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# Sidonius

## Letters Book 5, Part 1

Text, Translation and Commentary

GIULIA MAROLLA



SIDONIUS  
LETTERS BOOK 5, PART 1

## Edinburgh Studies in Later Latin Literature

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SIDONIUS  
LETTERS BOOK 5, PART 1

TEXT, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

*Giulia Marolla*

EDINBURGH  
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To my loving family: without your constant encouragement and support this book would never have been written.

## ABBREVIATIONS

For full names of ancient authors and works see the Index locorum.

<i>CIL</i>	Mommsen, T., et al. (eds), <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin, 1863–.
<i>CE</i>	<i>Codex Euricianus</i> .
<i>cett.</i>	<i>ceteri codices</i> (all other manuscripts collated).
<i>CLE</i>	Bücheler, F. (ed.), <i>Carmina Latina Epigraphica</i> , editio stereotypa, Amsterdam, 1964 (Leipzig, 1897).
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> .
<i>CTh</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> .
<i>DNP</i>	<i>Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike</i> , H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds), Stuttgart, 1996–2003.
<i>IRHT</i>	Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes, Paris.
<i>L&amp;S</i>	Lewis, C. T. and Short, C., <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> , Oxford, 1879.
<i>LLT</i>	<i>Library of Latin Texts Series A</i> .
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> .
<i>OCD</i>	Hornblower, S., Spawforth, A. and Eidinow, E. (eds), <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (4th edition), Oxford, 2012.
<i>OLD</i>	Glare, A. P., et al., <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> (2nd edition), Oxford, 2012.
<i>PCBE 4</i>	Pietri, L. and Heijmans, M. (eds), <i>Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire: 4 La Gaule Chrétienne (314–614)</i> , Paris, 2013.
<i>PIR<sup>1</sup></i>	Kebbs, E., Dessau, H. and von Rohden, P. (eds), <i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> , Berlin, 1897–8.
<i>PIR<sup>2</sup></i>	Groag, E., Stein, A., et al. (eds), <i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> , ed. altera, Berlin, 1933–2015.
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> .
<i>PLRE 1 and 2</i>	Jones, A. H. M., Martindale, J. R. and Morris, J. (eds), <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , vol. I, A.D. 260–395 (Cambridge, 1971); Martindale, J. R. (ed.),

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. II, *A.D.*  
395–527 (Cambridge, 1980).
- RE* Pauly, A. F., Wissowa, G., et al. (eds), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie  
der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart, 1893–1980.
- TLL* Vollmer, F., et al. (eds), *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Leipzig,  
1900–.



Figure 1. Map of Sidonius' Gaul, c. 380–c. 480. © Pieter van Waarden, all rights reserved.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Over the last fifty years there has been an ever-increasing scholarly interest in C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius' *Letters*.<sup>1</sup> Commentaries on single books of the letter collection have been issued since Helga Köhler published the commentary on Book 1 in 1995, followed by David Amherdt on Book 4, Filomena Giannotti on Book 3, Johannes van Waarden on Book 7 and Judith Hindermann on Book 2.<sup>2</sup> Commentaries on other Sidonian letter books are also being undertaken at the time of writing (2022): Willum Westenholz on Book 6, Marco Onorato on Book 8 and Silvia Condorelli on Book 9. Thus, this volume (the first of two volumes on Book 5, covering letters 1–10, with a second to cover letters 11–21) falls within a broader intellectual programme of providing the fundamental tool of a commentary for the complete *Letters* of Sidonius.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Although claiming there is an 'explosion of studies' in a field happens to be an academic cliché, Kelly 2021a has demonstrated through statistical data that, as far as Sidonius is concerned, there really has been a surge of scholarly interest in the last decades, in particular in Italian scholarship from the 1990s, followed by increased scholarly production in French and English since 2010. For the *Letters*, landmarks include Isabella Gualandri's groundbreaking *Furtiva Lectio* (1979); Jill Harries' *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome* (1994) and Mathisen's numerous contributions on Sidonian prosopography (I will refer for brevity to his 'A Prosopography of Sidonius', which brings together many of his previous arguments – see Mathisen 2020). A most useful and complete account of Sidonian scholarship from the *editio princeps* to this day is in Furbetta 2020 (fifteenth to nineteenth centuries) and Condorelli 2020b (twentieth to twenty-first centuries).
  2. Amherdt 2001; Giannotti 2016; van Waarden 2010 and 2016; Hindermann 2022.
  3. The Sidonius Apollinaris for the Twenty-First Century project and the scholarly debate it fostered helped to make the gap in commentaries on Sidonius apparent, and some of the commentaries to appear are formally part of it. The need for Sidonian commentaries has been articulated in van Waarden's introductory remarks to *New Approaches to Sidonius Apollinaris* (2013, 3–11), where he also argues in favour of the publication of a comprehensive commentary on Sidonius' works. At the time of writing, Green (2022) published his English translation of and commentary on the *Carmina*, and an Italian translation and commentary is in preparation – see Santelia forthcoming.



This volume, with its projected sequel, is the first commentary on Book 5 to be published.<sup>4</sup> My study seeks to pursue a holistic approach, combining philological, historical and literary angles. For this reason, I provide readers with a freshly edited text, having collated the letters in the highest manuscripts of Franz Dolveck's *stemma codicum*.<sup>5</sup>

### Letters as autobiography?

As an aristocrat, an office-holder, a poet and later bishop of Clermont in the period when Roman government was replaced by kingdoms under the Romans' former 'barbarian' allies, Sidonius (c. 430 – 479 or after) gives us vivid eyewitness testimony to both high politics and ordinary life. In Michael Kulikowski's words, 'Sidonius was born into a world that had ceased to exist at the time of his death'.<sup>6</sup> His artful letters are often the only source for the events described, and Book 5 provides readers with crucial insight on the transition to post-imperial Gaul. It testifies to the shift in relations between the (former) centre and peripheries, and to how the old categories are not applicable to the new local powers. Burgundians and Visigoths are the creators of a new system, which Sidonius finds hard to conceptualise, and is therefore even harder for scholars to conceptualise.

The events in Sidonius' life in relation to an ever-evolving political and social milieu, and to the turmoil of the last days of Roman rule in Gaul, are thoroughly analysed and contextualised in the comprehensive *Edinburgh Companion to Sidonius Apollinaris*. In light of the depth and breadth of information on Sidonius, his family and his time provided by the *Companion*, it seems superfluous to linger on details concerning his life in this volume. Therefore, this section will provide the reader with some biographical co-ordinates, useful for navigating the events mentioned in Book 5; however, for detailed information concerning the author and his time throughout the text, the reader will be redirected to chapters of the *Companion*.

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4. Unpublished works on Book 5 include Giulietti's doctoral thesis on letters 1–13 (2014) at the University of Macerata, as well as a Master thesis (2003) by Becchi at the University of Siena (which has proved hard to locate).

5. I am thankful for having had access to Dolveck 2020 before its publication in *The Edinburgh Companion to Sidonius Apollinaris*.

6. Kulikowski 2020, 197. For the complexity of these years see also Delaplace 2015; Mratschek 2020, 214–36.

First, a necessary caveat: the information we have on Sidonius is purely autobiographical, as has been repeatedly pointed out, by Harries, Hanaghan, and van Waarden among others.<sup>7</sup> The partiality and fragmentary nature of the information Sidonius carefully chooses to enclose in his collection is an obstacle that cannot be overcome, and one has to acknowledge the limitedness of having Sidonius as the sole witness of most of the autobiographical events he mentions in his artful letter collection and specifically in Book 5.<sup>8</sup> Books 1–7 are believed to have been edited by Sidonius for publication in 477, soon after his return from exile, and it is impossible to state to what extent letters were modified, edulcorated or even created for the sake of publication.<sup>9</sup> As will be seen in more detail in the section on dating below, although a broad chronological progression can be detected in the first three books, Sidonius' letters are not arranged in chronological order, in accordance with epistolographical trends and with Pliny's programmatic assertion in his *Ep.* 1.1.1 *collegi non seruatō temporis ordine*.<sup>10</sup>

In order to help the less experienced reader of Sidonius approaching the autobiographical mentions in Book 5, I list here the most relevant events in his life in relation to the letters of the book.

- 429–32 Sidonius was born in Lyon on 5 November, though in which year is uncertain.
- 452–5 Sidonius married Papianilla, daughter of Eparchius Avitus. *Ep.* 5.16 is addressed to Papianilla (it is the only letter to a woman in the collection) but it provides readers with scant information concerning her as it is entirely focused on her brother (see below).
- 455 Sidonius' father-in-law Eparchius Avitus became emperor with the support of the Visigothic king Theoderic II, praised for his Romanness and as a model of *ciuitas*.<sup>11</sup> Theoderic has been

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7. Harries 1994, 1; Hanaghan 2019, 18–20; van Waarden 2020a, 13.

8. As is argued by Gibson and Morello 2012, 13, although letter collections cannot be equated with autobiography, 'clearly they possess autobiographical potential', which should be scrutinised.

9. For the date of publication see e.g. Harries 1994, 8; van Waarden 2020a, 26; for the impossibility of determining with any certainty the extent of letter adaptation or even creation for the collection see Kelly 2020, 181–5. In this book I signal passages which appear to have been supplemented with details for the sake of the readers and letters which could have been created for the collection: see e.g. the introduction to *Ep.* 5.7.

10. Gibson 2012, 68–70; Gibson 2020, 378 n. 39. Loyen's edition is generally followed in the present volume for Sidonius quotations.

11. On Theoderic II see Gualandri 2000, 107–18; Fascione 2019a, 53–62.

- suggested as a likely candidate for the identification of the hunting rex of Secundinus' panegyrics mentioned in *Ep.* 5.8.
- 456 Sidonius recited the Panegyric for the consulship of Avitus in Rome (*Carm.* 7). Avitus, however, was defeated by Ricimer and is believed either to have been killed or to have been forced into a bishopric and to have died soon after.
- 458 Sidonius recited the Panegyric of Majorian (*Carm.* 5).
- 461 Majorian was murdered. Around this time Sidonius was baptised by Faustus of Riez, who is commonly believed to have been the author of the anonymous letter *Quaeris me*, refuted by Mamertus Claudianus in his *De statu animae*. For further context and for the dispute between the two see *Ep.* 5.2.
- 466–7 Euric murdered his brother Theoderic II and thus became king of the Visigoths. Sidonius presents him on various occasions as the embodiment of otherness and the negation of the good qualities of the former monarch.<sup>12</sup> In 467, at the head of a Gallic delegation, Sidonius informed emperor Anthemius of Euric's predatory attitude.
- 468 A prosperous year for Sidonius: he recited the Panegyric of Anthemius (*Carm.* 2) and was named *patricius and praefectus urbi*.
- 468–9 The 'Arvandus affair' took place. Sidonius informed Arvandus, the twice *praefectus praetorio Galliarum* (464–8),<sup>13</sup> of the accusations that a Gallic delegation comprising the author's relatives and friends was bringing against him, aiming at his impeachment. Arvandus, who was accused of collusion with the Visigoths, underestimated the seriousness of the charge and acted defiantly when questioned.<sup>14</sup> Sidonius, who at the time was *praefectus urbi* and therefore a judicial authority, did not attend the trial in Rome but neither did he explain his absence from the city. In 469, in the aftermath of the Arvandus affair, it seems likely Sidonius had been shunned by close friends and family members, as can be surmised from *Epp.* 5.3

12. On Euric as a *lupus* see Fo 1999, 21–2; for his being the antithesis of Theoderic see Gualandri 2000, 118–29, and Fascione 2019a, 62–3.

13. After the year 395 the system of prefects was stabilised, as is shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*: the four prefectures of the Gauls, Italy, Illyricum, and the East were each entrusted to a praetorian prefect, who was the highest judicial, financial, and tax authority. See Jones 1964, I, 370; Porena 2007, and (for the East) Laniado 2018.

14. In *Ep.* 1.7 Sidonius describes the trial and admits he had alerted his friend Arvandus; on Arvandus see *PLRE* II, 157–8; Mathisen 2020, 82; Harries 1994, 159–66; see also the introductions to *Epp.* 5.3 and 5.4 in the present volume.

- and 5.4, in which the author complains of being ignored by his relatives.
- 469 Sidonius probably published Book 1 of the *Letters*.
- 469–70 Sidonius' election as bishop of Clermont-Ferrand is dated to this time. Loyen believed the election could be dated as late as 471,<sup>15</sup> but an earlier date (469–70) is likelier. The possibility that his accession to the bishopric should be seen as a removal from political life when he was in disfavour for his implicit support of Arvandus deserves serious consideration.<sup>16</sup>
- 471–4 Every summer, Euric's Visigoths besieged Clermont. Sidonius led the resistance with the help of Burgundian troops and of his brother-in-law Ecdicius. As is argued by Delaplace, Sidonius started being closer to the Burgundians by virtue of their support against the Visigothic threat.<sup>17</sup> *Ep.* 5.12 to Calminius is written during one of the seasonal sieges.
- 473 Sidonius introduced *Rogationes* in Clermont. In *Ep.* 5.14 Sidonius explains that bishop Mamertus (the elder brother of Mamertus Claudianus)<sup>18</sup> is the *inuentor* of these public celebrations, which were being held at the time he was writing to the addressee, Aper.
- 474 Julius Nepos became emperor. In both *Epp.* 5.6.2 and 5.7.1, concerning rumours of his relative Apollinaris having encountered disfavour at the Burgundian court, he is vaguely mentioned as 'the new *princeps*'.<sup>19</sup> Presumably in 474 the emperor granted to Ecdicius, Sidonius' brother-in-law, the rank of patrician, and this appointment is enthusiastically welcomed by Sidonius in *Ep.* 5.16 to Papianilla. It seems worthy of mention, however, that in this laudatory self-representation of his extended family, the figure of Ecdicius overshadows that of the emperor, whose only acknowledged merit seems to be that of having granted him the rank of patrician, which had been repeatedly promised by the previous emperor, Anthemius.
- 475 Julius Nepos surrendered Auvergne to Euric in exchange for Provence and Sidonius was exiled to Livia.

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15. Loyen 1970a, xv.

16. See van Waarden 2020a, 23. For the political significance of the bishopric in the fifth century see Consolino 1979, 89–91.

17. Delaplace 2015, 249.

18. See Mathisen 2020, 106.

19. A useful dating element for both letters – see comments ad loc.

- 476–7 Sidonius was pardoned, helped by Leo of Narbonne, who had a key role at Euric's court, being the writer of the king's speeches and probably his legislator.<sup>20</sup>
- 477 Sidonius is generally believed to have published Books 1–7 of the *Letters* in (or very close to) this year. It is the only certain *terminus ante quem* for those letters that lack dating elements and for which Loyen's chronology proves to be unsustainable or arbitrary. At separate points after 477, Books 8 and 9 were published.
- 479/  
480s Death of Sidonius. The only two manuscripts containing Sidonius' epitaph have different readings when it comes to the date of his death.<sup>21</sup> The Madrid manuscript, known as codex *C* (*Matritensis* 9448) reads 21 August *Zenone imperatore*, 'under the reign of Zeno', an indication which leads to the inference that 491 is a *terminus ante quem* for the death of Sidonius. On the other hand, the epitaph in the IRHT manuscript (collection privée 347) reads 21 August *Zenone consule*, which leads scholars to date Sidonius' death to Zeno's consulship in 479. Valuable observations are being made by scholars in support of the reliability of both manuscript sources. The 479 date is rejected by scholars who consider *Ep.* 9.12 as evidence that Sidonius was still alive in 482; in this letter, the author states he has been poetically silent for three Olympiads.<sup>22</sup> Loyen dates the interruption of poetical production evoked in the letter to his becoming a man of the cloth (between 469 and 470) and therefore dates the composition of *Ep.* 9.12 to either 481 or 482.<sup>23</sup> Accepting Sidonius was still alive in 482, therefore, would not be coherent with the subscription of the IRHT manuscript; however, Kelly recently suggested an alternative:<sup>24</sup> the death date of 21 August 479 could be authentic should one consider that Sidonius' poetical silence started from his last major verse composition, namely the Panegyric of Anthemius, dated to 1 January 468.

20. See introduction to *Ep.* 5.5 and my comments in Marolla 2021a, 64–8 on Sidonius' changed attitude towards the Visigothic king.

21. For the *status quaestionis* see Mathisen 2020, 61–4. Two fragments of this epitaph were found in 1991 in Clermont-Ferrand (see Prévot 1993); although the discovery confirmed the authenticity of the transmitted text, the preserved fragments do not include the subscription concerning the date of his death.

22. *Ep.* 9.12.1–2 *ab exordio religiosae professionis ... postquam in silentio decurri tres olympiadas*.

23. Loyen 1970a, xxiii; Loyen 1970b, 219. Similarly, Köhler 1995, 8.

24. Kelly 2020, 189.

## The arrangement of the Letters

Being the editor of his own letter collection, Sidonius *chose* to structure it in nine books. The obvious model was the senatorial tradition of epistolary writing, and mainly the letters of Pliny the Younger and Symmachus, of which Sidonius intended to be a continuator.<sup>25</sup> And yet, structuring a letter collection in books was not the norm by the time Sidonius was publishing his correspondence. Not being characteristic of the collections which were chronologically closer to him, the book division was an artistic choice.

In terms of materiality, the book as a compositional unit was no longer necessary in the age of the codex, as is apparent when thinking of the great letter collections of Jerome, Paulinus of Nola and Augustine. These epistolary corpora were not originally divided into books and, as Gibson put it, ‘there exists no late antique canonical edition or ordering of their correspondence’.<sup>26</sup> Jerome was keen to have his letters circulate early on, either independently or in thematical dossiers. There is evidence that he chose to have some of his pre-393 correspondence circulating as separate collections (mainly his *Epistularum ad diversos liber unus*; *Ad Marcellam epistularum liber unus* and his exchanges with Damasus), but a late antique or medieval archetype of his complete correspondence did not exist.<sup>27</sup> Paulinus is believed not to have kept copies of his own letters, and, in light of the probable lack of a single archetype for the manuscripts, the collection and publication of his letters are likely to have been posthumous.<sup>28</sup> As for Augustine, the manuscripts of his over 300 extant letters reflect traditions which diverge considerably from each other in terms of the order and number of letters transmitted.<sup>29</sup>

Unlike the collections of his immediate predecessors, Sidonius’ *Letters* are not the product of arbitrariness, nor of the editorial criteria of others. Careful selection and arrangement of letters in books are the product of

25. As Sidonius declares programmatically in *Ep.* 1.1.1, on which more below.

26. Gibson 2012, 77. For Ambrose’s not being a model for Sidonius, see Gibson 2020, 389 n. 85.

27. For further details see Cain 2009, 13–19, 68–71, 223–7. One could also mention his *Ep.* 123 on monogamy as a post-393 example. Jerome says the letter (*libellus*) will circulate as a treatise by the name of his addressee, Geruchia (*Ep.* 123.17), and urges her to read similar letters (*Epp.* 54 and 79) he has already written on the same topic together with the famous letter 22, which he calls *liber*. See Marolla 2017, 127–8.

28. Conybeare 2000, 13–15.

29. In 1981, Divjak published a substantial group of unknown letters (1\*–29\*) he found in two manuscripts, Marseille 209 and Par. lat. 16861. See Divjak 1981, ix–x; xiii–xiv.

well-pondered authorial design, which should not be overlooked when reading single letters of the collection.

### Themes and structure of Book 5

Book 5 can be considered as a middle book in many respects other than its position in the collection, and looking at the *Letters* as a whole allows one to perceive its transitional nature. Book 1 notably centres around Rome and Sidonius' political influence, and while in Book 2 'Gallic aristocracy at leisure' could be considered the dominant theme,<sup>30</sup> in Book 3 Sidonius 'the bishop' is actively engaged in defending Clermont from Euric's siege and the author traces a portrait of himself as a leader of heroic stature.<sup>31</sup> Book 4 shows a complexity and variety of themes closer to those of Book 5,<sup>32</sup> whereas Book 6 is known as 'the book of the bishopric' since its letters are exclusively addressed to bishops. Letters to fellow bishops are similarly found in blocks in Books 7 (*Epp.* 1–11), 8 (*Epp.* 13–15) and 9 (*Epp.* 2–11). Moreover, the second half of Book 7 comprises letters dedicated to spiritual themes,<sup>33</sup> while both Book 8 and the second half of Book 9 stand out for the *carmina* studiously incorporated in the epistles.<sup>34</sup>

Compared with the Books 6 and 7,<sup>35</sup> Book 5 stands out for its peculiar features, since the author's representation of his literary persona touches upon different aspects of his life, and one can distinguish Sidonius the influential politician, the cultivated reader, the poet and the relative, while Sidonius the bishop mostly remains in the background. There are only passing mentions of the bishopric, such as the brief description of his feelings concerning

30. On *otium* in Book 2 see Hindermann 2022, viii–xii.

31. Mirroring Pliny's assumption of the consulship in his Book 3 – see Gibson 2012, 69. On the themes of the first three books being 'career, leisure and crisis' see Hindermann 2022, xi.

32. As argued by Gibson 2020, 378, the following broad topics can be identified in Book 4: 'politics and contemporary realities; literary matters; the courtesies and events of friendship, including praise of *amici*; and religious and ecclesiastical matters'. As will be argued in the section on the categorisation of the letters, the same themes are also distinctive of Book 5.

33. Letters 7.12–18 are significantly called 'the ascetic letters' by van Waarden 2016.

34. Sidonius claims to have written Book 8 at Petronius' request, by emptying his *scrinia* looking for additional letters to publish. For the dedication to Petronius also of Book 5, see the introduction to *Ep.* 5.1.

35. Books 1–7 are believed by most scholars to have been published together in 477; for this date see Kelly 2020, 180.

his appointment in *Ep.* 5.3, or, in *Ep.* 5.14, the invitation to preside over Rogations in Clermont, which, however, appears to be an excuse to ask the addressee, Aper, to visit, rather than a request of a spiritual nature. Hence, the bishopric does not appear to play a crucial role in the narrative of events in Book 5 and, unlike the blocks mentioned above, no letter is sent to a fellow bishop.

Unlike the straightforward complaints in Books 7–9,<sup>36</sup> Sidonius does not explicitly mention the deal struck between the emperor Julius Nepos and the Visigothic king Euric in 475, nor his exile in the aftermath of that truce. And yet, this does not necessarily entail that contemporary events are not mentioned in Book 5: quite the opposite. Sidonius may not be as explicit about the political situation or his personal disappointment as he appears to be in later books, but a close reading reveals that convoluted expressions and careful language conceal unease, for instance in mentioning his new bishopric (*Ep.* 5.3); in defining the role the Burgundians have in Lyon (*Epp.* 5.6–5.7), and in the affected *reticentia* of *Ep.* 5.12 to Calminius. In this letter, the besieged Sidonius states he cannot openly speak about the Visigoths and that the *necessitas silentii*, dictated by fear that letters may be intercepted, is no doubt familiar to the addressee.<sup>37</sup>

Entering the field of speculation, one may conjecture either that Sidonius was not ‘ready to speak his mind’ about contemporary events, as Gibson suggests,<sup>38</sup> or that in Book 5 he did not envisage including material that was to be discussed in later books, but no firm conclusion can be reached given the heterogeneous nature of this book, which will be discussed in the following pages.

### A life in autumn

One narratological observation deserves to be made about the ‘mood’ of the book and its position in the narrative arc of the collection (this follows up on an acute suggestion by Joop van Waarden): both explicit discussion and passing mentions of time in Book 5 all concern autumn. The seasonal references start with the image of himself as a tree, scattering words in place of

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36. According to Gibson (2020, 378) Books 7–9 ‘include the darkest and hardest political material of the collection’.

37. *Ep.* 5.12.1.

38. Gibson 2013a, 210.



leaves in *Ep.* 5.3.3. This autumnal image conveys the mood of Sidonius the newly elected bishop and his feeling of unworthiness when he thinks of the pastoral guidance which is expected of him. This is the least explicit seasonal reference in the book; however, its detection may be useful to interpret the more explicit ones. *Ep.* 5.6.1 starts with the seasonal indication that the letter recounts the events that happened at the beginning of autumn (*cum aestas decessit autumnno*). Although fleeting, the mention (*Ep.* 5.13.1) of the fallen leaves, which the diligent Evantius has had removed to facilitate the passage of Seronatus, hints at the same seasonal frame; while in *Ep.* 5.17.4 the heat of the night is said to resemble that of summer days, despite it being early autumn (*etsi iam primo frigore tamen autumnnalis Aurorae detepescebat*).

Hanaghan has highlighted the importance of the seasonal references in Sidonius' letter collection. As he rightly points out, 'a clear sense of the progression of time is conveyed to the reader through Book 2, from the early summer of *Ep.* 2.2 through to the late autumn of *Ep.* 2.14'.<sup>39</sup> The same sense of the passing of time is detected by Hanaghan in Book 3, where Constantius' winter journey to Clermont (*Ep.* 3.2) is followed by Ecdicius' brave defence of Clermont in the summer (*Ep.* 3.3).

And yet, the impression conveyed by Book 5, which comprises letters from very different times and places, is that events are set in a protracted autumn. There is no signalled seasonal change which may hint at time progression, not even in *Epp.* 5.6 and 5.7, which concern the same episode and in which it is clear that some time must have passed between their composition.

One may venture to suggest this is a way to mirror Sidonius' mood at the time he put the book together: his perception that the summer days of his younger adulthood are almost behind him and that he is entering the autumn of his life.<sup>40</sup> The idea that he is now approaching old age is

39. See Hanaghan 2019, 73.

40. On Sidonius' perception of ageing see van Waarden 2018, 191–6; Hanaghan 2019, 181–2. Note how, similarly, Cicero, in *Cato* 19 (71), makes old age equivalent to autumn. The parallelism age/seasons is traditionally attributed to Pythagoreanism, although it is usually winter that is linked to senescence: in *Ov. Met.* 15.199–214 Pythagoras himself compares human ageing to the passing of the seasons (see in particular v. 212 *senilis hiems*); see also Diog. Laert. 8.1.10, and for further parallels see Powell 1988, 243. Winter stands for old age also in, for example, *AP* 5.258 and 10.100 (on which see Albani 1995, 317 and 325). One cannot fail to mention Horace's Ode 4.7 for reflection on the endless cycle of seasons compared to the inevitability of human mortality, on which see Thomas 2011, 174–84. On Horace being one of Sidonius' favourite poets, see Stoehr-Monjou 2013; Pelttari 2016; Mratschek 2017.

expressed explicitly in *Ep.* 5.9.4, where the author tells the addressee that they are *in annis iam senectutis initia pulsantibus*. After all, Book 5 is the last book of the initial collection of Books 1–7 to comprise letters from both before and after his election to bishop: a time of political and social transition which can be compared to the passage from summer to autumn (as the image of the tree in *Ep.* 5.3 seems to suggest). As stated above, this can be considered as a transitional book, for many reasons other than its place in the collection, and the seasonal setting may be listed as further evidence of its unique nature. The seasonal progression would also be coherent with the context of the last letter of the collection, since *Ep.* 9.16 is set in winter and the symbolic function the wintry conditions described by Sidonius have in the last letters of Book 9 are well known to scholars.<sup>41</sup>

### Diversity of themes and letter lengths within Book 5

As Gibson suggests, ancient categorisations of epistolary writing can be applied to Sidonius' letters with interesting results, since he was versed in the same rhetorical studies from which these systems of classifications were created.<sup>42</sup> The themes of letters in Book 5 can be fruitfully compared to the twenty-one types in Pseudo-Demetrius' Τύποι Ἐπιστολικοί.<sup>43</sup> Although, as

41. See Hanaghan 2019, 180–4; Kelly 2020, 189.

42. Gibson 2020, 383.

43. The twenty-one types listed by the Pseudo-Demetrius *Præf.* are the following: (i) friendly, (ii) commendatory, (iii) blaming, (iv) reproachful, (v) consoling, (vi) censorious, (vii) admonishing, (viii) threatening, (ix) vituperative, (x) praising, (xi) advisory, (xii) supplicatory, (xiii) inquiring, (xiv) responding, (xv) allegorical, (xvi) accounting, (xvii) accusing, (xviii) apologetic, (xix) congratulatory, (xx) ironic, (xxi) thankful (translated by Malherbe 1988, 31). A later classification is that by Ps.-Libanius listed in Ἐπιστολιμαῖοι Χαρακτήρες 4: (i) advice; (ii) blame; (iii) request; (iv) recommendation; (v) irony; (vi) thanks; (vii) friendship; (viii) entreaty; (ix) threat; (x) denial; (xi) command; (xii) repentance; (xiii) reproach; (xiv) sympathy; (xv) conciliation; (xvi) congratulation; (xvii) contempt; (xviii) counter-accusation; (xix) reply; (xx) provocation; (xxi) consolation; (xxii) insult; (xxiii) news; (xxiv) indignation; (xxv) representation; (xxvi) praise; (xxvii) instruction; (xxviii) refutation; (xxix) slander; (xxx) reproof; (xxxi) enquiry; (xxxii) encouragement; (xxxiii) consultation; (xxxiv) declaration; (xxxv) mockery; (xxxvi) jesting ; (xxxvii) coded communication; (xxxviii) suggestion; (xxxix) grief; (xl) love; (xli) mixed type. For this passage see Trapp 2003, 191 and 323–6. For these two manuals of letter writing see the edition by Malosse 2004. A useful anthology of ancient epistolary theorists is also in Malherbe 1988, 30–41; a comparative study is in Fögen 2018, 49–55.

is argued later, a single letter could be ascribed to more than one category, it seems useful to employ classifications which were probably familiar to Sidonius.<sup>44</sup> The theorisation of these types outlined by Paolo Cugusi (1983) in his *Evoluzione e forme dell'epistolografia latina* proved useful in conducting a comparative study between Sidonius and his predecessors, mainly his declared models in *Ep.* 1.1.1, Pliny the Younger and Symmachus. When approaching the commentary on Book 5, it seemed sensible to take this programmatic assertion into account, to try to understand whether and in what way the Plinian and Symmachan imprint is detectable in the book.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, once ascribed to a genre, letters are here compared to those of Pliny and Symmachus in which the same themes occur. To this end, the lack of a comprehensive study concerning Symmachus' *Letters* has been an undeniable obstacle, but nonetheless a pervasive presence of this author in the topics as well as in the language of Book 5 has been detected. This approach led to satisfactory results: it seems appropriate to correct Hanaghan's recent scepticism concerning the influence of Symmachus on Sidonius.<sup>46</sup> In *Epp.* 5.1–5.10 Symmachus is a model of genre and expression, even more than Pliny.

Only in macroscopic terms – of the length of letters and of the organisation of the book – does Pliny surpass Symmachus as a model. Gibson's general remarks concerning the variety of length of the letters within Sidonius' books being a form of emulation of Pliny also apply to Book 5.<sup>47</sup> Like Pliny, and unlike Symmachus – whose letters are notably succinct – Sidonius includes within Book 5 short salutations, longer letters and even particularly long letters (such as *Epp.* 5.7 and 5.17). To this diversity in

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44. Fernández López 1994 structured her study on the letters of Sidonius by dividing them according to their function: metalinguistic, phatic, expressive, impressive, and declarative/poetic (with twenty-five subdivisions). However, as argued by van Waarden 2010, 37, this classification 'is all-encompassing to the detriment of clarity'; Gibson 2020, 384 is of the same opinion.

45. The presence of the Plinian model in Sidonius' epistolary collection has been discussed at length by Roy Gibson – e.g. Gibson 2011; Gibson 2013a; Gibson 2013b.

46. Hanaghan 2019, 16: 'It is unclear how influential a model Symmachus was, if at all; "following Symmachus' *rotunditas*" could in its narrowest sense simply mean publishing a single volume of letters. Occasional connections between Symmachus and Sidonius may be considered more usefully a product of their broad generic compatibility than the more deep and meaningful textual relationship that Sidonius develops between his epistles and Pliny's'. Fascione 2020 argued in favour of the identification of Symmachus as a model in Sidonius' perception and depiction of otherness; for Symmachus' presence in Book 8 see also Fascione 2019b.

47. Gibson 2020, 375.

length corresponds a variety of themes and addressees, like in Pliny,<sup>48</sup> while Symmachus' Books 1–7 are organised by addressee.<sup>49</sup>

### Categorisation of the letters by genre

The following categorisation (summarised in Table 1) shows how varied the themes of Book 5 are. Most of Sidonius' letters can be ascribed to more than one genre.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 1.** Genres of the letters in Book 5

Letter	Genre	Addressee
5.1	Commendation	Petronius
5.2	Direct request/literary matters	Nymphidius
5.3	Epistolary silence/valetudinarian	Apollinaris (relative)
5.4	Epistolary silence	Simplicius (relative)
5.5	<i>Epistula symbuleutica</i>	Syagrius
5.6	<i>Epistula symbuleutica</i>	Apollinaris (relative)
5.7	Vituperative	Thaumastus (relative)
5.8	Literary matters/epistolary silence	Secundinus
5.9	Declaration of friendship (and family history)	Aquilinus
5.10	Literary matters	Sapaudus
5.11	Declaration of friendship	Potentinus
5.12	Epistolary silence (his own)	Calminius
5.13	Vituperative	Pannychius
5.14	Invitation	Aper
5.15	Commendation	Ruricius
5.16	Informative	Papianilla (his wife)
5.17	<i>Lettera d'arte</i>	Eriphius
5.18	Declaration of friendship	Attalus
5.19	Legal issue	Pudens
5.20	<i>Epistula symbuleutica</i>	Pastor
5.21	Direct request	Sacerdos and Iustinus

48. See Gibson 2020, 378.

49. For this criterion of arrangement of Symmachus' letters, for the diversity of Symm. Books 8–10, and for what this implies concerning a later publication, see Kelly 2013, 264–7; Kelly 2015, 199–201.

50. As argued by Gibson 2020, 378 the same difficulty applies to all the collection: single letters could be placed in more than one thematic grouping. Pliny, in contrast, more often than not tried to confine himself to a single theme in each letter.

Commendation (*Epp.* 5.1; 5.15)

The collection is opened under the sign of Symmachus with a *commendaticia* (unusual at the beginning of a book). *Epp.* 5.1 and 5.15 are close to Symmachus' commendation letters in terms of length, style and status of the *commendatus*, being considerably different from Pliny's detached commendations for imperial high offices.

Declaration of friendship (*Epp.* 5.9; 5.11; 5.18)

Praise of the addressee, the intention of strengthening ties of friendship and the possibility that those ties may grant future favours are all elements that can be gathered from these letters, which do not give information to the addressees but can be considered as a way to reconnect and re-establish Sidonius' network of contacts. Incidentally, these letters provide the reader with a comprehensive view of the extent of Sidonius' influence, or, rather, of his intended self-presentation as an influential aristocrat. Declarations of friendship can often be read in Symmachus' collection.

Direct request (*Epp.* 5.2; 5.21)

Although *Ep.* 5.2 can also be ascribed to the genre of literary matters, this letter (like *Ep.* 5.21) ends on a pragmatic note. Sidonius demands the return of his copy of Mamertus Claudianus' *De statu animae*, while in *Ep.* 5.21 he brazenly claims for himself the *carmina* of Victorius, being his 'successor by profession', as the addressees are by birth.

Epistolary silence (of others in *Epp.* 5.3; 5.4; 5.8; his own in 5.12)

Much has been said in the commentary on epistolary silence and in particular on the pervasive presence – both thematic and linguistic – of Symmachus as model. Complaining about being ignored by the addressee or asking for forgiveness for one's own failure to write were standard forms of interaction.

Informative (*Ep.* 5.16)

For obvious reasons informative letters are the most common type of private letter, as argued by Cugusi.<sup>51</sup> And yet, in Book 5, the informative content is often subsidiary to other defining elements, with the exception of *Ep.* 5.16. This letter, addressed to his wife, Papianilla, is also the only letter addressed to a woman in Sidonius' letter collection, and yet it does not concern her directly as much as her brother, Ecdicius. Including this informative letter

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51. Cugusi 1983, 106.

in the collection may have the purpose of highlighting the news that his brother-in-law had received patrician dignity.

Invitation (*Ep.* 5.14)

Letters of invitations are very common in letter writing. In *Ep.* 5.14 Sidonius invites Aper to attend *Rogations* in Clermont, though he does not spare his friend some wry comments on his being at leisure.

Legal (*Ep.* 5.19)

Though in some letters there are references to justice (*Ep.* 5.7) – or to minor legal issues like inheritance in *Ep.* 5.21 – *Ep.* 5.19 is the only letter of the book entirely dedicated to a crime and distinguishes itself as a legal letter. The son of Pudens' wet-nurse had seduced the daughter of Sidonius' wet-nurse, hence the author discusses reparations.

*Lettera d'arte* (*Ep.* 5.17)

Cugusi's definition of *lettera d'arte* as a text aimed at *delectare* rather than *docere* and which avails itself of numerous rhetorical devices seems apt to describe this letter.<sup>52</sup> *Ep.* 5.17 shows unity of content and the aim of informing the reader is overshadowed by the entertaining features of the writing. It is a type of letter favoured by Pliny the Younger.

Literary matters (*Epp.* 5.2; 5.8; 5.10)

As the introduction to *Ep.* 5.2 explains at length, letters on literary matters had been common in epistolary collections since the Late Republic. Both Pliny and Symmachus are wont to praise literary works of friends in their letter collections. While in Sidon. *Ep.* 5.2 the object of praise is not the addressee but Mamertus Claudianus, in *Epp.* 5.8 and 5.10 it is the addressee, Secundinus and Sapaudus respectively, who is praised for his literary prowess.

*Symbuleuticae* (*Epp.* 5.5; 5.6; 5.20)

Sidonius' *symbuleuticae* are very different from those of Pliny the Younger:<sup>53</sup> the latter usually wrote advisory letters to friends who were about to assume an imperial office, while Sidonius' unsolicited advice usually concerns personal matters. The author admonishes Syagrius to stop speaking Burgundian in *Ep.* 5.5, he exhorts his relative Apollinaris to inform him about

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52. Cugusi 1983, 127.

53. See the introduction to *Ep.* 5.5.

his troubled situation (so that Sidonius may be of service) in *Ep.* 5.6, and in *Ep.* 5.20 he calls upon Pastor not to miss another city council meeting, since it is clear he is avoiding his peers in order not to receive another assignment as ambassador.

Valetudinarian (*Ep.* 5.3)

In addition to epistolary silence, *Ep.* 5.3 is also ascribable to the genre of valetudinarian letters, given that Sidonius, unprompted, informs the addressee about his health. This is a type of letter often found in Symmachus' letter collection and, before him, in Fronto's.<sup>54</sup>

Vituperative (*Ep.* 5.7; 5.13)

The informants of *Ep.* 5.7 and Seronatus of *Ep.* 5.13 are the object of personal attacks in letters addressed to others. *Epp.* 5.7 and 5.13 could also be ascribed to the broader category of *lettere d'arte* for the sophistication of language and for the undeniable intent to entertain. And yet, highly polemical content, masterful belittlement of enemies through rhetorical devices including absurd images, abusive language and uncommon expressions reminiscent of the ferocity of archaic comedy are the dominant features of these two letters.

### Principles of arrangement

At first glance, the most distinctive feature of Book 5 seems to be *uarietas*, in accordance with Pliny's abundant theorisation of variety as a leading principle in the arrangement of a letter collection. Pliny argued in favour of variety in style, length and content of letters, so that the reader would not have given up reading a letter collection. According to Pliny, even if single letters do not meet the taste of the reader, the author can be confident that the book as a whole is likely to be appreciated because of its *uarietas*.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, even if a book may comprise letters on the same topic, they should not be addressed to the same person,<sup>56</sup> and this is the case, in Sidonius' Book 5, with *Epp.* 3 and 4 as well as *Epp.* 6 and 7.

54. Over eighty of the extant letters that Fronto exchanged with Marcus Aurelius revolve around the narrative of sickness and health, and notably Book 5 of Fronto's *Ad M. Caesarem* is dominated by the theme. See Freisenbruch 2007, 236 and *passim*.

55. As is explained by Pliny in *Ep.* 2.5.8, when he pictures the letter collection as a sumptuous dinner: each of the guests will abstain from a certain number of dishes, but in the end they will all praise the dinner in its entirety.

56. On Pliny's *uarietas* see Gibson and Morello 2012, 244–7.

Apart from *uarietas*, one may wonder what principles of arrangement guided the author and whether they are detectable. Looking at the book in its entirety,<sup>57</sup> and leaving aside the prefatory *Ep.* 5.1, which is added as a dedicatory note accompanying the book, the straightforward requests with which Sidonius opens and ends Book 5 stand out: letters 5.2 and 5.21 oddly concern a direct and outspoken claim on literary works of others. In *Ep.* 5.2 Sidonius seeks to regain possession of his own copy of Mamertus Claudianus' *De statu animae*; while in *Ep.* 5.21 he claims the right to inherit the autograph works of a deceased friend. Both letters are characterised by a bluntness which is unmatched in the rest of the book and the underlying reason why Sidonius decided to begin and end a book with direct requests may elude us. However, if one looks past the outer appearance of these letters, the self-representation of himself as an authority when it comes to literature, being the possessor of a prestigious book (which had been dedicated to him by the author) and the legitimate 'literary heir' of Victorius' poems, may provide the reader with a possible answer. Authorial self-representation as a literary authority is also one of the main themes of the book, as can be argued when reading Sidonius' unprompted opinion on contemporary literature in *Epp.* 5.8 and 5.10. Hence, it may not be an unfair speculation that at a time when Sidonius is not publishing poetry, he is seeking to establish himself as a literary authority, by fostering intellectual debate over contemporary literature. It can be argued, therefore, that in a 'transitional book', Sidonius pictures himself in a transitional role, that of a leading figure in literary matters, since he is not openly a poet as he used to be, and not fully immersed in the role of bishop, as he will be in Book 6.

Moreover, as will be explained in the following section, the thematic block which stands out the most is constituted by letters 5.3–5.4 and 5.6–5.7, which all revolve around Sidonius' relatives. In particular, *Ep.* 5.7 decisively closes the block with a superabundant invective against the slanderers of his relative Apollinaris: the only addressee who receives two letters in the book (*Epp.* 5.3 and 5.6). One last group is that of letters which circulated independently among Sidonius' circle of friends. To this group can be ascribed the two vituperative letters, 5.7 and 5.13, as well as the *lettera d'arte* 5.17 – which appear to be excuses to flaunt Sidonius' literary prowess – and the same conclusion can be reached concerning *Ep.* 5.10, since Mamertus Claudianus' *Ep.* 2 appears to be a point-by-point answer to this letter.<sup>58</sup>

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57. See Table 1, p. 13.

58. See introductions to *Epp.* 5.7 and 5.10.



## Manuscript tradition

### The new stemma

Sidonius is transmitted in over 100 witnesses. Setting aside florilegia and excerpts, Franz Dolveck recently created a new census with seventy-seven manuscripts of Sidonius' works,<sup>59</sup> and traced them back to a single archetype.<sup>60</sup> The stemma presented in Figure 2 simplifies Dolveck's stemma by removing hyparchetypes (not transmitted but reconstructed by him) and by taking into account only manuscripts containing the *Letters*. The stemma reproduces the higher manuscripts which Dolveck identifies, as well as lower ones which had been collated in the previous editions by Lütjohann, Mohr and Loyen, who considered them to be valuable witnesses.

The relevance of Dolveck's stemma lies in its bipartite structure, in light of which, if a reading in  $\alpha$  agrees with *P* (or *PL*) one should have the reading of the archetype. For this reason, the reading *mellis* in *Ep.* 5.8, for example, was preferred to *fellis*, and in *Ep.* 5.9 *tenore* was preferred to the *facilior* reading *tempore*. Moreover, unusual spellings peculiar to *L* which had been chosen especially by Loyen out of respect for its antiquity have been reconsidered.<sup>61</sup>

Following Dolveck's stemma, I collated Book 5 in *C*, *L*, *M*, *P*, *Vat* 1661 and *Leip*. I then checked single *lectiones* in *A*, *S*, *N*, *F* and *T*, given that *A* and *S* are placed high in the stemma by Dolveck, as high as the more ancient *C* (the first manuscript listed by Lütjohann), while *F* is chosen by Lütjohann for the *constitutio textus*,<sup>62</sup> and *N* is chosen by Loyen as the second-best witness.<sup>63</sup>

59. Dolveck 2020, 508–42.

60. Which is called *Ur-Archetype* by Dolveck in the new census to avoid confusion; on its features see Dolveck 2020, 482–4.

61. *L* is dated between 814 and 830 in Dolveck 2020, 522; see the new census in Dolveck 2020, 508–42.

62. I can confirm the poor quality of the text in *F* hypothesised by Dolveck, as well as its belonging (for the *Letters*) to the same sub-branch as *Leip*. Even within the 'English family' (which is a valuable witness for the *Poems* rather than for the *Letters*) this manuscript is at the bottom of the stemma.

63. In his introduction on the manuscript tradition, Loyen 1970a, li states he believes that when the *lectio* in *N ante correctionem* 's'accorde avec celle de *L* nous avons toutes les chances de nous trouver en présence du texte authentique'. However, the collation of Book 5 in *N* did not result in useful evidence, and Dolveck's assertion can be validated.

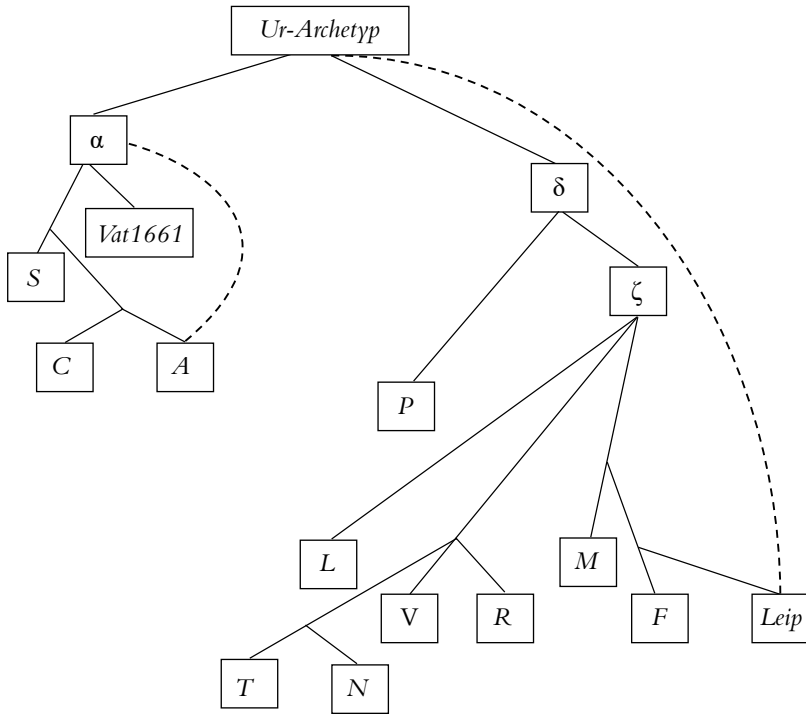


Figure 2. Dolveck's stemma, simplified

Table 2. *α branch*

<i>A</i>	Vatican City, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 3421 (s. XI)
<i>C</i>	Madrid, BNE, 9448 (s. XI <sup>2</sup> )
<i>S</i>	Formerly Schøyen collection, now Paris, IRHT, collection privée, 347 (s. XII <sup>2</sup> )
<i>Vat1661</i>	Vatican City, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 1661 (s. XII <sup>ex</sup> /XIII <sup>in</sup> )

Table 3. *δ branch*

<i>F</i>	Paris, BNF, Par. lat. 9551 (s. XIII <sup>1/4</sup> )
<i>L</i>	Oxford, Bodl. Libr., Laud. lat. 104 + Erlangen, UB, 2112/7 (s. IX <sup>1</sup> )
<i>Leip</i>	Leipzig, UB, Rep. I 48 (s. XII or XIII <sup>1/4</sup> )
<i>M</i>	Florence, BML, S. Marco 554 (s. XI <sup>2</sup> )
<i>N</i>	Paris, BNF, Par. lat. 18584 (s. X)
<i>P</i>	Paris, BNF, Par. lat. 2781 (s. X <sup>ex</sup> )
<i>R</i>	Reims, BM, 413 (s. IX <sup>2/4</sup> )
<i>T</i>	Florence, BML, Plut. 45.23 (A s. XII, B s. XI)
<i>V</i>	Vatican City, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 1783 (s. X–XI <sup>in</sup> )

Listed below are links to the digital reproductions (where available) of the manuscripts I collated with indication of the *folia* in which Book 5 is attested.

*α branch*

- A* <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.3421](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3421)> ff. 44v–53r.  
*C* <<http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000105585&page=51>>  
 ff. 49r–57v.  
*S* private reproduction ff. 38r–45v.  
*Vat1661* <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.1661](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.1661)> ff. 33v–39r.

*δ branch*

- F* <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10720833t/f28.item>>  
 ff. 23v–28r.  
*L* <[https://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/view/bodleian\\_mslaudlat104/0126](https://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/view/bodleian_mslaudlat104/0126)> ff. 58v–69r.  
*Leip* private reproduction, ff. 39r–46v.  
*M* <<http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOS41MkI1A4r7GxMdlG&c=S.%20Marco%20554#/oro/135>> ff. 64r–76v.  
*N* <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10720875c/f67.item.r=18584>> ff. 61v–73r.  
*P* <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10720839h/f56.item>>  
 ff. 52v–62r.  
*T* <<http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOIfcHPI1A4r7GxMIZA&c=Sidonii%20Epistolae#/book>> ff. 33v–37r.

The quality of the transmitted text is high overall, and for that reason the printed apparatus is negative and comprises only the most problematic readings. Readers can turn to the apparatus of Lütjohann (the only positive apparatus) for full details, though for some corrections see the appendix to the present volume.<sup>64</sup>

64. The apparatus in the editions by Mohr, Anderson, and Løyen is negative and heavily dependent on Lütjohann's collation. Note, however, that Lütjohann's apparatus is not consistently positive, a thing which led Løyen into some bad errors. See Furbetta 2020, 562–3 and Condorelli 2020b, 566–7 for a list of editions of Sidonius' text and for their features.

Dolveck's recent assessment provides much clarity about the relationship between the manuscripts, and it is worth listing the implications, if he is right.

First, if one takes into account the new stemma, most of the manuscripts standardly listed by Loyen (*FLMNT*) come from a single sub-branch, all deriving from hyparchetype ζ. This would make the readings of *P* and especially *C* more important, given that they come from two different hyparchetypes: δ and α.

### The α branch and the *editio princeps*

The collation of Book 5 confirms that *Vat1661*, *A*, *C* and *S* belong to the same branch, as is argued by Dolveck. Here are listed, by way of example, some peculiar features of the α branch in the entirety of Book 5, which confirm Dolveck's classification:

- Ep.* 5.5.2 *ACSVat1661* have *de hilario uetere nouus flacco*, though *ilario* in *A* and *ylario* (with a *y littera incerta*) in *S*. *Flacco* is a reading of this family. *L* has *faccho*, while *falco* is attested (with different spellings) in *MP*.
- Ep.* 5.8.2 the word *coniugem* is missing from *ACSVat1661*.
- Ep.* 5.9.2 *tenore* appears in *ACSVat1661* (and also *P*) while *tempore* is attested in *LM* (note that *M* has *tempore*, but *tenore* is added by *M*<sup>1</sup> *super lineam*).
- Ep.* 5.10.1 the word *bene* is added in *ACSVat1661* (but also *M*<sup>1</sup> *super lineam* and *P*<sup>1</sup> *super lineam*).
- Ep.* 5.10.1 *etiam* is omitted in *ACSVat1661* (present in *LMP*).
- Ep.* 5.14.2 *sed* appears in *ACSVat1661* instead of *quod* (*LMP*).
- Ep.* 5.14.3 *dum* in *AC*<sup>65</sup> *Vat1661* instead of *quando* (*L*) or *quod* (*MP*).
- Ep.* 5.16.1 *quaestor* is missing from both *C* and *Vat1661* but occurs in *AS*.
- Ep.* 5.16.1 *attigit* is given in *ACSVat1661* instead of *tetigit* (*LMP*).
- Ep.* 5.16.3 *quoque* is added in the text (*bona soror quoque optima es*) in *ACSVat1661* but not in *LMP*.
- Ep.* 5.17.4 *conductorium* appears in *ACSVat1661* instead of *conditorium* (*LMP*).

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65. In *C* Lütjohann reads *dum*, as I do, while Loyen reads *cum*.

According to Dolveck, *C* is not the best representative of its family, unlike *Vat1661* and *A* (after correction).<sup>66</sup> He argues that *C* was preferred by the editors because for a time it was the only witness of Sidonius' epitaph.<sup>67</sup> However, for Book 5, *Vat1661* has almost no readings that are different from *C*. The only different *lectiones* which may be worth taking into account are *reuerentia* instead of *uerecundia* (*AC*) in *Ep.* 5.4.1 and *fulloni* instead of *ortuloni* (*AC*) in *Ep.* 5.14.2.<sup>68</sup> Both these alternative readings are plausible in terms of meaning, and yet *uerecundia* and *hortuloni* are unanimously attested in the manuscript tradition, although with different spellings.<sup>69</sup>

Moreover, in *Vat1661* there are more than ten missing words in Book 5, far more than in *C* and *A*. There are also eight instances in which words or syntagmata are in a different order from the rest of the manuscript tradition, and on various occasions I registered solecisms and words in the wrong cases. The overall quality of *Vat1661*, therefore, is poorer than that of *C*. The collation of Book 5 confirms that *A* was corrected against a higher manuscript, possibly  $\alpha$  itself, as is argued by Dolveck (see stemma). Therefore, although it is possible to confirm the relation between *A*, *C*, *S* and *Vat1661*, and thus to validate Dolveck's reconstruction of an  $\alpha$  branch, there is no reason to prefer the *recentior* *Vat1661* to *C*, since both have readings which do not appear to be representative of the family. And yet, as Dolveck argues, *A*, *post correctionem*, is the best witness of the branch, and it seems sensible to suggest that an editor should try to ascertain which were the readings of  $\alpha$  by collating all the manuscripts of this branch. The *concordia codicum* of the branch would give the reading of the hyparchetype, and if the tradition appears to be split, given the overall high quality of the text, it will tend to be clear which of the manuscripts of the branch has a mistake. It seems therefore that the sensible choice for an editor would be to use  $\alpha$  to indicate the consensus of the branch.<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, Dolveck suggests that the 1474 *editio princeps* by Ketelaer and de Leempt 'is derived from a manuscript of the *Vat1661* type' and argues that the model is *Vat1661* itself.<sup>71</sup> Having compared the collation of *Vat1661* and the text in the Ketelaer and de Leempt edition, I can confirm

66. Dolveck 2020, 503.

67. Dolveck 2020, 504 n. 65.

68. *Ortuloni* in *ACS*.

69. See below for *hortuloni*/*ortuloni*/*ortolano*.

70. On *C* (s. XI<sup>2</sup>) see Dolveck 2020, 518 n. 25; on *Vat1661* (s. XII<sup>ex</sup>/XIII<sup>in</sup>), see Dolveck 2020, 533 n. 69.

71. Dolveck 2020, 500.

that, as far as Book 5 is concerned, Dolveck's theory that the *editio* derives from a manuscript of the  $\alpha$  family commands assent, since peculiar *lectiones* of the  $\alpha$  family are found in it. However, apart from minor similarities in orthography between *Vat1661* and the *editio*, the only *lectio* which occurs in both this manuscript and the *editio princeps* is *Ep.* 5.2.1 *architectoria*, attested in the variant *architectorica* in both *A* and *C*. On the other hand, as stated above, *Vat1661* often inverts and omits single words (much more than *A* or *C*).<sup>72</sup>

*Vat1661* also has different *lectiones* from those in the Ketelaer and de Leempt edition, such as:

- the already mentioned *Ep.* 5.4.1 *reuerentia* (not attested in *AC*) instead of *uerecundia*;
- *Ep.* 5.5.2 *flacco* (like *AC*) instead of *falco*;
- *Ep.* 5.12.1 *in hoc saeculo* (not attested in *AC*) instead of *in hoc solum*;
- *Ep.* 5.16.1 *attigit* (not attested in *AC*) instead of *tetegit*;
- *Ep.* 5.20.1 *legionis* (attested in *A*, but not in *C*) instead of *legationis*.

Ultimately, it does not seem likely that *Vat1661* itself was the source of the *editio princeps*, and if it was, it would have to have been collated against other manuscripts with great attention, and corrected in many instances. Furthermore, an explanation was already needed as to why and how the Flemish *editio princeps* would be modelled on a manuscript which was already in Rome at the time.<sup>73</sup> It seems likely that Ketelaer and de Leempt used as their primary exemplar a now lost manuscript of the  $\alpha$  branch, perhaps a sibling of *Vat1661*.

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72. For instance, the following omissions pose a challenge to Dolveck's suggestion that *Vat1661* is the source of the *editio princeps*, since none of these words is missing in it: *Ep.* 5.2.2 *liber* f. 34r l. 10; *Ep.* 5.3.3 *cui* f. 34r l. 2; *Ep.* 5.5.1 *quippe* f. 34v l. 5; *Ep.* 5.7.5 *confestim* f. 35r l. 9; *Ep.* 5.8.2 *coniugem* f. 35v l. 16; *Ep.* 5.11.3 *uitae* f. 36r l. 23; *Ep.* 5.12.1 *lacrimis* f. 36r l. 36; *Ep.* 5.16.1 *quaestor* f. 37r l. 35; *Ep.* 5.17.10 *tenebat* f. 38r l. 14. Conjunctions or monosyllabic words are not included in this list.

73. Since it was bought under pope Nicholas V (†1455). For details on the manuscript see Manfredi 1994, 445 and Dolveck 2020, 533.