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## The Transformation of Fulgentius of Ruspe in the Carolingian Age

by Francis X. Gumerlock

This essay explains how Fulgentius, the bishop of Ruspe in North Africa (d.533), underwent a transformation in the writing of a certain Carolingian author, Prudentius of Troyes (d. 861). This happened by Prudentius' attribution to Fulgentius the bishop literary works of another author by the same name, "Fulgentius the Mythographer." After clearly distinguishing the two Fulgentii, this essay will analyze how and why Prudentius in the ninth century conflated the two authors. It will also discuss the result of that conflation, namely, a transfiguration of Fulgentius the bishop into Fulgentius the bishop-mythographer.

### The Two Fulgentii

Most scholars today make a distinction between Fulgentius the bishop and Fulgentius the Mythographer. This section highlights those differences and presents the rationale for viewing them as two separate authors.

Fulgentius the Bishop. Claudius Gordianus Fulgentius, also known as Fulgentius of Ruspe, was arguably the most important figure in North African Christianity in the late fifth and early sixth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, eds., *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History*. Matthew J. O'Connell, trans. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 2:472 call Fulgentius "the most authoritative and important figure of African Christianity in the late fifth and early sixth centuries." Thomas S. Ferguson, "Fulgentius of Ruspe," in Patrick W. Carey and Joseph T. Lienhard, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Theologians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 203 calls Fulgentius "the foremost North African theologian of his day."