

The Christian Networks of the Aniciae: The Example of the Letter of Innocent I to Anicia Juliana*

The description of Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus given by Ammianus Marcellinus – that “he languished like a fish out of water if he was not in office”¹ – is the simile that memorably illustrates his “high birth, powerful influence, and vast riches.”² Peter Brown calls him “the doyen of Roman society.”³ Through his marriage to Anicia Faltonia Proba he was part of a family that was at the pinnacle of power and prestige in the late Roman empire.⁴ Edward Gibbon, in the late

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1. AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS 27.11.3: *Atque ut natantium genus, elemento suo expulsum, haud ita diu spirat in terris, ita ille marcebat absque praefecturis...*

2. *Ibid.*

3. P.R.L. BROWN, “Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy,” *Journal of Roman Studies*, 51 (1961), p. 5.

4. Although E.A. THOMPSON, *The Historical Works of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), p. 125, thought that Valentinian I was completely under Probus’ domination, and M.T.W. ARNHEIM, *The Senatorial Aristocracy in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 97, interprets Valentinian I making Probus Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, Italy and Africa as “an attempt on the part of the Emperor to conciliate at least the most significant of the noble families in the Empire...”, David M. NOVAK, “*Anicianae domus culmen, nobilitatis culmen*,” *Klio*, 62 (1980), p. 481, observes instead: “[n]or should one imagine Valentinian anxiously appeasing the chief of the most powerful aristocratic *gens* of the day: the Anicii and the Petronii may have been powerful, but they lacked connections with the army and were ultimately no threat to the stability of the new regime.” As Michele Renee SALZMAN, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 27-31, 110-111, suggests, members of the senatorial aristocracy pursued the reduced number of offices available to them not so much for the power but for the honour, social and economic opportunities they presented.

eighteenth century, said of the family that “[f]rom the reign of Diocletian to the final extinction of the Western empire that name shone with a lustre which was not eclipsed in the public estimation by the majesty of the Imperial purple.”⁵ Of course, what Ammianus fails to tell us is that Probus and his wife were Christian.⁶ Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, spent part of his early career as assessor for Probus during one of the latter’s stints as praetorian prefect.⁷ Not surprising for so distinguished an aristocratic Christian family,⁸ various notable Christian authors wrote letters to members of the Anician clan, particularly to the female members. Scholars who have been interested in questions of patron-client networks and social relationships, asceticism and the role of Christian women, contacts between East and West, and the theological controversies of Origenism and Pelagianism have commented upon many of these letters. While the letters to the female members of the family, from Augustine, John Chrysostom, Pelagius, Jerome, and possibly Prosper of Aquitaine, are well enough known, the letter from Innocent I, bishop of Rome from 402 to 417, to Anicia Juliana, the daughter-in-law of Probus and Proba, goes almost entirely unreported.⁹ Indeed, it has never been translated into English and has not been edited since Coustant’s 1721 edition.¹⁰

In this paper I wish to offer insight into the relationship not of some far-distant Christian cleric with the Aniciae but of that of the bishop of the very city in which

5. Edward GIBBON, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. 31 (London: Folio Society, 1986), vol. 4, p. 85.

6. E.D. HUNT, “Christians and Christianity in Ammianus Marcellinus,” *Classical Quarterly*, 35 (1985), pp. 186-200, argues that Ammianus was guided by the Roman historiographical tradition, which did not find a place for Christianity in its narratives. Michele R. SALZMAN, “Competing Claims to ‘Nobilitas’ in the Western Empire of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 9 (2001), pp. 364-365, points to Probus as an example of how Christian *nobilitas* was seen as exceeding his inherited family *nobilitas*, yet was granted to him because he already possessed the other.

7. See Neil B. MC LYNN, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 38-39.

8. For the early history of the family see David M. NOVAK, “The Early History of the Anician Family,” in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History I*, ed. Carl Deroux, Collection Latomus 164 (Brussels: Latomus, 1979), pp. 119-161; IDEM, “Constantine and the Senate: An Early Phase of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy,” *Ancient Society*, 10 (1979), pp. 290-297 (and pp. 297-299 for the Petronii).

9. INNOCENT I, *Ep. 15* (PL 20.518-519) = Pierre COUSTANT, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Clement I usque ad Innocentium III*, t. 1 (Paris: L.-D. Delatour, 1721), col. 830. See Philipp JAFFÉ, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, Bd. 1: *A S. Petro ad a. MCXLIII*, rev. Ferdinand Kaltenbrunner (Leipzig: Veit, 1885 [2nd edn]), n. 302. Patrick LAURENCE, “Proba, Juliana et Démétrias. Le christianisme des femmes de la gens Anicia dans la première moitié du v^e siècle,” *Revue d’Études Augustiniennes*, 48 (2002), p. 151, mentions Innocent’s letter in passing.

10. Currently I am preparing a critical edition of all the letters of Innocent I, as well as an English translation, funding for which is generously provided by the Australian Research Council.

they were based. In doing so I shall be commenting upon the inter-relationship between other key Christian letter writers and both the Aniciae and Innocent, perhaps reassessing their involvement in the light of what the evidence about Innocent reveals. The letter is of some interest for, as Green observes in the only full-length study devoted to this Roman bishop, it is the only piece of Innocent's correspondence not of an official nature.¹¹ Indeed, we may note, it is his only letter addressed to a woman and one of only two letters not addressed to either a cleric or emperor. Yet, beyond his brief mention Green had nothing else to say about it. First, we may consider Juliana in more detail.

ANICIA JULIANA'S FAMILY AND LIFE

Who was Anicia Juliana?¹² We need to begin with the family into which she married before considering her own family of birth. Anicia Juliana (Juliana 2)¹³ married Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius (Olybrius 2), who was ordinary consul in 395¹⁴ together with his brother Anicius Probinus (Probinus 1).¹⁵ They were the sons of the Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus (Probus 5) mentioned at the start

11. Malcolm R. GREEN, "Pope Innocent I: The Church of Rome in the early Fifth Century," (D.Phil. diss., Oxford, 1973), pp. 15 and 173, n. 1.

12. Otto SEECK, "Anicius 34," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Georg Wissowa, bd. 1.2 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlerscher, 1894), col. 2200; A.H.M. JONES, J.R. MARTINDALE and J. MORRIS, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1: A.D. 260-395 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) (= *PLRE* 1), p. 468 (Juliana 2); Charles PIETRI and Luce PIETRI, *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire*, vol. 2: *Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313-604)*, 2 vols (Rome 1999-2000) (= *PCBE* 2), pp. 1169-1171 (Juliana 3); Roland DELMAIRE, "Les 'lettres d'exil' de Jean Chrysostome. Études de chronologie et de prosopographie," *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 25 (1991), p. 137. For a recent investigation into the Anician family see Anne N. KURDOCK, "The Anician Women: Patronage and Dynastic Strategy in a Late Roman *Domus*, 350 CE – 600 CE" (PhD diss. Manchester 2003).

13. Here I am following the designations in *PLRE* 1.

14. SEECK, "Anicius 46," col. 2207; *PLRE* 1.639-640 (Olybrius 2). On the marriage of Juliana 2 and Olybrius 2 see Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Arts and Sciences (ed.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1893-) (= *CIL*) 6.1753 (= Hermann DESSAU, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1916] [= *ILS*] 1267); 6.1755. Eng. trans. in Brian CROKE and Jill HARRIES, *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome: A Documentary Study*, Sources in Ancient History (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1982), p. 116. On the consulship of Olybrius and Probinus see CLAUDIAN, *Pan. Prob. et Olyb.* (J.B. HALL, *Claudian: Carmina*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana [Leipzig: Teubner, 1985], pp. 1-11); *CIL* 6.1754 (= *ILS* 1269); 6.1756; 11.4042; 11.4043; 15.1705; 15.7158.

15. SEECK, "Anicius 47," col. 2207; *PLRE* 1.734-735 (Probinus 1). See *CIL* 6.1752 (= *ILS* 1268); 6.1754 (= *ILS* 1269).

of this paper¹⁶ and Anicia Faltonia Proba (Proba 3).¹⁷ Another son of Probus 5 and Proba 3 was Flavius Anicius Petronius Probus, consul in 406, who might have been the recipient of Innocent's *Epistula* 36.¹⁸ Juliana 2 was married to her husband by 395, the year of his consulship, according to a couple of inscriptions found in Rome.¹⁹ I would consider that she must have been born about 380, if we presume she was younger than her husband, whom I consider to have been born a few years either side of 375.²⁰

With this information what may we determine about Juliana's own family background? Arnheim offers no suggestion about Juliana's parents. Seeck, *PLRE*

16. SEECK, "Anicius 45," col. 2205-2207; *PLRE* 1.736-740 (Probus 5); *PCBE* 2.1840-1841 (Probus 3); André CHASTAGNOL, *Les fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire*, Études prosopographiques 2 (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1962), pp. 124-125.

17. SEECK, "Anicius 44," col. 2204-2205; *PLRE* 1.732-733 (Proba 3); *PCBE* 2.1831-1833 (Proba 2); DELMAIRE, "Les 'lettres d'exil'," p. 155. PROCOPIUS, *De bell. Vand.* 1.2.27 described Proba as "...πλούτῳ τε καὶ δόξῃ ἐν ψῆ τῇ Ῥωμαίων βουλῇ ἐπιφανεστάτην μάλιστα οὖσαν..." This relationship between Proba 3, Juliana 2 and Demetrias is supported by Serge LANCEL, *Saint Augustine*, trans. Antonia NEVILL (London: SCM Press, 2002 [Eng. edn]), p. 332 and Roland TESKE (trans.), *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, part II: *Letters*, vol. 3: *Letters 156-210*, ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2004), p. 251. Richard A. LAYTON, "Plagiarism and Lay Patronage of Ascetic Scholarship: Jerome, Ambrose, and Rufinus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 10 (2002), p. 494, is mistaken when he claims that John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 169 and Augustine, *Epp.* 130 and 131 were written as letters of consolation to Proba when her husband died. Augustine wrote in 412, about twenty-two years after her husband had died!

18. J.R. MARTINDALE, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2: A.D. 395-527 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) (= *PLRE* 2), pp. 913-914 (Probus 11*); *PCBE* 2.1842 (Probus 5). For an analysis of this letter see Geoffrey D. DUNN, "The Validity of Marriage in Cases of Captivity: The Letter of Innocent I to Probus," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 83 (2007), pp. 107-121.

19. *CIL* 6.1753 (= *ILS* 1267); *CIL* 6.1755. David M. NOVAK, "A Late Roman Aristocratic Family: The Anicii in the Third and Fourth Centuries" (PhD diss., Chicago 1976), p. 150, on the basis of these two inscriptions, briefly entertains the idea that she and Olybrius might have been siblings before opting for Juliana as the daughter of Bassus 7*. Jerome, *Ep.* 130 and Augustine, *De bono uid.* 19.24 (*NBA* 7/1.204-206), would rule the first option out.

20. See Geoffrey D. DUNN, "Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History XIV*, ed. Carl Deroux, Collection Latomus 315 (Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2008), pp. 431-437, for discussion about Olybrius' date of birth. T.D. BARNES, "Review of Werner Taegert, *Claudius Claudianus. Panegyricus dictus Olybrio et Probino consulibus*," *American Journal of Philology*, 111 (1990), pp. 418-419, agreeing with Werner TAEGERT, *Claudius Claudianus: Panegyricus dictus Olybrio et Probino consulibus* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), pp. 25-29, argues that Olybrius and his brother could not have been born before 380. If, however, Ausonius, *Ep.* 9.2.82-99 (R.P.H. GREEN, *Decimi Magni Ausonii. Opera* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999]), refers to another son of Probus (possibly even one from an earlier marriage as Barnes suggests), and was written as late as 374 or 375, this does not preclude Olybrius being born between 375 and 380.

and Chastagnol suggest²¹ that Juliana 2 was probably the daughter of Anicius Auchenius Bassus (Bassus 7*), ordinary consul in 408,²² and was the sister of Flavius Anicius Auchenius Bassus (Bassus 8*), ordinary consul in 431.²³ If we stick with our presumption that Juliana 2 was born about 380, then her father was probably born about 355-360 at the latest, which would make him between about 48 and 56 years old when he became consul. What is interesting, if this is correct, is that Juliana was the wife of a consul some twelve years before she became the daughter of a consul. This would highlight the extraordinary nature of the imperial gesture in making the sons of Probus consuls at such a tender age. It would also mean that Juliana 2 and Olybrius 2 were first cousins once removed and that Juliana 2 and Proba 3 were not only daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, but first cousins as well.²⁴ Some, however, do not think they might have been that closely related.²⁵

21. SEECK, col. 2201-2202; *PLRE* 1.1133; CHASTAGNOL, *Les fastes*, p. 291.

22. SEECK, "Anicius 31," col. 2200; *PLRE* 2.219-220 (Bassus 7*); *PCBE* 2.271 (Bassus 2). I am marking those members of the family detailed in *PLRE* 2 with an * to avoid confusion with those in vol. 1.

23. SEECK, "Anicius 33," col. 2200; *PLRE* 2.220-221 (Bassus 8*); *PCBE* 2.272 (Bassus 3).

24. If the reconstruction of Hagith SIVAN, "Anician Women, The Cento of Proba, and Aristocratic Conversion in the Fourth Century," *Viligiae Christianae*, 47 (1993), pp. 152-153, that Proba 2 and Proba 3 were mother and daughter instead of mother and granddaughter, were correct then the relationship between Juliana 2 and Olybrius 2 would be only one through marriage and not blood: Q. Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius (Olybrius 3), the son of the centoist and consul in 379, whom I accept as Proba 3's father, would then instead be the uncle of Olybrius 2 by blood rather than his grandfather (and the uncle of Juliana 2 by marriage) and Tyrrania Anicia Juliana (Juliana 3), whom I accept as Proba 3's mother, while still the aunt of Juliana 2 by blood, would be the aunt of Olybrius 2 by marriage instead of grandmother. This would mean that we know of no children of Juliana 3 and Olybrius 3. Sivan suggests further that while Proba 2 might have been the author of the cento, it was later edited by Proba 3. Elizabeth A. CLARK and Diane F. HATCH, *The Golden Bough, The Oaken Cross: The Vigilant Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba*, American Academy of Religion Texts and Translations 5 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 97-108, and Elizabeth A. CLARK, "Faltonia Betitia Proba and her Vigilant Poem: The Christian Matron as Artist," in Elizabeth A. CLARK, *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Late Ancient Christianity*, Studies in Women and Religion 3 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), pp. 124-152, accept Proba 2 as the cento's author. For further literature on the cento's authorship see DUNN, "Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius," p. 433, n. 29. On Peter Brown's curious reconstruction of the relationship between Proba 3, Juliana 2, and Demetrias see DUNN, "Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius," p. 438, n. 61.

25. ARNHEIM, *The Senatorial Aristocracy*, p. 183, points out that Juliana 3 as daughter of Bassus 11 and Turrenia Honorata, while plausible because of the names, is not plausible because of the dates. I would not necessarily support this. If Juliana 3 was the mother of Proba 3, born about 355, then she must have been born about 335. This would make sense if we accept that her husband, Olybrius 3, consul in 379, was also born about 335. For Bassus 11 to be the father of Juliana 3, he would need to be born no later than about 315, which would make him about 67 when he became urban prefect in 382 and about 35 when he became the father of Bassus 7*. All of this

In a very recent article Annewies van den Hoek has discussed a piece of African red slip ware, now on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, that, like a couple of other ceramic pieces,²⁶ depicts Bassus 7*.²⁷ He is dressed as a consul and seated between the apostolic figures of Peter and Paul, a rare combination of religious and secular imagery. It is argued that because of Bassus' connection with Augustine (for which, see below), this ceramic piece could have had some propaganda value in Bassus' possible intervention in the Donatist crisis between 408 and 411.

Juliana 2 and Olybrius 2 were the parents of a daughter Demetrias,²⁸ who came of marriageable age in late 413 or in 414 when she and the other members of her family were in Africa seeking safety after Alaric's capture of Rome.²⁹

Having considered her background we can examine some of the events in the life of Anicia Juliana. The next most significant event in Juliana's life after her husband's consulship in 395 and the birth of her children would have been his death, which occurred in August 410 at the time of Alaric's capture of Rome.³⁰ At any rate, it is the next event about which we know anything. At this time, I would suggest, Proba, Juliana, Demetrias, and other members of their family, together with a large number of clients, dependent ascetics, slaves, and friends, left Rome and sailed to Africa where the Anicii had vast estates.³¹

is possible. On Bassus 11's career see *CIL* 6.1679 (= *ILS* 1262).

26. Jeffrey SPIER, "A Lost Consular Diptych of Anicius Auchenius Bassus (A.D. 408) on the Mould for an ARS Plaque," *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 16 (2003), pp. 251-254.

27. Annewies VAN DEN HOEK, "Anicius Auchenius Bassus, African Red Slip Ware, and the Church," *Harvard Theological Review*, 98 (2005), pp. 171-185; IDEM, "Peter, Paul, and a Consul: Recent Discoveries in African Red Slip Ware," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, 9 (2005-2006), pp. 197-246.

28. *PLRE* 2.351-352; *PCBE* 2.544-547.

29. On other children see DUNN, "Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius," p. 438. We know from AUGUSTINE, *De bono uid.* 8.11 (*NBA* 7/1.180), that Juliana had sons.

30. For this date see DUNN, "Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius," pp. 440-442. On Alaric's invasion see Pierre COURCELLE, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 19 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1964), pp. 45-56; John MATTHEWS, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998 [2nd edn]), pp. 284-306; Thomas S. BURNS, *Barbarians Within the Gates of Rome: A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians, CA. 375-425 A.D.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 224-246.

31. J. MESNAGES, *L'Afrique chrétienne. Évêchés et ruines antiques* (Paris: E. Leroux 1912), p. 359. Despite the well argued reasons recently in Julia HILLNER, "Domus, Family and Inheritance: the Senatorial Family House in Late Antique Rome," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 93 (2003), pp. 129-145, that *gens* does not equate with *domus* (nuclear family elements of a *gens* would have lived in separate dwellings, which would not necessarily be transmitted patrilinearly), I would suggest that as a widow Proba might well have lived with Olybrius and Juliana, particularly if they all fled together. What Hillner has not considered in her research is how Christian asceticism

When they arrived in Africa, Jerome informs us, they fell victim to Heraclianus, the man who had killed Stilicho and had been made count of Africa and who, on Honorius' behalf, starved Rome of its grain supply while Alaric and Attalus held it during 409 and 410 and repelled soldiers they sent against him.³² According to Jerome, he took many of the female exiles and sold them into slavery.³³ Why should Honorius' agent have acted so cruelly against those who had endured Alaric's siege? The answer probably lies in the fact that so many members of the Roman senate cooperated with the puppet regime of Attalus that Alaric had set up in Rome. Even though the Anicii, according to Zosimus, were hostile to this arrangement,³⁴ I suspect that Heraclianus treated all those who landed in his province as collaborators. In the face of this threat, Proba used her wealth to enable herself and her travelling companions to escape slavery.

They remained in Africa for some years.³⁵ The fact that the depictions of Juliana's father Bassus on African red slip ware suggests that he joined his family in Africa at some stage, particularly if the images were somehow connected with the resolution of the Donatist crisis at the 411 conference in Carthage, but the literature tells us nothing about his presence there. Sometime around late 413 or 414³⁶ Juliana's daughter Demetrias was engaged to a Roman in exile in Africa³⁷ but, adolescent though she was, she decided instead to commit herself instead to an ascetical life of virginity, something for which Augustine and Alypius would claim a great deal of the credit.³⁸ It would seem that when they were in Carthage they had contact with Demetrias and her family. Her mother and grandmother were reported to be happy with her decision.³⁹ Augustine received from Proba

might have affected the patterns of aristocratic dwelling in Rome at this time.

32. See ZOSIMUS, *H.N.* 6.7-12 (François PASCHOUD, *Zosime. Histoire nouvelle*, t. III, 2^e partie: *Livre VI et Index*, Collection des Universités de France [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989], pp. 10-15); SOZOMEN, *H.E.* 9.8 (*GCS* n.f. 4.399-400).

33. JEROME, *Ep.* 130.7 (*CSEL* 56.184): *Hic matrum gremiis abducere pactas, negotiatoribus et audissimis mortalium Syris nobilium puellarum nuptias uendere, non pupillorum, non uiduarum, non uirginum Christi inopiae parcere manusque magis rogantium spectare quam uultus.*

34. ZOSIMUS, *H.N.* 6.7.4 (PASCHOUD, *Zosime*, p.10).

35. See AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 130.2.4 (*NBA* 22.76).

36. See KELLY, *Jerome*, p. 306, for the arguments to date the letter to Demetrias after the fall of Heraclianus on 3 August 413 based on JEROME's comments in *Ep.* 130.2 (*CSEL* 56.176) and *Comm. in Ezek.* 9.28:1-10 (*CCL* 75.388); 11.prol. (*CCL* 75.480); 12.prol (*CCL* 75.549); 13.prol. (*CCL* 75.605-606).

37. JEROME, *Ep.* 130.5 (*CSEL* 56.180).

38. AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 188.1 (*NBA* 23.176).

39. JEROME, *Ep.* 130.6 (*CSEL* 56.181). As Hagith SIVAN, "On Hymens and Holiness in Late Antiquity: Opposition to Aristocratic Female Asceticism at Rome," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 36 (1993), p. 84, points out, Jerome's implication in *Ep.* 130.4 that her mother and grandmother might have been opposed to her decision is not borne out by their presence with

and Juliana a memento of Demetrias' profession,⁴⁰ which had occurred probably before Aurelian, bishop of Carthage.⁴¹

It must have been during her years in Africa that Juliana became a consecrated widow.⁴² Augustine's *De bono uiduitatis* is a letter he wrote to Juliana in response to her requests, first in person and then in numerous letters, that he offer her some instruction on the occasion of her profession of widowhood as a stable form of Christian asceticism.⁴³ It was written after Demetrias had made her commitment to a life of virginity,⁴⁴ and is dated to 414.⁴⁵

As the extracts from her correspondence with Augustine in his *Epistula* 188 indicate, Juliana was a woman who was not afraid to voice her opinion and admonish even such a noted Christian thinker as Augustine himself when he dared to suggest that she was tainted with a whiff of heresy. As Elizabeth Clark points out, it was her social status rather than her asceticism that enabled her boldness.⁴⁶

When, or even if, Juliana returned to Rome and any other events in her life are not known.⁴⁷ We do know that Demetrias returned to Rome at some stage as the

her at her dedication to virginity ceremony. Indeed, Jerome described their discouragement of Demetrias' ambition not as opposition but as fear of failure.

40. AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 150 (NBA 22.498).

41. JEROME, *Ep.* 130.2 (CSEL 56.176-177). Kathryn Clare KRABBE, *Epistula ad Demetriadem De Vera Humilitate: A Critical Text and Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Catholic University of America Patristic Studies 97 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), pp. 97-98, n. 26. JEROME's comments in *Ep.* 130.5 (CSEL 56.180) that Demetrias was *in Libyco litore* when she decided not to marry and to make her commitment to virginity would certainly reinforce this view.

42. AUGUSTINE, *De bono uid.* 19.23 (NBA 7/1.202). David G. HUNTER in Ray KEARNEY, trans., *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, part 3, *Books*, vol. 9: *Marriage and Virginity: The Excellence of Marriage, Holy Virginity, The Excellence of Widowhood, Adulterous Marriages, Continence*, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1999), p. 111, dates this event to 412. Interestingly enough T.J. VAN BAVEL, "Augustine's View on Women," *Augustiniana*, 39 (1989), pp. 5-53, does not consider the place of virginity or widowhood in Augustine's thinking nor how his views were translated into practice.

43. AUGUSTINE, *De bono uid.*, 1.1 (NBA 7/1.166). See Geoffrey D. DUNN, "The Elements of Ascetical Widowhood: Augustine's *De bono uiduitatis* and *Epistula* 130," in Wendy MAYER, Pauline ALLEN and Lawrence CROSS (eds), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 4: *The Spiritual Life* (Sydney: St. Pauls Publications, 2006), pp. 247-256.

44. AUGUSTINE, *De bono uid.*, 4.6 (NBA 7/1.172).

45. BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 280; Othmar PERLER and Jean-Louis MAIER, *Les voyages de saint Augustin*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 36 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1969), p. 415.

46. Elizabeth A. CLARK, "Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the 'Linguistic Turn'," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6 (1998), pp. 414-415.

47. Donato OGLIARI, "An Anti-Pelagian *caueat*: Augustine's *Ep.* 188 to Juliana," *Augustiniana*,

letter from pseudo-Prosper (or Leo the Great) and *Liber Pontificalis* indicate.⁴⁸ In the latter is evidence that she built a basilica to St. Stephen on her estate along the Via Latina.⁴⁹ Whether she returned to her native city with her mother (and grandmother) is not known. Some have suggested that the whole family returned to Rome after Demetrias' profession and before they received the letters from Pelagius and Jerome, particularly as Jerome refers to the necessity of Demetrias holding on to the faith as professed by Innocent in the face of the revival of the Origenist controversy.⁵⁰ If that were so then Augustine must have sent *De bono uiduitatis* to Rome.

ANICIAN PATRONAGE OF CHRISTIAN FIGURES

One of the topics that has interested scholars recently has been that of the patronage networks that existed between aristocratic families and Christian authors and communities, as well as the appeal of asceticism to aristocratic women.⁵¹ Elizabeth Clark spent the first chapter of her work on the Origenist controversy offering a social explanation for the issues as revealed by networks among the Roman elite.⁵² Innocent is mentioned in only two brief footnotes in her work and the Anicii also receive scant mention. What I wish to do in this section is add to the kind of information she provides by adding the Aniciae to the mix.⁵³

54 (2004), p. 206, claims that Juliana did return to Rome.

48. PSEUDO-PROSPER, *De uera hum.*; *Liber Pontificalis* 47 (L. DUCHESNE, *Le Liber pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire* [Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955 (2nd edn)], p. 238).

49. See also ILS 8988 (= Ernest DIEHL, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, 3 vols [Berlin 1925-1931] 1765).

50. JEROME, *Ep.* 130.16 (CSEL 56.196). See KRABBE, *Epistula ad Demetraidem*, pp. 4, 100, n. 37.

51. See Anne YARBROUGH, "Christianization in the Fourth Century: The Example of Roman Women," *Church History*, 45 (1976), pp. 149-165; Elizabeth A. CLARK, "Ascetic Renunciation and Feminine Advancement: A Paradox of Late Ancient Christianity," *Anglican Theological Review*, 63 (1981), pp. 240-257; Elizabeth CASTELLI, "Virginity and its Meaning for Women's Sexuality in Early Christianity," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2 (1986), pp. 61-88; Anne EWING HICKEY, *Women of the Roman Aristocracy as Christian Monastics*, Studies in Religion 1 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987); Jan Willem DRIJVERS, "Virginity and Asceticism in Late Roman Western Elites," in Josine BLOK and Peter MASON, eds, *Sexual Asymmetry: Studies in Ancient Society* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1987), pp. 241-273; Elizabeth A. CLARK, "Patrons, Not Priests: Gender and Power in Late Ancient Christianity," *Gender and History*, 2 (1990), pp. 253-273; Karen Jo TORJESEN, "In Praise of Noble Women: Gender and Honor in Ascetic Texts," *Semeia*, 57 (1992), pp. 41-64; LAYTON, "Plagiarism and Lay Patronage," pp. 489-522.

52. Elizabeth A. CLARK, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 11-42.

53. Yarborough likewise does not locate the Anician women within her analysis. For an exception see Franca ELA CONSOLINO, "Modelli di comportamento e modi di santificazione per l'aristocrazia femminile d'Occidente," in A. GIARDINA (ed.), *Società romana e imperio*

Peter Brown too has made the point that in Rome each wealthy *domus* would have become a rival centre for ascetical and intellectual Christian life, such that “antipathies, once generated, might be passed from generation to generation; *ententes*, once sealed, might afford protection to a variety of newcomers.”⁵⁴ He has highlighted the connection between Jerome and Marcella and Pammachius (to which we could add Paula and Eustochium), on the one hand, and between Rufinus and Melania the Elder and Paulinus, bishop of Nola, on the other,⁵⁵ and the ways in which they were rival factions.⁵⁶ In addition he has pointed to the connections between Pelagius, Julian of Eclanum and their supporters, and Paulinus, Albina, Melania the Younger and Timasius.⁵⁷ According to Brown this goes some way in explaining why Jerome identified Pelagian teaching with that of Rufinus.⁵⁸

Where do the Aniciae fit into this network of patronage? John Chrysostom, the exiled bishop of Constantinople, addressed a letter to Juliana (as well as one to her mother-in-law Proba and another to Italica,⁵⁹ who might well have been married to her husband’s brother, Anicius Probinus) in the early months of 406.⁶⁰

tradoantico, vol. 1: *Istituzioni, ceti, economie* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1986), pp. 273-306, and EADEM, “Sante o patrone? Le aristocratiche tardoantiche e il potere della carità,” *Studi Storici*, 30 (1989), pp. 971-975.

54. P. BROWN, “The Patrons of Pelagius: The Roman Aristocracy between East and West,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 21 (1970), p. 57.

55. Francis X. MURPHY, “Rufinus of Aquileia and Paulinus of Nola,” *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 2 (1956), pp. 79-91, outlines the friendship that grew between these two that emerges after 400. P. COURCELLE, “Paulin de Nole et saint Jérôme,” *Revue des Études Latines*, 25 (1947), pp. 274-280, traced the decline of Jerome’s regard for Paulinus during those same years.

56. BROWN, “The Patrons of Pelagius,” pp. 57-58. See also J.N.D. KELLY, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), pp. 92-94, for Jerome’s patrons. On Jerome and women in general see Stefan REBENICH, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis. Prosopographie und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner 1992) and Christa KRUMEICH, *Hieronymus und die christlichen feminae clarissimae*, Habels Dissertationsdrucke: Reihe Alte Geschichte 36 (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1993).

57. BROWN, “The Patrons of Pelagius,” pp. 59-60. If the subject of Jerome, *Ep.* 50 was Pelagius as Georges DE PLINVAL, *Pélage, ses écrits, sa vie et sa réforme* (Lausanne: Payot, 1943), pp. 51-55; J.N.L. MYRES, “Pelagius and the End of Roman Rule in Britain,” *Journal of Roman Studies*, 50 (1960), pp. 22 and 24; R.F. EVANS, *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (London: Black, 1968), pp. 31-37; and KELLY, *Jerome*, p. 188, believe, then we have information, however much tainted by Domnio and Jerome’s prejudice, about how he sought patronage from wealthy widows and virgins.

58. BROWN, “The Patrons of Pelagius,” pp. 60-62, where he notes, in addition, that the supporters of John Chrysostom had connections with the family of Melania the Younger and that later Pelagians would promote John in the West.

59. See *PLRE* 1.465-466.

60. DELMAIRE, “Les ‘lettres d’exil’,” p. 90.

John the presbyter and Paul the deacon who carried the letter to Juliana (and the other two we may presume) also carried a letter to Innocent.⁶¹ However, the fact that these two clerics carried letters to others in the West at the same time probably means that we should not make too much out of this fact in terms of a connection between Innocent and the Aniciae. It is clear from these letters, particularly the one to Juliana, that John was well acquainted with this family.⁶² John's close supporter, Palladius, bishop of Helenopolis, stayed with Melania the Younger when he visited Rome in 404 on behalf of his exiled mentor.⁶³ Wendy Mayer, has pointed out how this probable connection between John and Melania was a reversal of her grandmother's support for the Evagrian faction in Antioch's ecclesial dispute.⁶⁴ Elizabeth Clark too has pointed to John's Origenist sympathies.⁶⁵ Does all this suggest that one who found favour with Melania might have had a foot in the door with the Aniciae?⁶⁶

Although Brown suggests that Juliana herself had sheltered Pelagius at least temporarily from the scruples of Augustine and Alypius, implying that Pelagius

61. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Ep. ad Innoc.* 2 (PG 52.535-536) = ([Innocent I], *Ep.* 11 [PL 20.513-514] = COUSTANT, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum*, col. 809-814). On the correspondence between Innocent and John see Charles PIETRI, *Christiana Respublica: Éléments d'une enquête sur le christianisme antique*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 123 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1997), pp. 789-811; Geoffrey D. DUNN, "Roman Primacy in the Correspondence Between Innocent I and John Chrysostom," in *Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo* (XXXIII Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 6-8 maggio 2004), *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 93/2 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2005), pp. 687-698; IDEM, "The Date of Innocent I's *Epistula* 12 and the Second Exile of John Chrysostom," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 45 (2005), pp. 155-170.

62. Elizabeth A. CLARK, "Theory and Practice in Late Ancient Asceticism: Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 5 (1989), p. 35, points out how many of the women to whom John wrote while in exile were people with whom he had been in frequent contact in Constantinople. This makes our lack of knowledge about the prior connections between John and the Aniciae frustrating.

63. PALLADIUS, *Hist. laus.* 61.7 (C. BUTLER, *The Lausiaca History of Palladius*, 2 vols, Texts and Studies 6 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904], pp. 155-157).

64. Wendy MAYER, "Antioch and the West in Late Antiquity," *Byzantinoslavica*, 61 (2003), pp. 5-32; EADEM, "John Chrysostom as Bishop: The View from Antioch," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55 (2004), pp. 455-466. On that dispute see Robin WARD, "The Schism at Antioch in the Fourth Century" (PhD diss., London 2003).

65. CLARK, *The Origenist Controversy*, pp. 23, 26. On p. 38 she notes Theophilus of Alexandria's anti-Origenist stance. This would provide one basis for the antagonism between these two bishops of the major eastern churches.

66. J.H.W.G. LIEBESCHUETZ, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 226. OGLIARI, "An Anti-Pelagian *caueat*," p. 219, n. 93, states that the Anicii were supporters of Rufinus because of their connections with Chrysostom.

had found patronage with this family,⁶⁷ something accepted quite explicitly by some,⁶⁸ he notes that this was a family whom everyone had to approach.⁶⁹ This suggests that it is difficult to identify the patronage or influence the Aniciae exercised simply on the basis of the letters to and from them.

The idea that Julian, bishop of Eclanum, a leading supporter of Pelagius, was Juliana's brother, while it would suggest a reason for Julian's theological stance and add to the impression that Pelagius attached himself to the Anician family, however, cannot be supported.⁷⁰ Nor can the idea that Paulinus of Nola was a member of the family be accepted.⁷¹

67. P. BROWN, "Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 21 (1968), p. 100. In his index to *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000 [rev. edn.]), p. 544, BROWN lists Juliana as Pelagius' patron. The sequence of events outlined in AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 188 (NBA 23.176-192), can be determined as follows: Augustine and Alypius had met with Juliana and Demetrias and had urged the latter to embrace the life of virginity (188.1); Juliana and Proba informed Augustine by letter that Demetrias had decided on the life of virginity (*Epp.* 150 [NBA 22.496-498] and 188.1); Augustine replied to Juliana and Proba with *Ep.* 150; Juliana requested other Christian ascetics (Pelagius and Jerome) to offer their insights; Juliana probably informed Augustine of this request; Augustine admonished Juliana to "avoid what does not pertain to sound doctrine" (188.2) – this could have been in *De bono uid.*, a letter Augustine wrote to Juliana after she had repeatedly requested some advice on this both in person and by letter, for in ch. 17.21 (NBA 7/1.196) it contains such a warning to her; Juliana responded to Augustine that her family did not consort with heretics (a statement that she did not consider Pelagius a heretic rather than a claim that she did not have anything to do with Pelagius the heretic) (188.2-3); and Augustine and Alypius wrote *Ep.* 188 in 417 or 418 enquiring of Juliana whether the work they had read was the one by Pelagius, whether or not she had received her copy, and whether her copy contained more than theirs did (188.4 and 14), and pointing out its flaws (188.5-13). P.-M. HOMBERT, *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustiniennne*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 163 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2000), p. 227, n. 5, suggests the beginning of 418 for *Ep.* 188. For more on this letter see OGLIARI, "An Anti-Pelagian *caueat*," pp. 203-222.

68. PLINVAL, *Pelage*, pp. 214-216; Charles PIETRI, *Roma christiana: Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)*, 2 vols, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 224 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1976), pp. 448-449; KELLY, *Jerome*, p. 309; LANCEL, *St. Augustine*, p. 326.

69. BROWN, "The Patrons of Pelagius," p. 56, n. 3.

70. MARIUS MERCATOR, *Comm. adu. haer.* 7 (ACO 1.5, p. 9) records that Julian's mother was Juliana, but gives no indication that she was related to the Anicii. See KRABBE, *Epistula ad Demetriadem*, pp. 5, 10, 39. She refers to J. FORGET, "Julien d'Éclane," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. 8 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1925), pp. 1926-1931. However, all Forget says, in col. 1927 is "Son union avec Titia, une descendante des Paul-Émile, fille d'Émile de Bénévent, fut honorée d'un épithalame par l'aimable évêque à leur mariage. Mais sa femme paraît n'avoir guère survécu à leur mariage." This is far from saying that Julian was related to Demetrias' family by marriage, as Krabbe claims. Even if PAULINUS OF NOLA, *Carmina* 25.219-220 (CSEL 30.245) meant that Aemilius was Titia's spiritual rather than biological father, there is no reason to believe that Titia was the sister of either Juliana 2 or Olybrius 2. Cf. PCBE 2.1175.

71. See KRABBE, *Epistula ad Demetriadem*, p. 125. PRUDENTIUS, *Con. Symm.* 1.558-560

Pelagius had contact with Melania the Younger and her family, meeting them in Palestine in 418. Brown suggests that their support of him might have been a reason why Augustine held back for so long in naming Pelagius as his opponent.⁷²

Given the negative comments Jerome had made to Paulinus of Nola about Juliana's great-grandmother, the centoist Faltonia Betitia Proba, it might be safe to assume that he was not a client of this family.⁷³ Yet, it could be argued, Jerome was not the first person to be critical of someone behind their back to a third party, hoping that his negativity would never be known by his patrons. Given the public nature of letters in late antiquity, however, this would be an unsafe presumption for us to make. Gonsette asserts that "Jérôme est comme chez lui dans la famille des Probi..."⁷⁴ Dunphy mistakenly observes that we know of no prior contact between Jerome and the Anicii.⁷⁵ Yet, even though Jerome had been in contact with Furia, responding to a letter from her, Gonsette's claim seems extravagant. Corresponding with Jerome does not turn him into an Anician client. Despite Andrew Jacobs' recent assertion that Jerome wrote to the Aniciae as an expert in asceticism with "a certain grizzled hauteur" (which presumably means that he did not write as a client of the family), he finds Dunphy's statement that Jerome was ill-at-ease in this letter as fairly insupportable.⁷⁶ While it is true that Jerome

(CCL 126.205), is obviously the source of this belief. However, it is to be noted that Paulinus is not presented as an Anician but as another example of an aristocrat who has converted to Christianity. See François CHAUSSON, "Les patronats familiaux de cités en Afrique et en Italie au IV^e et V^e siècles. Un dossier épigraphique," *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti Classe di scienze morali storiche e filologiche* s. 9, 15 (2004), pp. 113-115. Dennis E. TROUT, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 25-26 and Catherine CONYBEARE, *Paulinus Noster: Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 3, do not mention him having Anician connections. Indeed, it may be possible that Krabbe has confused the episcopal Paulinus with Anicius Paulinus (PLRE 1.678 [Paulinus 12]), urban prefect in 380, one of his predecessors as governor of Campania.

72. BROWN, "The Patrons of Pelagius," p. 65. AUGUSTINE, *Sermo* 348A.5 (NBA 35/2.788) (= Dolbeau 30) claimed it was because he wanted to give Pelagius a chance to correct himself.

73. JEROME, *Ep.* 53.7 (CSEL 54.453-454). See CLARK and HATCH, *The Golden Bough*, pp. 104-105; LAYTON, "Plagiarism and Patronage," p. 504. Walter DUNPHY, "Saint Jerome and the Gens Anicia (*Ep.* 130 to Demetrias)," *Studia Patristica* 18/4, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, Papers of the 1983 Oxford Patristics Conference (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications and Leuven: Peeters, 1990), p. 141, mistakenly claims that Jerome failed to mention the centoist. On the distinction between Jerome's thinking about asceticism and his relationships with women see Antti ARJAVA, "Jerome and Women," *Arctos*, 23 (1989), pp. 5-18.

74. M. GONSETTE, "Les directeurs spirituels de Démétride. Épisode de la lutte anti-pélagienne," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 60 (1933), p. 793.

75. DUNPHY, "Saint Jerome and the Gens Anicia," p. 139. See JEROME, *Ep.* 54, to Furia, Probus' daughter-in-law as he informs us elsewhere (*Ep.* 123.17 [CSEL 56.95]).

76. Andrew S. JACOBS, "Writing Demetrias: Ascetic Logic in Ancient Christianity," *Church History*, 69 (2000), p. 728.

must have had an ascetical reputation, which justified the Anician women writing to him for his insight, my reading of the letter leads me to agree with Dunphy in this respect, that Jerome was going out of his way to win the favour of the letter's recipients.⁷⁷ Ogliari too sees Jerome being uncomfortable with this family.⁷⁸ Despite Jerome's familiarity with a number of aristocratic Roman women, the Aniciae cannot be included among them. As suggested above, I believe this was in part due to the fact that Pelagius was a client of the family and that, whether or not the family actually cared about who were friends or opponents of their client (in other words, because they had such a vast network of clients that they could support as a client someone whom other clients of theirs might have regarded as opponents), Jerome would have been acutely aware that Pelagius had the inside running when it came to being well received by Juliana and her daughter and that he need to approach them carefully and cautiously, for this was a family, he tells us himself, he did not know well.⁷⁹

What would help in making this assessment would be some indication of the relationship between Rufinus, Paulinus of Nola or the two Melanias and the Anician family. We do get some information from Gennadius, who informs us that Rufinus wrote on a number of occasions to Proba, Juliana's mother-in-law and that these were among his most preeminent letters.⁸⁰ However, as for direct connections between Melania and the Aniciae, we are yet to discover them.

Augustine too may have enjoyed the hospitality of the Anician family during his time in Italy. This should not be surprising given that Ambrose would be the logical connection between them. The suggestion has been made, and repeated with approval by several distinguished Augustine scholars, that in late 387, Augustine, Monica and their friends stayed at Ostia in the house of one of the Anicii, possibly that of Olybrius 3, where Monica died.⁸¹ Bassus 7*, Juliana's father, was responsible for the epitaph dedicated to Monica, which was found

77. In this I want to go further than KURDOCK, "The Anician Women," pp. 92-93, who says that this panegyric was Jerome's attempt to imitate a style of writing familiar to aristocrats. Many of Jerome's letters were to aristocratic women, but this letter is unique and Kurdock's position is insufficient to explain this.

78. OGLIARI, "An Anti-Pelagian *caueat*," p. 219.

79. Geoffrey D. DUNN, "Anastasius I and Innocent I: Reassessing the Evidence of Jerome," *Vigiliae Christianae*, 61 (2007), pp. 30-41. Either Jerome had forgotten about Furia, Demetrias' aunt by marriage, or was not counting her as part of this immediate family, or was rhetorically downplaying his familiarity with this family. Even though I believe that Jerome's letter was highly rhetorical, I accept that he put a great deal of effort into polishing this letter for the simple reason that he needed to make a good first impression.

80. GENNADIUS, *De uir. illus.* 17 (TU 14.68).

81. R. MEIGGS, *Roman Ostia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973 [2nd edn]), p. 400; BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo*, p. 121; NOVAK, "A Late Roman Aristocratic Family," p. 141; LANCEL, *St. Augustine*, pp. 116, 492, n. 13.

in 1945.⁸² If this is so, then Augustine made a lasting impression on the family. Although Jacobs wants to make something out of the fact that it seems as though Augustine was not asked by the Aniciae to offer advice about the life of virginity and he suggests that they were somewhat disillusioned with him,⁸³ we need to take into account that down to 416 or 417 Juliana was still writing to Augustine with information about her life.⁸⁴ Indeed, it may well be possible that, if Pelagius accompanied the Anician family in their escape from Rome that they headed first to Hippo, as we know Pelagius did,⁸⁵ precisely because they knew they could rely upon Augustine's help.⁸⁶ As I noted a little earlier, *Epistula* 188 from Augustine and Alypius shows the two bishops using their contacts with Juliana in an effort to wrest her away from the influence of Pelagius. Elizabeth Clark argues that Augustine killed this blossoming relationship because of his harping on about Pelagius.⁸⁷ That might have been the case, though I am not sure that I would read quite this much into the fact that no further correspondence between him and the Aniciae survives.⁸⁸

What reinforces this view that Augustine's contact with the Anician family might have started during his time in Italy and endured thereafter and was not something started only when they arrived in Africa, comes from the letters from Italica to Augustine from around 408.⁸⁹ If indeed she were the widow of Anicius Probinus, making her the sister-in-law of Juliana, then the prior connection

82. MEIGGS, *Roman Ostia*, p. 400; A. CASAMASSA, "Ritrovamento di parte dell'elogio di S. Monica," *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Rendiconti* 27 (1951-1952), pp. 271-273.

83. JACOBS, "Writing Demetrias," pp. 732, 741.

84. AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 188.1.1 (NBA 23.176). Indeed, if Augustine were accurate in his claim that he and Alypius were responsible to a large extent with Demetrias' decision then there would be no need for the family to write to him seeking advice since he had provided it already. I would also not make too much out of the fact that Augustine never wrote directly to Demetrias. A reading of both Jerome's and Pelagius' letter indicates that they, particularly the latter, were about her (possibly sent to her mother) more than they were to her.

85. IDEM, *De gest. Pel.* 22.46 (NBA 17/2.90).

86. It could be argued, of course, that such a wealthy family with considerable land holdings in Africa and deep-rooted connections to this part of the Mediterranean could simply have headed to one of their own properties and would not need to have to rely upon the assistance of others. Knowing that Alaric had sent men to Carthage against Heraclianus already, perhaps they went to Hippo (either to impose upon Augustine or to reside in properties they owned in that part of Africa) to avoid possible trouble in Carthage. All of this is very speculative because, for one thing, we have no way of knowing whether Pelagius accompanied the Anician refugees. If he had, he did not remain long with them, heading off to Palestine in 411.

87. CLARK, "Theory and Practice in Late Ancient Asceticism," pp. 41-44; EADEM, *The Origenist Controversy*, p. 24.

88. OGLIARI, "An Anti-Pelagian *caueat*," p. 220, is likewise sceptical.

89. AUGUSTINE, *Ep.* 92 (NBA 21/2.796-802); 99 (NBA 21/2.930-932).

between Augustine and the Anicii would explain why Italica, a Roman widow, wrote to Augustine in Africa. Elizabeth Clark has not addressed the question as to why she wrote to him if she had had no previous contact with him.⁹⁰

We know that Augustine had contact with Melania the Younger, her husband Pinianus, her mother Albina, and her uncle Volusianus.⁹¹ While Clark is right to see this as a relationship that failed,⁹² we are still left without any knowledge of connections between Melania's family and the Aniciae and how this might have impacted on relationships between Christian clients.

INNOCENT AND THE ANICIAE

Where does Innocent fit into all of this? I would like to suggest that the Aniciae were supporters of their bishop. I am reluctant to describe them as patrons with regard to him because there is a lack of evidence, but perhaps it is sufficient to suggest some degree of support. In Jerome's letter to Demetrias it is clear that Jerome held Anastasius, Innocent's predecessor, in the highest regard because of his opposition to Origenism.⁹³ Demetrias is told, in the light of Jerome's information that the dangers of Origenism had reemerged in Rome, to hold fast to the faith of saintly Innocent.⁹⁴ However, in his letter to Principia, the protégée of his former patron Marcella, written only a couple of years earlier, about Marcella's life, Jerome likewise praised Anastasius, who seemed to have reached his position on Origenism under the influence of Marcella, yet clearly in a way that was critical of Innocent, his unmentioned successor.⁹⁵ I am suggesting that it may be reasonable to deduce from this that Jerome did not express a similar veiled

90. CLARK, "Theory and Practice in Late Ancient Asceticism," pp. 37-39. In n. 55 she concedes that they might have corresponded prior to the two preserved letters, but rules Italica out from having met Augustine in 387 in Italy as she would have been too young. If Italica was married to Probinus 1, then I would make her about the same age as Juliana, especially if the brothers Probinus 1 and Olybrius 2 were twins (see DUNN, "Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius," p. 436), i.e. born about 375-380. Given that neither Italica nor Juliana would have married into the family by this stage it is indeed unlikely that Augustine had met them personally. To me this is immaterial; what matters is that there was a contact between Augustine and the family. When the two women married into this family they gained access to Augustine as one of the family's contacts.

91. AUGUSTINE, *Epp.* 124 (NBA 22.8-10); 125 (NBA 22.12-20); 126 (NBA 22.22-38); 135 (NBA 22.130-134); 136 (NBA 22.136-140); 137 (NBA 22.142-168); 138 (NBA 22.170-194).

92. CLARK, "Theory and Practice in Late Ancient Asceticism," pp. 39-41.

93. JEROME, *Ep.* 130.16 (CSEL 56.196).

94. *Ibid.*: ...*ut sancti Innocentii...teneas fidem*... DUNPHY, "St. Jerome and the Gens Anicia," p. 143, suggests that Jerome, in need of new patrons, was prepared to affirm Innocent, whom he had not mentioned in the previous ten years of the latter's episcopate.

95. JEROME, *Ep.* 127.10 (CSEL 56.153): *Anastasius, quem diu Roma habere non meruit, ne orbis caput sub tali episcopo truncaretur*...

criticism of Innocent in his letter to Demetrias because the Aniciae were close to their bishop and Jerome knew it.

It is difficult to make too many dogmatic pronouncements about these aristocratic networks and their support of rival theological positions and Christian identities. Clark, for example, points out that Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia, and Paulinus, bishop of Nola, had cordial relationships with both Rufinus and Jerome and their respective supporters.⁹⁶ If Brown is right to suggest that the Anicii were so prominent and had such vast connections, then it should not surprise us to find that they could have connections with Pelagius and Augustine at the same time. That being said, however, the evidence still suggests that Pelagius was closer to them than was Jerome.

It is within this context that we may consider now the very brief letter of Innocent to Juliana. Those who have made mention of it presume that this letter was written to Juliana in connection with Demetrias' pledge to virginity.⁹⁷ I would like to suggest that the letter was occasioned not by Demetrias' vow but by Juliana's own vow of widowhood. This would make it a parallel piece to Augustine's *De bono uiduitatis*. The only way it could be taken as referring to Demetrias' vow of virginity would be on the basis of Innocent's statement that by joyfully accepting Christ Juliana rejoiced more in the faith than she boasted of the flower of such a great family.⁹⁸ However, the flower of the great family does not have to be her daughter Demetrias; it could be Juliana herself. Innocent could be praising Juliana for her own humility. In fact, the rest of the letter refers to Juliana's own achievements not anyone else's: she applies more noble devotion to the church,⁹⁹ she observes the commands of Christ,¹⁰⁰ and she has subdued the fame of the flesh and overcome nobility by her conduct.¹⁰¹ It was Juliana herself whom Innocent exhorted to take whatever opportunity there was to perform acts of kindness.¹⁰² All of this makes perfect sense if we take this letter as having been written upon the occasion of

96. CLARK, *The Origenist Controversy*, pp. 33-35.

97. KRABBE, *Epistula ad Demetriadem*, pp. 3-4; JACOBS, "Writing Demetrias," p. 741, n. 114. Erich CASPAR, *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft*, Bd. 1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck]), 1930), p. 327, was a little more tentative: "...es mag zu der kirchlichen Glückwunschkorrespondenz gehören, mit welcher Probas Familie beehrt wurde, als ihre Enkelin, Julianas junge Tochter Demetrias, aus Aurelius' von Karthago Händen i. J. 414 den Nonnenschleier empfing." *PLRE* 1.468, does not mention this letter in connection with Juliana.

98. INNOCENT I, *Ep.* 15 (*PL* 20.518): ...*et in fide potius exsultas, quam tanti generis flore iactaris.*

99. *Ibid.*: ...*multo nobiliorem Ecclesiae deuotionem impendis...*

100. *Ibid.*: ...*praeceptis eius obtemperas...*

101. *Ibid.* (*PL* 20.518-519): ...*uicisse gloriam carnis...nobilitatem moribus superasse...*

102. *Ibid.* (*PL* 20.519): ...*uitae huius quaecumque sunt spatia aeternis diuinisque officiis illustrare contende...*

Juliana's commitment to widowhood as a form of Christian asceticism. There is no real reason why we have to see any reference to Demetrias in this letter at all.

If that event took place in Africa in 412 then we should date this letter to that time. The fact that Innocent pointed out that Juliana's ascetical accomplishments were a mighty grace from Christ,¹⁰³ may or may not indicate that he was aware of the Pelagian controversy, but he expressed a view that was entirely consistent with the anti-Pelagian stance he would take in response to the communication between Rome and the African bishops on this matter in 416 and 417.¹⁰⁴

Did the fact that Innocent was to take a stand against Pelagius and in support of Jerome (in spite of what I suggest was Jerome's lack of enthusiasm for Innocent),¹⁰⁵ contrary to the relationship the Aniciae seemed to have had with these two figures, impact upon Innocent's own relationship with this distinguished Roman family? Certainly the letter to Juliana is not terribly long. Indeed, in comparison with Augustine's letter, *De bono uiduitatis*, it is completely insignificant. However, Augustine's letter is more than a congratulatory one, it was solicited by Juliana herself. We simply do not know whether or not Juliana asked for something similar from the Roman bishop. If she did she received a paltry offering from Rome in comparison with what came from Hippo. Perhaps the demands of dealing with the situation in Italy in the aftermath of Alaric kept Innocent that busy, as he seems to have indicated elsewhere,¹⁰⁶ that he only managed this perfunctory letter to Juliana upon hearing the news.

103. *Ibid.* (PL 20.518-519): ...*et magnae est Christi gratiae*...

104. AUGUSTINE, *Epp.* 175 (NBA 22.842-850) (= [Innocent I], *Ep.* 26 [PL 20.564-568]); 176 (NBA 22.852-856) (= [Innocent I], *Ep.* 27 [PL 20.568-571]); 177 (NBA 22.858-878) (= [Innocent I], *Ep.* 28 [PL 20.571-582]); INNOCENT I, *Epp.* 29 (PL 20.582-588) (= Augustine, *Ep.* 181 [NBA 22.902-912] = JK 321); 30 (PL 20.588-593) (= Augustine, *Ep.* 182 [NBA 22.914-920] = JK 322); 31 (PL 20.593-597) (= Augustine, *Ep.* 183 [NBA 22.922-926] = *Collectio Avellana* 41 [CSEL 35/1.92-96] = JK 323).

105. For his support of Jerome see INNOCENT I, *Epp.* 33 (PL 20.600) (= Jerome, *Ep.* 135 [CSEL 56.263] = *Collectio Avellana* 44 [CSEL 35/1.98] = JK 327); 34 (PL 20.600-601) (= Jerome, *Ep.* 136 [CSEL 56.263-264] = *Collectio Avellana* 42 [CSEL 35/1.96-97] = JK 326). See Geoffrey D. DUNN, "Innocent I and the Attacks on the Bethlehem Monasteries," *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, 2 (2006), pp. 69-83.

106. INNOCENT I, *Ep.* 16 (PL 20.519). This is a letter I would date to about 413, despite the efforts of others to date it to 409. See Geoffrey D. DUNN, "The Care of the Poor in Rome and Alaric's Sieges," in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 5: *Poverty and Riches*, ed. Geoffrey D. Dunn, David Luckensmeyer and Lawrence Cross (Sydney: St. Paul's, 2009), pp. 319-333. Cf. JK 299; CASPAR, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, p. 312, n. 4; Émilienne DEMOUGEOT, "À propos des interventions du pape Innocent I^{er} dans la politique séculière," *Revue Historique*, 212 (1954), p. 32; Jean GAUDEMET, *L'Église dans l'Empire romain (IV^e-V^e siècles)*, Histoire du Droit et des Institutions de l'Église en Occident 3 (Paris: Sirrey, 1958), p. 120; H.E.J. COWDREY, "The Dissemination of St. Augustine's Doctrine of Holy Orders During the Later Patristic Age," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 20 (1969), p. 465.

To return to the question, the fact is that our evidence for how the Aniciae responded to the latter stages of the Pelagian crisis is lacking upon which to make any firm statement.

Despite its brevity, this letter was to be incorporated into the *Collectio Dionysiana*, that important collection of conciliar canons and papal decretals.¹⁰⁷ Why such a private piece of correspondence, which lay down no disciplinary regulation, was incorporated into a collection of ecclesiastical law is a mystery, but had it not been so included we would not know about it today.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately there are too many gaps in our information to reach definite conclusions about the relationship between Innocent I of Rome and Anicia Juliana and other members of the Anician family. Over several generations at the end of the fourth and into the fifth centuries they were a remarkable Christian family at the very pinnacle of society in Rome. They had contact with quite a number of leading Christian identities of the time, each of whom sought to mould the women of this family into their own images of how wealthy and powerful Christians ought to live their lives and to draw them into supporting their positions in theological disputes. While some patterns of patronage and support do emerge, what seems unlikely is that the family supported one individual to the exclusion of supporting their rivals. Within this shadowy web the much neglected letter of Innocent to Juliana is hard to locate. I believe it to have been written in 412 or 413, on the occasion of Juliana's commitment to ascetical widowhood rather than on the occasion in 414 when her daughter Demetrias committed herself to ascetical virginity. The letter is too brief to tell us much in itself of the relationship between bishop and premier family beyond suggesting that the members of this family supported the Roman bishop, but, when added to the others, it is another clue that helps us gain insight into one of the most interesting features of Christian life in late antiquity.

Geoffrey D. DUNN
Australian Catholic University

107. Detlev JASPER, "The Beginning of the Decretal Tradition: Papal Letters from the Origin of the Genre through the Pontificate of Stephen V," in Detlev JASPER and Horst FUHRMANN, *Papal Letters in the Early Middle Ages*, History of Medieval Canon Law (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), p. 36.

RÉSUMÉ: À la fin du IV^e et au début du V^e siècle, les femmes de la famille des Aniciae étaient au centre d'un vaste réseau de correspondants chrétiens. Les lettres écrites par Augustin, Jean Chrysostome, Pélage, Jérôme et le pseudo-Prosper d'Aquitaine, à Anicia Juliana, sa belle-mère Proba et sa fille Démétrias, ont été minutieusement examinées en raison des informations qu'elles apportent sur l'ascétisme, le rôle des femmes chrétiennes, l'importance des réseaux de patronage, les contacts entre l'Est et l'Ouest, et les controverses origénienne et pélagienne. Au contraire, la *Lettre* 15 d'Innocent I, évêque de Rome de 402 à 417, à Juliana, n'a pas bénéficié de la même attention. Dans cet article, il s'agit de réexaminer les indices prosopographiques concernant Juliana et les nombreux rapports entre les Aniciae et les figures littéraires chrétiennes, et de faire des suggestions sur les raisons pour lesquelles Innocent eut besoin de l'appui de Juliana. L'argument proposé ici est de ne pas considérer cette lettre comme un commentaire sur la décision de Démétrias d'adopter un mode de vie ascétique mais sur la propre décision de Juliana de devenir une veuve ascétique, à la suite de la mort de son illustre mari. Ceci impliquerait une datation de cette lettre en 412 ou 413.

ABSTRACT: In the late fourth and early fifth centuries the women of the Anician family were at the centre of a large network of Christian correspondents. While letters to Anicia Juliana, her mother-in-law Proba, and her daughter Demetrias, from Augustine, John Chrysostom, Pelagius, Jerome, and pseudo-Prosper of Aquitaine have been subject to repeated scrutiny for what they reveal about asceticism, the role of Christian women, the importance of patronage networks, contacts between East and West, and the Origenist and Pelagian controversies, *Epistula* 15 from Innocent I, bishop of Rome from 402 to 417, to Juliana, has not received the same attention. In this paper I shall reconsider the prosopographical evidence with regard to Juliana and the many connections between the Aniciae and Christian literary figures, and offer suggestions as to why Innocent needed Juliana's support. My argument is that this letter is not to be considered as commenting upon her daughter's decision to embrace the ascetical life but upon Juliana's own decision to become an ascetical widow following the death of her illustrious husband. This would suggest a date of composition in 412 or 413.