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Constructing Emotions and Creating Identities
Emotional Persuasion in the Letters of Sidonius Apollinaris and Ruricius of Limoges

Abstract It is undeniable that the act of letter writing should be understood as a communication process in which information is shared, discussions are held, and different persuasion strategies are applied for convincing the addressees of certain pleas or ideas.

This paper focuses on emotional persuasion as a narrative instrument in the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris and Ruricius of Limoges to demonstrate that the authors constructed emotional communities with their readers. Based on this community, they wanted to convince their readers to follow a particular lifestyle: *Romanitas* and *Christianitas*. An in-depth analysis of emotional persuasion in their letters can contribute to a better understanding of the literary circles of Sidonius and Ruricius.

Zusammenfassung Das Verfassen und Versenden von Briefen ist als ein Kommunikationsprozess zu verstehen, in dem Informationen ausgetauscht, Diskussionen geführt und verschiedene Überredungsstrategien angewandt werden, um die Adressaten und Adressatinnen von bestimmten Argumenten oder Ideen zu überzeugen. Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die emotionale Überzeugung als narratives Instrument in den Briefen von Sidonius Apollinaris und Ruricius von Limoges. Er zeigt, dass die Autoren emotionale Gemeinschaften mit ihren Lesern schufen, auf deren Grundlage sie diese davon zu überzeugen suchten, einem bestimmten Lebensstil zu folgen: dem der *Romanitas* und *Christianitas*. Eine tiefgreifende Analyse der emotionalen Überzeugungsarbeit Sidonius Apollinaris' und Ruricius von Limoges' kann zu einem besseren Verständnis der literarischen Zirkel beitragen, in denen sich die beiden Autoren bewegten.

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Introduction

In a time when Gaul was slowly falling into the hands of non-Roman groups, like Goths, Burgundians, or Franks, the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris[1] and Ruricius of Limoges[2] share daily socio-political struggles, personal worries, fears, and hopes, as well as their efforts to maintain classical education, as a core marker for *nobilitas*. Both authors lived during the fifth century,[3] were members of the Gallo-Roman senatorial elites,[4] received a classical education, and became, later in life, bishops. Whereas Sidonius reports on his own political and ecclesiastical career, as well as the resistance against non-Roman groups in the Auvergne,[5] we know little about the life

1   See e.g. Courtenay E. Stevens, Sidonius Apollinaris and his Age, Oxford 1933; Jill Harries, Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, AD 407–485, Oxford 1994. Modern editions and translations: Sidonius, Poems and Letters, with an English translation, introduction and notes by William B. Anderson, London, Cambridge 1936/1970; Sidoine Apollinaire, texte établi et traduit par André Loyen (Collection des Universités de France), Paris 1960–1970; C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius, Die Briefe, eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von Helga Köhler (Bibliothek der Mittellateinischen Literatur 11), Stuttgart 2014. For an overview on the modern Sidonius scholarship, see Silvia Condorelli, Sidonius Scholarship. Twentieth to Twenty-First Centuries, in: Gavin Kelly and Joop A. van Waarden (eds.), The Edinburgh Companion to Sidonius Apollinaris, Edinburgh 2020, pp. 564–617, esp. pp. 566–572.

2   See e.g. Harald Hagendahl, La correspondance de Ruricius (Göteborgs Högskolas årsskrift 58), Göteborg 1952; Ruricius of Limoges and friends. A collection of letters from Visigothic Gaul: Letters of Ruricius of Limoges, Caesarius of Arles, Euphrasius of Clermont, Faustus of Riez, Graecus of Marseilles, Paulinus of Bordeaux, Sedatus of Nîmes, Sidonius Apollinaris, Taurentius and Victorinus of Fréjus, transl. with introduction, commentary and notes by Ralph W. Mathisen (Translated Texts for Historians 30), Liverpool 1999; Ruricius Lemovicensis, Lettere, ed. by Marino Neri (Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Pavia 122), Pisa 2009; Ralph W. Mathisen, The Letter Collection of Ruricius of Limoges, in: Cristiana Sogno, Bradley K. Storin and Edward J. Watts (eds.), Late Antique Letter Collections. A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide, Oakland CA, 2017, pp. 337–356.

3   See e.g. John F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (eds.), Fifth-century Gaul. A Crisis of Identity?, Cambridge 1992; Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (eds.), Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources, Aldershot, Burlington 2001; Steffen Diefenbach and Gernot M. Müller (eds.), Gallien in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Kulturgeschichte einer Region (Millennium-Studien 43), Berlin, Boston 2013; Christine Delaplace, La fin de l'Empire romain d'Occident. Rome et les Wisigoths de 382 à 531 (Collection Histoire, Série Histoire ancienne), Rennes 2015, pp. 99–281. Editions used for Sidonius and Ruricius are: C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius, Epistulae et Carmina, ed. by Christian Luethjohann (MGH Auctores Antiquissimi 8), Berlin 1887; Ruricius Lemovicensis — Epistularum libri II accedentibus epistulis ad Ruricium scriptis, ed. by Roland Demeulenaere (CCSL 64), Turnhout 1985, pp. 303–415.

4   On Gallic senatorial elites: Tabea L. Meurer, Vergangenes verhandeln. Spätantike Statusdiskurse senatorischer Eliten in Gallien und Italien (Millennium-Studien 79), Berlin, Boston 2019, pp. 164–253; Hendrik Hess, Das Selbstverständnis der gallo-römischen Oberschicht. Übergang, Hybridität und Latenz im historischen Diskursraum von Sidonius Apollinaris bis Gregor von Tours (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 111), Berlin 2019, pp. 27–117.

5   The letter collection of Sidonius is highly researched and a complete bibliography can be found on https://sidonapol.org/. See e.g. Sigrid Mratschek, The Letter Collection of Sidonius Apollinaris, in: Cristiana Sogno, Bradley K. Storin and Edward J. Watts (eds.), Late antique letter collections. A critical introduction and reference guide, Oakland CA 2017, pp. 309–336;

of Ruricius, aside from fragments of information gathered from his correspondences. However, both authors belonged to a common literary circle, and Ruricius was not only in contact with Sidonius but also shared strong familial and friendship ties, exemplified by Sidonius's *epithalamium* for Ruricius's wedding.[6]

Whereas Sidonius admits that he rearranged and revised his letters before they were publicly circulated, and modern scholarship has found a consensus that all nine books circulated before Sidonius died,[7] we cannot assume the same for the letters of Ruricius. However, MATHISEN convincingly argued that at least the first book was completely and the second book in parts prepared by Ruricius himself for circulating publicly. He further assumes that the first book might have circulated before 490 CE, so during Ruricius's lifetime. The final assemblage of the second book, as well as its circulation, dates to after his death.[8]

With their letters, both authors want to pass on a specific image of their personalities to their readers.[9] One can even state that all these letters share one purpose: to convince the readers that the authors were morally good men, meaning that they behaved according to what was perceived as a good life, and thus, the letters can be understood as a means to justify their actions.[10] Obviously, a "good character" is subjective and referring to an ideal that Sidonius or Ruricius and their circle constructed according to their needs. In their letters, they offer examples of morally good men, and, based on them, we can retrace our authors' understanding of being a *vir bonus*.[11] Already Aristotle claims that only an orator who appears to have a morally good character can win the trust of his audience and, consequently, persuade them.[12] Ancient epistolary theories proselytised that letters reflect the author's soul and mirror the writer's character.[13] Linking both approaches means that if Sidonius and

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Michael P. HANAGHAN, Reading Sidonius' Epistles, Cambridge 2019; KELLY and van WAARDEN (note 1).

6   Sidon. carm. 11; cf. MATHISEN (note 2), pp. 80–83.

7   Sidon. epist. 1.1.1. On dating the letters, cf. Gavin KELLY, Dating the works of Sidonius, in: Gavin KELLY and Joop A. van WAARDEN (eds.), The Edinburgh Companion to Sidonius Apollinaris, Edinburgh 2020, pp. 166–194, esp. pp. 179–193; cf. Ralph W. MATHISEN, Dating the letters of Sidonius, in: Joop van WAARDEN and Gavin KELLY (eds.), New Approaches to Sidonius Apollinaris, Leuven 2013, pp. 221–248, here pp. 231–232.

8   MATHISEN (note 2), pp. 340–344.

9   When using "reader", I refer to any possible reader of the letters, from Antiquity until today. Otherwise, I will use "recipient" or "addressee".

10 Cf. Ralph W. MATHISEN, Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul. Strategies for survival in an age of transition, Austin 1993, pp. 111–116; Joop A. van WAARDEN, Writing to survive. A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris. Letters Book 7. Vol. 1, The Episcopal Letters 1–11 (Late Antique History and Religion), Leuven, Paris, Walpole MA 2010, pp. 19, 30–31.

11 E.g. Sidon. epist. 5.11; Rvric. epist. 1.6.

12 Arist. Rhet. 1.2.4, p. 1356a. All references to Aristotle after: Aristotle, Art of Rhetoric, ed. by John H. FREESE (Loeb Classical Library 193), Cambridge 1926.

13 Demtr. Eloc. 227 (Demetrios von Phaleron, De elocutione, ed. by Ludwig RADERMACHER, Leipzig 1901); cf. Wolfgang G. MÜLLER, Der Brief als Spiegel der Seele. Zur Geschichte eines Topos

Ruricius manage to convince their readers of their upright character, they would also persuade their counterparts to comply with their respective requests.

In understanding the act of letter writing as a communication process and following the hypothesis of CHANIOTIS, KROPP, and STEINHOFF that every interpersonal relation and its communication is based on constant negotiations, aiming to persuade a counterpart, we must keep in mind that epistolarians intended to persuade the addressees, or in the case of a wider circulation the readers, of a certain plea.[14] Such requests can be as simple as asking the letter recipient for a copy of a book or as complex as using the letters to promote a particular lifestyle like *Romanitas* (in Sidonius) or *Christianitas* (in Ruricius).[15] Therefore, persuasion strategies in late antique letters can be analysed as a narrative tool.

Persuasion in this paper is defined following PETTY and CACIOPPO as "any instance in which an active attempt is made to change a person's mind" and which relies on communication.[16] Further to PETTY and CACIOPPO's definition, I argue that an act of persuasion aims to change a person's mind and to reinforce ideas. In reading Sidonius's and Ruricius's letters as persuasive acts of communication, different narrative strategies following rhetorical theory can be discerned. As such, this paper examines the literary presentation of emotions as a narrative instrument for persuasion.[17] The modern term emotion is used here as an umbrella term that

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der Epistolartheorie von der Antike bis zu Samuel Richardson, in: Antike und Abendland 26 (1980), pp. 138–157; Jennifer EBBELER, Mixed Messages. The play of epistolary codes in two late antique Latin correspondences, in: Ruth MORELLO and Andrew D. MORRISON (eds.), Ancient letters. Classical and Late Antique epistolography, Oxford 2007, pp. 301–323, here p. 322.

14 Angelos CHANIOTIS, Amina KROPP and Christine STEINHOFF, Überzeugungsstrategien. Einige Fragen, einige Theorien, einige Aspekte, in: Angelos CHANIOTIS, Amina KROPP and Christine STEINHOFF (eds.), Überzeugungsstrategien (Heidelberger Jahrbücher 52), Berlin, Heidelberg 2009, pp. 1–8, here p. 1.

15 The term *Romanitas* – even if first used in a pejorative way by Tertullian (Tert. De Pallio 4.1) – is used in modern research to describe a kind of 'Romanness'; see most recently Jonathan P. CONANT, Romanness in the Age of Attila, in: Michael MAAS (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila (Cambridge Companions to the Ancient World), New York, Cambridge 2015, pp. 156–172; Walter POHL et al. (eds.), Transformations of Romanness. Early medieval regions and identities (Millennium-Studien 71), Berlin, Boston 2018. For *Christianitas* see e.g. Tim GEELHAAR, Christianitas. Eine Wortgeschichte von der Spätantike bis zum Mittelalter (Historische Semantik 24), Göttingen 2015; Peter BROWN, The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and diversity, A.D. 200–1000 (The Making of Europe), Chichester 2013.

16 Richard E. PETTY and John T. CACIOPPO, Attitudes and Persuasion. Classic and Contemporary Approaches, New York 1996, here p. 4. For further definitions and a research overview see Sophia PAPAIOANNOU, Andreas SERAFIM and Kyriakos N. DEMETRIOU, The Hermeneutic Framework. Persuasion in Genres and Topics, in: Sophia PAPAIOANNOU, Andreas SERAFIM and Kyriakos N. DEMETRIOU (eds.), The Ancient Art of Persuasion across Genres and Topics (International Studies in the History of Rhetoric 12), Leiden, Boston 2019, pp. 1–16, here pp. 2–3.

17 For the history of emotions see Barbara H. ROSENWEIN, Problems and Methods in the History of Emotion, in: Passions in Context 1 (1/2010), pp. 1–32; Jan PLAMPER, Geschichte und Gefühl. Grundlagen der Emotionsgeschichte, München 2012; Maureen C. MILLER and Edward WHEATLEY, A road to the history of emotions. Social, cultural, and interdisciplinary approaches to the Middle Ages, c. 1966–2016, in: Maureen C. MILLER and Edward WHEATLEY (eds.), Emotions, Communities,

includes feelings, passions and sentiments, sensibilities, and affections.[18] In conducting emotional history, we must understand that emotions have a history in themselves and that they are part of historical events and linked to the formation of societies.[19] Therefore, I will argue that we should understand the literary circles of Sidonius and Ruricius as emotional communities[20] and will demonstrate via specific examples how they emotionally manipulated the reader to achieve their goals.

This paper will present some first steps in researching emotions in late antique Gaul, specifically in its epistolography. Further research on emotional discourses in the letters is needed to (a) better understand the semantics of specific emotions and (b) discern emotional communities based on a common discourse. Such research will reveal not only personal feelings and values but also shared emotions, and will help us understand the construction and transformation of communities.

The Art of Persuasion

Aristotle distinguishes three basic strategies that will lead to a successful, thus persuasive, speech: *ethos, pathos*, and *logos*.[21] Whereas *logos* persuades through appeal to reason, persuasion based on *pathos* will address the audience's emotion. However, without a trustworthy character (*ethos*), an orator will not be successful.[22] Investigating letters as persuasive communication, especially the moral character of a letter writer and the mindset of the readers, is therefore of great importance since, for Aristotle, the *ethos* of the speaker and the *pathos* of the recipient are equally necessary for emotionally influencing them in their decisions – hence, for persuading them.

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and Difference in Medieval Europe. Essays in Honor of Barbara H. Rosenwein, London, New York 2017, pp. 1–19. The beginning marks the article of Lucien Febvre, La sensibilité et l'histoire. Comment reconstituer la vie affective d'autrefois?, in: Annales d'histoire sociale (1939–1941) 3 (1941), pp. 5–20.

18 Cf. Ute Frevert, Gefühle definieren. Begriffe und Debatten aus drei Jahrhunderten, in: Ute Frevert et al. (eds.), Gefühlswissen. Eine lexikalische Spurensuche in der Moderne, Frankfurt a. M., New York 2011 pp. 9–39.

19 Cf. Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns, Emotionology. Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards, in: American Historical Review 90 (1985), pp. 813–836; William M. Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions, Cambridge, New York 2001; Martha C. Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions, Cambridge, New York 2001; Rolf Petri, The Idea of Culture and the History of Emotions, in: Historein 12 (2012), pp. 21–37.

20 Cf. Barbara H. Rosenwein, Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages, Ithaca NY 2006, p. 2.

21 Arist. Rhet. 1.2.3, p. 1356a1–3.

22 For persuasion in Aristotle see e.g. Christopher Carey, Rhetorical Means of Persuasion, in: Amélie O. Rorty (ed.), Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric (Philosophical Traditions 6), Berkeley CA, Los Angeles, London 1996, pp. 319–415; John M. Cooper, An Aristotelian Theory of the Emotions, in: Amélie O. Rorty (ed.), Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric (Philosophical Traditions 6), Berkeley CA, Los Angeles, London 1996, pp. 238–257.

This is immediately visible in the opening letters of Sidonius's and Ruricius's collections. They demonstrate both authors' efforts to convince their readers from the start of their good character and trustworthiness. For this purpose, they draw on the foundations of ancient rhetoric, defined by Aristotle as knowing everything that can serve for persuasion.[23]

First, let us examine the beginning of Sidonius's collection.

> *Diu praecipis, domine maior, summa suadendi auctoritate, sicuti es in his quae deliberabuntur consiliosissimus, ut, si quae litterae paulo politiores varia occasione fluxerunt, prout eas causa persona tempus elicuit, omnes retractatis exemplaribus enucleatisque uno volumine includam [...] (3) sed scilicet tibi parui [...]*[24]

Sidonius opens it with a letter to Constantius, in which he admits that Constantius persuaded him to revise and publicly circulate his letters. Constantius was successful in his persuasion because of the extraordinarily strong arguments (*summa suadendi auctoritate*) he used. Besides his high competence in persuasion techniques, Constantius is introduced as *dominus maior* and described with superlatives (*summa suadendi* and *consiliosissimus*), emphasising his authority and trustworthiness.[25] Sidonius accepts the request of Constantius and thereby shows modesty. Following Aristotle, he wants to appear to be of good character, not to the letter's addressee, but to his readers, whom he indirectly convinces to continue reading the collection.

The same line of argumentation can be applied to the publicly circulated letters of Ruricius:

> *Olim te, domine mi venerande ac beatissime sacerdos, fama celeberrima praedicante cognovi, olim desiderio pii amoris infuso illis te, quibus scribere dignaris, oculis cordis intueor [...]*[26]

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23 Arist. Rhet. 1.2.1, p. 1355b26.

24 Sidon. epist. 1.1.1;1.1.3: "For a long time, my honourable Lord, have you advised me with the highest authority – for you are the most suitable adviser in this matter, which had to be considered – that I should compile all letters, if they are even a little bit elegant, which have been written on different occasions, according to reason, person and time, into one volume, after I have revised and corrected the transcripts [...] (3) But of course, I obeyed you."

25 Cf. Helga Köhler, C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius. Briefe Buch 1. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar (Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften. Reihe 2, N. F. 96), Heidelberg 1995, here p. 103.

26 Rvric. epist. 1.1.3–5: "For a long time, my honourable Lord and most blessed priest, I have known you through your widespread prestige; for a long time, with the longing of pious love given to the words you write, I have admired you with the eyes of the heart."

He commences his letter collection with a request to Faustus of Riez to guide him on his religious path. The beginning of the letter is quite emotional and filled with love, even though Ruricius implies that he never actually met Faustus, whom he describes as the most venerable lord and most blessed prelate (*domine mi venerande ac beatissime sacerdos*). Similarly to Sidonius's opening, the addressee is presented with superlatives, emphasising his authority and upright character. However, Ruricius is the one who wants to persuade Faustus, and for this reason, he is showing him affection (*dignaris, oculis cordis intueor*), adoration (*olim desiderio pii amoris infuso*) and thus, indirectly, describes his personality through modesty.[27] Ruricius is implicitly manipulating Faustus, who is expected to be emotionally touched by those lines, which offer Ruricius's love and adoration. The use of metaphorical language helps the author to play upon the emotional state of the addressee. At the end of the letter, Ruricius uses a superlative to compare Faustus to the best knowledgeable doctor holding the power to heal his sinful malady with divine help. The requested medicaments are in fact words in the form of an epistolary response. With this metaphor, Ruricius closes his letter with a ring composition asking for advice on the righteous path to follow. Thus, metaphors are part of his persuasion strategy, since they evoke vivid images in the reader, who might feel immediately more involved.[28]

Those introductory examples from Sidonius and Ruricius demonstrate that we can discern different persuasion strategies as narrative tools based on rhetorical theory. Constantius was able to persuade Sidonius because he appeared as a man with *ethos* and, consequently, won the trust of Sidonius. Ruricius achieves his goal by presenting himself as a humble person and by appealing indirectly to the emotions of Faustus.[29] It seems that Ruricius followed the Aristotelian rule that both *ethos* and *pathos* are equally important to successfully persuade his counterpart. Furthermore, the beginning of Sidonius's letter to Constantius can be interpreted in similar ways since Sidonius presents himself as a modest person to appeal to the *pathos* of his readers. The question of whether the letters circulated were 'real' or purely 'fictional' in nature has no bearing on this argumentation since their addressees, real or not, serve as examples and as means of reflection for later readers. Late antique letters that publicly circulated are in both cases to be regarded as artworks in which the author's personality is expressed. The letter is thus a mirror of the soul, a possibility

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27 Cf. Hagendahl (note 2), pp. 93–97.

28 Rvric. Epist 1.1.39–44. A similar use of a medical language for creating a vivid image can be found in Sidon. epist. 8.11. Cf. Sigrid Mratschek, The Silence of the Muses in Sidonius Apollinaris, (carm. 12–13, epist. 8.11). Aphasia and the Timelessness of Poetic Inspiration, in: Journal of Late Antiquity 13 (2020), pp. 10–43, here pp. 26–33.

29 For direct / indirect appeal to emotions see Andreas Serafim, Feel between the Lines. Emotion, Language and Persuasion in Attic Forensic Oratory, in: Papaioannou, Serafim and Demetriou (note 16), pp. 137–152.

to create images of the self.[30] When interpreting letters, questions of intention and composition must be given priority over the question of their 'reality'.[31]

Here, ALTHOFF's argument on medieval public communication, in which emotional language has a functional purpose and even belongs to a set of societal rules, is applied to the in-group of Gallo-Roman elites. It can be argued that letter writers like Sidonius and Ruricius followed specific rules when composing a letter, and that the use of emotions in the letters is intentional and has a societal function.[32] Apart from emotions being used as a persuasion strategy, we should bear in mind that emotions like "affection" or "admiration" were probably part of epistolary communication rituals.

Emotional Persuasion and Emotional Community

But what exactly is meant by *pathos* or emotion? Aristotle defines emotions as follows: "The emotions are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgements."[33]

Hence, emotions as part of persuasion strategies must be regarded as a situational reaction to arguments. Aristotle states that to evoke emotions in the listener, an orator has to know his audience and how to trigger particular sentiments. Because emotions are connected to men's habits, ages, and fortunes, he presents different rhetorical methods an orator can use for evoking emotional reactions.[34] To successfully appeal to the emotions of Faustus, Ruricius needed to know the recipient well enough to determine which sentiments would be effective. We can assume that Ruricius opted for a sentiment of pious love in addressing their shared Christian faith. Faustus, feeling loved and touched, would be more willing to comply with the request than if he felt exploited.

Quintilian expanded on the ideas of Aristotle and continued to give further advice on how to use emotions in acts of persuasion.[35] He recognised that the *exordium* and the *peroratio* of a speech are where emotional rhetoric will be most used and most

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30 Demtr. Eloc. 227: *σχεδὸν γὰρ εἰκόνα ἕκαστος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς γράφει τὴν ἐπιστολήν.* Transl.: "For almost everyone composes a letter as a reflection of their own soul."

31 See Raphael SCHWITTER, Umbrosa Lux. Obscuritas in der lateinischen Epistolographie der Spätantike (Hermes), Stuttgart 2015, pp. 45–48, 152–154.

32 See Gerd ALTHOFF, Empörung, Tränen, Zerknirschung. ‚Emotionen' in der öffentlichen Kommunikation des Mittelalters, in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 30, 1 (1996), pp. 60–79, here pp. 61, 76–78. For communication rituals see EBBELER (note 13), p. 301. Cf. Alberto RICCIARDI, Transformations en Occident (Ve-Xe siècles) d'après l'épistolaire, in: François GUILLAUMONT and Patrick LAURENCE (eds.), La présence de l'histoire dans l'épistolaire (Epistulae Antiquae 7), Tours 2012, pp. 279–293, here p. 280; SCHWITTER (note 31), p. 135.

33 Arist. Rhet. 2.1.8, p. 1378a20: *ἔστι δὲ τὰ πάθη, δι' ὅσα μεταβάλλοντες διαφέρουσι πρὸς τὰς κρίσεις.* (Transl. FREESE, note 12). For Aristotle on emotions see COOPER (note 22).

34 See Arist. Rhet. 2.1.9, p. 1378a22 and Arist. Rhet. 2.12.1–2, p. 1388b31–32.

35 For Quintilian's rhetoric see Iván G. HOMPANERA, Der vir bonus peritus dicendi. Quintilian und das Problem einer richtigen Definition der Rhetorik, in: Divinatio 47 (2019), pp. 37–60.

effective.**36** If we transfer this thought to letters, the *captatio* and the *petitio* are the best places for emotional persuasion, which can be supported by the examples set out at the beginning. In both cases, persuasion strategies are visible immediately in the first lines of the letters, and the request will be enforced at the end. This does not mean that it cannot be expressed earlier on, as in the example of Ruricius (epist. 1.1), where the first direct request is articulated in the fourth paragraph or in the letter of Sidonius (epist. 1.1), where the request is accepted in the third paragraph. However, the strongest emphasis will be achieved at the end of the letter. Ruricius re-articulates his plea in the last paragraph of his letter to Faustus, and Sidonius affirms in the last paragraph that he will continue sending Constantius letters for publication. For Quintilian, emotional eloquence is the queen of all, and the core of convincing through emotions is the art of assimilating oneself to those emotions, which originate from the same sentiment that we want to evoke in the judge's mind.**37**

Thus, in the examples presented above, the use of emotional manipulation in their writing can only be successful because they are familiar with or even share the mindset of their counterpart. Through doing this, they build an emotional community, which Rosenwein defines as "group[s] in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value or devalue the same or related emotions".**38** She states that various emotional communities can exist simultaneously and that they can change over time. Furthermore, she portrays them as "common discourse" in which we can define common vocabularies and a similar mindset. Rosenwein, therefore, places her notion of emotional communities in relation to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, in the sense of "internalized norms that determine how we think and act".**39** Although I agree with Rosenwein on the basic ideas of her theory, I have to disagree on one part. Her definition of emotional communities is relatively broad and quite open, but she focuses on already existing social communities and thus bases her argumentation on the premise that existing social groups constitute shared emotions.**40** Would it not be possible, however, for shared emotions to lead to the development and constitution of communities? Benno Gammerl argues that emotions can be bound to spaces forming specific emotional styles, since people in a supermarket would show different

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36 See Qvint. inst. 6.1.51 (Marcus Fabius Qvintilianus, Institutio oratoria, vol. 1, Libri I–VI, ed. by Michael Winterbottom [Oxford Classical Texts], Oxford 1970).

37 Qvint. inst. 6.2.7; Qvint. inst. 6.2.27: *et a tali animo proficiscatur oratio qualem facere iudici volet.* Transl.: "and our speech must be of the same nature as the emotion we wish to evoke in the judge." It goes without saying that this little excurse on emotions in Aristotle and Quintilian are just the tip of the iceberg and that the semantics of emotions – *pathos/adfectus, ethos/morales* – changed with time and use.

38 Rosenwein (note 20), p. 2. See further p. 24: "An emotional community is a group in which people have a common stake, interests, values and goals."

39 Rosenwein (note 20), p. 25; cf. Pierre Bourdieu, La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement, Paris 1979, p. 70; Pierre Bourdieu, Les sens pratique, Paris 1980, pp. 87–88.

40 Cf. Rosenwein (note 20), p. 11: "Emotional communities are largely the same as social communities – families, neighborhoods, syndicates, academic institutions, monasteries, factories, platoons, princely courts."

emotions than people in an office.[41] Nevertheless, people know which emotions to show in which spaces because of our social conditioning. Building on the theories of Rosenwein and Stearns, he argues for a strong connection between the formation of social and spatial emotions.[42] His ideas strengthen the argument that shared emotions can lead to the formation of communities, i.e. of people sharing physical or ideological spaces. This goes in line with the thoughts of Lutz, who regards sentiments as "a cultural and interpersonal process of naming, justifying, and persuading by people in relationship to each other".[43]

Agreeing with the aspect that emotions can be socially constructed and our emotional behaviour is linked to our social environment, we should give the individual and his/her agency more space in the research on emotions. Even though Rosenwein explores the ideas of emotions as circles and the possibility of people leaving and entering them, or even having a part in two emotional communities at the same time, the questions of how those emotional communities are constructed, how long it takes before we can talk about an emotional community and how many people must have a part in it stay unanswered. I argue for not neglecting the importance of individuals sharing their emotions and, in doing so, contributing to the creation of new communities. I assume that in communicating personal sentiments regarding contingent events, emotional persuasion strategies are used to convince others to join these ideas, and consequently, communities may emerge that are based on shared emotions. For success, an individual has to know, as Aristotle and Quintilian state, how to appeal and address the emotions of their communication partners. Thus, they have to know the shared emotions of the community they want to address.

But we have to beware of falling into the trap of transferring our modern concepts of certain emotions when discussing premodern sources.[44] Furthermore, the semantics and meanings of emotion can vary from author to author, from genre to genre, and from time period to time period.[45] For historians, those emotions are traceable with the help of discourse analysis, as Rosenwein suggests. Additionally, whereas Rosenwein sees the research of emotional communities as one factor of recognising changes and transformations within societies,[46] I propose that the opposite is true as well and that shared emotions over a longer period can bring traditions and continuity to light.

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41 Benno Gammerl, Emotional styles – concepts and challenges. Rethinking History 16, 2 (2012), pp. 161–175;

42 Rosenwein (note 20), pp. 164, 166. Cf. Stearns and Stearns (note 19).

43 Catherine A. Lutz, Unnatural Emotions. Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and their Challenge to Western Theory, Chicago 1988, p. 5.

44 Valentin Blaas, Überlegungen zu einer Codierung der Emotion "Zorn" im "Willehalm" Wolframs von Eschenbach, in: Bele Freudenberg (ed.), Furor, zorn, irance. Interdisziplinäre Sichtweisen auf mittelalterliche Emotionen, Berlin 2009 (Das Mittelalter 14, 1), pp. 50–66, here pp. 50–51.

45 Cf. Bele Freudenberg (ed.), Furor, zorn, irance. Interdisziplinäre Sichtweisen auf mittelalterliche Emotionen, Berlin 2009 (Das Mittelalter 14, 1), see esp. the introduction by the editor.

46 Rosenwein (note 20), pp. 199, 203.

Bearing this in mind, for Sidonius and Ruricius I will argue in two ways. Firstly, agreeing with Rosenwein, both authors belong to a community of educated letter writers in late antique Gaul and follow certain conventions regarding their lifestyle and their letter collections. As common discourses in their letters, we can discern shared emotions towards the political situation, the importance of education, and the practice of religious life. Thus, authors like Sidonius and Ruricius were self-aware of the shared emotions within their communities.[47] Secondly, if we agree upon the constructed nature of emotions, their connections to society, and their contribution to the formation of communities, we can assume that emotions relate to the formation and affirmation of common identities. Common identities are defined following the ideas of Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann. Aleida Assmann sees a collective identity as discourse formations, which are in place or given up through symbols that carry a culture and through which people define themselves as belonging to it and identify themselves with it.[48] Like individual identity, group identities are in a continuous transformation process and can only develop through an active awareness of communalities, as Jan Assmann pointed out.[49] Linking this assumption with the theoretical notion on persuasion strategy and the importance of emotions within persuasion practices as defined by Aristotle and Quintilian, the person conducting the persuasive communication must not only fit the community's norm on an ethical level but must also know through which rhetorical or, in the case of written texts, narrative tools to address the *pathos* of the recipients. Following the hypothesis that shared emotions can actively construct a community, I argue that Sidonius and Ruricius use emotions as a narrative persuasion tool to address not only the recipients of their letters and contemporary readers of their social circle but also future generations to convince them to maintain *Romanitas* and *Christianitas*, which slowly lead to a new community based on shared emotions outside of the original letter circles.

Emotions in the Letters

Within their letter collections, Sidonius and Ruricius express various emotions, from which I will highlight only one – fear – to support the hypothesis that Sidonius and Ruricius formed emotional communities with their readers.

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47 Sidon. epist. 5.9: *animae duae, animus unus*; transl.: "two bodies but one soul"; cf. Rvric. epist. 2.10.4: *amicos duos unam animam habere*; transl.: "two friends share one soul". Both in the sense of two people sharing one emotion.

48 See Aleida Assmann, Zum Problem der Identität aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Sicht, in: Rolf Lindner (ed.), Die Wiederkehr des Regionalen, Frankfurt 1994, pp. 13–35, here p. 20.

49 Jan Assmann Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen, München 2013, p. 134, p. 139.

In one of Sidonius's letters, he reveals that he wrote under great anxiety since non-Roman soldiers surrounded his town.[50] He explicitly expresses his fear with the adverb *anxiu*s and emphasises his feelings with the verb *terrificare*. He continues, emotionally, in describing the *civitas Arvernorum* as loot worth crying over in the middle of rivalries between jealous Burgundians and angry Goths.[51] The fear of Sidonius, which expresses itself even in tears (*lacrimabilis*), is triggered by terror (*terrificare*), envy (*invidia*), and rage (*ira*).

Fear presents an emotion frequently encountered in his writing and can be expressed directly or metaphorically. Further examples of a direct expression of fear are references to the *tempus timoris*[52] in which he was living and his reports on the *timor Arvernorum*.[53]

I suggest that Sidonius uses fear as a persuasion strategy not only in individual letters with a certain plea, but also to reinforce the idea of protecting Roman culture, classical traditions, and *paideia*, which he describes as threatened by barbarians.[54] Due to the political situation of his *patria*, he fears not so much the downfall of the Roman Empire, but rather the loss of *Romanitas* for the upper class and their future generations. I follow the suggestion of Woolf that the local aristocrats developed a strong consciousness of a "Roman" identity that can be summarised under the umbrella term of *Romanitas* because of the various cultural encounters in the Gallic provinces.[55] *Romanitas* in Sidonius's letters can be defined as a set of *paideia* (education and a good knowledge of Latin), behaviours (in the sense of an aristocratic *mentalité*),[56] and traditions (like office holding, letter writing, *amicitia* etc.). This is visible when he complains to Calminius that he is not writing letters regularly anymore. The constant exchange through letters presents a duty considered to be of great importance for the aristocratic *amicitia,* and its neglect was taken seriously. Sidonius is thus seeking an explanation for his friend's behaviour and found one: fear (*par apud vos metus interpretetur*).[57] He needs to persuade his friends and readers

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50 Sidon. epist. 3.4.1.

51 Sidon. epist. 3.4.1. The 'angry Goths' are a recurring motive in Sidonius's writings and also trace-able in his poems, e.g. Sidon. carm. 7.426: *Geticas [...] iras.* For the 'conquest' of the Auvergne see Christine Delaplace, The so-called "Conquest of the Auvergne" (469–475) in the History of the Visigothic Kingdom. Relations between the Roman Elites of Southern Gaul, the Central Imperial Power in Rome and the Military Authority of the Federates on the Periphery, in: David Brakke, Deborah Deliyannis and Edward J. Watts (eds.), Shifting Cultural Frontiers in Late Antiquity, Farnham, Burlington 2012, pp. 271–281.

52 Sidon. epist. 4.6.2.

53 Sidon. epist. 5.6.1.

54 Sidon. epist. 8.2.2.

55 Greg Woolf, Becoming Roman. The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul, Cambridge 2003, p. 120.

56 See Michele R. Salzman, The Making of a Christian Aristocracy. Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire, Cambridge, London 2002, pp. 19–69; cf. Meurer (note 4), pp. 39–40.

57 Sidon. epist. 5.12.1.

like Calminius to overcome their fear of non-Roman groups and continue with the traditions of their community, in the case of Calminius specifically, to maintain their correspondence through letters, even if they belong to different sides. To convince his peers not to give up on *Romanitas* but to maintain it, he constantly gives examples of the proper behaviour, and requests that his readers continue their literary studies and maintain traditions.[58]

In a similar way, this use of fear can be encountered in different situations and with different purposes in the letters of Ruricius. Besides being scared of non-Roman groups in Gaul,[59] another parallel to Sidonius is his concern that the following generations will have no more examples of *Romanitas* and will therefore lose their *nobilitas,* as he reveals in a letter to Hesperius.[60] The background of the letter is the author's request to Hesperius to teach his sons, since only he knows how to shape them according to the aristocratic *mentalité.* Ruricius fears that without the example and work of Hesperius, his sons will lose their *nobilitas* in response to the difficult times in which they live. His concern reinforces Sidonius's already presented statement in a letter to John, which shows that, for these circles, literary knowledge was the only marker of *nobilitas* preserved at that time.[61] Whereas Sidonius quite openly recounts the political situation, Ruricius refers indirectly to it via expressions such as *sollicitudines saeculi,*[62] *in saeculi turbinibus*[63] or *necessitate temporis.*[64] Otherwise, his letters offer more insight into the daily life of a man of the church and his quest to proselytise the Christian faith.[65] For this reason, the fear of God or the fear of Christ (*in timore dei*)[66] can be encountered in his writings. Whereas Sidonius's work reads like a manifesto for *Romanitas* and the preservation of 'Roman' traditions, for Ruricius these traditions seemed to have been reinvented within the context of a Christian community, since he beseeched his readers to follow a Christian lifestyle that included the traditions of *Romanitas.* The knowledge that most of their readers shared their fears

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58 E.g. Sidon. epist. 4.17, 5.9, 5.11.3.

59 As visible in a letter to Bishop Volousianus of Tours, who was afraid of the enemy, by whom Ruricius meant non-Roman groups; see Rvric. epist. 2.65. On Bishop Volusianus of Tours see MATHISEN (note 2), pp. 235–236.

60 Rvric. epist. 1.3.31–32: *quae utique in tanta rerum confusione amitterent nobilitatem, si indicem non haberent.* Transl.: "certainly they would lose their *nobilitas* in the vast turmoil of our time, if they had no example."

61 Sidon. epist. 8.2.2: *nam iam remotis gradibus dignitatum, per quas solebat ultimo a quoque summus quisque discerni, solum erit posthac nobilitatis indicium litteras nosse.* Transl.: "because ranks and honours, through which we used to distinguish the best man from the worst, are already removed, henceforth the only indication of *nobilitas* will be the knowledge of literature."

62 Rvric. epist. 1.6.

63 Rvric. epist. 1.13.

64 Rvric. epist. 2.65.

65 HAGENDAHL (note 2), p. 8: He is interpreting this as a form of escapism of Ruricius. For the topic of escapism in letters of Gallo-Roman writers see MEURER (note 4), pp. 3–8.

66 E.g. Rvric. epist. 2.9.

enabled our authors to use an emotion that could easily be triggered to persuade the readers to either change their behaviour or to reinforce the safekeeping of traditions.

In continuously writing about such emotions indirectly or directly, Sidonius and Ruricius contribute to the affirmation as well as the formation of emotional communities and thereby to the construction of common identities.

Sidonius's Emotional Persuasion Strategy on Avitus: Epistle 3.1

In his third book of letters, in which Sidonius appears for the first time as a bishop of the Arvernian population, we encounter a letter addressed to Avitus, another Gallo-Roman aristocrat. The book is marked by narratives of the armed conflict with the Visigoths and their attacks on Clermont.[67] In the first letter, Sidonius requests that Avitus conducts his duty and acts as a mediator between Rome and the Visigoths, and as Clermont's protector. To persuade Avitus to follow his request, Sidonius attempts at the letter's outset to trigger the recipient's emotions.

After the *salutatio,* in the *captatio* of the letter, Sidonius speaks of the commonalities between the letter writer and the addressee, who have known each other since childhood and were related to each other not only through marriage but also through friendship.[68]

The enumeration of those commonalities that are described as *multis vinculis caritatis* – thus with the help of the emotion of love – is the beginning of an argumentative chain, focusing on nostalgic memories that are based on shared emotions: in this case, the mutual interest (*mutua cura*) in each other. Sidonius explains this mutual affection in recalling the family bonds between their mothers. Additionally, he and Avitus are the same age, had studied under the same teacher, and played the same games when they were young. Furthermore, they both took on state offices under the same emperors and tried to achieve friendships with the same people. All in all, Sidonius underlines the shared mentality[69] of him and Avitus, which represents his understanding of *Romanitas.* At the same time, he used those arguments, recalling nostalgic memories, to invoke the appropriate emotional state in the recipient for his request. In a second step, this foundation is expanded, and different emotions are invoked.

Sidonius uses modesty to amplify the good character of Avitus, and he argues that even if their *voluntas* – their mentality – is alike because of similar actions, the *conscientia* in Avitus – the awareness of morality, is stronger than in Sidonius:

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67 For the third book of Sidonius's collection see the commentary of Filomena Giannotti, Sperare meliora. Il terzo libro delle Epistulae di Sidonio Apollinare. Introduzione, traduzione e commento, Pisa 2016.

68 Sidon. epist. 3.1.1.

69 Cf. *animae duae, animus unus* (note 46).

> *propter quae omnia praeter* **conscientiam, quae interius tibi longe**
> **praestantior eminentiorque,** *multum* **voluntates nostras copulaverat**
> *decursarum forinsecus actionum similitudo.*[70]

Thus, in addressing the morality of Avitus and diminishing his own, he presents himself, following rhetorical traditions, as a trustworthy and good character (appeal to *ethos*). In honouring the recipient, Sidonius tries to put him into a favourable mood and, therefore, to make him more willing to accept his request. The emotional persuasion through friendship, affection, and praise makes it difficult for Avitus not to respond to the request.

As Sidonius lists the recipient's deeds for the church of Clermont in the *narratio*,[71] he already leads the reader emotionally to the actual cause of the letter, which is presented in a two-fold way: (1) Avitus should care for Clermont and support the city as he supported its church;[72] and (2) Avitus should halt the Visigothic expansion in the Auvergne.[73]

For the first request, Sidonius appeals to emotion by playing upon the guilt of the addressee. The appeal to guilt was one of Cicero's most common methods for persuading someone with whom he had a close relationship, as EVANGELOU was able to point out through research on emotional persuasion in the letters to Atticus. Since we can assume that Sidonius not only knew those letters but was quite familiar with them, he might have reused the Ciceronian model.[74] Avitus demonstrated his affection not only to Sidonius but also to the church of Clermont through the donation of a *villa*. Afterward, he inherited another property belonging to the city of Clermont but neither visited it nor took care of it. Sidonius interprets this gain of property as God's will, binding Avitus to the fate of the *civitas Arvernorum*. In coming back to the arguments made at the beginning of the letter – the mutual affection and the moral superiority of Avitus – Sidonius wants to evoke a feeling of guilt in Avitus, who should feel responsible (*cura*) for the fate of Clermont. He underlines the request for protection with the wordplay *patrocinium* (protection) and *patrimonium* (possession).[75]

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70 Sidon. epist. 3.1.2: "For all these reasons, the similarity of our public activity had closely linked our sentiments, apart from the consciousness for the moral right that is far more excellent within you."

71 Sidon. epist. 3.1.2–4.

72 Sidon. epist. 3.1.4.

73 Sidon. epist. 3.1.5.

74 Gabriel EVANGELOU, The Use of Emotions as Persuasion in Cicero's Letters to Atticus, in: PAPAIOANNOU, SERAFIM and DEMETRIOU (note 16), pp. 153–167. Cf. MEURER (note 4), pp. 215–232.

75 Sidon. epist. 3.1.4: *quod restat exposcimus, ut sicut ecclesiae nostrae ita etiam civitatis aeque tibi sit cura communis, quae cum olim, tum debebit ex hoc praecipue tempore ad tuum patrocinium vel ob tuum patrimonium pertinere.* Transl.: "What is now left is our request that in the same way you cared for our church now also our city shall be your concern, which should, as in the past, be more than ever the object of your protection since you have inherited a property there."

It is only at this point that he mentions in the letter why his city needs protection: the Visigothic expansion. The political situation worries Sidonius as he mentions it more than once in his letters,[76] and this brings him to the final request, unmasking his former plea as part of his appeal to the emotions of Avitus, to persuade him to behave as intended by Sidonius. In the conclusion, Sidonius summarises that it is Avitus' duty (*sed fast est*) to mediate between the Visigoths and the *res publica* to save Clermont.[77]

We can identify in this letter different strategies to convince the recipient to take a certain action. First, in evoking nostalgic memories shared within the community of Gallo-Roman aristocrats, Sidonius presents himself as trustworthy and benevolent to the recipient of the letter as well as to other readers. In using modesty to amplify the character and deeds of Avitus, he begins his construction of a feeling of responsibility for the Arvernian people since Avitus is a morally good man, and it is expected of him. The feeling of being responsible is then even magnified through the implementation of guilt, since Avitus is connected to Sidonius and his church not only mentally but even physically through the possession of lands. Everything that Sidonius reflected towards Avitus – the childhood memories, the same mentality, the morality – may be lost if Avitus does not react to the request of Sidonius. In using Avitus as an example, Sidonius expands the emotional community to his readers, contemporaneous as well as future ones, and appeals to their guilt to not neglect their *patriae*, their duties, but to preserve a shared mentality and finally contribute to the maintenance of *Romanitas*.

Ruricius's Emotional Persuasion Strategy on Capillutus

To explore emotions as a narrative persuasion tool in the letters of Ruricius, we can turn to his first letter to Capillutus.[78] Ruricius considered Capillutus a friend and, in concern for his friend's soul, tries to persuade him to adopt a religious life.

Ruricius opens his letter by sharing with the reader that he is in distress because of a malady that frequently befalls Capillutus. However, Ruricius is not in distress due to the suffering or the possible dangers faced by his friend. The source of distress seems to be his interpretation of this illness as a divine warning, through which God sought to correct sinners.[79] In the *narratio* of the letter, Ruricius uses hope for a better afterlife as a persuasion strategy for Capillutus, which he underlines through direct quotes from the New Testament, such as Matthew 23.12: "Whoever exalts himself shall

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76 E.g. Sidon. epist. 3.3, 7.5.3, 7.7.

77 Sidon. epist. 3.1.4. Cf. Giannotti (note 66), pp. 109–121. She interprets this letter as an expression of Sidonius's sorrow over the fate of his city.

78 For Capillutus see Mathisen (note 2), p. 174.

79 Rvric. epist. 2.21.2–3: *Ingrata mihi est frequentior aegritudo vestra, quae mihi etiam videtur commonitio esse divina.* Transl.: "Your recurring illness is distressing to me; indeed, it seems to me to be a divine warning," Translation: Mathisen (note 2).

be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted."[80] In this part of the letter, Ruricius presents God as a good, caring, and loving entity supporting those who are following him. In the *petitio*, this argument shifts again to create a ring composition with the *captatio* of the letter and presents God as an angry God when people will not convert. Hence, the illness at the beginning of the letter can be interpreted as a warning. The ending of the letter, the request to convert and take on religious life, appeals to Capillutus's fear, and Ruricius is not shy in even playing with the fear of sudden death. However, Capillutus still has a chance to turn to God, who is merciful and will offer comfort.[81]

Even though the letter seems quite different from that of Sidonius, we can still discern classical rhetorical persuasion techniques and narrative similarities. Like Sidonius, Ruricius must present himself as a good person with *ethos* – in this case, a faithful Christian – to even have a chance to persuade Capillutus of a lifestyle change. To appear to be such a person, Ruricius constantly refers to the New Testament to demonstrate his knowledge and his trustworthiness.[82] Opening the letter with reference to his own emotion – distress – appeals to the recipient's guilt, who had had the chance to convert for some time. Following the idea that friends are connected through a shared mentality and shared emotions, Ruricius evokes guilt in Capillutus, who inflicts misery upon his friend. Like Sidonius, he uses the recipient as an example to address a wider audience and appeal to their emotions. The guilt Ruricius evokes in Capillutus lays the foundation for encouraging any other reader of the letter to give up their old lifestyle and finally convert to the Nicene Creed. Ruricius argues via the *ultimo* argument: God himself, who sends Capillutus warnings to take on religious life. This warning is emphasised at the end of the letter, where Ruricius triggers Capillutus's fear, who is confronted not only with the possibility of sudden death but with an angry God. Thus, Ruricius follows the idea of Quintilian that emotional manipulation works best at the beginning and the conclusion of a speech. In the last sentence, Ruricius changes from the first-, second-, or, in the case of God, third-person singular to the first-person plural. In speaking of "us" and "we", he includes himself in the condemnation of the world or the mercy of God in the event of a conversion. Through this linguistic change, the exemplary role of Capillutus becomes clear, and the readers of the letter are directly addressed by Ruricius. Thus, he not only invokes shared emotions but also suggests through using the first-person plural that he and his readers are part of the same community.

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80 See Rvric. epist. 2.21.9–10: *quia qui se exaltat humiliabitur et qui se humiliat exaltabitur.*

81 Rvric. epist. 2.21.18–24: *Unde* **suadeo** *[...] Ideoque, dum tempus habemus, convertamur ad dominum, ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur, quia sine dubio illi misericors Deus suum praestat auxilium, quem circa praecepta sua cernit adtentum.* Transl.:"I *persuade* you [...] And therefore, while we still have time, let us turn to God, for that we are not condemned together with this world. For without doubt a merciful God will comfort the one whom He perceives as obeying His commandments." Translation: Mathisen (note 2).

82 Cf. Mathisen (note 2), p. 175 for references to the New Testament in this letter.

Like Sidonius, Ruricius creates a community based on shared emotions between himself, his recipients, and his readers to promote the Nicene Creed as essential part of his in-group. In the same way, Sidonius uses emotional persuasion as a narrative tool for preserving *Romanitas* as part of an aristocratic identity. Ruricius, on the other hand, applies emotional persuasion as a tool for constructing a Christian community based on shared emotions.

Conclusion

The shifting frontiers – physically and mentally – of fifth-century Gaul made communication crucial to remember the past, maintain identities in the present, and pave the way for future generations. For this communication, letters played a vital role in persuading the readers of a certain plea or idea, as we have seen in our examples. Sidonius and Ruricius stay human in their emotions: they try to put themselves in the best light, and their letters present an admonitory account with an educational intention. Sidonius instrumentalises emotions to promote his view on *Romanitas*, whereas Ruricius's exploits emotions to promote the Christian (i.e. Nicene) faith.

This paper presented some preliminary ideas on researching emotions as part of persuasion strategies in late antique letters that can be traced back to Aristotle. Following the work of Rosenwein, I argued that emotions contribute to the self-perception of a community like that found in the letter circles of Sidonius and Ruricius. Following the rhetoric theories of Aristotle and Quintilian, only the awareness of shared emotions and how to appeal to them enable their use as a narrative tool to influence and affirm the behaviour of the reader. Through the intentional stirring of emotions in their letters, our authors established and strengthened a common identity. As the examples demonstrated, sharing and triggering similar sensibilities allowed the authors to evoke guilt or compassion and, finally, to manipulate the reader emotionally. This was their way of interpreting and shaping reality.

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