

# MARTYROLOGY, A (PSEUDO-)HISTORICAL SOURCE: THE CASE OF PRUDENTIUS' *HYMN IN HONOUR OF THE MARTYR QUIRINUS*

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**Abstract.** This paper deals with the historical value of martyrologies, such as Eugippus' *vita* of St. Severinus and especially the poetic transcript of a fourth-century martyrology, the *vita* of St. Quirinus. Both saints were horrifically executed but later faced a similar fate: their bodies were exhumed and transferred to Italy, and their relics scattered all over the towns of the North Adriatic.

**Keywords:** martyrology, St. Quirinus, St. Severinus, Prudentius.

The text *Hymnus in Honorem Quirini Martyris, Episcopi Ecclesiae Siscianae*<sup>1</sup>, one of the few extant accounts of the death of St. Quirinus, is the seventh hymn of the fourteen written by Prudentius under one title, *Peristephanon*<sup>2</sup>. Several of the protagonists of

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<sup>1</sup> All references to the original text and translation are from Prudentius, (1953): *Prudentius. With an English Translation by H. J. Thomson*. London: W. Heinemann.

<sup>2</sup> The title is a paraphrase of the Greek term *περί στεφάνων*, meaning "on the crowns", since the martyrs were attributed a crown of martyrdom for their unrelenting faith.

Prudentius' hymns are Spaniards, such as Emeterius and Chelidonius from Calagurris (present-day Calahorra), Prudentius' birth town, about which Prudentius speaks in his first hymn. There is also Eulalia from *Emerita* (3<sup>rd</sup> hymn), the eighteen martyrs from Caesaraugusta – present day Zaragoza (4<sup>th</sup> hymn), Vincent from Caesaraugusta (5<sup>th</sup> hymn), and the bishop Fructuosus and his two deacons Augurius and Eulogius from Tarraco – present day Tarragona (6<sup>th</sup> hymn). This is understandable, since Prudentius was himself a Spaniard; however, martyrs from elsewhere are dealt with in a similar fashion and with equal care; the apostles Peter and Paul (the 12<sup>th</sup> hymn), St. Hippolytus and St. Lawrence from Rome (the 11<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> hymn, respectively), St. Cassian of Imola (the 9<sup>th</sup> hymn); the 8<sup>th</sup> hymn is a sort of a *unicum* – it is not about the passion of a certain individual but praise of the baptistery in Calagurris.

The *Liber Peristephanon* is excruciatingly difficult to read: all the hymns, with the sole exception of the hymn praising the baptistery in Calagurris, are packed with scenes of utter violence, described in detail that borders on the grotesque – if, granted, the author describes wondrous facts in which detail plays an important role. Even so, the *Peristephanon*, considered to be less enjoyable than Prudentius' other masterpiece *Cathemerinon*, holds a lot of historical interest. As a literary document, the *Peristephanon* is quite amazing: it is a fresh combination of form and content. In the late fourth century, in a post-Constantinian ideological environment, a new concept of martyrdom needed to be forged, completely different from the less dramatic traditions of the second century (Raby, 1953: 51). When the memory of martyrs' persecutions started to wane somewhat in the late fourth century, a need for the reconstruction of martyrdom occurred – a need for its idealization and the construction of its heroic aspects, which encouraged authors to infuse their texts with fictional additions in order to keep their audiences interested (Palmer, 1989: 227). In short, the meek and humble figure of a martyr needed to evolve to a full-blown hero type.

The new martyr is not a victim – the act of sacrificing his or her own life is a willing one, a sacrifice he or she readily embraces. He

or she is a warrior of God (Raby, 1953: 52), as is evident from the following verses (*Perist.* 2.9–16):

Haec sola derat gloria  
urbis togatae insignibus,  
feritate capta gentium  
domaret ut spurcum Iouem,

This was the one glory lacking  
to the honours of the city of the toga,  
that it should take savage paganism  
captive and sub due its unclean Jupiter,

non turbulentis uiribus  
Cossi, Camilli aut Caesaris,  
sed martyris Laurentii  
non incruento proelio.

not with the tempestuous strength  
of Cossus or Camillus or Caesar  
but by the battle in which the martyr  
Lawrence shed his blood.

In this respect, a certain pattern develops – as would be expected in a heroic text: a certain type of behaviour is expected with which the saints must necessarily comply in order to forge the new heroic *persona*. This is partly due to the circumstances in which the *Peristephanon* was written; the texts, which exhibit a great deal of personal note<sup>3</sup>, are also a clear testament to the prevailing sentiment of the post-Constantinian era – in a now-Christian empire, a great number of people previously reared in heathendom (Raby, 1951: 53) needed to see Christianity as a promising religion which could offer them as much if not more than their old set of beliefs. The old heroes needed to be replaced with new ones: an army – God’s army – of equally awe-inspiring performers of miraculous deeds. Obviously, the task was not an easy one since this particular body of new believers was a rhetorically well-trained one and had well carved-out pictures of *post-mortem* existence. Not surprisingly then, the *Peristephanon* is a fascinating mixture of epic and lyric moments, of Horatian literary commonplaces and complex metric forms, of personal notes and vivid (if sometimes horrific) pictures which needed not only to stir the listeners’ imagination (used to listening to Odysseus’ exploits) but also to cut deeply into their souls. Hence the gory portrayals of torture; how else would the recently heathen public think: “My God, *we* did that?”

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Cunningham, 1976.

In this respect, the 7<sup>th</sup> hymn is no exception: the Asclepiadic metre – five stanzas of Glyconic verse – is always perfectly built and nowhere faulting, the rhetoric and the lyric is there, even touches of personal note – which we will all discuss later. However, in other instances, Quirinus’ martyrdom is described quite differently, which is explained at the very outset of the poem (*Perist.* 7.11–15):

Non illum gladii rigor  
non incendia, non ferae  
crudeli interitu necant,  
sed lymfis fluuiatibus  
gurges, dum rapit, abluit.

No stark sword  
nor fire nor wild beasts  
put him to a cruel death,  
but in the waters of a river the flood  
washed him clean as it carried him away.

Let us briefly recall what we know about Quirinus. This is what St. Jerome says about him:

Quirinus episcopus Siscianus gloriose pro Christo intericitur. Nam manuali mola ad collum ligata e ponte praecipitatur in flumen, diutissime natatur et cum expectantibus elocutus ne sui exemplo terrentur vix orans ut mergeretur obtinuit<sup>4</sup>.

As it will become evident, Jerome’s account is, in fact, no more accurate than that of Prudentius. The story of Quirinus is far more diligently recorded in a passion, which could be traced back to the fourth century AD and is considered reliable, but with obvious interpolations and parallels to the passion of Christ – our text is summarized from the “Acts of Martyrs” (*Acta primorum sanctorum sincera et selecta*)<sup>5</sup>:

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<sup>4</sup> Engl.: “Quirinus, bishop of Siscia, is gloriously killed for Christ: for he was thrown from a bridge headlong into a river with a [manual] millstone fastened to his neck; he floated for a very long time and while he was being remarked upon by the spectators, lest by his example they should be frightened, praying that he should sink, he was finally granted his wish.”

<sup>5</sup> Ruinart, 1713: 797–500.

Having heard that he was sought by Maximus, the chief magistrate of the city, Quirinus fled but was consequently taken. After a lengthy discussion in which one of the main points is the issue of sacrificing to the Roman gods (Maximus said: “Old age has weakened your understanding, and you are deluded by idle tales. See, here is incense; offer it to the gods, or you will have many affronts to bear, and will suffer a cruel death.” Quirinus: “That disgrace I account my glory; and that death will purchase me eternal life. I respect only the altar of my God, on which I have often offered to him a sacrifice of sweet odour.” Maximus: “I perceive you are distracted, and that your madness will be the cause of your death. Sacrifice to the gods.” “No,” said Quirinus, “I do not sacrifice to devils.”<sup>6</sup>) Quirinus was beaten while being offered to be made a priest of Jupiter if he sacrificed to the gods. He was then thrown into jail – where he conversed with his jailer – under heavy chains, and later he was ordered to be taken to Pannonia Prima, to Savaria, before the provincial governor Amantius.

What follows is an obviously Christomorphic moment: The bishop was carried in chains through all the towns that lay on the Danube, till being brought before Amantius, then on his return from Scarabantia, the governor ordered him to be conducted to Savaria, whither he himself was going. Certain Christian women in the meantime brought him refreshments, which as he was blessing, his chains dropped off from his hands and feet.

On his arrival at Savaria, Amantius ordered him to be brought before him on the public theatre, and having read the records of what had passed between him and Maximus, asked the saint if he owned the truth of the contents, and whether or no he persisted in his former confession of the Christian faith.

Amantius endeavoured to overcome his resolution by large promises, and by the consideration of his old age: but

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<sup>6</sup> “Maximus: video quod insania te cogit ad mortem. Sacrifica diis. Quirinus episcopus respondit: Non scrifico daemoniis, quia scriptum est: Omnes dii gentium daemonia et qui sacrificant diis, eradicabuntur”.

finding him inflexible, he sentenced him to be thrown into the river with a millstone at his neck, and his order was obeyed. When he was thrown into the river, he floated for a very long time and spoke to the crowds on the shore not to be terrified by the example they had made of him. Then, finally, his prayers were heard and he sank.

The dilemma whether the passion is older or more recent than Prudentius' hymn (Sabattini, 1972: 43) seems to be rather out of place; the passion – even in its oldest form, whatever and whenever that was – must be a conjecture of Prudentius' hymn, Hieronymus' *Chronicle* and later interpolations.

What does Prudentius tell us? His account could be summarized very briefly, making the heroic death the pivotal part of his hymn in Quirinus' honour: Quirinus, the martyr of whom Siscia is proud, professed the Catholic faith and celebrated it through glorious death in the time of Galerius' rule over *Illyricum* (1–15). What follows is an important note of personal observation:

He was executed neither by sword, nor by fire nor torn apart by beasts, but was drowned and purged by water. It does not even matter how a saint is martyred – he receives equal glory. (16–20)

He was executed by being thrown off a bridge, a millstone fastened to his neck; however, the river did not suffer him to drown but instead took him to calm water (21–30). Still floating, Quirinus reassures his crowd of followers, the “frequens Christi populus” on the shore, all the while not sinking – the river dares not open (31–50). The bishop, feeling he is being robbed of his martyrdom, addresses God and praises his power but prays for death (51–85). His prayer is finally heard and he is granted sudden death (86–90).

Interestingly, the passion of Quirinus stands out somewhat in Prudentius' hymns, which are, for the most part, dedicated to the martyrs of Spain. Maurice Lavrenne asks the same question: ‘Pourquoi Prudence a-t-il célébré ce martyr, qui n'est ni espagnol, ni romain, ni particulièrement illustre?’ The (unlikely) explana-

tion he offers is that Prudentius might have witnessed the transport of Quirinus' relics to Rome by fugitive Christians from Hungary in 395 or heard about this recent event when he visited Rome (Lavrenne, 1963: 101). However, like Quirinus, St. Romanus was also not a Spaniard – he had suffered as a martyr in Antioch, possibly at the same time (303/04); he receives special attention from Prudentius in the lengthiest hymn of the *Peristephanon*, numbered at 1140 verses. Could it also be that Quirinus' death was so singular an event that it echoed throughout the Christian community? Quirinus is the only martyr from the province of Pannonia Savia<sup>7</sup> (Mocsy, 1974: 326) and quite possibly the last one (Lolić, 2003: 148). But why was he transported from Savia to Pannonia Prima? Butler's explanation maintains that Maximus, the chief magistrate of Siscia, did not have the full authority to punish Quirinus<sup>8</sup>, which seems unlikely. Could it be that Maximus simply did not want to execute him? We shall return to this question later.

The similarities in Quirinus' rhetoric are traceable, but obviously his heroic resistance to sacrificing to the heathen gods and subsequent conversion took place before Amantius, which is completely consistent with the other martyrs' sufferings during proceedings before the magistrates – from this we might deduce that what usually happened was more or less a matter of procedure. Take, for instance, Fructuosus' case: he, too, is taken (in chains!) before a cruel, demon-like judge ("atrox turbidus

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<sup>7</sup> After Diocletian's administrative reform of provinces, two Pannonian provinces – Pannonia inferior and Pannonia superior were gradually divided into four administrative units, two of which were Pannonia prima with its capital Savaria (now Szombathely in Hungary) and Pannonia Savia (known also as Pannonia Riparensis) with Siscia as its capital.

<sup>8</sup> "As Maximus had not the authority to pronounce a death-sentence, he arranged to send Quirinus to Amantius, the governor of Pannonia Prima. The bishop was taken through various towns on the Danube until he reached the town of Savaria, destined a very few years later to be the birthplace of St Martin. Here he was brought up before Amantius ..." (Thurston, Attwater, 2010: 473).

insolens profanus”) who insists on respecting the “*arae daemonicae* (*aras daemonicas coli iubebat*)” – we find the same in the process against St. Lawrence (“*praefectus horrescit stupens, conuersus in Laurentium oculisque turbatis minax*”), St. Vincent (“*tortore uicto et iudice*”), *et cetera*. Note the obvious similarities in terminology with the *Acta*. A pattern, which we already mentioned, develops: a martyr-to-be is led before a judge, forced to convert and eventually tortured to death. All the while, the martyr resists heroically, turning the whole process into an epic conflict from which he emerges victorious in death. His resistance becomes almost sarcastic, as can be seen in the case of Lawrence, the Roman deacon of Pope Sixtus II. Sixtus was crucified under the penalty of Valerian’s second edict against Christians from 258 (the first dating in 257). Sixtus was crucified, while Lawrence, because of his humble origins, endured the most horrific death (*Perist.* 2.401–9):

postquam vapor diutinus  
decoxit exustum latus,  
ultro e catasta iudicem  
conpellat adfatu brevi:  
“converte partem corporis  
satis crematam iugiter,  
et fac periculum, quid tuus  
Vulcanus ardens egerit.”  
praefectus inverti iubet.  
tunc ille: “coctum est, devora,  
et experimentum cape  
sit crudum an assum suavius.”

After the long-continued heat  
has burned his side away,  
Lawrence on his own part hails the judge  
and addresses him briefly from the gridiron:  
“This part of my body  
has been burned long enough;  
turn it round and try what  
your hot god of fire has done.”  
So the prefect orders him to be turned about,  
and then “It is done,” says Lawrence;  
“eat it up, try  
whether it is nicer raw or roasted.”

Lawrence’s heroism lies in the irony exhibited towards his tormentors; in the case of St. Romanus who has to endure torture and humiliation himself and whose tongue was torn out by the roots, this heroism lies in his continued ability to speak at length against the barbaric heathen practice of *Taurobolium* – a literary moment of great historical importance, though it has been shown that this particular body of text could well be a wild figment of the imagination (Gordon, Reynolds, 2003: 268).



In this very moment lies the biggest difference between Quirinus and the other martyrs – as far as Prudentius is concerned. There is no torture. It is, however, mentioned in the *Acta*: “Tunc Maximus praeses iussit eum fustibus caedi” (Ruinart, 1689: 553). Irony and sarcasm aside, this sounds lenient, compared to the sufferings endured by St. Lawrence or St. Romanus. Maybe it was the man’s old age that dissuaded the judge from imposing a harsher torture: “Per nimium tempus vivendo quasdam fabulas didicisti” (*ibidem*). The indispensable heroic moment ensues (*ibidem*):

Iniurias quas mihi minaris, gloriam puto; et promissa mors, si merear, vitam dabit aeternam. Propterea Deo meo devotus esse cupio, non regibus tuis. Neque enim deos credo esse, qui non sunt et aris daemonum thura non pono; quia scio aram esse Dei mei, in qua apta Dei mei sacrificia boni odoris incendi.

The process was lengthy and the judge reluctant to act immediately; the judge, Amantius, resorts to capital punishment only after a long exhortation to respect Roman legislation (Ruinart, 1689: 555):

Diu te ad obedientiam regalium praeceptorum inclinare volumus: sed quia rigor mentis domari non potuit, eris exemplo omnium Christianorum, ut formam tuae mortis qui vivere cupiunt expavescant.

Why is this so? Could it be that, in the case of Quirinus, the judicial proceedings were, in fact, very different from, say, Lawrence’s case? Could it be that the judges in Siscia or in Savaria – particularly Maximus – simply did not want to make a martyr of an old man? Alternatively, were they disinclined towards conducting a legal process at all? Obviously, the fourth Diocletian edict from 304 applied in Quirinus’ case; issued in January 304, this edict could have reached the Balkans as early as March 304 (Sainte Croix, 1954: 77). Lawrence, on the other hand, was persecuted according to the second Valerian edict with a special agenda to target clerics specifically and thus immediately attack the church organization (Bratož, 2007: 447). It is reasonable to

stop here for a historical pause: in Sirmium, where persecution was much more intense than elsewhere (Mocsy, 1974: 327), by late March 303, Bishop Irenaeus was persecuted along with his deacons, Fortunatus, Donatus, Demetrius, Romulus and Montanus. By the end of April 303, the persecution has spread to other cities as well (one famous victim was, for instance, Pollio of Cibalae) which is roughly when Quirinus might have been arrested. Montanus, for instance, fled Sirmium and was apprehended in Singidunum, where he endured the trial. It is very possible that Quirinus served a different purpose and was shown around – which concurs with the *Acta*. However, for this particular purpose, other saints could have been transported there as well to be made examples of, since other dioceses there were not short of such examples, as is evident from the list of bishops' sees from the fourth century for particular provinces (Mocsy, 1974: 329):

- Pannonia Prima: none
- Valeria: none
- Pannonia Savia: Siscia, Jovia
- Pannonia Secunda: Sirmium, Mursa, Cibalae
- Moesia Prima: Viminacium, Singidunum, Horreum Margi, Margum
- Dacia Ripensis: Ratiaria, Aquae
- Dacia Mediterranea: Naissus, Remesiana
- Dardania: Scupi, Ulpianum.

The thesis that Quirinus was put on display seems too bold, but if it is plausible that the fourth edict, which targeted no one in particular, first applied in the Balkans (Sainte Croix, 1954: 108), the reluctance of local magistrates to act accordingly makes a lot of sense. However, this aspect is completely absent from Prudentius' text, along with any other historical context. Generally, the hagiographers were not particularly eager to divulge the historical sources in their writings – the public did not need to be informed of the historical background (Delehaye, 1907: 70). Prudentius makes no exception to this rule in his *Liber Peristephanon* – a thorough reading of the hymn to

honour Quirinus makes this perfectly clear: almost no historical information is dispensed. However, in this case, the absence of the ‘pattern’ is what is disturbing, and possibly gives grounds for Lavrenne’s explanation. However, there is another obvious difference: the lack of detail in how Quirinus dies. His death is explained in no more than one sentence in the *Acta* (Ruinart, 1689: 555):

[...] iussit sancto Dei Sacerdoti vel famulo molam ad collum ligari et in fluvii Sibaris undas demergi. Cumque de ponte praecipitatus fuisset in fluvium et diutissime supernataret et cum spectantibus locutus est ne suo terrerentur exemplo vix orans ut mergeretur obtinuit.

Prudentius, on the other hand, focuses precisely on this seemingly uneventful death; no less than seventy verses focus on this point. In this particular segment, several moments converge, so much, in fact, that it seems a literary commonplace. In Prudentius’ utterances and actions – while he is (not) drowning – echoes the message of Fructuosus, celebrated in the 6<sup>th</sup> hymn: both Quirinus and Fructuosus are concerned about the spiritual wellbeing and religious strength of their followers (7.41 sqq.: “**confirmat** pia pectora verbis mitificis rogans, ne quem talia terreant” = 6.20 sqq.: “ac, ne quis socios timor feriret, praeceptor uehemens eundo **firmit** incenditque fidem calore Christi”); both embrace death (7.42 sqq.: “uerbis mitificis rogans, ne quem talia terreant neu constans titubet fides aut poenam putet emori” = 6.94 sqq.: “non est, credite, poena: quam uidetis, quae puncto tenui citata transit, nec uitam rapit illa, sed reformat”) – which is, by the way, also expressed in the dialogue between himself and Amantius: “Ego autem didici a Deo meo, ut debeam ad vitam illam pervenire, quae post mortem, mortis iam interficione non clauditur” (*Acta*, 499).

When Eusebius describes ways of torturing and then disposing of martyrs’ bodies, he describes – in some places – a crowd that does not care. In Prudentius’ hymn in honour of Quirinus, it is clearly completely different (*Perist.* 7.31–40):

Spectant eminus e solo  
doctorem pauidi greges;  
nam Christi populus frequens  
riparum sinuamina  
stipato agmine saepserat.  
Sed Quirinus, ut eminens  
os circumtulit, heu, suos  
exemplo trepidos uidet;  
nil ipse proprii memor  
inter stagna periculi.

Away on the ground anxious  
crowds were watching their teacher,  
for Christ's people in great numbers  
had lined the winding banks  
with a close-packed throng.  
But Quirinus, his head above water,  
turning to look round, regrets to see  
his flock in alarm at what is done to him,  
while he himself has no thought  
of his own peril amid the flood.

This indicates the very much new circumstances in which Quirinus was brought to death, and it again serves to reassure the point that his death would possibly serve to set an example for the concerned Christian crowd in what was to become a strong Christian community, which only lacked organization. Eusebius paints a completely different picture when portraying the attitude of the non-Christian crowd towards the bodies of Christians executed in Lyons (Euseb., *HE* 5.1.59–60):

Those that had been strangled in prison they threw to the dogs, watching sedulously both day and night lest we might bury any of the bodies. Then whatever was left of those who had been exposed to the beast or the fire, some charred and ripped apart as they were, with the heads off the rest and the pieces of their bodies, all this they similarly left unburied and kept under guard of soldiers for days on end. Some men raged and ground their teeth at these bodies as though they were trying to take some further special revenge on them. Others laughed and mocked them, at the same time exalting their own idols, attributing their punishment to them...

In Quirinus' case, it is quite different: the crowds gather on the banks of the river and watch the scene in alarm – hence the reassuring speech by Quirinus that death should not be feared and that it is actually a reward.

Probably the most striking feature of Prudentius' account, however, is the way Quirinus is brought to death. Even Prudentius makes this perfectly outstanding at the very outset of his poem

(*Perist.* 7.11–12): “non illum gladii rigor / non incendia, non ferae / crudeli interitu necant [...]”. Prudentius is here primarily concerned with the allegorical significance of martyrdom by water: “sed lymfis fluvialibus / gurgēs dum rapit abluit” (Roberts, 1993: 111). We shall come back to that later. Death by water – martyrdom by water – is seen as somewhat unusual (Kyle, 2001: 251 ss.), but cases were known nonetheless, and Eusebius cites quite a few (*Mart. Pal.* 5.3; *HE* 8.12 ss. etc.). Let us remember here the death of Agapius, who was executed in 306: he was thrown to the beasts and a day later, still alive, thrown into the sea with stones tied to his legs<sup>9</sup>. Quirinus’ punishment was, then, not extraordinary, but for Prudentius, who distinguishes between three major methods of capital punishment for martyrs (*gladius, incendia, ferae*)<sup>10</sup>, this was an excellent ideological basis on which he could work. The role of water is obviously pivotal – the act of the martyr’s death is at once redemptive and purgatory (Petruccione, 1995: 248); for Prudentius it makes no difference what kind of death befalls a martyr – “nil refert, vitreo aequore / an de flumine sanguinis / tingat passio martyrem, / aequē gloria provenit / fluctu quolibet uvida” (*Perist.* 7.16–20) – in any case, a martyr is “bathed” (*tingere*) in his passion, for he “drowns” in a flood of either blood (*flumen sanguinis*) or water (*vitreus aequor*) – but obviously he is also purged (“sed lymfis fluvialibus gurgēs, dum rapit, abluit”).<sup>11</sup> This

<sup>9</sup> Euseb. *Mart. Pal.* 6.7 ss.: καὶ τοῦτ’ εἰπὼν, ἅμα λόγῳ τοῦργον ἐπάγει, δρομαῖος ἄντικρυς ἀπολυθείσῃ κατ’ αὐτοῦ ἄρκτῳ ὑπαντιάσας ταύτῃ τε ἑαυτὸν ἀσμενέστατα ἐπιδεδωκὼς εἰς βορὰν μεθ’ ἣν ἔμπρους εἰς τὸ δεσμωτήριον αἴρεται, μίαν τε ἐνταῦθα ἐπιβίωσας ἡμέραν, τῇ ἐξῆς λίθων αὐτοῦ προσαρτηθέντων τοῖς ποσὶ μέσῳ πελάγει καταποντοῦται. τοιοῦτο καὶ τὸ Ἀγαπίου μαρτύριον.

<sup>10</sup> The majority of his martyrs die “conventionally”: either by sword (Emeterius, Chelidonius, Cyprian, Agnes) or by fire (Lawrence, Eulalia, Fructuosus and his deacons). From Agapius’ case, we see death by having been thrown to the beasts.

<sup>11</sup> To all this, yet another symbolical aspect needs to be added, at least in the form of a footnote, calling for further analysis: as a part of Christian dealings with heathendom, idols of the old were

only helps to associate very closely two different concepts, blood and water – death and baptism (Roberts, 1993: 68). By this, the next hymn, the celebration of the baptistery in Calagurris, could be ideally introduced (Schetter, 1982): a poem so short (18 disticha) that it could well be considered to be a longer inscription for the baptistery in question and is quoted below.

Electus Christo locus est, ubi corda probata  
prouehat ad caelum sanguine, purget aqua.  
Hic duo purpureum domini pro nomine caesi  
martyrium pulchra morte tulere uiri.  
**Hic etiam liquido fluit indulgentia fonte  
ac ueteres maculas diluit amne nouo.**  
Qui cupit aeternum caeli conscendere regnum,  
huc ueniat sitiens, ecce parata uia est.  
Ante coronati scandeant ardua testes  
atria, nunc lotae celsa petunt animae.  
Spiritus aeterno solitus descendere lapsu,  
ut dederat palmam, sic tribuit ueniam.  
Haurit terra sacros aut fonte aut sanguine rores  
exundatque suo iugiter uita deo.  
Ipse loci est dominus, laterum cui uulnere utroque  
hinc cruor effusus fluxit et inde latex.  
Ibitis hinc, ut quisque potest, per uulnera Christi  
euctus gladiis alter et alter aquis.

The text *Hymnus in Honorem Quirini Martyris, Episcopi Ecclesiae*, i.e., Prudentius' 7<sup>th</sup> hymn of the *Peristephanon*, is an important document, essentially inevitable when one wants to reconstruct the last days and the death of St. Quirinus. The text in itself is quite fascinating, since it opens several questions related to the philological and historical disciplines, respectively; of the several issues at hand, this paper only addresses two, i.e., the very com-

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thrown into water – take, for instance, the case of Domitianus of Carinthia, a possibly legendary duke of Carantania, who supposedly collected a thousand statues and had them thrown into the Millstatt lake.

plex state of sources relating Quirinus' death and the question of the sources used by Prudentius when choosing his motif. The majority of Prudentius' heroes portrayed in the *Peristephanon* were from Spain, which was understandable, since Prudentius himself was from that region. However, the 8<sup>th</sup> hymn is a sort of a *unicum* – it is not about the passion of a certain individual but praise of the baptistery in Calagurris; however, this hymn is, in fact, pivotal to our interpretation of hymn seven.

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