fuit morum factura quae taceret: he keeps silent about his achievements and does not exploit them to become popular. For a discussion of namque, see my comment on 7.1.1 namque. In the current phrase and in 7.8.2 huius es namque … dignationis, namque does not take up the first place in the clause, which creates room for what goes before, e.g. as topic; see comment on 7.8.2.

ni fallor, ‘if I am not mistaken’: By inserting a formula of modesty, the speaker tries to make what follows sound even more reliable.

totius popularitatis alienus, ‘wholly incapable of self-advertisement’ (Anderson): Totus = omnis, similarly to the plural for which see my comment on 7.9.3 totos. Omnis follows in the next phrase.

Popularitas, a term from politics, ‘the courting of popular favour’, tends to have a negative connotation, ‘populism’, in Sidonius’ correspondence, e.g. 1.7.3 (Arvandus) praefecturam primam gubernavit cum magna popularitate, q.v. scholion popularitas i. adulatio (see Köhler 1995: 235 f.), 5.20.2 multi ..., quos execrabilis popularitas agit, 8.13.1 sine popularitate communen. In his poetry it has a positive ring, ‘kindness’, ‘popularity’: Carm. 9.300 et carus popularitate princeps, cf. 23.141 and 400.
gratiam non captat omnium sed bonorum, non indiscreta familiaritate vilescens sed examinata sodalitate pretiosus

gratiam non captat omnium sed bonorum, ‘he does not seek the favour of the many, but of the good’: The boni are the ‘good’ as well as the ‘elite’; see my comments on 7.2.5 boni quique, and 7.8.3 plurima bona ... a plurimis bonis. Note the parallel to Amantius, 7.2.5 summatibus ... agnosci innotescere familiarescere. What is sly behaviour in a man from the people, is noblesse oblige in the aristocrat Simplicius.

non indiscreta familiaritate vilescens, ‘he does not make himself cheap by indiscriminate familiarity’ (Anderson): Cf. above, sect. 9 blandi apud eos communione vilescunt, with my comment.

examinata sodalitate pretiosus, ‘valuable because of his proven loyalty’: Examinare (‘to consider critically’, ‘examine’, since Hor. S. 2.2.8) only here in Sidonius. Examinatus meaning ‘proven’, ‘valuable’, is rare, and dear to Ennodius, e.g. Dict. 7 p. 7 l. 41 sequitur examinatiam intentionem effectus operis, ‘well begun is half done’, Opusc. 3 p. 362 l. 16 fides examinata, Opusc. 6 p. 317 l. 36 Probinus patricius, Placidi germinis examinata claritudo. The maxim of first examining someone’s worth, before forming closer ties of amicitia, is also Sidonius’ own, judging by 5.11.1 est enim consuetudinis meae, ut eligam ante, post diligam.

et a bono viratu aemulis suis magis prodesse cupiens quam placere,
Simplicius’ aristocratic mind forbids him to flatter his rivals; instead, he gives them a fair treatment.


aemulis suis, ‘his rivals’, ‘his competitors’: Here in a more general sense; in 7.8.3 concerning the episcopate in particular.

magis prodesse ... quam placere, ‘rather helping than pleasing’: See 7.2.3 plus prodesse quam placere, with comment. This is the rule of conduct of strict, but just fathers. Sidonius puts his protégé in the position of a wise pater familias towards his children, indeed, of a bishop, papa, towards his congregation, cf. e.g. Ferrand. Vita Fulg. Rusp. 14 p. 73 l. 22 (Fulgentius, designated as the bishop of Rusp) inde ad episcopum, qui admonitus fuerat ordinationem celebrare, perductus, ignoti populi constituitur pater, he was brought before the ordaining bishop and ‘appointed as the father of an unknown community’. Not everybody will have welcomed this patronizing attitude.

severis patribus comparandus, qui iuvenum filiorum non tam cogitant vota quam commoda

non tam vota ... quam commoda, ‘not so much what they like as what is good for them’: Develops the pedagogical maxim magis prodesse quam placere. For commodum, ‘profit’, ‘interest’, cf. 3.2.3 non privatum commodum requirebas, 3.5.1 sufficeret fides vestra commodis suis, 4.2.3 in aliorum commoda, 5.20.4 res commodi est, ‘it is worth while’, 6.8.1 non illi est ... militia commodo, ‘he does not earn a salary in the civil service’.

in adversis constans, in dubiis fidus, in prosperis modestus,

A tricolon with progression from negative to positive. The corresponding words in each member have an equal number of syllables, except for the final word, modestus, which has one extra.

For the same three concepts cf. Sen. *Ben.* 7.35.1 *te et in dubiis et in adversis et in laetis sapienter geris.* Simplicius is credited with the attributes of a Stoic wise man.

**in adversis constans,** ‘constant in adversity’: Cf. 8.5.2 *quod probaverunt te adversa constantem.* For Stoicism this is a key concept, e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 98.3 *rectus atque integer ... excipit ... adversa constanter ac fortiter.* For the opposition *adversa - prospera* cf. 4.5.2 *si adversa significes, cum prospera non sequantur, and also 7.7.2 *si quid prosperum cessit, vos secunda solata sunt, si quid contrarium, illos adversa fregerunt.*

**in dubiis fidus,** ‘faithful in times of uncertainty’ (Anderson): Cf. e.g. Pl. *Capt.* 305 f. *neque med umquam deseruisses te neque factis neque fide / rebus in dubiis (*at critical moments’.* In Sidonius cf. 3.13.10 *laudator in prosperis, delator in dubiis, 5.7.5 dubia tempora (*troubled times’*, Anderson), 7.5.3 *inter haec dubia* ‘in this tricky situation’ (see my comment).

**in prosperis modestus,** ‘restrained in times of prosperity’: Again an essential trait of the wise man in Stoicism, e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 98.3 *rectus atque integer ... secunda grate excipit modesteque.* This ideal is called *modestia* (Greek εὐταξία), cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.142. The wise man, under any circumstances, should avoid excess, *intemperantia, ἀκολασία.* For the Stoic theory of affects, refer e.g. to the recent assessment of Stoic ethics by Richard Bett in Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin (edd.), *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy,* Malden, MA. (2006) 530-48, with bibliography.

**in habitu simplex, in sermone communis,**

**in habitu simplex,** ‘simple in dress’: Cf. e.g. 1.7.11 *habitum purpuratorum,* ‘the imperial robes’, and the unpretentious dress of someone who has just taken orders: 4.24.3 *habitus viro gradus pudor color sermo religiosus.* Cf. Apul. *Apol.* 18 *paupertas ... philosophiae ... habitu secura [*negligent’*, *cultu simplex.*

**in sermone communis,** ‘open in conversation’: The phrase does not exist elsewhere, but cf. Ven. *Fort.* *Marc.* 2.5 *cum ... ego sim humilis in sermone.* *Sermo* also in 4.24.3 (just cited). For *communis* cf. 1.9.2 *dignitate elati, dignatione communes,* ‘high in rank, accessible in esteem’, and 8.13.1 *sine popularitate communem,* ‘affable without being populistic’. The concept of *communio* is central in letter 4: see my comment on 7.4.1, and cf. above 7.9.11 *blandi apud eos communione vilescunt.*

**in contubernio aequalis, in consilio praecellens;**

**in contubernio aequalis,** ‘never putting himself forward among his friends’ (Dalton): For *contubernium,* ‘good fellowship’, ‘close collaboration’, see my comment on 7.5.2 *ornes contubernio.*

**in consilio praecellens,** ‘the best in council’: Note the assonance *contubernio - consilio,* and the opposition *aequalis - praecellens.* In his free time he is good company, in his work he strives for excellence. Actually, that is what is expected from a man of the world, for the situation sketched in 2.1.3 *in concilio iubet, in consilio tacet,* ‘in the Great Council he gives orders, in
consultation he is silent’, is turning things topsy-turvy (giving orders where you must be modest, not contributing where you should create a distinct impression).

amicitias probatas enixe expetit, constanter retinet, perenniter servat;
In this society everything revolves around amicitia. Entering alliances, but especially renewing and retaining them, is the object of constant concern. Cf. e.g. 3.2.4 ut ... bonorum amicitias indefessim expetas, capias, referas, 6.7.1 amicitias tuas non tam expetendas mihi quam repetendas, 7.11.1 amicitias semel initas excolere. In 7.2.4 f. we have seen even Amantius networking tirelessly: crebro occursu, frequentibus excubiis, sedulitias.

amicitias probatas enixe expetit, ‘he strives assiduously for proven friendships’: Cf. Rut. Lup. 1.6 (end first cent. BC/beginning first cent. AD) Halm p. 6 item Theophrastus dicitur dixisse: prudentis esse officium, amicitiam probatam appetere, non, appetitam probare. Cicero and Seneca have the same idea, in other words: Cic. Lael. 85 cum iudicaris, dilexit aperit; non, cum dilexeris, iudicave. and Sen. Ep. 1.3.2 isti vero praepostero officia permissent qui, contra praecepta Theophrasti, cum amaverunt iudicavit, et non amant cum iudicaverunt. (For the fragments of Theophrastus’ On Friendship, see William W. Fortenbaugh, Quellen zur Ethik Theophrasts, Amsterdam, 1984; this specific subject section L98, pp. 70 f.) Cf. also Symm. Ep. 5.49 probata ... amicitiae fides.

There is one parallel for enixe expetit: Pl. Trin. 652 atque ego istum agrum tibi relinqui ob eam rem enixe expeto. For enixe cf. 8.12.4 ut te non valeat enixius retinere tempus quam invitare temperies.

constanter retinet, ‘entertains loyally’: Is virtually the same as perenniter servat, the difference, if any, being between the effort (constanter) and the duration (perenniter). The main reason for this tricolon is to balance the parallel tricolon on inimicitia which follows.

perenniter servat, ‘preserves to the end’: The adverb perenniter, ‘rhyming’ with constanter, here only in the correspondence. For the phrase cf. e.g. Cic. Lael. 25 quid? amicitiam nonne facile et qui ob eam summa fide constantia iustitiaque servatam maxumam gloriam ceperit?, cf. Sil. Pun. 1.17 f. tantarum causas iarum odiounque perenni / servatum studio. In Sidonius cf. 2.3.1 vir amicitiarum servantissime.

inimicitias indictas honeste exercet, tarde credit, celeriter deponit;
inimicitias indictas, ‘enmities declared against him’: Inimicitia only here in the correspondence, compared with forty-two times amicitia. Cf. Cic. Ver. 5.182 tacitae magis et occultae inimicitiae timendae sunt quam indictae atque apertae.

exercet ... deponit, ‘exercises ... drops’: Cf. resp. Sal. Cat. 49.2 nam uterque cum illo gravis inimicitias exercetabat, ‘for both fought out serious conflicts of interest with him’, and e.g. Cic. Prov. 47 possem etiam summorum virorum exemplo inimicitias rei publicae causa deponere. For exercere see also my comment on 7.7.1 exercere laeta.

This behaviour is in accordance with the age old codes of honour in Roman society. It is striking that Sidonius does not feel the need to compliment Simplicius for complying with the rules of the church which threatened with excommunication those who did not settle their disputes, e.g. canon 31 of the synod of Agde, a. 506 AD, Conc. Gall. 1: 206 qui si inimicitias deponere pernicioso intentione noluerint, de ecclesiae coetu iustissima excommunicatione pellantur. Evangelical ‘pacifism’ is not taken into account at all, with its precept to love one’s enemies, for ‘if you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners
love those who love them’ (Luke 6.32), or, in Lactantius’ words, Inst. 6.6.12 nam inprobis inimicitias indicere, aut bonorum defensionem suscipere potest cum malis esse commune, ‘for declaring hostility to the bad or taking up the defence of the good is doing like pagans do’.

maxime ambiendus, quia minime ambitiosus, non studet suscipere sacerdotium, sed mereri.

**maxime ambiendus, quia minime ambitiosus**, ‘the perfect candidate, because he does not impose himself as a candidate’; Ambiendus/ambitiosus is about ambitus, ‘canvassing’, during elections, as Loyen has seen, which in this context seems preferable to me to the moral category Anderson introduced: ‘a man to be desired ... because he desires so little for himself’. The wordplay is also found in 3.2.1 non ambitiosus comitatu sed ambiendus affectu, ‘not imposing yourself with your retinue, but inviting due to your friendliness’, and cf. 8.3.5 a divitibus ambitum nec divitias ambientem. About ambi and affability see Ep. 7.4.

**Section 23**

dicit aliquis: «unde tibi de illo tam cito tanta comperta sunt?» cui respondeo: prius Bituriges noveram quam Biturigas.

dicit aliquis: «unde tibi ... tanta comperta sunt?», ‘Somebody will say: “How do you know all this?”’: Cf. Cic. Pis. 68 dicit aliquis: ‘unde haec tibi nota sunt?’. Dicit aliquis (present tense) is not found in authors prior to 200 AD, whereas it occurs 95 times in authors from 200 till 500. The respective frequency for dicit aliquis (future tense) is 31 and 75 times, which amounts to a fairly even distribution because the corpus from 200-500 is 2,3 times as big as the one before 200 (data CLCLT-6).

**Bituriges ... Biturigas**, ‘the inhabitants of Bourges ... (the town of) Bourges’: See my comment on 7.5.1 Biturigas ... adveni.

multos in itinere multos, in commilitio,

**in itinere ... in commilitio**, ‘on the road ... in service’: Opposing ‘private’ to ‘official’, or ‘chance’ to ‘organized’. The exact connotation of commilitium remains necessarily vague. It means either ‘association in military service’ or ‘comradeship in other activities’ (OLD s.v.). In later antiquity ‘“military” service’ also means ‘public service’ (see my comment on 7.2.3 militia). Cf. the remaining occurrences in the correspondence, which are also variously interpreted, 1.11.3 cum semper mihi tum praecipue commilitio recenti familiaris, and 3.6.1 si veteris commilitii ... fides vestra reminiscitur.

multos in contractu, multos in tractatu,

**in contractu ... in tractatu**, ‘in doing business ... in discussion’: Opposing commercial to non-commercial situations. This is the same wordplay, but in the singular, as in 5.7.4 in tractatibus coeae, in contractibus trapezitae, ‘in discussions snails, in contracts usurers’ (Anderson).

For contractus, ‘the undertaking of a transaction; a legal or commercial agreement, contract’ (OLD s.v. 2, 3), cf. e.g. 4.24.8 ‘contract’, 6.4.2 ‘transaction’.
For *tractatus* I prefer ‘discussion’ to ‘negotiation’ (Anderson, Loyen). In Sidonius *tractatus* is either ‘letter’, ‘advice’ or ‘discussion, consideration, investigation’, see Mossberg 1934: 95 f. and 7.6.6, 7.8.1 and 7.9.12-18, with comment.

multos in sua, multos in nostra peregrinatione cognoscimus.

in ... *peregrinatione*, ‘travelling on duty’: On several occasions Sidonius uses *peregrinatio* for a stay abroad in military or public service, as in 1.5.1, about his journey from Lyon to Rome with a delegation of Arvernians to hand a petition to the new emperor Anthemius (see Köhler 1995: 300 ad loc.), and 1.6.1 f., where he exhorts his friend Eutropius to take up the responsibilities of the *militia Palatina*, which entails a *peregrinatio* to Rome, *domicilium legum ... verticem mundi*. Finally, 1.11.3 links up *peregrinatio* with commilitium (see above): *Catullinus ... cum semper mihi tum praecipue commilitio recenti familiaris; saepe enim cives magis amicos peregrinatio facit*: working together abroad knits close ties of friendship.

*sua*, ‘their’: For *sua* instead of *eorum* see my comment on 7.6.6 *pectori suo*. The current instance must be added to the list of this phenomenon in Grupe’s *Index verborum et locutionum* in Luetjohann’s edition, p. 481 s.v. *suus*.

*cognoscimus* The present tense, instead of the perfect *cognovimus*, makes it a general statement: ‘one gets to know ...’.

plurima notitiae dantur et ex opinione compendia,

*plurima notitiae dantur et ex opinione compendia*, ‘considerable advantages for knowing someone are also yielded by his reputation’: The focus is on *ex opinione*.

*Compendium* in Sidonius is either ‘shortcut’, ‘saving of time’ (2.9.2, 9.9.8) or ‘profit’, ‘help’, ‘advantage’ (1.6.4, 6.7.1, 6.8.1). Anderson’s translation ‘much in outline’ is not very felicitous. The noun generally occurs in the singular, but cf. e.g. Man. 4.19 *damna et compendia rerum*, ‘losses and profits’.

For *notitia*, ‘acquaintance’, cf. 4.24.2 *quia cum Maximo mihi non notitiae solum verum et hospitii vetera iura, 8.6.14 est eis quaedam cum discriminibus pelagi non notitia solum sed familiaritas*.

*Opinio*, ‘reputation’: cf. our comment on 7.4.1 *cum sitis opinione magni*. Cf. also 1.5.1 *montes numinum opinione vulgatos (nominum coni. Wilamowitz: nominum codd.). See above sect. 7 grandem publicae opinionis sarcinam*, in a different context.

*quia non tam parvos terminos posuit famae natura quam patriae.*

The same thought, that one can be acquainted with somebody without having met him, because fame exceeds the boundaries of the home town, recurs repeatedly, along with the the cognate topos of boundless friendship. Cf. e.g. 8.14.1 (to bishop Principius) *iamdiu nobis, papa venerabilis, etsi neclum vester vultus aspectus, tamen actus inspectus est. namque sanctorum laus diffusa meritorum stringi spatiis non est contenta finalibus*, ‘for a long time, worthy bishop, I have experienced your actions, although I have not yet seen your face; but the praise of saintly merits spreads abroad and is not confined within narrow limits’, and a little further: *nec bonae opinioni terminus*, ‘no limit to a good reputation’. See my comment on 7.5.5 *quia terminus potuerit poni vestrae quidem regioni, sed non potuerit caritati*. 
Compare the preference for patrons who manage to be attractive even at a great distance (7.4.3 ego tamen morum illius aemulatoress esse praeelegerim, qui etiam longe positorum incitare in se affectat affectum; see my comment ad loc.), and also e.g. 7.14.1 remotioribus notum, and above sect. 19 civi clerico peregrino.

parvos terminos, ‘narrow bounds’: This phrase only in Ennod. Carm. 1.18.1 f. angusta vitae tempora, / parvis coacta terminis. Angustus is the usual adjective (e.g. Tac. Dial. 12.5, Plin. Ep. 3.7.13); modicus (e.g. Cic. Deiot. 36) and brevis (e.g. Cypr. Pat. 20) also occur.

famae, ‘reputation, ‘fame’: Bad or good rumour exceeds all boundaries. In poetry it reaches even the stars, Verg. A. 1.287 (August) famam qui terminet astris, 4.176 (Fama) mox sese attollit in auras.

quocirca si urbium status non tam murorum ambitu quam civium claritate taxandus est, non modo primum qui essetis, sed ubi essetis agnovi.»

‘So if towns must be rated according to the quality of their inhabitants, not to their surface area, this is not the first time I gathered who you are, although only now do I see where you live.’

quocirca, ‘in consequence of which’, ‘so’: In consequence of the fact that I have heard so much about you before I came here. Sidonius uses quocirca as many as nineteen times. For this type of phrase cf. 2.4.3 quocirca, quia, 4.4.2 quocirca, nisi.

si, ‘if’: The idea is: ‘If towns must be judged by their inhabitants first of all (and nobody present will contradict that), I could be expected to have inquired after you before I arrived here.’ Nobody can deny the truth of the maxim that people are more important than houses. Consequently, the audience has to accept that it was only normal that Sidonius got his information about them before he came to visit them.

urbium status, ‘the status of towns’: For status see my comment on 7.1.3 statu urbis exinanito.

non tam murorum ambitu quam civium claritate taxandus est, ‘must be judged by the excellence of its inhabitants rather than by the length of its walls’: Murorum ambitus, ‘the circumference of the walls’, (the length of the walls’, is found since the fourth century, e.g. Amm. 18.6.10 circumvallato murorum ambitu praedatores latius vagabantur. In Sidonius cf. 1.5.1 urbes moenium situ inclitas.

Civium claritas, ‘the renown of their citizens’: Seneca distinguished claritas from gloria, Ep. 102.17 ‘gloria’ multorum iudiciis constat, ‘claritas’ bonorum, ‘“gloria” is decided by popular vote, “claritas” by the best’.

Taxare (only here in Sidonius) ‘to determine the size of’, e.g. Plin. Nat. 6.207 Agrippa hoc idem intervallum ... XXXIII.XL (passuum milibus) taxat. Literally with murorum statu, metaphorically with civium claritate.

non modo primum qui essetis, sed ubi essetis agnovi, ‘this is not the first time I learn who you are, although it is the first time I learn where you are’: Sidonius is in Bourges for the first time, but he had already heard a lot about its inhabitants. The key to the solution of this cryptic phrase (due to the constraint of rounding off the passage with a parallelism) was found by Shackleton Bailey 1982: 171. He took modo = nuper, and combined modo primum:
‘only recently’, ‘now for the first time’. Loyen comes closest: ‘j’ai commencé par savoir qui vous étiez avant de savoir où vous étiez’, but misses modo primum. The reading in C primum modo may be due to the difficulty of understanding the text.

The meaning of the phrase is the same as of the initial one: prius Bituriges noveram quam Biturigas. In this way it rounds off in an embrace Sidonius’ answer to the question ‘How do you know all this?’ (The Budé edition should have closed the inverted commas here.)

Section 24

uxor illi de Palladiorum stirpe descendit, qui aut litterarum aut altarium cathedras cum sui ordinis laude tenuerunt.


de Palladiorum stirpe, ‘from the family of the Palladii’: The Palladii were a Gallo-Roman family of landed gentry in the Auvergne, of which several members can be traced, be it inadequately, in the fifth and sixth centuries. The father of Simplicius’ wife, Palladius, probably preceded Simplicius’ own father as bishop of Bourges (see above on sect. 17 parentes ipsius).

In Carm. 9.310 Sidonius mentions a vilicus, ‘peasant’, which via Juvenal (4.77) might be an allusion to a praefectus urbi (an idea of Mommsen’s; see Anderson’s note 7 and Loyen 1: 187 n. 38 ad loc.) – who then might have been the brilliant Palladius mentioned by Rutilius Namatianus in de Red. 1.209. A further identification with the praefectus urbi of 458, and author of an Opus agriculturae, Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus, is equally controversial (see Loyen ibidem and Stroheker 1948: 197 f. # 274.

In Ep. 5.10.3 Sidonius mentions a certain rhetor Palladius for his pompa. It is impossible to know whether he was a member of the family, or one of several namesakes (see note Warming ad loc.).

aut litterarum aut altarium cathedras, ‘chairs of rhetoric or episcopal posts’: For cathedra, ‘chair of a teacher’, and hence ‘a bishop’s office’, see on 7.6.9 cathedris ... eliminatos. The phrase with explicative gen. litterarum and/or altarium is unique to Sidonius. Cf. Aug. Ep. 118.2 cathedras ecclesiasticas ... rhetoricis cathedris.

The word cathedra of a grammaticus or a rhetor is not usually provided with any further explanation. For the use of litterae, ‘language’, ‘literature’, in this context, one may compare Auson. Prof. (= 11) 7.9 f. (about the grammaticus Leontius) litteris tantum titulum adsecutus, / quantus exili satis est cathedrae, ‘he had attained a degree of language just about sufficient for his modest post’.

For ‘episcopal chair’, instead of the exquisite altaris cathedra, the more usual phrase is cathedra episcopalis, e.g. Optat. 2.2.2, or sometimes cathedra episcopatus, e.g. Arnob. Iun. Praedest. 1.43. Sidonius has 9.11.5 antistitum ... cathedris. That it could be used of priests in general, as
Anderson n. 2 ad loc. suggests, seems improbable. This is not the way in which *cathedra* is applied, and priesthood would not have meant much in the way of a career.

The occupations of Simplicius’ own ancestry lay also in the sphere of the episcopacy, or else of the law courts: sect. 17 *parentes ipsius aut cathedris aut tribunalibus praesederunt*.

*cum sui ordinis laude*, ‘with credit to their (respective) orders’ (Anderson) or ‘with the compliments of their orders’ (Loyen): I.e. clergy or laity as the case may be (see note 3 Anderson ad loc.).

*sane quia persona matronae verecundam succinctamque sui exigit mentionem,*

*sane*, ‘but’: With *sane*, here in its role as a concession marker, the speaker expresses ‘his assent of the content of one speech act, while immediately objecting against its possible consequences in the next speech act’ (Risselada 1994: 334). This amounts to something like: ‘It is true she is a first-rate woman, and it is tempting to say a lot more about her, but …’. See also above on sect. 13 *sane id liberius dico*.

*persona matronae*, ‘the person of a lady’: Loyen, correctly: ‘la condition de la femme mariée’, better than Anderson’s ‘the personality of that lady’. The statement is a general one: ‘It is indecent to talk about a lady in too much detail.’ The formulation of the idea is at least as old as the words Thucydides reports of Pericles when he addresses the housewives of Athens: Thuc. 2.45.2 τῆς γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ ἂν ἐπ᾽ ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἡ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἀριστεῖς κλέος ἡ, ‘your great glory is not to be inferior to your own nature: it is best when a woman is least talked about by men, either praising or criticizing her.’ For testimonies about Gallo-Roman women, see Santelia 2008.

*verecundam succinctamque ... mentionem*, ‘respectful and concise mention’: The two adjectives are paired only here. Even separately, they are not used by other authors together with *mentio*. For the highly valued quality of *verecundia*, see my comment on 7.2.1 *onera ... verecundiam meam*.

Succinctus is found with the – rather unusual – meaning of ‘compact’, ‘concise’ (of books, statements, etc.) since Mart. 2.1.3 *succincti ... libelli*. Cf. Sidon. Ep. 1.9.2 *fabor ... succinctius*, and 4.3.3 *dictio ... succincta*.

*constantem adstruxerim respondere illam feminam sacerdotiis utriusque familiae, vel ubi educta crevit vel ubi electa migravit*.

*constantem adstruxerim*, ‘I would unhesitatingly affirm’ (Anderson): For *constantem* cf. 7.14.2 *constanter asserui*. For *adstruxerim* see above sect. 13 *astruo*, and my comment.

*respondere*, ‘(of persons or things) to rise to the level demanded (by)’, ‘show oneself worthy (of) or equal (to)’ (OLD 13). See above on 7.9.16 *Simplicius ... utrique parti ... respondet*, ‘suits’, ‘harmonizes with’.

*sacerdotiis utriusque familiae*, ‘the bishoprics of both families’: More than ‘priesthoods’ (Anderson): both families boasted members of the highest ecclesiastical rank. This deserves special mention as she will soon be *episcopa*. 
educta crevit ... electa migravit, ‘was reared and grew up ... was adopted and moved to’: The same wordplay with eductus – electus is found in 3.11.2 ad stipulatur huic de te sententiae bonorum vel sic electus gener vel educta sic filia, ‘this esteem you are held in by good men is confirmed by your choice of a son-in-law and the upbringing of your daughter’. For this variation technique, see General Introduction, sect. 6.2 Style.

filios ambo bene et prudenter instituunt, quibus comparatus pater inde felicior incipit esse, quia vincitur.

filios ambo ... instituunt, ‘they both bring up their sons’: Ambo is always nominative in Sidonius (cf. the accusative ambos in 8.6.10 seu alterutrum ambosve sectere), which means that Anderson’s ‘their two sons’ is not right. For gender roles in the education of the children in traditional paganism and in Christian aristocratic families, see Salzman 2002: 155 ff., on the role of the Christian mother especially p. 160. The mother’s role was a secondary one compared to the father’s responsibility, especially with regard to educating sons. The aristocratic mother could teach the children to read, and she could read Scriptures with them, but probably in most cases tutors did that job. Chadwick 1955: 299-302, however, has made a plausible case for an important role of women in the education of children in Gaul: ‘We are led to surmise that the true nucleus of the family and the home in these great Gaulish households were the women on the maternal side of the family’ (299). Sidonius himself confided the upbringing of his children to his mother and her daughters in Lyon.


quibus comparatus pater inde felicior incipit esse quia vincitur, ‘once compared with them, their father will be all the more happy as he is surpassed by them’: The ultimate goal of education is that the children, the sons in the first place, reach an even better position than the parents had. The motif is repeated in 3.11.2 parentes ambo venerabiles, est securi: idcirco ceteros vincitis quod vos filii transierunt, and 8.7.4 deum posco, ut te filii consequatur aut ... transcendant, cf. e.g. Plin. Pan. 89 quam laetum tibi quod comparatus filio tuo vinceris, Symm. Ep. 6.20.2 o te beatum, amice, si vinceres [scil. a filio], Claud. Paneg. Hon. (= 8).430 f. iam natus adaequat / te meritis et, quod magis est optabile, vincit, and, about a daughter, Alc. Avit. Carm. 6.99 f. matres ... / gaudebunt vinci, dum proficis (Fuscina, who vowed to remain a virgin, will surpass her predecessors in the family (matres), and they will rejoice at it). Cf. also Quint. Inst. 11.1.82 omnium est votum parentum ut honestiores quam sint ipsi liberos habeant.

In the passages 5.16.4 and 8.7.3 f. we are introduced to situations in Sidonius’ own circle where this attitude is practised. In letter 5, to his wife Papianilla, he thanks God for the fact that he himself has managed to work his way up from praefectorian to patrician. Now he hopes the next generation may be consular. In letter 8 he congratulates a certain Audax, that he has got the opportunity, through his nomination as praefectus praetorio under Nepos AD 474, to boost the status of his family, with hopes of further advancement for his children: ‘nothing, in the opinion of the upper class, is nobler (nihil ... est ... per sententiam boni cuiusque generosius) than an unremitting effort to surpass one’s forefathers (ut maioribus suis anteponatur). See Salzman 2002: 107 ff. on career paths.

In another letter, 7.13, also about a father and a son, the compliment is slightly different: the father, Sulpicius, is congratulated on his son, Himerius, because the son is as brilliant as his father.
According to Näf 1995: 164, the implication of the current phrase is that Simplicius’ sons had become priests, because clerics q.q. surpass laymen. I do not find any lead for this specific interpretation in the text.

incipit esse, ‘he is going to be’: As the process of education is still going on, the excellence of the boys is still a promise. Incipit is an auxiliary for the future tense; see my comment on 7.6.3 incipit imminere.

Section 25

Peroratio: the address comes to an end. Simplicius must be the new bishop. The public is invited to make audible its consent. It had sworn to abide by Sidonius’ decision. Now is the moment.

et quia sententiam parvitatis meae in hac electione valituram esse iurastis,

et, ‘well’: This is et functioning, as it is called, on the ‘presentational’ level of discourse. It links two information units which represent two separate ‘acts’. The first act was the argumentation pro Simplicius. The second act, with et, draws the conclusion from this preliminary argumentation. See Kroon 1995: 70.

quia sententiam parvitatis meae ... valituram esse iurastis, ‘since you have sworn that the verdict of my humble self shall hold good’ (Anderson). For sententia valet cf. e.g. Aug. Psalm. 36.2.19 sed si valere vis adversus illum sententias tunc Donatistarum, valeant nunc adversus te sententiae Maximianistarum, and Sidon. Ep. 8.6.9 granditer enim sua in utramvis de me opinionem sententia valet, ‘his verdict of me in either direction is very important’.

Parvitatis meae: The authoritative pronouncement is made palatable by a simultaneous sign of self-effacement. For similar phrases cf. 7.8.1 and 7.9.6 mediocritas mea, 7.9.7 humilitas nostra. Parvitas mea/nostra is first found in V. Max. 1 praef. (the dedication of the Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri IX to the emperor Tiberius), and then regularly from the fourth century onward.

The reading iurastis NMCF is followed by all editions and Mossberg. The v.l. iuratis LT is not easily defendable.

siquidem non est validius dicere sacramenta quam scribere,
‘as one cannot take stronger oaths than write them down’. As Loyen translates: ‘car il n’est pas de serment plus fort qu’un serment écrit’, not, with Anderson: ‘for an oath spoken has no less validity than a written one’. Est is like Greek ἔξεστι + inf.: ‘it is possible’, see OLD s.v. 9, LHS 2: 349. Validius defines dicere: ‘say in a more binding way’. Cf. e.g. Plin. Nat. 23.112 non est satis mirari curam diligentiamque priscorum, ‘one cannot have enough admiration’ (cf. ibid. 14.2 illud satis mirari non queo etc.). The phrase does not belong to Sidonius’ standard repertory, but is evoked by the urge to formulate this crucial condition as strikingly and conclusively as possible. Bourges had promised, in black and white, that it would follow Sidonius’ decision, the pagina decretalis mentioned in the exordium of the speech (sect. 6, see my comment there). Thus, the speech begins and ends with it.
Validius continues the preceding valituram: ‘You have promised in the most binding way that my pronouncement will be binding’.

in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti Simplicius est, quem provinciae nostrae metropolitanum, civitati vestrae summum sacerdotem fieri debere pronuntio.

in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, ‘in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’: This formula again emphasizes the catholic character of the nomination, before a partly Arian audience (see above comment on sect. 15 omnipotens deus noster). As the Arians did not consider the Holy Spirit as being God on an equal footing with God the Father and God the Son, and thought of the Son as subordinated to the Father (ὁμοιούσιος, ‘of similar substance’, was one of the definitions). their form of the doxology was: ‘Glory be to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit’. See CHC 2: 57 and the literature mentioned above. On the ‘Arian danger’ in Gaul see GC 3: 229 f., and the Introductions to letter 6, section 4 Arians and Catholics, and to letter 9, section 4 Theme and function with note 183.

The confirmation of an important statement with an oath in this way is not often found in literature. Cf. Remigius of Reims’ testament (533 AD) which begins and ends with it (SL 117 p. 474-79, ed. B. Krusch, 1957).

provinciae nostrae, ‘our/my province’, ‘this province’, because Sidonius’ Clermont belongs to the provincia of the metropolitan of Bourges. Cf. the Notitia Galliarum in Griffe 2: 116.

vos autem de viro, quo loquimur, si novam sententiam meam sequimini, secundum vestram veterem consonate.

vos autem, ‘as for you’, correlates with the preceding pronuntio ‘I, for my part, declare’. Autem as a marker of parallel focus is discussed by Kroon 1995: 229-38.

quo codd. Mohr Anderson Loyen Bellès: quem Luetjohann (‘non bene’, Anderson judged). The reading quo, I think, is right, harsh as it may be. Apart from the unanimity of the manuscripts, Mohr xxxiv provided some convincing parallels for the attractio relativi: Ruric. Ep. 2.29.3 de causa qua mihi scribere dignati estis (cf. Ep. 2.57.1 in eadem qua mihi scripsistis causa), and several occurrences in Cassianus, Ennodius and the Codex Theodosianus.

Luetjohann must have seen that Sidonius elsewhere uses quem loquimur: 4.9.2 ipse, quem loquimur, ‘the man I am speaking about’, and 8.6.7 quem loquimur, orator, ‘the orator I am talking about’. Loqui + acc. of persons, ‘to speak of’, ‘mention’, is reasonably well attested throughout Latinity (although loqui de is much more frequent), from Pl. Men. 321 f. quas tu mulieres, / quos tu parasitos loquere?, to Merob. (fifth cent. AD) Poet. 1 p. 8. 1. 16 et quidem multum dicturo obst ignorantia; debet nosse quem loquitur. In view of the fact that Sidonius uses this turn of phrase (on a par with loqui de, e.g. 2.2.1), the attractio relativi quo is conceivable. Furthermore, the parallels from contemporary authors are decisive. For this later Latin usage of attractio relativi ‘mit Hinübergreifen der Praepos. aus dem Hauptsatz in das Gebiet des Relativsatzes’, see LHS 2: 567.

novam sententiam meam ... vestram veterem, ‘my recent ... your long-standing decision’: Resp. Sidonius’ decision to choose Simplicius and the people’s decision to put the election in the hands of Sidonius (thus expressly Anderson and Bellès). Alternatively, one might want to
advocate that the *vetus sententia* is the preference the people had shown earlier for Simplicius (sect. 20). However, I would not call that an (official) *sententia*, as the earlier occasion was clearly spontaneous and perhaps even violent (*vociferabamini*). Hence, it is difficult to see why ‘this odd *novus-vetus* business obscures the meaning’ (Anderson’s note ad loc.). On the contrary, it is a forceful recapitulation of the process, and beautifully formulated at that. Note the chiasmus, with the lively move of the possessive pronoun from the position after the noun in *sententiam meam* to the position before it in *vestram veterem* (*sententiam*), with added contrastive focus (cf. e.g. Cic. Agr. 2.16 quae cum, Quirites, exposuero, si falsa vobis videbuntur esse, sequar auctoritatem vestram, mutabo meam sententiam).

For the favourite opposition *novus* – *vetus*, cf. e.g. 1.10.1 *accepi per praefectum annonae litteras tuas, quibus cum tibi sodalem veterem mihi insinuas iudici novo, and 4.3.3 nova ibi verba quia *vetusta* (about archaic words; see Monni 1999: 26). See also my comments on 7.1.3 ad nova celer veterum Ninivitarum exempla decurrísti, and 7.6.1 novo nostrorum temporum exemplo amiciarum vetera iura. An equally popular conceit is the pair *primus* – *secundus*; see my comment on 7.2.2 secundo … *primum*.

**consonate**, ‘shout everybody’, ‘applause’: As effective a final word as one could wish for. It recalls the desire uttered by the speaker in his introduction, sect. 7, not to be applauded so much as to be supported by prayer (*dignemini humilitatem nostram orationibus potius in caelum ferre quam plausibus*). Now that everything has been said, there is every reason for applause and a shout of approval. Compare *plaudite*, ‘applause’, as the last word in comedies. In 8.6.6 a reaction ‘οοοο’ is mentioned: *illi maximum sophos non eloquentia prius quam verecundia dedit*, ‘not his eloquence in the first place but his modesty earned him a loud “bravo”‘ (cf. Petr. 40.1 ‘sophos’, universi clamamus). Reacting enthousiastically to the sermons of his mentor Faustus, Sidonius – in his own words – behaved like a *raucus plosor*, ‘applauding till I was hoarse’ (9.3.5). Cf. also 9.14.8 praeparare aures fragoribus intonaturis, ‘prepare the ears for a thundering applause’.

For the use of *consonare* in this not so common way (Blaise s.v. 2 ‘tr. faire entendre d’un commun accord’), cf. e.g. Sen. Con. 9 praef. 5 *inter fremitum consonantis turbæ*, Hier. Ep. 45.3 *antequam domum sanctæ Paulæ nossem, totius in me urbis studia consonabant*, Hormisd. Ep. 65 sugg. 2 (PL 63: 473c) *similia et omnes catholicæ consonabant* (the catholics agreed with the arguments of the emperor for the nomination of a new bishop in Antioch). Cf. Liv. 36.34.5 *consonante clamore ... orare*, Alc. Avit. c. Eutych. 2 p.22 l. 17 *consonae plebis clamor* (enthusiasm of the community during Mass at the Sanctus).

For a comparable, but less emotional, ending of a speech, see Cic. Phil 11.40 quae cum ita sint, *eam quam dixi sententiam vobis, patres conscripti, censeo comprobandum*. 