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The Comma Calmly Considered
Fulgentius of Ruspe (462-533 AD)

By

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Introduction

This is the fifth paper of the series. This essay has selections from my paper "The Witness of God is Greater." In this essay, my goal is to highlight some of the amazing evidence that I have discovered in collating sources for my paper. I give some comments in order to direct my readers through these points.

- For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)
- The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (Psalm 12:6-7)
- Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)
- Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Matt 24:35)

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Brief Remarks : Fulgentius of Ruspe

In the last paper, we saw how the Council of Carthage 484 was an unique historical event that was known and documented throughout Christendom. The 460 bishops presented a confession that featured the Heavenly Witnesses before the Arian opponents who had no objection to the use of this verse from John's Epistle. Despite the fact that Victor of Vitensis was an eyewitness to these events, the names and fate of the bishops was documented for posterity, and there were miracles attested to by Christian and Pagan alike through the empire, the critics insist that some fraud was committed though no evidence exists to support this ugly assertion. The blood of the martyrs cries out against the critics' attempt to spin false tales of fraud and deliberate deception, and more. It is common knowledge that critics in their ivory towers, like Gibbon, were openly contemptful of Christianity and others, like Porson, were more than willing to submit suppositions of the most vulgar lies upon these men in order to avoid the obvious conclusion that these verses via this event had been deemed valid by both groups in this contention.

In this next chapter, we will see another incredible father called to stand in the gap, chosen to debate all contenders as the single acknowledged representative of Christianity. Fulgentius of Ruspe is everything the critics fear. He is born in an upper class family (connected to Senators), well educated (fluent in Greek & Latin), travelled, endured torture for his faith, was exiled from North Africa by the Vandals under King Geiseric (losing property and wealth as a result), and was well aware of the Council of Carthage in 484. Everything that the critics usually deny and dismiss with the typical broad strokes and general statement about North African churchmen, is completely contradicted in the life and events surrounding Fulgentius of Ruspe. And like Victor Vitensis, Fulgentius has a close friend who was "there" to record the events of Fulgentius amazing life and accomplishments as the chosen one to debate the Arian king and his appointed Arian scholars concerning the oneness of the Godhead, etc.

Moreover, as the chosen and acknowledged representative (due to his eloquence, education, theological acumen, and fluency in Latin & Greek), Fulgentius is the North African bishop that used the Heavenly Witnesses and even referenced Cyprian's famous words as directly referring to the Heavenly Witnesses. Now we have seen that all the contenders for Cyprian's reference to "these three are one" were mistaken in their attempts to depict some kind of "invisible allegory" and/or "mystical interpretation" in Cyprian's words to "the Spirit, water, and blood". Fulgentius is some 50 years before Facundus in the timeline. Fulgentius completely refutes the idea that Cyprian was using allegory. And since Fulgentius is much more familiar and has spent significant time in Carthage, we can rest assured that his words concerning Cyprian's "these three are one". Cyprian did in fact have the Heavenly Witnesses found in John's First Epistle in his manuscripts. More to the point, there was no "tradition" of "mystical interpretation" concerning Cyprian's words.

Fulgentius was not only chosen specifically because of his gifts and accomplishments to represent Christendom defending the oneness of Nicene, but he was also so well known in the Empire. Fulgentius became the nexus of correspondence from as far as Rome and Constantinople of many bishops and others who wrote to Fulgentius to ask for instruction and apologetics concerning the Arian arguments. This was another interesting and providential aspect of Fulgentius' life and the Council of Carthage in 484. Both were known throughout the Empire and Christendom. Fulgentius' writings defending the "oneness" of Nicene were dispersed to many individuals all over Christendom making his name and thoughts well known. Certainly, this should demonstrate that the Heavenly Witnesses of John's First Epistle were likewise well known.

Finally, although the critics have sustained such devastating blows from the previous paper and all that I have indicated above concerning Fulgentius, more was to come. King Thrasamund also sought out Arians that were fluent and educated in Latin and Greek as opponents of Fulgentius. Yes, here we have the final mortal wound given to the critic's vulgar accusations. King Thrasamund proves that there are Arian's who are versed in these languages and educated in theology in his North African empire. These Arian opponents found

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and nominated by the king were set against Fulgentius in debates and written apologetics. Fulgentius defeated them and in his writings against them used the Heavenly Witnesses more than once. We, therefore, like the rest of the city of Carthage, celebrate this incredible and amazing man who vanquished all comers in debate and writings using the Heavenly Witnesses, Cyprian, Greek & Latin, and enduring in his own life the experience of suffering persecution for his faith. As I close these remarks, I simply ask again, What more is needed to demonstrate that these verses are authentic and have always been a part of Scripture in John's First Epistle? God has provided examples that cannot be doubted even by the most biased critic. And in the spectrum of events, evidence, debates where this verse has been shown to be used over the 1500 years of Christendom, I ask, could all these men, women, and martyrs be wrong? I don't expect to turn the hardened critic from his idols, but there is still more to come for those who have ears to hear.
Peace.

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Fulgentius' Early Life & Education

• Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe (462 or 467 – 1 January 527 or 533) was bishop of the city of Ruspe, Roman province of Africa, North Africa in modern day Tunisia, during the 5th and 6th century. He was also canonized as a Christian saint. Fabius Claudius Gordianus Fulgentius was born in the year 462 at Telepte (modern-day Medinet-el-Kedima), Tunisia, North Africa, into a senatorial family. His grandfather, Gordianus, a senator of Carthage, was despoiled of his possessions by the invader Genseric, then banished to Italy. His two sons returned after his death; though their house in Carthage had been taken over by Arian priests, they recovered some property in Byzacena. His father Claudius died when Fulgentius was still quite young. His mother Mariana taught him to speak Greek and Latin. Fulgentius became particularly fluent with the former, speaking it like a native. His biographer says that at an early age Fulgentius committed the entire works of Homer to memory. He quickly gained wide public respect for the conduct of his family's affairs. This reputation helped him to acquire a post as a procurator or tax collector of Byzacena. He quickly grew tired of the material life, and this combined with his religious studies, particularly a sermon of Augustine of Hippo on Psalm 36, which dealt with the transitory nature of physical life, convinced him to become a monk. (Fulgentius of Ruspe. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulgentius_of_Ruspe>)

• [Ferrandus] The truly blessed Fulgentius, born of a noble line in the eyes of the world, had among his ancestors some of senatorial rank in Carthage. When King Gaiseric⁵ entered Carthage as a conqueror, he compelled very many, indeed, all the senators, to sail to Italy after he confiscated their possessions. His grandfather, Gordianus⁶ by name, was among those who [PAGE 7] willingly undertook the journey imposed on them, wishing at least, having lost his fortune, not to lose his freedom. After his death, two of his sons came back to the province of Africa in the hope of reclaiming their heritage, but they were not able to stay in Carthage, for their house had been given to Arian priests. But, with the partial restoration of their property by royal authority, they went to Byzacena [fn. 7. Byzacena was the Roman province of North Africa which correspond roughly to the central and southern sections of modern Tunisia], and there in the city of Thelepte, one of them, Claudius⁸ by name, whose wife was named Mariana,⁹ a Christian and a good woman, happily begot that one to whom so great a glory was due, and his mother, as if knowing what he would become in the future, named him Fulgentius.¹⁰ Since his father died not long after, his religious mother first made him study Greek literature, and soon he had committed all of Homer to memory; he knew a great deal of Menander as well, but she did not permit him to be taught Latin literature. She wanted him, still in his tender years, to learn a foreign language by which he might more easily be able, having to live among the Africans, to speak the Greek tongue with expert pronunciation, as if he had been brought up there. His mother was not mistaken in making such a careful arrangement. Ever after, whenever he wished to speak Greek, even after a long period of disuse either in speaking or reading it, he still pronounced it so well that one would think that he had spent all his time living among Greeks. After having been taught a knowledge of Greek letters, he began the study of Latin letters at home, even though schoolmasters usually teach Latin, but he later went to a grammar school. The greatness of his mind and memory enabled him to retain all he had been taught. (Ferrandus, Life of Fulgentius; Translated by Robert B. Eno in Fulgentius selected works, 1997, p. 7-8)

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Fulgentius in Exile : His Expertise Requested from Rome & Constantinople

• Renewed Arian attacks on the area forced Fulgentius to leave for another nearby monastery. The abbot there, Felix, gave Fulgentius the duty of managing the temporal affairs of the monastery, while he managed the spiritual affairs. The two of them worked well together, and so in 499, during another wave of persecution, they both fled for Sicca Veneria. A local Arian priest had them arrested and tortured after learning the pair were preaching the orthodox Nicene teaching. In 500, he visited Rome, where he prayed at the tombs of the apostles. His visit coincided with a formal address to the people by king Theodoric, which confirmed Fulgentius in his low esteem for the earthly vanities of this world. He then returned to Byzacena, where he built a monastery, electing to live in an isolated cell. Fulgentius's reputation quickly spread, and he was several times offered the post of bishop of one of the dioceses which had been vacated through the actions of the Arian king Thrasamund. He chose not to accept these offers, knowing Thrasamund had specifically ordered that only Arians be permitted to fill those seats. (Fulgentius of Ruspe. Wikipedia.

<en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulgentius_of_Ruspe>

• [Ferrandus] During the same period [Fulgentius' second exile], he wrote to the Carthaginians a letter noteworthy for its sublime exhortations in which, with [PAGE 47] great sadness, he enumerated almost all the tricks and misleading allurements by which unfortunate souls are lured to their death. In addition, he swiftly replied in two booklets concerning the forgiveness of sins to the religious man, Euthymius, who had sought his counsel. He usefully discussed the proofs for predestination and instructed one who wanted to know about the varieties of grace. He wrote numerous friendly letters in which much spiritual edification is contained to people living near him in Sardinia, to those living in Africa, to people in Rome, especially senators, and to widows and virgins whose good reputations were well known. He wrote two brief books concerning fasting and prayer to the virgin of Christ, Proba.

• [Ferrandus] Fulgentius thus became better known to all people. Thus it was that two books were sent to the blessed Fulgentius to be critically evaluated by several monks in Constantinople who had been upset by them. Faustus, a bishop in Gaul, had written them with misleading guile—against grace, secretly favoring the Pelagians, though he wanted to appear Catholic. Lest the harmful material spread unnoticed, Fulgentius replied in seven books, working more to expound than to refute, since just to expose his deceitful speech was to refute the arguments of a deluded person. The great labor involved in writing this work found its due reward almost immediately. For, very soon, just as he was completing its dictation, the chains of his long captivity were broken. King Thrasamund died, and there was the marvelous goodness of Hilderic,⁵⁷ who began his reign. He restored freedom to the Catholic Church throughout Africa; he gave the people of Carthage their own bishop and by his [PAGE 48] most clement [i.e. lenient] authority ordered that ordinations of bishops be held everywhere. (Ferrandus, *Life of Fulgentius*; Translated by Robert B. Eno in *Fulgentius selected works*, 1997, p. 46-48)

• [Stevens] The importance of Fulgentius, the exiled bishop of Ruspe (a.d. 503-523), as the spokesman of the orthodox African church against the Arian Vandals has long been recognized, and so Fulgentius is primarily known for his polemical tracts addressed to the Vandal king Thrasamund (496-523) and other Arians.¹ His theology is not much admired, being largely derivative from Augustine; his style, likewise, compares poorly with that of the great bishop of Hippo.² Nevertheless, the real significance of Fulgentius as aristocrat, monk, bishop, and litterateur is revealed in his *Epistulae*. Fulgentius became bishop only a short time before his exile began, ca. 503, and consequently he was one of the most junior of the bishops exiled to Sardinia by the Vandals. As bishop of Ruspe, he did not hold a metropolitan see, nor was he primate of his native province of Byzacena.³ Yet he not only represented the African church in the debates with Thrasamund ca. 515, but he also wrote

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synodal letters and tracts at the request of his colleagues exiled on Sardinia, and even private letters for some of the bishops to their own congregations in Africa. The reason for this, according to his secretary, the deacon Ferrandus, who was also the author of the surviving *Vita Fulgentii*, was his eloquence and learning.

- [Stevens] Clearly, by the time of his exile, Fulgentius' literary reputation was well established.⁵ Fulgentius' literary activity in Africa, particularly his writing of letters, resembles the way other late Roman aristocrats exercised their literary talents. Parallels can be found in several provinces of the Western Empire, most notably in Gaul. The Gallic bishop Hilary of Aries (429-449), for instance, like Fulgentius, was an aristocrat, monk, and bishop, and had a circle of friends which included secular and ecclesiastical litterati.⁶ This and other parallels are instructive because they show the links between aristocratic background, literary activity, and the prominence of these individuals in the Church and in the state. The differences between the Gallic circles and that of Fulgentius are also revealing, and we will consider them in the conclusion of this article. But like contemporary Gallic letter-writers, Fulgentius' high social standing, in addition to his literary ability, was a strong reason for his prominence among the exiled bishops.

- [Stevens] It was the combination of his literary talents and his aristocratic connections, amply attested by the circle of friends represented in the bishop's correspondence, that made him an ideal choice as defender of the true faith against the Arian Vandals. Previous scholarship concentrated on Fulgentius as saint and theologian, but generally neglected his role in society. Though scholars have identified many of Fulgentius' correspondents in passing, they have not recognized the relationship of the correspondents to each other and to Fulgentius. The aim of this investigation is to show, through Fulgentius' letters, that both his aristocratic background and the aristocratic connections he maintained by correspondence had an effect on his career in the Church. Indeed, Fulgentius' personal connections are closely tied to the increasingly strong influence of Africans on the church of Rome in the early sixth century. The first part of this study will look at his letters and consider the evidence for the existence of a circle of correspondents around Fulgentius: the extent and circulation of his [PAGE 329] correspondence, the exchange of books and ideas among his correspondents, and their sharing of interests and aims. The second part will identify the members of this circle and discuss their relationships. The conclusion will consider the importance of the epistolary ties represented by the collection.

- Stevens, *The Circle of Bishop Fulgentius*, 1982 (38), p. 327-329.

- [Mathisen] ...during the reign of Thrasamund (496-523), Fulgentius of Ruspe debated a group of Arian bishops led by the episcopus Pinta, who may have been the successor to Cyrila; he also disputed the topic of the Holy Spirit with the Vandal presbyter Abrugila and published a refutation of an extant sermo of Fastidiosus, a Nicene presbyter who had converted to Arianism. (fn. 157. See *Vita Fulgentii* 47-48, PL 65:141; *Fulgentius Ruspensis, Ad Thrasamundum regem Vandalorum libri tres*, CCSL 91:97 ff.; *Sermo Fastidiosi ariani* and *Fulgentius, Contra sermonem Fastidiosi*, CCSL 91A:280-308. Pinta's name is reminiscent of that of the master of soldiers Plinta of 419.) (Mathisen, "Barbarian Bishops and the Churches" in *Barbaricis Gentibus During Late Antiquity*, 1997, p. 687)

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Fulgentius Chosen to Represent Christendom Against King Thrasamund

• In 502 Fulgentius was persuaded to take the post of bishop of Ruspe in Tunisia. His obvious virtues made a strong impression on the people of his new diocese, but he was soon banished to Sardinia with some sixty other bishops who did not hold the Arian position. Pope Symmachus knew of their plight and sent them annual provisions of food and money. While in Sardinia, Fulgentius turned a house in Cagliari into a monastery, and was determined to write a number of works to help instruct the Christians of Africa. In 515, he returned to Africa, having been summoned there by Thrasamund for a public debate with his Arian replacement. His book, *An Answer to Ten Objections* is supposed to have been collected from the answers he had made regarding objections to the catholic Nicene position. Thrasamund, impressed by Fulgentius' knowledge and learning, and fearing social discord if these persuasive arguments fell into the hands of his Arian subjects, ordered that all Fulgentius' future statements could only be delivered orally. Fulgentius responded with a further rebuttal to the Arian position, now known as the *Three Books to King Thrasamund*. Thrasamund's respect for Fulgentius grew, leading him to allow Fulgentius to stay in Carthage, but after renewed complaints from the local Arian clergy he banished Fulgentius back to Sardinia in 520. (Fulgentius of Ruspe. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulgentius_of_Ruspe>)

• [Ferrandus] Meanwhile, the implacable hatred and fearsome wrath of King Thrasamund against the Catholic religion went on. [PAGE 39] Between harsh persecutions there were deceptive measures trying, sometimes by terror, at other times by promises, to force Catholics to deny that Christ was equal to God the Father. With the intention of deceiving, he began to simulate the desire to find out more about the Catholic religion, thinking that no one could be found whose arguments could convict him of error. He proposed the trap of foolish questions to many. If any were found willing to respond, he neither disdained nor refused them. He listened as if patiently but boasted that none satisfied him. And, indeed, who was able to shine the light of truth on one so hardened in heart? The daring steadfastness of their faith enabled a number of religious men on these occasions, prepared by the Lord, to refute the blasphemies of this king who was interested in learning. The king continued to seek someone who could most fully prove the truth of Catholic teaching by proofs accepted on both sides. They told him that among the bishops in exile there was the blessed Fulgentius who lacked nothing in knowledge, who abounded in grace, and who by his wisdom and eloquence could satisfy the king. Immediately, the king, wanting to test this bishop to whom the whole Church of our religion bore favorable witness, quickly sent an eager servant, by whom Fulgentius was taken and without delay brought back to Carthage, which he entered joyfully. Here, as a faithful dispenser, finding the opportunity for using the talents entrusted to him, in the little room where he was staying, he diligently began to instruct orthodox Catholics who came to him; explaining how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, while the distinction of the three persons was maintained, were still preached as one God by the faithful. So pleasant was the eloquence of the blessed Fulgentius, such joy radiated from his countenance, that, almost as in a contest, holy charity drew all the faithful either to question the learned man or to hear how he answered the questions. ...Others, strengthened by his words and renewed in their faith by the salt of his teaching, confounded the Arian heretics with all confidence. Thus, by a marvelous grace, it came about that through one bishop, whose wisdom the king wished to put to the test, the number of wise men in Carthage grew and, through the ministry of the persecutor, the strength of the Catholic faith, rather than being diminished, actually increased. (Ferrandus, *Life of Fulgentius*; Translated by Robert B. Eno in *Fulgentius selected works*, 1997, p. 38-39)

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Fulgentius Debates King Thrasamund & Multi-lingual Arians

• [Ferrandus] All these things the king learned through his secret informers. He put the genius of this outstanding bishop to the test, his wisdom, learning, faith, piety, mildness, purity, and he acknowledged that the man deserved his reputation and was indeed such as he had been depicted. He sent him a book to be read right away, one full of the poison of infidelity, and demanded a rapid response. The most learned pontiff accepted the challenge, dividing up the collected fallacies of this very long statement into chapters, and adding his responses, which were brief, probative, of ineluctable logic, weighty with the authority of the witnesses invoked and bright with the logic of reason. Having discussed his answers in detail and at length with a number of wise men and having brought his work to the attention of the faithful, he then sent it to the king, who had been waiting impatiently for some time. The barbarous king read them over carefully, but, because he was never predestined for salvation, though [PAGE 41] he praised the wisdom, marveled at the eloquence, extolled the humility, still he did not deserve to recognize the truth. The people of Carthage, however, sensing a spiritual triumph, spread the word joyously but quietly that the king's views had been refuted, and they gloried that the Catholic faith was still victorious, all this joined to the praises of the blessed Fulgentius. He praised the wisdom, marveled at the eloquence, extolled the humility, still he did not deserve to recognize the truth. The people of Carthage, however, sensing a spiritual triumph, spread the word joyously but quietly that the king's views had been refuted, and they gloried that the Catholic faith was still victorious, all this joined to the praises of the blessed Fulgentius. (Ferrandus, Life of Fulgentius; Translated by Robert B. Eno in Fulgentius selected works, 1997, p. 40-41)

• [Ferrandus] But the king desired to put the most learned man to the test once again and asked him questions about still other matters. He ordered that his questions be read to the blessed Fulgentius only once, allowing him no time to think about them or to write them down. For he was afraid that Fulgentius would put the king's words into his own responses as his arguments were refuted and that, in the eyes of the entire city, he would be ridiculed again as having been bested. The blessed Fulgentius, having difficulty recalling what had been read to him but once, put off his response. But the king became ever more insistent, asserting that the delay and the caution of the holy man indicated fear on his part. Because of this, the same pontiff, relying on the virtue of discretion, lest perchance lies be spread about through the populace to the effect that the blessed Fulgentius was not able or was not willing to counter the king's questions, wrote three marvelous little books. In these booklets, he addressed the above-mentioned king in all simplicity. He discussed all sides of the questions he had barely heard posed in passing. He taught that in the Incarnation, Christ the Lord had not been without a rational soul. Thereafter, the king, filled with great admiration, no longer dared to ask him anything. But one of his bishops, Pinta by name, attempted a response, more because he was unwilling to remain silent than because he had nothing to say. Against him, the blessed Fulgentius then wrote another work in which he upheld the truth, a work entitled, Against Pinta,⁴⁹ and he showed that the adversaries who had been conquered in his first defense were foolhardy in trying to return to the fray. (Ferrandus, Life of Fulgentius; Translated by Robert B. Eno in Fulgentius selected works, 1997, p. 41)

• [Ferrandus] To a priest named Abragil,⁵⁰ who asked a question about the Holy Spirit, he wrote a short Admonition, in which he brought forward much evidence, teaching that, together with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is to be confessed as one God. This Admonition he ordained should be written down between the other two works of this period; all faithful Catholics read these works and marveled. The Arians, on the other hand, were put to shame and murmured against him in their chagrin. They found occasion for an evil suggestion which they brought to the king. The latter wanted to keep him in Carthage for a longer time, but these wicked men objected, "Your work is in vain, O King; your efforts have accomplished nothing. Bishop

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Fulgentius's teaching has been so successful that he has received some of your own priests. Unless you do something quickly to support our religion, it will go down to defeat, and whoever has been baptized by us will be reconciled and will again confess the homoousion. 51 And, if you try to stir up a persecution again, the royal wrath will no longer be feared. The very presence of Fulgentius strengthens many and reinforces all their bishops in their faith."The king, as if compelled by a greater necessity, agreed with those who put forward such arguments and had the blessed Fulgentius sent back to exile in Sardinia. In the dead of night (for, so the king had ordered), the blessed Fulgentius, unbeknownst to the people, was taken to the ship. But the winds were blowing the wrong way, and they had to wait by the shore so that for many days almost the entire city came out, and, in bidding them farewell, he gave them communion with his own hand. (Ferrandus, Life of Fulgentius; Translated by Robert B. Eno in Fulgentius selected works, 1997, p. 42)

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Fulgentius Debates Fabianus : Fluent Greek Arian Opponent

• [Fabianus the Arian] The only time Fulgentius of Ruspe considered it necessary to quote Greek was when writing against the Arian Fabianus. At some point between 523 and 533, Fabianus and Fulgentius had engaged in a public debate, most likely in Carthage. Fabianus published the proceedings in a manner so unflattering to his opponent that Fulgentius composed the ten-volume "Contra Fabianum" in response. In the "Contra Fabianum", Fulgentius quoted Scriptures in Greek as well as in Latin, a practice not followed in his other works. He did so with the expectation that Fabianus would be able to follow the Greek, saying at one point that "I will bring forward the truth of the Greek reading in this place also, so that you might understand this (point) more fully. Fabianus also apparently prided himself on his Latin: Fulgentius quotes Virgil to him and chides him by saying, "I think [PAGE 116] that a man like you who claims to be skilled in 'latinitas' might know that 'subministrare' is not the same thing as 'ministrare'". Fabianus is the best counterpart for the real Pseudo-Origen [author of the Arian commentary on Job] - an Arian scholar of late Vandal North Africa, literate in Latin and Greek, involved in debating the Greek Scriptures with his Nicene opponents. (Dossey, *The Last Days of Vandal Africa: An Arian Commentary on Job and its Historical Context*, 2003, p. 115-116)

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HITS : Heavenly Witness Quoted

- **[De Trinitate ad Felicem]** See, in short you have it that the Father is one, the Son another, and the Holy Spirit another, in Person, each is other, but in nature they are not other. In this regard He says: "The Father and I, we are one." He teaches us that "one" refers to Their nature, and "we are" to Their persons. In like manner it is said: "There are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and these three are one." Let Sabellius hear "we are" [plural], let him hear "three", and let him believe that there are three Persons. Let him not blaspheme in his sacrilegious heart by saying that the Father is the same in Himself as the Son is the same in Himself and as the Holy Spirit is the same in Himself, as if in some way He could beget Himself, or in some way proceed from Himself. Even in created natures it is never able to be found that something is able to beget itself. Let also Arius hear one; and let him not say that the Son is of a different nature, if one cannot be said of that, the nature of which is different." (Fulgentius, On the Trinity, chapter 4; Translated by William A. Jurgens, 1970, vol 3, p. 291-292)
 - **Latin:** En habes in brevi **alium esse Patrem, alium Filium, alium Spiritum sanctum: alium et alium in persona, non aliud et aliud in natura; et idcirco Ego, inquit, et Pater unum sumus (Ioan. X, 30) . Unum, ad naturam referre nos docet, Sumus, ad personas. (0500D) Similiter et illud: Tres sunt, inquit, qui testimonium dicunt in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus, et hi tres unum sunt (I Ioan. V, 7) . Audiatur Sabellius sumus, audiatur tres, et credatur esse tres personas, et non sacrilego corde blasphemet, dicendo ipsum sibi esse Patrem, ipsum sibi Filium, ipsum sibi Spiritum sanctum: tanquam modo quodam seipsum gignat, aut modo quodam a seipso ipse procedat; cum hoc etiam in naturis creatis minime invenire possit, ut aliquid seipsum gignere valeat. Audiatur scilicet et Arius, Unum, et non differentis Filium dicat esse naturae, cum natura diversa unum dici nequeat. (Fulgentius, De Trinitate, chap iv; Migne Latina, PL 65.500)**
- **[Responsio contra Arianos]** In the Father, therefore, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge unity of substance, but dare not confound the persons. **For St. John the apostle, testifieth saying, "There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one." Which also the blessed martyr Cyprian, in his epistle de unitate Ecclesiae (Unity of the Church), confesseth, saying, Who so breaketh the peace of Christ, and concord, acteth against Christ: whoso gathereth elsewhere beside the Church, scattereth. And that he might shew, that the Church of the one God is one, he inserted these testimonies, immediately from the scriptures; The Lord said, "I and the Father are one." And again, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is written, 'And these three are one.' (1 John 5:7).** In the book on the Lord's Prayer as well, to show that the Trinity is of one divinity and does not have any separateness among itself, he mentioned Daniel and the three boys who would say a prayer every three hours. Thus, by the course of three hours and the service of one prayer, he evidently showed that the Trinity is one God. We, therefore, do not worship one God, [consisting] of three parts; but retaining without beginning, of the perfect and eternal Father, not unequal in power, and equal in nature ; and we also confess, that the Holy Spirit is no other than God, neither different from the Father, nor the Son, nor confounded in the Son, nor in the Father. (Fulgentius, Against the Arians; Translated by Thomas Hartwell Horne, 1825; Horne, "IV. Sect. V. On the First General Epistle of John" in Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 1825, vol 4, p. 448)
 - **Latin:** In Patre ergo et Filio et Spiritu sancto unitatem substantiae accipimus, personas confundere non audemus. (0224B) **Beatus enim iohannes apostolus testatur, dicens: Tres**

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sunt qui testimonium perhibent in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus; et tres unum sunt (I Ioan. V, 7) . Quod etiam beatissimus martyr Cyprianus, in epistola de Unitate Ecclesiae confitetur, dicens: Qui pacem Christi et concordiam rumpit, adversus Christum facit; qui alibi praeter Ecclesiam colligit, Christi Ecclesiam spargit. Atque ut unam Ecclesiam unius Dei esse monstraret, haec confestim testimonia de Scripturis inseruit. Dicit Dominus: **Ego et Pater unum sumus. Et iterum: De Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto scriptum est: Et tres unum sunt.** Nam et in libro de Oratione dominica, ut ostenderet Trinitatem unius deitatis, esse nec inter se aliquam diversitatem habere, Daniele et tres pueros, ternarum horarum circulis revolutis, orationem fundere solitos memoravit. Ubi et in trium horarum curriculo, et in unius orationis officio, unum Deum esse Trinitatem evidenter ostendit. (0224C) Non ergo ex tribus partibus unum colimus Deum, sed apostolicae fidei regulam retinentes, perfectum et consempternum Filium, de perfecto et sempiterno Patre, sine initio genitum, et potestate non imparem, et natura fatemur aequalem. Sanctum quoque Spiritum non aliud fatemur esse quam Deum, nec a Filio nec a Patre diversum, nec in Filio nec in Patre confusum. (Fulgentius, Responso contra Arianos; Migne Latina, PL 65.224)

- **[Contra Fabianus]** For man, being the image of God, is not limited to only one person of the divine, but of the whole of the Trinity. From the holy writings are shown in the Trinity and the nature of the unit. The Trinity in Persons, and the Unity of Essence [of the Godhead] proved from the Holy Scripture. ...This also the holy Apostle [St. Paul] confirms: Who, in respect to the distinction of persons [in the Godhead] says, "One God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him; and that the faithful are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Shewing also that the one God is a Trinity, he adds, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" And a little afterwards, "For of him, and through him, and in him, are all things : to him be glory forever." **But the holy Apostle St. John [proceeds further, for he] plainly says, "And the three are one" ; which text concerning the Father, the Son [Filio] and the Holy Ghost we alleged, as we did before when ye required a reason from us [our belief].** (Fulgentius, Contra Fabianus, Fragmentum 21; Translated by George Travis, Letters to Edward Gibbon, 3rd edition, 1794, p. 38-39)
 - **Latin:** Homo factus est ad imaginem, non unius tantum personae divinae, sed totius Trinitatis. Dei ex Scripturis sanctis ostenditur et in personis Trinitas et in natura unitas. ...Hoc etiam beatus Apostolus firmat, qui ad discretionem personarum ait: Unus Deus Pater, ex quo omnia, et nos in ipso; et unus Dominus Iesus Christus, per quem omnia, et nos per ipsum (I Cor. VIII, 6) . Et fideles dixit coaedificari in habitaculum Dei in Spiritu (Ephes. II, 22) . Ostendens autem unum Deum esse Trinitatem ait, O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei (Rom. II, 33) ! Et paulo post: Quoniam ex ipso, et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia, ipsi gloria in saecula (Ibid., 36) . **Beatus vero Ioannes apostolus evidenter ait: Et tres unum sunt (I Ioan. V, 7) ; quod de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto dictum, sicut superius cum rationem flagitares ostendimus.** (Fulgentius, Contra Fabianus, Fragmentum 21; Migne Latina, PL 65.775-777)

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Fulgentius' Last Days

- Fulgentius founded several communities not only in Africa, but also in Sardinia. In 523, following the death of Thrasamund and the accession of his catholic son Hilderic, Fulgentius was allowed to return to Ruspe and try to convert the populace to the catholic position. He worked to reform many of the abuses which had infiltrated his old diocese in his absence. The power and effectiveness of his preaching was so profound that his archbishop, Boniface of Carthage, wept openly every time he heard Fulgentius preach, and publicly thanked God for giving such a preacher to his church. Later, Fulgentius retired to a monastery on the island of Circinia (Kerkennah), but was recalled to Ruspe and served there until his death on 1 January 527 or 533. (Fulgentius of Ruspe. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulgentius_of_Ruspe>)

- [Ferrandus] Therefore, the blessed Fulgentius, after having battered the Pelagians in his wisdom, deserved to see Catholics rejoicing. Then, just as the Holy Spirit had foretold through him, he returned to Carthage with all his fellow bishops whence he had departed alone. Those whom he had left in sadness he now found joyous. Those whom he had left suffering the violence of persecution, he now found delirious with happiness. Those whom he had left lamenting the sorrows of their mother the Church, he now found with a spiritual father. Those whom he had left in mourning, he now found awaiting his return with joy. ...[PAGE 53] After his return from exile, Fulgentius wrote many new works: ten books refuting the false doctrines of the liar Fabianus, 64 three small works on the truth of predestination and grace, as well as many others which he wrote. If you wish to find out about them, you will find authentic copies in his monastery. But, now it is time for us to speak of how, after all his good works, he rested, taken up to the heavenly kingdom. (Ferrandus, Life of Fulgentius; Translated by Robert B. Eno in Fulgentius selected works, 1997, p. 48, 53)

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Fulgentius' Biographer

- Fulgentius Ferrandus (disciple and biographer of Fulgentius of Ruspe) was a canonist and theologian of the African Church in the first half of the 6th century. He was a deacon of Carthage and probably accompanied his master and patron, Fulgentius of Ruspe, to exile in Sardinia, when the bishops of the African Church were banished from their sees by the Arian King of the Vandals, Thrasamund. After the death of Thrasamund and the accession of Hilderic, in 523, the exiles were permitted to return, and Ferrandus, although only a deacon, soon gained a position of great importance in the African Church. He was frequently consulted in regard to the complex theological problems of the time and was known as one of the most redoubtable champions of orthodoxy in Western Christendom. (Fulgentius Ferrandus. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulgentius_Ferrandus>)

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Fulgentius' works in the 8th and 9th Century

- [Laistner] The truth seems to be that most of the more important writers on theological subjects in western Europe during the ninth century show acquaintance with the works of Fulgentius; ...Fulgentius' writings must have been available in many monastic libraries; the evidence of early catalogues points in the same direction. ...The libraries of Friaul, St. Vandrille, Compiègne, Lorsch, and Wurzburg contained at least some of Fulgentius' works in the ninth century. Early in the previous century the compiler of *Liber Glossarum* had included some extracts in his huge dictionary from the *contra Fabianum libri decem* of Fulgentius and possibly from some other works as well. (Laistner, "Fulgentius in the Carolingian Age" in *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages: Selected Essays*, 1957, p. 210)
- [Laistner] It is, indeed, not surprising that the theologians of the ninth century should have consulted the works of the African bishop. Several doctrinal questions, where in the eyes of the orthodox affected the very foundations of Christian belief and ecclesiastical authority... the attacks of Photius on the western Church, and the letter in support of him addressed by the emperors Michael and Basil to the Bulgarian king, led Pope Nicholas I to communicate with the Frankish bishops towards the end of 867, and to invite them to rebut the charges. It was especially the question concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit which led to embittered discussion. ...the disquisitions of Aeneas, archbishop of Paris (d. 870), and Ratramnus of Corbie (800-868 AD) can still be studied by historians of dogma. To maintain their argument these writers of course make extensive use of patristic literature, and Fulgentius is among the authorities cited. Again, we find in the reports of several Councils of the late eighth and early ninth centuries appeals to the authority of the African bishop. (Laistner, "Fulgentius in the Carolingian Age" in *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages: Selected Essays*, 1957, p. 213-214)
- [Laistner] Thus besides Hincmar himself, we find our author used by Hrabanus, Prudentius of Troyes, Lupus of Ferreres, Remigius of Lyons, Ratramnus, and Gottschalk himself. ...Fulgentius works were to be found in many monastic libraries and that they were considerably studied by the Carolingian theologians. (Laistner, "Fulgentius in the Carolingian Age" in *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages: Selected Essays*, 1957, p. 215)

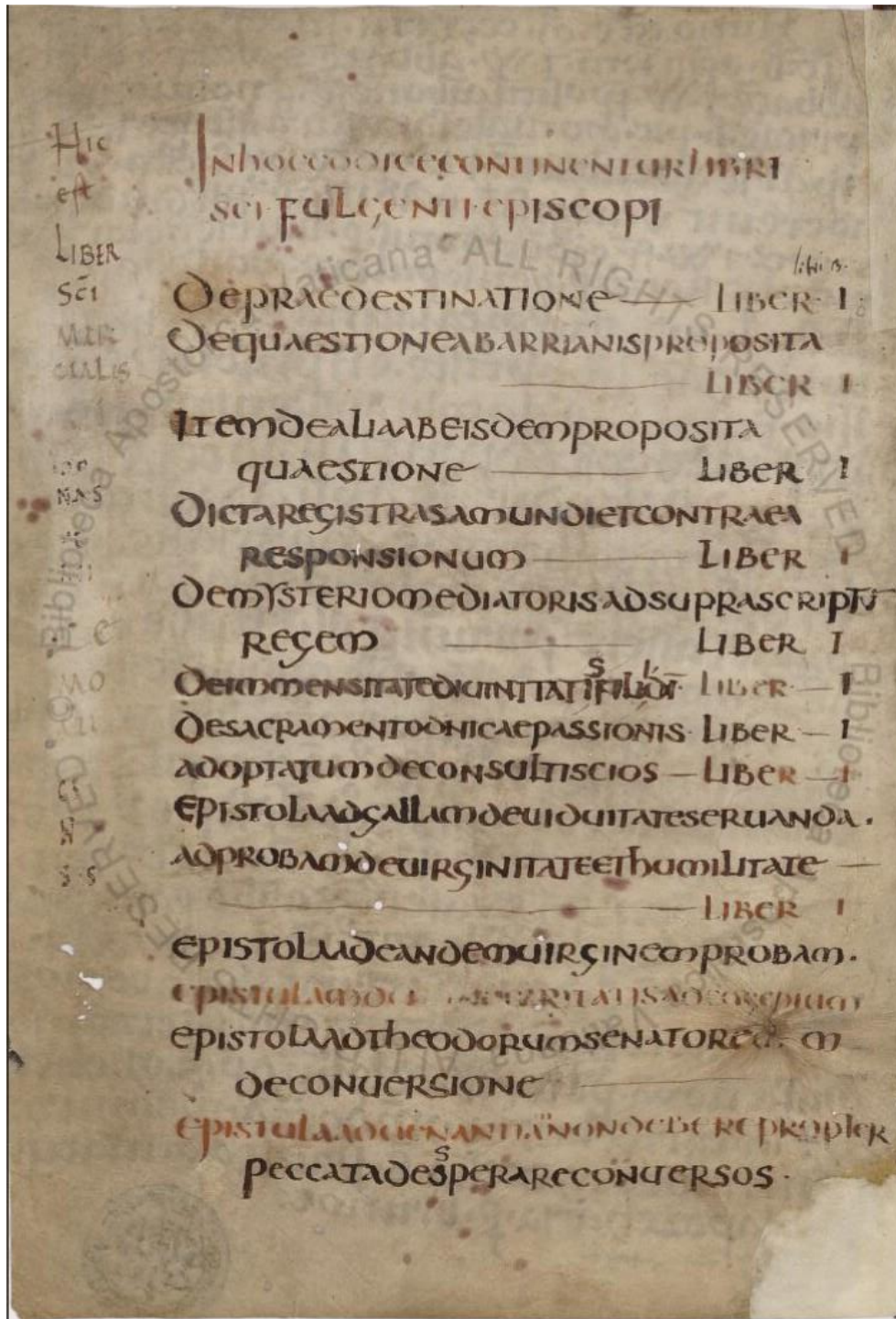
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Fulgentius' works in Vat. Reg. Lat. 267, 6th Century Manuscript

- 1) S. Fulgenti Ruspensis opera complura sec. VI ex.
- 2) 1r: Bernardus Iterius, 1163-1225 Notae historicae
- 3) 2r-98v: Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533 Ad Monimum (Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533)
- 4) 99r-117r: Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533 Contra Arianos (Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533)
- 5) 118r-181r: Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533 Ad Trasamundum (Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533)
- 6) 182r-228v: Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533 Epistulae (Fulgentius Ruspensis, s., 468-533). 1-7
<digl.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.267>

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Fulgentius Works : Vat. Reg. Lat. 267, 6th Century, f. 1v

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[For a full bibliography : See my paper "The Witness of God is Greater"]

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