When scholars have turned their attention to the function of domestic space as a place for Christian assembly in fourth- and fifth-century Christianity, they have tended to focus on the influence of structural features of the Greek and Roman household in the development of ecclesiastical architecture. This may be seen for example in those accounts which discover in the ancient household the constitutive elements of the Constantinian basilica: the New Testament house church developed into the *domus ecclesiae* of the second and third centuries, which in turn evolved into the basilica.¹ If such a continuous line of development can no longer be sustained,² it is still the case that when attention is given to the place of the household in the architecture of post-Constantinian Christianity, it is primarily with a view to identifying whatever traces of earlier domestic or more private structures lay buried beneath or have been incorporated by monumental Christian assembly places (as, for example, in studies of Roman *tituli* and their conversion into basilicas).³ In one way or another, domestic worship space has been studied in terms of its relationship to monumental structures.

This essay seeks to redirect this focus of attention by identifying some of the ways the household functioned in the life of fourth- and fifth-century Christian groups not sanctioned by Emperor and Church. This is a topic to which virtually no attention has been given, a surprising oversight given the abundance of evidence.⁴ In their condemnation of ‘heretical’ movements the framers of the Theodosian Code and conciliar decrees, ecclesiastical historians, and polemicists often list amongst the complaints of allegedly exotic teachings and practices the private assemblies of devotees. What follows broadly surveys this evidence by furnishing representative examples of different ways in which domestic space functioned for communities meeting apart from official meeting spaces. Households played an important role in the survival, propaganda, self-definition and characteristic disciplines of pro-
scribed groups. This essay is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to serve as stimulus to fuller investigation of this much-ignored aspect of late antiquity.

The anti-heretical decrees of the Theodosian Code provide significant evidence for determining the degree to which domestic space was used as proscribed Christian movements struggled to survive in hostile circumstances. The measures described by Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine* (3.65), forbidding meetings of 'heretics' not only in public 'but in any private house or place whatsoever,' are an early example of anti-heretical legislation that was to be regularly published, with some notable exceptions, in the century and a half that followed. One may describe the policy of Church and State, especially from the reign of Theodosius onward, as a form of 'territoriality,' by which is meant a strategy to 'affect, influence, or control people, phenomena and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.' Initially exercised against the Manichaeans and Donatists, the scope of such territoriality spread in the course of time to include Arians, Montanists, Apollinarians and a host of others. This territoriality sometimes took the form of a kind of 'ecclesiastical cleansing,' with decrees ordering the purging of all heretics from public worship places. But more usually it involved proscriptions of private meetings. Excluded from public worship, household space provided groups with a relatively safe place to meet and even flourish. The retreat to private space explains how many movements were able to survive in a hostile environment, and the difficulty those in control of officially sanctioned churches must have had in suppressing them. One may imagine in the places where such legislation was enforced two Christian topographies: an imperially supported one housed in official buildings; the other constituted by private households or analogous structures, formed outside more public assembly places. We can expect that these co-existed in a kind of détente until the shifting winds of political and ecclesiastical fortunes created opportunities for suppressed movements to enjoy more public profiles.

The more general portrayal of private meetings presented by the Theodosian legislation gains more detail when compared with the descriptions of ancient ecclesiastical historians. Charting the rise and fall of Arian fortunes from the 360s onward, Sozomen on several occasions describes the exclusion of Arians from official basilicas and their retreat to domestic assembly places. In Alexandria in 361, upon the