

# Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World

EDITED BY

RALPH W. MATHISEN AND DANUTA SHANZER



ROMANS, BARBARIANS, AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROMAN WORLD

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Romans, Barbarians, and the  
Transformation of the  
Roman World  
Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in  
Late Antiquity

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# Abbreviations

<i>AM</i>	<i>Archeologia Medievale</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, series Latina</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>The Classical Journal</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>HN</i>	<i>Historia Naturalis</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> ( <i>AA</i> <i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i> ) ( <i>Leges</i> <i>Leges</i> ) ( <i>SRM</i> <i>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i> )
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
<i>PSI</i>	<i>Papiri greci e latini. (Pubblicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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# Introduction

Ralph W. Mathisen, Danuta Shanzer

One of the most significant transformations of the Roman world between the fourth and seventh centuries CE was the integration of barbarian peoples into the social, cultural, religious, and political milieu of the Mediterranean world. In the western Roman world, barbarian peoples established independent kingdoms on what had been the territory of the Roman Empire. In the east, dealing with barbarian peoples became an even greater concern of the Byzantine government. Nowhere in the Roman world could the impact of the barbarians be escaped. The sixth biennial Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity Conference held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in March of 2005 was devoted to “Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World.”

## The Transformation of the Roman World

The phrase “The Transformation of the Roman World” was a nod to a project of the same name funded by the European Science Foundation between 1993 and 1998 to study “the origins of Europe and the emergence of European Nations, going back to the crossroads of the end of the ancient world” between the fourth and the eighth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Although the project did not focus exclusively on the role played by the arrival of barbarian peoples in this transformation, the barbarians were never very far away from the work of any of the five study groups, whose themes were (1) *Imperium, gentes, and regna*, (2) Settlement in town and countryside, (3) Production, distribution, and demand, (4) Transformation of beliefs and culture, and (5) Power and society. One of the consequences of the “team” approach—which probably was unavoidable, given the 150 participants—was that the resulting 14 published volumes each focused on but one small piece of the larger puzzle, and only by happenstance did one contribution or another deal with broader overlapping and overarching issues relating to the nature of the transformation writ large.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the project did not craft a single statement

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<sup>1</sup> For the project, see <http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=18&pid=7573>, accessed 16 July 2010.

<sup>2</sup> For reviews of various volumes, see, from *The Medieval Review*, e.g. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=tmr;cc=tmr;q1=Transformation%20of%20the%20Roman%20World;rgn=main;view=text;idno=baj9928.0005.007>, accessed 16 July 2010, and *passim*.

or theme about the nature of the transformation; indeed, it developed nearly as many models as there were participants.

This volume, based on the work of many fewer scholars meeting at a single place and time and augmented by a few additional contributions, proposes a more coherent model of the means by which the Roman world came to incorporate large numbers of barbarians. Collectively, the contributions paint a picture of change that provides a corrective to some of the assumptions that have made their way into the scholarship. In the current models, these changes have two primary components: (1) Changes in the nature of Roman culture as it “declined,” “was transformed,” or whatever term is used to describe what happened to it,<sup>3</sup> and (2) Changes in the nature of barbarian self-perceptions and self-identification, with the development of what is often called barbarian “ethnogenesis.”<sup>4</sup> All too often, as in the ESF project, these two components are treated separately, but the assumption in this volume is that they both were part of the same process, and that one cannot be understood without recourse to the processes underway in the other.

Many of the contributions remind us that the transformation of the Roman world took place in a Roman context. Contrary to many modern studies that to a greater or lesser degree begin by assuming that the transformation is about barbarians, with Romans playing only supporting roles, this volume demonstrates the pervasive influence of Rome that continued long after the “fall” of the western Roman Empire. The transformation occurred in a Roman intellectual context and a Roman geographical–political context. In addition, the Romans of Late Antiquity did not have “barbarians on their mind” and were not obsessed with “barbarophobia” to nearly the extent that modern commentators seem to think. Barbarians had been part of the Roman world, on both sides of the frontier (however the “frontier” is defined), long before they collectively crossed it and

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<sup>3</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 9–10, who prefers “decline” to “transformation,” takes to task “two distinguished American historians” who “have recently stated that the barbarian settlements occurred ‘in a natural, organic, and generally eirenic manner’,” and “feels obliged to challenge such views,” not realizing that the problematic statement was part of a summary of the contents of the volume, not a statement of the editors themselves (which is not to say that the editors do not hold similar views, only that if they are going to be criticized, it should be for their own views, not someone else’s).

<sup>4</sup> A topic of discussion that has resulted in heated arguments between the proponents of different models, or of no model at all; see, inter alios, H. Wolfram, W. Pohl, eds., *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1991); Charles R. Bowlus, “Ethnogenesis Models and the Age of Migration: A Critique,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 26 (1995): 147–64; Hans J. Hummer, “The Fluidity of Barbarian Identity: The Ethnogenesis of Alemanni and Suebi. AD 250–500,” *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 1–27; Walter Pohl, Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Brill, 1998); S. Mitchell, G. Greatrex, eds., *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London, 2000); A. Gillett, ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002).

established their own kingdoms. They could be hostile raiders or peaceful traders, neighbors, and settlers, even within the empire, where there was a long tradition of barbarian settlement and integration into the mainstream of Roman social, economic, and cultural life. In Late Antiquity, barbarians continued to follow the same model. Thus, we should not immediately assume that a fourth-century law that appears to prohibit marriages between barbarians and Romans does so out of a fear of barbarian political conspiracies on the one hand or racial miscegenation on the other.<sup>5</sup>

In the rush to create models for barbarian ethnogenesis we should not lose sight of the fact that the creation of barbarian identity took place in the context of barbarian interactions with the Roman world and that in the process of developing their own identity the barbarians in fact became Roman to a much greater degree than they invented some new form of reactive “barbarianness.” Some current scholarship ascribes a great degree of intentionality to barbarian ethnogenesis. But, once the barbarians came into contact with Rome (or were written about by Romans), was the establishment and creation of barbarian identity a result of conscious, intentional effort or a natural consequence of attendant circumstances and socio-cultural setting? Many of the studies below suggest that, rather than intentionally creating a new sense of identity, barbarian settlers assimilated Roman cultural constructs that were already there to a much greater degree than has been acknowledged. *Romanitas* always was the touchstone against which social, intellectual, and political developments were measured. If the barbarian adoption of Roman identity was in any way intentional, it was because an existing model was being followed, not because barbarians were consciously creating a new identity for which there was no previous model. Barbarians still were becoming Roman, as opposed to creating some new form of ethnic identity.

Meanwhile, the changing role of barbarians on the frontier affected Roman culture—and by the later Roman Empire, life throughout the empire was informed by what happened on its borders. Interactions with neighboring barbarian populations living in frontier zones occurred where barbarians and Romans looked much the same, and where Roman self-conceptions also were changing.<sup>6</sup> In the east, not only the New Persians<sup>7</sup> but even petty principalities such as Nubia<sup>8</sup> dealt with Rome with a greater sense of self-consciousness. In both the east and the west, the growing barbarian sense of self-consciousness nurtured by interactions with Rome. As barbarians gained political legitimacy, and assumed a greater importance in political, social, and economic life, interactions with barbarians became an integral part of Roman intellectual life, and Roman perceptions of barbarians changed.

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<sup>5</sup> See Mathisen below.

<sup>6</sup> See Ellis below.

<sup>7</sup> See McDonough and Drijvers below.

<sup>8</sup> See Faraji below.



Past scholarship has paid inordinate amount of attention to the process of “Romanization,” whereby barbarian peoples adopted elements of Roman culture. But it is clear that this kind of cultural sharing was a two-way street. At the same time that some fourth-century and later Romans were superciliously disparaging barbarian behavior in their writings, others were enthusiastically adopting one or another aspect of it in their everyday lives. When confronted by the cognitive dissonance that these two responses generate, rather than trying to resolve the inconsistencies or attempting to invalidate one response or the other, we should embrace them and see in them graphic examples of the ambiguity and negotiation that characterized the gradual—and generally peaceful—integration of Romans and barbarians, a process that gradually altered the concepts of identity of both populations. The creation of this late antique polyethnic cultural world, with cultural frontiers between Romans and barbarians that were increasingly permeable in both directions, was cited in the early sixth century by the Ostrogothic king Theoderic the Great (493–526), who saw a social dimension in this process, joking that, “The poor Roman imitates the Goth and the rich Goth imitates the Roman.”

This volume aims to break down old stereotypes about the cultural and social segregation of Roman and barbarian populations. Its contributions demonstrate that, contrary to the past orthodoxy, Romans and barbarians interacted in every way imaginable, social, cultural, political, and religious. An understanding of the degree of interaction, integration, and assimilation between Romans and barbarians during Late Antiquity does much to help explain how the barbarian settlement of the west was accomplished with a minimal, relatively speaking, level of disruption, and how barbarian populations were integrated so seamlessly into the old Roman world—through the emergence of a composite barbaro-Roman culture that integrated elements of the cultures of all of the peoples involved. All of this reflects perceptions of barbarians that were different from the conventional “us” versus “them” mentality.

Indeed, one might suggest that if barbarian kingdoms had not developed “barbarian” identities, it is possible that the empire nonetheless would have fragmented into independent kingdoms governed by provincial aristocrats, such as Aegidius and Syagrius in Gaul and the Roman “tyrants” of Britain, that would have looked very similar to the barbarian kingdoms, especially if traditional Roman patterns of the assimilation of barbarians into the provincial populations had continued. Given the process of “provincialization” and developing senses of provincial identity that already were accelerating during Late Antiquity,<sup>9</sup> the western empire might just as easily have ended up with Roman “kingdoms” of Gaul, Spain, Africa, Italy, and Britain that could be overlaid quite effectively on the kingdoms of the Franks, Visigoths, Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Anglo-Saxons.

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<sup>9</sup> See Mathisen below.

## The Contributions

The contributions are organized dynamically in order to illustrate the cultural processes and interactions that the book is describing. The first section, “Constructing Images of the Impact and Identity of Barbarians,” looks at conceptualizations of barbarians from the Roman perspective. There was a long tradition in the Greek and Roman classical world of portraying barbarians as “the other,” in either a narrow linguistic sense or a broader cultural sense. In some regards, this certainly remained the case in Late Antiquity. But in other ways, many late antique writers balanced the ancient stereotypes against more nuanced views of barbarians based on the changing political, economic, and military circumstances of the late antique world.

Manifestations of these changing perceptions can be seen in works that create “Literary Constructions of Barbarian Identity,” the title of the first subsection. As discussed by **Ralph W. Mathisen**, one such image of barbarians was presented in catalogues of barbarians, long lists of names of barbarian peoples where barbarians have no individual identity, but present a collective sense of “otherness.” And Christian writers such as Eusebius, John Chrysostom, and Orosius argued that barbarians could be transformed through Christianity and be included under the umbrella of all peoples. But some writers declined to make this accommodation. For example, **Gillian Clark** explores a notable omission from Augustine’s thought, namely a coherent discussion of the position of *barbari*. Starting with his discussion of Alaric’s siege of Rome, which she contrasts with Orosius’ presentation, she shows that Augustine chose not to pursue the idea that barbarians could become full-fledged members of the Christian world, and thus of humanity. Augustine was familiar with the problems that could be caused by barbarians for Roman society, yet he declined to discuss what Christians could do about the barbarian condition. Over-influenced by the local and temporal exigencies of his polemic in the *City of God*, he seems disingenuously to have neglected to mention Alaric’s and his Goths’ Arianism, which he must have known of. One might consider this merely a suppression of an embarrassing fact, but Clark takes the problem to elsewhere in Augustine’s work. For Augustine, perceptions of barbarians never went beyond the stereotypes, and barbarians were not potential members of the City of God. Thus, one of the greatest of late antique Christian theologians emerges as rather ostrich-like in this regard, a man unready for the missionary Christianity that would characterize the Early Middle Ages.

The literary spin put on the identity of barbarian rulers, meanwhile, was felt at the level of political terminology. In a subsection on “Literary Constructions of Barbarian Identity,” **Steven Fanning** looks at how Latin political terminology has been applied to the study of Germanic political structures, and zeroes in on the meaning of the words “*regulus*” and “*subregulus*,” terms often used to describe rulers of Germanic peoples in late antique contexts. Fanning concludes that the terms mean not “petty king,” as generally assumed, but “co-ruler.” Rulers

identified as “reguli” often would have been of much greater consequence than is generally allowed.

**Scott McDonough** and **Jan Willem Drijvers** look beyond the eastern frontier and consider Roman attitudes toward the highly civilized Sasanian “barbarians.” In the view of McDonough, the Sasanians were foreign barbarians who were “stubbornly unsubdued” and who challenged the confidence of Romans in the superiority of their civilization. Romans responded with a conflicted and contradictory rhetoric about the Sasanians, emphasizing the foreign and repugnant aspects of their civilization while at the same time praising their military valor and the justice of their kings. Ultimately, the Romans had to acknowledge the status of the Sasanians in the context of the Roman world by according the Sasanian king of kings an equal status with the Roman emperor. Drijvers suggests that the Romans considered the Sasanians to be barbarians in a more complex way than the way in which they viewed more obviously barbarous neighbors such as the Huns or Alamanni. Even though Roman views evolved against a backdrop of Greek perceptions of the inferiority of Persian civilization, the antiquity and grandeur of eastern civilization nonetheless helped to shape the Romans’ own identity as the predominant power of the Mediterranean world.

According to their particular political or religious agendas, late antique writers also could put a literary spin on political events that involved barbarians, as discussed in a subsection on “Political and Religious Interpretations of Barbarian Activities.” **Amelia Robertson Brown** compares archaeological and literary evidence to get a sense not only of the nature of three barbarian invasions and raids in Greece but also of the spin that the written sources put on these events. And **Edward Watts** reminds us that within the Roman Empire there was no unity of political perception, and looks at how the barbarian occupation of the western Roman Empire was perceived in Palestinian and Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian circles, where writers such as Timothy of Alexandria and John Rufus of Gaza interpreted Odovacar’s seizure of Rome as evidence of God’s displeasure at the Council of Chalcedon.

This section closes with a subsection entitled “Imperial Manipulation of Perceptions of Barbarians,” which considers how government perceived and treated barbarians. By various means, the imperial government incorporated barbarians into the Roman world, viewing barbarians not only as implacable enemies, a policy that has been extensively studied,<sup>10</sup> but also as potential participants in the Roman system, an element of barbarian relations with Rome that has not been nearly so well appreciated. **Yuval Shahar** looks at how the Diocletianic Great Persecution created a different sort of shifting frontier, viz. one between ethnic groups. Diocletian’s edicts had been intended to elicit universal sacrifice. Jews had been exempted, Gentiles not. But what was the legal status

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. as at the fifth Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity conference: Ralph Mathisen, “Violent Behavior and the Construction of Barbarian Identity in Late Antiquity,” in H. Drake, ed., *Violence in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 27–35.

of the Samaritans, who before the early fourth century had been seen by Jews as Jews? The form of sacrifice demanded, namely libation, drove a wedge between Jews and Samaritans, for some Samaritans sacrificed, and doubts about their wine survive in halakhic prohibitions in the Jerusalem Talmud. The Diocletianic persecutions thus occasioned the start of an important parting of the ways between Samaritans and Jews. **Elizabeth DePalma Digeser** then studies the role of traditional barbarian *religio* in the context not only of the incorporation of barbarians under the Roman umbrella but also of the Diocletianic effort to revive pagan practices and suppress Christianity. The Neoplatonists (some of whom were a “brains trust” for Diocletian’s policy) believed state religion necessary for the polis. Jews and Romans are configured as internal “barbarians” (in contrast to Hellenes) with Christians constituting an unacceptable and indigestible fifth column. We are a long way from the early medieval world in which Christianity was to become the prime carrier and signifier of *Romanitas*.<sup>11</sup> And, for the later fourth century, it is suggested that the government was not as terrified of foreign barbarian invasions or conspiracies as often has been assumed. **Cristiana Sogno** argues that what have been normally read as genuine battles between Romans and Alamanni may have been closer to staged military skirmishes to impress a distinguished Roman aristocrat unfamiliar with operations in the field.

The second section covers the broad topic of “Cultural Interaction on the Roman/Barbarian Frontiers” and looks at Roman–barbarian interactions on the frontier writ large, from broader social, economic, and political perspectives, sometimes from the point of view of the barbarians themselves and sometimes with regard to the effect that frontier barbarians had on the Roman population. Many of these interactions were moderated by policies of the Roman government that were intended to have direct effects on real people, especially on the frontier, where the integration of Roman and barbarian populations was accomplished by several mechanisms—such as marriages, slavery, trade, and Roman-sponsored settlement—as people moved back and forth across the frontier. In a subsection entitled “Becoming Roman: Movements of People across the Frontier and the Effects of Imperial Policies,” several contributions look at how Roman–barbarian relations, often in the context of policies or perceptions of the imperial government, affected individual people. The bi-directional movements across frontiers during Late Antiquity by peoples often compelled to do so by external forces was stimulated by the breakdown of the Roman “shell defense” strategy and greatly fostered the creation of a composite Roman–barbarian culture in which barbarians became Romans and Romans adopted aspects of barbarian culture.

Some kinds of interaction were directly related to legislation promulgated by the Roman government. **Cam Grey** focuses on imperial legislation that fostered contacts between Romans and barbarians and encouraged barbarians to become Roman, isolating a single law of 409 CE regarding barbarian Scirians who became

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<sup>11</sup> A. Thacker, “England in the Seventh Century,” in P. Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History vol. 1 c. 500–c. 700* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 484.

*coloni*. He considers the extent to which it provides a model for the settlement of other barbarians on Roman soil. These barbarian settlers would thus have been incorporated under the umbrella of Roman law and, over the course of time, become Romans, just as thousands of barbarians had done in the past. Not all barbarian settlement in the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity, therefore, was accomplished by the forceful seizure of Roman land by invaders.

The next two contributions look at cultural interaction on the frontiers in light of imperial concerns over information exchange. **Kimberly Kagan** describes how perceptions of “treason” resulting from the movements of barbarians and Romans back and forth across frontiers differed from the perspectives of state policy on the one hand and individual identity on the other. **Ekaterina Nechaeva**, starting with a puzzling passage in Menander Protector, also discusses the movements of peoples and the role of geography in defining identity by examining the characterization of either individuals or groups who fled to or from Romans as “deserters,” “runaways,” or “absconders.” Views of both the empire and barbarian peoples, such as the Avars, about how such ‘runaways’ should be perceived are analyzed.

In the next subsection, “Becoming Roman: Social and Economic Interchange,” two contributions consider the social and economic effects of traffic across the frontier that included slave trading, raiding, and the immigration of new settlers. **Noel Lenski** re-examines a variety of later Roman texts, including Jerome’s *Life of Malchus*, from a comparative perspective as ancient “slave narratives” and suggests that the most common contact between barbarians and Romans was that between Roman masters and barbarian slaves, and barbarian masters and Roman slaves. Barbarian slaves brokered increasingly sympathetic perceptions of barbarians among Romans who had long experience of them. More significant, perhaps, was the effect of slave trading on barbarians. The demands of Roman slave markets resulted in increased slave trading, and ownership of Roman slaves, by barbarian peoples, not only attesting to the economic impact that Rome had on barbarian society but also fostering the Romanization of barbarian society. And **Hartmut Ziche** considers the effect that barbarians moving back and forth across the frontiers had on the economy of the Roman Empire by looking at their complementary roles as raiders and settlers. Barbarians made both negative and positive contributions to the Roman economy, with destruction caused by raiding on the one hand and the provision of new labor, settlers, and markets on the other.

Nor did the policies of the Roman government occur in a vacuum: political and cultural developments on the frontiers were intertwined. As evident in the subsection “A New Era of Accommodation,” the development of late antique frontier societies was marked by political and cultural compromises in a world where Rome no longer exercised supreme authority on the basis of political influence, military might, or overwhelming economic influence. On the southern Egyptian frontier, the integration and accommodation of barbarians by the Roman government was reflected in Roman relations with the Kushites. Using

both Kushite and Roman sources, **Salim Faraji** depicts the process by which the Kushites developed a sense of empowerment as they negotiated with empire, often from a position of strength, against the backdrop of Rome. The empire initially accommodated Kushite religious rituals, but eventually the Christian Nobades triumphed over the pagan Blemmyes, leading to the decline of Kushite traditional religious practices. In Palestine, **Jason Moralee** narrows the focus on cultural interactions on the eastern frontier to a recently discovered 10-line hexameter inscription from Petra that praises an anonymous leader for defeating a “barbarous-sounding enemy.” A reference to “Palaestina Salutaris” dates this encounter to the period 358–388 and suggests a connection to the revolt of the Arab queen Mavia in 378. The inscription thus provides evidence for Roman perceptions of Arabs and the uncertainties of life on the Roman frontier.

**Linda Ellis** turns to the Danubian frontier and picks up on the importance of geography in the definition of identity by considering how human relatedness, and concepts of Roman and barbarian, were connected to geographical space in the province of Scythia Minor. There Roman and barbarian had been historically intertwined for so long that it was hard for anyone, including the parties concerned, to tell the two apart. And in North Africa, **Kevin Uhalde** discusses two letters of Augustine relating to real life on the Arzugitanian frontier and dealing with the question of how Christians should treat oaths sworn by barbarians. These letters provide insight into the day-to-day practicalia of life on frontier zones; portray associations that cut across religious, ethnic, and political boundaries; and delineate the kinds of cultural incompatibilities that had to be dealt with. Uhalde shows how pragmatism often had to take precedence over ideology when dealing with life on the frontier and attempting to foster a *modus vivendi* between different populations.

In the European continental post-Roman world, new kinds of identity were emerging in barbarian kingdoms where Roman rule seemed only a memory. Barbarians became full-fledged participants in cultures that integrated Roman and barbarian populations but that, in most cases, were ultimately rooted in Roman models. The third major section, “Creating Identity in the Post-Roman World,” considers forms of integrated identity that emerged in Spain, Gaul, and Britain after the final disappearance of western Roman authority. Andreas Schwarcz, Luis García Moreno, and Scott de Brestian tell the story of post-Roman Spain. **Andreas Schwarcz** looks at the processes by which barbarians, in particular the Visigoths, were settled on Roman territory and gained possession of formerly Roman land. In Spain, Schwarcz argues, the *tertia Romanae* and *sortes Gothicae* mentioned in Visigothic law codes were classifications of land that once had been owned by the imperial government and thence had passed to the Visigoths. The *tertia Romanae* were tracts that were rented out and provided one of the kingdom’s primary financial resources. The *sortes Gothicae*, on the other hand, were estates that were alienated and distributed to Visigoths. Neither classification had anything to do with the confiscation of Roman estates. **Luis A. García Moreno** studies a Visigothic dowry document of 615 CE providing insights into both Gothic and

Roman legal institutions as a basis for investigating the evolution of a nobility of mixed ethnicity that would contribute to the importance of the city of Cordoba from Visigothic to Islamic times. And **Scott de Brestian** provides a corrective to the picture of the occupation of the western empire by foreign barbarians alone by considering the case of the Vascones in northern Spain, a native people who long had accommodated themselves to Roman rule but regained their cultural and political identity after the decline of the western empire. De Brestian sees the development of the late Roman Vascones as a result not of native resistance but of economic changes and cultural differentiation in the agrarian south and pastoral north. The term Vascones came to be used both for Romanized and Christianized populations in the Ebro Valley on the one hand and unchristianized populations isolated between Visigothic and Merovingian spheres of influence.

In Gaul, **Patrick Périn** and **Michel Kazanski** use archaeological evidence to take a more nuanced look at the process of identifying archaeological, and in particular funerary, assemblages with historically attested peoples, and in so doing examine barbarian ethnogenesis in Gaul from a new perspective. Archaeology, the authors argue, can tell us more, for example, about periods of settlement than about the dynamics of population movements. And archaeological evidence often represents not so much the movements of entire peoples as the circulation of individuals, especially mobile elites, barbarians in Roman military service, and women, and in so doing helps us to personalize what in the past have usually been viewed as mass migrations of faceless crowds. Ultimately, most barbarians who settled on Roman territory became inevitably acculturated to Roman ways.

An example of an integration of peoples based not on social and cultural integration but on biological integration is presented by **Michael E. Jones**. One of the natural consequences of barbarian settlements anywhere was a mixing of the DNA of the newcomers with that of the natives. Sexual unions between invaders and natives produce offspring who pass on genetic markers of these encounters. Michael Jones introduces a most fascinating approach to our understanding of these kinds of interactions on the Roman frontier by bringing new evidence to bear on the thorny question of whether the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain comprised a mass migration of peoples or the arrival of relatively small groups of military elites. On the one hand, studies of mitochondrial DNA do not support models of massive population movements, and on the other, whereas some studies of Y-chromosome mutations show affinities among Basque, Welsh, and Irish populations, other studies of British and continental populations yield contradictory results.

The collection concludes with a look at “Modern Constructions of Barbarian Identity” by **Bailey Young** and **Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey**, who discuss the development of modern perceptions of barbarians as evidenced by an early nineteenth-century excavation at La Butte des Gargans by Auguste Moutié, an excavation intellectually well in advance of its time that recovered a number of grave assemblages now preserved at the Spurlock World Heritage Museum on the campus of the University of Illinois.

The preceding organizational structure is only one way that the contributions could be organized. Other patterns also might be equally instructive. For example, the volume boasts full geographical coverage of the late antique world, including both within the Roman *limes* (North Africa [Clark, Uhalde, Mathisen], Spain [García Moreno, Schwarcz, De Brestian], Gaul [Périn, Sogno, Young], Britain [Jones], Italy [Sogno], Moesia [Ellis], Greece [Brown], Palestine [Moralee, Shahar, Watts], Egypt [Faraji, Watts]) and beyond the frontiers (Alamannia [Sogno], Kush [Faraji], Sasanid Persia [McDonough, Drijvers], and the central Asian steppes [Nechaeva]), not to mention synthetic studies covering most or all of the late antique world (Mathisen, Kagan, Grey, Lenski, Ziche, Fanning). The clustering of several contributions around the same area—such as North Africa, Spain, Gaul, or the east—permits the reader to create virtual regional studies of Roman–barbarian interaction for different spheres of Roman–barbarian frontier interaction.

It would also be possible to create a virtual collection. There are many cross-references among the contributions that go beyond the sections into which they have been organized. Frontiers are considered not only from the usual Roman perspective, but also from the local, barbarian perspective (Faraji, Ellis, Périn, De Brestian, Schwarcz). Case studies of single, discrete documents provide examples of how detailed study of a single, small piece of evidence can produce broad, significant observations about the transformation of late antique society (Mathisen, Grey, García Moreno, Moralee, Uhalde). These multiple possible axes of linkage attest to the resonance of contributions that ultimately reflect the many variegated and complex interactions between barbarians and Romans in Late Antiquity.



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PART I  
Constructing Images of the Impact  
and Identity of Barbarians

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## A. Literary Constructions of Barbarian Identity

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# Chapter 1

## Catalogues of Barbarians in Late Antiquity<sup>1</sup>

Ralph W. Mathisen

The human desire to create tangible lists of stuff is at least as old as the Babylonian king lists, the Turin papyrus, the Egyptian Nile records, and the Homeric catalogue of ships. Some lists, of course, were of a practical nature: the Roman consular fasti gave a chronological framework to the Roman state. Others served a less practical, but nonetheless important, purpose. Of particular interest to Greek and Roman writers were lists of exotic places and the peoples associated with them. This study proposes to look at the creation of catalogues of barbarian peoples during the Roman and, in particular, the late Roman periods, and consider what they can tell us about interests, ideologies, and mentalities.<sup>2</sup>

### The Cataloguing Tradition

Many aspects of the nature of barbarian alterity, and the place of barbarian otherness in Roman intellectual, political, and ecclesiastical ideologies, have been well studied in the past.<sup>3</sup> But an aspect of Roman perceptions of barbarians that hitherto has been little noticed or understood, and can help us to nuance even further the conceptual positions of barbarians in the Roman world, is what one might dub the “cataloguing tradition.” This related to the way that Romans conceptualized groups of barbarians not for their specific traits but for their collective appearances with other groups of barbarians.

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this study was presented as “Catalogues of Barbarians in Late Antiquity” at the annual conference of the Medieval Academy of America Conference in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Late antique writers also enjoyed creating lists, as manifested, e.g., in the *Notitia provinciarum*; the *Notitia dignitatum*; and catalogues of saints, not to mention the great compilations of late Roman law. See also A. Diller, “Byzantine Lists of Old and New Geographical Names,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift (BZ)* 63 (1970): 26–42.

<sup>3</sup> See, inter alios, Y.A. Dauge, *Le barbare. Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation*, Collection Latomus 176 (Brussels, 1981); G.B. Ladner, “On Roman Attitudes toward Barbarians in Late Antiquity,” *Viator* 7 (1976): 1–25; H., R. Kahane, “On the Meanings of Barbarus,” *Hellenika* 37 (1986): 129–132; E. Lévy, “Naissance du concept de barbare,” *Ktema* 9 (1984): 5–14; and D.B. Saddington, “Roman Attitudes to the *externae gentes* of the North,” *Acta classica* 4 (1961): 90–102.

In the cataloguing model, barbarians lacked most or all of the identifying characteristics that were de rigueur in other models; indeed, they had little or no individual identity at all. In the most extreme manifestation of this model, catalogued barbarian peoples did not even have names, but were merely totaled up for each region of the world under consideration. For example, the geographical survey at the beginning of Orosius' *History against the Pagans* enumerates 44 *gentes* inhabiting India, 32 between the Indus and the Tigris, 18 from the Tigris to the Euphrates, 12 between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea, 24 in Upper Egypt, and 53 in northern Europe.<sup>4</sup>

More commonly, barbarian peoples were catalogued as lists of exotic names, the longer the better. These lists are as early as classical literature. Homer, for example, along with his catalogue of Greek ships also included a list of the Trojans and their allies, each accompanied by a brief identifying characteristic.<sup>5</sup> But the early Greek interest in exotic peoples and places is best represented by Herodotus, whose history of the Persian wars is replete with ethnographic catalogues listing, for example, the Scythians, Tauri, Agathyrsi, Neuri, Androphagi, Geloni, Budini, and Sarmatians.<sup>6</sup> In the earlier Greek lists, outlandish peoples were simply "out there," a natural, necessary, and even defining corollary of the civilized world, and a manifestation of the polarity between Hellenes and barbarians, between civilization and barbarism, and between "here" and "there."<sup>7</sup> In the Greek mind, these non-Greeks were uniformly classified as "barbarians," although the chauvinistic sense of superiority that the civilized Greeks felt toward their barbarian neighbors did not at all detract from their interest in them.

The tradition of creating catalogues of barbarians continued in the Roman and late Roman periods. Late antique catalogues include "simple lists," in which names are cited without any intervening commentary, and "descriptive lists," in which each entry is combined with a brief description.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the creators of lists of peoples also sometimes created hierarchical taxonomies, in which some peoples were subsumed as sub-groups of others. It will be suggested here that the late Romans, perhaps because of their much more intimate interactions with and

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<sup>4</sup> Oros. *Hist. adv. pag.* 1.2.

<sup>5</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 2, cited the "archers from Paeonia, from far off Amydon," the "Halizoni from distant Alybe, where men mine silver"; the "Phrygians from far-off Ascania, men keen for war"; the "Carians, men with a strange language"; and the "Lycians, from distant Lycia, by the swirling river Xanthus."

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* 4.102. And the Alexandrian love of cataloguing is exemplified by Callimachus' *Pinakes*, 120 books of tables of all those who were eminent in any kind of literature.

<sup>7</sup> For the importance of geography in the creation of identity, see Ellis in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> In a third type, the "narrative list," not discussed here, several names appear in close proximity during the course of a narrative, but are not directly connected to each other.

greater sympathy for barbarian peoples, also used catalogues of barbarians as a means of integrating barbarian peoples into the Roman conceptual world.

### *Simple Lists*

Roman encyclopediasts continued the Greek tradition of creating simple catalogues of barbarian peoples. Circa 40 CE, Pomponius Mela, in his *Description of the World*, offered laundry lists of the peoples who inhabited different parts of the world. In Asia, for example, lived “Medi, Armenii, Commageni, Murrani, Veneti, Cappadoces, Gallograeci, Lycaones, Phryges, Pisidae, Isauri, Lydi, Syroclilices.”<sup>9</sup> And at the end of the first century CE, in the full glory of Roman cultural and military supremacy, Tacitus catalogued in his *Germania* the peoples who lived beyond the northern pale of Roman authority.<sup>10</sup> Barbarians were organized using the Aristotelian practice of inventorying different traits, listing singularities, placing them in order, and organizing in subcategories within *gentes*. Just as Caesar had listed the Condrusi, Eburones, Caerosi, and Paemani as being subsumed under the single category of Germani,<sup>11</sup> Tacitus opined, regarding the Suebi, “they are not a single people ... they are divided among nations and names, although they are commonly called Suebi.”<sup>12</sup> In none of these catalogues was there any sense of threat or hazard, merely a genteel curiosity about the strange people who lived “out there,” and a chauvinistic sense of how the outlandish names and customs of barbarian peoples provided a striking contrast to Roman values, and of how much better “we” are than they.

In contrast to Greek ethnography, however, Roman lists almost always concerned peoples who actually existed (or were reasonably thought to): there were few of the monstrous races that regularly crop up in Greek ethnographers. Thus, Tacitus, when he finished his discussion of the Suebi, commented, “But other accounts are fabulous, such as that the Hellusi and Oxionae have the faces

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<sup>9</sup> Pomp.Mel. *De situ orbis* 1.2: “Brevis Asiae descriptio ... super Amazonas et Hyperboreos, Cimmerici, Zygi, Heniochae, Gorgippi, Moschi, Ceretae, Toretae, Arimphaei, atque, ubi in nostra marie tractus excedit, Matiani, Tibarani, et notiora iam nomina, Medi, Armenii, Commageni, Murrani, Veneti, Cappadoces, Gallograeci, Lycaones, Phryges, Pisidae, Isauri, Lydi, Syroclilices.”

<sup>10</sup> F. DuPont, “‘En Germanie c’est nulle part’: Rhétorique de l’altérité et rhétorique de l’identité: l’aporie descriptive d’un territoire barbare dans la Germanie de Tacite,” in A. Rouselle, ed., *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes dans l’antiquité* (Paris, 1995), pp. 193–205, at 203, begins a discussion of catalogues of Germanic peoples in Tacitus, reproducing the Alexandrian ethnographic classification as known from Agatharcides, and the alterity is reduced to a single trait.

<sup>11</sup> Caes. *BG* 1.51.2: “Condrusos, Eburones, Caerosos, Paemanos, qui uno nomine Germani appellantur.”

<sup>12</sup> Tac. *Germ.* 8: “Non una ... gens ... propriis adhuc nationibus nominibusque discreti, quamquam in commune Suebi vocentur.”



and visages of humans but the bodies and limbs of wild beasts. I leave this hanging because it is unconfirmed.”<sup>13</sup>

Citing simple lists of barbarians could serve several purposes. For example, barbarians were the stuff of humor. The poet Martial, for example, rattled off a list of barbarians—Parthians, Dacians, Cilicians, Cappadocians, Egyptians, Indians, Jews, Sarmatians, and Alans—with whom the prostitute Caelia had slept, and wondered why she avoided Romans.<sup>14</sup> And on another level, the listing of names may reflect an old commonplace of folk magic: to know something’s name is to be able to control it.<sup>15</sup> And to know all its names would be to control it absolutely, as seen in spells that attempt to list all the known epithets of a particular deity.<sup>16</sup> When it came to barbarians, the Roman writers certainly knew their names.

Cataloguing defeated barbarians became more and more a standard aspect of Roman imperial ideology. On a trophy in the Pyrenees, for example, Pompey the Great listed 876 towns that he had reduced,<sup>17</sup> and in 6 BCE Augustus, on a trophy at La Turbie in the Alps, listed forty-eight Alpine peoples defeated by his generals,<sup>18</sup> as quoted in full by Pliny the Elder:

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<sup>13</sup> *Germ.* 46: “Cetera iam fabulosa: Hellusios et Oxionas ora hominum voltusque, corpora atque artus ferarum gerere: quod ego ut incompertum in medio relinquam.”

<sup>14</sup> Martial, *Epig.* 7.30-1-8: “Das Parthis, das Germanis, das, Caelia, Dacis / nec Cilicum spernis Cappadocum toros / et tibi de Pharia Menphiticus urbe fututor / navigat, a rubris et niger Indus aquis / nec recutitorum fugis inguina Iudaeorum / nec te Sarmatico transit Alanus equo / qua ratione facis, cum sis Romana puella / quod Romana tibi mentula nulla placet?”

<sup>15</sup> For “anachronistic names” as a means of keeping barbarians “in check,” see W. Goffart, “Rome, Constantinople, and the Barbarians,” *American Historical Review* 86 (1981): 275–306, at p. 277.

<sup>16</sup> As on *tabellae defixionum*; see A. Audollent, *Defixionum tabellae quotquot innotuerunt tam in Graecis Orientis quam in totius Occidentis partibus praeter Atticas in Corp. inscrip. Attic. editas* (Paris, 1904); W.S. Fox, *The John Hopkins Tabellae defixionum* (Baltimore, MD, 1912); M. del A. Lopez Jimeno, *Las tabellae defixionis de la Sicilia greca* (Amsterdam, 1991); R. Wünsch, *Defixionum tabellae Atticae (IG III.3)* (Berlin, 1897); and John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York/Oxford, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> Plin. *HN* 7.26: also, *ibid.*: “He celebrated a triumph over Asia, Pontus, Armenia, Paphlagonia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Syria, the Scythians, Jews and Albanians, Iberia, the Island of Crete, the Bastarnians, and, in addition to these, over the kings Mithridates and Tigranes.” For the trophy, whose remains were found in 1984 at Col de Panissars, see P.A. Clement, A. Peyre, “Le trophé et l’autel de César,” in P.A. Clément, A. Peyre, eds., *La voie domitienne* (Languedoc, 1991), pp. 85–86. For a Republican monument in the Piazza della Consolazione bearing the names of eastern peoples, see D.E.E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven, CT, 1992), pp. 51–52, 57; also I.M. Ferris, *Enemies of Rome: The Barbarian Through Roman Eyes* (Stroud, 2000), p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> See Ferris, *Enemies*, p. 39.

The Senate and the Roman People to the emperor Augustus Caesar, son of the divine one, chief pontiff, emperor for the fourth time, tribune for the seventh time. In that under his leadership and authority all the Alpine peoples that spread from the upper sea [the Adriatic] to the lower sea [the Mediterranean] have been brought under the authority of the Roman people. The defeated Alpine peoples are the Trumpulini, Camunni, Venostes, Vennonetes, Isarci, Breuni, Genaunes, Focunates, four nations of Vindelici, Cosuanetes, Rucinates, Licates, Catenates, Ambisontes, Rugusci, Suanetes, Calucones, Brixentes, Liponti, Uberi, Nantuates, Seduni, Varagri, Salassi, Acitavones, Medulli, Ucenni, Caturiges, Brigiani, Sogionti, Brodionti, Nemaloni, Edenates, Vesubiani, Veamini, Gallitae, Triullati, Ecdini, Vergunni, Eguturi, Nemeturi, Oratelli, Nerusi, Velauni, Suetri.<sup>19</sup>

But later in imperial times there was a subtle paradigm shift. Conquered barbarians became more than merely names in a list, and the presence of barbarian peoples became even more closely connected with imperial policies. When the Roman state laid claim to the entire *orbis terrarum*, or *oikumēnē*, barbarians became an integral part of the Roman conception of their world. They were not just “out there,” not just part of the landscape, but were intimately interrelated to the empire in a co-dependent sort of relationship.<sup>20</sup> Martial, for example, wrote to the emperor Domitian, “What people is so distant or so barbarous, Caesar, that it does not have a representative in your city? ... Different languages of peoples are heard, but nevertheless all is one, because you are said to be the true father of the country.”<sup>21</sup> And Florus, the second-century epitomator of Livy, summarized well the Roman

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<sup>19</sup> Plin. *HN* 3.136–137: “Non alienum videtur hoc loco subicere inscriptionem e tropaeo Alpium, quae talis est: IMP • CAESARI DIVI FILIO AVG • PONT • MAX • IMP • XIII • TR • POT • XVII • S • P • Q • R • QVOD EIVS DVCTV AVSPICIISQVE GENTES ALPINAЕ OMNES QVAE A MARI SVPERO CE INFERVM PERTINEBANT SVB IMPERIVM P • R • SVNT REDACTAE • GENTES ALPINAЕ DEVICTAE TRVMPILINI • CAMVNNI • VENOSTES • VENNONETES • ISARCI • BREVNI • GENAVNES • FOCVNATES • VINDELICORVM GENTES QVATTVOR • COSVANETES • RVCINATES • LICATES • CATENATES • AMBISONTES • RVGVSCI • SVANETES • CALVCONES • BRIKENETES • LEPONTI • VBERI • NANTVATES • SEDVNI • VARAGRI • SALASSI • ACITAVONES • MEDVLLI • VCENNI • CATVRIGES • BRIGIANI • SOGIONTI • BRODIONTI • NEMALONI • EDENATES • VESVBIANI • VEAMINI • GALLITAE • TRIVLLATI • ECDINI • VERGVNNI • EGVI • TVRI • NEMATVRI • ORATELLI • NERVSI • VELAVNI • SVETRI. (138) Non sunt adiectae Cottianae civitates XV, quae non fuerant hostiles, item adtributae municipiis lege Pompeia.”

<sup>20</sup> Patrick Amory, “Ethnographic Rhetoric, Aristocratic Attitudes and Political Allegiance in Post-Roman Gaul,” *Klio* 76 (1994): 438–453, at p. 439: “Roman state ideology assumed a never-ending contest between the civilized Roman and the uncivilized barbarian, a validation of the idea of imperial power.”

<sup>21</sup> Martial, *Epig.* 3: “Quae tam seposita est, quae gens tam barbara, Caesar / ex qua spectator non sit in urbe tua? ... vox diversa sonat populorum, tum tamen una est / cum verus patriae diceris esse pater.”

imperial attitude toward world rule that had obtained ever since the reign of Augustus:

With all of the nations pacified toward the west and the south, and also to the north, at least between the Rhine and the Danube, and likewise in the east between the Kura<sup>22</sup> and the Euphrates, those remaining peoples, who were free of our rule, nevertheless sensed our greatness, and esteemed the Roman people as the victor over the nations. For the Scythians sent ambassadors, as did the Sarmatians, seeking peace, and the Chinese, and the Indians living under the same sun ... The Parthians, too.<sup>23</sup>

In subsequent Roman ideology, other barbarian peoples, too, were incorporated under the umbrella of Roman world rule.

An early fourth-century list of 53 peoples appended to an official list of Roman provinces and preserved in a manuscript at Verona has the heading, “Barbarian nations that sprang up under the emperors,”<sup>24</sup> suggesting an underlying assumption that the existence of the empire was somehow connected to their appearance:

Scoti Picti Caledonii Rugi Heruli Saxones Chamavi Frisiavi Amsivari Angli[?]  
Angrivari Flevi Bructeri Chatti Burgundiones Alamanni Suebi Franci Chattovari  
Iuthungi Armilausini Marcomanni Quadi Taifali Hermunduri Vandali Sarmatae  
Sciri Carpi Scythae Gothi Indii Armenii Osrhoeni Palmyreni Mosoritae  
Marmaridae Nabatheii Isauri Fryges Persae ....

This list is followed in the manuscript by lists of barbarians first in North Africa and Spain and then across the Rhine:

Item gentes quae in Mauretania sunt: Mauri Quinquegentiani, Mauri Mazices,  
Mauri Barbares, Mauri Bacuates, Celtiberi, Turduli, Ausetani, Carpetani,

<sup>22</sup> A river flowing from the Caucasus Mountains in Turkey into the Caspian Sea.

<sup>23</sup> Florus, *Epit.* 4.12: “Omnibus ad Occasum et Meridiem pacatibus gentibus, ad Septemtrionem quoque, dumtaxat intra Rhenum atque Danubium, item ad Orientem intra Cyrum et Euphratem, illi quoque reliqui, qui immunes imperii erant, sentiebant tamen magnitudinem, et victorem gentium populum Romanum reverebantur. Nam et Scythae misere legatos, et Sarmatae amicitiam petentes, Seres etiam habitantesque. sub ipso sole Indi ... Parthi quoque ....”

<sup>24</sup> “Gentes barbarae quae pullulaverunt sub imperatoribus”: A. Riese, ed., *Geographi latini minores* (Hildesheim, 1878; repr. Hildesheim, 1964), pp. 128–129, apparently copying Th. Mommsen’s editio princeps from *Acta academiae berolinensis* (1862), pp. 489ff.; see E. Demougeot, “L’image officielle du barbare dans l’empire romain d’Auguste à Théodose,” *Ktéma* 9 (1984): 123–143, at p. 124. The list is appended to the “Verona list,” an official list of Roman provinces dating to ca. 315, on which see T.D. Barnes, “The Unity of the Verona List,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik (ZPE)* 16 (1975): 275–278. Riese, ed., *Geographi latini minores*, p. xxxiii, dates the barbarian addendum to ca. 300/350.

Cantabri, Enantes. Nomina civitatum trans Rhenum fluvium quae sunt. Usiporum. Tubantum. Victoriensium Novariseari. Casuariorum. Istaе omnes civitates trans Rhenum in formulam Belgicae Primae redactae. Trans castellum Mogontiacensium LXXX leugas trans Rhenum Romani possederunt. Istaе civitates sub Gallieno imperatore a barbaris occupatae sunt.<sup>25</sup>

The compiler makes it clear that trans-Rhenane barbarians had occupied previously Roman territory across the Rhine from Mainz, demonstrating the constant give-and-take that went on between Romans and barbarians even in catalogues. By incorporating barbarians of recent origin, such as the Alamanni, along with those with a long history, such as the Persians, the list endows all of them with the mantle of antiquity.

In simple lists such as these, the names are rattled off in sequence without any intervening commentary. There is nothing to distinguish one people from another, and the catalogues achieve their force not from the peoples' individuality, but from their multiplicity. There was no concern here, for example, with what made a Saxon different from a Herul.

Simple lists became part of the classical literary tradition. Late antique writers demonstrated their poetic ingenuity by incorporating unmodified lists into verse, with the names cleverly chosen to suit the meter, as in Sidonius Apollinaris' list of barbarians who invaded Gaul with Attila the Hun in 451 (*Carm.* 7.321–325):

... pugnacem Rugum comitante Gelono,  
Gepida trux sequitur, Scirum Burgundio cogit,  
Chunus, Bellonotus, Neurus, Bastarna, Toringus,  
Bructerus, ulvosa vel quem Nicer alluit unda  
prorumpit Francus ....

The names had a cumulative effect, not because a Scirian was meant to be seen as any different from a Burgundian.

In the intellectual context of Late Antiquity, these lists served several purposes. On a very simple level, of course, they provided an opportunity for writers to display their encyclopedic knowledge and exercise their rhetorical cleverness, especially if the names were put into verse.<sup>26</sup> But the citing of lists of names was more than merely an indication of erudition. Doing so could also have a very tangible psychological impact. In 321 CE, the panegyrist Nazarius described one of the purposes that rattling off such lists of names could serve:<sup>27</sup> “Why should I

<sup>25</sup> Riese, *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Note Peter Heather, “Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes,” in W. Pohl, H. Reimitz, eds., *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 95–111, at 96, where names are chosen “to fit the poetic metre.”

<sup>27</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 10/4.18 (with references to the Galletier and Baehrens editions respectively): “Quid memorem Bructeros? quid Chamavos? quid Cheruscos, Lancionas,

mention the Bructeri, why the Chamavi, why the Cherusci, Lancioni,<sup>28</sup> Alamanni, Tubantes? The names blare out<sup>29</sup> a call to arms, and the savagery of barbarity evokes dread through their very names. All these nations, which had taken up arms one by one, later joined forces, inflamed by an agreement of confederation and alliance.” The sense of horror conveyed by a list of barbarian names was reprised 300 years later by Isidore of Seville, who, in his catalogue of Germanic peoples, referred to “the Tolosates, Amsiavari, Quadi, Tungri, Marcomanni, Bructeri, Chamavi, Vangiones, Tubantes, the savagery of whose barbarity signifies a certain horror even in their very names.”<sup>30</sup> But Victor of Vita, in his late fifth-century depiction of the Vandals of Africa, perhaps put it best: “Study their name and understand their character: could they be called by any name other than barbarians? They bear the word for ferocity, cruelty, and terror.”<sup>31</sup>

Nazarius’ reference to a collective, even collaborative, threat posed by these barbarians also is consistent with the fears about barbarian conspiracies discussed above, and resurfaced later in additional conspiracy theories involving endless lists of barbarian peoples, as when the *Augustan History* reported, “All the peoples from the border of Illyricum all the way to Gaul conspired, including the Marcomanni, Naristae, Hermunduri and Quadi, Suevi, Sarmatae, Lacringes, Burei, these and others with the Victuali, and the Sosibes, Sicobotes, Roxolani, Basternae, Alans, Peucini, and Costoboci.”<sup>32</sup> The seemingly inexhaustible list of invaders only intensified the sense of threat; the *Augustan History* continued, “Finally, diverse

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Halamannos, Tubantes? bellicum strepunt nomina, et immanitas barbariae in ipsis vocabulis adhibet horrorem. hi mones singillatim, dein priter armati conspiratione foederatae societatis exarserant”; for translation, see C.E.V. Nixon, B.S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici latini* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 363–364, and cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.51.2: “Excivit ea caedes Bructeros, Tubantes, Usipetes.”

<sup>28</sup> An obscure people otherwise mentioned only in the Calendar of Philocalus: see Nixon–Rodgers, *Praise*, p. 363, n. 79.

<sup>29</sup> A metaphor also used of barbarians as harbingers of destruction by Cyprian, *Epist. ad Demetriadem* 30 *PL* (*Patrologia Latina*) 30.44: “Recens factum est ... cum ad stridulae buccinae sonum, Gothorumque clamorem, lugubri oppressa metu domina orbis Roma contremuit.” The metaphor might have been suggested by the name “Tubantes.”

<sup>30</sup> Isid. *Hisp. Etym.* 9.2.89–97: “Ut Tolosates, Amsivari, Quadi, Tungri, Marcomanni, Bructeri, Chamavi, Blangiani, Tubantes, quorum inmanitas barbariae etiam in ipsis vocabulis horrorem quandam significat.”

<sup>31</sup> Vict. *Vit. Hist. persec. vand.* 3.62, M. Petschenig, ed., *Victoris episcopi vitensis Historia persecutionis africanae provinciae* (Vienna, 1881), *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (CSEL) 7.102–103: “Discutite nomen et intellegite mores. numquid alio proprio nomine vocitari poterant, nisi ut barbari dicerentur, ferocitatis utique, crudelitatis et terroris vocabulum possidentes?”

<sup>32</sup> *HA Marc. Aurel.* 22.1: “Gentes omnes ab Illyrici limite usque in Galliam conspiraverant, ut Marcomanni, Varistae [i.e. Naristae], Hermunduri et Quadi, Suevi, Sarmatae, Lacringes et Burei, hi aliique cum Victualis, Sosibes, Sicobotes Roxolani, Basternae, Alani, Peucini, Costoboci.” For the Costobocs, see also Brown in this volume.

peoples of the Scythians, that is, the Peuci, Gruthungi, Ostrogoths, Tervingi, Visi, Gepids, Celts and even Heruls, poured onto Roman soil out of their desire for loot and devastated everything there.”<sup>33</sup> This last passage also reprises the tendency to create taxonomies of barbarian peoples, with smaller groups being subsumed into larger ones, thus creating a polyethnic identity for larger, more inclusive groups.

In the early fifth century, the drumbeat continued. Jerome listed the barbarian devastators of Gaul: “The Vandal and Sarmatian, Alans, Gepid, Heruls, Saxons, Burgundians, Alamanni, and—O mournful Republic—the Pannonian hordes.”<sup>34</sup> And later in the century the African Dracontius saw threatening barbarians lurking under the bed: “The barbarian goes everywhere, and likewise they take arms, the Sueve, the Sarmatian, the Persian, the Goth, the Alaman, the Frank, the Alan, or whatever distant nations hide in the north and prepare to take arms against us.”<sup>35</sup>

The image of savagery, horror, and menace that was embedded in lists of barbarian peoples was put to good use in imperial ideology when emperors justified huge expenditures on the Roman military, not to mention their own existence, by playing up the threat posed by savage hostile barbarians.<sup>36</sup> Late Roman emperors were triumphally portrayed as victors over the same catalogues of barbarians that threatened imperial security. The *Augustan History*, for example, listed the barbarian peoples who provided captives for the triumph of Aurelian in 274 (*HA Aurelian* 33): “Blemmyes, Axomitae, Arabes, Eudaemones, Indi, Bactriani, Hiberi, Saraceni, Persae, Gothi, Halani, Roxolani, Sarmatae, Franci, Suevi, Vanduli, Germani.”

Emperors advertised their successes by compiling lists of victory titles.<sup>37</sup> In his official titulature, Diocletian (284–305), for example, was denoted as

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<sup>33</sup> *HA Claud.* 6.2: “Denique Scytharum diversi populi, Peuci, Grutungi, Austrogoti, Tervingi, Visi Gipedes, Celtae etiam et Heruli, praedae cupiditate in Romanum solum inruperunt atque illic pleraque vastarunt.”

<sup>34</sup> *Jer. Epist.* 123.16, *PL* 22.1057–1058: “Quadus, Vandalus, Sarmata, Halani, Gipedes, Heruli, Saxones, Burgundiones, Alemanni, et, o lugenda respublica, hostes Pannonii.”

<sup>35</sup> Dracont. *Romulea* 5.32–37, *MGH AA* 14.140–141: “Barbarus omnis eat, rapiant simul arma Suevus / Sarmata Persa Gothus Alamannus Francus Alanus / vel quaequaque latent gentes aquilone remotae / in nos tela parent.”

<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., J. Drinkwater, “The ‘German Threat on the Rhine Frontier’: A Romano-Gallic Artefact?”, in R. Mathisen, H. Sivan, eds., *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (London, 1996), pp. 20–30; and R.W. Mathisen, “Violent Behavior and the Construction of Barbarian Identity in Late Antiquity,” in H. Drake, ed., *Violence in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 27–35.

<sup>37</sup> See A. Arnaldi, “La successione dei cognomina devictarum gentium e le loro iterazioni nella titolatura di Costantino il Grande,” in *Contributi di storia antica in onore di Albino Garzetti* (Genoa, 1977); idem, “La successione dei cognomina devictarum gentium e le loro iterazioni nella titolatura di primi tetrarchi,” *Rendiconti dell’Istituto Lombardo* 106 (1972): 28–50; E. Kettenhofen, “Zur Siegestitulatur Kaiser Aurelians,” *Tyche* 1 (1986): 139–146; K. Schauenburg, “Siegreiche Barbaren,” *Athenische Mitteilungen* 92 (1977): 91–100.

“Germanicus Sarmaticus Persicus Britannicus Carpicus Armeniacus Medicus Adiabenicus.” And in the late sixth century, Maurice Tiberius (582–602) bore the titles “Alamannicus, Gothicus, Anticus, Alanicus, Vandalicus, Erullicus, Gypedicus, Africus.”<sup>38</sup> In such cases, size did matter: it was felt that the greater the number of barbarian peoples that could be cited as defeated, the greater the glory that accrued to an emperor.<sup>39</sup> How the process worked was explained by the panegyrist Latinus Pacatus Drepanius ca. 389 in his panegyric on Theodosius, when he noted that “If that custom had survived into this age, whereby Roman commanders assumed titles, such as Macedonicus, Creticus, or Numantinus, adopted from the names of peoples they had subdued, would there not be fewer cognomina to be read today in the historical archives than in the titles of your house. For he himself would be called Saxonicus, Sarmaticus, and Alamannicus, and the one family would boast as many triumphs as the whole state has enemies.”<sup>40</sup> This practice also permitted some gallows humor in the 390s by the author of the *Augustan History*, who, after reporting that Caracalla had taken the titles “Germanicus, Parthicus, Arabicus, and Alamannicus,” added that he also could be called “Geticus,” traditionally “conqueror of the Getae,” but here referring to his murder of his brother Geta.<sup>41</sup>

The emperors’ ability to maintain control over subdued barbarian peoples likewise was reflected in catalogues of Roman barbarian allies. Sidonius Apollinaris pulled out all the stops in his versified list of the barbarians who accompanied Majorian into Gaul in 459 (*Carm.* 5.474–477):

Hoc totum tua signa pavet; Bastarna, Suebus,  
Pannonius, Neurus, Chunus, Geta, Dacus, Halanus,  
Bellonotus, Rugus, Burgundio, Vesus, Alites,<sup>42</sup>  
Bisalta, Ostrogothus, Procrustes, Sarmata, Moschus ....

<sup>38</sup> *Ep.Aust.* 42, *Corpus Christianorum, series Latina (CCSL)* 107.464.

<sup>39</sup> A phenomenon going back to the late Roman Republic; note Sallust, *Bell.jurg.* 18, “Victi omnes in gentem nomenque imperantium concessere.”

<sup>40</sup> Pacat. *Pan. Lat.* 12/2.5: “An si eius saeculo mos ille vixisset, quo Romani duces Macedonici Cretici Numantini de vocabulis gentium subactarum adoptivum insigne sumebant, nonne hodie pauciora in annalium scriniis quam in vestrae domus titulis cognomenta legerentur?—cum ipse Saxonicus, ipse Sarmaticus, ipse Alamannicus diceretur et, quantum tota respublica habet hostium, tantum una familia ostenderet et triumphorum.”

<sup>41</sup> *HA Carac.* 9.5: “Nam cum Germanici et Parthici et Arabici et Alamannici nomen adscriberet (nam Alamannorum gentem devicerat), Helvius Pertinax, filius Pertinacis, dicitur ioco dixisse, ‘Adde, si placet, etiam Geticus Maximus’ quod Getam occiderat fratrem et Gothi Getae dicerentur, quos ille, dum ad orientem transit, tumultuariis proeliis devicerat.”

<sup>42</sup> See B. Bachrach, “A Note on Alites,” *BZ* 61 (1968): 35.

The “simple lists” of the preceding examples had the virtue of, well, simplicity. As suggested by Nazarius, the roll call of barbarian peoples, without any intervening verbiage, had a certain shock value. But the downside of these “simple lists” is that they told the reader or listener absolutely nothing at all about the individual character traits of the peoples being cited. The only effect was in the piling up of names. One size fit all, and no matter that one people dwelt in Scotland and another in Ethiopia.

### *Descriptive Lists*

Other catalogues were mediated by intervening verbiage that gave the peoples at least a tiny bit of personal identity and created a rather different kind of rhetorical effect. They provided writers with a broader range of uses to which their cataloguing inclinations could be put. Individual barbarian peoples could be given familiar identifying characteristics. Pacatus, for example, in the aforementioned panegyric to Theodosius, briefly described the geographical situation and character traits of several barbarian peoples:

The Ocean does not make the Indian secure, nor the cold the one from the Bosphorus, nor the equatorial sun the Arab ... Shall I speak of the Goths received in military service in your camps? Shall I speak of the punishments received by rebellious Saracens for a violated treaty? Shall I speak of the Tanais put off limits to the Scythians and even the unwarlike bows of the fleeing Albanians?<sup>43</sup>

Likewise, Claudian, in his panegyric to Stilicho of 405 CE, effused, “Who but you could have driven the savage Visigoths back to their wagons or destroyed the boastful Bastarnae? ... For you the fearful shriek of the onrushing Alan had no terrors, nor the fierceness of the nomad Hun, nor the scimitar of the Geloni, nor the Getae’s bow, nor the Sarmatian’s club.”<sup>44</sup> In a similar manner, in his attack on Rufinus in 400 CE, Claudian stated, “There march against us a mixed horde of Sarmatians and Dacians, and the rash Massageta who wounds his horses for a drink, the Alan drinking water through the broken ice of Maeotis, and the Gelonus who tattoos his limbs.”<sup>45</sup> In lists of this sort, the litany of barbarian names, each

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<sup>43</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 2/12.22: “Non Oceano Indus, non frigore Bosphoranus, non Arabs medio sole securus est ... Dicamne ego receptos servitum Gothos castris tuis militem ... dicam a rebellibus Saracenis poenas polluti foederis expetias? Dicam interdictum Scythis Tanain et imbelles arcus etiam fugientis Albani?”

<sup>44</sup> Claud. *Cons.Stil.I.* 94ff.: “Quis enim Visos in plaustra feroces / repulit aut ... tumentes / Bastarnas ... potuit delere? ... nec te terrisonus stridor venientis Alani / nec vaga Chunorum feritas, nec falce Gelonus / non arcu pepulere Getae, non Sarmata conto” (trans. Platnauer, Loeb 1.373).

<sup>45</sup> Claud. *In Rufinum* 1.307–314: “Mixtis descendit Sarmata Dacis / et qui cornipedes in pocula vulnerat audax / Massagetes caesamque bibens Maeotin Alanus / membraque qui



coupled with a few Homer-like epithets, focused on the diversity of the barbarian peoples encountered by Rome rather than on their homogeneity. And small matter that on one occasion the Geloni were known for their scimitars, and on another for their tattoos.

After the fall of the western Roman Empire and the establishment of several barbarian kingdoms, Roman writers transferred the cataloguing elements of victory ideology from Roman emperors to barbarian kings. According to Sidonius Apollinaris, suppliants to the Visigothic king Euric ca. 476 included “the blue-eyed Saxon, afraid of the land ... the shorn-headed Sicambrian ... the Herul with blue-grey eyes ... the seven-foot Burgundian ... the Ostrogoth oppressing the Huns”; even the Parthians offered supplication, and as a sign of how the playing field had changed, the list also includes “Romans seeking salvation.”<sup>46</sup>

### **Christian Ideology**

Christian writers, too, had their own reasons for creating catalogues of barbarian peoples. In the 430s, for example, the moralizing preacher Salvian of Marseille purported to demonstrate that barbarian character flaws were no worse than Christian ones:

The Saxons are savage. The Franks are treacherous. The Gepids are ruthless. The Huns are lewd. In short, the life of all barbarian nations is corruption itself. Do you think their vices have the same guilt as ours? Is the lewdness of the Huns as blameworthy as ours? Is the perfidy of the Franks as reprehensible as ours? Is the drunkenness of the Alamanni as blameworthy as the drunkenness of Christians? Is the rapacity of the Alans as much to be condemned as the greed of Christians? What is stranger if a Hun or Gepid cheats, he who is completely ignorant of the crime of cheating? What will a Frank who lies do that is new, he who thinks perjury is a kind of word and not a crime?<sup>47</sup>

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ferro gaudet pinxisse Gelonus.”

<sup>46</sup> Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 8.9.5 *carm.* 21–45, “Istic Saxona coerulum videmus / Assuetum ante salo, solum timere / Cujus verticis extimas per oras / Non contenta suos tenere morsus / Altat lamina marginem comarum / Et sic crinibus ad cutem recisis / Decrescit caput, additurque vultus / Hic tonso occipiti, senex Sicamber / Postquam victus es, elicis retrorsum / Cervicem ad veterem novos capillos / Hic glaucis Herulus genis vagatur / Imos Oceani colens recessus / Algoso prope concolor profundo / Hic Burgundio septipes frequenter / Flexo poplite supplicat quietem / Istis Ostrogothus viget patronis / Vicanosque premens subinde Chunos / His quod subditur, hinc superbit illis / Hinc, Romane, tibi petis salutem / ... Ipse hic Parthicus Arsaces precatur.”

<sup>47</sup> *De gub. dei* 4.14: “Gens Saxonum fera est, Francorum infidelis, Gepidarum inhumana, Chunorum impudica; omnium denique gentium barbarorum vita, vitiositas. Sed numquid eundem reatum habent illorum vitia quem nostra, numquid tam criminosa est Chunorum impudicitia quam nostra, numquid tam accusabilis Francorum perfidia quam nostra, aut tam

He also contrasted supposed barbarian virtues with Christian wickedness, although even here barbarian positive traits alternated with negative ones: “The Gothic nation is lying, but chaste; the Alans are unchaste, but they lie less. The Franks lie, but they are generous. The Saxons are savage in cruelty, but admirable in chastity.”<sup>48</sup> As always, however, one wonders to what extent these traits were manifested in reality, especially given Salvian’s inconsistency in his ascription of negative characteristics: the Franks are in one place treacherous but in another lying; the Goths are here ruthless but there lying.

The triumphalist ideology used to such great effect by the Roman imperial government also was adopted by Christian writers in their efforts to demonstrate the degree to which Christianity embraced the entire *orbis terrarum*.<sup>49</sup> In the late second century, putting new spin on the book of Acts 2.9–10, Tertullian could ask, “Indeed, the nations believe in (Christ), ‘Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene.’” He then described, in his own words, others who believed in Christ, including,

The Jews in Jerusalem and other peoples, such as the different kinds of Gaetuli and the many frontiers of the Moors, and all the borders of Spain and the varied nations of Gaul and, inaccessible to the Romans but surrendered to Christ, the places of the Britons and the Sarmatians and the Dacians and the Germans and the Scythians and of many hidden nations and provinces and of many islands unknown to us and which we are unable to enumerate.<sup>50</sup>

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reprehensibilis ebrietas Alani quam ebrietas Christiani, aut tam damnabilis rapacitas Albani quam rapacitas Christiani? Si fallat Chunus vel Gepida, quid mirum est, qui culpam penitus falsitatis ignorat? Si pejeret Francus, quid novi faciet, qui perjurium ipsum sermonis genus putat esse, non criminis?”; translation from J.F. O’Sullivan, trans., *The Writings of Salvian, the Presbyter* (Washington, DC, 1977), p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> Salv. *De gub.dei* 7.15: “Gothorum gens perfida, sed pudica est; Alanorum impudica, sed minus perfida; Franci mendaces, sed hospitales; Saxones crudelitate efferi, sed castitate mirandi.”

<sup>49</sup> Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in their History and Culture* (Berkeley, CA, 1973), p. 263: “If the lists of converted peoples in Tertullian and Arnobius were the products of exegesis, those of the post-Nicaean fathers were pure rhetoric. Poets and theologians indulged in exotic names ....” See P. Geary, “Barbarians and Ethnicity,” in Peter Brown, Glen Bowersock, Andre Grabar, eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 106–129, at 107, on mixing and matching barbarian names, and Heather, “Disappearing,” pp. 95–96, on Christian catalogues.

<sup>50</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 7.4: “Cui etenim crediderunt gentes, Parthi et Medi et Elamitae et qui habitant Mesopotamiam Armeniam Phrygiam Cappadociam, incolentes Pontum et Asiam Pamphylia, immorantes Aegyptio et regiones Africae quae est trans Cyrenen inhabitantes, Romani et incolae, tunc et in Hierusalem Iudaei et ceterae gentes, ut iam Gaetulorum varietates et Maurorum multi fines, Hispaniarum omnes termini et

Tertullian was careful to add his concluding rider to ensure that no nation anywhere escaped his assertion of inclusivity.

Later Christian writers also laid claim to catalogues of barbarian peoples. Paulinus of Nola told how Nicetas of Remesiana had spread the gospel among the Scythians, Getae, and Dacians.<sup>51</sup> Jerome wrote to Laeta, “From India, from Persia, and from Ethiopia we welcomed crowds of monks every hour. The Armenians have laid aside their quivers, the Huns are learning the psalter, the frosts of Scythia are warmed by the fires of the faith, the ruddy and yellow-haired army of Getae carries about tents of churches.”<sup>52</sup> And in the mid-sixth century, Martin of Braga in Spain was credited with creating a versified list—very similar to Sidonius’ list of barbarian allies—of peoples who had converted to Christianity:

Immanes variasque pio sub foedere Christi  
 Adsciscis gentes: Alemannus, Saxo, Toringus,  
 Pannonius, Rugus, Sclavus, Nara, Sarmata, Datus,  
 Ostrogothus, Francus, Burgundio, Dacus, Alanus  
 Te duce nosse deum gaudent; tua signa Suevus.<sup>53</sup>

This last example in particular demonstrates the degree to which the Roman catalogue tradition had been assimilated into Christian ideology.

## Roots in Reality

But, turning from the literary to the real world, to what degree, one might ask, did these lists represent the presence of actual peoples bearing these names? The answer to this question depends to some degree on chronological perspective. Once a people’s name had been entered into the “master list,” it pretty much stayed there forever. Writers such as Caesar, Pliny the Elder, and Tacitus provided lengthy

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Galliarum diversae nationes et Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca Christo vero subdita et Sarmatarum et Dacorum et Germanorum et Scytharum et abditarum multarum gentium et provinciarum et insularum multarum nobis ignotarum et quae enumerare minus possumus?”

<sup>51</sup> Paul.Nol. *Carm.* 18.245–264: “Ad tuos fatus Scythia mitigatur ... et Getae currunt, et uterque Dacus.”

<sup>52</sup> Jer. *Epist.* 107: “De India, Perside, Aethiopia, monachorum quotidie turbas suscipimus. Deposuit pharetras Armenius, Hunni discunt Psalterium, Scythiae frigora fervent calore fidei: Getarum rutilus et flavus exercitus, ecclesiarum circumfert tentoria.” This theme was picked up by Paula and Eustochium in a letter to Marcella, *apud* Jer. *Epist.* 46. 9, “Quid referamus Armenios, quid Persas, quid Indiae, et Aethiopiae populos.”

<sup>53</sup> *MGHAA* 6.2.195, from the manuscript *Parisinus latinus* 2832 of the eighth century, entitled “Versus Martini Dumiensis episcopi in basilica” = *Anthologia Latina* no. 349; for Martin, a Pannonian, and his church, see Greg.Tur. *Hist.* 5.37. For similar, see also Ven. Fort. *VGerm.Par.* 193; and Paul.Diac. *Hist.Lang.* 2.26.

lists of northern peoples attested as of the end of the first century CE, many of which—such as the Suevi, Marcomanni, Quadi, Sicambri, Chatti, Burgundians, Vandals, and Gothi—made regular appearances in later catalogues.<sup>54</sup>

But the “barbarian canon” also was dynamic and evolving. The names of new peoples made their way in. The third century saw the appearance in the Verona catalogue and other lists of a number of previously unattested peoples, such as the Franks, Alamanni, and Saxons. And in the second half of the fourth century, still new groups appeared on the scene, such as the Huns, Gepids, Vesi, Ostrogoths, and Geloni. Finally, the post-Roman period saw additional new arrivals, such as the Slavs and Bulgars. And the recent arrivals certainly got a better press than the old-timers. For example, Sidonius cited only nine of 38 names available from the Principate, but ten of 24 post-third-century peoples.<sup>55</sup> Thus, even though the compilers of late antique lists of barbarian peoples did favor the names of peoples who actually existed in their own times, they also used their literary license to flavor their lists with names from the hoary past, in an effort, no doubt, to anchor their lists in antiquity and endow them with the same sense of permanence conveyed by the catalogues of Caesar, Pliny, and others.

In addition, we can be fairly confident that, at least at the time of its initial appearance, a people not only existed but also was a cause of interest or concern. But, subsequently, once a name had become part of the canon, one can be less and less confident that a people who appears in an extended list is meant to be anything more than a placeholder, part of the “cast of thousands” who provided the literary flavoring for the main course.

Indeed, ancient writers themselves realized that the names of barbarian peoples they so readily cited were not fixed in stone. In the 550s, for example, the Gothic historian Jordanes spoke of the Venetae, “whose names now are altered in various families and places; they principally are called the Slavs and Antes.”<sup>56</sup> And, in general, it was recognized that the same peoples could go under different names or be understood to be incorporated into a larger super-group.

In general, the creation and use of lists of barbarian peoples represented more than just literary tours de force by writers who wanted to display their encyclopedic learning or poetic skill. They also were an integral part of Roman, Christian, and barbarian political ideology that viewed barbarian peoples collectively, whether as a completely homogeneous body or with very minimal identifying characteristics, as a means of presenting a simplified picture of how Romans, Christians, and barbarian kingdoms could classify and deal with the multitudes of different

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<sup>54</sup> Caesar, *BG* 1.51, 2.4, 4.1–18, 5.39, 7.4, 7.75; Tacitus, *Germ.* 29, 31–46, and *Ann.* 1.51.1; Pliny, *HN* 3.8–36, and 4.40, 96–118.

<sup>55</sup> And Jordanes used 7 of 38 early names, but 11 of 27 later ones.

<sup>56</sup> Jord. *Get.* 5: “Venetarum natio populosa consedit, quorum nomina licet nunc per varias familias et loca mutantur, principaliter tamen Sclaveni et Antes nominantur”; also *Get.* 23: “Nam hi, ut in initio expositionis vel catalogo gentium dicere coepimus, ab una stirpe exorti, tria nunc nomina ediderunt, id est Venethi, Antes, Sclaveni.”

peoples who manifested a multitude of different governments, customs, religions, and ways of life.

## Chapter 2

# Augustine and the Merciful Barbarians<sup>1</sup>

Gillian Clark

Life is in common, merit not, for all.  
Roman, Dahan, Sarmatian, Vandal, Hun,  
Gaetulian, Garamans, Alaman, Saxon: all  
Walk on one earth, enjoy one sky, one ocean  
That bounds our world. Why, even animals  
Drink from our streams; dew that gives grain to me  
Gives grass to the wild ass; the dirty sow  
Bathes in our river; even the dogs inhale  
Our air, whose gentle breath gives life to beasts.  
But Roman and barbarian stand as far  
Apart as quadruped from biped, or  
As dumb from speaking: and thus far apart  
Stand worshippers of God from senseless cults.

(Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 2.807–819)

This passage from Prudentius exemplifies the rhetorical uses of late antique barbarians. They are assimilated to non-human animals, the “non-rational” animals who, because they lack reason, do not speak an intelligible language or understand the difference between right and wrong.<sup>2</sup> But when traditional Roman religion is classed as “senseless (*stolidis*) cults,” that is, cults without intelligence, it is the traditional Romans who are like the non-rational barbarians. What difference does it make when the barbarians are Christian?

The Christian barbarians who invaded Rome in 410 prompted one of the most influential works of western culture, Augustine’s *City of God*. It is often regarded as Augustine’s response to the sack of Rome, but that is not quite right. His immediate response came in sermons, but in 410/11 Augustine was preoccupied with the Council of Carthage, a major effort, chaired by an imperial envoy, to settle the century-long Donatist dispute, and his preaching about Rome is interesting

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<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Noel Lenski, Neil McLynn, and Kevin Uhalde.

<sup>2</sup> Gillian Clark, “The Fathers and the Animals: The Rule of Reason?” in Andrew Linzey, Dorothy Yamamoto, eds., *Animals on the Agenda* (London, 1998), pp. 67–79. Later debate on rational barbarians: Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, 1982).

because it was so limited.<sup>3</sup> In the sermon now called *The Destruction of Rome* (*de excidio urbis*), Augustine began as usual with the scriptural readings for the day, and when he finally reached the sack of Rome, said what he always said about suffering.<sup>4</sup> He urged his hearers to get this episode of suffering into perspective by thinking of Job and of the pains of Hell. Rome had not been annihilated like Sodom; the city was still standing and many of its inhabitants had escaped or found refuge—and archaeological evidence confirms that the “sack,” which lasted just three days, did not cause widespread destruction.<sup>5</sup> Augustine shared the grief of his congregation, but he reminded them that those who had died were safe with God, and those who survived should take suffering as a reminder to heal the sins that separate people from God. Suffering, he said, was literally tribulation, that is, threshing with the stone-studded *tribula* that separated wheat from chaff.<sup>6</sup> Augustine was interested in the Christian response to suffering, not in barbarians invading the city of Rome. Barbarians did not appear in these sermons, not even as agents of the “slaughter, arson, looting, murder, torture” that had been reported to the congregation (*De exc.* 3).

Augustine began *City of God* perhaps two years later. The Preface dedicated his work to Marcellinus, who chaired the Council of Carthage, and who asked (*Aug. Ep.* 138) for a rhetorically effective response to some all-too-familiar attacks on Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Aristocratic refugees from Rome made the short sea crossing to Africa, where they raised philosophical problems about Christian doctrines (*Epp.* 135–136) and blamed the sack of Rome on Christian failure to worship the traditional gods: in Christian times, Rome had fallen.<sup>8</sup> Immediately after the Preface to *City of God*, Augustine attacked the credentials of those who had survived to complain. “These Romans who are hostile to the name of Christ—do they not include even those the barbarians spared on account of Christ?” (*Civ.* 1.1) “The barbarians spared” is a startling juxtaposition for a first appearance of barbarians. But does

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<sup>3</sup> Theodore S. de Bruyn, “Ambivalence within a Totalizing Discourse: Augustine’s Sermons on the Sack of Rome,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (*JECS*) 1 (1993): 405–421, with specific discussion of *ser.* 15A and 113 (no direct reference to the sack), 81, 296, 105, *exc.urb.*, and 25, Augustine and Rome: Gillian Clark, “City of Books: Augustine and the World as Text,” in William Klingshirn, Linda Safran, eds., *The Early Christian Book* (Washington, DC, 2007), pp. 117–138.

<sup>4</sup> François Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna* (Paris, 1968), pp. 239–245.

<sup>5</sup> Neil Christie, “Lost Glories? Rome at the End of Empire,” in Jon Coulston, Hazel Dodge, eds., *Ancient Rome: The Archaeology of the Eternal City* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 306–331.

<sup>6</sup> Suzanne Poque, *Le langage symbolique dans la prédication d’Augustin d’Hippone* (Paris, 1984), 1.157–170.

<sup>7</sup> On this “publishing coup,” see Neil McLynn, “Augustine’s Roman Empire,” in Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, Allan D. Fitzgerald, eds., *History, Apocalypse and the Secular Imagination* (Bowling Green, OH, 1999), pp. 29–44.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 37–39.

“spared on account of Christ” (*propter Christum*) imply that the barbarians were Christian? Augustine piled on the traditional clichés, presenting the barbarians as bloodstained raging enemies, frenzied slayers who acted out their monstrous urges to wound and enslave. Why then did they allow Romans to take refuge in martyr-shrines and the basilicas of the apostles? “It must be ascribed to the name of Christ, to Christian times. [...] Heaven forbid that any sensible man should ascribe it to the ferocity of the barbarians! It was Christ who terrified, who bridled, who wonderfully calmed those most fierce and savage minds.” (1.7)

This is the stereotype of the bestial barbarian who must be tamed as wild animals are tamed: overpowered then calmed, for they cannot be persuaded by reason. In Christian legend, wild animals become tame in response to the holiness of saints.<sup>9</sup> Augustine did not remind his audience that Christ’s great power restrained barbarians who were already Christian. This may be because the Goths, being Arian, were the wrong sort of Christian,<sup>10</sup> but a better reason is that Augustine did not want to strengthen the pagan case: if Christian neglect of the gods allowed barbarians to sack the city, it was even worse when the barbarians themselves were Christian. But Augustine could have argued differently, and his admirer Orosius showed how.

Orosius dedicated his seven-book *History* to Augustine, who, he said (1 *prol.* 10), had told him to write a concise survey, from all available sources, of all the wars and natural disasters that had happened before Christian times.<sup>11</sup> He finished in 417, too late to be useful, for Augustine had already published *City of God* 1–10 and was working on book 11 (*Oros.1 prol.* 11). Orosius might have helped in 415, when Augustine was writing 4 and 5 (*Aug. Ep.* 169.1) and observed (*Civ.* 4.2) that in *Civ.* 1–3 he had mentioned only a few of the disasters that had afflicted one city, namely Rome, and only down to the time of Augustus Caesar: if he had also tried to collect natural disasters, when would he have finished? But in 415 Orosius was in Jerusalem, and there is no evidence that Augustine ever used his work. Perhaps he told Orosius only that the survey would be a useful book to have, just as he envisaged in *De doctrina christiana* (2.141–2) useful books on the places, animals, plants and trees, stones and metals, unfamiliar items, and numbers, mentioned in Scripture.

Orosius is useful nevertheless as a comparison with Augustine on barbarians. He may have meant to follow Augustine’s lead in *City of God*, but he developed

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<sup>9</sup> Alison G. Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of Early Christian Saints* (Hanover, NH, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Gothic Christianity: Andreas Schwarcz, “Cult and Religion among the Tervingi and Visigoths and their Conversion to Christianity,” in Peter Heather, ed., *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 447–473, especially 452–454 and 470–471; Noel Lenski, “The Gothic Civil War and the Date of the Gothic Conversion,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 36 (1995): 51–87.

<sup>11</sup> Text and annotated (French) translation: Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, *Orose: Histoire (contre les paiens)*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1990).



the argument quite differently.<sup>12</sup> Like Augustine, he kept the events of 410 in perspective. Rome survived, unlike Sodom (1.6.1–6); the Great Fire in Nero's time did more damage than the Goths (7.39.15); a few years after the event, you would think "nothing happened" (7.40.1). Augustine called the sack a *vastatio*, "laying waste," not an *excidium*, "destruction" (*De exc.* 2); Orosius preferred *inruptio urbis per Alaricum*, "breaking into the city through Alaric" (7.40.1), and "through Alaric" expressed his belief that the Goths were agents of divine punishment, which was more or less severe, as appropriate. That was why Alaric, not Radagaisus, was permitted to break into Rome:

God's ineffable judgment decided that in this mixed people [sc. the Romans] the pious deserved grace and the impious punishment. It was fitting to give permission to enemies who would convict of error, with more severe afflictions than usual, the city that in so many ways resisted and could not be persuaded; but not to enemies who would destroy everyone indiscriminately with slaughter unrestrained. Two Gothic peoples, with their two powerful kings, were then on the rampage through Roman provinces. One king was a Christian and more like a Roman, and, as the event showed, mild in slaughter through the love of God. The other was a pagan barbarian, a real Scythian: insatiable in his cruelty, what he loved in slaughter was not so much glory or loot as slaughter itself. (7.37.8–9)

Augustine too used the defeat of Radagaisus (*Civ.* 5.23) as evidence of God's mercy in tempering punishment: if Radagaisus had entered Rome, whom would he have spared, and which shrines would he have honored? The Goths would have ascribed their victory to pagan sacrifice. Instead:

Rome was captured by barbarians who, against all custom of war, protected, from reverence for the Christian religion, those who took refuge in shrines, and who, in the Christian name, so opposed demons and the rites of impious sacrifice (on which Radagaisus had relied) that they seemed to be fighting a much fiercer war against them than against people. (*Civ.* 5.23)

That was the closest Augustine came to admitting that Alaric's Goths were Christian. Orosius was much more positive. He called Alaric "king and enemy, but a Christian" (7.37.17) and presented him as an aspirant Roman who with all his Gothic people "prayed simply and as suppliants for perfect peace and for somewhere to settle," for *sedes* (7.38.2).<sup>13</sup> Before Alaric burst into a terrified Rome, he gave orders to protect those who took refuge in sacred places, and

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<sup>12</sup> W.H.C. Frend, "Orosius," in Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), p. 617.

<sup>13</sup> Alaric's purpose: Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 193–218; Wolf Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 51–72.

to restrain from bloodshed, so far as possible, those who were gasping for loot (7.39.1). Orosius developed a dramatic scene in which a Goth, “both powerful and Christian,” finds an elderly nun in a church and asks her politely (*honeste*) for gold and silver. She brings out a splendid collection and explains that they are the holy implements (*sacra ministeria*) of the apostle Peter, which she cannot protect. The barbarian, moved by her faith and by fear of God to respect for religion, reports to Alaric, who orders that the treasure, the nun, and all Christians who join them should be escorted to Peter’s basilica. The gold and silver vessels are carried head-high, one to a man, and the escort has drawn swords. This description would fit a procession of loot and captives taken under guard to a conqueror, but Orosius presented Romans and barbarians united in singing a hymn to God. Pagans seized the opportunity to join them for safety, and “the more numerous the Romans who take refuge with them, the more eagerly barbarians surround them as defenders” (7.39. 3–10).

Orosius gave his readers Goths who were transformed by Christianity, even in their traditional activities of looting and slaughtering. In this context, he significantly failed to mention that they were the wrong sort of Christian. Earlier in book 7 (7.33.19) he noted that, when the Goths asked Valens for Christian teachers, he sent them Arians, and they adhered to this first instruction. Consequently, the people who burned Valens alive would themselves burn when dead “for the vice of their error.” But Arianism disappeared from view when Orosius reported that Athanaric, the Gothic leader who negotiated with Valens, persecuted Christians among his people. The point Orosius wanted to make was that many of the victims took refuge on Roman territory, “not in fear as if going to enemies, but in confidence because going to Christian brothers” (7.32.9). Augustine presented this episode differently—and for a different purpose. In *City of God* 18 he challenged the claim (used by Orosius, 7.27) that the Church had experienced ten persecutions, and the next would be the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world. Augustine asked how persecutions could be counted; he thought there had been, and would be, many more. For example:

Does it not count as persecution when the king of the Goths, in Gothia itself, persecuted Christians with amazing cruelty, when the only Christians there were catholic? Many were crowned with martyrdom, as we have heard from some of the brothers, who were children there at the time and immediately remembered that they had seen these things. (*Civ.* 18.52)

Augustine did not ask whether the king of the Goths was anti-Catholic or anti-Christian; it did not affect his argument. In his experience, Goths were Arian. He was in Milan in 386 when Ambrose resisted demands to release a church for the form of Christianity that Goths had learned, a generation earlier, from their

missionary Ulfila.<sup>14</sup> Ambrose categorized the Goths as Arian heretics, and used traditional ethnography to describe these members of the imperial army, supported by an empress, as nomad Scythians. He wrote to his sister, “they used to have wagons as *sedes*; now they have a wagon for a church” (*Ep.* 76 [20].12). But in the same letter (20–21) he told her how, as news came that some Goths supported him, he adapted in mid-sermon his interpretation of the reading “O God, the heathen have come into your inheritance” (Ps. 79.1): they had come no longer as invaders, but as co-heirs of God’s kingdom.<sup>15</sup> Augustine (according to *Conf.* 9.7.15–16) was not then engaged with Ambrose’s concerns, but he knew about them, for his mother took part in the pray-in Ambrose organized to defend the basilica; perhaps the story of Gothic persecution of Catholics came from captives ransomed by Ambrose.<sup>16</sup> As a bishop in Africa, Augustine heard of Donatists saying they were Arian in hopes of alliance with the Goths (*Ep.* 185.1). But in *City of God* he did not ask how far Arian Goths were preferable to pagan Goths: it was enough that respect for Christ had set limits to barbarian savagery.

Orosius avoided the problem because he had a different argument. Barbarians, for him, were actual or potential fellow-Christians. Barbarian invasions were means of divine punishment, but they also enabled the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world, a sign that the end of time was near (Matthew 24.14). Thus, when the Burgundians invaded Gaul, they converted to the Catholic faith and lived in obedience to Christian clergy “meekly, mildly and harmlessly, not as among subject Gauls but genuinely as with Christian brothers” (7.32.13). Barbarians were not always savage: in Spain, they would offer, for a surprisingly small fee, to be bodyguards and baggage-carriers for people escaping from other barbarians (7.41.4–5). Orosius concluded that the purpose of barbarian invasions was to fill the churches (7.41.8). As the climax of his *History*, he told the story (7.43.4–6) that Athaulf, successor to Alaric, had abandoned plans for Gothia, the Gothic empire, in favor of the rule of Roman law. Orosius followed this with a report that, in the midst of the fighting in Spain, the Gothic leader was negotiating for peace (7.43.15). Barbarians were notoriously unreliable, but, as Kevin Uhalde argues, Christian barbarians had *fides* in a double sense: faith in Christ and trustworthiness.<sup>17</sup>

Orosius, then, derived a hopeful message from the Gothic sack of Rome and from barbarian activity in general: some barbarians were already Roman and Christian; others showed by their conduct that they were on the way; and as more barbarians entered Roman territory, more encountered the Gospel. Why

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<sup>14</sup> Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 196–208. Ulfila: Peter Heather, John Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), pp. 133–153; Ulfila as interpreted in Milan, Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian–Nicene Conflicts* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 204–210.

<sup>15</sup> Annotated translation of *Ep.* 76: Wolf Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches* (Liverpool, 2005), pp. 160–173; McLynn, *Ambrose*, p. 182.

<sup>16</sup> I owe this suggestion to Neil McLynn.

<sup>17</sup> See Uhalde in this volume.

did Augustine not take the line that Christianity transforms barbarians? A century earlier, Eusebius (*PE* 1.4) claimed that Christian teaching had transformed customs that were formerly bestial and barbarian.<sup>18</sup> Borrowing from Porphyry to counter Porphyry's own religious ecumenism, he affirmed that Persians had stopped marrying their mothers, Scythians had stopped being cannibals, and there was an end to incest and other unacceptable sexual practices, to human sacrifice, and to brutal disposal of the old or the dead.<sup>19</sup> Augustine too argued that Christianity had spread even to barbarian lands (*De vera religione* 3.5), and recognized that Christianity transcended the barriers of language separating "barbarians" from people who spoke Greek or Latin. In *Confessions* (11.3.5) he wrote of "a truth without organs of speech or sound of syllables, a truth neither Hebrew nor Greek nor Latin nor barbarian": here "barbarian" meant only "foreign," as it did when late Platonist philosophers endorsed "barbarian wisdom."<sup>20</sup> Later in *Confessions* (13.20.26) Augustine quoted from the Psalms: "There is neither speech nor language where their voices are not heard; their sound is gone out into every land, and their words to the ends of the earth."<sup>21</sup> The voices, Augustine explained, are those of God's messengers who fly over the earth, and he linked the verse with the gift of tongues to the apostles at Pentecost, when "they spoke in the languages of all nations."<sup>22</sup>

Augustine wrote to his fellow-bishop Hesychius that the world was not yet evangelized, for in Africa "innumerable" barbarian peoples had not heard the Gospel message.<sup>23</sup> But that message had certainly reached the Goths in their own language. Ulfila, who took them the Gospel in the mid-fourth century, was credited with establishing a written form of Gothic so that they could have the Bible—but not the book of Kings, for they were quite warlike enough already.<sup>24</sup> When John Chrysostom in Constantinople faced demands, as Ambrose did in Milan, for a church where Goths in the imperial service could attend Arian worship, his response (Theodoret, *HE* 5.30) was to assign a church for orthodox worship, find

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<sup>18</sup> Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica* (Oxford, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Schott, "Porphyry on Christians and Others: 'Barbarian Wisdom,' Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution," *J ECS* 13 (2005): 277–314.

<sup>20</sup> "Barbarian wisdom": George Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy* (Oxford, 2001); Johnson, *Ethnicity*.

<sup>21</sup> Ps. 18[19].4, trans. Philip Burton, *Augustine: The Confessions* (London, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> *En.ps.* 18 en. 2.5; reference owed to James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford, 1992), 3.387.

<sup>23</sup> *Ep.* 199.12.46; letter mentioned *Civ.* 20.5.

<sup>24</sup> Heather and Matthews, *Goths*, pp. 144, 155. Gothic Bible at <http://www.wulfila.be/>, accessed 18 July 2010.

Gothic-speaking clergy, and himself preach there with an interpreter.<sup>25</sup> The only surviving sermon (*Hom. 8, Patrologia Graeca* 63.499–510) was not one of his best efforts, but his use of standard arguments shows how easily Augustine could have adapted them. John Chrysostom used the presence of barbarians to attack “the Greeks,” that is, Greek philosophers, whose “teachings have been dismissed even by those who speak the same language (*homophonoi*); our teachings have power even among those who speak different languages (*heteroglossoi*).” So, he said, the teachings of Plato and Pythagoras had been extinguished, but the teachings of fishermen and tentmakers (the apostles Peter and Paul) shone out, “as you have heard today,” in the language of barbarians. “Scyths, Thracians, Sarmatians, Moors, Indians, and those who live far away at the ends of the earth engage in this philosophy, each translating into their own language.” Where Greek philosophy reached only a few, the Church’s fishermen caught the whole world in their nets, even the Ocean, the barbarian lands, and the British Isles. (These are of course rhetorical commonplaces, not evidence for a Platonist revival or for the geographical spread of Christianity.) Then John linked Psalm 18, “there is neither speech nor language where their voices are not heard,” with the prophecy of Isaiah (65.25) that the wolf and the lamb would feed together. He told his congregation, “Today you have seen the most barbarian of all men standing among the Church’s sheep.”

John Chrysostom’s sermon included in the Christian fold both savage barbarians and barbarians from non-Greek cultures who engaged in Christian philosophy. Why did Augustine not ask himself the obvious question: if God’s word had reached the speakers of every language, were there any barbarians left? In *City of God*, written over thirteen years (412/13–425/26), he never took the opportunity to think seriously about barbarians in relation to other human beings and to God. In book 18 (*Civ.* 18.41), he contrasted, as John Chrysostom did, elitist and inconsistent Greek philosophy with Christian teaching that reached everyone, but he made no mention of barbarians among those it reached. In book 19 he considered the problems of human life and society, arguing that people cannot trust even family members or fellow citizens, and when they move up the scale of social organization from household and city to world (19.7), language divides them. “Dumb animals,” even if they are of different species, can communicate more easily than humans who have no language in common: a man would rather have his own dog for company. “Natural likeness, great as it is, has no effect in bringing people together if, because of this one difference in language, they cannot tell each other what they are thinking.” This was an obvious context in which to discuss the barbarian problem, but instead Augustine considered Latin as a universal language. “Efforts have been made for the imperious city (*imperiosa civitas*) to impose not only her yoke but also her language on subject peoples through the peace of society; this would ensure that there would be no lack, but

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<sup>25</sup> Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, p. 189; context in Roman–Gothic relations, A. Cameron, J. Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), pp. 96–100.

rather an abundance, of interpreters.” Again, this is an obvious context for the barbarian problem, but Augustine moved on to the cost in bloodshed of making Latin a universal language, and to the endless sequence of wars, external and civil—without a mention of barbarians. They are also absent from his earlier discussion (*Civ.* 15.4, 15.11) of the Tower of Babel and the origin of different languages.

The most conspicuous absence of barbarians from *City of God* is in the argument (19.12) that all human beings want peace. Human peace, as Augustine described it, is a very Roman peace: it is pacification, obedience to orders. The winning of hearts and minds is *ordinata concordia*, an ordered union of hearts. “Every man wants peace with his own: he wants them to live according to his decisions. He also wants to make his own those with whom he wages war, and to impose the laws of his peace on them when they are subject to him.” Even robbers want this kind of peace; even the half-human Cacus, living in isolation from any society, wants his own body to be at peace. Augustine found Cacus in the *Aeneid* (8.190–305), where he is merely monstrous, a bloodstained and savage predator on human flesh. What better opportunity to consider the bloodstained and savage barbarians, who have no law to impose on subject peoples, but still want peace among themselves and obedience from others? But Augustine still did not mention barbarians, and did not ask the key question: can barbarians be members of the City of God, which “assembles its foreign society,” *peregrina societas* (19.17), from all peoples and all languages, without regard to differences of culture and law and practice?

As in Rome in 410, so in *City of God*: the barbarians appear, do some damage, and go away. This is puzzling because Augustine liked to reflect on the meanings of words, yet did not analyze or challenge the category “barbarian.” It is puzzling also because North Africa provided all the examples he needed. There were local *Poeni* who were barbarian in that they spoke another language: Augustine tried to find Punic-speaking clergy for them (*Ep.* 209.2), just as John Chrysostom tried to find Gothic-speaking clergy for the Goths of Constantinople. There were barbarian peoples more numerous than the languages they shared: this appears from a passing comment (*Civ.* 16.6) that, as usual, Augustine did not develop. Augustine was aware that these barbarians differed among themselves and in their relationship to Rome and to Christianity. In his letter to Bishop Hesychius, discussing the “innumerable barbarian peoples” who had not yet been evangelized (*Ep.* 199.12), Augustine noted that there were barbarian captives, now living with Roman slaves, who were evidently not Christian. But, he added, it was only a few years since a very few barbarians in the borderlands had been pacified and given governors appointed by Rome in place of their kings, and it was also only a few years since the governors themselves had begun to be Christian. Further inland were peoples who were neither Roman nor Christian. But God’s promise was made to all the descendants of Abraham, not just to Romans, and some peoples were not subject to Rome but had been evangelized. Africa also had unpacified barbarians, *Afri barbari*, raiding from the south. Augustine urged Count Boniface

to stay in his job commanding troops against them, to protect the churches against barbarian attack and to stop the looting of Africa (*Ep.* 220.3, 7). Boniface had previously defeated these barbarians, and had been expected to make them tribute-paying subjects of Rome (*Ep.* 220.7). There was often news of barbarian attacks, in Africa itself and in places that had seemed safe. In the year before the Goths sacked Rome, Augustine replied to the concerns of a fellow priest, saying that barbarians had attacked monks in the Egyptian desert, and there were worrying reports from Italy and Gaul and even Spain, which had so far escaped. Barbarians had not yet reached Hippo, but militant Donatists committed outrages that would never occur to barbarians (*Ep.* 111.1).

Failure of communication, failure of trust, and outbreaks of violence were a constant anxiety, so why did Augustine not discuss the condition of barbarians and what Christians should do about it? The pessimistic conclusion is that Augustine's silence was exclusive: he did not think seriously or to positive effect about barbarians, who were always there and sometimes troublesome. If Goths in the imperial service had been part of his pastoral responsibility, he could have used the same rhetorical tropes and scriptural passages as John Chrysostom did. As it was, he deployed the Roman stereotype of barbarians when it was rhetorically useful, in polemic against Donatists and in debate with pagans, but Ambrose had taught him suspicion of Goths and he did not share the optimism of Orosius, so merciful barbarians remained a contradiction in terms. The optimistic conclusion is that Augustine's silence was inclusive: he was consciously, not carelessly, detached from the ethnicity debate. He saw violence of human against human, and language that divides, as endemic to the fallen human condition, and very noticeable in Africa. Ethnicity did not matter in comparison with a citizenship that is not Roman but foreign, the *peregrina civitas* of the City of God.

## Chapter 3

# *Reguli* in the Roman Empire, Late Antiquity, and the Early Medieval Germanic Kingdoms

Steven Fanning

Efforts to understand early Germanic kingship, whether before the end of the Roman Empire in the west or in the Germanic kingdoms created in the fifth and sixth centuries, encounter the problem of terminology used in Latin texts. In his *Histories*, Gregory of Tours wished to write of the earliest kings of the Franks, but to his frustration he found a variety of terms for early Frankish leaders in his sources. Gregory quoted a passage from the no longer extant *History* of Sulpicius Alexander mentioning the military leaders (*duces*) at the time of the Frankish invasion of the Roman Empire in the latter fourth century.<sup>1</sup> These *duces* were named as Genobaud, Marcomer, and Sunno. To complicate matters, however, Gregory's source also described the latter two of these *duces*, Marcomer and Sunno, as *regales*, a term that Gregory himself did not understand clearly, for he added his own comment that he did not know if Sulpicius meant that these two were kings or if they held power in the place of kings:

Eo tempore Genobaude, Marcomere, et Sunnone ducibus Franci in Germaniam prorupere, ac pluribus mortalium limite inrupto caesis, fertiles maxime pagos depopulati, Agrippinensi etiam Coloniae metum incusserunt ... Post dies pauculus, Marcomere et Sunnone Francorum regalibus transacto cursim conloquio imperatisque ex more obsidibus, ad hiemandum Treverus concessit. Cum autem eos regales vocet, nescimus, utrum reges fuerint, an in vices tenuerunt regnum.<sup>2</sup>

To muddle matters even further, Sulpicius went on to use the word *subreguli* for the same Marcomer and Sunno (“Arbogastes Sunnonem et Marcomerem subregulus Francorum”). Gregory then complained that Sulpicius did move beyond talk of *duces* and *regales* and mentioned a *rex* of the Franks but frustratingly neglected to provide his name: “Iterum hic relictis tam ducibus quam regalibus, aperte Francos regem habere designat, hujusque nomen praetermittens.”<sup>3</sup> In studying Frankish

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<sup>1</sup> Greg.Tur. *Decem libri historiarum* 2.9: *MGH SRM* 1.1, B. Krusch, W. Levison, eds. (Hannover, 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



kingship, modern historians have expressed much of the same frustration as Gregory in dealing with this vocabulary.<sup>4</sup>

The same difficulty arises with regard to the rulers of the Goths and other Germanic peoples in the fourth century. The Goths are said to have had *reges*, *regales*, and *reguli*, as well as a *basiliskos* (the Greek equivalent of *regulus*),<sup>5</sup> whereas the contemporary Quadi had a *rex*, a *regalis*, and a *subregulus*.<sup>6</sup> Just as with the Franks, this terminology often has confused scholars.<sup>7</sup>

The term *regulus* is common in earlier Latin historiography. For example, in the Mediterranean world dominated by Rome from the third century BCE on, Africa was a land of *reguli*, a word interpreted to mean kinglet, petty king, or prince; in fact most of the citations to support this range of definitions in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and Lewis and Short's *Latin Dictionary* refer to passages in Sallust and Livy on various African, and especially Numidian, *reguli*.<sup>8</sup> These two authors provide us with enough background information on *reguli* to allow us to discern an interesting pattern in how the term is used.

Sallust, in the *Jugurtha*, used the term *reguli* (although never the singular *regulus*) only three times, each in the same context. King Micipsa of Numidia had two sons, Hiempsal and Adherbal, and had adopted his nephew Jugurtha (the son of Micipsa's brother Mastanabal by a concubine), whom he named to be his heir equally with his own sons (5.7; 9.4). According to Sallust, upon the death of Micipsa, his heirs, styled *reguli*, performed the burial rites and met to discuss state affairs (11.5). Their bitter divisions led them to divide Micipsa's treasury as well

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<sup>4</sup> J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (London, 1962; repr. Toronto, 1982), pp. 155–156; Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988), p. 162; Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London/New York, 1994), pp. 36–37; also Henry A. Myers, *Medieval Kingship* (Chicago, IL, 1982), pp. 77–78.

<sup>5</sup> *Passio S. Sabae* 4.5, in AB 31 (1912): 219, line 3. *Basiliskos* is translated “of royal rank” in Peter Heather, John Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), p. 114. It is *basilikos*, however, that means “royal”; *basiliskos* on the other hand is the diminutive of *basileus*, king, and usually is translated “petty king.” On this distinction, see Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, eds., *A Greek–English Lexicon*, 9th edn. (Oxford, 1940; repr. 1968), pp. 309–310; William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, eds., *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 4th rev. edn. (Cambridge, 1957), p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> See E.A. Thompson, *The Early Germans* (Oxford, 1965; repr. 1968), p. 40; also Edward James, “The Origins of Barbarian Kingdoms: The Continental Evidence,” in Steven Bassett, ed., *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London/New York, 1989), p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> See Thompson, *The Early Germans*, pp. 39–40; Ian N. Wood, “Kings, Kingdoms, and Consent,” in P.H. Sawyer, I.N. Wood, eds., *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1979), p. 9, n. 28.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1879; repr. 1975), p. 1553, “The ruler of a small country, a petty king, prince, chieftain”; P.G.W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1968, repr. 1983), p. 1602, uses almost the same definition.

as arrange for each heir to have his own territory (16.2). It is only in this brief period, when Hiempsal, Adherbal, and Jugurtha were the joint heirs of Micipsa but before the kingdom was divided under Rome's aegis (16.2), that Sallust referred to them collectively as *reguli* (11.2; 12.1–2). During the same period Sallust also used *rex* to refer to Hiempsal and Adherbal (12.5; 13.7; 14.7; 15.1). Thus, Sallust's terminology indicates that *rex* and *regulus* could be interchangeable terms, but his use of *regulus* for the joint heirs only in the period following the death of Micipsa makes it seem that the meaning of *regulus* here as petty king, kinglet, or chieftain is improbable. Instead, its meaning appears to be that of "joint king" or "co-king."

Livy's discussion of Numidian *reguli* supports this interpretation. Referring to events during the Second Punic War two generations before Jugurtha, Livy related that the Numidian king Gala died and was succeeded by his elderly brother Oezalces, who likewise soon died and was succeeded by his eldest son Capussa. The new king was challenged for authority by Mazaetullus and in the subsequent fighting Capussa was killed. The entire people of the Maesulii conceded authority to Mazaetullus but he preferred not to have the name of king and instead allowed Lacumazes, the young brother of Capussa, to be called king whereas he himself took the title Protector (*tutor*). Mazaetullus then married the wife of the former king Oezalces and maintained an army under his own command (29.29.11–12; 30.8). It was in this situation of joint rule, with two men in fact ruling the Maesulii, Mazaetullus in real control and Lacumazes as his puppet, that Livy twice referred to Lacumazes as *regulus* (29.30.5, 10).

Evidence in Livy for *reguli* outside Numidia reinforces the connection with joint rulership. For example, the brothers Mandonius and Indibilis of the Iberian Ilorgetes were described as being of *regia nobilitas*, were paired together in their activities, including their joint hope of gaining the rule of Spain after the Carthaginians were expelled, and were styled *reguli* (28.27.5, 24.3, 32.3). For the Galli in Spain, Livy recorded the death in battle of two of their *reguli* and he mentioned that their rebellion against Rome was led by two *reguli*, Culcha and Luxinius (24.42.8; 33.21.7). The Boii in Spain likewise had a number of *reguli*, Magalus, Corolamus, and Boiorix, who, with his two brothers, convinced the Boii to take up arms in Spain (21.29.6; 33.36.4; 34.46.4). When a very large body of Galli invaded Thrace they suffered internal dissension, and 20,000 departed under *two reguli* (38.16.2). Livy made it clear that the Galli had a number of *reguli* when he denoted Eposognatus as one of the *reguli* who remained faithful to King Eumenes of Pergamum, and he made several references simply to plural *reguli Gallorum* (38.18.1; 38.18.14; 40.1, 45.34.13). And for the Gauls in Noricum, there were the *fratres reguli*, Cincibilus and his brother (43.5.8).

Thus, in both Sallust and Livy several features concerning *reguli* become clear. First, there is the connection with joint rule that is virtually always found around a *regulus*. Second, *rex* and *regulus* are interchangeable, for, like Sallust, Livy showed no great distinction between *rex* and *regulus*, using both to describe Syphax of

Numidia.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Indibilis of the Ilergetes was described by Livy as both *regulus* and *rex*, as were the Istrians Catmelus and Aetulo, and the Gaul Cincibilus (29.2.14–15; 41.1.2, 4.7; 41.11.1, 6, 9; 43.5.2, 7). The Gallic Tectosages had the *regulus* Orgiago as well as *reges* with whom the Roman consul wished to meet; a number of “*reguli ac principes*” bordering on Macedonia came to a Roman camp, including Amynder, *rex* of the Athamanians (38.24.2; 38.25.3–4; 31.28.1); and in Illyria one finds the *regulus* Arthetaurus (42.40.5), plural *reguli*, multiple *reges*, and the individual *reges* Pinnis and Gentius (42.40.5; 31.28.1; 42.45.8; 22.33.5; 42.26.2, 29.11, 37.2). Multiple *reges* could co-exist, for Gentius, his wife and children, and his brother all were called *reges* by Livy (45.43.6, 10). Thus, it is clear that one who was styled a *regulus* could equally well be seen as a *rex*, that is, a *regulus* was a species of *rex*, a co-king, and either *rex* or *regulus* could be used for such a ruler.

A third feature is that *reguli* seem to be found among large peoples who can be seen as a whole but who also had internal divisions, *gentes*, that often had their own individual leaders. For example, Livy tended to treat the Gauls as a single people, writing that in Gaul they had a single *rex*. But he also mentioned a number of peoples contained within the whole, including the Bituriges, Arverni, Senones, Aedui, Ambarri, Carnutes, and Aulerci (5.34.1; 5.34.5). In the third century BCE, a great number of Gauls (“*magna hominum vis*”) invaded Thrace, among whom were at least three *gentes*, the Tolostobogii, Troceni, and Tectosages (38.16.1). Livy also referred to the collective domination of the Gauls in Asia and treated their forces as a single entity (38.48.1). Thus, the *reges* of various subunits among the Gauls<sup>10</sup> would make them, in effect, joint rulers over the collectivity of the Gauls, that is, *reguli*, and indeed Livy made a number of references to the *reguli Gallorum* and to a *regulus Gallorum* (38.18.14, 40.1; 44.26.11; 45.34.13).

Likewise, although Livy was fully aware that a number of different peoples inhabited Spain and had their own rulers—for example the Gauls with *insignes reguli* and the *reguli* Culcha and Luxinius (24.42.8; 33.21.7), the Celtiberians under the *regulus* Thurrus and the *rex* Hilernus (40.49.5; 35.7.8), and the Ilergetes with Mandonius, Indibilis, and Bilistages—he often treated the inhabitants of Spain as a single people, the Hispani, who were seen as a *populus* (29.2.5) and whose combined military forces frequently were treated as a collectivity.<sup>11</sup> This *populus*, a collection of *gentes Hispaniae* (21.16.5), had a number of divisions under particular rulers, sometimes styled *reges*, which meant that the Hispani had a number of kings, *reguli* (21.19.7), ruling at the same time. The same is true for the Gauls of

<sup>9</sup> See especially Livy, where legates came to Rome “from king Syphax” (27.4.5) and senatorial envoys then were sent to Syphax and to “other *reguli* of Africa” (27.4.9). See also 29.23.2 for Syphax as *rex*, and 29.4.4, where Roman legations were sent to Syphax and other *reguli*.

<sup>10</sup> Note that Cincibilus, discussed above, was styled both *rex* and *regulus* in Livy 43.5.2, 5, 7–8.

<sup>11</sup> For only a few examples, see Livy 23.29.8; 27.2.6, 20.5; 29.2.18.

Asia Minor, with three *populi* named by Livy (the Tolostobogii, Tectosagi, and Trocmi), who had three *reguli*, Ortiago, Combolomarus, and Gaulotus (38.19.2). Once again, one collectivity, the Galli, was comprised of smaller groupings with individual rulers and for this situation of joint rulers of the Galli, the term *reguli* was seen by Livy as being most appropriate.

The evidence from Livy is consistent with that from Sallust. A *regulus* was a particular kind of *rex*, a *co-rex*, and thus the terms were interchangeable when referring to a joint ruler. Indeed, Livy did just this, sometimes using both terms for the same person within just a few lines of his text, which would make little sense if *regulus* in fact had a specific meaning of petty king as distinct from a “real” king, a *rex*.

Seen in this light, Livy’s “classic” statement purportedly distinguishing *reguli* from *reges*, that the Romans found *reguli* in Spain and left them *reges* (37.25.8–9), needs to be reassessed, for the *reguli* already were *reges*. The complete passage from Livy clarifies his meaning. The Romans were bragging to the Bithynian king Prusias that they had a policy of enhancing the majesty of the kings of their allies, and examples were provided. *Reguli* that had been accepted under Roman protection in Spain had been left as *reges* and, in addition, Masinissa in Numidia had been established on his own hereditary throne while also receiving the *regnum* of his fellow Numidian king Syphax (37.25.8–9). Thus, what was being said was that, in Spain, joint-kings over a particular grouping were being left as sole kings, and the example of Masinissa was another case of this policy, for where there had been two kings, now there was only one.

With this important nuance to the meaning of *regulus* established, that *regulus* and *rex* could be synonymous terms, that *regulus* was used especially for joint rulers of a single state or people, and that it was used for the joint rulers of individual *gentes* comprising a larger entity, such as the Hispani or Galli, other appearances of *regulus* in Roman texts now can be seen to convey this same range of meanings. Livy’s older contemporary Varro wrote a three-book manual on agriculture, the *Res rusticae*, and, as usual in antiquity, he referred to the leader of the beehive as a *rex* (3.16.8).<sup>12</sup> Invoking the term *reguli*, Varro cautioned a beekeeper against having more than one such leader because it would lead to rivalries for power (3.16.18). In the later first century CE, in his *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder also discussed bees and used *rex* for the sole male of the hive. He noted that *reges plures* may be produced in the hive, but as they begin to grow the worst ones are killed leaving only one to survive (11.16.46, 51). Thus, in the case of bees, Varro’s *reguli* are Pliny’s *reges plures*.

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<sup>12</sup> On the “king bee,” see T. Hudson-Williams, “King Bees and Queen Bees,” *Classical Review* 49 (1935): 2–4; Malcolm Davies and Jeyarany Kathirithamby, *Greek Insects* (London, 1986), pp. 62–3; H. Malcolm Fraser, *Beekeeping in Antiquity*, 2nd edn. (London, 1951); B.G. Whitfield, “Virgil and the Bees,” *Greece & Rome*, 2nd ser., 3 (1956): 99–117.

In the early second century CE, Tacitus referred to *reguli* five times: two unnamed *reguli* in Britain (*Agr.* 24.3; *Ann.* 2.24), *reguli* in the area of Armenia and Parthia (*Ann.* 6.33), and twice to *reguli* of the Cilicians (*Ann.* 2.78,80). In reference to the Britanni, Tacitus wrote that Agricola had sheltered a British *regulus* who had been expelled because of an internal plot (*Agr.* 24.3). It could be that the *gens* in question had several co-rulers, as was seen among the Celtic peoples in Livy, and internal divisions led to the expulsion of one of them. Like Livy referring to the Hispani and the Galli, Tacitus saw the Britanni as one people,<sup>13</sup> but within them he recognized separate *gentes* and *civitates*, such as Silures, Brigantes, and Ordovices (*Agr.* 17–18), and before the Roman conquest of Britain these subdivisions had their own *reges* (*Agr.* 13.3, 15.2). Thus, the *reguli* of the Britanni appear to be rulers of their individual subdivisions.

Additional support for the meaning of *regulus* as a co-ruler comes from the fourth-century *Historia Augusta*, which describes the succession of Roman rulers during the period of the “Thirty Tyrants” after 260 CE as “imperatores ac reguli.”<sup>14</sup> The Loeb edition of the *Historia Augusta* duly translates *regulus* according to the common understanding of word as “petty king” to render *reguli* as “princes of no importance.”<sup>15</sup> Roman emperors, however, frequently were referred to as *rex* in Latin sources of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.<sup>16</sup> The *Historia Augusta* itself (*HA Hadr.* 2.8) states that the Vergilian oracle referred to Hadrian as the *rex Romanus*; that Julia, the future wife of Septimius Severus, was told by an oracle that she was going to be the wife of a *rex* (*HA Sev.* 3.9, *Geta* 3.1); that Severus Alexander had verses written to him styling him as a *rex* (*HA Sev.Alex.* 38.4); and that when soldiers asked how Regalianus, one of the “Thirty Tyrants,” got his name, a *scholasticus* began declining the noun *rex* as “rex, regis, regi, Regalianus (*HA Trig.tyr.* 10.5).”

With the meaning of *regulus* now established as a co-ruler and with *rex* widely used to refer to Roman emperors and specifically used with that meaning in the *Historia Augusta*, this reference to *reguli* during the time of the Thirty Tyrants should lead one to look for examples of joint rule. One is not disappointed. The biographies in that section provide many examples of the “Thirty Tyrants” who shared their rule with others, especially their sons. Postumus the Younger was

<sup>13</sup> For examples, see *Agr.* 13.1, 15.1, 29.3, 36.1, 38.1. It must be emphasized that the Hispani, Galli, and Britanni were seen as particular peoples in the texts of Livy and Tacitus but do not necessarily reflect their actual political organization.

<sup>14</sup> David Magie, trans., *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA and London, 1932; repr. 1961), 3.152–153, “tumultuarios videlicet imperatores ac regulos, scripseram eo libro quem de tringenta tyrannis edidi” (*HA Claud.* 1.1).

<sup>15</sup> Magie, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 3.153.

<sup>16</sup> Steven Fanning, “Emperors and Empires in Fifth-Century Gaul,” in John Drinkwater, Hugh Elton, eds., *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 288–295; idem, “Odoacer Rex, Regal Terminology, and the Question of the End of the West Roman Empire,” *Medieval Prosopography* 24 (2003) [2007]: 45–54.

associated as Caesar and Augustus by his father Postumus the Elder (*HA Trig.tyr.* 4.1), and Tetricus and his son also were partners in the principate (*HA Trig.tyr.* 5.3, *Aurel.* 34.2), as were Postumus the Elder and Victorinus (*HA Trig.tyr.* 6.1), Macrianus and his two sons Macrianus and Quietus (*HA Trig.tyr.* 12.12, 14.1), and Odenathus and his son Herodes (*HA Trig.tyr.* 15.5, 16.1). Once more the appearance of *reguli* is directly in the context of *reges* who ruled jointly.

*Regulus* makes but a single appearance in the Latin Vulgate Old Testament and at first glance it would appear to confirm the meaning of the word as “petty king” or “chieftain.” Joshua 13:3 discusses the division of the Philistines into the populations of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, and specifies that the various groupings had their own rulers, who were described as *reguli*.<sup>17</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the word that corresponds to *reguli* in Joshua 13.3 is *serenim*, meaning “lords.”<sup>18</sup> Lisowsky cites 21 appearances of *serenim*,<sup>19</sup> all of which refer to the lords of the Philistines. In general Jerome’s translation followed the Septuagint reading of these passages, translating *serenim* with a variety of words, *satrapeiai*, *satrapai*, and *archōntes*. In most of these passages, where the Septuagint had *satrapeiai* and *satrapai*, Jerome used *satrapae* and *provinciae*, and where the Septuagint had *archōntes*, Jerome used *principes*. Most of the references to the “lords of the Philistines” in the Jewish Bible give no additional information about them, but five times it is specified that there were five such lords,<sup>20</sup> and twice Jerome used *satrapae* (Jud. 3:3, 1 Sam. 6:16) and twice he used *provinciae* (1 Sam. 6:4, 6:18) for them. Only in Joshua 13:3, where five rulers of the Philistines were specified by their individual cities, did Jerome deviate from his use of *satrapae*, *provinciae*, and *principes* to translate *serenim* (*satrapeiai* in the Septuagint) as *reguli*. Once again, joint rule and *reguli* appear together.

Germanic peoples also often had shared rule by kings, often close relatives,<sup>21</sup> so it is not surprising that *reguli* also are encountered among them, especially in the late fourth century in the pages of Ammianus Marcellinus. For the Quadi, Ammianus mentioned their *rex* Viduarius, his son, the *regalis* Vitrodorus, and the *subregulus* Agilmundus (17.12.21). *Reges* who shared their rule were especially common among the Alamanni. Whereas there were several branches of the

<sup>17</sup> “Ad terminos Accaron contra aquilonem terra Chanaan quae in quinque regulos Philisthim dividitur Gazeos Azotios Ascalonitas Gettheos et Accaronitas ....”

<sup>18</sup> Gerhard Lisowsky, *Konkordanz zum hebräischen alten Testament*, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart, 1958), p. 1006.

<sup>19</sup> Lisowsky, *Konkordanz*, pp. 1006–7: Jos. 13:3, Jud. 3:3, 16:5, 16:8, 16:18 (twice), 16:23, 16:27, 16:30, 1 Sam. 5:8, 5:11, 6:4 (twice), 6:12, 6:16, 6:18, 7:7, 29:2, 29:6, 29:7, 1 Chr. 12:20.

<sup>20</sup> Jos. 13:3, Jud. 3:3, 1 Sam. 6:4, 16, 18.

<sup>21</sup> On this phenomenon among the Franks, Visigoths, and Anglo-Saxons, see Wood, “Kings, Kingdoms, and Consent,” pp. 9–20.

Alamanni,<sup>22</sup> and thus many *reges* (for example, seven are named at one time: Amm. 16.10.1), in many instances it appears that relatives shared rule or divided what may have been a single people. The brothers Gundomadus and Valomarius were *regii fratres* (14.10.10)—each one was a *rex* (Amm. 14.10.2, 21.3.4) with a separate *plebs* and *pagus* (14.10.10, 21.3.4); Chonodomarius and his nephew Serapio both were *reges* (16.10.1, 12.23); and Macrianus and Hariobaudus were *germani fratres et reges* (18.2.15). Thus, when we read that one of the Alamannian *reges*, Hortarius, invited *reges omnes et regales et reguli* to a banquet (18.2.13), the guests can be understood as both *reges* with undivided rule as well as those with divided rule (the *reguli*), in addition to sons of *reges* (the *regales*). Moreover, it is evident that, for Ammianus, a *regulus* was not a petty prince, for he described Nubel of the Moors as a *potentissimus regulus* of the *nationes Mauricas*,<sup>23</sup> a phrase that constitutes a virtual oxymoron if *regulus* is taken to mean a “prince of no importance.” However, a reference to Nubel as “a most powerful co-ruler” is fully comprehensible. It also is significant that Nubel was only one of the rulers of the plural *nationes* of the Moors, implying that there would have been many other Moorish rulers and thus the use of *regulus* for him is clarified.

Jordanes, in his *Getica*, named Fritigern as a *Gothorum regulus* (*Get.* 135), commented that Attila esteemed Ardaricus, the Gepid *rex*, and Valamir, the Ostrogothic *rex*, above other *reguli* (*Get.* 199), wrote that on the death of the Ostrogothic ruler Vinitharius, Balamber, the king of the Huns, ruled over the Goths in a manner so that a *regulus* of theirs held the power under Hunnic supervision (*Get.* 249), and finally, he described the Visigothic king Theodorid’s beheading of Agrivulf (one of his own retainers whom he had placed over the Suevi), adding that Theodorid allowed the Suevi to choose a *regulus* from their own people (*Get.* 234). All these references to *reguli* are consistent with the meaning of *regulus* as co-ruler. In the first reference, Fritigern was one of three magnates who held joint military command over the Visigoths in the period immediately following their entry into the Roman Empire in 376 (*Get.* 134). Fritigern’s successor was the *rex* Athanaric (*Get.* 142). The second and third references, to the Gepid king Ardaricus and the Ostrogothic king Valamir, are in the context of Hunnic domination over many peoples. Attila not only was the lord of the Huns but also almost the sole ruler of all the *gentes* of Scythia (*Get.* 178). He had a great number of peoples and diverse nations under his power (*Get.* 198), a crowd of *reges* and leaders of diverse nations were his dependents (*Get.* 200), and he alone was king of all kings (*Get.* 201). The Hunnic style of rule was to allow individual *gentes* and nations to retain their own kings, who held power under the Hunnic kings. In effect, there

<sup>22</sup> The Iuthunti and Lentiensis are mentioned by Ammianus (17.6.1, 31.10.1), who notes that they were not normally assembled into one body (17.8.1), and that Julian defeated many of their *regna* (20.4.1).

<sup>23</sup> Amm. 29.5.2, translated as “Nubel, as a petty king, had great power among the Moorish peoples,” in John C. Rolfe, trans., *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1939), 3.247.

were two *reges* in this situation, the Hunnic king and the native king, the latter of whom would be a *regulus*, for he held power jointly, although subordinately, with the king of the Huns. The fourth reference is in the same context of power, but it was the Suevic ruler who held power under the dominance of the Visigothic king Theodorid, and thus he, too, was a *regulus*.

Among the most famous examples of the appearance of a *regulus* in early medieval sources is that recorded in the *Annals of Fulda* in reference to the events following the death in 888 of Charles the Fat, the last Carolingian, who theoretically held all of the empire established by Charlemagne. It was stated that many *reguli* arose in Europe, that is, the *regnum* of the deceased Charles.<sup>24</sup> *Reguli* here has been translated as “petty kings,” “kinglets,” and “kleine Könige,”<sup>25</sup> and certainly the *reguli* under discussion, Berengar of Friuli in Italy, Rudolf the Welf in Burgundy, Louis in Provence, Guido of Spoleto in Italy, and Odo of Paris in Gaul, were inferior in strength and majesty to Arnulf of the east Franks, especially in the eyes of the Fuldan annals, and thus perhaps it is justified to see them as kinglets. But the context provided in the entry makes it clear that these kings were co-kings, for it is stated that upon the death of Charles the Fat his *regnum* was divided. To style these joint rulers over the *regnum* as kinglets is an historian’s judgment, and perhaps even a proper one, but the view of them as co-kings dividing the rule of the territory held by Charles the Fat is in fact the meaning of the statement found in the *Annals of Fulda*.

In one last example, the entry in the *Annales de Vendôme* for the year 956 records the death of Hugh the Great, the *dux Francorum*, but the annal was obviously composed in its present form much later, for it makes reference to the accessions as king in France of Hugh’s son, Hugh Capet, grandson Robert II and great-grandson Henry I, who are not presented in a favorable light: “Hugh, duke and abbot of Saint Martin, son of Robert the pseudo-king, father of the other Hugh who himself afterward was made pseudo-king together with his son Robert, whom we saw ruling for his father most unskillfully; nor has our present *regulus* Henry, his son, strayed from his [Robert’s] idleness.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Annales Fuldenses* s.a. 888, in Reinhold Rau, ed., *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, Fontes ad Historiam Regni Francorum Aevi Karolini Illustrandum, pt. 3 (Darmstadt, 1960): “Rex Arnolfus urbe Radasbona receptis primoribus Baiowariorum, orientales Francos, Saxones, Duringos, Alamannos, magna parte Sclavorum, natalem Domini et pascham ibidem honorifice celebravit. Illo diu morante multi reguli in Europa vel in regno Karoli sui patruelis excrevere.”

<sup>25</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kings Under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London/New York, 1983), p. 262; Timothy Reuter, trans., *The Annals of Fulda* (Manchester/New York, 1992), p. 115; *Annales Fuldenses* 147.

<sup>26</sup> In Louis Halphen, ed., *Recueil d’Annales angevines et vendômoises* (Paris, 1903), pp. 57–58: “Obiit Hugo, dux et abbas Sancti Martini, filius Roberti pseudo-regis, pater alterius Hugonis qui et ipse postea factus est pseudo-rex simul cum Rotberto filio suo, quem



In a recent investigation of this passage,<sup>27</sup> *regulus* was translated “kinglet”—and taken to imply the view that Henry was “something less than a true king,” though at the same time it also might refer to Henry’s youth, meaning “little king or young king.”<sup>28</sup> Although there is no doubt that the annal displays hostility to all three of the first Capetian kings of France and doubts the legitimacy of Hugh and Robert I as well as that of Hugh Capet’s grandfather, King Robert I, also prominent in the passage is a mention of the joint rule of kings. The annal states that Hugh Capet was made pseudo-king along with his son Robert. Indeed, only five months after his own election as king, on 30 December 987, Hugh arranged Robert’s coronation as co-king.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Robert II followed his father’s example by also associating his eldest son Hugh with him as co-king in 1017, but following Hugh’s death in 1025 he likewise made his second son Henry co-king in 1027.<sup>30</sup> So during the years 987–996 (Hugh Capet and Robert II), 1017–1025 (Robert II and Hugh), and 1027–1031 (Robert II and Henry), the kingdom had seen three royal sons as co-kings ruling in association with their fathers.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the Vendômois annal referred to Henry as “our present *regulus*,” a clear indication that there had been previous *reguli* in the kingdom. Therefore, although it is unmistakable that the annalist detested Hugh Capet, Robert II, and Henry, a sentiment shared by others in the same region in the 1020s,<sup>32</sup> the term *regulus* again is used here in the context of the joint rule of kings. It is not simply a term of opprobrium but rather has a clear and specific meaning, namely a co-king.

Thus, one finds consistent patterns in references to *reguli* in antiquity, Late Antiquity, and the Early Middle Ages. *Rex* and *regulus* are frequently interchangeable terms, and *reguli* are closely associated with shared rule.

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vidimus ipsi inertissime regnantem; a cuius ignavia neque p̄sens Heinricus regulus, filius illius, degenerat.”

<sup>27</sup> Bernard S. Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra, the Neo-Roman Consul, 987–1040* (Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles/London, 1993), pp. 258, 353–354.

<sup>28</sup> Bachrach, *Fulk Nerra*, p. 353.

<sup>29</sup> For the sources, see Ferdinand Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens* (Paris, 1891; repr. Geneva/Paris, 1975), p. 217, n. 1; see also idem, *Études sur le règne de Hugues Capet et la fin du Xe siècle* (Paris, 1903; repr. Geneva/Paris, 1975), p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, John France, ed., trans. (Oxford, 1989), 3.34; Robert Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le pieux (996–1031)* (Paris, 1888; repr. Geneva, 1974), pp. 71–79.

<sup>31</sup> Additionally, King Lothair (954–986) succeeded in having his young son Louis V made co-king in 979 (Lot, *Derniers Carolingiens*, pp. 108–109), thus from 979 to 986 there had also been another *regulus* in the kingdom.

<sup>32</sup> For a very similar unflattering description of Henry, as well as his father Robert II, at around the time of his being crowned co-king, see Frederick Behrends, ed., trans., *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres* (Oxford, 1976), no. 115, pp. 206–207, “They say he [Henry] is a hypocrite, lazy, weak, and ready to take after his father in having no regard for what is lawful (quem dicunt simulatorem esse, segnem, mollem, in negligendo iure patrisaturum).”

Throughout the more than a millennium of Latin usage surveyed here, it is difficult to find an individual *regulus* who is not placed in the context of joint rule. Rulers denoted as *reguli* are not necessarily being disparaged as inconsequential rulers, the “petty kings” of the Latin dictionaries and our translations and understandings of the Latin sources, but rather are being described as joint-kings, co-kings. This is a nuance of considerable importance in assessing the position and power of the *reguli* found in Latin sources throughout the period of the Roman Empire, Late Antiquity, and the Early Middle Ages. When one encounters a *regulus*, one should first consider him as one who shares rule rather than one who is a petty ruler.

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## Chapter 4

# Were the Sasanians Barbarians?

### Roman Writers on the “Empire of the Persians”

Scott McDonough

In his long digression on the character and dubious philosophical achievements of the Sasanian king Kusro I Anoshirvan, the sixth-century Roman advocate, poet, and historian Agathias states, “The philosophers of our age had come to the conclusion, because the official religion of the Roman Empire was not to their liking, that the Persian state was much superior. So they gave a ready hearing to the stories in general circulation according to which Persia was the land of ‘Plato’s philosopher king’ in which justice reigned supreme. Apparently, the subjects, too, were models of decency and good behavior and there was no such thing as theft, brigandage, or any other sort of crime.”<sup>1</sup> With this notion, a group of Neoplatonist philosophers from Athens journeyed to the court of Kusro. But they quickly became disillusioned with the barbarism of Persian customs and the superficiality of the king’s philosophical knowledge, and eventually begged Kusro to facilitate their return to the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

Because Agathias made use of Persian sources and eyewitness informants in constructing his long excurses on the Sasanians, modern scholars justifiably have viewed his *Histories* as the most important Roman source on Sasanian Iran.<sup>3</sup> Correspondingly, Agathias’ negative assessment of the society, customs, and rulers of Persians have been taken as representative of the attitudes of Roman authors in sixth-century Constantinople toward barbarous Persia and its barbarian Sasanian kings. These negative views would have been rooted in Roman writers’ confidence

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<sup>1</sup> Agathias 2.30.3; translation from Joseph D. Frendo, *Agathias: The Histories* (Berlin, 1975), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> See Alan Cameron, “The Last Days of the Academy at Athens,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 15 (1969): 7–29; Philippe Hoffmann, “Damascius,” in R. Goulet, ed., *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* (1994), 2.541–593; Michel Tardieu, “Chosroès,” in *ibid.*, pp. 309–318; and Joel T. Walker, “The Limits of Late Antiquity: Philosophy between Rome and Iran,” *Ancient World* 33 (2002): 45–69.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leyden, 1879); Averil Cameron, “Agathias on the Sasanians,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23 (1969–1970): 69–183; and eadem, *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970).

in their own society's absolute organizational, military, cultural, and moral pre-eminence over its eastern neighbor.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the passage raises a point that needs further explanation, namely Agathias' observation, repeated on several occasions, about the general circulation of tales citing the superiority of the justice and governance of the Persian kings.<sup>5</sup> Before we dismiss this assertion of his own iconoclasm as a literary *topos*, we might note that several of Agathias' contemporaries, writing in the reigns of Justinian and his successors, did express a wary respect or even outright admiration for the achievements of the Sasanians. Indeed, in his vehement distaste for the Persians, Agathias was the odd man out, complaining ineffectively about a conventional wisdom of ambivalence toward or even admiration of the Persians, an attitude he viewed as fundamentally flawed, even dangerous. Yet the survival of Agathias' work in its entirety has perhaps lent it an authority it lacked in his own time.

In an effort to put Agathias into his proper historical and literary contexts vis-à-vis the Sasanians, this study will explore how authors in Constantinople in the mid-to late sixth century portrayed the Sasanian Empire. Its fundamental premise is that the historical writing of Agathias was essentially reactive, dismissive, or hostile toward intellectual currents common in Constantinopolitan literary circles that Agathias regarded as unjustifiably "pro-Persian." Focusing on Agathias' challenges to the works of other writers, this study also will examine the occupational and ideological distinctions between Agathias and his contemporaries, emphasizing the important role of bureaucrats, diplomats, and military men in the intellectual circles of sixth-century Byzantium. It will conclude with a brief attempt to account for why so many writers in the times of Justinian and his successors portrayed the Persians in an equivocal or openly positive light, and the implications of this literary tendency for the modern historian.

At a number of points in his digressions on the Persians, Agathias explicitly identifies where his own conclusions diverge from the opinions of "the crowd" or other writers, particularly those he claims to respect, such as Procopius. Agathias explicitly criticized three approaches to the Persians that he suggested were common in contemporary writing: (1) assertions of the superior moral and intellectual character of individual Persians and their kings,<sup>6</sup> (2) beliefs in the antiquity and distinction of Persian civilization,<sup>7</sup> and (3) claims of the superiority of the Sasanian political system, often predicated on Neoplatonic notions of ideal kingship, as seen in the introductory quotation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For Byzantine ethnography in this period, see Michael Maas, "'Delivered from Their Ancient Customs': Christianity and the Question of Cultural Change in Early Byzantine Ethnography," in Kenneth Mills, Anthony Grafton, eds., *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing* (Rochester, NY, 2003), pp. 152–188.

<sup>5</sup> Agathias 2.28.1–6.

<sup>6</sup> Agathias 2.28.1–6, 2.30.3–4, 2.32.5.

<sup>7</sup> Agathias 2.23.8–9, 2.26.1–2.27.9.

<sup>8</sup> Agathias 2.30.3.

## Writers from Diplomatic, Military, and Bureaucratic Circles

Why was Agathias so often at odds with his contemporaries on the subject of the Sasanians? Although Agathias circulated in Constantinopolitan literary circles like other writers, he was, in several senses, an outsider. His middling skill as a poet kept him from reaching the heights attained by his friend Paul the Silentiary. His turn to historical writings was more successful, but, unlike Paul, he never attracted the notice of patrons of any great status.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, in spite of his position as an advocate (*scholasticus*) and his access to a range of written and human informants (the most impressive being the Syrian translator Sergius, who provided him access to the Sasanian royal archives, and the physician Uranius, who met King Kusro), Agathias seems to have lacked the necessary contacts and talent to catapult himself into the highest echelons of Constantinople's literary elite. By contrast, the attitudes toward the Persians that offended Agathias were characteristic of authors circulating in more elevated literary circles than himself: on the one hand, diplomats and military men, and on the other, bureaucrats and intellectuals marginalized by the upstart Justinian.

The first of these literary circles consisted of high-ranking ambassadors and soldiers who had encountered Persians face to face, including such writers as Procopius, Peter the Patrician, Menander Protector, and pseudo-Maurice.<sup>10</sup> Their works prominently displayed their erudition on military matters, travel, and ethnography. By contrast, Agathias had few ranking military contacts and was little interested in the niceties of a well-executed military maneuver, preferring calculated literary allusion to the accurate recounting of campaigns and battles.<sup>11</sup> Agathias' travel experience likewise was limited to his hometown Myrina, Alexandria in Egypt, where he received his legal training, and Constantinople. Thus, Agathias' knowledge of the Persians seems to have been entirely secondhand, as a distant, menacing presence over the horizon.

By contrast, Agathias' contemporaries in diplomatic and military circles echoed in their writings the language of mutuality and respect used in Roman negotiations and diplomatic correspondence with the Persians. Peter the Patrician, describing negotiations between Narseh and Galerius two-and-a-half centuries before, reports the use of the term "the two eyes of the world" to describe the Roman and Persian monarchs.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in official communiqués the two monarchs addressed each

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<sup>9</sup> See Claudia Rapp, "Literary Culture under Justinian," in Michael Maas, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 376–397; and Alan and Averil Cameron, "The Cycle of Agathias," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 86 (1966): 6–25.

<sup>10</sup> See Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 176–310; also, Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, pp. 288–289.

<sup>12</sup> Peter the Patrician, fr. 13 = *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum* (FHG) 188; for this phrase, see Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), pp. 12–36.

other in the terms of brotherhood, and Romans reserved the imperial title *basileus* exclusively for the Roman Emperor and Sasanian King of Kings.

It is tempting to dismiss this language as a rhetorical flourish borrowed from diplomatic missives. Nevertheless, soldiers and diplomats clearly regarded their Persian counterparts as more than simple *barbaroi*, like the peoples of the northern and western frontiers. A notable example comes in Procopius' account of the emperor Arcadius (383–408) placing his son, the infant Theodosius II, under the guardianship of Yazdgard I, in which the historian praises Arcadius' wisdom and the Sasanian king's "nobility of character" for keeping the peace with Rome and for securing Theodosius' place on the throne.<sup>13</sup> Even though this incident has something of a legendary cast—Agathias complains that he was unable to find written evidence to verify Procopius' account even though the story "was repeated by both the upper classes and the common people"<sup>14</sup>—it still highlights Procopius' grudging respect for the Persians, and presumably a belief common among the wagging tongues of Constantinople. In contrast, Agathias vehemently criticizes Arcadius' action (and Procopius' analysis of it), suggesting that the dying emperor had placed Theodosius in the hands of "a foreigner and a barbarian, the ruler of a bitterly hostile nation, a man who in matters of honor and justice was an unknown quantity, and who on top of everything else was an adherent of a false religion."<sup>15</sup> Thus curiously, whereas Agathias' natural tendency is toward suspicion of Persian motives, Procopius seems generally to assume that Persians are at least as honorable in their conduct as Romans.

Procopius and other writers from military and diplomatic circles clearly admired their counterparts in the Persian military and bureaucracy for practical reasons, viewing them as opponents who were products of storied martial and scribal traditions not far removed from the Romans' own. Military writers saw the Persians as worthy adversaries both on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. Pseudo-Maurice, writing the *Strategikon* near the end of the sixth century, neatly summarized the attitudes of a Roman military man, stating: "The Persian nation is wicked, dissembling, and servile, but at the same time patriotic and obedient."<sup>16</sup> Although they certainly were not to be trusted, the Persians were the only adversaries whose discipline and organization measured up to the Romans'

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<sup>13</sup> Procopius, *Bell.Pers.* 1.2.1–10. Procopius presents a number of other examples of his positive views of individual Persian kings and leaders include: *ibid.* 1.2.11–15, 1.7.29–35, 1.11.1–35.

<sup>14</sup> Agathias 4.26.4. Agathias' dismissal (4.26.3–7) of Procopius' assessment raises several questions about why Procopius introduced his account of the contemporary conflict between Rome and Iran with this incident. Was this to set the present situation apart from the previous one? To criticize diplomatic efforts under Justin and Justinian (e.g. their rejection of Kavad's regency over Kusro)? To demonstrate that Procopius' belief that Persians might be trusted was naïve?

<sup>15</sup> Agathias 4.26.6, translation from Frenndo, *Agathias*, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> Pseudo-Maurice, *Strategikon* 11.4.

own. Indeed, Romans who had encountered the Persians directly, whether in war or peace, tended to develop a degree of respect for the sophistication and cunning of individual Persians and their leaders. For example, Menander Protector presents the Persian negotiator Yezdgushnasp as a true equal of Peter the Patrician, the Roman *magister officiorum* he faced at the treaty conference of 562. Indeed, Menander explicitly criticizes Peter's high opinion of his own eloquence, while characterizing Yezdgushnasp as a cunning diplomat more than a match for the *magister*.<sup>17</sup> In the same negotiations, Menander also tells of Roman and Persian negotiators commiserating with each other as equals about the "uncouthness and unreliability" of their mutual Saracen allies.<sup>18</sup> Whereas Persian bureaucrats were not to be trusted, they did, at least, "speak the same language," metaphorically, as their Roman counterparts. None of the empire's other friends or foes merited the same degree of respect in war and diplomacy, and certainly not in the writings of Roman generals and bureaucrats.

Along these lines, Agathias certainly was willing to accept the genius of individual Persians in the military arts. For example, he praised the Persian general Mihr Mihroch (Greek Mermeroes) and Kusro I for their martial prowess, if little else.<sup>19</sup> This praise would have been rooted in Agathias' respect for the opinions for soldiers and diplomats as practitioners of arcane arts that he had little skill or interest in himself. Yet whereas Agathias may have been willing to accept the opinions of proven experts, he proved less tolerant of the more liberal opinions of writers who were more clearly his peers.

In his personal life and scholarly pursuits, Agathias viewed himself as a member of the bureaucratic and academic circles of the capital. These circles included writers such as the functionary John the Lydian, as well as Neoplatonist scholars and their sympathizers, although the degree of contact among writers with distinct degrees of social, professional, and stylistic attainment is unclear. A diverse subset of this Constantinople-based intellectual elite openly commended aspects of Sasanian culture and administration as superior to those of the Romans. This was a far more radical expression of *Persophilia* than Roman soldiers' and diplomats' admiration for the skill of individual Persians on the battlefield and negotiating table. Indeed, this almost seditious sympathy for the great barbarian foe of Roman civilization was, to Agathias, naive, absurd, or actively dangerous.

Agathias' virulent hostility to these pro-Persian attitudes among the Constantinopolitan intelligentsia may be rooted in some aspects of his personal biography. Judging from references in his *History* and his poetic compilation, the *Cycle*, Agathias associated regularly only among the lower echelons of Constantinopolitan intellectuals. Perhaps because of his thwarted ambitions, Agathias was largely indifferent to the grievances that more esteemed intellectuals harbored against the emperor Justinian and his advisers. As will be argued below,

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<sup>17</sup> Menander Protector, fr. 6.1.100–101, 6.2.21–26.

<sup>18</sup> Menander Protector, fr. 9.1.67–69.

<sup>19</sup> Mihr Mihroch: Agathias 2.22.5; Kusro: Agathias 2.28.1–6, 2.32.5.



in this circle praise of Persian social and political institutions served as veiled criticism of contemporary Roman emperors. Indeed Agathias' aim of attracting patronage was best served by avoiding giving offence to his social superiors, imperial or otherwise, in his writings. Praise of the Persians in a time of continued warfare against them was hardly advisable for an ambitious *scholasticus*. Agathias' lack of success at breaking into more rarified literary ranks may have fed his bitter criticism of his supposed betters' follies, such as the philosophers' journey to the court of Kusro. Finally, we must not discount the importance of Agathias' own circle of unexceptional intellectuals in shaping his attitudes. Notably, Agathias' personal antipathy toward the insufferable Syrian physician Uranius, who met Kusro in person and apparently dropped the king's name at every opportunity, might have colored all of his writing on the Persians.<sup>20</sup>

The types of praise of the Persians that Agathias opposed were grounded in two lines of argument, both of which Agathias passionately deconstructs in his *History*: appeals to Roman antiquarianist tendencies, common among the cultivated bureaucrats of the imperial capital (such as John the Lydian), and claims of the superior philosophical foundations of Persian rule espoused by Neoplatonists and their sympathizers.

John the Lydian and Peter the Patrician, writing a few years before Agathias, expressed an intense interest in the ancient development and form of Roman administrative offices. This antiquarian fascination may be reflected in their explicit or implicit comparisons of Sasanian and early Roman political institutions. In the *De magistratibus*, John the Lydian equated the Persian Empire with the primitive (pre-Marian) Roman *res publica*, whereas Peter the Patrician casually defined the Persian office of *archapetes* (*argpat*) as a "Praetorian Prefect."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, a contemporary tendency to compare the institutions of Sasanian Iran to Rome may partially explain Agathias' odd attempt to explain the Sasanian use of regional royal titles like *Kirmanshah* or *Saganshah* (reflecting princely client kingship) through analogy with Roman victory titlature such *Germanicus* and *Parthicus*, while oddly, and falsely, consigning the Roman use of such titles to the past.<sup>22</sup> The logical conclusion of antiquarians such as John the Lydian would seem to be that institutions of Sasanian Iran were more true to the values of the Roman *res publica* than those "reformed" or established by that contemporary "radical" monarchist, Justinian. Although this notion seems not to have been openly expressed in writing by Roman bureaucrats, something like it might have inspired several of the more vehement anti-Persian passages in Agathias.

The Sasanians were indisputably the heirs of a Near Eastern civilization vastly more ancient than Rome, and the proponents of a Magian faith already ancient in the time of Augustus and Christ. To the earliest Roman observers, Sasanian Iran claimed for itself the power and majesty of the Achaemenid rulers of the sixth

<sup>20</sup> Agathias 2.29.1–30.3, 32.1–5.

<sup>21</sup> John the Lydian, *De magistratibus* 3.34; Peter the Patrician, fr. 14: *FHG* 4.189.

<sup>22</sup> Agathias 4.24.7–8, 4.26.1–2.

through fourth centuries BCE.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, Agathias challenged the Sasanian inheritance of a Persian *mos maiorum*, stating, “The present-day Persians have almost completely abandoned their old ways, an upheaval that has been marked by the wholesale adoption of alien and degenerate manners ever since they have come under the spell of the doctrines of Zoroaster, the son of Horamasdes.”<sup>24</sup> For Agathias, this “upheaval” consisted first of the Sasanian usurpation of power—the first Sasanian king, that “monster of wickedness and injustice” Ardashir I, was merely the son of a cobbler. More significantly, Agathias criticized the Persians’ adoption of appalling and immoral religious practices.<sup>25</sup> In Agathias’ telling, Magian customs (such as exposure of the dead and close-kin marriage) were a farrago of ideas lifted from other peoples, welded together by the Manichaean immorality of the Magi.<sup>26</sup> By denying a direct connection between the Sasanians and the ancient Persians, Agathias countered claims of the legitimacy of the Sasanian power and the superiority of Persian culture based on its continuity with the ancient Near Eastern past, and asserted the moral and historical supremacy of Roman Christianity. Although Averil Cameron has convincingly argued that Agathias refrained from overt expressions of Christian piety in his work out of an ingrained classicizing impulse,<sup>27</sup> his expression of revulsion toward the Persians clearly played to the sensibilities of an Orthodox Christian audience and may provide a window into Agathias’ own faith and moral standards.

Agathias’ Christian Orthodoxy also played into his rejection of the contemporary idealization of Sasanian Iran in Neoplatonic circles. The anonymous sixth-century treatise *On Political Science* provides clear evidence of the thinking that Agathias criticizes so harshly. Presented as a dialogue between Menodorus and Thomasius (perhaps “Platonized” versions of the names of two high officials from the early years of Justinian’s administration, Menas and Thomas), the tract explores governance and the “ideal constitution.” Near the end of the fourth book, Thomasius laments that, whereas he and Menodorus have discussed many examples of the “military class” (guardians) at war, he has seen little evidence of its other primary function, “concern for gentleness and justice toward citizens and subjects.”<sup>28</sup> Menodorus responds with a long anecdote about the Persian king Peroz’s execution of a soldier who took grain from a Persian farm. Justifying his decision, Peroz argues that he cannot allow injustice to go unchecked, because

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<sup>23</sup> Dio Cassius 80.4.1–2, Herodian 6.2.1–2, Zonaras 12.15.

<sup>24</sup> Agathias 2.24.5.

<sup>25</sup> Agathias 4.23.8.

<sup>26</sup> Agathias 2.24.9.

<sup>27</sup> Cameron, *Agathias*, pp. 89–111.

<sup>28</sup> *De scientia politica dialogus* 14 (f. 298r), in Carolus Maria Mazzucchi, ed., *Menae patricii cum Thoma referendario De scientia politica dialogus* (Milan, 2002). See also Dominic O’Meara, “The Justinianic Dialogue *On Political Science* and its Neoplatonic Sources,” in Katerina Ierodiakonou, ed., *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 49–62.

“It is obvious to everyone, I assume, that the bodies, the horses, the bows, the arrows, and the spears of the Romans are stronger than ours. We, however, use against them justice alone as our weapon, and arming ourselves with it against the enemy, we govern our subjects in a gentle and humane way.”<sup>29</sup> The author also notes that “an example of the Persian concern and clemency toward their subjects is the following custom that survives even today, for when it happens that some region of their land suffers a crop failure or other misfortune, comfort and assistance are extended to it through the intervention of the army.”<sup>30</sup> In essence, the anonymous author believes that the Persians provide a model of wise and effective (Platonic) governance.<sup>31</sup>

*On Political Science* was hardly unique in its positive vision of Sasanian Iran and its kings. Sasanian kings long had promoted themselves as “just rulers” in epigraphy, numismatics, and literature.<sup>32</sup> Paul the Persian and the Neoplatonist Priscian of Lydia, among others, dedicated significant philosophical treatises to Kusro as a wise king and (they hoped) a patron of learning. The Sasanian kings’ interest in philosophy was long-established: Eunapius claimed in the *Lives of the Sophists* that Shapur II was so enchanted with the visiting philosopher Eustathius that he would have abandoned his crown if the Magian priesthood had not stood in his way.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the belief in the “wisdom of the east” had wide and long-standing currency in the Mediterranean world, as evidenced, for example, by the aborted expedition of Plotinus, the Gnostic beliefs in the eastern travels of Jesus and his followers, and the cachet of Chaldaean magic and learning in the Roman world.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, we must add to this the general perception of the Athenian Neoplatonists mentioned by Agathias that Persia offered a land where they could escape a religion (imperial orthodox Christianity) that was not to their liking. The atmosphere of religious pluralism within the Sasanian world offered a stark contrast to the late Roman, and especially Justinianic, demand for imperial unity through rigid

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<sup>29</sup> *De scien.pol.dial.* 14–15 (f. 298r, 346r).

<sup>30</sup> *De scien.pol.dial.* 15 (f. 346r).

<sup>31</sup> For this ideal, see O’Meara, “Dialogue,” and Digeser in this volume.

<sup>32</sup> Jamsheed K. Choksy, “Sacral Kingship in Sasanian Iran,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* n.s. (1988): 35–52; Michael Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 27–32; M.F. Kanga, “Kingship and Religion in Iran,” *Acta Iranica* 3 (1974): 221–31. See also Josef Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia* (London, 1996), pp. 165–182, and Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran* (Rome, 1989) for further discussion and references regarding Sasanian kingship.

<sup>33</sup> Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists* 6.5.1–10. Note also Victoria Erhart, “The Context and Contents of Priscianus of Lydia’s *Solutionum ad Chosroem*,” presented at Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, Boston, MA, 10–15 August 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 3; *Acts of Thomas*; David Pingree, “Legacies in Astronomy and Celestial Omens,” in Stephanie Dalley, ed., *The Legacy of Mesopotamia* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 107–138.

Christian orthodoxy. Although hardly indifferent to matters of religious confession, the Sasanian kings adopted strategies of tolerance and cooperation with the leaders of their subject religious communities that were quite foreign to late Roman religious and imperial ideologies. Christians and Jews frequented the Magian king's court, and Christian bishops served as the king's ambassadors, representing their "pagan" ruler to their co-religionists, something that could hardly be lost on those whose loyalty and Roman identities were called into question by their failure to embrace normative imperial Christianity.

To Agathias, however, this tolerance was an invitation to the worst sorts of depravity: sexual, criminal, and against God himself. Indeed, Agathias explicitly links Persian rule, sexual depravity, and Platonic ideas in his account of the Sasanian king Kavad's flirtation with the Magian heresy Mazdakism, stating,

In his dealings with his subjects he [Kavad] was harsh and cruel, showing no respect for the social order, introducing revolutionary innovations into the body politic, and subverting their age-old customs. He even was reputed to have made a law that wives should be held in common not, I imagine, with a view to any of the utilitarian ends suggested by the hidden meaning of Socrates' words in the Platonic dialogue, but merely in order to facilitate concubinage and allow any man who felt so inclined to sleep with any woman of his own choosing, even if she happened to be somebody else's wife.<sup>35</sup>

Here Agathias' judgment differs markedly from his earlier digression on the Alamanni, in which Agathias expresses a surprising tolerance for false belief rooted in "irrationality" and "savagery," common among the barbarians of the north. By contrast, Agathias finds the folly of both Neoplatonists and reputedly wise Persians unforgivable.<sup>36</sup> Yet for Agathias, in the end all would face the ultimate triumph of God's will: the arrogant humbled, the ignorant educated, and the sinful punished.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of the views of Agathias, positive perceptions of the Sasanians continued to be common among the intellectual elites of sixth-century Constantinople. But why? Direct personal contact between Roman officials and their Persian counterparts, not to mention the important roles played by Sasanian Christians in diplomatic relations with Rome and at the Sasanian court, certainly may have moderated perceptions of the Sasanians. But, ultimately, positive portrayals of the

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<sup>35</sup> Agathias 4.27.7, translation from Frendo, *Agathias*, p. 130.

<sup>36</sup> Agathias 4.7.1–7.

<sup>37</sup> Cameron, *Agathias*, pp. 91–96. On the evolution of Christian Roman/Byzantine ideas of "just war," which forms an important backdrop for Agathias' ideas, see John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World: 565–1204* (Abingdon, 1999), pp. 13–33.

Persians were rooted in the preoccupations of the Constantinopolitan intelligentsia with the lasting implications of Justinian's reforms and reign.<sup>38</sup>

Literary praise of the Sasanians indirectly served to criticize the contemporary Roman political leadership. By emphasizing the Persians' fidelity to their ancient customs, Roman authors implicitly disparaged the administrative innovations of Justinian and his successors and highlighted the corruption of the present age. By holding up Kusro as a paragon of justice and temperate rule, a protector of the interests of the powerless, even a true "philosopher king," writers emphasized the shortcomings of their own rulers, who appointed rapacious officials such as John the Cappadocian (so loathed by Procopius and John the Lydian) to bleed the provinces, and seemingly opposed the pursuit of education, philosophical wisdom, and true religious insight.<sup>39</sup>

In this sense, praise of the barbarian empire of the Persians was another expression of political opposition from what Anthony Kaldellis has termed the "dissident circles" of sixth-century Constantinople, of a piece with the more explicitly critical writings of John the Lydian (*De magistratibus*) and Procopius (*Anekdotia*).<sup>40</sup> Thus, for all the direct knowledge of individual Persians among the military and diplomatic literary classes of Constantinople, for many writers the reality of the Persians, whether they were barbarians or not, was irrelevant. More important was their literary function as a rhetorical counterpoint inviting critical comparison of the current state of the Roman Empire.

Agathias envisioned himself providing a clear corrective to these literary Persians by means of a weight of factual evidence, making it his business "to collect accurate information ... from official Persian sources" in order to remedy the deficient and inaccurate views of his contemporaries.<sup>41</sup> Agathias sought to persuade his supposedly pro-Persian contemporaries of the logical flaws and foolishness inherent in their idealization of Sasanian Iran and its monarchs. Agathias claimed that his own accounts, based on Persian sources, must be given greater weight than those of other authors, because "We must follow the authority

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<sup>38</sup> See Michael Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London, 1992); Christopher M. Kelly, "Late Roman Bureaucracy: Going Through the Files," in A.K. Bowman, G.D. Woolf, eds., *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 161–176; idem, *Ruling the Late Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2004); Anthony Kaldellis, "Things Are Not What They Are: Agathias Mythistoric and the Last Laugh of Classical Culture," *CQ* 53 (2003): 295–300; and idem, "The Historical and Religious Views of Agathias: A Reinterpretation," *Byzantion. Revue internationale des etudes byzantines* 69 (1999): 206–252.

<sup>39</sup> An instructive comparison may perhaps be made with Priscus of Panium's anecdote about a Roman defector to the Huns: see Michael Maas, "Fugitives and Ethnography in Priscus of Panium," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 19 (1995): 146–160.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, "Identifying Dissident Circles in Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Florilegium* 21 (2004): 1–17.

<sup>41</sup> Agathias 2.27.6–8.

of the Persian documents and credit their contents with greater veracity."<sup>42</sup> Along the way, Agathias hoped to demonstrate his own erudition while humbling rivals within his own Constantinopolitan literary circle, notably the well-traveled Uranius. Yet, driven by pride in his own intellectual achievements and by envy of his better-known and respected contemporaries, Agathias failed to realize that his peers' point in praising the Sasanians was not to elevate the Persians, but to diminish their own Roman rulers in Constantinople. Nevertheless, by missing this crucial point, Agathias produced what remains one of the most valuable ancient sources on Sasanian Iran and has shaped all subsequent interpretations of the "barbarous" empire of the Persians.

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<sup>42</sup> Agathias 4.30.5

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## Chapter 5

# A Roman Image of the “Barbarian” Sasanians<sup>1</sup>

Jan Willem Drijvers

“Almost from earliest times in Europe the Orient was something more than what was empirically known about it.” This notion, formulated by Edward Said in his standard work *Orientalism*,<sup>2</sup> has had and still has—in spite of the many criticisms of Said’s work<sup>3</sup>—considerable influence on how ancient historians perceive the relations between the Mediterranean world of Greeks and Romans and the Oriental world of the Persians. For Greeks and Romans the Oriental world was an *alter orbis*, a world that culturally, socially, and politically differed considerably from their own. It was a world that Romans found hard to understand, about which they were prejudiced, and to which they felt superior. Since the “invention of the barbarian” by the Greeks, in particular in Herodotus’ *Histories*, the Persian world had been considered barbarian.<sup>4</sup> This conception of Persian society helped shape the Greco-Roman self-image as a predominant power, in particular also because the Orient was a world that could be defeated and conquered as shown by the victories of the Athenians, Spartans, and Macedonians under Alexander the Great and of the Romans. However, after conquest, it was a world extremely difficult to hold and to control as even the history of our own days shows.

Modern discussions about Romans and barbarians focus mainly on northern and western barbarians such as Alamanni, Franks, Goths, and Huns;<sup>5</sup> these are considered the barbarians *par excellence*, who differ in almost every respect from Greco-Roman civilization. In his fifteenth *Oration* Libanius described the

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Danuta Shanzer and Ralph W. Mathisen for their critical and very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> See now e.g. Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (London, 2006), esp. Ch. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989); Pericles Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience: From the Archaic Period to the Age of Xenophon* (Baltimore, MD/London, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, NJ, 1980); Patrick J. Geary, “Barbarians and Ethnicity,” in G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar, eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 107–129.



barbarians as raging and ravaging wild beasts who slew their kinsmen at table and drank toasts over their dead bodies. The chief aim of the Greek (and Roman) was to separate himself from these brutes as best he could.<sup>6</sup> Rome's greatest enemy in Late Antiquity, the Sasanian Persians, were not generally considered by the late antique sources as common barbarians but are described in a somewhat more nuanced way. This is not to say that the Persians were not considered barbarians, or at least as a people clearly demarcated and different from the civilized Greco-Roman world, but that the sources treat them in a more nuanced and at times even respectful way.

In Late Antiquity friendly and less friendly interactions between Romans and Sasanian Persians took place on a regular basis.<sup>7</sup> The first serious Roman contacts with Persian society date from the first century BCE. In spite of frequent contacts, military, political, economic, and cultural, over a period of more than seven centuries between the Roman and Persian (Parthian and Sasanid) empires, there existed a wide gulf between the two superpowers of their time. Whereas the Roman image of Parthian society has received considerable attention,<sup>8</sup> the same cannot be said of the perception the Romans had of Sasanian society. What follows will try to reconstruct succinctly the way that the Romans perceived the Sasanian Persians and their society. Three historiographic sources, Ammianus Marcellinus, Procopius, and Agathias, are at the center of this discussion.

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<sup>6</sup> Lib. Or. 15.25–26.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Michael H. Dodgeon, Samuel N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars A.D. 226–363: A Documentary History* (London/New York, 1991); R.C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*, ARCA, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers, and Monographs 30 (Leeds, 1992); A.D. Lee, *Information and Frontiers: Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1993); James Howard-Johnston, "The Two Great Powers in Late Antiquity: A Comparison," in Averil Cameron, ed., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III, States, Resources and Armies* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), pp. 157–226; Engelbert Winter, Beate Dignas, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity: Neighbours and Rivals* (Cambridge, 2007); Geoffrey Greatrex, Samuel N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars AD 363–630: A Narrative Sourcebook* (London/New York, 2002); Jan Willem Drijvers, "Rome and the Sasanid Empire: Confrontation and Coexistence," in Philip Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Malden, MA/Oxford, 2009), pp. 441–454.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), Ch. 8, "Parthia/Persia," and the abundant references there. See also Josef Wiesehöfer, ed., *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse/The Arsacid Empire: Sources and Documentation*, Historia Einzelschrift 122 (Stuttgart, 1998); Umberto Roberto, "Immagini del dispotismo: La Persia Sassanide nella rappresentazione della cultura ellenistico-romano da Costantino a Eraclio (306–641 d.C.)," in Domenico Felice, ed., *Dispotismo: genesi e sviluppi di un concetto filosofico-politico* (Naples, 2002), pp. 33–69.

## Ammianus Marcellinus

Ammianus, *miles quondam et Graecus* (Amm. 31.16.9), dealt at length with the Persians in the context of the conflicts between the two empires in the 350s and 360s.<sup>9</sup> As a Roman officer, who had fought them and participated in Julian's Persian expedition (363), Ammianus knew the Sasanians at first hand. His *Res Gestae* are famous for their digressions, in particular those on geography and ethnography. His longest digression, some 18 pages in the Teubner edition, is devoted to Persia and the Persians (23.6) and forms part of his elaborate description of Julian's campaign in the heartland of the Sasanid Empire.<sup>10</sup>

The main section of the digression contains a geographical description of the Persian Empire and its various provinces, but Ammianus also presents a short survey of Persian history and an ethnography. In the latter he describes the appearance, character, and customs of the Persians. They are slight in build, have a darkish and bloodless complexion, goat's eyes, and a grim expression. They have beards, wear their hair long, and their eyebrows are curved in a semicircle and meet in the middle. Most are inordinately addicted to sex and have, according to their means, several wives or concubines, but do not practice pederasty. They are frugal eaters and "the luxury of an elegant table and especially indulgence in drink they shun like the plague."<sup>11</sup> Only the king has fixed hours for dining; all others eat when they are hungry, but never to excess. Besides being modest in eating, they avoid unseemly actions; one will never see a Persian pass water standing up or withdraw to answer a call of nature.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand they are so careless and undisciplined in their movements that one might think them effeminate. They talk extravagantly and are full of empty words; they are disgustingly boastful and given to threats. They are cunning, proud, and cruel, and claim the power of life and death over slaves and common people. They flay men alive, and the servants who wait on them at table are not allowed to open their mouths, either to speak or to spit. They have great respect for their laws, which are severe. Persian judges are men of experience and integrity,

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<sup>9</sup> On Ammianus see, e.g., John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989); Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, NY/London, 1998); G. Sabbah, "Ammianus Marcellinus," in G. Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 43–84.

<sup>10</sup> For the digression see J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst, H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII* (Groningen, 1998), pp. 129–233; Fabrizio Cura, *Ammiano Geografo. La digressione sulla Persia (23,6)*, *Studi Latini* 54 (Naples, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Amm. 23.6.76: "munditias conviviorum et luxum maximeque potandi aviditatem vitantes ut luem."

<sup>12</sup> Amm. 23.6.79: "nec stando mingens nec ad requisita naturae secedens facile visitur Persa."

and need no others to advise them. Ammianus remarks that they “laugh at our [i.e. the Roman] custom of giving unlearned judges eloquent assessors who are thoroughly versed in public law.”<sup>13</sup> They are formidable warriors and could have put many other peoples under their yoke besides those whom they had fully subdued, had they not been constantly harassed by domestic and foreign wars. They dress in garments of various gleaming colors, which, though open in front and at the sides, never expose any part of their body. After their victory over Lydia and Croesus they began to wear gold arm rings and necklaces, and especially pearls, which they have in great quantities.

This description clearly emphasizes the “otherness” of the Persians.<sup>14</sup> The Persian national vices, as seen by Greeks and Romans, receive especially ample attention: sexual intemperance, cruelty, arrogance, effeminacy, violence, garrulity, constant domestic strife, and foreign wars. However, Ammianus apparently had aspirations to objectivity since he also mentioned the Persians’ virtues: their avoidance of excessive eating and drinking, their moderation, their professional judicial system, and, above all, their military training and discipline and expertise in warfare. Ammianus, a soldier himself, admired the Sasanian military qualities, although he criticizes them for not always fighting in an organized fashion, for lacking endurance in battle, and for not being good in one-on-one combat. Ammianus’ description, predominantly based on written sources, clearly bears the Herodotean imprint; he characterized the Persians in many respects as inferior to the Greco-Romans and in that sense displays the usual condescension found in the ancient Greek and Roman sources toward the Persian Oriental. Interestingly enough, nowhere in his work does he use the term “barbarian” to designate the Persians, an epithet that he did apply to Huns, for example, or to Germans, Sarmatians, Isaurians, and Berbers.<sup>15</sup>

Of interest is Ammianus’ image of the Persian king Sapor II (309–379). Although Ammianus admires his military achievements and calls him “victor

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<sup>13</sup> Amm. 23.6.82: “nostram consuetudinem rident, quae interdum facundos iurisque publici peritissimos post indoctorum collocat terga.”

<sup>14</sup> H.C. Teitler, “*Visa vel lecta?* Ammianus on Persia and the Persians,” in Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt, eds., *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York, 1999), pp. 216–223; Jan Willem Drijvers, “Ammianus Marcellinus’ Image of Sasanian Society,” in Josef Wiesehöfer, Ph. Huyse, eds., *Ērān ud Anērān. Studien zu den Beziehungen zwischen dem Sasanidenreich und der Mittelmeerwelt, Oriens et Occidens 13* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 45–69.

<sup>15</sup> A. Chauvot, *Opinions romaines face aux barbares au IVe siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris, 1998), p. 387. For Ammianus’ image of barbarians in general see also Francisco Javier Gúzman Armario, *Los Barbáros en Amiano Marcelino* (Cádiz, 2001; unpubl. PhD thesis).

in wars,”<sup>16</sup> Sapor is a harsh and cruel ruler,<sup>17</sup> unrestrained in his greed,<sup>18</sup> short-tempered and rude,<sup>19</sup> savage,<sup>20</sup> and pompous.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Ammianus calls him arrogant,<sup>22</sup> shrewd,<sup>23</sup> and a man with a fondness for plundering.<sup>24</sup> Several times Ammianus accuses the Persian king of treachery and dishonesty.<sup>25</sup> But the most frequently mentioned negative quality is rage.<sup>26</sup> The presentation of the Sasanian king is clearly the opposite of the ideal picture of the Roman emperor, who ought to be philanthropic, just, moderate, mild, and gentle.<sup>27</sup>

Ammianus thus gives a nuanced depiction of the Persians. On the one hand the picture has points of contact with common characteristics ascribed to barbarians by Ammianus: they are irrational, savage, unreliable, not human but bestial; they quarrel with their allies, fight all the time, are divided among themselves, and do not know the difference between good and evil.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand Ammianus does not explicitly call the Persians barbarians and they have a special position in his work. They are certainly not described as one of the many marginal peoples whose character and habits differed completely from the Greco-Roman standard. Their barbarism was certainly not like that of northern and western barbarians, who were

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<sup>16</sup> Amm. 19.2.11: “Persis Saporem saansaan appellantis et pirosem, quod rex regibus imperans et bellorum victor interpretatur.”

<sup>17</sup> Amm. 18.10.4: “lenitudinem profecto in tempore simulans, ut omnes, quos antehac diritate crudelitateque terrebat, spontesua metu remoto venirent”; Amm. 27.12.6: “Saporis inclementissimi.”

<sup>18</sup> Amm. 17.5.15: “effrenata regis cupiditate; Amm. 18.4.1: “augendique regni cupiditate supra homines flagrans.”

<sup>19</sup> Amm. 18.6.18: “irritabilis et asperrimus.”

<sup>20</sup> Amm. 20.6.1: “truculentus rex ille Persarum.”

<sup>21</sup> Amm. 21.7.6: “rege turgido.”

<sup>22</sup> Amm. 29.1.1: “Sapor immaniter arrogans.” Roman emperors also, as well as others, were accused of arrogance by Ammianus. For “Arroganz,” see Axel Brandt, *Moralische Werte in den Res gestae des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Göttingen, 1999), pp. 217–228.

<sup>23</sup> Amm. 27.12.14: “Sapor immensum quantum astutus.”

<sup>24</sup> Amm. 27.12.1: “Sapor, et ab ipsis imperitandi exordiis dulcedini rapinarum addictus.”

<sup>25</sup> Amm. 27.12.2: “per artes fallendo diversas”; Amm. 27.12.4: “deinde nequid intemeratum perfidia praeriret”; Amm. 28.1.1: “Dum apud Persas perfidia regis motus agitat insperatos.”

<sup>26</sup> Amm. 19.1.6: “orantibus potissimis ducibus, ne profusus in iram a gloriosis descisceret coeptis”; Amm. 20.7.3: “ira tamen tum sequestrata”; Amm. 20.7.8: “efferata vesania regis obstante”; Amm. 20.7.11: “rabiem regis”; Amm. 27.12.11: “Sapor ultra hominem efferatus.” T.E.J. Wiedemann, “Between Men and Beasts: Barbarians in Ammianus Marcellinus,” in I.S. Moxon, J.D. Smart, A.J. Woodman, eds., *Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 195, notices that the anger of some Roman emperors is also mentioned by Ammianus, among them Julian.

<sup>27</sup> In general the Sasanian kings are considered despots by the late antique and early Byzantine sources; see Roberto, “Immagini del dispotismo,” pp. 45ff.

<sup>28</sup> Chauvot, *Opinions romaines*, pp. 388ff.

uncivilized in every respect. However, just like these barbarians the Persians were different from Greeks and Romans, and Ammianus emphasized their otherness. The fact that Ammianus did not label the Persians as common barbarians may have something to do with his personal knowledge of the Sasanid Empire. He clearly admired the military virtues of the Sasanians and may also have had admiration for their political and judicial system. However, as a historian Ammianus was forced to keep to the age-old general and stereotypical categories of peoples in his ethnographical digressions, in spite of the fact that he may have known from his own experience that these received ideas were not necessarily accurate.

## Procopius

Almost two centuries after Ammianus, Procopius wrote about the Persians in the context of Justinian's wars with Khusro I (531–579).<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, his *Persian Wars* were not as detailed as Ammianus' in their treatment of the Persians and Persian culture. Procopius dedicated a few antiquarian comments to Persian (Zoroastrian) religion, the rites Magi perform at fire temples and the exposure of the bodies of the dead to dogs and birds.<sup>30</sup> Since Herodotus these subjects had been standard features of Greco-Roman writings about the Persians. Furthermore Procopius considered the Persians singular in their ways and rigid with regard to the routine of daily life: he called their officials arrogant, their infantry a crowd of pitiful peasants, but considered their bowmen very good yet not as good as the Roman archers; the requirements of the Persian laws were intolerable.<sup>31</sup>

Procopius displayed no real interest in Persian culture. He had to admit that Persians observed right and justice in their diplomatic dealings and that they were civilized in a diplomatic sense.<sup>32</sup> Most interesting is his observation in his description of the Ephtalite Huns that these latter had a lawful constitution and that they observed right and justice to the same degree as the Romans and the Persians. Clearly the observance of justice in the Sasanid Empire was comparable to that in

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<sup>29</sup> On Procopius: Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles, 1985); Henning Börm, *Prokop und die Perser. Untersuchungen zu den römisch-sasanidischen Kontakten in der ausgehenden Spätantike* (Stuttgart, 2007); and Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Procop. *Persian Wars* 1.30.20, 35; 1.12.4; 2.24.2. Remarkably, Ammianus does not refer to Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian customs in his extant books, features since Herodotus of ethnographic descriptions of the Persians. He does, however, have a few paragraphs about the Magi (23.6.32–35); J. den Boeft, "Pure Rites: Ammianus Marcellinus on the Magi," in Jan Willem Drijvers, David Hunt, eds., *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York, 1999), pp. 207–215.

<sup>31</sup> Procop. *Persian Wars* 2.28.25; 1.11.33; 1.14.25; 1.18.32; 2.28.26.

<sup>32</sup> Cameron, *Procopius*, pp. 239–240.

the Roman Empire. However, Procopius also emphasized the Persians' uncivilized traits, in particular those of Khusro I. As Ammianus was critical about Sapor II, so Procopius criticized Khusro,<sup>33</sup> who was generally appreciated as a religiously tolerant ruler, an intellectual, and a man open to influences from outside.<sup>34</sup> The king dissembled truth, did not keep agreements, debased himself for love of money, and was avaricious, treacherous, bloodthirsty, and murderous by nature.<sup>35</sup> Procopius represents him as the opposite of humane.<sup>36</sup>

Procopius' occasional remarks about Persians repeated in general what others had written before him. His observations show that he considered Persian society and civilization in general inferior to Greco-Roman culture. However, although Procopius referred to the barbarian characteristics of the Persians, he, like Ammianus, never called them barbarian. Their maintenance of justice put Sasanian society on a par even with Roman civilization.

## Agathias

Agathias, Procopius' continuator, dealt in the five books of his *History* with the final phases of Justinian's wars against the Persians and the Goths, in particular the military campaigns in Lazica and Italy during the years 552 to 559. More than a third of his work consists of digressions, among them an extensive one on the Franks as well as two long ones on the Persians: one on the customs and religion of the Sasanians, and another on Sasanian history (the annals of the Sasanian kings).<sup>37</sup> Agathias did not include these digressions out of any genuine interest in Persia and its civilization or because of the importance of the Sasanid Empire for contemporary Roman history, but because he had access to source material, i.e. the Persian Royal Annals, which had not been used by previous historians.<sup>38</sup>

The first excursus is a mishmash of chronography and Persian history, in particular the origin of the Sasanian dynasty, of Zoroastrian customs, and of Persian habits. Like his predecessors, Agathias referred to Persian funeral practices and the deceased left out to be devoured by dogs and carrion birds. Naturally he also mentioned their sexual customs: men slept with their sisters, daughters, and

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<sup>33</sup> Dariusz Brodka, "Das Bild des Perserkönigs Chosroes I. in den *Bella* des Prokopius von Kaisereia," *Classica Cracoviensia* 4 (1998): 115–124.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Ze'ev Rubin, "The Reforms of Khusro Anushirwan," in Cameron, ed., *Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, pp. 227–297; Josef Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia* (London/New York, 2001), pp. 216ff.

<sup>35</sup> Procop. *Persian Wars* 2.9.8, 11.26; *Secret History* 18.26ff.

<sup>36</sup> Cameron, *Procopius*, pp. 162–163.

<sup>37</sup> See for these digressions (Greek text, English translation, and commentary), Averil Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–70): 67–183.

<sup>38</sup> Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970), p. 116.

nieces; sons with their mothers.<sup>39</sup> They had not had these habits in olden times, but the teachings of Zoroaster enticed them into neglecting their former practices. In ancient times the Persians had worshipped Zeus and Cronos, the implication being that their customs and habits once had been like those of the Greeks. However, they had given these gods barbarian names in their own language<sup>40</sup> and now, i.e. in Agathias' own time, they resembled the Manichaeans in the sense that they distinguished between the two principles of good and evil. They practiced sacrifice, divination, and purification, and they revered water and fire. The latter was maintained unextinguished by the Magi in fire temples. Although Agathias almost certainly knew that Zoroastrianism went back to much earlier times, he claimed that the Magi grew powerful with the rise of the Sasanid dynasty. The Zoroastrian priesthood was indeed a privileged social class in Sasanian society and Iran was 'Zoroastrianized' as never before. However, Zoroastrianism never became the exclusive state religion.

In the second excursus Agathias presents a list of Sasanian kings and their main achievements, allegedly based on Persian records. He calls several kings barbarian and considers many of them wicked, bloodthirsty, cruel, quick to anger, and slow to forgive.<sup>41</sup> Interesting is his remark about Kavad I (488–496; 499–531), who is said to have promulgated a law according to which women were to be held in common by men.<sup>42</sup> The excursus features an appendix exclusively dedicated to Khusro I.<sup>43</sup> This king, generally known for his tolerance, learning, and interest in Greek philosophy, was described in an unfavorable way by Agathias. He is called barbarian and characterized as a ruler who "spent his life completely in the barbarian manner"<sup>44</sup> and could therefore never know the true *paideia*.<sup>45</sup> Under his rule every kind of crime was committed in Persia: the powerful abused the weak and they were cruel and inhumane. Every man had countless wives yet still committed adultery. Agathias was particularly critical of Khusro's interest in Greek philosophy. He called him a man with pretensions to philosophy but with no acquaintance with its subtleties. How could he understand the pure and noble work of Plato from translations in an outlandish and uncouth language? How could he, a barbarian, be trained in Plato's writings and benefit from them? His only admirable quality was his constant practice in war and his fearlessness.

Agathias was clearly contemptuous of the Persians. He thought the Persian language "outlandish and uncouth" and considered Persian names barbarian; he

<sup>39</sup> See also *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 19.

<sup>40</sup> Agathias 188 B = Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," pp. 82–83.

<sup>41</sup> Agathias 258.3 B (Artaxerxes, Sapor I), 263.18 B (Yazdgard) = Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," pp. 120–121.

<sup>42</sup> Agathias 267 B = Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," pp. 128–129.

<sup>43</sup> Agathias 126.1 B–136 B = Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," pp. 164–171.

<sup>44</sup> Agathias 135.4 B, 126.1 B = Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," pp. 170–171, 164–165.

<sup>45</sup> See e.g. Roberto, "Immagini del dispotismo," pp. 48–49.

accused the Sasanid kings of being wicked and abominable men.<sup>46</sup> His digressions show no sympathy for them or for their customs. His impression of Persian religion is that of an outsider with neither real knowledge of nor interest in Zoroastrianism. The same applies to the Persian habits. Although Agathias claimed to have had access to good source material, namely records from the royal archives, he bandied about stereotypes that had been in use since the time of Herodotus and clearly suffered from feelings of Roman superiority toward people from another culture.

## Epilogue

In the world of Late Antiquity there was considerable interaction between the Roman and Sasanid empires. The many connections that existed between the two empires through commerce, religion, warfare, and diplomacy should have resulted in a substantial degree of mutually accurate knowledge and comprehension. Nonetheless Roman sources reflect no sympathy for or better understanding of Persian culture. As a result of Greco-Roman literary tradition factual and practical information was often not mentioned in sources or presented as such. Moreover, as a consequence of viewing other peoples through the inherited categories of classical ethnography, the Herodotean dichotomies persisted. As a consequence the image the Romans had of their Persian neighbors was a construct and a stereotype that reveals more about the Romans than about the Persians. The Roman image of Persian culture was to a large extent characterized as the negative embodiment of Greco-Roman values and it helped therefore to confirm Greco-Roman identity and superiority. In that sense Said’s remark that “the Orient was something more than what was empirically known about it” is true.

The late antique view of Sasanian Persia as displayed in these three historical works is in general consistent with the view the Greeks and Romans had entertained of the Achaemenid and Parthian Persians in earlier times. However, in Late Antiquity the Sasanian kings evoke more interest and commentary than their Parthian and Achaemenid predecessors had. In particular Sapor II and Khusro I are presented as genuine despots with a savage, cruel, treacherous, avaricious, and unforgiving character. Another feature that inspires more attention and even admiration in the late ancient sources is the Sasanian observance of justice as well as Sasanian military strength and the qualities of the Sasanian military apparatus. The last two may be attributed to the need to create a worthy enemy, particularly because the Roman Empire suffered heavy defeats at the hands of the Sasanian army in Late Antiquity. It also may have had to do with the fact that Ammianus Marcellinus was himself a soldier and was therefore in a position to appreciate the military capacity of the Sasanian army.

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<sup>46</sup> Agathias 126.1 B, 125 B, 258.3 B, 263.18 B = Cameron, “Agathias on the Sassanians,” pp. 164–165, 88–89, 120–121; see also Cameron, *Agathias*, pp. 116–117, and Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, pp. 378–379.



The Persian is considered barbarian, although not always explicitly so called, as a result of inherited stereotypes. However, his world also fascinated because of its otherness; therefore, in a way, the Persian was also an admired stranger. Many centuries of confrontation and coexistence between the two empires resulted in a certain degree of mutual admiration and respect, in particular for Persian strength and strategy on the battle field,<sup>47</sup> and probably also for their political organization, as becomes evident from the works of Ammianus, Procopius, and Agathias. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of superiority over the Persian is clearly present in the writings of these late antique Greco-Roman authors.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See also *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 19.

<sup>48</sup> It may perhaps be some comfort to western “Orientalizers” that the Sasanians displayed the same condescension toward Greco-Roman civilization as is evident, e.g., from the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, in which the Roman emperor is called the subordinate of the Sasanian king, and the Roman Empire considered a vassal state of the Sasanid state; Ze’ev Rubin, “The Roman Empire in the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*: The Mediterranean World in Sasanian Propaganda,” in E. Dabrowa, ed., *Ancient Iran and the Mediterranean World: Proceedings of an International Conference in Honour of Professor Józef Wolski held at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, in September 1996* (Krakow, 1998), pp. 177–185.

## B. Political and Religious Interpretations of Barbarian Activities

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# Chapter 6

## Banditry or Catastrophe?: History, Archaeology, and Barbarian Raids on Roman Greece<sup>1</sup>

*Amelia Robertson Brown*

At first glance, the barbarian raids<sup>2</sup> on Roman Greece seem straightforward: Costobocis, Heruls, and Goths from the later second century periodically came south into the Roman province of Achaëa and subjected its ancient cities to arson, looting, and civic turmoil before retreating north again, often after a defeat in battle.<sup>3</sup> Although this reconstruction rested originally on a very small number of ancient literary sources, it also has long provided an explanation for archaeological destruction layers and thus the decline of civic life in Greece from the later second century on. Recent advances in awareness of ancient bias and archaeological documentation, however, have led some excavators to question the accuracy of this narrative, and in particular its applicability to every city and excavated site.<sup>4</sup> But few archaeologists are yet aware how fragmentary, contradictory, and classicizing the literary sources are, and how the role of the “barbarians” in them were changing faster than the traditions of recording their activities, moving from plunder to politics, and involving Greece in wider struggles between local and

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<sup>1</sup> This study benefited greatly from the editors’ comments, discussion at the Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity VI Conference, and C. Greenewalt’s Fall 2004 Berkeley seminar on “City Destruction.”

<sup>2</sup> For barbarian raiders, see also Ziche in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Note the third-century Herulian “trail of fire and devastation” through Athens in A. Frantz, *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700. Agora 24* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), p. 2; also P. MacKendrick, *The Greek Stones Speak* (New York/London, 1981), p. 482; Corinthian devastation by “invasion of the Visigoths” in J.H. Finley, Jr., “Corinth in the Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 7 (1932): 477–499, at p. 477.

<sup>4</sup> New historical awareness: W. Goffart, “The Theme of ‘The Barbarian Invasions’ in Late Antique and Modern Historiography,” in *Rome’s Fall and After* (London, 1989), pp. 111–132; D. Whittaker, “L’importance des invasions du Bas-Empire: peut-on faire confiance aux historiens?,” *Revue du nord-archéologie* 77 (1995): 11–20; C.R. Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (London/New York, 2004). New archaeological awareness: G.D.R. Sanders, “Recent Developments in the Chronology of Byzantine Corinth,” in C.K. Williams II, N. Bookidis, eds., *Corinth, The Centenary: 1896–1996. Corinth 20* (Princeton, NJ, 2003), pp. 385–400.

imperial authorities, western and eastern empires.<sup>5</sup> This study therefore considers more closely just how ancient authors depicted barbarian raids on Roman Greece, and to what extent their accounts are relevant to past and present excavations in Greece, in particular those at the Achaean capital city of Corinth.

## The Costobocs

The first barbarian raid into Greece after its incorporation into the Roman Empire also was the most minor, but to the modern reader it still indicates the challenges these raids, their documentation, and their excavation present. Pausanias is the primary source; describing the Phocian city of Elateia in the 170s, on the road between Thermopylae and Boeotia in central Greece, he digressed, “An army of bandits, called the Costobocs, who overran Greece in my day, visited among other cities Elateia. Whereupon a certain Mnesibulus gathered round him a company of men and put to the sword many of the barbarians, but he himself fell in the fighting.”<sup>6</sup> Pausanias included this tale only because Mnesibulus was an Olympic victor in 162, honored with a statue in the city he died defending, apparently successfully.

Just before Pausanias’ visit to Elateia, Aelius Aristides delivered his *Eleusinian Oration* in the Bouleuterion of Smyrna in June of 171, and mourned damage done recently to the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis, just south of Boeotia.<sup>7</sup> Nowhere, however, does Aristides refer to the perpetrators, deeds, or even date of what he calls only “τοσούτον πράγμα, τὸ κοινὸν πῶμα” (“so great a matter, the common calamity”), or “ἡ σχετλία ἡμέρα” (“the merciless day”), involving a fire at the sanctuary.<sup>8</sup> If he is referring to the same incursion as Pausanias, he tells us that the raiding Costobocs reached as far south as Eleusis, just west of Athens. Excavations at the sanctuary have found clear evidence for construction dating to this era, attributed to the patronage of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180), but he may have been completing works begun by previous emperors, replacing

<sup>5</sup> E.g., M. Kulikowski, “Nation vs. Army: A Necessary Contrast?,” in A. Gillett, ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 69–84; A. Ellegård, “The Ancient Goths and the Concepts of Tribe and Migration.” *Vetenskap och Omvärdering (Festschrift for Curt Weibull)* (Göteborg, 1986), pp. 32–62.

<sup>6</sup> Paus. 10.34.5: “τὸ δὲ Κοστοβόκων τῶν ληστικῶν τὸ κατ’ ἐμὲ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐπιδραμὸν ἀφίκετο καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἐλάτειαν: ἔνθα δὴ ἀνὴρ Μνησίβουλος λόχον τε περὶ αὐτὸν ἀνδρῶν συνέστησε καὶ καταφονεύσας πολλοὺς τῶν βαρβάρων ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ μάχῃ”; W.H.S. Jones, trans., *Pausanias: Description of Greece* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 576–577.

<sup>7</sup> Aelius Aristides, *Or. 22: Eleusinos*; C.A. Behr, *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1981), p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Aelius Aristides, *Or. 22: Eleusinos* 1.11.

old buildings, or repairing Costoboc damage.<sup>9</sup> In any case, inscriptions and other sources attest both to Marcus' and Commodus' initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries in 176, and to many other initiations held in the buildings of the sanctuary long after the raid and Aristides' oratorical lament.<sup>10</sup>

These short passages are typical of the sort of information ancient authors give about barbarian raids on Greece. The perpetrators are explicitly described as both barbarians and bandit-like (*ληστικοί*), and identified by the name of a northern people, in this case the Costobocs. Ancient geographers placed the Costobocs between the Rhine and the Danube; some moved gradually south into the empire and were romanized, whereas others apparently raided and then retreated north again.<sup>11</sup> The group was driven away by the first of a long string of local militias called up against this new threat, unknown since the Gauls in the third century BCE, with whom both Aristides and Pausanias compared them.<sup>12</sup> It seems that imperial (probably naval) forces eventually aided the Greeks too, under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus: the laconic epitaph of L. Iulius Vehilius Gratus Iulianus described him as "*praepositus* of a *vexillatio* throughout Achaea and Macedonia and in Spain, against Castabocas and rebel Mauri."<sup>13</sup> The rebellion in Spain reasonably has been separated from the campaign against the Costobocs in Achaea and Macedonia, and the latter associated with Pausanias' raid, put in August of 170 with reference to Aristides.<sup>14</sup> Another inscription associated less convincingly with this raid is a list from Thespieae in Boeotia honoring local men sent to aid Marcus

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<sup>9</sup> K. Clinton, "Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 64 (Philadelphia, PA, 1974), pp. 38–39; idem, "The Eleusinian Mysteries: Roman Initiates and Benefactors, Second Century B.C. to A.D. 267," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.18.2 (1989), pp. 1499–1539, 1530–1531; R.F. Townsend, "The Roman Rebuilding of Philon's Porch and the Telesterion at Eleusis," *Boreas* 10 (1987): 97–106, at p. 104.

<sup>10</sup> *Inscriptiones Graecae (IG)* IP<sup>2</sup> 1110, 1792; Clinton, "Eleusinian Mysteries," p. 1534; idem, "Sacred Officials," pp. 38–40, 59–63, 75, 79, 83–85, 88.

<sup>11</sup> Pliny, *HN* 6.19; Ptolemy 3.5.8, 3.8.3; Cassius Dio 71.12; Amm. 22.8.42; I.I. Russu, "Les Costoboces," *Dacia* 3 (1959): 341–52. Gravestone of a romanized Costoboc, or one of their freed former captives: *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (CIL)* 8.14667: "Dis Manibus sacrum ... Sallustius C. filius Quirina tribu Fortunatianus Costobocio quod inter Costobocos nutritus sit ...."

<sup>12</sup> Aristides, *Or.* 22: *Eleusinos* 8; Paus. 1.4.1–4; see F. Millar, "P. Herennius Dexippus: The Greek World and the Third-Century Invasions," *JRS* 59 (1969): 12–29, at p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> *CIL* 6.31856: "L. Iulio Veh[il]io Gr[at]o Iuliano, ..., proc(uratori) Aug(usti) et praef(ecto) classis Po[ntic]a[e] proc(uratori) Aug(ustorum) e]t pra[ep]osito] vexillationis per Achaia[m] et Macedonia[m] et in Hispanias, adversus Castabocas et Mauros rebelles, ...." Spain: see also *HA Marc.Aurel.* 21.

<sup>14</sup> A. von Premerstein, "Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Marcus, II," *Klio* 12 (1912): 139–178; B. Gerov, "Die Krisis in den Ostbalkanländern während der Alleinregierung des Marcus Aurelius," *Acta antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 16 (1968): 325–338.

Aurelius on a “most fortunate and most holy campaign” against an unnamed foe between 169 and 172.<sup>15</sup>

The most that can be determined from the literary sources about the extent and date of this raid or raids, therefore, is that it, or they, went as far south as Eleusis during the span of 169–171. No serious damage was caused, at least at Eleusis and Elateia, but people were killed, and some part of the sanctuary at Eleusis did burn. It attracted the attention of the Roman authorities enough to merit the sending of a *vexillatio*, and news reached Aristides in Smyrna across the Aegean. Thus, the military and psychological effects probably were more extreme than actual damage to property, and given the range of existing sources, there probably was only a single raiding party of Costoboccs coming south for plunder and returning in defeat in 170.

### The Heruls and Goths

The next attested barbarian raids into Greece come almost a century later, and seem to have been more wide-ranging and serious, although the sources do not bear directly on much of the damage attributed to the so-called “Herulian Invasion” of 267/68. The short-lived emperors prior to Diocletian fought a wide range of foes foreign and domestic, and some of the most persistent after ca. 250 were the Goths (anachronistically often dubbed Scythians)<sup>16</sup> moving south from around the Black Sea by land and sea to plunder the coast, countryside, and (if they could) cities of the Balkans, Greece, and Asia Minor. The Heruls were one of several groups identified as subsets of the Goths living north and west of the Black Sea, in the area of ancient Scythia.<sup>17</sup> After their raid of 267/268, the Heruls next appear in Procopius as a warrior band with hereditary royalty, servants,

<sup>15</sup> “ἐπὶ τὴν εὐτυχιστάτην καὶ εὐσεβεστάτην στρατείαν”: A. Plassart, “Une levée de volontaires Thespiens sous Marc Aurèle,” *Mélanges Gustave Glotz* 2 (Paris, 1932): 731–8; C.P. Jones, “The Levy at Thespieae under Marcus Aurelius,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971): 45–58; P. Roesch, *Les Inscriptions de Thespies (IThesp)* (Lyon, 2007), no. 37, pp. 44–47.

<sup>16</sup> On the anachronistic use of “Scythians,” see also Mathisen, Ziche, and Ellis in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> Goths and Heruls before the later third century: Pliny, *HN* 4.14; Ellegård, “The Ancient Goths,” pp. 49–50; idem, “Who were the Eruli?,” *Scandia* 53 (1987): 5–34; H. Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans. T.J. Dunlop (Berkeley, CA, 1997), pp. 39–50; idem, *History of the Goths*, trans. T.J. Dunlop (Berkeley, CA, 1988), pp. 43–57; W.A. Goffart, “Does the Distant Past Impinge on the Invasion Age Germans?,” in A. Gillett, ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 21–37; A.S. Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths* (Copenhagen, 2002), pp. 250–300. Common Gothic–Herul material culture, the “Sintana de Mures-Cernjachov Culture,” P. Heather, J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), pp. 51–101.

and accompanying families, some of whom settled in Pannonia in the later fifth century.<sup>18</sup> And, whereas the toponyms *Graecia* or in one case *Achaea* are found in long lists of places ravaged by Goths near the end of Gallienus' (253–268) reign, the very few descriptions of the Herulian invasion all can be traced back to the mostly lost writings of P. Herennius Dexippus of Athens.<sup>19</sup>

Dexippus came from a wealthy and ancient Athenian family; he was in middle age when he by his own admission led the fight against invading barbarians at Athens as Eponymous Archon for 267/68, and subsequently wrote his lost *History* (*Χρονική Ἱστορία*) and *Scythica* (*Σκυθικά*), which doubtless featured the event in some detail.<sup>20</sup> The only relevant passages from either work to survive, however, are sections of Thucydidean speeches, probably from the *Scythica*, that were quoted in the tenth-century collection *De sententiis*, and feature Dexippus urging his followers to repel an unnamed enemy from Athens.<sup>21</sup> Although Dexippus invokes in detail several past episodes of Athenian patriotism and pride, he provides only the barest outlines of the actual situation he claims to have faced: 2,000 armed Athenians gathered in a wooded and defensible location to retake the city, hoping for the help of the imperial navy or other Greeks.<sup>22</sup> We learn further details about this third-century invasion of Athens from later authors who adapted Dexippus' account at varying degrees of separation. Confusion arose from Dexippus' Thucydidean style and vocabulary, and from the fact that at least the raid on Athens occurred right between the reigns of Gallienus and Claudius II Gothicus (268–270).

In the late fourth century, the compiler of the *Historia Augusta* merely mentioned that, before a defeat by the emperor Gallienus, "Goths plundered all

<sup>18</sup> Procop. *Bell.* 2.25.28, 3.8.12, 6.14, 6.15.29.

<sup>19</sup> Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 33.3 ("Thraciam Gothi libere pergressi Macedonas Achaeosque et Asiae finitima occuparent"); Eutropius 9.8.2 ("Graecia, Macedonia, Pontus, Asia vastata est per Gothos"); Oros. *Hist. adv. pag.* 7.22.7 ("Graecia Macedonia Pontus Asia Gothorum inundatione deletur"); Jer. *Chron.* 260.3 ("Graecia Macedonia Pontus Asia depopulata per Gothos"); for a proposed common ancestor see T.D. Barnes, "The Lost *Kaisergeschichte* and the Latin Historical Tradition," in J. Straub, ed., *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium* (Bonn, 1968). Note also Ammianus, 31.5.17, on invasions between Decius and Aurelian of Scythians or barbarians, "vagati per Epirum Thessaliamque et omnem Graeciam licentius hostes externi," who were driven out and then caused trouble as merely *latrociniales*. For the later third-century raids see: A. Alföldi, "Notes 1. The Sources for the Gothic Invasions of the Years 260–270," *The Cambridge Ancient History (CAH)*, 12:721–723; idem, *Studien zur Geschichte der Weltkrise des 3. Jahrhunderts nach Christus* (Darmstadt, 1967), pp. 228, 320–325.

<sup>20</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 2931, 3198, 3669, 3670; J. McNerney, "Dexippos (100)," in I. Worthington, ed., *Brill's New Jacoby* (Brill Online, 2010); F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (FGrH)* 100; Millar, "P. Herennius Dexippus"; A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, eds., *PLRE I. AD 260–395* (Cambridge, 1971), s.v. "Dexippus 2."

<sup>21</sup> Jacoby, *FGrH* 100 F28; Millar, "P. Herennius Dexippus," pp. 27–28. For Dexippus' imitation of Thucydides: Photius, *Bibl.* 82=Jacoby, *FGrH* 100 T 5; F.J. Stein, *Dexippus et Herodianus rerum scriptores quatenus Thucydidem secuti sint* (diss., Bonn, 1957).

<sup>22</sup> See Millar, "P. Herennius Dexippus," p. 28.



of Achaëa and were defeated by the Athenians under the command of Dexippus. Driven from there, they wandered through Epirus, Macedonia, and Boeotia.”<sup>23</sup> Three Byzantine chroniclers include a Scythian sack of Athens under Claudius II and the same anecdote about the burning of the city.<sup>24</sup> But it is the early sixth-century bureaucrat Zosimus, drawing on Dexippus by way of Eunapius, who first brings in the Heruls: “Scythians inflicted *κάκιστα* (terrible things) on Greece and took Athens itself by siege,” before a defeat by Gallienus and the Roman army in Thrace; then, after the death of Gallienus and accession of Claudius II, Scythians, now allied with Heruls, Peuci, and Goths, sailed south from the Black Sea and largely suffered defeat in the north Aegean—“the remainder of the Scythians sailed about Thessaly and Greece, ravaging these districts, and although they were not able to attack the cities, which forestalled them by attending to their walls and other safeguards, they carried off everyone they found in the country outside the cities.”<sup>25</sup>

George Syncellus, a patriarchal adviser who compiled his *Ἐκλογα Χρονογράφικα* (*Chronography*) in Constantinople in the early ninth century, also named Dexippus as his source for the third century, and added important details to Zosimus.<sup>26</sup> Syncellus’ Heruls, like those of Zosimus, raided Greece from the sea, but furthermore, “after arriving in Attica, they burn Athens, and Corinth and Sparta and Argos and all Achaëa did they attack, until the Athenians, after setting an ambush along some narrow and difficult ground, destroyed most of them.”<sup>27</sup> Zosimus and Syncellus are the only writers to specify the attackers of Greece as Heruls, rather than generic Goths or Scythians. Because their source Dexippus referred to Heruls, this particular group has come to be seen in modern archaeological circles as the

<sup>23</sup> *HA Gallieni duo* 13.7–8: “Gothi Achaëam omnem vastaverunt et ab Atheniensibus duce Dexippo, scriptore horum temporum, victi sunt. unde pulsi per Epirum, Macedoniam, Boeotiam pervagati sunt.” Dexippus also is named as a source in *HA Severus Alexander* 49.3.

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous continuator of Cassius Dio (K. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum* [FHG] 4.196.9 F1, attributed to Petrus Patricius by Millar, “P. Herennius Dexippus,” p. 27); Zonaras 12.26; Cedrenus 259A.

<sup>25</sup> Zos. *HN* 1.39.1, 1.43.2: “τῶν δὲ Σκυθῶν τὴν Ἑλλάδα κάκιστα διαθέντων καὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας αὐτὰς ἐκπολιορκησάντων ... μοῖρα δὲ τῶν Σκυθῶν Θεσσαλίαν καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα περιπεύσασα τοὺς αὐτῆς τόπους ἐλήζετο, πόλεσιν μὲν ἐπιέναι μὴ δυναμένη τῷ φθῆναι αὐτάς τειχῶν τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀσφαλείας φροντίδα ποιήσασθαι, τοὺς δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς εὐρισκομένους ἀπάγουσα”; R.T. Ridley, trans., *Zosimus: New History* (Canberra, 1982). For these two episodes as referring to the same incursion: F. Paschoud, ed., *Zosime: Histoire Nouvelle* (Paris, 1971–1986).

<sup>26</sup> Syncellus, *Chron.* 706, in A. Mosshammer, ed., *Ecloga chronographica* (Leipzig, 1984); W. Adler, P. Tufflin, trans., *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> Syncellus, *Chron.* 717: “καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἀττικὴν φθάσαντες ἐμπιπρῶσι τὰς Ἀθήνας Κόρινθόν τε καὶ Σπάρτην καὶ τὸ Ἄργος καὶ τὴν ὅλην Ἀχαΐαν κατέδραμον, ἕως Ἀθηναῖοι κατὰ τινὰς στενὰς δυσχωρίας ἐνεδρεύσαντες αὐτοὺς πλείστους ἀνέϊλον.”

only barbarians to enter Greece during this raid.<sup>28</sup> Syncellus' close use of Dexippus is indeed evident here; the verb *ἐνεδρεύει*, for setting an ambush, and the reference to the advantages of difficult ground also are found in the speeches of Dexippus later collected in the *De sententiis*.<sup>29</sup> Syncellus also is the only writer to name any other city in southern Greece besides Athens as affected by this raid, but his list of Corinth, Sparta, and Argos looks suspiciously like a simple catalogue of the most famous ancient cities of the Peloponnese. Dexippus' colorful descriptions of successful barbarian assaults on Marcianopolis, Philippopolis, and Side at the same time do survive in Byzantine collections of *στρατηγικά*.<sup>30</sup> If Dexippus did discuss assaults by Heruls on famous cities in southern Greece, it is curious that they too did not merit mention in these, or any other, collections.

One interpretation of Syncellus' list of cities is to combine it with Zosimus' account of barbarian raids on the countryside, and suggest that the *χώρα* or fields of these cities were raided and burned, not the cities themselves. A pattern of raids mainly on the countryside certainly fits better with contemporary evidence from elsewhere. For example, in Pontus Bishop Gregory Thaumaturgus composed a letter answering questions about how Christians should behave after such a raid, suggestive of many things that went on in such a situation, such as theft and rape, the taking of prisoners, and use of the disturbance to settle local scores.<sup>31</sup> Sporadic raids over the period of a few years in the late 260s, mostly affecting the coastal countryside of the eastern Peloponnese, fits much better with the archaeological record, which shows minimal destruction, than violent, bloody sacks of cities all across southern Greece. Even in Athens, which Dexippus and later authors say was sacked, only a few buildings in the Agora show traces of burning, and it seems certain that barbarian raiders neither reached the Acropolis nor interrupted the operation of Athenian government or religion. The post-Herulian wall was built at least twenty years after Dexippus' archonship, and although it did cut through some older buildings, it also shows no evidence of emergency construction, having been built with great care and attention to detail in its course and external appearance.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Zos. *HN* 1.42; Syncellus, *Chron.* 717 (called *Αιλούροι*, literally, cats); Dexippus probably called the attackers Heruls, to judge from the evidence of Zosimus and Syncellus, but the only fragment of his that bears on the question is Jacoby, *FGrH* 100 F5: *Etym.mag.* 333.5 s.v. “Ἐλουρος. εὐθεία ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκείσε ἑλῶν Ἐλουρι κέκληνται Δεξιππος ἐν δωδεκάτῳ Χρονικῶν καὶ γράφεται διὰ τοῦ ἐπιλοῦ,” and Steph. Byz. s.v. “Ἐλουροι. Σκυθικὸν ἔθνος περὶ ὧν Δεξιππος ἐν Χρονικῶν ἰβ.”

<sup>29</sup> Jacoby, *FGrH* 100 F28; Millar, “P. Herennius Dexippus,” pp. 27–28.

<sup>30</sup> Jacoby, *FGrH* 100 F25, F27, F29.

<sup>31</sup> Heather, Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, pp. 1–12.

<sup>32</sup> Frantz, *Late Antiquity*, pp. 1–15; P. Castrén, “General Aspects of Life in Post-Herulian Athens,” in *Post-Herulian Athens: Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens A.D. 267–529* (Helsinki, 1994), pp. 1–14. Older walls around the city also were repaired in the third century: J.J. Wilkes, “Civil Defence in Third-Century Achaëa,” in S. Walker, A. Cameron, eds.,

Moving south from Athens, the only city mentioned outside of Syncellus, there is no evidence at all for a late third-century sack in the central area of Corinth. Fifty years ago, it already was observed that perhaps the Heruls did no damage there at all, despite a number of hoards of Gallienan-era coins.<sup>33</sup> More recent studies, with closer pottery and lamp chronologies, are even more categorical: no Corinthian destruction layers can be dated 260–280.<sup>34</sup> A Gallienan coin hoard found in an ash layer in the South Stoa (see Fig. 6.1) once was interpreted as evidence of a Herulian sack, but the pottery and lamps from this layer date to the late fourth century, and it has been suggested that the hoard may have been hidden in roof beams and

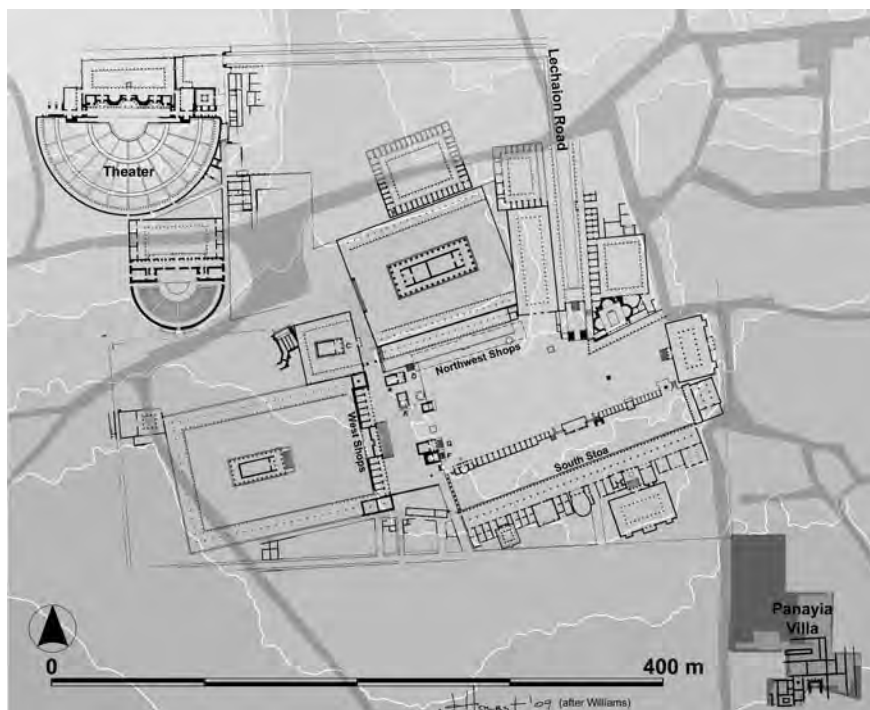


Figure 6.1 The central area of late Roman Corinth, courtesy American School of Classical Studies Excavations at Corinth.

*The Greek Renaissance in the Roman Empire*, Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Supplement 55 (London, 1989), pp. 187–192, at 190–192.

<sup>33</sup> R.L. Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture in the Central Area of Corinth*, *Corinth* 16 (Princeton, NJ, 1957), p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> K.W. Slane, “Tetrarchic Recovery in Corinth: Pottery, Lamps and Other Finds from the Peribolos of Apollo,” *Hesperia* 63 (1994): 127–168, at p. 163.

then burned with those beams later.<sup>35</sup> A hoard from a cistern in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on the slopes of Acrocorinth south of the central area contains similar coins that may have been deposited during cleanup after a Herulian raid, but the excavated sanctuary shows more evidence of late fourth-century rather than late third-century damage.<sup>36</sup> Other excavated parts of the city, such as an urban domus recently excavated in the Panayia Field (see Fig. 6.1), show continuous use throughout the third and fourth centuries.<sup>37</sup> In light of the lack of destruction deposits after more than a hundred years of excavation, it seems likely that hoards were deposited from largely unfulfilled fears of barbarian raiders.<sup>38</sup>

But if the Goths, Scythians, and Heruls of these raids did no discernable damage at Corinth, even though it was named by Syncellus and more likely to suffer from raiding from the Aegean and near Athens, there is even less reason to think that they reached as far as Olympia in the northwestern Peloponnesus. Nevertheless, as a result of historically based interpretations, until recently the effects of an earthquake around 290 were interpreted as evidence of the Heruls not only penetrating as far as Olympia, but causing the end of the games there and the construction of a protective fortress around the temple of Zeus.<sup>39</sup> And this despite the late third- and fourth-century victors known since antiquity, and continuing use of the games as a dating reference throughout the fourth century.<sup>40</sup> Recent excavations and revised analysis of older finds also have brought to light both inscriptions and construction testifying to sanctuary repairs and the celebration of the games into the late fourth century at least. In addition, the fortress that incorporated and protected the temple was not constructed until the later fifth century.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> O. Broneer, *The South Stoa and its Roman Successors, Corinth* 1.4 (Princeton, NJ, 1954), pp. 134–137; J.M. Harris, “Coins found at Corinth,” *Hesperia* 10 (1941): 143–162, at p. 145; Slane, “Tetrarchic Recovery,” p. 163, n. 45.

<sup>36</sup> K.W. Slane, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: The Roman Pottery and Lamps, Corinth* 18.2 (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp. 4–5; N. Bookidis, R.S. Stroud, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Topography and Architecture, Corinth* 18.3 (Princeton, NJ, 1997), p. 437.

<sup>37</sup> G.D.R. Sanders, “Archaeological Evidence for Early Christianity and the End of Hellenic Religion in Corinth,” in D.N. Schowalter, S.J. Friesen, eds., *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 419–442.

<sup>38</sup> Slane, “Tetrarchic Recovery in Corinth,” p. 163.

<sup>39</sup> A. Mallwitz, “Olympia und Rom,” *Antike Welt* 19 (1988): 42–44.

<sup>40</sup> *PA* 11.161, 11.163; Eusebius, *Chron.* 262 (= Jacoby, *FGrH* 100 F2).

<sup>41</sup> *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 48 (1998): no. 553, p. 165; U. Sinn, “Ο Νέρωνας’ και ’Οι Έρουλοι’ Δύο μοιραία γεγονότα στην ιστορία της Ολυμπίας,” in A.D. Rizakis, ed., *Achaia und Elis in der Antike, Akten des I. Internationalen Symposiums über Achaia und Elis in der Antike. Meletemata* 13 (Athens, 1991), pp. 365–371; idem, “Pilgrims, Athletes and Christians,” in R.F. Docter, E.M. Moorman, eds., *Classical Archaeology toward the Third Millenium* (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 377–380; idem, *Olympia: Cult, Sport, and Ancient Festival*, trans. T. Thornton (Princeton, NJ, 2000).

Thus, the literary sources agree only that Goths or Scythians (and then also Heruls) raided Greece under Gallienus, Claudius II, and Aurelian, that Athens was attacked and at least partially taken in 267/268, and that all the raiders were eventually defeated and driven out by a combination of local and imperial forces. As with the Costobocs, the goal of these raids seems to have been plunder of valuable objects and people; unlike the earlier raids the northerners now came by both land and sea, and appear to have been willing and able even to besiege walled cities. But the sources agree only on a sack of Athens, with one alone adding Corinth, Argos, and Sparta, perhaps as a result of inference based on the vaguer references to Greece or Achaëa in the chronicles. Archaeologically, there is evidence for some destruction in Athens, but at Corinth merely typical hoards of the era are found. The hasty conclusions about Herulians by archaeologists at both Corinth and Olympia suggest greater caution is needed when attributing material to third-century barbarian damage outside of Athens.

### The Visigoths of Alaric

But when we turn from the Goths, Scythians, and Heruls of the third century to the Visigoths of the later fourth century, we encounter both a changed political situation and a much larger number of surviving contemporary sources, most of which are not traditional histories but poems and panegyrics. Alaric's Goths were fundamentally different from a raiding party: they came from within the empire, they were Arian Christians, and they were "an army of imperial federates" who had fought for (and against) the Roman army under a man who held positions of authority among both Goths and the Romans.<sup>42</sup>

The Visigoths' entrance into Greece occurred in the aftermath of Theodosius' death in January of 395, as three men attempted to fill the military and political power vacuum. The half-Vandal western *magister militum* Stilicho controlled the armies and claimed regency not only over the new western emperor Honorius, but also, and less credibly, over his 18-year-old brother Arcadius in the east.<sup>43</sup> Rufinus,

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<sup>42</sup> Late fourth-century Goths: Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 137–146; idem, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, pp. 79–89; P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 199–208; idem, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996); idem, *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge, 1999). Settlement in empire: Syn. *De regno* 19.43.5; Themistius 16, 34; Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* 12.22.3; W. Goffart, "Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians," in *Rome's Fall and After*, pp. 1–32. In the army: *Not. dig. Or.* 5.61, 6.61; Kulikowski, "Nation vs. Army: A Necessary Contrast?," pp. 69–84; E.K. Chrysos, "De foederatis iterum," in W. Pohl, ed., *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 185–206.

<sup>43</sup> *PLRE I*, pp. 853–858, s.v. "Fl. Stilicho"; Zos. *HN* 4.59.1, 5.4.3; Oros. 7.37.1; Eunap. *Hist.* F62; É. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'Empire romain, 395–410* (Paris, 1951); J. Straub, "Parens principium. Stilichos Reichspolitik und das Testament des

praetorian prefect of the east, had Arcadius under his control in Constantinople, although no army.<sup>44</sup> And the Visigoth Alaric, who had been granted a Roman dignity (probably the rank of *comes*) for his support of Theodosius at the battle of the Frigidus river in 394, commanded his own army and almost certainly had a Gothic position of leadership within it.<sup>45</sup> According to Zosimus, Alaric came to Constantinople in the summer of 395 to demand a Roman command; after a meeting with Rufinus, he then left with his army and headed west and south into Greece, perhaps already as *magister militum per Illyricum*.<sup>46</sup>

Just a few years later, the Neoplatonic philosopher Eunapius recalled the event in his biography of a contemporary sophist: “Alaric with his barbarians invaded (παρήλθεν) Greece by the pass of Thermopylae, as easily as though he were traversing an open stadium or a plain suitable for cavalry. For this gateway of Greece was thrown open to him by the impiety of the men clad in black raiment (τὰ φατὰ ἱμάτια), who entered Greece unhindered along with him, and by the fact that the laws and restrictions of the hierophantic ordinances had been rescinded.”<sup>47</sup> For Eunapius, this event was significant as the beginning of an era prophesied by the Eleusinian hierophant Nestorius, an era of “the overthrow of the temples and the ruin of the whole of Greece,” when “the sacred temples would be razed to the

Kaisers Theodosius,” *Nouvelle Clio* 4 (1952): 94–115; S. Mazzarino, *Stilicone: La crisi imperiale dopo Teodosio* (Milan, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> *PLRE I*, pp. 778–781, s.v. “Fl. Rufinus.” Also criticized for his greed in Eunap. *Hist.* F63.

<sup>45</sup> J.R. Martindale, ed., *PLRE II. AD 395–527* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 13–18, s.v. “Alaricus 1”; A.P. Kazhdan, et al., eds., *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York/Oxford, 1991), s.v. “Alaric.” Alaric seems to first appear in history in Macedonia in 391, when Theodosius suppressed some rebellious barbarians, probably Goths: Zos. *HN* 4.48–49 (attack on Theodosius with no leader named); Claud. *De bell. Get.* 524, *De IV cons. Hon.* 107–108 (Alaric the leader of an attack on Theodosius). Battle of Frigidus, 394, and Alaric’s Roman promotion: Socrates, *HE* 7.10; Zos. *HN* 5.5.4; Jord. *Get.* 145; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social and Economic History* (Oxford, 1964), 3.29, n. 54. For Alaric (perhaps to later Goths) as a king of the Visigoths: Jord. *Get.* 29.146, 32.164, 47.245; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 143–146; Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths*, pp. 320–323.

<sup>46</sup> Zos. *HN* 5.5.4; Socrates, *HE* 7.10; T.S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), pp. 165–167. Alaric’s Goths: J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, “Alaric’s Goths: Nation or Army?,” in J. Drinkwater, H. Elton, eds., *Fifth-century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 75–83; E.K. Chrysos, *Το Βυζάντιον και οι Γότθοι: Συμβολή εις την εξωτερικὴν πολιτικὴν του Βυζαντίου κατά τον 8 αιώνα* (Thessaloniki, 1972), pp. 166–70; A. Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 156–188.

<sup>47</sup> Eunap. *VSoph.* 476 (7.3.5); W.C. Wright, trans., *Philostratus and Eunapius* (London, 1921), p. 439. For the date of composition of the *VS* ca. 399, and Eunapius in Athens 362–367 see T.M. Banchich, “On Goulet’s Chronology of Eunapius’ Life and Works,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987): 164–167.

ground and laid waste,” and “the worship of the goddesses (Demeter and Kore) would come to an end.”<sup>48</sup> Eunapius also adds in the same work that in the general misfortunes (“τῆς κοινῆς συμφορᾶς”) that followed Alaric’s arrival, the painter Hilarios was staying near Corinth when he and his servants were captured and killed by barbarians.<sup>49</sup>

Eunapius also wrote a longer account of these years in his lost *History*, epitomized by Zosimus and John of Antioch.<sup>50</sup> In their very similar accounts, Alaric was assisted in his entrance at every turn by Antiochus, the proconsul of Achaëa, and Gerontius, commander of the Thermopylae garrison, both of whom were paid off by Rufinus. Alaric and his army of Visigoths left walled Thebes alone but looted Boeotia. At Athens, a vision of armed Athena Promachos and Achilles on the walls prompted Alaric to approach peacefully and spend some time at leisure with the Athenian aristocracy (see Fig. 6.2).<sup>51</sup> After crossing the Isthmus, still with the full support of all imperial officials, he took control of Corinth, but there was no burning or looting; according to Eunapius, all the cities of the Peloponnese were handed over to Alaric “without toil or struggle.”<sup>52</sup> Finally, when Stilicho came with the western army in 397, Zosimus wasted his time with mimes and loose women, whereas it was his troops who actually plundered Greece. Alaric then retreated into Epirus, still with his army, and Stilicho returned to Italy with his, soon to be declared a public enemy by Rufinus’ successor Eutropius and the Senate of Constantinople.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, during almost three years in Greece (395–397), Alaric was acting with at least the tacit approval of Rufinus and Eutropius, for neither opposed him or ordered their officials to do so.<sup>54</sup> In both his contemporary biographies and his *History*, Eunapius presented Alaric, his army, and his men in black in Greece as an episode of looting, disruption of traditional religion, and murder in the countryside, with bribery, official collusion, and harassment by Stilicho’s troops in cities such as Athens and Corinth. The event was for him most importantly a symptom of

<sup>48</sup> Eunap. *VSoph.* 475–476; Wright, *Philostratus*, p. 437.

<sup>49</sup> Eunap. *VSoph.* 482.

<sup>50</sup> Eunapius’ *History* and Zosimus’ close use of it: Photius, *Bibl.* 77, 98; R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus, and Malchus* (Liverpool, 1981), 1.1–28; R.J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds, 1990), pp. 9–13; K.S. Sacks, “The Meaning of Eunapius’ History,” *History and Theory* 25 (1986): 52–67.

<sup>51</sup> Zos. *HN* 5.5–6; Frantz, *Late Antiquity*, pp. 49–56. Contrary to Claud. *Ruf.* 2.191, which refers to slaves taken at Athens.

<sup>52</sup> Zos. *HN* 5.6.4–5.

<sup>53</sup> Zos. *HN* 5.7.1–3, 5.11.1; John of Antioch: Müller, *FHG* 4.610a F190; Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 474–7. Stilicho in turn cut off relations with the east until his execution in 408: *CTh* 7.16.1 (10 December 408).

<sup>54</sup> Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates*, pp. 165–167.



Figure 6.2 A late nineteenth-century portrayal of a skin-clad Alaric in Greece: “Alaric at Athens,” by Ludwig Thiersch, from John H. Haaren, A.B. Poland, *Famous Men of the Middle Ages* (New York/Cincinnati/Chicago, 1904).



the decline of the Eleusinian Mysteries and traditional polytheistic religion, the beginning of the end for Hellenic and especially Athenian culture in general.

Eunapius is our only source for the mysterious men in black, identified on the basis of other references in his works as Christian monks.<sup>55</sup> Because Eunapius (and, as we shall see, Claudian)<sup>56</sup> both agree that Rufinus sent Alaric to Greece, it is perhaps not so surprising that Alaric brought monks, and that the plundering of temples and the disruption of polytheistic religion ensued. For, on the one hand, Rufinus was an energetic patron of ascetics and holy men, bringing them from Egypt to live on his estate in Chalcedon, by a martyrion filled with relics of Peter and Paul brought from Rome.<sup>57</sup> And on the other, as praetorian prefect of the east, Rufinus had the authority to enforce laws restricting polytheists. In spite of the Arian Christianity of Alaric and many of the Goths with him, and even though their individual antagonism for traditional Hellenic religion is unclear,<sup>58</sup> it nevertheless remains possible that Rufinus might have encouraged the attacks on pagan practices. In any case, Eunapius and his epitomizers are clear that Alaric and his men came to Greece and stayed there with official support from the east, and that the damage they caused was focused on the countryside and the practices of traditional Hellenic religion.

The poet Claudian, however, writing Latin poetry at Honorius' court in Italy, provides a very different perspective. As court poet, Claudian wrote panegyrics, invectives, and verse histories, responding directly to political and military events with politically correct interpretations. He lionized Stilicho and celebrated his military engagements, including two campaigns against Alaric in Greece (in Thessaly in 395 and near Elis in 397). He is most specific about Greece in the *In Rufinum*, written and performed in 396 and with a new preface in 397, and *De bello Gothico*, written and performed in the Temple of Apollo in Rome in 402 after Stilicho's first actual victory over Alaric, at Pollentia near Milan.<sup>59</sup> Claudian not only performed his poems at public events as orations but also published them in at least two collections, and, like Eunapius, his evidence is crucial for our

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<sup>55</sup> The black monks in Eunapius: *VSoph.* 472 (6.11.2) (monks involved in destruction and occupation of temples at Alexandria); Müller, *FHG* 4 F55 (barbarians disguising themselves as monks to get across the Danube); Zos. *NH* 5.23; Sacks, "The Meaning of Eunapius' History," p. 64.

<sup>56</sup> Claud. *Ruf.* 2.70–85.

<sup>57</sup> Rufinus' energetic Christianity: J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court CE 364–425* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 134–136, 140–142, 179, 228, 233.

<sup>58</sup> Gothic religion: Heather, Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*; Heather, *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century*; E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison, WI, 1982), pp. 43–45; idem, *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulfila* (Oxford, 1966); R.A. Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (New York, 1998), pp. 66–77.

<sup>59</sup> Claudian, *Get.* 25.4: "Bibliotheca Templi Apollinis-Pythia ... domus"; Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 1–62, 156–188.

understanding of Alaric's invasion of Greece, as, unlike Eunapius, he was writing in the moment, with scant benefit from hindsight.<sup>60</sup>

Claudian first mentions Alaric and Greece in the *In Rufinum*, which is bitterly hostile toward Rufinus while flattering Claudian's patron Stilicho.<sup>61</sup> In Claudian's version of events, Stilicho first attempted to oppose Alaric militarily for the sake of both young emperors in Thessaly in 395 with his combined armies. But Rufinus ordered the eastern army to be sent to Constantinople, so Stilicho returned to the western empire. This action freed Alaric to lead his barbarian army south into Greece in late 395, where, according to Claudian, "The cities of the Peloponnese still would have been flourishing untouched by the hand of war, Arcadia and Sparta's citadel would have remained unravaged. Burning Corinth would not have heated the waves of her two seas, nor would cruel chains have led in captivity the matrons of Athens."<sup>62</sup> This poem presents the usual list of Sparta, Corinth, and Athens, with Arcadia rather than Syncellus' Argos. But Claudian is the only ancient writer to accuse Alaric of burning Corinth, an image perhaps drawn from Vergil's account of the sack of Troy in the *Aeneid*.<sup>63</sup> Jerome, likely copying Claudian, reproduced this same list of cities in a letter of 396, and said their people then were ruled (*imperat*) by barbarians.<sup>64</sup>

In the slightly later *De bello Getico*, Claudian again describes the Gothic advance into Greece, alluding to the same places, and recalling famous events of history and myth: "Thermopylae itself that had once boldly withstood the Persians yielded a passage at the first onset. Sciron's cliffs protected by the waves, the wall that joins sea to sea across the Isthmus of Corinth, the narrow pass of Lechaem, all lay open to their approach. Thou, Erymanthus, couldst not protect the people of Arcadia with thy leafy ridges and thou, Amyclae, didst tremble to see the enemy's cavalry on the heights of Taygetus."<sup>65</sup> Aside from a few later mentions of booty and slaves taken by Alaric's army from these same cities, this is as much as Claudian

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<sup>60</sup> Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 156–188; J.H.E. Crees, *Claudian as an Historical Authority* (Rome, 1968).

<sup>61</sup> Claud. *Ruf.* 1.306–339, 1.349–353, 2.186–196.

<sup>62</sup> Claud. *Ruf.* 2.187–191: "oppida semoto Pelopeia Marte vigerent, / starent Arcadiae, starent Lacedaemonis arces; / non mare fumasset geminum flagrante Corintho / nec fera Cecropiae traxissent vincula matres"; M. Platnauer, trans., *Claudian* (London, 1922), 1.70–73.

<sup>63</sup> Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.56; Lucan 6.306–11; H.L. Levy, *Claudian's In Rufinum* (Cleveland, OH, 1971), p. 171.

<sup>64</sup> Jer. *Epist.* 60.16; Levy, *Claudian's In Rufinum*, p. 171.

<sup>65</sup> Claud. *Bell. Get.* 195–202: "ipsae, quae durius olim / restiterant Medis, primo conamine ruptae / Thermopylae; vallata mari Scironia rupes / et duo continuo conectens aequora muro / Isthmos et angusti patuerunt claustra Lechaei: / nec tibi Parrhasios licuit munire colonos / frondosis, Erymanthe, iugis, equitataque summi / culmina Taygeti trepidae vidistis Amyclae"; Platnauer, trans., *Claudian*, 2.138–141.

tells us about what Alaric did in Greece before Stilicho engaged with him in the western Peloponnesus in 397.<sup>66</sup>

But after Stilicho and the western army crossed again into Greece in 397, according to Claudian, “The blood of barbarians washes their wagons; the ranks of skin-clad warriors are mowed down, some by disease, some by the sword. The glades of Lycaeus, the dark and boundless forests of Erymanthus, are not enough to furnish such countless funeral pyres; Maenalus rejoices that the axe has stripped her of her woods to provide fuel for such a holocaust.”<sup>67</sup> Quite opposite to Eunapius, Claudian praises Stilicho as the savior of Greece, who made “Alpheus’ flood run all his length red with slaughter,” restored the Muses to Helicon and Apollo to Delphi, “piled funeral pyres high with bones in Arcadia,” and allowed Corinth to “rise from her ashes while Spartan and Arcadian, now safe, tread under foot the heaps of slain.”<sup>68</sup> Disappointingly, but not unexpectedly, these archaic toponyms from southern Greece are too poetic even to locate the site of a battle between Stilicho and Alaric, if one even occurred; the account of Eunapius as well as the army Alaric still possessed in Epirus suggest that at the very least this engagement must have been exaggerated by Claudian.<sup>69</sup>

Archaeological excavations on the other hand provide only ambiguous potential insight into Alaric’s actual activities in Greece. At both Athens and Corinth, evidence for destruction and burning of buildings at the end of the fourth century is abundant, but it remains difficult to distinguish among the effects of Alaric’s invasion, earthquakes, and intentional demolition for significant new building programs in both city centers in the mid-fifth century.<sup>70</sup> When Synesius of Cyrene sent letters from Athens to his brother just a few years after 395, for example, he blamed the decay of the city center and the theft of works of art on an unnamed greedy proconsul, perhaps the same greedy proconsul whom Eunapius blamed for Alaric’s access to Greece, this suggests that

<sup>66</sup> Claud. *Get.* 610–615, 629–634.

<sup>67</sup> Claud. *IV cons.Hon.* 466–470: “plaustra cruore natant: metitur pellita iuventus: / pars morbo, pars ense perit. non lustra Lycaei, / non Erymantheae iam copia sufficit umbrae / innumeris exusta rogis, nudataque ferro / sic flagrasse suas laetantur Maenala silvas”; Platnauer, trans., *Claudian*, 1.56–57, 2.162–163, 1.320–321.

<sup>68</sup> Claud. *pr. Ruf.* 2.1–12, *Get.* 511–517, *IV cons.Hon.* 462–463, 471–473; Platnauer, trans., *Claudian*, 1.321 and passim.

<sup>69</sup> Suggested by Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 168–176.

<sup>70</sup> Amm. 26.10.15–19, Liban. *Or.* 18.292, and Zos. *HN* 4.18 mention late fourth-century earthquakes affecting the Peloponnesus, and *IG* 4.674 from Navplion suggests a strong earthquake near Corinth. The only clear evidence of earthquake damage comes from the eastern harbor of Cenchreae; see R.M. Rothaus, “Earthquakes and Temples in Late Antique Corinth,” in S.C. Stiros, R.E. Jones, eds., *Archaeoseismology* (Athens, 1996), pp. 105–112. For fifth-century reconstruction in Corinth, see Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture*, pp. 6–26, who (p. 9) blames both earthquakes and Alaric for late fourth-century destruction in the city center, but suggests that fifth-century rebuilding would have been done in any case. For Athens, see below.

in Athens, irrespective of damage done by Alaric, it was corrupt imperial officials rather than raiding barbarians who were blamed for the state of the city.<sup>71</sup> There also is uncertainty about whether the buildings under the palace constructed in the center of the Athenian Agora in the fifth century were intentionally demolished to aid in the construction, or already destroyed by an outside force.<sup>72</sup>

At Isthmia, the end of use of the sanctuaries of Poseidon and Palaemon has consistently been dated to the late fourth century and blamed on Alaric, although Claudian poetically has the area restored by Stilicho after damage by Alaric, and the sanctuaries may have been destroyed only in the early fifth century to provide building material for the adjacent Hexamilion wall.<sup>73</sup> Nearby, around the Roman Agora (or central area) of Corinth, the destruction of the theater, central shops, and South Stoa were all originally laid at Alaric's feet (see Fig. 6.1).<sup>74</sup> Recent excavations in the theater and east of it, however, reveal evidence for destruction rather ca. 425 that awaits fuller publication.<sup>75</sup> Although the central shops did burn in the late fourth century, as did part of the adjacent South Stoa, the former were soon after replaced by a monumental marble staircase adorned with ornamental fountains, and the latter by a fountain, a bath, and other buildings in the fifth century.<sup>76</sup> But immediately adjacent buildings, such as the triconch Peirene fountain, the west shops, and the west temples reveal no signs of Gothic destruction, whereas the Roman Agora as a whole certainly remained public space in the fifth and early sixth centuries.<sup>77</sup> Outside of the central area, a mass grave in a chamber tomb in the north cemetery was published as the aftermath of Alaric, but is now recognized as containing later lamps and coins, and skeletons deposited over the course of a century.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Synesius, *Epist.* 54, 135.

<sup>72</sup> Frantz, *Late Antiquity*, pp. 48–74.

<sup>73</sup> Claud. *IV Cons.* 464–465, “young Palaemon, so long an exile from the shores of his isthmus, returns in safety with his mother to the harbour” (Platnauer, trans., *Claudian*, 1.320–321); A.E. Beaton, P.A. Clement, “The Destruction of the Sanctuary of Poseidon on the Isthmus of Corinth,” *Hesperia* 45 (1976): 267–269; T.E. Gregory, *The Hexamilion and the Fortress, Isthmia* 5 (Princeton, NJ, 1993), p. 141.

<sup>74</sup> Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture*, p. 5, n. 19.

<sup>75</sup> K.W. Slane, G.D.R. Sanders, “Corinth: Late Roman Horizons,” *Hesperia* 74 (2005): 243–297; C.K. Williams II, O.H. Zervos, “Corinth, 1988: East of the Theater,” *Hesperia* 58 (1989): 1–50, with earlier reports.

<sup>76</sup> Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture*, pp. 10–20.

<sup>77</sup> Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture*, pp. 6–26; G.D.R. Sanders, “Problems in Interpreting Rural and Urban Settlement in Southern Greece, A.D. 365–700,” in N. Christie, ed., *Landscapes of Change: Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 163–193. For the fourth-century rebuilding of the west shops, J.H. Kent, *The Inscriptions, 1926–1950, Corinth* 8.3 (Princeton, NJ, 1966), no. 504, p. 166. For the fourth-century phase of Peirene, B.A. Robinson, “The Fountain of Peirene at Corinth: A Fresh Look at the Triconch Court,” *American Journal of Archaeology (AJA)* 104 (2000): 326.

<sup>78</sup> T.L. Shear, “The Excavation of Roman Chamber Tombs at Corinth in 1931,” *AJA* 35 (1931): 424–441, at pp. 434–435. For the post-Alaric date of the 150 Broneer type

The implication is that although Alaric and his army (or Stilicho and his) may indeed have been responsible for archaeologically detected destruction in the city centers of Athens and Corinth, they neither caused the end of public life nor damaged most major buildings. The Visigoths' actions were remembered by Eunapius for their negative impact on traditional Hellenic religion and public safety and by Claudian to praise Stilicho. But after Alaric, only Procopius makes passing reference to any late antique barbarians in southern Greece: Vandal pirates raiding the Peloponnesus in the mid-fifth century.<sup>79</sup> Subsequently, Slavs and Avars appear in the sources for the later sixth century, but these raids are beyond the scope of this study.<sup>80</sup>

This discussion of the sources for barbarians in southern Greece in Late Antiquity demonstrates how vague is the textual evidence and how tentative are its links with destruction detectable on the ground. The sources pay the most attention to events that had broader political or religious implications. The references to military campaigns frequently have been interpreted to explain damage in the archaeological record, but the majority of the sources speak of raiders, not conquerors, and the carrying off of people or goods, not the systematic destruction of buildings; and the evidence for actual destruction caused by barbarian attacks appears to be much more slight than once was assumed. In the later second and third centuries, barbarian raids seem to have contributed rather more to a climate of fear than to measurable destruction: the mustering of local militias, the burial of coin hoards, and the building and repair of fortification walls. In every case there is a clear distinction between raiding barbarians and victorious Greeks and Romans. By the later fourth century, however, this distinction is far from clear; although Eunapius and Claudian both tried to use the old dichotomy of barbarian and Roman, the contradictions between them, and between their rhetoric and archaeology, show that Alaric and his army were fundamentally different from previous barbarian raiders, and in fact involved Greece in struggles between the eastern and western imperial administrations, rather than between barbarians and Romans.

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XXVIII lamps (out of 162, many with the Chi-Rho) and 3 of the 35 fourth-century coins, Slane, Sanders, "Corinth: Late Roman Horizons," pp. 280–282.

<sup>79</sup> Procop. *Bell.* 3.5.23, 3.22.16.

<sup>80</sup> Sanders, "Problems"; Scranton, *Mediaeval Architecture*, pp. 27–48; M.E. Landon, "The Archaeological Evidence for the Slavic Invasion of the Peloponnese, ca. A.D. 585" (MA thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1989).

## Chapter 7

# John Rufus, Timothy Aelurus, and the Fall of the Western Roman Empire

Edward Watts

According to a conventional narrative, the fall of the western Roman Empire resulted from a sequence of events that began on 28 August 475 when the emperor Julius Nepos fled to Salona to escape an imminent coup organized by his *magister militum* Orestes.<sup>1</sup> Following the flight of Nepos, Orestes took effective control of the state and arranged for the selection of his young son Romulus, nicknamed Augustulus (“the little Augustus”), as emperor. On 23 August 476 a dispute over military compensation caused the western Roman army to turn against Orestes and Romulus.<sup>2</sup> The troops shifted their allegiance to Odovacar, a barbarian commander, and named him king. On 28 August they apprehended and executed Orestes,<sup>3</sup> and on 4 September Odovacar captured Ravenna and arranged for the deposition of Romulus.<sup>4</sup> At his urging, an embassy soon was sent from the Roman Senate to the eastern emperor Zeno that declared there was “no need of a divided rule and that one, shared emperor was sufficient for both territories. They said, moreover, that they had chosen Odovacar, a man of military and political experience, to safeguard their own affairs and that Zeno should ... entrust him with the government of Italy.”<sup>5</sup> In response, Zeno accepted Odovacar’s de facto control over Italy while

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<sup>1</sup> For Orestes, see J.R. Martindale, ed., *PLRE II. AD 395–527* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 811–812, s.v. “Orestes 2.” On his coup, see Jordanes, *Getica* 231 and *Romana* 344 as well as Marcellinus Comes, *Chron.* 475.

<sup>2</sup> For discussion, see J. Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 6–8, and B. Croke, “A.D. 476: The Manufacture of a Turning Point,” *Chiron* 13 (1983): 83–87. Procopius (*BG* 5.1.4–8) holds that the dispute was over land distributions to barbarian troops.

<sup>3</sup> Ennodius, *VEpiphanii* 95–100; *Anonymous Valesianus* 8.37; Eugippius, *VSeverini (Epistola ad Paschasium)* 4. On Odovacar’s position as king, see A.H.M. Jones, “The Constitutional Position of Odovacar and Theoderic,” *JRS* 52 (1962): 126–130.

<sup>4</sup> *Anon. Vales.* 8.37. Romulus received a generous pension and permission to live out the rest of his life on his family’s estate in Campania (*Anon. Vales.* 8.38; Marcellinus, *Chron.* s.a.476; Jordanes, *Get.* 242 and *Rom.* 344).

<sup>5</sup> Malchus, fr. 14 (Blockley). One important symbolic action apparently taken by Odovacar was the return of the western imperial regalia to Constantinople. Malchus does not indicate that the imperial insignia were conveyed by this senatorial embassy, but the testimony of *Anon. Vales.* 12.64 suggests that these items were eventually sent to

urging him and the senators to direct their energies toward reconciling with Nepos.<sup>6</sup> They never did so, and following Odovacar's coup, no western emperor again reigned in Italy.

For over 1500 years, this has been seen by many historians as the fall of the western Roman Empire.<sup>7</sup> It generally has been thought that this view of Odovacar's coup took some time to develop.<sup>8</sup> This was partly the result of Odovacar's own actions. Although no emperor reigned in Italy, Odovacar made efforts to govern in a way that did little to disrupt established political procedures. He preserved cordial relations with the Roman Senate,<sup>9</sup> diligently acknowledged the superiority of the eastern emperor Zeno,<sup>10</sup> and even issued coinage in the name of Nepos.<sup>11</sup> Following Nepos' death, Odovacar continued this practice with coins bearing the image of Zeno.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the ambiguity of Odovacar's position is nowhere better illustrated than in his reaction to Theoderic's invasion of Italy in 489, the moment when Zeno explicitly broke with Odovacar. In response to this, Odovacar had his son Thela appointed Caesar, making him a junior emperor.<sup>13</sup> It is telling that, in this time of great peril, Odovacar sought to secure his power by reinforcing his support for Roman imperial institutions. It also suggests his awareness of potential opposition among those who could characterize his regime as straying too far from past Roman precedent.

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Constantinople. Their return symbolizes the very real political change that Odovacar tried to enact following his initial coup.

<sup>6</sup> Malchus, fr. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Including Marcellinus Comes (*Chron.* 476.2, discussed below), Evagrius Scholasticus (*HE* 2.16, possibly based upon the lost history of Eustathius), Jordanes (*Get.* 243; *Rom.* 345), Theophanes (*Chron.* AM 5965), Paul the Deacon (*Historia Romana* 15.10), and, in modern times, Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. David Womersley, 6 vols. in 3 (London: Allen Lane, 1994), 1.36. The interdependence of these sources has been discussed, e.g., by Croke, "A.D. 476," pp. 90–103, and W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (AD 550–800)* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), pp. 22–47, 357–369; for Marcellinus in particular, see B. Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his Chronicle* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 190–196.

<sup>8</sup> For this idea, note Croke, "A.D. 476," pp. 81–119.

<sup>9</sup> On his relationship with the Senate, see Moorhead, *Theoderic*, pp. 29–30, and A. Chastagnol, *Le Sénat romain sous le règne d'Odovacre* (Bonn, 1966), esp. pp. 52–56; also E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas Empire*, trans. J.R. Palanque, vol. 2 (Paris, 1949), pp. 45–46.

<sup>10</sup> Note in particular Odovacar's deferential behavior to Zeno following his Rugian campaign (John of Antioch, fr. 214); see M. McCormick, "Odovacar, Emperor Zeno, and the Rugian Victory Legation," *Byzantion* 47 (1977): 212–222. Odovacar's respect for Zeno evidently extended to the display of Zeno's portrait in Rome (*Anon. Vales.* 9.44).

<sup>11</sup> E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison, WI, 1982), p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> W. Hahn, *Moneta imperii Byzantini, I. Von Anastasius I bis Justinianus I. (491–565)* (Vienna, 1973), p. 79; and Chastagnol, *Le Sénat romain*, p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> See Moorhead, *Theoderic*, pp. 22–24. On Thela, see John of Antioch, fr. 214a.

During the life of his Italian regime, Odovacar occupied a constitutionally vague position that established his authority in Italy while emphasizing the continuity between his regime and that of his immediate imperial predecessors.<sup>14</sup> And there is considerable evidence to suggest that, for almost four decades, the ambiguity of his status was almost universally appreciated by contemporary historians. Indeed, Odovacar is not connected explicitly to the fall of the west until the early sixth century. The earliest surviving reference to this idea appears in the *Chronicle* of Count Marcellinus, a document composed in or around 518.<sup>15</sup> In the second entry under the year 476, Marcellinus writes: “Odovacar, king of the Goths, took control of Rome. Odovacar slew Orestes right there. Odovacar condemned Augustulus, the son of Orestes, with the penalty of exile in Lucullanum, a castle in Campania. The western empire of the Roman people, which the first emperor Octavian Augustus had begun to rule in the 709th year from the foundation of the city, perished with this Augustulus.”<sup>16</sup>

Marcellinus’ unambiguous statement is the clearest of a group of early sixth-century Constantinopolitan interpretations marking the barbarian Odovacar’s coup as the fall of Rome.<sup>17</sup> The fact that this historical interpretation first appears more than a generation after Odovacar’s coup indicates that his action evidently did not shake contemporaries in quite the same way that it has shaped later historical interpretation.<sup>18</sup> Many people in both the west and the east did not immediately see a significant difference between the interregnum during which Odovacar presided over Italy and, say, those during which Ricimer presided over the state in the 460s. Indeed, the third quarter of the fifth century was marked by several western interregna: October 456 until April 457, August to November 461, August 465 until April 467, and November 472 to March 473. People had become quite used to them. It was only a generation later, when the barbarian political domination created by Odovacar’s coup seemed to have become permanent and it had become

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<sup>14</sup> Evidently this extended even to the appointment of consuls; see Jones, “Constitutional Position,” pp. 126–127.

<sup>15</sup> On the date, see Croke, *Count Marcellinus*, pp. 17–20.

<sup>16</sup> Marcellinus Comes, *Chron.* 476.2. For discussion of the passage, see Croke, “A.D. 476,” pp. 87–113, and idem, *Count Marcellinus*, pp. 190–195.

<sup>17</sup> In addition to the sources in note 7, note also Damascius (e.g. *Life of Isidore*, fr. 51A Athanassiadi), and Zosimus (e.g. *New History* 4.59). For discussion see Croke, “A.D. 476,” pp. 116–118, and W. Kaegi, “Gli storici proto-bizantini e la Roma del tardo quinto secolo,” *Rivista storica italiana* 88 (1976): 5–9.

<sup>18</sup> Although this idea plays a role in eastern historiography from the 510s forward, western sources remain ambiguous about the relationship between the contemporary situation and the Roman past, often presenting Odovacar as a figure exemplifying Roman continuity (e.g. *Anon. Vales.* 10.48; Eugippius, *VSeverini* 44). Even the western sources critical of Odovacar do not attack him for the fall of the empire, e.g. Ennodius (*Pan.* 23, *VEpiphani* 95), who marks him as a plunderer.



clear that the appointment of a new western emperor was not imminent, that observers began to speak about and date the fall of the west.<sup>19</sup>

This did not mean, however, that fifth-century polemicists could not exploit the novel constitutional position Odovacar had created for himself. If we turn our attention away from Constantinopolitan sources, we find another, earlier, discourse about Rome's fall in John Rufus' *Plerophories*, an early sixth-century collection of 89 individual oral and written traditions that circulated in anti-Chalcedonian monastic circles.<sup>20</sup> John, the disciple and eventual successor of the Gazan anti-Chalcedonian abbot Peter the Iberian, preserved these materials to highlight the holiness of his community's leadership and celebrate the legacies of Peter and his associate, patriarch Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria. These tales also single out the leaders of the Chalcedonian movement, especially patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem and pope Leo I, and describe the misfortunes they already had caused or soon were to cause. These texts even equate this first generation of Chalcedonian leaders with the Antichrist.<sup>21</sup>

In the conclusion of the *Plerophories*, John Rufus writes at length about the end of the Roman Empire. This complicated passage begins with a description of an old ascetic who lived and prayed in silence outside the nearly abandoned imperial palace in Antioch.<sup>22</sup> The ascetic's virulent opposition to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 introduces John's final polemical discussion of Chalcedonian theology and the consequences of the Chalcedonian disregard for God's will. John first summarizes the book of Joshua's account of the Israelite conquest of parts of Canaan and then turns to the sins of Achan the son of Carmi,<sup>23</sup> which caused God to turn away from the Israelites and threatened their military success. John then argues that, if the sins of one person could do such damage in the past, one can only imagine the damage done by a church council in which bishops and laity turned away from God's commands. Moreover, unlike Achan, an individual who broke a simple command, all of the Chalcedonians deny the very teaching of God.<sup>24</sup> One of the consequences of the council's decision, John proposes, is that the council has "unjustly called the anger of God upon all the earth."<sup>25</sup> He continues: "And indeed, this is clearly revealed by the course of events. For since then, the empire of the Romans has ceased and come to an end, because of the Evil one and the fact that he made appear the abomination that one calls the *Tome* of Leo. The city that

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<sup>19</sup> A point made at some length by Croke, "A.D. 476," pp. 81–86.

<sup>20</sup> F. Nau, ed., *Jean Rufus, Plérophories* (Paris, 1912). Note as well the study of J.E. Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (Piscataway, NJ, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. *Plerophories* 7, 9, 12, 17, and 20.

<sup>22</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (144.8–148.5).

<sup>23</sup> Joshua 7:1–13.

<sup>24</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (148.5–150.9).

<sup>25</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (150.9).

was the mistress and queen of all of the inhabitable world has become captive and placed under the authority (w+Ltš) of barbarians (YrBr8B: barbari'y'e).<sup>26</sup>

John clearly articulates the concept of the empire's end. It occurred when the city of Rome was placed under barbarian authority and it happened because of the heretical *Tome* written by Pope Leo I.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps most intriguing about this is the fact that John's rhetoric focuses upon the city of Rome, the "city that was queen of the inhabitable world" and the place from which the heretical *Tome* of Leo emerged. He makes its fate representative of the empire as a whole. Furthermore, the text's use of the verb +Lš indicates that John describes not just a short occupation of the city but the continued exercise of authority over it by barbarians.<sup>28</sup> What event is this? John could, perhaps, mean some of the machinations of Ricimer, but, even under Ricimer, a Roman figure often remained at the head of the state. In addition, despite his many political interventions, Ricimer never sought explicit recognition as ruler of Italy. Indeed, no moment seems to represent the time at which barbarians began to exercise control over the city of Rome better than Odovacar's coup, the point at which Romans ceased to control their city and her Senate formally requested a barbarian superintendent. This suggests that John would have seen the coup of Odovacar as an historical turning point, a notable but not unprecedented notion in the 510s.<sup>29</sup>

John was an older contemporary of Marcellinus Comes, so it is not surprising to see both men articulate the idea that the west has come under the dominion of barbarians. But John's ruminations differ from the account of Marcellinus.<sup>30</sup> Marcellinus focused upon the specific personalities and events of 476 that, in his view, ushered in the end of the empire. John's discussion is more abstract. John explicitly marks the *Tome* as the cause of the subjugation of Rome, but the name

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<sup>26</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (150.11–151.1).

<sup>27</sup> For Chalceon's opponents, *Tome* of Leo rested at the root of their resistance to the council and quickly came to symbolize the heretical nature of the assembly; Timothy Aelurus himself wrote a line-by-line refutation—see R.Y. Ebied, L.R. Wickham, "Timothy Aelurus: Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon," in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, L. van Rompay, eds., *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert Van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday* (Leuven, 1985), pp. 115–166. The fourth session of the council was spent trying (and failing) to get Egyptian bishops and dissident monks to agree to the *Tome*: see M. Gaddis, *There is no Crime for those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA, 2005), pp. 310–312.

<sup>28</sup> R. Paine-Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford, 1902), p. 579, col. 2, gives the definition of "rule, have dominion, authority, or power over" in the ethpa'al.

<sup>29</sup> By the 510s, this had evidently become a common interpretation throughout the eastern empire, although the *Ecclesiastical History* of Zacharias Scholasticus presents a somewhat different picture. In it both Odovacar and Theoderic (misidentified as Alimeric) are presented as tyrants who nonetheless kept barbarians out of Italy (*HE* 7.12; cf. a similar statement at 9.18 by ps.-Zacharias).

<sup>30</sup> On the dating of the *Plerophories* see Steppa, *John Rufus*, pp. 77–78.

or names of those responsible and most contextual details are left unmentioned. In his reconstruction, specific political events are unimportant because the fall has religious, not political, causes and consequences. He then provides a distinct discussion of the fall of Rome that bears the specific imprint of sixth-century anti-Chalcedonian polemic.

John's text also reveals that this discourse was framed before the early sixth century, for he draws upon an interpretative tradition dating to the first generation of anti-Chalcedonian leadership. Following his dramatic statement that Rome has fallen under the control of barbarians, he includes another series of Old Testament quotations (this time taken from Jeremiah and Isaiah) describing the fall of Jerusalem because of the sins of the Israelites, again equating a people's symbolic capital with their kingdom. John reiterates the point that, if such a disaster afflicted the Israelites, we must imagine far worse resulting from Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo.<sup>31</sup> He then turns to a different and, in his mind, more authoritative source to explain the connection between the *Tome* and the prostration of Rome. He states: "The orthodox Timothy says this, he who is the invincible bishop of the faithful, the pillar of orthodoxy, and the guardian and teacher of Alexandria."<sup>32</sup>

John here means Timothy Aelurus, an extreme opponent of Chalcedon, who was appointed patriarch of Alexandria in 457, was sent into exile in 460, and in late 475 returned to his see, where he died in 477.<sup>33</sup> Timothy was an accomplished propagandist and pamphleteer who developed a distinctive and powerful rhetorical style that bolstered the morale of his often embattled anti-Chalcedonian followers.<sup>34</sup> Timothy's argumentative technique involved the appeal to carefully selected proof texts drawn from Apostolic and patristic authors.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, John Rufus replicated this approach when he quoted Timothy as the source of the idea that Rome's fall to barbarians was a consequence of Leo's *Tome*.<sup>36</sup>

John based his notion of Chalcedon as a council organized and directed by Satan upon an earlier discourse of Timothy, whom he quoted as saying: "It is with this repudiation [that is, the *Tome*] that the statement of the Apostle is brought about;<sup>37</sup> and now the sovereignty of the Roman Empire has ceased. That which

<sup>31</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (151.2–152.2).

<sup>32</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (152.5–6).

<sup>33</sup> For Timothy's biography see R. Y. Ebied, L. R. Wickham, "Collection of Unpublished Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 21.2 (1970): 321–369, esp. pp. 326–328.

<sup>34</sup> Ebied, Wickham, "Timothy Aelurus," pp. 115–117, and eidem, "Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus," pp. 329–330; note especially letter 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ebied, Wickham, "Timothy Aelurus," p. 117.

<sup>36</sup> This is, of course, also true of the other traditions within the *Plerophories*, whose power derives directly from the authority of the renowned anti-Chalcedonian leaders whose testimony John purports to record (see Steppa, *John Rufus*, p. 80).

<sup>37</sup> This seems to be a reference to 2 Thess. 2:1–13, a passage that Timothy proceeds to quote at length and then connect to the end of the empire.

never occurred in Rome, from the time that she became the mistress [of the world], comes now. She has committed a great sin with impiety to God and apostasy, and she has opened the door to the impiety that is called the *Tome* of Leo, which went forth from her, as we now see and understand.”<sup>38</sup> John then continued to quote from this lost work of Timothy for almost two full manuscript folios.<sup>39</sup> In this excerpt, Timothy argued at length that the Council of Chalcedon, Pope Leo’s *Tome*, and the end of Roman political control were all linked.<sup>40</sup> This suggests that John’s concluding discussion in the *Plerophories* recapitulated an earlier (now lost) text of Timothy Aelurus.

In the material that John quoted, Timothy clearly connected the end of the Roman Empire with the *Tome* of Leo and saw evidence for this in the novel position of the city of Rome. However, in this fragment, Timothy does not join these events explicitly with barbarians or with Odovacar in particular. This connection is made by John Rufus, who evidently thinks that his words are faithful to Timothy’s intended meaning. Although this is a somewhat precarious basis for argument, there is reason to think that John Rufus may be characterizing Timothy’s sentiments correctly. Indeed, the development of Timothy’s own thought seems to support this. In a work probably dating to the beginning of Timothy’s episcopate, Timothy makes a similar, yet crucially distinct, attempt to use barbarian actions against Rome to illustrate the impiety of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo. This text, a short history of the events leading up to and immediately following the Council of Chalcedon, survives in Syriac amid a collection of translated fragments of Timothy’s works.<sup>41</sup> The treatise begins with a general introduction emphasizing the Apostolic and patristic roots of the anti-Chalcedonian position. It then describes the events that led the emperor Marcian to call the Council at Chalcedon that established the *Tome* as “the definition of the faith.”<sup>42</sup> The rest of the document discusses the consequences of the council’s support for the *Tome*, with Timothy

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<sup>38</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (152.7–11).

<sup>39</sup> *Plerophories* 89 (152.11–155.2). Within this larger segment Timothy again refers to the “end of the Roman Empire,” this time as an event spoken about enigmatically by the Apostles and Patristic authors (*ibid.*, 154.3–4). John Rufus gives no indication of the work from which this extended quotation was taken but, in *Plerophories* 26, he mentions a letter, with a different focus, in which Timothy had identified Chalcedon as a precursor of the Antichrist that was described by Paul in II Thessalonians, and the material quoted in *Plerophories* 89 also may have come from a letter.

<sup>40</sup> This reading suggests that the first two sentences quoted have a causal connection, suggesting that the evidence for the fall of the empire is the newly subservient position of the city of Rome.

<sup>41</sup> F. Nau, ed., *Patrologia Orientalis* (PO) 13.2, 202–17.

<sup>42</sup> PO 13.2, 202–10. In *Plerophories* 36, John Rufus explicitly quotes an *Ecclesiastical History* written by Timothy Aelurus between 460 and 475 in order to introduce material about the death of Nestorius. Because the earlier history lacks the Nestorius material and presents the death of Theodosius II differently, the text John quotes seems to be distinct from the document preserved in this Syriac collection.

employing increasingly powerful rhetoric as the discussion proceeds. Acting under the influence of Leo's letter, the council restored those who were outside of communion, exiled champions of the faith such as Dioscorus of Alexandria, and undid the positive work of the previous two councils at Ephesus in 430 and 449.<sup>43</sup> Timothy then contends that Christ will not pardon those responsible for the violence that followed from Chalcedon. He goes on to suggest that divine displeasure can already be seen because not long after the council came "the devastation of [the city of] Rome" and the political and ecclesiastical separation of east and west,<sup>44</sup> which represent the most dramatic illustrations of this divine displeasure available to Timothy when he wrote this text.<sup>45</sup>

Because the work speaks about the reign of Marcian in the past tense and gives no mention of Timothy's exile, it was probably written between the beginning of Timothy's patriarchate in 457 and his exile in 460.<sup>46</sup> A dating of 457/460 would suggest that Timothy's mention of "the devastation of Rome" is almost certainly a reference to the Vandal sack of the city in 455. This would in turn indicate that Timothy, like John after him, saw barbarians as agents of God's retribution against Leo and his city. The rhetorical strategy used in this history then resembles that found in the work that John Rufus quotes, but the later text expands upon the real world consequence of the *Tome* of Leo.<sup>47</sup> In the earlier document, the barbarian devastation of Rome is the most evident and dramatic consequence of the *Tome*. In the passage that John Rufus quotes, however, the impious nature of the *Tome* now is illustrated by end of the sovereignty of the Roman Empire and (at least according to John's interpretation of Timothy)

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<sup>43</sup> *PO* 13.2, 210–11.

<sup>44</sup> "They created also divisions among kings and schisms, because it was not long after the council of liars that came about the devastation of Rome and, until today, the opposition, the schism and the divisions are found in ecclesiastical domains as well as among kings, because the westerners do not even now live in peace with the easterners": *PO* 13.2, 215–16.

<sup>45</sup> The ecclesiastical division described here is clearly that between anti-Chalcedonian bishops (such as Timothy) and the see of Rome. The political division may refer to the fact that, in the 450s, the empire remained divided, as manifested by the east's unwillingness or inability to respond forcefully to the Vandal sack of Rome.

<sup>46</sup> Marcian: *PO* 13.2, 216. Although Timothy later did not hesitate to speak about his exile (e.g. letters 2, 5, and 6 in Ebied, Wickham, "Syriac Letters of Timothy Aelurus," pp. 357–369) the only exile mentioned as a consequence of Chalcedon is that of Dioscorus. W.E. Crum, "Eusebius and Coptic Church Histories," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* 24 (1902): 71–72, argued that the Greek text preserved in this Syriac document is incomplete and can be continued by several fragments that survive only in Coptic. If this is true, he suggests that the date of composition may be closer to 475. Against this, however, see J. Lebon, *Le Monophysisme Sévérien* (Louvain, 1909), pp. 103–108.

<sup>47</sup> The Biblical underpinning of his reasoning also differs in a significant way. Whereas John Rufus quotes a text that draws primarily from II Thessalonians 2:1–13, the earlier work draws upon II Timothy, Matthew, and Psalms for support.

the apparent barbarian subjugation of the city of Rome, a more severe set of consequences. As Timothy notes, the latter also was an event that had not before occurred (a statement that was not true of the sack of Rome in 455).<sup>48</sup> The end of Roman imperial authority thus was a new consequence of the *Tome* of Leo that had yet to occur when Timothy wrote his account of the reign of Marcian. This suggests that, late in his life, Timothy learned of an event that enabled him to make a claim that the empire of Rome had ended.

Could this have been Odovacar's dismissal of Romulus? John Rufus evidently made this connection, probably with good reason. Odovacar's dismissal of Romulus and the Senate's request that a barbarian be recognized formally as caretaker of Italy stands out as the event that occurred during the period between Timothy's exile and his death in 477 that could best be described as both the "end of Roman sovereignty" and "that which never occurred in Rome since she became mistress of the world." It is likely that news of the notable senatorial embassy would have traveled fast and probably reached Alexandria within a fortnight.<sup>49</sup> There was certainly time for Timothy to learn that the city of Rome, the birthplace of Leo's hated *Tome*, had now, practically speaking, placed itself under direct barbarian authority. He then had both opportunity and motivation to shape this news into an additional rhetorical weapon to use against his Chalcedonian opponents. Without Timothy's full text, we are forced to trust John Rufus that the bishop deployed this rhetoric quickly. Nevertheless, John's reverence for Timothy gives us every reason to believe that he has accurately conveyed what he believed Timothy's sentiments to be.

In any event, the writings of John and Timothy show that an anti-Chalcedonian discourse speaking about the "end of the Roman Empire" existed as early as the 470s. This discourse stripped away the ambiguity surrounding barbarian control of Italy in a way that Constantinopolitan sources would not do for another generation. Indeed, anti-Chalcedonian thinkers had a clear motivation for doing this. The cataclysmic history of the city of Rome and the western empire following the appearance of the *Tome* of Leo serves as a distant but distinct reminder of the consequences of heresy. In both his short history and the work excerpted by John Rufus, Timothy presents Leo and his followers as deserving of the temporal and eternal punishment prescribed for heretics. However, this should not cause us to assume that such an interpretation was widely held, especially in places

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<sup>48</sup> Rome had, of course, been sacked before. It had not, however, seen its Senate request a barbarian sovereign before 476.

<sup>49</sup> These events took place at the height of the sailing season when ships would have made the ten to twenty-day trip between the cities. For journey lengths, see L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, 2nd edn. (Princeton, NJ, 1986), pp. 282–291, and for frequency of voyages see C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, MD, 1997), p. 42, who estimates that 32 grain ships per week made the trip between March and mid-November. Many other merchant ships also would have made the voyage, all carrying news from the west.

like Ravenna and Constantinople. These men belonged to a community that was physically distant from Italy and ecclesiastically separated from its bishops. The internal discourse of its leadership had come to center upon the spiritual breach opened by Pope Leo, his *Tome*, and the Council of Chalcedon as well as their real consequences. A negative historical interpretation of the late fifth-century political crises that afflicted Rome served to confirm God's sanction of anti-Chalcedonian belief, illustrate divine displeasure over Leo's *Tome*, and reiterate the necessity of repentance for Chalcedonians. Timothy's understanding of Italian political events was useful within this discourse and persuasive to resolute anti-Chalcedonians, but it cannot be viewed as anything but polemic. Despite John and Timothy, the less definite pronouncements of fifth-century historians and chroniclers probably better represent most contemporary views of Odovacar's actions and their significance for the Roman Empire.

## C. Imperial Manipulation of Perceptions of Barbarians



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## Chapter 8

# Imperial Religious Unification Policy and its Divisive Consequences: Diocletian, the Jews, and the Samaritans

Yuval Shahar

The reforms of Diocletian in a number of fields—military, economic, administrative, cultural, etc.—were intended to reunite the Roman Empire after the chaos that had preceded him.<sup>1</sup> In many senses he actually achieved this goal. The religious policies of this emperor who called himself “Iovius” played a particularly important role.<sup>2</sup> In Oriens, however, including Palestine, these religious policies tended toward the extreme, and included systematic persecutions of Christians.<sup>3</sup> To a large extent the results were the opposite of those Diocletian had intended: in the short term they produced long, drawn-out and widely resounding confrontations with influential groups in the population; in the long term—at least from Constantine onward—they laid the foundations for divisions and violent clashes between those Christians who had stood up to the persecutions and those whose reactions were perceived as treachery to the faith in time of trial.

This study will look at a secondary process that took place in Palestine. Here too, the religious policies of Diocletian strengthened the tendencies to division between two religious and ethnic groups of “barbarians,” Jews and Samaritans. That Jews and Samaritans were “barbarians” is clear from linguistic evidence: the Jewish historian Josephus actually used this term more than once to describe his own people.<sup>4</sup> More importantly, Jews and Samaritans were characterized as barbarians throughout Roman literature, historiography and legislation. They

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<sup>1</sup> The scholarly literature is vast—see, e.g., S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (London, 1985), pp. 41–150; and R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh, 2004), esp. pp. 13–45, 72–90, which includes useful English translations of the main primary sources.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *Diocletian*, pp. 153–172; Rees, *Diocletian*, pp. 46–59.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, *Diocletian*, pp. 173–185; Rees, *Diocletian*, pp. 59–71. Cf. also M. Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (London/Sydney, 1983), pp. 122–132.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus included the Hebrew sources as part of the barbarian culture, while arguing that “the tradition of keeping chronicles of antiquity is found rather among the barbarian races than among the Greeks”, *Ap* I 58. Tatian, the second-century Christian philosopher,

were barbarians on the very elementary and simple grounds that they used their own Semitic language and script, which differentiated them from Greek and Latin speakers.<sup>5</sup> This was obvious for Josephus, who explained his difficulties with writing Greek because “the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation. For our people do not favor those persons who have mustered the speech of many nations.”<sup>6</sup> Jews and Samaritans were barbarians also because of their Semitic origin in the East. Josephus admits this willingly, and declared the Chaldaeans to be the “original ancestors of our race, and this blood-relationship accounts for the mention made of the Jews in their annals.”<sup>7</sup>

But the most important factor that determined the “otherness,” including the “barbarian” character, of Jews and Samaritans was their religion and its implications for culture, lifestyle and social identity. These groups were designated *religio* or *superstitio*.<sup>8</sup> Roman writers related to their peculiar practices, sometimes positively but usually negatively: *Sabbath* observance,<sup>9</sup> circumcision<sup>10</sup> and so on. Their monotheism was seen as the polar opposite of polytheism, and this led to the charge that the Jews dishonored the gods.<sup>11</sup> The peculiar Jewish dietary, purity and other religious laws, which separated the Jew from the non-Jew, stood at the very heart of the acrimonious hatred of this “misanthropic” people.<sup>12</sup> In short, “the case of the Jews and Samaritans was unusual in the ancient world because these

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described the Hebrew Bible very favorably as barbaric, i.e. non-Hellenic, books: *Oration to the Greeks* 29.1–2.

<sup>5</sup> For the proclaimed superiority of Latin speakers over Syrians see the graffito in Sinai, *CIL* 3.86, and B. Isaac, “Orientals and Jews in the *Historia Augusta*: Fourth-Century Prejudice and Stereotypes,” in I. Gafni, A. Oppenheimer, R.D. Schwartz, eds., *The Jews in the Hellenistic–Roman World: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern* (Jerusalem, 1996), p. 101\* = B. Isaac, *The Near East under Roman Rule* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1998), p. 268.

<sup>6</sup> *AJ* 20.263–4. cf. *AJ* 1.7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ap* 1.71, cf. the prolegomena to *BJ* 3.6.

<sup>8</sup> *Superstitio*: Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.67; Quintilian, *Ins. Or.* 3.7.21; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.7.2, 13.1, see M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, II (Jerusalem, 1980), p. 60; *Ann.*, II 85:4, Stern, II, p. 72; Suetonius, *Tiberius* 36, Stern, II, pp. 112–113; Apuleius, *Florida* 6. For the terms *religio* and *superstitio* in Roman and Byzantine imperial legislation see A. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit, MI, 1987), pp. 55–67.

<sup>9</sup> See Stern, III (1984), index under “Sabbath”, 146.

<sup>10</sup> See Stern, III (1984), index under “circumcision, Jewish,” 114.

<sup>11</sup> Pliny, *NH* 13.46: “the Jews, a race remarkable for their contempt for the divine powers”; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.4.1: “The Jews regard as profane all that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they permit all that we have abhor.”

<sup>12</sup> The most concentrated profile of Jewish separatism and misanthropy is Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5.5.1–3, cf. Stern, II, pp. 39–43.

two peoples had related monotheistic religions.”<sup>13</sup> This, then, is the starting point for the current study.

According to the Jerusalem Talmud:

R. Abbahu prohibited their [Samaritan] wine. [This was on the basis] of instruction deriving from R. Hiyya, R. Assi, R. Ammi, who went up to the Royal Mountain and saw a gentile who was suspect by reason of having utilized their wine.<sup>14</sup> They came before him and told him about it. He told them, “Not on a pretext.” And there are those who wish to explain [as follows]: On a certain Sabbath, no wine was to be found all over Samartike. At the end of the Sabbath it [Samartike] was found full of [wine], which gentiles had brought, and which the Samaritans had purchased from them. And there are those who wish to explain [as follows]: When Di[o]cletian the king came up here, he issued a decree, saying, “Every nation must offer a libation, except for the Jews.” So the Samaritans made a libation, and [that is why] their wine was prohibited. And there are those who wish to explain [as follows]: They have a kind of dove to which they offer libations.” (Jerusalem Talmud, *Avodah Zarah* 5. 44d)

In spite of some differences between the four explanations of the exact circumstances that caused the ban on the wine of the Samaritans, there is a common personal, chronological and ritual base.<sup>15</sup> Personally, the decision was taken by R. Abbahu, the head of the Jewish scholarly center in Caesarea Maritima.<sup>16</sup> Chronologically he was active at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, namely during the reign of Diocletian.<sup>17</sup> Ritually the Samaritans were suspected of being

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<sup>13</sup> B. Isaac, “Ethnic Groups in Judaea under Roman Rule,” in A. Kasher, A. Oppenheimer, eds., *Dor Le-Dor: Studies in Honour of J. Efron* (Jerusalem, 1995; Heb.), p. 203 = idem, *The Near East under Roman Rule*, p. 260.

<sup>14</sup> Up to here the text is purely Hebrew; subsequently it is Aramaic.

<sup>15</sup> This source has been discussed by several scholars from the nineteenth century onward: H.H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, v. 4.2 (Leipzig, 1891), pp. 177ff.; I. Halevy, *Dorot Harishonim*, v. 2 (Frankfurt; photographic reprint Jerusalem, 1967, Heb.), pp. 377–344, S. Lieberman, “The Martyrs of Caesarea,” *Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire orientales et slaves* 7 (1939–1944), esp. 403–409; Y.F. Baer, “Israel, the Christian Church and the Roman Empire from the Time of Septimius Severus to the Edict of Toleration of A.D. 313,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 7 (1961), esp. 123–128; I.L. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1975), esp. pp. 111–112; M.A. Rabello, “On the Relations between Diocletian and the Jews,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35 (1984): 147–167; R. Pummer, “Samaritanism in Caesarea Maritima,” in T.L. Donaldson, ed., *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (Waterloo, ON, 2000), pp. 197–200.

<sup>16</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” pp. 397–409, I.L. Levine, “Rabbi Abbahu of Caesarea,” in J. Neusner, ed., *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults IV*, Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty (Leiden, 1975), pp. 56–76.

<sup>17</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” 400–402 dated R. Abbahu’s death to the end of 309 CE, on the basis of the unusual Caesarean tradition about its “weeping pillars.” Eusebius dated

idol worshipers, and in particular of using their wine for libations, intentionally or not. Comparison of this Talmudic passage with the testimony of Eusebius in his *Martyrs of Palestine* clarifies some details and strengthens the reliability of the discussion in the Jewish sources.

Eusebius was an eyewitness to the anti-Christian persecutions during the years 303–312 in *Oriens* and especially in the Roman colony of Caesarea Maritima. He wrote several accounts of these traumatic years beginning immediately after the persecutions and going on up to 316.<sup>18</sup> According to him, the Fourth Edict of Persecution was published by Diocletian in spring 304, and ordered all the citizens in the cities to sacrifice and offer libations:

It was in the second year of the persecution, and the hostility against us was more violent than in the first; and Urbanus, who at that time had superseded the governor Flavianus in his office, was governor over the people of Palestine.<sup>19</sup> There came then again the second time edicts from the emperor, in addition to the former, threatening persecution to all persons. For, in the former, he had given orders respecting the rulers of the Church of God alone, to compel them to sacrifice; but, in the second edict there was a strict ordinance that compelled all persons equally: that the entire population on every city, both men and women, should sacrifice to dead idols, and a law was imposed upon them to offer libations to devils.<sup>20</sup>

Later on, Eusebius' account of the second phase of persecution, as conducted in Caesarea in 305/306, clearly implies that the authorities used lists of all the inhabitants in the city to compel universal sacrifice (*MP* 4.8).<sup>21</sup> The same holds true also for the year 308 (*MP* 9.2).

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this miracle between mid-November and mid-December 309 (*MP* ix, 12). The Talmudic tradition saw it as mourning at R. Abbahu's death (Jer. Talmud, *Avodah Zarah* iii,1 42c, Bab. Talmud, *Mo'ed Katan* 25b). But this sort of midrashic tradition, which forms part of the latest phase of the redaction process of the Jerusalem Talmud, does not allow such chronological precision. See also Baer, "Israel," n. 126. At any rate R. Abbahu led the Jewish community of Caesarea at the end of the third- and during the first decade of the fourth century.

<sup>18</sup> A. Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden/Boston, 2003), pp. 37–45.

<sup>19</sup> Flavianus served as the governor in Syria Palaestina from April up to November 303; Urbanus took this office in the spring of 304 and served until winter 307/308, see T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> This is the long recension of the *Martyrs of Palestine*, composed in April 311 and preserved in a Syriac manuscript of 411, edited and translated into English by William Cureton (Paris, 1891) 9–10; see also the short recension *MP* 3.1 (*PG* 20.1469).

<sup>21</sup> F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31BC–AD 337* (Cambridge, MA/London, 1993), p. 197.

The most important point of correlation between Eusebius and the Talmudic tradition is the emphasis that the edict compelled all people to offer libations: “Every nation must offer a libation” (*JT*). “Compelled all persons equally, that the entire population in every city, both men and women, should ... offer libations to devils” (*MP* 3.1, 304 CE). “To compel all men to offer sacrifices and libations to devils” (*MP* 4.8, 305/306 CE). “To compel all the men, together with their wives and children and slaves, and even the infants at the breast, to sacrifice and offer libations to devils” (*MP* 9.2, 308 CE).

The main difference between Eusebius and the Palestinian Talmud is that only the latter refers explicitly to both Jews and Samaritans. There can be no doubt that Eusebius is much more detailed and accurate. His testimony naturally serves as the historiographical base against which other material, including the Talmud, should be examined. Against this background, the scholarly debate about the Talmudic passage focuses on two points, the date of the edict and the question of whether there is any historical basis for the explanation that the wine of the Samaritans was banned because of their behavior during the Diocletianic persecutions.

There have been different proposals for the dating of the edict. The main problem that concerns scholars is the phrase that opens the Talmudic passage: “When Di[o]cletian the king came up here.” Scholars either date it according to external evidence to the visit of Diocletian to Palestine,<sup>22</sup> or explain that, “the Jews subsequently confused Maximinus with Diocletian who had already abdicated at that time. At any rate, it is hardly possible to admit that Diocletian visited Palestine when his Fourth Edict arrived there.”<sup>23</sup>

However, this is not a real problem. The Talmudic Aramaic phrase “when x came here/there” is a technical term used by the anonymous redactors of the Palestinian Talmud to preface any tradition about a rabbi who “came up” from Babylonia to the Land of Israel, or “went down” in the opposite direction. There are three instances where such a phrase is attached to stories about Roman emperors: one about Julian the Apostate,<sup>24</sup> and two about Diocletian. The second story about

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<sup>22</sup> Diocletian visited Tiberias on 31 May 286, *CJ* 4.10.3, and maybe stayed there on (until?) 14 July 286, cf. *CJ* 1.51.1; cf. also in 31 August 286, *CJ* 5.17.3, see Barnes, *New Empire*, pp. 50–51; Halevy, *Dorot*, p. 337, n. 19, p. 344; Baer, “Israel,” pp. 124ff. Baer differentiates between this edict of 286 CE, which exempted the Jews, and between the main persecutions in the fourth century, which included the Jews as well. See the convincing arguments of S. Lieberman against this in “Religious Persecution of the Jews,” in Lieberman, ed., *Studies in Honour of Salo Baron* (Jerusalem, 1975; Hebrew section), pp. 234–245.

<sup>23</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” p. 404, dates it according to the visit of Maximinus, who celebrated his birthday in Caesarea in November 306, *MP* 6.1–2, see Millar, *The Roman Near East*, pp. 200–201. Other scholars have made methodological statements similar to those of Lieberman, e.g. Levine, *Caesarea*, p. 229, n. 51; Rabello, “On the Relations,” p. 151.

<sup>24</sup> *JT Nedarim* 3 37d, the parallel in *JT Shevu'ot* 3 34d has wrongly replaced Lulian (=Julian) with Diocletian; see Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” pp. 435–437.

the latter opens with the same phrase, “When D[i]ocletian the king came up here,” and proceeds, “they saw R. Hiyya bar Abba walk over graves in Tyre in order to see him” (*JT, Berakhot* 3 6a).<sup>25</sup> The famous *polis* of Tyre, later a Roman *Colonia* in Syria Phoenice, is outside the borders of both Roman Palestine and the Jewish Land of Israel. Thus the date of the Talmudic Edict is no longer dependent on a supposed visit of Diocletian to Palestine. The Fourth Edict of Diocletian in spring 304 CE was the basis for the new phase that for the first time legally and formally addressed the whole population. All the later edicts of Maximinus and Galerius were articulated very similarly.<sup>26</sup>

There is another point that strengthens the dating of the Talmudic passage to the days of Diocletian. Two out of the three rabbis according to whose testimony R. Abbahu banned the Samaritan wine are connected with Diocletian in other passages in the Palestinian rabbinic traditions. In one, on the very day that Diocletian became emperor, R. Ammi dreamt that he would be the last Roman king.<sup>27</sup> In the other, R. Hiyya made unusual efforts to see Diocletian in Tyre (*JT Berakhot* 3 6a, discussed above), and relates indirectly to the persecutions.<sup>28</sup>

We turn now to consider what the connection might be between the ban on Samaritan wine and the religious policy of Diocletian. As stated above, it is the Talmudic tradition alone that argues that only the Jews were exempted from having to make pagan libations, while the Samaritans offered them, just like the gentiles. Nevertheless, this accords with other information about the legal status of both groups in the third and fourth centuries. The legal status of the Jews in the Roman Empire had long been established, and they were allowed to live according to their law under autonomous leadership.<sup>29</sup> The evidence for the legal status of the Samaritans is not clear, but it seems that, at least *de jure*, it was less

<sup>25</sup> There is a parallel in *JT Nazir* 7 56a, where the name of the king is Doklinus.

<sup>26</sup> An interesting example of citing Diocletian as a wicked persecutor in 306/307 CE, after his abdication, occurs in the Syriac text, the *Martyrdom of Shmona and Guria*, Cf. Millar, *The Roman Near East*, pp. 486–487. This chronological error clearly occurred because the Seleucid year 618 (=306/307 CE) does not correspond with the regnal years of Diocletian. There is no such problem in the Talmudic source.

<sup>27</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 83, Theodor-Albeck, ed., 1000. The name of the king there is Litinas, but see the note of the editors *ad loc.*, and the convincing arguments that identify him with Diocletian: D. Sperber, “‘Aluf Magdiel’: Diocletian,” in *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature* (Ramat-Gan, 1994), pp. 127–130.

<sup>28</sup> *Song of Songs Rabbah* 2.7. Baer, “Israel,” pp. 126–127, concluded from this passage that the persecutions also applied to Jews, but Lieberman, “Religious Persecution,” p. 237, refuted his conclusions, and understood the words of R. Hiyya as referring to the revival of Jewish traditions dating to the persecution by Hadrian in the context of the current Christian persecutions. Cf. Rabello, “On the Relations,” pp. 152–153.

<sup>29</sup> A.M. Rabello, “The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2/13 (1980): 662–672; Linder, *The Jews*.

well established.<sup>30</sup> Origen, again from Caesarea Maritima, says that in 249, in contrast to the Jews, the Samaritans were not allowed to circumcise, and were even persecuted for so doing.<sup>31</sup>

Although Eusebius does not say explicitly whether the edicts were applied both to Jews and Samaritans, his records implicitly confirm the Talmudic evidence. First of all, at least twice he records that Jews were gathered in and around the place where Christians were persecuted, once in Caesarea (*MP* 8.10, Syriac version) and the other time probably in Diospolis-Lydda (*MP* 8.1, Syriac version).<sup>32</sup> It is hardly reasonable to assume that they would assemble in this manner unless they knew for sure that “every nation must offer a libation, except for the Jews” (*JT Avodah Zarah* 5.3.44d). Analysis of the Syriac version of the episode in Caesarea hints, perhaps, at a differentiation between Jews and Samaritans: “After this, he [Paul] offered up prayer for our enemies, the Jews, many of whom at that time were standing around him. Then he went on in his supplication, and prayed for the Samaritans, and for those among the Gentiles who were without knowledge.” So, literally only the Jews “were standing around him.” The Samaritans were not present while he prayed for their souls.

Thus it seems that Diocletian, and later on Maximinus and Galerius, preserved the borderline between Jews and others, by explicitly exempting Jews from the duty to sacrifice. But the Samaritans received no such explicit exemption. Their actual situation during the persecutions was to a great extent dependent on local conditions and authorities. Unfortunately for the Samaritans, they lived in Palestine and had a large community in its capital, Caesarea. Both the province, and especially its capital, stood at the very centre of the anti-Christian persecution. The authorities of *Colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Caesarea*, the governor and his staff, and even the emperor Maximinus himself took care to enforce religious policy in Caesarea, for no one there could remain indifferent toward it.<sup>33</sup> Here again there is a correlation between R. Abbahu in the Palestinian Talmud and Eusebius, both of whom emphasize the role of Caesarea: “R. Abbahu said: ‘That *taxis* of Caesarea, since most of them are Samaritans, are considered as worshippers [of Saturnalia and Kalendae]. [But] that *taxis* of the *dux* [its status]

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<sup>30</sup> None of the extant pre-Constantine Roman laws relates to Samaritans. The first Byzantine law, which refers to Samaritans and gives them a similar status to that of the Jews, dates from 22 March 404: Linder, *The Jews*, no. 33; M.A. Rabello, “The Samaritans in Roman Law,” in E. Stern, H. Eshel, eds., *The Samaritans* (Jerusalem, 2002; Heb.), pp. 481–495.

<sup>31</sup> *Contra Celsum*, 2.13. See also Origen, *Comm. in Matt.* 17.29–30.

<sup>32</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” pp. 409–412; Levine, *Caesarea*, pp. 81, 206, n. 213; he also points to *MP* 9.10 (Syriac version); Millar, *The Roman Near East*, pp. 201–202.

<sup>33</sup> Millar, *The Roman Near East*, pp. 197–204. Levine, *Caesarea*, pp. 131–134 tends to minimize the effect of the persecutions in Caesarea, but it is one thing to count retrospectively how many Caesarean Christians were executed, and quite another to estimate the horrifying atmosphere during the events themselves.



is doubtful” (JT *Avodah Zarah* 1.39c). Lieberman has analyzed this passage convincingly against the background of the persecutions. He identifies the “*taxis* of Caesarea” with the *hegemonike taxis*, the *officium* of the governor of Caesarea;<sup>34</sup> and the “*taxis* of the *dux*” with the *officium* of the *dux Palaestinae*.<sup>35</sup> The Samaritan members of the former could leave their position, and so preserve their religious duties. “Because the Samaritan officials held on to their posts R. Abbahu regarded them as willing worshippers of idols.”<sup>36</sup> However, interestingly enough, it was Lieberman who tended to reduce the weight and historicity of the Talmudic explanation that Samaritan wine was banned following their behavior under Diocletian’s decree. According to Lieberman, this was only a pretext, and his main argument was twofold. Firstly, the JT itself had already prefaced the four different explanations with the words “on a pretext.” Secondly, “All the grounds for the break attributed here to the ‘some one’ are among the latest anonymous strata of the Palestinian Talmud.”<sup>37</sup>

Now, the first claim is correct, but it also applies to the words “on a pretext.” Lieberman, however, truncated this phrase, which in fact reads “not on a pretext.” He also misunderstood it; it should be read as an instruction from R. Abbahu, stressing that the ban on Samaritan wine was not temporary and should not be cancelled on any pretext.<sup>38</sup> As for the second claim, it is not unusual for a new religious rule to be worded briefly and in Hebrew, so that the bottom line is simply, “Rabbi Abbahu prohibited their wine.” Only the anonymous redactors add the reasons in Aramaic.<sup>39</sup> More important is the fact that the new rule was accepted immediately and formed a watershed in the relationships between Jews and Samaritans. Historians should be concerned not so much about whether all the Samaritans offered libations, but about the fact that the Jews lost their confidence in the purity of Samaritan wine.<sup>40</sup> Immediately after the passage discussed above, the

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<sup>34</sup> For epigraphic evidence for the governors and their *officium* in Caesarea see C.M. Lehman, K.G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston, MA, 2000), pp. 6–9.

<sup>35</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” pp. 405–408. For the role of the *dux* in the persecutions see *MP I*, 5b–d, Millar, *The Roman Near East*, p. 199. Pummer, “Samaritanism,” p. 184, translated *taxis* as “garrison,” and saw “*Dukim*” as a place-name near Jericho; thus R. Abbahu differed between the garrison of Caesarea and that of *Dukim*. It is highly improbable that Caesarean Jewry and its leaders would bother themselves with a status of a garrison in a little village so far from them and away from the main Jewish settlement in Palestine.

<sup>36</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” p. 408.

<sup>37</sup> Lieberman, “The Martyrs,” pp. 403–404; the quotation is from p. 304.

<sup>38</sup> Y. Shahar, “*Har Hamelekh*: A Solution for a Puzzle,” *Zion* 65 (2000): 278–279 and n. 13 (Heb.).

<sup>39</sup> Nurit Be’eri, *Exploring Ta’aniot Yerushalmi Tractate Ta’aniot: Forming and Redacting the Traditions* (Ramat-Gan, 2005; Heb.), esp. pp. 23–64.

<sup>40</sup> See the reservations of Levine and his arguments against Lieberman’s conclusions: *Caesarea*, pp. 229–230, n. 53.

Palestinian Talmud returns to R. Abbahu and to the Hebrew language: “Samaritans in Caesarea asked R Abbahu [only this opening sentence is in Aramaic], ‘Your fathers would make ample use of things that we have prepared. Now why do you not make use of things that we have prepared?’ He said to them, ‘Your fathers had not yet ruined themselves, but you have ruined yourselves through your deeds’” (JT, *Avodah Zarah* 5.3.44d). Thus, we can conclude that there were Samaritans who offered libations out of fear or under compulsion, and in consequence the Jews banned their wine.

What is the meaning of the innovation that Samaritan wine was forbidden for Jews? For generations, it had been forbidden to drink the gentiles’ wine for fear it had been used in pagan cult, but there had been no problem in drinking Samaritan wine, and even saying a blessing over it, as is clear from the Mishnah, the Jewish law book, compiled at the end of the second- or beginning of the third century. “If a man buys wine among Samaritans he may say: ‘Let two logs which I shall set apart be a heave-offering, and ten [first] tithe and nine second tithe; then, after he has set apart the redemption money, he may drink [the wine]’” (Mishnah *Demai* 7.4). According to the Mishnah, a Jew can drink Samaritan wine on condition that he tithe it. But after the ban on the Samaritan wine the Jew had to suspect the Samaritan, even when the latter was transporting Jewish wine: “He who sends a jug of wine with a Samaritan, or one of brine, vinegar, *muries*, oil, and honey, with a gentile—if he recognizes his seal, which stopped it up, it is permitted. And if not, it is forbidden” (Tosephta, *Avodah Zarah* 7.14).<sup>41</sup> The crucial point here is the similarity, or at least proximity, between the gentile and the Samaritan.

We can find the same process in other fields of the Jewish law: for instance, the important and complex subject of the status of Samaritan products in connection with the law of tithes. According to the Mishnah, the Samaritan here is identical to the *‘am ha’aretz*, the Jew who does not observe Jewish law properly: in both cases it is not certain that they tithe their crops correctly, so the Jew must tithe these as *demai*, suspect produce. Both *Kuti* (= Samaritan) and *‘am ha’aretz* stand in contrast to the gentile, whose products must be tithed as *vadai*, definitely un-tithed produce. Of course, the Jew can trust the Samaritan when he gives him his tithed products temporarily, to return them properly, with the same halakhic status:

If a man brought his wheat to a miller who was a Samaritan or to a miller who was an *‘am ha’aretz*, its condition [after grinding] remains as before in what concerns Tithes and Seventh Year produce; but if he brought it to a miller who

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<sup>41</sup> It is generally accepted that the Tosephta is the slightly later contemporary of the Mishnah. However, there are some very considerable differences between the Mishnah and the Tosephta on the subject of the halakhic status of the *Kutim*, the Samaritans. Examination of these differences against the historical process, as reflected in the Palestinian Talmud, revealed that a large number of the rulings about the Samaritans in the Tosephta were re-edited and corrected no earlier than the beginning of the fourth century CE. The whole issue is beyond the scope of the current chapter.

was a gentile, [after it has been ground] it is considered *demai*-produce. If he gave his produce into the keeping of a Samaritan or an '*am ha'aretz*, its condition remains as before in what concerns Tithes and Seventh Year produce; but if into the keeping of a gentile it is considered like the gentile's own produce. (M *Demai* 3.4)

Later on, however, the picture changed dramatically: if a merchant sold produce from a Jew, it was considered *demai*-produce; if from a gentile or a Samaritan, it was considered as *vadai*—definitely un-tithed produce (Tosephta *Demai* 4.20; see also Tosephta *Demai* 6.4).

Usually the lineage of the *Kuti* is considered doubtful, but they are seen as possible sexual partners for Jews in Mishnah, *Ketubot* 3.1. But the later law, as reflected in Tosephta *Ahilot* 18.6, pushes them out toward the dwellings of the gentiles: "All [these] make [a house subject to the law of] dwelling of the gentiles: ... a gentile married to a Samaritan woman, and a Samaritan married to a gentile woman, a gentile whose slaves are Samaritans, and a Samaritan whose slaves are gentiles. Samaritans make [a house subject to the law of] the dwelling of the gentiles." Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, the Jewish Patriarch (Nasi) in the middle of the second century is quoted several times: "Rabban Shim'on b. Gamaliel says, 'Any religious duty which the Samaritans have preserved they observe far more exactly than Jews'" (Tosephta *Pisha* 2.3 and many parallels). By the first half of the fourth century, however, many later sages tend to say: "It is in accordance with him who said, 'A Samaritan is equivalent to a gentile.'" (JT *Ketubot* 3.1.27a and many parallels)

In sum: up to the beginning of the third century, the Jews of Palestine tended to relate to their Samaritan neighbors as to distant relatives. In most areas of life, the Samaritan was seen as a kind of inferior Jew of unclear origins who did not take proper care to observe a number of religious laws. There was, however, only one real distinction between Jew and Samaritan: a Jew would turn in the direction of Jerusalem while praying, while a Samaritan turned toward Mount Gerizim. During the third century, tendencies among Jews to reject the Samaritans increased, but they were still perceived by Jews as nearer to themselves than to non-Jews: the conceptual borderline left the Samaritan nearer to the Jew and separated both of these distant relatives from the gentiles.

At the beginning of the fourth century, however, as a result of the religious policies of Diocletian these frontiers shifted. Jewish religious law and traditions pushed Samaritans over the line and placed them next to the gentiles. It is clear that Diocletian wanted to strengthen and broaden the common ground between Romans and barbarians alike, and to reduce the number of exceptions—in this case the Jews. But he could not foresee the eventual effects of his edicts upon the relationships between two neighboring ethnic groups, the Jews and the Samaritans. The Talmudic evidence demonstrates that shifting the borders between Romans and Samaritans, by demanding pagan libations, hastened the process of shifting the borders between Jews and Samaritans. Thus for Christians, Jews and

Samaritans in Palaestina, the religious unification policy had an effect opposite to what Diocletian had intended.

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## Chapter 9

# Hellenes, Barbarians, and Christians: Religion and Identity Politics in Diocletian's Rome

Elizabeth DePalma Digeser

The period of the Tetrarchy was a time when, at least among a group of pagan philosophers, conventional identities in the Roman Empire had become unmoored: barbarians were decent people; Egyptians of the proper kind and Romans could be Greeks (Hellenes); only Christians were a group not to be tolerated.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly followers of Plato called themselves “Hellenes,”<sup>2</sup> even though most of those prominent among them (Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus) were not Greek, strictly speaking.<sup>3</sup> Rather than denoting “the Greek nation” or “Greek culture,” the term “Hellenes” as these philosophers used it described a political and religious community whose norms and beliefs were consistent with the teachings of the Greek philosophical tradition.<sup>4</sup> They saw the Roman Empire as a collection of *poleis* and *ethnê* under the guidance of Rome, a *polis* that was itself “from

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<sup>2</sup> Porph. *Chr. ap. Eus. HE* 6.19; ps. Julian, *Ep.* 76 449B (Hertlein). T.D. Barnes, “A Correspondent of Iamblichus,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978): 99–106 dates the latter, addressed to Iamblichus by an anonymous acolyte, to the reign of Licinius.

<sup>3</sup> Plotinus was Egyptian (*Eun. VS* p. 455 [Boissonade]), Porphyry was from Tyre in Phoenicia (Porph. *Plot.* 7.51), and Iamblichus was from Syria (*Eun. VS* p. 457 [Boissonade]). For the appropriation of this term by Porphyry, see Gillian Clark, “‘Translate into Greek’: Porphyry of Tyre on the New Barbarians,” in Richard Miles, ed., *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London/New York, 1999), pp. 112–132.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Digeser, “Christian or Hellene? The Great Persecution and the Problem of Christian Identity,” in R.M. Frakes and Elizabeth Digeser, eds., *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity* (Toronto, 2006), p. 57.

beginning to end, Hellenic.”<sup>5</sup> Certain barbarian *ethnê* whose traditional rites and laws fitted within this framework were seen now as constituent and contributing parts of the whole.<sup>6</sup> That Jews were grouped among the respectable barbarian communities derives from the monotheistic outlook of these Platonists,<sup>7</sup> some of whom became involved with the imperial court in an effort to defend Hellene and barbarian communities alike against an encroaching Christianity. By the late third century, Christians had become increasingly integrated into elite Roman society. They served in administrative positions, held imperial professorships, and even attended some of the most prestigious philosophical schools. Although Eusebius of Caesarea found the tremendous acculturation of Christians in this period to be a reason for celebration (*HE* 8.1), not everyone agreed. From the perspective of certain Neoplatonists, Christians, as neither Hellenes nor barbarians, pursued a dangerous “dead end” ideology that subverted both types of communities.<sup>8</sup> As this chapter will argue, the anti-Christian arguments leveled by these philosophers not only gained a sympathetic hearing at Diocletian’s court and so were part of the growing hostilities that culminated in the Great Persecution; the incorporation of barbarian communities into the political theology of these influential philosophers shows also the extent to which the Roman religious and cultural landscape had been transformed in the face of an increasingly popular Christianity.

This study will begin by describing Plato’s criteria for the best polities in practice, arguments upon which the Neoplatonists based their own views of what constituted a good regime. In these systems, such polities, Rome included, rested fundamentally on a basis of divine worship; such piety also shaped the community’s unique identity, whether Hellenic *polis* or barbarian *ethnos*. It next will illustrate how the Neoplatonists’ connection between piety and a community’s

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<sup>5</sup> Julian, *Hymn* 5 150d, 2–3 as cited in Jay Bregman, “Elements of the Emperor Julian’s Theology,” in John J. Cleary, ed., *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon* (Aldershot, 1999), p. 339. Although Julian articulates this idea best, he seems to have derived it from earlier authors, e.g., Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9.9, discussed below.

<sup>6</sup> Porph. *Phil. or.* fr. 324 (Smith) *ap. Eus. PE* 9.10.3–5 for Egyptians, Phoenicians, Chaldaeans (Assyrians), and Hebrews as barbarians who nevertheless retain true divine wisdom. For the contribution such knowledge makes to the Roman polity, see below.

<sup>7</sup> For Jews defined as barbarians, see the remarks in *Eus. PE* 1.2 attributed since U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, “Ein Bruchstück aus der Schrift des Porphyrius gegen die Christen,” *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der alten Kirche* 1 (1900): 101–105 to Porphyry of Tyre. For the argument that this passage introduces Porphyry’s *Philosophy from Oracles* and the anti-Christian character of the work, see R.L. Wilken, “Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religion and Christian Faith,” in W. Schoedel and R. Wilken, eds., *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition* (Paris, 1979), pp. 117–134, at 127. For the more conventional negative Greek view of Jews as barbarians, see Gideon Bohak, “‘Anti-Semitism’ in Historical Context,” in Menachem Mor, et al., eds., *Jews and Gentiles in the Holy Land in the Days of the Second Temple, the Mishna and the Talmud* (Jerusalem, 2003), pp. 41–43.

<sup>8</sup> Porph. *Phil.or.*, *ibid.*

identity was compatible with contemporary Roman jurisprudence. Then, these practical polities will be compared with the community to which the Neoplatonists believed that only Hellene philosophers belonged, namely that community ruled by Intellect to whose divine laws the mature philosopher conformed. And finally, it will show how the Neoplatonists perceived Christian practice as undercutting the foundations of both Hellenic (including Rome) and barbarian communities (the nation of Jews, in particular). Sharing this last concern were members of the Tetrarchy. Indeed, traces of these arguments in the edicts associated with the Great Persecution indicate that the Christian challenge to Roman identity—and so the divine foundation of the community for both jurists and philosophers—was a key factor in the legislation targeting the faith.

For Plato aristocratic rule by philosopher-kings supported by a guardian class was certainly the best regime in theory, an idea that he developed in the *Republic*. His *Laws*, however, delineated in detail the next-best regime. In this later work, Plato made clear that, while the former regime might never exist in any material way, “the second-best” type of state potentially could, in that it did not entail “a community of wives, children, and all property.”<sup>9</sup> For Plato, legislation regulating divine worship was critically important, both for the polity in the *Republic* and for that envisioned in the *Laws*. The *Republic*, however, leaves religious legislation *per se* to Apollo at Delphi and focuses on religious education,<sup>10</sup> whereas the religious legislation in the *Laws* is more particular and conservative in character. According to Plato, citizens should be convinced that their happiness depends upon their earnest pursuit of justice, which, in turn, emphasizes piety by taking God, not man, as a model.<sup>11</sup> Such piety is achieved through the reverence of gods, spirits, heroes, and ancestors according to the forms of worship set out by oracles (e.g., at Delphi, Dodona, and Siwa), or by ancient stories, visions, or divine inspiration. Regardless of their source, Plato says, “the lawgiver must not tamper” with these traditions.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In the *Laws*, the Athenian stranger describes this latter type of polity as appropriate for the ordinary sort of people who will make up his companion Megillus’ new colony at Magnesia, not the “gods” or “children of gods” who would populate the city of the *Republic*: Plat. *Leg.* 5.739a–740a (trans. throughout is that of T.J. Saunders, sometimes slightly modified [London, 1970]). See also D.J. O’Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 35–36, 91–93. Even in the *Republic* (592), Glaucon suggests that the regime that they have been describing exists only “in words” and probably does not exist “anywhere on earth,” to which Socrates adds that such a “pattern” may exist for the one “who wants to see and found a city within himself . . . It doesn’t make any difference whether it is or will be somewhere” (trans. throughout is by A. Bloom [New York, 1968], sometimes with slight modifications).

<sup>10</sup> Plat. *Rep.* 427b–c, 376e–398b; see O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Plat. *Leg.* 4.716a–718a. See O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 118.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* and Plat. *Leg.* 5.738. The foundational character of divine worship defined in this way is further emphasized in Book 10, which seeks to cultivate piety, in part by setting out and explaining grave punishments for various forms of impiety. See also O’Meara, *Platonopolis*, pp. 118–119.



He distinguishes these polities from inferior regimes, which are unjust to the extent that their laws seek not to help citizens take God as their model, but to codify the rule of the community's most powerful members (*Leg.* 4.712e–713a). Because even the “second-best” regime reflects the cosmic order as much as possible, in Plato's view it embodies justice, as much as possible, in that it strives to accord everyone his or her due.<sup>13</sup>

Legislation regulating divine worship also was part of the foundational character of the best regimes for the Neoplatonists Plotinus and his immediate successor, Porphyry, who drew their inspiration from Plato's *Laws*.<sup>14</sup> And here, the inspiration comes from Dominic O'Meara's *Platonopolis* (2003), which argues that Plotinus and his successors actively pursued a political philosophy based on the *Laws*. For example, Plotinus' treatise “Against the Gnostics,” written between 262 and 267 (during the reign of Gallienus),<sup>15</sup> not only appropriates the outline of the best regime in practice from Plato's *Laws*,<sup>16</sup> but uses the conception to describe the contemporary Roman state, defining it, as a result, as a type of Hellene polity. First, Plotinus distinguishes life in this world from a higher form of existence (*Enn.* 2.9.8), making clear that, because there is wealth and poverty, contemporary life is not regulated along the lines of the *Republic* (2.9.9). Next, he argues that the life of the “good and wise” person (*spoudaios*) should be “directed to the highest point and the upper region,” while the life of “the more human sort” of person (*anthrôpikôteros*) can take one of two forms. Either the more human person can be “mindful of virtue” and have “a share in some sort of good” or s/he can be like the “common crowd” who furnish “the necessities for the better sort” (2.9.9).<sup>17</sup> Speaking of the present regime in terms that evoke the polity in the *Laws* (10.9.4), Plotinus claims that he lives in a polity (*polis*) “which gives each man his deserts.” In this polity, he claims, “virtue is honored and vice has its appropriate dishonor, and not merely the images of gods but gods themselves look down on us from above ... leading all things in order from beginning to end” (2.9.9.19–27). In the present polity, he concludes, it is never wrong to praise the gods in their

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<sup>13</sup> Plat. *Rep.* 443b–c and 434c; Plat. *Leg.* 10.904. See also Sodano's commentary (regarding Ch. 40) on Porphyry's *Sentences*, in A.R. Sodano, ed., trans., *Introduzione agli Intelligibili* (Naples, 1979), pp. 58–59, n. 21.

<sup>14</sup> The other notable late third-century Neoplatonist is Iamblichus. His political philosophy is very close to that of Plotinus and Porphyry (see O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, pp. 46–50, 53–55, 62–65, 87–106, 123–127), but because the context in which he developed it is still not well established, he will not be discussed here.

<sup>15</sup> For the date, see Porph. *Plot.* 5.

<sup>16</sup> For Plotinus' favorable impression of Gallienus' regime, see L. Jerphagnon, “Platonopolis ou Plotin entre le siècle et le rêve,” in P.M. Schuhl, L. Jerphagnon, eds., *Néoplatonisme: Mélanges offerts à Jean Trouillard* (Fontenay-aux-Roses, 1990 repr. of 1981 edn.), pp. 216–221.

<sup>17</sup> Translations of A.H. Armstrong throughout (Cambridge, 1989), sometimes slightly modified.

“multiplicity,” thus endorsing traditional worship for ordinary people, for God reveals himself here in such a guise (2.9.9.36–40).

Porphry of Tyre, like his mentor Plotinus, was not traditionally thought to have had a deep interest in political philosophy.<sup>18</sup> Rather, Porphyry is famous as one of Christianity’s most serious and dangerous critics.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Porphyry, like Plotinus and Plato, also saw divine worship as having a foundational character in the best possible regimes, a group of polities in which he would include the Roman Empire. For example, in his *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry suggests that separate ethnic groups and *poleis* actually formed around the worship of their ancestral gods. These beings, in turn, had been considered divine “for generations,” among “all Hellenes and *barbaroi*, throughout all *poleis* and rural areas, in all holy places, sacred rituals (*teletais*) and mysteries” and by “emperors, lawgivers, and philosophers.”<sup>20</sup> Given the foundational character of different types of divine worship for each political community, whether *ethnos* or *polis*, Hellenes or *barbaros*, Porphyry, like the Athenian stranger in the *Laws*, saw divine worship as bound up with a polity’s identity.

The Neoplatonists’ conception of traditional piety’s foundational role and its link to a community’s identity also was compatible with legal theory found in the work of Ulpian, the early third-century jurist. At the beginning of his *Institutes*, Ulpian’s definition of public law specifically linked legislation regarding religious practice to the foundation of the Roman *res publica*. According to Ulpian,

There are two branches of legal study: public and private law. Public law is that which concerns the state of the Roman commonwealth (*ad statum rei Romanae spectat*), private that which concerns individuals’ interests ... Public law covers (*consistit*) religious affairs (*sacris*), the priesthood (*sacerdotibus*), and offices of state (ap. *Digest* 1.1.1.2).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Although Proclus (*In Remp.* 2.96) refers to Porphyry among those philosophers who have commented on the role of mythology in Plato’s *Republic*, it is uncertain whether Porphyry wrote a commentary on the entire work. See A. Smith, ed., *Porphyryi philosophi fragmenta* (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 206, n. to P.18.

<sup>19</sup> Constantine, “To the Bishops and People,” in Socrates, *HE* 1.9.

<sup>20</sup> Porphyry of Tyre in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.2.1ff: “τίνας ὄντες ἐπὶ τὴν γραφὴν παρεληλύθαμεν, πότερον Ἑλληνας ἢ βάρβαροι, ἢ τί ἂν γένοιτο τούτων μέσον ... τί ὄν ἂν γένοιτο τὸ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ξένον καὶ τίς ὁ νεωτερισμὸς τοῦ βίου; πῶς δ’ οὐ πανταχόθεν δυσσεβεῖς ἂν εἶεν καὶ ἄθεοι οἱ τῶν πατρῶων θεῶν ἀποστάντες, δι’ ὧν πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ πᾶσα πόλις συνέστηκεν; ἢ τί καλὸν ἐλπίσαι εἰκὸς τοῦς τῶν σωτηρίων ἐχθροῦς καὶ πολεμίους καταστάντας ... ποίαις δ’ οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως ὑποβληθεῖεν τιμωρίαις οἱ τῶν μὲν πατρίων φυγάδες”—K. Mras, ed., *Eusebius Werke, Band 8: Die Praeparatio evangelica, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 43.1–2 (Berlin, 1954), p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> “Huius studii duae sunt positiones, publicum et priuatum. Publicum ius est, quod ad statum rei Romanae spectat, privatum quod ad singulorum utilitatem: sunt enim quaedam publice utilia, quaedam privatim. Publicum ius in sacris, in sacerdotibus, in magistratibus consistit. Privatum ius tripartitum est: collectum etenim est ex naturalibus praeceptis aut

Scholars grappling with Ulpian's concept of *ius publicum* have increasingly understood him to be, first, defining public law as constituting the foundation, even the identity, of the Roman polity, and, second, identifying laws concerning divine worship as an integral part of that foundation.<sup>22</sup>

By the end of the third century, then, Neoplatonists and legal theorists converged in agreeing that the Roman state's foundation rested, in part, upon the cultivation of legal divine worship. For the Neoplatonists and for the jurists, the Roman state, so constituted, also was a just state in that it aimed to render all citizens their due. For the Neoplatonists, however, living in such a polity enabled them to reach an even higher goal—the divinization of the soul. Under the guidance of the leader of the philosophical school, an aspiring philosopher sought to live in the realm of Intellect. As this was a difficult process, Porphyry encouraged whoever sought this realm to embrace the form of piety proper to it. “God,” he says, “being the Father of all, is in need of nothing; but for us it is good to adore him by means of justice, chastity, and other virtues, and thus to make life itself a prayer to Him, by inquiring into and imitating His nature. For inquiry purifies us and imitation deifies us, by moving us nearer to Him.”<sup>23</sup> These practices, by keeping the divine at the forefront of one's mind, encouraged the contemplative to follow the precepts of the divine law that could unite the rational soul to Intellect. One should “fly to

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gentium aut civilibus.” The attribution to Ulpian appears in *D. 1.1.1.1* (T. Mommsen, ed., A. Watson, trans. [Philadelphia, PA, 1985]). Cf. Justinian's *Institutes* 1.1.1: “There are two aspects of the subject: public and private. Public law is concerned with the organization of the Roman state, while private law is about the well-being of individuals” (“Huius studii duae sunt positiones, publicum et privatum. publicum ius est, quod ad statum rei Romanae spectat, privatum, quod ad singulorum utilitatem pertinet”); translation from P. Krüger, ed., P. Birks, G. McLeod, trans. (Ithaca, NY, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> For detailed analyses of Ulpian's life and work, see G. Crifò, “Ulpiano. Esperienze e responsabilità del giurista,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.15 (1976): 708–789, and T. Honoré, *Emperors and Lawyers with a Palingenesia of Third-Century Imperial Rescripts, 193–305* (Oxford, 2002). On *ius publicum* see, for example, G. Nocera, *Ius naturale nella esperienza giuridica romana* (Milan, 1962); H. Müllejans, *Publicum und privatum in römischen Recht und im älteren kanonischen recht, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Unterscheidung ius publicum und ius privatum* (Munich, 1961); H. Ankum, “La noción de ‘ius publicum’ en el derecho romano,” *Anuario de historia del derecho español* 53 (1983): 523–536; G. Aricò Anselmo, “Ius publicum—ius privatum in Ulpiano, Gaio e Cicerone,” *Annali del Seminario Giuridico dell'Università di Palermo* 37 (1983): 449–784; M. Kaser, “Ius publicum und ius privatum,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 103 (1986): 1–101. For example, Max Kaser suggests that *ius publicum* in Ulpian can refer to “constitutional law” (Kaser, “Ius publicum,” p. 9), and Giuseppina Aricò Anselmo argues persuasively that this term alludes to matters intimately associated with the very essence or “l'identità stessa” of the Roman polity. (Comprising the *ius publicum*, she suggests, are things without which there would not be a *res Romana*: Aricò Anselmo, “Ius publicum,” pp. 455, 605.)

<sup>23</sup> Porph. *Phil. or.* in Aug. *Civ.* 19.23; translation based on B. Dombart, ed., W.C. Greene, trans. (Cambridge, MA, 1960).

our dear country,” Plotinus exhorted his auditors, using the reference from the *Iliad* (2.140) to suggest that, from the perspective of his place in even the best earthly realm, the philosopher lived as a kind of exile, part in the everyday and part in the Intelligible world. Indeed, in Porphyry’s description, Plotinus was a good example of one who lived simultaneously in both realms.<sup>24</sup> He was a proper Hellene, in Porphyry’s view: a moral member of his earthly political community, and a citizen of the realm of Intellect.

The problem with Christians, however, for these early Neoplatonists was that their practices and doctrines undermined the foundations of both Hellene and barbarian (here, Jewish) communities. For example, Plotinus criticized Christians for disapproving of the Roman polity and the role that its form of piety played in leading people toward the realm of Intellect (*Enn.* 2.9.6).<sup>25</sup> In this vein, Porphyry suggests that Christians are “in every way impious and atheist” because they have “apostatized from the ancestral gods through which each *ethnos* and *polis* has come together (*sunestêten*).”<sup>26</sup> Porphyry develops the link between religious law and political identity in this fragment of the *Philosophy from Oracles* by asking whether Christians are “Hellenes” or “barbaroi” (Jews, in this context) or “what might be between these” categories. What is this “foreignness (*xenos*) among” Christians and “what is the revolutionary character (*neôterismos*)” of their “way of life?” Furthermore, he accuses his opponents of undermining the various religious communities of the empire by abrogating their laws and “hew[ing] out for themselves” a “new and solitary dead end.”<sup>27</sup>

Not only did Christians undermine these good “barbarian” and Hellene communities, their theologians also challenged the integrity and identity of the Neoplatonists’ own community, their school. For example, in a fragment attributed to *Against the Christians*, written perhaps in the mid-290s,<sup>28</sup> Porphyry compares the behavior of Ammonius, Plotinus’ mentor and chief inspiration, with that of Origen of Alexandria, the Christian theologian: Ammonius “brought up in Christian ways,” Porphyry says, “... turned himself without reserve toward his *politeia* to live according to its laws, when he attached himself to thinking of

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<sup>24</sup> *Plot.* 12.

<sup>25</sup> This treatise is among those that Porphyry’s edition of the *Enneads* titled “Against the Gnostics” (see Porph. *Plot.* 5.16). The content of the treatise and Porphyry’s remarks have led scholars to identify Plotinus’ opponents as including Christians. See, e.g., Chiara Guerra, “Porfirio editore di Plotino e la ‘paideia antignostica,’” *Patavium* 8 (2000): 111–137, and A.H. Armstrong, “Man in the Cosmos: A Study of Some Differences between Pagan Neoplatonism and Christianity,” in W. den Boer, et al., eds., *Romanitas et Christianitas. Studia I. H. Waszink a. d. VI Kal. Nov. a MCMLXXIII XIII lustra complenti oblata* (Amsterdam, 1973), pp. 5–14.

<sup>26</sup> Porph. *Phil. or.* in Eus. *PE* 1.2f.

<sup>27</sup> In Eus. *PE* 1.2.1f.

<sup>28</sup> E.D. Digeser, “Lactantius, Eusebius, and Arnobius: Evidence for the Causes of the Great Persecution,” *Studia Patristica* 39 (2006): 33–46, at pp. 40–41.

philosophy.” This is what a good Hellene does. But although Origen was educated as a Hellene—by Ammonius himself—his manner of life was that of a Christian: lawless. Origen’s behavior disturbed Porphyry not simply because it was “illegal” but because he saw Origen as twisting Ammonius’ teachings and threatening the integrity of the Platonist community to which they both—in some respect—belonged.<sup>29</sup>

Lest we think that the ideas of these philosophers remained disengaged from public life, echoes of their assumptions and criticisms reverberate in documents directly connected with the Great Persecution. These texts show that the emperors and their spokesmen also believed that legislation regulating divine worship was part of the foundation and identity of the Roman state. Although the edicts inaugurating the persecution are no longer extant,<sup>30</sup> the decree ending the episode does survive. Issued in 311 by Galerius, Diocletian’s successor and erstwhile junior colleague, it sets out the emperors’ justifications for the persecution and outlines what their expectations had been in adopting such a policy. Galerius, in short, claims that that they launched the persecution because Christians did not uphold the type of divine worship appropriate to the Roman people.<sup>31</sup> In the edicts, he says, issued against the Christian populace in 303, the emperors strove,

To set everything right in accordance with the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans and to ensure that even the Christians, who had abandoned the religion (*sectam*) of their ancestors, should return to a sound frame of mind (*ad bonas mentes*); for ... such self-will (*voluntas*) had come upon these same Christians ... that they no longer followed those things established (*instituta*) by the ancients ... [but] were making up for themselves the laws which they were to observe.

Galerius conceded that the persecution had been a failure, since, as a result, Christians refused to worship the ancestral gods (one of the edicts had called

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<sup>29</sup> *Chr.* 39 in Eus. *HE* 6.19.2f: “Ἀμμωνίος μὲν γὰρ Χριστιανὸς ἐν Χριστιανοῖς ἀνατραφεὶς τοῖς γονεῦσιν, ὅτε τοῦ φρονεῖν καὶ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἤψατο, εὐθύς πρὸς τὴν κατὰ νόμους πολιτείαν μετεβάλετο, Ὠριγένης δὲ Ἑλληὴν ἐν Ἑλλησιν παιδευθεὶς λόγοις, πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα.” Part of Origen’s “barbarian recklessness” is to apply Hellenic exegesis to Jewish texts. This passage clearly shows the hierarchical relationship between barbarian and Hellene. In a letter to his wife, Marcella, written perhaps within the decade, Porphyry identifies three types of law, “one, the law of God; second, the law of mortal nature; third, the law established in nations and states”: K.O. Wicker, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI, 1986). The latter “strengthens social interaction through mutual agreement about the laws that have been established” and is “written in different ways at different times” (*Marc.* 25). For the date, see H. Whittaker, “The Purpose of Porphyry’s Letter to Marcella,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 76 (2001): 150–168.

<sup>30</sup> They are described but not quoted by Lactantius (*Mort.* 13–15) and Eusebius (*HE* 8.2, 6). Significantly, Christians lost all their civic rights.

<sup>31</sup> Lact. *Mort.* 12.1–2. Cf. Lact. *Inst.* 4.30.2: “plurimae sectae et haereses.”

for universal sacrifice) and were not worshipping their own god.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, he reversed the edicts of persecution and allowed Christians to reconvene for worship, provided that they “pray to their god for our safety (*pro salute nostra*) and for that of the state and themselves, so that from every side the state may be kept unharmed.”<sup>33</sup> In contrasting the laws that Christians “ma[de] up for themselves” with “the ancient laws,” Galerius’ statement intimately connects legislated religious observances or *sacra* (in Ulpian’s text) with the character of the ancestral *secta* (“religion”). Not surprisingly, Galerius suggested that what Christians considered to be *sacra*, i.e. the acts that their own laws called for, were not viewed as *Roman* by the emperors, at least prior to the persecution, in that they deviated from ancestral custom. Willing to legalize Christianity only under the condition that its followers pray for the wellbeing (*salus*) of the state and its citizens, Galerius indicated that the laws that the Christians made for themselves potentially undermined the *res publica*, unlike local laws regulating diverse religious practices for the Rome’s *ethnê*—most of which had been tolerated since their incorporation into the empire.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, he may have objected to the Christians’ practice of “gathering different peoples (*populos*) together in different places” because he saw them as undermining the religious communities of Rome’s traditional *ethnê*. For this reason, the emperor could accept only a Christianity that interceded on behalf of the *salus* of the state.

Although it has long been read as simply an expression of the emperors’ desire to maintain the *pax deorum*, Galerius’ edict does more than imply that Christian practice in itself jeopardized the security of the empire by angering the gods. In connecting the ancient laws that the Christians were evading, namely those requiring

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<sup>32</sup> Lact. *Mort.* 15.

<sup>33</sup> In Lact. *Mort.* 34: “Nos quidem volueramus antehac iuxta leges veteres et publicam disciplinam Romanorum cuncta corrigere atque id providere, ut etiam Christiani, qui parentum suorum reliquerant sectam, ad bonas mentes redirent, siquidem quadam ratione tanta eosdem Christianos voluntas invasisset, et tanta stultitia occupasset, ut non illa veterum instituta sequerentur, quae forsitan primum parentes eorumdem constituerant: sed pro arbitrio suo atque ut isdem erat libitum ita sibimet leges facerent quas observarent, et per diversa varios populos congregarent. Denique cum eiusmodi nostra iussio extitisset, ut ad veterum se instituta conferrent, multi periculo subiugati, multi etiam deturbati sunt; atque cum plurimi in proposito perseverarent, ac videremus nec diis eosdem cultum ac religionem debitam exhibere, nec christianorum deum observare, contemplatione mitissimae nostrae clementiae intuentes et consuetudinem sempiternam, qua solemus cunctis hominibus veniam indulgere, promptissimam in his quoque indulgentiam nostrum credidimus porrigendam; ut denuo sint Christiani, et conventicula sua componant, ita ut ne quid contra disciplinam agant. Alia autem epistola iudicibus significaturi sumus, quid debent observare. Unde iuxta hanc indulgentiam nostram debebunt deum suum orare pro salute nostra et rei publicae ac sua, ut undique versum res publica praestetur incolumis”; translation based on J.L. Creed, ed., trans. (Oxford, 1984).

<sup>34</sup> P. Garnsey, “Religious Toleration in Classical Antiquity,” in W.J. Sheils, ed., *Persecution and Toleration*, Studies in Church History (Oxford, 1984), pp. 1–27.

public sacrifice, with the ancestral way of life to which Christian should return, the emperor linked legislation on religion to the character of the Roman Empire. Accordingly, Galerius' edict seems to instantiate the views of both Ulpian and the third-century Neoplatonists, Porphyry especially, that legislation concerning divine worship constitutes part of the foundation and identity of the polity. This consonance should not be surprising, for the court in Nicomedia whence Galerius issued his edicts had ties with both sources. On the one hand, under Diocletian, the jurists Gregorianus and Hermogenianus had undertaken to reorganize imperial legislation and jurisprudence, an effort that drew heavily on Ulpian's thought and work.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, Porphyry had voiced his concerns about Christianity's detrimental effect on the Roman polity not long before Diocletian inaugurated the Great Persecution. He articulated some of these concerns in the *Philosophy from Oracles*,<sup>36</sup> perhaps at the request of the Nicomedian court.<sup>37</sup> Just as Porphyry had, Galerius closely linked a people's traditional religious rituals with the integrity of

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<sup>35</sup> E.D. Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), p. 53; T. Honoré, *Ulpian: Pioneer of Human Rights* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 182–183; S. Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, AD 284–324* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 26, 32, 37, 41–42, 294–295.

<sup>36</sup> Although J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre, le philosophe néo-platonicien* (Hildesheim, 1964; repr. of 1913 edn.) thought that Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* was a product of the philosopher's youth, it is now more widely accepted that this work is a product of his later years, written and delivered in the context of the Great Persecution. See J.J. O'Meara, *Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine* (Paris, 1959); Wilken, "Pagan Criticism"; M.B. Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (New York, 1995), esp. Ch. 1; E.D. Digeser, "Lactantius, Porphyry, and the Debate over Religious Toleration," *JRS* 88 (1998): 129–146, and eadem, *Christian Empire*, Ch. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Lactantius (*Inst.* 5.2.3–4, 7) asserts that, at the behest of the emperors, an *antistes philosophiae* "vomited up three books against *religio* and the Christian *nomen*" at a conference in Nicomedia just before the general edicts were published (S. Brandt, G. Laubmann, eds. [Vienna, 1890–1897]) (for date see his *Mort.* 11–12). Observing that Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* was just such a three-volume anti-Christian book and that Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* was equally devoted to deflecting the accusations against Christians levied during the persecution and to rebutting this anti-Christian work, Wilken ("Pagan Criticism") identified this philosopher with Porphyry. Although he now agrees that the *Philosophy from Oracles* belongs in the context of this persecution, T.D. Barnes, "Monotheists All?," *Phoenix* 55 (2001): 142–162, at pp. 158–159, thinks that Porphyry did not speak at this conference because Lactantius describes the philosopher there, whom he saw, as blind (there is no record that Porphyry suffered this handicap). Nevertheless, Lactantius' language here is clearly metaphorical since what he claims the philosopher cannot "see" is the "truth" (*Inst.* 5.2.9). Moreover, Lactantius' reference to the speaker as an *antistes philosophiae* (whom he accuses of secret gluttony) points directly to Porphyry, whose *On Abstinence* (a treatise on continence and vegetarianism) uniquely claims that the philosopher is the "priest of the god who rules all" (2.49.1, tr. G. Clark [London, 2000]), and whose *Letter to Marcella* (16) cites Pythagoras as saying that "the wise man alone is priest."

their polity. Like Ulpian and Porphyry, Galerius suggests that legislation concerning divine worship constitutes an integral part of that polity's identity. Here too is the sense, implicit in Ulpian and explicit in Porphyry, that people deviating from a polity's traditional *sacra* might legitimately be punished. Porphyry's involvement with the imperial court seems to have instantiated a policy implicit in Plato's *Laws* but explicit in Plotinus, namely that the enlightened philosopher—one who lived in the realm of Intellect—should become a kind of missionary from that world, working with the centers of power to promote a political order whose legislation is in the divine image.<sup>38</sup> In this way, these early Neoplatonists set themselves apart from other contemporary philosophical traditions, which seem to have remained more aloof from civic affairs.<sup>39</sup>

It seems clear then, that Neoplatonic political theory buoyed by Roman jurisprudence helped to justify the use of force against the empire's Christian populace. Both systems did so by tapping into concepts, already embedded in Roman legal theory, that posited traditional cult as part of the foundation and identity of the *res publica*. The conflict between Hellenes and Romans on the one side and Christians on the other is a matter of the historical record. But the way in which jurists and philosophers defined whether communities of worshipers were acceptable shows the extent to which the Roman world had transformed by the cusp of the fourth century. The threat to the philosopher or to the security of the state is not, surprisingly, the barbarian; indeed, traditional religious communities other than Hellenic polities, "barbarian" *ethnê*, in Neoplatonist terminology, are valued. Christians were the real danger to the empire, to its constituent communities, and to the philosophers whose duty it was to advise the sovereign. Nevertheless, when the Tetrarchy's persecution failed to achieve its goal, Christians too could be Romans if they prayed for the wellbeing of the *res publica*.

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<sup>38</sup> This position is implicit in Plato's *Laws* in that the Athenian stranger and his companions, as they describe the best type of polity for Megillus' colony at Magnesia, are on their way to descend into the cave of Zeus, which those familiar with the *Republic* would recognize as a symbol of the terrestrial, sensible world. See also Plot. *Enn.* 6.9.7.22–26 and O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, pp. 74–75.

<sup>39</sup> O'Meara, *Platonopolis*, p. 6, for example, discusses the "retreat of the Stoic sage."



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Chapter 10  
Barbarians as Spectacle:  
The Account of an Ancient “Embedded  
Reporter” (Symm. *Or.* 2.10–12)

Cristiana Sogno

“The only good barbarian is a dying barbarian” might be a crude but accurate paraphrase of the attitude of the late Roman senator Q. Aurelius Symmachus (and of many of his contemporaries) toward the peoples living beyond the frontiers of the Roman world.<sup>1</sup> For citizens of the empire “barbarian” was synonymous with “non-Roman” and, therefore, “uncivilized,” as exemplified by a famous passage in his third *Relatio* (3.4), in which Symmachus claimed that only those entirely “assimilated to the customs of barbarians” could be hostile to a symbol of *Romanitas* as revered as the Altar of Victory. Because barbarians posed a threat to civilization, the spectacle of their death in the arena was always welcome to Roman spectators.<sup>2</sup> And, when barbarians refused to comply with the expectations of their Roman masters—as in the case of a band of unfortunate Saxon prisoners, who preferred suicide to fighting in the arena, thus spoiling the celebrations for the questorian games of Symmachus’ son Memmius (393 CE)—cultured aristocrats such as Symmachus could draw on a vast array of philosophical and historical *exempla* that allowed them to show “the forbearance of Socrates” in the face of adversity (Symm. *Ep.* 2.46).

The defense of the frontier against the barbarian menace was a subject dear to imperial propaganda and popular with taxpayers, and was in fact the main theme of Symmachus’ second panegyric in honor of Valentinian I. In that oration, barbarians appear both as a threat to the security of Rome and as part of a spectacle orchestrated by the emperor for the benefit of his senatorial guest, thus offering us some interesting insights into the relationship between senate and court vis-à-vis the barbarian question.

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<sup>1</sup> See P. Heather, “The Barbarian in Late Antiquity,” in R. Miles, ed., *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999), pp. 234–242.

<sup>2</sup> Symm. *Rel.* 47.1 describes the joy of the Roman people watching the “column of the defeated people in chains” (i.e. Sarmatians) marching through Rome during a triumphal procession and then fighting in the arena.

## An Embedded Reporter at Court

On 1 January 370, the Roman senator Quintus Aurelius Symmachus delivered a panegyric in honor of Valentinian I.<sup>3</sup> The main themes of the panegyric were the fortification of the frontier against the barbarians and a successful campaign in Alamannic territory. Symmachus was an eyewitness to the emperor's exploits, because he had been invited to accompany Valentinian I on campaign. The date of the Alamannic campaign that Symmachus took part in is a notoriously difficult problem and is inextricably linked with the date of Valentinian's *quinquennalia*, the first panegyric of Symmachus, and Symmachus' stay at court. Given its complexity, the problem can be mentioned here only in a footnote with some of the most relevant bibliographical references.<sup>4</sup> Be that as it may, the main argument

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<sup>3</sup> This is the second of the eight (fragmentary) orations of Symmachus that survive, and the only one that can be securely dated to 370 on account of the mention of Valentinian's third consulship (Symm. *Or.* 2.2: "Nam quid tibi adicit consulatus, cum felices annos imperii tui de aetatibus nouarum urbium calculemus? ... fuit euidentis causa, qua fasces sumere tertio cogereris"). For the date, see Angela Pabst, *Reden: Quintus Aurelius Symmachus* (Darmstadt, 1989), p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> According to O. Seeck, ed., *Q. Aurelii Symmachi quae supersunt*, in *MGH AA*, VI.1 (Berlin, 1883), Symmachus pronounced his first panegyric in honor of Valentinian I in February 369 on the occasion of Valentinian's *quinquennalia*. Following the successful delivery of the panegyric, Symmachus was invited to accompany the emperor on a military campaign in the summer of 369 and remained at court until after his delivery of a second panegyric for the third consulship of Valentinian (370). However, the date of Valentinian's *quinquennalia*, upon which Seeck based his persuasive reconstruction of Symmachus' career, seems mistaken, because the *quinquennalia* were celebrated in the fifth year of an emperor's reign, and the fifth year of Valentinian's reign was 368, not 369. As Rita Lizzi points out (p. 451), Seeck had not simply made a mistake in calculating the date of the *quinquennalia*, but had deliberately postponed the celebration of the *quinquennalia* to the following year in order to make sense of a (fragmentary) inscription from Hissarlik (*CIL* 3.6159 = 7494 = *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (ILS) 770). However, his interpretation of the inscription was successfully corrected by Dessau, and February 368 is now the accepted date for the celebration of Valentinian's *quinquennalia* – at least in works of prosopography, because with regard to Symmachus' orations and career the preferred date remains 369. To be sure, it is easy to see how 368 complicates the chronology of Symmachus' orations and of his stay at court: To which Alamannic campaign did Symmachus participate in, 368 or 369? Did he go back to Rome after taking part in the campaign of 368, only to return a year later and celebrate the military exploits of Valentinian I in the panegyric for his third consulship (*Or.* 2), as Chastagnol suggested? Or did he stay at court until 370? For the date of Valentinian's *quinquennalia*, see A. Chastagnol, "Les *quinquennalia* de Valentinien I et Valens," in *Mélanges de numismatique offerts à Pierre Bastien* (Wetteren, 1987), pp. 255–266; see also on *quinquennalia* in general, R. Burgess, "Quinquennial *Vota* and the Imperial Consulship in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, 337–511," *Numismatic Chronicle* 148 (1988): 77–96. The clearest summary with relevant bibliography can be found in R. Lizzi, *Senatori, Popolo, Papi. Il governo di Roma al tempo dei Valentiniani* (Bari, 2004), pp. 447–454. Pabst

of this chapter, which concerns the uses and abuses of barbarians as (imperial) spectacle, is largely independent from the date of Valentinian's campaign against the Alamanni.

Symmachus was certainly not the first civilian to accompany an emperor on a military expedition. One need not go further than Julian's ill-fated Persian campaign. Following in the footsteps of Gordian III, who had brought the philosopher Plotinus along on his campaign against Persia (Porph. *VPlotini* 3.17–19), Julian went to Persia with a chosen group of his close friends.<sup>5</sup> One of them, the master of ceremonies Anatolius (*magister officiorum* 360–363),<sup>6</sup> took part in the fighting and died in battle (Amm. 25.3.14); another, the physician Oribasius, who had followed Julian also to Gaul,<sup>7</sup> wrote a memoir of the expedition, which became the main source of the history of his friend Eunapius.<sup>8</sup>

Symmachus' position, however, was different. He cannot be described as a close friend of the Emperor—whom he had never met before his embassy at court—but it is not difficult to see why Valentinian might have wished to bring him along. The emperor was well aware that upon returning to Rome Symmachus would have been required by his fellow senators to deliver a report on his experiences at the court of an emperor they knew little about, and whose elevation of his 8-year-old son Gratian as Augustus in 367 might have given rise to some perplexity among the Roman senatorial aristocracy.<sup>9</sup> The senate would at least appreciate a sound investment of tax-money, and, with luck, the emperor's successes abroad would promote and foster among its members the devotion that Symmachus mentions at the beginning of his panegyric (*Or.* 2.1).

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(*Reden*, p. 137) might be ultimately right in concluding that the problem of the chronology of Symmachus' orations cannot be solved. However, she proposes a compromise solution by suggesting that, if the first oration was pronounced at the same time as the panegyric for Gratian (*Symm. Or.* 3), the earliest the two orations could have been delivered would have been Fall 368. Following Pabst, see J.F. Drinkwater, *The Alamanni and Rome 213–496: Caracalla to Clovis* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 285–305; see also D. Shanzer, "The Date and Literary Context of Ausonius' *Mosella*: Ausonius, Symmachus and the *Mosella*," in P. Knox, C. Foss, eds., *Style and Tradition: Studies in Honor of Wendell Clausen* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 284–305. Notwithstanding Pabst's pessimistic view, I propose to address the problem fully in an Italian commentary on the *Orationes* of Symmachus.

<sup>5</sup> The philosophers Priscus and Maximus of Ephesus were at Julian's bedside when he died: Amm. 25.3.23.

<sup>6</sup> A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, eds., *PLRE I. AD 260–395* (Cambridge, 1971), s.v. "Anatolius 5."

<sup>7</sup> *PLRE I*, s.v. "Oribasius."

<sup>8</sup> W.R. Chalmers, "Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Zosimus on Julian's Persian Expedition," *CQ* 10.2 (1960): 152–160; C. Fornara, "Julian's Persian Expedition in Ammianus and Zosimus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 111 (1991): 1–15.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Symm. Or.* 3.3, emphasizing Gratian's young age at the moment of his elevation as Augustus.

One of the two main themes of this second panegyric is the praise of Valentinian's fortifications along the Rhine. His vigorous fortification of the *limes* is commended as the best investment of tax-revenues: tax-money is well spent for granting the "safety of the Empire," and a revealing contrast is drawn between the annual levies and the "eternal" advantages of a strong frontier against the barbarian.<sup>10</sup> Symmachus' remarks seem well attuned to imperial propaganda, which, to judge from the coin issues, emphasized the *Gloria Romanorum* and the *Securitas reipublicae*.<sup>11</sup> As Heather points out, Valentinian wished to present his regime as "tough on barbarians,"<sup>12</sup> and even a contemporary observer as difficult to impress as Ammianus switches to panegyric in praising the emperor for building fortifications along the Rhine "from the beginning of Raetia to the strait of the Ocean."<sup>13</sup>

Symmachus was apparently there when Valentinian "put the weapons down and traced the foundations" (*Or.* 2.18) of a fortified landing place (*Schiffslände*)<sup>14</sup> on the right bank of the Rhine, opposite the new Valentinianic fort at Altaripa on the left bank of the river. As will become clear, not any real fighting against the barbarians, but the construction of fortifications became the symbol of Valentinian's real achievement in promoting the *securitas imperii*. According to Symmachus, the emperor carefully selected the place for its natural advantages and provided both for its fortification and for its decoration.<sup>15</sup> Watchtowers were a "good thing for controlling savage outsiders," and Symmachus conveyed the idea with an effective metaphor of barbarians "besieged," as it were, by the constant gaze of the Roman guards inside (*Or.* 2.22). The structure becomes the all-watching eye of the emperor that guarantees the safety of the empire, and, in this sense, its building is perceived as a great achievement, greater in fact than that of any other famous manmade edifices, most notably (and predictably) the pyramids. Valentinian's enterprise is compared for its boldness with the giants' attempt to reach the sky (*Or.* 2.21), but the comparison shows by contrast the favor with which the gods looked upon Valentinian's endeavor.

There is a great similarity in format and language between the second oration of Symmachus and the tenth of Themistius, and, more strikingly still, both orations were delivered "within few days of one another," which has led one scholar to talk about a "pre-planned propaganda effort to advertise the building campaign in both halves of the empire at precisely the period when it was being pursued most

<sup>10</sup> Symm. *Or.* 2.1: "quae sumis, annua sunt, quae condis, aeterna."

<sup>11</sup> *RIC* 9, 17–18.

<sup>12</sup> Heather, "Barbarian in Late Antiquity," p. 240.

<sup>13</sup> Amm. 28.2.1; cf. *De rebus bellicis* 20.1, *praef.* 7.

<sup>14</sup> S. Lorenz, *Imperii fines erunt intacti. Rom und die Alamannen 350–378* (Frankfurt, 1997), pp. 122–126. I also would like to thank J.F. Drinkwater for his comments on this chapter and for letting me read his (at that time forthcoming) *The Alamanni and Rome 213–496*.

<sup>15</sup> Symm. *Or.* 2.20, "What should we believe your state of mind was, Augustus, when you established this? You built it as if you were worried, you decorated it as if you felt safe."

intensely."<sup>16</sup> Themistius delivered his oration in the Senate of Constantinople in either January or February 370; Symmachus spoke in front of the court in Trier, but, as suggested above, Valentinian might have hoped that his message would be relayed to the senate upon his return to Rome. Both orators had been invited to accompany an emperor (Valentinian in Symmachus' case, Valens in Themistius') on a campaign against the barbarian menace. Although in *Or.* 10.133 he presents himself as the leader of an autonomous senatorial delegation sent to Valens, Themistius had been on the Danubian front with him, as shown by the fact that he delivered his eighth oration for the *quinquennialia* of Valens at the military base of Marcianopolis and proudly recalled witnessing military maneuvers a couple of days earlier (*Or.* 8.116). Moreover, Themistius had been actively involved in negotiations with the barbarians and had accompanied two of Valens' senior generals on a diplomatic mission that ultimately led to the "fluminal summit" between the barbarian leader Athanaric and Valens.<sup>17</sup>

It is tempting to compare the situation and role of both Symmachus and Themistius with that of modern embedded reporters, watching from a safe distance the military exploits of their army and writing for their audiences on the home front. In the case of ancient panegyrists at least, the assumption is that their accounts were spoon-fed them by the emperor or one of his functionaries. In reality, little is known about the process of briefing, but a study of the extant corpus of Latin panegyrics shows that the court did not exercise strict control over the writing and delivery of the speech.<sup>18</sup> Panegyrists were certainly not the equivalent of "press secretaries," and it would be too simplistic and ultimately misleading to see them simply as mouthpieces of the emperor. True, Themistius owed his senatorial status and political career to his rhetorical skills, and Symmachus was rewarded with the title of *comes* of the third order for his panegyrics in praise of Valentinian and his son Gratian.<sup>19</sup> Yet even a panegyrist desperate to please the emperor could maintain a degree of objectivity, as the section of Symmachus' second oration discussed below shows.

## Barbarians as Spectacle

As a recent commentator perceptively points out, "Architecture is prominent in Symmachus' *laudatio*. He devotes more time to it that he does to military forces."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century AD* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), pp. 376–377.

<sup>17</sup> Heather, "Barbarian in Late Antiquity," pp. 238–239.

<sup>18</sup> C.E.V. Nixon, B. Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of Late Roman Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini. Introduction, Translation, and Historical Commentary* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 29–31.

<sup>19</sup> See *ILS* 2946, and *Symm. Ep.* 1.32.4.

<sup>20</sup> Shanzer, "The Date and Literary Context of Ausonius' *Mosella*," p. 298.

Military service was not part of the realm of experience of a Late Roman senator, and the safety of the empire and the defense of civilized society against the barbarian menace were entirely the responsibility of the emperor and his officers. As his correspondence shows, Symmachus was well acquainted with the staged violence of gladiatorial games,<sup>21</sup> but had no direct experience of the battlefield. War was something Late Roman senators read about in epic poems and works of history, but had no direct experience of.

From Symmachus' own body of writings, it emerges that the closest he ever came to experiencing military life was during the year at court when he accompanied Valentinian on campaign. At the beginning of the second panegyric Symmachus proudly emphasized the fact that he had been a direct witness of the events he narrated: "I am no less in awe," he proclaims, "of what I found out" (that is, what he narrated in the first panegyric), "but I cherish what I experienced!"<sup>22</sup>

The prospect of accompanying the emperor on campaign must have been exciting, and in a letter to Ausonius, whom he had met during his stay at court, Symmachus nostalgically recalled the good old days when he "followed the standards" of the emperor into hostile territory.<sup>23</sup> But the reality of the campaign was perhaps less adventurous than Symmachus had anticipated. Interestingly, the only actual fighting against the barbarians described in his panegyric documents Valentinian's clemency rather than his military valor. According to the vision expressed by Symmachus in the second *laudatio*, the exercise of *clementia* had a civilizing effect on the barbarians, and, by sparing them, Valentinian changed their customs (*Or.* 2.12). The barbarians were thus incorporated into the Roman Empire, and their way of life was destined to disappear in a region where the Roman presence was so overwhelming. Clemency is presented as an act of conquest in disguise, because conquest was the traditional way with which Romans dealt with unruly neighbors,<sup>24</sup> and toward the end of the speech Symmachus could envisage the triumphal extension of the empire and creation of a province of Alamannia (*Or.* 2.31).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> As many of his letters show, Symmachus was actively involved in organizing the games for the quaestorship and praetorship of his son Memmius and in dealing on a regular basis with annoying problems such as the suicide of Saxon prisoners mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> Symm. *Or.* 2.3, "stupeo non minus illa sane, quae conperi, sed haec magis diligo, quae probavi." For the importance of the theme of *autopsia* as a guarantee of the truthfulness of the narrative in the second panegyric, see Cristiana Sogno, *Quintus Aurelius Symmachus: A Political Biography* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Symm. *Ep.* 1.14.3; cf. *Ep.* 1.32.4, where Ausonius mentions Symmachus' reward, namely the title of count of the third order, for his service to the emperor (*militia*).

<sup>24</sup> U. Asche, *Roms Welterherrschafsidee un Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike im Spiegel der Panegyrici Latini* (Bonn, 1983), pp. 29, 50.

<sup>25</sup> On the meaning of this passage, see Drinkwater, *The Alamanni and Rome*, p. 299: "Symmachus treats *imperium* as other than the direct control of territory. Deploying

But the actual fight against the Alamanni that Symmachus witnessed and described in the panegyric seems to have amounted to little more than a skirmish in which clearly superior Roman forces easily put to flight a disoriented group of barbarians. Fighting was apparently minimal, and Valentinian's soldiers behaved in the most exemplary way with the civilian population, which was given the chance to escape. According to Symmachus, "No Roman soldier destroyed their hay-roofed hovels by setting them on fire, no one in the hours before dawn dragged out their uncivilized mothers still asleep in their little beds and raped them. They had hardly sweated out their hangover during the day, and their bedrooms had hardly grown cold, that they mingled their flight with your pardon," that is, Valentinian allowed them to flee.

The battle itself did not even take place, since the barbarians, clearly overwhelmed, took flight, and the Roman army preferred not to pursue them. As John Matthews has argued,<sup>26</sup> the surreal scene of the Alamanni fleeing and the Romans watching strongly suggests that, if Valentinian did not actually stage the battle, he carefully picked his enemy to impress a man like Symmachus, who would certainly be well acquainted with the staged violence of gladiatorial games, but had no previous experience of the battlefield.

The unthreatening character of the enemy is emphasized by a lengthy simile: the barbarians are compared to "gazelles swiftly fleeing in the arena" and "stags hunted out from their hidings," but the Roman soldiers prefer to sit back and enjoy watching them flee, rather than actively pursuing and killing them. The simile has clear epic overtones, and one need only remember *Aeneid* 4, where Dido is compared to a wounded doe fleeing a shepherd-turned-hunter (*Aen.* 4.69–73). But the scene depicted in the simile is also reminiscent of a *venatio*, a familiar spectacle for Symmachus. Elaborate material settings were often given to the hunts, and trees and shrubs were temporarily planted in the arena to make the spectacle more similar to a real hunt.<sup>27</sup>

As mentioned above, Symmachus did not have prior military experience; his knowledge of war was based exclusively on epic and works of history, and his readings are well documented in his correspondence. Very informative in this respect are a couple of letters, addressed to Protadius and Valerianus respectively. When Protadius expressed an interest in the history of Gaul in a letter addressed to him (*Ep.* 4.18.5), Symmachus promptly replied by sending him a comprehensive

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an extended conceit, by which non-belligerent neighbours are peaceful neighbours and therefore subject neighbours, he claims that it is precisely by not subduing the Alamanni by force, but by practicing *clementia* ... that the emperor could pacify, dominate and even Romanize them. *Imperium* no longer produced *pax*; rather *pax* was *imperium*."

<sup>26</sup> J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court* (Oxford, 1975), p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> The use of the word *campus* in the simile suggests that this was the scenario Symmachus had in mind. See H. Devijver, F. Van Wouterghem, "The *campus* in the urban organization of Africa and Sardinia: Two Examples, Carthage and Carales," *L'Africa romana* 10 (1993): 1035–1060.



reading list including Caesar's, Livy's, and Pliny the Elder's works. Symmachus' knowledge of and interest in Livy's history in particular is further illustrated by the letter to his friend Valerianus, in which he apologized for the delay in sending an edition of Livy, which was being edited (*Ep.* 9.13).

The strangeness of the "battle-scene" he described in the panegyric was not lost on Symmachus, although he used it to illustrate the remarkable *clementia* of the emperor toward the Alamanni. After all, the burning of cities or villages, and the capture (and rape) of women, was precisely what was expected in war. That is what Symmachus had read in Caesar's account of the Gallic War, where Caesar with admirable brevity described how he and his army set on fire buildings and villages and captured a great number of men and cattle.<sup>28</sup> Virgil too offered a very different depiction of war characterized by brutal and unrestrained violence. The description of the fall of Troy in *Aeneid* 2 is paradigmatic in this respect, and its structure bears a close resemblance to Symmachus' account. Both Virgil and Symmachus focus on three key elements: the fire, the rape of women, and the circumstances under which Trojans and Alamanni were attacked. First, Troy's palaces were destroyed by fire, whereas the Romans refrained from setting fire to the hovels of the Alamanni. Second, the priestess Cassandra was brutally raped, whereas Roman soldiers abstained from touching the women of the Alamanni. Third, the population of Troy was taken by surprise while "asleep and drunk" after a day of feasting, whereas the Alamanni had had the opportunity to sleep off their hangovers before the Romans attacked them.<sup>29</sup>

Valentinian invited Symmachus, as representative of the Roman Senate, to a military campaign against the Alamanni. He offered the Roman senator a tour of his impressive fortifications along the Rhine. The actual fighting that the senatorial envoy witnessed was kept to a minimum: the Emperor wanted to avoid unnecessary danger, but was willing to put on a show for the benefit of his guest. Symmachus went along with it and praised enthusiastically Valentinian's defensive strategy and his wise use of clemency.

But, for all his inexperience of real war, Symmachus seems to have been more aware of what was going on than one might suspect at first. After all, Valentinian's fortune in his fight against the barbarians had been uneven at best. In 369 Roman troops sent by the emperor to set up a fortress in Alamannic territory were destroyed in a surprise attack by the Alamanni (*Amm.* 28.2.5–10).<sup>30</sup> The only survivor, the *notarius* Syagrius, possibly a correspondent or a family member of one of Symmachus' correspondents, was dismissed by Valentinian in a "typical" outburst of anger. If Symmachus was at court when this happened, he might have

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<sup>28</sup> See e.g. Caes. *BG* 6.6.

<sup>29</sup> A nice detail perfectly consistent with well-entrenched Roman prejudice about barbarians' fondness for drink. See A. Momigliano, "Cassiodorus and the Italian Culture of his Time," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 4 (1955): 207–245.

<sup>30</sup> Heather, "Barbarian in Late Antiquity," p. 140, observes that "over-enthusiastic fortification might cause trouble" at times.

been present at Syagrius' "dismissal." One may wonder whether his appeal to Valentinian "not to regret having spared a terrified enemy" may not refer to a recent defeat experienced by the Roman troops. In any case, the news might have been enough to make Symmachus wonder about the fighting he had witnessed.

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PART II  
Cultural Interaction on the  
Roman/Barbarian Frontiers

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A. Becoming Roman:  
Movements of People across the  
Frontier and the Effects of Imperial  
Policies

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# Chapter 11

## The *ius colonatus* as a Model for the Settlement of Barbarian Prisoners-of-War in the Late Roman Empire?

Cam Grey

In late 408 or early 409, a group of Huns under the leadership of Uldin were forced to retreat back across the Danube following a series of raids upon Roman settlements in Thrace. According to the historian Sozomen, writing some thirty years after these events, Uldin's withdrawal was due in no small part to the defection of a number of his allies.<sup>1</sup> Of those who remained loyal, Sozomen makes special mention of the Sciri, who, he says, were slaughtered in the retreat. The survivors were taken in chains to Constantinople, where some were sold or gifted into slavery, and others ordered to settle on the land. Sozomen observes that these individuals could still be found dispersed across the landscape of Bithynia in his own time. This event is one among numerous attested instances of the settlement of conquered barbarians on land inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> What is unique about this particular settlement, however, is the survival of a law, issued on 12 April 409 at Constantinople in the names of Honorius and Theodosius II, that purports to lay down the precise terms under which the Sciri were to be settled. This text provides the most detailed extant evidence for the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war as rural cultivators in the late Roman period, and it is worth citing in full here:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, *HE* 9.5.

<sup>2</sup> See G. Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic Partners in the Fourth Century," in W. Pohl, ed., *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 13–55, and P. Heather, "Foedera and foederati of the Fourth Century," in T.F.X. Noble, ed., *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms* (London/New York, 2006), pp. 292–308. References to the settlement of barbarians are collected by G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquest* (London, 1981), "Appendix III," pp. 509–518.

<sup>3</sup> *CTh* 5.6.3: "[Idem aa. A]nthemio p(raefecto) p(raetori)o. Sciras barbaram nationem maximis Chunorum, quibus se coniunxerunt, copiis fuis imperio nos[tr]o subegimus. ideoque damus omnibus copiam ex praedicto ge[ner]e hominum agros proprios frequentandi, ita ut omnes [scia]nt susceptos non alio iure quam colonatus apud se futu[ros] nullique licere ex hoc genere colonorum ab eo, cui se[m]el adtributi fuerint, vel fraude aliquem



The same Augustuses to Anthemius, praetorian prefect. We have subjugated to our authority the Sciri, a barbarian people, after having utterly destroyed a very plentiful force of Huns, to whom they had attached themselves. Therefore, we offer to all persons an opportunity for supplying their own fields with men from the aforementioned group. Let all persons understand, however, that those whom they will have received are theirs under no other title than that of *colonatus* (*non alio iure quam colonatus*). Nobody will be permitted either to remove by deceit any among this group of *coloni* from the individual to whom he was assigned in the first place, or to accept one as a fugitive, under the penalty prescribed for those who receive *coloni* who are registered in the tax rolls of others or are not their own. 1. Moreover, the owners of lands may make use of the free labor of these individuals; ... and no one shall ... by making a tax equalization (*peraequatio*) or ... the tax rolls ... and nobody will be permitted to drag such persons away from the obligation of the tax rolls (*a iure census*) to slavery or to devote them to urban duties, as though they had been given to him. Because of the shortage of farm produce, those who accept these individuals shall be permitted to retain them for a two-year period in any of the transmarine provinces whatsoever, and after that time to set them up in permanent homes (*in sedes perpetuas*); they will be completely forbidden from residing in the regions of Thrace and Illyricum. It shall freely be permitted to transfer these individuals within the boundaries of the same province for a period of up to five years. In addition, within the aforementioned twenty-year period, the furnishing of recruits (*iuniorum praebitio*) will cease. The distribution of these individuals throughout the transmarine provinces will be made to those who wish to apply through petitions to your court.

Since its discovery in 1824, this text has stood at the intersection between two debates over the political, social, and economic history of the Late Roman Empire. On the one hand, the explicit mention of *colonatus*, the subjection of these individuals to the obligations of the tax rolls, and the discussion of the fiscal demands of the state situate this text within the debate over the phenomenon labeled the “colonate of the Late Roman Empire,” a type of registered tenancy that long

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abducere vel [fugie]ntem suscipere, poena proposita, quae recipientes [alien]is censibus adscriptos vel non proprios colonos in[seq]uitur. 1. opera autem eorum terrarum domini libera [utantur] ac nullus sub acta peraequatione vel censui \*\*\*\* acent nullique liceat velut donatos eos a iure census [in se]rvitutum trahere urbanisve obsequiis addicere. [lice]t intra biennium suscipientibus liceat pro rei frumen[tari]ae angustiis in quibuslibet provinciis transmarinis [tan]tummodo eos retinere et postea in sedes perpetuas [con]locare, a partibus Thraciae vel Illyrici habitatione eorum [pen]itus prohibenda et intra quinquennium dumtaxat intra [eius]dem provinciae fines eorum traductione, prout libue[rit, co]ncedenda, iuniorum quoque intra praedictos viginti an[nos p]raebitione cessante. ita ut per libellos sedem tuam ad[e]untibus his qui voluerint per transmarinas provincias eorum [distri]butio fiat. dat. prid. id. April. Constantinopoli Honorio VIII et Theodosio III cons.

has been implicated in discussions of the transition from an ancient countryside dominated by free peasant proprietors to the medieval world of dependent serfs.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the opening remarks of the law, the mention of military recruitment, and the limitations upon where and how these individuals are to be settled are redolent of descriptions in other sources of the settlement of conquered barbarians on Roman soil. Indeed, when Wenck included this text in his edition of the Theodosian Code, he used it as support for the argument that the limitations placed upon registered *coloni* in the period were modeled upon the treatment of barbarian prisoners-of-war.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have since rejected Wenck's argument in favor of the opposite conclusion: that the settlement of conquered barbarians was, to a certain degree, modeled upon the *ius colonatus*, the conditions imposed upon registered *coloni* in the late Roman period.<sup>6</sup>

Wenck inserted the text into his edition of the Theodosian Code under the rubric *De bonis militum* ("Concerning the Estates of Soldiers"). Wenck's decision was based on a reasonable set of assumptions, and conditioned by his own interpretation of the content of the law. But there is no reason to assume that it was shared either by the original drafter of the legislation or by the lawyers responsible for compiling the Theodosian Code in the second quarter of the fifth century. Indeed, the law seems to be more closely concerned with alleviating economic difficulties and adjusting the existing fiscal burden upon local landowners than with the matters of military inheritance that occupy the other pieces of legislation contained under this title. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the law is addressed to Anthemius, praetorian prefect of the east, rather than to a military officer, who might be expected to handle military matters and relations with foreign groups such as the Sciri, like the *magister equitum*, the *magister peditum*, or perhaps the *dux* of the province.<sup>7</sup> Analysis is further complicated by the fact that the text itself is damaged, so that key sections are obscure or incomplete. It also is likely

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<sup>4</sup> The literature is vast: see G. Giliberti, *Servi della terra: ricerche per una storia del colonato* (Torino, 1999); W. Scheidel, "Slaves of the Soil: Review Article," *JRA* 13 (2000): 727–732. For current purposes, the disagreements are less important than the limited consensus that has emerged. For full discussion, see C. Grey, "Contextualizing *Colonatus*: the *Origo* of the Late Roman Empire," *JRS* 97 (2007): 155–175.

<sup>5</sup> Building on a proposition offered by Gothofredus: see R. Clausing, *The Roman Colonate: The Theories of its Origin* (Rome, 1925; repr. 1965), pp. 31–32, 35.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford/New York, 1990), pp. 127–128; M. Mircovic, *The Late Roman Colonate and Freedom* (Philadelphia, PA, 1998), pp. 98–99. More cautious are H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe CE 350–425* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 129–131; P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford/New York, 1991), pp. 123–124; Wirth, "Germanic Partners," pp. 35–36, nn. 100–101.

<sup>7</sup> R.C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds, 1992), pp. 129–130. Praetorian prefects, along with the *comes sacrum largitionum* and the *comes rei privatae*, receive the bulk of legislation concerning financial and fiscal affairs preserved in the Theodosian and Justinianic Codes.

that it has suffered a process of editing and expurgation, which further hampers interpretation of the settlement and the circumstances in which it was effected.

The aims of this study are therefore twofold. First, to engage with and nuance the assumption that this text, and the *ius colonatus* that it describes, reveal that barbarian prisoners-of-war were settled on land using the “colonate of the Late Roman Empire” as a model. This will be done through an examination of points of convergence and divergence between incidences of *colonatus* in the late Roman legal sources and historiographical accounts of the “colonate” in contemporary scholarship. Based largely on the evidence of this law, scholars have suggested that there developed over the course of the fourth century a discrete legal concept of *colonatus*: that is, a type of registered tenancy designed to facilitate the collection of taxes, which entailed certain limitations upon the economic freedoms of tenants so registered.<sup>8</sup> This argument will be revisited below, where it will be suggested that it amounts to the imposition of an artificial logic upon the ancient evidence, which is in reality disparate and heterogeneous.

Second, this study will explore the evidence that this text does provide both for a generalized model of such settlements and for the uniqueness of the circumstances in the present case. The bulk of the ancient references to the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war is couched in vague and allusive terms. It therefore is tempting to take the regulations of this law as a model for those settlements. But in spite of the common factors that can be adduced in a number of instances of barbarian settlement, the specific circumstances addressed in the current text make such an approach problematic. To this end, this study begins with a brief survey of the current state of scholarship concerning the “colonate of the Late Roman Empire.” Next, it explores what is known or can be surmised from this and other texts about the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war in the period, before analyzing the factors that make this case unique. By way of conclusion, it notes some areas of congruence between the persons under discussion in this text and others who were considered marginal to the communities of the late Roman world.

### ***Coloni, Colonatus, and the “Colonate”***

The text under discussion raises two broad sets of questions. First, it appears to assume the existence of some combination of obligations and rights, which it signals using the abstract noun *colonatus*. What did this amount to, and to what extent should it be interpreted as a discrete, defined legal concept? Second, the text

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<sup>8</sup> The legal concept of registered tenancy has been labeled the *ius colonatus* by J.-M. Carrié, “Un roman des origines: les généalogies du ‘colonat du Bas-Empire’,” *Opus* 2 (1983): 243; idem, “‘Colonato del Basso Impero’: la resistenza del mito,” in E. Lo Cascio, ed., *Terre, proprietari e contadini dell’Impero romano. Dall’affitto agrario al colonato tardoantico* (Rome, 1997), pp. 80, 100, 103, 142, and passim; also P. Rosafio, *Studi sul Colonato* (Bari, 2002), pp. 137–158.

refers to *coloni* who could be *alienis censibus adscripti*, that is, entered into the census returns of others. How might tenants be registered on the census returns of others, what were the implications of such an arrangement, and was this practice unique to tenants in the period?

The legislation of the fourth and fifth centuries attests a category of tenant farmers, or *coloni*, registered on the tax rolls in connection with a particular field. The ensuing relationship between tenant and land, which entailed an obligation upon the former for the taxes assessed on the latter, often is signaled in the legal sources by the addition of the terms *originalis* or *originarius*. These terms indicate the fundamental importance in the tax system of the late Roman world of the *origo*, an administrative concept that made it possible to impose a set proportion of a municipality's tax burden or other clearly identified *munera* upon a specific area of land.<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, *coloni* might be described as *adscripti* or *adscripticii*, terms that referred explicitly to the act of entry upon the tax rolls.<sup>10</sup>

Over the course of the fourth century, legal sources reveal certain restrictions upon the economic behavior of registered *coloni*. There exist laws forbidding *coloni* from alienating property, and curtailing their ability to give up their tenancies and move elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> The aim of these restrictions was to ensure that the relationship between tenant and field that appeared on the tax rolls continued to be reflected in reality. In this way, a clear hierarchy of fiscal responsibility could be traced. This process is one aspect of a broader phenomenon in the fiscal legislation of the period, namely an attempt to intervene in matters that hitherto had been left to the municipalities. We witness here the impulse to identify publicly, for the purposes of taxation, tenancy arrangements that had up to now been private matters between the two parties. Of course, such a tendency was of limited effectiveness. In particular, the enduring, inflexible arrangements that resulted from this impulse bore little resemblance to the agricultural strategies practiced by large and small farmers alike, and many of the legal difficulties surrounding registered tenancy may be traced to a fundamental disjunction between fiscal ideals and economic realities.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, not every *colonus* was registered in the tax rolls, and therefore identifiable as a tenant with fiscal responsibilities through his landlord to the state.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *CTh* 5.16.34 = *CJ* 11.68.6 (425, to Valerius, *CRP*); Carrié, "Roman," p. 227; idem, "Resistenza," p. 138.

<sup>10</sup> Carrié, "Roman," pp. 217–218, with n. 58, 227; idem, "Resistenza," p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. *CTh* 5.19.1 (365, East); *CTh* 11.7.2 (319, Britain); *CTh* 11.1.14 = *CJ* 11.48.4 (371, East).

<sup>12</sup> See C. Grey, "Revisiting the 'Problem' of *Agri deserti* in the Late Roman Empire," *JRA* 20 (2007): 362–376.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. *CTh* 11.1.26 (399, Gaul), acknowledging the limited distribution of this particular type of tenancy. Also W. Goffart, *Caput and Colonate: Toward a History of Late Roman Taxation* (Toronto/Buffalo, 1974), p. 81, with n. 46; D. Eibach, *Untersuchungen zum spätantiken Kolonat in der kaiserlichen Gesetzgebung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung*

At any rate, the limitations that the state attempted to place upon registered *coloni* are often described in a language that evokes the much harsher and more restricted condition of slavery. Registered *coloni* are referred to as *servi terrae*, “slaves of the soil,” and their obligation termed *quaedam servitus*, “a kind of slavery.”<sup>14</sup> This is not to say, however, that registered *coloni* were regarded as slaves, for their status as free men was jealously guarded in the legal sources.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the act of registration in the tax rolls and the high degree of visibility that this act brought with it led to certain privileges and protections. Landlords were forbidden to expel registered *coloni* from their fields, or to remove them from land that they planned to sell.<sup>16</sup> *Coloni* also were confirmed in their right to an action against a landlord who demanded more rent than that upon which the two originally had agreed.<sup>17</sup> The fiscal motivations behind this legislation are clear, and it seems reasonable to attribute the laws dealing with registered *coloni* to the needs of the tax system instituted under the Tetrarchy and modified over ensuing reigns.<sup>18</sup> The new system was overlaid upon existing systems of assessment and collection in the provinces, which retained their diversity into the fifth century and beyond. Similarly, tenancy and labor arrangements continued to exhibit immense variety in the period.<sup>19</sup>

On the foundation provided by laws concerned with regulating the relationship between registered *coloni* and the land upon which they were registered, a vast historiographical edifice has been constructed, which can only be broadly summarized here with a view toward commenting upon the limitations that it has placed upon our interpretation of the ancient sources. In the early 1980s, the broad scholarly consensus as to the nature of the “colonate of the Late Roman Empire” was subjected to a sustained attack by J.-M. Carrié. In particular, Carrié argued that scholars had become immured in a debate over a historiographical institution rather than a discussion of the evidence for registered tenancy.<sup>20</sup> Carrié’s critique stimulated a re-evaluation of both the state of the historiographical debate and the nature of the sources themselves. Much that once was held certain is again the subject of controversy, with scholars fundamentally divided over the nature,

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*der Terminologie* (Cologne, 1980), pp. 130–131; Carrié, “Roman,” p. 226; idem, “Resistenza,” pp. 133, 139; Giliberti, *Servi della terra*, pp. 86–87.

<sup>14</sup> *CJ* 11.52.1 (393, Thrace); *CJ* 11.50.2.3 (396, Asia).

<sup>15</sup> E.g. *CTh* 5.17.1 (332, *Ad provinciales*); *CJ* 11.52.1 (393, Thrace).

<sup>16</sup> *CJ* 11.48.7 (371, Gaul); *CJ* 11.63.3 (383, East); *CTh* 11.1.26 (399, Gaul).

<sup>17</sup> *CJ* 11.50.1 (325, East).

<sup>18</sup> See A.J.B. Sirks, “Reconsidering the Roman Colonate,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung* 123 (1993): 331–362, at p. 335: “in every explanation of the colonate a connection is made with the tax.”

<sup>19</sup> See D. Vera, “Padroni, contadini, contratti: realia del colonato tardoantico,” in Lo Cascio, ed., *Terre, proprietari e contadini dell’Impero romano*, pp. 185–224.

<sup>20</sup> J.-M. Carrié, “Le ‘colonat du Bas-Empire’: un mythe historiographique?,” *Opus* 1 (1982): 352; idem, “Roman,” p. 241.

character, and origin of this phenomenon. There are, however, also certain points of agreement. Scholars generally agree, for example, that the “colonate” was not a generalized condition of rural dependency, and that there was no concerted policy driving the legislation of the fourth century. There also is a consensus of sorts over the perceived erosion of the economic independence of these registered *coloni*, and their increasing subjection to the control and authority of landowners. The role of landowners as *domini* of land is taken gradually to have elided with or become analogous to the rights of *domini* over slaves.<sup>21</sup> These arguments amount to an assertion that a *ius colonatus* developed and solidified over the course of the fourth and early fifth centuries. Such a position rests in part upon the assumption that ancient attestations of the term *colonatus* came over the course of the fourth century to refer to a unified concept, and the conflation of that concept with the “colonate” (or, better, “colonates”) of contemporary historiography. These propositions will be briefly explored before focusing in particular upon the law under discussion.

There are a mere handful of attestations in fourth- and fifth-century legal sources of the abstract noun *colonatus*. In each case, the term refers to rural tenancy broadly conceived, but similarities between the specific characteristics of each instance of *colonatus* are difficult to pin down.<sup>22</sup> In the earliest example of the term, *colonatus* is conceived as a privileged or special type of tenancy, which carries with it exemptions from *munera* for which an individual might otherwise be held liable. A law directed toward Rufinus, *comes orientis*, censures *curiales* who attempt to evade their municipal responsibilities by recourse to a *ius colonatus rei privatae*, the right of tenancy on imperial estates.<sup>23</sup> In this instance, then, registration for the purposes of the tax collection process is not at issue. Rather, *colonatus* refers simply to a type of tenancy, which is further defined as being attached to imperial estates.

Similarly, a rescript to the prefect of Rome emphasizes the uniqueness of the *colonatus* it describes, and the special circumstances in which it is enacted. The law directs that individuals found to be begging illegitimately should be given to their *proditores*, or denouncers, in an arrangement of *colonatus perpetuus*, “perpetual tenancy.” The measure is redolent of the *opus publicum in perpetuam*, a punishment inflicted upon criminals of particularly humble status, and upon slaves, which involved heavy labor in the service of the municipality. In this instance, the state may be observed attempting to safeguard the civic community from the threat posed by individuals who are not part of that community’s established power relationships, and who therefore constitute an uncontrolled and threatening

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<sup>21</sup> Carrié, “Roman,” pp. 222–224; idem, “Resistenza,” p. 92; Sirks, “Reconsidering,” p. 335, with n. 12, 352; idem, “The Farmer, the Landlord, and the Law in the Fifth Century,” in R. Mathisen, ed., *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford/New York, 2001), p. 262, with n. 21; Mircovic, *Late Roman Colonate*, pp. 66–68, 108–109.

<sup>22</sup> See Grey, “Contextualizing,” Section II.

<sup>23</sup> *CTh* 12.1.33 (342, to Rufinus, *comes orientis*).

element in the city.<sup>24</sup> The strategy adopted here is to initiate a private relationship of *colonatus*, which, it is hoped, will carry with it mutual responsibilities between landlord and tenant. Beyond this vague hope for a mutually binding personal relationship, however, there is no mention here of registration, nor of facilitating the collection of taxes through this arrangement of *colonatus*.

A law of 400, aimed at maintaining the civic institutions of Gaul, also acknowledges the essentially private nature of the *colonatus* agreements it describes. These relationships are explicitly contrasted with service in urban *curiae*, *collegia*, and *burgi*, which are obligations to the municipality. The law recognizes that urban and rural activity are difficult to seal hermetically from one another when it censures those who have abandoned their civic duties by fleeing to the country. Importantly, however, it prioritizes service of the municipality over *colonatus* of both imperial and private estates when it directs that these individuals be recalled to their urban duties, and denies the right of both the state and individual landowners to claim the labor of *coloni* and *inquilini* (resident tenants) who have served on a *curia*, *collegium*, *burgus*, or other municipal association for a period of 30 years.<sup>25</sup> Again, there is no mention of taxation, and no impulse to ensure that *coloni* be held responsible for the tax burden of land; indeed, the rights of a landowner to the labor of his former *colonus* are explicitly subordinated to the right of the municipality to exploit his service. In these texts, then, *colonatus* appears in a variety of contexts, with a diversity of meanings.

With the promulgation of the law under consideration here, the *ius colonatus* appears to attain a more coherent legal identity that is not completely consistent with the *colonatus* of earlier legislation, and it remains to be seen whether it can be connected to the “colonates” of contemporary scholarship. The settlement of the Sciri displays an awareness of the practice of registering tenants in the census in connection with an estate. It also assumes that this practice brought with it certain limitations and conditions. As with other laws concerning registered *coloni*, the limitations of this law are as much upon the landowners as they are upon the tenants. Harborers and enticers of fugitive Sciri are threatened with “the penalty prescribed for those who receive *coloni* that are registered in the tax rolls of others or are not their own.” The nature of this penalty can, perhaps, be gleaned from a collection of three laws preserved under the rubric *De fugitivis colonis, inquilinis et servis* (“On Fugitive *Coloni*, *Inquilini* and Slaves”). In the first of these, dated to 332,<sup>26</sup> the offending landowner is instructed to return the individual to his *origo* and to pay the outstanding tax burden assessed on the individual. Later laws threaten a heavy fine.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the reference to restrictions upon the landlord’s

<sup>24</sup> *CTh* 14.18.1 = *CJ* 11.26.1 (382). See C. Grey, A. Parkin, “Controlling the Urban Mob: The *Colonatus perpetuus* of *CTh* 14.18.1,” *Phoenix* 57 (2003): 284–299.

<sup>25</sup> The text is divided between *CTh* 12.19.1 and 2 (400, Gaul).

<sup>26</sup> *CTh* 5.17.1 (332, *Ad provinciales*).

<sup>27</sup> E.g. *CTh* 5.17.2 (386, East), prescribing a fine of six ounces of gold if the *colonus* is from a private landowner, and one pound of gold if he is from an imperial estate.

right to expel or move *coloni* echoes similar laws from both eastern and western parts of the empire in the second half of the fourth century.<sup>28</sup> It seems likely, then, that when the law directs that the Sciri are to be made available to landowners “by no other law than that of *colonatus*,” it envisages that they be settled as registered *coloni*, with responsibilities through their landlords to the state for the tax burden of the land on which they are registered. This is not to say, however, that the settlement of these barbarians was modeled solely or entirely upon a *ius colonatus*, or is to be equated directly with the “colonates” of contemporary scholarship. The law also reveals the unique circumstances under which their labor was supplied, and displays a concern for security and limitations upon their activities, as might be expected in a case such as this.

Laws concerned with registered *coloni* are limited in their focus. They also must be placed within the broader context of the fiscal policies of the late Roman state. At the heart of this legislation lies the act of registration itself, which had the potential to impact significantly upon the economic behaviors of landlords and their tenants. The focus in contemporary scholarship upon this phenomenon alone, however, is simultaneously too narrow and too broad. By focusing solely upon the registration of *coloni*, scholars have ignored the broader context of the late Roman tax system, in which the *origo* played a crucial part. Indeed, it is the *origo*, not the registration of *coloni*, that is the defining feature of the tax system of the period. Although the *origines* of tenants loom largest, other *origines* also are visible in the legal sources, where they are accorded both particular fiscal responsibilities and special privileges.<sup>29</sup> Equally, by extrapolating legal, social, and economic implications from the act of registration, scholars have accepted uncritically the richly rhetorical language of the legal sources, which exploits the vocabulary of slavery as a convenient, but imperfect, analogy for the limitations it attempts to impose upon registered tenants in the interests of ensuring that they continue to pay their taxes.<sup>30</sup> They also have accepted and built upon the impression of cohesion and unity that the emperors responsible for the great codifications of the period sought to convey when they ordered the collection, editing, and organization of the vast mass of heterogeneous and context-specific legislation of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. The “colonates” of contemporary scholarship represent attempts to impose a sense of order and system upon texts that originally were promulgated for

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<sup>28</sup> E.g. *CTh* 13.10.3 (357, to Dulcitus, *consularis Aemiliae*); *CJ* 11.48.7 (371, Gaul); *CJ* 11.63.3 (383, East).

<sup>29</sup> Obligations: *CTh* 7.21.3 (396, Rome), which directs that the children of decurions who have attained special privileges will still be liable to the obligations of their *origo*. Privileges: *CTh* 4.12.3 (320, *Ad populum*), which identifies imperial estates as a particular *origo*, and singles out individuals attached to such an estate for special treatment. Further discussion in Grey, “Contextualizing,” Section IV.

<sup>30</sup> Grey, “Contextualizing,” p. 169; idem, “Slavery in the Late Roman World,” in K.R. Bradley, P. Cartledge, eds., *The Cambridge World History of Slavery* (Cambridge, forthcoming).



specific reasons, in response to unique problems, in particular circumstances. In the process, scholars have moved well beyond the texts themselves, and proposed interpretations and explanations that betray modern concerns more than ancient understandings. These explanations are of only limited value in the current project, for they ignore the unique circumstances surrounding the settlement of the Sciri, in pursuit of the broader principles that it is taken to illustrate.

### Settlement of Barbarian Prisoners-of-War

The late Roman sources offer a multitude of references to barbarian prisoners-of-war being settled in various parts of the empire as rural cultivators on imperial estates or on the estates of private landowners.<sup>31</sup> The vocabulary used to describe them is diverse, and we should be careful not to place too great a weight upon the terminology used in a panegyric speech or a bucolic poem. Nevertheless, three broad categories emerge. In some circumstances, these individuals are described explicitly as *servi*, and there is no doubt that both within the boundaries of the empire and beyond its borders warfare continued to be a significant source of slaves.<sup>32</sup> Elsewhere, they are *tributarii*, a term that appears to highlight their responsibilities as taxpayers. Ammianus reports that in the 360s and 370s Alamanni were relocated to Gaul, where they became “subject to taxes and a source of income,” and to Italy, “where, having received fertile fields, they now cultivate the Po as taxpayers.”<sup>33</sup> In still other contexts, they are *coloni* or *cultores*, signaling their designated role as agricultural cultivators. Ausonius, for example, speaks of “fields recently harvested by Sarmatian *coloni*,” and the author of the *Historia Augusta*, no doubt reflecting more contemporary concerns, claims that after Claudius II’s defeat of the Goths ca. 270, “the provinces were filled with Gothic *cultores*; the Goth became a *colonus*.”<sup>34</sup>

There is diversity, too, in the nature of the settlements themselves. In some circumstances these prisoners-of-war are accompanied by their wives and children;

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<sup>31</sup> Above, note 2; also R.W. Mathisen, “*Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire*,” *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 1011–1040.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. *HA Claudius* 8.4. For more general treatment, C.R. Whittaker, “Circe’s Pigs: From Slavery to Serfdom in the Later Roman World,” *Slavery and Abolition* 8.1 (1987): 88–122; also Grey, “Slavery.”

<sup>33</sup> Amm. 20.4.1: “tributarios ... et vectigales”; 28.5.15: “ubi fertilibus pagis acceptis, iam tributarii circumcolunt Padum.”

<sup>34</sup> Aus. *Mosella* 9: “arvaque Sauromatum nuper metata colonis”; *HA Claudius* 9.4: “impletae barbaris servis Scythicisque cultoribus Romanae provinciae. factus limitis barbari colonus e Gotho.” Cf. Amm. 31.9.4, noting that in 377 defeated Goths and Taifals were settled in Italy as cultivators (*cultores*).

in others it seems that it is individual barbarians being settled on the land.<sup>35</sup> While we should expect these settlements to have been largely initiated and controlled by the Roman authorities, there is some evidence that barbarian peoples themselves might have had a hand in determining the terms of their settlement. Thus, for example, in 359, a group of Sarmatians promised to “undertake the name and burden of tributaries” (*tributariorum*) if allowed to settle on Roman territory.<sup>36</sup> This diversity presents obstacles to any attempts to arrive at a comprehensive, systematic picture of these settlements, and the difficulties are compounded by the fact that no text except for the current law provides any details about the terms under which the settlements were effected. As a consequence, it is vital that we establish which aspects of the settlement of the Sciri are unique, and which speak to a more general policy.<sup>37</sup>

Some general statements about the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war are possible. Broadly speaking, these settlements appear to display three characteristics. First, they reveal an impulse to disperse them, and keep them from constituting a threat as a body. Second, they often involve some provisions for future recruitment into the army. Third, and, arguably, connected with the previous point, taxation often is mentioned. Thus, for example, in 297/298, a panegyricist of the emperor Constantius I (293–306) reports that conquered Chamavians and Frisians were settled in the Gallic countryside, where they attended markets, paid taxes, and were liable for military service.<sup>38</sup> The Sciri, too, were dispersed across the landscape on the estates of individual landowners, and the continuing effects of this policy were observed by Sozomen. They were forbidden to occupy certain provinces, no doubt because those provinces were too close to their homelands.<sup>39</sup> And the provisions surrounding their tenancy strongly suggest that they were held liable for taxation.

The issue of military service, however, is more difficult to untangle. The law does nod toward recruitment, but only to offer a remission in the compulsion

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<sup>35</sup> Families: *HA Aurelian* 48.2. Individuals: *CTh* 13.11.10 (399, Italy and Africa); 7.15.1 (409, Africa).

<sup>36</sup> *Amm.* 19.11.6: “tributariorum onera subirent et nomen.” Also, more generally, Wirth, “Germanic Partners,” p. 42.

<sup>37</sup> Mircovic, *Late Roman Colonate*, p. 99, argues for a general policy, but note the cautions of Elton, *Warfare*, p. 130, and Wirth, “Germanic Partners,” p. 36, n. 100.

<sup>38</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.9.1–4: C.E.V. Nixon, B.S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Late Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 121–122. These barbarians are described as accompanied by their wives and children, waiting in the cities to be parceled out to the fields assigned to them. A lead proof of a non-extant gold medallion showing barbarian families entering the Roman Empire at Mainz is thought to depict this very event: see Pierre Bastien, *Le médaillon de plomb de Lyon*, appended to Pierre Bastien, Michel Amandry, Georges Gautier, eds., *Le monnayage de l’atelier de Lyon (274–413), Supplément* (Wetteren, 1989); Ste-Croix, *Class Struggle*, p. 513. For these settlements, see also Ziche in this volume.

<sup>39</sup> Sozomen, *HE* 9.5, preserves this detail, too, although in a slightly different form.

to provide recruits to the army for a period of 20 years. No further information about the settlement of the Sciri survives, but it seems unlikely that the original settlers would be acting as recruits after 20 years. Did they bring their wives and children with them? Were they permitted to marry local women and start families?<sup>40</sup> It is tempting to consider this twenty-year remission as providing the opportunity for these individuals to settle, marry, and produce children.<sup>41</sup> The Sciri could then be compared with the barbarians settled by Constantius I at the end of the third century.

Such a hypothesis would be speculative at best, and it may be more satisfactory to connect this provision with the practice of *prototypia*, whereby the owners of a geographically contiguous area of land, or *capitulum*, were held collectively responsible for supplying a recruit. This practice became over the course of the fourth century a normal part of the fiscal machinery.<sup>42</sup> In this construction, the provisions for remitting the obligation to provide recruits would act as an incentive for landowners to take on these barbarians. Further support for this interpretation is found in the attention given to the localized conditions of the municipalities in the provinces in question. A shortage of grain is mentioned as justification for an initial two-year window, within which landlords are permitted to employ the labor of the Sciri wherever they choose, before settling them in permanent homes.

But uncertainties remain. The fragmentary nature of the text renders any further explication of the provisions surrounding the *peraequatio*, or tax equalization, impossible. Such a process might be necessary as a result of changes in the assets of a province, municipality, or individual landowner, such as would occur when new tenants were registered in the tax rolls. But the apparent prohibition of such an act is difficult to reconcile with the other evidence in the law for incentives to take on these new *coloni*, and sympathy for the travails currently suffered by landowners in the region. Moreover, it is not clear whether the settlement after two years carries with it freedom from the supervision of the praetorian prefect's office, or, indeed, whether the relationships between the landowners and these barbarian cultivators are envisaged to be transformed or modified in its aftermath. Nor are the reasons behind the five-year limitation upon any subsequent movements clear. It is tempting to draw analogies with legislation forbidding landowners from moving registered *coloni* between fields, or removing them. But the provisions here go well beyond anything contained there, and we should resist the temptation to use the current law either as an example of the wholesale imposition of a *ius colonatus*

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<sup>40</sup> Hagith S. Sivan, "Why Not Marry a Barbarian? Marital Frontiers in Late Antiquity (The Example of *CTh* 3.14.1)," in R.W. Mathisen, H.S. Sivan, eds., *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Brookfield, 1996), pp. 136–137, offers some preliminary remarks and further bibliography.

<sup>41</sup> Recruitment to the army in the period appears to have begun at the age of 19, or, in some circumstances, 16: *CTh* 7.13.1 (326); 7.22.4 (343, East).

<sup>42</sup> *CJ* 10.42.8 (293–305); *CTh* 11.23.2 (362, Gaul); *CTh* 7.13.7.1 (375, East). See W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie* (Paris, 1946), pp. 367–372.

upon conquered barbarians, or as an indication of the coherence of regulations surrounding registered tenancy in the fourth and fifth centuries. Connections between the legislation concerned with registered *coloni* and the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war remained incomplete and imperfect.

## Conclusions

Some general patterns in the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war are discernible in the ancient sources, and the law concerning the settlement of the Sciri does reveal the broad trajectories of such settlements. Often, it seems, the settlement of these individuals entailed explicit provisions about their obligation for taxation. This nexus of tenancy and fiscal responsibility renders comparison with the legislation concerning registered tenancy in the period fruitful. But the extent to which the Sciri, at least, were supervised by the state, and the nature of the restrictions upon their freedom of movement, exceeded anything that was enacted for registered tenants. Some further caveats are also pertinent. It is likely that restrictions of the sort laid down in this text were characteristically imposed upon conquered barbarians. But the explicit recognition of unique circumstances in this law is a reminder that any such settlement is likely also to have responded to local economic conditions, and to the needs of local municipal aristocracies and landowners.

Likewise, the socio-economic arrangements that might accompany these settlements also present problems, not only for the imperial administration and landowners, but also for modern commentators. What was the relationship between these individuals and their new landlords? Were they “free,” “dependent,” or a combination? To whom were they ultimately held responsible? It is here that the starkest contrast with the registered tenancy of the fiscal system is apparent. Registration of *coloni* amounted to the public acknowledgement of an existing arrangement. The *coloni* in question remained juridically free.<sup>43</sup> The settlements of the Sciri and other barbarian prisoners-of-war, however, do not conform to this pattern, and the status of these individuals is not at all clear. In the law of 409, the landowners and their new tenants are in a strange intermediate position, where a private relationship is purportedly created by a public enactment, but that private relationship continues to be mediated by the office of the praetorian prefect. We may perhaps, with caution, interpret this text as providing another example of the impulse identified with reference to the law concerning beggars in the city of Rome (*CTh* 14.18.1)—that is, an attempt to create a private relationship through public intervention. Although the fit is by no means perfect, in both cases the individuals in question are marginal, and therefore dangerous. They pose a threat to the stability of the community. In response, the legislators attempt to create a personal relationship between them and a local landowner through an arrangement

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<sup>43</sup> Carrié, “Resistenza,” p. 94; Scheidel, “Slaves,” p. 73.

of tenancy. Perhaps, then, the law concerned with the settlement of the Sciri can best be understood as another example of a preoccupation in the legislation of the period with control and limitations on the behavior of potentially threatening, liminal groups in society. Regardless of the terms of their settlement, there can be little doubt that barbarian prisoners-of-war were one such group.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> I wish to thank the editors of this volume for their many comments and suggestions, which were of immense help in the revision of the manuscript, and the refinement of the arguments advanced here. They are, of course, not to be held responsible for the views expressed, or any errors that remain.

## Chapter 12

# Spies Like Us: Treason and Identity in the Late Roman Empire

Kimberly Kagan

Many inhabitants of lands outside of the formal provinces of the Roman Empire participated in Roman culture and the Roman economy, and as the Roman army employed more foreign elites and soldiers in the fourth century, cultural contacts across the frontiers increased. As this interchange evolved, some foreign elites from one side of the frontier functioned in high circles of the Roman state far from home. At the same time, other persons living on the other side of the frontier technically were part of the Roman state but felt that they were not. Those from both sides of the frontier behaved in ways that Roman law would call treacherous as participation in frontier culture created confused political identities and blurred distinctions between the Roman state and other polities.<sup>1</sup>

A number of questions arise about the so-called traitors to the Roman state who appear frequently from the 350s to the 370s on both the eastern and western frontiers. Did competition among multiple identities motivate treacherous exchange of information with the enemy in the mid-fourth century? Did such traitors renounce not only their loyalty to the state, but also their Roman (or foreign) identity? Did Roman authorities, or members of the imperial elite such as Ammianus, perceive treason as a crime linked to ethnic identity, and did ethnic biases inform their treatment of traitors? This study will attempt to answer these, and other, questions about espionage on the Roman frontier.

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<sup>1</sup> For the nature of the frontier, C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore, MD, 1994), pp. 192–242. For identity, David Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay* (London, 2004), p. 443; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge/New York, 1998); Stephen Mitchell, Geoffrey Greatrex, eds., *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London, 2000); Guy Halsall, “Social Identities and Social Relationships in Early Merovingian Gaul,” in Ian Wood, ed., *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective* (San Marino, 1998), pp. 141–143; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA, 2000), p. 424.

## The Nature of “Treason”

For most of this period, imperial governments expected individuals to serve only one state. Roman and Persian elites on the eastern frontier served either the Roman emperor or the Persian king of kings. Competing cultural identities did not blur their sense of political allegiance. Individuals in the east engaged in treason deliberately, for personal advantage, indicating their acknowledgment that they could not serve more than one state at once. In the west, however, cultural and political confusion did induce actions, or the opportunities for actions, that could be considered to be treasonous when imperial authorities allowed foreigners to serve the Roman Empire and lead barbarian political entities simultaneously.

Roman law, articulated by the early third-century jurist Ulpian, defined *maiestas*, translated here as “treason,” as a crime “that is committed against the Roman people or against their safety.”<sup>2</sup> It recognized a wide variety of behaviors as treason, ranging from killing hostages given by an enemy (and thus provoking war) to seditious plotting against the emperor or any Roman magistrate.<sup>3</sup> These and other types of treason appear in the pages of Ammianus, but are beyond the scope of this study, which will focus upon cases of treason concerning, in the words of Ulpian, “anyone who sends a messenger or letters to the enemies of the Roman people, or gives them a password, or does anything with malicious intent whereby the enemies of the Roman people may be helped with his counsel against the state.”<sup>4</sup>

## Treachery and Spying on the Eastern Frontier

### *The Case of Antoninus*

Ammianus’ narrative of the Persian War of 359 describes several cases of treason to the Roman state and one case of treachery to the Persians. The most spectacular of these was the pre-planned defection of Antoninus to the Persians. Antoninus had been a wealthy merchant in the Roman east before entering imperial service

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<sup>2</sup> *Digest* 48.4.1.1: “Maiestatis autem crimen illud est, quod adversus populum romanum vel adversus securitatem eius committitur.” Translations from *Digest* 48.4.1, discussing the *Lex Iulia on Maiestas*, from Alan Watson, trans., *The Digest of Justinian*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA, 1985; rev. 1998).

<sup>3</sup> For the legal complexities of the definitions of *maiestas*, see R. Bauman, *Impietas in principem: A Study of Treason Against the Roman Emperor with Special Reference to the First Century A.D.*, Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und Antiken Rechtsgeschichte 67 (München, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> *Digest* 48.4.1.1: “Quive hostibus populi romani nuntium litterasve miserit signumve dederit feceritve dolo malo, quo hostes populi romani consilio iuventur adversus rem publicam.”

as a financial official. Eastern merchants well represented the cultural diversity of that area. They moved among cities, had personal connections in many different locations, and thus had a range of linguistic skills, geographical knowledge, and cultural affinities. As a result, merchants often served as spies for both the Roman and Persian empires.<sup>5</sup> In the early fifth century, the emperors Honorius (395–423) and Theodosius II (402–450) attempted to regulate commercial exchanges between Roman and Persian in order to prevent the Persians from learning Roman state secrets from merchants.<sup>6</sup>

Antoninus' participation in state-sponsored espionage seems to have emerged relatively recently in his official career. From his first appointment as a *rationarius* (accountant) of the *dux Mesopotamiae*, he ultimately rose to the rank of military adjutant (*protector*) to Cassianus, the governor of Mesopotamia, who helped to manage organized espionage in Persian territories in the mid-350s.<sup>7</sup> Cassianus' centrally directed efforts provided information that led to peace negotiations between Constantius II (337–361) and Shapur II (309–379).<sup>8</sup> Antoninus' promotion to *protector* probably signals his involvement in the new espionage and diplomacy efforts, which would have given him access both to state secrets and to important Persian officials.

It was not the cultural complexities of the region, and the competing loyalties arising from them, that motivated Antoninus to renounce his connections to Roman imperial politics, but rather, according to Ammianus, imperial corruption that exacerbated his personal financial problems. Extremely powerful imperial officials somehow had suffered financial losses through him, and a legal case arose from their dispute. Imperial officials transferred his legal case to the office of the *sacrae largitiones* (privy purse), and to settle the claims he had to acknowledge steep debts to powerful officials.<sup>9</sup> When the imperial treasury pressed him for payment, he avenged himself dramatically by departing to Persia with a trove of sensitive information that he had collected.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A.D. Lee, *Information and Frontiers: Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge/New York, 1993), p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> CJ 4.63.4 (408/409): “Mercatores tam imperio nostro quam Persarum regi subiectos ultra ea loca, in quibus foederis tempore cum memorata natione nobis convenit, nundinas exercere minime oportet, ne alieni regni, quod non convenit, scrutentur arcana.”

<sup>7</sup> Amm. 18.5.1.

<sup>8</sup> Amm. 16.9.

<sup>9</sup> Amm. 18.5.1: “Aviditate quorundam nexus ingentibus damnis cum iurgando contra potentes se magis magisque iniustitia frangi contemplaretur, ad deferendam potioribus gratiam qui spectabant negotium inclinatis, ne contra acumina calcitraret, flexit se in blanditias molliores confessusque debitum per concludia in nomen fisci translatum”; on the role of the fisc, note *Digest* 49.14, “De iure fisci”, with A.H.M. Jones, *The Late Roman Empire 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Oxford, 1964; repr. Baltimore, MD, 1986), 1.484–486.

<sup>10</sup> Amm. 18.5.2–3.



Antoninus' ability and decision to defect were furthered not only by his mercantile connections and linguistic ability, which had qualified him well to serve as a spy for the Romans, but also by the connections he had made both as a merchant and as a Roman official. His experiences as a well-known merchant in Mesopotamia, for example, made it possible for him to purchase property in Hiaspis, a region near the Tigris, and to transfer his whole household without attracting attention.<sup>11</sup> And he exploited his position as a staff-officer of the governor discreetly to acquire information about the disposition of Roman troops, campaign plans, and logistical preparations throughout the east for the subsequent year. Rather than simply funneling the information to the Persian commander Tamsapor, Antoninus delivered the material in person. In exchange, Tamsapor provided military protection for Antoninus and his full household as they crossed the Tigris frontier. The Persian king Shapur received Antoninus warmly at court, and Antoninus advised the king well about how to attack the Roman east as the king prepared for the campaign of 359.<sup>12</sup>

Antoninus betrayed the state deliberately and terminated his political affiliation with it, not especially because he had developed loyalties to the Persians, but because of his personal problems back home. When he came to Shapur's court he received a great deal of dignity and respect. He wore a tiara (indicating high status at court), dined at the royal table, and participated in policy discussions;<sup>13</sup> he even advised the Persian king to occupy the entire eastern Roman Empire.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps he also thought he could gain greater distinction across the frontier than within the Roman administration.

The kinds of competing motivations—personal financial embarrassment, disgust with a corrupt or ineffective bureaucracy, and hope of increased dignity in another system—that influenced Antoninus also motivated defections in the Cold War,<sup>15</sup> and have been common throughout history. Of course, Antoninus' personal comfort in Mesopotamian culture doubtless reduced friction as he moved from one political system to the other. Yet his situation should remind us that even if people's complex identities did not always generate competing loyalties they

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<sup>11</sup> Amm. 18.5.3.

<sup>12</sup> Amm. 18.5.

<sup>13</sup> Amm. 18.5.6: "Antoninus ad regis hiberna perductus averter suscipitur et apicis nobilitatus auctoritate—quo honore participantur mensae regales et meritorum apud Persas ad suadendum ferendasque sententias in contionibus ora panduntur"; for the tiara, Hans Werner Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft; Untersuchungen zu Zeremonien und Rechtsgrundlagen des Herrschaftsantritts bei den Persern, bei Alexander dem Grossen und im Hellenismus* (Munich, 1965), and Matthew Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Competition and Exchange in the Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2004), pp. 373–408.

<sup>14</sup> Amm. 18.6.19: "Antonino hortante dominium orientis adfectare totius."

<sup>15</sup> E.g., David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford, 2003).

sometimes provided different opportunities, of which a wily and ambitious man such as Antoninus could take advantage. And after his defection, one might ask whether Antoninus considered himself culturally a Greco-Roman or a Persian?

This question can be informed by an analysis of an encounter of Antoninus, now leading the Persian troops, with the Roman general Ursicinus (and Ammianus as well) during a skirmish in 359. The complex ceremonial shows us how the defector manipulated his cultural identities after dramatically renouncing one set of political loyalties. When the two met, the Roman ritual demanded that Antoninus abase himself completely by placing himself in a physically inferior position to Ursicinus and by exaggerating the latter's dignity in his speech.<sup>16</sup> According to Ammianus, "Having removed his tiara, which he wore on the top of his head as a great honor, he leapt off his horse, and on bended knee, nearly touching the ground with his face, he greeted Ursicinus, calling him patron and lord, holding his hands behind his back, which among the Assyrians indicates a type of supplication."<sup>17</sup> Antoninus explained to Ursicinus that his defection was criminal (*scelesta*), but necessary because he had been ruined by the actions of men whom not even one as powerful as Ursicinus could stop. Then, "he departed from our midst, not turned around, but respectfully moving backward and showing his front until he disappeared."<sup>18</sup>

Behind the straightforward humble supplication reported by Ammianus there no doubt lie some more nuanced behaviors. For example, Antoninus performed his obeisance with an ironic flourish that could not have been lost on Ursicinus: in order to bow, he had to remove his tiara, which, among the Persians, conferred upon him a rank that exempted him from this demeaning behavior toward one who was his superior no longer. The defector also verbally addressed the Ursicinus as if he, Antoninus, were still his subordinate. And he spoke in Greek or Latin, likewise acknowledging his previous identity. In addition, to Antoninus and his Greek-cultured audience, the battlefield scene also must also have evoked the many Homeric episodes of supplication.<sup>19</sup> In performing these gestures of supplication, which belonged to the Roman imperial, not the Persian royal, court ceremonials, in which the highest ranking *protectores* could bow and kiss the emperor's robe in the *adoratio* ceremony in the imperial court,<sup>20</sup> Antoninus shed his Persian court

<sup>16</sup> John Gould, "Hiketeia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973): 93.

<sup>17</sup> Amm. 18.8.5: "Sublata tiara, quam capiti summo ferebat honoris insigne, desiluit equo curvatisque membris, humum vultu paene contingens salutavit patronum appellans et dominum, manus post terga conectens, quod apud Assyrios supplicis indicat formam."

<sup>18</sup> Amm. 18.8.6: "E medio prospectu abscessit non aversus, sed dum evanesceret verecunde retrogradiens et pectus ostentans."

<sup>19</sup> See Gould, "Hiketeia."

<sup>20</sup> For cross-cultural exchange of court ceremonial rituals and ornaments, see Canepa, *Two Eyes*; Richard N. Frye, "Gestures of Deference to Royalty in Ancient Iran," *Iranica Antiqua* 9 (1971): 104–107; Richard Brilliant, *Gesture and Rank in Roman Art: The Use of Gestures to Denote Status in Roman Sculpture and Coinage* (New Haven, CT, 1963). For

identity. But at the same time, Antoninus indicated his Persian identity by holding his hands “in the Assyrian manner,” and by withdrawing in the Persian manner.<sup>21</sup>

These gestures sent mixed messages and emphasized the cultural ambiguities. Throughout the ritual, Antoninus required that Ursicinus treat him, a fugitive criminal, as if he were a foreign warrior, generating sufficient irregularities in the Roman ritual behavior to highlight his Persian and Roman identities. Antoninus ritually indicated that Ursicinus was powerful, while sardonically telling him that he ought to have been powerful enough to stop the corrupt officials, and demonstrating through that comment and through his withdrawal that Ursicinus had no power over him. Rather than appearing “Orientalized,” as some have remarked, Antoninus deliberately demonstrated his dual cultural identities to Ursicinus in order to complicate the latter’s image of him and interpretation of his actions.<sup>22</sup>

### *More Spying on the Eastern Frontier*

On the eastern frontier cultural affinity or ethnicity rarely seems to have prompted defection or treason. Fear of authority, as in the case of Antoninus, also influenced others to turn traitor. In the mid-fourth century, it propelled the defection of a Gallic soldier, born in Paris and serving in a Roman cavalry unit. Afraid of punishment for a crime he had committed, he deserted to Persia. Only then, it seems, did this hardly Hellenized soldier adopt some Near Eastern culture, marrying and raising a family.<sup>23</sup> Subsequently, as Ammianus relates, “He was sent as a spy (*speculatorem*) against us and often relayed back true reports. Now, having been sent by the aristocrats Tamsapor and Nobadares, he was returning to them to report what he had learned. After this, when he added that he knew what was transpiring on the other side, he was put to death.”<sup>24</sup> In this case, again, the soldier was not inherently disloyal to Rome but defected as a consequence of legal actions against him. He evidently had no pre-existing loyalties to the

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*protectores* and the *adoratio* ceremony, John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989), pp. 77, 243–249

<sup>21</sup> Matthews, *Roman Empire*, p. 68, suggests that Antoninus retreated “as if he were in an Iranian audience-hall.”

<sup>22</sup> “Orientalization”: Matthews, *Roman Empire*, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> Amm. 18.6.16: “Invenimus militem, qui oblatu duci et locutus varia prae timore ideoque suspectus, adigente metu qui intentabatur, pandit rerum integram fidem docetque quod apud Parisios natus in Galliis, et equestri militans turma vindictam quondam commissi facinoris timens ad Persas abierat profugus, exindeque morum probitate spectata sortita coniuge liberisque susceptis.”

<sup>24</sup> Amm. 18.6.16: “Speculatorem se missum ad nostra, saepe veros nuntios reportasse. at nunc se a Tamsapore et Nohodare optimatibus missum, qui catervas ductaverant praedatorum, ad eos redire, quae didicerat, perlaturum. post haec, adiectisque agi in parte diversa norat, occiditur.”

Persians, but developed them as he established his personal connections there. But the consequence of his decision was that, upon being recaptured, he was executed for his treasonous activity.

A certain Craugasius, a *curialis* of the Mesopotamian capital Nisibis, demonstrates again how treasonous activities could result from dire personal circumstances. Having introduced this tale by noting that Shapur had received information from “deserters” (“*perfugarum indicio didicit*”),<sup>25</sup> Ammianus reported how Craugasius’ beautiful wife and daughter had been captured, and his property seized, by the Persians during the 359 campaign. Shapur cagily preserved the wife’s virtue in an attempt to lure Craugasius to betray Nisibis to him.<sup>26</sup> This initiative, however, seems to have come to nought, so Craugasius’ wife, who had risen to high rank herself among the Persians, engaged in some espionage activities of her own, secretly sending a family retainer back across the frontier with a message begging Craugasius to defect.<sup>27</sup> Upon receiving a favorable response from Craugasius, the wife then obtained safe passage across the frontier for him from Tamsapor.<sup>28</sup> Craugasius’ decision to defect was strengthened when the sudden unauthorized departure of the retainer aroused suspicion of treason against him. Pretending that he was preparing to remarry, Craugasius departed for a country home outside the city, and fled to a band of Persian looters he encountered. He was transferred to the custody of Tamsapor, and then to the king, where he rejoined his property, recovered his property, and, as Ammianus notes, “was of second position after Antoninus.”<sup>29</sup>

Ammianus’ comparison of Craugasius to Antoninus demonstrates the acknowledged similarity in the two cases. Just as competing identities played little role in Craugasius’ decision to join his beautiful wife at Shapur’s court, Antoninus too had defected for personal reasons. But no state secrets passed between Craugasius and Shapur, and the city of Nisibis was bypassed in Shapur’s attack the following year. For this reason, Ammianus felt that Craugasius was rightly deemed inferior because Antoninus had earned his position by talent, experience, and good counsel, whereas Craugasius had only his good name to

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<sup>25</sup> Amm. 18.10.1.

<sup>26</sup> Amm. 18.10.3: “Cumque rex percontando cuiusnam coniunx esset, Craugasii conperisset, vim in se metuentem prope venire permisit intrepidam et visam oportamque adusque labra ipsa atro velamine, certiore iam spe mariti recipiendi et pudoris inviolati mansuri benignius confirmavit. audiens enim coniugem miro eius amore flagrare, hoc praemio Nisibenam proditorem mercari se posse arbitrabatur.”

<sup>27</sup> Amm. 19.9.4: “Ideo familiarem suum ... occulte dimisit mandatis arcanisque vitae secretioris maritum exorans ut auditis, quae contigerint, veniret secum beate victurus.”

<sup>28</sup> Amm. 19.9.4: “Hoc cognito per Tamsaporem ducem supplicaverat regi ut, si daretur facultas, antequam Romanis excederet finibus, in potestatem suam iuberet propitius maritum adscisci.”

<sup>29</sup> Amm. 19.9.7: “Erat secundi loci post Antoninum.”

offer.<sup>30</sup> Craugasius and Antoninus both participated in a wider culture that allowed them to change their political loyalties, but did not prompt them to do so.<sup>31</sup>

Only one case of treason on the eastern frontier seems to have been related to the competition between cultural and political identity. In his youth, the satrap of the trans-Tigris Persian satrapy of Corduene had been a hostage in Syria, where he had grown to love classical education; as a result, Ammianus says, the satrap “secretly sympathized with us”<sup>32</sup> and wished to return to the Romans.<sup>33</sup> His native name is not given, but he was known as Jovinianus among the Romans. When Ammianus and a centurion approached him during the campaign of 359, Jovinianus gave them a guide who helped them to spy on Shapur’s preparations from a high point in his territory.<sup>34</sup> Naturally, Ammianus admired his behavior, because, although treacherous to the Persians, it served Rome’s interests. It is unclear, however, what benefit Jovinianus hoped to obtain from this espionage endeavor, as he certainly made no attempt actually to defect. He may, perhaps, given his exposed position, have been playing both sides of the fence.

The Roman imperial elite was not alone in expecting people to serve either Rome or Persia. Inhabitants of the cities along the Euphrates, which were caught in between two military enemies, also believed that it was proper for some people to serve one state. A royal Persian defector to Rome, Hormisdas, a brother of Shapur, seems to have come to Rome as a political refugee in 324,<sup>35</sup> before he had acquired any affinity for the Roman state. He had a distinguished military career under Constantius, who treated him as an important dignitary, evinced especially

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<sup>30</sup> Amm. 19.9.8: “Ille enim ingenio et usu rerum diuturno firmatus consiliis validis sufficiebat in cuncta quae conabatur, hic natura simplicior, nominis tamen itidem pervulgati.”

<sup>31</sup> Amm. 19.9.7–8.

<sup>32</sup> Amm. 18.6.20

<sup>33</sup> Amm. 18.6.20: “Erat eo tempore satrapa Corduena, quae obtemperabat potestati Persarum, Iovinianus nomine appellatus in solo Romano adulescens, nobiscum occulte sentiens ea gratia, quod obsidatus sorte in Syriis detentus et dulcedineliberalium studiorum inlectus remeare ad nostra ardenti desiderio gestiebat.” The status of Corduene at this time is unclear. In 299, the Persians had ceded territory that became the province of Corduene to Rome (Amm. 25.7.9); if Ammianus is referring to the province, then Jovinianus’ territory was still nominally Roman. But Ammianus is at pains to call Jovinianus’ territory a “satrapy” and to specify that it was under Persian control. This could mean either that the Roman province was now de facto under Persian control, or that the Roman province subsumed only part of greater Corduene, with the remainder, the satrapy, remaining under Persian control. For the status of Corduene, see L. Dilleman, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents* (Paris, 1962), pp. 217–220; E. Winter, *Die sassanidisch-römische Friedensverträge des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), pp. 176–178; Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), pp. 161–162 (for the subdividing of these territories).

<sup>34</sup> Amm. 18.6.21–23.

<sup>35</sup> For the defection, Amm. 16.10.16: “Regalis Ormizda, cuius e Perside discessum supra monstravimus”; also Zosimus 3.18.1.

during the emperor's state visit to Rome in 357.<sup>36</sup> In 363, Julian intended to place him on the throne of Persia, indicating the imperial desire to benefit from his continuing status as a Persian.<sup>37</sup> Many of his countrymen considered his actions treasonous: the commander Nabdates reviled him and the inhabitants of Pirasabora publicly scorned him as a traitor, although the people of Pirasabora later explicitly wished him to serve as a mediator with the Romans after the siege.<sup>38</sup> The Romanization of Hormisdas' family continued with his son, also Hormisdas, who served Rome as the proconsul of Asia under Procopius (365–366) and as a general under Theodosius I.<sup>39</sup>

Competing cultural identities thus seem directly to have motivated only one known political betrayal on the eastern frontier, that of Jovinianus. And prior cross-cultural affinity existed in all but, perhaps, the case of the Gallic spy. The palpable cultural permeability of the east did not preclude Roman or Persian imperial authorities, not unexpectedly, from expecting loyalty to one state, especially for members of the social and political elite. Serving both sides at the same time was definitely forbidden. Members of these elites likewise recognized the principle of single-state loyalty, but they sometimes found it very difficult to practice, especially if they experienced political or legal difficulties under their current government. But the presence of another power across the frontier gave people an option that they would not have had if they were living further from the frontier: of offering their services to the enemy. The amount of constant movement across the frontier,<sup>40</sup> coupled with the multiplicity of examples of not just simple defections, but also actively working against the interests of their former government, by espionage of serving as expert advisers, demonstrates the degree of cultural and political ambiguity in which both Romans and Persians lived in the mid-fourth century.

### Treachery and Spying on the Northern Frontier

A different model appears to have existed on the Rhine frontier, where, even in the mid-fourth century, the emperors allowed certain individuals to serve in Roman

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<sup>36</sup> Amm. 16.10.15; A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, eds., *PLRE I. AD 260–395* (Cambridge, 1971), s.v. “Hormisdas 2,” p. 443.

<sup>37</sup> Liban. *Ep.* 1402.

<sup>38</sup> Amm. 24.2.11: “Propinquantem probris atque conviciis ut male fidum incesebant et desertorem”; 24.2.20: “copiam sibi dari conferendi sermonis cum Ormizda poscebant”; 24.5.4: “[Nabdates] Ormizdam laceraret omnibus probris”; Zosimus 3.23.4.

<sup>39</sup> *PLRE I*, s.v. “Hormisdas 3,” pp. 443–444.

<sup>40</sup> See S. Lieu, “Captives, Refugees, and Exiles: A Study of Cross-Frontier Civilian Movements and Contacts between Rome and Persia from Valerian to Jovian,” in Philip Freeman, David Kennedy, eds., *Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, BAR International Series 292, (London, 1986), 2.475–505.

official positions while openly ruling their barbarian people.<sup>41</sup> In 372, for example, Valentinian I named Fraomarius king of the Bucinobantes. Soon afterward he appointed him as a tribune of a unit of Alamanni and transferred him to Britain to meet a crisis.<sup>42</sup> Mallobaudes served Gratian as a *comes domesticorum* while also holding his title as king of the Franks.<sup>43</sup> Our scant evidence suggests that this pattern is more characteristic of Valentinian's rule than of Constantius' and Julian's. Constantius seemed content to have Vadomarius serve as the king of the Alamanni, and only after Julian captured him and removed him from that royal office did he serve the Roman state as the governor of Phoenicia.<sup>44</sup> His tenure of office began sometime after 361, and very possibly only in the reign of Valens.

This pattern of dual service—king of a foreign people, Roman army commander—was quite different from what one encounters on the frontier with the Persian Empire, and quite possibly was based on different kinds of rule. The political organization of western barbarian peoples was quite unlike that of the Persian Empire, and the attitudes toward single-state service very well were likewise different. The Persian Empire, a political entity of the same extent and nature as the Roman Empire, posed a far greater threat than the smaller barbarian kingdoms. In addition, and more to the point, barbarian kingdoms were considered to be Roman client states, and their rulers therefore, to some extent, already part of the Roman system and thus acceptable in Roman military office. Although this model of dual office-holding is manifested mostly in the west, it also applied, it seems, to eastern client kingdoms; probably in the 380s, for example, Bacurius, king of the Iberians, fled to the Romans, and Rufinus describes him as “Bacurius, king of that very people [the Iberians] and among us count of the domestics.”<sup>45</sup>

But the Roman willingness to trust client rulers also to hold Roman administrative positions does not mean that there were not examples of the same kinds of treasonous behavior that occurred on the Persian frontier. According to Ammianus, for example, the Roman army would have been able to cross the Rhine against Alamannic opposition in 354, “if, as some thought, a few from that same people, to whom the responsibility of quite responsible military service had been committed, had not informed their countrymen of these plans through secret

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<sup>41</sup> Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, pp. 76–77; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*; Michael P. Speidel, “Raising New Units for the Late Roman Army: ‘Auxilia Palatina’,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996): 163–170.

<sup>42</sup> Amm. 29.4.7.

<sup>43</sup> Amm. 31.10.6.

<sup>44</sup> Amm. 31.3.5.

<sup>45</sup> Rufinus, *HE* 1.11: “Bacurius gentis ipsius rex et apud nos domesticorum comes”; *PLRE I*, s.v. “Bacurius,” p. 144; see also Themist. *Or.* 8; Peter Heather, John Matthews, eds., *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), p. 31, n. 56; Lenski, *Valens*, p. 171, argues that the king in question is the Armenian Pap, who had escaped to the Roman court after a Persian attack, and was waiting there for Valens' support for restoration to his throne.

messengers.”<sup>46</sup> Suspicion fell upon three Alamannic officers—Latinus, count of the domestics; the tribune Agilo; and Scudilo, commander of the targeteers,<sup>47</sup>—but the matter went no further, and given that a peace treaty immediately followed one might wonder whether there was more to the supposed treachery than meets the eye. Nor did the subsequent careers of the accused suffer: Scudilo later was sent to Antioch with the delicate task of luring the wayward Caesar Gallus back to Milan;<sup>48</sup> and Agilo was promoted to master of soldiers and sometime before September 365 his daughter married Araxius, who had governed Palestine, served as vicarius (probably) of Asia, and occupied the proconsulship of Constantinople.<sup>49</sup> Both must have assimilated a good degree of Greco-Roman culture in spite of their barbarian heritage, given Araxius must have been a Greek-speaker, and Agilo had married his daughter into the highest levels of the Roman aristocracy.

Desertion was a more likely (and routine) cause of information leaks on the Rhine frontier. Ammianus tells of a Roman deserter (*perfuga*) who fled to the Alamanni for the same reason that the aforementioned Gaul fled to the Persians, because of a crime he had committed, and reported on Roman troop dispositions.<sup>50</sup> But on another occasion, it was an Alamannic deserter who warned the Romans about an enemy ambush.<sup>51</sup>

Other information leaks occurred as a consequence of the normal coming and going across the frontier. In 378, a soldier betrayed sensitive information to his native people across the Rhine, the Lentienses, to whom he had returned on leave, telling them of the impending departure of the army to quell the widespread disorder caused by the Gothic migration. The Lentienses then acted on this knowledge to organize a military expedition across the Rhine and delayed Gratian’s move to Adrianople, with momentous consequences.<sup>52</sup> But this leak, Ammianus informs us, came not from conscious treachery, but simply because the soldier was a blabbermouth (“*ut erat in loquendo effusior*”).

The kind of ambiguity in political and personal relations that could surround barbarian rulers who also had close relations with the Romans is manifested in the case of the Alamannic king Hortarius. During Julian’s campaigns of 359, a Roman spy, the tribune Hariobaudus, whom Ammianus describes as “thoroughly knowledgeable in barbarian speech” and whose name indicates Germanic

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<sup>46</sup> Amm. 14.10.7: “Ni pauci ex eadem gente, quibus erat honoratoris militiae cura commissa, populares suos haec per nuntios docuissent occultos, ut quidam existimabant.”

<sup>47</sup> Amm. 14.10.8.

<sup>48</sup> Amm. 14.11.11.

<sup>49</sup> *PLRE I*, s.v. “Agilo,” pp. 28–29; *PLRE I*, s.v. “Araxius,” p. 94.

<sup>50</sup> Amm. 16.12.2: “Scutarius perfuga, qui commissi criminis metuens poenam transgressus ad eos ... armatorum tredecim milia tantum remansisse cum Iuliano docebat.”

<sup>51</sup> Amm. 17.1.8: “Indicio perfugae doctus per subterranea quaedam occulta fossasque multifidas latere plurimos.”

<sup>52</sup> Amm. 31.10.1.



ancestry, used Hortarius' territory as a base of operations.<sup>53</sup> Later, while Julian was in the midst of organizing an expedition across the Rhine, "Hortarius, a king previously allied with us, not intending anything treasonous but also being a friend of his neighboring countrymen, invited all the kings and joint kings and sub-kings to a banquet that lasted, in the barbarian manner, all the way to the third watch."<sup>54</sup> Little did Hortarius realize, however, that Julian had sent a force of 300 scouts across the river. When these encountered the departing guests, a skirmish erupted in which some of the servants were killed. Hortarius, therefore, was trying to preserve a middle position between the Romans and Alamanni. In the ensuing campaign, Julian spared him and his kingdom, but devastated the territories of the others.<sup>55</sup> Ca. 372, Valentinian appointed an Alamannic king of the same name to an army command. It is not clear whether this was the same person, but he followed a policy similar to his namesake's. While holding his Roman army command, he funneled information back to "barbarian optimates" across the Rhine. When his transgressions were discovered, he was tortured until he confessed and burnt to death.<sup>56</sup>

In addition, in contrast with the east, not as many defections in the west seem to have been caused by political or legal difficulties. In 355, the ill-fated usurper Silvanus, who served as a general in Gaul, refused to return to his native Franks after his abortive snatch at the imperial purple because he had been too acculturated and too successful in the Roman order to return safely to his native kingdom.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, the Roman collaborator Vadomarius, an Alamannic king, did not return to his people after his captor, the emperor Julian, died, but remained in Roman service with Valens.<sup>58</sup> In such instances, the now-Romanized barbarians may have feared the consequences of returning home more than those of staying within the empire. Nor would someone who defected to the barbarians be nearly as secure as someone who defected to the Persians, for to a greater or lesser degree all the barbarian kingdoms of the fourth century were clients of Rome, and the extradition of a defector no doubt would have been a fairly simple matter.

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<sup>53</sup> Amm. 18.2.2: "Sermonis barbarici perquam gnarus."

<sup>54</sup> Amm. 18.2.13: "Dum haec celerantur, Hortarius, rex nobis antea foederatus, non novaturus quaedam, sed amicus finitimis quoque suis, reges omnes et regales et regulos ad convivium conrogatos retinuit epulis ad usque vigiliam tertiam gentili more extentis."

<sup>55</sup> Amm. 18.2.

<sup>56</sup> Amm. 29.4.7: "Contra rem publicam quaedam ad Macrianum scripsisse barbarosque optimates, veritate tormentis expressa, conflagravit flamma poenali."

<sup>57</sup> Amm. 15.5.15–16, 15.5.31; *PLRE I*, s.v. "Silvanus 2," p. 840.

<sup>58</sup> *PLRE I*, s.v. "Vadomarius," p. 928.

## Conclusion

These incidents tell us much about perceptions of the relationship of culture and ethnicity to state loyalty. In the mid-fourth century, confusion about political loyalty emerged primarily in dealings with barbarian client states, mainly in the west, when emperors such as Valentinian allowed Germanic kings to exercise royal authority while serving in the Roman army. Thus, persons of barbarian ethnic backgrounds were assumed to be more naturally inclined toward treasonous behavior, even when they were recruited into imperial service. On several occasions, loyalty to ethnic origins competed directly with loyalty to the Roman state, and imperial policies that permitted dual-state service highlighted the ambiguous political loyalties of Alamannic kings.

But participation in the “civilized” culture of Rome and Persia was not expected to generate quandaries concerning to which imperial authority individuals owed political allegiance. In fact, the assumption was that subscribing to a civilized culture would generate the preconditions for loyalty to Roman political authority, rather than posing a challenge to it.<sup>59</sup> Acculturated inhabitants of the Roman and Persian empires generally thought that loyalty to the state was exclusive. Regardless of their ethnic and cultural background, they expressed their loyalty to a single state and expected their colleagues to do the same. In special cases, individual Romans and Persians might deviate from the norm and adopt different political loyalties, but even traitors knew that they were flagrantly violating the norm, and loyalty to the state remained the accepted default condition. Thus, in the cases studied above, defectors on the eastern frontier—the only place the Romans encountered another “civilized” opponent—usually took up a new political identity at the same time that they adopted any elements of a new cultural identity, thus fulfilling the expectation of single political allegiance.

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<sup>59</sup> For the role of Hellenization in building political loyalty and identity in late Roman Asia Minor, see Stephen Mitchell, “Ethnicity, Acculturation, and Empire in Roman and late Roman Asia Minor,” in Mitchell, Greatrex, eds., *Ethnicity and Culture*, pp. 117–150.

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## Chapter 13

# The “Runaway” Avars and Late Antique Diplomacy

Ekaterina Nechaeva

The treatment of fugitives was extensively discussed in late antique diplomacy, and their status can shed interesting political light on different forms of Roman and barbarian integration and interaction. While the flight of individuals from the Roman Empire to the territory of an enemy or vice-versa happened frequently, there also existed a different form of flight, in this case, the desertion to the enemy, of large groups, such as a part of a people or even the whole.

The subject of this chapter is the “runaway” Avars, as depicted in the fragment of Menander Protector about the Avar embassy to Justin II that was received in Constantinople on 21 November 565 CE:<sup>1</sup> “Ὅτι ἐπὶ Ἰουστίνου τοῦ νέου οἱ τῶν Ἀβάρων πρέσβεις παρεγένοντο ἐν Βυζαντίῳ τὰ συνήθη δῶρα ληόμενοι, ἅπερ τῷ κατ’αὐτοὺς ἔθνει Ἰουστινιανός ὁ πρὸ τοῦ βασιλεὺς ἐδίδου· ἦσαν δὲ καλῶδιά τε χρυσῶ διαπεποικιλμένα, ἐς τὸ εἶργειν τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων ἐπινενοημένα, καὶ κλῖναι ὁμοίως καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ἐς τὸ ἀβρότερον ἀνειμένα.” (“During the reign of the younger Justin the envoys of the Avars came to Byzantium to receive the usual gifts which the previous emperor, Justinian, had given to their tribe. These were cords worked with gold which were made to confine what was escaping, and likewise couches and other luxury goods.”<sup>2</sup>)

The immediate problem concerns the phrase “ἐς τὸ εἶργειν τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων” (Men. 8.4–5). Blockley translates “to confine what was escaping,” and in his note explains, “this is apparently a reference to cords with which the Avars bound up their hair,”<sup>3</sup> with evidence from Agathias and Corippus about the long and shaggy hair of the Avars.<sup>4</sup> Ἀποδιδράσκω, however, was frequently used of human beings who were running away, fleeing, or escaping.<sup>5</sup> But Blockley seems insufficiently puzzled by the concept of “absconding” or “runaway” hair and provides inadequate support for his interpretation. Menander nowhere connects the cords with hair. The fact that Avars were famously disheveled

<sup>1</sup> Y. Kulakovskii, *Istoriya Vizantii* (St Petersburg, 1996), 2.276.

<sup>2</sup> Men. 8.1–6; the numeration of fragments by Menander and translation according to R.C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> Blockley, *The History of Menander*, p. 261, n. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Agathias 1.3.4, and Corippus, *In laudem Iustini minoris praef.* 4.

<sup>5</sup> *LSJ*, s.v. ἀποδιδράσκω.

cannot prove Blockley's interpretation. The translation into Russian by Destunis is quite different: "the laces that were used to bind the fugitives" (fr. 14).<sup>6</sup> The French version by Serge Antès is slightly more literal: "C'étaient des chaînettes d'or ciselé, conçues pour enchaîner en quelque sorte des fugitives."<sup>7</sup>

This study aims to explain what Menander meant by "ἐξ τὸ εἶργειν τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων ἐπινενοημένα." And starting from the problematic word τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων one might suggest a connection with the perception that the Avars were a people who came in desperation to the Romans seeking an alliance, after having previously escaped from the Turks. So τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων in Menander would refer not to the Avars' hair, but to the Avars themselves.

The fragment cited is not the only place in Menander where the Avars are called fugitives. This opprobrious epithet may have reflected the Turkish point of view, regarding the Avars as the people who had fled from their power. The leader of the Turks, Silzibil, speaking about the Avars (*Ouarchonitai*, as he named them), called them fugitives, who would not escape Turkish might in future (Men. 4.2: "οὔτε ... διαφύγοιεν τῶν Τούρκων τὰ ξίφη ... καὶ τὰς ἐμὰς ἡκίστα φευξοῦνται δυνάμεις"; cf. *De sent.* 3). Different cognates of φεύγω are used three times in the passage, and no doubt the meaning is that the Avars had fled from Turkish khanate.<sup>8</sup> The verb φεύγω here can be regarded as virtually synonymous to ἀποδιδράσκω: "Ὅτι ἀρχομένου τοῦ τετάρτου ἔτους τῆς Ἰουστίνου βασιλείας πρεσβεία τῶν Τούρκων ἀφίκετο ἐν Βυζαντίῳ ... ὁ βασιλεὺς ἄρα ἡμᾶς ἀναδιδάξητε ὅση τῶν Ἀβάρων πληθὺς τῆς τῶν Τούρκων ἀφηνίασεν ἐπικρατείας, καὶ εἴ τινες ἔτι παρ' ὑμῖν. εἰσὶ μὲν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, οἳ γε τὰ ἡμέτερα στέργουσι ἔτι, τοὺς δὲ δῆπουθεν ἀποδράσαντας οἶμαι ἀμφὶ τὰς εἴκοσι εἶναι χιλιάδας." In the year 568 CE the emperor Justin II received an embassy from the Turks (Men. 10.1.1–2). Among the other questions, he asked a Turkish envoy how large was the multitude of the Avars who revolted from Turkish rule and whether any remained subject to him. The response was that some of them stayed loyal to the Turks, and the number of those who fled was around 20,000 (Men. 10.1.80–83). The meaning is clear. From the Turkish point of view the Avars had once been subordinate to the Turkish Empire and some of them remained, but some had rebelled (ἀφηνίασεν) and became ἀποδράσαντας, runaways. Thus, the rebel Avars were called "fugitives" by the Turks, and were considered as such. The root ἀποδιδράσκω is used here as well as in the first passage discussed.

In another fragment of Menander (Men. 19.1) appear accusations of the Turkish khan Tourxanthos against the Romans. The khan's boastfulness is striking. He

<sup>6</sup> "Eti podarki sostoyali v shnurkakh, kotorymi svyazyvayut beglykh ...," S. Destunis, trans., and G. Destunis, comm., *Vizantiiskie istoriki* (St Petersburg, 1860), fr. 14, p. 357.

<sup>7</sup> S. Antès, *Corippe* (Paris, 1981), p. 139, App. 2.

<sup>8</sup> About the runaway status of the Avars and their name "Ouarchonitai" see W. Pohl, *Die Awaren: ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa, 567–822 n. Chr.* (Munich, 1988), pp. 27–43; S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, "The Avars," *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 206–208.

blamed the Romans for making a treaty with the Avars.<sup>9</sup> Tourxanthos considered the latter to be his rebel subordinates and, according to all international and diplomatic norms, the Romans were not supposed to make alliances with a tribe that had defected. The terminology used by the Turkish chief is important: “my slaves, the Οὐαρχωνίται” (“τὰ κατ’ ἐμὲ ἀνδράποδα τοὺς Οὐαρχωνίτας” [Men. 19.1.56]); “the Ouarchonitai our slaves ... who fled their masters” (“τοῖς δὲ δὴ Οὐαρχωνίταις τοῖς ἡμετέροις δούλοις [ἔδήλου δὲ τοὺς Ἀβάρους] ἀποδράσαι τοὺς δεσπότης γενόμενος ἔσπονδος” [Men. 19.1.66–67]); and “our slaves, the Ouarchonitai” (“τὸ ἡμέτερον δουλικὸν οἱ Οὐαρχωνίται” [Men. 19.1.82]).

He boasted that, as soon as he wished, they would again become the subjects (κατήκοοι) of the Turks, as has already happened with other tribes, who became subjects (ὑπακούουσιν) and were among the slaves of the Turks (“ἐν μοίρᾳ καθεστήκασιν δούλου”) (Men. 19.1.89–90). First of all, it is obvious that words cognate to ἀποδιδράσκω are often used of the Avars, when their flight from the Turks is mentioned. Another interesting aspect of this terminology is the correlation between the word ἀποδιδράσκω and the notion of slavery. The word ἀποδιδράσκω was regularly used by ancient authors of runaway slaves.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the Turks speak about the Avars as rebel subjects, and subjects in their turn are perceived as slaves.

The notion of “slavery” (δουλεία) is the key to understanding the concept of “absconding” Avars. As Maas, referring to Harmatta, notes, δουλεία in that period “could also be used to denote ... personal and political dependence.”<sup>11</sup> People at such a disadvantage, even in a military alliance between unequal parties, were perceived as slaves not only by barbarians, but by Romans and the Persians as well. Subjects who were in any way joined to the state, on the basis of different forms of alliance, could—at least rhetorically—be regarded as slaves (e.g.: Proc. *Bell.Pers.* 2.3.32–33, δοῦλοι τε καὶ δραπέται; 2.3.39, δεδούλωται; 2.3.47, δοῦλον

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Theophanes of Byzantium, preserved in the Library of Photius (Theoph. Byz. = Phot. *Bibl.* 64). The Turks sent an embassy with gifts to Emperor Justin, beseeching him not to receive the Avars. The term used in Greek is ὑποδέχομαι. The verb δέχομαι seems to be used in diplomatic language to mark receiving in alliance certain people, who thus may have escaped from another alliance or dependence (Priscus 9.3.8–10, 4.15.4.5ff.). Numbering of the fragments of Priscus and translation are from R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Late Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus, and Malchus* (Liverpool, 1981–1983). We cannot be sure that the original word used by Theophanes was preserved by Photius, but it is probable that terminology characteristic of late antique diplomacy continued to be used in the Byzantine period.

<sup>10</sup> *LSJ*, s.v. ἀποδιδράσκω.

<sup>11</sup> M. Maas, “Fugitives and Ethnography in Priscus of Panium,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 19 (1995): 156, n. 32.

(of the emperor, about Alamundarus); Proc. *Bell. Vand.* 1.25.3, δοῦλοί τε βασιλέως (of the Moors); Ioann.Ephes. *Hist.eccl.* 2.11, 18.20–21, 6.11).<sup>12</sup>

So it is important to read the Avar embassy and its conflict with Justin II in the context of this special rhetorical notion of collective δουλεία. The continuation of Justin's response to the Avars, referred to by Menander, justifies it. Justin, concluding his refusal to send any more gifts to the Avars, said: "I shall never need an alliance with you, nor shall you receive from us anything other than what we wish to give, and that is a free gift for your service (δουλείας ἔρανον), not, as you expect, a tax (φορολογία) upon us."<sup>13</sup> So the alliance with the Avars and their service to the Romans was perceived as, or at least proclaimed to be like, slavery—at least in diplomatic and political language.

Evidence from a third source can be adduced, which describes the negotiations between the Avars and Justin II: Corippus' *In laudem Iustini minoris* 3.151–407. Similarities between Corippus and Justin II's speech, as recorded both by Menander and John of Ephesus (*Hist.eccl.* 6.24), have been noted. These suggest that Corippus could have worked from the speeches, or, more probably, that all three had a common, perhaps written source.<sup>14</sup> In the text by Corippus the connection between the fugitive status of the Avars and their servitude is clear. The accusatory speech of the emperor against the Avars includes several passages worth citing:<sup>15</sup> "Why do you praise fugitives and extol an exiled people with empty glory? The bold Avar race, which you say subdued strong kingdoms, could not defend its own lands and left its home as a fugitive"<sup>16</sup>; "Or if the ungrateful peoples refuse to serve, nevertheless it first warns its enemies in the manner of ruling";<sup>17</sup> "Do you think my father did it through fear, because he gave gifts to the needy and exiled

<sup>12</sup> See especially the dissertation of C.F. Pazdernik, *A Dangerous Liberty and a Servitude Free from Care: Political ELEUTHERIA and DOULEIA in Procopius of Caesaria and Thucydides of Athens* (Princeton, NJ, 1997), pp. 3–4, 18, and 29 about "notionally 'enslaved' imperial subjects" and the tendency to perceive allies as slaves. The dissertation provides a brilliant analysis and comparison of Thucydides and Procopius. Menander the Guardsman on the concept of "slavery" is rather close to Procopius.

<sup>13</sup> Men. 8.54–56: "οὐτε γὰρ δεηθεῖν ποτὲ τῆς καθ' ὑμᾶς συμμαχίας, οὔτε τι λήψεσθε παρ' ἡμῶν ἢ καθ' ὅσον ἡμῖν δοκεῖ, ὡσπερ δουλείας ἔρανον, καὶ οὐχ, ὡς οἴεσθε, φορολογίαν τινά."

<sup>14</sup> A. Cameron, *In laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris Libri IV* (London, 1976), p. 191, n. 267; R. Pallas-Brown, "East Roman Perception of the Avars in the Mid- and Late Sixth Century," in S. Mitchell, G. Greatrex, eds., *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London, 2000), p. 318.

<sup>15</sup> Here and elsewhere the translations of Corippus are those of A. Cameron, *Flavius Cresconius Corippus, In Praise of Justin II* (London, 1976).

<sup>16</sup> Coripp. *In laud.Iust.* 3.317–320: "Quid profugos laudas famaue attolis inani extorrem populum? Quae fortia regna subegit effera gens Auarum proprias defendere terras non potuit sedesque suas fugitive reliquit."

<sup>17</sup> Coripp. *In laud.Iust.* 3.333–334: "Vel si seruire negabunt ingratae gentes, primum tamen ammonet hostes more gubernandi."

out of pity?” “We do this because of the piety of our rule, and we command that the appointed gifts be given to those who are grateful ...”;<sup>18</sup> “... peoples who are willing to serve we protect, and we raise them humble with gifts and honor”;<sup>19</sup> “... and gave their hearts and minds to servitude and remain loyal to us though they were once our enemies. See, Scaldor is ready to serve in our palace and sends us legates and countless gifts. Against those we find ungrateful, we go to war. Are we to stand in the way of kings, yet open our doors to exiled slaves?”<sup>20</sup>

The tenor of Justin II’s speech is as follows: the Romans were extremely generous to have accepted the fugitive Avars, who subsequently showed base ingratitude in demanding gifts and refusing to serve. Justin depicted the Avars from one point of view as fugitives from somewhere (surely from the Turks, though it is not stated directly),<sup>21</sup> and from another as those who have fled to the Roman service, being admitted by the emperor Justinian. Concluding an alliance with the Romans brought the Avars into servitude. The fugitive status of the Avars is underlined many times, no doubt because of Justin’s desire to humiliate and insult them. The same method was used by the Byzantine general Priscus, who calls the khagan of the Avars “the fugitive from the east”, τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἕως ἀπόδρασιν (Theoph.Sim. 7.7.5.ff.). Theophylact Simocatta, explaining the history of the epithet, told the famous story about the true and false Avars.<sup>22</sup>

The texts examined show that the Avars were often called a “runaway” or “fugitive” tribe, in allusion to their defection from the Turks; in most cases forms of the verb ἀποδιδράσκω are used, a word with connotations of slavery and

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<sup>18</sup> Coripp. *In laud.* 3.347–349: “Terrore putatis id nostrum fecisse patrem, miseratus egenis et profugis quod dona dedit? Pietate regendi hoc facimus gratisque dari prouisa iubemus.”

<sup>19</sup> Coripp. *In laud.Iust.* 3.369–370: “Gentes servire volentes suscipimus donisque humiles et honore levamus.”

<sup>20</sup> Coripp. *In laud.Iust.* 3.382–391: “Mentes animosque dedere servitio nobisque manent ex hoste fideles: en Scultor, nostra servire paratus in aula, legatos nobis et plurima munera mittit. Quos contra ingrates defendimus arma paramus. Obstamus dominis, profugis damus ostia servis.”

<sup>21</sup> Cameron, *In Laudem Iustini*, p. 193, n. 319, comments that “from Byzantine point of view the nomadic Avars were no more than fugitives from their homeland.” But the meaning of the phrase is more complex.

<sup>22</sup> Here we face another very complex problem, namely the reasons for such appellation of the Avars in the context of Turkish–Byzantine–Avar relations. According to Dobrovits, it shows Turkish influence and interest in keeping the Avars as “Pseudo-Avars” for reasons of diplomatic and political status. See M. Dobrovits, “They Called Themselves Avar: Considering the Pseudo-Avar Question in the Work of Theophylaktos,” *Eran und Aneran, Webfestschrift Marshak*, Studies presented to Boris Ilich Marshak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday, electronic version, TRANSOXIANA, *Journal de Estudios Orientales* (2003), at <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/dobrovits.html>, accessed 26 July 2010; also Pohl, *Die Awaren*, pp. 31–37.



servitude. The Avars, having fled the Turks, made an alliance with the Romans and thus found themselves in bond to the Roman Empire.

Now the final link in the chain. What is the connection between the fugitive and servile state of the Avars and the gold cords “binding” them (Men. 8.1–6)? Here late antique diplomacy and the semantics of diplomatic gifts come into play. The question is complicated, and the importance of gifts in international relations in Late Antiquity is hard to overestimate. Roman diplomacy seems to have generated a protocol to determine what gifts were to be given to what peoples under what circumstances. Gifts destined for the barbarians and their chiefs indicated their status.<sup>23</sup> In several instances, errors or injustice in distributing gifts caused serious international conflict (Prisc. 11.2; Amm. 26.5.7; Agath. 5.11–12). The issue was not just money and valuables, but, above all, status and prestige.

Another closely related subject is insignia, those special signs of power that Roman rulers sent to barbarian chiefs and kings, sanctioning their right to rule. Diplomatic gifts as well as insignia had ambivalent meanings. Some kinds of insignia were signs of honor, such as those that copied different kinds of insignia of the emperor himself. He who obtained an analogous set could, thus, pretend to comparable status. On the other hand such acts of investiture proclaimed the dependence of local rulers,<sup>24</sup> putting them in client (or vassal) positions toward the empire and making them subordinates, or even δοῦλοι<sup>25</sup> of the emperor.<sup>26</sup>

The set of gifts that Justinian gave the Avars and that they later wanted to receive from Justin II deserves special attention. What were the chains mentioned by Menander twice in different terms?<sup>27</sup> They could have been neck decorations, which, according to some scholars, “appeared in the barbarian world in the IV–VI c.

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<sup>23</sup> M. Schmauder, *Oberschichtgräber und Verwahrkunde in Südosteuropa im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert. Zum Verhältnis zwischen dem spätantiken Reich und der barbarischen Oberschicht aufgrund der archäologischen Quellen* (Bukarest, 2002), 1.218; W. Pohl, “The Empire and the Lombards: Treaties and Negotiations in the Sixth Century,” in W. Pohl, ed., *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1997), p. 83; D.R. Shanzer, “Two Clocks and a Wedding: Theodoric’s Diplomatic Relations with the Burgundians,” *Romanobarbarica* 14 (1996–1997): 237. Also M. Hardt, *Gold und Herrschaft: die Schätze europäischer Könige und Fürsten im ersten Jahrtausend* (Berlin, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> A. Grabar, *Imperator v Vizantijskom iskusstve* (in Russian, translation of *L’Empereur dans l’art Byzantin. Recherches sur l’art officiel de l’Empire d’Orient* [Paris, 1936]) (Moskva, 2000), pp. 27–28, n. 7.

<sup>25</sup> O. Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell* (Jena, 1938), p. 205.

<sup>26</sup> A. Kaldellis describes the paradigm of master–slave relationship as typical in relations with subjects, especially for the times of Justinian, and notes the influence of oriental despotism and Christianity: A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA, 2004), p. 137.

<sup>27</sup> “δώρα ἔστειλεν, σειράς τε χρυσῶ διαπεποικιλμένας” (Men. 5.2.3); “ἦσαν δὲ καλῶδιὰ τε χρυσῶ διαπεποικιλμένα” (Men. 8.3–4).

as gifts from the Byzantine emperors to the foreign chiefs, signifying their position in the hierarchy of the empire.”<sup>28</sup> Such chains are known also from archaeological finds.<sup>29</sup> While one cannot prove that the chains found among treasures of the “Great Migration” epoch are like those Menander mentions, the hypothesis is tempting. They could have been “insignia.”

Menander’s evidence may be interpreted thus: the cords are said to bind the fugitives in the sense that such gifts were destined for the peoples who would thereby be joined as allies to the Roman Empire. The verb εἶργω used by Menander may be regarded as a metaphor, but one with some live meaning. The military alliance and service of the tribes on the side of empire was a sort of δουλεία. The circumstances of the Avar embassy, when Justin II had refused their demands, are relevant. The term “fugitives” was intended to insult the envoys. The “runaway” status of the Avars means that they were fugitives in the sense that they had run away from the Turks (and that surely was an insult to them), and also in the sense that they had run to the alliance with the Romans.

As allies they would receive special gifts, both honorable and humble, signifying the distinction of their service to the Roman Empire. Such ambiguity was an important part of the ideology of the Roman foreign policy and diplomacy that, however tricked out in the finery of rhetoric, was clear to the parties concerned. It is possible to suppose that the almost parenthetical phrase “ἐξ τὸ εἶργειν τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων ἐπινενοημένα” in Menander, which elucidated the meaning or destination of the chains, was written by Menander himself (or even by a later compiler or commentator) to explain to the reader the real significance of the gift. The origin of the statement may have been a speech of the emperor himself, as the situation was critical and Justin’s treatment of the Avar embassy far from gentle. This is clear not only from Menander, but also from Corippus and John of Ephesus. Justin II, intending to insult the Avars, may have loudly enunciated matters usually muffled in diplomatic tact.

<sup>28</sup> Y. Shevchenko, *Zolotoi poyas: relikviya “v meru groba gospodnya” Yuvelirnoe iskusstvo i material’naya kul’tura, tezisy doklada, II kollokvium* (1979), p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> W. Seipel, ed., *Barbarenschmuck und Römergold. Der Schatz von Szilágysomlyó* (Wien, 1999), pp. 97–111; M. Kazanski, P. Périn, F. Vallet, *L’Or des princes barbares. Du Caucase à la Gaule, Ve siècle après J.-C.* (Paris, 2000), cat. nos. 9.5–6, 12.2, 13.3, 32.1; I. Zasetzkaya, *Kul’tura kochevnikov yuzhnorusskikh stepei v gunnskuyu epokhu* (St Petersburg, 1994), table 32.3; I. Zasetzkaya, M. Kazanski, I. Akhmedov, *Morskoï Chulek. Burials of the Nobility from the Sea of Azov Region and Their Place in the History of Tribes from the North Black Sea Coasts in the Post-Hun Epoch* (St Petersburg, 2007), pp. 28–33. I express particular gratitude to the authors for giving me the opportunity to read their then-forthcoming book, and to I. Zasetzkaya for her consultation and help.

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## B. Becoming Roman: Social and Economic Interchange

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## Chapter 14

# Captivity and Romano-Barbarian Interchange

Noel Lenski

In the September issue of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for the year 1748, a disturbing letter was published: "Sir, it is highly probable that very few of our countrymen know of the great hardships and cruel usage of 64 poor Englishmen, now in slavery, in the kingdom of Morocco, in Barbary. It is greatly to be regretted that a subscription is not set on foot for their deliverance from the intolerable tyranny of their inhuman task-masters . . . For what state in life can be worse than Turkish bondage!" Already the next month's issue reported the establishment of a common fund to ransom the captives and posed a number of questions that had naturally arisen: How long had the prisoners been in slavery? About what sum would be necessary for redeeming and bringing them home? And what of their families? By November, it had been learned that the men had crewed a privateer named *Inspector* that had been wrecked off Tangier Bay almost three years earlier, on 4 January 1746. Several of the captives had already attempted escape: some successfully, others at the cost of their heads.

By December the affair had become a *cause célèbre*. One of the escapees had been located, and his story of the captivity relayed: having swum to safety, the men were caught, stripped, imprisoned, and treated as slaves of the Moorish governor; 28 of the 96 captives had already, "turned Moors [that is, converted to Islam], not being able to undergo the fatigues we have undergone." Even so, help, it seemed, was on the way, for King George II had sent an ambassador to settle a ransom. Yet fully one year later, the December 1749 *Gentleman's Magazine* reported that negotiations had faltered when the ambassador arrived short of the £4399 demanded for the captives. After 1749 negotiations seem to have broken off, and the magazine ceased all correspondence on the affair. One of the survivors, Thomas Troughton, did, however, publish a narrative of his experience. His object was, in part, to memorialize what he had suffered, but above all to rally his countrymen against what was at the time an all-too-common occurrence, for the crewmen of the *Inspector* represented only a fraction of the tens of thousands of Europeans enslaved by Muslims in the Mediterranean and Atlantic during the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sources for this incident can be found at *The Gentleman's Magazine* 18 (1748): 413, 440, 482, 531; 19 (1749): 3, 142, 560–561. This source was not noted by L. Colley in

Although this incident is obviously far removed from the ancient world, its vivid testimony of the details of capture and enslavement by foreign peoples offers a window into a phenomenon that was even more widespread in the turbulent world of Late Antiquity. For this reason, it serves as a fitting backdrop to the discussion to come. In Late Antiquity, as in the eighteenth century, trafficking in humans was rampant, but news of captured countrymen was scarce on the home-front and traveled painfully slowly; violence or warfare were at the root of most foreign captivity; the ordeal was generally resolvable, though only through money settlements; escape was possible, but only at risk of death; efforts to obtain release entailed protracted negotiations that often proved fruitless; bondage to “the other” added an air of lurid exoticism that was at once repulsive and exciting; and one common response of the captive to his or her plight was simple submission, even to the point of “going native.” Though all of these phenomena can be found in Late Antiquity, a study of this length can survey only the tiniest fraction of the available sources. Furthermore, because of its brevity, this chapter will not be able to investigate the complex question of the relationship between captivity and slavery beyond asserting that no easy distinctions can be drawn.<sup>2</sup> Its object is rather to demonstrate that the captivity of Romans to barbarians and vice versa was a widespread problem in Late Antiquity and that it played a major role in the interactions, social, economic, cultural, and religious, between Romans and barbarians.

### Roman Captives of Barbarians

There can be no doubt that late Romans were regularly captured and enslaved by barbarians along all their frontiers. The problem occurred on a scale far greater than the sources might suggest. An inscription found in Augsburg in 1992 illustrates the problem, for it records a raid by the Iuthungi deep into Roman Italy in the winter of 259/60 that carried off “many thousands of Italian captives” but was eventually stopped by a Roman general near the Lech in April 260. Prior to the discovery of the inscription, we had only the vaguest idea that there ever was such an incursion and no reports of the capture of thousands.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, extant sources are so patchy that they could report only a fraction of the problem. Nevertheless the tale they

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her fine book *Captives* (New York, 2002), p. 62, though she used Troughton’s *Barbarian Cruelty* (London, 1751). See also K.R. Bradley, “On Captivity under the Principate,” *Phoenix* 58 (2004): 298–318.

<sup>2</sup> On this vexed question, see Malchus fr. 6.2 with Y. Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. J.M. Todd (Cambridge, MA, 2009) pp. 33–36. Not discussed in this chapter are the many instances of captivity by brigands, e.g. Aug. *Ep.* 10\* (CSEL 88.46–51); Sid. *Ap. Ep.* 6.4.1.

<sup>3</sup> L. Bakker, “Raetien unter Postumus: Das Siegesdenkmal einer Juthungenschlacht im Jahre 260 n. Chr. aus Augsburg,” *Germania* 71 (1993): 370–386. Oros. 7.22.7 may refer to the incursion.

tell is harrowing. To get an impression, one may think of Ammianus watching tens of thousands of Roman captives paraded past the walls of Amida by Shapur II in 359; or of the Quadi and Sarmatian raids into Pannonia he reports for 374 during which the princess Constantia, granddaughter of Constantine, narrowly escaped capture.<sup>4</sup> Military defeats at the hands of barbarian peoples generally led to mass enslavements, as when Gaiseric's rout of Aspar during the Vandal takeover of Africa in 431 resulted in the capture of thousands, including the future emperor Marcian, or when the Hunnic invasion of Anatolia and the Levant in 395 occasioned the enslavement of 18,000.<sup>5</sup> Often entire cities were enslaved: Attila carried off inhabitants from Ratiaria, Naissus, Philippopolis, Arcadiopolis, Constantia, and most other fortified cities of Thrace in the 440s; and the Avars enslaved Singidunum and Anchialus in the mid-580s.<sup>6</sup> The Persians had a particular penchant for the capture, deportation, and resettlement of cities, territories, and armies, as when Shapur I captured over seventy towns and cities and deported their populations between 256 and 260, or when Kavad I took the population of Amida in 503, and Khosrau I the populations of Sura, Antioch, Beroea, Apamea, Callinicum, and Batnae in 540.<sup>7</sup>

The fact is that, for most barbarian societies, slave raiding was both a political and economic strategy. This is well illustrated in an incident from Gregory's *Historiae* that reports how, in 532, when Theuderic refused to march on Burgundy with Lothar and Childebert, his Frankish troops nearly revolted until he won them back by promising to lead them instead against Clermont-Ferrand where "they had his permission to bring home with them not only every single thing which they could steal in the region that they were about to attack but also the

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<sup>4</sup> For Shapur's captives in 359 see Amm. 19.6.1–2, cf. 20.7.15, 25.8.1. On the Sarmatian raids of 374 see Amm. 29.6.8 with N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), pp. 40, 102–103.

<sup>5</sup> On the Vandals see Procop. *Bell.* 3.4.1–11; cf. Evag. Schol. *HE* 2.1; Theophan. a.m. 5943. On the Huns see *Chron. Misc. ad annum 724 (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 3.4.2.136–7)* with G. Greatrex, M. Greatrex, "The Hunnic Invasion of the East of 395 and the Fortress of Ziatha," *Byzantion* 69 (1999): 65–75.

<sup>6</sup> For Attila see Priscus fr. 9.4 = Theophan. a.m. 5942. For the Avars see Evag. Schol. *HE* 6.10 with M. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 140–55.

<sup>7</sup> Sources at M.H. Dodgeon, S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, AD 226–363* (London, 1991), pp. 49–67; G. Greatrex, S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, AD 363–630* (London, 2002), pp. 63–67, 102–108. On the Sasanian penchant for large-scale capture and deportation see S.N.C. Lieu, "Captives, Refugees and Exiles: A Study of Cross-Frontier Civilian Movements and Contacts between Rome and Persia from Valerian to Jovian," in P. Freeman, D. Kennedy, eds., *The Defense of the Roman and Byzantine East*, British Archaeological Reports – International Series 297 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 475–505; M.G. Morony, "Population Transfers between Sasanian Iran and the Byzantine Empire," in *La Persia e Bisanzio. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Roma, 14–18 ottobre 2002)* (Rome, 2004), pp. 161–179.



entire population.”<sup>8</sup> Control of the *Gefolgschaft* thus entailed, at least in part, the acquisition and redistribution of human capital. Raiding for Roman captives also was regularly used by barbarian groups, Germanic and otherwise, as a political tool to punish the imperial government for perceived slights. Gaiseric raided Italian coastal towns for captives in revenge for the failure of Valentinian III and Aetius to render property he felt was owed him after Hermanaric’s marriage to Eudocia; in like fashion the Ghassanid prince al-Nu‘man raided the eastern frontier ca. 582 for captives in revenge for the capture of his father al-Mundhir.<sup>9</sup>

Particularly lucrative for barbarians were those high-prestige, high-status captives whose relatives were willing to ransom them at all costs. The wife of a certain Syllus, captured by the Huns in Ratiaria in 449, was ransomed by her husband for 500 solidi, 25 times the average price of a slave in Late Antiquity, and in 474 the *magister militum* Heracleius was ransomed from Theodoric the Ostrogoth by his relatives for 100 talents.<sup>10</sup> In several sermons from the end of his life, Augustine discusses ransoms paid to redeem captives from the Vandals as if these were a common and cripplingly expensive part of life for well-heeled North Africans.<sup>11</sup> Although most families were unable to afford such sums, it appears that late Romans, like the eighteenth-century English gentlemen, also assembled ransoms collectively. Procopius tells us that the citizens of Edessa and Carrhae amassed great hoards in a vain effort to ransom the citizens of Antioch in 540.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, powerful individuals from Melania the Younger to the empress Flaccilla were eager to loosen their purse-strings on behalf of the masses of captives.<sup>13</sup>

When possible, well-connected family and friends were enlisted to expedite negotiations and, with luck, curb expenses. Ennodius of Pavia thus worked his connections with the patrician and praetorian prefect Liberius in an effort to win the release of his relative Camella from captivity in Gaul. He also exploited his

<sup>8</sup> Greg. Tur. *Hist.* 3.11–13 (*MGH SRM* 1.107–110).

<sup>9</sup> On Gaiseric see Priscus fr. 39.1. On al-Nu‘man see Evag. Schol. *HE* 6.2; cf. Joh. Eph. *HE* 3.42–3; Joh. Mosch. *Prat.* 155 with I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. 1.1, *Political and Military History* (Washington, DC, 1995), pp. 532–540.

<sup>10</sup> On the wife of Syllus see Priscus, fr. 14. On Heracleius see Malchus, fr. 6.2. The Vandals seem to have taken particular delight in holding people of noble lineage in slavery, cf. Vict. Vit. *HP* 1.13–14 (*MGH AA* 3.4–5).

<sup>11</sup> Aug. *Serm.* 134.3 (*PL* 38.744); *Serm.* 344.4 (*PL* 39.1514–5); *Serm.* 345.2 (*PL* 39.1518–9); cf. R. Klein, *Die Sklaverei in der Sicht der Bischöfe Ambrosius und Augustinus* (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 196–197, 207–208.

<sup>12</sup> Procop. *Bell.* 2.13.2–7, 14.1–4.

<sup>13</sup> Geront. *VMelaniae* 20 (*Sources chrétiennes* [Sch] 90.168–70); Greg. Nys. *Or. fun. in imp. Flaccillam* (*Gregorii Nysseni Opera* [GNO] 9.487); cf. Zach. Mit. 12.4 on Justinian’s ransoming activity and Joh. Lyd. *De mag.* 3.75.1–3 (ed. Bandy) on that of the patrician Phocas (J.R. Martindale, ed., *PLRE II. AD 395–527* [Cambridge, 1980] [*PLRE II*], s.v. “Phocas 5”). *P. Cair. Masp.* 3.67312 (a. 567) records the will of Fl. Theodorus, who left his fortune to the monastery of Apa Shenoute with the request that it be liquidated and the proceeds used to ransom captives.

contacts with Avitus of Aquileia for the release of the brother of his friend Bonifatius, held captive in that city.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Avitus of Vienne opened negotiations with Maximus, bishop of Pavia, for the release of a boy named Avulus, held captive by the Ostrogoths for four years, at the request of the boy's father.<sup>15</sup> Powerful friends could not, however, always keep expenses down, as Ruricius of Limoges' friend Possessor revealed, for though Possessor's fortunes had once matched his name, he had gone bankrupt ransoming his own brother.<sup>16</sup>

Ennodius, Avitus, and Ruricius were, of course, all bishops, figures whose growing stature in Late Antiquity rendered them important power brokers in the business of ransoming. This was true from the early third century, when Cyprian of Carthage first recognized the ransom of captives from barbarians as an act of corporal mercy.<sup>17</sup> In the fourth century, bishops across the empire became involved in ransoming captives, most famous among them Ambrose, who, in 379, melted down sacred vessels from his church to ransom Romans recently ensnared following the Gothic invasion of Thrace and Illyricum. Naturally this charitable act elicited derision from his Arian opponents, not without reason.<sup>18</sup> In a fine article on Caesarius of Arles' activities in this arena, Klingshirn has shown how Caesarius liquidated church assets and assembled donations for ransoms not just to exercise his charity toward fellow citizens of Arles and other Christians, but to extend his ecclesiastical patronage over external, barbarian, sometimes

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<sup>14</sup> Ennod. *Ep.* 9.29 (no. 457: *MGH AA* 7.319–20); *Ep.* 5.20 (no. 248: *MGH AA* 7.195) with *PLRE II*, s.v. "Bonifatius 4."

<sup>15</sup> *Ep.* 12 (*MGH AA* 6.2.45). Avitus was regularly involved in the ransom of captives, cf. *Ep.* 10, 35, 46 (*MGH AA* 6.2.44, 65, 76); Ennod. *VEpifani* 173 (*MGH AA* 7.106) with D. Shanzer, I. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*, Translated Texts for Historians (TTH) 38 (Liverpool, 2002), pp. 7, 350–356; D. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 29–57, at pp. 42–50. Cf. Alexander of Antioch's (s. 413–421) redemption of his secretary, Joh. Mosch. *Prat.* 34 (*PG* 87.2884).

<sup>16</sup> Ruric. *Ep.* 2.8; cf. *Ep.* 2.3 (*CCSL* 64.341; cf. 333–334).

<sup>17</sup> Cyprian *Ep.* 62.4 (*CSEL* 3.2.700); cf. Lact. *DI* 6.12.16, 31, 39. Prior to this, the biblical injunctions to care for and free captives (Is. 61:1–2; Lk. 4:18–19; Mt. 25:34–43) had been interpreted as applicable to fellow Christians imprisoned by the Roman authorities, cf. C. Osiek, "The Ransom of Captives: Evolution of a Tradition," *Harvard Theological Review* 74 (1981): 365–386.

<sup>18</sup> Amb. *De off.* 2.70, 136–143; cf. Paulinus *VAmbr.* 38 (*PL* 14.43); Amb. *Ep.* 73(18).16 (*CSEL* 82.43). See also I.J. Davidson, *Ambrose De officiis* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 746–8; Klein, *Die Sklaverei*, p. 26. The liquidation of church plate to ransom captives becomes something of a hagiographical topos, cf. Possidius, *VAugustini* 24 (*PL* 32.54); Honoratus *VHilarii* 11 (*SCh* 404.116); Vict. Vit. *HP* 1.25 (*MGH AA* 3.7); Ennod. *VEpifani* 115–119 (*MGH AA* 7.98–99); Uranius, *VPaulini* 6 (*PL* 53.862–3). Julianus Pomerius (*De vit. cont.* 1.25 [*PL* 10.440]) lists the ransoming of captives along with feeding the poor and clothing the naked in a "job description" of the *sacerdos*; cf. Sidon. Ap. *Ep.* 4.11.4; 7.7.6; Greg. Tur. *Hist.* 6.8; 7.24 (*MGH SRM* 1.277–278, 344).

even pagan communities.<sup>19</sup> To be sure, such bishops were reacting to the political chaos and military violence of their age with a legitimate form of pastoral care. Because, however, they also were broadening their power base—and in the process destroying sacred, and often very valuable endowments—they necessarily drew fire from their opponents. For precisely this reason, a series of laws and canons from the sixth century onward regulated tightly the liquidation of church property for such purposes.<sup>20</sup>

As in the case of the English sailors from the *Inspector*, the redemption or ransoming of late ancient captives also was a regular subject of delicate negotiations between Romans and barbarians. When the Alamannic chief Vadomarius came to terms with Julian in 359, the emperor demanded the return of all Romans captured by the Alamanni. To ensure full compliance, Julian assembled a full roster of 3,000 names to be checked against those returned.<sup>21</sup> The parties to peace negotiations often attempted to avoid the necessity of ransoming in the first place, as when Jovian negotiated the surrender of the fortresses Nisibis and Singara in 363 minus their inhabitants, or when the magister militum Theognis convinced the Avar khan Baian to accept the surrender of Sirmium without its denizens ca. 582.<sup>22</sup> The problem of war captives as a subject of negotiation of course cut both ways. Alaric, for example, first demanded the return of all slaves of barbarian origin as a precondition of lifting his siege of Rome in 408.<sup>23</sup> Equally delicate were negotiations between different barbarian kingdoms over hostages, as when in 495 Theodoric sent Epifanius of Pavia to engage Gundobad, king of the Burgundians, in sensitive discussions for the ransom of 6,000 Ligurians captured

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<sup>19</sup> Cyprianus, *VCaesarii* 1.20, 32–44, 2.8–9, 23–24 (CCSL 104.303–304, 308–314, 327–328, 334–335) with W. Klingshirn, “Caesarius of Arles and the Ransoming of Captives,” *JRS* 75 (1985): 183–203. Confirmation of Klingshirn’s theory can be found in Severinus of Noricum, who assembled a veritable army of former captives as clients who served him in various roles, Eugip. *VSeverini* 9.1, 10.1–2, 17.1 (*SCh* 374.202, 206–208, 226). Numerous other examples of bishops involved in ransoming captives are cataloged at R. W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin, TX, 1993), pp. 101–102; H. Grieser, *Sklaverei im spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Gallien (5.–7. Jh.)* (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 167–190.

<sup>20</sup> *CJ* 1.2.21 (a. 529); *Nov. Iust.* 7.8 (a. 535), 65.1 (a. 538), 120.9–10 (a. 544); *Conc. Clippiacense* a. 626–627 can. 25 (CCSL 148A.296).

<sup>21</sup> *Zos.* 3.4.4–5.1; *Eunap. Hist.* fr. 19; *Amm.* 18.2.19; *Lib. Or.* 18.78–9. Cf. the role of Roman captives in Julian’s negotiations with the Chamavi in 357 (*Zos.* 3.7.6–7; *Eunap. Hist.* fr. 18.6) in Constantius’ negotiations with Zizais and the Sarmatians in 358 (*Amm.* 17.12.11; 20), and in Julian’s negotiations with Suomarius that same year (*Amm.* 17.10.4). Julian himself claimed to have rescued 20,000 captives (*Ep. ad Ath.* 280c).

<sup>22</sup> On Nisibis and Singara see the sources at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, p. 163, nn. 51–52. On Sirmium see *Men. Prot.* fr. 27.3 with J. R. Martindale, ed., *PLRE III. AD 527–640* (Cambridge, 1992), s.v. “Theognis 1.”

<sup>23</sup> *Zos.* 5.40.3. Eventually, of course, many Romans themselves suffered captivity, cf. *Aug. De excidio urbis Romae* 2.2 (CCSL 46.252).

ca. 491. Unable at the time to retake the captives by force and constrained by straitened circumstances to provide little in the way of ransom money, Theodoric eventually offered his daughter in marriage to Gundobad's son and, probably, a vague and ultimately hollow promise of a share in the inheritance rights to the Ostrogothic kingdom.<sup>24</sup> Given that money was being weighed out against human lives, it is little wonder that the arrangement of ransoms was a contentious issue, often demanded concessions from both sides, and, as in the story of the *Inspector*, regularly broke down.<sup>25</sup> Priscus' famous embassy to the court of Attila in 449 eventually foundered in large part on the question of captives.<sup>26</sup>

Priscus' embassy confirms yet another commonality with the English captives in Morocco, the tendency for some prisoners simply to go native. Among Priscus' most interesting acquaintances during his journey was a trader from Viminacium who had been taken prisoner by the Hunnic leader Onegesius, whom he had served faithfully and by whom he was eventually freed. After manumission, he married a Hunnic wife and became a wealthy freedman who readily sprang to the defense of the Hunnic lifestyle in a lengthy diatribe before Priscus.<sup>27</sup> Nor was he unusual: Gregory Thaumaturgus indicates that many had joined the Goths during their raids on central Anatolia in the 260s and became so thoroughly barbarized that they renounced their past and willingly executed Roman prisoners;<sup>28</sup> and the Gauls of the mid-fifth century, Salvian reports, gladly supported their barbarian captors against their former Roman overlords.<sup>29</sup> Little wonder, then, that a law of 366 on *postliminium*—the legal right to return to citizenship and property after foreign captivity—explicitly denies this right to those who willingly fled to or remained with barbarians longer than necessary.<sup>30</sup>

Priscus' embassy to the Huns also evinces one final commonality with our English captives, the role of exoticism in increasing the value of outsiders and thus raising the stakes in their capture. Among the curiosities witnessed by Priscus

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<sup>24</sup> Ennod. *VEpifani* 120–176: *MGH AA* 7.99–106. The excellent article of D. Shanzer, “Two Clocks and a Wedding: Theodoric's Diplomatic Relations with the Burgundians,” *Romanobarbarica* 14 (1996–1997): 225–258, illuminates the terms of the agreement. At times captives themselves became the reward, as when Tiberius offered Khosrau all the Persian captives he currently held in a bid to coax him into a peace in 589. *Men. Prot. fr.* 23.8; cf. *Zon.* 14.11.16. See also the incidents at Malchus, fr. 5 and Sebeos 39(128).

<sup>25</sup> See for example Joh. Mosch. *Prat.* 112 (*PG* 87.2976–2977).

<sup>26</sup> Priscus fr. 11.2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Greg. Thaum. *Can. Ep.* 7 (*PG* 10.1040) with P.J. Heather, J.F. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, TTH 11 (Liverpool, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *De gub.* 5.5 (21–23), 5.7 (27–28), 5.8 (36–38) (*CSEL* 8.108–111, 113–114); cf. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> *CTh* 5.7.1; cf. *CJ* 6.1.3 (a. 317/23), ordering that the feet of fugitive slaves who fled to the barbarians be amputated. On *postliminium* see *Dig.* 49.15 and M.V. Sanna, *Nuove ricerche in tema di postliminium e redemptio ab hostibus* (Cagliari, 2001).

while at the Hunnic royal court was a certain Zercon, a black African slave with a physical deformity who was eventually captured by the Huns and wound up in the hands of Attila's brother, Bleda. Zercon was kept as a court jester, a sort of goliwog mutant whose incongruity in central Europe made him a rare prize.<sup>31</sup> Exoticism also boosted the erotic value of captives. Fowden, for example, has recently argued that the bathing beauty portrayed in the frescoes at the Umayyad palace of Qusayr 'Amra was the captive Sasanian princess Shâh-I Âfrîd, daughter of Yazdigird III (632–651), who was captured and eventually offered to the caliph al-Walîd I. In the fresco, on the wall of al-Walîd's palace, the artist simultaneously exposes the girl's naked beauty, subtly reveals her exoticism and captivity, and throws into relief her master's dominion not just over her as subject but also over her father the foreign potentate.<sup>32</sup>

### Barbarian Captives of the Romans

This notion of exoticism provides a good transition to the question of barbarian slaves and captives of the Romans. Not surprisingly, the Romans felt the same titillation as Bleda and al-Walîd at holding exotic barbarians in thrall. Julian, for example, selected as his prize from the prisoners of Maiozamalcha a single deaf mute Persian boy whose queer ability to express himself in graceful signs he found fascinating.<sup>33</sup> For Romans, too, exoticism also was an important spur to eroticism. Ausonius' prize slave mistress Bissula offers a star example. Captured as a girl during Valentinian's Rhine expedition of 368, she was schooled in Latin under the tutelage of her owner and eventually freed by him. Ausonius' fawning praise for her exotic beauty, her blond hair and blue eyes, her charming combination of German and Roman habits, leaves little doubt that he was himself enthralled by her enticements and surely took advantage of his master's prerogative to taste their fruits. She was the perfect fetish, "rather terrifying to the unaccustomed, but charming to her lord."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Priscus, fr. 13.2 = *Suda* Z 29. Compare the Pontic slave girl whose tiny breasts were ogled with curiosity by the large-bosomed women of Dernis, Syn. *Ep.* 4[5].

<sup>32</sup> G. Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, CA, 2004), pp. 227–247. Compare Khosrau's lust for Euphemia, a captive from Sura, Procop. *Bell.* 2.5.28–30.

<sup>33</sup> Amm. 24.4.26.

<sup>34</sup> Auson. *Biss.* 3–4: "horridulum non solitis, sed domino venustum." Compare the beautiful and exotic prisoner from "Kherkhir" (Khirgiz?) presented by the Turkish khan Sizabul to Zemarchus, the MVM *per Orientem*, in 570/71, Men. Prot. fr. 10.3 with R.C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 264–265. More on the erotic appeal of the barbarian slave at Joh. Chrys. *In Joan. hom.* 79 (PG 59.432); Amm. 24.4.27.

Late Romans, no less than barbarians, counted on regular hauls of foreign captives to gain diplomatic and military advantage and feed their slave markets. Traditionally it has been assumed that slave supplies from the *externae gentes* dropped markedly with the end of the “wars of conquest” in the early first century CE. This assumption proves false under closer scrutiny, for while the frequency and scale of warfare certainly dropped off in the second century CE, it resumed with vigor in the third- and continued steady into the fourth century and beyond. A full catalog of the evidence is impossible, but a few examples can illustrate the point: Julian claimed to have taken thousands of captives in his four years in Gaul between 356 and 360;<sup>35</sup> Theodosius’ general Modares captured 4,000 wagonloads of Gothic women and children in 380; the general Sabinianus captured over 500 prisoners from Theodoric’s Gothic rearguard in 479; a passage of Orosius hints that the barbarian followers of Radagaisus were sold by the thousands at rock-bottom prices after their defeat in 406; a law of 409 advertises Huns and Scyri recently captured in battle who could be claimed for use on landed estates as *coloni*; and the magister militum Areobindus took 30,000 captives from Persarmenia during raids in 504.<sup>36</sup> The Romans could thus still bring in massive hauls of prisoners.

For Romans, as for barbarians, the traffic in captives and slaves was very much a question of money. Though we have no good evidence that the Romans returned barbarian captives for ransoms, all along the frontier barbarians were readily available for sale, whether by Romans or by fellow barbarians who had captured or enslaved them. The fourth-century trader’s handbook *Expositio totius mundi* states explicitly that Pannonia and Numidia offered especially rich markets for slaves.<sup>37</sup> In 393 or 394, Symmachus wrote to his friend Flavianus, then on the Rhine, to request the purchase and shipment of 20 male slaves for donation to the curule stables in Rome. His reason for looking so far afield was his awareness that “the location of slaves along the frontier is easy and the price is usually tolerable.”<sup>38</sup> The traffic in barbarian captives was indeed so widespread that, when in 372 Valentinian I sent his general Severus on a secret mission into Alamannic territory to capture the king Macrianus, Severus happened upon some Roman slave traders and their captives, whom he was forced to kill in order to maintain his cover.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately all Roman denizens of the frontier zone assumed that money was to be made from the traffic in barbarians. In point of fact, this mentality led to a breakdown in oversight during the fateful transfer of the Goths south of the Danube in 376. As Eunapius

<sup>35</sup> *Epist. ad Ath.* 280c–d. Among these will have been a group of 600 Franks seized in winter 357/58 (Amm. 17.2.3–4), another of Chamavi taken that same year (Amm. 17.8.4–5), and a third of Atuarii in 360 (Amm. 20.10.2). Cf. Amm. 17.1.7; Eunap. *VS* 7.3.7.

<sup>36</sup> On 380 see Zos. 4.25.3; on 479, Malchus fr. 20; on 406, Oros. 7.37.12–16; on 409, *CTh* 5.6.3; on 504, Josh. Styl. 75.

<sup>37</sup> *Exp. tot. mund.* 57; 60 (*SCh* 124.196).

<sup>38</sup> Symm. *Ep.* 2.78 (*MGH AA* 6.1.65). On this passage see G.A. Cecconi, *Commento storico al libro II dell’epistolario di Q. Aurelio Simmaco* (Pisa, 2002), pp. 397–398.

<sup>39</sup> Amm. 29.4.4.

complains, because “each of the [soldiers] had decided that he would fill his house with domestics and his farm with herdsmen and sate his lust through the license that he enjoyed” rather than supervise the transfer, the Goths were able to foment a rebellion that provided the springboard to their victory at Adrianople.<sup>40</sup>

Little wonder, then, that Synesius of Cyrene could assume: “every household has Scythian [that is, Gothic] slaves if they have any money at all, whether as table-setters, or cooks, and all have Scythian amphora-bearers, attendants, and litter-bearers since they are best suited to serving Romans.”<sup>41</sup> Working on similar assumptions, Julian dismissed the Goths as unworthy enemies, saying they were better suited to Galatian slave traders.<sup>42</sup> In many ways this condescension was founded in fear, for the Goths were undeniably formidable foes. The Roman desire to hold them as slaves was thus in some sense an outward expression of their desire for dominion over a wild and very uncontrollable force. In this sense, their retention of enslaved barbarians served not only to supply labor for the Roman economy and to provide a productive outlet for captured enemies, but as a psychological reinforcement of the Roman desire for domination over barbarian antagonists. As if to prove the point, Symmachus in his orations four times refers to Roman military victories over barbarians using the language of slavery, as when he describes the Neckar river as “rejoicing in its servitude, being known as a captive.”<sup>43</sup>

### Romano-Barbarian Interchange

If we accept, then, that captivity and its corollary, enslavement, offered ready avenues for Romano-barbarian exchange and the transfer of human and money capital, one might ask if there were any secondary effects of this exchange on a macro-social level. The answer is, of course, yes, and the most obvious and generic of these was surely an increase in intercultural communication. Augustine reports that barbarian captives and slaves in Roman control were the most ready source for information on whether and when African tribes were converting to Christianity.<sup>44</sup> Captives could thus pass testimony and rumors. At times their usefulness for the exchange of cross-cultural information was

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<sup>40</sup> Eunap. *Hist. fr.* 42; cf. Zos. 4.20.6; Amm. 31.4.10–11, 5.1, 6.5. More at Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, pp. 325–327.

<sup>41</sup> Syn. *De Reg.* 20.

<sup>42</sup> Amm. 22.7.8. On Galatian slave traders see Aug. *Ep.* 10\*.7–8 (CSEL 88.50–51); Claud. *In Eutrop.* 1.59.

<sup>43</sup> Symm. *Or.* 2.24 (MGH AA 6.2.328): “Gaudet servitute: captivus innotuit”; cf. *Or.* 2.6, 2.15, 3.9.

<sup>44</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 199.46 (CSEL 57.284–285); cf. Klein, *Die Sklaverei*, p. 120. Aug. *Ep.* 220.7 (CSEL 57.436) implies that Roman captives were often taken by native African tribes as well.

extended to military intelligence, as when Shapur II captured the wife of the Nisibene noble Craugasius and used her to convince her husband to help direct raids on Roman territory in 359.<sup>45</sup> Captives must also have passed on cultural and linguistic traditions, much like any immigrants. Already Tacitus could complain that the Latin tongue was being polluted by those who turned their children over to foreign-born slaves to be nursed.<sup>46</sup> Customs and even laws could be passed via captives from Roman to barbarian as well. The eunuch Euphratas, a captive slave who had spent years in Justinian's court, was sent back to his native people, the Abasgi, to introduce and enforce Justinian's ban on castration among them.<sup>47</sup> Technology and ideas could also be exchanged. As early as 256 the Goths employed Greco-Roman captives to construct the fleet they would use to attack the coastal cities of Anatolia.<sup>48</sup> Similarly the Avars learned to construct sophisticated siege-engines from a certain Busas, whom they captured near Appiaria in 587.<sup>49</sup> The Hun Onegesius used a captive Roman architect to design his elaborate palace and kept another as an amanuensis.<sup>50</sup> The Persian Shahahshah regularly exported Greek captives into his territory and put their skills to work building palaces and cities and operating manufactories.<sup>51</sup> Even spiritual technology, as it were, was employed by captors. Augustine relates how the niece of his friend Severus, Bishop of Milev, was captured by three barbarian brothers who fell deathly ill shortly after dragging her to their house (*domus*). When their mother turned desperately to the virgin ascetic for intercession with the Christian God, the girl sprang into action with prayer and fasting rituals that proved miraculously efficacious. For this she won her freedom.<sup>52</sup>

This story introduces another major effect of Romano-barbarian interchange through slaves and captives: religious conversion. Indeed, the degree to which the sources feature conversion to Christianity by barbarian peoples as a product of slave–master interchange is remarkable. In a narrative with many parallels to Augustine's story, Rufinus reports, on good authority, that a Christian captive girl living among the Georgians in the early fourth century had acquired a reputation as a healer after effecting miraculous cures with her prayers. When the son of the

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<sup>45</sup> Amm. 18.10.2, 19.9.1–8. More on the use of captives and deserters for intelligence in Lieu, "Captives," pp. 491–495.

<sup>46</sup> Tac. *Dial.* 28; cf. *Germ.* 20.1. For similar disdain toward foreign slaves see *Am.* 14.44.3.

<sup>47</sup> Evag. Schol. *HE* 4.22; Procop. *Bell.* 8.3.18–21.

<sup>48</sup> Zos. 1.34.1; cf. *SHA Gall.* 4.7, 6.2; *Iord. Get.* 107.

<sup>49</sup> Theophylact 2.16.10–12. Busas had turned traitor after his comrades in Appiaria refused to redeem him for a ransom.

<sup>50</sup> Priscus fr. 11.2; 14. On Roman captives acting as secretaries, cf. Ruf. *HE* 10.9.

<sup>51</sup> See Lieu, "Captives," *passim*.

<sup>52</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 111.7 (*CSEL* 34.654); cf. A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire 1: Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303–533)* (Paris, 1982), "Severus 1," pp. 1070–1075.



Georgian king Mirian III fell ill and was cured by the captive, Mirian converted to Christianity and opened diplomatic channels with Constantine that provided ongoing access between Georgia and Byzantium for centuries to come.<sup>53</sup> In a similar story dating to the late third century, the grandparents of the future bishop Ulfila, themselves Christians, were abducted in Cappadocia by Gothic raiders, carried north of the Danube, and eventually founded a Christian community inside “Gothia” that came to play a crucial role in the wider conversion of the Goths in the fourth century.<sup>54</sup> So too, the royal house of Axum in Ethiopia was first converted to Christianity through the influence of the Christian captive Frumentius, who had been held since boyhood as the secretary of the Ethiopian king Ezana.<sup>55</sup> Christian captives transplanted into Persia by the Sasanians played a major role in the creation of the important Christian communities there, and St Patrick, of course, began the work of converting the Irish after returning to his former captors with this explicit intention.<sup>56</sup> Zacharias of Mytilene indicates that the Hephthalite Huns were converted to Christianity ca. 540 when a group of Christian captives evangelized among them and even translated the bible into Hunnic.<sup>57</sup> Of course, religious interchange between Romans and Barbarians occurred in both directions. Basil of Caesarea reports how the capture of eastern Christians by the Isaurians in 375 led to the lapse of some who sacrificed to barbarian deities.<sup>58</sup> John Moschus even relates the tale of a strikingly handsome male captive whom his Saracen captors refused to allow to be ransomed because he was to be sacrificed to the love goddess al-‘Uzzâ.<sup>59</sup> By and large, however, it seems to have been Christianity that profited most from these exchanges.

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<sup>53</sup> Ruf. *HE* 10.11. For further sources and analysis see D. Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity: A History of Colchis and Transcaucasian Iberia, 550 BC–AD 562* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 246–261.

<sup>54</sup> Sources at Heather, Matthews, *The Goths*, 133–153; cf. N. Lenski, “The Gothic Civil War and the Date of the Gothic Conversion,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 36 (1995): 51–87.

<sup>55</sup> Ruf. *HE* 10.9–10. For further sources and analysis see S. Munro-Hay, *Aksum, An African Civilization in Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 77–78, 202–232.

<sup>56</sup> On the Christians of Persia see S. Brock, “Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties,” in *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London, 1984), study VI. Patrick’s attempt to convince Coroticus to allow the ransom of Christian captives rather than kill or sell them (*Ep. ad Coroticum* 14 [*SCh* 249.144–146]) must be at least in part rooted in his own experience as a captive. Cf. Sidon. *Ap. Ep.* 8.6.15 on the wanton slaughter of captives by the pagan Saxons.

<sup>57</sup> Zach. *Mit.* 12.7.

<sup>58</sup> Basil, *Ep.* 217.81 with N. Lenski, “Basil and the Isaurian Uprising of 375,” *Phoenix* 53 (1999): 308–329. Cf. Greg. Thaum. *Can. Ep.* 1 (*PG* 10.1020); Amb. *De off.* 2.136.

<sup>59</sup> Joh. Mosch. *Prat.* 155 (*PG* 87.3021–3). On the Saracen sacrifice of captives see Zach. *Mit.* 8.5; Procop. *Bell.* 1.17.41, 2.27.12–14, 28.13; Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, pp. 237–238.

The trade in captives and slaves also led to indirect cultural interchange in that it fostered an atmosphere of interethnic collusion in human misery. Gregory Thaumaturgus reports that, in the aftermath of the Gothic invasions of the 260s, many Anatolians continued to detain people initially captured and sold to them by the barbarians.<sup>60</sup> Similar problems surfaced after the Visigothic devastation of Illyricum, compelling Honorius and Theodosius II to order the restitution of status to freeborn captives still being held by Roman soldiers as booty in 409 and to forbid the inhabitants of other provinces to claim Illyrian refugees as their slaves.<sup>61</sup> In a contemporary homily that seems to be related to the same events, Maximus bishop of Turin railed against those members of his congregation who had paid barbarians a pittance for plundered goods, including *Romana mancipia*.<sup>62</sup> Even so, a law of the same period stresses that anyone redeemed from captivity was required to repay the cost of the ransom to the redeemer or, if he or she could not, to serve the redeemer for a five-year period.<sup>63</sup> And a law of 451 ordered fines against those who had sold their own children to barbarians in order to make ends meet during a recent famine.<sup>64</sup> Human bondage was thus big business, making it a tempting source of revenue even when it involved trafficking in one's own countrymen and kin. Patriotism was regularly trumped by profit, providing an incentive for cooperation between barbarian slave dealers and Romans.

Ultimately, the conditions of captivity and enslavement by outsiders were little different in antiquity and in the eighteenth century. For most they must have represented an almost intolerable state of abject suffering. In a telling passage, Victor of Vita reports the condition of Romans recently captured during the Vandal sack of Rome in 455 and transported by sea to Carthage: "Because most of them had been weakened by sailing, an experience with which they were unfamiliar, and by the harshness of their captivity, there was no small number of sick people among them."<sup>65</sup> Rather than endure the scorn and degradation to which they were subjected, many captives chose simply to end their lives. Symmachus reports that 29 Saxons cut their own throats rather than participate in the gladiatorial combats

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<sup>60</sup> Greg. Thaum. *Can. Ep.* 6 (PG 10.1040).

<sup>61</sup> *CTh* 5.6.2; 10.10.25. Similar problems at Amb. *De off.* 2.70.

<sup>62</sup> *Serm.* 18 (CCSL 23.67–9), esp. 18.3: "Unde enim barbaro auri gemmarumque monilia? Unde pellito serica vestimenta? Unde, rogo, Romana mancipia? Scimus ea conprovincialium nostrorum esse vel civium."

<sup>63</sup> *CTh* 5.7.2 = *CJ* 1.4.11 + 8.50.20 = *Sirm.* 16 (a. 408 or 409); cf. E. Levy, "Captivus Redemptus," *Classical Philology* 38 (1943): 159–176. Theologians of course discouraged such profiteering (e.g. Aug. *Serm.* 134.3 [PL 38.744]), and made a show of refusing reimbursement, e.g. Avitus, *Ep.* 35 (MGH AA 6.2.65). Klingshirn, "Caesarius of Arles," pp. 201–202, nevertheless shows that many bishops did claim repayment or labor rights over *redempti*.

<sup>64</sup> *Nov. Val.* 33. On child sale see also *CTh* 5.10.1 = *CJ* 4.43.2; *CTh* 11.27.2; *CJ* 4.43.1; Basil *De spiritu sancto* 20 (*SCh* 17bis.204–6); Aug. *Ep.* 10\*.2.

<sup>65</sup> Vict. Vit. *HP* 1.24–27 (MGH AA 3.7).

for which they were destined in 393.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps the most vivid example of the suffering of captives comes from what would seem to be the only true slave narrative from antiquity, Jerome's *Life of Malchus*. Malchus, an ascetic from Palestine, fell captive to the Saracens and was put to work as a shepherd by his owner. Despite his general docility, reinforced by his desire to keep Paul's oft-repeated injunction that slaves be obedient to their masters, Malchus fell into a deep depression and nearly committed suicide before resolving to escape clandestinely. After narrowly avoiding recapture by his master when the latter was eaten by a wild lion, Malchus made it back home to relate his story to Jerome. Like so many slaves retelling the story of their flight, Malchus had to admit (in words recast by Jerome): "I shudder even as I recall it, poor creature that I am, and even though I know that I am safe, my whole body still trembles."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Symm. *Ep.* 2.46 (*MGH AA* 6.1.57), with Ceconi, *Commento storico*, pp. 304–313. See also Aug. *Civ.dei* 1.16–18, which justifies the choice of Christian virgin rape victims, who also were in some sense "captives," to endure rape rather than commit suicide.

<sup>67</sup> *VMalchi* 8, (*SCh* 508.204). S. Weingarten, "Postliminium in Jerome: A Roman Legal Term as Christian Metaphor," *Scripta classica Israelica* 14 (1995): 143–150, argues that the *Life* is rather more literary and less reliable as a source. I shall argue otherwise in a forthcoming paper. On the desire of captives to flee to their native peoples, see also Amm. 31.6.5–6, 15.2–4; Aug. *En. in Ps.* 148.10 (*CCSL* 40.2173); Eugip. *VSeverini* 5.4 (*SCh* 374.194).

# Chapter 15

## Barbarian Raiders and Barbarian Peasants: Models of Ideological and Economic Integration

Hartmut Ziche

The concept of the barbarian in Greco-Roman civilization, for its contemporaries, was first and foremost a cultural construct. In its earliest manifestation in the Greek world the concept was even primarily linguistic (and to a lesser degree ethnic): barbarians were those who did not speak, and therefore were not, Greek. For the Greeks and Romans, it was the perceived cultural difference with the barbarians that determined their perception and formulation of other, to us, more fundamental, more tangible, and hence more objective differences. In practice, differences beyond culture were real and shaped political, military, and other relations between Romans and barbarians, but actual events involving barbarians normally were interpreted by Roman observers through the prism of perceived cultural difference. To the late Romans, barbarians were recognizable because of the sweeping cultural generalizations that had been elaborated in the late Republican and early imperial periods: barbarians were ferocious but cowards, dominated by their passions but docile, and so on.<sup>1</sup> It was not necessary for late Roman authors to analyze specific traits in detail in order to know and demonstrate that they were barbarian.<sup>2</sup>

Barbarians also were a cause for concern. Synesius, for example, identified cultural differences between Romans and barbarians as a fundamental problem.<sup>3</sup> In a rather strange panegyric delivered to Arcadius in 399, Synesius presented very distinct and seemingly objective—even if somewhat paranoid—arguments.<sup>4</sup> Synesius was worried about Goths in the Senate and in the magistracies, Gothic

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<sup>1</sup> See Y.A. Dauge, *Le barbare* (Brussels, 1981), pp. 413ff., for the “essence of the barbarus,” esp. 456 for a summary table of barbarian characteristics.

<sup>2</sup> For the Roman stereotyping of barbarians see Dauge, *Le barbare*, pp. 57–380. Dauge’s argument (e.g. 132, for the Augustan period) that Roman barbarian typologies evolved according to increasing objective knowledge seems to be contradicted by his examples showing the persistence of cultural stereotypes.

<sup>3</sup> Synesius, *De regno* 19.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of Synesius’ views on barbarians, dealing also with the discrepancies between *De regno* and the markedly less anti-barbarian *De providentia*, see

slaves in every family, Gothic craftsmen in every city, and, most importantly, Goths in the army. It was not necessary for Synesius to show that in the past barbarian troops had been disloyal to the empire (which they rarely were), or that Gothic slaves in the cities had conspired with Gothic raiders (which is not attested), because for him it was self-evident that young barbarians in the army, who had been brought up in a different cultural system of moral values, could not be loyal to the empire and to Roman culture.

### **The Roman Economy and the Barbarians**

The intellectual generalization of Roman thinkers, reducing all problems in Roman–barbarian interaction to cultural differences, also colors their writings on the role barbarians played in the economic developments of the late Roman Empire. Identifying what Roman contemporaries objectively and analytically thought about the economic impact of barbarians is therefore, in some sense, an impossible task. We can assume that at least some Romans had a reasoned opinion on the economic consequences of barbarian pressure, migration, and settlement, but extracting these views from the texts they produced is not straightforward.

This study will focus on models of how Greek and Roman stereotypical perceptions of barbarians affected late Roman views of both the negative and positive economic impact of barbarians as manifested in the stereotypical images of “barbarian raiders” or the “barbarian peasants.” It will suggest that neither of these concepts was based on a rational analysis of what barbarians were or could be, as barbarians often were imaginary figures constructed on the basis of cultural stereotypes. A discussion of when barbarians are imagined as raiders and when barbarians are conceived as peasants helps to explain why, for Roman observers, barbarians should be either one or the other according to the different contexts in which they wrote. The following discussion therefore is not meant to decide the question of the contribution of barbarians to the late Roman economy, but to show what purposes imaginary barbarian raiders and barbarian peasants served in the writings of authors like Synesius, Themistius, Ammianus, Salvian, and Sidonius.

No late Roman historian, for example, made much of an effort to explain that the Alamanni were barbarians because they damaged the provincial economy, raided Roman territory, and drove away the cattle. Raiding was a barbarian custom, one of the cultural traits that defined barbarism. It was not necessary to analyze raiding as an economic phenomenon—an important element of barbarian economies and potentially a significant factor of economic disruption on the Roman side—because raiding was what barbarians are along with what barbarians do. Thus, when a contemporary historian like Ammianus mentioned Alamannic raids, he probably did not see them primarily in terms of economic impact on the provincial

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A. Chauvot, *Opinions romaines face aux barbares au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris, 1998), pp. 343–364.

economy, but rather as a stereotypical illustration of the cultural otherness of the barbarians. Raiding by the Alamanni or other barbarians was part of a cultural, not an economic, narrative.

If barbarian raids in Ammianus had been part of an economic analysis, indeed any kind of historical analysis as opposed to simple cultural stereotyping, it would have been necessary to explain why raids by the imperial army on Alamanni territory (not to mention the looting of Roman territory) were not barbarian. If raiding was an economic phenomenon for contemporary Roman observers, then there should be two distinguishable models of raiding: one Roman, one barbarian. As it is, there is only one model of raiding, the barbarian. “Raids” by the imperial army are conquest or punishment for barbarian arrogance. Again, a cultural model. Ammianus and narratives of similar kind were probably not meant to be read as a sort of economic balance-sheet—cattle and slaves captured by barbarians versus cattle and slaves (re)captured by Rome—but as a cultural comparison: barbarism/raiding versus *Romanitas*/conquest and booty. The easy recognition of the barbarian based on cultural stereotypes accounts for much of the rhetorical imprecision in accounts of Roman–barbarian interactions relating to economic development and the barbarian impact on it.

Contemporary observers normally did not provide a detailed account of the influx of barbarian labor into the empire, regardless of whether this influx was slow but continuous (such as the Gothic slaves mentioned by Synesius, which even relatively modest families could own), or concerned the rapid migration of large groups into the empire (as in the case of the Visigoths in the late 370s).<sup>5</sup> Because of their perceived cultural characteristics and their inability to develop organized state structures, barbarians were somehow by default seen as either uncountable multitudes swamping the empire—perhaps a minority view, but present, for example, in Synesius’ “nightmare” or in the caricature of *De rebus bellicis*,<sup>6</sup> with treacherous barbarians howling round the empire—or are “counted” through the application of stylized pseudo-figures to their actual but undocumented numbers. The 80,000 Vandals crossing into Africa in 429 are an example for the model of

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<sup>5</sup> The textual evidence for barbarian settlements is collected by G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London, 1981), pp. 512–518. Ste. Croix underlines the important contribution these barbarians made to the Roman economy, and his texts often designate barbarians to be settled as taxpayers or at least agricultural labor, although this often reflects the government’s agenda and does not necessarily mean that contemporaries were aware of or interested in barbarian settlement as an economic factor. In addition, mentions of taxes/tribute and barbarian peasants repopulating the countryside were intended to portray the symbolic submission of the barbarians to Rome, not to provide an economic narrative.

<sup>6</sup> *De rebus bellicis* 6.1–2. The absence of a rational analysis of barbarian numbers by the author is particularly striking here, because the treaty purports to offer concrete policy guidelines to the emperors.

imperial observers not taking a rational and analytical interest in the details of the barbarian migration into the empire.<sup>7</sup>

The combination of cultural prejudice and rhetorical convention shown by contemporary writers is of course hardly surprising, but it proves to be problematic when modern historians require objective economic information from their narrative sources. The cultural and ideological blind spot of ancient writers in this matter is particularly regrettable because migratory phenomena and their precise impact on the economy of the late empire cannot easily be reconstructed from alternative, archaeological sources.<sup>8</sup> The absence of objective and quantified information on barbarian numbers is part of the general Roman disinterest in statistics.<sup>9</sup>

A straightforward reading of narrative sources does not allow one to balance the economic benefits of foreign trade and additional labor against the economic disruption caused by barbarian raids or the permanent occupation of imperial territory. Generally speaking, contemporary Roman sources were more likely to talk about economic depredation than to mention the repopulation of a weakened countryside by new settlers. This bias does not even necessarily exist because of an anti-barbarian ideological framework that Roman writers such as Synesius applied to their narrative—"never say anything positive about barbarians," as it were—but because settled barbarian peasants did not fit the cultural stereotypes of greed and lust for plunder that contemporaries used when talking about barbarians.<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to talk about the contribution of barbarian labor when, as will be seen,

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<sup>7</sup> The same figure appears in Victor of Vita, *Hist. Vand. persec.* 1.2, and Procopius, *Bell. Vand.* 1.5.18, although they disagree whether this is supposed to be the total population of migrants or only the fighting force of the Vandals. See also Périn, Kazansky in this volume.

<sup>8</sup> The difficulty of archaeologically identifying barbarians settled on Roman territory is restated by M. Todd, "The Germanic peoples," in A. Cameron, P. Garnsey, eds., *CAH 13, The Late Empire* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 463–464. See also E.M. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (London, 1985), pp. 243–266; G. Halsall, "The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On," in J. Drinkwater, H. Elton, eds., *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 196–207, who questions the connection of the *reihengräber* in Gaul to the migration of barbarian settlers.

<sup>9</sup> For pseudo-figures see also W. Scheidel, "Finances, Figures, and Fiction," *CQ* 46 (1996): 222–238; and for the limited interest of Roman historians in what we see as economic history, see H. Ziche, "Historians and the Economy: Contemporary Views on Fifth and Sixth-Century Economic Development," in J. Burke, U. Betka, P. Buckley, K. Hay, R. Scott, A. Stephenson, eds., *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott, Byzantina Australiensia* 16 (Melbourne, 2006), pp. 462–474.

<sup>10</sup> In *Or.* 16, Themistius comes relatively close to combining the stereotype of the invading barbarian hordes (206d–207a) with the idea of barbarians as peasant labor (211a–b). It should be noted, however, that the barbarians become peasants only after Saturninus has "bewitched" them (209d–210a) and that Themistius does not talk about barbarians as agricultural labor in general.

for contemporary observers barbarian peasants were former “barbarians,” but now “Roman” peasants.

Modern historiography has to deal with a similar problem. Given that even large-scale settlements, such as those of the Burgundians and the Visigoths in Gaul, left only few “genuine” barbarian artifacts,<sup>11</sup> it is difficult to distinguish these sections of provincial society as barbarian and as distinctively different from the rest of the rural population. Thus, to some extent at least, it can be claimed that barbarians settled on imperial territory as *dediticii*, *laeti*, or *gentiles*<sup>12</sup> were no longer really barbarians and therefore they could be the topic of a barbarian narrative neither in Roman nor in modern discussions. Modern historians are not limited to Roman cultural definitions of barbarism, according to which settled, farming and taxpaying barbarians are a contradiction, but a rational, modern argument to treat for example *laeti*—often established on imperial territory for generations—as barbarian is not easy to construct. With full integration into the rural economy and taxation, assimilation of material culture, and probably rapid linguistic assimilation as well, on what grounds can peasants descended from settled barbarians be treated as a distinct element inside rural populations? An example for this sort of disappearance/assimilation of barbarians into rural society is provided by the post-380/82 history of the Danubian Goths: apart from the slowly forming Alaric-group, Goths seem to disappear from sight, even though it is quite clear that the majority of those who crossed the Danube in 376 were not in any large degree physically destroyed or driven back by Theodosius’ Balkan campaigns.<sup>13</sup>

### Imaginary Raiders and Imaginary Peasants

To be a “raider” normally was one of the default characteristics of barbarians in Roman writing, from the Republic to the late empire, but this discussion will begin

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<sup>11</sup> See Périn, Kazanski in this volume.

<sup>12</sup> *Dediticii*, *laeti*, and *gentiles* served as regular soldiers—collectively in the case of the *laeti* (the Sarmatians settled in the Balkans in 334, for instance) and *gentiles* (cited, with *laeti*, in the *Notitia dignitatum*), individually for the *dediticii* (Franks and Suevoi defeated by the tetrarchs for example)—indicating that they cannot be viewed in the same light as foreign barbarians who served in federate units; see J.M. Carrié, A. Rousselle, *L’empire romain en mutation* (Paris, 1999), pp. 639–640; also R.W. Mathisen, “*Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani*: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire,” *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 1011–1040.

<sup>13</sup> G. Wirth, “Rome and its Germanic Partners in the Fourth Century,” in W. Pohl, ed., *Kingdoms of the Empire* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 51–55, argues that Alaric and his unintegrated group of barbarians were the exception to the rule; but for an opposing view, that all the Goths crossing the Danube in the 370s and 380s remained “separate constitutional entities that would invariably develop into ‘states within states,’” see H. Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic peoples* (Berkeley, CA, 1997), pp. 88ff.



at the other end of the spectrum, with the view that barbarians sometimes could be “peasants.” But when doing so, as noted above, we have to ask whether writers saw some, as opposed to other, barbarians as economically beneficial, because their own opinions diverged from the established orthodoxy of Roman barbarology, or because they discussed barbarians in very specific political or ideological contexts.

### *The Autun Panegyricist*

One of the most explicit and earliest apparent statements on the economic benefits of barbarian settlement under the late empire is made by the Autun panegyrist, addressing Constantius I (293–306) in Trier in 297.<sup>14</sup> The writer congratulated Constantius on providing, through his victorious campaigns, new cultivators for territories in northern Gaul, who were “distributed to the provincials and conducted to the cultivation of deserted lands assigned to them,” where they attended markets, paid taxes, and were liable to military service.<sup>15</sup> The panegyrist notes that these territories previously had been suffering from depopulation and the abandonment of agricultural land: “Land that remained abandoned in the territory of the Ambiani, Bellovaci, Tricasses, and Lingones turns green again under cultivation by the barbarian.”<sup>16</sup> The people settled by the emperor are unambiguously designated as “barbarian” and put into a tradition of barbarian settlements in Gaul that is judged favorably.

As we are dealing with an official panegyric, it may be assumed that the opinion expressed by the author is representative at least of the civic elite of Autun, and possibly of Gallo-Romans in general. There is no indication that the barbarians settled by Constantius—who are not identified as belonging to any particular group—either are in any sense exceptional by their mode of submission or have cultural characteristics that prevent them from falling under the negative definition of barbarism. But this does not automatically mean that the panegyrist generally considers barbarians as just potential peasants. From the context of the barbarian settlement passages it seems clear that the panegyrist feels somewhat uneasy about his depiction of barbarians as just welcome labor, without any mention of their natural character, which, according to stereotypical Roman thinking, is

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<sup>14</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.21.1–2, cited here and passim from C.E.V. Nixon, B. Saylor Rodgers, eds., *In Praise of Late Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, CA, 1994). See also *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.9.1–4, where the panegyrist compares the previous *feritas* and *ignavia* of the barbarians to their new function of cultivating the land and trading cattle. Even though the term is not used—possibly a telling absence, see below—the panegyrist clearly considered the savage barbarians to have been transformed into *coloni*, fully integrated into rural society, regarding which process see also Grey in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.9.3.

<sup>16</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.21.1.

incompatible with sedentary agriculture.<sup>17</sup> Their earlier mention<sup>18</sup> in the panegyric does not lack a reminder of the traditional barbarian combination of savagery with cowardice, and the later image of the barbarian cultivator in the speech is strongly linked with the ideas of submission and servitude. Even though the mention of markets, taxes, and military service later makes it quite clear that de facto the barbarians have become normal peasants, the panegyrist still tries to present them as quasi-slaves, distinct in status from the rest of the rural population.<sup>19</sup>

The settlement of barbarians as peasants in Gaul by Constantius is explicitly justified, moreover, by historical precedents under the senior *augusti* Diocletian and Maximianus:<sup>20</sup> turning barbarians into peasants, the panegyrist implies, is not the dangerous new concept it would naturally appear to be to his audience (and to himself), conditioned by exposure to the negative barbarian stereotype, but is already endorsed by tradition and senior authority.

But in spite of this official sanction, it would seem that the panegyricist still has difficulty constructing barbarians as “peasants.” Unlike Synesius, who comments at leisure on imperial policies that do not directly concern him, the author of this panegyric had intimate experience of the results of both barbarian depredations and barbarian settlements. There is no positive proof here for an alternative, explicitly formulated current of late Roman barbarology in which barbarians are neutrally considered as just another type of rural labor whose addition to the countryside boosts production. This reading of the Autun panegyrist is supported by consideration of the historical context of the speech. After the economic disruption caused by the wars of the second half of the third century, there was a real and visible shortage of agricultural labor in Gaul, obvious to a local observer, that could only be met by non-traditional approaches.<sup>21</sup> The Autun panegyrist does not represent a model that considers barbarian labor as a neutral category, but does demonstrate how cultural prejudice about barbarians can be subordinated to

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<sup>17</sup> This does not mean that Romans did not know that some “real” barbarians were farming, but rather that for Romans the archetypical barbarian does not farm, as seen in Tacitus, *Germania* 5.1–2: “The land of the Germans is diverse, but generally covered by forests and swamps, it is fertile, but not suitable for arboriculture, Germans have cattle, but of small size and not of proud and glorious aspect.”

<sup>18</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.9.1–4.

<sup>19</sup> This idea also is expressed regarding Constantius’ barbarian settlements in the Low Countries: “They crossed over to lands long since deserted in order to restore [them] to cultivation through their servitude” (*Pan. Lat.* 8/5.8.4).

<sup>20</sup> For settled Franks as taxpayers, see *Pan. Lat.* 8/5.21.1. The panegyrist’s opinion that barbarian peasants generally pay taxes is shared by modern scholarship, e.g. C.R. Whittaker, P. Garnsey, “Rural life in the Late Roman Empire,” in Cameron, Garnsey, eds., *CAH* 13, pp. 279–280.

<sup>21</sup> See Wightman, *Gallia Belgica*, pp. 243–246, for visible economic disruption in fourth-century Gaul; and P. van Ossel, *Établissements ruraux de l’Antiquité tardive dans le nord de la Gaule* (Paris, 1992), for a complete presentation of the evidence.

economic reality—with suitable rhetorical safeguards—where these realities are inescapable to the speaker and his audience.

But special awareness of the economic reality perhaps is not even the decisive factor in allowing the exceptional combination of barbarians as ordinary peasants with the still-present negative barbarian stereotype. The fact that the text is an imperial panegyric also encourages the speaker's approval for an imperial policy of using barbarians as agricultural labor in Gaul. Emperors need taxpayers and army recruits, and cannot afford the luxury of making imperial policy coincide with the cultural prejudices of their subjects—unless those prejudices were held by Gallic landowners who needed additional labor.



Figure 15.1 The settlement of barbarians on the northern frontier by the Roman government is depicted on the so-called “Plomb de Lyon,” a lead proof, found in the Rhône river, of a non-extant gold medallion. In the upper register, in a scene of “deditio” (“surrender”), barbarians beg for mercy from the emperors Maximianus and Constantius I ca. 297 and are assembled for resettlement; in the lower register barbarian families cross the Rhine (“FL RENU”) from Kastel (“CASTEL”) to Mainz (“MOGVNTIACVM”) on their way to resettlement on land within the Roman Empire. The legend reads “Saeculi felicitas” (“Felicity of the age”). The original, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, is greatly degraded by age; illustrated here is a nineteenth-century electrotype.

The idea that even the economic benefit of barbarian settlement and labor, obvious to the modern historian, was on its own insufficient to overturn contemporary cultural prejudices, and the probability that the additional motivation of approving an emperor's policy decision was required to present barbarians as "just peasants," can be illustrated more graphically by the depiction of Constantius' settlement of 297, it seems, on the "Plomb de Lyon" (Fig. 15.1), the lead proof of a non-extant gold medallion showing barbarian families entering the Roman Empire at Mainz.<sup>22</sup> The scene in the lower register depicts what could be seen as the arrival of new rural labor, "normal" peasant families, but the apparent "deditio" ("submission") of these "peasants" to imperial power in the upper register is necessary to reconcile the notion of barbarians as peasants with the dominant barbarian stereotypes. Here, again, barbarians are not just peasants, but shown as something akin to rural slave labor, and cause for approval and celebration because they contribute to the glory of Constantius.

### *Other Barbarian Settlements*

Another, at first sight neutral, mention of barbarians as peasants can be found in Ammianus.<sup>23</sup> In 359, the Sarmatian Limigantes asked Constantius II (337–361) to be settled as *tributarii*, i.e. as ordinary taxpaying peasants of *colonus* status.<sup>24</sup> The rhetoric here works somewhat differently from the preceding examples: the barbarians are indeed called "peasants" (implied in *tributarii*), but in the narrative leading up to their proposed submission Ammianus trots out all the usual stereotypes: the Limigantes are treacherous raiders, at the same time dangerous and timid, cowardly, and afraid of punishment by the imperial army. Ammianus mentions the benefits of barbarian immigration: more taxpayers and easier army recruitment, but the argument for settlement is made by Constantius' flattering courtiers ("adulatorum cohors"),<sup>25</sup> of whose opinion Ammianus does not approve. Thus, here barbarians again are peasants, but peasants only by submission to imperial power and contrary to their intrinsic nature, and, unlike the Autun panegyrist, Ammianus is leery of this proposition, which, indeed, came to nought

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<sup>22</sup> See list of barbarian settlements in Ste-Croix, *Class Struggle*, p. 513, and detailed discussion in Pierre Bastien, *Le médaillon de plomb de Lyon*, appended to Pierre Bastien, Michel Amandry, Georges Gautier, eds., *Le monnayage de l'atelier de Lyon (274–413)*, *Supplément* (Wetteren, 1989). The possibility that this scene represents repatriated Roman captives is belied by the depiction of barbarian *deditio* (surrender) (pl. 1).

<sup>23</sup> Amm. 19.11.1–7.

<sup>24</sup> "Tributariorum onera subirent et nomen" (ibid.). For *tributarius* as another name for *colonus*, see *CTh* 5.11.9 (364/5), 10.12.2 (368/373), 11.7.2 (319), and 12.6.21 (368).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the "adulatorum globus" (Amm. 25.7.9) who advise Jovian (363–364) to yield to the Persians.

in a riot in which the barbarians returned to form and Constantius himself nearly lost his life.<sup>26</sup>

As other examples of his *History* show, Ammianus is quite consistent in his opinion that barbarians can be made into peasants by imperial power, but this does not change his negative barbarian stereotypes. Barbarians are not natural peasants, and trying to make them into peasants generally is considered by him to be bad judgment. Julian's settlement of the Alamanni in Gaul escapes overt criticism, but the very close juxtaposition of the Alamanni as *tributarii* and *vectigales* with the Gallic cities destroyed and plundered by them also suggests doubt with regard to the imperial policy of turning barbarians into peasant taxpayers.<sup>27</sup> Theodosius the Elder's settlement of Alamanni as *tributarii* in 369 is treated very similarly: barbarians are peasants, but only through defeat by imperial armies and after having been clearly stereotyped as "fearful barbarians."<sup>28</sup> The same point is made most clearly with regard to the settlement of the Taifali Goths. The barbarians here are not called peasants at all, but are "banished to the Italian towns of Mutina, Rhegium, and Parma for the cultivation of the fields."<sup>29</sup> And the settlement, in the narrative, is sandwiched between two passages highlighting the stereotypical barbarism of the Taifali—the passage following the settlement being the more lurid: "We understand that the shameful people of the Taifali is so sunken into a life of shame and obscenity that among them young men copulate with men in the pollution of an unspeakable intercourse", hardly a description of sturdy, reliable Roman peasants.<sup>30</sup>

A view on "barbarian peasants" similar to the one expressed by Ammianus can be seen in the *Historia Augusta*. The settlement of barbarians is mentioned, for instance, in the lives of Claudius and Aurelian, where the dominant view is not of the barbarian as a useful peasant, but of the barbarian as an agricultural slave forced into his position by victorious emperors.<sup>31</sup> Given the satirical character of the work, it is difficult to tell what the author thinks about the policy, but the passage in the *Life of Aurelian*, which puts the settlement into the context of the mad schemes of Aurelian (from which he has to be restrained by his praetorian prefect), might suggest that the author considers the notion of barbarians as peasants an incongruous idea.

<sup>26</sup> Amm. 19.11.10–17.

<sup>27</sup> Amm. 20.4.1; Ammianus also was reluctant to criticize Julian. For "telling silences" in Ammianus see G. Kelly, "The New Rome and the Old: Ammianus' Silences on Constantinople," *CQ* 53 (2003): 588–607, esp. pp. 588–589.

<sup>28</sup> Amm. 28.5.15: "pluribus caesis, quoscumque cepit ad Italiam iussu principis misit, ubi fertilibus pagis acceptis iam tributarii circumcolunt Padum."

<sup>29</sup> Amm. 31.9.3–4: "vivosque omnes circa Mutinam Regiumque et Parmam Italica oppida, rura culturos exterminavit."

<sup>30</sup> Amm. 31.9.3–5: "Taifalorum gentem turpem obscenae vitae flagitiis ita accepimus mersam, ut apud eos nefandi concubitus foedere copulentur maribus puberes."

<sup>31</sup> *HA Claudius* 9.4, *Aurelian* 48.2–3.

Still, not every mention of barbarians as peasants is subverted by doubts, irony, or overt criticism. In 368, for example, Ausonius in the *Mosella* speaks neutrally about land shared out to Sarmatian *coloni*.<sup>32</sup> There is no indication in the poem that Ausonius finds the notion of barbarian peasants incongruous, and their mention does not clash with the generally idyllic setting of the poem. But one isolated example from poetry does not prove that the notion of “barbarian peasants” was generally, naturally, and easily acceptable to contemporary Roman observers, without being backed up by an economic or political imperative that invited positive comment. And the need to put a positive spin on official policy was most likely to generate approval and acceptance of barbarians as peasants even in circumstances, as in Theodosius’ settlements, where the economic benefits of barbarian settlement were rather doubtful—to what extent were Goths settled as taxpaying *dediticii* and to what extent did some of them remain non-taxpaying federates?—and the political problems more pronounced, for unlike Constantius, Theodosius I had not properly defeated the Goths.

#### *Themistius and the Goths*

For the Autun panegyrist, it was comparatively easy to see barbarians as peasants. In Gaul the barbarians were fully integrated into provincial rural society and even paid taxes. Thus, the panegyric context, ideologically motivated approval for the settlement of barbarians as peasants, and a rational analysis of its economic benefits all coincided to override (despite some rhetorical contortions) cultural stereotypes against “barbarian peasants.” The situation Themistius was commenting on in his speech in 383 in honor of the consulate of Flavius Saturninus,<sup>33</sup> one of the principal architects of the 382 treaty with the Goths, however, is subtly different, despite the fact that Themistius also celebrates and approves the installation of taxpaying, law-abiding, and culturally assimilated barbarian peasants.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, in a modern, purely economic, analysis, the settlement of the Goths by Theodosius could be seen as beneficial to the agrarian economy of the Balkans: the fighting between 376 and 382, during which the Goths maintained themselves in the area mainly by raiding the provincial farming economy, had caused widespread economic disruption, and like the Autun panegyrist Themistius could claim that Theodosius was merely providing urgently needed labor.<sup>35</sup>

But, whereas in 297 the panegyrist could insist that the barbarian settlement followed a clear Roman victory and that Constantius was not providing barbarian peasants for the province, but rather new, ordinary, peasants who through defeat had

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<sup>32</sup> Ausonius, *Mosella* 9: “Arvaque Sauromatum nuper metata colonis.”

<sup>33</sup> Themist. *Or.* 16.

<sup>34</sup> Themist. *Or.* 16.210d–211b.

<sup>35</sup> The need for labor is explicitly stated when Themistius (211b) envisions as the only alternative to settling the Goths a “recolonization” of Thrace with Phrygians and Bythinians.

lost their barbarian status, this option was not open to Themistius. The perceived difference in the military outcome explains Themistius' odd and rather lengthy description of Saturninus' campaign, in which he insists that the imperial army could have defeated and destroyed the Goths, but that this had been unnecessary because, like Orpheus, Saturninus could charm the Goths into laying down their weapons.<sup>36</sup> This is very poetic, but it is hard to escape the feeling that Themistius would have found it more reassuring if the Goths had been made more suitable to a peasants' existence by a sound military defeat.

His colleagues in the Constantinopolitan Senate knew that the 382 treaty followed four years of inconclusive fighting and had left the Goths largely undefeated, and thus still fully possessed of their typical barbarian arrogance and ferocity.<sup>37</sup> Themistius, therefore, had to take a position not on "former barbarians as Roman peasants," but on "barbarian peasants." This was markedly different from what previous Roman writers had to deal with, and required a great deal of reconceptualizing what "barbarian" meant.

Within the constraints of panegyric, Themistius constructed his "barbarian peasant" by fudging the issue. His memorable slogan of a Thrace better off filled with peasants than filled with corpses leaves the identity of these peasants rather vague.<sup>38</sup> Settlement of Visigoths by persuasion rather than force is of course mentioned in the panegyric (210d), but as to the "peasants" who have been spared from death (211a–b), Themistius leaves it relatively open whether they are Roman provincials who would have died if the war had dragged on, or whether they are Visigoths, now turned into Thracian peasants, who would have perished if Theodosius had pursued his campaigns until the inevitable Roman victory. The point Themistius insists on is that it is a good thing that Thrace is cultivated by peasants; he puts much less stress on the fact that those peasants are largely barbarian.

Moreover, the Gothic peasants in Thrace who are unambiguously called barbarians<sup>39</sup> have curiously hybrid characteristics that make them fit neither the classical stereotype of the barbarian raider only motivated by greed nor the model of the "barbarian," or rather "former barbarian," peasant presented by the Autun

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<sup>36</sup> Themist. *Or.* 16.208d–211a.

<sup>37</sup> For the tension between the official *deditio* and the realities of Gothic settlement, see P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 158–165. The existence of some senatorial dissatisfaction with the "peaceful defeat" of the Goths can be inferred from Themistius' comment that "if they have not been utterly wiped out, no complaint should be raised" (*Or.* 16.211a).

<sup>38</sup> Themist. *Or.* 16.211.

<sup>39</sup> Like other late Roman writers, Themistius systematically calls the Goths "Scythians," an anachronism that fudges the difficult issue of real, contemporary barbarians becoming provincial peasants, for giving them a label of great antiquity insinuates that they are part of the Greco-Roman world, barbarians perhaps, but not newcomers. See also G. Halsall, *Barbarian Migration and the Roman West* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 48, 51–52.

panegyrist.<sup>40</sup> Themistius' Goths have merely begun to turn into peaceful peasants and retain a warlike attitude: "they are now turning the metal of their swords and breastplates into hoes and pruning hooks, and while still paying distant respect to Ares, they offer prayers to Demeter and Dionysus."<sup>41</sup> They do not yet pay taxes or accept Roman law, but in support of his hope that they eventually will, Themistius cites the precedent of the Galatians in Pontus who were not exterminated by Augustus and subsequently became fully integrated Roman citizens: "and now no one would ever refer to the Galatians as barbarian, but as thoroughly Roman"<sup>42</sup> This analogy between the policies of Augustus and Theodosius serves to justify Theodosius' treaty with the Goths.

In some sense, Themistius is even farther from constructing a counter-model to the barbarian raider than was the Autun panegyrist. What Themistius proposes to his audience is a barbarian raider who has begun the transformation toward a peasant, but there is still no notion that culturally defined barbarism is compatible with an agriculturalist life. What Themistius argues is not that the barbarians are peasants, but rather that they will in time stop being barbarians and then also become peasants. Thus, even if barbarism and farming are not compatible, Themistius considers it to be possible for barbarians to stop being barbarians. The domination of cultural over more objective economic or political concepts postulated above here is made explicit: cultural assimilation will precede practical integration of the Goths into provincial society as farmers and taxpayers.<sup>43</sup> If the Galatians could evolve from barbarian raiders into Roman peasants, so could the Goths.

The same idea of cultural conversion, ceasing to be barbarian, as a prerequisite to becoming a proper Roman (not barbarian) peasant also is present in Themistius' *Oration* 34, of late 384 or early 385, in which the conversion process expressed only as a hope in January 383 now is seen as having been completed by means of

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<sup>40</sup> The contrast is seen in a law of 409 (*CTh* 5.6.3), where Scirian settlers are called barbarians ("Scyras barbaram nationem") while at the same time being described as ordinary *coloni*: "non alio iure quam colonatus." For this law, see also Grey in this volume.

<sup>41</sup> Themist. *Or.* 16.211b. For the same concept, see Orosius, *Histories* 7.41.7, with regard to the settlement of friendly Vandals, Suevi, and Alans in the Spanish peninsula after 409: "barbari exsecrati gladios suos ad aratra conversi sunt residuosque Romanos ut socios modo et amicos fovent" ("the barbarians cursed their swords and converted themselves to the plough, now treating the remaining Romans like allies and friends").

<sup>42</sup> *Or.* 16.211c.

<sup>43</sup> Other readings of Themist. *Or.* 16.211b are possible, but I take it here that the adoption of Demeter and Dionysus, with secondary worship of Ares, implies the adoption of Roman culture, an idealization of the peasant life, combined with warlike qualities. A first step followed—Themistius is using a future tense—by their actually becoming peasant taxpayers: "For now their clashes with us are still recent, but in fact we shall soon receive them to share our offerings, our tables, our military ventures, and public duties" (211d), so cultural assimilation before assimilation as peasant-soldiers and peasant-taxpayers.



a special intervention:<sup>44</sup> Theodosius has treated the barbarians like a wild beast, casting a spell over them before accustoming them to be useful contributors to the empire.<sup>45</sup> The “magical” transformation needed to convert the Goths from raiders into peasants reinforced the earlier point that, regardless of what was eventually possible, barbarians for Themistius were not naturally and easily envisaged as peasants.

### **Barbarian Economies and Elites**

So far we have considered only what possible contributions, according to the ideological models constructed by contemporary commentators, barbarians could make to the development of the Roman agrarian economy. But what about barbarian economies themselves? Did Roman authors intellectually conceive of an alternative model to the stereotype of a barbarian economy as a community of raiders living on the spoils of the empire?<sup>46</sup> Or at least of a barbarian economy not merely consisting of impoverished and primitive peasants drawn to the wealth of the empire?<sup>47</sup>

In a practical sense, the empire was well aware that some barbarians possessed a sophisticated trading economy, as demonstrated by legislation restricting trade in certain items and imposing limits on the number of authorized trading posts.<sup>48</sup> But, as already seen, objective and ideological interpretations of the economic status of barbarians do not necessarily coincide. Just as the existence of imperial legislation on barbarian *coloni* does not mean that contemporaries perceived barbarians as ordinary peasants, let alone as an unproblematic addition to the rural labor force, it also can be inferred that imperial legislation acknowledging the sophistication of

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<sup>44</sup> Themist. *Or.* 34.20–24.

<sup>45</sup> Themist. *Or.* 34.22: “You did not slaughter them like wild beasts but cast a spell over their wildness, like one who, having ensnared a lion or a leopard in a net, did not butcher it but accustomed it to bear burdens.” The simile is awkward, maybe tellingly so; should we envisage the acculturated Goths as peasants as incongruously as we would envisage a tamed lion as a beast of burden?

<sup>46</sup> As discussed above, and note also Jerome, *Ep.* 77.8, on the Huns, “erupisse Hunnorum examina, quae pernicibus equis huc illucque volitantia, caedis pariter, ac terroris cuncta complerent”; and *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 20, where the Saracens are said to live exclusively by pillage.

<sup>47</sup> As discussed above, and note also the 313 panegyric addressed to Constantine (*Pan. Lat.* 9.24.2), where the Franks are not even primitive peasants, but rather some sort of hunter–gatherers living exclusively on wild animals, a stereotype that the Gallic author surely knew did not correspond to the economic reality of the Franks.

<sup>48</sup> *CJ* 4.41.1 (370–375 CE), 4.63.2 (374 CE); see E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians* (Madison, WI, 1982), pp. 10–15. For trading posts, see also Ellis in this volume.

barbarian trading economies does not mean that Roman commentators perceived these economies as sophisticated.

Indeed, the way that emperors legislated on restricted items shows that, even though the simplistic model of the barbarian raider may not be the intellectual template used by Roman policymakers, they still did not have a rational appreciation of the barbarian economies. Restricting the sale of iron or weapons to the barbarians makes ideological and political sense,<sup>49</sup> but the implied assumptions of the superiority of the Roman economy, of barbarians not being able to produce these items themselves, clearly shows imperial policymakers letting their cultural prejudices override their knowledge that barbarians were perfectly able to manufacture their own shields and swords.

Still, some contemporaries possibly saw barbarian economic systems not only as developed, but perhaps even as sometimes superior to the Roman economic model—or so it might seem at first sight. Ammianus, when describing Julian's campaign against the Alamanni, not only speaks about the plunder of "wealthy" farms by the imperial army—a statement easily ascribed to a desire to glorify Julian's victory—but also remarks that Alamannic villas were built in "the Roman style."<sup>50</sup> The comment about villas can possibly be interpreted as an admission of a comparable level of economic development, although in other instances Ammianus describes stereotypical simple savages "sheltering in fragile huts."<sup>51</sup>

An interesting problem is presented by the description of Mauritania in the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*. The author unambiguously labels the inhabitants barbarians ("homines qui inhabitant barbarorum vitam et mores habent"), but at the same time calls them wealthy through trade in clothes, slaves, and wheat.<sup>52</sup> The juxtaposition seems to imply that the author does not necessarily associate cultural barbarism with economic primitivism. This example, however, probably is not particularly useful when looking for generally held opinions about barbarian economies, because on the one hand the case is rather exceptional—we are dealing with "Roman barbarians"—and on the other hand the author, possibly of eastern origin,<sup>53</sup> treats the whole extreme west of the empire as a sort of semi-mythical fairyland.

A western case for barbarian economic development potentially can be constructed around a passage in Salvian of Marseille, who claims that "the poor are ruined ... to a point where many, even those born into well-established families ... flee to the enemy in order not to die under the burden of public persecutions."<sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> CJ 4.41.2 (455–457 CE).

<sup>50</sup> Amm. 17.1.7: "opulentas pecore villas et frugibus rapiebat nulli parcendo. extractisque captivis domicilia cuncta curatius ritu Romano constructa flammis subditis exurebat."

<sup>51</sup> Amm. 18.2.15: "saepimenta fragilium penatium."

<sup>52</sup> *Expos.tot.mund.* 60.

<sup>53</sup> See J. Rougé, *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* (Paris, 1966), pp. 27–38.

<sup>54</sup> Salvian, *De gubernatione dei* 5.21–23 and 36–37: "ut multi eorum, et non obscuris natalibus ... ad hostes fugiant, ne persecutionis publicae afflictione moriantur"—tax

But the flight discussed here resulted from low or non-existent taxes rather than from greater economic sophistication in the *barbaricum*. And, more to the point, Salvian's judgment is moral rather than economic; the barbarian economy is not more developed, but more just. Salvian is denouncing the moral failings of Roman society, not objectively assessing barbarian economic policies. In addition, Salvian also is engaged in a polemical attack against the Roman state, not a discussion of economic and fiscal conditions under barbarian governments, and does not really demonstrate economic sophistication. In addition, Themistius likewise saw lower taxes as being one of the attractions of barbarian rule.<sup>55</sup> To a modern observer, Salvian's and Themistius' observations about the low taxes under barbarian rule suggest that these economies in fact remained at a rather low level of development: they might not be raiding economies, but they clearly are less well developed than the Roman system.

The difficulty of finding genuinely positive views concerning the level of development of the barbarian economy—as opposed to purely incidental remarks that show a practical Roman awareness of economic activities in the *barbaricum*<sup>56</sup>—can be explained not only by the dominant alternative model of the unsophisticated barbarian raider, but also by the permanence of Roman disinterest in barbarian issues, including economic development, as long as those issues did not directly impinge on the empire.<sup>57</sup> The most positive image of the barbarian economy can best be inferred from indirect statements, such as Salvian's,<sup>58</sup> stressing barbarian moral superiority.

A perhaps better example of indirect indications of Roman opinion on barbarian economic development is Themistius' oration in the Senate justifying Valens' 370 treaty with the Goths. Themistius reports that Valens had restricted trade with the Goths to only two trading posts on the Danube, despite the fact that Gothic trade—unrestricted and at *emporía* controlled by the Goths after the 332 treaty—

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refugees, one might say. In spite of Salvian's moralizing agenda, his pro-barbarian statements nevertheless probably reflect an appreciation of barbarians as not being economically primitive.

<sup>55</sup> Themist. *Or.* 8.115c: "many well-born men, consular for three generations, have brought their dependants to wish for the arrival of the barbarians." As tax-collectors for their *coloni* the landowners in question are responsible for passing on to their peasants the imperial fiscal oppression that Themistius criticizes.

<sup>56</sup> Note, e.g., Ammianus' mention of Burgundian and Alamannic salt mining (Amm. 28.5.10), and Libanius' (*Orat.* 18.78) report on Alamannic iron manufacturing.

<sup>57</sup> With the exception of Jordanes—whose *Getica* has partly personal motivations—there is no coherent narrative of Gothic politics or development before their sustained contact with the empire in the mid-fourth century. Only when the Goths become part of imperial history do historians such as Ammianus show an interest in internal Gothic affairs.

<sup>58</sup> A primitive and poor economy also may have seemed preferable to a Christian commentator precisely because it exhibits more Christian simplicity.

had been profitable and beneficial to Roman traders and consumers.<sup>59</sup> Themistius had to justify a restriction of trade that at first seemed to be in the interest of neither Romans nor Goths, and he attempted to do so by underlining the universal *philanthropia* of the emperor, who treated Romans and barbarians with equal care (or in this case with equal discipline)<sup>60</sup> and implemented policies serving the universal good. But Themistius' focus on this issue suggests that a view of barbarian economic sophistication was widespread in the capital; senators would be worried about losing economic opportunities, and an awareness of the value of trade with the Goths was not confined to just a small number of local traders on the Danube. If Constantinopolitan elites had been unaware of the scope of Gothic trade and had been uninvolved in it, Themistius probably would not have found it necessary to explain at considerable length why making trade more difficult was a good thing. In addition, for the purposes of this discussion, Themistius' awareness of the Goths' degree of mercantile sophistication is not combined with a positive judgment of the barbarians. The Goths were treacherous wrongdoers by nature, and by taking away opportunities for trade, Valens removed opportunities where this nature could reassert itself.<sup>61</sup>

A second instance of indirect information suggesting that Romans perceived the barbarian economy as rather more developed is provided by Sidonius' snapshot of life at the court of the Visigothic king.<sup>62</sup> Sidonius not only depicted Theoderic in political terms, as if he were a Roman provincial governor, but through his description of social and economic life in the palace—luxury trade items such as wine, food, ceramics, and fabrics were available<sup>63</sup>—he also made it clear that the level of economic sophistication of this particular barbarian nobleman and his followers was not inferior to that of the Roman members of the Gallic elite. This was not because Theoderic was a successful barbarian raider, but because he lived and acted like the Gallo-Roman elite surrounding him.

Rather later, Ruricius of Limoges interacted with the Visigothic estate owners Freda<sup>64</sup> and Vittamerus<sup>65</sup> in just the same way that he interacted with their Roman counterparts. These examples demonstrate that barbarians already living inside

<sup>59</sup> Themist. *Or.* 10.135c–d. See also Ellis in this volume.

<sup>60</sup> For the importance of *philanthropia* as an imperial virtue for Themistius and others see F. Kolb, *Herrscherideologie in der Spätantike* (Berlin, 2001), pp. 125–129.

<sup>61</sup> Contrary to the view of barbarian peasants in Themistius, *Or.* 16., the barbarians here (10.135d) are stereotypically barbarians by nature: “[Valens] γινώσκει γάρ, οἶμαι, σῶζειν τοὺς βαρβάρους δυνάμεως ἔχων, τὴν φύσιν δὲ αὐτῶν ἀμείβειν οὐχ οἶός τε ὢν” (“[Valens] knows, I think, that he has the power to save the barbarians by denying them opportunities for wrongdoing, but he is unable to change their nature”).

<sup>62</sup> Sid. *Apoll. Ep.* 1.2.

<sup>63</sup> Sid. *Apoll. Ep.* 1.2.7: purple tissues and fine ceramic tableware.

<sup>64</sup> Ruric. *Ep.* 1.11; see R.W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends* (Liverpool, 1999) for commentary.

<sup>65</sup> Ruric. *Ep.* 2.61, cf. 63.

the empire could be seen as economically sophisticated; to the Gallo-Romans they were in some sense barbarians who had already become Roman, just as, in the intellectual conception of some contemporary observers, the barbarians settled on imperial territory discussed above were transformed from barbarians into “Roman peasants.”

By stressing the easy assimilation of Theoderic and other Visigoths into Roman models of elite society, Sidonius and Ruricius indicate that in the fifth century the stereotypical Roman image of the barbarian became more flexible and that the concept of the barbarian only as raider was no longer the only model. But a more cynical interpretation also is plausible: unlike Themistius, Sidonius and Ruricius lived inside a barbarian, semi-autonomous state and had to deal with barbarian elites on a daily basis. Irrespective of their prejudices, they were forced to live with barbarians, and Gallo-Roman aristocrats perhaps produced the positive spin needed to make this situation palatable: propaganda not only for themselves and the rest of the senatorial elite, but also for their barbarian neighbors. Acknowledging one’s dealing with a primitive barbarian court would be ideologically unpalatable, and thus the Visigoths had to be shown as non-barbarians.

### **Barbarian Raiders**

In our attempt to find “barbarian peasants” in contemporary Roman opinion we have implicitly assumed that the opposing model of the barbarian as a raider was a more or less uniform concept. This stereotype conceives of “barbarian raiders” in a manner akin to how the Alamanni are presented in Julian’s account of their 355 invasion: they cross a boundary of the empire, grab as much booty as they can, damage cities and villas, take captives for ransom and enslavement, and then re-cross the border to their own territory.<sup>66</sup> But given the level of complexity already seen in the construction of intellectual models of “barbarian peasants,” it perhaps is over-simplistic not to allow for flexibility in the stereotype of the “barbarian raider.” Just as in the case of positive evaluations of the economic role of barbarians, their condemnation as raiders can be nuanced according to the ideological convictions of the observer and can depend to a large extent on local circumstances and the political situation.

At their most negative, barbarians could be seen as a factor of permanent economic decline,<sup>67</sup> as seen, for example, in Jerome’s account of the “great invasion” of Gaul in 407:<sup>68</sup> “Innumerable people of extreme savagery have occupied the

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<sup>66</sup> Julian, *Ep. ad Ath.* 279.

<sup>67</sup> A view to some extent shared by A.H.M. Jones, *The Late Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), p. 1027, who talks about “devastation” caused by barbarians “impoverishing and depopulating the frontier provinces.”

<sup>68</sup> Jerome, *Ep.* 123.15–16: “Innumerabiles et ferocissimae nationes universas Gallias occuparunt ... Aquitaniae, Novemque populorum, Lugdunensis, et Narbonensis provinciae,

whole of Gaul ... the provinces of Aquitania, Novempopulana, Lugdunensis, and Narbonensis, apart from a few cities, are completely devastated; the cities, by war in the country and famine inside, are depopulated ... Spain, where danger is imminent, trembles in fear every day." Whereas Julian was interested in showing that recovery was possible after a barbarian raid if the emperor took the right kind of action, Jerome insists on the finality of barbarian destruction. Barbarian raiders in Jerome are not a military accident imputable to bad governance—"this disaster was not the fault of the emperors"<sup>69</sup>—but a cataclysmic unstoppable disaster brought by God.

Irrespective of the actual economic impact of the 407 incursion,<sup>70</sup> our main interest here is rather to tie models of imaginary "barbarian raiders" to the motivations of their proponents. Jerome's agendas are easy to find. First of all, Jerome was thousands of kilometers away, relying on second-hand reports, and he thus might be prone to exaggerate the level of destruction caused. More importantly, Jerome had strong ideological motivations to paint the barbarian raider as destructive as possible, for doing so fit in well with trends of Christian apocalyptic thinking. And we also must not forget that Jerome was attempting to prevent a Gallic lady from remarrying and thus attempted to persuade her that there was no hope for a worldly future. These factors make it unlikely the "apocalyptic" barbarian raider was the dominant late antique stereotype.

Better informed local sources, moreover, tend to underline the temporary and limited character of the economic disruption caused by the barbarians in 407 and correspond better to Julian's model of the "barbarian raider." For example, Paulinus of Béziers, who, for the same ideological reasons as Jerome, would like the barbarian raids to be terminally destructive, as a local observer cannot escape the truth that they in fact are not. Indeed, he almost seems to complain about the barbarians not causing enough destruction to compel the Gauls to lead a more pious life: "even though the Sarmatian devastates, the Vandal lights fires, and the quick Alan pillages, we strive, with painful effort and uncertain results, to put everything back to order ... Neither the sword, nor cruel famine, not even illness have any influence on us, what we were we still are, subject to the same vices we continue to sin."<sup>71</sup> Here, the barbarians in 407 are not the apocalyptic invaders of Jerome, but are the usual raiders of Ammianus, Julian, and other authors. They are a nuisance, but not a force of permanent economic destruction.

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praeter paucas urbes populata sunt cuncta. quas et ipsas foris gladius, intus vastat fames ... Ipsae Hispaniae iam iamque periturae, quotidie contremiscunt."

<sup>69</sup> Jerome, *Ep.* 123.16.

<sup>70</sup> For the extent of the destructiveness of barbarian invasions, see, e.g., C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, MD, 1994), pp. 210–242; even he counts 407 as having at least locally "devastating effects" (211).

<sup>71</sup> Paulinus of Béziers, *Epigramma*, 19–21, 30–2: *CSEL* 16, 503–508, cited in P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques* (Paris, 1964), p. 87.

Given that Jerome and Paulinus create such different models from the same barbarians, it is clear that barbarian raiders are as “imaginary” as barbarian peasants, and that the construction of their identity has to be explained by the motivations of the writers rather than by actual differences in the behavior of the barbarians. Barbarian raiders, like barbarian peasants, are real, but the way they are described in contemporary sources tells us more about the authors than their subject.

The discussion of images of the barbarian raider might conclude by returning to Ammianus Marcellinus. Like Synesius, albeit for different reasons, Ammianus subscribed to the “anti-barbarian” current of thought among the late Roman elite and was opposed to any policy of accommodation.<sup>72</sup> He expresses all the classical stereotypes about barbarians being cruel, ferocious, and easy to intimidate.<sup>73</sup> But Ammianus also clearly states that barbarians are not more economically and politically destructive than mere raiders: most are notably not interested in permanent conquest.<sup>74</sup> Especially interesting in the case of Ammianus is that his concession that Julian’s treaty with the defeated Attuarii Franks was in the interest of neighboring landowners<sup>75</sup> shows that some contemporaries, at least, were able to see barbarians as both raiders and peasants at the same time, both to some extent imaginary.

## Conclusions

The present discussion allows two sets of conclusions. On the one hand, late Roman texts about barbarians more often than not are not a good guide for evaluating the economic development of the barbarians or their impact on the Roman economy. Contemporary observers make quite diverse statements on the economic damage caused by “barbarian raiders,” and also vary in their opinions on the advisability of the use of barbarians as “barbarian peasants.” Indeed, late Roman writers do not even seem able to agree whether there was a category of people that, at the same time, could be distinctly barbarian and also fully integrated into the rural landscape as “normal” peasants.

The observation that contemporary written evidence is anecdotal and cannot easily be used to infer general trends of historical development is, of course, not new either. But what our discussion shows, beyond restating this point, is why this seems especially true with regard to barbarians and their impact on the

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<sup>72</sup> See E. Frézouls, “Les deux politiques de Rome face aux barbares d’après Ammien Marcellin,” in E. Frézouls, ed., *Crise et redressement dans les provinces européennes de l’Empire* (Strasbourg, 1983), pp. 175–197, for the motivations of Ammianus’ anti-barbarism.

<sup>73</sup> For example 16.12.2 and 16.3.2.

<sup>74</sup> E.g., on the Alamanni, Amm. 17.10.10.

<sup>75</sup> Amm. 20.10.2.

empire. Roman authors had to deal with the tension between ideological reality and political and economic reality. Barbarians are stereotypically defined in rather simple terms, but late Roman observers are aware of the fact that these traditional stereotypes are not always—indeed, rarely—consistent with reality. Thus, we have snapshots of Roman elite opinion where the account resulting from this opposition depends very much on the precise circumstances in which the Roman observer operates. The tension between reality and ideology does not allow for detached objective discussions of barbarians and the Roman economy. The various and changing views on barbarians in writers such as Ammianus and Themistius reveal more about Ammianus and Themistius, and the changing circumstances in which they write, than they actually show about the changing barbarian impact on the Roman economy.

The second set of conclusions concerns the construction of barbarian stereotypes themselves. Given the changing reality of the late Roman Empire—more barbarian raids, more barbarian soldiers, and possibly a higher presence of barbarian peasants in the countryside—an unbiased observer would expect an evolution of barbarian stereotypes in place since the beginning of the empire. But these stereotypes—barbarians being fierce, disloyal, undisciplined, and uncivilized by nature—changed very little, and were applied by both pro- and anti-barbarian writers. The growing contact with and presence of barbarians did not lead to a reformulation of barbarian stereotypes and to a new, more realistic Roman barbarology, but rather produced ideological models that allowed an easier transformation of barbarians into Romans. It may still have been difficult to think of barbarians as ordinary, taxpaying, barbarian peasants, but the rhetorical models developed by late Roman writers made it easier either to conveniently forget that some Roman peasants actually were barbarian peasants, or to pretend that assimilation was an automatic, rapid, and inevitable outcome.



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## C. A New Era of Accommodation

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# Chapter 16

## Kush and Rome on the Egyptian Southern Frontier: Where Barbarians Worshipped as Romans and Romans Worshipped as Barbarians<sup>1</sup>

Salim Faraji

This study proposes to investigate the political and religious interaction of the Kushite and Roman empires on the Egyptian southern frontier between the third and sixth centuries CE. Kush refers to the region of the Nile Valley designated by the ancient Egyptians as south of the second cataract, although lower Nubia between the first and second cataract could refer to Kush when the territory was under Kushite control. Kushite history is divided into the Napatan (ca. 700–300 BCE) and Meroitic (ca. 300 BCE–350 CE) periods. Meroitic Kush's capital was located at Meroë. Nubia also is a common designation for Kush, although the term “Nubian” during Late Antiquity could also refer to non-Meroitic peoples inhabiting the middle Nile valley, such as the Noubades and Blemmyes, who had occupied much of the northern Nubia as of the late fourth century.

### **Kush, Rome, and their Common Frontier**

The first book of Procopius' *Persian Wars*<sup>2</sup> provides the major documentary evidence for Roman and Byzantine frontier policy toward the Nubian kingdoms of the Noubades and Blemmyes south of Egypt, and also implicitly addresses the interaction between Rome and Meroitic Kush before the political collapse of the Meroitic state in the middle to late fourth century CE. The northern Nubian frontier area known as the Dodekaschoinos (“Twelve *schoinos* region”), an

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this study is based upon my dissertation *The Roots of Nubian Christianity: A Transitional Culture in the Late Africa; The Silko Inscription and the Temple of Kalābsha as Context* (Claremont Graduate University, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Procopius, *Bell.Pers.* 1.19.27–37, collected with other sources in T. Eide, T. Hagg, R. Holton Pierce, L. Torok, eds., *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual Sources for the Middle Nile Region Between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD, Vol. III: From the First to the Sixth Century AD* (hereafter *FHN*) (Bergen, 1998). The Procopius text is in *FHN* 3.328, 1188–93. See also Stanley Burstein, ed., *Ancient African Civilizations* (Princeton, NJ, 1998), pp. 73–75.

approximately 135 kilometer-long frontier area running south from Aswan, was a buffer zone established by Kush and Rome in the aftermath of the Roman–Kushite war between 29 and 21 BCE.<sup>3</sup> Although it often is interpreted as a unilateral act by Rome, the discoveries in 1910 of the Hamadab stela and a royal complex in the vicinity of Meroë city, the capital of the Meroëtic kingdom, provide the Kushite perspective on the war.<sup>4</sup> The stela recalls the Kushite queen Ameniras and her prince Akindad and their celebration of victory over Rome. For them, the Kushite concession to a Roman presence in lower Nubia was a mutually advantageous victory that permitted their continued patronage of Nubian temples in the region.

The Dodekaschoinos functioned as a zone of diplomatic, commercial, religious, and cultural interaction that for over four centuries facilitated the formation of hybrid cultural practices, multiple religious identities, and a plurality of cultural allegiances among the Kushite, Nubian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman inhabitants of the region. These relations challenge the rhetorical and ideological constructions of barbarian and Romans as fixed and rigid categories, for the demarcation between “Romans” and “barbarians” was actually more fluid and indeterminate and the boundaries in terms of religious practices much more porous than traditionally recognized. The region was home to several Nubian temples, including the temple of Isis at Philae, erected during the Ptolemaic era, and the temple of Mandulis at Talmis (modern Kalâbsha), fifty kilometers south of Philae, which was rebuilt and expanded by Augustus to accommodate both Romans and Nubians.<sup>5</sup> The temple at Kalâbsha, the largest freestanding temple in Nubia, was the major counterpart to Philae for the performance of religious rites and festivals in the Dodekaschoinos. Isis, of course, had become a universal goddess in the Mediterranean world, but her roots as an Egypto-Nubian deity remained pre-eminent.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the solar deity Mandulis, a distinctively Nubian god, being the Nubian form of Horus, was a patron of Roman soldiers.<sup>7</sup> Thus, along with Nubian worshippers, both Isis and Mandulis also attracted Roman devotees and, for Roman soldiers, these were “barbarian” gods with universal appeal. Other temple centers of the Dodekaschoinos included the cities

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<sup>3</sup> For Roman policy in the Dodekaschoinos, see David O’Connor, *Ancient Nubia: Egypt’s Rival in Africa* (Philadelphia, PA, 1993), pp. 86–107; Laurence Kirwin, “Rome Beyond the Southern Egyptian Frontier,” in T. Hagg, L. Torok, D.A. Welsby, eds., *Studies in the History of Late Antique and Christian Nubia* (Burlington, VT, 2002), pp. 13–17; idem, “The International Position of Sudan in Roman and Medieval Times”, in *ibid.*, pp. 23–37. The *schoinos* was equivalent to two Persian parasangs, and thus was about 11.2 kilometers; see Wilhelm Schwarz, *Der Schoinos bei den Aegyptern, Griechen und Römern. Eine metrologische und geographische Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1894).

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., F.I.J. Griffith, “The Great Stela of Prince Akinizaz,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 4 (1917): 159–173.

<sup>5</sup> Torgny Save-Soderbergh, ed., *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia: The International Rescue Campaign at Abu Simbel, Philae and Other Sites* (London, 1987), pp. 127–131.

<sup>6</sup> For Isis, see, e.g., R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore, MD, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Burstein, *Ancient African Civilizations*, p. 66.

of Dakka, Maharaqqa, Karanog, Qasr Ibrim, Qustul, Ballana, and Faras, all of which served as religious centers frequented by religious pilgrims and diplomatic officials from both the Roman and Kushite empires.

## Religious Encounter on the Frontier

### *Procopius*

As recorded primarily by Procopius, this unique Roman–barbarian encounter continued well into the sixth century, and the Roman Empire’s diplomatic ties with the Noubadian-Kushite and Blemmyan states maintained Roman and Nubian traditional religion at the temple of Philae long after it had been banished throughout the Roman Empire. In his *Persian Wars*, Procopius digresses momentarily from his discussion of Roman–Axumite affairs to recount the history of Roman relations on the Egyptian southern frontier with the Nubian kingdoms of the Noubades and the Blemmyes. According to Procopius, the Roman frontier was withdrawn from the Dodekaschoinos back to Elephantine at the First Cataract because Diocletian (284–305) decided that it was no longer profitable and the resources needed to maintain garrisons there exceeded the tribute collected from the region.<sup>8</sup> Procopius also states that Diocletian had to contend with the “Nobatae” who were constantly “ravaging and plundering all the places there,” so he decided to invite the Noubades to settle in the lower Nubian Nile Valley to serve as a defense against the frequent attacks and incursions of the Blemmyes; Diocletian also provided a subsidy to both the Noubades and the Blemmyes “on the condition that they no longer plunder Roman territory.”<sup>9</sup>

Now, Procopius was correct in his description of the “separate alliances between Rome and the Noubades and Rome and the Blemmyes” and the possibility of joint Noubadian–Blemmyan attacks on Roman Egypt, and these events only are attested in other Greek and Coptic texts as of the fifth century CE. But Procopius’ depiction of Diocletian abdicating the Dodekaschoinos to the Noubades and the Blemmyes is contradicted by other evidence indicating that by the late third century this region was dominated by the Kushite Empire, and that the Noubades did not appear in the valley until the fourth and fifth centuries CE.<sup>10</sup> Thus, a major problem with Procopius’ account of the Dodekaschoinos was that he ignored the important continuing role of the kingdom of Kush in establishing diplomatic and religious alliances between Rome and the lower Nubian Nile Valley. Procopius probably

<sup>8</sup> Procop. *Bell.Pers.* 1.19.28–29; see Stanley M. Burstein, “The Roman Withdrawal from Nubia: A New Interpretation,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 73 (1998): 125–132, which provides the basis for this study’s discussion of Diocletian’s withdrawal from the Dodekaschoinos.

<sup>9</sup> Procop. *Bell.Pers.* 1.19.29–32.

<sup>10</sup> As argued, e.g., by László Töröks, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan–Meroitic Civilization* (Leiden, 1997); and Burstein, “Roman Withdrawal from Nubia.”

placed the Noubades in the Nubian Nile Valley in the third century because they were the major inhabitants of this region in his own time, three centuries later.

Procopius also devoted a significant amount of time describing religious interaction between Romans and Kushites (whom he thought were Noubades and Blemmyes) on the Egyptian southern frontier:

This emperor chose an island in the Nile river somewhere very near the city of Elephantine and constructed there a very strong fortification, and in that place he founded some temples and altars for the Romans and these very barbarians in common and settled in this fortification priests of both peoples, in the expectation that their friendship would be secure for the Romans because of their participation in the rites. This is the reason why he named the place Philae. And both these peoples, the Blemmyes and the Nobatai, revere all the other gods in which Hellenes believe, as well as Isis and Osiris and not least Priapus. But the Blemmyes also have the custom of sacrificing human beings to the Sun. These barbarians retained the sanctuaries in Philae right down to my day, but the emperor Justinian decided to pull them down.<sup>11</sup>

Procopius' statement about continuity of worship at Philae, whose name he derived from Greek φίλος ("filos"), or "friend," could be taken to imply that the other Nubian temples also continued to function as religious centers in Late Antiquity, where Hellenes, Procopius' word for worshippers of the traditional gods, and barbarians shared a common piety.

Additional evidence for the religious environment of the Dodekaschoinos, for the early fifth century, comes from Olympiodorus of Thebes, a poet, historian, and sometime ambassador, who lived for a time at Syene in the Thebaid, the southernmost section of Roman Egypt. A fragment preserved by the ninth-century Byzantine scholar Photius notes, "While he was living at Syene, the chiefs and priests of Isis and Mandulis among the barbarians, called the Blemmyes, at Talmis [Kalâbsha], wished to meet him. 'They took me,' he says, 'as far as Talmis itself so that I might investigate those regions that are five days distant from Philae, as far, indeed, as the city called Prima, which of old was the first city of the Thebaid that one reached when coming from barbarian territory . . . It has been occupied with four other towns, Phoenico, Chiris, Thapsis, and Talmis.'<sup>12</sup> Olympiodorus therefore was quite aware that Roman territory had been ceded to the Nubians, and his account also indicates that, by the first quarter of the fifth century, the Blemmyes were providing priests for the Nubian temples of Isis and Mandulis.

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<sup>11</sup> Procop. *Bell.Pers.* 1.19.34, translation based on *FHN* 3.328.

<sup>12</sup> C.E. Gordon, trans., *The Age of Attila: Fifth-Century Byzantium and the Barbarians* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1960), p. 16.

*Paccius Maximus: Roman or Barbarian Nubian*

Adding to the cultural ferment was the fact that many of the Roman soldiers stationed in the Dodekaschoinos were local recruits, ethnically Nubian and Egyptian. Nevertheless, they often bore Greek and Latin names and were well acquainted socially and culturally with Greco-Roman traditions. Such individuals were at once Roman and barbarian, thereby blurring the lines between cultural and national divisions. The southern Egyptian frontier thus was a zone of cultural ambiguity where Romans could adopt barbarian religious identities and barbarians could emulate the religions of imperial Rome.<sup>13</sup>

One such soldier was Paccius Maximus, described as a “Nubian by birth, Greek by education, and Roman soldier by profession,”<sup>14</sup> attesting to the open-ended, fluid, and indeterminate nature of the Dodekaschoinos. Maximus left four *prosyknemata*, memorialized dedications inscribed on the walls of the temple of Mandulis at Kalâbsha and the temple of Serapis at Maharaqqa.<sup>15</sup> The most significant for understanding his religious worldview, cultural orientation, and devotional practice is a 36-line poem, located on the south wall of the forecourt of the temple of Mandulis and dated to the first century CE, that scholars have named the *Hymn to Mandulis*. Although there was initially debate over whether he was a Nubian or a Hellenized Egyptian, the accepted current consensus is that he was a Nubian. It is likely that Maximus, who reached at least the rank of decurion, was a part of the three cohorts that were traditionally stationed on the Egyptian southern frontier until Roman withdrawal in the late third century.<sup>16</sup>

Maximus' *Hymn* manifests the nature of the hybrid religious piety and plurality of cultural allegiances that were found in the Dodekaschoinos. Maximus described an overwhelming mystical encounter at the temple of Kalâbsha that inspired him to compose a song. Upon finishing it, he was drawn to a cave, where he fell asleep

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<sup>13</sup> As modeled by Jitse Harm Fokke Dijkstra, *Religious Encounters on the Egyptian Southern Frontier in Late Antiquity: AD 298–642* (Groningen, 2005), p. 11: “Frontiers are not linear barriers but rather marginal zones or ‘areas of differentiation,’ since they are often mixed ethnically, socially, and economically. Regions on both sides of the frontier live together in an interdependent relationship, stimulating exchanges of food, trade and culture rather than blocking them ... Frontiers are always zones, constantly shifting and in ferment, ambivalent in their loyalties and often having more in common with the ‘other side’, as it were, than with their own political centre. Rather than a line dividing peoples, the southern Egyptian frontier was therefore an ‘open frontier’”; for the classical exposition of this model, see C.R. Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers: The Dynamics of Empire* (London/New York, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> S. Burstein, “Paccius Maximus: A Greek Poet in Nubia or a Nubian Greek Poet,” *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference for Nubian Studies, Lille: 1994, Cahier de recherches de l’Institut de papyrologie et d’égyptologie de Lille* 17.3 (1998): 47–52, at p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> Guy Wagner, “Le decurion Paccius Maximus, champion de l’acrostiche,” *ZPE* 95 (1993): 147–148, identifies the four inscriptions as by the same person.

<sup>16</sup> M.P. Speidel, “Nubia’s Roman Garrison,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.10.1 (1988): 767–798.



and succumbed to a “dream of fantasy” where he washed in the “bountiful waters of the Nile.” Receptive once again to the Muse and the melodious rhythms of Greek poetry, Maximus stated:

Just as one moving his body in time to music beaten by the staff, I summoned the rhythm as a partner for the inscription of my song, leaving those of a critical bent little reason for blame. The leader urged me to speak my clever poem. Then great Mandulis, glorious, came down from Olympus. He charmed the barbaric speech of the Ethiopians and urged me to sing in sweet Greek verse. He came with brilliant cheeks on the right hand of Isis, exulting in his greatness and the glory of the Romans, and uttering Pythian oracles like an Olympian god.<sup>17</sup>

The appearance of the traditional Nubian god Mandulis, here presented as Horus at the right hand of Isis, descending from Olympus to replace Maximus’ indigenous Ethiopian tongue with “sweet Greek verse” reveals an instance of *Intepretatio Graeca* being applied to the Nubian gods.<sup>18</sup> And, although the Greek language in this passage claimed prestige and priority, we also can hypothesize that Maximus was a bilingual Nubian speaker. For this soldier, Mandulis represented not the antique traditions of Meroitic Kush, but the glory of Rome; the god even functioned “like an Olympian god.” Although the Greek element of Mandulis was emphasized in this inscription, the syncretic nature of the god demonstrated that the Nubian aspect served as the basis by which the comparisons to Greek gods could be possible. Maximus was quite aware of the indigenous context of Mandulis, but chose to stress the Greek cultural traditions because of his commitments as a Roman soldier. His Nubian ethnicity did not preclude him from vowing allegiance to Rome. Maximus would have been one among many Roman soldiers who devoted himself to the Nubian god Mandulis. And Procopius suggests that this first-century religious milieu of the Dodekaschoinos was preserved into the sixth century.

#### *Noubades and Blemmyes: Barbarians as Romans*

Two documentary sources that provide insight into the nature of interactions among the Noubades, Blemmyes, and Roman Egypt in the early to middle fifth century were authored by the Coptic bishop Appion of Syene and the historian Priscus. In the former, Appion petitions the Roman emperors Theodosius II (402–450) and Valentinian III (425–455) (thus between 425 and 450) for authorization to command the troops stationed in the region of Syene and Elephantine because he and his churches were “in the midst of those merciless barbarians, between the

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<sup>17</sup> Stanley M. Burstein, “A Soldier and His God in Lower Nubia: The Mandulis Hymns of Paccius Maximus,” *Graeco-Arabica* 7–8 (1999–2000): 45–50.

<sup>18</sup> See Stanley M. Burstein, “When Greek Was an African Language: The Role of Greek Culture in Ancient and Medieval Nubia,” *Journal of World History* 19.1 (2008): 41–61.

Blemmyes and the Annoubades.”<sup>19</sup> Appion explains that his people have suffered many attacks and had no soldiers to defend against the pillaging and raids.

Although Appion presents the Blemmyes and Noubades as barbarian menaces to Upper Egypt, the fifth-century Egyptian abbot Shenoute presents a rather more hopeful view:

How blessed is the whole flock and all the flocks of Christ in that they follow after him, for they know him to be the God of truth; would that these friends sitting here, that belong unto the Blemmyes and the Noubas too, would mingle with us and follow after him, that is, would know him to be God. For we have suffered them to mix with us and to come into God’s house, that perchance they might come to reason. Can they, then, not know what the Psalmist writes, “The idols of the heathen are silver and gold”?<sup>20</sup>

The propaganda element of this text is clear, characterizing the Noubades and Blemmyes as potential friends, on the verge of conversion, to reinforce the image of pagan barbarians in need of Christian conversion. It also indicates that the demarcation between Roman Christian monks and the Blemmyes and Noubades was rather ambiguously defined. Shenoute describes a mixed population of Egyptians, Blemmyes, and Noubas (Nubians) inhabiting the monasteries of Upper Egypt, and one wonders whether these Roman monks were former practitioners of barbarian religious traditions and therefore quite capable of translating their new ideology in ways consistent with barbarian cult and piety. Such a cultural milieu suggests reciprocal interaction between the barbarians and Egyptians, and therefore may represent mutual cultural influence as opposed to cultural isolationism between non-familiar Roman and barbarian groups.

The second text is of Priscus, a court historian writing in the middle to late fifth century CE who served under Maximinus, governor of the Thebaid in Upper Egypt, during the years 452–453 CE. Priscus summarized the events between Rome and the Nubian barbarians as follows:

The Blemmyes and the Noubades, having been defeated by the Romans, sent ambassadors to Maximinus from both peoples, wishing to enter into a peace treaty. And they proposed that this be observed so long as Maximinus remained in the country of the Thebans. When he refused to enter into a treaty for such a short period, they said that they would not take up arms for the rest of his life.

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<sup>19</sup> The *Papyrus Leidensis* Z: see D. Feissel, Klaas A. Worp, “La requête d’Appion, évêque de Syène, à Théodose II: P. Leid. Z révisé,” *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden* 68 (1988): 97–111; translated in *FHN* 3.314.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute’s Literary Corpus*, Corpus Scriptorum Orientalium 599 (Louvain, 2004).

But as he would not accept even the second proposal of the embassy, they made a treaty for one hundred years.<sup>21</sup>

Priscus continued by describing the terms of the peace treaty. Rome required that the Blemmyes and Noubades release all Roman prisoners without ransom and pay reparations for damages and property lost or confiscated. The Romans also stipulated that the Blemmyes and Noubades hand over the royal elite among them as hostages in order to guarantee the treaty. The Blemmyes and the Noubades requested that they be permitted, “according to ancient custom,” access to the temple of Isis at Philae in order to ferry the statue of the goddess back to their own country for consultation and thereby return it safely. Kalâbsha and the other major temples of Lower Nubia, such as Dakka and Mahararqa, were the most likely destinations of the goddess once she arrived in the land occupied by the Blemmyes and the Noubades. The treaty was ratified at Philae, and the Blemmyes and Noubades surrendered the children of their chiefs and paramount kings as hostages. After Maximinus, however, became ill and died unexpectedly, the Blemmyes and Noubades disregarded the treaty, invaded the country, and recovered their hostages.

The above texts demonstrate not only that the Noubades and the Blemmyes were the predominant ethnic polities that Rome had to deal with in the former Roman Dodekaschoinos during the fifth century CE, but also that the two peoples coexisted there. The temple of Isis at Philae functioned as a shrine of national stature among the Nubian kingdoms as well as a cultural icon that was united with the other major temples of Lower Nubia. Further south, the temple of Mandulis at Talmis likewise provided a focus of devotion for all of the peoples of the southern Egyptian frontier. By the mid-fifth century, the majority of Roman soldiers serving on the southern frontier would have been Christian, but they too, and especially the captives repatriated in the early 450s, would have been familiar with the triumphant Nubian war god Mandulis and the patron queen mother of Philae, Isis. The Noubadian and Blemmyan hostages held by the Romans likewise would have been exposed to certain aspects of Christianity, and upon their return Nubians began to appropriate elements of that religion—as, indeed, the life of Shenoute indicates already was happening—without abandoning their traditional cult.

One might speculate that the mid-fifth-century Noubadian king Silko could have served Rome as a federate king; he certainly would have been involved in the treaty of 451, and even if he was not a hostage himself, members of his family and entourage surely would have been. His familiarity with both Roman military tactics and Roman diplomacy could well have encouraged Silko to seize the opportunity as heir to the Noubadian throne to defeat the Blemmyes and gain full control over the Dodekaschoinos and Lower Nubia. Having already established a relationship with the Roman authorities, Silko would have been supported in his ambitions by his former captor, Rome. This may be why the Greek inscription

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<sup>21</sup> Priscus, fr. 21; translated in *FHN* 3.318.

left by this barbarian king at the temple of Kalâbsha, commemorating his victory over the Blemmyes, proclaimed, “the God (ὁ θεός) gave me the victory,” perhaps referring not to Mandulis or Amun but to the Christian God of the Roman Empire.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the Kushite-Roman encounter also provided the impetus for the Christianization of Nubia, and the kingdom of the Noubades, Ethiopians, and Blemmyans became united the banner of Roman piety without the loss of their barbarian culture or identity.

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<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., David N. Edwards, *The Nubian Past: An Archaeology of the Sudan* (New York/Oxford, 2004), pp. 197–198. For text and translation, see Helmut Satzinger, “The Inscription of Silko, King of the Noubades at the pronaos wall of the Talmis temple (Kalâbsha),” at [http://homepage.univie.ac.at/helmut.satzinger/Wurzelverzeichnis/Silko\\_Inscription.html](http://homepage.univie.ac.at/helmut.satzinger/Wurzelverzeichnis/Silko_Inscription.html), accessed 28 July 2010.

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## Chapter 17

# Petra and the Saracens: New Evidence from a Recently Discovered Epigram

Jason Moralee

Petra's role<sup>1</sup> in the defense of the east against the rising Saracen threat, though it had been the capital city of Palaestina Salutaris (later Tertia) since the middle of the fourth century, has remained obscure.<sup>2</sup> There is little literary or documentary evidence to suggest how this city participated in the defensive system along the eastern frontier. Nor is there much evidence for how the people of Petra and its territory interacted with the Saracens that lived in the region, or how they considered themselves distinct from the Saracens, though they shared cultural similarities with their nomadic neighbors. An epigram recently discovered at Petra promises to shed some light on these issues, and may indeed provide evidence for Petra's role in the defense of the eastern frontier against Saracen raids.

It should be emphasized that what follows is not meant to be a thorough interpretation of all of the issues relating to the text.<sup>3</sup> Rather it is meant to highlight—in a strictly preliminary sense—the potential historical importance of a little-known document for the military role of Petra and cultural changes within the city in Late Antiquity.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the research for this chapter was done while I was the Whitney Fellow at the Center for Epigraphical and Palaeographical Studies (Ohio State University), in the summer of 2004. I wish to thank the conference participants at *Shifting Frontiers* for their useful criticisms on the resulting chapter. The ideas initially presented there were revised and substantially improved in light of the generous encouragement and suggestions of Glen W. Bowersock, Zbigniew T. Fiema, David F. Graf, and Dennis H. Groh. Of course, all errors in fact and judgment remain my own. Above all, I thank Illinois Wesleyan University for their support of faculty research.

<sup>2</sup> See Zbigniew T. Fiema, "Late-antique Petra and its Hinterland: Recent Research and New Interpretations," in J.H. Humphrey, ed., *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, vol. 3 (Portsmouth, RI, 2002), pp. 191–252, including an extensive bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> The inscription has begun to receive some attention, e.g. Ariel S. Lewin, "'Amr Ibn 'Adī, Mavia, the Phylarchs and the Late Roman Army: Peace and War in the Near East,'" in Ariel S. Lewin and Pietrina Pellegrini, eds., *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest*, Proceedings of a Colloquium held at Potenza, Acerenza, and Matera, Italy (May 2005), British Archaeological Reports International Series 1717 (Oxford, 2007), pp. 243–262.

On the face of it, there is no reason that Petra should occupy our interest in the evolving picture of frontier relations. Petra apparently had no garrison in the fourth century, as the city is not mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a document that lists troop placements throughout the empire as they stood in the early fifth century (though reflecting conditions perhaps as early as the late third century for the eastern provinces).<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, any role that Petra had in frontier defense was ignored by late antique authors. The only information about Petra's military resources is archaeological and epigraphic in nature.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, the territory of Petra was protected by a series of nearby forts and watchtowers, attested both by the *Notitia* and the archaeological evidence.<sup>5</sup> In addition to relying on troops from these places, Petra apparently also had a local militia headed by a "master of infantry" (*magistros hoplitôn*) that patrolled the passes into the city from the north.<sup>6</sup> It is also possible that a garrison of troops came to Petra in the middle of the fifth century; the rededication of the Urn Tomb as a church under Bishop Jason in 446 mentions a *numerus* in attendance at the ceremony.<sup>7</sup> Because of these military resources, Petra was either safely protected or surprisingly ignored by hostile forces, both indigenous and foreign. Finally, though the details are far from clear, the Romans, since the early empire, had relied on treaties with Saracen federates to protect this southern and most permeable section of the frontier. Petra had somehow been involved in this arrangement until at least the late sixth century, when there is evidence for the intervention of a Saracen phylarch in the arbitration of a dispute involving citizens of Petra.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from this smattering of evidence we lack sufficient data to write a history of the military-administrative role of Petra. How Petra organized its local militia,

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<sup>4</sup> David F. Graf, "The Saracens and the Defense of the Arabian Frontier," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)* 229 (1978): 1–26.

<sup>5</sup> Fiema, "Late-antique Petra," pp. 228–231; idem, "The Military Presence in the Countryside of Petra in the 6th C.," in Philip Freeman, Julian Bennett, Zbigniew T. Fiema, and Birgitta Hoffmann, eds., *Limes XVIII: Proceedings of the XVIIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, Amman, Jordan (September 2000)*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 2002), pp. 131–136; idem, "Military Architecture and the Defense 'System' of Roman-Byzantine Southern Jordan: A Critical Appraisal of Current Interpretation," *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Jordan (SHAJ)* 5 (1995): 261–269, for important theoretical considerations.

<sup>6</sup> Fawzi Zayadine, "Inscriptions grecques et nabatéennes au nord de Pétra," *Syria* 70 (1993): 81–94, esp. pp. 85–91, for edition and commentary = Maurice Sartre, *Inscriptions de la Jordanie*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1993), pp. 65–66, no. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Sartre, *Inscriptions*, p. 81 no. 50; Fiema, "The Military Presence."

<sup>8</sup> Saracen federates: Graf, "The Saracens and the Defense of the Arabian Frontier," pp. 15–19; idem, "Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace," in T. Fahd, ed., *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel, Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 24–27 Juin 1987* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 341–400. Phylarch's arbitration: Fiema, "Late-antique Petra," p. 214.

how often it was deployed, and the nature of the relationship between Petra and its outposts all remain largely unknown. Indeed, the silence of the sources has led to sweeping dismissals of the military readiness of this section of the frontier. Maurice Sartre, for example, could conclude more than a decade ago that frontier arrangements in southern Palestine seem to have been totally ineffective against Saracen raids.<sup>9</sup> While this view appears to be largely correct, the recent discovery of an inscription that speaks of Petra's role in the defense of the east nevertheless dispels the impression that Petra was insignificant in strategic terms.

The epigram is of interest precisely because it celebrates a man from Petra for successfully waging a large-scale "war." A certain Orion is praised for routing the "barbarous-sounding enemy" and saving the inhabitants of the city, the surrounding region, and indeed the entire province of Palaestina Salutaris. In connection with this event, he paid for the construction of a defense work (*asphales ergon*).<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, not much more detail can be gleaned from the inscription. While Stephen Tracy has produced an edition of the text, the edition remains "preliminary," because the upper half of the text is dilapidated and needs restoration.<sup>11</sup> Though this preliminary edition along with a German translation has been in print for a few years, the epigram has not yet received much attention. Thus it is worth providing a literal English translation based on the currently available text:

τείχεα τῆς πόλεως [...] Πέτρης  
 τίς πόλεμος [...]  
 τίς δὲ [...] κλέος εὐρύ  
 ἄφθι[τ-] αὐτὸς [...]  
 πωσ [...] μεν  
 αὐτὸς γὰρ καὶ ἔδωκε τὰ χρη. ατα μυρι. νας  
 καὶ πολίεθρον ἔσωσε π[ε]ρικτί[ο]νας ἅμα πάντας  
 ἡδὲ Παλαιστίνης Σαλουταρίας νοετήρας  
 μαρνόμενος· δηίους γὰρ ἀπώλεσε βαρβαροφώνους,  
 σπουδῆ δ' Ὀρίωνος ἀεχθὲν ἀσφαλὲς ἔργον

The wall of the city ... of Petra ... war ... broad fame ... For he both gave money and saved the city and likewise all the nearby dwellers and inhabitants of [the province of] Palaestina Salutaris, while fighting. For he utterly destroyed the barbarous-sounding enemy. By the zeal of Orion, this secure work was built up.

<sup>9</sup> Sartre, *Inscriptions*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>10</sup> The inscription was first mentioned in a preliminary excavation report: Patricia M. Bikai, "Petra: North Ridge Project," *American Journal of Archaeology* 103 (1999): 510–511, with photograph of half of the text. No other photos are currently in print.

<sup>11</sup> *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten*, R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, eds., vol. 4: *Die Südküste Kleinasien, Syrien und Palaestina* (Munich, 2002), p. 445, no. 22/71/01, Patricia M. Bikai and Stephen V. Tracy, eds. [abb. hereafter *SGO* 4].



The epigram was found as part of the excavation of the Ridge Church in 1988. The American team led by Patricia Bikai discovered in subsequent seasons that the church was part of a larger ecclesiastical complex, built just inside the “Inner Wall” of the city in the fifth or sixth century.<sup>12</sup> The 10-line hexameter epigram was found in a small structure in the “Piazza” directly opposite to the entrance to the Ridge Church. The interior of this building is a small space measuring 1.5 meters by 1.6 meters. This space is further divided into two rooms by a low wall. The eastern face of this low wall contains the epigram of interest here. It was incorporated into the wall as spolia and its content was apparently not of interest to the builders: though facing outward, the inscription was partially buried. This explains why the first five lines of the text are nearly effaced, while the last five lines are reasonably well preserved and legible.

All that can be concluded from the epigram’s find spot is that it must have been inscribed before the fifth century at the earliest and before the sixth century at the latest. As for its original location, it seems likely at present to suggest that the epigram, obviously pertaining to military matters and to the city wall, had been set up near the wall, but whether Orion’s “secure work” actually refers to the construction of the wall itself is unclear. As a decorative relic, the stone was marked as suitable building material for the small structure, whose function is as yet undetermined.

The internal evidence for dating the text is slightly more promising. It hinges on the letterforms and the mention of the provincial name of Palaestina Salutaris in line 8. From a preliminary look at the one published photograph of half of the text, it is apparent that the letterforms are squared.<sup>13</sup> If one compares, for example, the alpha, with its slanting crossbar moving up to the right, to the few dated inscriptions from late antique Petra, they most closely resemble an inscription dated to 446. In the same cultural milieu, the alpha also resembles an epigram from a village north of Bostra dated to 410/11.<sup>14</sup>

At first sight, the mention of the provincial name Palaestina Salutaris seems to date the inscription earlier than the fifth century. According to Theodore Nöldeke, southern Palestine was organized as Palaestina Salutaris after 358 CE. However, the first literary attestation of the name is in Jerome’s *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, dated to ca. 388.<sup>15</sup> Just a few years later, by 409, the name Palaestina Salutaris was

<sup>12</sup> Patricia M. Bikai, “The Ridge Church at Petra,” *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 40 (1996): 481–486; eadem, “Petra: North Ridge Project,” *SHAJ* 6 (2004): 59–63, with detailed plan of the complex.

<sup>13</sup> Also the commentary on the published preliminary edition notes that date of the inscription is “spät,” based on the squared letterforms: *SGO* 4, p. 445, no. 22/71/01.

<sup>14</sup> I owe this suggestion to Glen Bowersock. Petra: Sartre, *Inscriptions*, p. 81, no. 50, pl. XXVII. Djemerrin (territory of Bostra): *SGO* 4, p. 425, no. 22/42/98.

<sup>15</sup> Jerome: *Quaestiones hebraicae in Genesim* 21.30, 31. For the discussion of the dating based on the mention of Palaestina Salutaris I have relied on the citations listed in preliminary edition of the epigram: *SGO* 4, p. 445, no. 22/71/01.

officially changed to Palaestina Tertia. But the older name continued to be used, appearing, for example, in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus in 431.<sup>16</sup> Locally, the province was known by a hybrid of the two names. In the Petra Papyri, dated between 528 and 583, the province is called *Salutaris Tertia Palaestina*.<sup>17</sup>

Using this evidence, it is possible to determine the range of dates for the inscription. It will have been inscribed after 358, but owing to the persistence of the title *Salutaris* until the sixth century and the fact that *Palaestina Salutaris* fits the meter, an allusion to *Palaestina Salutaris* is not enough in itself to date the event between 358 and 409, when Petra was officially made the capital of Third Palestine.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the letterforms seem to place the inscription in the middle of the fifth century, a dating that can be supported by the imprecise use of *Salutaris* into the sixth century. Thus at present it is not possible to associate the information in the inscription with any known historical event, even though the conflict was apparently important enough to affect the entire province.

We can nevertheless speculate on two issues relevant to the issue of Roman–barbarian relations: the role of Orion, the honorand of the epigram, in the city both before and after the event referred to in the text; and the characterization of the enemy as “barbarous-sounding.” Given that this Orion was influential enough to raise a force to save “the city and likewise all the nearby dwellers and inhabitants” of the province, he must have been a member of the local elite. Through his resources, he raised the requisite funds to build up the physical defenses of the city in the aftermath of the war described in the epigram. Indeed, this Orion might have occupied a position similar to the leader of the local militia (*magistros hoplitôn*) mentioned above. The position of *magistros* is attested only once in an inscription found just north of Petra. In this case, the official was a certain Abdoobdas. Sartre suggests that the duties of this position were probably similar to those of the *Irenarch*, a police official attested widely in the epigraphy of Asia Minor.<sup>19</sup> This profile, of course, is purely speculative, and the restoration of the entire inscription is unlikely to provide further elucidation. The text, it must be remembered, is a literary epigram by a provincial poet. As such, he used archaizing diction, and would never have referred to Orion in anything but the most obfuscating Homeric terms.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Theodor Nöldeke, “Die römischen Provinzen Palaestina Salutaris und Arabia,” *Hermes* 10 (1876): 163–170.

<sup>17</sup> Fiema, “Late-antique Petra,” p. 192; J. Frösén, A. Arjava, and M. Lehtinen, eds., *Petra Papyri*, vol. 1 (Amman, 2002), p. 26, no. 1, l.5, dated to 23 May 537.

<sup>18</sup> Yaron Dan disputes the designation of Petra as the capital, preferring Elusa: see “Palaestina Salutaris (Tertia) and its Capital,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 32 (1982): 134–137. Refuted by Fiema; see Zbigniew T. Fiema, “Historical Conclusions,” in *The Petra Church* (Amman, 2001), pp. 425–436, at 425.

<sup>19</sup> See above, note 6.

<sup>20</sup> On the use of Homer in Late Antiquity as a status marker, notably in inscriptions, see Cyril Mango, “Byzantine Epigraphy (4th to 10th Centuries),” in D. Harlfinger and G.

The poetic murkiness likewise frustrates the identification of Orion's enemy. The only clue is their designation as "barbarous-sounding" (*barbarophônous*). As this word is fairly uncommon and probably chosen for a specific reason (the poet, presumably, having sufficient training to seek out another word to fill out the meter), it is worth speculating on what "barbarous-sounding" meant to a provincial poet and his literary-minded audience in the fifth century. There are at least two possibilities. Homer attached the term to the Carians of Asia Minor (*Il.* 2.867), Herodotus to the Persians (8.20, 9.43). In both cases, the meaning seems to be "non-Greek speakers."<sup>21</sup> Strabo, by contrast, used the term to mean "speaking Greek poorly" (14.2.28). In agreement with this latter definition is Theodoret, the bishop of Cyrrhus in the middle of the fifth century. He defended the apostles against the charge that their Greek was rather poor, barbarous-sounding. As such, the apostles, so pagan critics argued, cannot be ranked among the true philosophers.<sup>22</sup> Theodoret disagreed.

With both of these definitions in mind and considering the region and its peoples, the only fitting "barbarous-sounding enemy" were the Saracens.<sup>23</sup> Since at least the third century, fortifications along this section of the empire's frontier had been built to police the comings and goings of indigenous, nomadic tribes, not to establish a linear defense against a massive invasion of foreign enemies, such as the Sasanians.<sup>24</sup> Occasionally, however, the day-to-day tensions along the frontier erupted into large-scale conflicts. For example, in 377/78 Mavia, a Saracen queen, led a revolt against the state of such magnitude that the emperor

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Prato, eds., *Paleografia e codicologia greca, Atti del II Colloquio internazionale, Berlino-Wolfenbüttel 1983* (Alessandria, 1991), 1.235–249, 2.117–146; Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, 5th edn. (Paris, 1960), pp. 410, 426; Robert Browning, "Homer in Byzantium," *Viator* 6 (1975): 15–33; William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 336; Marc D. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres: Texts and Contexts*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 2003), esp. p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Recent comments on the Homeric use of the term: Allan A. Lund, "Hellenentum und Hellenizität: Zur Ethnogenese und zur Ethnizität der antiken Hellenen," *Historia* 54 (2005): 1–17, esp. pp. 9–10; Shawn A. Ross, "Barbarophonos: Language and Panhellenism in the *Iliad*," *Classical Philology* 100 (2005): 299–316; Rosaria Vignolo Munson, *Black Doves Speak: Herodotus and the Languages of Barbarians* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), p. 2 and n. 7; Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago, IL, 2002), pp. 111–112.

<sup>22</sup> *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 1.41; 5.64, edited by Pierre Canivet, *Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*, Sources chrétiennes 57 (Paris, 1958), pp. 115, 247. See also Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 17.376, 23.122.

<sup>23</sup> The mystery of origins of the term Saracen successfully unraveled by Graf, "The Saracens and the Defense of the Arabian Frontier," pp. 14–15.

<sup>24</sup> Graf, "The Saracens and the Defense of the Arabian Frontier," and idem, "Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace," orig. publ. 1989, reprint in idem, *Rome and the Arabian Frontier: From the Nabataeans to the Saracens* (Aldershot, 1997).

Valens had to sue for peace.<sup>25</sup> About the same time, Saracens infiltrated a monastery near Mount Sinai. The raiders, according to hostile sources, slaughtered dozens of monks and their indigenous neighbors.<sup>26</sup> For Saracens, if indeed they are the enemy referenced here, the poet of Petra probably intended the meaning used by Homer and Herodotus. The “barbarous-sounding enemy” that Orion defeated was not cultured at all. The relatively uncommon word *babaraphônos* therefore intentionally called to mind the historical antithesis of civilization and barbarism forged by Herodotus in the fifth century BCE.

Despite the importance of federates to the maintenance of peace, stereotypes and rumors adhered to the Saracens. While they could be allies, these nomads were unpredictable and uncivilized. For example, after negotiating a settlement with the emperor, the same Mavia sent a contingent of troops to Constantinople in 378 to fight the approaching Goths. Reflecting perhaps a true episode or just aping the characteristic denigration of the Saracens as barbaric, Ammianus described the monstrous (*monstrroso*) act of one particular soldier. Half-naked, shrieking, and long-haired, this Saracen jumped ahead of the troops, killed one of the Goths, and then began to suck the blood from the dead man’s neck (31.16.6). This was a strange episode, he wrote, that no one had ever seen before (*novo neque ante viso eventu*). Stereotypes followed the Saracens into the sixth century. In both Greek and Syriac the term “barbarian” could be synonymous with Arab.<sup>27</sup> The elite of Petra would understandably have wished to dissociate themselves from such a geographically and ethnically proximate barbarism.

The celebration of distance of the local elite from their “barbarous-sounding” neighbors in the epigram was probably also rooted in the growing use of Arabic in late antique Petra. This process was long underway. As early as the first century, Old Arabic was spoken and written in this region alongside Nabataean, the official

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<sup>25</sup> Rufinus, *HE* 11.6; Sozomen, *HE* 6.38; Socrates, *HE* 4.36; Theodoret, *HE* 4.23. Dated to spring 378 by Glen W. Bowersock, “Mavia, Queen of the Saracens,” in Werner Eck, Hartmut Galsterer, and Hartmut Wolff, eds., *Studien zur antiken Sozialgeschichte: Festschrift Friedrich Vittinghoff* (Vienna, 1980), pp. 477–495. But Noel Lenski has pushed the date back to late 377—see *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), pp. 204–210. In general, see Maurice Sartre, *Trois études sur l’Arabie romaine et byzantine*, Collection Latomus vol. 178 (Brussels, 1982) pp. 140–144; I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, DC, 1984), pp. 138–202; and most importantly Bowersock, “Mavia.”

<sup>26</sup> Philip Mayerson, “The Ammianus Narrative: Bedouin and Blemmye Attacks in Sinai,” orig. publ. 1980, reprint in idem, *Monks, Martyrs, Soldiers and Saracens: Papers on the Near East in Late Antiquity (1962–1993)* (Jerusalem, 1994), pp. 148–163.

<sup>27</sup> See Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 239–268 (on Ammianus), pp. 293–295 (on Jerome); M.A. Kugener, “Sur l’emploi en Syrie, au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère, du mot ‘barbare’ dans le sens de ‘arabe’,” *Oriens Christianus* 7 (1907): 408–412.

language of Petra, an Aramaic dialect that included significant Arabic elements.<sup>28</sup> By the end of the fourth century, the displacement of Nabataean Aramaic was nearly complete. Epiphanius of Salamis recorded that the pagans of Petra celebrated the liturgy of Aphrodite “in the Arabic dialect” (*Panarion* 2.51.22). The accuracy of Epiphanius’ terminology is confirmed by the epigraphic record. The use of Nabataean Aramaic in inscriptions was fading rather quickly, increasingly replaced by Greek in urban settings and Old Arabic in the countryside. In fact, one of the last inscriptions using the Nabataean script honors Imra’alqays as the “King of the Arabs” in 328. While the script is Nabataean, the language is Old Arabic.<sup>29</sup> From the fourth century on, it appears then that the majority of the people of Petra and its hinterland spoke a language closely related to that of the “barbarous-sounding” Saracens.<sup>30</sup> But to the urban elite, including both the poet and his honorand, the languages of the hinterland, however familiar, were barbarous. The only cultured language was Greek.

This inscription allows us to draw two broad conclusions of some importance. First, the honorand of the inscription was a certain Orion, otherwise unattested, who played a major role in organizing the defense of this stretch of the southeastern frontier sometime in the mid-fifth century. Thus we have the first direct evidence for Petra’s role in the defense of the east. Second, the inscription, in ascribing the term “barbarous-sounding” to Saracens, betrays an otherwise obscure sense of cultural anxiety apparently taking root in the city. The elite of Petra felt embattled as their city and territory increasingly became part of an Arabic-speaking land. A local poet found that he could celebrate his city’s defeat of the Saracens in terms that called to mind the heroic struggles of the distant past between Greeks and barbarians. And yet this anxiety was unfounded. While Nabataean faded from use in the city, Greek continued to be the official language of Petra into the seventh century. Hellenism was, in the end, triumphant, lasting longer than the celebration of a spectacular war and a local patriot, whose epigraphic remembrance lost its power and was seconded for building material among a population of oblivious churchgoers.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> David F. Graf and Michael J. Zwettler, “The North Arabian ‘Thamudic E’ Inscription from Uraynibah West,” *BASOR* 335 (2004): 53–89, see discussion at pp. 68–71.

<sup>29</sup> The last known Nabataean Aramaic inscription dates to 356. See M.C.A. MacDonald, “Languages, Scripts, and the Uses of Writing among the Nabataeans,” in Glenn Markoe, ed., *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans* (New York, 2003), pp. 37–56.

<sup>30</sup> Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, pp. 435–448.

<sup>31</sup> On Hellenism in Petra, with reference to the present epigram, see Glen W. Bowersock, “The Nabataeans in Historical Context,” in Glenn Markoe, ed., *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans* (New York, 2003), pp. 19–25, at 25.

# Chapter 18

## Elusive Places: A Chorological<sup>1</sup> Approach to Identity and Territory in Scythia Minor (Second–Seventh Centuries)

Linda Ellis

As the geographer D.B. Knight has stated, “In a sense, territory is not; it becomes, for territory itself is passive, and it is human beliefs and actions that give territory meaning.”<sup>2</sup> Territories, provinces, nations, or whatever designation we choose, are spatial patterns on the landscape and can be “produced” and “reproduced” as society, politics, and economics dictate, so that their boundaries become culturally generated “geographies of the mind.”<sup>3</sup> Every human group assigns a symbolic meaning to its landscape, which in itself is sufficiently powerful to give rise to conflict.

Since the late 1980s, the discipline of regional geography, and especially human (or cultural) geography, has witnessed a theoretical transformation. This philosophical renaissance analyzes “place” and “territory” and how human geography can study land categorization within the context of social theory.<sup>4</sup> This study explores some ideas from the field of “new regional geography” and how they might assist our understanding of human relations, delimiting territorial boundaries, and defining place during Late Antiquity.<sup>5</sup> This is a behavioral, rather than an ethno-linguistic, approach to understanding identity; socioeconomic relations are spatialized and cultural landscapes develop as a result of human practice. The criteria for identifying

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<sup>1</sup> From Greek *χώρος* (“place”), first used by Strabo; the study of the causal relations between geographical phenomena occurring within a particular region.

<sup>2</sup> D.B. Knight, “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers (AAAG)* 72 (1982): 514–531.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> M.A. Lewis, “Elusive societies: A Regional–Cartographical Approach to the Study of Human Relatedness,” *AAAG* 81.4 (1991): 605–626, at p. 609.

<sup>5</sup> For “new regional geography,” see, e.g., Mary Beth Pudup, “Arguments within Regional Geography,” *Progress in Human Geography (PHG)* 12.3 (1988): 369–390; Anne Gilbert, “The New Regional Geography in English and French-Speaking Countries,” *PHG* 12.2 (1988): 208–228. For critique, see, e.g., Hans Holmén, “What’s New and What’s Regional in the ‘New Regional Geography’?,” *Geografiska Annaler, Series B. Human Geography* 77.1 (1995): 47–63.

communities and their behavior, however, do not remain fixed; all human groupings and their geographical connections are “fluid” and metamorphose through time, as categories of relatedness (Roman vs. peregrine, for example) and their *territoria* encroach upon one other. The characterization of Late Antiquity as a “migration period,” the movements of peoples across space, is significantly symbolic of this geographic approach to identity.

A “place,” according to geographer R.J. Johnston,<sup>6</sup> is a set of institutionalized relationships composed of (1) the geophysical environment, (2) the built environment, and (3) the population. If we step back momentarily from the idea of a place being fixed in geographic space, we might notice that places, like cultural identity, are also mutable and quixotic. With the benefit of centuries of historical and archaeological evidence, scholars of Late Antiquity are in a unique position to analyze how and why cities and provinces were places that were repeatedly transformed, why the Romans were preoccupied with the “betweenness”<sup>7</sup> of space, and the perceived danger so-called “barbarians” posed in turning a Roman “place” into a state of “placelessness.”

The cultural–geographic example used here is the Roman province of Scythia Minor (modern Dobrudja in southeastern Romania), from the end of the Dacian wars (106 CE) to the migrations of the Slavs at the start of the seventh century. Scythia Minor was defined by two geomorphological borders: the Black Sea to the east and the final stretch of the lower Danube river on the west and north. Over the course of the Romano-Byzantine period, the area was divided into overlapping native, Greek, and Roman cultural–political domains: (1) The Black Sea coastline had a string of well-established Greek cities eventually taken over by Roman imperial interests; (2) local, Iron-Age populations occupied the interior hinterland, into which the Greeks rarely ventured but where the Romans colonized and established new cities; and (3) the Danube was a land-based frontier that was porous to human migration and therefore needed constant supervision by military bases established by the Roman army and navy. The Roman establishment of Scythia Minor as a buffer zone with provincial *limes*, epitomizes Roman xenophobia (fear of new ideas), a natural apprehension of empty space beyond regularly occupied areas and their (un)known boundaries.

### **From *Terra Nullius* to *Tropaeum Traiani***

Necessary to the understanding of Roman–barbarian relations and the transformation of the landscape was Roman metageography itself, that is, how the empire defined, categorized, and utilized geographic space. Perhaps no more dramatic example of Roman identification and control over place was the establishment of *Tropaeum Traiani* (“Trajan’s Trophy”), near the modern-day

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<sup>6</sup> R.J. Johnston, *A Question of Place: Exploring the Practice of Human Geography* (Oxford, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> J.N. Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place: Toward a Geography of Modernity* (Baltimore, MD, 1991).

village of Adamclisi in southeastern Romania. After the two wars with the Dacians (101–102, 105–106 CE), a military memorial complex consisting of a monument, altar, and mausoleum was completed ca. 109.<sup>8</sup> Located 600 meters from Adamclisi and 1,500 meters from the triumphal monument is the fortified city of Tropaeum Traiani, built by Roman veterans of the wars, sustained for five centuries, and then finally abandoned after the Slavic invasions of 602.<sup>9</sup>

The betweenness of place that characterized the region surrounding Tropaeum Traiani—southeast of the Danube, west of the Black Sea coast, and north of Moesia—demanded a Roman response, a built environment, to this *horror vacui*, that was manifested in the construction of a massive enclosure wall fortified with 22 towers to define the city, the creation of new spaces for human activities on the landscape (including cemeteries, baths, quarries, aqueducts, and cultivation), and roads linking dissociated Roman communities.

The emperor Trajan (98–117) founded Tropaeum Traiani in a good agricultural zone, but inconveniently distant from a source of water and distant from river and maritime transportation—in other words, a veritable “non-place.”<sup>10</sup> The Romans typically established cities at or near pre-existing population centers in conquered territories precisely because most people congregated within walking distance of available natural resources for survival. In Scythia Minor, the Romans sensibly emplaced cities along the Danube, took over the Greek cities on the Black Sea coastline, and founded inland cities with easy access to water and trade routes (see map of Scythia Minor, Fig. 18.1). But “Trajan’s city” was founded on *terra nova* and was not a necessity for economic or geographic purposes. Unlike many other Roman cities that often were palimpsests emplaced on autochthonous communities, Tropaeum Traiani became a new place and assigned political identity in Trajan’s name.

In fact, the regional surveying program currently being undertaken by the author has revealed that, in order to provide safe water for Tropaeum Traiani, an abstruse network of subterranean aqueducts permeated the surrounding landscape. Significantly then, a new *territorium*, a new ecology, and a vertical geography beneath and above the ground, also were being created from no pre-existing support system. No longer *terra nullius*, the empire created new places for human interaction, and Roman identity, on the landscape: aqueducts, quarries, basilicas, baths, and burial places.

The conflict between Roman forces and the Dacian–Sarmatian–Germanic coalition on the Adamclisi plain was one of the bloodiest battles, with an immense loss of life, of any Roman war. This complex at Tropaeum Traiani, which endured throughout Late Antiquity, was unequivocally Trajan’s political footprint on the

<sup>8</sup> M. Sâmpetru, *Tropaeum Traiani II: Monumentele romane* (Bucharest, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> Alexandru Barnea, Ion Barnea, Ioana Bogdan Cătănicu, Monica Mărgineanu-Cârstoiu, Gheorghe Papuc, *Tropaeum Traiani I: Cetatea* (Bucharest, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> M. Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London, 1995).



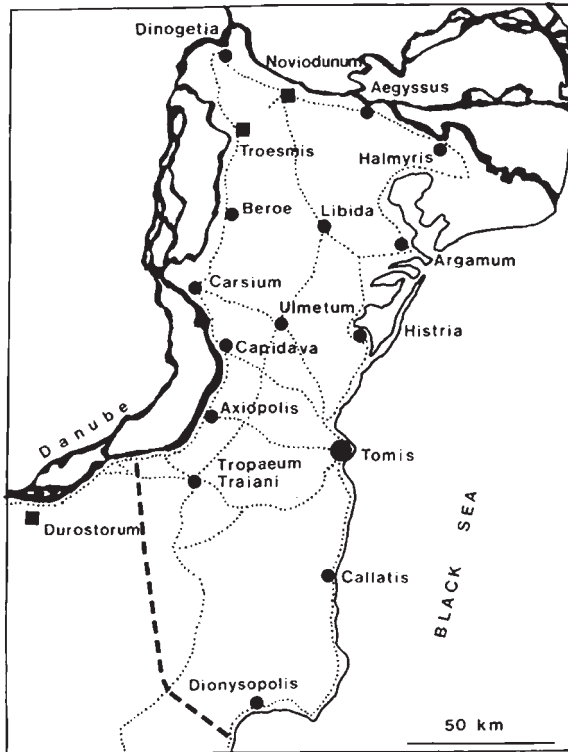


Figure 18.1 Map of Scythia Minor showing Greek and Roman cities and major trade routes.

landscape. The trophy monument could be seen from all directions—even from the Danube on unusually clear days—and thus provided three inescapable messages from the empire. To the Roman military, “Trajan’s Trophy” became a conflation of *memoria* and place—a Roman Iwo Jima. To the colonists, the city and its fortified walls provided land, water, and above all security. And to foreign *peregrini*, and potential enemies of Rome, who crossed the Danube and entered the empire via Scythia Minor, the monument with its graphic scenes of victory over barbarians gave an unambiguous warning.

But barbarian raids in this region continued to threaten the edge of empire. Periodic imperial reconstruction and building programs not only re-established Roman control over a region or city but also emplaced another emperor’s imprint, and thus identity, on the landscape. The city was attacked again in the latter half of the third century by the Carpi (a Dacian people in Moldavia) in alliance with the Goths. Much of the city was destroyed.

At the beginning of the fourth century, under the co-emperors Constantine I (306–337) and Licinius (308–324), Tropaeum Traiani was rebuilt and renamed

Civitas Tropaeensium, as indicated by a commemorative inscription dating to 316 and discovered by the east gate of the city:

By the defenders of Roman security and liberty, our lords Flavius Valerius Constantinus and Licinianus Licinius, pious, happy, and eternal Augustuses, by whose virtue and wisdom peoples of barbarian *gentes* everywhere have been defeated in order to establish the oversight of the frontier, the Civitas Tropaeensium was built, with the work happily undertaken from the foundations. The praetorian prefects [were] the *vir clarissimus* Petronius Anianus and the *vir perfectissimus* Iulius Iulianus, always devoted to the divine will of these [emperors].<sup>11</sup>

Although Trajan's name disappeared from the city and its landscape, imperial identity continued uninterrupted.

After economic growth during the fourth century, Tropaeum Traiani faced both economic and cultural decline, as did the province of Scythia Minor as a whole, in the fifth century due to both poor fiscal conditions and repeated attacks by the Huns. But at the end of the fifth century and continuing into the latter half of the sixth century, during the reigns of the emperors Anastasius (491–518) and Justinian (527–565), the city began to flourish again, becoming an important civil and religious center. This development is quite apparent in the built environment through the construction of both public and religious buildings: at Tropaeum Traiani, archaeological excavations have revealed five basilicas built within the city walls during this time frame.

### The *Limes* of Human Relatedness

The *limes* is the archetypal feature of Roman metageography, but it was more than a simple term to refer to the border that divided Roman-controlled from non-Roman territory.<sup>12</sup> Depending on the location along Rome's tri-continental empire, the *limes* could manifest itself as a Roman "Maginot Line," a lure for profit, an indistinct hinterland, the barrier between "us" and "them," or the psychological frontier of civilization itself. The Lower Danubian *limes* manifested each of these cultural visions of the landscape.

<sup>11</sup> "Romanae securitatis liberatisq(ae) [v]indicibus / d(ominis) n(ostris) Fl(avio) Val(erio) Constantino et [Liciniano / Licinio] piis felicibus aeternis Aug(ustis) / quorum virtute et providentia edomitis / ubique barbarum gentium populis ad confirmandam limitis tutelam etiam / Tropaeensium Civitas auspicato a fundamentis / feliciter opere constructa est / Petr(onius) Annianus v(ir) c(larissimus) et Iul(ius) Iulianus v(ir) em(inentissimus) praef(ecti) praet(orio) numini eorum semper dicatissimi" (CIL 3.13.734 = ILS 8938); for translation, see "The Museum Complex of Adamclisi," at <http://www.cjc.ro/enглеza/adamen~1.htm>, accessed 29 July 2010; also E. Popescu, "Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Tropaeum Traiani," *Studii clasice* 6 (1964): 185–203.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, MD, 1994).

The Danube was patrolled by the Roman navy and heavily guarded by the Roman army in an attempt to offer both security against *peregrini* as well as opportunity for business. Riverine frontiers always have been notoriously porous and logistically difficult, if not impossible, to defend. In 369, the emperor Valens (364–378) went so far as to establish only two border customs stations in Scythia Minor (Noviodunum and Daphne) where trade between Romans and Goths could take place.<sup>13</sup> The other cities of Scythia Minor also, however, provided opportunity for commerce and served as trade centers precisely because of their locations. A fifth-century inscription from a cemetery south of Tomis (today Constanța),<sup>14</sup> for example, identifies Fl. Servandus as *comes commerciorum*, the Roman bureaucrat who had authority over border trade.<sup>15</sup> The *comes commerciorum* not only supervised commerce but also attempted to control espionage across the *limes* by foreign businessmen and the flight of Romans to enemy populations to whom they could divulge information.<sup>16</sup>

The Roman Empire always felt under threat by migrating, transhumant, and displaced populations who encroached on Roman territory. The epithets, “barbarian” and “barbaricum,” are symbolic of both a “cultural *limes*” and the difficulty Romans had with disaffected peoples whose behavioral patterns were at variance with Roman notions of how a population should “belong” or be fixed in space. In fact, many groups foreign to the empire could, and probably were, considered peoples without a place.<sup>17</sup>

Thus in Johnston’s ternary system of understanding “place,” we have moved from the geophysical environment and the built environment to the population. Cultural landscapes develop as a result of human behavior, and part of the strategy for the Roman colonial system was to “manage” or control diversity by fossilizing mutable populations. Whether by simplifying or remaking group identity or through forcible resettlement, imperial regimes often link people with “place.” Late antique historians often labeled non-Roman populations under anachronistic names derived from Herodotus, Tacitus, and other earlier authors: for instance, “Scythian” (an Iron-Age

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<sup>13</sup> See Themist. Orat. 10.135c–d; and Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), p. 135. See also Ziche in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> Tomis preserved its ancient Greek name until the tenth century: E. Popescu, “Constantiana. Ville et évêché de la Scythie Mineure. Un problème de géographie historique,” *BZ* 73 (1966): 359–382.

<sup>15</sup> E. Popescu, *Inscriptiile grecesti si latine din secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România* (Bucharest, 1976) (= *IGLR*), no. 86.

<sup>16</sup> *CJ* 4.63.6: “Honorius et Theodosius AA. Maximino comiti sacrarum largitionum. Si qui inditas nominatim vetustis legibus civitates transgredientes ipsi vel peregrinos negotiatores sine comite commerciorum suscipientes fuerint deprehensi, nec proscriptionem bonorum nec poenam perennis exilii ulterius evadent”; for trans-frontier flight, see Nechaeva, Kagan in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> For the lack of places of origin of barbarian peoples in encyclopedic catalogues, see Mathisen in this volume.

population from the south Russian steppes) became a generic appellation assigned to the Goths, as well as to geographic space, and Goths also could be referred to as “Getae” (an Iron-Age population on the lower Danube related to the Dacians).<sup>18</sup> The Roman name for the Lower Danubian province of Scythia Minor, therefore, was both ethnographically and historically inaccurate.

The *barbarae nationes*, consequently, were gathered together as a psychologically manageable collectivity. The “barbarians” were not identified precisely on the basis of language, religion, geographic origin, and so on, but more likely judged as to whether their pattern of behavior was (in)compatible with the Roman perception of how a people should relate or “belong” to place. The *limes*, then, in Roman metageography, was also a way to define and maintain “human unrelatedness”—a frontier between place and placelessness, between the *Ordnung* of Rome and the disorder of *barbaricum*.

### Church and the Reproduction of “Place”

From the Trajanic period to the fourth century, the definition of Roman place in Scythia Minor continued to evolve within its now Christian metageography. Starting with the events at Adrianople in 378, Scythia’s economic history went into sharp decline until the end of the fifth century, as a result of barbarian incursions.

By imperial custom, as determined in particular at the Council of Nicaea in 325, each city in the empire, at the level of *polis*, was to have its own episcopate together with a *territorium*. But the installation of bishops in each city of Scythia Minor was both dangerous and prohibitively expensive due to invasions of Goths and Huns, who damaged churches and instigated widespread poverty. Therefore, as of the mid-fifth century, the province had but a single episcopal see, Tomis, as reported by Sozomen (*HE* 7.19): “There are in this country a great number of cities, villages, and fortresses. The metropolis is called Tomis; it is a large and populous city, and lies on the sea-shore to the left of one sailing to the sea, called the Euxine. According to an ancient custom that still prevails all the churches of the whole country are under the sway of one bishop.” This policy was confirmed by a constitution of Zeno (476–491), issued in 480, that designated only a single episcopal see for Scythia Minor, in Tomis, with authority over the entire province:

But considering the status of the holy churches under the jurisdiction of Tomis in the province of Scythia, these holy churches have been troubled by continuous incursions of the barbarians, or have otherwise been afflicted by want, and they cannot be preserved except by the care of the blessed bishop of Tomis, which city is also the capital of the people.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> For this tradition, see also Mathisen in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> *CJ* 1.3.35, translated by Fred H. Blume, *Annotated Justinian Code*, 2nd edn., ed. Timothy Kearly, at <http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/blume&justinian/>, accessed 29 July 2010.

A century of excavations across Dobrudja has revealed an enormous amount of data for Late Antiquity. In the early sixth century, under the reign of Anastasius, an economic renewal, more like a basilica building boom, began for Scythia Minor that continued under Justin I (518–527) and Justinian I.<sup>20</sup> The archaeological evidence is presented in the following chart:

Table 18.1 Archaeological evidence of basilicas from Roman cities in Scythia Minor<sup>21</sup>

City	Date	Architectural details
Tomis	Fifth/sixth centuries	6 basilicas, all excavated
Callatis	Anastasius I	Basilica with baptisterium
Histria	Fifth/sixth centuries	6 basilicas, all excavated
Tropaeum Traiani	Fourth/fifth centuries	5 basilicas inside city, 2 with baptisteria, 1 with possible residential quarters for clergy; 2 outside city walls
Axiopolis		Basilica with baptisterium; a second outside the north tower of the city
Dinogetia	Fourth/fifth centuries, renovated under Anastasius I	3-apsidal basilica with an external 5-sided apsis
Troesmis		3 basilicas; largest is 50m, the other 2 are 24m and both have an exterior 5-sided apsis
Noviodunum (Isaccea)	Fourth/fifth centuries	3-apsidal basilica; in the territorium is the basilica at Niculițel with a crypt for reliquaries of 4 martyrs
Slava Rusă (Ibida)		Large 3-apsidal basilica with a nave and 2 aisles and narthex, excavated in 1917
Capul Dolojman	Fifth/sixth centuries	3 basilicas under the ruins of a Romano-Byzantine fortification
Capidava	Fifth/sixth centuries	Basilica
Beroe	Fifth/sixth centuries	Basilica
Zaldapa (Bulgaria)	Fifth/sixth centuries	Basilica

<sup>20</sup> I. Barnea, “Contributions to Dobrudja History under Anastasius I,” *Dacia* 4 (1960): 363–374.

<sup>21</sup> See E. Popescu, “Die kirchliche Organisation der Provinz Scythia Minor vom vierten bis ins sechste Jahrhundert,” *Jahrbuch der osterreichischen Byzantinistik* 6 (1988) 75–94; sites are in Dobrudja except where indicated.

Vasile Pârvan, the founder of archaeology in Romania, proposed an interesting hypothesis, that independent bishoprics might have existed in the areas where non-Roman *foederati* were settled.<sup>22</sup> If so, it would be an interesting question as to whether these bishoprics had official recognition from the church hierarchy. Pârvan's idea was proposed before World War I and without the benefit of substantial archaeological or historical research. His hypothesis, which he himself did not explore further, is worth revisiting. A sixth-century inscription from Callatis (modern Mangalia) reads, "Hic facta est oratio episcoporum Stefani ..." ("Here a prayer of the bishops was made ... of Stefanus").<sup>23</sup> This dedication to Stefanus, who is presumed to have been a bishop, is broken after his name, but for the first time we have epigraphic evidence of a bishop in a city other than Tomis.

No one is suggesting that all of the cities in Table 18.1 were episcopal sees, but, given all the aforementioned construction to rebuild the ecclesiastical map of Scythia Minor over such an extensive period of time, it does seem improbable that this province would only have a single episcopate at Tomis. If there were other bishoprics, the best candidates, based on the archaeological remains found to date, would seem to be Callatis, Tropaeum Traiani, Histria, and Axiopolis. What is clear, moreover, is that these renovation and construction programs after periods of decline extended Roman horizontal and vertical space, with additional imperial palimpsests.

### Psychological Landscapes: From Bishops' Signatures to *Natio*

The city of Tomis appears in four *Notitiae episcopatum*, dating between the seventh and tenth centuries, with the title of autocephalous archbishopric, dependent on Constantinople, and included in the now-designated "Diocese of Scythia."<sup>24</sup> Earlier evidence for the position of the province of Scythia in the episcopal hierarchy comes from the subscriptions of bishops to conciliar proceedings, in which the hierarchs of Tomis mentioned the name of the province of Scythia next to that of their city. For instance, Timotheus, who took part in the Council of Ephesus in 431, wrote (in Greek) next to his name that he was from the city of Tomis, province of Scythia; of the 197 participants, he was the only one to mention his province. Likewise, in 448, the subscription of John, bishop of Tomis, was recorded as

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Vasile Pârvan, *Epigraphic Contributions to the History of Daco-Roman Christianity* (Bucharest, 1911); for churches established by or for barbarian *gentes*, see R. Mathisen, "Barbarian Bishops and the Churches 'in barbaricis gentibus' during Late Antiquity," *Speculum* 72 (1997): 664–697.

<sup>23</sup> See D.M. Pippidi, *Studii de istorie a religiilor antice* (Bucharest, 1969), p. 301.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Heinrich Gelzer, *Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der Notitiae episcopatum* (Munich, 1900). *Notitiae episcopatum* were lists of the episcopal sees in the empire and their practical purpose was to give an account of their number and, most of all, to ascribe the rank of each prelate.

“beatissimus pater noster Tomitanae urbis episcopus provinciae Scythiae” (“our most blessed father bishop of the city of Tomis of the province of Scythia”). The presence of his successor Alexander was recorded at the “Robber Council” of Ephesus in 449 as “Alexander reverendissimus episcopus Tomitanorum civitatis provinciae Scythiae” (“the most reverend Alexander, bishop of the city of the Tomitani, of the province of Scythia”); he also signed the acts of the third session of the Council of Chalcedon (13 October) in the penultimate position among 49 bishops as “Alexander episcopus Tomitanorum provinciae Scythiae” (“Alexander bishop of the Tomitani, of the province of Scythia”).<sup>25</sup> It is remarkable that, of all the signatories of these documents, the ecclesiastical representatives from Tomis in Scythia Minor were repeatedly the only ones to designate and thus emphasize their provincial space, demonstrating the extent to which they were identified with their province as well as with their city.

Moving from objectified landscapes to “geographies of the mind,” the late antique period of Scythia Minor provides documentary evidence for the transformation of the geographic province into a collective identity. The bishops of Tomis also appreciated the strategic significance of their province, as did the emperor Valens, as reported by Sozomen (*HE* 6.21) regarding the mid-fourth century: “Valens ... well knew that the Scythians were a courageous nation, and that their country, by the position of its places, possessed many natural advantages which rendered it necessary to the Roman Empire, for it served as a barrier to ward off the barbarians.” Scythia Minor represented the psychological “betweenness” of place, a cenophobic peninsula jutting outward from the empire, and exposed to invasion. At first an anachronistic designation, “Scythia” was a tool for the Romans to tackle the ambiguity of a multi-ethnic frontier. Over the course of time, the fluidity of “Scythia” fossilized into a landscape with political boundaries, as obtrusively advertised by the bishops of Scythia Minor in their territorial bylines, and with a developing sense of *natio* and belonging to place.

Knight also has developed a useful paradigm for understanding the group-to-territory relationship and the development of a notion of “nation”: “Whereas a socially cohesive group once defined its territory, in time the politically bounded territory came to define the people; there was a transference in emphasis from group to territory.”<sup>26</sup> For most people in the pre-industrial world, identity is with the local community and the face-to-face social group. Even for those subsumed within the borders of an ancient empire, rarely would the ordinary person have identified with or even been cognizant of a vast, tri-continental imperial “state,” but more likely would have identified with a smaller scale group, such as the family, clan, village, church, or city.

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<sup>25</sup> For these bishops, see <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/carte-913-81526-episcopul-timotei-16>, accessed 29 July 2010; see also Nelu Zugravu, “Itineraria ecclesiastica in Scythia Minor,” *Studia Universitatis Babeş Bolyai – Theologia Catholica* 3 (2007): 10–29.

<sup>26</sup> Knight, “Identity and Territory,” pp. 514–531.

From Sozomen, we clearly witness such transference from group to territory back to group again. We can clearly see that the borders of geographic and personal identity coalesced during Late Antiquity as “Scythian.” That Sozomen referred to the Roman province of Scythia Minor as a “country” and “nation,” coming full circle and returning to a definition of a place in terms of the people in it, should be no surprise. This “geography of the mind” had become a distinctive source of identification for the population, now referred to in texts as “Scythians,” thus linking personal identity of a local group to a collective, Roman-engendered space.

## Conclusion

After the Slavic invasions at the beginning of the seventh century, and until the ninth century, no textual information is available regarding Scythia Minor—ruralization and a state of “placelessness” had supervened. After the breakup of the Danubian *limes* in 602 by Avars and Slavs and their penetration into the empire, many episcopal sees declined or even disappeared. In the Dobrudja, a bishopric at Axiopolis existed in the eleventh century during the reign of emperor Alexius I Comnenus.<sup>27</sup> Tomis, the largest urban area and major Black Sea port, should have been in a similar situation, for it continued to exist as a city even though it witnessed a process of decline widespread in Europe at the time of the barbarian invasions. Tomis preserved its Greek name until the tenth century, when it became yet another Roman palimpsest on the landscape, known as “Constantza.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 97.

<sup>28</sup> See Popescu, “Constantiana.”



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Chapter 19  
Barbarian Traffic, Demon Oaths, and  
Christian Scruples (Aug. *Epist.* 46–47)

Kevin Uhalde

LUCIUS [son of Titus, leading the Goths]

Who should I swear by? Thou believest no god:  
That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?

AARON [the Moor]

What if I do not? As, indeed, I do not;  
Yet, for I know thou art religious  
And hast a thing within thee called conscience,  
... Therefore I urge thy oath; for that I know  
An idiot holds his bauble for a god  
And keeps the oath which by that god he swears,  
To that I'll urge him .... (*Titus Andronicus* 5.1)

Sometime around 397, a landowner named Publicola wrote Augustine of Hippo about happenings on his estates in the “region of the Arzuges,” probably southern Tunisia or western Libya.<sup>1</sup> Publicola’s managers on these remote lands contracted with barbarians for labor and protection and in the process accepted oaths that the barbarians swore by their own gods, whom Publicola called *daemones*. Publicola’s main question was whether oaths sworn by demons in any way contaminated the Christians who accepted the oaths or those who profited from the arrangement. His 13 other questions ranged across issues broadly related to sacredness and purity—what happens, for example, if a Christian eats food offered to an idol. Publicola drew Augustine’s attention to his letter’s orderly arrangement and asked that the bishop respond in kindly fashion; Augustine complied.

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<sup>1</sup> Y. Modéran, *Les Maures et l’Afrique romaine: IV–VII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rome, 2003), pp. 364–374; C. Lepelley, “La diabolisation du paganisme et ses conséquences psychologiques: les angoisses de Publicola, correspondant de saint Augustin,” in L. Mary, M. Sot, eds., *Impies et païens entre Antiquité et Moyen Ages* (Paris, 2002), pp. 81–96, at 86–87.

## Scholarship and Style

Both letters, numbers 46 and 47 in the Augustinian corpus, are well known among archaeologists and historians. In his 1993 synthesis on Tripolitania, David Mattingly cited them in a half-dozen different contexts, and he was not the first archaeologist to squeeze the correspondence for information about agriculture, commerce, and military activity on the frontier.<sup>2</sup> Whereas traffic of this sort has interested archaeologists and some historians of the Roman army and African economy, historians generally have been more interested in demons, scruples, and figuring out who Publicola was or was not.

Various adjectives have characterized the form and syntax of Publicola's letter, none of them flattering. Some historians have used the mediocrity of the letter's style as evidence that this Publicola must not be Valerius Publicola, Roman senator and father of Melania the Younger, whose family owned extensive property in North Africa.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that no extant text is attributed to Valerius Publicola, so no comparison between this letter and a known specimen of the senator's epistolographic skill is possible. It also should be noted that most of the letters we have from senatorial ranks in the late fourth or early fifth centuries come from individuals renowned for their Latinity, such as Symmachus or Paulinus of Nola. The evolution of the Latin language is easily distorted when scholars select "vulgar" specimens and exclude master stylists such as Symmachus as anomalies.<sup>4</sup> So, conversely, might our expectations of elite culture err when we disallow the existence of educated, wealthy, and powerful men self-secure enough to air worse-than-mediocre literary skills, at least when writing to recently ordained bishops of provincial cities? If different *mentalités* could coexist in Publicola's and Symmachus' elite circles, as Michele Salzman has demonstrated,<sup>5</sup> then why not a mix of epistolary styles, which the harsh selection process of editing, publishing, and preservation has mostly obscured from our view? Anyway, stylistic arguments must remain inconclusive, but they have influenced other areas of the debate.

Claude Lepelley, these letters' most recent commentator, is inclined to reject the identification of the epistolographer Publicola with the senator Publicola.<sup>6</sup> But

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<sup>2</sup> D.J. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1994), p. 75, n. 13, also pp. 89, 114, 175–176, 186–187, 212; R.G. Goodchild, *Libyan Studies*, ed. J. Reynolds (London, 1976), pp. 36–38; see below, notes 13–14, 35.

<sup>3</sup> A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, eds., *PLRE I. AD 260–395* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 753–754; J. Desmulliez, C. Fraisse-Coué, E. Paoli-Lafaye, C. Sotinel, *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire. II: Italie (313–604) (PCBE II)*, pp. 1863–1864.

<sup>4</sup> G. Haverling, *Studies on Symmachus' Language and Style* (Göteborg, 1988), p. 11 and passim; my thanks to Cristiana Sogno for this reference.

<sup>5</sup> M.R. Salzman, "Elite Realities and *Mentalités*: The Making of a Western Christian Aristocracy," *Arethusa* 33 (2000): 347–362.

<sup>6</sup> Lepelley, "La diabolisation," p. 85, n. 7, departing from the opinion of M. Moreau, "Sur un correspondant d'Augustin: qui est donc Publicola?," *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes*

Lepelley's real interest is in religion. He writes that Publicola's letter betrayed "a crude religiosity and a strongly mediocre intelligence," an "anxious temperament," and "neurotic" concerns; he also argues that Publicola's understanding of oath swearing in particular reflected antiquated "scruples."<sup>7</sup> Lepelley is not alone. Denys Gorce referred to Publicola's "fragility of conscience verging on scruple." André Mandouze describes Publicola as narrow-minded and suffering from a *maladie du scrupule*. Elizabeth Clark refers to "the nugatory concerns of epistle 46," while Frederik Van der Meer might have been the one to put the "scrupular" vocabulary into play, by claiming that Publicola was "pathologically concerned" and a "victim of scruples" and by summarizing his letter as "a pitiful performance, as also is his style, and both express a purely formalistic type of Christianity."<sup>8</sup> So Lepelley's innovation is not to deride Publicola's style and scruples or even to elide the two. Instead, it is to suggest that Publicola's brand of old-fashioned religiosity—marked by a physical, tactile sense of sacredness—was something he shared with many late Roman Christians. This proposal offers compelling possibilities for contextualizing these letters.

Nevertheless, there are problems. First, the evidentiary basis is worryingly thin. If this Publicola is not Melania the Younger's father, then we know nothing about him beyond Letter 46, much of whose religious content, especially the concerns that may strike us as most trifling, was generic: plenty of Jews and Christians worried over the risk of eating sacrificial food, even while contemplating the Apocalypse (Rev. 2:14, 20)! Publicola well might have been feeding Augustine the sort of questions he thought bishops enjoyed, sweetening the otherwise bland request to approve a mundane swearing practice. Second, just because demons and purity are the letter's refrain does not mean they accurately or wholly represent its gist. We also should notice the repeated references to prices, credit, and especially fidelity in both Publicola and Augustine's letters. According to Publicola, the act of swearing stood for public credit.<sup>9</sup> It was Publicola, not Augustine, who elevated the subject from a mere frontier matter to one that concerned everyone, when he

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28 (1982): 225–238, whose stylistic analysis he otherwise follows.

<sup>7</sup> Lepelley, "La diabolisation," pp. 81–96.

<sup>8</sup> D. Gorce, ed., *Vie de sainte Mélanie, Sources chrétiennes* 90 (Paris, 1962), p. 26, n. 2; A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin, l'aventure de la raison et de la grâce* (Paris, 1968), p. 575, n. 5; idem, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. I: Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303–533)* (Paris, 1982), pp. 932–933; E.A. Clark, trans., *Gerontius: Life of Melania the Younger* (New York, 1984), p. 88; F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: Church and Society at the Dawn of the Middle Ages* (London, 1961), pp. 56, 153.

<sup>9</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 46.1: "iuramentum iniquum medium intercessit," where he also comments, *fides per daemonum iurationem firma uisa est*"; *ibid.*, 46.2: "si inde manducaverit Christianus sciens vel de pretio ipsarum rerum usus fuerit, coinquinetur"; similarly in 46.3 and 46.4. Augustine, *Ep.* 47.2: "utrum eius fide utendum sit, qui, ut eam servet, per daemona iuraverit ... iuraverit se fidem servaturum; nemo recte reprehenderet, quia fidem servavit and qui utitur fide illius ... non peccato eius se sociat ... sed bono pacto eius, quo fidem servavit."

asked about Christians within the empire whom pagan Romans, happy to swap demon oaths, represented on the frontiers.<sup>10</sup>

The bottom line is that Publicola's sensitivity to the sacred quality of oaths, which we need not doubt, did not hinder him from understanding their moral, legal, and pragmatic importance. Moreover, if a regard for the sacred character of oath swearing signified an archaic sensibility, then Augustine and everyone else in Late Antiquity were as outdated as Publicola. The aim here is not to extract anecdotal evidence in order to flesh out poorly understood beliefs or practices at large, as others have done well enough. Instead, a broader context of oath swearing can be used to help us understand better what was bothering Publicola and why Augustine took him seriously. For both these letters survive because Publicola's concern over demon oaths was well placed and settled upon a cluster of weighty, timely issues. The bishop of Hippo grasped the significance of Publicola's inquiry and would grapple with it for years to come (as would other bishops<sup>11</sup>). A matter these men treated so seriously deserves our serious attention.

## Frontier Peace

The barbarians Publicola referred to might have included people not resident in any town or estate but living permanently in the region, pastoralists willing to work the harvests in return for grazing rights, or nomads or semi-nomadic merchants attending markets on estates like Publicola's.<sup>12</sup> They moved back and forth through farms and towns along the African frontier, checking in with Roman officials at stations where, Publicola specified, they received written

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<sup>10</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 46.5, "si paganus, qui limitis praestit, iuraverit barbaro pro fide illi servanda per mortale iuramentum, si non inquinat, pro quibus iurat?"

<sup>11</sup> A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411–533* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 233.

<sup>12</sup> From a large bibliography, the following have been directly informative here: C.R. Whittaker, "Land and Labour in North Africa," *Klio* 60 (1978): 331–362; P. Troussset, "Pénétration romaine et organisation de la zone frontrière dans le prédésert tunisien," in M. Khanoussi, P. Ruggeri, C. Vismara, eds., *Ai confini dell'Impero: contatti, scambi, conflitti* (= *L'Africa romana* 15), 3 vols. (Rome, 2004), 1.59–88, with references; E.W.B. Fentress, *Numidia and the Roman Army: Social, Military and Economic Aspects of the Frontier Zone*, British Archaeological Reports (BAR) International Series 53 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 183–186; P. Leveau, "Le pastoralisme dans l'Afrique antique," in C.R. Whittaker, ed., *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 177–195; B. Shaw, "Rural Markets in North Africa and the Political Economy of the Roman Empire," *Antiquites africaines (AntAfr)* 17 (1981): 37–83; C. Grey, "Letters of Recommendation and the Circulation of Rural Laborers in the Late Roman West," in L. Ellis, F. L. Kidner, eds., *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 25–40.

receipts for swearing their oaths and paying their fees.<sup>13</sup> Written certificates and other records were routine on the frontiers,<sup>14</sup> but it is hardly surprising that none of these work permits survive. These would be temporary certificates and no doubt scrappy things.

But just as soldiers made note of their own annual oaths of loyalty to the emperor,<sup>15</sup> more distinguished occasions than the mundane immigrations Publicola described left physical memorials of the oaths Romans and barbarians shared. At Volubilis in Mauretania Tingitana, for example, truce conferences between Roman governors and tribal leaders in the late second and third centuries produced numerous inscriptions recording the establishment of peace and the dedication of an altar to the reigning emperor. Brent Shaw suggested we recall that this “ritualistic mode of contact” would have integrated the inscribed altar as a physical object along with other essential rituals not recorded in the inscription but often elaborated in literary sources—an “embrace, a kiss, or a handshake.” We should add oaths to the top of that list.<sup>16</sup>

For both the physical and verbal formulas of solemn interactions were meaningful,<sup>17</sup> as in the scene set by Libanius, in his funerary oration for Julian, of

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<sup>13</sup> R. MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Late Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), pp. 14–21: “tribes of every name, in every quarter, [who] mumbled an oath of loyalty to an alien culture . . .” (MacMullen referred indirectly to the correspondence with Publicola at 59, n. 27); J. Matthews, “Mauretania in Ammianus and the Notitia,” in R. Goodburn, P. Bartholomew, eds., *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, BAR Supplementary Series 15 (Oxford, 1976), pp. 157–186, at 171, suggests that the *decuriones* and *tribuni* Publicola mentioned might be local “dynasts” as in Mauretania.

<sup>14</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 2.19.1–2. Barbarians appear in military records from Bu Njem dating to 253/59 and in the so-called Abinnaeus Archive: J.N. Adams, “Latin and Punic in Contact? The Case of the Bu Njem Ostraca,” *JRS* 84 (1994): 87–112, at pp. 92–93, 97; R. Marichal, “Les ostraca de Bu Njem,” *Comptes rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1979): 436–52, at p. 451, who refers to *Garamantes* carrying “des sortes de passeports, comme ces lettres dont parlera saint Augustin”; H.I. Bell, V. Martin, et al., eds., *The Abinnaeus Archive: Papers of a Roman Officer in the Reign of Constantius II* (Oxford, 1962), for which see further note 25 below; P. Morizot’s recent survey, “Impact de l’armée romaine sur l’économie de l’Afrique,” in P. Erdkamp, ed., *The Roman Army and the Economy* (Amsterdam, 2002), pp. 345–374, cites our letters at 349, n. 11.

<sup>15</sup> R.O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus* (Cleveland, OH, 1971), pp. 422–429, no. 117.

<sup>16</sup> B.D. Shaw, “Autonomy and Tribute: Mountain and Plain in Mauretania Tingitana,” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 41–42 (1987): 66–89, at pp. 70–74, 76–77, 80; cf. Liv. 29.24 (Scipio to Masinissa): “neu fas, fidem, dexteras, deos testes atque arbitros conuentorum fallat”; Gillett, *Envoys*, pp. 248–249.

<sup>17</sup> Especially E.A. Meyer, *Legitimacy and Law in the Roman World: Tabulae in Roman Belief and Practice* (Cambridge, 2004); also J. Moralee, “For Salvation’s Sake:” *Provincial Loyalty, Personal Religion, and Epigraphic Production in the Roman and Late Antique Near East* (New York, 2004).

the emperor cowing the Alamanni in 361. One of their leaders, Vadomarius, had broken his word and pillaged, so now Julian went in person to ensure that the rest would not follow suit. Libanius emphasized that, although most of the barbarians had kept their oaths faithfully, out of shame over Vadomarius and in awe of the emperor looming there above them they now not only confirmed their loyalty, they piled oath on top of oath.<sup>18</sup>

Here, as so often is the case in the literature, fidelity is relative.<sup>19</sup> After all, the barbarian king Vadomarius was enticed to perjury by the Christian Roman emperor Constantius. If fidelity is relative, oaths by contrast are absolute: they are either honored or they are broken. Ancient and modern historians alike refer often and casually to barbarians' infidelity and tendency to break their oaths. A range of authors from Julius Caesar through Ammianus Marcellinus to Hydatius and Procopius endorse this notoriety.<sup>20</sup> Yet no one seems to have assembled a dossier of cases in which barbarians are shown keeping their oaths, or tried to balance the ledger by tracking how often Romans or Christians break faith with barbarians. Nonetheless some of our historians made a point of juxtaposing the way barbarians treated oaths with the way Romans treated oaths. Christian authors did the same, even though one text—Augustine's *City of God*—is curiously silent on the complexities of barbarian faith and fidelity, as Gillian Clark astutely demonstrates in this volume. Salvian of Marseilles, for example, writing around 440, accused Franks and Syrian merchants of habitual perjury but also scolded Christians who explained away perjury as a symptom of "pagan barbarism." Christians were as likely to swear oaths and to break them as pagans were, Salvian insisted, and far better perjure oneself by demons than by God.<sup>21</sup>

Glimpses of demon oaths are rare, even in the literary sources. In one of his "canonical" letters addressed to Amphilochius in 375, Basil of Caesarea prescribed penance for Christians who had sworn "ethnic" or "Hellenic" oaths and come in contact with demon altars during times of barbarian (probably Persian) invasion. Notice first that Basil addressed swearing oaths side by side with eating sacrificial food—a convergence of concerns remarkably similar to what bothered Publicola, and further reason not to deride his "scrupulosity." Next, Basil made it clear that many Christians complied promptly without being physically forced to swear

<sup>18</sup> Lib. *Or.* 18.108: "συνδραμόντων δὲ περιφόβων τῶν τὰ δίκαια τετηρηκότων καὶ τοῖς ἀμαρτήμασιν ἐκείνου δεινῶς αἰσχυνομένων καὶ προστιθέντων ὄρκους ὄρκους ἀναβάς ἐπὶ βῆμα ὑψηλὸν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ βαρβάρῳ καὶ τοὺς ἐκείνων ἄρχοντας ἄνωθεν ὄρων ἐν ὑπηκόων τάξει μετὰ τῶν πολλῶν ἐστηκότας τὰ μὲν ἀναμνήσας, τὰ δὲ ἀπειλήσας ἀπήλθε."

<sup>19</sup> See C. Hamdoune, "Témoignages épigraphiques de l'acculturation des *gentes* en Maurétanie Césarienne," in Khanoussi, Ruggeri, Vismara, eds., *Ai confini dell'Impero*, pp. 277–291, at 278–281, for "la réceptivité de la notion de *fides*."

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Gillett, *Envoys*, pp. 55–56, with n. 68, and 63; N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), p. 346, n. 150.

<sup>21</sup> Salv. *Gub.* 4.67–80 (quote at pp. 76–77): "et de hostili iniquitate conquerimur! et paganicam barbariem peierare causamur."

whatever oaths the barbarians required of them. Romans may have been no more fazed by swearing barbarian oaths than barbarians were by swearing Roman oaths when the tables were turned.<sup>22</sup>

## Oath Documents

In the last decade of the fourth century, it might have been more unusual to hear people in the Roman Empire swearing Christian oaths than demon oaths, depending on what we mean by demon oaths.<sup>23</sup> Documentary practice in the fourth century and after favored the record of imperial oath formulas. That does not mean imperial oaths were the only oaths or the most common oaths to be sworn, only that they were the ones written down. When Publicola wrote to Augustine, the first official mention of Christian elements in oath formulas had been published only recently, in 395 at Constantinople. In that edict, Arcadius and Honorius confirmed the binding nature of oaths sworn by God, while also equating those oaths with the traditional oaths sworn by the emperors' welfare. These are the oaths (by the imperial *salus* in Latin and τύχη, νίκη, or sometimes both in Greek) that were common around the empire for centuries before and even centuries after Publicola wrote his letter. They contain the formulaic elements we find in hundreds of documentary papyri studied by Erwin Seidl. And when soldiers enlisted and received their tattoos in Publicola's time, they combined the Trinity with the emperor's majesty in their initiation oaths.<sup>24</sup>

If we want to find documentary records for the sort of routine oath swearing Publicola described, then we must turn to the papyri. There we find hundreds of people swearing oaths and we also find barbarians, but we seem not to find both in the same documents.<sup>25</sup> As for the demon oaths that troubled Publicola,

<sup>22</sup> Basil, *Ep.* 217.81 to Ampilocius (a. 375): “ὄρκους ἔθνικούς τελέσαντες ... ἀψάμενοι τῆς τραπέζης τῶν δαιμονίων καὶ ὁμόσαντες ὄρκους Ἑλληνικούς”: W. Hauschild, ed., trans., *Basilii von Caesarea: Briefe*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1990–3), 3.189–190, n. 55; B. Gain, *L'Église de Cappadoce au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après la correspondance de Basile de Césarée (330–379)* (Rome, 1985), pp. 233–234, 243–245.

<sup>23</sup> See R. Hirzel, *Der Eid: Ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1902), pp. 142–149 (“Der Horkos als Dämon”).

<sup>24</sup> J. González, “The First Oath *pro salute Augusti* found in Baetica,” *ZPE* 72 (1988): 113–127; E. Seidl, *Der Eid im römisch-ägyptischen Provinzialrecht*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1933, 1935); K.A. Worp, “Byzantine Imperial Titulature in the Greek Documentary Papyri: The Oath Formulas,” *ZPE* 45 (1982): 199–266; Z.M. Packman, “Notes on Papyrus Texts with the Roman Imperial Oath,” *ZPE* 89 (1991): 91–102; H. Hauben, “On the Invocation of the ‘Holy and Consubstantial Trinity’ in Byzantine Oath and Dating Formulas,” *ZPE* 139 (2002): 158–160; Veg. *Mil.* 2.5; dating: N.P. Milner, trans., *The Epitome of Military Science* (Liverpool, 1993), pp. xxv–xxix; A.D. Lee, “The Army,” in *CAH*<sup>3</sup> 13: 211–237, at p. 227.

<sup>25</sup> In the *Abinnaeus Archive* 41–42, no. 4 = *P. Lond.* 236, lines 3–4, a civil official collecting annona says he has sent collections to Abinnaeus by means of Libyans (διὰ τῶν



there is not a single example; but, at the same time, there are no Christian oaths in documents before the fifth century either. The first documentary evidence we have of Christianity affecting the way people swore oaths (with God appearing as a distinct entity and party to the oath) comes at least a decade after Publicola and Augustine's exchange. This was a papyrus from between 408 and 423: "we speak together swearing [by] God the almighty and the piety of our all conquering lords Honorius and Theodosius the perpetual Augusti." The form and vocabulary were still boilerplate: παντοκράτορ moved from imperial epithet to divine epithet but the emperors retained πάντα νικώντοι.<sup>26</sup> Even when the names of the emperors disappeared, the first time in a papyrus from 487, the formula remained the same.<sup>27</sup>

This does not mean that Christians were too scrupulous to swear oaths, but instead that they were swearing them long before there were legally sanctioned Christian oaths to swear. The first documentary occasion of a swearing Christian comes from the middle of the fourth century, when a deacon spoke the customary imperial formula (though the customary word, τύχη, is absent in the papyrus).<sup>28</sup> This was no demon oath, to be sure, although earlier Christians had treated it as such, especially Origen, who claimed that swearing by an emperor's τύχη was swearing by a δαίμων.<sup>29</sup> By Publicola's day, Christians who swore by the emperor's τύχη, νίκη, or *salus* might have believed themselves to be swearing by his majesty, his good fortune, even just another of his titles and nothing more.<sup>30</sup> In short, people might not have been as scrupulous as Publicola.

But the likelihood of such a casual attitude grates against more than just Publicola's letter. A lease from the sixth century involving monks named Mênas and Noumenios is one of a number of papyri to include variations on a peculiar oath formula. In lines 51–53 we see a lawyer named Phoibammôn swear a conventional imperial oath, "by the holy and same-substance Trinity and the victory of the

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Λυβυκῶν, also line 15); also *ibid.* 86–87, no. 34 = *P. Lond.* 410, line 6 (where a mother describes her son having gone to serve μετὰ τῶν βαρβάρων); *ibid.* 117–118, no. 57 = *P. Gen.* 49, lines 10–11 (Διόσκορος υἱὸς Παύλου τοῦ Λιβυκοῦ); and *ibid.* 164–165, no. 82 = *P. Gen. inv.* 39 *ined.*, line 11 (grain transported δι[ὰ] Λιβυκῶν καμηλ[.]); for Abbinæus and the archive, T.D. Barnes, "The Career of Abinnaeus," *Phoenix* 39 (1985): 368–374, and Lee, "Army," p. 230.

<sup>26</sup> *PSI* 689, lines 6–8: "ὁμολογοῦμεν ὀμνύγτες θεὸν τὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν τῶν τὰ πάντα νικόντων δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν Ὀνωρίου Θεοδοσίου τῶν αἰώνιων ἀγούστων": Seidl, *Eid.*, 2.8.23–24.

<sup>27</sup> *P. SB* 1, 5273, lines 7–8: "θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ νίκην τῆς καλλινίκου καὶ ἀθανάτου [κορυ]φῆς": Seidl, *Eid.*, 2.34.

<sup>28</sup> *P. Würzb.* 16: Seidl, *Eid.*, 2.23.36–38.

<sup>29</sup> Origen, *Contra Cels.* 8.65; H. Crouzel, "Celse et Origène à propos des 'démons,'" in A. Rouselle, ed., *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1995), pp. 331–355, at 350–351 (tainted food), 354 (imperial oaths).

<sup>30</sup> Seidl, *Eid.*, 2.17–21.

universal ruler Flavius Justinian the perpetual all-powerful Augustus.” The monks also swore, but instead of swearing *by* the Trinity they swore “*before* Christ the lord” (“ἐνώπιον τοῦ δεσπότου Χριστοῦ”); the “before” (“ἐνώπιον”) governs another genitive, the σχήμα (in the singular) that lay upon them. So the monks’ oath was “before Christ the lord and the robe that lay upon them.” Moreover, the deed does not record that they swore but instead that they “made binding affirmation” (“διεβεβαίωσαντο”). We find this awkward formula in other documents involving monks and at least one bishop in the sixth century. Seidl’s suggestion, that the monks invoked their σχήμα in order to transfer responsibility for their oaths away from their persons, is plausible.<sup>31</sup> In any case, these monks had scruples about the physical nature of solemn oaths that Publicola would have understood.

Moreover, although worried about the vocabulary of oath swearing and especially its written record, they obviously had no problem with oaths themselves. Publicola shared the monks’ inclination to be mindful of one’s association with unsavory oaths and rituals without obstructing polite business conduct. Judging by the persistence of imperial oaths and their slow transformation into Christian forms, most Christians were similarly inclined, Augustine among them. The bishop gave Publicola precisely the answer Publicola wanted, and not only by itemizing his response as requested: Augustine assured Publicola that he had nothing to worry about from demon oaths. Instead, Christians should worry about keeping their own Christian oaths. After receiving Letter 47, Publicola’s agents could get back to work, now with episcopal approval.

### The Future of Fidelity

Augustine insisted that Christians maintain a clear distinction between the faith *by* which they hoped for salvation and the faith *to* which they swore—between the faith of the baptized and the “faith of human settlements and treaties.”<sup>32</sup> This important distinction arose directly from Publicola’s anxiety over the soldiers swearing oaths and making treaties on the behalf of all the empire. Are the bonds that hold society together free from risk? Augustine’s answer was no, but risk cannot be avoided. Can Christians trust people who have no trust in Jesus? Augustine’s answer was yes, and he posed a question of his own: Are Christians more trustworthy than pagans? Not necessarily, and Augustine would reiterate that point on a number of occasions over the next 20 years, most artfully in his praise for Regulus, the heroic Roman from the early Republic who had gone to certain death among the

<sup>31</sup> Seidl, *Eid*, 2.41–42, 44, especially *P. Cairo Masp.* 67299(527/65), lines 49–50: “διεβεβαίωσαντο ἐνώπιον τοῦ δεσπότου[υ] Χ[ριστ]οῦ καὶ τοῦ περικειμένου αὐτοῦ σχήματος.”

<sup>32</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 47.2: “neque hic eam fidem dico seruari, qua fideles uocantur, qui baptizantur in christo. illa enim longe alia est longeque discreta a fide humanorum placitorum atque pactorum.”

Carthaginians rather than break his oath, even though he had sworn only “by the filth of demons.”<sup>33</sup> The pagan was more faithful in this regard than some very pious Christians of Augustine’s acquaintance—including Pinianus, husband of Melania the Younger and son-in-law of Valerius Publicola (the senator, that is, not necessarily the author of Letter 46)—who the bishop thought might learn from Regulus’ commitment.<sup>34</sup>

Augustine recognized the profound questions Publicola had raised about human society. Letters 46 and 47 demonstrate how the relationships holding together late Roman society might cut across tribal, political, and religious differences. Barbarians knew that Romans expected some form of warranty from those with whom they engaged in business or military alliances, while Romans recognized that the strange oaths of barbarians were as sacred as their own, even if they were not always honored.<sup>35</sup> On the African frontier, Christian and Roman identity were less important than profit and security. Moreover, Augustine’s response to Publicola suggests that this priority was neither an exclusively frontier condition nor something peculiar to Roman and barbarian interactions. “Not only on the border,” Augustine wrote, “but in all the provinces, peace is attained by barbaric swearing.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 125.3: “per daemonum inquinamenta iurauerat”; also *De civ. dei* 1.15, 1.24, 3.18, 5.18.

<sup>34</sup> G.A. Cecconi, “Un evergete mancato: Piniano a Ippona,” *Athenaeum* 66 (1988): 371–389; L.J. Swift, “Augustine on *Fama*: The Case of Pinianus,” in J. Petruccione, ed., *Nova et Vetera: Patristic Studies in Honor of Thomas Patrick Halton* (Washington, DC, 1998), pp. 196–205; *PCBE* II, pp. 1798–1802.

<sup>35</sup> See P. Morizot, “Pour une nouvelle lecture de l’*Elogium* de Masties,” *AntAfr* 25 (1989): 263–284, especially on “neque perjuravi, neque fide fregi, neque de Romanos, neque de Mauros” (pp. 276–277), citing *Ep.* 47 among other comparanda.

<sup>36</sup> Aug. *Ep.* 47.2: “neque enim tantum modo limiti sed uniuersis prouinciis pax conciliatur iuratione barbarica.” Joshua Sosin and Michael Kulikowski kindly read an earlier version of this essay.

PART III  
Creating Identity in the  
Post-Roman World

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## Chapter 20

# Visigothic Settlement, *Hospitalitas*, and Army Payment Reconsidered

Andreas Schwarz

Questions about the nature of the settlement of barbarians on Roman soil received renewed attention in 1980 with the publication of Walter Goffart's book about the techniques of accommodation. As Goffart wrote then, the sources on the settlement of the Visigoths and the Burgundians are scanty, speak at a great distance from the actual settlement, and do not tell us very much, the Visigothic sources even more so than the Burgundian ones.<sup>1</sup> This opinion had been expressed already by Ernst Theodor Gaupp, who wrote in 1844, "The Visigothic legal code contains relatively few references to the division of lands and those are much more laconic than the Burgundian one."<sup>2</sup> All authors since Gaupp agree that four entries in the *Codex Euricianus* (*CE*) (276–277, 312, and a fragment of 304) and about four or five of the *Liber Iudiciorum* or *Lex Visigothorum* (*LV*), issued by Reccesvinth (649–672) in the mid-seventh century, those expressively concerned with *sortes Gothicae* and *tertia Romanae*, are the legal evidence for the modalities of the settlement. These laws can be summarized as follows:

1. *CE* 276 concerns the disputes about borders of possessions and mentions Goths as *hospites*, who are to show the judges where to draw the borders (*LV* 10.3, 5);
2. *CE* 277 mentions "sortes Gothicae" and "tertia Romanae," and a limit of 50 years is given for any disputes about them (*LV* 10.2, 1–3,1);
3. *CE* 304 belonged to the *titulus* "De venditionibus" and seems to have dealt with the transfer of lands between *Gothi* and *Romani* within the territory of a *civitas*. Its exact meaning is unclear;
4. *CE* 312 concerns deals between a Goth and a Roman, through which possessions were transferred that rightfully could be claimed by another

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans. A.D. 418–584. The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, NJ, 1980), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Theodor Gaupp, *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landtheilungen in den Provinzen des Römischen Westreiches in ihrer völkerrechtlichen Eigenthümlichkeit und mit Rücksicht auf verwandte Erscheinungen der alten Welt und des späteren Mittelalters dargestellt* (Breslau, 1844), pp. 392ff.

- Roman. In *LV* 5.4.20 this became a general rule without any mention of Goths or Romans;
5. *LV* 10.1.8, called a *lex antiqua*, concerns the division of lands and woods between Goths and Romans (two parts for the Goths and one part for the Romans) and mentions the possibility of royal donations out of the Roman part;
  6. *LV* 10.1.9 mentions woods that had not been divided up between Goths and Romans;
  7. *LV* 10.1.16 orders the *iudices*, *vilici*, and *praepositi* to restore all illegally occupied *tertia Romanae* to the Romans, “ut nihil fisc debeat deperire”;
  8. *LV* 10.2.1 repeats the beginning of *CE* 277, that no claim to *sortes Gothicae* and the *tertia Romanae* may be raised after 50 years; and
  9. *LV* 10.3.5 states the immutability of all lawful changes of possessions before the arrival of the Goths.

This evidence was first interpreted by Gaupp, and later by Ferdinand Lot,<sup>3</sup> as a settlement on the basis of the Roman system of *hospitalitas*, or military quartering, and the *Leges de metatis* in the Theodosian Code, and later by Goffart and Jean Durliat<sup>4</sup> as the sharing of tax proceedings evolving into ownership of the taxed land. The discussion concentrated on the exact meaning of the terms “sors” and “consors.” In 1983, a study by Luis A. García Moreno of terms in the *Liber Iudiciorum* proved that “sors” usually meant “una unidad patrimonial de pleno y completa iure dominical,” a unit of land held by full and complete dominical ownership.<sup>5</sup> “Sortes Gothicae” are mentioned twice, in *CE* 277 and nearly identically in *LV* 10.2.1; both laws state that neither *sortes Gothicae* nor a *tertia Romana* could be claimed if they had not been recovered within 50 years.<sup>6</sup> Land obviously was involved in the case of these “sortes Gothicae,” but before concluding that “sortes Gothicae” always referred to land, we need to take into account that by the time of Reccesvinth, over 200 years since the settlement of

<sup>3</sup> Gaupp, *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen*; Fernand Lot, “Du regime de l’hospitalité,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 7 (1928): 975–1011.

<sup>4</sup> Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*; Jean Durliat, “Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares (Ve–VIIe siècles),” in Herwig Wolfram, Andreas Schwarcz, eds., *Anerkennung und Integration. Zuden wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Völkerwanderungszeit 400–600* (Vienna, 1988), pp. 21–72.

<sup>5</sup> Luis A. García Moreno, “El termino ‘sors’ y relacionados en el ‘Liber Iudicum.’ De Nuevo el problema de la division de las tierras entre godos y proviciales,” *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* (1983): 137–175, at p. 153. The exception was when “sors” was used in the combination of “sors fatalis,” as a synonym for “death.”

<sup>6</sup> “Sortes Gothicas et tertias [Roma]norum, quae intra L annis non fuer[int] revocate, nullo modo repetantur”: *CE* 277, nearly identical *LV* 10.2.1, a *lex antiqua* in the recensions of Reccesvinth and Ervig. See Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 118ff.

the Visigoths in Aquitaine and more than 150 since the settlement in Spain, the meaning of the term might have changed.

In order to try to recover the original meaning of these terms, let us briefly recall the circumstances of the settlement of the Visigoths in Gaul, which are discussed by Hydatius and Prosper of Aquitania. The Spaniard Hydatius, bishop of Aquae Flaviae (Chaves), relates under the year 418, “The Goths, after the campaign that they had been carrying out was broken off, were recalled to Gaul by Constantius and received territory in Aquitania from Toulouse to the Atlantic Ocean. After the death of Vallia, Theoderic succeeded to the kingdom.”<sup>7</sup> Prosper’s account, however, dates these events to 419: “The patrician Constantius concluded a peace with Vallia; Aquitania was given to him for habitation along with several cities of neighboring provinces.”<sup>8</sup> A detailed analysis of these passages suggests that the transfer of the Visigoths to Aquitania in fact took place in the summer of 419, when the harvest had been brought in and everything had been prepared for their arrival.<sup>9</sup> The newcomers were stationed in the *civitates* of Aquitania Secunda, as well as in some of those in Novempopulana and Narbonensis I, including Toulouse.

What did the newly settled Visigoths get? They undoubtedly were stationed as Roman soldiers and that meant not only regular payment but also usually land to till, for both veterans and active soldiers.<sup>10</sup> This land could be *agri deserti* or the *caduca* (land whose ownership had lapsed and reverted to the fisc), or *res privatae* (land owned by the emperor).<sup>11</sup> Initially, the Visigothic settlers were quartered as soldiers in the cities by the system of *hospitalitas*, one of the reasons why

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<sup>7</sup> “Gothi, intermisso certamine quod agebant per Constantium ad Gallias revocati, sedes in Aquitanica a Tolosa usque ad oceanum acceperunt. Vallia eorum rege defuncto Theodericus succedit in regno”: Hyd. *Chron.* 69–70, s.a. 418, *MGH AA* 11; A. Tranoy, ed., *Hydace, Chronique 1, Sources chrétiennes* 218 (Paris, 1974), pp. 122ff.; see also Olympiodorus, fr. 34: R.C. Blockley, ed., *The Classicising Fragmentary Historians of the Late Roman Empire* (Liverpool, 1983), 2.198; Philostorgius, *HE* 12.4: *PG* 65.459–638, esp. 609–612. An eighth-century manuscript of Fredegar’s Chronicle (*BN Lat.* 10910), written in 715 CE, adds that the Visigoths settled from the Tyrrhenean Sea and the Rhone along the Loire river to the Atlantic coast (“a mare Terrenum et fluvio Rodano per Ligerem fluvium usque Oceanum possident”: *MGH AA* 11.69; *MGH SRM* 2.71).

<sup>8</sup> “Constantius patricius pacem firmat cum Wallia data ei ad inhabitandum secunda Aquitanica et quibusdam civitatibus confinium provinciarum” (Prosp. *Chron.* 1271 s.a. 419: *MGH AA* 9.341–499).

<sup>9</sup> For a date of 419 as opposed to the traditional date of 418, see Andreas Schwarcz, “The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitaine: Chronology and Archeology,” in Ralph W. Mathisen, Danuta R. Shanzer, eds., *Society and Culture in Late Roman Gaul: Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 15–25.

<sup>10</sup> See Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> R. Mathisen, H. Sivan, “Forging a New Identity: The Kingdom of Toulouse and the Frontiers of Visigothic Aquitania,” in A. Ferreiro, ed., *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture & Society* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 1–62, at 13.



there is so little archaeological evidence of the Visigoths in the fifth century in Aquitaine.<sup>12</sup> As soldiers, they also received wages, *annonae*, which were assessed based on land (*iugatio*) and people (*capitatio*). This last is a point that needs to be elaborated, because some writers postulate, at least temporarily, a complete breakdown of the Roman administration.<sup>13</sup> But the “*Constitutio saluberrima*” of 418, which reinstated the Council of the Seven Provinces, attests to the efforts of the patrician Constantius to reorganize the imperial administration.<sup>14</sup>

Both tax collecting and transferring its proceeds to the military authorities were the responsibility of the *curiales*, the members of local city councils, and there is evidence that the *curiales* continued to function well into Late Antiquity. For example, the existence of the *curiales* in Spain in the sixth or seventh centuries, although not in all cities, is attested by the *Fragmentum Gaudenzianum* 15, which ordered all donations of land to be brought to their notice, and if there were none in the city of the contracting parties, to seek them in a neighboring city.<sup>15</sup> And in the *Liber Iudiciorum* they still are attested in a law of Chindasvinth (641–653) (*LV* 5.4.19), where they have the obligation to fulfill public functions and to provide horses for the royal service or the army, and their obligations must be taken over by anyone buying their lands or goods. But there is no indication in either source for a continued responsibility for gathering taxes. And although the *fragmentum*, by acknowledging that some cities might no longer have a *curia*, indicates that there were difficulties keeping up this system, and Chindasvinth’s law is evidence that people had to be coerced by law to remain in this status, there nevertheless is clear evidence here to demonstrate the continued existence of *curiales* in Spain into the seventh century, and thus no reason to doubt their existence in Aquitaine in the first half of the fifth century or at the turn from the fifth- to the sixth century, during the Visigothic settlement in Spain.

The *Liber Iudiciorum* and *Lex Visigothorum* 9.2.6 and 12.1.2 also contain laws expressly mention the continuing payment of *annonae*.<sup>16</sup> The first, a *lex antiqua* but also present in the recension of Ervig (680–687), mentions *erogatores*, also called *annonarii*, responsible in fortresses and small towns for the levying of the *annonae*, a responsibility in larger cities of the *comes civitatis*. Both types of officials seem to have been prone to embezzling the proceeds or were unable to supply the soldiers with the necessary amount and were liable to a fourfold penalty from their own fortune for any amount that did not reach the army. The second law, issued by Reccared, orders all *comites*, *vicarii*, and *vilici* not to exact *annonae*

<sup>12</sup> See also Périn, Kazanski in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Arne Stüven, *Rechtliche Ausprägungen der “Civilitas” im Ostgotenreich. Mit vergleichender Berücksichtigung des westgotischen und des burgundischen Rechts* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1995), p. 109.

<sup>14</sup> Mathisen, Sivan, “Forging a New Identity,” p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> *MGH Leges* 1.1.471: “Et donatio ipsa ante curiales deferatur. quod si in civitate eadem curiales non possunt inveniri, ad aliam civitatem, ubi inviantur, deferatur.”

<sup>16</sup> As discussed, e.g., by Garcia Moreno, “El termino.”

for their own purse from the people in the cities or the countryside.<sup>17</sup> Both laws were renewed in the recensions of the *Liber Iudiciorum* by Reccesvinth and Ervig, thereby confirming that *annonae* were levied for the payment of troops well into the second half of the seventh century. And this, incidentally, is a strong indication that the *annonae* had not changed their character from taxes and soldier's wages into a feudal rent up to this time, and that they were not paid by individual landowners to individual soldiers or their commanders.

If there were *annonae*, there were landowners taxed for it, and another *lex antiqua*, LV 10.1.16, orders that the *tertia Romanae* occupied by Goths should be restored by the *iudices* to their original owners, "ut nihil fisco debeat deperire," that is, "so that it is fitting that nothing be lost to the fisc." In order to clarify the precise connection of the *tertia Romanae* to the fisc, it is necessary to investigate the nature of the lands held by the fisc and how it was managed by the government. Land controlled by the Visigothic fisc came primarily from land that had belonged to the Roman Empire.<sup>18</sup> The fisc had inherited the lands of the imperial fisc and the imperial *patrimonium*, and the emperor already had been the biggest landowner in the empire since the times of Augustus. The imperial lands were augmented by the possessions of people dying intestate and condemned of high treason, and also by those of pagan temples when they were closed.<sup>19</sup> This division of imperial property was taken over by the Visigothic kings, and both *fisc* and *patrimonium* are attested up to the end of the seventh century.<sup>20</sup>

The Visigoths continued the practice of granting long-term leases on fiscal land and former temple lands to private tenants by way of emphyteusis (*ius emphyteuticum*); only the *curiales* were prohibited by the *Breviarium Alarici* from entering into such relationships.<sup>21</sup> But the *Breviarium* also confirmed the practice of giving donations to individuals out of the *patrimonium fisci*.<sup>22</sup> This law described these donations as given "directo iure atque perpetuo," directly and forever. As the royal *fundi* were divided up by donations, part of these *fundi* became private property, *sortes Gothicae*, if they were given to Goths or to members of the nobility. As this went on, the designation *Gothus* became synonymous with the landowning military aristocracy, whose armed retainers formed the majority of the army already in the fifth century and certainly in the seventh. Lands belonging to the fisc, therefore, were the monarchy's resource for ensuring the loyalty of the Gothic nobility.

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<sup>17</sup> LV 12.1.2.

<sup>18</sup> As Mathisen, Sivan, "Forging a New Identity," p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Demandt, *Die Spätantike: Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian* (Munich, 1989), pp. 239ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Concilium Toletanum XIII*, a.683: "Vitulus comes patrimonii" (*MGH Leges* 1.1.486).

<sup>21</sup> LV 10.2 = *CTh* 10.3.2.

<sup>22</sup> LV 10.1. = *CTh* 10.1.2.

The rest of the *fundi* became the *tertia Romanae*. *LV* 10.1.8 states that the king continued to give donations out of the *tertia Romanae*, confirming that this land was not private property, but still in possession of the fisc or the *patrimonium* and only leased to private landowners. This interpretation also is confirmed by the aforementioned passage from *LV* 10.1.16, which orders that the *tertia Romanae* should be restored to their legitimate holders, if they had not already been alienated for more than fifty years “so that the fisc should not lose anything.” The dues from the *tertia Romanae* were paid into the fisc and were the financial backbone of the royal administration.

That there were already large Gothic landowners in the fifth century is attested by the case of Vittamer, to whom bishop Ruricius of Limoges sent two letters after 485.<sup>23</sup> Ruricius not only calls his correspondent “filius” and his wife “filia mea,” implying a close spiritual relationship, but also “vestra dignatio,” “sublimitas vestra,” and “nobilitas vestra,” implying high rank and noble origin. His gift of a hundred pears to each of the noble couple is quite rightly usually interpreted as a sign of close neighborship. Vittamer may be identified with Vidimir the Younger, nephew of Theodoric the Great, who had joined the Visigoths and surely was equipped by Euric with sufficient lands and income to support his high rank.<sup>24</sup> Visigothic nobles such as he and the former senatorial aristocracy of Gaul fought together with their armed retainers for Alaric II at Vouillé in 507.

It thus would appear that lands belonging to the fisc that were directly granted to Goths such as Vidimer came to be known as *sortes Gothicae*, as reflected in the *Liber Iudiciorum*, whereas those parts of the royal *fundi* leased to former conductors and to other Romans, still part of the fisc and the patrimony, came to be the *tertia Romanae*.

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<sup>23</sup> Ruric. *Epist.* 2.61, 63: *MGH AA* 8.349; R. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Aquitania* (Liverpool, 1999), pp. 232–234.

<sup>24</sup> See H. Wolfram, *Die Goten: von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1975), p. 193; P. Périn, “L’armée de Vidimer et la question des dépôts funéraires chez les Wisigoths en Gaule et en Espagne,” in F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, eds., *L’armée romaine et les barbares* (Paris, 1993), pp. 411–414; and Schwarcz, “Visigothic Settlement.”

## Chapter 21

# Building an Ethnic Identity for a New Gothic and Roman Nobility: Córdoba, 615 AD

Luis A. García Moreno

Among the model notarial documents known as the *Formulae wisigothicae*, number 20 is of exceptional interest. It is a record of gifts given as dowry by a groom to his bride, called a *donatio ante nuptias* in Roman law.<sup>1</sup> The *Formula* stands out from the others in this collection. It is by far the longest and it is written in verse, 88 quite respectable hexameters if compared to other cultivated writings of the times. Moreover it is the only text of the group that still preserves authentic traces of the juridical act for which the original document was issued. The name of the groom and that of the bride who received the donation have been replaced by the pronoun *ille*, as is standard in this kind of document.<sup>2</sup> However, personal epithets given to the bride have been preserved, and these are characteristic of a unique social status. Even the current *formula* retains part of the date on which the original was signed: the third year of the reign of Sisebut, i.e. between February and March 614 and the same months of the following year.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately the document does not mention the place where it was signed. However, an inference from other *formulae* of the collection, as well as the history of its textual transmission, allow the deduction that the dowry gift was made in the city of Córdoba.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, a will formula in the collection, securely dated to the times of the Visigothic monarchy, indicates that such wills were read out loud in *Patricia Corduba*, with the principal members of its municipal curia acting as witnesses; the document ended with the order to record it among the *gesta* of the municipality.<sup>5</sup> Allusions to these notables and to the former Roman municipal

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<sup>1</sup> *Form. Wis.* 20: J. Gil, ed., *Miscellanea Wisigothica* (Seville, 1972), pp. 90–94; it also was edited by K. Zeumer, *MGH Leges V. Formulae* (Hannover, 1886), pp. 583–585.

<sup>2</sup> *Form. Wis.* 20.1–2: *Insigni merito et Getiçe de stirpe senatus / illius sponsae nimis dilectae ille*.

<sup>3</sup> *Form. Wis.* 20.85–87: “Carta manet mensis illius, conscripta calendis / ter nostrii uoluto domini foeliciter anno / gloriosi merito Sisebuti tempore regis.” On Sisebut’s chronology see K. Zeumer, “Die Chronologie der Westgothenkönige des Reiches von Toledo,” *Neues Archiv* 27 (1902): 426–430.

<sup>4</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Form. Wis.* 25.

institution are also preserved in the collection's other *formulae*.<sup>6</sup> These allusions are surely an indication of the place of origin of the whole collection, because, as is known, the maintenance of the Roman municipal institutions in Gothic Spain, especially in the seventh century, was not a common phenomenon in most towns that had municipal status during the Roman Empire.<sup>7</sup> But the existence and function of these institutions among the non-Muslim people is still attested in Córdoba in the mid-ninth century, when the city had been the seat of the central power of the Islamic Emirate of al-Andalus for a century and a half.<sup>8</sup>

Survival of Roman practices explains how the *Formulae wisigothicae* came to be assembled and how their manuscript was transmitted. The fact is that by the middle of the ninth century some members of the most prominent Christian families of Córdoba, such as the renowned Eulogius, were members and indeed *principales* of the old curia.<sup>9</sup> Their participation in the famous movement of the Cordoban voluntary martyrs (850–859)<sup>10</sup> had disastrous consequences for the survival of a Christian elite in al-Andalus as well as for the maintenance of the Cordoban curia.<sup>11</sup>

The *Formulae wisigothicae* survived in several manuscripts of the early modern period, all derived from the copy of a codex called the *Liber Ithantium*. Unfortunately that codex, preserved up till the middle of the fifteenth century in the cathedral of Oviedo, has been lost forever.<sup>12</sup> A part of the missing manuscript coincides with the content of a famous codex from the later eighth century, now

<sup>6</sup> *Form. Wis.* 21.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. M. Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (Baltimore, MD/London, 2004), pp. 306ff. The classic C. Sánchez Albornoz, *Ruina y extinción del municipio romano en España e instituciones que le reemplazan* (Buenos Aires, 1946) is followed by P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 69, 202.

<sup>8</sup> See L.A. García Moreno, "En las raíces de Andalucía (ss. V–X): los destinos de una aristocracia urbana," *Anuario de historia del derecho español* 65 (1995): 873–876, and idem, "Una memoria indomable: aristocracia municipal romana y nobleza goda," *Quaderni catanesi di cultura classica e medievale* 2 (2003): 76–81.

<sup>9</sup> Eulog. *Ep. Wil.* 8: J. Gil, ed., *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum* (Madrid, 1973), 2.500, and the commentary by García Moreno, "En las raíces," p. 875.

<sup>10</sup> About this very important event see the latest, but not the best, F.K.B. Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge, 1988), and J.A. Coope, *The Martyrs of Córdoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln/London, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> In fact, nothing is known about the curia of Córdoba after Eulogius. In the tenth and eleventh centuries many Christians, especially in Córdoba, became Muslim and Arab-speakers. Then, important Christians left Córdoba and other towns of al-Andalus, settling down and founding abbeys in the kingdom of Asturias; a milestone in this trail was the arrival of the body of Eulogius and the manuscript of his works in Oviedo in 884: E. Colbert, *The Martyrs of Córdoba (850–859)* (Washington, DC, 1962), pp. 435–453.

<sup>12</sup> Gil, ed., *Miscellanea*, pp. x–xv. The *Liber Ithantium* was composed in Oviedo in the twelfth century from manuscripts that had previously come from al-Andalus.

conserved in the library of El Escorial (Esc. I-14). The latter manuscript must have been written in Córdoba and was used in Eulogius' circle through the middle of the ninth century.<sup>13</sup> So, it is not improbable to assume that the original manuscript, from which this part of the *Liber Ithatum* derives, also came from Córdoba.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, *Formula 20* was written in Córdoba in 614/15 CE in order to document a *donatio ante nuptias* for the marriage of two prominent members of Cordoban society. The German scholar Alfred Schultze and the Portuguese Paulo Merêa studied its origins and characteristics from the point of view of legal history in the forties of the last century.<sup>15</sup> According to them its content was the result of the convergence of the German-Gothic tradition and that of Roman Vulgar Law. The Germanic tradition would derive from the *Sippenvertragsehe* and not from the marriage by purchase, in which the woman continued to belong to her paternal lineage (*Sippe*).<sup>16</sup> So, the merging of that Gothic dowry with the *donatio ante nuptias* of Late Roman Vulgar Law<sup>17</sup> became easier. However, *Formula 20* preserves the clear fingerprint of Gothic, and not Roman tradition, when it affirms that the future wife will have total freedom to do whatever she wants with the *dos*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The manuscript preserves some annotations by Alvar of Córdoba: see M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *De Isidoro al siglo XI* (Barcelona, 1976), pp. 70ff.

<sup>14</sup> So M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Un document privé de l'Espagne wisigothique sur ardoise," *Studi Medievali* 1 (1960): 61. The carriers were people like those who arrived at Oviedo from Córdoba in 884 with the body of Eulogius and his works, or like the monk Samuel who removed from Córdoba MS 22 of León's cathedral (M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "El manuscrito 22 de la catedral de León," *Archivos Leoneses* 45–46 [1969]: 154–166).

<sup>15</sup> A. Schultze, *Über westgotisch-spanisches Eherecht* (Leipzig, 1944), pp. 39–60 and 75–80; P. Merêa, *Estudos de Direito Visigótico* (Coimbra, 1948), pp. 23–39.

<sup>16</sup> This continuity of the woman inside her paternal lineage was especially prominent when she belonged to a much nobler family than her husband, for the offspring of such a union bore a name taken from the onomastic stock of his mother's family. This husband's dowry really was a *Werbungsgabe*, a gift to the family of his bride as a token of the marriage's celebration with the consent of both lineages.

<sup>17</sup> About the evolution of the *donatio ante nuptias* in Roman Vulgar Law see in general E. Levy, *West Roman Vulgar Law: The Law of Property* (Philadelphia, PA, 1951), pp. 170ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Form. Wis.* 20.63–67: "Singula quippe supra vultu conscripta iucundo / adprehendas, habeas, teneas, post multa relinquis / secula posteris in iure, charissima, nostris; / aut inde facere vestra quodcumque voluntas / elegerit, directa tibi est vel certa potestas." Of course, the *formula* looks forward as usual to the inheritance of the *dos* by the children, but does not forbid any other solution if wished by the wife; on the contrary, in the Roman Law the woman was not free if the couple had living children. This prescription specifically was incorporated into Visigothic Law by King Chindasvind (*LV* 3.1.5 and 4.5.2), cf. Schultze, *Über westgotisch*, pp. 75ff., and Merêa, *Estudos*, pp. 35ff.; the explanation of E. Gacto (*La condición jurídica del cónyuge viudo en el derecho visigodo y en los fueros de León y Castilla* [Sevilla, 1975], pp. 67ff.) is vitiated because of his exclusive Romanist point of

On the contrary, the delivery of the so-called *Morgengabe*, the gift given after the consummation of the marriage, is a characteristic custom of the nobility of the Goths and other Germanic peoples. The *Morgengabe* is also attested among the Burgundians at the beginning of the sixth century,<sup>19</sup> among the Saxons one century later,<sup>20</sup> and among the Lombards by the eighth century,<sup>21</sup> although in all those legal traditions the regulations about the ownership and inheritance of the donated goods are different in the event of the husband's death, the widow's later marriage, or her death without issue. According to *Formula 20*, in Visigothic law the wife maintained her full *Morgengabe* under any future conditions.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, in the event of the woman's premature death without issue it became the property of her kin, and not that of her former husband. This is what happened to the princely *Morgengabe* given by the Frankish king Chilperic to Galswintha, the daughter of King Athanagild (?567).<sup>23</sup> The example probably attests a primitive stage of the Germanic law, uncontaminated by Roman practice, and with parallels in the legislation of Aethelbert of Kent.<sup>24</sup> Of course, this characteristic of the Gothic *Morgengabe* matches very well the fact, already noted, that among the Goths marriage did not require the woman to pass to her husband's *Sippe*. The evolution of the *Morgengabe* in the later Spanish-Gothic Law supposed a break with this old rule and its adaptation to the *donatio ante nuptias*.<sup>25</sup>

The nature of the *Morgengabe* described in *Formula 20* also shows archaic, and possibly very Gothic, features: twenty young slaves—ten males and ten females—ten stallions, ten mules, and arms and other ornaments.<sup>26</sup> All of these

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view. On the other hand, the main Roman fingerprint in the Gothic *dos* was the necessity of making and signing the document; this was prescribed later by Reccesvind (*LV 3.1*), but it was regular many years earlier among Romanized people, as seen in *Formula 20*.

<sup>19</sup> *Lex Burgundionum*, 42.2.

<sup>20</sup> *Aethelbert*, 81.

<sup>21</sup> *Edict. Liutp.* 7.

<sup>22</sup> See the text in note 18.

<sup>23</sup> According to the Treaty of Andelot Galswintha's *Morgengabe* was given to her sister Brunhild (Greg.Tur. *Hist.* 9.20), cf. Schultze, *Über westgotisch*, p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> In *Aethelbert*, 81 the *morgengyfe* of a woman who died without issue went to the family of her father. However, in the Burgundian law (42.2) that *morginegiva* came back to the heirs of her husband after her death (of course, this meaning of 42.2 is based on the *prior lex* being 42.1 and not 24.2 as L.R. de Salis [*MGH Leges*, 2.1 [Hannover, 1892], p. 73, n. 4] supposed).

<sup>25</sup> According to Chindasvind's *LV 3.1.5* the *Morgengabe* of a woman who died intestate without issue reverted to the husband, or his relatives if he had died. This late evolution in the Gothic Law differs from the early one in the Burgundian Law. In accordance with this we can affirm that the breakdown of the lineages' links occurred at a later date among the Visigothic nobility than among the Burgundians.

<sup>26</sup> *Form. Wis.* 20.48–51: “Ecce decem in primis pueros totidemque puellas / tradimus atque decem virorum corpora equorum / pari mulos numero damus inter caetera et arma, / ordinis ut Getici est et morgingeba vetusti.”

are characteristic chattels of a warring elite, rich in horses and almost nomadic: economic and social conditions that match the Goths' situation before the beginning of their great and epic migration, when they still resided in the plains of Scythia,<sup>27</sup> and an old oddity also attested in the familiar text of Tacitus (*Germ.* 18), describing the delivery of harnesses and weapons to the bride. Since the gift of weapons is especially marked, if the beneficiary is a maiden, some scholars have related it to the Germanic *Waffensohnschaft*,<sup>28</sup> or (A. Schultze) to the ritual of joining a *Gefolge*.<sup>29</sup>

These last observations situate the venerable Gothic tradition of the *Morgengabe* in the bosom of the noble class. In his great legislative activity Chindasvind (642–653) dedicated a law to the *donatio ante nuptias*, unifying the Gothic and Roman traditions. The king establishes a difference between the common free people and the high nobility. The new law allowed members of the nobility to donate to their brides, in addition to the “*dos ex marito: insuper X pueros, X puellas et caballos XX,*” a supplementary gift matching to a large extent the content of the traditional Gothic *Morgengabe*, as described in the Cordoban *formula*.<sup>30</sup> The adoption of a pure Gothic tradition by the nobility shows how much it felt itself ethnically Gothic as late as the middle of the seventh century.

The main goal of the law of Chindasvind mentioned above was to limit the value of those goods given to the bride, fixed at a maximum of 10 per cent of the total of the groom's patrimony in general, but at 1,000 *solidi* plus the *Morgengabe* for the members of the high nobility. Of course, the first restriction recalls the limitation fixed by an ancient *Lex Iulia et Poppaea*, abolished by Honorius in 410.<sup>31</sup> However, a limit was contrary to Gothic custom rule, and the absence of a previous restriction is nicely reflected in the Cordoban *formula*, whose *donatio ante nuptias* is fixed at half of the husband's patrimony, plus the *Morgengabe*.<sup>32</sup> But the second restriction was a real attack on the high nobility. So, a weaker king,

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<sup>27</sup> The same goods recorded in *Form. Wis.* 20. 48–51 are enumerated as the heritage of a Gothic prince in the *Hervararsaga* (a later *saga* related to the legend of Ermanaric), which recalls the time when the Goths lived in Scythia: see H. Kuhn, “Die Grenzen der germanischen Gefolgschaft,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung* 73 (1956): 61ff. This epic tradition belongs to the Greuthungi, and it shows the importance of this people in Visigothic ethnogeny.

<sup>28</sup> T. Melicher, *Der Kampf zwischen Gesetzes- und Gewohnheitsrecht im Westgotenreiche* (Weimer, 1930), pp. 167ff.

<sup>29</sup> Schultze, *Über westgotisch*, pp. 50–52.

<sup>30</sup> *LV* 3.1.5 dated 12 January 644. Chindasvind's law does not use the word *Morgengabe*, perhaps because of the Romano-Latin contours of his legislation. Cf. K. Zeumer, *Historia de la Legislación Visigoda* (Barcelona, 1944), pp. 225ff.

<sup>31</sup> *Ulp. Reg.* 15; *CTh* 8.17.2. See Zeumer, *Historia*, p. 226, and Merêa, *Estudos*, p. 34, n. 43.

<sup>32</sup> *Form. Wis.* 20.57–62.



Erwig (680–687),<sup>33</sup> abolished it, establishing the regular maximum of 10 per cent for the nobility too.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the energetic Chindasvind tried to strengthen the power of the sovereign, forbidding transfers of patrimony among noble families without the king's consent.

The Cordoban *formula* also proves that the Gothic *Morgengabe* had been exclusive to the nobility well before Chindasvind's law. For this would be the meaning of the sentence "ordinis ut Getici est morgingeba vestusti,"<sup>35</sup> understanding *ordo* as "class."<sup>36</sup> However, it is also true that the sentence in *Formula* 20 could be understood as "the Morgengabe of ancient Getic tradition."

In any event, what cannot be in doubt is that the matrimonial contract, ratified in Córdoba in 615, refers to a bride from the Gothic nobility, while the groom could be from Spanish–Roman stock.<sup>37</sup> The bride's noble as well as Gothic origin is clearly affirmed in the first two verses of the *formula*, "insigni merito et Getice de stirpe senatus illius sponsae nimis dilectae ille," a sentence that cannot be understood other than as the statement that the bride was of Gothic blood and that in addition her family belonged to the senate: "Outstanding in her worth and Gothic, from senatorial lineage, to X, well-beloved bride, the groom named Y."<sup>38</sup>

Elsewhere I have tried to show that this *senatus* refers to the former Cordoban municipal *curia*.<sup>39</sup> It was, of course, a *curia* that had been renovated socially and politically, because in it met the real Cordoban establishment, the so-called *principales*, ready to reject any superior power at any favorable opportunity, and to claim full political sovereignty for themselves. This Cordoban *curia* liked

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<sup>33</sup> See D. Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum im Westgotenreich* (Sigmaringen, 1971), pp. 166–184; L.A. García Moreno, *El fin del Reino visigodo de Toledo* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 184–194.

<sup>34</sup> LV 3.1.5. Erwig let the nobility be more generous, because ornaments worth 1,000 *solidi* were added to the traditional slaves and horses (Zeumer, *Historia*, p. 227).

<sup>35</sup> According to the regular Latin wording *ordinis getici* is referring to *Morgingeba* and *vetusti* in a chiasmic pattern.

<sup>36</sup> *Ordo* has this same meaning in LV 3.1.5.

<sup>37</sup> This was not the first mixed marriage in Visigothic Spain. In the sixth century Theudis married a very rich Spanish noblewoman before becoming king (Proc. *Bell.* 1.12.50), and one Sinticius, who died in 632, married a Spanish woman in western Lusitania: J. Vives, *Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda* (Barcelona, 1969), no. 86. Contemporary with *Formula* 20 was the marriage between Justus, a noble of Spanish stock according to his name, and Veresuinda: M.C. Díaz y Díaz, ed., *Epitaphion Antoninae, Anécdota Wisigothica I* (Salamanca, 1958), p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Getice* modifies *sponsae*, not *senatus*, wrongly C. Sánchez Albornoz, *Orígenes de la Nación española* (Oviedo, 1972), p. 1.236. The substitution of the original names of the bride and of the groom for pronouns caused confusion, and *illius* must be corrected to *illi*, so as not to create a tautology. This substitution occasioned a metrical shipwreck for the creator of the formula, and the second line cannot be rescued as it stands.

<sup>39</sup> García Moreno, "En las raíces," pp. 871ff.; idem, "Una memoria," p. 72.

to be called a *senatus*, and its members *senatores*.<sup>40</sup> These were magic words, which, on the one hand, evoked the best of the traditions of the nobility of the former Roman Empire, and showed the opposition of such a social class to every absolute monarchical regime, be it the Byzantine emperor or the Visigothic king of Toledo. For Gothic noblemen, *senatus* evoked a social and political class to which they had always aspired from the day their ancestors first trod on Roman soil; and, also, from the point of view of the Gothic language *senatus* included the concept of the nobility as a hereditary social caste, custodian of the ethnic traditions and representative of the sovereignty of the *gens*, with equality of stature with the kings.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, the use of *Geta* for Goth is not casual, but shows how much this nobility had contaminated their supposed Gothic identity with cultural elements, revealing a classicizing conception of their ethnic roots and ideology. This development was already present in the historiographical works of Cassiodorus and Jordanes in the first half of the sixth century.<sup>42</sup> At the same time as this Cordoban noble wedding, Isidore of Seville had adopted the substitution of *Geta* for *Gothus* in the construction of the ideology of the Spanish–Gothic kingdom and nobility, marking their superiority both to other Roman–Germanic kingdoms and nobilities, and also to the Byzantine Empire.<sup>43</sup> But when and why had some noble Gothic families come to live in the old Roman colony of Córdoba and ended up constituting a unified aristocracy together with the *principales* of its *curia*, legitimated by the memory of the two original ethnic and mythical identities?

The old Roman colony had a new distinction in the fourth century. Chief town of the province Baetica, Córdoba enjoyed important building activity in these years, whose main result was the great colonnaded public precinct erected in Tetrarchic

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<sup>40</sup> The thesis here reverts to the position of E. Pérez Pujol, *Historia de las instituciones sociales de la España goda* (Valencia, 1896), 2.283, attacked by Sánchez Albornoz, *Orígenes*, pp. 235ff., and K.F. Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike* (Zurich, 1965), pp. 78ff. But it is an anachronism to keep seeing epigones of the former Roman *Reichsaristokratie* in Spain 150 years after the death of Valentinian III.

<sup>41</sup> *Seniores gentis gothorum* was the regular way of designating the old Gothic nobility in Spain in the sixth and seventh centuries; see C. Sánchez Albornoz, *Estudios Visigodos* (Roma, 1971), pp. 158ff.; Idem, *Orígenes*, pp. 237ff. with n. 38; Claude, *Adel*, p. 93.

<sup>42</sup> The identification with the ancient Scythians was reinforced with another, namely with the biblical Gog or Magog, following Josephus and Jerome: see R. Manselli, “I popoli immaginari: Gog e Magog,” in *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’Alto Medioevo*, 29.2 (Spoleto, 1983), pp. 489–496.

<sup>43</sup> Isid. *Etym.* 9.2.98; but enemy Franks were barbarian Germans (ibid., 9.2.97 and 101). See H.-J. Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla und das westgotische Spanien* (Berlin, 1977), pp. 32, 62; S. Teillet, *Des goths à la nation gothique* (Paris, 1984), pp. 312, 469ff. The heirs of the Gothic nobility still felt themselves proudly *Getae* in ninth-century Córdoba: L.A. García Moreno, “Spanish Gothic Consciousness among the Mozarabs in al-Andalus,” in A. Ferreiro, ed., *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society* (Leiden, 1999), p. 306.

times outside the old walls, reflecting the power and pride of the city oligarchy.<sup>44</sup> Some years later a church dedicated to one of the most famous Christian martyrs of the city was built in that place and became an ideological milestone in the life of Córdoba.<sup>45</sup>

In the first decades of the sixth century, Gothic dominion in Spain was based on military control of the great corridor running from Barcelona to Seville, through Toledo and Mérida.<sup>46</sup> No matter how much the city was naturally protected by the mountains surrounding it, it was evident that Córdoba had to be strongly fortified, if western Andalusia were to be controlled, permitting free communication with the Tagus valley. Full Visigothic dominion over Seville and southwestern Andalusia was achieved in the times of King Theudis (531–548), although it had begun many years before.<sup>47</sup> However, Córdoba could still enjoy some independence. The new king Agila (549–554) recognized this state of affairs as a real danger. But his attack upon Córdoba turned into a disaster, attributed to a miracle of St Acisclus. The victory over Agila gave Córdoba some years of independence in the face of foreign powers, Gothic or imperial.<sup>48</sup> King Leovigild took the city for the first time in 572,<sup>49</sup> and for the second and definitive time in 584, after the precinct of St Acisclus in Córdoba had become the last rampart of his rebellious son Hermenegild.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> R. Hidalgo, *Espacio público y espacio privado en el conjunto palatino de Cercadilla (Córdoba): el aula central y las termas* (Sevilla, 1996); P. Marfil, “Córdoba de Teodosio a Abd al-Rahmán III,” in L. Caballero, P. Mateos, eds., *Visigodos y Omeyas* (Madrid, 2000), pp. 120ff.

<sup>45</sup> The identity of the titular martyr of this church is disputed: Acisclus or Zoilus; cf. the changing opinion of Marfil, “Córdoba,” p. 122. Unfortunately there is no decisive proof. But Cercadilla is in western Córdoba, where the church and convent of St Acisclus was according to Arabic testimony, and its plant and buildings fit better with the palace and castle close to St Acisclus’ church. Last but not least, in Recemundus’ calendar, *Cal.Muz.*, 80, R. Dozy, ed., *Le calendrier de Cordoue de l’année 961* (Leiden, 1873), p. 167, two churches dedicated to St Acisclus are recorded: one in the neighborhood of the papermakers, near to the gate to Seville, and “that of those in jail” (*carceratorum*), which is precisely the famous sixth-century basilica.

<sup>46</sup> See L.A. García Moreno, “La arqueología y la historia militar visigoda en la Península ibérica,” in *Arqueología medieval española. II Congreso* (Madrid, 1987), 2.334.

<sup>47</sup> See L.A. García Moreno, “Vándalos, Visigodos y Bizantinos en Granada,” in N. Marín, ed., *In Memoriam Agustín Díaz Toledo* (Granada/Almería, 1985), pp. 129–133.

<sup>48</sup> Isid. *Hist.Goth.*45; see L.A. García Moreno, in *Historia de España fundada por R. Menéndez Pidal*, III, 1 (Madrid, 1991), pp. 159ff.

<sup>49</sup> Biclár. s.a. 572.2: J. Campos, ed., *Juan de Biclár, obispo de Gerona* (Madrid, 1960), p. 82. See also J.F. Rodríguez Neila, *Historia de Córdoba* (Córdoba, 1988), pp. 527–532.

<sup>50</sup> Greg.Tur. *Hist.* 5.38; Biclár., a.a. 584. 3. See García Moreno, *Historia de España*, pp. 190ff., with n. 48.

Córdoba's independence is unlikely to have concealed any sort of Hispano-Roman irredentism against anything Gothic, as some have thought.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, it is not improbable to suppose that in the bosom of that autonomist Cordoban nobility there were families of Gothic stock, established for more than a generation. A number of inscriptions attest the permanent presence of Visigoths in Córdoba and its territory's strategic sites from the final years of the fifth century onward. Particularly interesting is a funereal inscription found in Arahál, a town between Seville and Córdoba. It belonged to a woman called Hilduarens, who died in March 504.<sup>52</sup> The most curious thing about this text is the name Hilduarens. This Germanic name is inexplicable as Latin, for it was usually translated to Hildoara, as the prosopography of Visigothic Spain shows.<sup>53</sup> But Hilduarens makes perfect sense in Gothic as a feminine nominative of a name made up of *hildi-* and *wareins*.<sup>54</sup> Of course, this assumes that the deceased and her relatives who commissioned the stone continued to speak Gothic, to the point that this inscription constitutes the latest testimony of spoken Gothic in Spain. Another testimony of the use of the Gothic language at this date in the hinterland of Córdoba could be the epitaph of Frigitto, a 7-year-old boy who died in the town of Uliá (current Montemayor).<sup>55</sup> Because his name is composed of *frij-* (= "love") with the diminutive suffix "*itto*,"<sup>56</sup> such a hypocoristic name was appropriate for a well-beloved small boy. We can also consider as evidence for Gothic people settled in Córdoba and its territory other Germanic names—*Wiliulfus*, *Hintio*, *Calamarius*, *Ugnericus*—on tombstones found in such places as Montoro, Alcaracejos, or Córdoba, and dated between 562 and 615.<sup>57</sup>

A significant piece of evidence about the nobility and power of some Gothic families seated in Córdoba's territory is the gravestone of Oppila, in Villafranca de Córdoba. Oppila died in 642, fighting against the rebellious Vascones in northern Spain.<sup>58</sup> The metrical character of the epitaph and its contemporary and learned literary reminiscences<sup>59</sup> attest the wealth and influence of Oppila's family,

<sup>51</sup> García Moreno, "Una memoria," pp. 61ff.

<sup>52</sup> Vives, *Inscripciones*, no. 149.

<sup>53</sup> The wife of King Gundemar (610–612) was named Hildoara (*Epist. Wisig.* 15).

<sup>54</sup> *Hildi-* is very common in personal Gothic names (J.M. Piel and D. Kremer, *Hispanogotisches Namenbuch* [Heidelberg, 1976], pp. 180–183). \**Wareins* (= "carefulness") is a noun issued from the verb *warjan*; see A. Agud, M.P. Fernández, eds., *Manual de lengua gótica* (Salamanca, 1988), 2.70. Her name meant "careful in battle."

<sup>55</sup> *CIL* 2.2.5.509.

<sup>56</sup> On the Gothic origin of this suffix, see Piel, Kremer, *Namenbuch*, p. 341.

<sup>57</sup> Vives, *Inscripciones*, nos. 167, 166, 170, 607.

<sup>58</sup> Vives, *Inscripciones*, no. 287; see L.A. García Moreno, *Prosopografía del Reino visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca, 1974), p. 64.

<sup>59</sup> J. Fontaine, "Une épitaphe rythmique d'un contemporain d'Isidore de Séville: l'éloge funèbre du Visigot Oppila," in *Aevum inter utrumque. Mélanges offerts G. Sanders* (Steenbrugge, 1991), pp. 163–186.

something also established by the very text that tells how Oppila's corpse was brought to be buried in his town from the distant north, a trip of more than 800 kilometers, by his clients, members of a real *Knechtsgefolgschaft*.<sup>60</sup>

The name Oppila is Gothic, although it is not frequently attested. However, it stands out as characteristic of the nomenclature of the family of Egica (687–702) and Wittiza (†710). Literary testimonia from before and after the Islamic invasion in 711 link this royal Gothic family with the city of Córdoba.<sup>61</sup> Transformed into a royal residence toward 700 CE, Córdoba continued to be the city where descendants of this family still lived in the second half of the tenth century.<sup>62</sup>

Of course, Egica's lineage might not be the only one established in Córdoba that produced sovereigns for the Visigoth kingdom in Spain. Some evidence points to a special relationship between Sisebut and the Cordoban area. This consists of special legislation for the Jews in Córdoba and its territory, and the exclusive documents issued by Sisebut's royal chancellery and still preserved in Córdoba in the middle of the ninth century.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the last Visigothic king, Roderic (†711), might owe his crown to a marriage with Egilo, possibly a relative of King Egica.<sup>64</sup> And there is evidence that Roderic and his family had their residence in Córdoba, where as late as the ninth century their ancestral palace continued to be used.<sup>65</sup> The only reliable testimony on the reign of Roderic and the Islamic invasion, the so-called Mozarabic Chronicle of 754, affirms that Roderic ascended the throne *ortante senatu*.<sup>66</sup> More than ten years ago I suggested that this *senatus*

<sup>60</sup> See H.-J. Diesner, *Westgotische und Langobardische Gefolgschaften und Untertanenverbände* (Berlin, 1978), pp. 7ff.

<sup>61</sup> See L.A. García Moreno, "El linaje witizano de Artaba(s)do," in L. Adao da Fonseca, L.C. Amaral, M.F. Ferreira Santos, eds., *Os Reinos ibéricos na Idade Média. Livro de Homenagem ao Professor Doutor Humberto Carlos Baquero Moreno*, II (Oporto, 2003), pp. 779–788; also idem, "El Tesoro de Torredonjimeno. Su contexto histórico," in A. Casanovas, Rovira i Port, eds., *Torredonjimeno. Tesoro, monarquía y liturgia* (Barcelona, 2003), p. 40.

<sup>62</sup> See A. Neubauer, "Hafs al-Qouti," *Revue des études juives* 30 (1895): 65–69; D.M. Dunlop, Hafs b. Albar, "The Last of the Goths?," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1954): 137–151.

<sup>63</sup> *LV* 12. 2. 13; *Epist. Wisig.*, 1–8. The letters 1–6 are transmitted in the manuscript *Escorialensis* I-4, used by Alvar, and the full set was in the manuscript copied in Oviedo for the *Liber Ithaticum* (see above, notes 12–14).

<sup>64</sup> García Moreno, "El linaje witizano," p. 784.

<sup>65</sup> Ibn Idâri, translated by E. Fagnan, *Histoire de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne intitulée al-Bayano'l Mogrib*, II (Argel, 1904), p. 4; Ibn al-Qûtiyya, translated by J. Ribera, *Colección de obras arábicas de historia y geografía que publica la Academia de la Historia*, 2 (Madrid, 1926), p. 1; *Chron. Adef.*, 6: J. Gil, ed., *Crónicas asturianas* (Oviedo, 1985), p. 120. See L.A. García Moreno, "Los últimos tiempos del Reino visigodo," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 189 (1992): 434.

<sup>66</sup> *Cont.Hisp.*, 52 (ed. J.E. López Pereira, *Crónica Mozárabe de 754* [Zaragoza, 1980], p. 68).

was none other than the very old municipal Cordoban *curia*, in whose cabinet *Formula 20* continued to be preserved for another 125 years.<sup>67</sup> But that is a story for another day.

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<sup>67</sup> García Moreno, “Los últimos,” pp. 440–447.

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## Chapter 22

# Vascones and Visigoths: Creation and Transformation of Identity in Northern Spain in Late Antiquity

Scott de Brestian

Any examination of the Vascones during the Early Middle Ages must first acknowledge the limitations of the sources, both literary and archaeological.<sup>1</sup> The territorial extent of the people known as Vascones during the Roman period is well known from early imperial sources, particularly Strabo, Pliny, and Ptolemy.<sup>2</sup> The heart of their territory stretched from the Atlantic coast at the western end of the Pyrenees along the Arga and Ega river valleys to their confluence with the Ebro, an area corresponding roughly to the modern Spanish province of Navarre. Three major cities lay along this axis: Oiasso, on the Atlantic coast (modern Irún), Pompaelo (Pamplona), and Calagurris (Calahorra) on the Ebro. To the west of the Vascones the same sources inform us that a series of smaller groups inhabited slices of territory running approximately north to south. From east to west these were the Vardulli, the Carietes and Vennenses, and the Autrigones. Only one urban center of note was located in the area occupied by the modern Basque country, the *oppidum* of Veleia, which occupied a site known today as Iruña, and which is located just to the west of modern Vitoria.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Much confusion arises from the appearance of a group named “Vascones” in both Roman and early medieval sources, the habit of some scholars to translate the name in one or both instances as “Basques,” and the presence of a later medieval and modern identifiably Basque population in an area near to, but not identical with, the territory of the earlier Vascones. This study uses “Vascones” to refer to the peoples referred to in literary sources (although the name remains the same, however, the peoples should not be treated as identical); “Basques” to refer to people who speak the Basque language, where we have evidence on the matter; and “Basque country” to refer to the modern Spanish autonomous region known as the País Vasco, consisting of the three provinces of Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, and Álava.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, *Geog.* 3.3.8, 3.4.12, Pliny, *HN* 3.3.26, 4.20.10–11; Ptol. *Geog.* 2.5. See José J. Irigaray Arrieta, *Los vascones a través de las fuentes literarias antiguas* (San Sebastián, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> The colony of Flaviobriga (modern Castro Urdiales), located on the coast in the territory of the Autrigones, lies just outside the area discussed here.



Throughout the Roman imperial period, this area maintained a reputation for backwardness. Strabo lumped the inhabitants together with the other mountain peoples of northern Spain as examples of extreme barbarism, whereas Paulinus of Nola, writing in the late fourth century, remarked, “much of the folk is unimproved and ignorant of laws.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, many parts of the region show signs of close social and cultural integration into the wider empire, attested not only by the growth of urban centers but also by the adoption of intensive agriculture, primarily viticulture, in large villa estates along the Ebro river.<sup>5</sup> This area was fertile ground for the spread of Christianity. Prudentius, in the middle of the fourth century, observed that the inhabitants “throng” (*confrequentant*) the site of the martyrdom of the local saints Emeterius and Chelidonius, and that “many a resident of the wider world comes here” for the same reason (“*exteri nec non et orbis huc colonus advenit*”).<sup>6</sup>

After this period, literary references become much scarcer. The *Chronicle* of Hydatius notes that in 449 the Suevic king Rechiarius plundered “the Vasconias” on his way to visit his father-in-law Theoderic in Toulouse. At the same time the region, and particularly the area around the modern Araquil river, had become a base for bands of Bacaudae.<sup>7</sup> Under their leader Basilius they joined an attack on Roman territory with Rechiarius on his return from Aquitania, plundered the Ebro valley, and killed the bishop of Turiasso (Tarazona), Leo, along with some federate troops.<sup>8</sup> This alliance may have been arranged as Rechiarius passed through the region on the way to Toulouse.

The “Vasconias” referred to by Hydatius probably represent a wider region than that occupied by the earlier people of that name. One possible route to Gaul would have taken Rechiarius along the Roman road, marked as *Iter 21* in the *Antonine Itinerary*, leading up from the Ebro past Veleia and Pamplona across the Pyrenees. Only a small portion of this road (or any other likely route) passed through the territory of the Vascones as known from earlier Roman sources. It is as unlikely that Hydatius was trying to be geographically precise here as it is that Rechiarius was respecting native boundaries; “Vasconias” apparently was just shorthand for the region between the Ebro and the Pyrenees. Such an extension

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<sup>4</sup> Ausonius, *Epist.* 32.199.

<sup>5</sup> María A. Mezquíriz de Catalán Irujo, “La producción de vna en época romana a través de los hallazgos en territorio Navarro,” *Trabajos de Arqueología Navarra* 12 (1995–1996): 63–90.

<sup>6</sup> *Peristephanon* 1.96. Prudentius hagiographic objectives and the fact that Calagurris was his home town make him prone to exaggeration, but the widespread presence of Christianity appears to be on solid ground. For a summary of urban Christianity in Spain see Michael Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (Baltimore, MD, 2004), pp. 215–240.

<sup>7</sup> Hydatius, *Chron.* 120 (ed. Burgess): “*Brevi tempore potestatis suae Aracellitanorum frangit insolentiam Bacaudarum.*”

<sup>8</sup> Hydatius, *Chron.* 133 (ed. Burgess).

of a narrow geographic referent to a much larger district is a common feature in late antique literary sources referring to Spain. The Ravenna Cosmography, for example, divides Spain into several regions, namely Calletia (Gallaeca), Lusitania, Asturia, Iberia, Betica, Hispalis, Austrigonia, and Auariola; a catalog that includes names derived from provinces, cities, and peoples (the Autrigones) long absent from the literary tradition.<sup>9</sup> A similar shift in meaning can be seen in the term “Cantabria,” which in Caesar’s day encompassed all of northern Spain, in the Imperial period referred to a specific area of north central Spain, and in the Early Middle Ages again became vague, attested by the “Senate of Cantabria” in the *Life* of Aemilianus and the modern Sierra de Cantabria.<sup>10</sup> It has been argued that this practice was the result of a revival of local autonomy after the collapse of the Roman Empire.<sup>11</sup> Although such a revival did occur, another factor behind the reappearance of older geographical terms may simply be the struggle of writers removed from the scene to make sense of a rapidly shifting environment. As familiarity with a region declined, so too did geographical precision.

This custom of employing an earlier name to refer to a larger, or different, area that that represented by its original use also may lie behind the reappearance of the name “Vascones” in late antique sources to refer to a group inhabiting a large but nebulous area in northern Spain at the western end of the Pyrenees. The sources tell us nothing about them or their social organization: no king of the Vascones is mentioned, and it is most likely they had none.<sup>12</sup> They appear as violent raiders of the communities to the south and east, or as targets of frequent expeditions by a succession of Visigothic kings from Leovigild in the sixth century to Roderic, the last Visigothic king, in the early eighth.<sup>13</sup> These later Vascones then disappeared,

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<sup>9</sup> Josef Schnetz, ed., *Itineraria Romana*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart 1990), p. 82. For the use of archaic names, see Mathisen in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> A.T. Fear, trans., *Lives of the Visigothic Fathers* (Liverpool, 1997), p. 30, n. 75. The “Senate of Cantabria” often is taken to refer to the Iron Age site Monte de Cantabria just northwest of Roman Varea, although there is no historical or archaeological evidence that the site was occupied in Late Antiquity. The practice of extending “Cantabria” to encompass a wider area can be seen in Juvenal, *Sat.* 15.936–939: “Vascones, ut fama est, alimentis talibus usi / produxere animas, sed res diversa, sed illic / fortunae invidia est bellorumque ultima, casus / extremi, longae dira obsidionis egestas.”

<sup>11</sup> Pablo C. Díaz, Luís R. Menéndez-Bueyes, “The Cantabrian Basin in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: From Imperial Province to Periphery,” in Kim Bowes, Michael Kulikowski, eds., *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 294–297.

<sup>12</sup> See *infra* for evidence for social organization.

<sup>13</sup> While Leovigild supposedly pacified the Vascones in 581, founding a city, Victoriacum, in the conquered territory, Isidore records campaigns by Reccared and Gundemar, an inscription dated to 642 from Villafranca near Córdoba dedicated to a Gothic noble named Oppilianus notes that he was killed by Vascones, and both Wamba and Roderic engaged the Vascones during their reign. The Vascones also raided the Ebro valley as far as Caesaraugusta in 653, according to a letter from the priest Teius to his friend Quiricius in Barcelona.

only to re-emerge in the tenth and eleventh centuries, when they can be identified as Basque communities within the ambit of the kingdoms of Navarre and Castille.<sup>14</sup>

The meagerness of the literary sources has hindered examination of the political and social changes that occurred in northern Spain after the collapse of Roman authority. Despite this difficulty, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a consensus emerged among Spanish scholars regarding the nature and development of the Vascones as a people. In this view, the Basques of the High Middle Ages were the descendents of the Vascones that appear in peninsular and Frankish sources of the sixth and seventh centuries, who in turn were ethnically identical to the Vascones of the Roman period. Because the modern Basque country lies outside the classical boundaries of the Vascones of antiquity, either the Vascones-cum-Basques must have expanded into the Basque country at some point, or the other peoples who lived within the boundaries of what would become the Basque country also must have originated from the Vascones-cum-Basques. The *Ora Maritima* of Avienus, which mentions “restless Vascones,”<sup>15</sup> was adduced as evidence that the Vascones chafed under Roman rule and only sought a favorable opportunity to throw off the chains of oppression. Once free, they maintained their independence in the face of Visigothic, Frankish, and Muslim threats until they became part of the kingdom of Navarre. For convenience, we may term this the “ethnic hypothesis”: that the historical development of the Vascones can only be understood in the context of their subsequent Basque identity.<sup>16</sup>

It was apparent from an early date that this image of tension between Basques and their Roman overlords did not fit well with the evidence of acculturation from the settlements around the Ebro valley.<sup>17</sup> It also seemed to contradict the linguistic evidence. In both the territory of the Vascones and the area of the later Basque country, Roman-era inscriptions bear names that are nearly all Latin or Celtic in origin. Place-names also show a strong Celtic influence; even the modern names

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<sup>14</sup> For the disappearance and reappearance of barbarian peoples, see Peter Heather, “Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes,” in W. Pohl, H. Reimitz, eds., *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 95–111.

<sup>15</sup> “Inquietos vascones”: *Ora Marit.* 251.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Ladislao de Velasco, Fernández de la Cuesta, *Los Euskaros en Álava, Guipúzcoa y Vizcaya* (Barcelona, 1879); Felix López del Vallado, “Arqueología. Las tres provincias Vascongadas,” in Francesh Carreras y Candi, Serapio Múgica, Carmelo de Echegaray, Vicente Vera y López, eds., *Geografía General del País Vasco-Navarro* (Barcelona, 1911), pp. 825–985.

<sup>17</sup> José Amador de los Ríos, “Estudios Monumentales y Arqueológicos. Las provincias vascongadas,” *Revista de España* 19 (1871): 27–29; Federico Baraibar, “Antigüedades de Iruña. Discurso leído en el Ateneo de Vitoria al abrirse el curso de 1882 a 1883,” *Ateneo* 9 (1883): 1–9, 17–24, 44–48, and 57–61. Also significant were the excavations at the Roman villa of Ramalete: Blas Taracena, Luís Vazquez de Parga, “La villa romana del Ramalete (término de Tudela),” *País Vasco* 34 (1949): 9–46.

of most of the major rivers in the Basque country are Celtic in origin.<sup>18</sup> When the Vascones briefly minted coins in the early first century BCE, their name was written with an Indo-European ending (“Ba[r]skunes”); the same was true of coins minted by individual cities within the region.<sup>19</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, linguistic work indicated that Basque was related to Aquitanian, the language spoken in southwestern Gaul. Like Basque, Aquitanian was a non-Indo-European language unrelated to Gallic/Celtic and Iberian (itself a separate language group). Many Aquitanian personal- and place-names have parallels in Basque, and Aquitanian now is thought to be a form of proto-Basque or closely aligned with it.<sup>20</sup> These findings led several authors to conclude that in antiquity there were in fact no Basque speakers south of the Pyrenees. This since has been shown to be an overreaction: there are a handful of inscriptions from Spain with personal or deity names that are plausibly Basque, and elements of several place-names in the territory of the Vascones have what appear to be Basque elements. Nevertheless, the epigraphic evidence suggests that Basque was very much a minority language south of the Pyrenees during the Roman Empire.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the absence of evidence for early Basques or Basque precursors in the Iberian Peninsula, nationalism, politics, and the general sense that their non Indo-European language makes the Basques one of the oldest peoples in Europe have ensured the survival of the “ethnic hypothesis.” The argument, in one form or another, is that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. The lack of Basque names in Roman inscriptions is accepted as evidence that most of the Basque population was quickly assimilated into Roman society. It is argued, however, that a core of Basque speakers preserved their ancient culture. They withdrew to the mountains, maintaining a traditional pastoral existence, and had little contact

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<sup>18</sup> The major exception is the Río Idazabal: Robert Trask, *The History of Basque* (London, 1997), pp. 329–331. For personal names see María L. Albertos, “Álava prerromana y romana: Estudio lingüístico,” *Estudios de Arqueología Alavesa (EAA)* 4 (1970): 124–142. Idem, “Los nombres euscaros de las inscripciones hispanorromanas y un Ibarra entre los Vettones,” *EAA* 5 (1972): 214–215, provides a complete list of Basque personal names from Roman Spain.

<sup>19</sup> Antonio Tovar, *Estudios sobre las primitivas lenguas hispánicas* (Buenos Aires, 1949), p. 82.

<sup>20</sup> Luís Michelena, *Sobre el pasado de la lengua vasca* (San Sebastián, 1964); linguistic discussion in Trask, *History of Basque*, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> Martín Almagro Gorbea, “Etnogénesis del País Vasco: de los antiguos mitos a la investigación actual,” *Munibe (Antropología–Arkeología) (Munibe)* 57 (2005–2006): 345–364; María L. Albertos, “La lengua de los habitantes del País Vasco en la Edad del Hierro,” *EAA* 21 (2004): 253–280.

with their more sedentary neighbors.<sup>22</sup> Only after the end of Roman rule did they reassert their identity in the face of threats from barbarian invaders.<sup>23</sup>

References in Livy to an *ager Vasconum*, and in Pliny and Paulinus to a *saltus Vasconum*, have been considered by many to reflect a dichotomy between the agriculture-based settlements of the plains, open to external influences and easily acculturated, and pastoral communities in the supposedly unassimilated highlands.<sup>24</sup> Archaeological discoveries in the Basque country seemed to support this view. A series of cave sites have been excavated in the north of the province of Vizcaya, many of which produced Bronze Age and late Roman levels, sometimes with an intervening layer of mixed material. Prehistorians have dubbed these sites the Santimamiñe Group, after the best-known representative, and some concluded

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<sup>22</sup> Variations of this hypothesis can be found in Albertos, “Álava prerromana,” p. 120; Julio Caro Baroja, *Los pueblos del Norte* (San Sebastián, 1973), p. 100; Milagros Esteban Delgado, *El País Vasco atlántico en época romana* (San Sebastián, 1990), pp. 23–24; Juan J. Sayas Abengochea, *Los vascos en la antigüedad* (Madrid 1994), pp. 178–179; Javier Gorrochategui, “Los pireneos entre Gallia y Hispania: Las lenguas,” *Veleia* 12 (1995): 218. Genetic arguments have been brought into the equation as well: see Frédéric Bauduer, “Études sur l’anthropologie biologique des Basques,” *Bulletin du Musée Basque* (2006): 5–18; idem, Josué Feingold, and Didier Lacombe, “The Basques: Review of Population Genetics and Mendelian Disorders,” *Human Biology* 77.5 (2005): 619–627, contending that the Basques are “the most homogeneous relict population of the pre-Neolithic inhabitants of Europe.” For a contrary view, see Ainhoa Alzualde, N. Izagirre, S. Alonso, A. Alonso, and C. de la Rúa, “Temporal Mitochondrial DNA Variation in the Basque Country: Influence of Post-Neolithic Events,” *Annals of Human Genetics* 69.6 (2005): 665–679, where it is argued that DNA from recent populations in the Basque country shows much closer affinity to other western European groups than prehistoric DNA samples from the same area. For DNA analysis of Basques, see also Jones in the volume.

<sup>23</sup> Even a recent discussion such as Richard Collins, “The Ethnogenesis of the Basques,” in H. Wolfram, W. Pohl, eds., *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* (Vienna, 1990), pp. 35–44, takes for granted that the Basques in Spain trace their origins to the Neolithic or Bronze Age. “Unlike any of the other peoples of Western Europe, the Basques do not have a formative period in the Roman and immediate post-Roman periods....”

<sup>24</sup> Livy, frag. of book 91, 18; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 4.20; Paulinus: Ausonius, *Epistles* 29.50, uses the variant “saltus Vasconiae.” See Alberto Balil, *Historia social y económica de la España antigua* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 68–69; Sayas, *Los vascos*, p. 20; Ángeles Alonso Avila, “Navarra y los vascones durante la época visigoda,” *Príncipe de Viana* 48, Anejo 7 (1987): 278; Irigaray, *Los vascones a través*, p. 5; Joaquín González Echegaray, *Los Cantabros* (Santander, 1992), p. 168; Amparo Castiella Rodríguez, “Peculiaridades del poblamiento prerromano en territorio vascón: Navarra,” *Cuadernos de Arqueología Universidad de Navarra (CAUN)* 12 (2004): 178, fig. 1; Esteban, *País Vasco atlántico*, accepts the traditional division between *ager* and *saltus*, but is cautious about arguments from silence. Almagro Gorbea (“Etnogénesis del País Vasco,” p. 358) also employs the concept of an isolated “solar vascón,” albeit one much more geographically restricted than earlier scholars.

that these caves were occupied by early Basque pastoralists who had lived in the area for millennia.<sup>25</sup> The arrival of first Celtic and then Roman immigrants did not alter their lifestyle, but they remained isolated and living at a Bronze-Age level of technology well into the first millennium CE. Only at the end of the Roman Empire, according to this interpretation, was there a belated and superficial phase of Romanization that was quickly discarded at the fall of the western empire.<sup>26</sup> The general lack of Iron-Age and Roman-era settlement evidence also has been used to support this line of argument.

The archaeological data, however, will not bear the weight of this interpretation. The cases of mixed Bronze-Age and Roman material all involve disturbed stratigraphy, often as the result of partial roof collapse. There is no well-preserved context where Bronze-Age and Roman material are found together.<sup>27</sup> Over the last 20 years major Iron-Age centers at Intxur, Maruelea (with the associated assembly place of Gastiburu), and Kosnoaga have been identified in increasing numbers along with many smaller sites, and today it is clear that the cultural sequence in the northern Basque country broadly parallels that further to the south and east.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from the growing archaeological evidence for long-term and significant cultural contact between northern Spain and both Gaul and the wider peninsula, the argument that there was a large Basque population in northern Spain that remained culturally isolated and epigraphically invisible through the Roman period is flawed because it is not subject to either proof or refutation. As a working hypothesis it is implausible, as no culture is completely isolated from its neighbors. It is better

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<sup>25</sup> José María Apellániz, "El grupo de Los Husos durante la Prehistoria con cerámica en el País Vasco," *EAA* 7 (1974): 362.

<sup>26</sup> José Luis Arribas Pastor, "I Campaña de excavación en la cueva de Lumentxa (Lekeitio)," *Kobie (Paleoantropológica y Ciencias Naturales)* 14 (1984): 547; A. Armendariz, "Anton Koba (Oñate, Guipuzcoa): I campaña de excavaciones," *Arkeoikuska* 85 (1986): 46. This explanation also is accepted by José María Apellániz, Enrique Nolte y Aramburru, "Cuevas sepulcrales de Vizcaya. Excavación, estudio y datación por el C14," *Munibe* 19.3-4 (1967): 172-174, although the authors note that Santimamiñe, in particular, shows a full cultural sequence and not survival of a "Neolithic" culture.

<sup>27</sup> The coins and pottery date most of the assemblages to the late fourth- or early fifth century. Given the absence in most cases of domestic implements and the lack of architectural elaboration or hearths, it is most likely that the caves were used as refuges in the wake of the barbarian invasion of 409.

<sup>28</sup> See Carlos Olaetxea Elósegi, "Prospección arqueológica orientada a la localización de poblados de la Edad de Hierro en Guipúzcoa, campañas de 1987-99, 1988-89, 1989-90," *Cuadernos de Sección de Eusko Ikaskuntza. Prehistoria y Arqueología* 4 (1991): 197-218; Luis Valdés, "Avance a la III campaña de excavaciones del castro protohistórico de Maruelea (Nabarniz, Bizkaia) 1984 y excavación de urgencia en el castro de Kosnoaga (Luno, Bizkaia)," *Kobie* 14 (1984): 181-191; idem, "El Santuario Protohistórico de Gastiburu (siglos IV al I a.C.) y el calendario estacional (Arratzu, Bizkaia)," *Munibe* 57 (2005-2006): 333-343.

to take an agnostic viewpoint regarding the relative proportion of Latin, Celtic, Iberian, and Basque speakers south of the Pyrenees than adopt the assumptions underlying the “ethnic hypothesis.”<sup>29</sup>

Even if it were true that Basques or their forerunners formed a larger proportion of the population than the linguistic evidence suggests, that still would not provide an adequate explanation for the region’s political and cultural segregation during Late Antiquity. It long has been recognized that there is no one-to-one correspondence between cultures and linguistic boundaries. Among many groups, such as the Nuba in Africa, groups with similar language and culture are divided into two or more ethnic groups, while cultural and linguistic diversity can be found within a single ethnicity. The equation of ethnicity with monolithic groups having a fixed language and culture is a product of a nineteenth-century culture-historical paradigm that has already been discarded in discussion of early Germanic culture.<sup>30</sup> It is time it was discarded in the case of the Vascones as well. Even the proponents of a large Basque population south of the Pyrenees in antiquity admit the coexistence of multiple languages within the region controlled by the Vascones during antiquity and, presumably, later.

Nor does geography fully explain the creation of a cultural divide in this region. The territories of the different native groups mentioned in the literary texts are not separated by natural barriers but run across them. Far from indicating a cultural stratification between *saltus* and *ager*, this indicates that different geographical zones were politically connected in the period leading up to the Roman conquest, likely as a means of ensuring access to a variety of floral and faunal resources.<sup>31</sup> The division between *saltus* and *ager*, if it existed, was a Roman distinction, derived from Classical preconceptions that equated agriculture with civilization and pastoralism with barbarism. Not coincidentally, the first signs of cultural

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<sup>29</sup> This brief overview cannot treat in detail the evidence for linguistic diversity. In reality, bilingualism and the development of creoles or pidgins would have created an even richer linguistic landscape than these four language groups. For a similar viewpoint see Almagro Gorbea, “Etnogénesis,” pp. 349–350, published subsequent to this session of Shifting Frontiers.

<sup>30</sup> Most recent critical attention has concentrated on the *Traditionskern* model of Reinhard Wenskus, which hypothesizes that the various Germanic groups of Late Antiquity crystallized around an authority-building tradition developed by small elite groups. See discussion by A.C. Murray, “Reinhard Wenskus on ‘Ethnogenesis,’ Ethnicity, and the Origin of the Franks,” in Andrew Gillett, ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 4 (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 39–68. Although a salutary example of an approach that does not reduce ethnicity to blood ties, it does not serve as a model for the relationship between the Vascones and the Basques, since neither an aristocratic elite nor an oral origin tradition is in evidence.

<sup>31</sup> Noted by Collins, “Ethnogenesis,” p. 37.

stratification appear during the Roman period, as agriculture was practiced both more extensively and intensively in the river valleys draining into the Ebro.<sup>32</sup>

The changes in cultural expression exhibited along the upper Ebro valley between antiquity and the Middle Ages were radical ones, from Celtic peoples to Latinized natives in a social pattern revolving around the city and town to Basque extended families (*etxeak*) organized around a central residence, a developmental arc attested in other areas of northern Spain in Late Antiquity.<sup>33</sup> Under these circumstances it is better to avoid naturalistic explanations that stress the inevitability of the resulting relationships. Instead, by looking at how ethnic identity is created and disseminated within and without the group, we can isolate those factors that most contributed to the emergence of a new identity among the population as the Roman Empire came to an end.

Ethnic identity is created by both internal self-description within a group, and external characterization by those outside the group. Unfortunately for us, the only testimony we possess in the case of the Vascones is that of outsiders. Bourdieu's formulation of ethnicity attempts to reconcile these competing subjective and objective definitions: "The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment ... produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions."<sup>34</sup> These dispositions both structure, and are structured by, society at large. This definition has been used by Bentley to describe the creation of ethnic identity: "It is commonality of experience and of the preconscious *habitus* it generates that gives members of an ethnic cohort their sense of being both familiar and familial to each other."<sup>35</sup>

The emergence of a common identity through commonality of experience and tradition can be seen in the merging of Roman and barbarian elites to form a new governing class in the wake of the barbarian invasions. It has also been noted that feelings of ethnicity also can be intensified by a realization of differences in *habitus*. Classic examples of this are the encounters of colonial powers with natives in Africa, the Americas, and Australia. Among the Tswana of South Africa, precolonial society was marked by division of the group into competing clans focused around different kin groups and totemic practices.<sup>36</sup> The arrival of the Europeans resulted in a greater awareness of commonalities between Tswana

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<sup>32</sup> Díaz and Menéndez-Bueyes, "The Cantabrian Basin," p. 289 and n. 97 suggest that the lack of archaeological material from upland areas was simply due to low population density and not lack of integration with surrounding areas.

<sup>33</sup> Collins, "Ethnogenesis," p. 39; Díaz and Menéndez-Bueyes, "The Cantabrian Basin," pp. 290–297.

<sup>34</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 72.

<sup>35</sup> G. Carter Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987): 32–33.

<sup>36</sup> Sian Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (London, 1997), pp. 95–97.



clans relative to European society, and subsequently a strengthening of Tswana self-consciousness and a weakening of traditional divisions within native society.

What were some of the differences in *habitus* that may have led to cultural differentiation between the Vascones and their neighbors? Economic disparity has already been alluded to. Yet while it is true that the rugged terrain of the foothills of the Pyrenees and Cantabrian mountains did not lend itself to agricultural exploitation like the broad valley of the Ebro, this cannot be the only explanation. Not every mountainous region became independent during Late Antiquity, and many peripheral and impoverished areas of Visigothic Spain nevertheless became integrated into its socio-political structure.

One characteristic that sets the territory of the Vascones off from the rest of Spain is its very late Christianization.<sup>37</sup> There are some fourth- and fifth-century vessels from the Roman town of Veleia, but whatever this means for the religious beliefs of the local inhabitants, it did not result in a persistent tradition.<sup>38</sup> No early church, if one existed, survived the abandonment of Veleia in the late fifth century or early sixth century, nor is there evidence of Christianity in the surrounding landscape. As early as the sixth century a few monks, perhaps encouraged by Visigothic military campaigns against the Vascones, established cave churches in southern Álava and the county of Treviño. To the north, however, archaeology has found no evidence for church building before the end of the eighth/early ninth century.<sup>39</sup> We have one anecdotal account of attempts by outsiders to proselytize in the region, that of the seventh-century Frankish saint Amandus. He was treated rudely by the locals and the only hospitality he received was from a bishop located somewhere south of the Pyrenees, probably at Pamplona.<sup>40</sup>

The lack of evidence for Christianity in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, and the limited material found in Álava, contrasts markedly with the situation to the south and east. Here, we find thriving Christian communities. The sixth-century *Life* of St Aemilianus, who lived and worked just south of the Ebro river, describes a world that is entirely Christian. Almost all of the people that appear in the narrative<sup>41</sup> have Latin or Gothic names, and include officials clearly

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<sup>37</sup> Agustín Azkarate Garai-Olaun, *Arqueología cristiana de la antigüedad tardía en Álava, Guipúzcoa y Vizcaya* (Vitoria, 1988), pp. 26–52, sums up the historiographic background to this issue.

<sup>38</sup> Eliseo Gil Zubillaga, “Iconografía cristiana sobre sigillata tardía de Iruña/Veleia,” *Isturitz* 8/9 (1997): 820.

<sup>39</sup> Agustín Azkarate Garai-Olaun, L. Sánchez Zufiarre, “Las iglesias prefeudales en Álava. Cronotopología y articulación espacial,” *Arqueología de la Arquitectura* 2 (2003): 25–36.

<sup>40</sup> *VAmandi*, 21.

<sup>41</sup> Gerontius, Sofronius, Potamia, Eugene, Felix, Barbara, Didymus, Sicorius, Tuentius, Sibila, Nepotian, Proseria, Maximus, Columba, Honorius, Sempronius, Asellus, and Eufrasia. Only the somewhat odd Citonatus and Thuribus may come from an earlier linguistic stratum.

working within a recognizable, if modified, Late Roman political structure, as the references to several so-called senators, bishops, and the mysterious “Senate of Cantabria” attest. Centers of devotion such as the *martyrium* at Calagurris mentioned by Prudentius and Aemilianus’ own retreat replaced pagan shrines,<sup>42</sup> and served as foci of new communities self-identified as Christian.<sup>43</sup> Aemilianus entered upon a religious life when he became a disciple of a hermit named Felix, who inhabited a cave near the modern town of Buradón, located on the Ebro near the southern boundary of the modern Basque country. Excavations here have revealed a church with antecedents perhaps extending back to the fifth century.<sup>44</sup> The rural areas on either side of the Ebro attracted religious men such as Felix and Aemilianus, and eventually communities of monks. The cave churches near Faído, mentioned above, are likely related to this movement and represent an offshoot of Aemilianus’ monastic settlement around Mount Dircetius. The graffiti left by the monks allows us to date the founding of the community to this period. The names attested (Atanasius, Iohanni, Valerianus, Flainus, Armerius, Senticio) are common Christian names of the Visigothic kingdom, and link the churches to the wider Visigothic world.<sup>45</sup> The contrast between the literate, Christian communities of the south and the rural, pagan inhabitants to the north could not have been starker.

The spread and persistence of Christianity in La Rioja and Navarre was inextricably bound with the survival of at least some of the socio-political organization of the Roman Empire. The new religion required at least a modicum of Latin literacy from among the clergy, and Latin education was dependent on a tradition derived from the urban schools of rhetoric of the late empire. Christianity demanded a supply of literate men, but such men also were needed to serve as royal officials, and to handle the written legal code that was a legacy of Roman civilization. Christianity, urbanism, and a literate bureaucracy were mutually reinforcing institutions. Among the Vascones, the lack of urban nuclei, of complex social structures such as a written law code, and the slow penetration of Christianity all contributed to movement in the opposite direction: toward a

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<sup>42</sup> See María L. Albertos, “El culto a los montes entre los Galaicos, Astures y Berones y algunas de las deidades más significativas,” *EAA* 6 (1974): 153, for possible pagan antecedents related to the name Dercetius.

<sup>43</sup> Note the letter to Pope Hilarius regarding an ecclesiastical controversy in Calagurris in 465, signed by *possessores* from several towns in the upper Ebro valley. See also M. López, “Obispo, comunidad y organización social: El caso de la *Vita Emiliani*,” in A. González and J. M. Blázquez, eds., *Cristianismo y Aculturación en Tiempos del Imperio Romano*, Antigüedad y Cristianismo VII (Murcia 1990), pp. 519–531.

<sup>44</sup> Santiago Castellanos, Iñaki Martín Viso, “The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500–1000),” *Early Medieval Europe* 13.1 (2005): 1–42.

<sup>45</sup> See Azkarate Garai-Olaun, *Arqueología cristiana*, pp. 383–422 for a full discussion.

rural, pagan social organization characterized by few centers of political control larger than the Basque *etxeak*.<sup>46</sup>

Evidence of the interrelation of urbanization, social complexity, and Christianity has come from the recent excavations under the Cathedral of Santa María, located in the center of the modern city of Vitoria.<sup>47</sup> Here, architectural remains dating to the eighth century were found in the lowest levels, providing the earliest known evidence for settlement on the natural eminence that formed the core of the medieval town.<sup>48</sup> These early remains consist of modest structures constructed of wood, both circular and rectangular in shape. Two rectangular structures ranging from  $2.5 \times 6$  to  $3.5 \times 5.5$  meters in size and divided into two rooms were discovered just to the southwest of the cathedral. Another, larger, structure identified by the excavators as a longhouse partially overlaps the larger of the two buildings and is slightly later. By the tenth century, six small dwellings took the place of the earlier circular and rectangular buildings, while the longhouse was replaced by another building of significant size, although only partially excavated. These buildings were constructed in wood on a stone foundation, a sign of growing wealth and architectural complexity. In the eleventh century, the earlier smaller dwellings were gone completely, replaced by the earliest church on the site, a single-naved stone-built structure, with an associated cemetery. The area occupied by the former longhouse and its successor building was still occupied by a large residence, which was expanded and rebuilt over several phases during this period. After the conquest of this nascent urban community (known as Gasteiz) by Sancho VI of Navarre in 1181, the church was further expanded and the city became a bishopric.<sup>49</sup>

The sequence of events uncovered under the Cathedral of Vitoria demonstrates the connection between increasing political power and the penetration of

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<sup>46</sup> Juan A. Quirós Castillo, Alfonso Vigil-Escalera Guirado, “Networks of Peasant Villages between Toledo and Velegia Alabense, Northwestern Spain (V–Xth Centuries),” *AM* 33 (2006): 79–128, at pp. 111–112. The limited evidence for a monumental expression of pagan religion before the arrival of the Romans may indicate that this cultural atmosphere had a long pedigree within the region.

<sup>47</sup> Agustín Azkarate Garai-Olaun, Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo, “Arquitectura doméstica altomedieval en la Península Ibérica. Reflexiones a partir de las excavaciones arqueológicas de la Catedral de Santa María de Vitoria-Gasteiz, País Vasco,” *AM* 38 (2001): 25–60.

<sup>48</sup> Scattered Early- and Late Roman material has been found in and around the modern city, but at present we cannot say what kind of settlement, if any, existed at that time. The dating of the early remains under the cathedral should put the final nail in the coffin of the hypothesis that Leovigild’s city of Victoriacum, founded in 581 after a victory over the Vascones, should be identified with modern Vitoria. The apparent correspondence of the two names is a coincidence, as Vitoria only received that name after its conquest by Sancho VI in 1181.

<sup>49</sup> Pedro García Villada, *Historia ecclesiastica de España*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1929–1936), pp. 270–272.

Christianity. The eighth-century longhouse was likely the seat of an extended family powerful by local standards, yet unable to mobilize the resources of its urban counterparts in the Ebro valley. The lack of urbanization and literacy meant Christianity had difficulty gaining a foothold, while the political fragmentation of the region meant that there were no state resources that could be used to spread the religion, nor any surviving monumental architectural tradition to employ in the construction of centers of worship and proselytization.<sup>50</sup> Such decentralization meant Christianity could spread only slowly and gradually. Only after the growth of nascent political centers, seen in the denser occupation of tenth-century Gasteiz and the appearance of stone architecture, do monumental church buildings appear.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, indicia of increased economic activity and craft specialization, such as the production of fine pottery, appear.<sup>52</sup>

Lack of urbanism and centers of Christian worship were not the only features that inhibited the cultural integration of the area of the modern Basque country into the society of Visigothic Spain. The growing cultural independence of the people known as Vascones in Visigothic sources was greatly aided by geo-political events. The Battle of Vouillé in 507 ended Visigothic control over southwestern Gaul, leaving the Basque country as a buffer zone between the Franks and Visigoths. Recent work has suggested that Merovingian influence south of the Pyrenees may have been greater than previously thought. The Chronicle of Pseudo-Fredegair, for example, records that in 607:

Eo anno, mortuo Betterico, Sisebodus successit in Spaniae regnum, vir sapiens et per totam Spaniam laudabilis valde, pietate plenissimus. Nam et adversus manum publicam fortiter dimicavit. Provinciam Cantabriam Gotthorum regno subegit, quam aliquando Franci possederant. Dux, Francio nomine, qui Cantabriam tempore Francorum subexerat, tributo Francorum regibus multo tempore impleverat. Sed cum a parte imperii fuerat Cantabria revocata, a Gotthis, ut supra legitur, praeoccupatur, et plures civitates ab imperio Romano Sisebodus

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<sup>50</sup> This was not a phenomenon confined to the Basque country. Paganism survived in many rural areas of Spain well into the seventh century, as pronouncements of several church councils and the sermons of Martin of Braga indicate. However, the lack of any urban centers until the tenth century was a phenomenon peculiar to the region. See Azkarate Garai-Olaun, *Arqueología cristiana*, pp. 524–527, for evidence of pagan ritual in the Basque country in the Middle Ages.

<sup>51</sup> Azkarate Garai-Olaun, Quirós Castillo, “Arquitectura doméstica,” p. 56. The pattern of late church-building following upon the growth of regional power centers appears to be true elsewhere in the region: see Quirós Castillo, Vigil-Escalera Guirado, “Networks of Peasant Villages,” pp. 103–104.

<sup>52</sup> Agustín Azkarate Garai-Olaun, Julio Nuñez, José Luis Solaun, “Materiales y contextos cerámicos de los siglos VI al X en el País Vasco,” *Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología* 28 (2003): 360–362; José Luis Solaun, *La cerámica medieval en el País Vasco (siglos VIII–XIII)* (Vitoria, 2006), pp. 308–322.

in littore maris abstulit, et usque fundamentum destruxit. Cumque Romani ab exercitu Sisebodi trucidarentur, Sisebodus dicebat pietate plenus: Heu me miserum, cujus tempore tanta sanguinis humani effusio fitur! Cuicumque poterat occurrere de morte liberabat. Confirmatum est regnum Gotthorum in Spania per maris littora usque montes Pyrenaeos.<sup>53</sup>

The chronicler's statement that the Visigothic king Sisebut (612–621) conquered "Cantabria," then held by a Frankish duke, was for a long time rejected as a misunderstanding or copyist's error, since there is no other record of Frankish penetration beyond the western Pyrenees. There is clearly some confusion by the author, as Sisebut was preceded by Gundemar, not Witteric (Betteric in the chronicle), as the text states, nor was he king in 607. Furthermore, Sisebut did not conquer all of the remaining Byzantine possessions in Spain, a deed that was left to Suinthila (621–631). Nevertheless, the discovery of Merovingian material in some abundance south of the Pyrenees suggests that there is a kernel of truth behind this entry.<sup>54</sup> Most notably, excavations at Aldaieta in the province of Álava have revealed a number of graves containing weapons and personal effects, such as franciscas and belt-buckles, that are clearly of Frankish origin.<sup>55</sup> Whether the persons buried at Aldaieta were Franks or simply local inhabitants with foreign equipment is unknown,<sup>56</sup> but some Frankish connection is clear. The material at Aldaieta dates to the sixth century, precisely when, judging by the chronicle, the Franks had some kind of hegemony over parts of north-central Spain. Other cemeteries of similar date have been found at San Martín de Finaga in Vizcaya and San Pelayo near Alegría in central Álava.<sup>57</sup> Frankish and Aquitanian material found in the well-known Visigothic cemetery in Pamplona also may be related to these contexts. The evidence from these necropoleis indicates that the Basque country developed close ties with the Franks in the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Fred.Chron.cont.*1.33

<sup>54</sup> Koldo Larrañaga Elorza, "Los textos y la presencia franca al sur de los Pirineos," *Archivo Espanol de Arqueología* 66 (1993): 177–206. The appearance of "Cantabria" in the passage by Pseudo-Fredegard, at first confusing, seems to be merely another example of the extension of a geographic term to encompass neighboring areas, as discussed earlier.

<sup>55</sup> Agustín Azkarate Garai-Olaun, *Aldaieta: necrópolis tardoantigua de Aldaieta (Nanclares de Gamboa, Álava)* (Vitoria, 2001), pp. 152–157.

<sup>56</sup> Alzualde et al., "DNA Variation," pp. 673–674, found that DNA samples taken from the burials fell approximately midway between the modern Basque population and populations from northwest France.

<sup>57</sup> Iñaki García Camino, Miguel Unzueta Portilla, "Necrópolis de San Martín de Finaga (Basauri)," *Arkeoikuskua* 94 (1995): 339–344; A. Iriarte Cortazar, "La necrópolis de San Pelayo (Alegría-Dulantzi, Álava) y la cuestión de la fecha de inicio de las necrópolis de tipo merovingio en Álava," *CAUN* 6 (1998): 139–164.

<sup>58</sup> Agustín Azkarate Garai-Olaun, "Sobre los orígenes cronológicos de los cementerios cispirenaicos de época tardoantigua," *Munibe* 57.2 (2005–2006): 405–417.

The relationship cannot now be reconstructed exactly, but it clearly was not always peaceful. Gregory of Tours (*Hist.* 8.7), for example, records at least one attack on Aquitania by the Vascones of the Pyrenees.

The position of the Basque country between two expansionist kingdoms may have contributed to a balance of power in which neither was strong enough to assert permanent control over the area. The position of the Basque country as a marcher territory, in effect, contributed to the preservation of local authority and prevented the re-establishment of central control by the Visigothic kingdom, as happened elsewhere in the Peninsula. The raids of the Vascones on the Ebro valley can be better understood as a series of independent actions by the leaders of local *etxeak* rather than a coordinated response to Visigothic pressure.<sup>59</sup> It is conceivable that the wealth generated by these raids may have increased the power of these clan leaders and helped fuel the rise in urbanism and social complexity seen in the excavations beneath the Cathedral of Vitoria. Ironically, increased political centralization may have assisted in the eventual conquest of the region by Navarre and later Castille, something the Visigothic kings were never able to accomplish.

Divorced from racial and nationalist paradigms, the Vascones of Late Antiquity, and their development into the Basques, can be seen as a product of several reinforcing influences on the region: increasing economic isolation, a lack of urbanism, the slow penetration of Christianity, the decay of Late Roman political institutions, and the strategic location of the region. The eventual dominance of the Basque language, put into context, is more reasonably seen as the product of this process than the cause of it. The continuity of name conceals a major discontinuity in culture, as the fall of the Roman Empire was accompanied by the disintegration or reformulation of existing social associations and cultural traditions. Different groups had to renegotiate their identity around axes of cultural similarities and differences. The position of the Basque country on the margins of Visigothic and Frankish power allowed these changes to develop over a longer period than elsewhere in the Peninsula, resulting in a medieval cultural landscape very different from the Classical one. It is in this light that we should view and interpret the historical events of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, not as the re-emergence of ethnic traditions that had existed since time immemorial.

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<sup>59</sup> In this regard the fact that the chronicles do not preserve the name of any leader of the Vascones reinforces the idea that these were not centrally directed campaigns, as does the fact that they seem to have aimed at booty rather than the occupation of territory.

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## Chapter 23

# Identity and Ethnicity during the Era of Migrations and Barbarian Kingdoms in the Light of Archaeology in Gaul<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Périn, Michel Kazanski

Archaeology, Hans-Jürgen Eggers wrote, is concerned with the study of “dead civilizations” and thus, naturally enough, with the identity of the deceased.<sup>2</sup> This study will discuss the light that archaeology may or may not shed on questions of ethnic identity during the period when barbarian, generally Germanic peoples were depicted in the historical sources as settling in the western empire and establishing kingdoms there. The focus will be on Gaul, which at that time, as shall be seen, was a crossroads. Whether evidence comes from settlement sites, artifact types, or, as often is the case, cemeteries, the question of ethnic attribution at once arises. After all, ancient societies of all types, including Greeks, Romans, and barbarian *gentes*, displayed cultural particularisms whose material vestiges archaeology, using a comparative perspective, tries to discern. Indeed, the variation revealed in material culture is the archaeologist’s stock-in-trade. To correlate variation with ethnic identities is a very tricky business (some would say impossible or fruitless), at least without reliable written sources to help.<sup>3</sup>

The idea that particular ancient peoples had distinctive material cultures guided most early research, and at the hands of Gustav Kossinna<sup>4</sup> and his disciples

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<sup>1</sup> The authors warmly thank Bailey Young for the English translation of this contribution, and Ralph Mathisen for the final editing.

<sup>2</sup> H.-J. Eggers, “Das Problem der ethnischen Deutung in der Frühgeschichte,” in H. Kircher, ed., *Ur- und Frühgeschichte als historische Wissenschaft* (Heidelberg, 1950), pp. 49–59; idem, *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte* (Munich, 1959).

<sup>3</sup> For different perceptions of this question, see, inter alios, Andrew Gillett, ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002); Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 2002); Walter Pohl, ed., *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1997); and Walter Pohl, Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> G. Kossinna, “Die indogermanische Frage archäologisch beantwortet,” *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 34 (1902): 161–222; idem, *Die Herkunft der Germanen. Zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie* (Würzburg, 1911); idem, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte eine*



was developed into a model that at one time had the force of dogma. Current research, however, suggests that the reality is much more complex, and that ethnic identity cannot always be discerned from material culture.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, certain archaeological cultures sometimes can be identified with historically attested peoples, such as the Černjahov culture of the Goths to the north and west of the Black Sea which also was shared with vassal peoples and even survived for a time under Hun domination.<sup>6</sup> (See Fig. 23.1.) Other archaeological cultures that seem to match up with historically attested peoples united under a single name include the Gepids in eastern Hungary and Transylvania, the Lombards in Austria and western Hungary, or the Thuringians in central Germany.<sup>7</sup> Although these groups manifest certain common Germanic features, they also are distinguished by types of handmade pottery, by weapon panoplies, and most of all by female costume.<sup>8</sup>

According to written sources, the Lombards, who settled in the middle Danube in the sixth century, came from northern Germany.<sup>9</sup> Czech physical anthropologists have argued that there are significant differences in physical type between the Germanic peoples living in the middle Danube in the fifth century (Suevi, Heruls, and Rugians in the written sources) and the people found in the later Lombard cemeteries: the latter display features more “Nordic” (and closer to the Slavic peoples of Greater Moravia) than the former, who resemble provincial Roman and Mediterranean physical types.<sup>10</sup> In addition, whenever the sixth-century Sclavenes, considered ancestors of the Slavs, are mentioned by Byzantine authors such as Procopius, Jordanes, Maurice, and Menander, archaeologists have seen the so-called “Prague Culture,” which seems both archaic in character and homogeneous.<sup>11</sup>

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*hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft* (Würzburg, 1912); idem, *Die Indogermanen. Ein Abriss. I. Das indogermanische Urvolk* (Leipzig, 1921).

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Pohl, Reimitz, eds., *Strategies*.

<sup>6</sup> M. Kazanski, R. Legoux, “Contribution à l’étude des témoignages archéologiques des Goths en Europe orientale à l’époque des Grandes Migrations: la chronologie de la culture de Černjahov récente,” *AM* 18 (1988): 7–53; Linda Ellis, “Dacians, Sarmatians, and Goths on the Roman–Carpathian Frontier: Second–Fourth Centuries,” in R. Mathisen, H. Sivan, eds., *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 105–119.

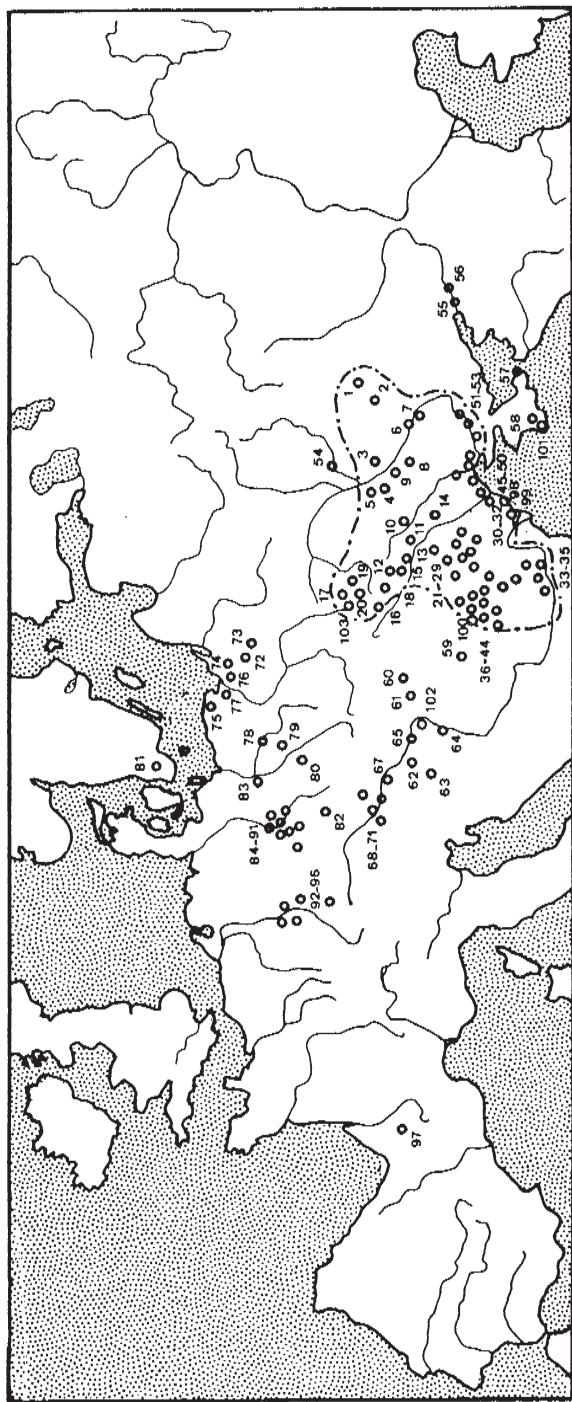
<sup>7</sup> H.-W. Böhme, “Les Thuringiens dans le Nord du royaume franc,” *Revue Archéologique de Picardie (RAP)* 3–4 (1988): 57–69.

<sup>8</sup> I. Bona, *A l’aube du Moyen Age. Gépides et Lombards dans le bassin des Carpates* (Budapest, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> E.g. *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 1: “Est insula qui dicitur Scadanan ... in partibus aquilonis.”

<sup>10</sup> Findings presented at conference on “L’époque des Grandes Migrations dans la région du Danube moyen,” at Kravsko (Czech Republic) in 2002.

<sup>11</sup> I.P. Rusanova, *Slavjanskije drevnosti VI–VII vv.* (Moscow, 1976); Zbigniew Kobylinski, “The Slavs,” in R. McKitterick, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, I, c.500–c.700* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 525–544, at 534.



- 1 : The territory of the Černjahov culture (dashed line).

o - 2 : The points correspond to the find spots of combs of Thomas III type associated with the Černjahov culture

Figure 23.1 Černjahov culture (dashed line) and the find spots of combs of Thomas III type associated with the Černjahov culture: M. Kazanski, in M. Larrieu, *La nécropole mérovingienne de La Tirraque, Beaucaire-sur-Baise (Gers)* (Toulouse, 1985), p. 268.

Elsewhere, however, it often proves difficult or impossible to reconcile the written sources with what archaeologists find, or fail to find, in the ground. Edward James once quipped that without written records we would never know that the Visigoths had been in southwest Gaul for the better part of the fifth century, for there are practically no archaeological traces of them.<sup>12</sup> This also is true to a lesser extent of the Burgundians, settled in eastern Gaul from their establishment there in 443 until the end of their independent kingdom in 534, although a few epitaphs, deformed skulls, and brooches do suggest a Germanic presence of some undefined sort.<sup>13</sup>

Where the large-scale movement of peoples is concerned (whether one calls them “Great Invasions,” “Great Migrations,” or simply “barbarian settlement”), the Kossinna school boldly called on physical anthropology, ethnography, and linguistics to support its archaeological-cultural assumptions and fill in the gaps in written sources. This approach thus produced confusing maps of ethnic groups, represented by huge arrows, racing about ancient Europe and maintaining the same ethnic identity over thousands of miles and hundreds of years. Walter Goffart has convincingly demonstrated the intellectual weaknesses of this caricature of cartography.<sup>14</sup> For one thing, it draws attention more to short-term migratory episodes (when there was little time to leave archaeological traces behind) in the story of peoples who were more normally sedentary. The Vandal migration from the shores of the Baltic to Carthage via Germany, Gaul, and Spain, for example, looks quite dynamic on the map (see Fig. 23.2), but took place over some four centuries (first to fifth centuries). The actual population movements were relatively short episodes between long periods of residence, nor can one assume that the people who began the process were culturally or biologically identical to those who appear later in history.

Before we can attempt to draw general conclusions about ancient peoples migrating and settling down, we must analyze separately the various kinds of evidence in accordance with the methods proper to each separate discipline, be it archaeology, physical anthropology, philology, linguistics, numismatics, and so forth. Only after that can we compare and attempt to integrate the sources. By themselves, the sources can show us at best but a deformed aspect of the “dead civilization” that only partially reflects the image of the “living civilization” we seek to understand. This method of “regressive purification,” which offers a

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<sup>12</sup> Edward James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South-West Gaul*, British Archaeological Reports, Supplementary Series 25(1) (Oxford, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> M. Martin, “Burgunden, Archäologisches (443–700),” in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 4.3–4 (1980): 248–271; H. Gaillard de Semainville, ed., *Les Burgondes, apports de l’archéologie* (Dijon, 1995); F. Passard, S. Gizard, J.-P. Urlacher, A. Richard, eds., *Burgondes, Alamans, Francs, Romains dans l’Est de la France le Sud-Ouest de l’Allemagne et la Suisse (V–VII<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.)* (Besançon, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> W. Goffart, “What’s Wrong with the Map of the Barbarian Invasions?,” in S.J. Ridyard, J. Benson, eds., *Minorities and Barbarians in Medieval Life and Thought* (Sewanee, 1996), pp. 159–177.

corrective to the “mixed-sources” logic of the Kossinna school,<sup>15</sup> was developed by Rolf Hachmann, Gustav Kossak, and Herbert Kühn in their study of the Rhenish peoples in La Tène times and can serve as a model for us.<sup>16</sup>

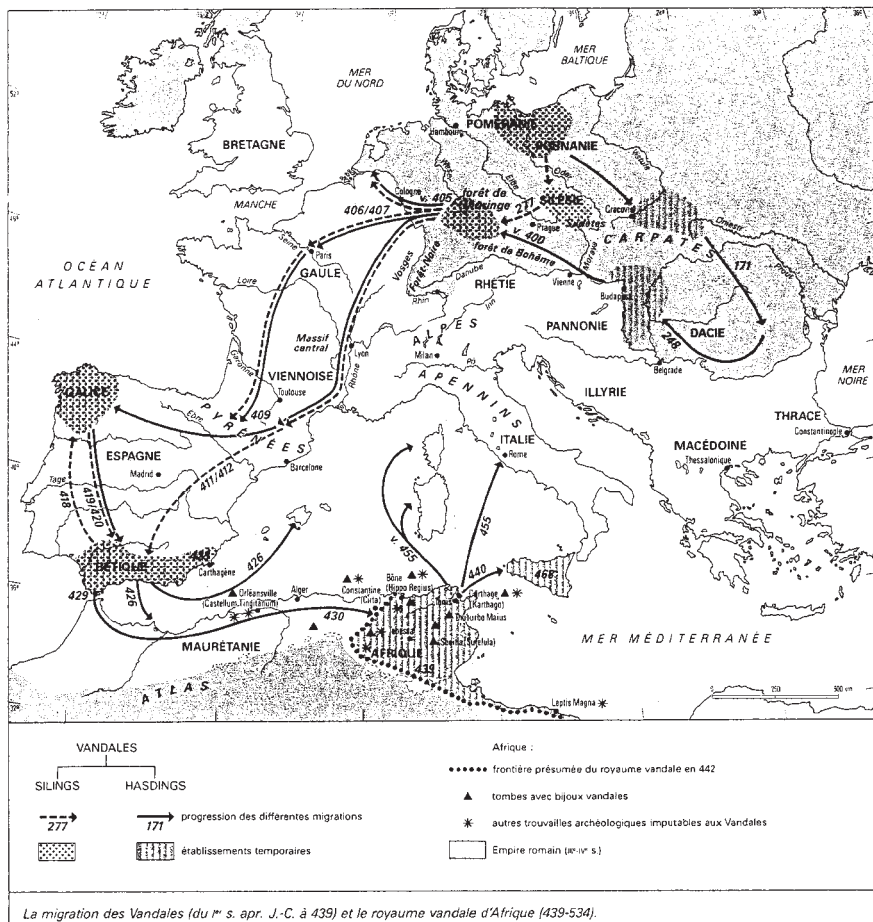


Figure 23.2 A typical representation of the movements of a supposedly culturally homogeneous Vandal people during the course of their travels over hundreds of years and thousands of miles: P. Périn, “Archéologie et art des Vandales,” in *Encyclopaedia Universalis* (1989), at [http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/X927802/VANDALES\\_ARCHEOLOGIE\\_ET\\_ART\\_DES.htm](http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/X927802/VANDALES_ARCHEOLOGIE_ET_ART_DES.htm), accessed 2 August 2010.

<sup>15</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>16</sup> R. Hachmann, G. Kossak, H. Kühn, *Völker zwischen Germanen und Kelten* (Neumünster, 1962).

## Initial Assumptions

Before considering the question of archaeological criteria that might help identify migrant, or at any rate foreign, peoples from a cultural or ethnic standpoint, we might establish some initial assumptions relative to the historical and archaeological context:

### *Migrants Limited in Number*

Although the “Grandes Migrations” may have impressed those who witnessed them, the number of migrants, Germanic and non-Germanic alike, was not great. Historical sources speak, for example, of 80,000 to 100,000 peoples, about a third of them warriors bearing arms.<sup>17</sup> The Romanized populations confronting them numbered in the millions. We also need to distinguish the quasi-federate force of Visigoths, wandering within the empire from the Balkans to southwest Gaul over 40 years and then integrated into its overall defensive system, from the motley assemblage of Suevi and Vandals who entered suddenly as outsiders in 406. Thus, we should not be looking for numerous barbarian sites resulting from the settlement of external demographic groups: there never were that many in the first place.

### *Migration often Peaceful and Unrecorded*

The arrival of barbarian groups—whether eastern or western Germans or peoples of the steppes such the Alans—should not be seen systematically as invasions. Recent research has stressed that outsiders entered the empire for different reasons in a variety of ways over a rather long period. In northern Gaul, for example, palaeoclimatic and political changes from the early third century on led to the abandonment of cultivated land and peaceful, and often unrecorded, colonization by outsiders, often sponsored by the Roman government itself.<sup>18</sup> There also is much evidence of barbarians, including *foederati*, *gentiles*, and *laeti*, being integrated into the expanding late Roman defensive system, and of barbarians enjoying careers in the military.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Victor Vitensis, *Historia persecutionis Vandalicae* 1.2; Procop. *Bell.Vand.* 1.5.18, *Anec.* 18.6; also L. Musset, *Les invasions. Les vagues germaniques* (Paris, 1965), p. 235. See also Ziche in this volume.

<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive list, see G.E.M. de Ste-Croix, *Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca, NY, 1981), pp. 245–249, 509–518.

<sup>19</sup> K. Böhner, “Zur historischen Interpretation der sogenannten Laetengräber,” *Jahrbuch des römische-germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz (JRGZM)* 10 (1963): 139–167. For *laeti* and *gentiles*, see also R. Mathisen, “*Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani*: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire,” *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 1011–1040.

*Migrants Well Dispersed throughout Late Roman Society*

Although known and appreciated as fighters, barbarians were by no means always at war with Romans or each other. Indeed, it is clear that they never sought to dismantle the administrative system of the western empire and its civilization. On the contrary and above all, they wanted to join it, at the highest levels possible. Potential archaeological traces of them, as we shall see, are all the rarer and harder to spot precisely because they were so well dispersed in the sites already favored by the Roman population.<sup>20</sup> There were exceptions, of course: barbarian groups who came from far beyond the *limes* and did not have a history of contact with the Roman world before they entered it, such as the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century and the Slavs in the sixth.

*Mixed Migrants, Ethnically and Culturally Heterogeneous*

The barbarians who settled in the Roman west, whether Germanic or steppe nomads, were neither ethnically nor culturally homogeneous.<sup>21</sup> During the migration of any group, an original core population inevitably was joined by other barbarian individuals and groups with their own cultural traditions. And the groups of warriors and the chieftains who made up the entourage of a king or other powerful warlord, such as Odovacar, came from very diverse origins. It thus is quite unrealistic to look for a homogeneous archaeological culture, let alone a monoculture, to identify barbarian groups settled in the empire, as shall be seen in the case of northern Gaul.

*Inevitable Acculturation of Migrating Minorities*

A great gap must have existed between the original culture of barbarian groups before their migration and what it had become by the time they settled within the empire. The very act of migration itself must have initiated significant social transformation: a traditional people was changed into a numerical minority, typically a sort of wandering army whose activities were mostly confined to acts of violence or the threat of it, as they sought to extort the means of survival from either the imperial government or the local population. These barbarian wanderers must have largely abandoned their agricultural, commercial, and craft traditions, thus changing their original material culture. The change in social status also must have led to a deformation of their funerary practices, which generally were intended to affirm the social position of the deceased. And thus we find that barbarian auxiliaries in the service of Rome, settled in the north of Gaul from

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<sup>20</sup> H.-W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1974).

<sup>21</sup> P. Périn, "A propos de publications récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l'époque mérovingienne: la 'question franque'," *AM* 11 (1981): 125–145.

the middle of the fourth century, began habitually to be buried with weapons, a custom very little practiced in the German territories east of the Rhine from which many of them came and totally unknown up until then in the lands where they settled.<sup>22</sup> The presence of Germanic fibulae in women's graves nearby confirms the Germanic origin of these men with weapons. The so-called *Reihengräberfelder* (row grave fields) in which they are found represent a new, unique frontier culture uncharacteristic of either the barbarian or Roman homelands.<sup>23</sup>

Another significant example is the Visigothic federates who, after defeating the emperor Valens at Adrianople in 378, wandered through the Balkans and then Italy before reaching southwest Gaul in 412. There, perhaps charged with repressing the Bacaudae,<sup>24</sup> they formed a kingdom centered on Bordeaux and Toulouse and became integrated with the Roman population. By the time the Visigoths entered Gaul, few of those who originally crossed the Danube would have been left, replaced either by children born on the march or by new recruits picked up along the way.<sup>25</sup> What might have been preserved of the Visigothic ancestral heritage? Their language, perhaps (though that assumption too is under dispute), and with it some oral traditions. But what about material culture? It seems likely that most of what they carried with them into Gaul had little to do with the lands they had left behind and must have derived from plunder along the way, such as that taken from Rome in 410. It is not surprising, then, that the Visigoths left behind no significant archaeological traces of their presence in Aquitaine in the fifth century. It is logical to argue rather that their national de-acculturation favored a rapid, even immediate, acculturation into the Roman provincial world. One feature of this was adoption of inhumation burial without grave goods.<sup>26</sup>

But after the Visigoths were expelled from Gaul in 507 and rebuilt a kingdom in Old Castile in the sixth century, they did manifest a national material culture in their funerary practice. This can be seen, for example, in women's graves with pairs of fibulae worn at the shoulder and plate-buckles at the waist of the Gothic type (see Fig. 23.3). This custom might well have come from contact with the

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<sup>22</sup> Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde*.

<sup>23</sup> See Dieter Quast, "Vom Einzelgrab zum Friedhof. Beginn der Reihengräbersitte im 5. Jahrhundert," in Karlheinz Fuchs, Martin Kempa, Rainer Redies, Barbara Theune-Grosskopf, André Wais, eds., *Die Alamannen* (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 171–190; and Frauke Stein, *Alamannische Siedlung und Kultur: Das Reihengräberfeld in Gammertingen* (Sigmaringen, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Suggested by E.A. Thompson, "Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain," *Past and Present* 2 (1952): 12–22.

<sup>25</sup> For the view that, as of 409, "Alaric's' Goths included many non-Goths," see Thomas S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome: A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians, ca. 375–425 B.C.* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), p. 247.

<sup>26</sup> P. Périn, *Gallo-Romains, Wisigoths et Francs en Aquitaine, Septimanie et Espagne. Actes des II Journées mérovingiennes de Toulouse, 1985* (Rouen, 1991).

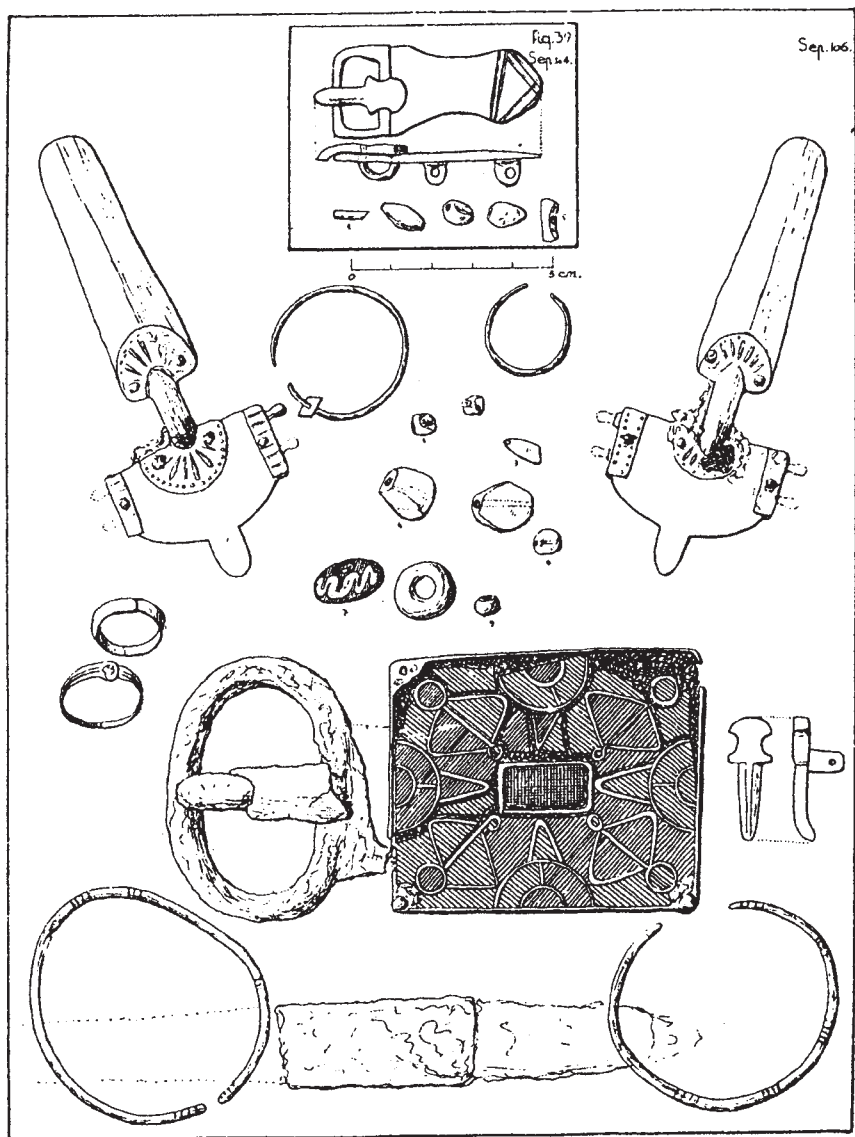


Figure 23.3 Funerary artifacts from the grave of a Visigothic woman from the cemetery at Duraton: A. Molinero-Perez, *La necropolis visigoda de Duraton (Segovia)* (Madrid, 1948), pl. 27.



army of the Ostrogothic king Vidimer.<sup>27</sup> In 473, on orders of the emperor Glycerius (473–474), this army went directly from Pannonia to Italy and the next year on to Aquitaine and Tarraconnensis, thus reintroducing to Visigoths there aspects of ancestral Gothic material culture, notably where female costume was concerned.<sup>28</sup> This hypothesis explains the striking presence in Aquitaine, and more especially in Septimania and Spain, of Gothic artifacts of the Danubian type, not the sort one would expect to have been brought by the Ostrogothic contingents from Italy sent there by Theodoric after 507 to support the young Amalaric.<sup>29</sup>

### *Mobile Elites with an International Culture*

Finally, barbarians, and especially barbarian elites, usually were highly mobile, and shared what might be called an “international” barbarian culture resulting from their widespread experiences. The Frankish king Childeric, for example, spent eight years at the Thuringian court; and the Herul prince Rodolf came from northern Europe to sojourn with Theodoric in Italy.<sup>30</sup> One should not be surprised that the material culture of this princely barbarian caste was very international in flavor, and that the splendid artifacts from their graves or the treasure finds of the period usually do not betray the geo-cultural origins of their owners. What we can distinguish through archaeology in Late Antiquity, to some extent at least, is the Roman nobles from the barbarian chiefs, thanks to different funerary traditions. Noble Romans are identified by monumental funerary architecture, such as mausoleums, richly decorated sarcophagi, and epitaphs, but rarely by votive offerings. Barbarian chieftains, on the other hand, often were buried in wooden funerary chambers, sometimes covered by

<sup>27</sup> P. Périn, “L’armée de Vidimer et la question des dépôts funéraires chez les Wisigoths en Gaule et en Espagne (Ve–VIe siècles),” in F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, eds., *L’Armée romaine et les barbares du IIIe au VIIIe siècle* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1993), pp. 411–423.

<sup>28</sup> “Quod et factum est et mox Vidimer Italiae terras intravit, extremum fati munus reddens rebus excessit humanis, successorem relinquens Vidimer filium suumque synonymum. quem Glycerius imperator muneribus datis de Italia ad Gallias transtulit, quae a diversis circumcirca gentibus praemebantur, asserens vicinos ibi Vesegothas eorum parentes regnare. quid multum? Vidimer acceptis muneribus simulque mandata a Glycerio imperatore Gallias tendit, seseque cum parentibus iungens Vesegothis, unum corpus efficiunt, ut dudum fuerant, et sic Gallias Spaniasque tenentes sui iuri defendunt, ut nullus ibi alius prevaleret”: *Jord. Get.* 284; see Andreas Schwarcz, “The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitania: Chronology and Archaeology,” in R. Mathisen, D. Shanzer, eds., *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 11–22.

<sup>29</sup> See Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400–1000* (New York, 1995), pp. 32–36.

<sup>30</sup> Childeric: J.R. Martindale (ed.), *PLRE II. AD 395–527* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 285–286, *Jord. Tur. Hist.* 2.12: “Abiens ergo in Thoringiam . . . qui cum octavo anno super eos regnaret”; Rodulfus: *PLRE II*, p. 946, *Jord. Get.* 3(24): “Grannii, Augandxi, Eunixi, Taetel, Rugi, Arochi, Rauii, quibus non ante multos annos Roduulf rex fuit, qui contempto proprio regno ad Theodorici Gothorum regis gremio convolvavit.”

a tumulus, and typically were accompanied by lavish funerary offerings. Childeric's tumulus, for instance, combined items evoking power and prestige in the Germanic tradition (golden bracelet, sword with cloisonné hilt, and other high-status weapons) with emblems of Roman authority (cruciform fibula, gold signet ring), which were consistent with his dual role as a German king and the Roman administrator of Belgica II.<sup>31</sup> Thus his assemblage, barbarian elite in overall tone, also suggests some blurring of identity to include elements of both Roman and barbarian culture.

This blurring of identities appears in other cases as well. A late fifth-century grave from the suburban necropolis of Bourges, for example, belonged to a man whose grave goods included a spear inscribed with the words "Regius" and "Patricius." The former would suggest a connection with the Visigothic king, who then ruled there, and the latter, if it is a title and not a name, denotes the resonant Roman title "patrician." This merging of aspects of barbarian and Roman

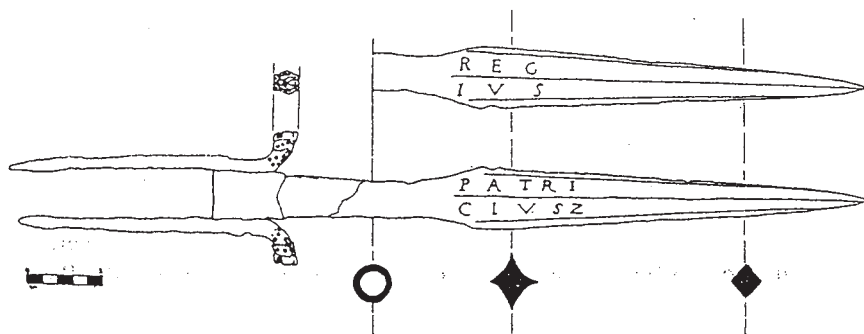


Figure 23.4 Inscribed lance head from Bourges, with legends "Regius" and "Patricius"; late fifth century: Pierre Bailly, "A propos d'une mention de 'patrice' dans une sépulture du Ve siècle à Bourges," in *Actes du XLIIIe Congrès de la Fédération des sociétés savantes du Centre (Guéret, 6, 7 et 8 mai 1983)* = *Etudes creusoises* 5 (1984): 39–43, at p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> M. Kazanski, P. Périn, "Le mobilier funéraire de la tombe de Childéric Ier. Etat de la question et perspectives," *RAP*, n.s. 34 (1988): 13–38; eadem, "La tombe de Childéric et la question de l'origine des parures de style cloisonné," *Antiquités nationales* 28 (1996): 203–209; R. Brulet, ed., *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai. 1. L'environnement funéraire de la sépulture de Childéric* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1990); idem, *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai. 2. L'environnement funéraire de la sépulture de Childéric* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1991); E. James, "Childéric, Syagrius, et la disparition du royaume de Soissons," *RAP* 3–4 (1988): 9–12; P. Périn, "Les tombes de 'chefs' de l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis et leur interprétation historique," in *La noblesse romaine et les chefs barbares. Actes du colloque international du Musée des Antiquités nationales, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1992* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1995), pp. 247–301; and Guy Halsall, "Childeric's Grave, Clovis' Succession and the Origins of the Merovingian Kingdom," in Mathisen, Shanzer, eds., *Society and Culture*, pp. 116–133.

identity also is reflected in the manner of burial, for this individual was buried with weapons according to barbarian tradition, but placed within a lead sarcophagus, a well-attested Roman custom.<sup>32</sup> (See Fig. 23.4.)

### **Archaeological Criteria Pertinent to Questions of Identity and Ethnicity**

We now come to the question of what archaeological traces of their presence on Roman soil these barbarians might have left behind. How was their material culture affected by the birth of the barbarian, or Romano-Germanic, kingdoms in the west? To answer this question we must look for cultural domains least likely to have varied in the midst of the changing social and economic conditions. An unlikely place to look, for example, would be among most craft items, for the newcomers would have turned to Roman craftsmen to meet their demands for wheel-made pottery, metalwork, glassware or glass beads, and so forth. Nor should we expect to find, in most cases, signs of barbarian influence in architecture or building traditions, either public or private in nature, urban or rural, for here, too, the migrants would have used or adapted to existing forms.

### **Possible Sources of Archaeological Evidence for Ethnicity**

There are, however, some domains where the presence of individuals or groups of foreign origin is more likely to have left archaeological traces.

#### *Funerary Practices*

Funerary custom is a domain, as so many ethnographic studies show, often closely linked in traditional societies to religious belief and cult practices, to ideas and rituals embedded deeply enough in the group sense of identity that they can long survive uprooting from the original environment. Even when that environment was polytheistic, and the migrants entered a Christian world,<sup>33</sup> groups preserved older funerary customs, albeit shifting their meaning more toward affirmation of social status, it seems, as the group moved toward conversion. Nonetheless, we

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<sup>32</sup> A. de Kersers, R. de Marquerye, R. de la Guerè, “Tombe du cimetière des Capucins,” *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires du Centre* 18 (1891): 51–63; Pierre Bailly, “A propos d’une mention de ‘patrice’ dans une sépulture du Ve siècle à Bourges,” in *Actes du XLIIIe Congrès de la Fédération des sociétés savantes du Centre (Guéret, 6, 7 et 8 mai 1983) = Etudes creusoises* 5 (1984): 39–43, at p. 40. It also is possible, however, that “Patricius” was a name, relatively common at this time: see *PLRE II*, pp. 837–843.

<sup>33</sup> Some barbarians, such as the Vandals, Burgundians, Goths, and Lombards already were Christians, primarily Arians, when they entered the empire, as opposed to the Franks, Alamanni, and Anglo-Saxons, who initially were polytheists.

should not draw too fixed a line between barbarian and Roman funerary custom in late antique Gaul. For example, the decorated military belt-sets found so widely in northern Gaul and along the *limes* in the fourth- and early fifth century should not be taken, by themselves, as a necessary sign of German presence, as has sometimes been too systematically claimed, especially because they are found primarily on and inside the frontier rather than in *barbaricum*: they seem rather to be a manifestation of late Roman military culture that was shared by barbarian auxiliary troops.<sup>34</sup> (See Fig. 23.5.)

On the other hand, when cremation graves, or burials under tumuli, or horse burials are found within the frontiers,<sup>35</sup> we plausibly can attribute them to recent barbarian immigrants, for such funerary customs do point to *barbaricum*. Indeed, it may be because they so closely associated with barbarians that they seem to

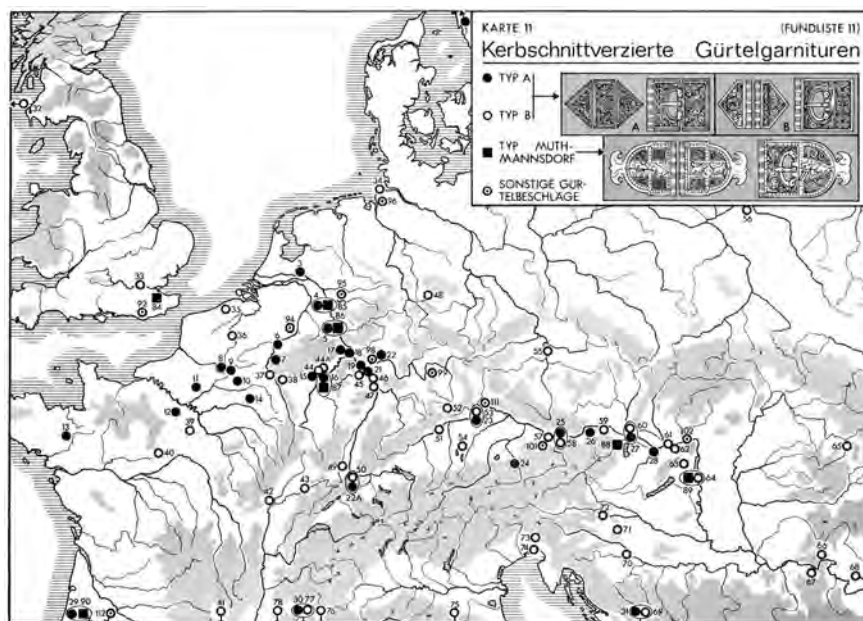


Figure 23.5 Findspots and appearance of military belts from the second half of the fourth century: H.-W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1974), map 11.

<sup>34</sup> H.-W. Böhme, “Les découvertes du Bas-Empire à Vireux-Molhain. Considérations générales,” in J.-P. Lemant, ed., *Le cimetière et la fortification du Bas-Empire de Vireux-Molhain (Ardennes)* (Bonn, 1985), pp. 76–88; idem, *Germanische Grabfunde*.

<sup>35</sup> See C. Hackler, H. Ament, M. Martin, in P. Périn, L.-Ch. Feffer, eds., *Les Francs*, 2nd edn. (Paris, 1997), pp. 391–393, 395.

have been tolerated or ignored by the church, for no liturgical texts of that time denounce them, perhaps because they were seen as a social or ethnic rather than as a religious choice.<sup>36</sup> And it would be quite impossible to tell the difference between a barbarian integrated into Roman society and a Roman who went to live outside the frontiers and was buried according to the customs of his adopted community, except perhaps, in exceptional cases, through physical anthropology.<sup>37</sup> Nor is an ethnic reading of the funerary practices of the barbarian elite always possible, as it was in the case of Childeric. In addition, the two greatest Germanic rulers of the early sixth century, Theodoric in Ravenna and Clovis in Paris, were buried with monumental splendor borrowed from the imperial and Christian models.

### *Ethnographic Customs*

Ethnographic customs can be good markers of social identity, even if their correlation with specific ethnic groups is sometimes uncertain. An example is the artificial deformation of skulls, a practice first attested in Europe among the Alans and Sarmatians of the first and second centuries.<sup>38</sup> (See Fig. 23.6.) But when the Huns were dominant during the early fifth century, this custom spread among other barbarian peoples, which should make us careful about ethnic attributions, even for early examples, for in many cases the precise date of the grave of a deformed-skull subject is uncertain. Nevertheless, sometimes an ethnic identification can be plausibly argued; the individual in a grave in the late Roman cemetery at Strasbourg (a grave oriented west–east like the majority) was probably an Alano-Sarmatian integrated into the Gallo-Roman population.<sup>39</sup> And even in instances when we cannot exactly specify to which ethnic group such an individual belonged, we can say that the ethnographic custom points to the Iranian-language milieu of the steppes.

A case, unique in Gaul for the moment, of ethnic background being reflected in funerary customs may concern human sacrifice. At a Germanic sanctuary discovered at Arras beside military barracks, the ditches surrounding it served for

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 390–395.

<sup>37</sup> For the use of DNA analysis in identifying Roman and barbarian populations, see Jones in this volume.

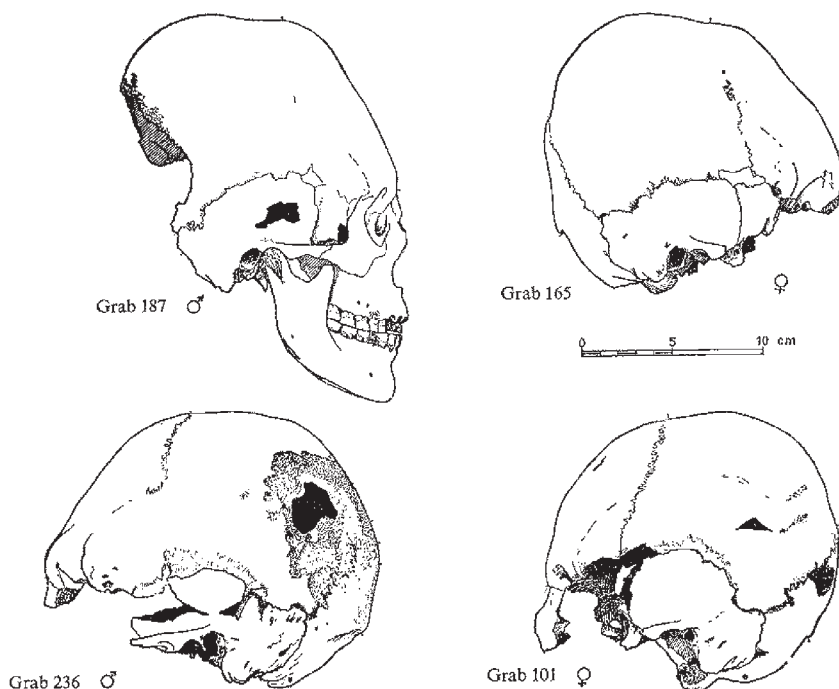
<sup>38</sup> M. Kazanski, “A propos de l’apparition de la coutume de la déformation crânienne artificielle chez les tribus germaniques de la Gaule,” *Bulletin de Liaison de l’Association Française d’Archéologie Mérovingienne (Bulletin)* 3 (1980): 85–88; L. Buchet, “La déformation crânienne en Gaule et dans les régions limitrophes pendant le haut Moyen Age: son origine, sa valeur historique,” *AM* 18 (1988): 55–71.

<sup>39</sup> J. Werner, *Beiträge zur Archäologie des Attila-Reiches* (Munich, 1956), p. 112; B. Anke, *Studien zur reiternomadischen Kultur des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts* (Weissbach, 1998), p. 122.

the burial of both men and animals.<sup>40</sup> After decomposition, certain body parts, notably the skulls of human adults and children and animals, were removed and placed in a large square ditch in the center of the site, protected by a small wooden building. Here, written sources as well as the presence of fibulas typically of the lower Elbe region suggest that these practices should be attributed to Germanic auxiliaries in Roman service.<sup>41</sup>

Where warfare was concerned, late antique authors make it clear both that barbarians fought differently from Romans, and that they also differed from one another in preferred weapons and tactics.<sup>42</sup> Post-Sasanian treatises specify, for example, that Sasanid weapons training began during childhood (at age 6 for

Figure 23.6 Example of deformed skull, Saint-Prex (Switzerland): R. Moosbrugger-Leu, *Die Schweiz zur Merowingerzeit*, 2 vols. (Bern, 1971), 2.11.



<sup>40</sup> A. Jacques, "La présence militaire à Arras au Bas-Empire," in F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, eds., *L'armée romaine et les barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1993), pp. 195–209.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> I. Lebedynsky, *Armes et guerriers barbares au temps des Grandes Invasions* (Errance, 2001), p. 69ff.

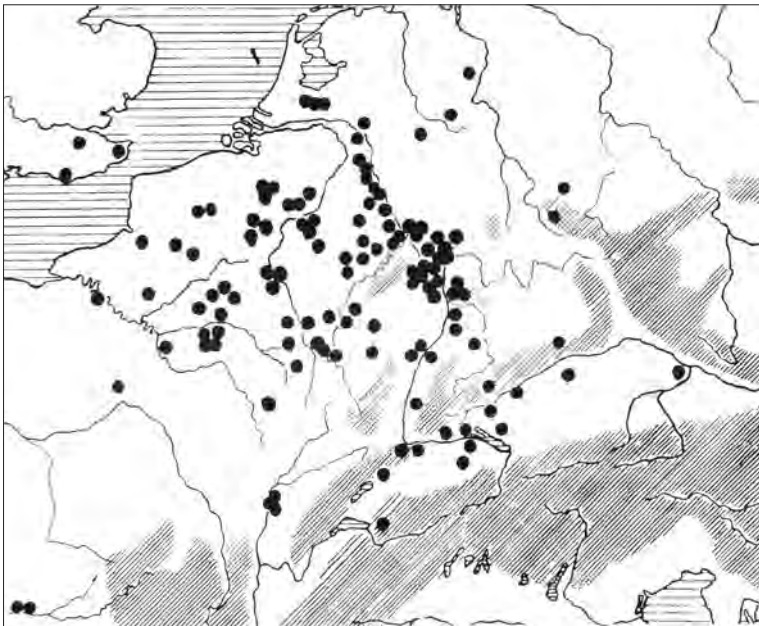
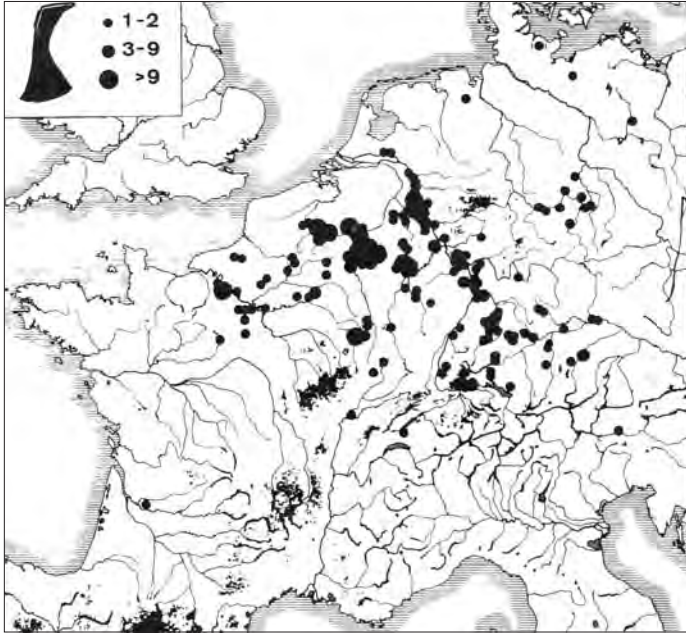


Figure 23.7 Findspots of franciscas (above) and angons (below): W. Hübener, in P. Perin, L.-Ch. Feffer, eds., *Les Francs*, 2nd edn. (Paris, 1997), p. 312.

archery),<sup>43</sup> suggesting that military techniques and weaponry were culturally rooted, and also can serve as ethnic markers. It is not by chance that the distribution of franciscas (famously identified as the Frankish weapon of choice)<sup>44</sup> and angons<sup>45</sup> between the Rhine and the Seine fits with the Frankish conquest of those regions by Clovis from 486, and their presence in southwest Germany is consistent with the establishment of Frankish protectorates there from 506.<sup>46</sup> (See Fig. 23.7.) At the same time, other characteristic types of weapons were used throughout barbarian Europe, notably long swords and most types of spears and arrows, although the three-barbed arrowhead is specifically associated with steppe nomads.<sup>47</sup>

### *Traditional Female Garb*

Many ethnographic studies stress the culturally conservative role of female costume in traditional societies, assigning it a quasi-sacral quality that was closely controlled. Archaeologists, too, have been struck by the importance of women's costume as an ethnic marker. (See Fig. 23.8.) Among eastern Germans, women during the later fifth and sixth centuries wore at the shoulders a pair of large round-headed fibulas that fixed the garment, or *peplum*, according to ancient custom. Among western Germans at that time, women wore fibulas of that general type at the waist, with a second pair of smaller brooches worn on the chest or at the neck (the so-called "two paired fibulae" fashion). The latter pair clearly served to secure a robe or a veil, but the function of the lower pair is subject to discussion. Some authors think they had a practical function, such as securing the lower part of the dress or closing a textile belt; others see them as purely ornamental, decorating strips of leather or of cloth material festooned with pearls that might have hung from the belt—there are iconographic Mediterranean parallels.<sup>48</sup>

It is interesting to note that the graves of women with two sets of fibulas correspond to the time (late fifth- to mid-sixth century) and place (northern Gaul and its eastern and northern margins, notably in Alamannia) of the construction of the Merovingian monarchy under Clovis and, like contemporary weapons graves,

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., H.F.J. Junker, ed., *Ein mittelpersisches Schulgespräch* (Heidelberg, 1912).

<sup>44</sup> First mentioned in the seventh century by Isidore of Seville: *Etym.* 18.6.9: "securis signa sunt quae ante consules ferebantur, quas Hispani ab usu Francorum per derivationem franciscas vocant."

<sup>45</sup> A barbed spear used by the Franks: see Agathias, *Historiae* 2.5.

<sup>46</sup> Périn, Feffer, eds., *Francs*, pp. 311–312; P. Périn, "L'archéologie funéraire reflète-t-elle fidèlement la composition et l'évolution de l'armement mérovingien?," in A. Bos, X. Dectot, J.-L. Leniaud, Ph. Plagnieux, eds., *Materiam superabat opus. Hommages à Alain Erlande-Brandenburg* (Paris, 2006), pp. 94–111.

<sup>47</sup> Lebedynsky, *Armes*; M. Kazanski, "L'équipement et le matériel militaires au Bas-Empire en Gaule du Nord et de l'Est," *Revue du Nord-Archéologie* 77 (1995): 37–54.

<sup>48</sup> M. Martin, "Fibel und Fibeltracht," in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 8.5–6 (1994): 541–582.





Figure 23.8 Reconstructed garb of western (above, middle) and eastern (below) Germanic women: W. Menghin, ed., *Saalführer Eisenzeit. Europa und Eurasien* (Berlin, 1998), p. 102.

account for a minority of graves in a given cemetery,<sup>49</sup> suggesting that they denote ethnically conscious west-German women of the new Frankish elites. It has been suggested, for example, that the grave of a woman wearing exotic ornamentation in traditional foreign style can be taken as a sign of a foreign woman, no doubt an immigrant, keeping up her ethnic identity.<sup>50</sup> There are many examples of this for late antique Gaul, particularly with some Visigothic women, as at Lezoux (Puy-de-Dôme) (see Fig. 23.9) or grave 359 at Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay (Calvados).<sup>51</sup> Some scholars also have sought to identify women from the provincial Roman population by other costume markers, such as the presence of a single pair of small fibulae at the neck, or grave goods limited to a belt-buckle along with a comb or a large bead.<sup>52</sup>

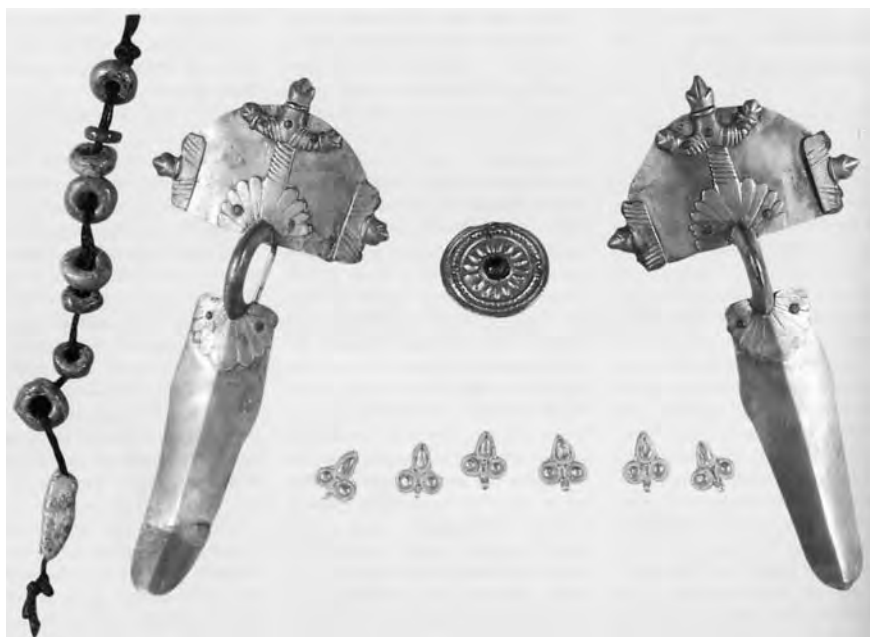


Figure 23.9 Funerary goods from a female grave at Lezoux, second half of the fifth century (Puy-de-Dôme): Y. Duterne, in *Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas* (Mainz, 1996), 1.166.

<sup>49</sup> A. Koch, *Bügel fibeln der Merowingerzeit im westlichen Frankenreich*, vols. 1–2 (Mayence, 1998).

<sup>50</sup> J. Werner, “Zur Verbreitung frühmittelalterlicher Metallarbeiten (Werkstatt-Wanderhandwerk-Handel-Familienverbindung),” *Early Medieval Studies* 9 (1970): 65–81.

<sup>51</sup> *L’Or des princes barbares. Du Caucase à la Gaule, V<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.* (Paris, 2000), pp. 156–157; C. Pilet, *La nécropole de Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay (Calvados)* (Paris, 1994), pls. 52–54.

<sup>52</sup> M. Martin, “Tradition und Wandel der fibelschmückten frühmittelalterlichen Frauenkleidung,” *JRGZM* 38 (1991 [1995]): 629–680.

Sometimes, women with Visigothic objects show signs of probable acculturation. A woman at Vicq (Yvelines), grave 756, for example, wore not only large round-headed fibulae at the shoulders and a cloisonné plate-buckle in classical Visigothic fashion, but also sported a pair of little zoömorphic brooches on her chest, in the local “two paired fibulae” style.<sup>53</sup> (See Fig. 23.10.)

Similar blurring of ethnic identity is manifested when we find an exotic item either in an incomplete assemblage (only one fibula instead of a pair, for example) or not worn in the proper place, as seen in the examples of three women from northern Gaul. A woman buried at Saint-Germain-de-Fontenay, grave 741, wore at her waist a Visigothic plate-buckle but at her shoulders a pair of Frankish fibulae in the Visigothic manner.<sup>54</sup> (See Fig. 23.11.) On the contrary, a woman at Nouvion-en-Ponthieu (Somme), grave 140, wore not only a pair of Visigothic fibulae at the waist in the Frankish manner but also a pair of zoömorphic fibulae of

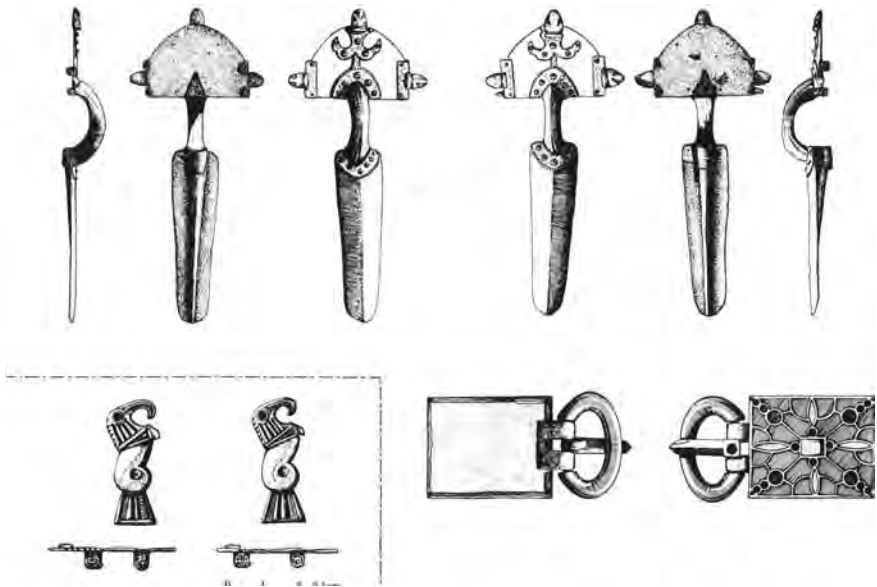
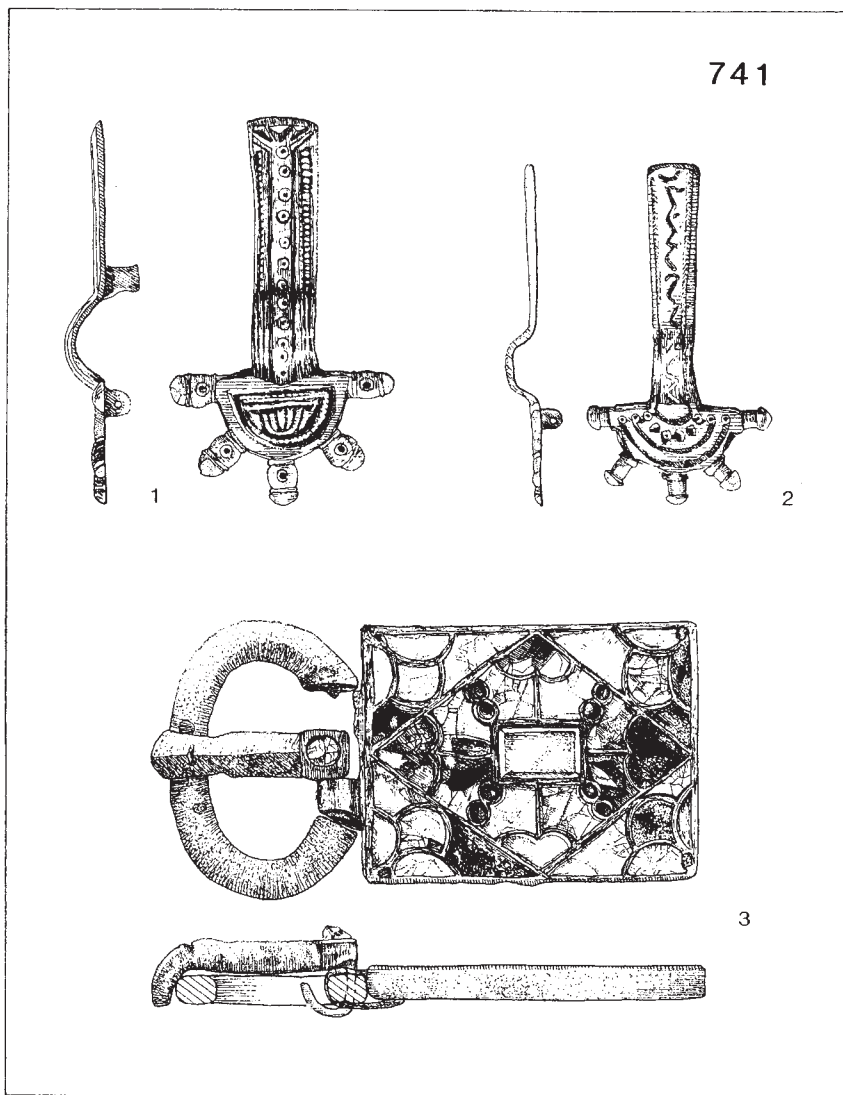


Figure 23.10 Funerary goods from a female grave, no. 756, at Vicq (Yvelines), ca. 500/550: E. Servat, “Exemple d’exogamie dans la nécropole de Vicq (Yvelines),” *Bulletin de Liaison de l’Association Française d’Archéologie Mérovingienne* 1 (1979): 40–44, at p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> E. Servat, “Exemple d’exogamie dans la nécropole de Vicq (Yvelines),” *Bulletin* 1 (1979): 40–44.

<sup>54</sup> Pilet, *La nécropole de Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay*, pl. 93.



Ech. 1 : 1.  
741.1-2 : bronze et or; 741.3 : bronze, or et verre.

Figure 23.11 Funerary goods from a female grave, no. 741, at Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay (Calvados), ca. 500/550: C. Pilet, *La nécropole de Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay* (Calvados) (Paris, 1994), pl. 93.

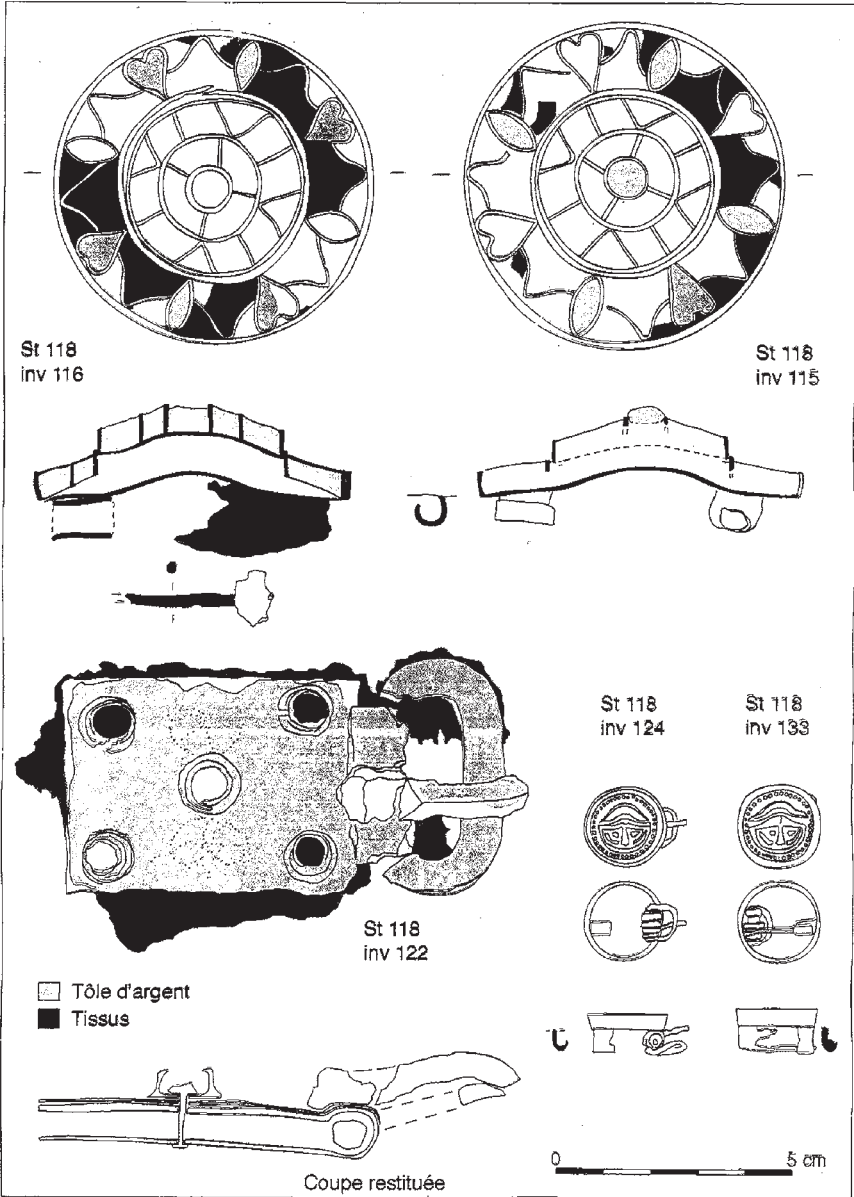


Figure 23.12 Funerary goods from a female grave, no. 118, at Louviers (Eure), late fifth/early sixth century: F. Carre, *Louviers (Eure) au haut Moyen Âge. Découvertes anciennes et fouilles récentes de la rue du Mûrier* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 2008), pl. 24.

local type at the neck, following the local “two paired fibulae” fashion.<sup>55</sup> At Cutry (Meurthe-et-Moselle), grave 859, a third woman, with a Visigothic plate-buckle, was no doubt paying tribute to the local Frankish style by wearing at the waist a simple eagle-fibula of Visigothic style.<sup>56</sup> These examples suggest that women of Visigothic origin were becoming assimilated to Merovingian society without altogether losing the memory of their roots.

A last example of a composite costume suggesting acculturation still in progress is grave 118 at Louviers (Eure).<sup>57</sup> (See Fig. 23.12.) This lady wore two pairs of brooches, in the local fashion, one at the neck and one at the waist, but the upper pair was Anglo-Saxon in type, whereas the lower pair were not classical western Germanic “fibules ansées asymétriques” (“asymmetric bow fibulae”), but round cloisonné brooches, a Mediterranean type common in Visigothic lands. This woman also wore a classic Visigothic cloisonné plate-buckle. Where she came from is impossible to determine.

### *Handmade Ceramics*

In many traditional societies, even today, pottery handmade by women is reserved for domestic use. Because it is not traded, this type of ceramic reflects local community traditions, passed along within families. In northern Gaul we sometimes find handmade wares of Thuringian type, or along the Channel and North Sea coasts others of Anglo-Saxon type that can be taken as signs of migration from these areas. Analysis of the paste sometimes reveals that these vases were made from clay not native to the presumptive home region, but from closer to the find-spot. This is no surprise. Although some vessels may have survived the migration along with their owners, what we find are more often reproductions of the native form made with local resources. Excavations at Erstein in Alsace, for example, where funerary practices—wooden burial chambers, tumuli, horse burials, and so forth—as well as the grave goods point to an immigrant military community, reveal handmade pottery, of both Thuringian and Saxon types, made with local clays.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> D. Piton, *La nécropole de Nouvion-en-Ponthieu* (Berck-sur-Mer, 1985), pl. 31.

<sup>56</sup> R. Legoux, *La nécropole mérovingienne de Cutry (Meurthe-et-Moselle)* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 2005), pl. 93.

<sup>57</sup> F. Carré, *Louviers (Eure) au haut Moyen Âge. Découvertes anciennes et fouilles récentes de la rue du Mûrier* (Condé-sur-Noireau, 2008), pl. 24.

<sup>58</sup> J.-Y. Marin, ed., *Les Barbares et la Mer. Les migrations des peuples du nord-ouest de l'Europe du V<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Caen, 1992), p. 129; *Trésors mérovingiens d'Alsace* (Strasbourg, 2004), p. 60.

### “Germanic Animal Style” Ornament

The “Germanic animal style,” so identified by Bernhard Salin in 1904,<sup>59</sup> originated in northwestern Europe in the fifth century and featured intricate animal motifs, with boars’ heads, wolves, birds of prey, sea monsters, and fantastic animals, with long serpentine bodies interlaced together, wholly or in pieces, and filling every space. It often has been considered to have been a cultural expression of Germanic polytheism, not only in Scandinavia and Germany, but also in the western Christian kingdoms of Gaul or Italy, where one later finds these motifs associated with Christian symbols or even on liturgical items.<sup>60</sup> Scandinavian scholars have proposed a more political and social reading of these motifs, suggesting that they served as heraldic emblems affirming the power of great lineages in the northern world.<sup>61</sup> Along with “degenerate” popular interpretation of this style, a “pure” form developed in elite milieux as at Saint-Denis, a famous Christian burial place used by the Neustrian court of Paris.<sup>62</sup> As in the north, it is possible that these zoömorphic motives affirmed a prestigious Germanic cultural heritage, reaffirmed in Romano-barbarian kingdoms in the late sixth and seventh centuries.

### Movements of Groups and Individuals

If funerary archaeology is incapable of measuring the barbarian migrations themselves, it nevertheless has the ability to point out, here and there, the presence of individual, or even groups of “foreigners” in a region, and sometimes to understand in some sense their process of acculturation. For the period under consideration, the following four models of historical interpretation can be proposed.

#### *Germanic Auxiliaries in Late Roman Gaul (ca. 350–ca. 450)*

As seen above, the presence of western Germans with self-conscious ethnic traditions is attested in northern Gaul between the Rhine and the Seine by graves

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<sup>59</sup> B. Salin, *Die altgermanische Thierornamentik. Typologische Studie über germanische Metallgegenstände aus dem 4. bis. 9 Jh., nebst einer Studie über irische Ornamentik* (Stockholm, 1904).

<sup>60</sup> See, e.g., Edouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1959), pp. 142–144.

<sup>61</sup> Karen Høilund Nielsen, “... Writhe-Hilted and Serpent-Marked ...,” in *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe* (Zellig, 1997), pp. 83–93; eadem, “Animal Style. A Symbol of Might and Myth. Salin’s Style II in a European Context,” *Acta Archaeologica* 69 (1998): 1–52; eadem, “Style II and the Anglo-Saxon Elite,” *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 10 (1999): 185–202.

<sup>62</sup> M. Fleury, A. France-Lanord, eds., *Les trésors mérovingiens de la basilique Saint-Denis* (Woippy, 1998), 2.22.

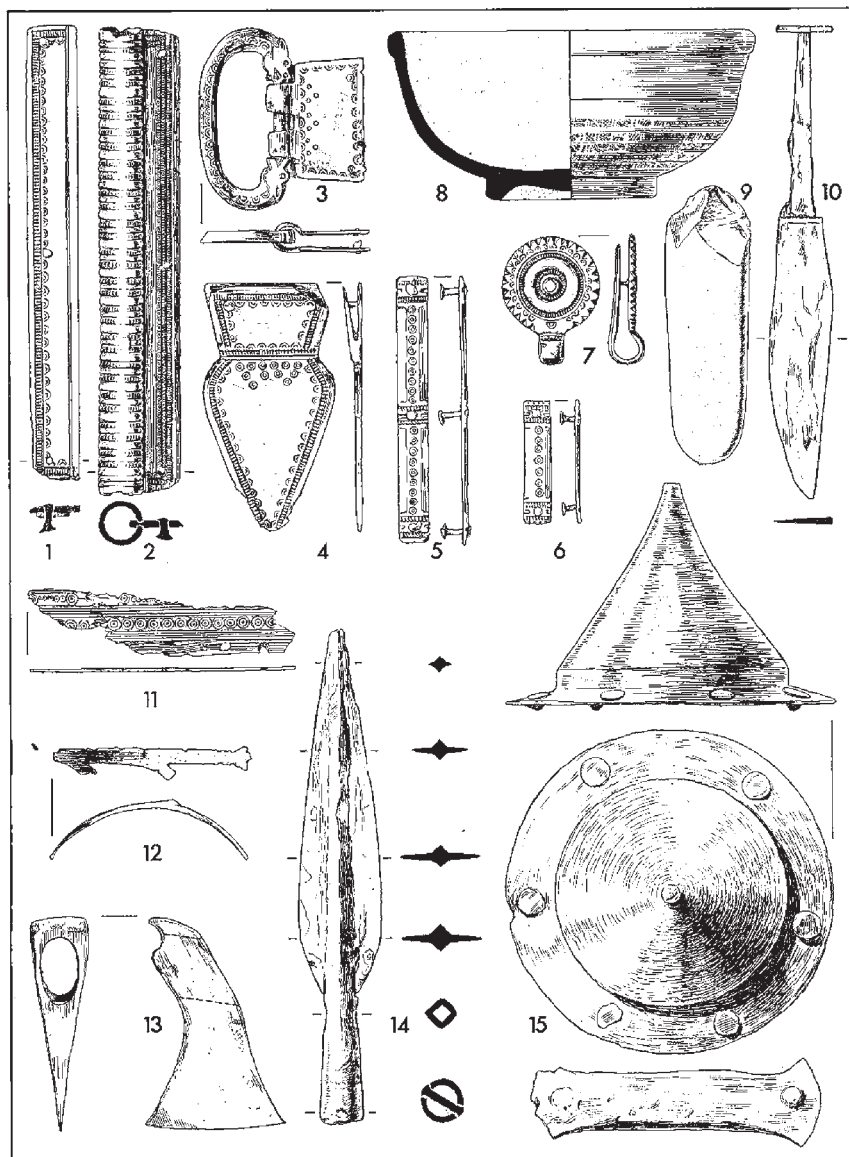


Figure 23.13 Funerary goods from the grave of a Germanic auxiliary of the Roman army, grave no. 833 from Rhenen (Netherlands), ca. 350/400: H.-W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1974), pl. 63.



dating from the later fourth century into the earlier Merovingian period. Ethnically significant weapon panoplies and personal ornamentation, most notably female and worn according to tradition, are the principal archaeological markers of these Germanic immigrants. (See Fig. 23.13.) But what was their role? These Germanic graves often are mixed in with those of other elements of the late Roman population, but there are not enough of them to suggest military colonization.

There often is, however, a correlation between these burials and strategic sites.<sup>63</sup> Thus, we now tend to identify these graves with Germanic auxiliaries in the later Roman military, whose mission was to keep order in troubled times, and to correlate them with the barbarian military presence in northern Gaul well attested in written sources, which mention *laeti*, *gentiles*, *dedicicii*, and *foederati*.<sup>64</sup> The *Notitia dignitatum*, for example, cites units of Suevic *gentiles* at Coutances in Armorica and Le Mans, Sarmatian and Taifal *gentiles* at Poitiers, and Sarmatian *gentiles* “in the countryside of Paris” (“chora Parisios”), between Reims and Amiens, “in the district of Rodez” (“per tractum Rodunensem”), at Langres, and at Autun. In addition, “gentilic *laeti*” were stationed at Reims and Senlis, and “Suevic gentilic *laeti*” at Clermont.<sup>65</sup> The stationing of these barbarian auxiliaries can be compared, in scale and mission, with the gendarmeries put in place all over France by Napoleon I to control the countryside. The small cemetery by the fort at Vireux-Molhain (Ardennes), with some 45 burials of men, women, and children for two generations, offers us one image of this coherent, small-scale west-Germanic immigration. Another is furnished by the settlement site of Saint-Ouen-du-Breuil, in Normandy, from exactly the same time.<sup>66</sup> For the first time in northern Gaul it offers the house-with-stable model typical of northwestern Germany, along with handmade ceramics and fibulae types from the lower Rhine. It well might be a settlement of Germanic *laeti* or *gentiles*.

#### *Eastern Barbarians in Gaul (Late Fourth Century to First Half of Fifth Century)*

There are many fewer traces of Huns, Alans, Sarmatians, and eastern Germans in Gaul, and these consist mostly of isolated objects such as fibulae, combs, and mirrors. (See Fig. 23.14.) When these kinds of objects turn up in graves, they clearly suggest that the immigrants were well integrated with the Roman population sharing the same cemeteries, as at Angers, Reims, Strasbourg, or

<sup>63</sup> Lemant, *Cimetière*, p. 133, fig. 78.

<sup>64</sup> Böhner, “Laetengräber”; for the legal status of barbarian settlers, see Mathisen, “*Peregrini*.”

<sup>65</sup> *Not.dig.occ.* 42.

<sup>66</sup> V. Gonzalez, P. Ouzoulias, P. Van Ossel, “Saint-Ouen-du-Breuil (Haute-Normandie, Frankreich). Eine germanische Siedlung aus der Mitte des 4. Jahrhunderts in der *Lugdunensis Secunda*,” *Germania* 79.1 (2001): 43–61.

Krefeld-Gellep.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the absence of funerary customs differing from the Roman must mean that they became assimilated from the first generation. These isolated objects turn up all along the Danube and Rhine *limes*, so they probably belonged to eastern barbarians serving as individuals in the military, along with their wives who continued to wear traditional ornament.<sup>68</sup> In southern Gaul, the archaeological traces of eastern barbarians, including Visigoths, Vandals, and

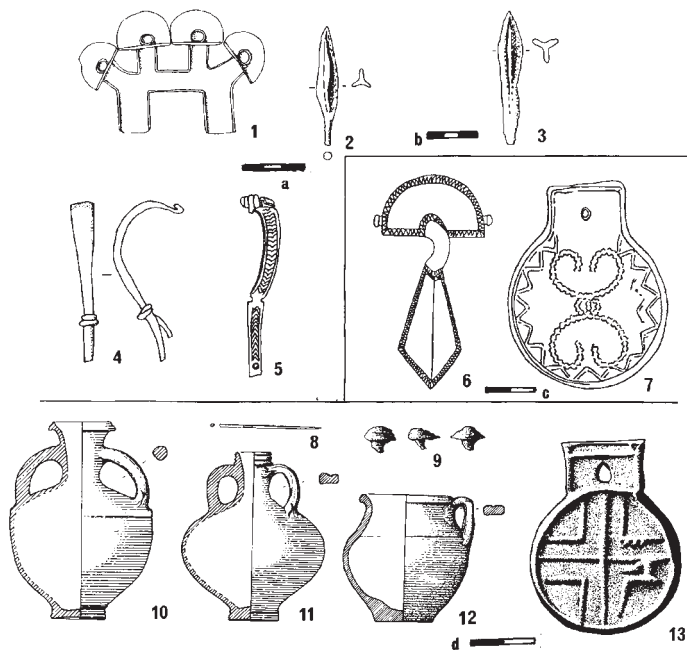


Figure 23.14 Examples of objects of eastern origin (Alano-Sarmatian and Hunnic) discovered in Gaul (end of the fourth to first half of the fifth centuries), 1–5, 7, 13: Alano-Sarmatian and Hunnic origin; 6: Černjahov culture (1. Region of Troyes; 2. Sponeck; 3. Mannheim-Neckrau; 5. Remagen; 6–7. Reims, Fosse Jean-Fat; 8–13. Krefeld-Gellep, tomb 4607): M. Kazanski, “Les barbares orientaux et la défense de la Gaule aux IV<sup>e</sup>–V<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, eds., *L’armée romaine et les Barbares du III<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Actes du colloque du musée des Antiquités nationales, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1990 (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1993), pp. 175–186, at 183.

<sup>67</sup> See M. Kazanski, “Les Barbares orientaux et la défense de la Gaule aux IV<sup>e</sup>–V<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, eds., *L’armée romaine et les Barbares du III<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Actes du colloque du musée des Antiquités nationales, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1990 (Condé-sur-Noireau, 1993), pp. 175–186.

<sup>68</sup> Kazanski, “Les Barbares orientaux.”

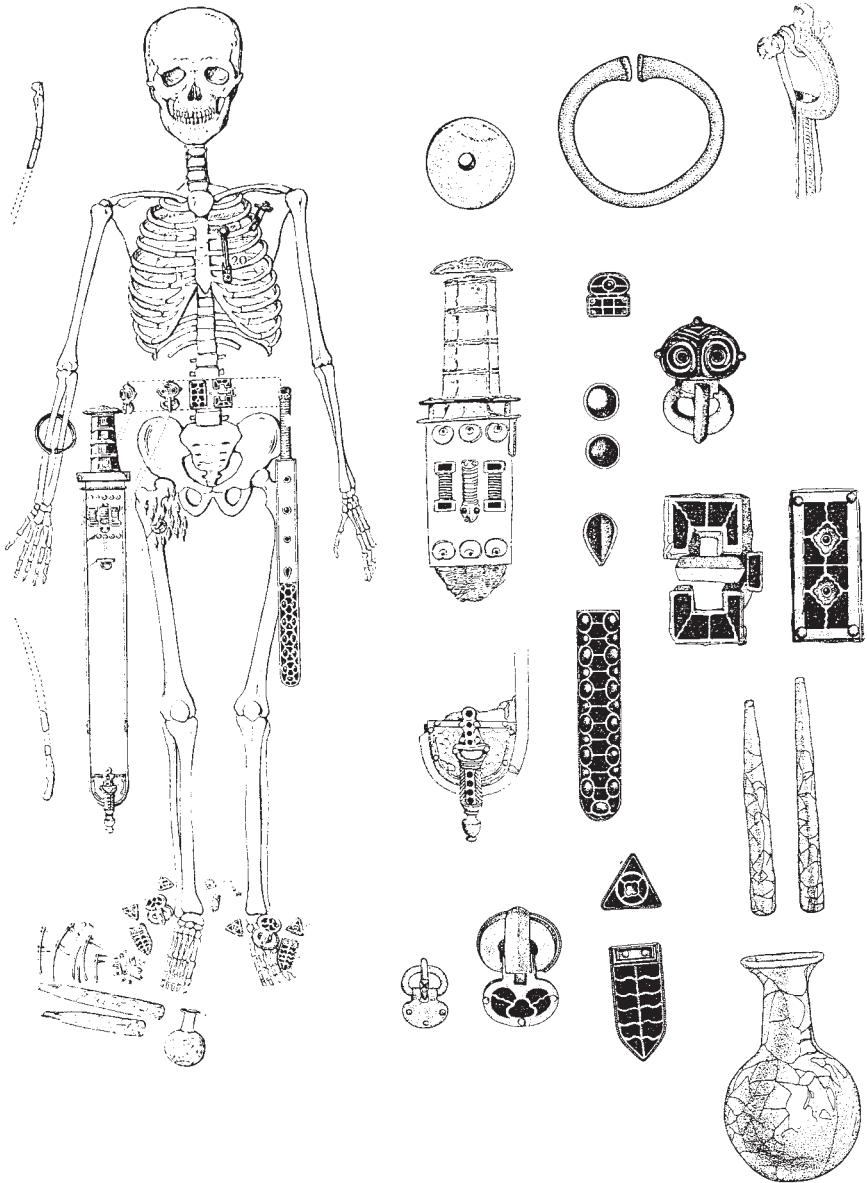


Figure 23.15 An elite grave of ca. 450/500, Blučina-Cezavy (Czechoslovakia, Moravia): J. Werner, "Der goldene Armring des Frankenkönigs Childerich und die germanischen Handgelenkringe der jüngeren Kaiserzeit," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 14 (1980): 1–49, at p. 3, fig. 1.

Suevi, are less numerous, and include combs in bone and fibulae that, coming most often from Gallo-Roman villas, illustrate the method of installation of part of these barbarians on the great estates. Archeological discoveries connected to military events, however, are rare.<sup>69</sup>

Some of these artifacts belong to “princely” assemblages of the Untersiebenbrunn type dating to the end of the fourth- and the earlier fifth century, that time of frequent warfare and rapid change, including examples from Airan (Calvados), Hochfelden (Bas-Rhin), Mundolsheim (Bas-Rhin), and Balleure (Saône-et-Loire),<sup>70</sup> reflecting on the one hand the integration of elite barbarians into the imperial defense, and on the other the spread of prestigious Pontico-Danubian fashions, an international style identifying the emerging nobility of barbarian origin throughout the western empire. We should note, however, that none of these eastern Germanic objects dates to earlier than the mid-fourth century, so their involvement in imperial defense may have first started then.

#### *A Common Style of Prestige for Military Elites (ca. 450–500)*

During the second half of the fifth century, barbarian warrior elites in the east and the west shared a common style of prestige. (See Fig. 23.15.) We can distinguish a royal style of burial, represented by Childeric’s grave in Tournai and the Apahida I and II graves in Romania, as well as an elite burial style of leading military chiefs, such as at Pouan (central France), Blucina (Slovakia), and Oros (Hungary).<sup>71</sup> From the Danube to northern Gaul, the military elite took into the grave their splendid swords with gold hilts and cloisonné decoration, gold bracelets, cruciform fibulae, and decorated horse gear. Although this international style is rightly identified with barbarians, it also would have appealed to Roman commanders.

#### *Individual Outsiders in Merovingian Gaul (Late Fifth Century to Seventh Century)*

During the Merovingian period, archaeological conclusions depend primarily on funerary finds and offer traits both shared and specific characterizing the minorities of Germanic origin who gave military and political structure to the various Romano-Germanic kingdoms of the west, such as the Franks, Alamanni, Burgundians, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Anglo-Saxons. On the other hand, the receiving populations of Roman origin, in the majority, largely escaped this kind

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<sup>69</sup> J.-L. Boudartchouk, J.-C. Arramand, L. Grimbert, “Une sépulture de relégation découverte dans un fossé antique sur le site de l’îlot Castelbou (Toulouse, 1991): un guerrier vandale inhumé à la hâte?,” in X. Delestre, M. Kazanski, P. Périn, eds., *De l’Âge du Fer au haut Moyen Âge. Archéologie funéraire, princes et élites guerrières* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2006), pp. 123–133.

<sup>70</sup> *L’Or des princes barbares*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

of approach, for want of funerary deposits or because the latter do not provide adequate distinguishing features. In the heart of each of the kingdoms, which often fluctuated in space and time, funerary archaeology permits the identification, through women and their ethnic dress and more rarely by men and their weaponry, of the presence not only of foreign populations, but even of foreign individuals, identifiable by the modes of dress or the type of objects that one can characterize as “foreign.”

In Gaul, for example, one should certainly attribute to the population under Frankish control, as we have already emphasized, certain male tombs with abundant arms, notably the franciscas and the angons (Fig. 23.7 above), weapons specifically attested as Frankish in the contemporary sources, and female tombs, characterized by the wearing of two pairs of fibulas, one pair at the throat or breast, and the others, of the asymmetrical bow type, at the pelvis (Figs. 23.8–12 above). In a meaningful way, these few tombs, blended in with atypical burials of the resident population, characterize the region between the Seine and Rhine, the area of the first Frankish conquest and royal organization from the end of the fifth century through the first decades of the sixth.

Parallel to these archaeological indexes regarding the first Frankish generations in northern Gaul one can note in the same cemeteries the occasional presence of female tombs whose ethnic style and jewelry, especially fibulas, attest a geographically “foreign” origin,<sup>72</sup> not only Anglo-Saxon or Visigothic, but also Alamannic and Thuringian, and, more rarely, Danubian, Ostrogothic, and Danubian Lombard (see Fig. 23.16). One doubtless should see here cases of exogamy resulting, as suggested by the written sources, from various causes: embassies, military expeditions, matrimonial exchanges in the context of networks of family alliances, and so on. Such is not always the case with isolated “foreign” objects, which can result both from the circulation of persons and from exchanges of goods.

Figure 23.16 “Foreign” objects of Thuringian origin from northern Gaul, late fifth- to sixth century: A. Wieczorek, P. Périn, in *Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas* (Mainz, 1996).



<sup>72</sup> F. Vallet, “Parures féminines étrangères du début de l’époque mérovingienne trouvées dans le Soissonnais,” *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 8 (1993): 109–121; M. Kazanski, *La nécropole gallo-romaine et mérovingienne de Breny (Aisne). D’après les collections et les archives du Musée des Antiquités Nationales* (Montagnac, 2002), p. 186, fig. 42.

In subsequent periods of history, it becomes increasingly difficult to use this kind of evidence to trace the process of integration of newcomers into the existing populations of northern Gaul, for from the beginning of the seventh century, the archaeological facts become exceptional between the Loire and Rhine as one proceeds through the period of the acculturation of Germanic minorities (the famous “progressive fusion”) to the rarity and then the disappearance, around 700 CE, of burials accompanied by grave goods.

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## Chapter 24

# Text, Artifact, and Genome: The Disputed Nature of the Anglo-Saxon Migration into Britain

Michael E. Jones

The theme of Roman and barbarian interaction, with its hint of a binary relation, is of course a convenient shorthand, a Pandoran lid that opens to reveal a multiplicity of hybrid cultures. For historians and archaeologists influenced by anthropological and post-colonial theories, Roman and barbarian identities are not essentialist or homogenous. Roman and barbarian interaction is characterized rather by hybridization, mimicry, ambivalence, and fractured identities.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the history of Roman Britain in Late Antiquity, this kind of complexity is apt. “Britannia,” or more correctly “Britanniae” (“The Britains” in plural), was a place of multiple cultures and identities. The civilian southeast was heavily Romanized, but the north and west retained a great deal of indigenous Iron Age social organization and culture. Much of northern and western Roman Britain remained in many ways frontier areas.<sup>2</sup> Beyond Britannia’s northern frontier, defined by the 73-mile-long Hadrianic Wall, or the more northerly Antonine Wall, resided barbarians. It is possible to identify glimmerings of a process of ethnogenesis, externally observed through Roman sources, whereby a number of disparate peoples eventually coalesced into the confederation of the Picts.<sup>3</sup> This particular Roman and barbarian interaction produced a dangerous enemy for the empire, for the shores and seas of Britain were the point of intersection and overlap of two sets of barbarians—the great belt of Germanic-speaking barbarians stretching from Russia to the North Sea, and an arc of Celtic-speaking barbarians including Britons, the Scots from Ireland, and probably the Picts of northern Britain.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Sheppard Frere, *Britannia*, 3rd edn. (London, 1987), pp. 181–205; David Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession: Britain in the Roman Empire* (London, 2007), pp. 520–528; Janet Huskinson, “Culture and Social Relations in the Roman Province,” in Peter Salway, ed., *The Roman Era* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 107–138.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland AD 80–1000* (London, 1984), pp. 36–83.



The period 350–450 CE seems to be the great hinge of history for Britain in Late Antiquity.<sup>4</sup> The first half of the fourth century perhaps marked Roman Britain's high water mark. The villa economy representing a commercialized countryside was then at its peak. In the mid-fourth century Britain shared with the rest of the Roman world a unified currency, a common language, a centralized bureaucracy and system of taxation, a regular army, and a complex of roads and trade routes. In the second half of the fourth century, however, the security situation changed drastically for the worse. Increased barbarian threats coincided with internal security problems related to repeated rebellion and usurpation. In 400 CE, Britain still was a land with late Roman characteristics. But by 450 CE, key elements of Roman economic culture "ceased to be renewed."<sup>5</sup> Coinage, manufactured glass and pottery, stone construction, and the other hallmarks of Roman civilization vanished. By the end of the fifth century, new forms of building, new forms of burial, and new forms of rural settlement seemingly drastically altered the face of Britain. What could account for such a sudden, massive, economic, political, and social change? The traditional explanation, of course, places the origin of much of this new culture across the sea in northern Germany, as a result of the Anglo-Saxon migrations, the debate over which James Campbell characterized as a creeping dialectic.<sup>6</sup>

A number of historical models, representing differing interpretations of Roman and barbarian interactions, have been constructed to bridge the gaps between 350 and 550. At one extreme, the Anglo-Saxon movement into Britain has been presented as a massive folk migration that extinguished or displaced the native Britons. But at the other extreme, an elite-dominated takeover by groups maintained by a surviving British peasantry has been proposed, wherein acculturation, assimilation, and changed political allegiance transformed these Britons into Saxons.<sup>7</sup> There now are a number of variations on these two extreme positions.<sup>8</sup> Overall, however, the debate has produced increasing uncertainty rather than a widely agreed synthesis. The debate also holds wide popular interest. It goes to the root of nationalism and identities in modern Britain.<sup>9</sup>

Historical models of the Anglo-Saxon migration can be tested by using historical texts, archaeology, physical anthropology, and even genetics. This study will focus

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<sup>4</sup> P.J. Casey, "The Fourth Century and Beyond," in Salway, *Roman Era*, pp. 75–104; A.S. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain* (London, 1989), pp. 41–130.

<sup>5</sup> Catherine Hills, *Origins of the English* (London, 2003), p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> James Campbell, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons* (New York, 1982), p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> For a historiographic review see Michael E. Jones, *The End of Roman Britain* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), pp. 1–3; Ken Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Charleston, SC, 2000), pp. 12–15; N.J. Higham, *The English Conquest* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 1–6.

<sup>8</sup> Contrast the interpretations of Martin Welch, *Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1992), pp. 11–12; J.N.L. Myres, *The English Settlements* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 74–111; N.J. Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1992), pp. 1–16; and Cleary, *Ending of Roman Britain*, pp. 131–161.

<sup>9</sup> Hills, *Origins*, pp. 9–20.

on the last of these. Put baldly, neither the textual nor the traditional archaeological evidence can give a decisive answer to our questions about the Anglo-Saxon migrations and their role in the transformation of Britain in the period 400–600. The literary evidence is too sparse and obscure to confirm or disqualify definitively any of the various theories. Archaeologists of the old school view the evidence for cemetery, settlement, house-type, ceramic and metal work as *prima facie* proof for a substantial immigration. In contrast, the “New Archaeologists” of the processual school and scholars of the Vienna school see all of this as cultural elements in a process of ethnogenesis characterized by elite dominance, indigenous survival, assimilation, and acculturation. For them, the material trappings of ethnicity are not biological but cultural, the product of historical processes.<sup>10</sup> But, as Dominic Powlesland remarked, the new interpretation of the archaeological evidence leaves us “without any clear model which covers the transition from Roman to Saxon at the overall population level.”<sup>11</sup>

So how to proceed? The most direct source about ancient peoples, including Britons and Saxons, is their biological remains. Biological evidence is probably the best hope for testing and refining our theories on the nature of the Anglo-Saxon migration. As Michael Weale has noted, “genetic data comprise an obvious source of information to help solve these issues.”<sup>12</sup> Modern European populations are genetically very closely related. Although there are no distinctive Anglo-Saxon or Viking or Norman genes, recent development of highly informative genetic markers in combination make it possible to define distinct genealogical groups (haplogroups). Provided that the respective source populations of natives and immigrants are distinguished by some genetic marker or markers, it ought to be possible to identify genetic changes associated with migration.<sup>13</sup> Genetic patterning of people is, of course, the direct result of their historical ancestry. Paternal ancestry can be traced back by study of the non-recombining portion of the Y chromosome, a complex of genes, each with a set of inherited mutations. This accumulated set has been transmitted over time by a long sequence of fathers-to-sons. The mapping of the human genome is, in effect, a collective history of these genes and their mutations. Because the Y chromosome and its contents can only be directly transmitted from father to son, and because it is statistically almost

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<sup>10</sup> Walter Pohl, “Introduction: Strategies of Distinction,” in Walter Pohl, Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 1–15.

<sup>11</sup> Dominic Powlesland, “Early Anglo-Saxon Settlements, Form and Layout,” in John Hines, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century* (London, 1997), pp. 101–117, at 103.

<sup>12</sup> Michael E. Weale, et al., “Y Chromosome Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Mass Migration,” *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 19 (2002): 1008–1021, at p. 1008.

<sup>13</sup> Weale, et al., “Y Chromosome Evidence,” p. 1009; James F. Wilson, et al., “Genetic Evidence for Different Male and Female Roles during Cultural Transitions in the British Isles,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 98 (2001): 5078–5083, at p. 5078.

impossible for identical mutations to occur independently, UEPs (“Unique Event Polymorphisms”) shared by two individuals are a sure indication of common ancestry. The greater the level of shared sets of mutations (haplotypes), the closer is the relatedness.

The equivalent genetic history for females, on the other hand, may be traced through mitochondrial DNA. Mitochondria are inherited only through the mother and are involved in regulating activities within individual cells. By isolating specific genes and their mutations within mitochondria, it is possible to compare the modern and ancient populations in terms of relatedness or change.

This idea of genetic patterning and a comparison of genetic variation among individuals and groups has been applied to the historical question of the relation of cultural change to migration. The field of study known as archaeogenetics uses DNA extracted from skeletal remains to study ancient populations directly. For a variety of reasons, however, including problems of preservation and the degradation of DNA over time, the risks of contamination in processing the evidence, and the difficulty of reproducing results, recovery of genetic material from archaeological specimens is expensive, technically difficult, and time-consuming. A much simpler, albeit less exacting approach to the same problem, is to classify and compare DNA from geographically defined modern populations and use the modern patterns of genetic variations to “back project” demographic processes and historical relationships. Statistical analyses relating to mutation rate and population growth permit a tentative charting of the chronological evolution of the historical relationships between different genetic population groups.<sup>14</sup>

Studies using this method have important implications for the Anglo-Saxon migration. Sensationalist headlines, such as “Saxons? We’re all Ancient Britons Here,” mark a strong popular interest in our subject.<sup>15</sup> They also reveal the ongoing nature of ethnogenesis and the gap between academic and popular understanding. A study by Bryan Sykes, funded by the European Union and conducted by the Institute of Molecular Medicine at Oxford, matched mitochondrial DNA from 6,000 modern Britons. The study concluded that 99 per cent of the modern British group was directly descended from the Neolithic population of 10,000 years ago, at the time of the last Ice Age when Britain still was attached to the European mainland.

The Sykes study, therefore, suggests that the enormous cultural transformations associated with the arrival in Britain of Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, and Vikings were not reflected in significant genetic changes in the mitochondrial history of women. There is one important exception, however, to the idea of an ancient and continuous matrilinear history in Britain. In Shetland and Orkney, the mitochondrial DNA of the modern populations suggests a large settlement of women from Norway during the Viking period. This settlement was on a par with that of Norse men, and roughly 40 per cent of modern Shetlanders and 30

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<sup>14</sup> Hills, *Origins*, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Lois Rogers, John Harlow, “Saxons? We’re all Ancient Britons Here,” *London Sunday Times* (22 March 1998), p. 9.

per cent of modern Orcadians can trace their origins to the Vikings.<sup>16</sup> There also is evidence of female emigration from continental Europe into eastern Britain on a scale not detected in the west and north. Sykes estimated this genetic overlay of an indistinguishable combination of Saxon, Danish, and Norman inputs “to be between 10 percent in the east and 5 percent in the north—substantial in terms of numbers but really only denting the Celtic substructure.” The higher concentration of these genetic signals north of the old Danelaw line led Sykes to conclude that, within this combined female settlement, more were likely to be Viking than Saxon or Norman.<sup>17</sup> Applied to Britain and the Anglo-Saxon migrations, the overall evidence from mitochondrial DNA indicating an extraordinary continuity in female population suggests that a mass migration involving a wholesale movement of women from northern Germany and southern Scandinavia into Britain was unlikely. The model of a movement of military elites, and a small, predominately male population, looks more likely.

Attempts to use Y-chromosome studies to illuminate the genetic legacy of the Anglo-Saxon invasions and to determine how substantial the immigration from continental Europe was and the degree of displacement of the male British indigenous population have produced not an emerging consensus but contention and contradiction.<sup>18</sup> A BBC News headline from 2001 read, “Genes link Celts to Basques,”<sup>19</sup> and referred to a Y-chromosome study of Celtic and Basque male populations involving 88 males from Anglesey, 146 males from Ireland, and 50 males from the Basque region. Based on a comparison of mutations on the Y chromosome, the report stated, “the Celtic populations turn out to be statistically indistinguishable from the Basque.”<sup>20</sup> The Basques, in turn are thought to be directly descended from the pre-farming population of Europe.<sup>21</sup> The genetic similarity might be explained either by a specific link between these Basque and Celtic populations, or by the idea that both groups are the surviving relatives of the early population of Europe.

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<sup>16</sup> Brian Sykes, *Blood of the Isles: Exploring the Genetic Roots of our Tribal History* (London, 2006), pp. 273–282. The anomalous case of Shetland and Orkney is confirmed by other studies; see Wilson, et al., “Genetic Evidence,” p. 5078.

<sup>17</sup> Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, p. 283.

<sup>18</sup> See M.G. Thomas, M.P.H. Stumpf, H. Härke, “Evidence of an Apartheid-like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society (PRS)* B273 (2006): 2651–2657; John E. Pattison, “Is it Necessary to Assume an Apartheid-like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England?,” *PRS* B275 (2008): 2423–2429; Mark G. Thomas, Michael P.H. Stumpf, Heinrich Härke, “Integration versus Apartheid in Post-Roman Britain: A Response to Pattison,” *PRS* B275 (2008): 2419–2421.

<sup>19</sup> “Genes link Celts to Basques,” *BBC News* (3 April 2001), at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/wales/1256894.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/1256894.stm), accessed 2 August 2010.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* For the Basques, see also De Brestian in this volume.

<sup>21</sup> “Genes link Celts to Basques”; cf. Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, p. 162.

The investigation of the relatedness of Basque, Irish, and Welsh Y-chromosome patterns grew out of an attempt to assess the genetic contribution the Vikings had made to the population of Orkney. The Orkney study was part of a wider project commissioned by the BBC to trace the United Kingdom's Viking roots.<sup>22</sup> The modern male population of Orkney reflected a dual Celtic and Norwegian heritage. Significant differences in Celtic and Norse Y chromosomes indicated that the Vikings had left a significant paternal legacy. In an attempt to work out where the Celtic population in Orkney had originated, investigators looked at the ancient Basque bloodline. The close genetic similarity, along with the lack of genetic variation of the Y chromosome among modern male Basque, Irish, and Welsh populations, is significant. It strongly suggests that the "Celtic" population of western Britain was not affected by large-scale male population movements in the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon era.<sup>23</sup>

Another BBC News story, from 2002, was headlined "English and Welsh Are Races Apart"<sup>24</sup> and compared men in the United Kingdom with men from Norway and Frisia (northern Netherlands), the region where investigators believed the Anglo-Saxons originated. Volunteers were chosen from seven market towns mentioned in the Domesday Survey, whose paternal grandfathers had lived within 30 kilometers of the town. The results showed a clear difference between Welsh and English DNA and indicated that the English and Frisian DNA were essentially identical. Mark Thomas, the principal investigator, believes that the results of this study completely overturn the modern view of the origins of England. He infers that the Anglo-Saxon migrations were on a huge scale and wiped out much of the indigenous British population, saying, "It appears England is made up of an ethnic cleansing event from people coming across from the Continent after the Romans left." Here is a restatement of the old "invasion thesis" for the origin of England, with the idea of an extermination or expulsion of the native population and historical discontinuity, the most destructive kind of Roman and Barbarian interaction.<sup>25</sup> It is difficult to reconcile Thomas's conclusions with those of other Y-chromosome studies from Britain or the mitochondrial evidence suggesting widespread matrilineal continuity. It may well be that different regions within Britain have distinctly different paternal histories and that the maternal and paternal origins of the British Isles are different.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The BBC series, "Blood of the Vikings," aired in 2001; see Julian Richards, *Blood of the Vikings* (London, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, et al., "Genetic Evidence," pp. 5078, 5083.

<sup>24</sup> "English and Welsh are Races Apart," *BBC News* (30 June 2002), at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/wales/2076470.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/2076470.stm), accessed 2 August 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas and his colleagues suggest that Anglo-Saxon migration into central England displaced the indigenous males and replaced 50–100 per cent of the male gene pool. Weale, et al., "Y Chromosome Evidence," p. 1008.

<sup>26</sup> Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, p. 279.

A final study, “A Y Chromosome Census of the British Isles,” published in 2003,<sup>27</sup> shares the assumption that comparison of genetic variations between modern British and continental populations can illuminate demographic processes and movements within the history of the British Isles. It included 25 locations and involved 1,772 individuals. Y-chromosome material from Britain was compared with material from Norway, Denmark, Germany, and central Ireland. Based on variations in Y-chromosome frequencies for particular sets of mutations, the study made a number of interesting conclusions. Different parts of the British Isles have sharply different paternal histories. Orkney and Shetland have Norwegian input but little German and Danish input. English and Scottish sites all have German/Danish influence (there is no significant difference between Danish and German samples). The biggest surprise was in southern England. The genetic evidence suggested only a limited continental input into a population that was “predominately indigenous.” In the context of the Anglo-Saxon migrations, irrespective of whether the homeland of the ancestral English was presumed to be Frisia, Denmark, or northern Germany, “there is a clear indication of a continuing indigenous component in the English paternal genetic make up.” Such a conclusion suggests significant historical continuity and an assimilation of populations.

So where do genetic studies of modern British populations leave the question of the Anglo-Saxon migrations and the British example of Roman and Barbarian interaction? Several observations may be made:

1. Studies of mitochondrial DNA do not support the idea of massive migration and a displacement of native populations. The mitochondrial results offer some support for the idea of a takeover by male-dominated military elites;
2. Y-chromosome evidence suggests a strong affinity of the Welsh/Irish/Basque male populations and may indicate continuity. The unanswered question is how and when this genetic relatedness developed;
3. Studies of the modern Y-chromosome evidence comparing British and continental populations have produced contradictory interpretations. At the extreme, Thomas’s research team has concluded that a massive Anglo-Saxon migration displaced or destroyed the indigenous male population of central England, replacing 50–100 per cent of the male gene pool.<sup>28</sup> But other studies suggest a radically different historical picture, with the Anglo-Saxon invaders representing only about 5 per cent of the total population.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Christian Capelli, et al., “A Y Chromosome Census of the British Isles,” *Current Biology* 13 (2003): 979–984.

<sup>28</sup> Weale, et al., “Y Chromosome Evidence,” p. 1008.

<sup>29</sup> Steven Oppenheimer, *Origins of the British: A Genetic Detective Story* (London, 2006), p. 111, concludes that about 30 per cent of the population of southern and eastern England arrived after 7,500 years ago but that no single group such as the Anglo-Saxons accounts for more than about 5 per cent of the gene pool; the Anglo-Saxons represent about

4. Regions within Britain may have distinctive paternal and maternal histories.

Attempts to work backward from DNA samples and the genetic patterning of modern populations, as an alternative to direct study of archaeologically recovered DNA, are hampered by inherent methodological problems. This may account in part for contentious and contradictory conclusions. The problems are even more acute with attempts to explain genetic change rather than mark genetic continuities.<sup>30</sup> In the particular case of the Anglo-Saxon migrations and British history, the imprecision of a genetic chronology resting on uncertain calculations of timing of mutation rates and coalescence means that genetic change cannot be securely apportioned to the specific episode of the Anglo-Saxon migrations rather than to any or all other episodes in the migrational history of eastern Britain that mixed continental populations from northwestern Europe with local British populations. The temptation to associate genetic change with a specific historical event or process risks circularity of argument, excludes alternative explanations, and can create a kind of migrational tunnel vision.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the closely related genetic identities of Saxons, Danes, Jutes, Angles, Franks, Frisians, and Flemings, all involved in migrations to Britain, means that the genetic pool has been “muddied” to such an extent that the particular genetic contribution of one of these groups to the British population cannot be separated from the cumulative change created by long-term contacts between peoples on either side of the Narrow Seas.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps the most difficult problem of all is to find a suitable proxy from the DNA of modern populations to represent the original invading and indigenous populations at the time of the Anglo-Saxon migrations. For the Anglo-Saxons, the populations of Denmark and northern Germany often are selected, the traditional homelands whose populations presumably have been but little affected by immigration or internal migration in the past 1500 years. This is a reasonable choice, although possibly based on an overly simple depiction of the settlement history. For the indigenous population of eastern Britain, the choice is more difficult. Samples cannot be taken from eastern Britain proper, for this is the area in contention. Instead, the populations of Ireland and Wales, populations less directly influenced

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5.5 per cent for England and 3.8 per cent for all of the British Isles. Pattison, “Anglo-Saxon Apartheid,” p. 2427, suggests a figure of approximately 6.2 per cent as the net percentage of Anglo-Saxon immigrants and their descendants for Britain in the period 430–730. Sykes, *Blood of the Isles*, p. 286, concluded that approximately 10 per cent of men now living in southern Britain are patrilineal descendants of Saxons and Danes; This figure rises to 15 per cent above the Danelaw line, with a high of 20 per cent in East Anglia. Sykes also believes that the Danish settlement may have been more numerous than the Saxon component.

<sup>30</sup> David Miles, *The Tribes of Britain* (London, 2005), pp. 174–175; Hills, *Origins*, pp. 65–71.

<sup>31</sup> Hill, *Origins*, p. 66; Miles, *Tribes*, p. 175; Wilson, et al., “Genetic Evidence,” p. 5081.

<sup>32</sup> Hills, *Origins*, p. 67; Miles, *Tribes*, p. 175.

by the Anglo-Saxon migration, are used as a proxy for pre-Saxon population in eastern Britain.<sup>33</sup> This is a more dubious choice and it assumes that there were no significant genetic differences in the pre-Saxon western and eastern regional populations of Britain.

In fact, there is limited and anecdotal historical evidence for regional variation. It is worth quoting a famous passage from Tacitus describing Britain at the end of the first century CE:

Who the first inhabitants of Britain were, whether natives or immigrants, is open to question: one must remember we are dealing with barbarians. But their physical characteristics vary, and the variation is suggestive. The reddish hair and large limbs of the Caledonians [the north] proclaim a German origin; the swarthy faces of the Silures [the west], the tendency of their hair to curl, and the fact that Spain lies opposite, all lead one to believe that Spaniards crossed in ancient times and occupied that part of the country. The peoples nearest to the Gauls [the east] likewise resemble them. It may be that they still show the effect of a common origin; or perhaps it is climatic conditions that have produced this physical type in lands that converge so closely from north and south. On the whole, however, it seems likely that Gauls settled in the island lying so close to their shores.<sup>34</sup>

The seemingly unavoidable confusions and confluences associated with the use of modern DNA drive us back to the need for archaeologically recovered DNA. If and when large samples of DNA recovered from both eastern Britain and the continental homelands before and after the Anglo-Saxon migrations can be compared, we will be in a position more confidently to assess the genetic changes associated with the Anglo-Saxon invasions. Only then will we be able to reinforce the competing historical and archaeological theories for either a genuine folk-migration or the takeover by a military elite. Overall, the present genetic evidence can inform but not answer the question of the nature of the Anglo-Saxon migrations. Taken as a whole, however, the genetic evidence does not comprise a convincing argument for a massive migration. For most of the population of early Anglo-Saxon England, it seems, the difference between being “British” or “Saxon” was a matter of linguistics and culture, not a product of biological descent.

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<sup>33</sup> Capelli, et al., “Y Chromosome Census,” p. 979.

<sup>34</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola* 11, translation from H. Mattingly, trans., *Tacitus, Agricola* (London, 1948), pp. 61–62; Cf. Caesar, *BG* 5.12; also Hills, *Origins*, pp. 57–58.



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PART IV  
Epilogue: Modern Constructions of  
Barbarian Identity

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## Chapter 25

# Auguste Moutié, Pioneer of Merovingian Archaeology, and the Spurlock Merovingian Collection at the University of Illinois

Bailey Young, Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey

The Spurlock Museum at the University of Illinois-Urbana long has possessed an important collection of Merovingian artifacts, purchased as a study collection and rarely seen by the public.<sup>1</sup> In the course of her dissertation research, Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey discovered that it derives essentially from the excavation of a single site, by a neglected archaeological pioneer, Auguste Moutié. The sixth biennial Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity conference, held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in March 2005, provided the opportunity not only to assess Moutié's work and its significance and to comment on the collection, but also to mount a special exhibit at the Spurlock Museum, entitled "Digging Barbarians."<sup>2</sup>

### **Auguste Moutié and the Butte des Gargans Excavations**

On 19 January 1843, a young property-owner from the town of Houdan, now in the Département of Yvelines (about 60 kilometers southwest of Paris) read a paper to the Société Archéologique de Rambouillet in which he discussed a cemetery excavation he had been conducting for the past decade, correctly identifying the graves as Merovingian in date, discussing specific grave-assemblages in context, and displaying an alertness to the possibilities of using burial practices and topochronology in site interpretation that would have done credit to an archaeologist a century later. The substance of his presentation is preserved in an

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<sup>1</sup> The authors gratefully acknowledge help from Luc Bourgeois of the CESCUM at the Université de Poitiers, Marc Langlois, INRAP, and the curators and staff of the MAN in the research for this chapter. Thanks, too, to Christine Merllié-Young for reviewing the French.

<sup>2</sup> "Digging Barbarians" exhibit, March to August 2005 at the Spurlock Museum, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The authors wish to thank Douglas Brewer, then Director of the Spurlock Museum, for arranging the exhibit and are especially indebted to Christa Deacy-Quinn and Beth Watkins of the Spurlock for their collaboration in the installation and interpretation of materials.

unpublished album entitled “Communication de M. Moutié à M. Guégan: Mémoire sur différents lieux de sépultures anciennes découverts dans les arrondissements de Mantes et Rambouillet et notamment sur le cimetière de la Butte des Gargans près de Houdan. Attributions mérovingiennes.” It is richly illustrated with watercolor plates of selected artifacts and is preserved at the Musée d’archéologie nationale in S. Germain-en-Laye.<sup>3</sup> In 1853, this manuscript was examined by the Abbé Cochet, who wrote enthusiastically to its author, Auguste Moutié (Fig. 25.1), “Vos Francs sont des frères des miens,” chiding him gently for not having put his name clearly to the interpretative chapter, no doubt out of modesty. “Vous eussiez bien figuré dans le bataillon des fouilleurs européens,” exclaimed the Abbé, thanking him for a remarkable work, “un échantillon du genre.”<sup>4</sup> And yet, by the time Moutié died in 1886, his name and work were largely forgotten, and his carefully catalogued collection of artifacts had disappeared. By a fortuitous series of circumstances many of them came to the University of Illinois in 1924, but it is only recently, as a result of Oehlschlaeger-Garvey’s dissertation research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, that their true provenance and significance have been appreciated, allowing us to pay tribute to a true pioneer of Merovingian archaeology.

Auguste Moutié was born in 1812, so when he became involved with excavations at La Butte des Gargans, just outside his native Houdan, in 1832, he was the age of a college junior, and Merovingian archaeology did not yet exist as a recognized field. True, two years earlier Arcisse de Caumont had begun his *Cours d’Antiquités monumentales* at Caen in Normandy, but funerary matters were a very marginal subject of instruction, and when de Caumont did publish on the subject, in 1841, he raised the question (perhaps for the first time in print) of how Merovingian might be distinguished from Gallo-Roman cemeteries.<sup>5</sup> True too, in 1832 another young man, Henri Baudon, drew public attention to graves with weapons, personal ornaments, vases, and other objects, discovered at Charnay in

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<sup>3</sup> The authors thank Françoise Vallet, Curator of Merovingian Archaeology, Musée d’archéologie nationale, for her assistance. A discussion of the album can be found in Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, *Reconstructing the Merovingian Cemetery of Butte des Gargans, Houdan, France: The Documents of Auguste Moutié and Paul Guégan Considered with the Collections of the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures and the Musée d’art et d’histoire de Dreux*. (diss., Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000; Ann Arbor, MI, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Abbé Cochet to Auguste Moutié, letter dated 1 December 1853, preserved in the Archives départementales d’Yvelines, Fonds Moutié 13 F 12. Thanks, again, to Françoise Vallet for bringing the Cochet–Moutié correspondence to our attention and providing photocopies of two letters by Moutié written in November 1853, and the letter cited above, evidently in reply. See also A. Paris, M. Zuber, “L’Archéologie mérovingienne qui se cherche: deux érudits au travail dans les années 1850. Textes de la correspondance entre Auguste Moutié et l’Abbé Cochet,” *Bulletin de la Société Historique et Archéologique de Rambouillet et de l’Yveline* 36 (1986): 47–152.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Périn, *La Datation des tombes mérovingiennes: historique, méthodes, applications* (Geneva, 1980), pp. 17–18.

Burgundy.<sup>6</sup> In this article, however, Baudot wondered to what period these dated (he pointed to “armes gauloises, objets romains, et d’autres (objets) enfin d’un style voisin du moyen âge”), and whether they derived from a great battle that the Gallo-Romans had won against some enemy.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 25.1 Auguste Moutié. Courtesy of Patrick Périn. Used by permission, Musée d’archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

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<sup>6</sup> Henri Baudot, “Description d’objets antiques découverts en octobre 1832, dans le territoire de Charnay commune de l’arrondissement de Verdun, département de Saône-et-Loire,” in *Mémoires de la Commission des Antiquités du département de la Côte-d’Or* (1832–1833), pp. 200–223.

<sup>7</sup> Baudot, “Description,” pp. 221–222.

Indeed, archaeology itself, if understood to be the investigation of the past through excavating, recording and studying its material remains, could scarcely at that period be said to be practiced, except in a few privileged spots, generally classical, such as Pompeii.<sup>8</sup> Even in Egypt, opened to the west a generation earlier by Napoleon's invasion, this was an era of crude haphazard looting of ancient sites, not excavation; elsewhere in the ancient lands still controlled by the Ottoman Empire (Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria, Anatolia, and Greece) excavation was not yet conceivable, even for intrepid adventurers. In Denmark, another young pioneer of archaeological theory, method, and practice, J.A.A. Worsaae, had not yet written the first great book on the subject; in Germany the Lindenschmidt brothers had not yet excavated and published the cemetery of Selzen (the appearance of this study, in 1848, has sometimes been considered the true beginning of Frankish archaeology);<sup>9</sup> in England the British Archaeological Association, which would become a motivating force in the development of Anglo-Saxon archaeology, had not yet been founded. Closer to home, in Normandy, the great publications of the Abbé Cochet, the first widely known, broadly interpretative works on Merovingian graves and their implications, lay more than twenty years in the future.<sup>10</sup> So when he undertook to excavate Merovingian graves, at age 20, and when in 1843 he first presented his work to a learned audience at little more than 30, Auguste Moutié was venturing onto largely uncharted ground—and he did it amazingly well.

It was stone-quarrying that led to the discovery of the site called La Butte des Gargans, which Moutié describes as the slope of a hill overlooking a pretty little valley (“la riante et fertile vallée”); he notes that it was rather poor land, under cultivation only for about sixty years. There were only about 30 to 40 centimeters of arable topsoil, with chalky subsoil underneath, and then limestone beds. When workers quarrying for building-stone turned up skeletons with old pottery and metal artifacts, they did not think much of them, as such things had no cash value. Most of the intact pots were casually smashed, though a few were taken into homes and reused for a time. This had been going on for several years (the first author to take note said since 1830, but Moutié puts it back as far as 1827), when a local physician, Dr Aulet, and a man named Garnier, who had recently bought some of this land, invited the young Moutié out to observe. In many places during the 1830s, a boom time leading into the Industrial Era, when old roads were being widened and improved and railroads were being built for the first time (one was put in near this site), similar scenes must have taken place: gentlemen from town coming out to have a look at the artifacts workers were turning up. Sometimes

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<sup>8</sup> For general background on the history of archaeology see Paul Bahn, *The Cambridge History of Archaeology* (New York, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> W. and L. Lindenschmidt, *Das germanische Totdenlager bei Selzen in der Provinz Rheinhesen* (Mainz, 1848); see also Périn, *Datation*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>10</sup> *La Normandie souterraine* (Paris, 1855); *Le tombeau de Childéric I* (Paris, 1859). For a review of the works of Abbé Cochet, see *Centenaire de l'Abbé Cochet: Actes du Colloque international d'archéologie, Rouen, 3–4–5 juillet 1975*, 3 vols. (Rouen, 1978).

these gentlemen would take away some of the interesting pieces; they might even bring them to a meeting of one of the learned societies (“sociétés savantes”) that had multiplied across France since the Enlightenment in the preceding century. Dr Aulet seems to have been this sort of gentleman: he began a collection that, at his death, in 1861, would be donated to a museum in nearby Dreux (where at least some of it is still preserved).<sup>11</sup>

But Auguste Moutié proved to be a different sort of man. Not only did he decide to become an archaeologist himself, but he bought some land from Garnier so he could work at his ease and with control: “Je fus à même dès ce moment (de l’achat du terrain) d’observer et de diriger des fouilles, d’étudier et de constater le gisement des corps et toutes les conditions de leur enfouissement; les armes, les vases, les agrafes, boucles et bijoux dont je donne le dessin sont déposés dans mes collections.”<sup>12</sup> At a time when such excavation was usually left to laborers, who were rewarded for turning up artifacts, Moutié was concerned with digging for information, accurate information: “Les renseignements que je donne doivent être considérés comme rigoureusement exacts.”<sup>13</sup> He sought to learn as much as he could, not only about this site, but about another, called La Butte des Cercueils, on the other side of Houdan, destroyed by quarrying a few years earlier. He thus employed for his own excavations laborers who had worked there, and he sought, with limited success, to acquire objects that had been found previously. Even more remarkably, he understood the importance of giving an exact and detailed description of a particular grave, so that the assemblage of objects that belonged to this particular context—what would later be called a grave-group—would be preserved, and (at least by 1843) of illustrating the written record with precise sketches and drawings.

Such methodological rigor seems astonishing for a young man in the 1830s, apparently entirely self-taught. He also quickly became convinced he was dealing with Merovingians. In his first letter to the Abbé Cochet, dated 1 November 1853, he wrote: “Dès cette époque mon opinion était bien formellement établie sur l’attribution que j’avais donnée aux poteries, aux armes et aux agrafes. Je les considérais comme franques et j’avais comme j’ai encore une collection assez variée de francisques, de framées de scramasax, ou validis, dont parle notre

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<sup>11</sup> An inscribed vase in this collection is discussed in Luc Bourgeois, “Une coupe en bronze de l’antiquité tardive provenant de Houdan (Yvelines),” *Bulletin archéologique du Vexin français* 27 (1994): 91–94.

<sup>12</sup> Auguste Moutié, “Communication de M. Moutié à Guégan, Mémoire sur différents lieux de sépultures anciennes découverts dans les arrondissements de Mantes et Rambouillet et notamment sur le cimetière de la Butte des Gargans près de Houdan.” This handwritten manuscript, associated with the presentation Moutié made to the Société archéologique de Rambouillet on 19 January 1843, is now preserved in the Musée d’archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye; quotation from p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Moutié, “Mémoire,” p. 3.



Grégoire de Tours.”<sup>14</sup> It took him some time to make these findings public. As he acknowledged in the same letter, “Ma jeunesse, mon inexpérience surtout et mon extrême timidité m’empêchèrent de mettre ma découverte et mon attribution au grand jour.”

When he did so, it was with the help of the man who shares authorship of the 1843 *Mémoire*, Paul Guégan. Guégan was an artist who labeled each piece and from the labels created the elaborate album of watercolor and of pencil drawings that today identify many of the objects from the tombs. He was, doubtless, a member of the Société archéologique de Rambouillet, perhaps even its president at the time, and was certainly what Mr Roach-Smith calls a gentleman, like Moutié a member of the local elite.<sup>15</sup> What is striking to note is that by this time Guégan was acting as a full collaborator in the archaeological project. This was conceived not as simply digging up antiquities and collecting those that seemed interesting, but as gathering information about the past, keeping careful records of observations (with, as noted above, an understanding of context), preserving and illustrating the artifacts at a professional standard, and communicating a carefully argued interpretation of the significance of the site in historical terms to a qualified peer audience. When archaeology is conceived of and practiced in this fashion, it has left behind its antiquarian phase and claimed its right to be regarded as a field of scientific research and of scholarly debate. The standard histories of archaeology show this shift taking place generally in the second half of the nineteenth century (very imperfectly), and Patrick Périn’s study confirms this for the specific case of Merovingian archaeology.<sup>16</sup> Moutié’s *Mémoire*, complemented by Paul Guégan’s labels for the individual artifacts and his album of sketches and watercolors, show that they were almost a generation ahead of their time.

We should thus not be surprised to learn that Moutié’s methods and records were deficient in some critical areas: he did not tell us how many burials he excavated, for example, let alone estimate the total number of graves, nor did he provide even a crude sketch-plan of the site. This was done for the first time in 1841 by the Swiss archaeologist Frédéric Troyon at Bel-Air,<sup>17</sup> but it remained the exception rather than the rule in France for some time—the Abbé Cochet almost never did so for the many cemeteries he dug. He did, however, make some valuable observations regarding what would much later be called the topochronology of the site, as well as of funerary practice: he noted that the graves higher up the hill seemed to be older, and that the area he explored himself, down the slope, was coherently organized in rows and limited by a path that seemed to provide the cemetery with a

<sup>14</sup> Moutié to Abbé Cochet, 1853, above note 4.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Roach Smith was the first major British archaeologist to follow and report on Merovingian archaeology. He cited Moutié’s work in “Discoveries of Frankish Sepulchral Remains,” in *Collectanea antiqua*, vol. 4 (London, 1857), pp. 176–196.

<sup>16</sup> Périn, *Datation*, p. 28, cites Moutié as an emblematic figure for this progress.

<sup>17</sup> Frédéric Troyon, *Description des tombeaux de Bel-Air, près Chéseaux-sur-Lausanne* (Lausanne, 1841). Also Périn, *Datation*, p. 23.

border; he gave the average dimensions and depth of the grave-pits and the nature of the grave fill, discussed how the bodies were arranged on their backs, facing east (the head was “almost always raised” by a flat stone), with iron nails offering evidence of wooden coffins even though the acid soil had dissolved any traces of the wood; he even made some observations about the bones, noting the absence of children. Nineteenth-century archaeologists long after him would often simply discard the bones without comment.

Finally there is the description of 18 tombs, or rather of the artifact-assemblages in these graves, followed by a list of various other artifacts not attributed to particular graves. This part seems to have been written by Guégan, who wrote the labels. Moutié lived another 40 years (he died in 1886), was involved in other excavations in his region (notably at Vicq, which renewed research since the 1970s has shown to be a major site with over 1,000 graves),<sup>18</sup> and published a number of studies on historical, archaeological, and naturalist subjects as well as travel pieces. He also published a shorter version of his *Butte des Gargans* excavations in 1843 (it lists only seven graves). And from his 1851 correspondence with Abbé Cochet it would seem that he was still digging at Houdan after 1843 and adding to his artifact collection.

### E.C. Hayes and the “Baudon Collection”

On 5 December 1923, a University of Illinois English professor on sabbatical with his family in Paris went to bookseller J. Gamber’s shop at the request of Prof. Neil Brooks, Curator of the Museum of European Culture at the University of Illinois, to examine a collection regarding “prehistoric man” advertised for sale. From their correspondence it is clear that E.C. Hayes was recognized for his interest in prehistory.<sup>19</sup> Hayes reported that the collection had been assembled by a Professor Baudon, described as the first president of the *Société Préhistorique*, who had died in 1917, and who had, Hayes assumed, written the labels as well as assembled the collection. Some labels identified artifacts as coming from La Butte des Gargans. Much of the collection consisted of stone implements, but there also were metal artifacts and a few bones, as well as 100 lantern-slides. Hayes was not at first sure whether the collection was worth purchasing, so he arranged for Professor Capitain of the *Collège de France* to accompany him for another visit on 24 December, and passed along the advice of this “very competent judge” that it was a bargain. For the first time he noted that, although the collection offered a “great majority” of

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<sup>18</sup> E. Servat, “Nécropole de Vicq (Yvelines),” in *Childéric-Clovis, 1500e anniversaire, 482–1982* (Tournai, 1982), p. 100, figs. 134–136; W.H. Wimmers, *Etude sur l’interprétation du cimetière mérovingien de Vicq (Yvelines)* (Hoofddorp, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> This correspondence is preserved in the Spurlock Museum at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is reproduced in Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, *Reconstructing Butte des Gargans*, Appendix 3, pp. 405–412.

prehistoric stone tools, there also was “a considerable number of old rusty (half-eaten away) Merovingian axes and swords and spear heads,” as well as “Greek, Roman, Etruscan and some old Spanish pottery.” Brooks obtained the consent of Dean Babcock and the “Prehistoric Collection” was purchased, packed into four crates by J. Gamber himself, and shipped off to Urbana by 20 February 1924.<sup>20</sup>

The Hayes correspondence is at the origin of some misinformation still reflected in the descriptions of the Merovingian artifacts available on the Spurlock Museum website.<sup>21</sup> Hayes did not confirm the identity of “Baudon,” a name that in fact hides *two* people, father and son. The father, Auguste Adolphe Baudon (1821–1905), was a doctor from Mouy (Oise) known as a naturalist, palaeontologist, and archaeologist, who excavated prehistoric and Merovingian sites in the Oise, among the latter Angy and Villers-sous-Erquery. It is probable that a few of the “Merovingian” artifacts in the collection sold by Gamber come from Baudon’s excavation at the latter site.<sup>22</sup>

The son, Théodore Auguste Baudon (1848–1913), also was a doctor, as well as a Radical Socialist deputy of the first *circonscription* (electoral district) of Beauvais, and a scholar and collector interested in prehistory. It was he who was at one time president of *La Société Préhistorique Française*, presumably in 1909, when its Fifth Congress was held in Beauvais, and he published many articles.<sup>23</sup> His collection, which presumably included the one inherited from his father, was on display at the Museum of Beauvais in 1913, the year that he died. Whether this was the same collection sold by Gamber a decade later, or whether the Gamber collection was only part of it, is not known.

Of interest to us, though, is that roughly 200 pieces of the collection derive from the older Moutié collection and from the latter’s excavations at Houdan. This can be shown by comparing the handwriting of the labels identifying artifacts from the Butte des Gargans with the handwritten *Mémoire* of 1843. The most elaborate of these labels came with a Visigothic belt-buckle (Fig. 25.2), for which La Butte des Gargans is listed as the site. The description of the artifact matches that of the *Mémoire*, “une belle agrafe de baudrier en bronze doré . . .” The plate and figure number, matching Guégan’s illustration, plate IV, figure 1, also are mentioned. The drawing of the belt-buckle matches the drawing of the buckle in Guégan’s design and closely measures up with the Spurlock artifact.

How Baudon *père* came into the possession of Moutié’s collection can only be guessed, but it seems likely that the two men became acquainted when the latter did some excavation in the Oise region. Be that as it may, the Baudon collection, whose main interest was prehistoric, preserved together, and passed on ultimately to an American museum, materials that derive from one of the very first self-

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp. 410–411.

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.spurlock.illinois.edu>, accessed 2 August 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, *Reconstructing Butte des Gargans*, Appendix 6, pp. 438–444.

<sup>23</sup> He would not have been the first president, as Hayes mistakenly believed.

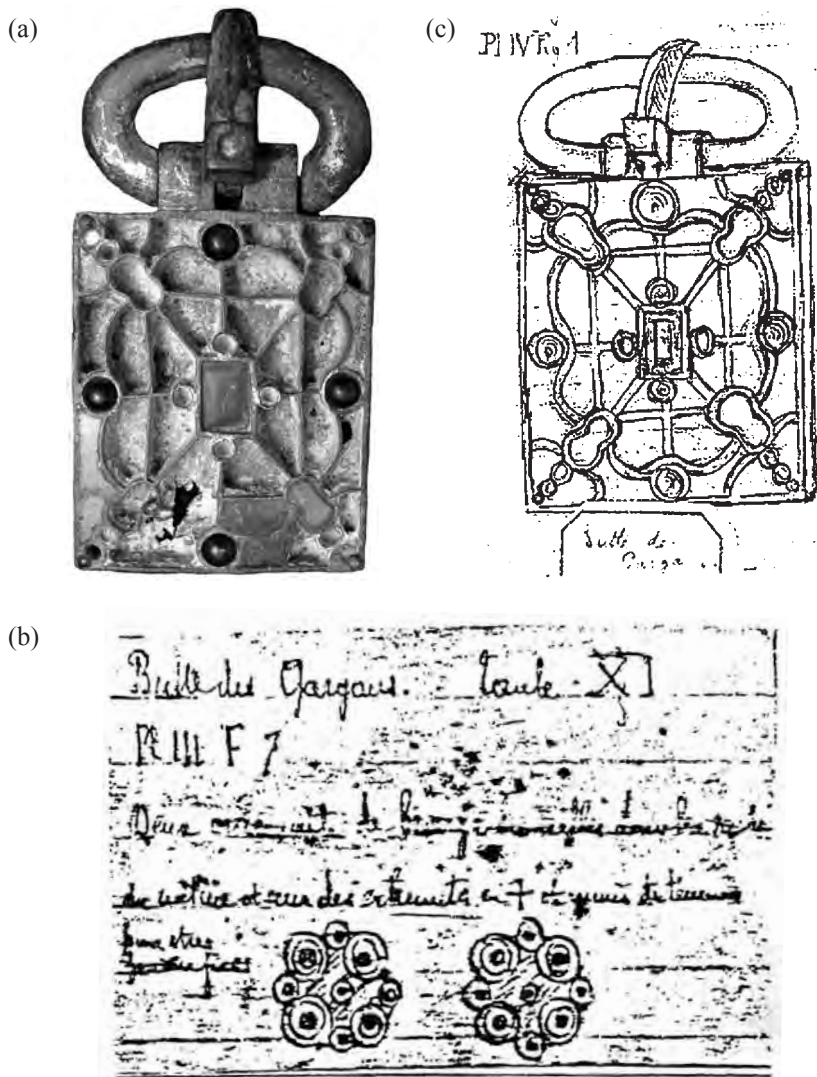


Figure 25.2 (a) Visigothic plate-buckle in the Spurlock Collection. Used by permission.  
 (b) Label from the Baudon collection. From Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, *Reconstructing the Merovingian Cemetery of Butte des Gargans, Houdan, France* [...] (diss., Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000; Ann Arbor, MI, 2001), p. 7.  
 (c) Visigothic plate-buckle now in the Spurlock Collection as depicted in Moutié/Guégan album, pl. 4, fig. 1. Used by permission, Musée d'archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

conscious (and for its day scientific) Merovingian cemetery excavations, whose import can be better understood in the context of more recent research.

### Barbarians, Romans, Merovingians, and La Butte des Gargans

So what do this excavation, artifacts, and documents, tell us about the theme of the volume, “Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World”? It is important to stress, first of all, that La Butte des Gargans is a good representative example of the type of necropolis that sprung up in the northern part of Gaul between the fourth and seventh centuries. Grave 9, with its weapons, glass vial and handled cup, and elaborate chip-carved belt set, is typical of Late Roman “military” graves. The grave contained an axe and two blades, probably one a knife and the other a spearhead. H.W. Böhme has documented many examples of this type of grave, the closest parallels to the seven-piece belt assembly being

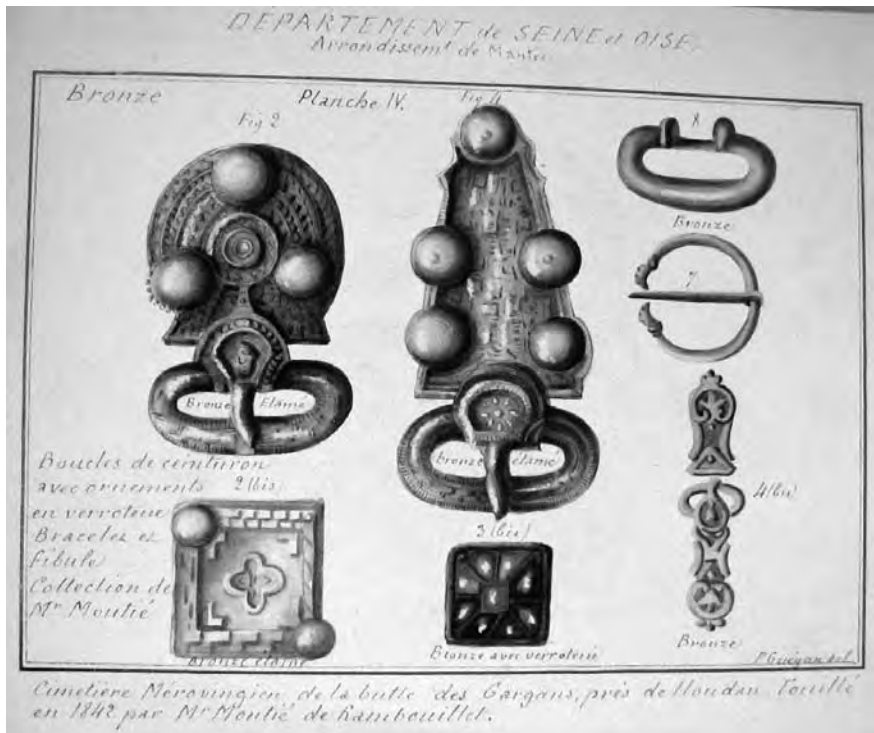


Figure 25.3 Late Roman “military” belt sets from Houdan as depicted in the Moutié/Guégan album. Used by permission, Musée d’archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

those at Vermand II and Furfooz and dating to the late fourth- or fifth century.<sup>24</sup> These belt sets (as in Fig. 25.3) were part of the uniform worn by ranking soldiers, manufactured in official workshops to high standards of craftsmanship. Their decoration appealed to barbarian taste: animal heads displayed in profile with jaws open to bite and monsters would notably inspire the development of Germanic animal art for centuries to come.<sup>25</sup> The German preference for being buried wearing them is a marked departure from their earlier custom of cremation with few, or no, grave-goods, and points the way forward to the great vogue for “dressed burial” in the Merovingian period.

Grave 16, with a vessel deposit (Fig. 25.4) including a glass cup and a bronze bowl, hairpin, earring and the *tutulus* fibula, is typical of the women’s burials associated with them. The bronze vessel has a convex, rounded base that leads to an edge near the base; it is a handled cauldron typical of the fourth- or early fifth



Figure 25.4 Late Roman female assemblage from Houdan (Grave 16) as depicted in the Moutié/Guégan album. Used by permission, Musée d’archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

<sup>24</sup> H.W. Böhme, *Germanische Gräbfunde des 4 bis 5 Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1974), pp. 120, 192.

<sup>25</sup> H. Roth, “Kunst der Merowingerzeit,” in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas: vor 1500 Jahren, König Chlodwig und seine Erben* (Mainz, 1996), 2.629–639.

century. The *tutulus* fibula is quite distinctive: Böhme and Salin recognized it as a type named after the site (Houdan) and date it to after 400 AD. This suggests that burial continued on the site after that date, when the occupation of most late Roman burial places seems to break off.<sup>26</sup>

Several Houdan graves containing weapons (Fig. 25.5) seem to fit into early Merovingian horizon when the region would have been under the control of Clovis. Graves 4, 6, and 8 are all weapons burials, presumably male; all include an axe, and in two cases it was a true *francisca*, or throwing-axe, the weapon particularly associated with the Franks.<sup>27</sup> In addition to a “true” *francisca*, Grave 4 contains



Figure 25.5 Different types of Merovingian cutting implements from Houdan, as depicted in the Moutié/Guégan album. Used by permission, Musée d'archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

<sup>26</sup> Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde*, p. 158, and Edouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne. I* (Paris, 1951), pp. 245–246, and n. 1.

<sup>27</sup> See for example, Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 5.238–253; see also L.-C. Feffer, P. Périn, *Les Francs. A la conquête de la Gaule* (Paris, 1987), p. 107, and eidem, *Les Francs. A l'origine de la France* (Paris, 1987), pp. 88–89. For a thorough discussion of this weapon, and the problems of reconciling written and archaeological sources in regard to it, see Walter Pohl, “Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity”, in T.F.X. Noble, ed., *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms* (London/New York, 2006), pp. 131–135.

a scramasax, a spear-point, a plate buckle and its counter-plate, a small buckle, and a small ceramic bowl. This type of plate buckle is usually called “vannerie” in French after the basket-weave decoration in the field of the plate. This type of buckle, along with the s-curved *francisca*, strongly suggests a late fifth- to early sixth-century date for the grave. Grave 6 similarly contains a group of typically Merovingian pieces: the s-curve *francisca*, a spear point, a square buckle. Grave 8 likewise contains a *francisca*, an arrow or spear point, an openwork buckle, and a vase. All are consistent with a fifth- or early sixth-century date.<sup>28</sup>

It is one of the remarkable features of the Moutié/Guégan *Mémoire* of 1843 that it cites the close parallel between the Houdan weapon and the one from Childeric’s grave in Tournai, because this find had been made almost 200 years earlier, and was known from a book by Montfaucon dating back to the previous century. Not until the Lindenschmidt publication of Selzen (in German) in 1848, and Abbé Cochet’s study of the Childeric burial (1859) did this parallel become widely known and come to serve as a firm anchor for Merovingian grave-groups.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, a *francisca* or other type of axe turns up in 10 of the 18 grave groups singled out, in virtually all the warrior assemblages that were described in detail. They span the whole sixth century and reach into the seventh century.

Finally, we can note some anomalies that are apparent in the Moutié/Guégan *Mémoire*. Moutié himself drew attention to the absence of children’s graves. Although the attested presence of children in Merovingian cemeteries varies widely, even wildly, and discrepancies can stem from a variety of factors, including the excavator’s sheer lack of interest, it seems very odd that Moutié found no children’s graves at all. He would not have overlooked evidence of them in the places where he supervised excavation himself, so it seems likely that children were buried in a separate area at Houdan.

There is also a considerable imbalance in regard to women’s graves. Only four or five of those selected for description in 1843 seem to have been female: one of these was Late Roman, as we noted (Grave 16), and one was probably a plundered elite female grave from the sixth century (Grave 14). The female assemblages in tombs 11 and 12, on the other hand, point to a date late in the sixth- or early in the seventh century, whereas many of the male assemblages seem to date a generation or so earlier. This kind of chronological imbalance is also not unusual in early medieval cemeteries where grave-goods were widely used over a long period. It might reflect a shift in burial custom—for example, a weakening of the custom of burying a warrior with a panoply of weapons

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<sup>28</sup> Our dating of grave assemblages follows Périn, *Datation*, as recently revised and updated in R. Légoux, P. Périn, F. Vallet, “Chronologie normalisée du mobilier funéraire mérovingien entre Manche et Lorraine,” *Bulletin de liaison de l’Association française d’archéologie mérovingienne* (AFAM), numéro hors série (2006): 1–62.

<sup>29</sup> See Périn, *Datation*, pp. 24–25; For Abbé Cochet, see above note 10; B. Montfaucon, *Les monumens de la monarchie française* (Paris, 1729).



combined with a heightened fashion for display in the graves of elite women.<sup>30</sup> Such a trend has been suggested on a regional scale by a recent study of grave-goods culture in Anglo-Saxon England, and it could be argued for some sites or regions in Merovingian Gaul.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, the later Merovingian period—the seventh century—is not well represented in the *Butte des Gargans* collection. One of two damascene (iron-inlay) belt sets, one of the most striking markers for the later phase, noted here was in the female grave 11; in contrast, there are a number of the bronze plate-buckles that precede the fashion for damascene, or overlap with its earlier phases. Grave 11 contained not only a damascened plate buckle, but also a carinated vase with stamped decoration, two whorl fibulae, some green glass, an amber bead, and a bronze pierced medallion (presumably worn as an amulet). The vase (Figs. 25.6–7), covered in a black wash and sporting a chevron motif, closely parallels examples classified by Périn as dating from the period between 520/30 and 560/70.<sup>32</sup> Typically, a Merovingian necropolis with a strong grave-goods culture in the sixth and earlier seventh centuries, as is the case at Houdan, ends with sectors where grave-goods become fewer and further between, and many or most intact graves offer none at all.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps Moutié's excavations did not extend to such sectors, or perhaps he did not document unfurnished graves.

From what we can know of it, from what he does document, Houdan stands out in its region as a particularly “Frankish” kind of site, with many weapons, and

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<sup>30</sup> See for example, G. Halsall's analysis of cemeteries in the Metz region, leading to a model that proposes fluctuations of funerary display correlated to age and gender as well as to social status: *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 75–163.

<sup>31</sup> In France, apart from Halsall's attempted regional model cited in the previous note, such trends in funerary display are now more often noted in site monographs; for example, R. Legoux, “La nécropole mérovingienne de Cutry (Meurthe-et-Moselle),” *Mémoires publiés par l'Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne* 14 (Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2005), pp. 203–211. For an ambitious, broadly based discussion of interpretative problems for Gaul, see the chapter “Grave Goods and the Ritual Expression of Identity,” in B. Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles/London, 2003), pp. 119–173. In England: H. Geake, “The Use of Grave-Goods in Conversion Period England, c. 600–850,” *British Archaeological Reports British Series* 261 (Oxford, 1997) argues that complex funerary trends can be detected over a wide area from around 600.

<sup>32</sup> Period MA2/MA3 in Legoux, Périn, Vallet, ‘Chronologie normalisée’: 58–9.

<sup>33</sup> A link between the decline of grave-goods customs in later Merovingian Gaul and the “Christianization” of the countryside was suggested in B. Young, “Paganisme, christianisation et rites funéraires mérovingiens,” *Archéologie médiévale* 7 (1977): 45–57. B. Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary*, pp. 171–173, and eadem, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife of the Merovingian World* (University Park, PA, 2002), pp. 42–61, 205–208, offers a complex discussion of these changes in mortuary expression; note also discussion in review of Dieter Quast, *Germania* 83 (2005): 468–472.



Figure 25.6 Merovingian assemblage with carinated vase, as depicted in the Moutié/Guégan album, pl. 7. Used by permission, Musée d'archéologie nationale in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.



Figure 25.7 Carinated vase from Baudon Collection, Spurlock Museum (Inv 1924.02.0182), at <http://www.spurlock.illinois.edu/DBimages/original/1924/1924.02/1924.02.0182.2.jpg>, accessed 2 August 2010. Used by permission.

with personal ornament so well represented, including the kind of high-quality items preferred by the elite. It is the type of site that is common enough in Picardy, Lorraine, or Champagne-Ardenne. South and west of the Seine, however, cemeteries with so robust a grave-goods culture are less common, though Moutié himself was later involved in the excavation of one of these, at Vicq, which was also extensively dug in the later twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> But one can also cite other well-excavated cemeteries in the area, such as Sublaines, in Touraine (thus south of the Loire, it is true), where grave-goods were rarely included at this period, and the few that do turn up do not reflect the emphasis on display seen at Butte des Gargans.<sup>35</sup>

Auguste Moutié was a self-taught archaeologist, a pioneer working in a field that scarcely had a recognized existence in France before the influential publications of Abbé Cochet in the 1850s. By that time he seems to have completed his remarkable excavations in Houdan, at a site that has not been further researched since his day. His field methodology, when allowance is made for the inevitable shortcomings of his times and his circumstances, nonetheless anticipated in key respects future developments, and he took great care to preserve not only the artifacts but also information about them. By good fortune a significant part of his collection is now preserved at the Spurlock World Heritage Museum in Urbana, Illinois, and it can be hoped that future research will bring this material into the mainstream of Merovingian scholarship.

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<sup>34</sup> See above, note 18.

<sup>35</sup> G. Cordier, "Le site archéologique du dolmen de Villaine à Sublaines (Indre-et-Loire). Deuxième partie: cimetière mérovingien," *Gallia* 32 (1974): 163–221.

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# Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World

RALPH W. MATHISEN AND DANUTA SHANZER

One of the most significant transformations of the Roman world in Late Antiquity was the integration of barbarian peoples into the social, cultural, religious, and political milieu of the Mediterranean world. The nature of these transformations was considered at the sixth biennial Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity Conference, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in March of 2005, and this volume presents an updated selection of the papers given on that occasion, complemented with a few others.

These 25 studies do much to break down old stereotypes about the cultural and social segregation of Roman and barbarian populations, and demonstrate that, contrary to the past orthodoxy, Romans and barbarians interacted in a multitude of ways, and it was not just barbarians who experienced “ethnogenesis” or cultural assimilation. The same Romans who disparaged barbarian behavior also adopted aspects of it in their everyday lives, providing graphic examples of the ambiguity and negotiation that characterized the integration of Romans and barbarians, a process that altered the concepts of identity of both populations. The resultant late antique polyethnic cultural world, with cultural frontiers between Romans and barbarians that became increasingly permeable in both directions, does much to help explain how the barbarian settlement of the west was accomplished with much less disruption than there might have been, and how barbarian populations were integrated seamlessly into the old Roman world.

Jacket image: The so-called “plomb de Lyon,” a lead proof of a non-extant gold medallion found in the Rhone river, depicts the transfer of barbarians across the Rhine River for resettlement in the Roman Empire. In the upper register, barbarians, probably Alamanni, beg for mercy from the emperors Maximianus and Constantius I ca. 297; in the lower register, barbarian families cross the Rhine (“FL-RENUM”) from Kastel (“CASTEL”) to Mainz (“MOGVNTIACVM”) on their way to resettlement on land within the Roman Empire. The legend reads “Saeculi felicitas” (“Felicity of the age”). Illustrated here is a nineteenth-century electrotype of the greatly degraded original, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris.

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