

Daniel K. Knox

**Trading Letters: A Network Analysis of Ennodius of Pavia's Letter
Collection (A.D. 500-513)**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2016

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500-513)**

by

Daniel K. Knox

(New Zealand)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

Chair, Examination Committee

Thesis Supervisor

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I, the undersigned, **Daniel Keven Knox**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

This thesis is a network analysis of the letters of Ennodius of Pavia: aristocrat, intellectual, churchman, and letter writer of the early sixth century. This Thesis Examines the structure of Ennodius's network to the extent that it can be reconstructed from his extant published letter collection. Three questions are the focus of the thesis: who were the most structurally important actors in Ennodius's network? Which influential individuals and groups did Ennodius seek to attach himself to and why? And how did Ennodius maintain the ties that he had made? By answering these questions I aim to provide a better understanding of how Ennodius' social network functioned. I will argue in this thesis that Ennodius was what network scientists call a 'sociometric superstar': a well-connected actor within his network who facilitated the communication and connectivity of the other actors within the network. This status is based on Ennodius's ties to a number of influential individuals in Ostrogothic Italy—chiefly the senator Faustus Niger. When we consider Ennodius's letter collection in the light of the social network that it represents it is clear that a key purpose of the text was to promote Ennodius's ties to the most influential members of his society and his extensive participation within it.

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Introduction

Ennodius of Pavia was a prolific if enigmatic writer. Much of what we know about Ostrogothic Italy comes from the pages of Ennodius's letters and poems. However as an individual Ennodius is not often well understood, partly due to the difficulty of his Latin.¹ As his letters show Ennodius was a central figure in the social world of Ostrogothic Italy—a position earned from his intellectual efforts in aid of the church. He was a close correspondent of influential senators, in particular Faustus Niger, and Pope Symmachus. Ennodius used his social influence to help his friends and family and as such acted as a key connection between Northern Italy, Ravenna, and Rome. This thesis will explore Ennodius's social network and illustrate his importance as a social actor in the world of Ostrogothic Italy.

Ennodius was born in Arles in the late-fifth century and moved to Pavia in northern Italy to live with family as an adolescent after the death of his parents. He was a member of the extensive and powerful Anicii clan which had branches across Gaul and Italy, though he was not a member of one of the clan's senatorial branches. Ennodius was appointed as a deacon in Pavia in 493 and subsequently at Milan. As a deacon Ennodius put his extensive literary education to work to the benefit of the Ligurian church and the papal see. Ennodius was a key player in during the turbulent Laurentian Schism of 501-506; as a staunch partisan of Pope Symmachus he integrated himself into the influential circle of Faustus. Faustus was an influential senator, administrator in the Ostrogothic government, and a fierce defender of Pope Symmachus. Ennodius's correspondence is extensive and provides a window into the social world of Ostrogothic Italy in the early sixth century. As a member of the northern Italian aristocracy Ennodius was a step removed from the influential social world of Rome's senatorial elite, thus his correspondence was a means by which he might further integrate himself into the

¹ John Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1993) 3.

society of Ostrogothic Italy. Subsequently through the act of collecting and publishing his letters Ennodius created a testament to his social accomplishments and importance within the social networks of Italy.

While this thesis will primarily analyze the epistolary action of sending individual letters as a means of reconstructing Ennodius's social network it is also important to consider the secondary act of communication represented by the collection of letters. Late antiquity was an age of letter collecting – particularly in Gaul and Italy.² Ennodius is one of four major letter writers from Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries, the others being: Sidonius Apollinaris, Ruricius of Limoges, and Avitus of Vienne. In addition many of his correspondents also feature in the letters of Cassiodorus. Published collections of letters promoted the ideals of their authors. Ennodius's collection celebrates his treasured relationships and social achievements which connected him to the wider social world.

Ennodius's collection of letters includes 297 letters in nine books. The letters date between 500 and 513, ending before Ennodius was appointed bishop of Pavia in 514.³ Within the collection Ennodius addresses letters to 86 separate individuals. It is not entirely settled whether or not Ennodius collated and edited his own collection of letters. Richard Bartlett suggests that Ennodius was responsible at least for the initial grouping of the texts in the codices though the division of the work into nine books is the work of modern editors.⁴ Pauline Allen has argued

² Andrew Gillett, "Communication in Late Antiquity: Use and Re-Use" in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 816; see also: Daniel K. Knox, *Post-Roman Gaul: an Epistolary Society*, (MA Thesis, Auckland: The University of Auckland, 2014); Ralph Mathisen "Literary Circles and Family Ties in Late Roman Gaul", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 111 (1988) 95-96.

³ Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy*, 152.

⁴ Richard Bartlett, "The Dating of Ennodius' Writings" in: *Atti Della Seconda Giornata Ennodiana*, [Acts of the Second Conference on Ennodius] ed. Edoardo D'Angelo (Naples: Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Filologia Classica dell'Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II., 2003) 55-74.

that Ennodius's collection was collated by an anonymous individual after Ennodius's death.⁵ This argument is based on the fact that all of the letters in the collection date from Ennodius's deaconate with no letters surviving from his career as the bishop of Pavia. I am inclined to consider that this is evidence to the contrary – that Ennodius himself curated the letters during his episcopate and that they promote his actions as a deacon.

Ennodius is undergoing a renaissance in scholarship of late, in particular as the focus of a study on his literary career by Stefanie Kennell and three recent volumes from a series of Italian conferences in 2001, 2003, and 2006.⁶ Similarly, ancient networks are a growing field of study.⁷ This is increasingly true for studies of ancient letters and letter collections, which provide excellent evidence for the study of ancient networks and networking. Network studies of ancient letter collections have been conducted by: Margaret Mullett in her study of the twelfth-century bishop Theophylact of Ohrid; Giovanni Ruffini's in his study of byzantine letters in late-Roman Egypt; and Adam Shchor in his study of Theodoret and networks in Syria.⁸ This study stems from my first master's thesis, which examined the social networks of Sidonius, Ruricius, and Avitus.⁹

⁵ Pauline Allen, "Rationale for Episcopal Letter Collections in Late Antiquity" in: *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*, eds. Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 18-34.

⁶ Stefanie Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius: a Gentleman of the Church* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000); *Atti della prima Giornata Ennodianna* [Acts of the First Conference on Ennodius] ed. Fabio Gasti (Pisa: ETS, 2001); *Atti Della Seconda Giornata Ennodianna*, [Acts of the Second Conference on Ennodius] ed. Edoardo D'Angelo (Naples: Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Filologia Classica dell'Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II., 2003); *Atti della terza Giornata Ennodianna* [Acts of the third Conference on Ennodius] ed. Fabio Gasti (Pisa: ETS, 2006).

⁷ See the recent edited volume: Katarina Mustakallio and Christian Krötzel, eds., "*De Amicitia* Friendship and Social Networks in Antiquity and the Middle Ages," *Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae Vol. 36* (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2010).

⁸ Margaret Mullett, "Theophylact of Ohrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop," *Variorum* (January, 1997); Giovanni Ruffini, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Adam M. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley, Los Angeles CA: University of California Press, 2011).

⁹ Daniel K. Knox, *Post-Roman Gaul*.

This thesis seeks to understand three things: who were the most structurally important actors in Ennodius's network? Which influential individuals and groups did Ennodius seek to attach himself to and why? And how did Ennodius maintain the ties that he had made? By answering these questions I aim to provide a better understanding of how the social network evident in the letter collection of Ennodius functioned. I will argue in this thesis that Ennodius was what network scientists call a 'sociometric superstar': a well-connected actor within his network who facilitated the communication and connectivity of the other actors within the network. This status is based on Ennodius's ties to a number of influential individuals in Ostrogothic Italy—chiefly the senator Faustus Niger. When we consider Ennodius's letter collection in the light of the social network that it represents it is clear that a key purpose of the text was to promote Ennodius's ties to the most influential members of his society and his extensive participation within that society.

Chapter 1 will provide a broad analysis of Ennodius network as reconstructed from his letters. In this chapter I will map out the network of Ennodius and identify the key actors within the network. Chapter 2 will examine Ennodius's network in the context of Ostrogothic Italy. I will discuss the primary targets of Ennodius's correspondence and the social groups to which they belonged. I will focus on Ennodius's friendship with Faustus the most important relationship in the network and illustrate how Ennodius tied himself socially to this important figure. Finally this chapter will argue that through his connections to the influential elite of Ostrogothic Italy Ennodius himself became the target of individuals seeking patronage and support. In my final chapter I will discuss the importance of maintaining social ties within a network. Letters were the medium through which Ennodius and his friends tied themselves together and this chapter will discuss the relationship between letters, letter collections and *amicitia*. I will also consider Ennodius's frequent use of the term *commercium litterarum* and his concern with maintaining

the flow of letters within his circle. Finally this chapter will consider the role of letter carriers as human ties between the actors in Ennodius's network.

Chapter 1 – The Network of Ennodius

Magnus Felix Ennodius was a part of an extensive social network. In this chapter I will present a model of the social network of Ennodius based on the evidence of his published letters. This is not the first time that Ennodius's network has been mapped; Johannes Preiser-Kapeller has produced a visualization of Ennodius's wider network as a part of the *Topographies of Entanglements* project at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.¹⁰ My model differs from Preiser-Kapeller's as it only includes individuals mentioned in the letter collection rather than those that extend beyond it—such as Cassiodorus. In this chapter I will examine the model of Ennodius's network using some of the key measures of network analysis. Chief among these are the concepts of direction, centrality, and betweenness—each of which will be explained as they are discussed I will compare these measurements with an analysis of the volumes of correspondence that Ennodius dedicates to the actors within his collection. The goal of this chapter is to illustrate the broad trends within Ennodius's letter collection and to show the usefulness of network analysis in understanding the social world of Ennodius's correspondence. The trends established will be placed within their literary and historical context in the subsequent two chapters. What shall be shown is that Ennodius's network is centered around a cluster of important individuals chief amongst which is the important senator Faustus Niger.

Social Networks

Before plunging headfirst into the social world of Ennodius it will help to define what a social network is and the terms used to describe the data that social network analysis works with.

¹⁰ “Extended “Ego-Network” of Magnus Felix Ennodius (473/475-521 CE), Bishop of Pavia” (2010): https://www.academia.edu/2764097/Extended_Ego-Network_of_Magnus_Felix_Ennodius_473_475-521_CE_Bishop_of_Pavia.

Mark Newman begins his introduction to network science with this explanation: “A network is, in its simplest form, a collection of points joined together in pairs by lines. In the jargon of the field the points are referred to as *vertices* or *nodes* and the lines are referred to as *edges*.”¹¹ This rather abstract explanation requires some elucidation. Imagine a metro rail system. The vertices/nodes of a city’s metro system are its stations while the edges of the network are the rail lines that connect the stations to one another. While vertices, nodes, and edges are suitable terms for describing the workings of a metro system or the internet—for networks of people they have a dehumanizing effect. Sociologists use a separate set of terminology from other network analysts, due to the human nature of their subjects. In place of vertices and nodes sociologists refer to *actors*; the edges that link the actors of a network are referred to as *ties*.¹² As my work focuses on human subjects and draws on the methodology of sociology, from this point on I will refer exclusively to actors and ties.

Social networks are networks of people. The actors of the network represent individuals or groups of people, while the ties represent social interactions or relationships between the actors.¹³ Two types of data might be gleaned from social situations: *attribute* and *relational* data. Attribute data pertain to the: “attitudes, opinions and behavior of agents [actors] so far as these are regarded as the properties, qualities or characteristics that belong to them as individuals or groups.”¹⁴ Relational data are the relationships, contacts, and interactions that bind actors together—represented by the ties of a network.¹⁵ John Scott proposes that relational data is the kind most suited to the techniques of social network analysis, geared as it is to the study of social interactions.¹⁶

¹¹ Mark E. J. Newman, *Networks: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.

¹² Newman, *Networks*, 36.

¹³ Newman, *Networks*, 36.

¹⁴ John Scott, *Social Network Analysis* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 3.

¹⁵ Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 3.

¹⁶ Newman, *Networks*, 3–5.

Using a piece of literature as a source for network data may seem problematic. As a constructed piece of literature it does not represent a ‘real’ network. That is the editorial choices made in its composition may have left out many individuals that Ennodius communicated with on a frequent basis but did not fit with the ideals that he wished to promote in his letter collection. I will counter this with several points. First, while Ennodius’s letter collection may only represent a small portion of his correspondents with its 297 letters this is still a significant enough sample size to examine when you consider that for many letter writers we only possess a handful of letters—such as in the collections of Caesarius of Arles and Faustus of Riez. Secondly, even though Ennodius’s collection represents a conscious editing of his correspondence, network analysis provides a suitable tool with which to examine and analyze Ennodius’s goals in collating the question. Network analysis is used in the study of literary works as well as in the study of real life networks. A recent article in *Math Horizons* called “Network of Thrones” presented a network analysis of *A Storm of Swords* from the *Song of Fire and Ice* series.¹⁷ The analysis tracked interactions within the book in order to ascertain which character was the most central within the narrative. In a similar vein I will be analyzing the letter collection of Ennodius in order to find out which individuals are the most central in the network that he presents and thus which relationships Ennodius was most intent on promoting. That the network that Ennodius presents to us in his letter collection is an idealized network does not detract from the goals of this work, indeed it is the reason for it—so that we can understand more clearly the goals behind the act of collecting and publishing letters.

¹⁷ Andrew Beveridge and Jie Shan “Network of Thrones” *Math Horizons* 23, no. 4, (April 2016): 18–22.

Analyzing the Network of Ennodius

Figure 1 is a graph of Ennodius's letter collection. It has been compiled from several types of data collected from Ennodius's letters. Apart from Ennodius himself—who is centrally

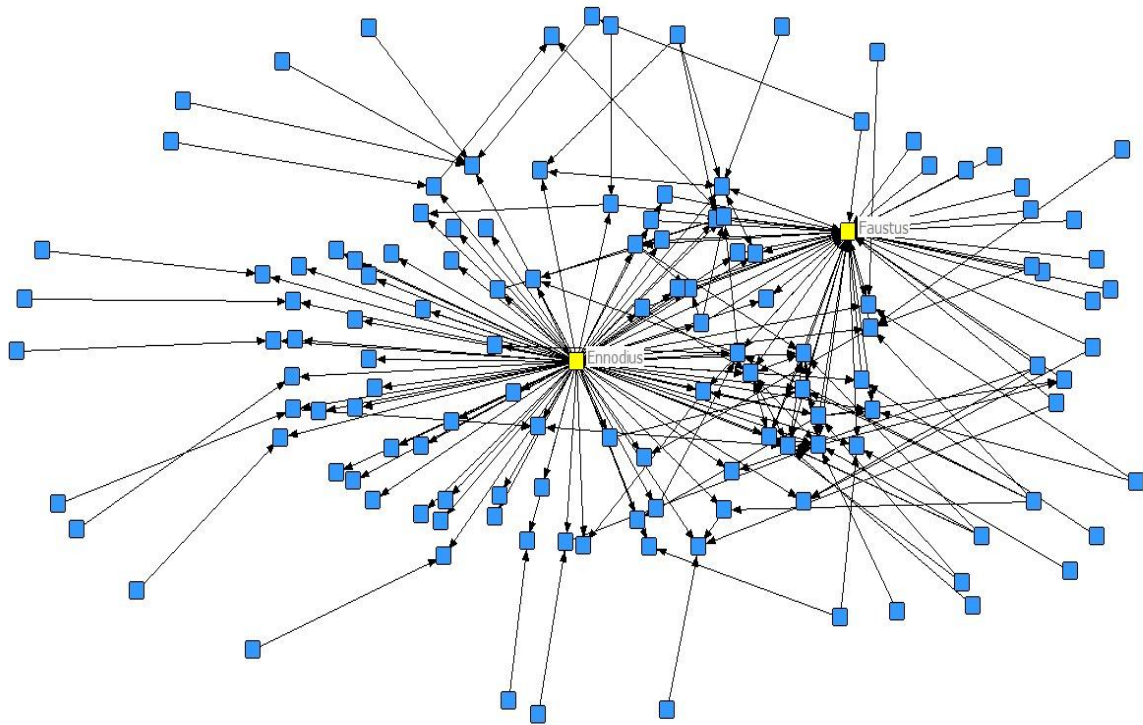


Figure 1 Ennodius's Network

located in the graph—the actors depicted are the individual recipients of Ennodius's correspondence as well as the individual mentioned in the correspondence. The ties that link the actors represent two intended acts of communication carried out by Ennodius: the epistolary action of sending a letter to an individual; and the secondary act of mentioning a third party in a letter. Both of these acts were intended to create and strengthen relationships—whether between Ennodius and the recipient of a letter or between the recipient and a mentioned third-party.¹⁸ All of the individuals mentioned by Ennodius in letters are presumed to have a tie to Ennodius—though this has not been represented in the graphs. These ties have been omitted

¹⁸ The creation and maintenance of relationships will be examined in detail in chapter 2.

for two reasons—as all the mentions derive from letters written by Ennodius it is not significant that they all share a tie to Ennodius, and as such the omission has made the graphs easier to interpret. What is significant is the number of individuals that Ennodius chooses to mention in letters, but who are not the recipients of letters themselves—this will be discussed later in the chapter.

Behind all of the graphs presented throughout this thesis lies an ‘affiliation matrix’ that records all of the actors and ties in Ennodius’s network. A brief description of the matrix and its relationship to the graphs analyzed in this chapter is warranted in order to make clear the methodology of this study and to situate it correctly within the context of network analysis.¹⁹ The affiliation matrix that lies behind the graphs in this thesis is a ‘square’ matrix. This means that each axis of the matrix contains the same set of variables—in this case the names of the individuals who received and are mentioned in the letters of Ennodius. This type of matrix is used to express the affiliations that individuals share—rather than ‘rectangular’ matrices that are used to measure qualities that individuals possess.²⁰ UCINET, a piece of network analysis software, has been used to analyze the data collected in my affiliation matrix and to produce the series of graphs that will be analyzed in this thesis.²¹ These graphs, or sociograms, provide a visualization of Ennodius’s network that can be examined and analyzed. It is important to stress that what is important in these graphs are the patterns—rather than the physical positions of the actors and the length of the lines that represent the ties between them. UCINET arranges the position of the actors and ties to present the information in a clear manner and as such the physical distances depicted are of no consequence.²² As will be discussed in the following

¹⁹ A more thorough discussion of the methodologies and theory of social network analysis can be found in Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 11–98.

²⁰ See: Scott, *Social Network Analysis* 41–52.

²¹ Borgatti, Everett, and Freeman, *UCINET 6 for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis*. (Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies, 2002).

²² Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 64–69.

section we can measure the distance between actors in Ennodius's network, but that distance is measured in the number of ties that separate actors from one another—not the physical length of the ties themselves. A final important qualification to make is that the graphs that will be examined in this thesis are all 'single mode' graphs. Like the affiliation matrix that they represent they all deal with a single type of data—individual actors and the ties that they share rather than comparing them on various shared qualities.

The network can be divided into several parts. Starting at the periphery there is an outer ring of actors who are loosely connected to the rest of the network—mostly via a single connection each. These are individuals mentioned in Ennodius's letters, but lacking any further ties to the network. On each side of Ennodius there are two inner clusters. On the left side of the graph is a weaker cluster containing actors with between two and three ties to the rest of the network. On the right side of the graph is a stronger cluster containing several actors with many connections. Importantly this cluster lies between the two centers of the graph: Ennodius and Faustus. It is a zone of high connectivity.

To begin with Fig. 1 shows a number of broad trends. There are a total of 133 actors in the network. Ennodius—colored red—is the center of the network. He has visible ties radiating out to 87 actors in the network—these are level 1 ties representing letters sent by Ennodius. Ennodius is also tied to the remaining 46 actors in the network with ties that have been deliberately left out of this graph—as I have not included ties from Ennodius to individuals that he mentions in the letters. Ennodius has a visible centrality of 0.65 within the network—this is a high score and is to be expected given Ennodius's status. If we consider the ties to individuals mentioned in his letters but not represented in the graph Ennodius's centrality increases to 1—as he is tied to all of the individuals in the network. This figure makes Ennodius statistically irrelevant in his network—as the source of all of the communication it is not

important that he is tied to all of the individuals in the network. It is significant that he is only tied to two-thirds of the actors directly—as this shows that Ennodius’s network is bigger than the sum of his letters.

Network Direction

When the relationships that tie a social network together are examined they can be seen to be either directed or undirected. In some networks the direction of a relationship is irrelevant—what is important is that the relationship exists at all. For instance if one was to map out the relationships of professors in a university based on their membership of various research committees the direction of those relationships would not be important—rather the focus would be on the existence of the shared membership of the committees. As the network of Ennodius is the result of intended acts of communication the direction of those acts becomes interesting and important. As mentioned above all of the ties in the network represent one of two acts: the sending of a letter and the mentioning of an individual in a letter. The direction of Ennodius’s communication is important for understanding which actors and ties Ennodius wished to promote in his letter connection. The direction of a tie is indicated in the graphs by the presence of arrow heads on either end of a tie. Where a tie has an arrowhead on either end we can say that the tie is reciprocated. A broad trend that is readily apparent in Fig. 1 is that Ennodius has no ties directed towards him and only ties emanating out from him. This trend is entirely in keeping with his role as the author of the letters in the collection. If we were considering multiple letter collections, or a letter collection that included received letters we could compare the amount of ties directed towards Ennodius versus those that are directed away from him. A second broad trend that is apparent in Fig. 1 is the clear flow of ties in the network trends towards Faustus—indicating that he is a central focus of the network and thus the letter collection that it represents.

Network Centrality

Centrality is the extent to which an individual actor is tied to the other actors in a network. An actor with many ties to other actors in a network has a high degree of centrality in comparison to actors who have few ties across the network. Here I will examine both undirected and directed centrality. Undirected centrality is the sum of all of an actor's ties relative to all of the possible ties in a network. Directed centrality takes two measurements into account: in-degree and out-degree—*i.e.* acts of communication that an actor is the recipient of versus acts of communication that extend out from the actor (such as being mentioned in a letter to another actor). These measures provide a means of comparing the relative importance of individuals within a network and to identify which actors are the most crucial for the functioning of the network. Centrality is calculated by identifying the number of other actors that an actor is tied to and comparing this as a ratio to the total number of actors within a network. I will not be considering Ennodius in this evaluation. As he is tied to all of the actors in the network he has a degree of centrality of 1.0—this score is trivial because as the source of all of the acts of communication in the letter collection Ennodius has to be connected to all of the other actors.

Using UCINET I have calculated the centrality scores for all of the actors in the network. The top possible score is 1.0. Fig. 2 presents a comparison of centrality of the top 12 actors in the network.²³

²³ Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 84–89.

Undirected and Directed Network Centrality			
Actor	Undirected	In-degree	Out-degree
Faustus	0.37	0.28	0.098
Eugenes	0.1	0.038	0.068
Liberius	0.1	0.038	0.068
Albinus	0.09	0.038	0.053
Agapitus	0.09	0.038	0.053
Senarius	0.7	0.03	0.053
Pope Symmachus	0.6	0.023	0.038
Florus	0.06	0.023	0.045
Avienus	0.06	0.045	0.015
Beatus	0.045	0.015	0.03
Parthenius	0.045	0.03	0.015
Euprepria	0.04	0.015	0.023

Figure 2 Network Centrality

From this table it is clear that the actor Faustus has the highest degree of centrality in all three categories considered. Faustus's score in undirected centrality is particularly stark in comparison to the next highest scores—being four times greater. It is also significant that the change in centrality between the most central actor and the twelfth most central actor is so great—dropping 0.33 degrees. This shows that the group of actors within the network who are significant in terms of network centrality is quite small—12 out of 133. Furthermore, even within this group of 12 most central actors there is a significant drop off in centrality from the most central to the least. In comparison to Faustus's score of 0.37 any score under 0.04 is insignificant. What these scores indicate is that Faustus's network centers heavily on the actor Faustus—more so than any other actor. These scores back up our initial observation of Fig. 1, which clearly showed that Faustus was a focal point of the network.

The in-degree of an actor is also often used as a measure of that actor's prestige in a network. Wasserman and Faust describe an actor as prestigious who “is the object of extensive ties.”²⁴

²⁴ Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 174.

Based on the in-degree scores in Fig. 1.2 this description clearly fits Faustus, who in comparison to the other actors in the network is the object of an extensive number of ties. It will be worth holding this description of Faustus in mind as we further examine Ennodius's network.

The centrality of an actor in a network can also be examined in terms of their “betweenness.” While an individual actor may have an insignificant degree of centrality—perhaps sharing ties with only two other actors—if those actors are themselves highly central to the network and otherwise unconnected to each other, then the third party becomes far more significant. Betweenness describes the importance of actors that connect major parts of the network. This concept is built upon two considerations: local dependency and structural holes. An actor is dependent on another if: “the paths that connect it to others pass through this point.”²⁵ Structural holes exist where two actors are connected at a geodesic distance of two (*i.e.* via two ties linked to an intermediary actor) but all other connections are via a long path of ties through the network.²⁶ In both of these situations actors that act as gatekeepers and go-betweens in the network become increasingly important. A visual example of this is apparent in Fig. 3: the

²⁵ Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 87.

²⁶ Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 87.

Actor Stephanus Diaconus is separated from Faustus by two ties—and is thus dependent on his ties Albinus for links to the broader network.

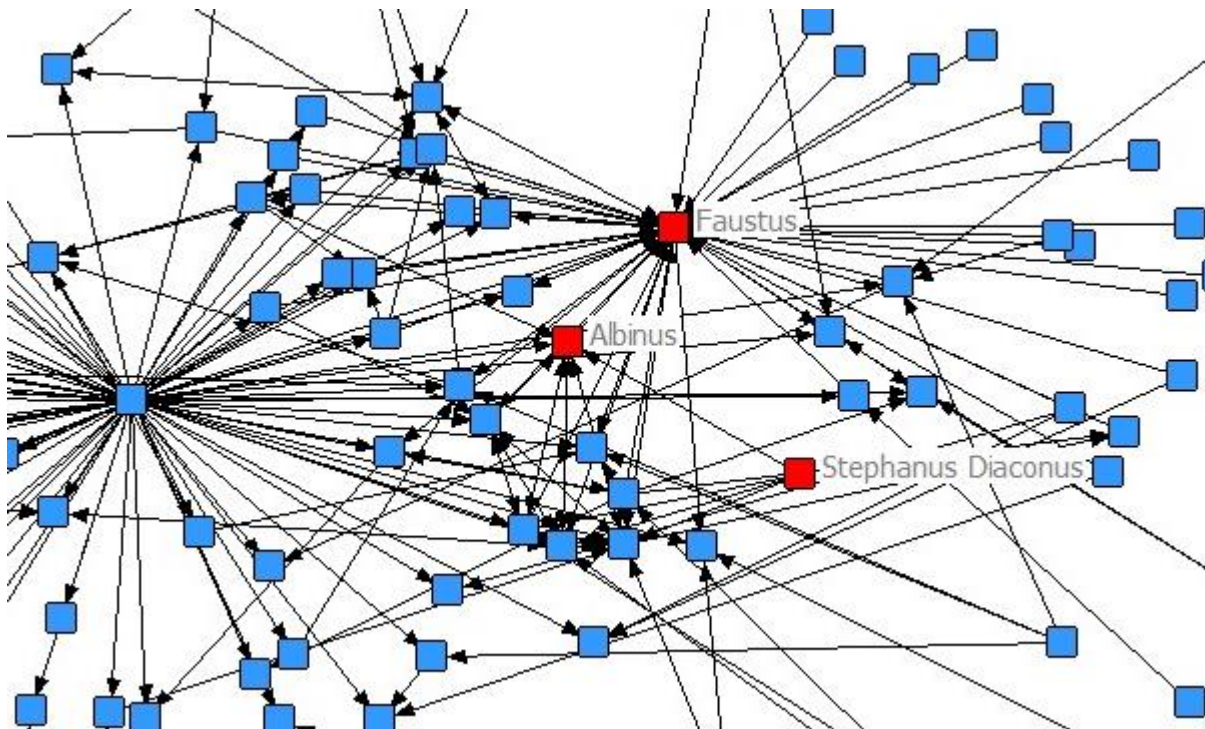


Figure 3 Example: Structural Hole

This is visible by following the direction of the ties that link the actors—indicated by the arrowheads.²⁷ I have calculated the betweenness of the actors in Ennodius's network using UCINET. The results of this calculation are visible in Fig. 4, which lists the ten actors with the highest net degrees of betweenness.

²⁷ This example has been provided purely to illustrate the concept—Ennodius's letters do not indicate that Agapitus or Albinus provided Stephanus with any link to Faustus. Chapter two will provide analysis of examples of individuals who did play this gate-keeper role.

Network 'Betweenness'	
Actor	Degree of Betweenness
Faustus	7.674
Beatus	1.238
Symmachus Papa	1.110
Eugenius	1.042
Liberius	0.912
Florus	0.815
Parthenius	0.734
Agapitus	0.574
Albinus	0.525
Hormisdas	0.379

Figure 4 Betweenness

Some similar trends to what was seen in Fig 2 are immediately apparent. Once again Faustus has the highest score out of those compared and there is a remarkable drop-off in the scores of the subsequent actors. Nine of twelve actors from Fig. 2 are present in this table, indicating a correlation between centrality and betweenness in the network. This should not be surprising as it follows that actors with lots of connections in a network are also important in connecting a network together.

Epistolary Acts vs. Centrality

As the source material for this analysis is a letter collection we can compare the measures of centrality and betweenness with the total number of letters and mentions—the epistolary acts each actor is the object of. This is an important comparison to make because in many cases the ties pictured in Fig. 1 are representative of more than one epistolary action or mention. We can thus compare the information that we have inferred by recreating Ennodius's network with intended acts of communication. A table of the actors with the highest totals of received letters is represented in Fig. 5.

Actors - Received Letters	
Actor	Number of Letters
Faustus	52
Avienus	23
Senarius	11
Eugenes	9
Euprepria	8
Adeodatus Presbyterus	7
Avitus	7
Boethius	7
Florus	7
Hormisdas	7
Pope Symmachus	6
Agapitus	6
Agnellus	6

Figure 5 Received Letters

This table includes the 13 actors with the highest tallies of received letters. As we have seen in Figs. 2 and 4 Faustus is again top of the list by a large margin—receiving 52 out of 297 letters or 17.5% of the letter collection. From Faustus there is a steep decline in the totals with Avienus receiving 8%, and Senarius 4% of the letters in the collection. After this dramatic drop the number of letters each actor receives becomes much more consistent. It is worth noting though that 29% of the actors in the network only receive one letter each.

A smaller, but still important, measure is the number of times certain actors are mentioned in in letters of which they are not the recipient. In such cases Ennodius creates a link between the recipient of the letter and the actor mentioned in it. In Fig. 6 the top nine mentioned individuals are listed.

Actors with Highest Mentions	
Actors	Mentions
Faustus	16
Avienus	9
Parthenius	5
Cynegia	4
Sabinus	4
Atticus	3
Faustinus	3
Laurentius	3
Lupicinus	3

Figure 6 Actors with Highest Mentions

While the volume of mentions pales in comparison to the total numbers of letters sent, similar trends are apparent when compared to our previous examples. Once again Faustus is the top-rated actor with a total of 16 mentions within the letter collection. The second most mentioned individual is Faustus's son Avientus, and the third is Ennodius's nephew Parthenius. Again it is clear that Faustus is by far the focus of this particular act of communication. These acts cannot be viewed in isolation and in chapter two I will examine more closely the nature of the tie created by the act of mentioning an individual in a letter.

Faustus

Fl. Anicius Probus Faustus iunior Niger was a high profile senator at Rome, an important civil-servant in the Ostrogothic court, and a prominent supporter of Pope Symmachus in the contested papal election of 498.²⁸ Faustus as his name suggests was a member of the powerful and widespread Anicii clan; and through this group was loosely related to Ennodius. What the previous analyses have made abundantly clear is that Faustus was major focus of the acts of communication within the letter collection of Ennodius. Faustus was the recipient of the most letters in the collection and he was mentioned more frequently in comparison to others. Having built a model of Ennodius's social network it has been illustrated that Faustus was a crucial

²⁸ J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire Volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) 454–6: Henceforth PLRE 2.

actor that ties the network together. Faustus tops the scores of centrality and betweenness, and as the actor with the highest in-degree score he is the most prestigious actor in the network. Of course care must be taken when analyzing the importance of these figures—Ennodius's network has been reconstructed from a carefully curated literary source. That Faustus is the recipient of the most letters in the collection has surely influenced his ranking in the other scores analyzed. This sample cannot be taken to fully represent the realities of social relations in Ostrogothic Italy, but it does provide a model for understanding how one aristocrat—Ennodius—viewed the social landscape. Clearly Ennodius's relationship to Faustus was one he wished to promote and as far as Ennodius was concerned Faustus was a key player in the social scene.

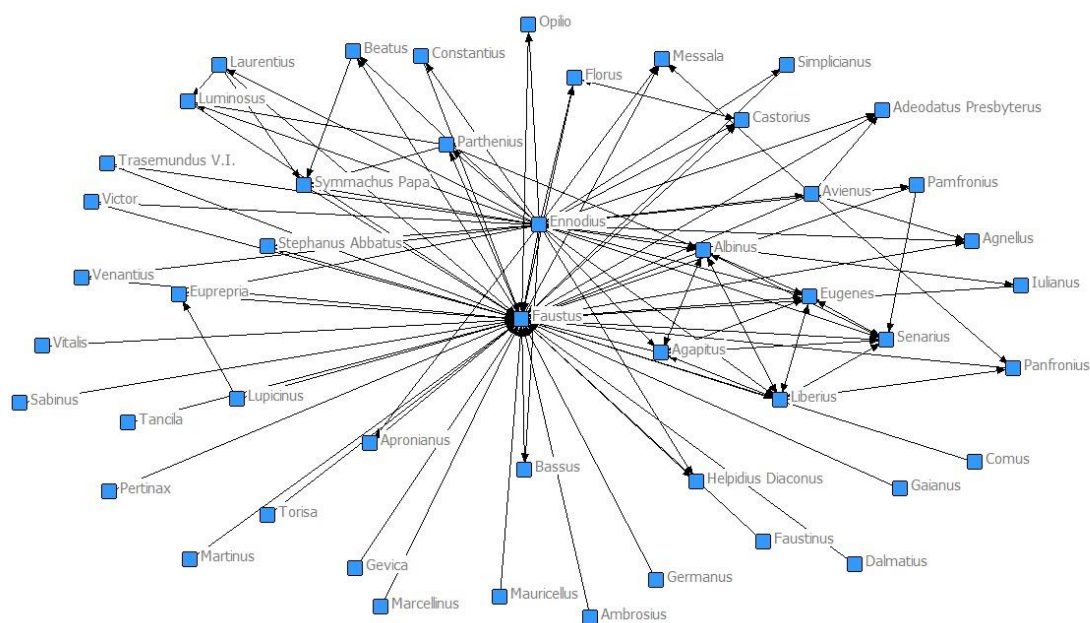


Figure 7 Faustus's Neighborhood

Given the prominence of Faustus in the measures that have been examined, a closer examination of Faustus's position in the network is warranted. Fig. 7 is a selection of Ennodius's network focused on Faustus as an actor.²⁹ The graph illustrates Faustus's

²⁹ This is called an Egonet.

‘neighborhood,’ that is those actors who are tied to Faustus by a distance of 1. What is particularly significant about this graph is that it shows that Faustus shares ties with many of the actors who had the top measurements for centrality, betweenness, received letters, and mentions. For instance the cluster includes: Senarius, Pope Symmachus, Albinus, Eugenius, Agapitus, Parthenius, and Euprepia. Furthermore, within this cluster there is a high level of interconnectivity between the actors—thus they are not entirely reliant on their ties to Faustus and Ennodius for their connections to the wider network. Here then we have a glimpse at the society that Ennodius’s letter collection represents. This cluster of individuals will be examined more closely in the subsequent chapters.

The Value of Modelling Ennodius’s Network

This initial analysis has shown that Ennodius’s letter collection is centered on Ennodius’s relationship with Faustus. While one might conclude this by simply looking at a summary of the letters addressed to the senator, network analysis provides several means with which to view this trend. Faustus’s centrality in the network is a result of his many ties to other actors, and in particular other important actors in the network—a fact reflected in his high level of betweenness. Many ties are directed at Faustus and in the modeling of Ennodius’s network Faustus appears as a second center within the network. Faustus is also a source of ties—representing the act of Ennodius mentioning him in letters to other actors. When combined with the volume of correspondence directed at Faustus the measures of centrality and betweenness along with observations drawn from the graphing of the network show that Faustus was the primary target of communication within the letter collection. It will be left to the subsequent chapters to further qualify the value of Faustus within Ennodius’s network. The following chapters will illuminate the trends established here with context from the letters themselves.

It is also clear that Faustus was not the sole target of Ennodius's epistolary actions. A core group of actors has been identified. Many of these actors share ties with Faustus even if they do not share in his volume of correspondence. While Faustus is the most prestigious actor in the network, it is clear that his position in the network is closely tied to the importance of these other highly connected actors. Thus Faustus's relationships to the other actors within this cluster need to be examined more thoroughly.

Chapter 2 – Influential Connections

The previous chapter examined Ennodius's letter network in broad detail and concluded that at the heart of the network was a highly connected group of actors surrounding both Ennodius and his primary correspondent Faustus. In this chapter I will discuss the social landscape of Ostrogothic Italy. I will examine the importance of the Ostrogothic administration and the increasingly independent papacy in Ennodius's network. I will also discuss Ennodius's links to influential members and factions within the senate. As was made clear in Chapter 1 the heart of Ennodius's network was dominated by the senator Faustus Niger. Faustus was an important contact for Ennodius who provided him with connections to other actors, helped him with requests, and aided his relatives. The importance of Ennodius's relationship to Faustus can be seen structurally within the network by the numerous secondary paths that link the two actors—they share a large number of contacts and these contacts increased the closeness of their relationship. Finally, due to Ennodius's connections to prestigious actors such as Faustus, Ennodius became a more important social actor in his own right. Within his social network Ennodius was a 'sociometric superstar'—a facilitator and gatekeeper within the network who could help less connected members make contact with the most important actors such as Faustus.

The Social and Political Landscape of Ostrogothic Italy

Ennodius was a member of what Patrick Amory calls the *parvenu* elite of Northern Italy. Amory defines the *parvenu* from the senatorial elite—who dominated civil appointments and whose status derived from their membership of the two major aristocratic clans: the Decii and

the Anicii.³⁰ Ennodius was a regional aristocrat who was dependent upon his church office for social advancement. While he was a member of the Anicii clan his ties were not so strong as to guarantee his social advancement. It was crucial therefore for Ennodius to cultivate ties to important and connected individuals in order to improve and maintain his social standing. Two options were available to Ennodius—he could develop existing relationships and he could forge new bonds. Despite the focus of his work being on the Middle Ages Gerd Althoff outlines these options well:

In the middle ages, a child became a member of a number of different communities and groups the moment he was born. He was not only born into his own kindred, he was also born into his father's network of associations, including friends, lords and vassals. These connections were inherited as if they were property. He was also able to enter new groups himself; in fact, it was almost compulsory for him to do so. He could bind himself to new lords, or bind to himself new vassals, and he could form new political allegiances and new friendships.³¹

Ostrogothic Italy was a fertile ground for cultivating new relationships. During the late fifth and early sixth centuries Italy was dominated by multiple centers of power. Unlike the situation in fifth and sixth-century Gaul these powers were not clearly divided into separate kingdoms but coexisted within the Ostrogothic Kingdom.³² For a member of the regional aristocracy of northern Italy the internal divisions and powers of Ostrogothic Italy provided opportunities for social advancement. Two centers of power were particularly important for defining the social landscape: the Ostrogothic court in Ravenna and the papacy in Rome.

³⁰³⁰ Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489 – 554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xvi – xvii.

³¹ Gerd Althoff, *Family Friends and Followers, Political and Social Bonds in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

³² For problems of social mobility and elite status in fifth and sixth-century Gaul see: Ralph Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); Allen E. Jones, *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

The Pull of Theodoric's Court

Theodoric the *Rex Gothorum* was the effective ruler of Italy. While the emperor in Constantinople held nominal jurisdiction over Italy, Theodoric's presence in the region and his control of the military gave him real power. Theodoric's ascension to power in Italy in 489 fundamentally shifted the political landscape. Physically Theodoric changed the status quo by establishing his court in Ravenna. By removing the center of civil authority away from Rome it created space for new powers to establish themselves in the former capital, which remained a crucial center for the political elite. This move also gave freer rein to the senatorial elite—who could now exert their political power more freely without the direct intervention of the region's top authority. A cornerstone of Theodoric's rule was his incorporation of the senatorial elite into his administration by which he secured the cooperation of the existing aristocracy.³³ Still aristocratic competition was fierce—particularly over offices such as the western consulship—and Theodoric had to balance competing factions against each other.³⁴ The shift of civil power from Rome to Ravenna was a great benefit to the *parvenu* elite. The regional aristocrats of northern Italy suddenly found themselves with greater access to power with the establishment of the court at Ravenna, and Theodoric made great use of these individuals in his civil administration.³⁵

Ideologically the establishment of the *Rex Gothorum* challenged the supreme authority of the Emperor by establishing Italy as a distinct and partially separate political unit. Theodoric outlined the nature of his rule in 508 with a letter to Emperor Anastasius—*Epistle* 1.1 of Cassiodorus's *Variae*. In the letter Theodoric clearly marks out the Ostrogothic kingdom as being separate from the Empire: “Our rule is an imitation of yours, modeled on your good

³³ Yitzhak Hen, *Roman Barbarians, The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 30–31.

³⁴ John Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy*, 147–56.

³⁵ Amory, *People and Identity*, xvi–xvii.

designs, a copy of the only empire: and insomuch as we follow you, we precede all other nations.”³⁶ Importantly Theodoric separated his *regnum* from the *imperium* of the Emperor. While Theodoric presented himself as astutely following the Emperor’s lead, the two entities were distinct from each other. Theodoric explicitly separated Italy from the Emperor’s jurisdiction by defining the Emperor’s *imperium* in relation to his own power. Furthermore Theodoric positioned his rule as one among many nations—*gentes*. This is a clear acknowledgement of the plurality of polities that made up the Roman world. Theodoric’s conception of two separated powers is made even clearer at the end of the letter: “We do not think that you will suffer that any discord should remain between either of the two republics which are declared to form one body under their ancient princes.”³⁷ Theodoric separated the Italian *re publica* from the ‘Roman’ *res publica*. Still, while the two republics are separated they are still both a part of the wider Roman world. The concept put forward by Theodoric is of a plurality of powers, not just between the Ostrogothic kingdom and the Emperor, but also including all of the other *gentes*—the other barbarian kingdoms, which Theodoric claims to have outdone in devotion to the Emperor.

The first of two major trends that illustrate the impact of the social landscape on Ennodius is that his network gravitates towards holders of office in Theodoric’s administration. Of the fifteen consuls appointed between 493 and 510, seven feature in Ennodius’s collection. These were Albinus (493), Asterius (494), Avienus (iunior) (501), Rufus Magnus Faustus Avienus (502), Ennodius Messala (506), Venantius (507), and Boethius (510).³⁸ In addition two consuls

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1.1.18: “Regnum nostrum imitatio uestra est, forma boni propositi, unici exemplar imperii: qui quantum uos sequimur, tantum gentes alias anteimus.” (trans. amended from: Thomas Hodgkin (Trans.) *The Letters Of Cassiodorus Being A Condensed Translation Of The Variae Epistolae Of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator* (Oxford: Horace Hart, 1886) 141.

³⁷ Cass. Var. 1.1.24: “pati uos non credimus inter utrasque res publicas, quarum semper unum corpus sub antiquis principibus fuisse declaratur, aliquid discordiae permanere.” (Trans. amended from Hodgkin, *The Letters of Cassiodorus*, 141).

³⁸ Albinus iunior 9: PLRE 2, 51–2; Asterius: PLRE 2, 171; Fl. Avienus iunior 3 PLRE 2, 193; Rufus Magnus Faustus Avienus iunior 2: PLRE 2, 192–193; Fl. Ennodius Messala 2: PLRE 2, 759–760; Venantius 2: PLRE 2, 1153; Anicius Malius Severinus Boethius 5: PLRE 2, 233–237. Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 147–154.

from the period 510–521, Probus (513) and Agapitus (517), were recipients of letters.³⁹ As Ennodius’s letters span the period from 500–513, it is clear that his correspondence included past and current consuls as well as up and coming individuals such as Probus and Agapitus. The group of consuls from 501–510 were in particular noted for their immaculate pedigrees—largely members of the Decii and Anicii clans whose family members had also celebrated consulships. These family groups also feature heavily in Ennodius’s network. In particular the brothers Faustus Avenius and Ennodius Messala were both sons of Faustus Niger—the consul of 490 and Ennodius’s primary correspondent.⁴⁰ Ennodius also sought out high ranking senators beyond the consulship. Senarius, Florus, Eugenius, Liberius, and of course Faustus rank highly in Ennodius’s network and correspondence.⁴¹ Senarius served as a diplomat and advisor to Theodoric, Florus was an advocate at Ravenna, Eugenius held the position of *quaestor* directly after Faustus in 505, while Liberius was a praetorian prefect of both Italy (493–500) and Gaul (510–534). Ennodius was clearly in contact with some of the leading lights of Italian politics—and as Moorhead notes he seems to have been “undiscriminating in badgering prospective patrons.”⁴² This being said there is a particularly noticeable exception in the correspondence of Ennodius—the senator Cassiodorus. Cassiodorus was the star of Ostrogothic politics and the chief apologist of Theodoric’s regime. His absence from Ennodius’s collection is so noticeable as to be deliberate. Moorhead puts this down to Cassiodorus’s competition with Faustus over public office and his status as a rival of Ennodius’s great patron.⁴³

³⁹ Probus: Ennod. *Ep.* 7.27; Agapitus: Ennod. *Ep.* 1.13, 4.6, 4.16, 4.28, 5.26, 6.12.

⁴⁰ Faustus Niger 5, see PLRE 2, 454–456.

⁴¹ Senarius: PLRE 2, 988–989; Florus 4: PLRE 2; Eugenius, PLRE 414–416; Liberius 3: PLRE 2, 677–681.

⁴² Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 155.

⁴³ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 157–158.

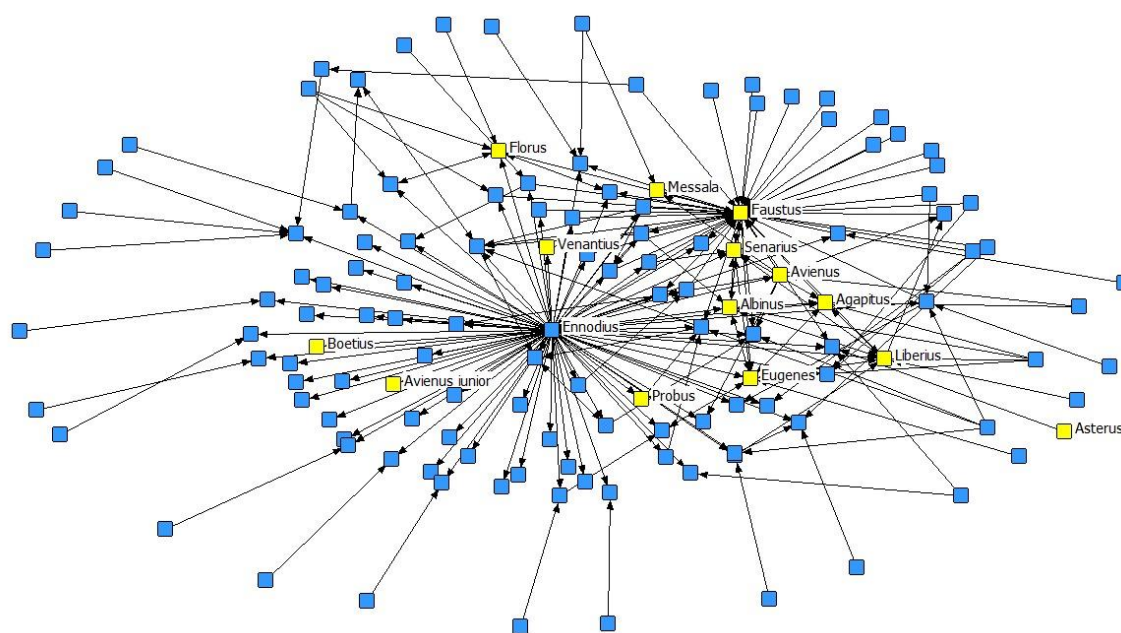


Figure 8 Important Office Holders

Forging contacts with powerful senators was a sound social strategy for Ennodius. Fig. 8 illustrates the structural importance of these individuals in Ennodius's networks. The yellow actors represent the individuals mentioned in the previous paragraph. The graph clearly shows that the majority of these actors are located in the highly connected area that exists between Ennodius and Faustus. Combined with the data examined in Chapter one this illustrates that not only did Ennodius seek out influential individuals but that they were integral actors within his network. By connecting himself to influential and well-connected individuals Ennodius ensured that his network was influential and well connected.

The Laurentian Schism and the Papacy

The big winner from these changes was the Papacy which exploited the political space created by the change in power in Italy to create for itself the foundations of an independent powerbase.⁴⁴ The drive for greater independence was spurred on by a major break with the

⁴⁴ John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions, The Church 450-680* (New York NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 158.

Emperor and the Eastern churches—the Acacian Schism. The schism erupted after the Emperor Zeno promulgated the *Henotikon* in 482 in an attempt to reconcile the Nicene and Monophysite positions after the Council of Chalcedon. The papal response under Felix III was to excommunicate the Patriarch of Constantinople, Acacius, in 484 creating a split between east and west. While all of the popes of this period attempted to assert and increase their authority there was by no means a coherent papal doctrine that defined the period. Rather, popes sought to improve their own situations, often coming into conflict with the positions of their predecessors, the Ostrogothic kings, emperors, and the senatorial elite.⁴⁵ The argument that set the tone for this increasing papal independence was Pope Gelasius's statement that the world was ruled by two powers: "There are two powers, August Emperor, which primarily rule this world: the sacred authority of the Church, and the power of the Emperor."⁴⁶ Gelasius's division of the world into a sacred sphere overseen by papal *auctoritas* and a civil world controlled by *imperium* was symptomatic of the increasing political fragmentation of the Mediterranean in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.

The papacy itself was not immune to divisions. The turn of the sixth century was a tumultuous time in Italy with factions competing over the papal see during the episcopates of both Anastasius and Symmachus.⁴⁷ It was the election of 498 that would prove most divisive with two candidates being elected on the same day—Symmachus and Laurentius. The impact of the Laurentian Schism for the senatorial elite has been well noted. Support for Symmachus was spearheaded by Faustus and was strong in Northern Italy with regional aristocrats such as Ennodius.⁴⁸ Ennodius was a staunch supporter of Symmachus throughout the Laurentian Schism and the Symmachian Faction had made use of Ennodius as an intellectual asset.

⁴⁵ Amory, *People and Identity*, 195.

⁴⁶ Gelasius *Ep. 12*: "Duo quippe sunt, imperator Auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur: auctoritas sacra pontificum, et regalis potestas."

⁴⁷ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 58–60.

⁴⁸ Faustus Niger—not Faustus Albus a supporter of Laurentian.

Ennodius composed the *Libellus adversos eos qui contra synodum scribere praesumpserunt*, a polemic against those senators who wished to hold Symmachus to account during the contested papal election. The Laurentian faction held much more sway among members of the senatorial elite. Two decorated senators were at the forefront: Festus and Probinus. These two were joined by other prominent senators including: Faustus Albus, Symmachus, and Boethius.⁴⁹

Senators who were tied to the Laurentian faction are underrepresented in the letter collection with some only receiving letters after the end of the schism in 506. Faustus Albus was the recipient of two letter in the collection—*Ep.* 6.34 from 508 and 7.25 from 509 both written after Theodoric’s decision against Laurentius.⁵⁰ Similarly the senator Symmachus received three letters starting with *Ep.* 7.25 dated to 509, while Probinus is only the recipient of a single letter in the collection—*Ep.* 9.4 written in 511.⁵¹ Festus, Laurentius’s chief supporter, does not feature in the collection at all. Structurally, as is clear in Fig. 9, the chief supporters of Laurentius (colored red) are isolated and unimportant members of the network. They lack ties to actors other than Ennodius, and thus were not mentioned in Ennodius’s letters to other correspondents. In comparison the primary supporters of Pope Symmachus (colored green) have many connections in comparison and are located in the highly connected part of the graph—they are clearly more structurally crucial to Ennodius’s network.

⁴⁹ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 129–133.

⁵⁰ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 132.

⁵¹ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 132.

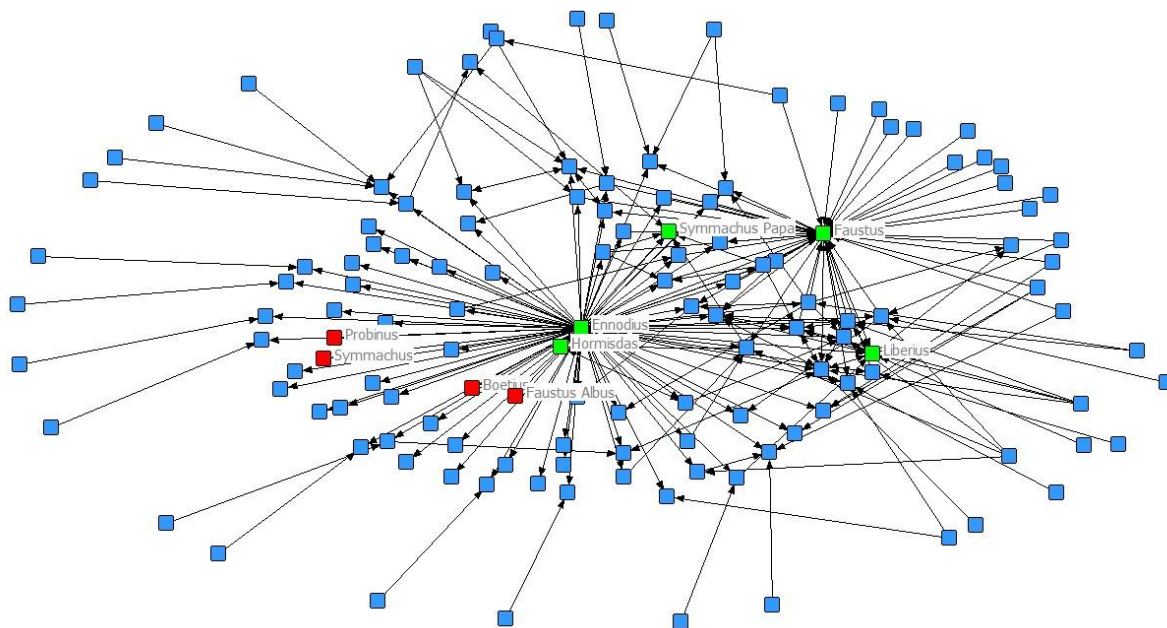


Figure 9 Factions in the Laurentian Schism

Boethius presents an interesting situation. The recipient of seven letters beginning in 507, Boethius otherwise seems to be a relatively important correspondent of Ennodius.⁵² The two writers shared a tumultuous relationship, with Ennodius penning some particularly venomous versus that attacked Boethius's sexual appetite.⁵³ Still, after the settlement of the schism Ennodius appeared keen to heal the breach—seemingly pleased with the arrival of letters from Boethius in *Ep.* 6.6: “Regarding the letters, for the first I admit that I owe a debt, for the other I proffer affection.”⁵⁴ Ennodius's pleasure in engaging with Boethius stemmed from his rising status in the Ostrogothic court. A particular group of letters: *Ep.* 8.1, 8.31, 8.36, and 8.37, date to the period of Boethius's consulship in 510 and deal with Ennodius's attempts to profit from Boethius's new appointment. Consuls celebrated their appointments with displays of *largess* and Ennodius hoped to gain the gift of one of Boethius's unused houses in Milan.⁵⁵ Ennodius

⁵² Ennod. *Ep.* 6.6, 7.13, 8.1, 8.31, 8.36, 8.37, 8.40; Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 133.

⁵³ *Carm.* 2.132; Bartlett, “The Dating of Ennodius' Writings,” 61.

⁵⁴ Ennod. *Ep.* 6.6: “de utrisque enim epistulis una obsequitur debito, altera praestatur affectui.”

⁵⁵ Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 108–9.

was unsuccessful in his attempt, but the episode shows that Ennodius was willing to put aside past differences if the possible returns were worth it.

If Ennodius was willing to put aside old differences in order to advance his cause, he was more than willing to exploit those patrons with whom he had close connections. As was noted above Ennodius was a partisan of Pope Symmachus during the Laurentine Schism. Ennodius lent his pen in aide of the pope's cause and in *Ep* 5.10 to Symmachus Ennodius from the outset explicitly states that the pope owes him a favor:

While the care of your crown governs the apostolic throne and you rule the summit of the heavenly empire, it is favorable for the profit of a relative. He holds the promise for my duties, he holds hope without blemish, ... such that what one earns repays many.⁵⁶

The duties that Ennodius refers to in his opening statement is his composition of the *Libellus* three years earlier that helped to secure the papal throne for Symmachus.⁵⁷ The relative that Ennodius hoped would profit from his endeavors was his nephew Parthenius.⁵⁸ Ennodius makes it clear that Symmachus should favor Parthenius because he is a relative—*consanguinitate*—of Ennodius.⁵⁹ Parthenius was traveling to Rome in order to further his studies and Ennodius furnished him with four letters of recommendation to prominent individuals at Rome: Faustus Albus, Pope Symmachus, Luminosus, and Faustus.⁶⁰ For Ennodius and his relatives the connections that he forged through his writing were a means to social advancement.

⁵⁶ Ennod. *Ep.* 5.10: “Dum sedem apostolicam coronae vestrae cura moderator et caelestis imperii apicem regitis, blanditur profectibus parentum quod meis promissum tenetur officiis. Spem sine labe obtinet apud constantem virum fideliter obsecutus. Grandis est pompa praestantis, quotiens quod unus meruit plurimis repensatur.”

⁵⁷ Kennall, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 47.

⁵⁸ Parthenius 2/3: PLRE 2, 832–4. See below for a discussion of this actor's identity: note 76.

⁵⁹ Ennod. *Ep.* 5.10: “Fovete ergo cuius veniendi causas patefacta consanguinitate didicistis.”

⁶⁰ Ennod. *Ep.* 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12.

Both the establishment of the Ostrogothic administration at Ravenna and the increasing independence of the papacy redefined the social landscape of Italy. The establishment of new centers of power increased the opportunities for regional aristocrats such as Ennodius to expand their networks beyond the connections that they inherited at birth. Even so traditional connections remained important. The elite of northern Italy shared strong connections with their cousins in Gaul—Ennodius, a native of Arles, was no exception, and he maintained a number of contacts there. Still, as I have shown here and in Chapter 1 Ennodius's network was directed towards Ravenna and Rome. Ennodius's primary contacts were those whose influence made them the most useful and thus he tended towards high ranking officials and churchmen. Still, these connections were of a great benefit to his relatives and fellow Ligurians, and as I will argue, Ennodius served as a facilitator for connectivity between northern Italy, Ravenna, and Rome.

Connections to Faustus

In the previous chapter we saw that the primary target of Ennodius's acts of communication was the actor Faustus. Faustus is such a central actor within Ennodius's network that it is necessary to examine how Ennodius tied himself to the influential senator. Faustus was a highly ranked senator who had held several important offices in the Ostrogothic administration during his career being consul (490), *magister officiorum* (c. 492–4), *quaestor palatii* (503–505), and Praefectus Praetorio (509–12).⁶¹ Faustus served as an ambassador on a number of occasions, notably in 492 on an embassy to Constantinople on behalf of Theodoric.⁶² It is in the role of senatorial ambassador that he features in Pope Gelasius's letter to Anastasius:

The servants of Your Piety, my sons and the distinguished men Master Faustus and Ireneus, along with their colleagues holding public office, had said on returning to

⁶¹ PLRE 2, 454–456.

⁶² Ibid.

the city [Rome] that your clemency had inquired why I had not sent to you a letter of greeting.⁶³

Faustus was an individual with ties to the centers of power in Ostrogothic Italy. As well as being a prominent official in the Ostrogothic administration he was a staunch supporter of Pope Symmachus during the Laurentian Schism—a position that he shared with Ennodius.⁶⁴ Ennodius and Faustus were loosely related by their shared membership of the Anicii clan and, as is clear from the volume of correspondence that Ennodius dedicates to his relationship with Faustus throughout the collection, the relationship was one that grew through epistolary correspondence.⁶⁵ Faustus was a useful contact for Ennodius and through Faustus Ennodius gained introductions to important senators such as Florus, Castorius, and Decoratus.⁶⁶

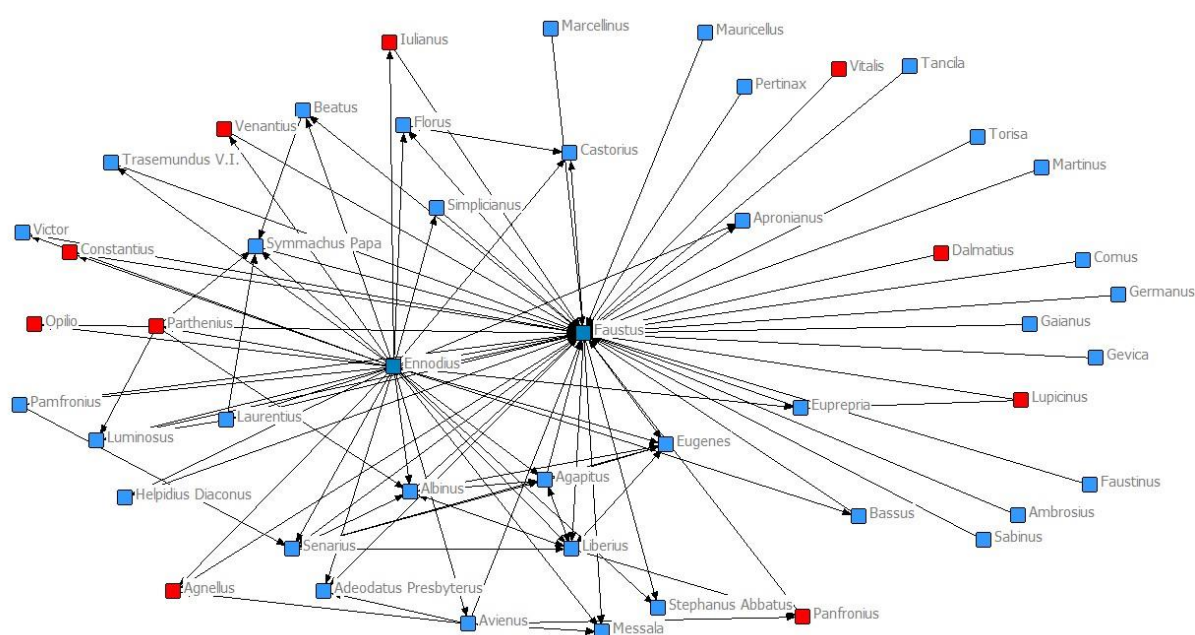


Figure 10 Faustus, Requests and Recommendations

⁶³ Gelasius, *Duo Quippe Sunt*: “Famuli vestrae pietatis, filii mei, Faustus magister et Irenaeus viri illustres, atque eorum comites publica legatione fungentes, ad Urbem reversi, clementiam vestram quaesisse dixerunt cur ad vos meae salutationis scripta non miserim.”

⁶⁴ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 129–131.

⁶⁵ Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 141–143.

⁶⁶ Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 143.

Ennodius exploited his relationship with Faustus in order to further his goals and the goals of his friends. As noted above Faustus was one of four individuals to whom Ennodius recommended his nephew Parthenius. Faustus had a reputation for supporting the studies of young men at Rome and Ennodius commends several young men to Faustus in his letters.⁶⁷ Fig. 10 illustrates all of the actors that Ennodius requested help for from Faustus (colored red). Faustus's willingness to assist his relative Ennodius is evident in the easy expectation that Ennodius displays in his commendation of Parthenius: "Parthenius, the son of my sister, wishes to seem a gentleman through the discipline of liberal studies, he hopes, if I am not mistaken, to have evidence of your support."⁶⁸ Ennodius's confidence of Faustus's willingness and ability to help his nephew is clear—Parthenius need only show up with the letter in hand and Faustus will provide him with a stipend. Ennodius's connection to Faustus is so prominent in the letter collection in part because of the value of the relationship to Ennodius. Ennodius could rely on his relative's willingness to support Ennodius and his relatives. Faustus was so able to provide this support due to his successful career in the Ostrogothic administration and his many contacts within the senatorial elite. Indeed Ennodius exploited the two year period that Faustus held the office of *quaestor* at Ravenna to make numerous commendations and requests.⁶⁹

Ennodius connected himself to Faustus through many ties. While Ennodius is a geodesic distance of one tie away from Faustus due to the many letters directly addressed to him, he also maintains 35 paths to Faustus of two ties' distance.⁷⁰ These paths are the results of the numerous mentions of other actors in the letters addressed to Faustus. These ties, despite the

⁶⁷ For Faustus's support of scholarship see: Castorius: PLRE 2, 271. For Ennodius's commendations to Faustus: Parthenius 2/3, PLRE 2, 832–4 and Ennod. *Ep.* 5.12; Pertinax: PLRE 2, 861 and Ennod. *Ep.* 6.25; Vitalis 3: PLRE 2, 1177 and Ennod. *Ep.* 3.21; Constantius 15: PLRE 2, 321 and Ennod. *Ep.* 3.22; Dalmatius: PLRE 2, 341 and Ennod. *Ep.* 4.5; Venantius: PLRE 2, 1153 and Ennod. *Ep.* 4.9; Panfronius: Ennod. *Ep.* 4.14.

⁶⁸ Ennod. *Ep.* 5.12: "Partenius sororis meae filius per liberalis studii disciplinas ingenuus uult uideri: optat, ni fallor, peculii uestri habere testimonium."

⁶⁹ Moorhead, *Theodoric*, 156–158.

⁷⁰ A path is a connection between actors of more than one tie; see Scott, *Social Network Analysis*, 67. Even actors with no represented tie to Ennodius in this graph are connected by one tie to Ennodius due to the act of Ennodius mentioning them in a letter: for example the actor Faustinus.

and paths that connect him to Faustus, shares in that prestige. This is compounded by Ennodius's connections to the other important power groups discussed in this chapter—the Ostrogothic administration and the Papacy.

A Sociometric Superstar

Ennodius's high level of connectivity to powerful individuals in Ostrogothic Italy in turn made him a valuable contact to make. Throughout Ennodius's corpus are examples of individuals seeking out Ennodius for help making new contacts and solving problems. We have encountered some of these individuals already in our discussion of Faustus: Dalmatius, for example, who Ennodius commended to Faustus for help in a property dispute.⁷² A junior official Virgilius sought out Ennodius's help in avoiding a summons—questions had arisen over his official paperwork.⁷³ Ennodius put in a good word with his friend Marcellianus to have the summons dropped.⁷⁴ Ennodius's connections to influential and important individuals and the fact that he was sought out by other actors for his connections marks him out as a 'sociometric superstar.' The concept of the sociometric superstar stems from Stanley Milgram's studies into the small world theory and it describes individuals whose connectivity in a network facilitates the connectivity of others.⁷⁵ Superstars are sought out in networks because they can lessen the distance to important individuals and facilitate access to them. They often act as gatekeepers. The act of providing a recommendation is an excellent example of gatekeeping—as an individual who receives a recommendation can engage with individuals who they might not otherwise have access to without leveraging the reputation of the actor who vouchsafed for them. Ennodius's strong ties to Faustus made him an excellent shortcut for

⁷² Ennod. *Ep.* 4.5.

⁷³ Virgilius: PLRE 2: 1171 and Ennod. *Ep.* 3.23.

⁷⁴ Marcellianus 3: PLRE, 707 and Ennod. *Ep.* 3.23.

⁷⁵ Stanley Milgram, "The Small World Problem," *Psychology Today* 2 (1967): 60–67; J. Travers and Stanley Milgram, "An Experimental Study of the Small World Problem," *Sociometry* 32 (1969): 425–443; Mark E. J. Newman, *Networks: an Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56–57.

individuals seeking help from the former consul. In turn Ennodius's ability to provide valuable recommendations enhanced his status as an actor of influence and prestige in the social world of Ostrogothic Italy.

Through the careful leveraging of recommendations an individual could undertake a startling amount of social mobility. I have already mentioned Ennodius's nephew Parthenius and the recommendations that Ennodius supplied him with when he embarked to Rome for study. Prior to seeking aid from his uncle Parthenius had already leveraged the networks of his Gallic relatives. Partheius was a native of Arles—as was his uncle Ennodius. In Gaul he married into the family of Ruricius of Limoges through Ruricius's granddaughter Papianilla.⁷⁶ Sometime after 502 Ruricius commended his grandson Parthenius to the Bishop Caesarius of Arles asking the bishop to aid him on his travels. In a follow up letter (2.37) Ruricius bade farewell to his grandson Parthenius and his wife Papianilla as they left Aquitania permanently.⁷⁷ It seems that Parthenius leveraged his connections in order to escape Gaul during an increasingly hostile time and to subsequently improve his social standing.

The Value of Good Connections

Italy in the sixth century was a home to multiple centers of influence and power. In particular the establishment of the Ostrogothic court at Ravenna and the increasing independence of the papacy created new centers of power that aristocrats such as Ennodius could exploit to improve their social connections. Ennodius was a forger of connections. His network was composed of a large number of influential senators and officials and he also benefited from the factionalism

⁷⁶ There is still some disagreement over whether the Rurician Parthenius is the same individual as the Ennodian Parthenius. The PLRE notes two separate Parthenii: Parthenius 2 and 3: PLRE 2, 832–4; Kennell argues that they are separate individuals, see: Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 193; Ralph Mathisen argues convincingly that based on a number of shared traits that the two are one and the same. I agree with his conclusions, see: Ralph Mathisen, “Literary Circles and Family Ties in Late Roman Gaul,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 111 (1988): 102–103.

⁷⁷ See: Ralph Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: a collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 204–205.

of the Laurentian Schism. Chief among Ennodius's influential network of contacts was Faustus. The consul of 490 was a highly influential aristocrat and official in the early sixth century. The importance of this relationship to Ennodius is reflected in the number of direct and indirect ties that Ennodius used to connect him to Faustus. Through his many influential contacts and his ties to both the Ostrogothic administration and the papacy of Symmachus Ennodius became a sociometric superstar. He was an actor that other actors within the wider social network of Italy sought out for aid and to enhance their status in society. However, ties did not maintain themselves. In the next and final chapter I will examine the importance Ennodius placed on maintaining his carefully cultivated network.

Chapter 3 – Maintaining Ties

Establishing ties with influential individuals is pointless if those ties are not maintained. For Ennodius the maintenance of epistolary relationships was a necessary and constant task. The price of failing to maintain ties was obscurity. The most important tie for sixth-century letter writers was *amicitia*. More than just friendship, *amicitia* was the social bond that tied together aristocrats separated by geographic distance, political boundaries, and lines of status. To participate in the world of *amicitia* was to participate in and be an accepted part of elite society. *Amici* held the same values, granted each other's requests, and validated each other's status.⁷⁸ Importantly, *amicitia* was a reciprocal relationship built through exchange and obligation—participation in relationships of *amicitia* was confirmation of an individual's place in society. Because of the importance of *amicitia* to the identity of an aristocrat individuals such as Ennodius of Pavia went to great lengths to maintain, expand, and promote their networks of *amicitia*. The primary genre through which we can see evidence of late antique *amicitia* is in the letter collections of aristocrats such as Ennodius. Late antiquity saw a surge in both the composition and preservation of letters as a literary genre.⁷⁹ While the letter collection of Ennodius has been described as being about nothing in particular, numerous letters discuss the exchange of letters as a key task in maintaining and facilitating friendships.⁸⁰ The volume of letters on this subject indicates that Ennodius was concerned with the maintenance of his social network and that the exchange of letters was a key part of his status as an aristocrat. In this chapter I will discuss the value of letter and letter collections as vehicles for the maintenance

⁷⁸ Mathisen argues that for Gallo-Roman letter writers in particular appeals to *amicitia* were symptomatic of a desire for class unity in the face of the disruption caused by barbarian incursions. See: Ralph Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 15.

⁷⁹ Andrew Gillett, "Communication in Late Antiquity: Use and Re-Use" in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 816.

⁸⁰ Kennell, "Ennodius the Epistolographer," in *Atti Della Seconda Giornata Ennodiana*, ed. Edoardo D'Angelo (Naples: Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Filologia Classica dell'Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II., 2003) 125.

and promotion of *amicitia*. I will follow this with an examination of the importance of *amicitia* in the letters and collection of Ennodius, with a focus on what he terms the *commercium litterarum*—the trade of letters. I will argue that Ennodius's obsession with the exchange and reciprocation of letters stemmed from his need for social validation. Social validation for Ennodius meant participation in relationships of *amicitia* via the medium of letters. Finally I will discuss the importance of third parties in maintaining epistolary relationships and the extent to which actors and ties are often blurred together in ancient epistolary networks.

Amicitia and Letters

It is important for the following discussion to make clear the difference between letters and letter collections. Ancient letter collections preserve two acts of communication: the initial epistolary action—the sending of a letter—and the collection and editing of preserved letters for subsequent publication. One act, the initial sending of a letter, is a directed act: that is it is sent from one person to another. The publication of a letter collection is, on the other hand, an undirected act—as letter collections are published with a wider target audience in mind. Still, both actions represent intended acts of communication that facilitated and promoted the business and ideals of late antique aristocratic society.⁸¹

Letters, like all written communication, are a response to the problem of distance—be it physical, temporal, or social distance. An epistolary situation arises when one individual or group wishes to communicate with another individual or group. The epistolary action—the sending of a letter—is aimed at healing the separation caused by distance.⁸² This may seem like an obvious statement to anyone who has composed a letter, email, or text message, however, it is an important point to consider as the theme of distance lies behind a great deal

⁸¹ Gillett, "Communication in Late Antiquity," 816.

⁸² See: Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976).

of Ennodius's correspondence. Distance from one's peers whether physical, or a perceived social distance, was a source of great anxiety for late antique aristocrats—letters provided a salve for this anxiety by allowing individuals to communicate over great distances in a world where travel was often complex and dangerous.⁸³ Importantly, “letter writing allowed the elite to maintain networks of friendship capable of collapsing the distances of empire and substantiating the claims of social status.”⁸⁴ As mentioned above, elite society in late antiquity was constructed upon the basis of a shared identity—one based around *amicitia*. As such letters were “instruments directed at the fulfillment of a deeper cultural need, the need to define the bounds of an extended social group and establish a basis for its common identity.”⁸⁵

This “cultural need” can be seen as a form of social distance. Letters were the physical representation of *amicitia*. The reception of a letter from an *amicus* illustrated that an individual was a part of a reciprocal bond of *amicitia*. On the other hand, the failure to receive letters could be a source of social anxiety as it was a signal that an individual was not regarded by their peers as a part of the social group. In this sense the sending of letters was a dialogic act intended to stimulate literary exchanges that illustrated an individual's social standing.⁸⁶ Letters were sent with the hope that the recipient would reply and the bond of *amicitia* would be affirmed. The letter as a tool was well suited for this task. Late antique society placed a high value on gift exchange as an expression of social bonds.⁸⁷ Sending a letter was a tripartite act. The written communication of the letter was often accompanied by a gift and a verbal message born by the letter carrier.⁸⁸ However, the letter could also serve as a gift if necessary.⁸⁹ In this

⁸³ M. Shane Bjornlie, “*Amicitia* in the Epistolary Tradition: The Case of Cassiodorus’ *Variae*,” in *De Amicitia: Friendship and Social Networks in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Katarina Mustakallio and Chistian Krötzl, *Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae* 36 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2010), 136.

⁸⁴ Bjornlie, “*Amicitia* in the Epistolary Tradition,” 136.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Stefanie Kennell, “Ennodius the Epistolographer,” 113.

⁸⁷ Bjornlie, “*Amicitia* in the Epistolary Tradition,” 136.

⁸⁸ Gillett, “Communication in Late Antiquity,” 817–18.

⁸⁹ Bjornlie, “*Amicitia* in the Epistolary Tradition,” 136.

vein it was a physical token of the bond shared between individuals—a reminder of the shared *amicitia* that could be kept long after the initial act of communication.

While reciprocation was a crucial part of *amicitia* that reinforced social bonds it was important that the act of reciprocation was never fully acquitted. Partners in an exchange were careful to ensure that the acts of reciprocation that they engaged in were ambiguous in nature. This was because as Saller notes: “It has been suggested that ‘balanced exchange may tend toward self-liquidation,’ for the reason that a precise one-for-one exchange—that is, a complete and conscious absolution of debt—leaves both parties free to break off the relationship without moral recriminations.”⁹⁰ The dialogic nature of letters stimulated conversation between sender and recipient, ensuring that the exchange of letters remained an ambiguous and thus continuous act. Receiving a letter incurred a social debt that encouraged the recipient to repay in kind and thus stimulated and fostered relations between individuals. As was noted in Chapter 2, Ennodius invoked this theme in *Ep.* 6.6 in his response to Boethius, stating that he owed the senator repayment in kind for a recent flurry of correspondence.

The importance of letters in stimulating and fostering relationships between individuals is made particularly clear in a letter written by a relative of Ennodius, Ruricius, bishop of Limoges. In the letter dating to the first decade of the sixth century Ruricius explains in overblown style the use of letters in maintaining friendships to Caesarius, bishop of Arles:

We who seek out occasions for writing reciprocally to each other because of our mutual affection ought not to disregard them when they are offered, so that our correspondence, as a mediator, might confer upon us a kind of shared presence: it is sent forth but is not lost, it is bestowed and yet retained, it seems to depart and yet does not withdraw, it is sent by me and received by you, it is written by me and read by you, and it is not detached, when as if detached, it is whole in each of our hearts, because like the divine word, it is relinquished and does not depart, it is conferred upon the needy and is not taken from the author, as profit

⁹⁰ Richard Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 17.

for the recipient without loss to the donor, enriching the pauper without impoverishing the landlord.⁹¹

Ruricius discusses three key points in this opening lines: writing is a reciprocal act (*scribendi invicem*) carried out due to shared feelings of affection (*mutua caritate*); opportunities for writing to each other should be seized; letters act as a mediator and provide a shared presence between individuals who are otherwise separated. This is an excellent explanation of the concept and mechanics of literary friendship. Reciprocation is the chief concern here: shared emotions are maintained by the mutual exchange of letters. The affection expressed between the two is that of *caritas*—the Christian expression of mutual love.⁹² This affection and mutual feeling is a part of the larger reciprocal act conducted between the two. Ruricius's description of the letter as a mediator between individuals is interesting. Late antiquity was an age of mediators, whether they were saints, envoys, or items. Each act of writing represents a negotiation between friends with each reciprocation of the act renewing and confirming the bond between them. This is why, as Ruricius explains in the second half of the letter, letters are such an excellent social glue. Letters are not a finite commodity—they can be sent and read over and over again. As most aristocrats kept archives of the letters that they sent both individuals involved in an exchange would be left with a token of the relationship that was shared.

Letters were also an excellent medium for the promotion of *amicitia* because they could be repackaged into letter collections. The collation of letters into letter collections, the re-use of letters as Andrew Gillett puts it, was an important means of signaling an author's status and

⁹¹ Ruricius, *Ep.* 2.36: "Qui occasiones scribendi nobis invicem pro mutua caritate inquirimus, oblatas praetermittere non debemus, ut conferat nobis quandam praesentiae portionem sermo mediator, qui emittitur nec amittitur, tribuitur et habetur, uidetur discedere nec recedit, a me dirigitur, a te suscipitur, a me scribitur, a te legitur nec tamen diuiditur, cum quasi diuisus integer tamen utriusque corde teneatur, quia uerbi more diuini traditur et non egreditur, confertur indigenti et non aufertur auctori, accipientis lucrum sine dispendio largientis, ditans inopem nec adtenuans possessorem." (Trans. Mathisen, *Ruricius*, 204-205).

⁹² For more on the Christian usage of *caritas* see: David Konstan, "Problems in the History of Christian Friendship," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4, No. 1 (1996): 87–113.

social standing. Individually each letter stood as a symbol of a relationship that joined one individual to another physically illustrating an individual's carefully cultivated bonds of *amicitia*. As a collection letters could illustrate and promote an author's ties to the social world around him. Having been collected into an edited volume each letter represented a secondary act of communication, divorced from the original act that it had been created for.⁹³ As Bjornlie notes: "the publication of a letter collection was the monumentalization of a social group, arrested in scenes of interaction in which the *amicitia* shared both explicitly and implicitly between correspondents conveyed consensus and conformity at a deep social and moral level."⁹⁴ In essence letter collections promoted the shared social identity of *amicitia* by preserving individual exemplars of literary exchanges. They promoted both the shared ideals of elite society and the individual achievements of the collection's author within that society.

Amicitia was far from the only tie that could unite two individuals. As was discussed in Chapter 2, an individual was born in to a world of relationships. These inherited ties were often—though not exclusively—ties of kinship. Kinship was an important tie for Ennodius and he frequently notes even very loose bonds of kinship with correspondents. In his initial exchanges with Faustus and his family Ennodius made much of their shared kinship until he felt confident enough in the relationship to label it one of *amicitia*.⁹⁵ Indeed the more types of ties individuals shared the better. That said, as was seen in the last chapter, Ennodius forged many bonds outside of his kin group as he sought patrons from among the senatorial elite. These new ties of *amicitia* were then leveraged to help kin—such as his nephews' Parthenius and Lupicinus. *Amicitia* is the focus here because it is the tie most connected to the maintenance and reciprocation of relationships in Ennodius's letters.

⁹³ Gillett, "Communication in Late Antiquity," 816.

⁹⁴ Bjornlie, "*Amicitia* in the Epistolary Tradition," 136–137.

⁹⁵ Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 141–143.

Ennodius, Amicitia, and the Commercia Litterarum

Ennodius makes numerous references to friends in his collection of letters using forms of the noun *amicus* 65 times. In addition he makes references to the obligations of friendship throughout the corpus. These references apply both to *amicitia* and to *caritas* which was increasingly common in the works of Christian writers. Ennodius makes 31 direct references to *amicitia* and 68 to *caritas* throughout his letters. The importance placed on *caritas* in relation to *amicitia* should not be surprising in the writings of a deacon of the Church. Furthermore, it is not clear that these two varieties of friendship are mutually exclusive for Ennodius. In a letter to the senator Boethius, Ennodius argues that it is impudent for those who have chosen the path of friendship (*amicitiarum*) to not respond to each other with affection (*caritate*).⁹⁶ The Christian affection represented by *caritas* is for Ennodius an expression of *amicitia* that represents the formalized relationship that joins individuals together. Bianca-Jeanette Schröder observes that Ennodius spurned the traditional literary trope of *laudes amicitia* in his letters. Ennodius's letters do not dwell extensively on praising the nature of friendship, unlike the letters of other late antique letter writers such as Symmachus.⁹⁷ Because Ennodius does not discuss *amicitia* in flowery terms, as in our earlier Rurician example, it can be difficult to ascertain just what his opinions on the subject are. Therefore, rather than relying on Ennodius for an explanation of friendship we must observe his letter writing in practice as it is preserved for us.

Many letters in Ennodius's collection were composed for no other reason than to exploit an opportunity to send a letter. Kennell argues that these letters were devices for "alleviating pain and causing pleasure."⁹⁸ Kennell ties this effect to the welcome news of a friend's health and

⁹⁶ *Ep.* 1.3: "*debeo uobis amicitiam, querimoniae meae, quas, dum uotis effectum tribuitis, plus amabo.*"

⁹⁷ Bianca-Jeanette Schröder, *Bildung und Briefe im 6. Jahrhundert* [Education and letters in the sixth century] (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 276–277.

⁹⁸ Kennell, "Ennodius the Epistolographer," 125.

well-being that these letters often conveyed, however, the welcome arrival of such letters went beyond the knowledge that one's friends were hale and hearty. These letters served to maintain and establish connections of *amicitia*. The need to ensure that bonds of *amicitia* were reciprocated was so great that a genre of letters existed that served simply to greet friends and maintain the flow of communication. In *Epistle* 1.3 Ennodius refers to this phenomena as the "embrace of letters."⁹⁹ Such letters alleviated the social anxiety caused by the physical separation from one's peers by confirming an individual's social status within the cultural framework of *amicitia*. The greatest fear of sending a letter is not receiving a reply. Such a situation implies that an individual is not worth replying to and is therefore outside of the bounds of accepted society.

Ennodius calls the flow and exchange of communication the *commercium litterarum* or occasionally the *commercium epistolarum*, the trade of letters. Ennodius refers to this exchange in 15 letters.¹⁰⁰ Ennodius frequently encourages his correspondents to keep up the trade with him as in *Epistle* 9.28 to Agapium: "Still, I impertinently seek through honorifics and refined salutations, that you frequently confer upon me the gifts of the trade in letters."¹⁰¹ The arrival of letters is a gift (*munera*) and the opportunity presented by a letter carrier is the "highest of joys."¹⁰² This opportunity was of course the chance to compose and send a response, even if the letter was hurried due to the letter carriers' imminent departure.¹⁰³ That the trade in letters was time consuming is clear from Ennodius's praise of his friend Constantius: "Now I give thanks and am grateful that you visit my paltriness by addressing me with literary discourse and that, amid the responsibilities and the waiting with which Ravenna distracts everyone, you

⁹⁹ Ennod. *Ep.* 1.3: "delenificam allegationem amplexus epistularis alloquii ago atque habeo gratias, quod me diu tristium noluit esse participem."

¹⁰⁰ Ennod. *Ep.* 1.8; 2.4; 2.13; 3.2; 3.32; 4.2; 4.34; 6.16; 6.32; 8.20; 8.31; 8.36; 8.37; 9.18; 9.28.

¹⁰¹ Ennod. *Ep.* 9.28: "uos tamen honorificae cultu salutationis inperiens rogo, ut crebro mihi epistularis commercii munera conferatis."

¹⁰² Ennod. *Ep.* 6.2: "Summa gaudiorum est oportunitas perlatoris."

¹⁰³ Ennod. *Ep.* 8.36: "Consideratio magnitudinis uestrae exegit epistolare commercium sed festinatio portitoris epistolam breuitate conclusit."

have not laid your concern for me aside.”¹⁰⁴ While in this case Ennodius had been remembered in the correspondence of a friend, he is clearly concerned here with the possibility that the duties of his friends might lead them to forget their duties to their friends.

Ennodius was on occasion guilty of forgetfulness himself. This is evident in a letter from Ennodius to a certain Dominator.¹⁰⁵ Ennodius had received a letter from another correspondent, Agnellus, prodding him to write to Dominator. Clearly Ennodius had been negligent in maintaining ties with his friends and in the letter he seeks to make redress: “because just as it is in the first place detrimental to affection [*caritatis*] not to grant speech to one who desires it, so neither the recollection of friendship [*amicitiae*] nor of shame advises silence as a response to a published piece of writing.”¹⁰⁶ The cure for a neglected friendship was the resumption of writing. Ennodius’s concern for the maintenance and continued flow of the trade in letters stemmed from the need that he and other aristocrats shared for social validation. The reciprocal exchange of letters was for them the evidence of the bonds of *amicitia* that they shared: a cease in communication could represent a cease in the relationship and was a situation to be avoided at all costs.

Shared Presence and Human Ties

Epistolary friendships were not just binary affairs. As noted above, Ennodius had been prodded to write to Dominator by a mutual friend Agnellus. In a letter which exists solely to re-establish

¹⁰⁴ Ennod. *Ep.* 2.17: “Nemo peritiam pomposa elocutione condemnat nec spernendum cum pudore ducit esse quod sequitur: sui inpuator est quisquis elucubratis sermonibus linguae cultum praedicat abiurari. ego tamen in epistulis magnitudinis uestrae diligentiam semper, non uerba pensavi nec adiutricem malitiae facundiam maius pretium habere censui quam simplicitatem, quae infucata fronte secretum mentis enuntiat” (trans. Kennell, “Ennodius the Epistolographer,” 117).

¹⁰⁵ Ennod. *Ep.* 4.23; Kennell, “Ennodius the Epistolographer,” 118.

¹⁰⁶ Ennod. *Ep.* 4.23: “nec ullo me colore defenderem te loquente a paginis abstinendo. in tuo iure fuit linguae nostrae ferias exercitio commutare et rubiginem rusticantis eloquii fabrilibus studiis amouere, quia sicut damnum caritatis est primum cupienti non dedicare sermonem, ita promulgatae scriptioni silentium reddere nec amicitiae suadet memoria nec pudoris” (trans. Kennell, “Ennodius the Epistolographer,” 118); cf. Ennod. *Ep.* 6.6: “nec tantum habet uirum aut genii qui amicitiarum callem secundus ingreditur: summam sibi gratiam non potest uindicare cui in amore forma praestatur: inpudentiae est non respondere caritati.”

and promote the connection between individuals we should not consider the mention of a mutual acquaintance as mere context. As a third party to the relationship between Ennodius and Dominator Agnellus was crucial to reconnecting the two and Ennodius's inclusion of him illustrates his shared connection to the two correspondents. This letter celebrated a tripartite friendship. The relationship between Ennodius and Dominator was strengthened by their shared connection with Agnellus: as friends they shared common opinions of others. Furthermore, the group friendship that all three shared was stronger because there were more individuals who shared a stake in its survival. While left to their own devices Ennodius and Dominator might have left their relationship to rot on the vine the prompt intervention of their mutual friend had rekindled the fire.

As discussed in Chapter 2, when seeking to establish new relationships or to strengthen existing ones Ennodius often turned to intermediaries to assist and aid his epistolary endeavors. This was the case in *Ep.* 1.3 where Ennodius sought help from the senator Florianus in introducing himself to the important and influential senator Faustus who would go on to be Ennodius's most celebrated and featured correspondent in his letter collection.¹⁰⁷ By seeking out the help of a third party Ennodius could hope to increase his chances of gaining a successful introduction with Faustus, as his overtures would carry the weight of a mutual friend's recommendation. But as in his relationship with Dominator, by binding another friend to his hoped for relationship with Faustus, Ennodius could hope to strengthen his ties with his acquaintance. The maintenance of multiple paths did not just help ensure the closeness of a relationship but in a world where sending a letter was an uncertain task multiple paths and connections ensured relationships were maintained. More paths of communication meant a greater chance of staying in contact with an individual.

¹⁰⁷ Florianus 2: PLRE 2, 480.

Another type of third party is often present in Ennodius's letters: the letter carrier. Letter carriers present a problem of definition for network analysts as they blur the line between actor and tie in a network. As was made clear in the opening stages of this work the basic focus of network science is on actors and ties. The separation between these two aspects of a network is portrayed in network analysis handbooks as being clear and firm—a result of the focus of many network analyses being focused on technological and systematic networks. The dichotomy between actor and tie is not so clear in ancient communication networks. This is because the ties that link individuals together—letters—needed to be borne by people in order to reach their destinations. As the bearers of letters often feature in the letters that they carried they become fully fledged members of the network themselves. Here the line between tie and actor becomes blurred as the letter-bearer acts as both a tie between sender and recipient as well as an actor within the network. This is particularly true in cases where the letter bearer is also the focus of a recommendation within the letter. An accepted part of *amicitia* was that friends should accept each other's recommendations.¹⁰⁸ Accepting an individual's recommendation signaled that the author and recipient of the recommendation held mutual opinions and values. Furthermore the recommendee became a shared client of each party—a human tie that further cemented the bond between them. In the recommendation of his nephew Ennodius declared to Pope Symmachus that Parthenius would act as a hostage to secure the good relations between the two.¹⁰⁹

The Value of Maintaining Ties

Amicitia was an important social tie for the elite of late antique Italy. Reciprocal exchanges of letters fostered and maintained the complex social bonds that united Italian aristocrats and

¹⁰⁸ Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, 10–16.

¹⁰⁹ Ennod. *Ep.* 5.10: “habetis obsidem, in quo dilucide meritorum apud uos meorum qualitas innotescat.”; Kennell, *Magnus Felix Ennodius*, 45.

provided an important means of social validation. Letters were an important medium in the fostering of *amicitia* as they allowed letter writers to defeat the limits of geographic distance and conduct friendships outside of their immediate area. Letters also provided a physical token of the bonds that linked elite individuals: the arrival of a letter was a symbol of social validation and a cure for the perceived social distance that separated elite individuals. In addition letters could be repackaged and reused as letter collections: secondary acts of communication that promoted and celebrated the friendships and social ties of their authors.

Ennodius's promotion of the *commercium litterarum* in his letter collection illustrated his ties to the wider world of *amicitia* and thus the justification of his claims to elite social status. His concern with the constant flow of letters was a concern for his social status within the wider world of *amicitia*. For Ennodius communications from his friends were a gift that relieved social anxiety and isolation. He sought to strengthen his relationships with others by maintaining a constant flow of communication and by binding others to his epistolary relationships. The trade in letters was a crucial part of Ennodius's social identity and one that he strove to maintain with frequent gifts of letters.

Third parties to epistolary conversations played an important role in maintaining ties between correspondents. They helped to ensure that correspondents kept up the flow of communication; they facilitated communication by acting as secondary paths of communication; and they often acted as a shared tie between correspondents. The convergence of actors and ties is an important feature of ancient letter networks that circumvents the usual separation of these constituent parts of a network.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have shown that Ennodius of Pavia was a well-connected actor in a network of influential and important individuals. By modelling Ennodius's network I have outlined the network's structure, identified core groups of actors, and illustrated the importance of social acts—for example the act of recommending an individual to a friend.

The structure of Ennodius's network was examined in Chapter 1. Ennodius's network was directed towards his primary correspondent Faustus and a core group of influential senators who dominated political and civil life in Ostrogothic Italy. These trends are readily visible in the network visualizations that I have presented. The most highly connected part of the network includes actors connected to both Ennodius and Faustus and this suggests a circle of actors. By measuring the centrality and betweenness factors in the network I have shown that there was a central core of actors who dominate the network in all measurements. Individual actors such as Eugenius, Avienus, Albinus, Liberius, Florus, Pope Symmachus, and Agapitus were the most influential members in the network in terms of their structural integrity and the extent to which they were connected to other members in the network as reflected in their scores of betweenness. Faustus of course is a special category—his scores are far superior to any other actor's in all of the measures examined. Faustus was by far and away the most connected and prestigious actor within the network. When these structural measures were compared to the volumes of correspondence that Ennodius dedicated to individual actors a correlation was apparent between the volume of correspondence received and an actor's prestige in the network. Actors who received more correspondence, and who were mentioned frequently were also those actors with the highest scores of centrality and betweenness. This signaled that Ennodius devoted the most correspondence to a particular group of well connected actors.

Chapter 2 placed these trends in context. Ostrogothic Italy was a region dominated by multiple centers of power and influence. Both the Ostrogothic court of Theodoric and the pope were nodes of influence that drew in influential individuals. As a *parvenu* aristocrat Ennodius focused his attention sought to attach himself to these men of influence. Ennodius's top contacts were the elite of Italian society. They were individuals who had celebrated consulships, who held important posts in government, and were related to other influential individuals. The early sixth century was a period of intense elite factionalism due to the effects of the Laurentian Schism. Ennodius was a staunch partisan of Pope Symmachus and his network reflects this. Individuals who were supporters of Laurentius occupy far more isolated positions within the network. Still influence trumped factionalism and Ennodius did attempt to engage with influential men such as Boethius—as long as it was in his interest.

The center of influence that Ennodius was most interested in attaching himself to was Faustus. Faustus was highly connected and due to his administrative positions he was in a position to fulfil requests that Ennodius made of him. To this end Ennodius tied himself to Faustus through many paths—increasing the connectivity and closeness between the two actors. Through his ties to numerous influential individuals Ennodius became a center of influence in his own right. Ennodius can be aptly described as a sociometric superstar due to his ability to facilitate the connectivity of other actors within the network and his role as a gatekeeper for influential actors like Faustus. Due to this Ennodius was sought out by individuals seeking social advancement and aid such as his nephew Parthenius.

Due to the importance of his ties to influential individuals in Ostrogothic Italy Ennodius paid a keen interest to the maintenance of literary ties within his letter network. The flow of letters facilitated and made possible the social life of Italian aristocrats. Bonds of *amicitia* stretched across the region linked by peregrinating letter carriers and their precious cargo of salutations.

Ennodius frequently refers to the *commercium litterarum* in his letters and encouraged his correspondents to keep up the literary trade. The reciprocation of correspondence confirmed an aristocrat's place in society, and for a regional aristocrat such as Ennodius this was a crucial concern. Ennodius engaged third parties in epistolary conversations as a means of following up on friends who had dropped out of contact. The *commercium litterarum* relied on letter carriers to connect correspondents; through this act letter carriers became network ties in their own right, blurring the line between actor and tie.

From the perspective of network analysis Ennodius's letter collection promotes Ennodius's role as a facilitator of communication: a sociometric superstar. It celebrates his links to the powerful and influential senatorial elite of Rome, particularly the prestigious Faustus. It shows that Ennodius was a crucial link between northern Italy and the centers of power in Ostrogothic Italy. Ennodius maintained his status through the trade of letters and through ties of *amicitia* that linked him to the wider social world.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter Recipients

PLRE ID	Addressee	Letters
	Adeodatus	
NA	Presbyterus	3.7, 6.36, 7.28, 8.30, 9.16, 9.19, 9.32
Agapitus 2/3	Agapitus	1.13, 4.6, 4.16, 4.28, 5.26, 6.12,
Agapius 4	Agapius	8.41, 9.28
Agnella	Agnella	9.25
Agnella	Agnellus	7.4, 7.11, 7.15, 7.16, 7.26, 8.20
NA	Afros	2.14
Albinus		
iunior 9	Albinus	2.21, 6.12
Albus		
(Faustus)		5.9, 6.34
Alico	Alico	4.2
Apodimia	Apodimia	9.17
Apollinaris 4	Apollinaris	2.8, 3.13, 4.19
Apronianus		
2	Apronianus	4.35
Arator	Arator	8.4, 8.11, 9.1
Archotamia	Archotamia	6.24, 7.14
Aermenius 2	Armenius	2.1
Asturius	Asturius	1.24; 2.12
		1.12, 1.18, 2.28, 3.26, 3.27, 3.30, 3.31, 5.17, 6.7,
		6.11, 6.32, 7.3, 7.9, 7.17, 7.18, 8.2, 8.6, 8.26, 8.42,
Avienus 2	Avienus	9.7, 9.24, 9.31, 9.34
Avienus 3	Avienus iunior	3.8
Avitus 3	Avitum	4.31, 5.5, 5.20, 5.21, 5.25, 6.13, 6.14
Aureilianus		
8	Aureilianus	6.5, 8.13, 8.35; 9.27
Bassus 4	Bassus	4.25
Barbara	Barbara	8.16, 8.27
Beatus	Beatus	7.29, 8.21, 8.28, 8.29, 9.6
Boethius 5	Boetius	6.6, 7.13, 8.1, 8.31, 8.36, 8.37, 8.40
	Caesarius	
NA	Episcopus	9.33
Camilla	Camilla	9.9
Castorius 3	Castorius	1.11
Celsus 3	Celsus	9.10
Constantius		
15	Constantius	2.17, 2.19, 2.20, 4.13, 5.23
	Constantius	
NA	Episcopus	4.21
Decoratus 1	Decoratus	4.17, 7.6, 7.10
Deuterius 3	Deuterius	1.19

NA	Dioscorus	6.33
Dominicia	Dominicia	6.18, 6.35
NA	Dominatorus	4.23
Edasius	Edasius	8.15
Eugenus	Eugenus	3.2, 3.25, 3.29, 4.20, 4.26, 4.32, 5.27, 6.12, 6.22
NA	Eulalius Episcopus	3.18, 4.3
Euprepria	Euprepria	2.15, 3.14, 3.15, 3.28, 5.7, 6.3, 6.26, 7.8
		1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.14, 1.17, 1.20, 1.21, 1.26, 2.10, 2.11, 2.16, 2.22, 2.23, 2.24, 2.25 3.3, 3.19, 3.20, 3.21, 3.22, 3.33, 4.5, 4.9, 4.14, 4.15, 4.18, 4.24, 5.12, 5.18, 6.2, 6.4, 6.9, 6.10, 6.15, 6.19, 6.20, 6.21, 6.25, 6.29, 6.30, 7.2, 7.30, 8.5, 8.14, 8.18, 8.19, 8.24, 8.25,
Faustus 9	Faustus	9.2, 9.11, 9.22
Firminus 4	Firminus	1.8, 2.7, 6.38
Florus 4	Florus	1.2, 1.11, 7.6, 7.10, 8.12, 8.22, 8.23
Florianus 2/4	Florianus	1.15, 1.16
Gudilevus	Gudilleuus	6.28
Helisaea	Helisaea	5.4
Helpidius 6	Helpidius Diaconus	7.7, 8.8, 9.14, 9.21
Honoratus 2	Honoratus	2.27
N/A	Hormisdas	4.34, 5.13, 6.33, 7.12, 8.33, 8.39, 9.5
Iohannes 67	Iohannes	1.1, 1.10, 2.18, 4.12, 6.37
Iulianus 24	Iulianus	4.7, 4.20, 7.10
Laconius	Laconius	2.5, 3.16, 5.24
Laurentius 7/9	Laurentius	3.6
Leontius 18	Leontius Abbatus	5.6
Liberius 3	Liberius	2.26, 5.1, 6.12, 9.23, 9.29,
Luminosus	Luminosus	3.10, 4.11, 5.11, 6.16
Marcellianus 3	Marcellianus	3.9, 3.23
N/A	Marcellinus	
Marcianus 13	Episcopus	6.17
Mascator	Marcianus	5.2
Maximus 16	Mascator	3.24, 9.20, 9.26
Meribaudus	Maximus	3.5, 7.20, 7.21, 7.22, 7.23, 8.10
Messala 2	Meribaudus	7.30
Olybrius 5	Messala	8.3, 8.9, 8.43, 9.12, 9.35
Opilio 5	Olybrius	1.9, 1.25, 2.4, 2.9, 2.13,
Pamphronius	Opilio	1.22, 5.3
Parthenius 2/3	Pamfronius	5.16, 9.13
N/A	Parthenius	6.1, 6.23, 7.31
FL. Petrus 28	Passiuus	3.32
Pomerius	Petrus	5.8
NA	Pomerius	2.6
Fl. Probus 9	Porcianus Abbatus	8.35
	Probus	7.27

Probinus 2	Probinus	9.4
		1.23, 3.11, 3.34, 4.27, 4.33, 5.15, 6.8, 6.12, 6.27, 7.5,
Senarius	Senarius	8.7
Senator 3	Senator Episcopus	3.1
Simplicianus	Simplicianus	7.19
SPECIOSA	Speciosa	2.2, 2.3
Servilo	Servilo	5.14
Stephania	Stephania	8.17, 9.15, 9.18
NA	Stephanus Abbatus	3.4, 3.12
	Stephanus	
Stephanus 19	Episcopus	3.17, 7.24
NA	Symmachus Papa	4.1, 4.8, 4.22, 4.29, 5.10, 6.31,
Symmachus		
9	Symmachus	7.25, 8.32, 8.38
NA	Trasimundus V.I.	4.1
Venantius 2	Venantius	5.22
Victor 9	Victor	9.8

Appendix 2: Individuals Mentioned in Letters

PLRE ID	Mentioned Actor	Letter
NA	Aetheria	8.35
Agnellus	Agnellus	4.18, 4.23
Albinus		
iunior 9	Albinus	2.22
NA	Amantius	4.2
Ambrosius 3	Ambrosius	2.1
NA	Asterius	5.2, 8.17
NA	Attica	8.1, 8.3, 8.8
Avienus 2	Avienus	1.5, 2.1, 9.11, 9.12, 9.13, 9.14, 9.15, 9.19, 9.32
Barbara	Barbara	7.29
Bassus 4	Bassus	1.20
Beatus	Beatus	8.38, 8.39
Benenatus	Benenatus	3.16, 3.17
NA	Bonifacius	5.20
Camilla	Camilla	9.29
NA	Camillus	4.25
NA	Comus	1.6
Constantius		
15	Constantius	3.3
NA	Crispus	6.3
NA	Cynegia	5.4, 5.4, 7.28, 7.29
Dalmatius 3	Dalmatius	4.5
NA	Discorus	9.16

NA	Eleutherius	8.23
NA	Epiphanus	7.1, 7.10
Erduic	Erduic	2.3
Euprepia	Euprepia	2.23, 7.14
Faustinus 5	Faustinus	9.2, 9.3, 9.4
		1.2, 1.11, 3.4, 4.26, 4.27, 4.35, 5.26, 7.29, 8.9, 9.12, 9.14, 9.16, 9.19, 9.29, 9.32
Faustus 9	Faustus	8.18
Florus 4	Florus	7.1, 8.5
NA	Gaianus	3.19
NA	Germanus	3.20
NA	Gevica	5.8
NA	Glovidenum	5.5
Helisaea	Helisaea	4.13
Iohannes 67	Iohannes	3.20
Iulianus 24	Iulianus	
Laurentius 7/9	Laurentius	4.11, 4.22, 6.10
Liberius 3	Liberius	9.13
Luminosus	Luminosus	2.24
Lupicinus 3	Lupicinus	2.15, 2.23, 3.28, 6.26
NA	Lyaeus	7.21
	Marcellinus	
N/A	Episcopus	4.1
Marcellianus 3	Marcellianus	3.2, 5.1
Marcellus 5	Marcellus	7.24
Martinus 4	Martinus	6.10
NA	Marus	1.18, 4.8
Mauricellus	Mauricelli	1.26
Messala 2	Messala	9.14
Opilio 5	Opilio	4.18
Pamphronius	Pamphronius	2.16, 7.2
Panfronius	Panfronius	4.14
Parthenius 2/3	Parthenius	5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 7.30
NA	Patricius	9.9
NA	Patricus	3.5
NA	Paulus	9.8
Pertinax	Pertinax	6.25
Fl. Probus 9	Probus	8.21
NA	Rusticius	9.33
Sabinus 7	Sabinus	5.25, 6.13, 6.14, 6.29
Sabinus 8	Sabinus	6.29
Senarius	Senarius	5.16
NA	Silenus	7.21
Simplicianus	Simplicianus	6.15

Speciosa	Speciosa	2.13
Stephania	Stephania	6.17
NA	Stephanus Diaconus	6.12
Symmachus 9	Symmachus	8.28
Tancila	Tancila	2.23
NA	Tobia	8.10
NA	Torisa	2.23
NA	Trasemundus	3.20
NA	Triggua	9.21
NA	Tyria	4.9
Venantius 2	Venantius	4.9
Victor 9	Victorem	3.1, 8.24
Vigilius	Vigilius	4.21
NA	Virgilius	3.23

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