

Theoderic, the Goths, and the Restoration of the Roman Empire

by

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For Raven, for everything, forever and always.

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Abbreviations

AA	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi.</i>
AnonVal	<i>Anonymi Valesiani pars posterior.</i>
CassChron	<i>Cassiodori Senatoris Chronica ad a. DXIX.</i>
CassOratReliquiae	<i>Cassiodori Orationum Reliquiae.</i>
CCSL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum.</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.</i>
CTh	<i>Codex Theodosianus.</i>
Ep.	<i>Epistulae.</i>
Fiebiger, vol. 1	<i>Inschriftensammlung zur Geschichte der Ostgermanen.</i>
Fiebiger, vol. 2	<i>Inschriftensammlung zur Geschichte der Ostgermanen. Neue Folge.</i>
Fiebiger, vol. 3	<i>Inschriftensammlung zur Geschichte der Ostgermanen. Zweite Folge.</i>
Fr.	<i>Fragmenta.</i>
HA, DAur	<i>Historia Augusta, Divus Aurelianus.</i>
HA, TT	<i>Historia Augusta, Tyranni Triginta.</i>
Hist. Goth.	<i>Isidori Iunioris episcopi Hispalensis historia Gothorum Wandalorum Sueborum ad. a. DCXXIV.</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.</i>
LHF	<i>Liber Historiae Francorum.</i>
LTUR	<i>Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae.</i>

<i>Marc. Com.</i>	<i>Marcellini v.c. comitis Chronicon ad a. DXVIII.</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica.</i>
NMaj	<i>Novellae Maioriani.</i>
NVal	<i>Novellae Valentiniani.</i>
<i>PanTh</i>	<i>Ennodius, Panegyricus dictus clementissimo regi Theoderico.</i>
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina.</i>
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire.</i>
SRL	<i>Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum Saec. VI-IX.</i>
SRM	<i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum.</i>
<i>VE</i>	<i>Ennodius, Vita Epiphanii</i>

Introduction

The end of Roman rule in the West was a complicated process that lasted the better part of a century. Ironically, it began in the East in 376 when a population of Goths, later known as Visigoths, appealed to the eastern emperor Valens for admission and settlement within the Roman Empire. Valens, seeing an opportunity for new recruits, agreed, settling these Goths along the Danube as federate allies with the task of defending portions of the frontier. Famine and profiteering, however, led to a rather different outcome. The Goths revolted, winning a decisive victory at the Battle of Adrianople in 378. Valens' army was obliterated and Valens himself lost his life. Such an outcome was a serious blow to Roman prestige, yet within just a few years Valens' successor, Theodosius I, had reestablished good relations with the Goths and was even using them in a major campaign against a western usurper, Eugenius. Theodosius would die in 395, but by then the Visigoths, led by their strong king Alaric, were becoming a force to be reckoned with in the Balkans. Played by both halves of the Empire in the aftermath of Theodosius' death, they soon set their eyes on Italy, making an initial foray in the opening years of the fifth century. By 408 they had surrounded Rome and, having been denied their requests for land and booty, they infamously sacked the Eternal City two years later, much to the outrage and dismay of the Roman world.

It was within this same context that other barbarians had likewise begun to pick apart the western Empire. In the winter of 405/6 a massive invasion of Gaul was launched by a number of barbarian peoples, the most noteworthy being Sueves, Alans, and Hasding and Siling Vandals. These participants in what has been dubbed the "Great Rhine Crossing" soon picked up momentum, laying waste to the regions of Gaul in their wake. By 409 they had made their way to Hispania, divvying up its provinces and intending to settle there permanently. It was at this point, however, that the western emperor Honorius appealed to the Visigoths, who had recently relocated to Gaul, and

promised them a legal settlement in this province should they defeat the barbarians in Hispania. The Visigoths agreed and proved successful in this enterprise, annihilating both the Alans and the Siling Vandals in the process. But their victory would come at a serious price for the western Empire, laying the seeds for the barbarian kingdoms that would soon supplant it in the West.

In 428/9, no longer checked by the Visigoths, the Hasding Vandals and the remnants of the Alans crossed the Straits of Gibraltar into North Africa, seizing Carthage by 439. From there, as pirates, they harassed the Mediterranean Sea, even going so far as to sack Rome in 455. The western Empire's hold on the Mediterranean had been broken, and Vandal North Africa would persist, largely unopposed, for generations. In Gaul, on the other hand, the Visigoths were granted their promised reservation in southwestern Aquitania following their return from Spain; but the Great Rhine Crossing had had other consequences, effectively dissolving the Rhine frontier and allowing those barbarians settled within that region to filter slowly into the Empire. By the time of the Vandal sack of Rome, southeastern Gaul was fast becoming the land of the Burgundians, while the northwest was slowly being transformed into a series of Frankish kingdoms. Though the Visigoths would continue to serve as allies of the Empire into this period, even backing a Gallic emperor in 455, they too would eventually abandon the imperial cause. Under Euric (r. 466-488) the Visigoths rapidly assumed possession of central and Mediterranean Gaul, bringing most of Spain under their sway as well.

By 476, then, the western Roman Empire had become unrecognizable as a territorial entity. Barbarians had wrested away nearly all its provinces and its boundaries had been reduced to the Italian peninsula. This was a Roman Empire in name alone, and so it was fitting that in this year yet another barbarian strongman, Odovacer, took a decisive step by deposing the last western emperor and declaring himself king. Italy, like the rest of the West, had devolved into a barbarian kingdom. And though Odovacer himself would be deposed, the fate of this Italian kingdom would remain in the hands of barbarians, ruled by Theoderic and his Ostrogoths until the Justinianic reconquest initiated in 535. A long process, it had taken a century for the western Empire to fall.

A rather traditional (and somewhat intentionally anachronistic) political overview like the one just provided should make clear why the "barbarians" tend to dominate

modern studies of the late antique and early medieval West. Peoples like the Visigoths and Vandals played significant roles in the transformations witnessed over the course of the fifth century, at times acting as the primary agents of imperial decline, but also, at times, casting their lots with the Empire and attempting to forestall what seems, with hindsight, to have been inevitable. In the process and in the immediate aftermath of Roman rule, the cultural impact of these same peoples was also of fundamental importance, contributing to the forging of those new, post-Roman identities that would define the societies of early medieval (Latin) Christendom and by extension the modern nations of western Europe.

Scholars generally agree on these basic points, but their interpretations of this period, emphases, and overall tones have indeed varied greatly over the years. The most traditional of narratives, rather extreme elaborations of the political overview provided above, envision this period from the perspective of a unified Roman Empire and Roman civilization. Privileging both, they offer a crisis or conflict model, where the stereotypically savage barbarians of Greco-Roman literature are imagined as inserting themselves into the Roman world by violent means, disrupting and dismantling the Empire as a political institution and, at their very worst, even destroying Roman civilization itself.¹ Here, as is expected, Romans appear as victims, the Empire completely falls, and a decisive break rather depressingly ushers in a dark Middle Ages. If there is any continuity beyond the fifth century, it is dismal and fails to live up to the greatness of the preceding era.

Such “disruption” models have endured for centuries and even witnessed a mini revival in recent years.² But the last three decades have also provided a number of attractive alternatives. The most extreme of these replace an emphasis on Romanness and the Roman Empire with an emphasis on barbarians and barbarian kingdoms, endeavoring to “liberate the barbarians” from unfair Roman (and modern) biases. Members of the so-called “Vienna School,” for example, have utilized ethnogenesis theory in an attempt to shed further light on the origins of barbarian peoples,

¹ See, for instance, Musset (1965) or, most recently, Ward-Perkins (2005). The title of the latter, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, is almost as gloomy as its contents.

² Indeed, the “barbarian conquest” model has its roots in the early sixth century, flowering in the lead-up to and aftermath of the Justinianic reconquest. For discussions, see Croke (1983) and Goffart (2006), 51-4. For examples of this recent revival, see Ward-Perkins (2005) and, a bit less negatively, Heather (2006).

investigating the process whereby once disparate tribes coalesced and formed into the larger confederacies of late antiquity.³ Ethnogenesis informed and created the “tribal” memories and identities of peoples like the Goths, memories and identities that accompanied so-called barbarians when they entered Roman soil and that ultimately contributed to the new, “national” identities of early medieval Europe. Ethnogenesis, in other words, helped to forge medieval Europe.

Other scholars, while still privileging barbarian ethnicity or identity, have criticized ethnogenesis models, questioning both the written sources that supposedly recorded tribal memory and, ironically, the (apparently) nationalistic motivations of their modern advocates.⁴ These scholars propose, instead, that the barbarians of late antiquity were by and large the products of the Roman frontier and a mixed Romano-barbarian military aristocracy. They treat the frontier as a zone, imagining that it fostered interaction, cooperation, and even synthesis between “barbarians” and “Romans” long before the political transformations of the fifth century.⁵ In their view, in other words, the coming of the barbarians may have had political repercussions, but the cultural seeds of the Middle Ages had already been sown.

A final model combines certain elements of all of the above, while focusing primarily on accommodation narratives. Here, reverting to a more Romano-centric approach, scholars generally emphasize either the legal and constitutional mechanisms that allowed for barbarian rule in the West or the socio-cultural mechanisms that provided Roman elites with alternatives to Romanness and Roman political rule. Such legal and constitutional analyses often stress the ordered settlement of barbarians on Roman soil, challenging models of “disruption” and demonstrating greater and lesser degrees of political continuity within the barbarian kingdoms.⁶ The socio-cultural analyses, on the other hand, tend to focus on the reactions of individual Romans to the coming of the barbarians. Here, fifth-century Gaul generally serves as the model, with Gallo-Roman elites becoming truly “post-Roman” and then “medieval” through mass-

³ The classic work is Wenskus (1961). Wolfram and Pohl are currently the most prolific representatives of the Vienna School.

⁴ See, most recently, Goffart (2006) and the collection of rather hostile essays in Gillett (2002).

⁵ For this view of the frontier, see Whittaker (1994) and Burns (2003). For the military aristocracy, Demandt (1989) and Goffart (2006), 188-92.

⁶ For legal settlement based on taxation, see Goffart (1980) and (2006), chp. 6. For constitutionality, Barnwell (1992). Both treat developments in the West broadly.

exodus to the Church or (less frequently) by coming to hold offices in barbarian regimes.⁷ Accommodation, in short, eases the fifth-century West into the Middle Ages, while still allowing for a degree of crisis and disruption.

In general, the scholarship dealing with Ostrogothic Italy, the sub-discipline into which this dissertation falls, fits within these three interpretive schemes. Those interested in disruption models tend to emphasize the otherness and “barbarian” status of Theoderic and his Goths, or point towards “un-Roman” activities within the Ostrogothic kingdom.⁸ Those interested in understanding the Ostrogoths on their own terms have relied on ethnogenesis or frontier models, both benefiting from studies in sub-disciplines like archaeology and linguistics;⁹ or, rather differently, they have challenged the very idea of Gothicism, suggesting that in the Ostrogothic kingdom “Goths” and “Romans” were merely ideological constructs that served largely propagandistic purposes.¹⁰ Finally, those interested in accommodation narratives have explored a number of angles, including the legal mechanisms of Gothic settlement in Italy; the constitutional position of Theoderic vis-à-vis Constantinople; and the collaboration of the senatorial aristocracy with the Ostrogothic regime.¹¹ A recent proliferation of studies treating contemporary authors and their works, moreover, has granted greater insight into the reactions of certain individuals at this time.¹²

⁷ The classic treatment, which remains influential, is Stroheker (1948). Stroheker’s focus was primarily on the lay aristocracy, while more recent works, such as Van Dam (1985) and (1992) and Mathisen (1993), have emphasized the Christianization of Gallo-Roman society. The collected essays in Drinkwater and Elton (1992) and Mathisen and Shanzer (2001) utilize both approaches.

⁸ Cf. MacPherson (1989) and Ward-Perkins (2005), 72f.

⁹ Cf. Burns (1984), Wolfram (1988), and Heather (1996), as well as the topical essays collected in *Theoderico il Grande e i Goti d’Italia* (1993), Bierbrauer et al (1994), Carile (1995), and Barnish and Marazzi (2007).

¹⁰ For this thesis, see especially Amory (1997). For a recent critique, Heather (2007). Cf. Goffart (1988), part 2, and (2006), chp. 4, who argues for a similar kind of propagandistic construction of Gothicism in the eastern Roman Empire.

¹¹ For the argument that the Goths were given tax revenues rather than land, Goffart (1980), chp. 3. For critiques, Barnish (1986) and Heather (2007). For Theoderic’s constitutional position, Jones (1962), Barnwell (1992), part 3, and Prostko-Prostyński (1994). For collaboration, Momigliano (1955), Moorhead (1978), O’Donnell (1981), Barnish (1988), and Giardina (1993).

¹² The most important of these individuals are Cassiodorus Senator and Magnus Felix Ennodius. For recent studies of the former, see O’Donnell (1979) and the collected essays in Leanza (1986). The partial translations of his *Variae*, found in Barnish (1992), likewise provide a needed alternative to the rather useful, but ultimately unsatisfying summations of Hodgkin (1886). More recently, studies of Ennodius have also flowered. Kennell (2000), the proceedings of the *Atti della Giornata Ennodiana* (2001-6), and Schröder (2007) can now be consulted for treatments of his life and works. A translation with commentary superior to that of Cook (1942) is now available in Cesa (1988). Ennodius’ extremely important *Panegyric*

Such developments would seem to suggest that a synthesis is warranted, but this is not the purpose of this dissertation. Indeed, though the present study is informed by the above models and benefits from the advances discussed so far, its purpose is to take the fields of “Ostrogothic Italy” and “barbarian studies” into an entirely different direction by suggesting a new type of accommodation model. Set within the context of Roman imperial decline and the emergence of “barbarian kingdoms,” this study is unapologetically “Roman” (“Italo-Roman” to be more specific) in its orientation. It is not, therefore, a history of Ostrogothic Italy or the Goths, but instead, as its title implies, a history of the Roman Empire that fully accepts Ostrogothic Italy as a continuation of Roman history, not a break or fundamental alteration. It does not, then, like the models discussed above, look to the medieval future; it looks instead to the Roman past. One of its principal purposes, therefore, is to complicate quite considerably notions of “barbarian” and “Roman” during this period, providing new models for the understanding of both and suggesting in the process how Theoderic and his Goths could find acceptance as “Romans.” Another purpose, in keeping with the first, is to draw attention to the full extent to which the “Ostrogothic” state was perceived, in its own time, to have been the western Roman Empire. “Ostrogothic Italy,” this study claims, is a misnomer, an unfortunate (though convenient) inaccuracy that renders barbarian an Italy that remained proudly Roman in its self-identification. Finally, a third underlying purpose is to demonstrate that Theoderic and his Goths not only fit within these understandings of Romanness and a Roman Empire, but were also essential to it, their unique roles contributing to contemporary beliefs of imperial resurgence, blessedness, and even a golden age. Theoderic’s Italy, then, was not a mistake; nor were the Romans of Italy yearning to be liberated by the only real Roman Empire based out of Constantinople. It was a true Roman Empire that worked and would have continued to work, persisting in its Roman identity, had it not been for the unforeseeable intervention of the east-Roman state.

The dissertation itself is divided into five chapters that address these ideas both diachronically and thematically. Chapter 1 investigates the question of the “decline and

to King Theoderic now has two new editions in the works of Rohr (1995) and Rota (2002), both of which include translations and extensive commentary. Finally, in 2006 the first of many Budé editions by Stéphane Gioanni made translations with commentary of some of Ennodius’ letters available.

fall” of the western Roman Empire over the course of the fifth century. It introduces Magnus Felix Ennodius, from Liguria in northern Italy, and the slightly younger Cassiodorus Senator, from Calabria in southern Italy, two Romans whose sentiments remain important throughout this study. Though from very different backgrounds and following rather dissimilar career patterns, this chapter demonstrates that both individuals had similar, oftentimes complicated views of the fifth century. Imperial leadership failed in their estimation; provinces were lost, not just to stereotypical barbarians but also to an increasingly rapacious eastern Roman Empire; and Roman society itself also began to decay. Within this milieu of decline, Romanness became negotiable, a factor that eventually allowed fifth-century “barbarians” to appear (at times) more Roman than the “Greek” emperors dispatched from Constantinople. Both Ennodius and Cassiodorus, this chapter argues, also agreed on a fundamental point: 476 was meaningless. King Odovacer’s position may have been ambiguous, but his realm was not. There was still a western Roman Empire, separate from its eastern counterpart, and, according to these two Italo-Romans, it waited for restoration.

Chapter 2 begins with the arrival of the Goths in 489, going on to examine the highly traditional mechanisms that allowed Theoderic himself to fit within the idea of a revived and resurging Roman Empire. It investigates the titles and epithets used by Theoderic and applied to him by his subjects, both officially and unofficially. It suggests that Italo-Romans wanted their own emperor (the ambivalence of Odovacer’s position was undesirable) and concludes that Theoderic was indeed that emperor, though a very different kind of emperor than those that had directly preceded him. He was, foremost, a *princeps* (first citizen), an emperor in the style of Augustus and other “Republican” emperors; he was hence the kind of emperor that western Romans, Italo-Romans especially, had demanded for centuries but had been denied owing to the increasingly despotic nature of imperial rule in late antiquity. This chapter likewise examines the regalia employed by Theoderic, concluding that his appearance matched his imperial standing, even if more indicative of a late antique *dominus* (lord) than a Republican *princeps*.

Chapter 3 addresses the issue of “Gothicness” in Theoderic’s Roman Empire. Romans, of course, had once considered the Goths to be savage barbarians, but by the

early sixth century, this chapter argues, Gothicness had shed a number of its undesirable characteristics, largely ceasing to be oppositional to Romanness (though it always had the potential to become so again). Theoderic's Goths became Italy's defenders, constituting Rome's victorious army. Moreover, Goths proved that they were able to act justly (a civilizing quality) and were even proposed to the "decadent" Romans encountered in chapter 1 as models for proper (Roman) behavior. Somehow the Romans had lost their way in the fifth century, both martially and morally, and now the Goths, model "Romans," served to remind them of it. This chapter also treats the importance of Theoderic's own, unique Gothic and Roman heritage and how it legitimized his role as a *princeps Romanus* before an Italo-Roman audience.

Chapter 4 attempts to draw attention to the wondrously positive changes that Italo-Romans witnessed at home during the reign of Theoderic, changes that ultimately validated contemporary sentiments of a golden age. It treats at length the early reign of Theoderic as described in the *Life of Epiphanius*, a hagiographical text that reveals the extent to which sound leadership could legitimize "Gothic" imperial succession at a local level (in this case for the inhabitants of Liguria). It then briefly describes the *renovatio urbium* (urban renewal) of the Theoderican epoch, turning to the city of Rome as an extensive case study. After centuries of imperial neglect, Rome (the ideological "capital of the Roman world") became important again. The Senate was treated with the utmost respect (in true Republican fashion) and both senators and plebeians were admonished to imitate their noble ancestors. Rome, once decaying, received extensive imperial patronage, both for the upkeep of her ancient monuments and the construction of new wonders. Ancient privileges were confirmed and new ones granted. Theoderic even graced the city with his presence for a time, celebrating his *tricennalia* (30-year anniversary) in 500 with pomp and adulation recorded in a number of sources.

Chapter 5, finally, is intended to complement chapter four by looking at the positive changes that Italo-Romans (and others) witnessed in matters abroad. To put it rather simplistically, empires require territory, but before 504 Theoderic's western Roman Empire lacked any beyond the confines of Italy (in fact, the term "Empire of Italy" was sometimes employed, sadly, in contemporary sources). These provinces had, as chapter 1 demonstrates, been lost over the course of the fifth century, and this loss had

served a serious blow to Italo-Roman morale and the Empire's status with respect to both its eastern counterpart and the so-called "barbarians" responsible (Franks, Visigoths, Burgundians, and so forth). In this final chapter, therefore, Gaul provides a case study (primarily because the evidence for this region is so exceptional), and issues of perceived Gallo-Roman barbarization, captivity, and liberation are examined. Unlike Italy, Gaul was believed to have completely fallen by 476, yet as a result of Gotho-Roman intervention, a Gallo-Roman named Felix could become consul in 511.

Indeed, this consulship, in general, was emblematic of the blessings of the Theoderican era and the proudly Roman identity of "Ostrogothic" Italy. It is no accident, therefore, that this dissertation both begins and ends with the year of this Gallic consul: the *Felix annus*, the "happy year" of consul Felix.

Chapter 1

A World Turned Upside-down

A Happy Year

In 511, for the first time in over two generations, a Gallo-Roman was consul at Rome. The event would have shocked and delighted former Gallo-Roman statesmen like Sidonius Apollinaris, who had claimed decades earlier (and in the midst of western imperial collapse) that worthy Gallo-Romans would no longer hold such offices.¹ For Sidonius and countless others, the future of Gaul seemed to lie with “barbarian” kings, and by the early sixth century Italo-Romans like the young senator Cassiodorus were in agreement, openly declaring that his generation had only *read* of a Roman Gaul and in utter disbelief.²

By 511, however, a series of unexpected events had unfolded in the West, suddenly reuniting Italy with its long-lost Gallic province. Italy’s sovereign welcomed these newly “liberated” provincials back to their ancient homeland, to the Roman Empire, and invited them to “wrap themselves again in the morals of the toga.” He informed the western Senate that the Gauls had “gloriously regained Rome” and told those in Constantinople that Rome had reclaimed “her very own nurslings,” the senators of Gaul.³ Honor, it seemed, had been restored on both sides of the Alps, and Felix’s consulship was a moment of triumph and celebration.

Yet this was not a solitary or confined incident. It was, in fact, a capstone of sorts for a series of rebounds and recoveries witnessed in Italy for over a decade. Even before this consul, Italo-Romans were applauding the restored status of the Republic and

¹ Sidonius, *Ep.* 9.14.

² *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 466, ln. 17-20, discussed in full in chapter 5.

³ For these references, see chapter 5.

lauding their *princeps* as “forever Augustus” and a “propagator of the Roman name.”⁴ Portions of Italy, so recently ravaged, were said to “live again,” while “unforeseen beauty” was hailed as coming forth “from the ashes of cities.” Rome too, once decrepit and “slipping in her tracks,” was described as youthful and her senate’s crown as “wrapped with innumerable flowers.”⁵ Nor was Italy alone, for regions of the Balkans, lost in the fifth century to barbarians and a covetous eastern Roman Empire, had been reclaimed by valiant Roman soldiers, “returning Roman powers to their [former] limits” and making the Danube Roman again.⁶ It was fitting, then, that the consul granting his name to the year 511 was named Felix, “the happy one,” for sentiments of a golden age had been on the lips of many, and it seemed, with Gaul now restored, that its blessings would never end.⁷

But how was such jubilation and overtly Roman language possible? This was the year 511, and the western Roman Empire had collapsed long ago, in 476. Moreover, this ruler of Italy was not a Roman emperor but a king, and worse still a barbarian king with the hopelessly un-Roman name Theoderic. This was “Ostrogothic Italy,” just another medieval, barbarian kingdom and surely not the Roman Empire. Those principally responsible for the changes outlined above, likewise, were “barbarian” Goths, not Romans. Had everyone gone mad? The answers, this chapter will suggest, lie in the fifth century, when the seeds for this Roman Empire and its golden age were first sown.

Decadent Rome

If Rome fell,⁸ it did not fall in a day. It took the better part of a century and, indeed, the Gallo-Roman perspective on this process is well documented, not least owing to the survival of fifth-century works by “representative men” like Sidonius Apollinaris (mentioned above).⁹ In Gaul, Roman aristocrats like Sidonius watched as barbarian

⁴ For *princeps*, see chapter 2. For *Augustus* and propagator, Fiebiger, vol.1, #193 (*ILS* 827 and *CIL* 10 6850-2), discussed in chapters 2 and 5. For *status*, see below with chapter 4.

⁵ For these and related references, see especially chapter 4.

⁶ Ennodius, *PanTh* 69, with *Variae* 11.1.10 and chapter 3.

⁷ For golden age and blessedness, *PanTh* 93 and *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 466, ln. 17-18, with chapters 4 and 5.

⁸ In fact, it will be suggested in this chapter that Rome did not fall, at least as far as certain Italo-Romans were concerned.

⁹ Treatments of fifth-century Gaul rely heavily on Sidonius’ works. See, among others, Stroheker (1948); Van Dam (1985); Mathisen (1993); and Harries (1994).

Visigoths and Burgundians slowly whittled away at those enclaves still claimed by the Roman Empire. They continued to participate in the imperial administration, to be staunchly “Roman,” and to hope for imperial resurgence into the twilight of Roman rule. Though eventually resigning themselves to their lots and adapting, many nonetheless expressed horror and disbelief when the crumbling western Empire, reduced to Italy, finally abandoned them.¹⁰ How exactly the Roman inhabitants of Italy reacted to this situation, on the other hand, is difficult to ascertain. Surely, if Gallo-Romans could feel betrayed, Italo-Romans must not have felt much better. Italy, the ideological heartland of the Roman Empire, had witnessed disappointments of her own: barbarian invasions, internal strife and civil wars, and finally the loss and even willful abandonment of long-held provinces like Gaul. Though the central administration endeavored to reassert itself, it was ultimately unable. Developments like these must have been shocking and humiliating to contemporary Italo-Romans, yet a “representative man” like Sidonius fails to shed light on the matter, ushering in Italy’s “dark ages” with blackening silence.¹¹

This long silence, however, is soundly broken by Magnus Felix Ennodius, primarily a deacon of Milan at the time of his writings, but later Bishop of Pavia. Ennodius was a prolific author, with extant works straddling a number of genres, including private epistles, panegyric, hagiography, orations, and epigrams, all apparently penned during his tenure as subdeacon or deacon (ca. 495-513).¹² This timing is extremely important, particularly since it coincided almost exactly with the period during which Italy, under Theoderic’s leadership, was reasserting itself as an imperial power and beginning to make the lofty claims encountered at the outset of this chapter. Ennodius, as

¹⁰ Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.7 provides an excellent example. On the “crisis” and reaction of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy in general, see Mathisen (1993) and the collected essays in Drinkwater and Elton (1992).

¹¹ Granted, this period in Italian history is not without its evidence, but what does exist is rather sparse in nature, comprised mostly of short inscriptions, coins, and chronicle entries. Compared to the plethora of literary sources from contemporary Gaul, many of a deeply personal nature, Italy truly is bleak. Still “dark ages” is a term used here for ironic and rhetorical effect. The evidence for Italo-Roman sentiments during the late fourth and early fifth century, on the other hand, is more substantial. See, for instance, Paschoud (1967).

¹² The exact chronology of Ennodius’ ecclesiastical career is uncertain. It began at Pavia (Ticinum) during the episcopate of Epiphanius. Following Epiphanius’ death (ca. 496/9), Ennodius became a subdeacon and then deacon at Milan. Whether he had served in the same capacity at Pavia is unknown, though it is certainly possible. The dating of his works, however, is more certain. Only #43 (a speech on the occasion of Epiphanius’ birthday) can be placed before the sixth century, whereas the majority of the extant corpus dates to the period 501-513 and was written at Milan. On the career of Ennodius and the dating of his works, see Kennell (2000), 6-18; Bartlett (2003); and the useful introduction in Vogel’s *MGH* edition (AA 7). Vogel’s numbering system (rather than Hartel’s artificial divisions by genre) has been used throughout.

a classically trained rhetorician, a reader and admirer of Sidonius' works,¹³ and an eyewitness to the changes that had occurred both before and during Theoderic's reign, was particularly susceptible to these ideas of Roman renewal and restoration, proving himself a steadfast partisan of the new order.

Ironically, however, this hoped-for mouthpiece for Italo-Roman sentiments was not Italian in his origins, but from a Gallic family with extended kin residing on both sides of the Alps. Ennodius had spent his early childhood within the vicinity of Arles, relocating, while still a child, to Pavia upon being orphaned sometime in the late 470s or early 480s.¹⁴ He may have been too young, therefore, to comprehend fully the transformations of his youth, but it was at about this time that Sidonius had given up on the Roman Empire, and likewise that the government of Italy had ceded the remnants of its Gallic possessions to the Visigoths.¹⁵ That Ennodius was able to keep his ties to this region, despite changing political climates and attitudes, and the formidable barrier posed by the Alps, testifies to the interconnectedness and interdependence of Provence and Liguria. But Ennodius, though well aware of his origins, was no Gallo-Roman.¹⁶ The bulk of his maturation had occurred in Liguria, on the Italian side of the Alps, and Ennodius thought of himself as an Italo-Roman and Ligurian foremost.¹⁷

This Ligurian upbringing had consequences for the deacon's impression of the world in which he lived. Ennodius grew up with a traditionally aristocratic and (northern) Italian outlook, believing that Italy was the heart and soul of the Roman world and fancying notions, albeit anachronistic, of Republicanism. Such Republican notions

¹³ Ennodius imitated or outright copied passages from Sidonius, *Carmen* 16 (the *Euchariston* dedicated to Bishop Faustus of Riez) and *Carmen* 2 (*Panegyric on Anthemius*) in his *dictio* on the occasion of Epiphanius' birthday (#43), his earliest extant *opus* (ca. 495). The marginalia in Vogel's *MGH* edition appear to be a misprint, since 18 is used for 16 and 22 for 2.

¹⁴ See #438 with Kennell (2000), 5-8; and Vogel's *MGH* edition, pg. II-V.

¹⁵ Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.7 is conventionally dated to 474/5, while Odovacer appears to have yielded Provence to Euric late in 476.

¹⁶ See Kennell (2000), 18, on Ennodius' references to his Gallic origins. Ennodius' north-Italian *Weltanschauung* as well as his Italian career has led some to suggest either a Ligurian or a Gallic birthplace for him, at Milan or Arles respectively. Vogel's conclusion in favor of Arles is generally accepted, particularly since Ennodius himself appears to deny a Ligurian birth in #311 (see the *MGH* edition, pg. III). But Ennodius' probable Gallic origins are perhaps overemphasized. Despite descent from a Gallo-Roman family and likely birth at Arles, he also had family ties to Liguria. His aunt, for instance, who raised him after the death of his parents, resided there. Moreover, though maintaining ties with Gallic correspondents, Ennodius at times viewed Gaul and Gauls with traditional Italo-Roman contempt. For this, see chapter 5.

¹⁷ See Bartlett (2001), 201-216, on Ennodius' understanding of Christianity as more typically Italian than Gallic. These sentiments, as will be demonstrated throughout, extend far beyond the ecclesiastical realm.

were tied to ideas of Roman liberty (*libertas*), which for Ennodius' class not only embodied Romanness itself,¹⁸ but also brought with it certain expectations. Among the most important of these was that Romans were culturally and morally superior to barbarians, and that emperors would not be despots but *principes* (first citizens), who worked in partnership with Italy's senatorial aristocracy.¹⁹ An elite upbringing and rhetorical education also instilled in Ennodius a deep appreciation for the art of proper speaking ("sweet speech") and the conviction that its presence defined an individual as a nobly Roman.²⁰ These ideas, moreover, reinforced the understanding that Rome was the mistress and the center of the world, not simply as the ideological capital of the Roman West, but also as a veritable font of Latin eloquence and a seat of apostolic power.²¹

Traditional though these ideas and expectations may have been, they were nonetheless painfully inconsistent with Ennodius' recollection of the Italy of his youth. Indeed, to reflect upon the late fifth century was to remember a time when the world had been turned literally upside-down. Romans were transformed into barbarians; rusticity and a lack of erudition became a virtue; and Rome, once the mistress of the world, tottered, appearing ready to collapse before unstoppable savages. Rome, however, had not collapsed in Ennodius' lifetime, nor had 476, the year in which Odovacer deposed the last western emperor, been a particularly meaningful date for him. Roman decline had begun long before this time, long before Ennodius had even been born, and it persisted, in his opinion, long after Odovacer had been proclaimed king. Ennodius believed that he had grown up in a Roman Empire denuded of its territories and ruled by a series of unworthy and often savage men, an "Empire of Italy," as he sometimes referred to it. But it had been in this sordid condition for decades and would remain so until the advent of Theoderic and his Goths.

Nowhere is this negative conception of the past more clearly expressed than in two of Ennodius' more enduring works, the *Panegyric to Theoderic* and the *Life of*

¹⁸ See Barnish (2003), with Moorhead (1987).

¹⁹ For these ideas, see chapters 2 and 3.

²⁰ On sweet speech in Ennodius' opera, see Kennell (2000), chp. 2 especially. Its role as an indicator of Romanness, attested in Sidonius, *Ep.* 5.5 and 8.2, will be discussed at length in chapter 5.

²¹ For font of Latin eloquence, see chapter 5. For Rome in a Christian context, see the *Libellus pro Synodo* (#49), with Kennell (2000), 199-201. In his devotion to the Apostolic See, Ennodius would even undertake two papal missions to Constantinople, the first in 512 and the second in 515.

Epiphanius. A discussion of the latter, which treats more extensively the period leading up to the so-called “fall” of the western Empire, will now follow.

The Saintly Orpheus

The *Life of Epiphanius* was intended as a tribute to the holy man described within (and by extension the See of Pavia) and was thus not an official piece of Theoderican propaganda. As a work of hagiography, its author endeavored foremost to praise the hero of God, Epiphanius, drawing attention to his miracles, appropriation of the apostolic life, and imitation of Christ. Epiphanius, therefore, was the central figure in this work. Though true, Ennodius painted a vivid picture of the turbulent times in which his hero was living, and since his subject’s most glorious miracles concerned his role as a saintly intercessor, peacemaker, and diplomat, a number of episodes in his *Vita* involved key episodes from the final decade of western imperial rule. Ennodius’ depiction of fifth-century woes was thus limited, at least in this work, to the incidental experiences of Epiphanius. Yet a consistent image emerges, finding echoes in his other works.

Ennodius began his *Life of Epiphanius* with the expected topoi of the hagiographical genre. A miracle was associated with the saint’s infancy; there were prefigurations of his later more defining miracles during his teenage years; and his pious virtues eventually allowed him to ascend the ecclesiastical cursus with ease, becoming Bishop of Pavia by popular acclaim.²² As Bishop of Pavia, Epiphanius was inevitably drawn into the politics and intrigues of the late imperial period. Liguria was a staging point for Italian-led campaigns in Gaul, of which there were a number during Epiphanius’ lifetime,²³ and moreover a source of grain for the nearby imperial court and its army. Milan was by far a more prestigious city, but Pavia’s fortunes were rising, and her greater proximity to Gaul made her bishop an obvious choice should an ambassador of goodwill be needed there.²⁴

Ironically, however, Epiphanius’ first major trial would concern a matter of internal discord, a clear indication that all was not well in fifth-century Italy. This particular episode was set in the reign of the emperor Anthemius (467-72), traditionally

²² VE 7-42.

²³ See Stroheker (1948), chp.2 especially.

²⁴ The use of bishops as peacemakers was common at this time. See Gillett (2003), 113f.

understood to be the last truly effective emperor of the West. An easterner, Anthemius had been made emperor at Constantinople and then sent to Rome in the hope that his military expertise would allow him to make headway against the Vandals in North Africa and the Visigoths in Spain.²⁵ An outsider, the new emperor had attempted to win an Italian home-base by offering his daughter in marriage to the Gotho-Sueve (“barbarian”) Ricimer, the current generalissimo of Italy and, at that point, a domineering figure in western politics. Though Sidonius Apollinaris himself had lauded this union personally at Rome,²⁶ it had failed to establish concord between these two headstrong men. Envy became a cause of discord, according to Ennodius, and the “status of Italy” was thus placed in peril.²⁷

Ostensibly, at any rate, this would seem to have been a clear-cut case of an over-mighty barbarian general challenging the Roman order, a cause traditionally cited for the fall of the western Empire. Ennodius, however, did not depict it as such, his account demonstrating the full extent to which traditional expectations had been inverted. According to Ennodius, both emperor and general were consumed with madness,²⁸ and, indeed, as civil war seemed imminent, the nobility of Liguria turned not to the emperor, but to Ricimer as their patron and protector. With tears in their eyes they begged him to seek peace, and Ricimer, surprisingly, yielded before their supplication. “Soothed” and “deeply moved by their tears,”²⁹ he promised that he would seek reconciliation with the emperor, yet added that success seemed improbable. “Who is there,” he asked, “who can win over that enraged Galatian” whose wrath yields to no “natural moderation?”³⁰ Such wrath, Ricimer feared, would render his petition useless, but the nobles of Liguria responded that Epiphanius, the account’s hero, should be chosen for the task, since he could tame “even rabid beasts.”³¹ Epiphanius, they claimed, was worthy of veneration

²⁵ A joint East-West expedition against the Vandals in 468, however, proved disastrous.

²⁶ See *Carmen* 2 with the discussion in chapter 3.

²⁷ For envy, *VE* 51: “inter eos iecit scandali illa quae dominantes sequestrat invidia et par dignitas causa discordiae”; for peril, *VE* 52: “Nutabat status periclitantis Italiae.” The Latin text used throughout is from Cook (1942), which utilizes Vogel’s *MGH* edition as its basis.

²⁸ *VE* 52: “Surrexerat enim tanta rabies atque dissensio ut muto bella praeparent”

²⁹ *VE* 53: “Mulcetur Ricimer et velle se reparare concordiam permotus multorum fletibus pollicetur.”

³⁰ Ibid: “Quis est qui Galatam concitatum revocare posit et principem? Nam semper, cum rogatur, exuperat qui iram naturali moderatione non terminat.”

³¹ *VE* 54. “...cui et beluae rabidae colla submittunt.”

by every Catholic, Roman, and even “the Greekling,” Anthemius.³² And, true to their advice, once Epiphanius arrived, Ricimer himself venerated the saint, choosing him immediately for the mission.³³

Paradoxically, then, this initial exchange served in Ennodius’ narrative to transform the barbarian Ricimer into a benevolent, moderate, and surely “Roman” ruler, in stark contrast with the emperor, who was described as an unyielding savage and rabid beast. Anthemius, it seemed in Liguria, was the real barbarian, and beyond his disposition, his foreignness was underscored by his Galatian and pejoratively Greek origins.³⁴ But when Epiphanius arrived in Rome and was rather reluctantly received by the emperor, another demonstration of the backwardness of this period was presented, this time by Anthemius. Ricimer, in his eyes, was the real barbarian, and the emperor, proud of his own Roman lineage, had been dishonored by a traditionally deceitful savage. The mere act of sending Epiphanius, well-known in Rome for his eloquence, qualified as a crafty ruse, apparently the only possible means of rendering Ricimer’s “immoderate and unreasonable proposals” acceptable.³⁵

In addressing the emperor, Epiphanius likewise manipulated these expected categories. Playing on origins, he urged, “your Italy and the patrician Ricimer sent my smallness, concluding that a Roman would grant, as a gift to God, that peace for which even a barbarian begs.”³⁶ He then suggested to the emperor that the best way to prove his valor was to contend with his own anger, to earn a “triumph without blood” and thus “shame the very fierce Goth with kindness.”³⁷ The implications of these words are

³² Ibid: “...quem venerari possit quicumque si est catholicus et Romanus, amare certe, si videre mereatur, et Graeculus.”

³³ VE 58: “ad Ricimerem patricium porrexit, a quo simul visus et electus est.”

³⁴ Galatian was more than just a reference to Anthemius’ eastern origins, since (despite Hellenization) the Galatians were understood in antiquity to be Gallogrecians, and hence only semi-civilized. See, in general, Mitchell (1993), with the commentary of Cook (1942), 162, and Cesa (1988), 152. For *Graeculus*, see Isaac (2004), 401-3.

³⁵ VE 60-1: “Callida mecum Ricimer et in legationibus suis arte decertat. ...dubito tamen an Ricimer apud me quod poscit optineat, cuius scio votorum intemperantem esse personam et in condicionibus proponendis rationis terminum non tenere.” Anthemius’ fears seem, to some extent, well founded, since the *adventus* of Epiphanius at Rome had already rendered the Romans there dumbstruck (and would continue to do so during the audience). VE 59: “Conversi ilico omnium oculi, stupuere mentes adtonitiae quod tantam sibi exhiberi reueneriam imago eius index sanctitatis exquireret.”

³⁶ VE 64: “Hoc ergo Italia vestra freta iudicio vel Ricimer patricius parvitatem meam oratu direxit, indubitanter coniciens quod pacem Romanus deo munus tribuat quam precatur et barbarus.”

³⁷ Ibid: “Erit enim triumphus vestris proprie profuturus annalibus si sine sanguine viceritis. Simul descio quae species fortior possit esse bellorum quam dimicare contra iracundiam et ferocissimi Getae pudorem

revealing. Ironically it was the barbarian Ricimer who had come to speak on behalf of the emperor's Italy. He offered "Roman" peace with the common good in mind, while the emperor appeared concerned with bellicose thoughts of victory and valor. Moreover, though a "fierce Goth," it was Ricimer who had already proven himself merciful and kind, while Anthemius, still truly angry, had to be provoked to kindness. In this depiction of Epiphanius' initial audience with the emperor, therefore, Ennodius yet again suggested who the barbarian really was.

These implications, intended to shame the emperor, appeared lost on Anthemius, whose outrage was fueled by more traditional assumptions about Roman dominance and barbarians, in addition to the rather personal insults he had suffered at the hands of his son-in-law. Indeed, the noble marriage alliance lauded by Sidonius for linking East and West was thoroughly denigrated by the Greek emperor, who claimed that it had shamed both his house and the state.³⁸ Pleading with Epiphanius, he demanded to know which of his imperial predecessors, for the sake of peace, had included a daughter "as a gift to a skin-clad Goth," implying that such an occurrence had been unprecedented.³⁹ Romans were not supposed to mix with barbarians, and he alone had made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the state, tainting his Roman blood with barbarian filth.⁴⁰ Ironically, of course, the very Italo-Romans for whom Anthemius was playing the martyr had only recently disparaged him as a savage little Greek. But the emperor was unaware. More pressing for his purposes was the fact that his sacrifice had been in vain, for despite showering benefits upon his son-in-law, Ricimer had answered his kindness with

onerare beneficiis." The reference to Ricimer as "Getic" in origin is a rather classicizing way of calling him a Goth (see below). Ricimer, as intimated above, was actually of mixed barbarian origins, his father a Sueve and his mother a Visigoth. References to him as Getic, therefore, may be considered doubly classicizing, since it is possible that "Getae/Goth" was a stand-in for any barbarian group, much as "Germani" could stand for any people residing east of the Rhine and "Scythians" for those occupying the Steppes. On Ricimer's origins, *PLRE* 2, 942-5 ("Fl. Ricimer 2") with chapter 3.

³⁸ That Sidonius appears unconcerned with such miscegenation may be reflective of a greater tolerance for barbarians in fifth-century Gaul. Marriage between elite barbarians and the Roman (even imperial) aristocracy, however, was actually quite common from the fourth century onward. See Demandt (1989).

³⁹ *VE* 67: "Quis hoc namque veterum retro principum fecit umquam ut inter munera, quae pellito Getae dari necesse erat, pro quiete communi filia ponetur." But again, it was not unprecedented for a Roman princess to be married to a barbarian prince, the best "Gothic" example being Galla Placidia, who married the Visigothic king Athaulf amid great fanfare in Narbonne. On this marriage and its significance, see chapter 3. Huneric, the Vandal prince, likewise married the daughter of Valentinian III, Eudocia.

⁴⁰ *VE* 67: "Nescivimus parcere sanguini nostro dum servamus alienum." Cf. the discussion of Ennodius' nephew Parthenius in chapter 5, who may also have had "tainted" barbarian blood.

increasing insults.⁴¹ Ricimer, he avowed, had plotted against the state with the enemy on numerous occasions, even scheming against his life. He was thus an “enemy in the garb of friendship,”⁴² and needed to be treated appropriately.

True to his saintly powers, however, Epiphanius eventually succeeded in mollifying the emperor, who agreed to a shaky peace. Even then, however, he remained convinced of his suspicions concerning Ricimer. Alluding to his rival’s innate barbarism, he suggested that perhaps Epiphanius himself had been fooled by “the cunning of his customary trickery”⁴³ and promised to renew hostilities should his fears prove founded.

Civil war between Ricimer and Anthemius did eventually break out, but it received no treatment in the *Life of Epiphanius*, doubtless because its greatest casualty was not Liguria but central Italy, where Ricimer had put Anthemius on the defensive.⁴⁴ In passing, Ennodius simply informed his audience that the two had died and that Anthemius had been succeeded by Olybrius, who soon also died.⁴⁵ Only a brief anecdote concerning the reign of his successor, Glycerius, was then provided, but these shorter entries were then followed by a much more extensive treatment of an episode dating from the reign of Julius Nepos (474-5), yet another imperial appointee from Constantinople.⁴⁶

A master of soldiers in Byzantine Dalmatia, Nepos had been commissioned by the eastern emperor Zeno to depose Glycerius, who was viewed from the East as a usurper. In his account, Ennodius devoted no space to what must have been seen as a confusing situation, a replay of sorts of the conditions witnessed before the advent of the preceding “Greek” emperor, Anthemius.⁴⁷ Unlike Anthemius, however, whose Romanness and qualities as a leader Ennodius implicitly questioned, Nepos was eventually treated

⁴¹ VE 68: “...quotiens a nobis maioribus donis cumulatus est Ricimer, totiens gravior inimicus apparuit.”

⁴² VE 69: “Hunc intestinum sub indumento amicitiarum inimicum sustinebimus...”

⁴³ VE 70: “Postremo si solitae calliditatis astutia etiam te fefellerit certamen iam vulneratus asumat.”

Both *astutia* and *calliditas* were the mark of a barbarian. See Dauge (1981), 748.

⁴⁴ For details, MacGeorge (2002), 253-7; Jones (1964), 243; and Heather (2006), 425.

⁴⁵ VE 79: “Defuncto tunc Ricimere vel Anthemio successit Olybrius, qui in ipsis exordiis diem clausit extremum.” This one-sentence entry seems worth quoting, since it reiterates the point that the *Life of Epiphanius* is specifically centered around Epiphanius, while politics serve as an important backdrop. For Olybrius, PLRE 2, 796-8 (“Anicius Olybrius 6”).

⁴⁶ The anecdote, recorded in VE 79, concerned securing a pardon for a man who had insulted the bishop’s mother. For Glycerius, PLRE 2, 514.

⁴⁷ Anthemius’ predecessor, Libius Severus (461-5), a “puppet” of Ricimer, had also not been recognized in the East. An interregnum lasting seventeen months followed his death, during which Ricimer essentially acted as sovereign. Eventually Ricimer and the eastern emperor Leo I agreed on the choice of Anthemius as emperor. See MacGeorge (2002), 215-34.

sympathetically, if not favorably, in the *Life of Epiphanius*. Indeed, in this particular episode Nepos became a victim, while Italy ceased to be the proxy whereby the status of the Roman Empire was measured. Instead, Gaul took her place, and the rise of Euric's Visigothic kingdom at the expense of Nepos' Roman Empire became the motif reiterated throughout, providing a sobering glimpse into the Italo-Roman side of the situation deemed by Gauls like Sidonius as "betrayal."

Euric had been on the move against the Empire since the early 470s at the latest, perhaps in response to the rapid imperial turnover and civil wars in Italy at the time.⁴⁸ When Nepos arrived on the scene in 474, the Visigoths had already laid claim to most of Aquitania Prima as well as the important maritime cities of Arles and Marseille. Their principle rivals and imperial allies, the Burgundians, had refused to check their advances,⁴⁹ and Gothic raiders had even made forays into Italy itself.⁵⁰ The perspective from Italy was no doubt bleak at this point, not just because more territories had been lost, but because Italy was now clearly exposed. Within the confines of his hagiographical treatment, Ennodius described a situation in which the central imperial authority ardently desired to reclaim its lost territories and assert its dominance in the West, but ultimately understood that it lacked the strength to challenge this new order and so reluctantly (but of necessity) nodded assent in order to survive. Epiphanius himself played an essential mediatory role in the process, securing a truce perhaps even more humiliating in retrospect than at the time, and, in recounting this episode, Ennodius again drew attention to the extent to which it demonstrated that the world had once been turned upside-down.

There was no room in this story for the nuances encountered earlier in the *Vita*. The king of the Visigoths and (by extension) the Visigoths themselves were stereotypically antithetical barbarians. Ennodius introduced them by explaining that

⁴⁸ For a fascinating reappraisal of Euric's "empire-building" policy, see Gillett (1999). For the more traditional view of Euric as anti-imperial, see Wolfram (1988), 182f., and Heather (1996), 189f.

⁴⁹ This refusal probably stemmed from the fact that their king, Gundobad, had been the driving force behind the accession of Glycerius. See MacGeorge (2002), 272-5.

⁵⁰ See Jordanes, *Getica* 284 and *Romana* 347, with Wolfram (1988), 188. In fact, these Gothic raiders were "Ostrogoths" under the leadership of King Vidimir and had invaded Italy in 473 from Pannonia, not Gaul. Interestingly enough, however, after their defeat they joined forces with Euric in Gaul and became assimilated to his Visigoths. For the possibility that they had been invited into Italy by Glycerius, see MacGeorge (2002), 272.

dissentation had arisen between Nepos and the “Getic nurslings of Toulouse, whom Euric governed with cruel despotism.”⁵¹ From the beginning, this association of the Visigoths with the classical Getae found in the pages of ancient works like Herodotus suggested, despite its common usage in late antique sources, that certain “facts” could be assumed about them. The most obvious of these was that they were a warlike, barbarous people originating outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire, specifically in trans-Danubian Scythia.⁵² The claim that Euric governed them cruelly,⁵³ that is, in stark contrast with civilized, Roman conceptions of *libertas* and *humanitas*, reiterated their barbarism. More importantly, these savage qualities provided a rationale for why a disagreement had arisen between Nepos and Euric. According to Ennodius, Nepos had recently restored lands across the Alps to his “Italian Empire,” and the Goths, “scorning their recovery,” had continually attacked them.⁵⁴ On the one hand, Euric and his Goths believed they had a claim to these lands by right of conquest, and, on the other, Nepos argued that they had been granted to him by God and that to forfeit them to the Goths would have led to further losses.⁵⁵

Though clearly casting Euric and his Goths as savages, Ennodius likewise claimed, as in the case of Anthemius and Ricimer, that both parties were blameworthy. Nepos and Euric, in his opinion, were both driven by “the excitement derived from an eagerness for conquest,”⁵⁶ and it was this unwillingness to back down that had perpetuated their dispute. Initially, then, Julius Nepos had appeared as much an enraged and bellicose easterner as his predecessor, sharing his concern for military glory. To Nepos’ credit, however, he soon had a change of heart, ardently desiring to make overtures to the enemy. Time and a lack of success had caused him to alter his position, and he now summoned the nobles of Liguria (*Liguriae lumina*) to his counsel. The

⁵¹ VE 80: “...Tolosae alumnos Getas, quos ferrea Euricus rex dominatione gubernabat.”

⁵² For a discussion of these broad generalizations, see Pohl (1998).

⁵³ *Ferrea*, literally “iron,” suggests an unyielding, stern, or even cruel quality. Its use as a descriptive adjective to describe weapons complements the martial language later used to describe Euric (see below).

⁵⁴ VE 80: “dum illi Italici fines imperii, quos trans Gallicanas Alpes porrexerat, novitatem spernentes non disinerent incessere.” Cook (1942), 65, and Cesa (1988), 94, take *novitatem* to refer to the “new” emperor, rather than to Nepos’ restored territories in Gaul (presumably in Provence). See Harries (1994), 236-238, for Nepos’ Gallic policies, which indirectly led to his deposal.

⁵⁵ VE 80: “...e diverso Nepos, ne in usum praesumptio malesuada duceretur, districtius cuperet commissum sibi a deo regnandi terminum vindicare.”

⁵⁶ Ibid: “Dum neutrae partes conceptum tumorem vicendi studio deponunt...”

advice of these bright men, the emperor hoped, would help him to “revive the status of the declining Republic” and “restore its stability, then despaired of, to its ancient height.”⁵⁷ The move was significant, transforming the warlike, semi-barbarous Nepos into a truly Roman emperor acting with moderation on behalf of the common good. The contrast with Anthemius is unmistakable, so too the contrast with Ricimer, who required tears and supplication in order to act.

Nepos’ Ligurian advisors eventually assembled and unanimously selected the bishop of Pavia, Epiphanius, as the ambassador most suited to carry the olive branch over the Alps. According to Ennodius, the soldier of Christ accepted the burden with joy,⁵⁸ arriving at Toulouse weakened from the rigid spiritual exercises he had undertaken during his journey.⁵⁹ At Toulouse he was quickly brought before Euric, whose court was moderated by Leo, a Gallo-Roman correspondent of Sidonius, whom Ennodius praised in this account for his oratorical skills.⁶⁰ Romanness, it seemed, could still survive in Euric’s Gaul, but only, as this episode eventually made clear, through the learning of men like Leo.⁶¹

Negotiations with the king began with Epiphanius appealing to Euric’s love for military glory, while also reminding him, as a devoted bishop, of his duties as a Christian. He assured Euric that “the fame of valor” rendered him “terrible to the ears of many,” and that his swords oppressed “neighboring regions with continual devastation” and “reaped a harvest of enmity.” Though true, he avowed that such a “horrible desire to wage war” had scarcely been pleasing to God.⁶² Indeed, Epiphanius warned Euric that his mighty swords would be rendered useless, should he persist in offending the Lord of

⁵⁷ VE 81: “Quorum possit deliberatione labans reipublicae status reviviscere et in antiquum columen soliditas desperata restitui.” That Ligurian nobles had become the source of inspiration for a revived Republic would no doubt have seemed ironic to senators at Rome, but was a pragmatic solution owing to Liguria’s strategic importance vis-à-vis Visigothic Gaul and the location of Nepos’ court. The role of Liguria’s nobles no doubt also reflects Ennodius’ important ties to the region.

⁵⁸ VE 82: “Cum laetitia Christi miles occasionem laboris amplectitur.”

⁵⁹ For the journey and exercises, VE 83-4.

⁶⁰ VE 85: “Leo nomine, quem per eloquentiae meritum non una iam declamationum palma susceperat.” Two of Sidonius’ letters dating to the 470s were addressed to Leo. *Ep.* 4.22 was a categorically negative response to Leo’s request that Sidonius write a history, while *Ep.* 8.3 informed Leo that Sidonius had finished making a copy for him of a Pythagorean treatise. For Leo, *PLRE* 2, 662-3 (“Leo 5”).

⁶¹ For more on this theme, see chapter 5.

⁶² VE 86: “quamvis te... multorum auribus reddat virtutis fama terribilem, et gladii, quibus finitimos continua vastitate premis, segetem quandam inimici germinis metant, nullam tibi tamen superni gratiam numinis dira bellandi praestat ambitio.”

Heaven,⁶³ advising the king to “defend his own possessions more diligently” by not seeking after those of another.⁶⁴ The bishop then continued by pressing the case of Nepos, who, he informed Euric, had become the ruler of Italy by divine ordination.⁶⁵ Nepos’ divine right, again, became a rationale for his claims, though it should be noted that in this particular instance the emperor had been reduced once more to merely the ruler of Italy. Epiphanius’ final remarks, however, reminded Euric and more importantly Ennodius’ Italo-Roman audience that this was not the way the situation was supposed to be.

“You know...with what border the ancient inhabitants of our dominions were demarcated and with what patience these lands [of yours] endured serving the rulers of those [lands of ours]. Let it suffice that [Nepos] has chosen, or at any rate allows himself to be called friend, when he deserves to be called master.”⁶⁶

Barbarians like Euric were supposed to be servants of the Empire, their subordination a constant theme in imperial panegyric and propagandistic imagery. The Visigoths, in particular, had been granted a special position within the Roman Empire as federate allies, theoretically independent residents, yet bound by their treaties to provide military aid. Nepos assumed that Euric understood the way their relationship was supposed to work. There had been a specific border, and Euric’s predecessors had respected it and heeded the orders of prior Roman emperors. But in 474 the situation was markedly different. The Roman Empire’s position had declined to such an extent that, though confident in Roman superiority, it was necessary for Nepos to behave as an

⁶³ Ibid: “nec ferrum fines tuetur imperii si caelestis dominus offendatur.”

⁶⁴ VE 87: “Deinde perpendere nos convenit quod nemo diligentius propria tuetur quam qui aliena non adpetit.”

⁶⁵ VE 88: “Nepos, cui regimen Italiae ordinatio divina commisit...”

⁶⁶ Ibid: “Nostis in commune, quo sit dominiorum antiquitas limitata confinio, qua sustinuerint partes istae illarum rectores famulandi patientia. Sufficiat quod elegit aut certe patitur amicus dici, qui meruit dominus appellari.” Cook (1942), 96, (whose interpretation is accepted by Cesa) renders the passage “You know, as well as we, how great has been the reduction of the ancient limits of the Empire and with what patient subjection those regions have endured their new masters,” suggesting that the servants implied by *famulandi* are provincials. It seems better to understand these servants as prior Visigothic kings and *dominiorum* to refer to both the Empire and the federate kingdom established in Aquitania Secunda. This reading thus complements Epiphanius’ point that Nepos, as emperor, ought to be served and thus called *dominus*. Cf. Reydellet (1981), 157, who renders the passage, “Vous savez de notoriété publique quelle limite a été fixée anciennement aux royaumes, vous savez comment les terres qui sont les vôtres ont servi patiemment les princes de là-bas.”

equal.⁶⁷ This very concession, shocking and painful, flew in the face of centuries of Roman ideology.

On the other hand, for Euric to have been told to his face that he was supposed to be a slave to the dwindling western Empire and was likewise unworthy to be called the emperor's friend might have easily (and justly) been construed as an insult. But like Anthemius, the implications of Epiphanius' speech appeared lost on the Goth, who, in true barbarian fashion, broke off into "I know not what barbarous murmur"⁶⁸ and had to avail himself of an interpreter. Through this go-between, Ennodius explained, Euric was able to validate those martial themes already associated with him by Epiphanius. He described himself as always armored and accompanied by his shield and sword, yet conquered by the bishop's words alone.⁶⁹ He had been moved by Epiphanius' words, describing his gift for speech as a specifically Roman weapon, substituting for shields and javelins and piercing its adversary deep in the heart.⁷⁰ Charmed, the once savage Euric agreed to come to terms, bested by Epiphanius' soothing words and not the justice of Nepos' claims.⁷¹

The strict polarization between "Roman" and "barbarian" in this episode is blatantly over-the-top, but nonetheless highly suggestive. On the one hand, Epiphanius was transformed into a new Orpheus, taming the savage beast with sweet speeches in lieu of music. His eloquence, the mark of a noble Roman, could win out amid barbarian swords. As a stereotypical barbarian who literally spoke gibberish, on the other hand, Euric could not have been a better savage. He was covered in the instruments of war and, when it came time to praise the bishop's "Roman" talents, could only do so by analogy to the battlefield. He might be pacified and charmed into a beneficial peace, but

⁶⁷ Such equality is in fact anticipated by Ennodius, who refers to Euric and Nepos as *reges* in *VE* 81. For the significance, see below.

⁶⁸ *VE* 89: "Gentile nescio quod murmur infrings." This *gentile murmur* may not necessarily be a reference to the Gothic tongue, however, since Ennodius claims in another work that his Gallic nephew Parthenius spoke with a similar impediment (see chapter 5). Perhaps this was simply a Gallic accent, for Parthenius and Euric surely knew Latin well. The point, then, was to point out the "abnormality" or "un-Romanness" of the individual in question. Cf. Kennell (2000), 139.

⁶⁹ *VE* 90: "Licet pectus meum lorica vix deserat et asdidue manum orbis aeratus includat necnon et latus muniat ferri praesidium, inveni tamen hominem qui me armatum possit expugnare sermonibus."

⁷⁰ For moved, *VE* 89: "Euricus... mollitum se adhortationibus eius vultus sui serenitate significat." For weapons, *VE* 90: "Fallunt qui dicunt Romanos in linguis scutum vel spicula non habere. Norunt enim et illa quae nos miserimus verba repellere et quae a se diriguntur ad cordis penetraliae destinare."

⁷¹ *VE* 91: "Facio ergo, venerande papa, quae poscis quia grandior est apud me legati persona quam potentia destinantis."

so long as Euric and “real” barbarians like him reigned supreme in Gaul, the fate of this land and neighboring Italy would remain in question.

Still, Gaul was not the worst of Italy’s problems. Italy, too, the *Life of Epiphanius* has so nicely shown, had savages of her own to deal with, often lurking in not-so-obvious places. One such barbarian, Odovacer, would even put Nepos’ “Italian Empire” out of its misery and declare an end to the Western Roman Empire once and for all. No one in Italy, however, seemed to notice.

The Odovacrian interlude

Thus far a close reading of the *Life of Epiphanius* has demonstrated its author’s impression of the period immediately preceding his lifetime, presenting a picture of a western Roman Empire in turmoil and unapologetically Italian in its orientation. Such fifth-century woes are traditionally understood to have reached their nadir shortly after the truce established (with Epiphanius’ saintly intercession) between Euric and Nepos. It was at this time that a series of civil wars once again rocked Italy, ultimately leading to the deposition of the last western emperor, Romulus Augustus. The events themselves are important, but for the present purposes only a rather cursory recounting is warranted.

In 475 Julius Nepos was forced to abandon Italy altogether, seeking the safety of his old stomping grounds in Dalmatia. Though technically still emperor, for all intents and purposes his reign in the West had ended.⁷² In Italy, Nepos was replaced by Romulus Augustus, the young son of his principal rival and master of soldiers, Orestes.⁷³ The little Augustus,⁷⁴ who was never recognized in the East, reigned as a figurehead for his father for less than a year, during which time questions of payments to his soldiers escalated to the point of violence. When civil war erupted again in August of 476, Odovacer, a military man of barbarian origins, became the champion of the mutiny,

⁷² He was still recognized as the legitimate western emperor in Constantinople, and Odovacer would later recognize Nepos as the sovereign of the West (at least until 480, when the exiled emperor died). Nonetheless, he was never able to exercise real authority in the West, and Italo-Romans like Ennodius and Cassiodorus clearly thought that his flight in 475 had ended his reign. For this, see below.

⁷³ Ironically the soldiers that Orestes had been granted were intended for a campaign against the Visigoths in Gaul. Cf. MacGeorge (2002), 275-9, with *PLRE* 2, 811-12 (“Orestes 2”). Even more interesting, Orestes had once served as a secretary to Attila the Hun, a fact that may explain his desire to elevate his son as emperor, since he himself may have been considered “too Hunnic.”

⁷⁴ Romulus is referred to as *Augustulus* (“little Augustus”) in a number of sources. For these, *PLRE* 2, 949-50 (“Romulus Augustus 4”).

promising the soldiers payment in the form of land if victorious. Orestes was quickly defeated and killed, little Romulus deposed but spared, and Odovacer, as master of Italy, wrote to Emperor Zeno at Constantinople officially announcing that the West no longer required its own emperor. He would rule, instead, as a king and patrician, subordinate to the emperor.⁷⁵ So fell the Western Roman Empire.

These events conventionally provide an important (and convenient) terminus for accounts of Roman history, though they appear to have had little resonance in Western eyes.⁷⁶ Indeed, the end of the Roman Empire in 476 would have fit rather nicely into the version of history presented and discussed so far in Ennodius' *Life of Epiphanius*, with decline ultimately leading, as it does in many modern accounts, to collapse. But this was not reality as Ennodius imagined it. For him and other Italo-Romans, Odovacer was simply a replacement for the young Augustus, and in some instances even an improvement of sorts.⁷⁷ Continuity, therefore, typified the contemporary (or, in Ennodius' case, near-contemporary) understanding in Italy of the so-called "fall" of the Roman Empire. This continuity, moreover, was largely characterized by the persistence of two important fifth-century conditions, which would play fundamental roles in later perceptions of resurgence and fecundity during the era of Theoderic.

First of all, as far as Italo-Romans like Ennodius were concerned, the western Empire as a political institution never ceased to exist. The political changes ushered in by the events of 476 were essentially meaningless to them, a reality demonstrated by their continued references to their government as the Roman Empire or Republic.⁷⁸ In

⁷⁵ For reconstructions, MacGeorge (2002), 281-93, and Bury (1958), vol. 1, 405-9.

⁷⁶ This has not gone unnoticed. See, among others, Croke (1983), 81-119; Momigliano (1973), 397-418; Krautschik (1986), 355f.; Barnwell (1992), 134-5; and Moorhead (1992), 7-8. The eastern perspective on these events is a slightly more complicated matter, however. The earliest Byzantine commentator, Malchus of Philadelphia, continued to hold Nepos as the reigning Emperor of the West and Odovacer as his subordinate. Cf. Malchus, frg. 10. It was not until the Justinianic era that a Byzantine source, the chronicle of Marcellinus Comes, explicitly referred to the "fall" of the West. Moreover, in Marcellinus' case both 454 and 476 were proposed as dates for the fall of the western Empire.

⁷⁷ For one of these other Italo-Romans (Cassiodorus Senator), see below. For a more sympathetic interpretation of the era of Odovacer in general, see Moorhead (1992), 8-9 and 29-31; and Cesa (2001).

⁷⁸ *Imperium Romanum*, *Res publica Romana*, and (even) *Regnum Romanum* (see below) were at this point nearly synonymous, and likewise pervasive. See Rota (2002), 245-6, and Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 77-80. Heather (2006), 432f., argues that the institutions of the western Empire themselves ceased to exist, the office of emperor being the most conspicuous example. Hence, to his mind, so too did the western Empire. The extent of carryover into the sixth century of imperial offices and superstructure is a matter of debate, and clearly Odovacer was not an emperor. Still, these points are moot, for the fact of the matter is that

fact, contemporary Italo-Romans appear to have had little trouble reconciling a king or kingdom with their Empire, and though perhaps bizarre to the classically trained, this is quite understandable. Already in Augustus' time the Principate had been viewed by some as merely a monarchy in disguise, and by the fifth century royal language was regularly and unapologetically being applied to emperors and their Empire.⁷⁹

Odoacer's imperial predecessors were thus, more or less, just as "royal" as he was and, as the case of Anthemius discussed above suggests, perhaps even more barbarous.⁸⁰

Second, the sense of this Roman Empire as moribund and decadent endured. Thus, though the Roman Empire survived 476, it did so in what was perceived to be a rather sorry state. Weak fifth-century leadership had deprived the Empire of its provinces and allowed the barbarians to dishonor the Roman name. Individual emperors, likewise, had behaved no better than their savage enemies, thinking selfishly of personal dignity and not the common good. Their actions had pitted Roman against Roman in one civil war after another, contributing further to the internal decay of what remained of the western Empire.

In their works, Ennodius and others (to be discussed) make it abundantly clear that these two characteristics typified the period leading up to the advent of Theoderic. For them, the Roman Empire, reduced to Italy, simply languished from one fifth-century ruler to another, until Theoderic, a kind of savior, assumed command. Whether distorted or not, their interpretations of the fifth century made contemporary, i.e. Theoderican, notions of restoration and renovation all the more wondrous. A continued close reading of the *Life of Epiphanius*, therefore, now in conjunction with the *Panegyric to Theoderic*, will be undertaken, ultimately providing greater insight into the origins of the Theoderican "golden age" and its consequences for the Roman Empire. What follows, then, is by no means intended to be an accurate appraisal of the Odovacrian era, but

Italo-Romans continued to believe that their state was the western Empire. Modern criteria like Heather's, therefore, need not apply.

⁷⁹ Provided the views found in Tacitus, *Annals* 1.9-10, are a reflection of early first-century (AD) sentiments and not those of Tacitus and his contemporaries. On the use of royal language in late antiquity, see Wolfram (1967), 33f., Reydellet (1981), 25f., and Fanning (1992) and (2003), especially. For more on this royal language, see below.

⁸⁰ Other "barbarian" emperors (legitimate and illegitimate) had also paved the way. These included Maximinus Thrax (Goth-Alan), Magnētius (Briton-Frank), and Silvanus (Frank). But see chapter 3 for a complication of the idea of barbarian, which would suggest that a number of other "Roman" emperors could also have been considered as such.

instead a discussion of one interpretation of that period (Ennodius') written by a partisan of the Theoderican government who believed that Roman renovation and restoration had been achieved.

Ennodius on Odovacer

In his *Life of Epiphanius* Ennodius introduced the events of 476 shortly after the Visigothic embassy piece recounted above. He completely passed over Orestes' revolt against Nepos and likewise provided no details concerning the elevation of his son, Romulus, to the purple. Instead, he simply described Orestes as the patrician of Italy and claimed that Odovacer had marshaled an army against him (not his son).⁸¹ Despite the apparent ambiguity of Orestes' position and his prior, unmentioned role as a usurper against Nepos, Ennodius cast him in the role of a legitimate power in Italy, for Odovacer's revolt was portrayed as contrary to nature and inspired by the Adversary himself, the Devil.⁸² In Ennodius' account, the civil war that then followed became yet another proving ground for the holy man,⁸³ but the central position of Italy, whose safety had figured so prominently in earlier episodes, was abandoned in favor of the more local perspective of the bishop's see. Pavia, not Italy or the Roman Empire, suffered, transforming the "fall" of the Roman Empire into a trial designed specifically by the Devil to defeat the hero of God. "Barbarous men" looted Epiphanius' house and seized captives from the local nobility, including his own sister.⁸⁴ Both of the city's churches were destroyed by fire and "the entire city burned as if a funeral pyre."⁸⁵ Pavia literally became a Hell on Earth and a locus of the dead. But true to hagiographical expectations,

⁸¹ VE 95: "Exercitum adversus Orestem patricium erigit et discordiae crimina clandestinus supplantator interserit." Later, in VE 101, Ennodius writes, "post quem [i.e. Orestem] adscitus in regnum Odovacris," implicitly echoing the sentiments of other sources, such as the *Auctorium Hauniense*, that Orestes had truly acted the part of an emperor, while his son was merely emperor in name. See MacGeorge (2002), 279-81.

⁸² For the Devil, VE 95: "ille quietis nescius et scelerum patrator inimicus... Odovacerm ad regnandi ambitum extollit..." Hence, though Odovacer himself raises the army, the Devil instigates him. The "adversary" as the Devil is quite common in hagiographical treatments, paralleling the life of Christ and the archetypical holy man, Anthony.

⁸³ VE 95: "Inimicus... inquirat, quibus virum integerrimum passionibus lacessiret."

⁸⁴ VE 97: "Currunt ad ecclesiae domum, totis direptionis incendiis aestunantes, dum quem videbant erogare plurima, perimensa suspicabantur abscondere. Pro nefas! thesauros cruda barbaries quaerebat in terra quos ille ad caelestia secreta transmiserat. Diripitur etiam sancta eius germana et seorsum ab eo captivitatis sorte deducitur." Also taken into captivity at this time was the noble matron Luminosa.

⁸⁵ VE 98: "O dolor! utraeque ecclesiae flammis hostilibus concremantur, tota civitas quasi rogos effulgurat."

Epiphanius was somehow able to inspire fear and dread in these barbarians, ransoming captives and beginning the processes of rebuilding even as the city itself burned.⁸⁶

With the death of Orestes, however, the situation in Pavia appeared to return to normal, so normal, in fact, that it is difficult to find evidence of any change at all. Whatever Odovacer's actual constitutional position,⁸⁷ Ennodius' language makes clear that he viewed the king as no different than his imperial predecessors, commenting in a rather formulaic style, "after him [i.e. Orestes], Odovacer was admitted into royal power."⁸⁸ Removed from its literary context and at an initial glance, of course, this statement seems to suggest that Ennodius did perceive a difference between Odovacer and the Roman emperors preceding him.⁸⁹ His use of *regnum* in this instance is especially important, since the term in its simplest English translation means "kingdom" and a kingdom is ruled by a king (*rex*), exactly the title Odovacer appropriated for himself. In contrast, the Roman Empire was traditionally referred to as the *imperium* (Empire) or *res publica* (Republic) and ruled by an *imperator* (emperor), *princeps* (first citizen/prince), or *Augustus* (Augustus). As intimated above, however, the problem for modern readers is that in later Latin the distinctions between all these terms were becoming increasingly blurred. In the early imperial period the idea of a *princeps* as something other than a monarch had been a fundamental element to the fiction of a revived Republic. But time had slowly changed this. Outside Rome, especially in the Greek East, for instance, it had already been common to call the emperor king (*basileus*) and his empire the kingdom of the Romans (*Basileia ton Rhomaion*) in the first century. These Greekisms no doubt influenced Latin over the centuries, as did the increasingly despotic nature of imperial rule (complete with new titles) witnessed especially after the third century. Christianization, likewise, played an important role, providing new models of rulership that made Old Testament kings like David models for Christian emperors. Finally, the highly stylized Latin of the fifth and early sixth century, which required linguistic flexibility and a plethora of often creative synonyms, aided in the breakdown of barriers. In short, by the fifth century it would have been rather natural to hear the

⁸⁶ For this, VE 98-100. For Epiphanius as a liberator of captives, see chapter 4.

⁸⁷ A subject of some debate, but see chapter 2.

⁸⁸ VE 101: "Post quem adscitus in regnum Odovacris."

⁸⁹ See the commentary in Cook (1942), 197, and Cesa (1988), 178.

Roman Empire referred to as a *regnum* and *res publica* in the same work; the emperor as *princeps*, *dominus*, and *rex*; and his exercising of official powers as *regnare*, *dominare*, and *imperare*.⁹⁰

This ambiguity of imperial terminology in fifth- and sixth-century Italy will have greater implications later on, particularly because the use of many of these terms still tended to be a prerogative of the imperial court and a sign of Romanness.⁹¹ In the *Life of Epiphanius*, at any rate, it is quite clear that the use of such royal language in reference to emperors was more than natural, since Ennodius did so on multiple occasions. Two of the most telling instances were rather formulaic expressions of the assumption of power by emperors, and as such they resemble the statement above concerning Odovacer. In one, the emperor Glycerius was said to have been “admitted into royal power,” while in the other Ennodius claimed that “Nepos came into royal power after him [i.e. Glycerius].”⁹² In addition, Nepos actually had royal language applied to himself elsewhere, at one point even referring to himself and Euric as *reges*.⁹³ Ennodius’ statements concerning the assumption of royal power by Odovacer, therefore, cast him as nothing more than one in a long line of ambiguous rulers of the western Empire (Italy).⁹⁴

Somewhat differently from that of his predecessors, however, the depiction of Odovacer’s reign in the *Life of Epiphanius* continued with a fairly kind impression of its ruler, though Ennodius hinted at certain internal problems for which he would later criticize the regime in his panegyric. As with prior examples, the necessities of the hagiographical genre largely restricted his commentary to the personal exposure and interaction of the saint with the king and his agents. The perspective, again, was predominantly Ligurian and overwhelmingly episcopal in nature. Thus, through his benevolence to the region and its church, Odovacer was actually able to become a subject of praise in the account and could even be interpreted as an improvement of sorts over

⁹⁰ Again, see the important studies of Reydellet (1981), 25f., and Fanning (1992) and (2003). These terms could likewise be used interchangeably, hence, though it might be expected that a “*princeps imperat imperium/rem publicam*,” one might just as easily find that a “*princeps regnat rem publicam*.”

⁹¹ See chapter 2.

⁹² VE 79 “post hunc Glycerius ad regnum ascitus est”; VE 80, “post quem ad regnum Nepos accessit.” Cf. VE 101 (cited above) for Odovacer.

⁹³ For *reges*, VE 81. For Nepos’ view that God ordained him to rule (*regnandi*) the Roman Empire, VE 80.

⁹⁴ But cf. Reydellet (1981), 154-6, who suggests that Ennodius has substituted royalty for “la notion d’Empire,” transposing the *regnum Italiae* of the early sixth century back upon the Roman Empire of the late fifth century. His distinction between *regnum* and *imperium*, however, seems artificial.

rulers like Anthemius, who seemed (at least to the Ligurian nobility) to have had this region's ruin in mind in his quest to eliminate Ricimer. Ennodius, who only partially blamed Odovacer for his desire to rule,⁹⁵ explained that once hostilities had subsided Odovacer "began to honor the eminent man [i.e. Epiphanius] with such worship that he surpassed the kindnesses of all his predecessors."⁹⁶ Such kindness, however, was not just personal, but extended to the bishop's flock, to the city of Pavia, and to the larger region of Liguria. The city's two churches, for example, which had been ruined during the course of the civil war, were able to be rebuilt, and Epiphanius was even successful in securing from Odovacer a five-year exemption for Pavia from fiscal tribute.⁹⁷ The king also appeared to have been the object of a number of other embassies from the city, and judging from Ennodius' comments above, must have ruled in Epiphanius' favor on many occasions.⁹⁸

Indeed, in the *Life of Epiphanius*, only a brief episode specifically tarnished Odovacer's 15-year reign (besides, of course, its precipitation from a ruinous civil war). Ennodius claimed that Odovacer's praetorian prefect of Italy, Pelagius, had been particularly oppressive and that his greed-induced madness had acted "for the ruin of the landowners of Liguria."⁹⁹ The Prefect had apparently abused his right of *coemptio*, doubling the burden of tribute owed by the Ligurians and thus rendering it, already burdensome, unbearable.¹⁰⁰ Once again, the situation afforded Epiphanius an opportunity to intercede, and though only the scantest details were provided, Ennodius' short entry is revealing: "For the sake of all in need, he [Epiphanius] went quickly, asked, and obtained."¹⁰¹ The swiftness of this resolution seems as much a tribute to the hero's willingness to help as Odovacer's to give it.

⁹⁵ After all, the "Devil made him do it"!

⁹⁶ VE 101: "...tanto cultu insignem virum coepit honorare ut omnium decessorum suorum circa eum officia praecederet." Doubtless, *omnium decessorum* demonstrates the perceived equality of the respective positions of Odovacer and his imperial forebears.

⁹⁷ For the churches, VE 101-5. For the exemption, VE 106.

⁹⁸ VE 109: "post multas tamen quas apud Odovacrem regem legationes..." But see below and chapter 4 for a critique.

⁹⁹ VE 107: "in perniciem Liguriaie possessorum Pelagi, qui ea tempestate praetorio praefectus erat, repositus malitiae ardor efferbuit."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid: "Nam coemptionum enormitate gravissima tributa duplicabat reddebatque onus germinum quod simplex sustineri non poterat." For the practice of *coemptio*, see the commentary in Cook (1942), 197-8, and Cesa (1988), 181.

¹⁰¹ VE 107: "pro cunctorum necessitate alacer ambulavit poposcit obtinuit."

Thus far Ennodius' treatment of the era of Odovacer has demonstrated well the perceived continuity of the Roman Empire beyond 476. Odovacer appeared, at best, an emperor himself, since emperors from a fifth-century Ligurian perspective were little more than kings, or, at worst, a surrogate. The second aspect of continuity discussed above, that of decadence, however, barely made an appearance in this work's treatment, no doubt owing to the rather limited criteria by which Odovacer's reign was analyzed. Liguria, in fact, appeared to flourish under a kind of Odovacrian peace and its holy man to have been quite successful at securing the new ruler's benevolence.¹⁰² Compared to the cycle of civil wars witnessed in the last decades of the Roman Empire and featured as a backdrop to the prior episodes of the *Vita*, this really was an improvement. But there are cracks in the veneer, and upon closer scrutiny, Odovacer's role appears perhaps too passive throughout and more akin to apathy than benevolence. Indeed, in Ennodius' short treatment, Odovacer never took the initiative and his kindness, though available, always required seeking. In fact, his inactivity even allowed agents like Pelagius to abuse regions like Liguria to the point of near ruin and, though Odovacer eventually interceded (an act that surely won Ennodius' approval), he only did so after Epiphanius courted him.

While these critiques of Odovacer were not explicitly made in the *Life of Epiphanius* and must be teased out, they are nonetheless in accord with the more specific comments on his reign found in Ennodius' *Panegyric to Theoderic*. The purpose of this work, unlike the *Life*, was to praise the current ruler, Theoderic, who had invaded Italy and deposed Odovacer. Naturally, a rather effective way of doing this would have been to disparage the preceding regime, an act that Ennodius proved more than willing to accomplish. The Odovacer of the *Life of Epiphanius*, for instance, had kept a sinking ship of state afloat, but in the *Panegyric* the condition of that ship appears less than sturdy. In the *Life*, likewise, Odovacer himself had been kindly (at least to Epiphanius), but his governance passive and one of his agents particularly corrupt. In the *Panegyric*, however, it becomes clear that such corruption was not the exception, but the rule and that greediness extended as high up as the king himself. The *Panegyric* even claims that the Odovacrian peace, during which Pavia seemed to benefit in the *Life*, was a sham, for the presumed loyalty and bravery of Odovacer's soldiers was purchasable and could

¹⁰² But see Cesa (1988), 178-81, with chapter 4.

falter at a whim. These concomitant problems, moreover, were imagined to extend beyond the administration of Odovacer, trickling down to Italo-Roman society as a whole. Decline, per usual, begot decline in a domino-effect like fashion. And again, though the *Panegyric* was a propagandistic piece and as such an embellishment, it nevertheless hinted at an image of the past, however distorted, that allowed for the Theoderican golden age.¹⁰³

In his panegyric, Ennodius introduced Odovacer's Italy rather depressingly as a once "mighty land that had grown weak through the worthlessness of its governors."¹⁰⁴ Odovacer himself, though not specifically named, was described as a "ravager of the state" who had "brought failure to the public resources" through lavish personal spending and had increased taxation not so much "through tributes as rapine." Such policies, Ennodius claimed, had "driven private assets into difficulty" and incurred the hatred of many.¹⁰⁵ If this was not bad enough, the peace and stability secured by Odovacer's revolt in 476 had also proven shaky. The king could still command his legions, but he did so "cold with fear."¹⁰⁶ "Obedience," Ennodius explained, "was suspect" and Odovacer's lowly origins and assumption of power through a militarily coup exacerbated his suspicions. If he could seize power, he believed, any soldier could, and because his own officers were aware of this fact, "they feared that for which they were being feared."¹⁰⁷

Beyond this mutual distrust, Ennodius additionally denigrated the king's soldiers for their cowardice and infidelity in battle. He referred to them initially as a "faction of men apt to flee"; later he asserted that while engaging Theoderic's army their "pledges of loyalty faltered from prior decay" and "the feebleness of their limbs failed to complete

¹⁰³ Cf. Nixon and Rodgers (1994), 33-5, on the value of panegyrics as historical sources. Cf. Rota (2001), 203.

¹⁰⁴ *PanTh* 23: "Iam diuturnae quietis dispendio per gubernantium vilitatem potens terra consenuerat." The Latin text used throughout is from Rohr's 1995 *MGH* edition, though the edition of Rota (2002), which differs in punctuation in some places, as well as Vogel's *MGH* edition were consulted.

¹⁰⁵ *PanTh* 23-24: "...qui suorum prodigus incrementa aerarii non tam poscebat surgere vectigalibus quam rapinis. Saeviente ambitu pauper dominus odia effusione contraxerat, sed nec defrudatis viribus quod minuebat opulentiae iungebatur affectui. Tunc enim aulae angustia in artum res privatas agitabat, nec micare usquam scintillas famulantum extinctus tyranni fomes indulserat." Cf. *AnonVal* 60, with chapter 4. Had Odovacer's seeming inertia in the *Life of Epiphanius* stemmed from this apparent love of the high life?

¹⁰⁶ *PanTh* 24: "Metuebat parentes exercitus... nam ire ad nutum suum legiones et remeare pavore algidus imperabat."

¹⁰⁷ *PanTh* 24: "suspecta enim est oboedientia quae famulatur indignis, et quotiens praelatos convenit conscientia stirpis ultimae, et illud metuunt, quod timentur."

their promised attacks.”¹⁰⁸ In a final engagement Odovacer was even depicted trying to ply his lax soldiers with fine trappings and payments, apparently in an attempt to buy (once more) their loyalty.¹⁰⁹ Odovacer, himself, likewise, was described as a coward throughout the account. At one point Ennodius declared to the long-dead king, “the battle consumed your lines while you watched, not toiled.”¹¹⁰ The contrast with Theoderic, the story’s hero, who twice in the course of the panegyric fought heroically alongside his troops, is unmistakable.¹¹¹

But the reign of Odovacer, as intimated above, had repercussions beyond this weakening of the army and bankrupting of public and private assets. Not only had the venerable institutions of the Roman Empire suffered under Odovacer’s poor stewardship, but Rome and the Roman way of life had suffered as well. Ennodius described the city of Rome, perhaps Romanness’ greatest representative, as old and decrepit leading up to, and in the immediate aftermath of, the Ostrogothic invasion. At one point he specifically addressed a personified Eternal City and beckoned her to come to Theoderic, “unmindful of your old age” and “trembling in your slipping footsteps.”¹¹² The beleaguered and war-weary Rome of earlier panegyrics had at last succumbed to a long-overdue senescence, neglected by an impious Odovacer.¹¹³

The Romans, themselves, on the other hand, and by this Ennodius surely meant Italo-Romans, were depicted as victims of poor policies. Theoderic’s predecessors, not

¹⁰⁸ For faction, *PanTh* 25: “ne vel a negotio perituris veniret fiducia, pars fugacium proelia concitavit”; for faltering and feeble, *PanTh* 37: “adhuc turorum dexterarum de praecedenti tabe titubabant nec peragebat votivos impetus membrorum inbecillitas.”

¹⁰⁹ *PanTh* 39: “Dum apud Veronam tuam apparatu nobili laxis manibus pugna instruebatur inpendiis.” An apparently tricky sentence for all translators. Rota (2002), 332, provides a long discussion of her own translation which somehow makes *laxis manibus* act adverbially as in “loosely”. Rohr (1995), 225, on the other hand, accounts for the *inpendiis* by making it an adverb “aufwendig” (costly) and translates *laxis manibus* adjectivally as “weit ausgreifen” (widely taken), in reference to the *apparatu*. My translation reads *laxis manibus* as dative and is fairly straightforward in its approach to the Latin: “while at your Verona the battle was prepared for your lax soldiers/forces with fine trappings and payments.”

¹¹⁰ *PanTh* 38: “Interea acies tuae aspectu consummant proelia, non labore.”

¹¹¹ For these episodes, see *PanTh* 31-35 (against the Gepids) and 42-47 (against Odovacer). The latter encounter is discussed in chapter 3.

¹¹² *PanTh* 48: “Illic vellem ut aetatis inmemor, Roma, conmeares. Si venires lapsantibus tremebunda vestigiis, aevum gaudia conmutarent.”

¹¹³ See, for instance, Sidonius’ *Pan. on Avitus*, ln. 45-60, and *Pan. on Majorian*, ln. 35-50. The Rome featured in these works, a likeness of Minerva, is still rather youthful, capable of brandishing a spear, and pugnacious to say the least. The theme of Rome as battle-weary and elderly, however, has precedents in earlier panegyrics. For a discussion, Roberts (2001), 535-6.

just Odovacer, had “loved ignorance, and never did what was praiseworthy.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, eloquence, an ideal so important to classically trained rhetoricians like Ennodius, an indicator of Roman nobility, and a weapon of sorts particularly effective against uncouth barbarians like Euric, had been abandoned, replaced by the plough. Under Odovacer, it was bemoaned, “bodily strength negated whatever [eloquence’s] expertise once bestowed.”¹¹⁵ Romans, just as in the *Life of Epiphanius*, were playing the role of barbarians, only now the phenomenon was universal. Their lack of appreciation for educated men had also led to further corruption and decline; without erudition “the outcome of lawsuits gave way to chance and no value was given to written accounts.”¹¹⁶ “Everywhere,” Ennodius concluded, “one massive sadness oppressed us, since inactivity was impairing the faculties of eloquent men, while rapacious disregard was stealing away the ostentation of our elders and youths were not aroused towards emulation worthy of pursuit.”¹¹⁷ Italo-Roman society, it seemed, was losing itself.

Cassiodorus: A Second Opinion

To this point this chapter has relied exclusively on the writings of Magnus Felix Ennodius, a classically educated churchman of Gallo-Roman origins with a uniquely north-Italian (Ligurian) outlook. Ennodius has acted more or less as the voice of Italo-Roman aristocratic malaise vis-à-vis the decline of Roman power during the course of the fifth century. Relevant passages from his most extensive works, the *Life of Epiphanius* and the *Panegyric to Theoderic*, have been closely examined, providing a specific and coherent interpretation of this period. In Ennodius’ version of the past, which was influenced both by his own experiences and contemporary approval of the Theoderican regime, there were key factors that had contributed to overall notions of decadence and decline. The Empire, he believed, had been denuded of its provinces and stripped of its honor by savages; it was feeble and weak with old age; it was a ship piloted by un-Roman, inept, and greedy rulers; and its sorry condition had eventually led to social decay extending to the masses.

¹¹⁴ *PanTh* 76: “Amaverunt praecessores tui inscitiam, quia numquam laudanda gesserunt.”

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*: “Sordebat inter aratra facundissimus et, quod peritia dederat, vis negabat.”

¹¹⁶ *PanTh* 77: “In casu negotiorum nutabat eventus, quando litteris genius non dabatur.”

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*: “Unus ubique ingenia maeror oppresserat, quia adtuebant otia eloquentium facultates; pompam seniorum edax neglegentia possidebat nec accendebatur tiro aemulatione sectanda.”

Despite the coherence of this picture, however, it might easily be argued that this version of the past was unique to Ennodius and possibly even exceptional. Indeed, perhaps Ennodius should not be considered representative at all; the very notion of one individual representing the entirety of Italo-Roman society seems dubious, not least because Italy and her Roman population were both quite diverse.¹¹⁸ As a man of Gallic origins and a staunch loyalist of the progressively frontierized province of Liguria,¹¹⁹ Ennodius himself is even indicative of this diversity. But a regional identity of this sort should not necessarily suggest that Ennodius was out of tune with mainstream ideas, especially given his aristocratic background, traditional education, and connections with the noblest senators of Rome.¹²⁰ This is not to say that Ennodius' version of the past (or the present for that matter) was the only understanding in circulation,¹²¹ but many of his sentiments do find harmony with those evidenced in other Italian sources. These corroborating sources will be encountered in later chapters, but for the present discussion the most important (and most extensive in their treatment) are the works of Cassiodorus Senator.

Cassiodorus' experience of the fifth century must have been quite different from Ennodius'. Like Ennodius he was a classically educated orator whose training imparted traditional expectations of a particular Roman order. Like Ennodius he was also deeply attached to the region in which he was raised, in this instance southern Italy, specifically Bruttium and Lucania.¹²² Yet born and raised shortly after the Ostrogothic invasion of Italy, Cassiodorus had no personal experience of the pre-Theoderican age. His understanding of the fifth century, therefore, was informed largely by the impressions of those around him who had lived through this period, contemporaries of Epiphanius or

¹¹⁸ On this diversity, see Wickham (1981), 9-14, and Giardina (1997).

¹¹⁹ On this frontierization, see chapter 5.

¹²⁰ For Ennodius' connections, Moorhead (1992), 155-8; Gioanni (2006), LXVII-LXXIII; Kennell (2000), 31f.

¹²¹ There are known partisans of Odovacer who indeed stood by their king until the bitter end, the most notable being Petrus Marcellinus Felix Liberius, who will be encountered throughout this study. Doubtless men like Liberius were much more sympathetic to the reign of Odovacer.

¹²² See, for instance, *Variae* 12.15, for an encomium of Cassiodorus' home region. Cf. *Variae* 11.14, for a similar laudation of the region around Como, an area ironically disparaged by the northerner Ennodius in a letter to the senator Faustus (#10).

Ennodius.¹²³ Their impressions, however, would have been markedly different from those of an individual from the north, where a great deal of the internal violence and disruption of the fifth century had occurred and where the presence of the imperial court was more strongly felt. Cassiodorus' Italy was far removed from the world of high politics and intrigue that surrounded Ennodius and Epiphanius, and had long since devolved to a veritable state of self-rule.¹²⁴

Yet because he was the scion of a politically-active family, Cassiodorus' conception of the past was also linked more specifically to the successes and failures of his family on the greater political stage. Indeed, the Cassiodori had been involved in imperial politics since at least the middle of the fifth century, holding offices under the final emperors and continuing to do so under Odovacer and his Gothic successors. His father had even held two countships under Odovacer before defecting to Theoderic, who granted him regional governorships in southern Italy and later the office of praetorian prefect and a patriciate.¹²⁵ His, therefore, was a family that had been successful in the fifth century, despite the adversity claimed by Ennodius, and this success might have rendered Cassiodorus (and men like him) more favorably disposed to the past.

Though true, Cassiodorus was no admirer of the fifth century and may have even coined the term "modern" (*modernus*) as a means of separating his own, contemporary era of blessedness from the gloomy epoch preceding it.¹²⁶ The present had much to recommend to Cassiodorus, but the past was disappointing from the perspective of an aristocrat born of a traditional office-holding family. It was certainly not without significance, for instance, that his family had achieved its greatest political successes during the reign of Theoderic. His father's achievements under Odovacer were notable, but they had reached their zenith owing to Theoderic's patronage. Likewise, and with

¹²³ The books that Cassiodorus read likewise made an impression, particularly on his feelings about Gaul. For this, see chapter 5.

¹²⁴ Southern Italy was not, of course, a safe haven from trouble. Cassiodorus' great-grandfather had organized defenses against a Vandal incursion sometime before 455. For this, *Variae* 1.4.14, with *PLRE* 2, 263-4 ("Cassiodorus 1"). By the time Cassiodorus was born in the 490s, however, local factionalism had become a greater source of violence. For this and the largely "hands-off" policy of the central administration, see Cracco Ruggini (1986) and Noyé (2007). In a sense, southern Italy was also a frontier, removed from the central authority rather like the "Wild West."

¹²⁵ Much of the elder Cassiodorus' career is described by Cassiodorus himself in *Variae* 1.3 and 1.4. Cf. O'Donnell (1979), 18-20, and *PLRE* 2, 264-5 ("Cassiodorus 3").

¹²⁶ On *modernus*, Freund (1957). For blessedness, see the citations from his *Chronica* and fragmentary oration in chapters 4 and 5.

similar patronage, Cassiodorus himself had even surpassed these feats, a clear indication of rising (sixth-century) fortunes for the Cassiodori. While still a youth he served as a quaestor of the palace (507-11); later he was consul (514), master of offices (523-527), and finally praetorian prefect of Italy (533-537).¹²⁷ Such lofty accomplishments were a source of honor, to be sure, yet they could also serve as a patent reminder that times had not always been so felicitous for this noble house.

For Cassiodorus, then, the fifth century's decline was not just about a loss of prestige or territory for the Empire (though both were important). There was also a personal element involved that could be correlated directly to a perceived loss of honor for the traditional office-holding nobility. The situation in Italy was thus not quite as Ennodius had presented it. Society had not simply abandoned its core values through a steady process of attrition, imitating its increasingly "barbarized" leaders. Instead, the leadership itself was to blame for ceasing to promote to the highest offices of state those men who actually cherished these values, among whom Cassiodorus could count his ancestors. The Cassiodori and those like them, in other words, had not become barbarians. But the net result was still an impression of a fifth-century Italy that had been badly in need of resuscitation. This rescuing, Theoderic's government claimed, had been achieved in Cassiodorus' lifetime, and Cassiodorus, in his role as both an ardent partisan and dutiful publicist, seconded these sentiments.

Cassiodorus the Historian

It is well known that Cassiodorus wrote an extensive history, designated by him as a "Roman history of the Goths," that rather unfortunately does not survive.¹²⁸ References to it suggest that the work consisted of twelve books and that among its topics was a royal genealogy of the Amal house, the royal clan of Theoderic.¹²⁹ Though the scholarly debate concerning this lost work is tremendous, there is little doubt that, as an official commission, it must have echoed sentiments of the Theoderican era as a golden

¹²⁷ For an overview of Cassiodorus' political career, O'Donnell (1979), 25-32; Barnish (1992), xxxix-liii; and *PLRE* 2, 265-7 ("Cassiodorus 4").

¹²⁸ *Variae* 9.25.5: "Originem gothicam historiam fecit esse romanam." Its relationship to the *Getica* of Jordanes will not be treated here. But see chapter 3 for relevant bibliography.

¹²⁹ For twelve books, Jordanes, *Getica* 1.1: "duodecim Senatoris volumina"; for Amal genealogy, *Variae* 9.25.5 with 11.1.19 (discussed in chapter 3).

age and probably would have contained material relevant to its author's (negative) conception of the fifth century. Nonetheless, since this work has not survived, scholars must rely instead on a less elaborate historical opus in order to gain a glimpse of Cassiodorus' understanding of the past. Though rather limited in scope, Cassiodorus' world chronicle, which was composed in 519 for Theoderic's son-in-law and then consul, Eutharic, provides an interesting glimpse into its author's conception of the fifth century.¹³⁰ When coupled with chance references in his more substantial *Variae* collection, this work demonstrates that Cassiodorus was generally sympathetic to the views expressed by Ennodius.

The *Chronica* is, as should be expected, fairly straightforward, but does include some particularly noteworthy entries. Its commentary on imperial rule in general will be revisited shortly. For now, it should simply be mentioned that the terminology used to describe emperorship in this work was just as vague as with other contemporary authors.¹³¹ Unlike Ennodius, however, Cassiodorus' depiction of fifth-century events appears more traditional, though admittedly the chronicle genre hardly allowed for much nuance. Barbarians were almost always barbarians, and Roman emperors tended to be legitimate, unquestionable heads of state.¹³² The best example of this is Cassiodorus' treatment of Ricimer, whom Ennodius had depicted in a rather sympathetic light. Cassiodorus, on the other hand, took a position analogous to the one expressed by Anthemius in the *Life of Epiphanius*, i.e. that Ricimer was a crafty barbarian and an enemy of the state. In the chronicle, Ricimer was blamed for the deaths of the emperors Majorian and Severus, the latter said to have been deceitfully poisoned by him.¹³³ The murder of Anthemius likewise received a serious rebuke: "After he made Olybrius Emperor at Rome, the patrician Ricimer killed Anthemius contrary to the reverence owed

¹³⁰ I find it difficult to accept the conclusion that Cassiodorus' chronicle is simply a consular chronicle, despite its author's claim to have composed "consules in ordinem." The chronicle begins with Adam and continues with Assyrian kings and then Latin and Roman kings (none of which was a consul!). It is true that the bulk of the chronicle is concerned with the listing of consuls, but this is also the case in the rather Romano-centric Christian world chronicles on which Cassiodorus based his own. Perhaps, by 519, the two had become synonymous. Cf. O'Donnell (1979), 15.

¹³¹ *Regnare* and *imperare* are synonymous throughout, as are *imperium* and *regnum*.

¹³² But Cf. O'Donnell (1979), 38-41, who points out certain instances of Cassiodorus' deliberate distortion of his sources in episodes dealing with the Goths, casting them in a more favorable light.

¹³³ *CassChron*, anno 461: "His cons. Maiorianus inmissione Ricimeris extinguitur, cui Severum natione Lucanum Ravennae succedere fecit in regnum"; and anno 465: "His cons., ut dicitur Ricimeris fraude, Severus Romae in Palatio veneno peremptus est."

to a prince and the laws of affinity.”¹³⁴ This act itself was specifically labeled a crime (*scelus*), and no doubt, if this period was featured in his non-extant history, the Ricimer depicted would have seemed almost the alter-ego of the general presented in the *Life of Epiphanius*. Still, though interpreting the specific events rather differently than Ennodius, Cassiodorus’ language nevertheless demonstrates that he too understood the situation to have been “contrary” to the way it should have been, echoing Ennodius’ sentiments of the fifth century as a world turned upside-down.

This pro-imperial, traditionalist reading of the past may suggest that Cassiodorus was generally more sympathetic to the imperial cause than Ennodius, especially to “little Greek” emperors like Anthemius.¹³⁵ Two-sentence entries in a chronicle, however, are admittedly little on which to base this and so further substantiation is needed. As already suggested, the *Variae* can serve in such a capacity. Here, Cassiodorus’ disappointment with fifth-century leadership becomes much clearer, and critiques bearing greater resemblance to those made by Ennodius can be readily discerned.

Like his Ligurian contemporary, Cassiodorus presented a version of events in which fifth-century (imperial) ineptitude had cost the Roman Empire provinces and prestige, and where sixth-century reprisals had avenged such injuries. The context of this commentary was an encomium, delivered in Cassiodorus’ own name before the Senate at Rome, which treated the regency of Amalasuētha, Theoderic’s daughter. The work provided its author with the opportunity to delve even farther into the fifth century than Ennodius had. It was common knowledge that Amalasuētha’s regency was not the first instance of the West being ruled by a woman. A century prior Galla Placidia, the daughter of Theodosius the Great, had served in the same capacity for her purple-clad son, Valentinian III. But whereas, with hindsight, Placidia had largely failed to live up to her noble lineage, Amalasuētha was depicted as exceeding, by far, all expectations.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ *CassChron*, anno 427: “His cons. patricius Ricimer Romae facto imperatore Olybrio Anthemium contra reverentiam principis et ius adfinitatis cum gravi clade civitatis extinguit.”

¹³⁵ Cassiodorus’ origins in the south of Italy (*Magna Graecia*), which had strong and enduring connections with Greece, might have made him open to a “Greek” emperor; more important are his family’s origins, which appear to have been eastern (possibly Syrian). For Cassiodorus’ appreciation of Greek culture, see Garzya (1986). It is unclear, however, how much Greek he knew. Cf. O’Donnell (1979), chapter 6.

¹³⁶ *Variae* 11.1.19: “hanc si parentem cohors illa regalis aspiceret, tamquam in speculum purissimum sua praeconia mox videret.” A description of ten Amal rulers then follows these lines, each praised for a virtue Amalasuētha likewise had. For these virtues and their significance, see chapter 3.

The former had played a fundamental role in ruining the Roman Empire, the latter in its continued florescence under a Gothic aegis.

Cassiodorus' objections to the reign of Placidia obviously should not have been based on her gender, since the comparison that was being made was between two women. Nevertheless, the Roman view of women as naturally infirm and fickle, defined as *infirmitas* and *levitas sexus*, did subtly underlie his critique. It was evident, in Cassiodorus' estimation, that both women's gender-specific qualities were demonstrably opposed and had had consequences for their respective reigns. Though Placidia was praised foremost for her imperial lineage and for rearing a purple-clad son (fundamental roles for an imperial matron), she was denigrated for her rather feeble administration of the Empire.¹³⁷ Feeble, construed by the adverb *remisse*, was a clever word choice on Cassiodorus' part, since, on the one hand, it suggested the weakness understood to be innate in all womankind (*infirmitas*) and, on the other, its ancillary meaning of "peacefully" or "placidly" (*placide*) played quite nicely upon Placidia's own name. In keeping with this idea, Cassiodorus complained that Placidia had destroyed her soldiers "with too much peace,"¹³⁸ later commenting that long periods of peace "soften" (*molire*) soldiers;¹³⁹ this softness, too, was a condition of the feminine sex, suggesting a kind of feminization of the Empire's once valiant and manly soldiers. Placidia's placidity, in short, had seriously undermined the Roman Empire's ability to assert or even defend itself.

In contrast to Placidia's softness and weakness, Amalasuetha was a perfect combination of the masculine and feminine qualities necessary for a female ruler. Her foresight, a virtue inherited from her father,¹⁴⁰ had prevented too much or too little warfare from having a negative effect on the disposition of her soldiers. As a result,

¹³⁷ *Variae* 11.1.9: "Placidiam mundi opinione celebratam, aliquorum principum prosapia gloriosam purpurato filio studisse percipimus, cuius dum remisse administrat imperium, indecenter cognoscitur imminutum."

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, "militem quoque nimia quiete dissolvit."

¹³⁹ *Variae* 11.1.10: "Qui [i.e. exercitus] provida dispositione libratus nec assiduis bellis adteritur nec iterum longa pace mollitur."

¹⁴⁰ *Variae* 11.1.19: "enituit... sapientia, ut iam vidistis, inclitus pater [i.e. Theoderic]." For the connection between *sapientia* and *providentia*, both virtues regularly associated with emperors, see Rota (2002), 96, and Nixon and Rogers (1994), 10-12. Foresightedness and wisdom are regularly applied to Theoderic in the sources. See, among others, *Variae* 3.41, 4.5, and 4.19; *PanTh* 51; *AnonVal* 61; Jordanes, *Romana* 349; and Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.27.

Cassiodorus claimed, “our soldiers terrify our enemies,”¹⁴¹ a situation rather different from that of the fifth century. The extent of this terror was phenomenal and treated at length by Cassiodorus, his references to fearful or subservient Franks, Burgundians, and even Byzantines no doubt reminding his audience that in fairly recent times these very foes had posed serious threats to Italy.¹⁴² Such valor, by its very Latin name, *virtus*, was a condition of manliness obviously alien to Placidia and her times, but now embraced by the Amal princess. Though manly, Amalasuetha was also a mother and, just as Placidia, had acted as a conduit for royalty through her childbearing capacity. Her dual role as both *mater patriae* and *pater patriae* was, hence, nothing short of a miracle. Cassiodorus went so far as to exclaim, “Behold, under God’s watch our happy mistress has done what is excellent for both sexes, for she has begotten for us a glorious king and defended a very extensive empire with the fortitude of her mind.”¹⁴³ This wondrous duality, moreover, could stand as a metaphor for the success of the golden Amal era: the unity of Goths and Romans, which had ultimately saved the Roman Empire, was a marriage of sorts contracted between the wise, yet effeminate and decadent Romans with the courageous and manly, yet unruly Goths.¹⁴⁴ Placidia’s reign, in contrast, stood for the decadence and decline of the fifth century, a time of proud Roman leadership that was ultimately ineffectual and weak.

Cassiodorus’ critique also extended beyond the specific qualities of these two queens. Like Ennodius, he believed that the loss of territory long-held by the West was indicative of the incompetent management characteristic of the fifth century, management that had ultimately dealt a serious blow to Roman prestige. But, whereas Ennodius’ *Life of Epiphanius* had emphasized the loss of Gaul to the archetypically barbarous Euric, Cassiodorus revealingly focused on the predation of Illyricum not by

¹⁴¹ *Variae* 11.1.10: “Sub hac autem domina... iuvante deo, noster exercitus terret externos.”

¹⁴² For Byzantines, *Variae* 11.1.10-11, which discusses certain skirmishes between the eastern Romans and the Goths within the vicinity of the Danube. Here the Byzantines act as the aggressors, but ultimately beg for a humiliating peace. No other source verifies this conflict. For a Gallic campaign against the Frankish king Theuderic I (also otherwise unattested), *Variae* 11.1.12. Here the Franks, described as “conquerors of so many nations” and “always the first to jump into battle” are said to fear engaging the Goths. For the Burgundians, *Variae* 11.1.13, where they appear placid and obedient in order to keep that which they already control. Cassiodorus claims, “the moment the Burgundian put down his arms he defended a safer kingdom.” See also chapters 3 and 5.

¹⁴³ *Variae* 1.11.14: “Ecce praestante deo felix domina quod habet eximium uterque sexus implevit: nam et gloriosum regem nobis edidit et latissimum imperium animi fortitudine vidicavit.”

¹⁴⁴ See chapter 3, especially.

barbarians but by other Romans, namely the “Greeks” at Constantinople. Of course, Cassiodorus himself was by no means anti-Greek and clearly viewed both eastern and western courts as legitimate sources of Roman power.¹⁴⁵ But his portrayal of these events reiterates the tension between western and eastern Romans already encountered in the Anthemius episode of the *Life of Epiphanius*. As a westerner and Calabrian-Italian in his sympathies, Cassiodorus naturally sided with the West whenever conflict arose between both empires. And in this particular episode, since Italy’s sphere of influence had been violated by the East, the eastern Romans were portrayed as usurpers and betrayers of their western consorts. Despite the outrageous presumption on the part of the East, however, it was the weakness of Placidia and the outrage that it had allowed that ultimately received Cassiodorus’ rebuke.

The particular straits in which Placidia and her young son Valentinian III had found themselves at this time were not mentioned by Cassiodorus, no doubt since, though they could have further demonstrated her weakness, they might have also justified her actions. The empress and her son had in fact stood on shaky ground when they embarked for Italy in 424. Placidia had abandoned her brother and western emperor, Honorius, for Constantinople the year prior, and upon his death a rival had been proclaimed emperor at Ravenna. It was unclear whether the current eastern emperor, Theodosius II, would even back Valentinian’s claim to the western throne; perhaps he would recognize the usurper or simply try to assume control of the West himself. An agreement was therefore necessary from Placidia’s perspective in order to secure her son’s recognition and needed military support against the western usurper. With this in mind, she offered portions of Illyricum to the East and, in exchange, acquired recognition, an army, and eventually a bride from the house of Theodosius, binding East and West even further.¹⁴⁶

Though the bargain was quite effective for Placidia’s purposes, in retrospect, Cassiodorus was unimpressed with it, claiming that it had “indecently impaired [the

¹⁴⁵ The chronicle refers to both realms as the “occidentale” and “orientale” imperium respectively. Theodosius II is also said to have ruled the roman imperium alone (i.e. both east and west) until appointing Valentinian III as his Caesar (though later referred to as Augustus). Cf. *CassChron*, anno 423 and 424.

¹⁴⁶ For reconstructions, see Bury (1958), vol. 1, 221-5, and Heather (2006), 258-60. The fact that Theodosius II had not recognized Valentinian III’s father, Constantius III, as emperor, presumably rendered his aid even more uncertain.

western] Empire”¹⁴⁷ and that Placidia had “acquired a daughter-in-law for herself through the loss of Illyricum and caused a division lamentable to the provinces.”¹⁴⁸ It mattered not from a sixth-century perspective that peace and harmony had been restored, since this “harmony” was viewed as a state of inequality and meant the loss of territory and face to the East. Cassiodorus could therefore justifiably conclude that “he [i.e. Valentinian] endured, while protected by his mother, what without her could scarcely have been suffered,”¹⁴⁹ and continue in his encomium of Amalasuētha by praising her reconquest of some of those very lands once willfully ceded by Placidia.¹⁵⁰

Cassiodorus and Odovacer

Thus far the examination of Cassiodorus’ works has demonstrated the broader appeal of some of Ennodius’ sentiments concerning the status of the Empire during the fifth century. Though neither wholeheartedly agreed with the other, and sometimes, owing to their individual backgrounds, even patently disagreed, both found common ground in their general assessment of the outrages of this period. The Roman world was being turned upside-down. Whether emperors were lazy, weak, barbarous, or all of the above, the simple fact was that they had failed the state, the greatest expression of this being the loss of provinces and, by association, prestige for the Roman Empire (embodied, of course, in Italy). In Ennodius’ estimation, the Roman Empire continued well beyond 476, but so too did its concomitant miseries. Cassiodorus shared this vision, presenting a history of fifth-century decadence culminating in the reign of Odovacer and decisively ended by the glorious advent of Theoderic.

Since it doubtless would have provided rather important details as to the nature of Odovacer’s reign, it is once again particularly unfortunate that Cassiodorus’ official history does not survive. Nevertheless, both the *Variae* and the *Chronica* suggest that Cassiodorus’ impression of Odovacer was just as ambiguous as Ennodius’, viewing him as more or less a successor of the western emperors. Most telling, perhaps, is the world

¹⁴⁷ *Variae* 11.1.9: “...cuius dum remisse administrat imperium, indecenter congoscitur imminutum.”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid: “amissione Illyrici comparavit factaque est coniunctio regnantis divisio dolenda provinciis.”

¹⁴⁹ Ibid: “Pertulit a matre protectus quod vix pati potuit destitutus.”

¹⁵⁰ *Variae* 9.1.10: “contra Orientis principis votum Romanum fecit esse Danuvium.” Much of Pannonia had already been reclaimed by Theoderic during the Sirmian War, an act likewise praised for its restitutive effect. Cf. *PanTh* 69, which concludes, “interea ad limitem suum Romana regna remearunt.”

chronicle genre itself with its divisions into nations and eras. Had Cassiodorus imagined that 476 represented a decisive break, a new heading would have been necessary.¹⁵¹ That Odovacer's and later Theoderic's reign fell under the rubric "Imperatores Romani" surely implies that the chronicler's impression was one of continuity. Likewise, in the few references to Odovacer and his reign found in the *Variae*, Cassiodorus seems to echo this understanding of continuity, referring to Odovacer tellingly as a *princeps* and his realm as the *res publica*.¹⁵²

It is nevertheless clear from the chronicle entry for 476 that Cassiodorus was aware of certain differences between Odovacer and his predecessors. Specifically, Cassiodorus wrote that Odovacer had "assumed the name of king, though he employed neither purple nor the imperial insignia."¹⁵³ The title "rex," of course, should not be alarming, since, as demonstrated above, kingship was thought by fifth- and sixth-century Italo-Romans to be wholly consistent with imperial rule. What was strange, then, was not that Odovacer had taken the name of king, but that he refused to adopt the proper attire of one, i.e. imperial purple and insignia.¹⁵⁴ Cassiodorus might have seen this as especially bizarre, given that in an earlier entry he had been keen to point out the various styles of adornment historically adopted by Roman emperors.¹⁵⁵ Odovacer's decision to avoid these trappings, therefore, was an obvious break with a particular ornamental tradition. It was backward, but perhaps did not extend beyond this. Indeed, rather than an indication of subservience or deference to the eastern emperor, which was, in fact, Odovacer's actual intention,¹⁵⁶ this peculiar manifestation of royalty (or lack thereof) stood in Cassiodorus' eyes as further witness to the inappropriateness and illegitimacy of his rule. A ruler who refused to dress like one was perverse, and his decision hence a

¹⁵¹ An educated man like Cassiodorus was certainly aware of these conventions.

¹⁵² *Variae* 5.41.5: "in penuria rei publicae"; *Variae* 8.17.5: "cum princeps non esset erectus." For more on this "princely" language, see chapter 2.

¹⁵³ *CassChron*, anno 476: "His cons. ab Odovacre Orestes et frater eius Paulus extincti sunt nomenque regis Odovacar adsumpsit, cum tamen nec purpura nec regalibus uteretur insignibus." Considering the interchangeability of royal and imperial language in the chronicle, "regalibus" might just as legitimately be translated "imperial" (as above) as "royal". Barnish (1992), 134, agrees with this reading, though doubting the "imperial" qualities of Odovacer's rule.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Fanning (2003), 51, who concludes similarly.

¹⁵⁵ *CassChron*, anno 298: "His cons. primus Diocletianus adorari se iussit ut deum et gemmas vestibus calciamentisque conseruit, cum ante eum omnes imperatores in modum iudicum salutarentur et chlamydem tantum purpuream a privato habitu plus haberent." This is discussed at greater length in chapter 2.

¹⁵⁶ See chapter 2.

further indication of the disrespect for tradition felt to be ubiquitous at the time.¹⁵⁷ That Cassiodorus refused to associate Odovacer with any title for the remainder of his chronicle no doubt seconded this sentiment, echoing, at the same time, the official Theoderican (and Byzantine) position that Odovacer was a usurper.¹⁵⁸

Usurpation, however, was a common enough phenomenon throughout the history of the Empire for its occurrence to be an unfortunate, yet inevitable, condition of Roman rule.¹⁵⁹ So, while the Odovacer depicted in Cassiodorus' chronicle was indeed a usurper, this fact alone neither disqualified his realm from being the western Roman Empire nor him from being its ruler. Cassiodorus' impression was not, therefore, that the western Empire continued to exist by virtue of the survival in Dalmatia (at least until 480) of its deposed emperor, Julius Nepos. Nor did he maintain that Italy retained its imperial status because the eastern Emperor Zeno nominally ruled over it.¹⁶⁰ While both views acquire some support in other sources, they utterly fail in reaching accord with the versions of the past endorsed by either Ennodius or Cassiodorus.¹⁶¹ For Cassiodorus, Nepos' deposition had decisively ended his imperial claims in the West, and Romulus Augustus was his legitimate successor.¹⁶² Moreover, the wording of the chronicle specifically demonstrates Cassiodorus' opinion that emperors residing in Constantinople during the reign of Odovacer only ruled the eastern Empire, a fact surely suggesting that a western counterpart existed and was thus ruled by Odovacer.¹⁶³ In short, Cassiodorus' Odovacer may have been poorly dressed and an illegitimate tyrant, but neither was a novel

¹⁵⁷ The same was implied of cross-dressing emperors like Gaius in the first century, or emperors who donned Dacian attire like Galerius in the fourth.

¹⁵⁸ For this observation, Wes (1967), 69.

¹⁵⁹ The years 469 through 476 in Cassiodorus' chronicle, for example, feature coups in nearly every entry, nor are these restricted to the West. In general, the term "usurper" was (and is) highly subjective, for legitimization could be acquired through a number of avenues, perhaps the most obvious being victory. Cf. Cullhed (1994), 89f.

¹⁶⁰ For such views, Bury (1958), vol. 1, 408; Kent (1966); Wes (1967), 52f.; and Moorhead (1992), 8.

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of these sources, see especially Wes (1967), 52f., who concludes similarly regarding Cassiodorus and Ennodius. These other sources include some of the later *Consularia Italica*, *AnonVal*, Procopius, the fragments of Malchus, Marcellinus Comes, and Jordanes. Of these, the only contemporary source is Malchus. The remainder date to the Justinianic era or later.

¹⁶² *CassChron*, anno 475: "Eodem anno Orestes, Nepote in Dalmatias fugato, filio suo Augustulo dedit imperium." Moreover, had Nepos been regarded as the reigning emperor in exile, reference to him doubtless would have been made in later entries. Nepos, however, fails to appear again in the chronicle. Cf. Wes (1967), 68.

¹⁶³ *CassChron*, anno 491: "Cui ANASTASIUS in orientali successit imperio."

experience for the western Empire; neither necessitated its collapse; and neither resulted in a loss of western independence to Constantinople.

Of course, as before, there is great danger in inferring too much from one-line entries in a chronicle, no matter how tempting. Again, however, the *Variae* contain more specific claims about the reign of Odovacer that would seem to validate the conclusions drawn thus far. Their more elaborate treatment also hints at Cassiodorus' personal grievances against this era, and consequently supports the themes of decline, continuity, and decadence that have been discussed throughout. Two letters, one written in 524 in the name of Theoderic and the other in 527/8 in the name of his successor and grandson Athalaric, are of paramount importance.¹⁶⁴ Both were official announcements to the Roman Senate of the conferral of high office to Cyprian and Opilio, the sons of another Opilio who had served in a lesser office during the reign of Odovacer.¹⁶⁵ Both, naturally enough, treated the qualities of these two brothers at length, but also used this discussion as a pretext to reflect upon the changes ushered in under Amal rule.

Even more than Cassiodorus' own experience, these sons of Opilio had risen to heights far exceeding those of their father, whose merits, it was believed, should have afforded him a similar level of success. Such injustice was presented as a typical occurrence during the reign of Odovacer, while the success of the brothers Opilio and Cyprian served as further proof of the glory of modern times. The earlier of the two letters, which was written in regard to Cyprian and includes the more extensive of the two treatments, introduced the elder Opilio as a man living "in sordid times," who "would have been promoted much more, had his faith not lain dead under the most greedy sterility of its remunerator."¹⁶⁶ This statement hints at the greediness and distrust of the

¹⁶⁴ To this point the excerpts taken from the *Variae* have been derived from letters penned in Cassiodorus' own name. These two letters, however, were penned in the name of two Gothic kings, and so cast some doubt as to their relevance to Cassiodorus' own sentiments. Indeed, they provide an official position, and though written by Cassiodorus, should be taken as the public image of the respective king in question. Those hearing or reading these notices in their original context surely were intended to think so. Though true, because the *Variae* collection was consciously and deliberately assembled by Cassiodorus as an apology for Amal rule, and because Cassiodorus' other works generally demonstrate his approval of the official position, it seems fair to suggest that he was, on the whole, sympathetic with the ideas espoused within.

¹⁶⁵ For Opilio and his sons, see chapter 3, with *PLRE* 2, 807-8 ("Opilio 3"); 808 ("Opilio 4"); and 332-3 ("Cyprianus 2").

¹⁶⁶ *Variae* 5.41.5: "Nam pater huic... Opilio fuit, vir abiectis quidem temporibus... qui multo amplius crescere, nisi fides eius sub avidissima remuneratoris sterilitate iacisset."

era already encountered in the works of Ennodius, though Cassiodorus continued by claiming that Odovacer, “a weak benefactor,” could literally do no better.¹⁶⁷ Similar ideas were expressed in the second letter, where the Senate was reminded of the specific qualities that had made Opilio worthy to begin with: his fame in battle, the highest nobility of his character, and his preservation of ancient (Roman) virtues.¹⁶⁸ Playing upon the adjective *clarus*, which meant “famous” but was also a rank conferred by holding certain offices, Cassiodorus maintained that Opilio had never obtained this distinction under Odovacer, but was a *clarus* nonetheless through his merits. Though Odovacer’s failure to recognize such qualities was characteristic, it ultimately served to glorify men like Opilio and by extension Theoderic himself, who was understood to have promoted deserving men like Opilio.¹⁶⁹ Opilio’s personal glory, however, rested less in such subsequently-granted titles and more in being magnanimous in a time when such honors were scarce. Cassiodorus explained in one letter that Opilio had become conspicuous despite a lack of remuneration, “since there is an abundance of great praise in having earned offices, however mediocre, in a time of scarcity for the Republic.”¹⁷⁰ Similarly he claimed in another letter that Opilio’s success was “extraordinary, since the prince was not attentive in those times.”¹⁷¹

But luckily for Opilio, his children, and the Roman Empire itself, times had indeed changed. Cassiodorus claimed that Cyprian was now “surpassing his ancestors under Theoderic’s fortunate times” and that his increased glory was directly related to the change in rulers.¹⁷² “The measure of progress among [Theoderic’s] subjects,” it was said, “[is] as great as the difference in lords.”¹⁷³ Looking back at the fifth century, when the world had been turned upside-down largely owing to incapable leadership, it was

¹⁶⁷ Ibid: “Quid enim conferre poterat tenuis donator?”

¹⁶⁸ *Variae* 8.17.1: “Pater huic manu clarus ac summa fuit morum nobilitate conspicuus, quem nec ferventia bella respuerunt et tranquilla otia praedicarent, corpore validus, amicitia robustus aevi antiquitatem gestabat, abiectis saeculis Odovacris ditatus claris honoribus.”

¹⁶⁹ Indeed, it was Theoderic himself who actually conferred the rank of *clarus* upon Opilio. The theme of promoting deserving men is common in the *Variae* and likewise eulogized in Ennodius’ *Panegyric*. For examples and their significance, see chapter 4.

¹⁷⁰ *Variae* 5.41.5: “Quia magnae abundantia laudis est in penuria rei publicae vel mediocria munera meruisse.”

¹⁷¹ *Variae* 8.17.2: “his temporibus habitus est eximius, cum princeps non esset erectus.”

¹⁷² *Variae* 4.41.6: “Vicit iste maiores suos felicitate saeculorum et, quod amplius evectus ets, nostris est temporibus applicandum.”

¹⁷³ Ibid: “Talis quippe est in subiectis mensura provectum, qualis fuerit et distantia dominorum.”

clear that the modern age, as Cassiodorus referred to it, had finally been turned right-side-up and that the responsibility for this change could be placed squarely at the feet of Theoderic. How exactly he accomplished this and how such accomplishments specifically translated in Italo-Romans eyes as renewal and restoration will be the subject of the remainder of this study.

However badly beaten, denuded of territory and stripped of honor, unjustly, ineptly, or selfishly governed, the Roman Empire, embodied in Italy in the minds of men like Ennodius and Cassiodorus, progressed in its trembling footsteps to that fateful day in 489, when Theoderic arrived upon the scene. Reflecting back on the situation in the aftermath of his invasion, it was clear to them why Theoderic had come. For Ennodius the reason was simple and he expressed his elation on a number of occasions: Theoderic's advent was most desired;¹⁷⁴ God Himself had sent him;¹⁷⁵ he looked to Roman prosperity;¹⁷⁶ and, as he told Theoderic personally in 507, "Rome, the mistress of the world, demanded you for the restoration of her status."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ *Eucharisticon* (#438.20): "optatissimus Theoderici regis... ingressus

¹⁷⁵ *VE* 109: "Dispositione caelestis imperii ad Italiam Theodericus rex cum immensa roboris sui multitudine commeavit."

¹⁷⁶ *PanTh* 25: "Nata est felicitas inter vos causa discordiae, dum perduelles animos in propinquorum tuorum necem Romana prosperitas invitavit." An identification of these *propinqui* is provided in chapter 1.

¹⁷⁷ *PanTh* 30: "te orbis domina ad status sui reparationem Roma poscebat."

Chapter 2

Restoring the Republic

Order from Chaos

Embarking from the Balkans in 488 with a mixed group of peoples conveniently (but misleadingly) labeled Goths, Theoderic arrived the following year in Italy with perhaps twenty thousand fighting men and eighty thousand non-combatants.¹ Conflict ensued for the better part of four years and unfolded much like the civil wars that had typified the fifth century. Loyalties varied on regional and personal bases, and were often fickle in nature. Cities like Milan and Rome switched sides or suffered the alternating domination of one faction over another. Others, like Ravenna and Pavia, had sides chosen for them by being occupied by “defending” or “invading forces.” Still others remained neutral, awaiting an outcome. The Po Valley, where Odovacer’s base of operations had been located and where Theoderic’s army had initially entered the Italian Peninsula, witnessed the greatest amount of disruption and destruction.² Verona, Ravenna, Pavia, Milan, Cremona, and Trent were among those cities most notably affected, but the chaos and disruption of this period extended far beyond this theater of war, even as far south as Sicily.³

Years would be required to undo the damage. Moreover, as the dust was settling in 493 and Theoderic was asserting his control, the fate of Italy and her inhabitants remained in doubt. There was little indication that this barbarian general, ostensibly

¹ For a discussion, see Wolfram (1988), 279, and Heather (2007), 36-40. Rugians and individual Romans were among those non-Goths who accompanied Theoderic. Heather seems to rightly point out the overwhelmingly “Gothic” nature of this group, but see chapter 3 for a complication of “Gothic.” Cf. *PanTh* 26-7 for an (epic) account of the migration.

² See chapter 4 for greater detail.

³ For a general account of the invasion, see Burns (1984), 72; Wolfram (1988), 278-284; and Moorhead (1992), 17-27. For Sicily, see O’Donnell (1979), 18-19; Cracco Ruggini (1986), 245-6; Noyé (2007), 191-2. Cassiodorus’ own father was credited with securing the allegiance of the distrustful Sicilians at this time. Cf. *Variae* 1.3.3-4.

commissioned by Constantinople to liberate the West from Odovacer's tyranny, would prove any different from his immediate fifth-century predecessors. Other barbarian generals and even emperors had been sent from the East before, often with disastrous results. Yet within less than a decade this barbarian general would be hailed as a new Trajan and a new Valentinian;⁴ would celebrate in true imperial style his *tricennalia* at Rome; would honor the Senate and people; and would begin a series of massive renovation projects hailed by contemporary Italo-Romans as "surpassing ancient wonders."⁵ Theoderic's invasion may have initially devastated Italy, but as a self-consciously *pius princeps* he had personally revived Italy and reasserted the *status*, despaired of in the fifth century, of her Republic.⁶ Rome again had her emperor and empire, and the uniquely imperial persona of Theoderic, this chapter will demonstrate, was largely responsible.

Odovacer and Theoderic

Despite tendencies to place Odovacer and Theoderic within the same constitutional context,⁷ their reigns were quite different, both in substance and ideology. Italo-Romans like Cassiodorus and Ennodius, of course, had understood Odovacer's position vis-à-vis the Roman Empire and Italy rather ambiguously: he was undeniably the ruler of Italy and certainly the successor of Romulus Augustus, but also an obvious usurper; his reign had been inspired by the Devil and, moreover, he refused to clothe himself in a manner befitting his station.⁸ Odovacer himself, however, had generally not made any claims to imperial succession, and if so, only after Constantinople had sent

⁴ *AnonVal* 60 (cited below). To my mind, the Valentinian in question was probably Valentinian III, since, like Theoderic, he also heavily patronized the city of Ravenna (where the chronicler was a resident). For the possibility of Valentinian I, see Burns (1984), 68.

⁵ *CassChron*, anno 500: "Hoc anno dn. Rex Theodericus Romam cunctorum votis expetitus advenit et senatum suum mira affabilitate tractans... magnisque eius operibus antiqua miracula superantur," with *AnonVal* 60: "exhibens ludos circensium et amphitheatrum, ut etiam a Romanis Traianus vel Valentinianus, quorum tempora sectatus est, appellatur." For an extensive discussion, see chapter 4.

⁶ For destruction, *Eucharisticon* (#438.20): "tempore quo Italiam optatissimus Theoderici regis resuscitavit ingressus, cum omnia ab inimicis eius inexplicabili clade vastarentur..."; for status despaired of, *VE* 81 with chapter 1; for status restored, *PanTh* 5: "Salve, status reipublicae: nam nefas est speciatim a te simul conlata narrare et unius bona temporis verborum divisione discernere."

⁷ See, for example, Jones (1962) and Barnwell (1992), 134f.

⁸ See chapter 1.

Theoderic to depose him.⁹ Indeed, from the very beginning of his reign, he had asserted that he was the subject of the eastern emperor Zeno. The West, senatorial ambassadors had suggested on his behalf in 476, no longer required its own emperor and he, content to rule as Zeno's representative, simply asked for the title and rank of a patrician.¹⁰ The idea had been to function like other fifth-century generalissimos, such as Stilicho, Ricimer, and Orestes, only now unimpeded by a resident emperor. As a sign of his obedience and commitment to a single empire with a single emperor, Odovacer even sent Romulus Augustus' imperial insignia to Constantinople, providing a more reasonable explanation for their noticeable absence from his personal attire.¹¹

Such proposals, however, were problematic from the perspective of Constantinople and only partially, if temporarily, acceptable. On the one hand, the emperor whom Odovacer had deposed and whose regalia he had remitted to Constantinople had never been recognized in the East. Romulus was a usurper, and so Zeno still technically had an imperial colleague in the person of the exiled (but still active) Julius Nepos. More complicated still, Nepos' own ambassadors were at that time attempting to court eastern assistance for a campaign to reclaim Italy. On the other hand, Zeno's reputation had been tarnished recently by a coup (perhaps at the hands of a relative of Odovacer¹²). He was understandably sympathetic to Nepos' cause, but lacked the resources to assist him. Moreover, he could not have failed to appreciate the propagandistic value of Odovacer's offer; Zeno would become ruler of the entire Roman Empire, a feat not achieved since Theodosius the Great.¹³ Choosing a sort of middle ground, therefore, the eastern emperor responded to Odovacer by addressing him as a patrician, apparently agreeing to the requested rank, but also instructed him to be

⁹ The evidence for Odovacer's reign is scanty, but a fragment of the history of John of Antioch (frag. 307) claims that he appointed his son, Thela (Thelanes), as a Caesar during Theoderic's campaign, perhaps an indication that ties with Constantinople had been completely severed and that Odovacer was willing to go his own way. His later treaty with Theoderic (see below) would be consistent with such an interpretation. Moreover, if Thela was a Caesar, what did this make Odovacer? For Thela/Thelanes, see Wolfram (1988), 282-3; Moorhead (1992), 23; and *PLRE* 2, 1064.

¹⁰ For this, Malchus, fr. 10, with commentary by Wes (1967), 72-3, and Burgarella (2001), 121-5.

¹¹ *AnonVal* 64 (cited below), with *CassChron*, anno 476, discussed in chapter 1.

¹² It has been suggested that Odovacer was the nephew of Verina, Zeno's mother-in-law, who played an important role in the revolt of Basiliscus. On the identification, Krautschik (1986), 349, with MacGeorge (2002), 284-85, who concludes that it is improbable.

¹³ Though there were shorter periods of interregnum during the fifth century, when the eastern emperor technically ruled both halves of the Empire. The seventeen-month interregnum separating the reigns of Libius Severus and Athemius is a case in point. See Wes (1967), 54-5.

obedient to Nepos. The Byzantine perspective, then, was that Nepos would continue to rule the West, albeit from Dalmatia, and that Odovacer would be his patrician. And although Nepos would die in 480, having never returned to Italy, Odovacer appears to have upheld his end of the bargain, minting his coinage in Nepos' and then Zeno's name.¹⁴

After the death of Nepos, however, Odovacer's position with respect to Constantinople became more tenuous. He continued to nominate consuls that were recognized in the East and even made Zeno a partner in his triumph against the Rugians in 487,¹⁵ but by 488 a falling-out had occurred. It was at this time that Zeno and Theoderic came to an agreement, the exact details of which are less than certain, but the basic premise of Theoderic deposing Odovacer in the name of the emperor seems clear. Later Byzantine sources questioned Zeno's involvement, and the earliest Italo-Roman reference, found in Ennodius' *Panegyric*, cites vengeance as Theoderic's rationale.¹⁶ But Theoderic had a history of service in the East and, given his own recent rift with Zeno, such a commission would have proven mutually beneficial.¹⁷ Not only was it a great idea to remove a potentially dangerous Theoderic from the vicinity of Constantinople, but it was better, as Jordanes claimed, to allow a man like him, a man indebted to the emperor and known for his commitment to Roman ideals, to rule in Odovacer's place.¹⁸

¹⁴ For Nepos' coins, see Kent (1966), with Moorhead (1992), 8; for Zeno's coins, Kraus (1928), 52f.

¹⁵ See McCormick (1977), 212-22.

¹⁶ For Byzantine sources that question Zeno's involvement (citing instead Theoderic's fear of Zeno), see Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE* 3.27; John Malalas 5.9; and John of Nikiu 47-50 (who makes use of the former). For vengeance, *PanTh* 25 (cited at the end of chapter 1). The vengeance seems to have stemmed from both Odovacer's slaughter of Theoderic's relatives (*parentes*) and his mismanagement of Roman affairs in general. These relatives were doubtless the Rugi against whom Odovacer had triumphed in 487, since Fredericus, the son of the captured and executed Rugian king Feletheus, fled to Theoderic's court at Novae following the defeat. The Rugi had apparently been invited to attack Odovacer by the emperor Zeno. Cf. McCormick (1977), 215-17, and Moorhead (1992), 10-11.

¹⁷ For service in the East, see chapter 3. For beneficial, Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.11, with Moorhead (1992), 17-19, who emphasizes the rocky relationship between both men at this time. He places Zeno's decision within the Roman tradition of encouraging barbarian groups to fight against each other, a strange comment considering Procopius' own statement that Theoderic's senatorial dignity influenced Zeno's decision. Heather (1996), 217-18, a bit more cautiously, suggests that both Theoderic and Zeno were looking for a solution and that Theoderic had already offered to use his Goths to restore Nepos in Italy (cf. Malchus frag. 20).

¹⁸ Jordanes, *Romana* 348 and *Getica* 291. The former source emphasizes Theoderic's honors and offices in the East, claiming "Zenon... maluit Theodorico ac si proprio iam clienti eam [i.e. Italiam] committi quam illi [i.e. Odovacro] quem nec noverat." The reference to *cliens* surely refers to Theoderic's current status in 488, rather than necessarily his intended status as ruler of Italy, contra Moorhead (1992), 50. The status of

Unlike Odovacer, then, Theoderic was imagined from the very beginning as a legitimate representative of imperial power in the West. His intended position upon defeating Odovacer, however, is far from certain, as is the intended fate of Italy. Procopius, for instance, wrote that Zeno “advised Theoderic to go to Italy, attack Odovacer, and win for himself and the Goths the realm of the West,”¹⁹ apparently suggesting that Italy (the western Empire) would remain a separate entity from the eastern Empire and would be ruled directly by Theoderic. Later in his history, however, he claimed that Theoderic was technically a usurper.²⁰ In the *Getica*, on the other hand, Jordanes described Odovacer as a tyrant who was unknown to Zeno and oppressing the Senate and a portion of his Republic. Italy, in this version, remained a part of Zeno’s *res publica*, and Theoderic asked permission to depose its unlawful ruler, stipulating that if victorious, he would possess “that kingdom” through Zeno’s bestowal as a gift and present.²¹ Jordanes’ understanding of the situation, therefore, appears to have been that Theoderic would rule Italy as a federate kingdom, perhaps independent of Constantinople’s control, but certainly owing much to Zeno’s act of bestowal. Roles are essentially reversed in Jordanes’ *Romana*, but the same basic premises hold true. Here Zeno commended to Theoderic, described as his *cliens*, the Senate and People of Rome, shorthand for the Republic itself, and Theoderic then proceeded to Italy in the capacity of a barbarian king and former Roman consul. This consular status linked Theoderic to the Eastern court, yet Jordanes described his subsequent domain as concurrently a barbarian kingdom (*regnum gentium*) and Roman principate (*principatus romani populi*), both terms implying a certain degree of independence from Constantinople.²²

These comparatively short notices, which agree on certain details and disagree on others, have traditionally been augmented by the more comprehensive account found in a mid sixth-century chronicle referred to as the *Anonymi Valesiani pars posterior*,

Theoderic as a Roman statesman and its legitimizing power before western and eastern audiences will be discussed in chapter 3. See, much less elaborately, Barnwell (1992), 135.

¹⁹ Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.10, based on Dewing (1919).

²⁰ Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.29 and 5.5.8-9 (here repeated as a justification for Justinian’s invasion).

²¹ *Getica* 291: “haut ille, quem non nostis, tyrannico iugo senatum Vestrum partemque rei publicae captivitatis servitio premit. Ego enim si vicero, Vestro dono Vestroque munere possidebo.”

²² *Romana* 348-9: “secumque ita deliberans, ad partes eum Italiae mandans, Romanum illi populum senatumque commendat. Obansque rex gentium et consul Romanus Theodericus Italiam petiit. ...Deinde vero ac si suspectum Ravenna in palatio iugulans regnum rentis sui et Romani populi principatum prudenter et pacifice per triginta annos continuit.”

Chronica Theodericiana, or (as will be employed throughout) the *Anonymus Valesianus*. This work provides a rather specific, though convoluted, description of the pact made between Theoderic and Zeno in 488, as well as much greater detail concerning Theoderic's intended position and how it changed over the course of his Italian campaigns. A cautious reading of this source, therefore, which takes account of the claims of Jordanes and Procopius discussed above, can provide a hypothetical reconstruction of the nature of Theoderic's rule, ultimately demonstrating just how different it was from Odovacer's.

To begin, the author of this chronicle actually stated the intended conditions of Theoderic's rule rather plainly. He was supposed to go to Italy and, if he defeated Odovacer, he would rule in place of the emperor until Zeno himself should come to Italy. Theoderic, acting as a patrician, would thus defend Italy for the emperor.²³ Still, whether Zeno actually planned to come to Italy in the aftermath of a Theoderican victory is questionable, especially since this had not been the first time that a patrician had been sent by this emperor to depose a western usurper. In fact, as the *Anonymus Valesianus* understood it, Julius Nepos had come to Italy in exactly the same capacity, deposed Glycerius, and then himself been made emperor at Rome.²⁴ It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to suggest that Zeno had no intention of leaving Constantinople and that Theoderic was essentially intended to function indefinitely as his subordinate in Italy. His loyalty would have been assured by the potential for being recalled or replaced by yet another eastern patrician. Moreover, this position would have been a logical extension of Theoderic's current (and official) capacity in the East as a *magister militum praesentialis* and patrician, perhaps providing a sort of prototype for later exarchs.²⁵

²³ *AnonVal* 49: "Cui [i.e. Zenoni] Theodericus pactuatus est, ut, si victus fuisset Odoacar, pro merito laborum suorum loco eius, dum adveniret, tantum praeregnaret. Ergo superveniente Theoderico patricio de civitate Nova cum gente Gothica, missus ab imperatore Zenone de partibus Orientis ad defendendam sibi Italiam." The Latin of this passage is admittedly vulgar, allowing for other possible interpretations. Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 103-5, who discusses alternative readings but ultimately concludes similarly.

²⁴ *AnonVal* 36: "Igitur imperante Zenone Augusto Constantinopoli, superveniens Nepos patricius ad Portum urbis Romae, deposuit de imperio Glycerium et factus est episcopus et Nepos factus imperator Romae." There is, therefore, absolutely no justification for assuming that Theoderic's patrician status was specifically "barbarous" in nature, i.e. a form of rulership reserved for "barbarian" generalissimos like Ricimer, Gundobad, and Odovacer. Such a conclusion is anticipated by Moorhead (1992), 36, who, though ignoring the Nepos reference, suggests that Theoderic's position as patrician mirrors that of the "Roman" Orestes and "barbarian" Odovacer.

²⁵ Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 55-6, who argues against such models.

What seems certain, at any rate, is that Theoderic was not supposed to rule Italy outright or even necessarily claim a royal title. He would remain a patrician and, as such, could only *praeregnare*, a verb first attested in the *Anonymus Valesianus*, but surely indicating a handicap to out-and-out royal or imperial power (*regnare*).²⁶

Indeed during the early course of the campaigns against Odovacer, Theoderic was consistently described in the chronicle as a patrician rather than a king.²⁷ In 490, however, when confidence in a Gothic victory was growing and all Italy was apparently already calling Theoderic *dominus* (lord), Festus, the head of the Senate, was sent to Constantinople by Theoderic, who hoped to secure certain vestments described as “royal” (*regiam*).²⁸ These very well could have been imperial robes, especially given the interchangeability of royal and imperial adjectives and the fact that in 476 it had been senators who had returned Romulus Augustus’ regalia to the Eastern court. Perhaps Festus was asking for them back, or in the very least suggesting that a new agreement granting Theoderic greater powers and a royal title was desired. Festus, however, failed to materialize with a response the following year, and Theoderic, though still described in the account as a patrician, was growing tired of laying siege to Ravenna. By 493 he reached a separate treaty with Odovacer, agreeing to share control over Italy and hence theoretically violating (though not necessarily nullifying) the terms of his original pact with Zeno.²⁹ Nothing, of course, would come of these new arrangements, since shortly after being admitted into Ravenna Theoderic personally slew his supposed partner, who, he claimed, had been plotting against him. Nevertheless, this alliance with Odovacer had the potential to place Theoderic’s loyalty to Constantinople (already questioned in the past) in doubt. It may have only been a clever ruse on Theoderic’s part, but such a move

²⁶ Souter’s *A Glossary of Later Latin* reads, “*praeregno*: rule beforehand (Anon. Vales. 11.49).” Moreover, a digital search through Brepol’s *Library of Latin Texts* only results in one hit: Anon. Vales. 11.49!

²⁷ Theoderic is referred to as *Patricius* from *AnonVal* 49 through 54; in 55 and 56 he kills Odovacer and his supporters, and then in 57 is made *Rex*. Cf. Ensslin (1959), 75, and Moorhead (1992), 38.

²⁸ For *dominus*, see Jordanes, *Getica* 294, with Moorhead (1992), 36, who claims that Theoderic’s position at this time was particularly weak; for the embassy, see *AnonVal* 53 and 64. On Theoderic’s diplomacy with the East during his Italian campaign, see Moorhead (1992), 37-39; Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 131f.; and Heather (1996), 218-220. Barnwell (1992), 135, misleadingly suggests that these embassies “clearly show that Theoderic still expected to receive instructions from the emperor.”

²⁹ The sharing of power is not specifically referenced in the *AnonVal*, though it is implied at 54-55, which describes Odovacer conferring his son, Thelanes (Thela), as a hostage, and Theoderic entering Ravenna.

could have jeopardized the security of his patriciate and likewise hindered ongoing attempts to secure a royal title.³⁰

Zeno, however, had died in 491, while Festus was presumably in the midst of negotiating new arrangements with him, forcing a second embassy, equally fruitless, to be dispatched under the leadership of Faustus Niger in 492. After the death of Odovacer, but apparently before the return of Faustus, the Goths, impatient for an imperial response, took the initiative and confirmed Theoderic as king.³¹ Why exactly Theoderic, who was already a king of the Goths, needed the approval of Constantinople to remain a king has been the subject of some debate.³² The best explanation seems to be that the position that he once held was fundamentally altered by his conquest of Italy. His confirmation by the Goths was hence a symbolic gesture that marked Theoderic's transition from a king of certain Pannonian Goths with a Roman title (*patricius*) beholden to Constantinople, to a new role as the independent king of the Goths and Italo-Romans, *rex Italiae*.

The act was significant. Indeed, from this point forward the author of the *Valesianus* account consistently referred to Theoderic as a *rex*, rather than patrician, and described him in the act of ruling (*regnare*) rather than the conditional act of ruling indicated by *praeregnare*. Moreover it was a bold move with potentially serious repercussions, a flagrant violation of the original agreement established with Zeno in 488. It qualified, according to the chronicler, as *praesumptio*, a daring act of an illicit nature suggestive, in this case, of usurpation.³³ In and of itself, the feat proclaimed that Theoderic was an independent ruler who did not require the assent of Constantinople for

³⁰ Something like this did in fact happen during the Justinianic reconquest of Italy, when Belisarius, in order to reach a truce with the Goths, agreed to become the Emperor of the West, apparently as a stratagem. The act, however, cast his loyalty in doubt, and resulted in Belisarius being relocated to the Persia front. Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 6.29.18-31 and 6.30.1-4.

³¹ *AnonVal* 57: "At ubi cognita morte eius antequam legatio reverteretur, ut ingressus est Ravennam, et occidit Odoacrem, Gothi sibi confirmaverunt Theodericum regem, non exspectantes iussionem novi principis."

³² Theories range from Theoderic being confirmed as a king over other barbarians besides the Goths, such as the remnants of Odovacer's Heruli, to the suggestion that the act was a declaration of Theoderic's kingship over Goths and Romans, either as a federate king on the model of contemporary Visigoths and Burgundians, or as the ruler of the western *imperium* outright. See Ensslin (1959), 74-79; Wolfram (1988), 287-88; Barnwell (1992), 136; and Moorhead (1992), 38. Wolfram cleverly proposes that the passage refers to the *exercitus Gothorum* behaving in the same "emperor-making" capacity as the *exercitus Romanus*, only now in the in the western *regna* (i.e. the western Empire). Perhaps the best solution, however, is to simply amend *sibi* as *ibi*, allowing it to correspond with the *ubi* occurring at the beginning of the sentence.

³³ *AnonVal* 64 (cited below).

legitimacy. He would not be a subordinate of the eastern emperor, as Odovacer had once been, but the ruler of the western Roman realm. Moreover, as such, he could even presume upon certain imperial prerogatives that his immediate predecessor had never dreamed of usurping. To be sure, the Goths had not proclaimed Theoderic emperor of the West, but with time it became increasingly clear that he was amenable to an official image that both likened him to an emperor and cast him as the colleague of the emperor of the East.

Initially the move may not have been well received in Constantinople,³⁴ and a third embassy, led once more by Festus, was dispatched in 497. The *Anonymus Valesianus* provides no indication of the diplomatic maneuvering that was entailed, but when the “head of the senate” finally returned later that year, he arrived not simply with the royal vestments that had been requested seven years prior, but with the very imperial regalia sent by Odovacer when he notified Zeno that the western Empire was no more.³⁵

The situation in 497 was thus quite different from that in 476. Regardless of its origins from an apparent act of *praesumptio* and the violation of a prior agreement (perhaps why Procopius claimed that Theoderic was a tyrant), Theoderic’s position as a kind of Roman emperor had been acknowledged in the East. More importantly, this position was, as will be demonstrated, accepted with enthusiasm by a number of his subjects, who believed that many of Theoderic’s imperial qualities were the source from which the seemingly moribund western Empire was able to resurge. Their beliefs and his willingness to meet their expectations made him a legitimate Roman emperor, regardless of sometimes (but not always) hostile eastern perceptions and modern (anachronistic) preoccupations with constitutionality.³⁶

“Emperor” Theoderic

The historical relationship between Italy and her emperors no doubt facilitated the acceptance of a figure like Theoderic as emperor, paradoxically allowing staunch

³⁴ See Moorhead (1992), 38, who discusses possible interpretations of the standing of western consuls in the East from 494-497.

³⁵ *AnonVal* 64: “Facta pace cum Anastasio imperatore per Festum de praesumptione regni, et omnia ornamenta palatii, quae Odoacar Constantinopolim transmiserat, remittit.”

³⁶ Such constitutional analyses include Jones (1962) and Barnwell (1992), 134f. But see the study of Prostko-Prostyński (1994), which, though constitutional in nature, ultimately suggests the imperial (or near imperial) standing of Theoderic vis-à-vis Constantinople.

traditionalism to inspire innovation. The earliest emperors had maintained their presence within Italy and especially at Rome, guarding their image as mere *principes* of the Senate who worked within the framework of the Old Republic. Increasingly, however, both Italy and Rome were abandoned in favor of the frontiers, and provincial capitals became “new Romes.” Emperors could behave differently outside the Empire’s cradle, eventually disposing of Republican niceties and becoming increasingly despotic. The process marginalized Rome and Italy, not just politically speaking but also ideologically. Still, many Italo-Romans continued to think of themselves and the Eternal City as central to the Empire, and hoped that princely emperors would one day return.³⁷ Emperors would indeed return in the fifth century, and not just to frontier capitals in the north like Milan and Ravenna, but to Rome itself.³⁸ But while potentially worthy of jubilation, this homecoming had not ushered in a golden age, but quite the opposite. The preeminence once desired came at a very disquieting price and was only partial. Italy’s new emperors were un-republican, un-Roman, and worse still disastrously inept. Italy became central once more, but as much through the presence of emperors and the imperial administration as through the attrition of surrounding provinces. Italo-Romans had wanted a Roman Empire centered on Italy, but got instead a Roman Empire that was *only* Italy. These blows to Italo-Roman prestige were exacerbated further by Constantinople’s increasing challenge to Rome’s status as the *caput mundi* (capital of the world). Somehow “first” Rome began to rank second to “second” Rome.

The ironies may have been maddening, but the western Empire’s cause was not so lost that Italo-Romans abandoned completely their desire for centrality or a resident emperor. The need was powerful and longstanding, and for exactly this reason men like Ennodius and Cassiodorus had been willing to imagine Odovacer as an imperial figure, despite glaring contradictions. Indeed, a senatorial embassy had announced Odovacer’s intention of dissolving the western *imperium* and placing its remnants under the jurisdiction of Constantinople, but the idea stemmed from Odovacer himself and did not

³⁷ Indeed, the city of Rome remained a powerful ideology, though Romans in Italy generally did not. See, in general, Wes (1967), chps. 1 and 2; Fuhrmann (1968); Cullhed (1994), 63-67; and Van Dam (2007), chapter 2. But see also Matthews (1975), 20-23, who describes some of the benefits conferred to Italian senators by the absence of a resident emperor.

³⁸ Gillett (2001).

necessarily reflect his subjects' desires.³⁹ The world of continuity discussed in the preceding chapter was thus, in part at any rate,⁴⁰ a reflection of the wishful thinking of certain Italo-Roman patriots, but it nevertheless fulfilled a historically important need. The Romans of Italy did not want their paramount position, so recently restored, to be marginalized, nor could they accept an Italy transformed into just another province, especially of a Greek Roman Empire.⁴¹ The return of Romulus' regalia in 497, therefore, was especially significant in their eyes. Italy could once more be understood as a seat of imperial power, while in Theoderic they received not only an emperor, but the kind of emperor they wanted.

That Theoderic was in fact the emperor of the West may seem a bit unlikely at first, particularly since modern scholarship generally depicts him as a "king of the Ostrogoths" and his realm as "Ostrogothic Italy."⁴² At worst, Theoderic is imagined as a savage barbarian king; at best, and following the sympathetic conclusions drawn by Procopius, as a sub-Roman ruler who had technically been a tyrant: a Gothic *rex* who avoided imperial dress and titles, but was in truth a Roman emperor in his behavior.⁴³ The words of Procopius tend to resonate the most in modern scholarship and are valuable insofar as they hint at the imperial or quasi-imperial nature of Theoderic's reign. But his conclusions ought to be used with caution, for, though largely approving of Theoderic, they reflected an *ex post facto*, Byzantine-oriented bias. Procopius was not a contemporary Italo-Roman, nor do his sentiments duplicate their values. In fact, in Italy (as will be shown) Theoderic's status as both a king and a Goth, while certainly innovations, were not necessarily problematic and could even be manipulated in ways that reaffirmed the rightness of his reign.⁴⁴ Moreover, his status as a usurper was hardly an issue. Usurpation, after all, was not unheard of in Italy, and for that matter had never

³⁹ A similar conclusion is drawn by Wes (1967), 72: "Die Idee, im Westen keinen Kaiser mehr zu ernennen, stammt von Odoaker." Cf. Burgarella (2001), 124, who concludes similarly.

⁴⁰ The structure of the western Empire and its aristocracy remained more or less intact under Odovacer, despite his "subservience" to Constantinople. On this survival, see Chastagnol (1966); Barnish (1988); Moorhead (1992), 7-11; Barnwell (1992), 140f.

⁴¹ See chapter 1.

⁴² The use of such terminology, however, is not attested in Theoderic's Italy. Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 75f.

⁴³ Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.26-29. Cf. *PLRE* 2, 1083: "He did not receive the imperial purple and never used the title 'Augustus' always calling himself 'rex'."

⁴⁴ For royal manipulation, see below. For Gothiness, see chapter 3.

historically disqualified anyone from “legitimate” rule, especially given the fact that legitimacy could be acquired through a number of avenues.⁴⁵ In spite of these seeming contradictions, then, Theoderic could still be seen as a “Roman” emperor, provided he actually presented himself as such and his Roman subjects accepted this presentation. Procopius’ sentiments were hence quite irrelevant from an Italo-Roman perspective and need to be understood within their own, rather different historical milieu.

Indeed, Italians like Cassiodorus and Greeks like Procopius generally had dissimilar ideas about Roman emperorship.⁴⁶ In the East, emperors had been imagined from the very beginning as more or less replacements for Hellenistic monarchs; like them, the emperor was a divine king, an autocratic and despotic *basileus*. In Italy, on the other hand, it was the legacy of the late Republic and Principate from which imperial ideals had been derived; here emperors had always been *principes*, first citizens, the best of the senators who guarded Republican notions of *libertas*.⁴⁷ Again, eastern, “basilean” despotism had prevailed in the later Empire, but the traditions of the Principate remained deeply ingrained within Italo-Roman society. This was the kind of emperor, a Republican emperor, that Italians longed for, and it stood in direct opposition to the style of rule typical by the late fifth century. Politically adept emperors had generally understood these distinctions, conforming to local expectations when in Italy,⁴⁸ and Theoderic and his image-makers were no different. He too could play the role of a Republican *princeps*, thereby becoming more than a mere monarch.

When Procopius claimed, therefore, that Theoderic had not usurped the title of a Roman emperor, employing instead the simple barbarian title *rex*, he was only half

⁴⁵ For an excellent discussion of these avenues see Cullhed (1994), 89-93. Even the criteria for “constitutional” legitimacy as provided by Jones (1964), 326-327, do not entirely exclude Theoderic, since his collegiate position appears to have been recognized in the East. See below with Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 90f.

⁴⁶ Admittedly, the examples of Cassiodorus and Procopius are perhaps a bit problematic given that Cassiodorus’ family appears to have been eastern in origin and Procopius’ Palestinian-Syrian. For the former, see chapter 1. Both authors’ works, however, demonstrate their respective western and eastern approaches, no doubt a product of their upbringings and education.

⁴⁷ See especially Wes (1967), chp. 2, and Reydellet (1981), 7f., on the *princeps-basileus* opposition in late antiquity. Jones (1964), 321-323, demonstrates the preeminence of the *basileus* model in the later Empire, though tempers its absolute nature with a hint of Republican ideology: “Though an absolute he was not an arbitrary monarch” (321).

⁴⁸ Wes (1967), 31-34, discusses the successful examples of Constantius II, Valentinian II, and Gratian I, and the lack of success of Maximinus Thrax (too barbarous) and Julian (too Greek).

correct.⁴⁹ It was true that Theoderic was not a *basileus*, or as westerners would have understood the term, an *imperator*,⁵⁰ but he had also not entirely disqualified himself from Roman emperorship by being just a simple *rex*. Unconcerned with “empty titles of ostentation,”⁵¹ he employed in addition the title of *princeps*, a term clearly within the imperial tradition⁵² and pregnant with meaning in Italy, but at the same time different enough from contemporary usages in Constantinople that it could avoid the displeasure of an already offended eastern emperor.⁵³ As *princeps*, then, Theoderic was rightly said to rule in the manner of emperors (*imperare*), and likewise, as the only *princeps* who ruled Italy, cherished Rome, and honored the western Senate, his realm could be referred to interchangeably as the *res publica Romana*, *imperium Romanum*, and *regnum Romanum*, all of which signified the Roman Empire in contemporary Latin, *res publica*, of course, being the most traditional expression.⁵⁴ In Italy, therefore, to be *princeps* was to be emperor, yet on a model clearly very different from, and undoubtedly more authentically

⁴⁹ Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.26.

⁵⁰ Theoderic himself never adopted or used this title, though his subjects applied it to him on a few occasions, Ennodius especially. For these references, see below. Even Greeks could refer to Theoderic as a *basileus*. Procopius referred to Theoderic as “truly a basileus”; John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 47, simply called him “emperor” (though this may be an issue of translation, since his source, John Malalas, uses *rex*). Theophanes, *AM* 5931, claimed that the Goths “gained control of the Western Empire under Theoderic,” and *AM* 5977, that Theoderic “ruled Rome and all the West,” perhaps implying some sort of imperial position. On Greek imperial language to describe Theoderic’s realm, see Chrysos (1978), 57.

⁵¹ *PanTh* 81: “...pomposae vocabula nuda iactantia.”

⁵² Cullhed (1994), 33, asserts “*princeps* was not a normal part of the emperor’s official title, though it was used... to address any ruler in general.” Similarly and in the specific case of Theoderic, Jones (1962), 247, writes “[Theoderic] was... often addressed as *princeps* –as were the other German kings- and he even issued a few gold coins on which he placed his portrait with that title. ...but officially he used only the title *rex*, and was so addressed by emperors.” Why Jones insists that the *official* correspondence in the *Variae* and Theoderic’s *official* coinage, where the king is referred to as both *rex* and *princeps*, were “unofficial” is completely baffling. These are both official in nature, and, in fact, in the case of the *Variae* the title *princeps* (and its derivations) is employed more frequently than *rex*. For this observation, Reydellet (1981), 214. Moreover, in a specifically Italian context, the connection between *princeps* and emperor, as it had been in Maxentius’ case, was obvious and potent, while its use by other “barbarian” kings (much less frequently attested, and often not self-referential) was perhaps less obviously imperial. These barbarian *principes*, after all, did not rule the *res publica Romana*, possess Rome, the capital of the world, or patronize the western Senate.

⁵³ Indeed, Theoderic’s position as a ruler of Italy may have been wholeheartedly accepted in Italy, but it had only been accepted in the East *ex post facto* and after much diplomacy. It was a violation of a prior agreement with an emperor, an act of *praesumptio*. This meant that from an eastern standpoint Theoderic could be viewed as illegitimate and a tyrant (as Procopius suggested), opening up the possibility of yet another patrician invading Italy in order to oust him. By not adopting an obviously imperial title, then, Theoderic had kept the peace.

⁵⁴ See chapter 1 for the interchangeability of royal and imperial language in the Latin of this period. This fact no doubt made it all the more easy for “Theodericus Rex” to be understood as a *princeps*, *imperator*, and even *Augustus*.

Roman than, the model employed by the reigning Roman emperor in the east, the *basileus*.

This restoration of the principate also harmonized well with certain ideas of renewal and renovation that were current in Theoderic's realm. The rule of the *princeps* resonated in Italy, its very terminology reminiscent of the Empire's first principate, which was generally remembered fondly. Indeed, the first principate, under Augustus, had ushered in a golden age and the *Pax Romana* after generations of civil war and disruption. Rome was transformed from a city of brick into one of marble, and, despite the rule of one man, the institutions of the Old Republic appeared unscathed. Now, under Theoderic, a second golden age and kind of *Pax Romana* were being proclaimed after a similar stint of misfortunes.⁵⁵ Rome and specifically Roman *Romanitas* became intrinsic components of Theoderican propaganda, linking his reign with a glorious Roman past. Traditional games were celebrated once more in the Eternal City with a *princeps* in attendance in both 500 and 519; ancient monuments, some of which had been erected by famous late-Republican statesmen, were refurbished at the *princeps*' order, so that "antiquity might seem rather decently restored in our [i.e. Theoderic's] times."⁵⁶ On coinage, Rome-oriented themes were likewise commemorated, reiterating that Rome, once more the *caput mundi*, held the primary position in the Empire. Busts of a helmeted and youthful Rome, starkly different from the weak and geriatric Rome of Ennodius' panegyric, were also prevalent, while the image was generally accompanied by the inscription *invicta Roma* (unconquered Rome) and linked to Theoderic through his royal monogram (an imperial practice). Other coins featured the Roman She-wolf (*Lupa Romana*) suckling Romulus and Remus, the very founders of Rome; still others the abbreviation "SC," which stood for "Senatus consultu" (by decree of the Senate), emphasizing once more the connection of the *princeps* with senatorial *libertas* and Republican traditions.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Klingshirm (1994a) coins the term "Ostrogothic peace" for this period in southern Gaul, though this peace, generally referred to in Italian sources as *quies generalis*, would be better understood as "Roman." See chapter 3 for a clarification.

⁵⁶ *Variae* 4.51.12: "ut... nostris temporibus videatur antiquitas decentius innovata." The particular monument in question was the Theater of Pompey. On the propagandistic value of this and other building projects, see chapter 4.

⁵⁷ On the coinage in general, see Kraus (1928) and Wroth (1966), with chapter 4. The connection was made even more so under Theoderic's nephew Theodahad, whose coinage featured a bust of himself on the

This conscious appeal to the late Republic and early Principate made it possible for Italo-Romans to laud Theoderic as a new Trajan, a new *optimus princeps* who often imitated one of the first.⁵⁸ It likewise helped to transform Italy from the decadent Roman Empire of the fifth century to the glorious “Republic” of the first century, a period worthy of admiration and imitation in these apparently trying times. Legitimacy was thus gained for Theoderic among Italo-Romans through his princely appellation and its ideological trappings, nor was he the first late antique ruler to understand their power within a specifically Italian context. In the early fourth century, at a time when the Romans of Rome had felt particularly betrayed by their own “un-Roman” emperors,⁵⁹ Maxentius, a usurper like Theoderic, had also become *princeps* and for a time eschewed all other imperial titles. He too had found the title politically expedient and had used it as a means of signaling to the Romans in his midst his veneration for those traditions that they perceived were being threatened. He too inaugurated a renovation of the city of Rome and advertised his *Romanitas* through the use of some of the same motifs on his coinage that would later be used by Theoderic.⁶⁰ But while Maxentius did eventually become an *imperator* and *Augustus* and seek to become a part of the very Tetrarchy that his principate had opposed, Theoderic and his successors would remain content with their princely titles.

The fact that Italy’s “Gothic kings” never openly declared themselves *imperatores* or *Augusti*, however, should not suggest that they or their subjects necessarily understood

obverse and a depiction of victory on the reverse with the inscriptions “Victoria Principum” (rather than the expected “augustorum”) and “SC”. For this design, Kraus (1928), 146-148, and Wroth (1966), 75-76. Cf. Metlich (2004), whose dating of issues seems dubious.

⁵⁸ On the association of Theoderic with Trajan, *AnonVal* 60 (cited above) as well as Fiebiger, vol. 3, #7 (a fistula recording Theoderic’s repair of an aqueduct of Trajan’s): “D(ominus) N(oster) Theodericus | civitati reddidit.” Trajan generally had a reputation for being a good *princeps*, perhaps why “good” emperors were sometimes likened to him. Nor was Theoderic the only Amal ruler compared to Trajan, since Athalaric was once referred to as “Trajan” in a letter in the *Variae*. See *Variae* 8.13.5, where Ambrosius, a newly appointed quaestor, is instructed, “redde nunc Plinium et sume Traianum.”

⁵⁹ The context is explained by Cullhed (1994), 21 and 32-33, who bases much of his analysis on the commentary found in Lactantius’ *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, a work, which he effectively argues, was traditionally “Roman” in many of its values, despite its obvious Christian bias and pro-Constantinian position. The Romans of Rome felt betrayed because in 306 the tax exemption privileges of their city had been revoked by the emperor Galerius, seemingly transforming Rome into another “provincial” city. Likewise, Galerius was believed to be a barbarian, “an enemy of the Roman name,” who wanted the Empire to be not Roman but “Dacian.” The idea bears a certain similarity to the claim in Orosius, *Historiae* 7.43, that the fifth-century Visigothic king Athaulf had wanted to transform “Romania” into “Gothia.” For this, see chapter 3.

⁶⁰ See Cullhed (1994), 46-59.

their position to be otherwise. The rule of the *princeps* worked in Theoderic's Italy much as it had in Augustus', concealing before certain audiences the reality and nature of its holder's power. Just as Republican *principes* were in fact *reges* in disguise, so too were "Gothic" *principes imperatores* and *basileis* in disguise. Nowhere are these ideas better expressed than in the very first letter of Cassiodorus' *Variae*, placed thusly, no doubt, so that it might serve as an ideological statement for the entire collection.⁶¹ Addressed to Emperor Anastasius after a period of open hostilities, this letter was replete with praise for the eastern emperor and his empire, focusing especially on their uniqueness and exceptionality. Yet, such necessary and, indeed, expected blandishments aside, this missive also drew attention to the equally unique role of Italy as one of two Roman Republics and Theoderic as an imperial counterpart to Anastasius. Neither Theoderic's nor his realm's subservience to, or dependence on, the East received mention, both being ideas that would have seriously disappointed Italian expectations. Instead, the letter staked numerous claims to an imperial status for Italy and her ruler, cunningly masking these with language ostensibly complimentary to the East.⁶²

Theoderic's compliments began with a laudation of Anastasius as "the most beautiful glory of all kingdoms, the health-giving guardian of the whole world, [and the one] whom other rulers rightly admire."⁶³ The assertion clearly suggested the primacy of the Byzantine emperor, but was followed by the claim of Theoderic that he especially admired Anastasius because he had learned in "your [Anastasius'] Republic how to rule over Romans in a like fashion."⁶⁴ The statement implied much. Anastasius, for instance, while extraordinary owing to his rulership over the Roman Empire, nonetheless had his

⁶¹ Cf. Moorhead (1992), 44, who argues, instead, that the letter was included first because it was simply an example of a missive directed to an emperor during Cassiodorus' quaestorship (507-11) and was important because of its historical context (friction between East and West). He also claims that other letters in the collection demonstrate the inconsistency of this letter as an ideological statement. His example of inconsistency, however, is more an example of the flexibility of the Latin of this period with regards to the language of Roman emperorship. Moreover, the idea that this letter lacked deeper meaning beyond its historical context seems problematic. Surely other letters were penned to the eastern emperor between 507 and 511. Why were these others excluded? Why was this one thought best? Why was it placed first in the corpus? The best answer seems to be the one provided above.

⁶² Heather (1996), 229, puts it a bit more bluntly, "The deference is superficial. An iron fist is evident within the letter's velvet glove." This may go too far, though.

⁶³ *Variae* 1.1.2: "Vos enim estis regnorum omnium pulcherrimum decus, vos totius orbis salutare praesidium, quos ceteri dominantes iure suspiciunt..."

⁶⁴ *Ibid*: "...nos maxime qui divino auxilio in re publica vestra didicimus, quemadmodum Romanis aequabiliter imperare possimus." For this reading of *aequabiliter*, see below.

empire referred to as “your Republic,” insinuating that there was more than one in existence. Indeed, “your Republic” anticipated the counterpart “my Republic,” a sentiment that was consistent with current principate ideologies in the West. Moreover, the comment alleged that living in this eastern Republic had literally taught Theoderic how to exercise imperial power (*imperare*) over Romans in a manner similar to Anastasius’ (*aequabiliter*),⁶⁵ a Roman emperor. The flexibility of fifth- and sixth-century Latin with respect to royal and imperial terminology no doubt made the wording acceptable in Constantinople,⁶⁶ but the implications of the statement could not have been entirely lost: however disguised with flattery, Theoderic suggested that, just like the Roman emperor, he too ruled a Roman republic.

Such ideas of parity were reiterated in other passages of the letter, again with praise for the eastern Empire and its emperor attached to self-promoting claims. Shortly after the remarks discussed above, for instance, Theoderic asserted, “Our kingdom is an imitation of yours, a model of its good design, a copy of its unique imperial rule.”⁶⁷ Clearly the statement marked out Anastasius’ realm as special and unique, but again the ruler of Italy professed that his own kingdom bore a certain similitude to it. His was not the original, but a copy both in form and governance of Anastasius’, a Roman empire by implication, and no one else, he claimed, could assert this.⁶⁸

This suggestion that the western Roman Empire was now somehow a copy of the eastern Roman Empire was certainly backward and an obvious historical irony, but in

⁶⁵ Given the comparisons that the letter draws between Theoderic’s and Anastasius’ respective realms, it would make more sense to translate *aequabiliter* as “in a like manner,” as opposed to “with equity,” as some, such as Heather (1996), 221, who cites the translation of Hodgkin (1886), have interpreted it. The equity of Theoderic’s reign, while certainly consistent with Roman values, was not the point. For this definition, Lewis and Short: “*aequabiliter*: uniformly, equally, in like manner.”

⁶⁶ See the preceding chapter on this.

⁶⁷ *Variae* 1.1.3: “Regnum nostrum imitatio vestra est, forma boni propositi, unici exemplar imperii.” This is an oft-cited passage, though Hodgkin’s less than satisfactory rendering is too frequently adopted, e.g. by Heather (1996) and Moorhead (1992). Hodgkin (1886), 141: “Our royalty is an imitation of yours, modeled on your good purpose, a copy of the only Empire.” Moorhead, 44, fn. 47 explains, “Hodkin’s translation... seems to me to catch the meaning well.” I obviously disagree. Though the final part might indeed be translated “a model of *the only* empire,” it would be more consistent with the ideas expressed in the letter for *unici* to mean unique and *imperii* to mean “imperial power.” Combined with the prior comparison, it explains how Theoderic’s *regnum* imitates Anastasius’ (implied *regnum*): both look and are ruled similarly, though Anastasius’ is the model and Theoderic’s the copy. Moorhead (1992), 45, and Heather (1996), 229, suggest that the statement implies parity, while Barnwell (1992), asserts, “[Theoderic] makes no claim to be an emperor himself, or to have parity with Anastasius.” Both observations appear false, provided *princeps* is understood to be imperial. Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 83-4.

⁶⁸ *Variae* 1.1.3: “quantum vos sequimur, tantum gentes alias anteimus.”

fact made sense within a contemporary context and had further implications for the nature of Theoderic's reign. The developments of the fifth century, as already discussed, had increasingly placed Constantinople in the more senior position within the Empire as a whole, much to Italian chagrin. The reigns of "Greek" western emperors appointed from Constantinople had been symptomatic of this transition, while the transfer of Romulus Augustus' imperial *ornamenta* to Constantinople in 476 had served as a final *coup de grace*, rendering second Rome "first Rome." The return of these insignia in 497 could thus be imagined as a *(re)translatio imperii*, reinvesting Italy with her lost imperial status, yet their very investment from the East provided a rationale for how Theoderic's Italy might be construed as a copy. Italy was reinstated, for sure, but now in a junior capacity, secondary (and to some degree beholden) to the East. It did not mean that the western Empire or its ruler were subjects of the East, but it did mean that within a united Roman Empire, east and west, the eastern emperor was technically *primus inter pares*. The deference, rather than subservience, that Theoderic showed to his senior colleagues, much like any junior Augustus or Caesar would have shown, seemingly confirms this understanding.

Indeed, as a senior and apparent investor of the *imperium*, Anastasius had encouraged Theoderic to rule in a manner becoming a proper Roman emperor, and Theoderic reminded him of these injunctions in his letter, asserting that he had done so. "You frequently urge me to cherish the Senate," he wrote, "and to delight joyfully in the laws of [former] *principes*, so that I might govern well the entirety of Italy."⁶⁹ Beyond the Republican language used to describe Roman emperors, this statement, like the others, served to reinforce the Romanness and kindredship of both realms, so important at this time of friction. Theoderic declared that such Romanness should have prevented the outbreak of hostility, asking the emperor, "How can you exclude from [your] Augustan peace one whom you did not want to differ from your customs?"⁷⁰ There was no reason, he avowed, for war to exist between both Roman Republics, since they were of the same quality and "things joined in the unity of the Roman name" cannot be divided from each

⁶⁹ *Variae* 1.1.3: "hortamini me frequenter, ut diligam senatum, leges principum gratanter amplectar, ut cuncta Italiae membra componam."

⁷⁰ *Ibid*: "quomodo potestis ab Augusta pace dividere, quem non optatis a vestris moribus discrepare." *Pax Augusta*, again, was an ideal with roots firmly established in the Principate.

other.⁷¹ In fact, though Anastasius was not the ruler of Rome, Theoderic claimed that he continued to be held in the city's esteem through their (imperial) collegiality.⁷² This notion too was not novel, and bore a certain resemblance to the ideology of concord and fraternity espoused by the Tetrarchs and the eastern and western emperors of the fourth and fifth centuries;⁷³ there may have been multiple emperors and empires, but that there was still only one Roman Empire was an old idea.

Nor were such historical precedents lost on Theoderic, who stated most tellingly, “we do not believe that you should permit any matter of discord to endure between both Republics, whose substance is proven to have been one under ancient *principes*.”⁷⁴ This was a rather frank statement: both Anastasius and Theoderic were ruling the two Roman *res publicae*, clearly meaning eastern and western halves of the empire, and unity between both halves needed to be fostered, just as it had been under (again tellingly) ancient *principes*. Both Republics were thus to be “associated with each other in peaceful delight” and aid each other “with their mutual strength.”⁷⁵ “Let there always be one sentiment,” Theoderic suggested, “one desire for the Roman Empire,”⁷⁶ implying not that there was only one Roman Empire and Anastasius was *the* emperor,⁷⁷ but that both republics together constituted a greater whole, just as they had in the past, and required

⁷¹ Ibid: “Additur etiam veneranda Romanae urbis affectio, a qua segregari nequeunt quae se nominis unitate iunxerunt.”

⁷² See the citation above. The idea finds some echo in the statement made by Theoderic to Zeno in Jordanes, *Getica* 291: “dirige me cum gente mea ...ut... ibi, si adiutus a domino vicero, fama vestrae pietatis inradiet.” In this speech Theoderic attempted, successfully, to gain permission from Zeno to depose Odovacer. Here Theoderic explained to Zeno that the fame of the emperor would beam forth in Italy, should he win, though perhaps only because Zeno would have been credited for sending him in the first place.

⁷³ The ideology can be seen especially in coinage, where imperial colleagues are featured together on reverses as triumphant generals or seated magistrates, or on obverses with busts facing (“vis-à-vis”) or overlapping (“jugate”). In these cases a senior emperor might also appear larger than a junior. See the examples from the late fourth and early fifth century in Carson (1981), vol. 3.

⁷⁴ *Variae* 1.1.4: “quia pati vos non credimus inter res utrasque publicas, quarum semper unum corpus sub antiquis principibus fuisse declaretur, aliquid discordiae permanere.” Hodgkin (1886) and those who utilise his translation render the passage “between two republics,” which seems to undermine the letter's point that these are *the only* two Roman republics. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 84.

⁷⁵ *Variae* 1.1.5: “Quas non solum oportet inter se otiosa dilectione coniungi, verum etiam decet mutuis viribus adiuvari.”

⁷⁶ Ibid: “Romani regni unum velle, una semper opinio sint.” The use of *regni* instead of *regnorum* demonstrates the understanding that the *utrae res publicae* could constitute a greater unity. See MacPherson (1989), 82-83, and Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 83-4, who agree with this assessment. Moorhead (1992), 44-45, suggests some possible flaws based on “republican” versus “royal” terminology. Given that in the same letter Theoderic referred to each *res publica* as a *regnum* (i.e. “Regnum nostrum imitatio vestra est”), it would seem necessary for Moorhead to allow for greater linguistic flexibility.

⁷⁷ Such was concluded by Bury (1958), vol. 1, 454.

imperial harmony to preserve their unity.⁷⁸ Theoderic concluded his dispatch with a final nod to Anastasius' senior position, proposing once more that his own exploits would be associated with Anastasius,⁷⁹ but doubtless as a function of their fraternity, rather than through subservience or dependence.

This first letter of the *Variae* thus provided an ideological statement that asserted Italy and her princely emperor's Roman and imperial standing, while at the same time showing due reverence to the comparatively newly-won and surely jealously guarded primacy of the East. Such ideas found echoes in the official dispatches to Byzantine emperors penned in the period after Theoderic's death, even as Justinian's troops were busy laying siege to the cities of central and southern Italy.⁸⁰ Senators, acting as the voice of Italy, for instance, beseeched Justinian in the 530s to seek peace, recommending that both rulers unite their wills and counsels, "so that it may be a profit to your [i.e. Justinian's] glory, should anything prosperous be added to me [i.e. Italy]."⁸¹ A few years later, King Witigis likewise asserted to Justinian that, despite the injury caused by the emperor's forces, peace should be established, "so that both Republics might persist with their harmony restored, and that what was once established through the praiseworthy judgment of *principes* might be exalted more with God's help under your Empire."⁸² As Theoderic's Empire was crumbling, then, the idea that it represented one of two Roman Republics within a unified Roman Empire remained strong, as did the sentiment of confraternity and eastern seniority.⁸³

Letters like these were nevertheless official in nature, and the ideas that they promoted were intended for a specifically Byzantine audience, one which, again, had agreed to Theoderic's position in Italy, but only after much diplomacy and as more or

⁷⁸ Jones (1962), 128, suggests, on the other hand, that Theoderic's Italy had ceased to be a part of the Empire and was now a kingdom ruled by a king. This was certainly not what Theoderic was claiming here.

⁷⁹ *Variae* 1.1.5: "quicquid et nos possumus, vestris praeconiis applicetur."

⁸⁰ For Athalaric, *Variae* 8.1; Amalasuetha, *Variae* 10.8; Theodahad, *Variae* 10.9, 10.19, 10.21, and 10.23. Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 85f., who demonstrates their acknowledgement in eastern sources as well.

⁸¹ *Variae* 11.13.4: "iunge quin immo vota, participare consilia, ut tuae gloriae proficiat, si mihi aliquid prosperitatis accedat."

⁸² *Variae* 10.32.4: "quatinus utraque res publicae restaurata concordia perseverent et quod temporibus retro principum laudabili opinione fundatum est, sub vestro magis imperio divinis auxiliis augeatur." The *principes* in question may in fact have been Theoderic and Anastasius.

⁸³ *Sub vestro imperio* (above) seems to imply the acknowledgment of Justinian's senior position within a united Roman Empire, particularly because the prior sentence fragment refers to the *concordia* of both Republics.

less a *fait accompli*. Dispatches to the East needed to be especially deferential and carefully composed; the fact that they still expressed Italy's independent Roman status and the (near) parity of her rulers with those in Constantinople should suggest all the more the validity of their claims, particularly among Italo-Romans. Context and audience, again, were key. In Italy, on the other hand, Theoderic could be even less cautious in stating his position, either upholding these ideologies of imperial fraternity or disregarding them altogether according to his personal whims and his subjects' needs. Disregard could be beneficial, in fact, since it might serve to assert to Italo-Romans that they once more occupied the primary position within a greater Roman empire, while reverence could be equally useful, since imperial harmony had, by this time, become a kind of expectation, a venerable institution.⁸⁴

Traditional opportunities for reinforcing such fraternity and unity ideologies reveal the flexibility of their utilization. The tendency for coins in Theoderican Italy to bear the eastern emperor's bust and name on the obverse may provide one such example. Though often assumed to have stemmed from an imperial prohibition, the practice may have actually been entirely voluntary.⁸⁵ Indeed, examples of coins bearing Theoderic's or his successor's busts survive (albeit in limited quantities), challenging this understanding, while a letter in the *Variae* makes plain the near sacred significance that Theoderic attached to his own numismatic portraiture.⁸⁶ If voluntary, therefore, minting

⁸⁴ As chapter 1 has demonstrated, this lack of harmony had been a cause for complaint against the rulers of the fifth century, particularly Galla Placidia.

⁸⁵ There seems little justification, in fact, to conclude that the Amal rulers of Italy were specifically prohibited from minting such coins, despite the claim of Procopius, *Wars* 7.33.5, that minting gold coins was a prerogative of the emperor (Procopius also states here, wrongly, that the Persians respected this prerogative). Clearly the image of the eastern emperor dominates Italy's gold coinage, but this might just as easily be interpreted as a sign of respect towards a senior colleague, or simply conforming to (more abundant) eastern models for the sake of commercial regularity. Moreover, the comparative rarity of Italian exemplars (particularly of gold) from this period, in general, may explain the absence of gold issues bearing the likeness of Amal rulers. No known examples of gold coinage survive from the reign of Theodahad, for example, though surely gold coins were minted. Likewise, those examples of gold coins that do survive often bear the monogram of the reigning western *princeps*, thereby associating the two rulers with one another. On these coins, see the discussions of Wroth (1966) and Kraus (1928).

⁸⁶ Theoderic's Roman mint, for instance, produced a gold triple solidus that depicted him in an overtly imperial manner, complete with the title *princeps* (on this coin, see chapter 3), while the later king Baduila-Totila minted gold coinage bearing the bust of the long-dead emperor Anastasius, a statement of his lack of concord with the reigning emperor, Justinian. For the silver issues of Theodahad, which bear the inscription "Victoria Principum," see above. For sacred significance, *Variae* 7.32.1: "tamen omnino monetae debet integritas quaeri, ubi et vultus nosters inprimitur... nam quid erit tutum, si in nostra peccetur

coins of the eastern emperor could have had propagandistic value, demonstrating the concord of both Republics and signaling the western *princeps*' respect for his senior imperial colleague. There were even precedents for this practice during the later Empire, when, in a show of unity, emperors intentionally minted the coinage of their colleagues or adopted their motifs.⁸⁷

Coins, then, might reinforce imperial harmony, but other artistic media might not be at all in keeping with this ideal. The Tetrarchs, for instance, had used statues as a means of demonstrating their imperial oneness, each emperor bearing a striking resemblance to and supporting the other, while a later imperial practice was to erect an emperor's statue flanked by his respective colleague. In all known artistic representations of Theoderic, however, the *princeps* stood alone, suggesting to onlookers that the glory and *dominium* signified in his likeness were only his and did not complement the eastern emperor's, contrary to Theoderic's avowal.⁸⁸ Nor were eastern emperors entirely blind to this situation and its implications. In the peace terms that he offered to King Theodahad, Justinian himself had included the stipulation that, henceforth, all statues of Italy's rulers would have to be accompanied by similar statues of the current eastern emperor and, moreover, that the latter would be placed in the senior position.⁸⁹ To that point, however, this had obviously not been the case.

Unity (or a lack thereof) might also be shown on an annual basis when it came time for consuls to be selected. Like his imperial predecessors, Theoderic had the power to appoint his own consuls and invest them with their curule rods,⁹⁰ yet he often (but not

effigie, et quam subiectus corde venerari debet, manus sacrilega violare festinet?" Gold, silver, and bronze coinage are specifically mentioned at *Variae* 7.31.2.

⁸⁷ They also made it a point not to mint their so-called colleague's coinage or adopt their motifs, spurning their legitimacy. See Cullhed (1994), 35-39, who cites examples from the reigns of Maxentius and Carausius. Carausius minted his own coins and the coins of Diocletian and Maximian, though neither minted his coins. Similarly, Maxentius excluded Galerius from his coinage (though minting the coins of other Tetrarchs) and substituted "Conservator Urbis Suae" for the common Tetrarchic legend, "Genio Populi Romani."

⁸⁸ On such imagery, see below.

⁸⁹ Procopius, *Wars* 4.6.5.

⁹⁰ There is a tendency to accept the statement of John Malalas 15.9 that Theoderic received the codicils of his chief magistrates from the Byzantine emperor, including the rods of the consuls. The passage, however, is obviously misinformed (Malalas actually claimed that Theoderic received these codicils in the emperor's very presence, a ridiculous idea!), since both the *Variae* and even Procopius make Theoderic's prerogative in this regard quite clear. *Variae* 6.1 (a formula for the appointment of a consul), implies that Theoderic selected his consuls and granted insignia to them of his own volition, while *Variae* 2.1.4 reiterates this idea, demonstrating that, in the case of the consul Felix (511), he first conferred the curule rods and then

always) sought confirmation of his choice from the eastern emperor. Acceptance in the East was not necessary, but was nonetheless a source of honor for would-be consuls and, by the early sixth century, an established tradition. There was always the potential for the western candidate to fail to win recognition in the East owing to political friction or, perhaps more admirably, to hold his consulship alone because of miscommunication or the lack of a worthy eastern colleague. Neither scenario, however, weakened the validity of his consulship, especially before a western audience,⁹¹ but the failure to secure acceptance in the East was an obvious indicator of disunity, while success implied the opposite.

Other venues proved equally negotiable in Theoderic's Italy. Inscriptions, for instance, had typically been erected in honor of both emperors or at least referred to both in passing. But in Theoderican Italy only one known inscription appears to have perpetuated this practice, possibly placing Theoderic in a role subordinate to Anastasius.⁹² All others made no reference to the eastern emperor, and one series of inscriptions even referred to Theoderic as *semper Augustus*.⁹³ Acclamations at public and private assemblies (such as games or ecclesiastical synods) were quite similar. A synod convened at Rome in 498, for example, concluded with nearly two hundred bishops, priests, and various attendees shouting in unison thirty times "hear us, Christ;

contacted the eastern emperor, hoping for (but not requiring) acknowledgment. Likewise, Procopius, *Wars* 5.6.3, included in the peace terms offered to Theodahad by Justinian the stipulation that the Gothic king would have to ask the emperor to bestow senatorial ranks, suggesting that to this point Theodahad (and his predecessors) had done so of their own volition. But Cf. *Wars* 6.6.20, where an envoy of the Goths is made to suggest that all the western consuls had, to that point, had their dignity conferred upon them by the emperor of the East. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 110-11, argues that this may have been a reference to the original agreement established between Zeno and Theoderic in 488, but certainly not with Anastasius in 497. Jones (1962), 127, essentially agrees with the position taken above in his "constitutional" analysis, while Bury (1958), vol.1, 455, and MacPherson (1989), 82, take the opposite view.

⁹¹ Boethius is perhaps the best example. He was consul in 510, and, though having no eastern colleague, his consulship was clearly seen as valid in both the East and West. Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.32.

⁹² Fiebiger, vol. 1, #187 (*ILS* 825 and *CIL* 6 1794), corrected with Bartoli (1949): "Salvis domi[n]is nostris Anastasio Perpetuo / Augusto et Gloriosissimo ac Triumfali Viro / Theoderico." Here both Theoderic and Anastasius are hailed as "our lord," but Anastasius is an Augustus, while Theoderic (placed second) is reduced to being a "most glorious and triumphant man." Given the connection between triumph and emperorship (discussed below), the title had some imperial connotations. Jones (1962), 128, concludes that the passage implies that Theoderic was Anastasius' colleague, while Bartoli (1949), 87-8, disagrees, and suggests placing the inscription between the years 493 and 497, i.e. before Theoderic's official recognition in the East. For more on this inscription and its context, see chapter 4.

⁹³ Fiebiger, vol.1, #193 (*ILS* 827 and *CIL* 10 6850-2): "...Theodericus victor ac triumfator semper Augustus..." For more of this inscription, see below; for its probable context, see chapter 5.

long live Theoderic,”⁹⁴ while the pope received only twenty of the same acclamation, and the eastern emperor, Anastasius, none at all. The Byzantine emperor appeared irrelevant within these latter contexts, his absence militating against an understanding not only of Theoderic’s junior status but of fraternity in general. Theoderic was not just preeminent, but unassociated. And, indeed, there is room to argue that the exclusion of the eastern emperor from such acclamations was a regular practice, given that it too appears as a grievance in Justinian’s peace offer to Theodahad.⁹⁵

Just as the junior status of Italy’s *princeps* and his fraternity with the eastern *basileus* was negotiable in Italy, so too was the style of emperorship that he adopted or had applied to him. The language of the Principate had always remained an intrinsic part of the Italo-Roman understanding of Roman empire and emperorship, but Italy had nonetheless experienced the Empire’s physical and ideological transformations from the first through the early sixth century. History had initiated Italo-Romans into the cultural systems of the Dominate, its language and ideas becoming a part of their conception of rulership. Theoderic and his successors were able, therefore, to draw safely from a rich heritage of Roman emperorship, and their subjects could prove rather amenable to a number of competing imperial incarnations. Indeed, since the manifestation that they held most dear, the *princeps*, remained an overriding ideology, apparent inconsistencies could become perfectly acceptable, while centuries of tradition helped to make any inconsistencies completely excusable or even necessary.

The most noticeable of these alternative images and most ironic, at least from a Republican standpoint, was embodied in the specifically royal language of the era. That Italy was simultaneously presented as a *res publica* ruled by a *princeps* and a *regnum* ruled by a *rex* would have seemed absurdly contradictory centuries before. The latter terms, however, had by this time lost their first-century meaning and now served to suggest, once more, the imperial standing of Italy and her ruler. *Rex* was still antithetical to *princeps*, to be sure, but now as a synonym for *basileus*, eastern, despotic emperor, similar to *imperator*. Other titles and epithets helped to assimilate *rex* Theoderic to this

⁹⁴ *Acta Synhodorum Habitarum Romae* I: “Exaudi, Christe! Theoderico vitam! / dictum XXX.”

⁹⁵ Procopius, *Wars* 5.6.4. Italians were to proclaim the eastern emperor’s name first whenever they acclaimed their own ruler in places like the theater and hippodrome. Prior to this point, it is not clear whether they had simply proclaimed him second or not at all (though the Synod of 498, cited above, would seem to indicate the latter).

eastern style of emperorship, indicating that Italy's ruler was more concerned with "empty titles of ostentation" than Ennodius or Procopius were willing to admit. Though apparently not employing the terms himself, for instance, Theoderic was publicly acknowledged as an *Augustus* on a few occasions and was hailed as an *imperator*.⁹⁶ These titles obviously had Republican and Principate origins, but had been transformed through their constant appropriation by emperors (the former even given new meaning under the Tetrarchy), unlike *princeps*. Theoderic was also, in the style of a *basileus*, referred to as *Dominus Noster* (Our Lord), regularly employing these words on his coinage and official inscriptions.⁹⁷ Early Principate emperors had gone out of their way to avoid this appellation, while *dominus* itself had given its name to the late antique Dominate. Theoderic was likewise associated with victory through the use of the epithets *victor* and *triumphator*,⁹⁸ and, while victory and triumphs were not completely imperial prerogatives, the two were becoming increasingly connected in late antiquity.⁹⁹

Together, titles like these implied that Theoderic was unequivocally the Roman emperor in the West, not just some sort of quasi-imperial figure who insinuated his position with antiquated language. The association of the ruler with a plethora of typically imperial virtues reiterated this understanding. Not just a *rex*, Theoderic could be described rather imperially as *gloriosissimus*, *pius*, *inclytus*, *invictus/invictissimus*, *clementissimus*, *felix/felicissimus*, *fortissimus*, *praecipuus*, *maximus*, *bonus/optimus*, and *eminentissimus* among other qualities.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, other contemporary rulers in the West

⁹⁶ For Augustus, *ILS* 827 (cited above) and *PanTh* 7: *augustior*; for *imperator*, *VE* 143 (Epiphanius to Theoderic): "omnes retro imperatores te pietate superasse commemorem"; *VE* 18 (the same): "boni imperatoris est possessoris opulentia"; Ennodius, *Libellus Apologeticus Pro Synodo* 36: "imperialis... auctoritas"; idem 73: "imperiala... scripta"; idem 74: "imperatoris nostri"; *PanTh* 17 (debatable): "inter imperatores adhuc precetur adiungi"; and #447.5 (Ennodius to Liberius): "Tuta enim tunc est subiectorum opulentia, quando non indiget imperator." For the context of most of these, see chapter 4.

⁹⁷ *Dominus Noster* is ubiquitous. For coins, Kraus (1928), 99 (#98-9), and Wroth (1966), who includes none of the Theoderican examples, but demonstrates the use of DN by his successors. For inscriptions, see chapter 4. Other sources that regularly refer to Theoderic as "Dominus Noster" include *PanTh*, the *Variae* (Athalaric refers to Theoderic regularly as "dominus avus noster"), *CassChron*, and letters from the *Collectio Avellana*. Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 59f.

⁹⁸ *Victor* (for example): *Victor Gentium* (on the Senigallia Medallion, discussed below) and on *ILS* 827 (cited above), which likewise includes *Domitor Gentium*; for *Triumphator* (or related titles): *ILS* 827 and 825; *PanTh* 5, 10, and so forth (Theoderic and his Goths' triumphs and their status as *invictissimi* are a theme throughout); and *CassOratReliquiae*, pg 466, ln. 9-19 (discussed in chapter 5).

⁹⁹ See McCormick (1986), who discusses victory and triumph as an imperial act *par excellence*. Indeed emperors came to virtually monopolize the triumph and other visual celebrations of victory.

¹⁰⁰ Such language can be found throughout contemporary sources. For *gloriosissimus*, *ILS* 825; *pius*, *Variae* 1.12.4; *inclytus*, *PanTh* 14; *invictus/invictissimus*, Senigallia Medallion; *clementissimus*, *PanTh* 29;

adopted some of this titlature or had it applied to them by their subjects, but never as blatantly imperial as in Theoderic's case. A series of inscriptions from central Italy proclaimed Theoderic as "Our Lord, the most glorious and famous king... victor and celebrator of triumphs, always Augustus, born for the good of the Republic, guardian of liberty and propagator of the Roman name, subduer of the barbarians."¹⁰¹ There was clearly more to this phenomenon than simply the wishful thinking of a few die-hard Roman imperialists residing in Theoderic's Italy.¹⁰² The best that the contemporary Frankish king Clovis could expect, for instance, was *Dominus illustris* or *Dominus Magnus*.¹⁰³

Theoderic's reign (and by extension his successors'), then, constituted much more than simply that of a king along the same lines as other "barbarian" kings in the West.¹⁰⁴ He was a Roman emperor, acknowledged as such by his own subjects and presented as such, though in a deferential and conciliatory manner, to the East. Although regularly employing the "barbarian" title *rex*, as a "Roman" title even *rex* could serve to associate him with emperorship, a connection that was strengthened all the more by his use of customary imperial epithets and titles, or their application to him. Theoderic promoted the traditional idea of imperial unity and fraternity with the East, yet staked a claim to the West's separate existence as one of two Roman Republics. Indeed, in Italy (though not

felix/felicissimus and *fortissimus*, *CassChron* anno 489; *praecipuus*, *PanTh* 50; *maximus*: idem 5; *bonus/optimus*, *VE* 143; *eminentissimus*, idem 147.

¹⁰¹ Fiebigler, vol.1, #193 (*ILS* 827 and *CIL* 10 6850-2): "Dominus noster gloriosissimus adque inclytus rex Theodericus, victor ac triumphator, semper Augustus, bono rei publicae natus, custos libertatis et propagator Romani nominis, domitor gentium...." Later the inscription refers to Theoderic as "clementissimi principis" and adds "ad perpetuandam tanti domini gloriam."

¹⁰² Contra Jones (1962), 128. This kind of language, the above citation being a rather extreme example, was pervasive, and even when produced in excess by a private individual, was manifested publicly for all to see. It was, moreover, utilized by the state, since the dedicator of the above inscription was an important statesman (ex-consul ordinary, praetorian prefect, city prefect) and had been given permission to undertake the work under dedication by Theoderic himself (cf. *Variae* 2.32 and 2.33). How much more there was to this phenomenon than just "wishful thinking" is largely the subject of chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁰³ *Epistulae Austrasicae* 1.1 and 2.1 respectively. A letter directed to Clovis by the bishops convened at the Council of Orleans (511) similarly referred to the Frankish king as "Dominus... gloriosissimus." See the edition of Gaudemet and Basdevant (1989). Clovis is simply addressed as "rex" in the letters of Avitus of Vienne and Cassiodorus' *Variae*, though see below for a (probably mistaken) reference to the Frankish king being hailed as an "Augustus." A grandson of Clovis, Theudebert (r. 534-48), would later strike gold coins bearing his likeness and the inscriptions "DN Theudebertus Rex/Victor." For this, see Grierson and Blackburn (1986), 115-6, with Procopius, *Wars* 7.33.5 (discussed above). Cf. Wolfram (1967), 32f., who provides other examples of the (more simplistic) titles and epithets employed by "barbarian" kings.

¹⁰⁴ Contra the general conclusions of Jones (1962) and, though complicating the definition of "barbarian kingship" quite considerably, Barnwell (1992).

in the East), his western Republic was granted primacy over its eastern counterpart, much to the delight of heretofore disappointed patriots. More importantly, the language of his reign provided Italo-Romans with the kind of emperor they wanted, a *princeps*. The Republic, the Senate, Roman *Romanitas*, and *renovatio*: these were important components of the prosperity ushered in by the first *princeps*, Augustus; by the first late antique *princeps*, Maxentius; and by the first “Gothic” *princeps*, Theoderic, who like Augustus, also inaugurated a golden age. The kind of emperor that Theoderic was perceived to be, therefore, was intrinsically linked with the ideologies of restoration and resurgence that his reign had ushered in.

The *Princeps*’ new clothes

Titles, which were flexible, had the ability to insinuate to an Italian audience that Theoderic was a legitimate Roman emperor and his reign a sort of Republican Principate reborn. But an imperial image, as a part of this ideology, could have even greater resonance. A ruler’s image was extremely important and influenced his public reception. From the very beginning, emperors had painstakingly cultivated their public images, going out of their way to ensure that the language of their empire was legitimated through visual confirmation. Augustus, in keeping with his non-monarchical Principate, for instance, not only refused ostentatious titles and powers, but refused to behave or appear in a manner inconsistent with a mere senator. He dressed as such and was deferential to his senatorial colleagues, maintaining the charade that his reign was nothing more than a benign stewardship of the Republic. His imperial iconography, likewise, emphasized his *pietas* and Roman *Romanitas* at a time when many of Rome’s elite were feeling especially conservative and xenophobic.¹⁰⁵ Despite radical shifts in imperial ideology, the same underlying principles applied in the later Empire. The behavior and public display of emperors now promoted the splendor, detachment, and divine or near divine qualities of their titles *dominus et deus* (or for Christian emperors *theophilos*), or served to highlight the unity of colleagues in a divided Roman Empire.¹⁰⁶ Emperors covered themselves in purple embroidered with gold and studded with gems, wore similarly

¹⁰⁵ See, in general, Béranger (1953); A. Wallace-Hadrill (1982); and Zanker (1988).

¹⁰⁶ See, in general, Kolb (2001) and MacCormack (1981).

adorned slippers, and employed a jeweled diadem; they appeared unapproachable, sublime, and statuesque.¹⁰⁷ Their iconography asserted their connection with Roman victory;¹⁰⁸ their visual association with an imperial counterpart, either through physical resemblance or perhaps clasping a shoulder, reinforced the harmony of imperial wills.

Titles, to return, could insinuate that Theoderic was an emperor, but tenuously and only for so long. Visual confirmation of his imperial standing was also necessary, for emperors had to look and behave as such, living up to their subjects' expectations. The criteria for accomplishing this had varied over time and region, and some emperors, like Diocletian and Constantine, had obviously been quite successful in making alterations according to their own designs. But innovation could be dangerous, and while wholeheartedly accepted by one audience, it could be entirely despised and resented by another.¹⁰⁹ Generally speaking, the failure to live up to such local expectations (or to modify them in a passable manner) seriously jeopardized a ruler's legitimacy, often leading to sedition, usurpation, or assassination. Those who were egregiously offensive in their lack of regard might even suffer *damnatio memoriae*, the official erasure of their existence after death, a terrifying prospect for rulers who cared about their legacy.

The situation that Theoderic inherited in Italy, therefore, made an image amenable to Italo-Romans all the more important, particularly since defeat and intolerable innovation had largely defined the preceding era. While imperial language had continued to be propagated, imperial leadership in the West had failed to give substance to its claims of victory and unity, disappointing needs deeply entrenched in Italian society.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Odovacer himself had abandoned ideologies of unity altogether by announcing the dissolution of an independent western realm. Italo-Romans may have continued to believe that they lived in the western Roman empire, but their conviction

¹⁰⁷ Often-cited late antique examples include the mid fourth-century *adventus* at Rome of Constantius II and the Avar embassy directed to Justin II at Constantinople in the mid sixth century. See Ammianus, *Res Gestae* 16.10 and Corippus, *In Laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris*. The former is discussed in McCormack (1981), 40-45.

¹⁰⁸ See especially McCormick (1986).

¹⁰⁹ Again, this was especially the case in rather traditional Rome (and by extension Italy), where elites often took exception to certain imperial innovations that might have been more acceptable in the provinces. Galerius' Dacian persona (discussed above) is a good example.

¹¹⁰ Indeed, while the East was encroaching on the West and barbarians were stripping Italy of her provinces, western coinage continued to feature legends like "Victoria Augustorum," "Concordia Augustorum," "Virtus Romanorum," and "invicta Roma," and include "unity" and "victory" motifs. For the disappointment, see chapter 1.

lacked a visual component in the person of their ruler, who not only avoided imperial titles but also imperial dress. For a Theoderican restoration and Principate to have substance that extended beyond empty rhetoric, then, these grievances would have to be redressed, and visibly so. Indeed, the above discussion has already demonstrated instances where Theoderican language and practices reflected this altered reality, particularly in the case of Italy's regained status as an independent western realm. But while expected behavior and traditional acts of *pietas* legitimized Theoderic's imperial standing and helped to fuel sentiments of restoration,¹¹¹ a specifically imperial appearance remained important and was, owing to its absence under Odovacer, equally suggestive of a kind of restoration.

Still, given the rather traditional expectations of his Italo-Roman subjects, the predominance of Principate themes, and the variety of imperial incarnations available in Italy, what exactly did such an appearance entail? Cassiodorus' own comments on Odovacer's lack of imperial adornment suggest that purple robes and some sort of specifically imperial insignia constituted the minimal requirements for dressing like an emperor, and indeed the former were known to have been employed since the Julio-Claudians.¹¹² But whether Theoderic utilized such items and, if so, to what extent, is a matter of debate.¹¹³ The Byzantine historian Procopius is the only decisively negative commentator, claiming that the king never usurped the name Roman emperor (but see above) and never adopted his *schema*, meaning "appearance." *Schema* is generally interpreted as clothing and insignia, a reading that would imply that Theoderic was content with both a barbarian title (*rex*) and barbarian attire.¹¹⁴ But if this is what Procopius had intended, other sources make it clear that he was seriously, perhaps even

¹¹¹ See chapter 4 especially.

¹¹² See *CassChron.*, anno 298 and anno 476, both discussed in chapter 1.

¹¹³ Purple is generally agreed upon, but the diadem is not. See Ensslin (1959), 156; MacCormack (1981), 233-5; McCormick (1986), 270 (fn. 48 especially); MacPherson (1989), 81-2; and Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 158f.

¹¹⁴ Dewing's translation of *Wars* 5.1.26, for instance, reads, "[Theoderic] did not claim the right to assume either the garb or the name of emperor of the Romans." But *schema* may have had another intended meaning. It may have simply indicated that Theoderic lacked some (but not all) of the emperor's insignia, or it may have indicated a more approachable disposition. Both would have been consistent with a *princeps*, but would have disqualified Theoderic in Procopius' eyes from being a *basileus*.

intentionally, mistaken.¹¹⁵ The *Anonymus Valesianus* account, it will be remembered, recorded that Anastasius remitted to Theoderic in 497 the very imperial ornaments that Odovacer had sent to Zeno twenty-one years prior. The gesture, again, was significant. Other barbarian kings were also sent certain trappings of Roman rule from Constantinople, but Anastasius had not dispatched a consular toga or honorary chlamys, both of which insinuated their wearer's nominal status as a subject and dependent.¹¹⁶ Nor had he sent mere imperial robes, which nonetheless would have made an important statement about Theoderic's status vis-à-vis the Empire, since the wearing of imperial purple was a jealously guarded prerogative.¹¹⁷ Presumably Anastasius had sent all the trappings of imperial rule to Theoderic: the eagle-adorned scepter, the diadem, bejeweled slippers, lances, and purple and gold-embroidered robes.¹¹⁸ Of course, if these had been the actual items used by Romulus Augustus, a youth, they probably would not have fit Theoderic, but other accessories, such as his scepter or perhaps even diadem, might have been appropriated. The point, however, is moot, for the very act of returning these items clearly recommend that Theoderic could adopt them and with the complete approval of Constantinople.

Similar ideas can be found in the *Getica*. Much like the *Valesianus* account, Jordanes wrote that Theoderic adopted a different, more royal style of adornment after the death of Odovacer. He claimed that Theoderic, now the ruler of both Goths and Romans, "assumed clothing with royal insignia, laying aside the garb of a private citizen

¹¹⁵ Such irony is common in Procopius' works, and would present a rather interesting parallel with the Justin found in the *Anecdota*, i.e. a ruler with a Roman title and Roman dress (except for his pants, of course), but truly a barbarian by nature.

¹¹⁶ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2.38, records that, after his conquest of Aquitania, the Frankish king Clovis received letters from Anastasius conferring upon him a consulship. He was then described donning a purple tunic, chlamys, and diadem, and being hailed as "consul aut Augustus." This last reference is probably mistaken, and alternative readings, such as "Augustalis," have been suggested. Perhaps, though, Gregory intentionally cast Clovis as an Augustus (see chapter 5). At around the same time, the Burgundian king Sigismund was apparently named a patrician and possibly even *Magister Militum per Gallias* by Anastasius. See Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 93 and 94. In the former Sigismund is made to declare "famula vestra, prosapia mea... Vester quidem populus meus, et plus me servire vobis quam illi praeesse delectat."

¹¹⁷ For the significance of imperial purple, see especially Avery (1940); MacCormack (1981), especially part 3.1; and Kolb (2001), 117-120.

¹¹⁸ On late imperial dress and insignia see Kolb (2001), 49-54, and MacCormack (1981), 184-85. It is true that emperors had at times invested certain barbarian kings with some of these trappings (including the diadem), but in these cases the rulers in question received these items in Constantinople and were, moreover, client kings who had no authority over Romans (both in stark contrast with Theoderic). Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 124-9.

and the dress of his race.”¹¹⁹ These words cast serious doubt on Procopius’ suggestion that Theoderic was content to dress like a barbarian. Moreover, the timing of their adoption was certainly right for these royal insignia to have been the same royal (i.e., imperial) ornaments dispatched from Constantinople in 497. Jordanes’ comment that Theoderic had done this only after Zeno had been consulted hints at this relationship.¹²⁰ The statement is curious, since Zeno at this point was already dead and had presumably not agreed to this kind of royal position for Theoderic in 488, but it is suggestive of Festus’ second embassy, which had ultimately secured Romulus’ imperial ornaments for the king.¹²¹ Perhaps Jordanes assumed that Festus had been able to reach some sort of agreement with Zeno before his death or, better still, he may have simply (even understandably) been confused, since Festus’ first embassy had been directed to Zeno, not Anastasius. The gist of his account, at any rate, was that Theoderic, with the approval of the eastern emperor, had adopted royal attire that was clearly not Gothic and probably of an imperial nature.

The exact features of this attire are difficult to ascertain, however, owing to the survival of few pictorial representations and verbal descriptions of Theoderic. It is important, therefore, to emphasize the fact that neither Jordanes nor the *Valesianus* account provide any indication that Constantinople placed restrictions on the extent to which Theoderic could adopt an imperial appearance. Had he so desired, Theoderic could have dressed exactly the same as the emperor, yet, if deferential to his senior position or trying to affect a more Republican mien, less ornate (but still recognizably

¹¹⁹ *Getica* 295: “et primum concedens Theodoricus postmodum ab hac luce privavit tertioque, ut diximus, anno ingressus sui in Italia Zenonemque imp. consultu privatum abitum suaeque gentis vestitum seponens insigne regio amictu, quasi iam Gothorum Romanorumque regnator.”

¹²⁰ This can be inferred from the grammatically bizarre and probably corrupt passage “Zenonemque imp consultu” which appears in the prior citation. The MSS is hopelessly confused: *Zenonemque* is the most frequently used form, though *Zenoneque*, *Zenonisque*, and *Zenone* are all attested. *Consultu*, on the other hand, is less frequently attested than *consulto*, while *consultum* is also present. The best solution would be to see the passage as either an accusative or ablative absolute, both being attested in Jordanes’ works. Thus “Zenonemque imp consultum” or “Zenoneque imp. consulto.”

¹²¹ Moorhead (1992), 37-38, who consistently (and problematically) reads Jordanes’ work as a piece of pro-Theoderic propaganda (apparently adopting the stance of Cassiodorus), interprets the mistake as evidence for Jordanes’ having invented the entire episode. This seems too hasty, especially since Jordanes was generally Byzantine in his sympathies. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 134-8, on the other hand, argues that the passage refers to the first embassy of Festus in 490/1 and concludes that Festus had been successful in securing these royal vestments. The account in the *Anonymus Valesianus*, however, seems to indicate otherwise. See above.

imperial) decoration might have been appropriated.¹²² Denying a diadem, for instance, was a particularly Republican act espoused even by Julius Caesar and maintained by the early Principate emperors.¹²³ Likewise, men like Cassiodorus knew well enough that simpler robes, marked out as imperial only by their purple coloring, had typified the attire of a *princeps*, in obvious contrast to the bejeweled and sacred purple of the late antique *dominus*.¹²⁴ Potentially, then, Theoderic could choose how he wanted to appear before his subjects, and while certainly imitating his eastern colleague, important nods were at times given to the ideals of a Republican emperor.

It is almost certain, for instance, that Theoderic's robes were dyed with imperial purple, in stark contrast with Odovacer, who had deliberately avoided this color and its implications. Italian sources for the period, such as the *Variae*, are riddled with references to Theoderic and his Gothic successors as "purple-clad,"¹²⁵ and the second letter of this collection is specifically concerned with the production at Hydron (Otranto) of purple dye for Theoderic's "sacred robes" (*sacra vestis*). The positioning of this letter was again likely intentional, directly following the dispatch sent to Anastasius which outlined Theoderic's position as an imitator and imperial colleague. The letter itself was largely a rhetorical flourish that treated the production and quality of purple dye. When originally written, it was designed to demonstrate Cassiodorus' own knowledge of the subject and literary panache, while at the same time conveying the official message contained within. But within the *Variae* collection it also served the purpose of reiterating the imperial claims which Theoderic had alluded to in the letter preceding it, providing a kind of visual confirmation to the ideology that had been espoused. In the specific context of the letter, the production of dye at Hydron had been halted for

¹²² Just as one possible interpretation of Procopius' *schema* would suggest. See above, fn. 114.

¹²³ The theme of *recusatio* (refusal to take power) is prevalent throughout imperial history, but has its roots in the late Republic. The early imperial biographies found in Suetonius' *Life of the Caesars* makes this abundantly clear. Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Tiberius all refused a diadem, while Gaius nearly adopted one but was convinced to do otherwise (certainly not an act of *recusatio*), contributing to the understanding of him as a tyrant and monster. Diadems do not feature regularly on coinage until Constantine, though the radiate crown may appear as early as Augustus (its meaning, however, is contested). On *recusatio* during the Principate in general, see Béranger (1953), 137-169.

¹²⁴ See above, with chapter 1.

¹²⁵ For Theoderic or his successors as purple-clad (*purpuratus/a*) see *Variae* 4.39, 8.1 (to a Byzantine emperor no less!), 8.5, 9.24, 9.25, and 11.1. Ennodius too refers to a hoped-for son for Theoderic as a *purpuratum germen* (*PanTh* 93). On the advent of *purpuratus* as a descriptor for emperors, see Kolb (2001), 49. In Theoderic's Italy, just as it had been in the past, purple-clad was more than simply a synonym for "royal."

unexplained reasons and yearly dispatches of purple cloth had not been received at Ravenna. Rebuking the count responsible, Theoderic maintained that it was “sacrilegious to sin against such garments.” Their absence was a personal insult and act of *praesumptio* that would require “an avenger... not an exactor” should it not be corrected immediately.¹²⁶ Just as with any late antique emperor, such an outrage against the sacred purple could not go unpunished.

Ennodius too recognized Theoderic’s right and worthiness to adorn himself with this imperial color, even referring to a hoped-for son of Theoderic as a “purple-clad heir.”¹²⁷ His treatment of Theoderic’s appearance in the *Panegyric*, however, casts some doubt as to the exact nature of these supposedly purple garments. At one point in his treatment, for instance, Ennodius asserted to Theoderic that he deserved all the splendor and trappings of royalty, but likewise boasted that these were entirely unnecessary, owing to his natural regal qualities. Lauding Theoderic for the glory of his appearance, he claimed that “the purple of your royal countenance shines upon the purple of your office,”¹²⁸ suggesting that Theoderic himself exuded a kind of regalness that was complementary to his station and its insignia. He then addressed the people of the Far East, known for their expensive purple textiles, entreating them to send the most purple vestments they had, sparing not one drop of their ennobling dye.¹²⁹ Theoderic was thus deserving of the most overt expression of his imperial likeness, purple cloth, and in an extreme manifestation whereby he tellingly consumed all of the East’s best dye (despite the fact that, as seen above, this dye was available locally and requisitioned annually by the court). The reference extended beyond the Orient as simply the land par excellence of this royal pigment and alluded to Theoderic’s presumed superiority over the Byzantine

¹²⁶ *Variae* 1.2.4-5: “miramur tua te pericula minime cogitasse, dum sacrilegus sit reatus neglegentiae in tali veste peccare. ...tu quoque comitiva subvectus tantis iubes, tanta te istius nominis praesumptione defendis, ut, cum regale opus crederis agere, in multis videaris tibi civibus imperare. ... quod si te facultatis tuae adhuc cura non deserit, si salutis propriae tangit affectus, intra illum diem, imminente tibi harum portitore, cum blatta, quam nostro cubiculo dare annis singulis consueti, venire festina: quia non compulsorem ad te mittimus, sed ultorem, si aliqua credideris ludificatione tardandum.”

¹²⁷ See above.

¹²⁸ *PanTh* 89: “Sed nec formae tuae decus inter postrema numerandum est, quando regii vultus purpura ostrum dignitatis inradiat.”

¹²⁹ *Ibid*: “Exhibete, Seres, indumenta pretioso murice quae fucatis, et non uno aeno bibentia nobilitatem tegmina prorogate.” *Seres* is sometimes translated as “Chinese,” but the term really connotes any “far” eastern (and thus exotic) people, hence the more ambiguous translation provided above. Cf. Rohr (1995), 261, fn. 81. For Chinese (lit. “men of China”), MacCormack (1981), 233.

emperor; it was Theoderic, after all, not the Byzantine emperor, who deserved those robes earmarked for eastern consumption.

Beyond indicating Theoderic's worthiness to wear this imperial color, this treatment also provided Ennodius with an opportunity to compare Theoderic to his senior colleague and avowed model, ultimately demonstrating that it was preferable for Italo-Romans to have their current ruler as *dominus* and *princeps*. Theoderic was superior, foremost, because it was not necessary for him to concern himself with the fancy adornments and titles with which Byzantine despots seemed so obsessed. The eastern emperor needed all the Oriental purple, an expensive and perilously obtained diadem, and empty titles like *Alamannicus* (conqueror of the Alamanni) to assert his position as *dominus*,¹³⁰ but Theoderic's natural qualities made these trappings superfluous. Ennodius claimed that the association of purple with his king served to ennoble the vestments themselves rather than their wearer and that "whatever ornaments the world yields... will shine all the more having been decorated with the splendor of your [i.e. Theoderic's] venerable body."¹³¹ It was nature and God's own guidance which had bestowed on Theoderic those qualities that his eastern colleague could only affect, and poorly in Ennodius' estimation, through personal adornment.¹³² Theoderic was lord not because of ostentatious display or fear of his imperial majesty, but because his qualities as a leader made him so. Indeed, Ennodius declared that Theoderic's "simple and unchangeable nature" made him better than the eastern emperors, who were concerned with the display of their wealth and endeavored with their finery "to obtain beauty alien to themselves."¹³³

¹³⁰ *PanTh* 81: "Rex meus sit iure Alamannicus, dicatur alienus. Ut divus vitam agat ex fructu conscientiae nec requirat pomposae vocabula nuda iactantia..." Divus was likewise a title reserved for emperors. Cf. Reydellet (1981), 173-5, whose interpretation of *alienus* (as a reference to Theoderic) seems highly unlikely.

¹³¹ *PanTh* 89: "quaecumque ornamenta mundo obsequente transmissa fuerint, decorata venerandi genio corporis plus lucebant." *Genius* commonly means "glory/splendor" in later Latin, as evidenced in the works of Ennodius and Cassiodorus.

¹³² *PanTh* 91: "quod agunt in aliis dominis diademata, hoc in rege meo operata est deo fabricante natura." This idea echoes the Roman and Judeo-Christian understanding that rulers are selected by God. See Reydellet (1981), 166-8. The suggestion of Schramm (1954), 147, repeated in MacCormack (1981), 234, that Ennodius intended to reference Theoderic's "langen Haaren," is utterly ridiculous. Cf. Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 164-5, with the comments below.

¹³³ *PanTh* 91: "illos [i.e. alios dominos] faciunt tot divitiarum adiumenta conspicuos, sed hunc [i.e. meum regem] edidit simplex et indemutabilis figura meliorem. Quid! Cultu laborent qui cupiunt peregrinam obtinere pulcritudinem."

Perhaps Ennodius' words ought to be taken as an indication that Theoderic's attire was in fact less ornate than that of contemporary emperors residing in Constantinople. Such simplicity, of course, would have been consistent with current court ideologies and certainly in keeping with the practices of the Principate. In a sense, then, Ennodius had described Theoderic as a perfect *princeps* who had returned to humbler, Republican practices. But such a depiction had its limitations, and even Ennodius understood the difference between the simple, purple-striped toga of a high Roman magistrate, the attire of early emperors, and the sacred purple robes that Theoderic himself requisitioned annually from Hyrdon.¹³⁴ Indeed, Ennodius only suggested that Theoderic did not require such ornately decorated robes, perhaps an homage to the ideals of the Principate; he never claimed that Theoderic did not wear them.

The diadem was another issue altogether. Its adoption by Roman emperors had been an expression of majesty as much as divinity, the splendor of its pearls and jewels intended to bedazzle and stupefy its beholder. The wearing of a diadem was an imperial prerogative, and perhaps even more jealously guarded than purple-colored robes. The accessory itself had been adopted in imitation of eastern despots in the early fourth century, replacing the more Republican crown of oak or laurel (*corona civica* or *laureata*), which had signified the emperor's role as a perpetually triumphant commander (*imperator*) and savior. Its origins were therefore clearly linked to the transition from the rule of the *princeps* to that of the more despotic *basileus*, and the eschewal of a diadem on Theoderic's part, again, might have been construed as a particularly Republican or princely act by his Roman subjects. On the other hand, adopting a diadem may have been a prudent choice, despite contradictions. Diadems, after all, had been employed by

¹³⁴ In describing the ordinary consulship of Theoderic in Constantinople (484), Ennodius referred to his wearing of something resembling a consular *toga palmata*, decorated with palm leaves and colored borders, no doubt similar to the ones featured on the consular diptychs of the period, such as Flavius Felix's (western consul, 428). *PanTh* 15-16: "fascēs accepisti, non quo tibi accederet genius de curuli, sed ut de pretium palmata mereretur. ...ille annus habuit consulem, qui rempublicam non tam sollicitudine quam opinione tueretur, quo in segmentis posito quae ab hostibus sumpta fuerant arma tremuerunt." Though not simple, per se, it was certainly less ornate than the costuming worn by late antique emperors. The passage likewise demonstrates that Ennodius knew the difference between the purple of a consul and the purple of an emperor, both of which, his panegyric suggested, Theoderic had worn. The splendor of the imperial insignia is also described in *VE* 62, where the presence of Epiphanius renders them uninspiring. For more on Theoderic's consulship, see chapter 3.

emperors for nearly two centuries, and their complete absence may have caused the same kind of disapproval in Italy that Odovacer's avoidance of purple had inspired.

But whether Theoderic wore a diadem is a great deal less certain than his use of purple. In his panegyric, for instance, Ennodius called for a certain "wreath woven with different colored gems" and a "jewel guarded by a rather violent snake"¹³⁵ to accompany the garments dyed with Oriental purple for his king. Though never explicitly called a diadem, the description certainly could be interpreted as such, especially since these items were coupled with Theoderic's robes and later described as ornaments necessary for Byzantine emperors.¹³⁶ A bejeweled wreath is clearly consistent with the design of a diadem, a band sometimes of woven gold, decorated with precious stones and pearls, and wrapped around the forehead. Moreover, in describing such a diadem as a "wreath," Ennodius may have been intentionally alluding to the Republican *coronae* described above, rendering Theoderic's diadem more princely, or, given his rather ornate Latin, he may have simply been attempting to demonstrate his *eloquentia*. The "precious jewel," on the other hand, is reminiscent of the central gem featured on many representations of Roman diadems.¹³⁷ Diadems like these were known in Theoderic's Italy and Frankish Gaul, where they were praised for their eye-flattering, "fluctuating luster of gems."¹³⁸

¹³⁵ *PanTh* 89: "discoloribus gemmis sertum texatur, et quem vehementior vipera custodit lapis adveniat."

¹³⁶ MacCormack (1981), 233, and Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 163, interestingly (but probably erroneously) interpret the passage to refer to jewels interwoven into the fabric of the purple Oriental cloth, explaining that this was an imperial prerogative. For this to be correct, however, *sertum* would have to act as a past participle modifying *indumenta* in the prior sentence, a difficult reading given that *indumenta* is plural. It would make much more sense to see *sertum* as a noun, as rendered in the translation above. Both Rohr (1995), 261, and Rota (2002), 225, agree with this assessment, translating *sertum* as *Girlande* and *corona* respectively.

¹³⁷ Depictions of diadems, especially on coinage, tend to feature a central jewel. In late antique mosaics, on the other hand, the jewel appears to be optional. Justinian and Theodora at San Vitale in Ravenna, for instance, wear diadems covered with jewels and pearls, while the pseudo-Justinian at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo wears a diadem with a red jewel at the center. The latter style may be what this passage refers to, the jewel being made all the more precious because of its perilous origin. Another possibility that should not be excluded, however, is that this is a reference to a jeweled imperial *fibula*, also found on the mosaic portraits above and known to have been worn by Theoderic through the Senigallia Medallion (see below). On such insignia, Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 163-4.

¹³⁸ In a letter to Clovis Theoderic explained the merits of the cithara (a gift he sent to the Frankish king accompanied by a skilled citharist) through a comparison to a diadem. *Variae* 2.40.13: "et ut diadema oculis varia luce gemmarum, sic cithara diversitate soni blanditur auditui." Indeed, Clovis may have understood the reference from personal experience, since two sources refer to his possession of a diadem. The *Life of Hormisdas* in the *Liber Pontificalis*, for instance, records that Clovis gifted Saint Peter with a diadem [decorated] with precious jewels, while Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2.38, claims that Clovis crowned himself with a diadem after apparently receiving an honorary consulship from Anastasius in 508.

Though Ennodius would later assert that finery of this sort, just like purple robes, was unnecessary for Theoderic (a point, as discussed above, that is open to interpretation), other sources provide additional evidence that a diadem was indeed employed. In the *Variae*, for instance, a letter conferring the office of urban prefect to a certain easterner, Artemidorus, makes a rather fortuitous reference to Theoderic's diadem. In this letter Theoderic explained to Artemidorus that greater offices bestow greater honor on their holders, comparing the lesser honor acquired by one who guards the wine cellar to the extreme honor acquired by an individual who "attends to the precious diadem."¹³⁹ Admittedly, the comparison may have been merely hypothetical or intended to demonstrate both Theoderic's and Artemidorus' familiarity with practices in Constantinople.¹⁴⁰ But then again, Theoderic might just as easily have been referring to his own diadem.

In the *Life of Caesarius of Arles*, on the other hand, an unquestionable reference to Theoderic's wearing of some sort of royal head covering, perhaps a diadem, is provided. Here, after being escorted to Ravenna on the charge of treason, the bishop entered Theoderic's court and beheld the king, who "rose reverently to greet [him] after he removed the royal insignia from his head."¹⁴¹ The act signified Theoderic's utmost humility as a Christian and cast him in the role of Christian emperors and their biblical models, who were supposed to show deference to such modern "apostolic men."¹⁴²

The latter account is generally taken with a grain of salt, but both statements are certainly interesting given the assumption that diadems were at this time an imperial prerogative. Perhaps they were not.

¹³⁹ *Variae* 1.42.4: "plerumque honor ex commendatis adquiritur nec tale est cellam vinariam tuendam suscipere, quale pretiosa diademata custodire."

¹⁴⁰ Both men, after all, had grown up at Constantinople around the same time. For Artemidorus, his links to the imperial family, and his eastern career, see *PLRE* 2, 155-6 ("Artemidorus 3"), with *Variae* 1.43 and chapter 3. On the reference to the diadem, see McCormick (1986), 270, fn. 48, who suggests that this passage is "clearly metaphorical if the syntax is properly understood." But cf. Ensslin (1959), 156, who takes the passage literally.

¹⁴¹ *Vita Caesarii* 1.36: "Ut vero rex dei hominem intrepidum venerandumque conspexit, ad salutandum reverenter adsurgit hac, deposito ornatu de capite, clementissime resalutat..."

¹⁴² Indeed, the authors of the *Life of Caesarius*, like other Theoderic-friendly sources in Italy, failed to explicitly reference the king's Arianism, perhaps owing to his rather sympathetic and respectful position vis-à-vis the Catholic Church. On this, see Moorhead (1992), 54-60 and 90-97. Theoderic himself referred to Caesarius as "angelic" and "apostolic," later gifting him with a sixty-pound silver dish along with three hundred solidi. The occurrence placed Caesarius and Theoderic in the company of other Gallic saints and emperors, since holy men like Germanus of Auxerre and the Jural father Lupicinus had also traveled to Italy and received gifts from emperors (or their representatives) in a show of piety. For the removal of the diadem as evidence of proper Christian emperorship, see Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 65.4: "sed melius est ut Romam cum venerit imperator, deposito diademate, ploret ad memoriam piscatoris, quam ut

While the account itself post-dated the event by nearly fifty years and so may simply reflect a Gallic translation of Theoderic's known imperial pretensions, it may also have been based on information provided by Caesarius himself,¹⁴³ and thus, again, suggests that Theoderic made use of a diadem, vaguely referred to here as head-insignia.¹⁴⁴

Images of an emperor

Thus far written sources appear to suggest that Theoderic did in fact adopt an image that conformed to Italian expectations of Roman emperorship. Artistic representations can likewise shed additional light on the extent of this imperial likeness, whether through depictions of Theoderic wearing a diadem or wrapped in purple, or through his figure's association with traditional imperial iconography or motifs. A discussion of images from this period, however, is somewhat problematic owing to the nature of their later transmission. Though contemporary sources refer in passing to a number of artistic representations of Theoderic,¹⁴⁵ only one image that is unquestionably his has survived. The remaining "known" images are of uncertain attribution or survive, in part at least, through the often rather detailed observations and descriptions of later authors. Of the latter, the *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, a historical work of a ninth-century priest and abbot of Ravenna, Agnellus, is undoubtedly the most important.

Agnellus' history, consisting of a series of episcopal biographies that begin in the first century AD, was intended to celebrate the autonomy and autocephaly of the See of Ravenna in the face of increased Roman (i.e. papal) dominance.¹⁴⁶ Regardless, the work is replete with digressions and anecdotes, many of which include rich descriptions of the various artistic and architectural sights in and around Agnellus' Ravenna. It is, hence, an

piscator ploret ad memoriam imperatoris"; and similarly, but in reference to an *adventus* of Honorius, *Sermo* 61, with Vitiello (2005), chp. 1 especially.

¹⁴³ On the dating of the *Vita* see Klingshirn (1994b), 2, who places its composition within seven years of Caesarius' death in 542. The work was a collaborative project of five clerics who personally knew the bishop.

¹⁴⁴ McCormick (1986), 270, fn. 48, calls this potential diadem "some kind of headgear" (which might be mistaken as a helmet), but ultimately concludes that later Gothic kings *did* use diadems, altering Theoderic's policy. Given the evidence discussed thus far, however, there seems little need for their use to have been a change in policy.

¹⁴⁵ Procopius, *Wars* 5.14.22, provides a rather strange anecdote concerning a brick portrait of Theoderic in Naples that crumbled in such a way that it divined the future. Statues of Theoderic in Rome, which were also destroyed, are mentioned in *Wars* 7.20.29 and Isidore of Seville, *HG* 39.

¹⁴⁶ Deliyannis (2004), 17-19, who also places the work within a context of securing the rights of clergymen in the face of increased episcopal oppression.

invaluable source for early medieval art historians, and likewise relevant here for its descriptions of three representations of Theoderic, one in the form of an equestrian statue and the other two mosaics.

Caution, however, must be observed in using Agnellus' work, despite its potentially enormous value. By the ninth century a number of alterations could have theoretically been made to these pieces of art, unbeknownst to their observer.¹⁴⁷ Worse still, Agnellus may have simply been confused about who had been depicted and in reality described a likeness that was not Theoderic's.¹⁴⁸ Either occurrence would mean that the history's descriptions themselves might have been authentic, but not their association with Theoderic.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, even if such confusion or alterations were not a factor, the information about these works included by Agnellus was idiosyncratic, limited to his personal impression and tastes. Despite his attention to detail, he was not a technically trained art critic nor did he always systematically examine these works, aspiring to provide as accurate a portrayal as possible, down to the tiniest minutia. His descriptions were, again, anecdotes within a greater historical *opus*. Certain features of ideological import, therefore, such as color or an inscription, may not have been recorded, though historically central to the piece's original message and context, and of the utmost importance for the present discussion.

These caveats aside, the mosaic representations of Theoderic as described by Agnellus are still potentially quite revealing. The first, located at Theoderic's palace at Pavia, was simply described as Theoderic sitting on horseback.¹⁵⁰ As such, it provides a good example of the problem outlined above, i.e. that Agnellus sometimes offered too little information for analysis to take place. The description of the second mosaic as

¹⁴⁷ Changes to the mosaics at Sant' Apollinare Nuovo are a case in point. See *LPR* 86, where only some of these (known) alterations are described.

¹⁴⁸ An equestrian statue in a palace known to have been Theoderic's, for instance, might logically have been assumed to be a representation of Theoderic, yet it could have been any of Theoderic's male successors (or for that matter a Roman emperor, exarch, or even Lombard king). Similar confusions are known to have occurred in the middle ages: the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius now housed at the Capitoline Museum in Rome, for instance, probably survived the Middle Ages, in part, at any rate, owing to the belief that it depicted Constantine the Great. See below for an equestrian statue of Theoderic that may have portrayed Zeno and a surviving mosaic of Justinian that probably depicts Theoderic.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Deliyannis (2004), 70f., who claims that the extant images correspond well with Agnellus' descriptions.

¹⁵⁰ *LPR* 94: "...obsiderunt Ticinum, quae civitas Pavia dicitur, ubi et Theodericus palatium struxit, et eius imaginem sedentem super equum in tribunalis cameris tessellis ornati bene conspexi."

similar to this one, however, suggests that there were common themes shared between them.¹⁵¹ This second mosaic was located at the entrance of Theoderic's palace at Ravenna, called the Chalke on the model of the Great Palace at Constantinople,¹⁵² and its features were described in such a way that some of its deeper symbolic meaning may be inferred. Agnellus claimed that Theoderic was depicted here holding a lance in his right hand, a round shield in his left, and covered in lorica armor.¹⁵³ These items were the trappings of both a commander and a ruler and featured prominently in depictions of emperors as triumphant *imperatores*.¹⁵⁴ Though unclear, the representation may have been intended to depict Theoderic as a triumphant Roman ruler, a *princeps* or even *imperator*. More significant than this, Agnellus' description continued with the claim that Theoderic was flanked in this image by personifications of Rome and Ravenna, the principal cities of his empire, and a motif observable in other imperial iconography.¹⁵⁵ Rome stood near Theoderic's shield, to the left, helmeted and holding a spear, the decrepit old woman of Ennodius' panegyric rejuvenated and as fierce as ever. Ravenna stood to the right, also grasping a spear, her legs straddling the sea and land, doubtless an

¹⁵¹ Ibid: "Hic autem similis fuit in isto palatio, quod ipse haedificavit, in tribunale triclinii quod vocatur Ad mare, supra portam et in fronte regiae quae dicitur Ad Calchi istius civitatis, ubi prima porta palatii fuit, in loco qui vocatur Sicrestum, ubi ecclesia Salvatoris esse videtur." This rather specific description places the image within the palace complex of Theoderic, located in Ravenna near his Arian church dedicated to Christ the Redeemer (Salvator), now Sant'Apollinare Nuovo.

¹⁵² For Chalke, see the prior citation; for the connection between Theoderic's palace complex and the one at Constantinople, see below.

¹⁵³ LPR 94: "in pinnaculum ipsius loci fuit Theoderici effigies, mire tessellis ornata, dextera manum lanceam tenens, sinistra clipeum, lorica indutus."

¹⁵⁴ The best examples occur in coinage, which tended especially in the fifth century to feature portraits of emperors brandishing a lance, covered in lorica, and helmeted. Reverses might likewise include military scenes in which similarly dressed emperors triumphed over barbarians or received a globe from a winged victory or Roma herself. Excellent examples of these motifs can be found in the figures from Carson (1981), vol. 3, as well as Bruun et al. (1964), 236f and Belinger (1958), 149f. A similar image of a "barbarian king" accompanied by many of these items can be found on the fifth-century signet ring of Childeric of the Franks. This too was intended to depict the king in a specifically Roman fashion. See James (1988), 61, and Schramm (1954), 213-217, the latter of which suggests (unnecessarily) that the use of lances is of Germanic origin.

¹⁵⁵ Once again the best examples can be found on coinage, where Rome and Roman themes were quite frequently depicted on both the reverse and obverse. Such numismatic personifications of Rome served the purpose of associating an emperor with the city of Rome, demonstrating his authentically Roman and hence rather traditional *Romanitas*, and legitimizing his position as a Roman emperor. For Theoderic's and Maxentius' use of such motifs, see above and chapter 4. It should be remembered also that a personified Rome featured regularly in imperial panegyric, as the examples from Sidonius' and Ennodius' *opera*, cited in chapter 1, demonstrate.

allusion to her status as a port and to Theoderic's claims to *dominium* over land and sea.¹⁵⁶

Such imagery seems quite indicative of Theoderic's imperial pretensions and likewise to have echoed contemporary sentiments of his role in returning Rome and Italy to their glorious central positions. Her personification placed in the senior position, at the actual right hand of the Theoderic,¹⁵⁷ Rome was once more fully armored and reinvigorated, a rather active participant in the fortunes of the empire, while Ravenna, her subordinate, has taken the role occupied by Constantinople in earlier iconography as a New Rome.¹⁵⁸ Both, as Italian cities, likewise represented Italy. The symbolism itself is (and would have been) illuminating to be sure, but unfortunately Agnellus' description falls short of commenting beyond this. Finer details that would have been equally important either symbolically or ideologically are left unmentioned. The mosaic itself, for instance, was described as "wonderfully adorned,"¹⁵⁹ suggesting that the array of colors, as in surviving examples, was impressive. Yet whether there was a purple *paludamentum* tellingly wrapped around Theoderic's lorica or a flashing diadem adorning his head will never be known.

Agnellus' description of the equestrian statue of Theoderic, which had been located at Ravenna until a rather impressed Charlemagne had it shipped back to his own new Rome (Aachen), is also suggestive of his imperial pretensions. As in the mosaic above, Theoderic appeared with a shield in his left hand and a lance in his right, this time

¹⁵⁶ LPR 94: "Contra clipeum Roma tessellis ornata astabat cum asta et galea; unde vero telum tenensque fuit, Ravenna tessellis figurata, pedem dextrum super mare, sinistrum super terram ad regem properans." This claim to dominance over the sea was backed up sometime in the mid 520s, when Theoderic ordered a formidable navy constructed at Ravenna apparently *ex nihilo*. Cf. *Variae* 5.16-20.

¹⁵⁷ It seems best to conclude that "dexter" and "sinister" are relative to Agnellus, rather than the figures in the mosaic. Not only does this place Rome within her established (and expected) senior position, but it also allows the sea on which Ravenna places her foot to be the Adriatic (also expected). It would have been perfectly natural for Agnellus to describe this image in terms of his own perspective, but perhaps, given tensions between Rome and Ravenna at this time, describing Ravenna at Theoderic's right was intentional and designed to assert a former superiority for his city. That "dexter" and "sinister" are relative to the figures in the mosaic, of course, cannot be ruled out.

¹⁵⁸ The pairing of the "twin" Romes (new and old) in imperial iconography can be seen both on the consular diptychs of the fifth and sixth century (such as the diptych of Clementius, cons. 513) and on coinage, where Constantinople, to the left of Rome, places her foot on a prow (similar to Ravenna). For Clementius' diptych, see Delbrueck (1929), vol. 2, 117-121; for an example of the coin motif, Carson (1981), vol. 3, #1589 (a coin of Theodosius II bearing the inscription "GLORIA REIPUBLICAE").

¹⁵⁹ LPR 94: mire tessellis ornata.

his arm apparently outstretched, extending the lance forward.¹⁶⁰ The horse itself was magnificently wrought of copper or bronze and covered in gold, though apparently in a state of neglect in the ninth century.¹⁶¹ Agnellus additionally repeated the contemporary lore that the statue had originally been commissioned in honor of Zeno, but then (perhaps because the emperor had died?) Theoderic decided to decorate it “in his own name.”¹⁶² This change may, in fact, have had something to do with Theoderic’s decision to rule Italy outright (rather than *praeregnare* as a patrician). In the very least, at any rate, it suggests that the statue looked imperial enough to a ninth-century audience, and, indeed, the features described by Agnellus were modeled on imperial exemplars. The outstretched right arm, the bronze and gold covering, and the general theme of dominance were motifs identifiable in imperial equestrian statues, such as those of Marcus Aurelius and Nerva. Statues like these had a deeper ideological importance for the Roman public; they were a venue for advertising the imperial persona and its virtues, particularly valor and clemency.¹⁶³ Nor was the significance of such statues lost on Theoderic or his east-Roman colleagues, who, as mentioned above, made it a point to include regulations concerning them in the peace terms they offered before the outbreak of the Gothic wars. Theoderic’s equestrian statue at Ravenna, like the others that had been erected in his empire, surely stood alone, identifying him within his capital as the undisputed and victorious ruler of the western Empire.

Beyond Agnellus’ written descriptions, an actual artistic representation of Theoderic in mosaic may in fact survive in his palace church at Ravenna, now known as Sant’Apollinare Nuovo, but originally an Arian basilica dedicated to Christ the Redeemer. This church and the palace complex that accompanied it was one of the many

¹⁶⁰ Ibid: “desuper autem equus ex aere, auro fulvo perfusus, ascensorque eius Theodericus rex scutum sinistro gerebat humero, dextro vero brachio erecto lanceam tenens.”

¹⁶¹ The phrase “ex naribus vero equi patulis et ore volucres exhibant in alvoque eius nidos haedificabant” seems to refer to the neglected status of the statue shortly before Charlemagne had it removed to Aachen. Birds had apparently nested inside the horse’s muzzle and presumably hollow belly.

¹⁶² *LPR* 94: “Alii aiunt, quod superadictus equus pro amore Zenonis imperatoris factus fuisset. . . . Pro isto [i.e. Zenoni] equus ille praestantissimus ex aere factus, auro ornatus est, sed Theodericus suo nomine decoravit.” Whether Theoderic himself had commissioned the work in Zeno’s honor or simply appropriated the half-finished product is not stated.

¹⁶³ Victory and clemency were especially important within this medium, and it is often suggested, by inference from other imperial imagery (such as coin motifs), that a supplicating barbarian was featured underneath the rearing horse, pardoned or about to be slaughtered by the emperor. Equestrian statues were thoroughly connected to late antique imperial victory propaganda. See McCormick (1986), 64-66.

building projects undertaken at Theoderic's command and was apparently modeled after the basilica-palace complex in Constantinople.¹⁶⁴ While the Ravenna complex itself does not survive, much of the church and its mosaics do. The specific mosaic in question contains the portrait of what is clearly an imperial figure: an older, heavy jawed man with white hair, dressed in the traditional clothing of imperial rule. Though the nineteenth-century inscription above identifies the subject as Justinian, scholars have concluded that portions of the image are contemporary with Theoderic's reign, leading to the assumption that the portrait is either of Theoderic himself, or perhaps Justin or Anastasius.¹⁶⁵ The prospect of the latter Byzantine emperors being depicted in Theoderic's Arian palace cathedral, however, seems unlikely, not just because of differences in dogma or the oftentimes rocky nature of relations between east and west, but because the entire complex, modeled after the emperor's in Constantinople, was designed to demonstrate Theoderic's imperial standing. Christ the Redeemer was Theoderic's personal church, not Anastasius' or Justin's. It connected to his palace and its mosaic program even featured an image of that palace juxtaposed with an image of Christ enthroned.¹⁶⁶ There was, hence, no need to show deference to the eastern emperor here, and indeed, if Theoderic had designs on being something more than a *rex* or *princeps*, this was the place where this could be expressed.

If, therefore, as seems probable, the image is that of Theoderic, there seems little question that he adorned himself with purple and adopted a diadem, since both items are clearly present in the mosaic portrait.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the attire employed bears a striking resemblance to that found in the depiction of the emperor Justinian in the Basilica of San Vitale, likewise in Ravenna. Both feature a purple *paludamentum* covering the left shoulder and attached with a golden jeweled brooch at the right; both a white tunic under the cloak; both a golden diadem spotted with multi-colored jewels and hanging tassels;

¹⁶⁴ For a reconstruction of this complex and its relationship to the "Great Palace" complex at Constantinople, see Siena (1984), 526f; Johnson (1988), 78-91; and Maioli (1994), 234-7.

¹⁶⁵ See Lorentz (1935); Fuchs (1944), 125f.; Bovini (1956); Johnson (1988), 86-7; Andalaro (1993), 561-2; and Lippolis (2000). The attribution to Justinian seems to be derived from the statement of Agnellus in *LPR* 86 (in reference to the decorations in Theoderic's church): "In ipsius fronte intrinsecus si aspexeritis, Iustiniani augusti effigiem reperietis et Agnelli pontificis auratis decoratam tessellis."

¹⁶⁶ For the significance, see Siena (1984), 535, and Johnson (1988), 85-6.

¹⁶⁷ But see below.

both the imperial nimbus surrounding the ruler's head.¹⁶⁸ This, then, was Theoderic the *imperator, dominus, and basileus*: perhaps not the image that he could cultivate regularly in public, but certainly representative of his imperial designs.

Thus far the discussion of images has largely been hypothetical owing to the nature of the sources involved. The purpose has been to suggest that Theoderic intentionally cultivated a public image that was indicative of his standing as an actual Roman emperor, and that this gave substance to ideological claims of his realm as a revived and restored western Roman Empire. Though perhaps not in agreement on all details, a consistent image of Theoderic, which ranged from an exact copy of the eastern emperor to something more in the style of the Principate, emerges. And indeed, this physical representation of Theoderic as straddling a middle course is in harmony with the official and unofficial understanding of his role as ruler of Italy. "Theodericus Rex" could appear, as he did in his palace church, as a new Valentinian: diademed and covered in sacred purple, a *semper Augustus, dominus, and basileus*; or, as he did in Ennodius' panegyric, as a new Trajan: a more simply adorned *pius princeps*, a mere fellow citizen and defender of the Republic. Two last images, artistic representations of Theoderic found on the so-called "Senigallia Medallion" and "Jewel of Bern," reiterate the reality of this situation, while at the same time adding a necessary, but ultimately important complication to the picture.

Created from a commemorative triple solidus minted sometime in the early sixth century,¹⁶⁹ the medallion contains the only surviving likeness (or attempted likeness) that is definitely Theoderic's. The image etched into the jewel, on the other hand, which had once functioned as a signet ring, has been attributed to Theoderic through its

¹⁶⁸ Admittedly, only portions of this iconography date from the sixth century and only the face and neck have been securely dated to the Theoderican era. Indeed, some specialists have attempted to date the imperial iconography to the middle of the sixth century, i.e. to after the reign of Theoderic, suggesting that the original lacked these trappings altogether. Such a conclusion, however, seems too hasty, especially since another surviving artistic representation of Theoderic (discussed below) includes both a jeweled fibula and a *paludamentum*, items supposedly added to the mosaic in the mid sixth century. Bearing this in mind, there is room to argue that the mid-sixth-century dating is incorrect or, alternatively, that such additions are not indicative of a prior absence. They may reflect, instead, a repair or embellishment of a pre-existing image, the latter of which would be consistent with Agnellus' statement in *LPR* 86 (cited above). For the dating, see especially Lorentz (1935), 339-40; Bovini (1956), 52; Andaloro (1993), 561-2; and Lippolis (2000), 465-9.

¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of the date, see chapter 5.

accompanying monogram, though the identification is not entirely secure.¹⁷⁰ Both figures, at any rate, appear to be clothed in a Roman style, and both are accompanied by certain elements of imperial iconography, their appearance in the Senigallia Medallion being most striking.¹⁷¹ Still, these representations also blend their Roman and imperial features with seemingly un-Roman elements, necessitating discussion.

The Theoderic found on the jewel, first of all, appears rather simply dressed, fitted in civilian attire consistent with the unadorned robes of a *princeps*: a tunic covered by a toga draped over the right shoulder.¹⁷² Nothing explicitly imperial, beyond the use of a monogram, is featured here, though the (purple) amethyst on which the entire scene is depicted may be a statement of this Theoderic's imperial pretensions.¹⁷³ The medallion's Theoderic, in contrast, is overtly imperial. The figure wears a cuirass of lorica with the customary brooch holding a *paludamentum* at his right shoulder; both items, it will be recalled, were featured in the "imperial" mosaics described by Agnellus and are likewise visible in the surviving mosaics at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo and San Vitale. He stands at attention, his right hand raised in the imperial act of *adlocutio*, his left hand holding a globe straddled by a winged victory, which extends a laurel wreath towards him (enlarged and facing in the opposite direction on the reverse). These motifs, traditional themes symbolic of an emperor's claim of *dominium* over the entire world, are in obvious imitation of imperial models. The inscriptions on the obverse and reverse conform to this, the former reading, REX THEODERICUS PIUS PRINC[EPS] I[NVICTISSIMUS] S[EMPER],¹⁷⁴ "king Theoderic, the pious and always most

¹⁷⁰ The monogram itself appears to be consistent with a "Theoderic," probably, but not definitely, our Theoderic. Cf. Berges (1954), 222-6, and Breckenridge (1979), who suggests that this Theoderic is likely Theoderic II of the Visigoths.

¹⁷¹ The Jewel of Bern is only "imperial" in its iconography if its "royal" monogram is accepted as imitative of imperial models. See Berges (1954), 226.

¹⁷² The suggestion of Schramm (1954), 220, that the subject may not be dressed as a Roman, but instead in a Germanic tunic and mantel seems unreasonable given the context. Cf. Breckenridge (1979), 12, who concludes, "The costume is... Roman."

¹⁷³ A similar jeweled signet ring is known to have been worn by the Visigothic king Alaric II, though the stone in this case was a blue sapphire. See Schramm (1954), 217-9, and Breckenridge (1979), 14. Moreover, the gem portraits of Constantine and Constantius II discussed in Breckenridge were also carved in amethyst. Admittedly, the use of this (purple) stone in Theoderic's case may simply be coincidental, but if so, it is certainly ironic.

¹⁷⁴ The meaning of PRINCIS has been debated. The "I" is usually interpreted as *invictissimus*, *invictus*, or *inclutus*, while the "s" either completes the word beginning with the "I" or is interpreted as "Semper." *Invictissimus Semper*, however, is most commonly accepted. See Wroth (1966), 54, and Kraus (1928) 78-9. Cf. Allara (1898), who rather interestingly offers "PRIN(ceps) C(onsul/aesar) I(mperator) S(alutatus).

invincible prince,” the latter, REX THEODERICUS VICTOR GENTIUM, “king Theoderic, conqueror of the barbarians.” Both highlight Theoderic’s role as a triumphant *imperator*,¹⁷⁵ though the term itself is eschewed and the expected *princeps* and *rex* are substituted.

But as straightforwardly Roman and imperial as both of these images seem, especially the latter, Theoderic’s head is nonetheless problematic. Admittedly a trend in some later numismatic portraiture, the head on the Senigallia Medallion appears entirely too large for Theoderic’s body,¹⁷⁶ almost as if he has a hydrocephalus, and the effect is exacerbated by the absence of the expected diadem, radiate crown, or helmet of a triumphant emperor.¹⁷⁷ In place of such head-pieces, a massive, almost ridiculous head of curled hair is featured, producing a near cone-headed effect. The same hair appears in the Jewel of Bern, though Theoderic’s head is not misshapen, and the hair itself is a bit longer and uncurled. The faint remnants of a moustache, moreover, appear to adorn Theoderic’s upper lip in the medallion, and though lacking in the Jewel of Bern,¹⁷⁸ the occurrence has led many to conclude that this particular style of facial-hair, rather

¹⁷⁵ *Victor Gentium* (or more specifically over a country or specific people, e.g. *Victor Franciae/Gothorum*) was a common inscription on imperial Roman coinage, usually celebrating victory in a major campaign. A medallion of Constantine II bore the inscription for instance. For this, see Carson (1980), vol. 3, #1330. *Invictissimus (Semper)* was a more florid extension of the simpler idea of “Victor.” Maxentius’ early coinage similarly described him as a *Princ[eps] Invict[us/issimus]*. Cf. Carson (1980), vol. 3, #1251, and Cullhed (1994), 46-9.

¹⁷⁶ Examples of such enlarged heads on numismatic portraits include the busts of Honorius, Valentinian III, and Olybrius (the latter bearing some stylistic resemblance to Theoderic’s triple solidus). For these, Carson (1980), vol. 3, #1514, 1536, and 1561.

¹⁷⁷ Items like helmets and diadems are particularly prominent in portraits found on fifth- and sixth-century coinage, though uncovered heads are not unheard of, and, indeed, are in keeping with Principate models and standards. For interpretations of their absence in the Senigallia Medallion, see below.

¹⁷⁸ Despite the comments of Schramm (1954), 221; Breckenridge (1979), 12; and McCormick (1986), 269, the Theoderic featured on the Jewel of Bern clearly lacks a moustache. This “moustache” is, in fact, his top lip. The absence of stria designating hair and comparisons with busts on contemporary coinage makes this clear. Indeed, if this Theoderic has any facial hair, it would seem to be a goatee, but the suspicious spot on his chin may simply be a blemish or prominent chin.

different from the Greek beard or Tetrarchic stubble,¹⁷⁹ was a specifically Gothic practice that served, along with longish hair, to distinguish Theoderic as a Goth.¹⁸⁰

These portraits thus produce what may seem to the modern viewer as a rather strange representation of a Roman ruler.¹⁸¹ The medallion is perhaps the most bizarre:¹⁸² here Theoderic is clearly dressed as an emperor complete with symbols of victory and majesty, and labeled with traditional imperial epithets, yet he employs the titles *rex* and *princeps*; likewise he substitutes what seems to be an unprecedented mass of hair and moustache for a helmet or diadem, the absence of the latter sometimes used as evidence for Theoderic's having never employed one.¹⁸³ Though striking, neither image is altogether inconsistent with the depictions of Theoderic discussed thus far, sharing in the same symbolic language of Roman emperors. Moreover, despite appearing strange to the modern eye, many of the seemingly "Gothic" elements in both portraits may not be

¹⁷⁹ Amory (1997), 338-41, for instance, fails to distinguish between different facial-hair styles, describing them all as kinds of beards, while Ward-Perkins (2005), 202, fn. 20, critiques this view as "wrong." This is a fair criticism, but given the variety of facial-hair styles throughout Roman history, one has to wonder how striking a lone trimmed moustache would have appeared, particularly since the moustaches of Roman emperors tended to be more prominent than the short beards that accompanied them in fourth- and fifth-century portraiture. For this observation, Delbrueck (1929), vol. 2, 43.

¹⁸⁰ See Ward-Perkins (2005), 73f, especially, who claims that there was no Latin word for moustache. This is true, but there was also no word for "sideburns," "neck-beard," or "stubble," yet Roman emperors clearly wore these, as can be seen from their coinage. Latin simply never developed a technical vocabulary for facial-hair styles, describing each, much like Amory (above) as a kind of beard or hair. Sidonius Apollinaris, for instance, calls a moustache (*Ep.* 2.1) "*pilis infra narium antra fruticantibus*" (unless he actually means nose hairs here!) and sideburns (*ibid*) "*barba concavis hirta temporibus*." The lack of a native vocabulary for such styles should not exclude them from existing or being perfectly acceptable. To take a modern example, the words "goatee" and "Fu Manchu," both recognizable styles of facial hair with ancient precedents, did not enter into the English language until the nineteenth and twentieth century respectively. "Moustache" itself was adopted into Latin from the Greek *moustax*, a fact that is certainly suggestive of its ability to be recognized in the Roman world. For others who share Ward-Perkins' view of "Gothicness," "Germanness," or "un-Romanness," see Kraus (1928), 79; Delbrueck (1929), vol. 2, 42-3; Schramm (1954), 221; Breckenridge (1979), 12; and McCormick (1986), 269. Kraus even suggests that the length of hair could be used to distinguish western Germans from eastern ones (i.e. shoulder-length hair for Franks, ear-length hair for Goths).

¹⁸¹ Ward-Perkins (2005), 73, writes, "Contemporaries... will have interpreted Theoderic's moustache as a sign of his un-Romanness, indeed of his Gothicness; and, in doing so, they will surely have been right"; McCormick (1986), 269, similarly, "contemporary Italians [could not] miss the distinctively non-Roman identity projected by the Amal's official portraits"; and Breckenridge (1979), 12, "No Roman would have worn a moustache with no beard..."

¹⁸² If not for the longish hair, the Jewel of Bern would doubtless be used as a source demonstrating this Theoderic's Romanness, though see below on the Romanness of this particular hairstyle.

¹⁸³ See Kraus (1928), 79; MacCormack (1981), 234; McCormick (1986), 270, fn. 48. The suggestion is completely unwarranted since a number of imperial portraits lack these "necessary" trappings of imperial rule (thus demonstrating just how unnecessary they actually were). MacCormack's argument that the diadem was becoming an imperial prerogative, using its apparent absence from Theoderic's regalia as evidence, is circular. Cf. the comments above concerning Clovis' use of a diadem.

specifically “Gothic” at all. Theoderic’s massive head of hair, for instance, finds parallels in a many of the depictions of Roman soldiers and heads of state, including consuls, in fifth- and sixth-century statuary, mosaics, and diptychs,¹⁸⁴ and is certainly not in keeping with the long-haired style used to depict Germanic barbarians or Scythians in traditional iconography.¹⁸⁵ If Gothic in origin, the style was clearly as much Roman as Gothic by the early sixth century.¹⁸⁶ Theoderic’s faint and rather kempt moustache likewise finds a few parallels in late-antique pictorial representations.¹⁸⁷ This is obviously not a beard in the style generally seen in Roman art, but moustaches unaccompanied by (usually long) beards are likewise not typical of traditional representations of Goths, being found instead on Celts, like in the famous second-century (BC) Attalid series.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, other depictions of royal Goths suggest that moustaches were optional at best. Again, the portrait found on the Jewel of Bern lacks

¹⁸⁴ Delbrueck (1929), vol. 2, 42, explains the move in the fifth century away from the rounded, “Constantinian” hairstyle with ears uncovered to one with ears covered and hair a bit longish. He suggests a possible Germanic origin, but cites the very Roman Felix, Basilius, and Boethius as examples of Romans who utilized this “Germanic” style. If Germanic, it had certainly become acceptably Roman at this juncture. The style was also employed in the East and can be seen on a number of late antique statues from Aphrodisias. For a discussion with excellent black-and-white reproductions, see Smith (1999).

¹⁸⁵ A better example of a mixture of this sort would be the signet ring of King Childeric of the Franks, which contains the image of what looks to be a long-haired legionary soldier. Such an image is starkly different from the portrait found on the signet ring of Theoderic’s contemporary, the Visigothic king Alaric II, whose hair is cut short, much like Theoderic’s and contemporary Romans’ round-style. It is strange, then, considering how much more Theoderic’s signet resembles Alaric II’s than Childeric’s, that scholars insist on referring to Theoderic as “long-haired,” failing to distinguish between the two. MacCormack (1981), 233, is probably the most egregious, claiming that Ennodius praised Theoderic’s long Germanic hair in his panegyric (which she describes as equivalent to the royal Frankish practice!), but then providing no evidence in her citations to prove this (in fact, Ennodius never mentioned Theoderic’s hair at all) On traditional depictions of Scythians and Germans in imperial iconography see Amory (1997), 344-6.

¹⁸⁶ Styles recognizably “Gothic” became as “Roman” as “French” fries are “American,” according to Amory (1997), 340-1. But see also 344-46, where he suggests that the fashion of wearing hair long among Roman men finds its roots in the reign of Constantine, adopted in imitation of the emperor’s own unique, long-haired “bowl cut.” Cf. Delbrueck (1929), vol. 2, 42, (discussed above), who draws a distinction between Constantine’s fourth-century round-cut and the later (ear-covered) fifth-century style.

¹⁸⁷ The image of Honorius on the diptych of Probus, for instance, features a prominent moustache, though accompanied by a rather sparse beard or some sort of sideburns. The motif is described by Delbrueck as a “Jünglingsbart,” the beard of a youth, but one cannot help but notice that the moustache is the most prominent feature, obscuring (almost negating) the others. No doubt this effect stems from the fact that young men are generally able to grow “thin” moustaches long before a “full beard.” Two of the apostles surrounding Christ in the Arian baptistery located in Ravenna also have prominent (not-youthful) moustaches, which appear to connect to their sideburns (but lack chin hair). These are clearly not Goths, nor is the scene necessarily intended to be some sort of *interpretatio gothica*, despite the baptistery being Arian. Cf. Ward-Perkins (2005), 73.

¹⁸⁸ The Attalid, better known as “the dying Gaul,” often, but not always, includes a Gallic male with a lone, and rather thick moustache. Gallic busts from the same period also feature moustaches and occasionally goatees.

one; so too does the imperial visage featured at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, a face which, when compared side-to-side with the Theoderic of the Senigallia Medallion, bears a striking resemblance (particularly the strong chin and eyes). Likewise, Theoderic's cousin and eventual successor, Theodahad, appears with and without a moustache on his coinage, while the later Ostrogothic king Baduila not only lacks a moustache, but is even featured with a diadem.¹⁸⁹ The signet portrait of Theoderic's Visigothic brother-in-law, Alaric II, lacks a moustache altogether,¹⁹⁰ while contemporary emperors like Leo and Zeno may have worn one.¹⁹¹ Much like the hair featured on the Senigallia Medallion and Jewel of Bern, then, the moustache was not necessarily an indicator of Gothiness.

Yet even if such features did have a bit of a "Gothic" flavor to them, was this really a point of friction? Goths like Theoderic and his followers, after all, had been instrumental in the restoration of the western Roman Empire and had ushered in a golden age. They had defeated the tyrant Odovacer, had made it possible for the western insignia to be returned to Italy, and had ruled in a style that conformed to local expectations. Soon they would even reassert Rome's dominance, despaired of in the fifth century, far beyond the confines of the Italian Peninsula. Gothiness, in other words, had not interfered with the Goths' ability, in the eyes of their Roman partisans, to rescue the Roman Empire; it had, on the contrary (and as the following chapter will show), been fundamental to its realization.

¹⁸⁹ For the coinage of Theodahad, see Kraus (1928), 143-8, and Wroth (1966), 75-6. Both suggest that the moustache appears in all his coins, yet the facsimiles provided in their plates suggest otherwise (e.g. Kraus #40, 39, and 32). For the coinage of Baduila, see the same, 193-196 and 91-94, respectively. Whether the likeness is actually of Baduila is moot, since the portraits of many Roman emperors found on their coinage were largely recycled. Perhaps the most blatant (and humorous) is the reuse of the rather distinctive face of Maximinus Thrax for his wife Paulina. For this, see Carson (1980), vol. 2, #760.

¹⁹⁰ Though his uncle may have worn a moustache. See Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 2.1 (cited above).

¹⁹¹ Indeed, some coins of Leo and Zeno seem to feature a moustache, though there is the possibility that these phantom moustaches are actually their top lip (much like the case is in the Jewel of Bern, discussed above). The problem stems from the fact that this particular area of the coin is easily subject to wear, so in the Senigallia Medallion, for instance, the stria designating hair is especially worn on the right side of Theoderic's moustache. Had the entire area been worn thusly, Theoderic's moustache might very easily have gone unnoticed, mistaken for his top lip. The same can be said of the apparently moustache-lacking coins of Theodahad described above. For contemporary Byzantine emperors who may or may not be moustache-less, see Carson (1980), vol. 3, #1620, 1623, 1632, 1634, 1635, and 1659.

Chapter 3

Romans and Goths: The Other Techniques of Accommodation

Defending the Tiber

The idea that Goths could fit within the Roman Empire, and even become its principle defenders and restorers, was not entirely new to Romans. Before a change in imperial policy had led to their invasion of Italy in 409, Alaric and his federate Visigoths had been guardians of the Balkan frontier, commissioned to check the inroads of other barbarians in the region. Moreover, after breaking with the emperor residing in Ravenna, this king of the Goths, who doubled as a Roman *magister militum*, continued to pursue a pro-Roman policy, acquiring the support of the Roman Senate and raising one of its preeminent members, Priscus Attalus, to the purple. For roughly a year, Alaric's Goths had actually substituted for a senatorial army, opposing (in the name of the Senate) the emperor Honorius' "legitimate" government at Ravenna. Though these very Goths would eventually (and infamously) sack the city they claimed to defend, the act itself would come as a last resort, following a dispute with Attalus and repeated failures to come to terms with Honorius.¹

Obviously the sack of Rome in 410 was a significant event, but it nonetheless failed to strip the Goths entirely of their ideological role as defenders of Roman liberty. In fact, though at times rebellious, they continued in their pro-Roman policies, with some Romans being so impressed that they even used the sack of Rome as a pretense for praising Gothic *pietas*.² Soon, led by Alaric's brother-in-law Athaulf, these Goths

¹ For the political wrangling see Matthews (1975), chp. 11 especially; also Kulikowski (2007), chp. 8; and Burns (1994), chps. 7 and 8.

² Orosius, *Historiae* 7.39, is especially kind in his depiction of the Gothic sack of Rome. He describes the Goths as respectful of the Church and its properties and doing far less damage than the emperor Nero or the Gauls. At 7.40.1 he even writes, "cuius rei quamvis recens memoria sit, tamen si quis ipsius populi Romani et multitudinem videat et vocem audiat, nihil factum... arbitrabitur." It was almost as if nothing had happened!

crossed into Gaul, settling there permanently. Athaulf, it was said, had begun his reign in opposition to the Empire, but had quickly changed his mind. At Narbonne he married the emperor's sister, Placidia, establishing a link with the imperial family that was strengthened when she bore him a son tellingly named Theodosius.³ Though the infant would die shortly thereafter, Athaulf's transformation was complete. Once an avowed destroyer of the Empire, he now wanted to "become glorious by completely restoring and increasing the Roman name using the might of the Goths, and [thus] be held by posterity as the author of Rome's restoration."⁴

In Italy Ennodius and others had obviously seen the situation quite differently, but in Gaul other Romans came to embrace the Goths for fulfilling Athaulf's dream. The former prefect of Rome and bishop of Clermont, Sidonius Apollinaris, for instance, eulogized the Gothic king Euric as a *bona fide* "defender of the Tiber" and the source from which Romans sought their salvation,⁵ in stark contrast with the stereotypical barbarian encountered in Ennodius' *Life of Epiphanius*. Long before the advent of Theoderic and his Ostrogoths, then, other Goths were paving the way for their acceptance. Yet Theoderic and his Goths would ultimately fit within the Roman Empire in ways that Athaulf had never imagined. Indeed, though Goths, they were also uniquely Roman, and this Romanness would be of fundamental importance to the Theoderican golden age.

New and Old Romans

The examples of Alaric, Athaulf, and Euric suggest that already in the fifth century Goths were filling positive niches in the Roman Empire as partners and restorers, rather than simply foes whose defeat validated imperial victory ideology and manifest destiny. The relationship was clearly shaky at times, the sack of Rome being an obvious

³ This was the name of Placidia's father, Emperor Theodosius I. On the son, *PLRE* 2, 1100 ("Theodosius 5"), which notes an inscription that may refer to the youth as a *nobilissimus puer*, a title that marked him as a potential successor to the imperial throne. Indeed, another son of Placidia, Valentinian III, would become emperor of the West, though Athaulf was not his father.

⁴ Orosius, *Historiae* 7.43.6: "...ut gloriam sibi de restituendo in integrum augendoque Romano nomine Gothorum viribus quaereret habereturque apud posteros Romanae restitutionis auctor."

⁵ This was done in a panegyric intended for Euric's ears. See Sidonius, *Ep.* 8.9, ln. 42-44: "Eorice, tuae manus rogantur, / ut Martem validus per inquilinum / defendat tenuem Garumna Thybrim"; and ln. 39: "hinc, Romane, tibi petis salutem." Cf. *Carmen* 2, ln. 352-386, which praises both Wallia and his grandson Ricimer for similar protection, and *Ep.* 1.2, which eulogizes King Theoderic II, though for other reasons.

example, but the appearance of Goths and other so-called barbarians was becoming very regular in the late Roman world, and by the fifth century those living in close proximity to them were clearly becoming desensitized to their otherness (and vice versa).⁶ An inhabitant of Italy was perhaps more likely to meet a Goth than a Gaul,⁷ and this potential surely rendered the former less alien, provided the Goth in question met the observer's minimal requirements of acceptability and posed no immediate threat. Acceptance, in fact, was generally aided by long durations of peace,⁸ and a healthy amount of syncretism had occurred first within the frontier zones and later, after large scale migrations, within the Roman heartland itself.⁹ Such conditions meant that Gallo-Romans like Sidonius could romanticize about the attire of barbarian princes and playfully mock Ravenna as a city where *foederati* (barbarians who probably included Goths) were literati;¹⁰ they meant that circus partisans in Constantinople could feel perfectly "Roman" sporting "Gothic" beards and "Hunnic" mullets.¹¹ The more traditionally minded or elitist may have found such occurrences aberrant, perhaps even loathsome, but they were no different in substance from emperors who affected a Greek, Syrian, or Persian appearance, or Gallic provincials who donned pants, all of which met with similar criticism.¹²

The very nature of the Empire aided in the acceptability of such diversity, its existence perhaps an inevitable consequence of the assimilation process that radiated

⁶ But see Whittaker (1994), 198-200, for comments on the increased opposition to barbarians in the later Empire among the traditional elite.

⁷ Especially given the historical reluctance on the part of Gallo-Romans to travel and participate within the Empire. For this, Stroheker (1948), 14-28; Drinkwater (1989); and Mathisen (1992).

⁸ Burns (2003), chp. 1 especially.

⁹ In general, Whittaker (1994), 237f; Geary (1988 and 1999); Amory (1997), chp. 8 esp. (on Balkan "military" culture); Burns (2003), chps. 6 and 7; Heather (1999). On the permeability of the Roman and barbarian aristocracies, Demandt (1989).

¹⁰ Admittedly the barbarian prince, Sigismer, was more likely a Burgundian or Frank. For Sigismer, Sidonius, *Ep.* 4.20, with *PLRE* 2, 1008 ("Sigismer 1"). For Literati, *Ep.* 1.8: "armis eunuchi litteris foederati." This juxtaposition of eunuchs with weapons and federates with literature inverted traditional expectations. Ravenna was hence lampooned as a kind of "world turned upside-down."

¹¹ See Amory (1997), 340-41, who cites Alan Cameron (1976). The association of the Hunnic haircut with the "mullet" is my own, but accords well with Procopius' description of the "Massagetic" (i.e. Hunnic) practice in *Anecdota* 7.

¹² Procopius (cited above) and Ennodius (#182) seem to have responded negatively towards the adoption of such "Gothic" or "Hunnic" styles by Romans. See the discussion of Ward-Perkins (2005), 72-81, but also Amory (1997), 339-41, who suggests that their association with barbarism was out-dated. Indeed, Ennodius himself may have been joking in the case of Jovinianus' "barbaricam faciem." For Greek beards, see the emperor Julian's cleverly titled *Misopogon*; for pants, Procopius (above); for anti-Syrianism, *HA* on Elagabalus.

outward from the Roman core to its periphery (and back again). The Roman world was a heterogeneous composition of numerous ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, all of which had adopted various Roman cultural elements to differing degrees and over different amounts of time, thus becoming “Roman,” but with obviously diverse manifestations that were constantly in flux.¹³ Gallo-Roman culture, for instance, could be readily identifiable by outsiders in the mid-fourth century as different or even bizarre,¹⁴ and to some degree Gallic society actually maintained a certain Celtic flavor,¹⁵ yet these differences did not disqualify Gallic provincials from self-perceived or externally-perceived¹⁶ Romanness; they could still think of themselves and be acknowledged as Roman, largely (but not exclusively) through their adoption and employment of a Roman culture-system and participation in the Empire’s cults and honors.¹⁷ The same can be said of virtually any provincial culture and its regional manifestations. This very real diversity visible throughout the Roman Empire, as well as the tendency for Romans to allow for variation along a Roman theme, provided an avenue for the eventual fitting of Goths within the Roman world.

But, of course, the above should not be taken to mean that the Roman Empire was some open-minded melting pot where ethnic and sub-ethnic groups lived harmoniously and were always tolerant of new members or external cultural elements. This was the case to some degree, but Romanness, so intrinsically linked with claims of dominance, was also oppositional in nature and often predicated on the existence of a recognizable and perennially inferior other, the barbarian. The term itself, “barbarian,” served to designate insiders from outsiders, but barbarism was not restricted to those living beyond

¹³ On Romanization see, among many others, the discussions of Curchin (2002), chp. 1, and Woolf (1998), chp. 1. Both accept a definition along these lines. For a stricter interpretation which imagines “static” Romanness and provincial “barbarism” or “resistance,” see Curchin (1991); Millett (1990); Cherry (1998); and Isaac (2000). There seems little reason to believe that differences in material culture throughout the Empire precluded self identification as Roman (“emic” Romanness), itself perceivably Roman depending on audience (“etic” Romanness).

¹⁴ See the more specific discussion in chapter 5.

¹⁵ See Stroheker (1948), 8-9, and Van Dam (1985), 11-18, who follows him. But see also Mathisen (1993) and Harries (1994), whose Gaul and Gauls appear thoroughly Roman.

¹⁶ In anthropological terms, “emic” and “etic,” respectively (see above).

¹⁷ These are the general implications of the studies of Woolf (1998); Stroheker (1948); and Ando (2000), but note that Roman identity in Gaul did not necessarily require participation in the administration or its cults, and that local religion, though disguised with an *interpretatio Romana*, was nonetheless idiosyncratic. See Matthews (1975), 77-79, for the former observation; Wightman (1985), Drinkwater (1983), and Van Dam (1993), generally, for the latter.

the Empire's frontiers. Virtually every provincial culture had at one time or another fallen within its purview, and this legacy of barbarism was enduring. Indeed, it had the potential to be quite divisive, since any perceived deviance from an expected Roman norm ran the risk of being interpreted as a lapse into savagery. Old prejudices died hard in the Roman Empire, and even if forgotten, could reemerge under certain pressures and in new manifestations. The strange Gallo-Roman customs alluded to above might find acceptance among the more tolerant, but for many, Gauls never quite gave up their status as barbarians or were, at best, semi-barbarous. They could even, as a later chapter will demonstrate, occupy this liminal position in the eyes of one of their own, like the transplant Ennodius, or ironically appear as stereotypical barbarians to more traditionally "barbarian" peoples like the Goths, whose understanding of Romanness became Italo-centric.¹⁸

Much like the Gauls and other provincials, then, fifth- and sixth-century Goths became scrutinizers of barbarism at the same time as they were subject to its scrutiny. Their situation was also a bit different, however. Despite finding increasing acceptance, Goths were ultimately newcomers with a history of dictating terms through the threat and very real use of violence. Other barbarians, integrated and turned provincial, could also have bloody pasts,¹⁹ but what separated the Goths from these was the fact that they remained proudly (and perhaps even defiantly) unconquered by Rome.²⁰ When harnessed for the Romans (which frequently was the case), their valor and indomitability could become objects of praise, but the very existence and potentially unrestrained nature of such characteristics caused some to continue to think of Goths as dangerous and antithetical barbarians. With a little convincing from his Roman wife, Athaulf himself had even been sympathetic to this rationale, abandoning his desire to be "what Caesar Augustus had been," since his Goths "could not obey the laws" owing to their "unbridled

¹⁸ See chapter 5. Burns (2003), 134, identifies a link between barbarian status and the distance a population lived from the Mediterranean, pointing out Gaul's liminal position between Italy and Germania. In addition, a Gallic stigma (*Terror Gallicus*), stemming from Rome's conflict with the Celts of Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy), may have persisted, contributing to the reluctance on the part of Gallo-Romans to travel and participate in the Empire. For this, Drinkwater (1989).

¹⁹ The sack of Rome by the Gauls is doubtless the most infamous.

²⁰ Though this is not entirely the case, since the threat of internal rebellion and the memory of pre-conquest outrages remained burned into the Roman psyche. The lifespan of the Terror Gallicus (see fn. 18, above), Terror Dacicus (visible in Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum*, discussed below), and the Terror Isauricus (also discussed below) are but examples.

barbarism.”²¹ Barbarism, accordingly, seemed to disqualify the Goths from a legitimate inheritance of Roman rule, and though the historian Orosius had placed these words in Athaulf’s mouth, they nonetheless reflected the general sentiment among Romans that the wild and savage disposition of the Goths was best directed towards servile ends.

This was, in fact, the function that they and other barbarians held in the fifth- and early sixth-century West. In Gaul and Spain, barbarian kings, not just of the Visigoths but also of the Burgundians, Alans, and Franks, often used their armies in defense of the Empire, sometimes accompanied by Roman legions. They put down usurpers, stopped local rebellions, prevented the advance of other barbarians into and within the Empire, and provided needed military backing to imperial claimants.²² Such barbarians became partners and allies of the Empire, welcome solutions to contemporary problems,²³ and the relationship was remembered even after the Empire’s collapse. Addressing the Burgundian king Gundobad, whose warriors had recently ravaged Liguria, Epiphanius of Pavia declared, “aren’t you *our* Burgundians?”²⁴ They obviously were, the bishop assured him, and indeed Gundobad’s son and heir, Sigismund, would acknowledge this subject status, though professing his allegiance to the eastern Empire alone.

In Italy, on the other hand, Goths and other barbarians were serving in a similar military capacity, and just as in the provinces, the situation provided for greater familiarity with them and their eventual integration within the local population. To some degree these developments have already been discussed in an earlier chapter. They allowed the Ligurian nobility to accept the “Gothic” generalissimo Ricimer as a defender and veritable emperor, while nearly rejecting the “Roman” emperor Anthemius, who was seen as a barbarous “Galatian” and “Greekling.” Similar conclusions were also drawn

²¹ Orosius, *Historiae* 7.43.5-6: “et fieret nunc Athaulfus quod quondam Caesar Augustus, at ubi multa experientia probavisset neque Gothos ullo modo parere legibus posse propter effrenatam barbariem...”

²² Jovinus used Alans; Constantine III and his associates made use of Sueves; Burgundians were employed to check Visigoths and vice-versa (see the preceding section); Franks tried (but failed) to prevent the mass migration of Vandals, Sueves, and Alans after the Great Rhine Crossing; Aegidius employed Franks; Visigoths (and perhaps Franks) fought alongside Romans at the Catalaunian Plains against Attila and his Huns; Wallia was contracted to destroy the Siling Vandals in Spain; Goar, the Alan king, was employed by the western Empire against revolting Armoricans, and so forth. These are just a few examples from the early-mid fifth century. Ward-Perkins (2005), 13f., thus misleadingly emphasizes those times when barbarian kings acted on their own initiative, sometimes (but not always), against “legitimate” emperors.

²³ Goffart (2006), 238, concludes, “The cost-benefit equation... offered an opportunity not to be missed.”

²⁴ *VE* 160: “Scimus et evidenter agnoscimus, nonne vos estis Burgundiones nostri?”

concerning Odovacer; he was not a Goth,²⁵ but a military man whose barbarian origins did not disqualify him from playing the part of an emperor, though only (and tellingly) claiming to be an imperial servant. These examples demonstrate that the barbarian category was negotiable and especially subject to manipulation in the fifth and early sixth centuries,²⁶ yet as Ennodius' extremely stereotypical depiction of Euric reveals, traditional ideas about barbarism remained powerfully viable.²⁷

Even these classically cruel savages, however, could undergo a kind of transformation when met in the flesh. In Gaul, Euric and Gundobad were in fact mollified by the Roman eloquence of Epiphanius, while in Pavia defenders like the Rugi, barbarians described by Ennodius as “brutal in every savagery, [men] who were incited to daily outrages with the cruel and violent force of their minds,”²⁸ could become civilized partners. The sweetness of Epiphanius' speech caused their “barbarous hearts” to submit to his authority; “[men] whose hearts had always been dedicated to hatred, learned to love,” and “their natural perversity was transformed.”²⁹ It was amazing, according to Ennodius, that those who barely obeyed their own kings now loved and feared a Catholic and Roman bishop, and a testament to this love that they left Pavia in tears, when finally recalled to their own families.³⁰

²⁵ Though he is sometimes referred to as a Goth in later sources, such as *Marc. Com.* 476, and Theophanes *AM* 5965. See *PLRE* 2, 791-3.

²⁶ Geary (1983), describes barbarian ethnicity as a “situational construct.”

²⁷ Amory's claim (1997), 79, fn. 188, that *barbarus* generally ceased in Ostrogothic Italy to have its classically pejorative connotation does not stand up to scrutiny. Though the term could be neutral (and appears as such in earlier, imperial documents), it continued to be used with traditional force, as this dissertation thoroughly demonstrates. It seems safer to suggest that the term *gens* and *gentiles* were used in Ostrogothic Italy as a means of avoiding the overly charged term *barbari*. *Gens* was clearly neutral; *gentiles* less so, *barbari* even less than this.

²⁸ *VE* 118: “Post hinc digressis Gothis civitas Ticinensis Rugis est tradita, hominibus omni feritate immanibus, quos atrox et acerba vis animorum ad cotidiana scelera sollicitabat.”

²⁹ *VE* 118-119: “quos tamen beatissimus antistes sermonum suorum melle delenibat, ut effera corda auctoritati submitterent sacerdotis et amare discerent, quorum pectora odiis semper fuisse dedicata cognovimus. Mutata est per meritum illius perversitas naturalis, dum inhonoris mentibus radix peregrinae apud illos affectionis inseritur.” This episode is in many ways a replay of the confrontation with Euric (discussed in chapter 1), where Roman eloquence defeats barbarism. Here, interestingly enough, Ennodius betrays the understanding that barbarism was innate, rather than necessarily the result of an absence of advancement or the impact of environmental factors. This is very different from his understanding of the Gauls. Cf. chapter 5.

³⁰ *VE* 119: “Qui sine grandi stupore credat dilexisse et timuisse Rugos episcopum et catholicum et Romanum, qui parere regibus vix dignantur? Cum quibus tamen integrum paene biennium exegit taliter, ut ab eo flentes discederent etiam ad parentes et familias regressuri.”

Barriers, primarily ideological, were clearly breaking down, especially when Romans throughout the western portion of the Empire were forced to confront the barbarian boogeyman face-to-face. It happened in Gaul; it was happening in Odovacer's Italy; and it continued to happen under Theoderic. The process did not mean that all barbarians ceased to be thought of as such, but that those who became local patrons and sources of assistance certainly could be civilized. Just like Epiphanius' Rugi, Theoderic's Goths arrived in Italy as outsiders, but soon they lost those qualities which rendered them "barbarians" in Italo-Roman eyes or, perhaps even more powerful, such qualities remained, but became vital, having been recast within a positive light.

Athaulf's fear expressed a century prior, that Goths could not obey the laws, was demonstrated to be unfounded. Italy's new Goths, the Ostrogoths, became self-proclaimed defenders of justice and models of *civilitas*, the civilized rule of law.³¹ This was a profoundly important transformation, since *civilitas* itself was at the very heart of Romanness and was said at the time to "separate [all men] from savagery."³² Indeed, Theoderic and his successors claimed that lawlessness was a condition of barbarians and rendered anyone, regardless of ethnicity, barbarous.³³ This newfound ability to obey the laws and moreover defend them would become the means through which Goths could be seen as not only tolerably Roman, but even admirably so. Romans like Ennodius praised the "sweetness of *civilitas*"³⁴ in Theoderic's reign, claiming that "the law restrains characters untamed in battles: their necks submit to your precepts... your brave men

³¹ This definition essentially agrees with Moorhead (1992), 79, who concludes, "civilitas and its cognates... indicate the quality of abiding by the laws." The definition of Amory (1997), 43, "two nations living together in peace but performing different functions," is unsatisfying, especially since "Goths" and "Romans" were not the only nations subject to this ideology. See chapter 5, as well as *Variae* 1.27.1, where *civilitas* exists for the benefit of the Jews of Gerona.

³² *Variae* 4.33: "hoc [praeceptio iustitiae, i.e. civilitas] enim populos ab agresti vita in humanae conversationis regulam congregavit. haec ratio a feritate divisit." This understanding of *civilitas* would seem to be a sixth-century counterpart of Roman *humanitas* as described by Woolf (1998), chp. 3: "*Humanitas* encapsulated what it meant to be Roman." Cf. Reydellet (1995), 285, who concludes, "L'idée général est celle de respect du droit. ...La *civilitas* évoque, plus largement, l'idée d'une société organisée dans laquelle chacun est à sa place dans le respect d'autrui, parfois même l'idée d'un monde civilisé n'est pas loin."

³³ Cf. *Variae* 4.33 (cited above); *Variae* 9.18: "quosdam civilitate despecta affectare vivere beluina saevitia, dum regressi ad agreste principium ius humanum sibi aestimant feraliter odiosum"; and *Variae* 9.19: "ut nostra civilitate recognita spes truculentis moribus auferatur." The example of the Rugi and Athaulf's Goths (above) demonstrate the link between lawlessness and barbarism. Orosius, *Historiae* 7.43.6, may have put it best: "sine quibus [i.e. legibus] respublica non est respublica."

³⁴ *PanTh* 87: *civilitatis dulcitudini*.

follow your orders always.”³⁵ Unruly provincials were similarly reminded of the fact that the Goths were modest, not bellicose, at home,³⁶ while administrators were instructed to “demonstrate the justice of the Goths,” who had adopted the “prudence of the Romans while possessing the courage of the *gentes*.”³⁷ Justice, so intrinsically linked with Roman order, now became intrinsically linked with Italy’s Goths: nothing uncivilized was to be tolerated in Theoderic’s Roman Empire and “the laws, not arms,” were to ensure justice.³⁸

These laws were Roman in origin and so too was Gothic justice, a reality that reiterated Theoderic’s and his successors’ claims to imperial succession and at the same time implied the Goths’ reverence for Roman traditions. Roman law, and by extension the Roman way of life, was the model to be upheld in this Roman Empire. Theoderic asserted that there was no better condition than for mankind to live according to these laws; they were “the most certain comforts of human life”³⁹ and provided for a life that was “truly human,”⁴⁰ in obvious contrast to lawless barbarism. Their restoration to others was likewise claimed as the rationale behind expelling “ignorant barbarians”⁴¹ from newly won territories and a cause for subjects “to grieve that they had not acquired our [Roman] rule earlier.”⁴² Goths, then, became defenders, preservers, and even restorers of Roman law, but the relationship extended even further, since they too were expected to live according to its precepts.⁴³ Goths and Romans thus acquired the same

³⁵ *PanTh* 87-88: “Nam indomita inter acies ingenia lex coercet: summittunt praeceptis colla post laureas et calcatis hostium cuneis, quibus arma cesserint, decreta dominantur. Solus es meritis et natura compositus, cuius magnanimi iussa sectentur.”

³⁶ *Variae* 3.24.4: “imitamini certe Gothos nostros, qui foris proelia, intus norunt exercere modestiam. Sic vos volumus vivere, quemadmodum parentes nostros cernitis domino praestante floruisse.”

³⁷ *Variae* 3.23.3: “ut inter nationum consuetudinem perversam Gothorum possis demonstrare iustitiam. qui sic semper fuerunt in laudum medio constituti, ut et Romanorum prudentiam caperent et virtutem gentium possiderent.”

³⁸ *Variae* 7.3.2 (a form letter directed to various *comites Gothorum* throughout the Empire): “non amamus aliquid incivile... in causa possint iura, non brachia.” The use of violence instead of proper legal channels was regularly inveighed against, both in the provinces and in the city of Rome itself. Cf. *Variae* 1.23; 1.30; 1.31; 4.10; 4.43, for just a few Italian examples. Some specific examples from Gaul can be found in chapter 5.

³⁹ *Variae* 3.17.3: “Iura publica certissima sunt humanae vitae solacia, infirmorum auxilia, potentum frena.”

⁴⁰ *Variae* 5.39.1: “...illa vita vere hominum est, quae iuris ordine continetur.”

⁴¹ *Variae* 3.43.1: “quid enim proficit barbaros removisse confuses, nisi vivatur ex legibus?”

⁴² *Ibid*, “ut subiecti se doleant nostrum dominium tardius adquisisse.” For the context, see chapter 5.

⁴³ This is made quite clear in *Variae* 3.13.2: “nec permittimus discreto iure vivere quos uno voto volumus vindicare. Censebis ergo in commune, quae sunt amica iustitiae...” There does not appear to have been a *Lex Gothica* (whatever this might have been) in Theoderic’s Italy, even in cases between Goths. The status

legal identity and heritage, a process ultimately contributing to the breakdown of potential barriers between immigrant and resident populations.⁴⁴ It meant that Theoderic could justifiably refer to Romans as “our ancestors”⁴⁵ and provide his own interpretation of the original intent of the law, while claiming at the same time to preserve and hold inviolate his imperial predecessors’ judgments.⁴⁶ His grandson and successor Athalaric could similarly issue an edict deliberately divided into twelve chapters, “just as the civil law [i.e. the *Twelve Tables*] had been founded,” intending “not to debilitate the remaining laws, but to strengthen them... for the sake of Roman peace.”⁴⁷ Rome’s new *principes*, then, styled themselves as legal traditionalists, a position doubtless appreciated by

of Roman law in Ostrogothic Italy has a large bibliography, but see more recently Amory (1997), 51-52, fn. 24 especially, and (more traditionally) Moorhead (1992), 75-80. Barnish (1992), 138, suggests (unnecessarily) that the law “was almost certainly Roman vulgar law.” The existence of a document known as the *Edictum Theoderici* complicates matters further, though not too terribly for the present purposes. Its attribution and even authenticity have been called into question in the past, but if genuinely “Ostrogothic,” it serves to reaffirm that both Goths and Romans fell under the same (Roman) legal heritage. See Amory (1997), 78-84, for a problematic attempt to read this document in correspondence with the *Variae*. Given that the *Variae* and most later Latin legal codes are informed by the same linguistic traditions, his logic is circular.

⁴⁴ The same could not be said for the other successor kingdoms in the West, where legal identities, though flexible, were often oppositional. The bibliography on legal identity in the Burgundian, Frankish, and Visigothic kingdoms is, again, rather daunting, but see in general Amory (1993); Thompson (1969), 132-9; Collins (1983), 24-30; James (1982), 81-92; and Fischer Drew (1991). On the whole there seems to have been separate codes for Romans and barbarians, though some barbarian law clearly applied to both Romans and barbarians, especially when either legal system did not provide for the case at hand. Some “barbarian” law also appears to have been derived from praefectorial edicts in the provinces or Roman vulgar law. Regardless, this is certainly much different from Theoderic’s exclusive use of the precedents set by imperial rescripts and the issuing of edicts on the model of a magistrate, or perhaps emperor, if Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 187-8, is accepted. That law in Italy was territorial (*de iure* not *de facto*), rather than personal, is discussed in Amory (1997), 51-2.

⁴⁵ *Variae* 5.14.7: “maiores enim nostri discursus iudicum non oneri, sed compendio provincialibus esse voluerunt.” This statement concerned the movement of Roman circuit judges from one community to another and the expenses which they were allowed to demand from the local population.

⁴⁶ See, among others, *Variae* 4.26, 4.33, and 9.19 for references to Gothic kings as successors to emperors with respect to a Roman legal heritage. For two concrete examples, one dealing with treason and the other with the destruction of statues, see chapter 4.

⁴⁷ *Variae* 9.19.2: “conquerentium siquidem vocabus adacti et frequentium populorum de rebus quibusdam interpellatione communiti necessaria quaedam Romanae quieti edictali pragrammate duodecim capitibus, sicut ius civile legitur institutum, in aevum servanda conscripsimus, quae custodita residuum ius non debitare, sed potius corroborare videantur.” This letter announced to the Senate the proclamation of an edict, dated to 533/4 (*Variae* 9.18). The last portion demonstrates the desire on Athalaric’s part to prevent himself from being seen as a legal innovator, desiring instead to be viewed as a strengthener of the laws. The point is reiterated in the final portion of the edict itself (9.18.12), where Athalaric orders all the edicts of Theoderic and the usual public laws (“omnia edicta... domni avi nostri... et usualia iura publica”) to be upheld.

conservative Romans who feared innovation,⁴⁸ while her newest Romans, the Goths, were cast as model citizens: obedient defenders and practitioners of the law.

These ideas about *civilitas* and Gothic admiration for Roman values were an important ideological component of the accommodation reached between Goths and Romans. Goths and Romans both claimed that the Goths had abandoned their former barbarism, ceasing to be the uncontrollable savages that Romans and even Gothic kings like Athaulf had feared. They had adopted, instead, Roman laws and virtues in a marvelous show of discipline. This imagined “civilizing process” likewise fit perfectly into the understanding of the decadent status of the Empire and its citizens leading up to their arrival.⁴⁹ Ironically, while Goths had become models for good Roman practices, the Romans themselves had degenerated and strayed from their historic virtues. The trope of the “noble savage” as a model for decadent Romans, perhaps best expressed in the *Germania* of Tacitus, was obviously not new to Greco-Roman society, but in Theoderic’s Italy the purity which seemed to have been lost by Romans was not some sort of primeval innocence, but the very foundation of their Roman identity. Goths, therefore, could be imagined as absolutely essential for the well-being of the Empire, and their arrival could be seen as perfectly timed. They represented what was right about *Romanitas* and served, by their example and by their injunctions, to remind the lapsed inhabitants of Italy of those very virtues that they had so recently lost.

Steeped in Romanness, Theoderic reached out to an unruly *Populus Romanus*, enjoining it to “abandon foreign customs” and to be truly Roman.⁵⁰ “There is nothing that we want you to preserve more keenly,” these Romans were told, “than the discipline of your ancestors, so that you might increase under our reign what you have always,

⁴⁸ Procopius, *Anecdota* 14, cites the legal innovations of Justinian, a slightly younger contemporary of Theoderic, as one of the major outrages of his reign.

⁴⁹ On this, see chapter 1

⁵⁰ *Variae* 1.31.1: “mores peregrinos abicite: Romana sit vox plebis, quam delectat audiri.” This example and the example cited below (*Variae* 1.30) involved strife at the circus. Cf. *Variae* 1.27, 1.32, 1.33, and the discussion of spectacles at Rome in chapter 4. Compare also *Variae* 4.43.1, which admonishes the inhabitants of Rome in the aftermath of an episode of anti-Semitic violence: “Urbis Romanae celebris opinio suo conservanda est nihilominus instituto, nec vitia peregrina capit, quae se semper de morum probitate iactavit. Levitates quippe seditionum et ambire propriae civitatis incendium non est velle Romanum.” The last line is especially revealing: “embracing the fickleness of sedition and burning one’s own city is not to want what is Roman.”

since ancient times, held as praiseworthy.”⁵¹ Senators, too, were admonished that those, “whom *gravitas* always becomes,”⁵² should not behave “ferociously” on account of “fickle causes,” or “exact vengeance on the innocent, hopelessly trampling upon the prudence of the laws.”⁵³ Ferocity, fickleness, and irreverence for the laws were thoroughly barbarian characteristics, but in Theoderic’s Italy the loveliness of *civilitas* demanded that truly Roman behavior be the norm.⁵⁴

The “new” Roman Goths, who were, as a result of this understanding, actually “old” Roman Goths, thus came to the rescue, earning praise for restoring Romanness to the Romans, first in Italy and then beyond. They had not made *Romania* into a kind of *Gothia*, as Athaulf had once imagined,⁵⁵ but instead recast the remnants of *Romania* into a recognizably Roman Empire, corrected and reinvigorated.

This idea of the Goths as new Romans who were guardians of old Roman values had some other rather interesting consequences. First, it meant that Romans and Goths, despite potential differences, could function as a specifically Roman front in opposition to those who were not members of their order.⁵⁶ Under a Gothic aegis the Roman Empire was able to reassert its claims of cultural superiority and hegemony over its neighbors, speaking of itself once more as a beacon of civilization. Such claims had been seriously undermined in the fifth century, not only because of perceived cultural decline, but also because emperors like Julius Nepos, despite their declarations of dominance, had been forced to behave as the equals of stereotypical barbarians like Euric or been lorded over by superiors in Constantinople. The blow to (Italian) Roman prestige has already been discussed,⁵⁷ but now once more Franks, Burgundians and even Visigoths were

⁵¹ *Variae* 1.31.3: “nihil est enim, quod studiosius servare vos cupimus quam vestrorum veterum disciplinam, ut, quod ab antiquis laudabile semper habuistis.”

⁵² *Variae* 1.30.4: “...quos semper gravitas decet.”

⁵³ *Variae* 1.30.1: “[Querela populorum] orta quidem ex causis levibus, sed graves eructavit excessus. ...ut legum ratione calcata desperate persequeretur innoxios servilis furor armatus.”

⁵⁴ *Variae* 1.30.3: “...civilitas gratia reductis moribus convenire...”

⁵⁵ Orosius, *Historiae* 7.43.5: “...se inprimis ardentem inhiasse, ut oblitterato Romano nomine Romanum omne solum Gothorum imperium et faceret et vocaret essetque, ut vulgariter loquar, Gothia quod Romania fuisset.”

⁵⁶ Just as disparate ethnic groups in the early Roman Empire had banded together as “Romans” in opposition to other so-called barbarians.

⁵⁷ See chapter 1.

being referred to and often directly addressed as savages, Byzantines as crafty Greeks, and Gauls, as will be shown later, as semi-barbarous.⁵⁸

As a ruler of the Roman Empire Theoderic asserted his and Rome's special civilizing position, sending, on one occasion, a water-clock to the Burgundian king Gundobad. Savage beasts, he claimed, told time by their stomachs and so this Roman gift would serve to humanize the Burgundians.⁵⁹ Burgundy, Theoderic opined, should have "what you [Gundobad] once saw in a Roman city";⁶⁰ it was right for her to "put down her barbarous ways" and "desire the accomplishments of wise men."⁶¹ Similarly, Theoderic attempted to procure a cithara and citharist for the Frankish king Clovis, suggesting to his rather blue-blooded Roman correspondent, Boethius, that the musician "like Orpheus... will tame the savage hearts of the barbarians."⁶² To a Grecophile like Boethius, the statement was no doubt ironic and probably earned a snide remark in private, yet to others, as we shall see, the idea of the Goths brandishing the torch of *Romanitas* beyond the Alps was no laughing matter: whatever her leader's origins, Rome was believed to have retaken her rightful, righteous position as the head of the world, *caput mundi*, her "gifts" to barbarians functioning as a statement of superiority and a form of dominance.⁶³

In Italy itself, on the other hand, the ancient Romanness of the Goths meant that there could be "a common peace for both nations" and the enjoyment of "sweet tranquility."⁶⁴ Like claims of superiority, this too had been a problem in fifth-century

⁵⁸ See below for Frankish and Burgundian examples. For Visigoths, *Variae* 3.1 (to Alaric II): "moderatio provida est, quae gentes servat: furor autem instantia plerumque praecipitat et tunc utile solum est ad arma concurrere, cum locum apud adversarium iustitia non potest invenire." For Greeks as crafty, see the discussion below of negative understandings of Greekness. For negative impressions of all these peoples except the Visigoths, who go unmentioned, see *Variae* 11.1.10-14 (an encomium of Amalasuetha).

⁵⁹ *Variae* 1.46.3: "Beluarum quippe ritus est ex ventris esurie horas sentire et non habere certum, quod constat humanis usibus contributum."

⁶⁰ *Variae* 1.46.2: "Habetote in vestra patria, quod aliquando vidistis in civitate Romana." This is generally translated as "in the city of Rome," hence Hodgkin (1886) and Barnish (1992). But while such a translation is certainly correct, since Rome could be referred to at this time as the *civitas Romana*, the condescension implied in this letter makes the above translation, "a Roman city," plausible and possibly preferable. The claim to Boethius in *Variae* 1.45.2, "quod nobis cottidianum, illis vedeatur esse miraculum," also seems to justify this interpretation.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*: "per vos propositum gentile [Burgundia] deponit et dum prudentiam regis sui respicit, iure facta sapientium concupiscit."

⁶² *Variae* 2.40.17: "citharoedum, quem a nobis diximus postulatum, sapientia vestra eligat praesenti tempore meliorem, facturus aliquid Orphei, cum dulci sono gentilium fera corda domuerit."

⁶³ On gifting as a form of dominance, see Mauss (1954).

⁶⁴ *Variae* 7.3.2: "Sic pace communi utraeque nationes divinitate propitia dulci otio perfruantur."

Italy, where civil wars occurred regularly, corruption ran rampant, and borders were objects of predation by fearsome barbarians. Peace and tranquility were therefore linked to the Theoderic theme of restoration which largely defined the era, and provided an important connection to the early imperial past, when the very first *princeps*, a title also used by Theoderic, had similarly ushered in a *pax Romana* after over a generation of chaos and disruption. These conditions were more than just the end result of the Goths' apparent romanization and obedience to *civilitas*, however. It was specifically Gothic military might, as much as their respect for Roman mores and jurisprudence, that had been instrumental in the turn-around. Barbarians, aided by ineffectual Roman leadership, had very recently caused the western Empire to be transformed into the "Empire of Italy," but the Goths, as Rome's soldiers, became the means by which this empire was defended, its old boundaries restored, and its claims of being a Roman (rather than Italian) Empire legitimized. Indeed, as far as Goths and Romans were concerned, it was actually *because* of the Goths, not despite them, that Rome had reclaimed her rightful place.

Even the passages cited above, which demonstrated the Goths' idealized obedience to the laws, reveal the duality of their position within the Empire. Ennodius praised sweet *civilitas*, but hinted at the "unrestrained" temperament of the Goths in battle; Theoderic defined his Goths as having Roman prudence, but also the courage of barbarians; provincials were reminded that the Goths were modest at home, yet likewise bellicose abroad. Qualities, therefore, which had once rendered Goths susceptible to accusations of rashness and savagery, were now, since the Goths fought on behalf of the Empire, transformed into familiar themes of bravery and military glory. The Goths were no longer barbarian raiders and marauders but Italy's protectors, guarding against external and internal acts of violence and allowing non-Goths, civilian Romans, to flourish.⁶⁵ Romans had "gained a defender at the cost of some land";⁶⁶ they were to

⁶⁵ See Amory (1997), chp. 5, on such ethnic terminology as largely dependent on societal role (but nonetheless situational); more traditionally Burns (1984), 70-72, and Moorhead (1992), 71-75. For "Gothicness" as a political identity stemming from the Goths' land settlement in Italy in 493, see Heather (2007), 45f. The nature of this settlement, however, is a matter of debate (see below) as are the predominantly Greek sources Heather uses for his reconstruction.

⁶⁶ *Variae* 2.16.5: "et parte agri defensor adquisitus est." What exactly Cassiodorus and others meant by "land" remains a matter of scholarly debate, however. Goffart (1980) and (2006) challenged the common consensus by suggesting tax revenues derived from land, while Barnish (1986) and others, such as Heather

enjoy the peaceful habitations of their cities, while the Goths “endured the toils of war for the common good”⁶⁷ and “defended the entire Republic during its wars.”⁶⁸ Romans like Ennodius romantically praised young Goths who trained for battle, since they assured “the blessings of tranquility” and provided for senatorial *otium*.⁶⁹ Goths like Theoderic himself and his noble general Tuluin became heroes who fought on behalf of the Republic.⁷⁰ Their enemies’ (that is, Rome’s enemies’) weapons trembled in fear;⁷¹ their own weapons established peace and prevented “the effeminate toga, now battle-ready,”⁷² from lying dead,” or granted substance to the Roman claims of eternal victory emblematic in triumphal ornaments like the *toga palmata*, the honorary clothes of a triumphant general.⁷³ It was Goths who claimed the victory, but symbolically wrapped in Roman clothing, a testament to their Romanness.

The Goths, as a people but more importantly as an ideal, had thus breathed new life into Italy, rescuing not only the state, but the Roman people themselves through their insertion of new, invigorating blood. A new, Getic race of Mars was praised for having

(2007), continue to maintain that these words refer to actual pieces of land. Though not terribly important for the present purposes, I am (for the most part) swayed by Goffart’s arguments.

⁶⁷ *Variae* 8.3.4: “Quod si vos, ut opinamur, libenti animo similia feceritis, harum portiores sub obstestatione divina vobis fecimus polliceri iustitiam nos et aequabilem clementiam, quae populos nutrit, iuvante domino custodire et Gothis Romanisque apud nos ius esse commune nec aliud inter vos esse divisum, nisi quo illi labores bellicos pro communi utilitate subeunt, vos autem habitatio quieta civitatis Romanae multiplicat.” The idea had universal application, though this specific letter was sent by Athalaric to the “populus Romanus” (the inhabitants of the city of Rome).

⁶⁸ *Variae* 7.3.3: “Vos autem, Romani, magno studio Gothos diligere debetis, qui et in pace numerosos vobis populos faciunt et universam rem publicam per bella defendunt.”

⁶⁹ *PanTh* 83: “Nam illud quo ore celebrandum est, quod Getici instrumenta roboris, dum provides ne interpellentur otia nostra, custodis et pubem indomitam sub oculis tuis inter bona tranquillitatis facis bella proludere?”

⁷⁰ Ennodius himself referred to Theoderic’s Goths as “your heroes” (*PanTh* 87: *heroas tuos*). Within the panegyric Theoderic was first a defender and restorer of the eastern Empire (see the discussion below) and then of the western Empire. The theme of Theoderic and his successors as “defenders” is echoed throughout the *Variae*. For Tuluin, see *Variae* 8.9 and (especially) 8.10.

⁷¹ There are many examples of this motif during the period, ranging from general to rather specific. *PanTh* 16: “...quae ab hostibus sumpta fuerant arma tremuerunt”; *PanTh* 53 (on the Heruli): “...ut hic agnoscerent etiam in propriis sedibus quem timerent”; *PanTh* 54 (on the Burgundians): “Taceo ubi tibi iuncta est pax diuturna, Burgundio, quando sic foederibus obsecutus es, ut deputetur quod vivi feriatu constantiae, non pavori” (pavori obviously being implied as the *real* rationale). *Variae* 11.1.12 (on the Franks): “laccessiti metuerunt cum nostris inire certamen qui praecipiti saltu proelia semper gentibus intulerunt.”

⁷² Effeminate toga, *Variae* 8.10.1: “auctus est inire pacis genius de ferri radiantis ornatu nec discincta iacet toga iam procinctualis effecta”; weapons, *PanTh* 42: “qui [Theodericus] dum munimentis chalybis pectus includeres, dum ocreis armare, dum lateri tuo vindex libertatis gladius aptaretur.” On this passage, see below; *PanTh* 84 eulogizes Gothic spears and bows which provided for “nostra otia.”

⁷³ *PanTh* 15-16 (cited more extensively below) describes the legitimacy that Theoderic granted to the *toga palmata*, the toga of a consul, but also of a triumphant general. Cf. *Variae* 6.1. Theoderic, as we shall see, had been granted a public triumph in Constantinople in 484.

fortuitously come to the aid of the race of Romulus, itself sired from the house of Mars.⁷⁴ The association gave Romans and Goths a common (divine) ancestry, perhaps not especially important to a Christian audience, but nevertheless suggestive of their imagined kinship and the importance of warfare and victory among both peoples. Ironically, violence linked Goths and Romans more than it drove them apart, martial themes being celebrated by Romans in their panegyrics, monumental architecture, inscriptions, coins, popular entertainment, and the language of emperorship itself.⁷⁵ In the late fourth century Ammianus Marcellinus had declared that the Romans had won their Empire by “fierce wars” and “valor,” but that now they “owed victory to [their] name alone.”⁷⁶ It was this lack of substance to Roman claims of invincibility, coupled with crippling losses, that had led to disillusionment and sentiments of decline in the fifth century. But under Theoderic, the Goths had returned substance to these claims, fulfilling expectations of Roman victory and dominance, despite the fact that the propaganda of the day associated these old Roman virtues exclusively with Gothiness.

The distinction, however, was largely artificial and an ideal, and doubtless fueled by the tendency for the Roman army to be filled with provincial and barbarian recruits, rather than with Italians, who served primarily in civil posts. This was not a new development, though some in Constantinople would later suggest that it had been the very reason for the western Empire’s fall. The barbarian element had simply grown too strong, according to Procopius, and had made demands that ultimately led to the deposal of Romulus Augustus.⁷⁷ In Procopius’ classicizing mind, these barbarians were antithetical to Romans, yet the reality of the situation was much more complex. Many of

⁷⁴ *Variae* 8.10.11 (directed to the Roman Senate in reference to Tuluin’s patriciate): “convenit gentem Romuleam Martios viros habere collegas.”

⁷⁵ The problem with violence, therefore, was not violence itself, but when it was turned against Rome. Hence the acceptability and praise for Athaulf and the *Gothorum viribus* found in the Orosius passage cited at the beginning of this section (fn. 4). See Ward-Perkins (2005), chp. 2 “The Horrors of War,” who, in a reactionary move against “accommodation narratives,” emphasizes the violence that typified the fifth century, yet fails to draw adequate attention to the praise that such barbarian violence received when harnessed for the benefit of the Empire. Orosius and Sidonius are but two examples of provincial literati who were willing to praise the Visigoths for just this. Cf. Heather (1999), 242f.

⁷⁶ *Res Gestae* 14.6.10: “ignorantes profecto maiores suos per quos ita magnitudo Romana porrigitur, non divitiis eluxisse, sed ber bella saevissima, nec opibus nec victu nec indumentorum vilitate gregariis militibus discrepantes, opposita cuncta superasse virtute”; and 14.16.4: “iamque vergens in senium, et nomine solo aliquotiens vincens, ad tranquilliora vitae discessit.” Of course, in these instances Ammianus was referring specifically to the inhabitants of the city of Rome.

⁷⁷ Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.4-5.

the “barbarian” soldiers in Italy were not newcomers; their families had been settled within Italy for over a generation and no doubt they were able to identify themselves as both Roman and barbarian at the same time, much like the Rhineland Frank whose fourth century epitaph read, “I am a Frank, a Roman soldier in arms.”⁷⁸ Just as Frankishness became a marker for Roman soldiers stationed along the Rhine, Gothicness became a prerequisite for the soldiers defending Italy. Being labeled a Goth did not exclude such soldiers from Romanness, but made a statement about their military role in society and, most importantly, suggested the bravery and might for which Goths had come to stand. Once indicative of a *Roman* army, this bravery and might now became indicative of *Rome’s* army.

Indeed the separation of Goths and Romans generally failed to stretch beyond these kinds of ideals and propaganda. Real distinctions, if ever there, had already been weakened by the conditions of the Empire discussed at the beginning of this section, and so were blurred at best, growing increasingly fuzzy with time.⁷⁹ Theoderic himself was said to have wisely observed, “the poor Roman imitates the Goth, the rich Goth the Roman.”⁸⁰ This was not necessarily a statement about the aristocracy giving up its military role or the ranks of the army being filled with peasants, but an affirmation of the cultural convergence that was occurring in Theoderic’s Italy. Gothic aristocrats, on the one hand, imitated their Roman aristocratic half-brothers, something that this class had been doing for generations,⁸¹ becoming classically (and even biblically) trained in Greek and Latin and coming to possess sizable estates and senatorial titles.⁸² Whether Gothic

⁷⁸ For barbarians settled in the north of Italy, Szidat (1995). For the Frankish epitaph, *CIL* 3 3576: “Francus ego civis Romanus miles in armis.” The association might explain why a Roman general like Aegedius in the later fifth century could be understood as a ruler of the Franks during the exile of their king, Childeric. See Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2.12, for the anecdote, which is repeated in *LHF* 7. For a discussion of the Frankification of the Rhineland army, James (1988), 38-44, and Stroheker (1955). To my knowledge, there is no known “Gothic” inscription which parallels this Frankish one, though some scholars have suggested that a number of the names of (Roman) soldiers listed on the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* are actually Gothic in origin. On the regular use of Goths as auxiliaries against Persia, see Wolfram (1988), 43f.

⁷⁹ The near archaeological invisibility of the Ostrogoths of Italy is well known. See Bierbrauer (1975) and (1994); Maioli (1994), 238-42; Brogiolo and Possenti (2001), 272-77; and Brogiolo (2007), 116f.

⁸⁰ *AnonVal* 61: “Romanus miser imitatur Gothum et utilis Gothus imitatur Romanum.”

⁸¹ See the discussions of Danubian archaeology in Heather (1996), chp. 3, and Whittaker (1994), 178f. On aristocratic permeability, again, Demandt (1989) and Goffart (2006), 191f., who follows him.

⁸² The most conspicuous examples belong to the royal family (Theodahad, Amalasuetha, and Athalaric). But others were acquiring land, adorning themselves with letters, and holding illustrious offices. Examples include Tuluin (described above), Theudis in Spain (Procopius, *Wars* 5.12.50-52), and the “former barbari”

or Roman, peasant society, on the other hand, remained the same-old rustic and rude rabble traditionally looked down upon by the elite as semi-, if not fully, barbarous.⁸³ But in spite of Theoderic's claims, this was no mere assimilation but a two-way process: rich Romans were also imitating Goths, an act not nearly so fantastic when it is borne in mind that many of these "Gothic" qualities were nothing more than Roman ones in disguise.⁸⁴

The Roman Opilio, for instance, was described as both prominent for his noble character and "famous in the force of his arms." He was lauded for "upholding the virtues of the ancients," but described as "strong in body [and] a man whom peace praised, but raging war would not reject."⁸⁵ The Romans were bound to him "though his judgments" the barbarians (*gentiles*) "through his way of life."⁸⁶ This was an Italo-Roman whose virtues seemed to parallel the Goths' own (justice, physical strength, love of peace, courage in war), yet who was a Roman statesman and a model of ancient Roman virtues. The sons of a certain Venantius, a descendant of the noble Decii, were similarly "exercised in arms and trained in letters,"⁸⁷ while those of the patrician Cyprian were extolled for "shining forth with tribal grace, having been imbued in the institutions of arms," and for being "boys of Roman stock, [who] spoke our [Gothic] language."⁸⁸

of Sirmium (*Variae* 5.14). Some "senators" in the *Variae* also appear to have "un-Roman" names, perhaps Goths, but perhaps not. See Amory (1997), chps. 3 and 5. Cf. Heather (2007), who maintains (on inferences derived largely from Procopius) that there existed a separate and proudly traditional (almost anti-Roman) Gothic aristocracy. There seems, however, little Italian evidence for this, and it makes more sense to see these "Goths" as a foil for Procopius.

⁸³ Examples of this elite understanding of rusticity as barbarity can be found in the works of Ennodius, Sidonius, and the *Variae*, while Whittaker (1994) demonstrates the reality of convergence along socio-economic lines within the frontier regions. There was, however, a major exception to this pejorative understanding of the peasantry, which lay in the Republican ideal of the citizen-soldier-farmer type, embodied in heroic individuals like Cincinnatus.

⁸⁴ Indeed, though Italian society in general seems to have become increasingly martialized in late antiquity, martial values (ideologically speaking) had remained a constant. For martialization, Everett (2003), chp. 1; Kennell (2000), 117-18; MacGeorge (2002), 170-1; and Goffart (2006), 191. The ban on civilians' carrying arms, for instance, was actually lifted over the course of the fifth century. See *CTh* 15.15.1 with *NVal* 9 and *NMaj* 8 (lost).

⁸⁵ *Variae* 8.17.1: "...manu clarus ac summa fuit morum nobilitate conspicuus, quem nec ferventia bella respuerunt et tranquilla otia praedicarent, corpore validus, amicitia robustus aevi antiquitatem gestabat, abiectis saeculis Odovacris ditatus claris honoribus." For Opilio, see the discussion in chapter 1.

⁸⁶ *Variae* 8.17.6: "Gentiles victu, Romanos sibi iudiciis obligabat."

⁸⁷ *Variae* 9.23.3: "quorum infantia bonis artibus enutrita iuventutem quoque armis exercuit, formans animum litteris, membra gymnasiis: tradens amicis exhibere constantiam, domnis fidem." The Decii themselves were described in *Variae* 9.23.5 as *plena... fascibus laureatis*. This letter was written to the Senate announcing the consulship of Paulinus, the son of Venantius, in 534, whose colleague was the emperor Justinian.

⁸⁸ *Variae* 8.21.6-7: "relucent etiam gratia gentili nec cessant armorum imbui fortibus institutes. Pueri stirpis Romanae nostra lingua loquuntur." The status and nature of the "Gothic" language in Ostrogothic

Cyprian himself was acclaimed for being a valiant warrior, who helped the Goths achieve victory by pursuing fleeing barbarians during the Sirmian wars,⁸⁹ while the distinguished Patrician Liberius,⁹⁰ whom Ennodius complimented for his eloquence and early role in securing Italy's "hope of restoration,"⁹¹ was described by Cassiodorus as "a military man... famous in his merits, notable in his appearance, but more beautiful in his wounds."⁹² It was wounds, in fact, which had marked Theoderic's heroic Gothic general Tuluin as a courageous Goth; wounds were "an inseparable source of esteem, a proclamation without an advocate, a particular language of courage, which... adorn us for the rest of our lives."⁹³ Yet while Tuluin's wounds were proof that the Getic race of Mars had reinvigorated the weak toga, Liberius' proved that "he had served the Republic well."⁹⁴

Italy has been debated. Amory (1997), 102-108, has suggested that "Gothic" amounted to a kind of Balkan pidgin Latin used primarily within military circles. The idea is very intriguing, but has little to support it. In the very least, the available evidence does suggest that bilingualism was already the norm for newcomers.

⁸⁹ *Variae* 8.21.3: "vidit te adhuc gentilis Danuvius bellatorem: non te terruit Bulgarum globus, qui etiam nostris erat praesumptione certaminis obstaturus. Peculiare tibi fuit et renitentes barbaros aggredi et conversos terrore sectari. Sic victoriam Gothorum non tam numero quam labore iuvisti." In *Variae* 8.10.4 Tuluin was similarly praised as a *bellator* during the same campaign against the Bulgars, but in his case the victory served as a testament to Gothic might. The invincibility of the Bulgars was also treated in Ennodius' panegyric, where a lengthy ethnographic excursus provided details beyond Cassiodorus' more simple *Bulgares toto orbe terribiles*. Later in the panegyric, the same Sirmian campaign served as a vehicle to praise the general Pitzias, who, by imitating Theoderic, restored Balkan territories to the Roman Empire. This is a wonderfully epic account where two hitherto unconquered nations clash, the loser being thoroughly dejected and humiliated. See *PanTh* 19-22 (ethnographic excursus) and *PanTh* 63-69 (Bulgar battle scene).

⁹⁰ Liberius' career was exceptional, beginning under Odovacer. He served as Praetorian Prefect of Italy (493-500), Patrician (500-554), and Praetorian Prefect the Gauls (510-534). Later he traveled with a number of senatorial elites to Constantinople in an attempt to secure peace between Theodahad and Justinian. At some point before 538 he switched sides and attached himself to Justinian, for whom he served as an Augustal Prefect in Egypt (538/9-?542), and military commander against the Goths in Sicily (550) and later Spain (552-3). He also seems to have played an important role in the formulation of Justinian's pragmatic sanction. See *PLRE* 2, 677-81 ("Liberius 3") and O'Donnell (1981). For more on Liberius, see chapters 4 and (especially) 5.

⁹¹ Ennodius #447.3: "vix pascatur Italia publici sudore dispendii, quando tu eam sine intervallo temporis et ad spem reparationis et ad praebitionem triubtariam commutasti." The letter exalted Liberius for his role in accommodating the Goths after Theoderic's invasion and suggested that he should provide a similar benefit to newly re-conquered Gaul. See chapter 5. In all, six letters survive within Ennodius' corpus that were directed to Liberius, almost all commenting on his eloquence. Similar praise for Liberius' role in accommodating the Goths can be found in *Variae* 2.16.

⁹² *Variae* 11.1.16: "Patricium Liberium praefectum etiam Galliarum, exercitualementem virum, communiione gratissimum, meritis clarum, forma conspicuum, sed vulneribus pulchriorem, laborum suorum munera consecutum, ut nec praefecturam, quam bene gessit, amitteret et eximium virum honor geminatus ornaret."

⁹³ *Variae* 8.10.7: "vulnera inquam, opinio inseparabilis, sine assertore praeconium, propria lingua virtutis, quae licet ad praesens periculum ingerant, reliquum tamen vitae tempus exornant."

⁹⁴ *Variae* 8.10.16: "ne de republica bene meritus diu absens putaretur ingratus."

In this respect, then, there was a distinction to be made between Goths and Romans in Theoderic's Empire, but it existed foremost on an ideological plane and ultimately did not call into question the Romanness of Goths or, for that matter, Romans who had "gone Gothic." Goths and Gothicism represented martialism, the old Roman virtue of *virtus* (the very source of the term virtue), which meant "manliness" or "courage." *Virtus* was an ideal that the Romans had seemingly lost, becoming overly effeminate (perhaps even overly Greek), yet which until recently had been most Roman indeed.⁹⁵ As idealized soldiers, therefore, the Goths became symbolic of the restored Roman victory that other barbarians had snatched away in the fifth century, and the trappings of Gothicism (if any resisted Roman assimilation) served to complement such ideas. Indeed, Theoderic's hair and moustache may have been recognizably Gothic after all, but, if so, their appearance would have harmonized well with the overtly Roman claims of victory and dominance depicted on the Senigallia Medallion. Theoderic, and by extension every Goth, was *invictissimus semper* and *victor gentium*, but the victory was Roman and allowed Rome, once "trembling in her slipping footsteps,"⁹⁶ to be celebrated again as *Roma invicta*.⁹⁷

Theoderic: Vir Inlustris

As Roman soldiers and "barbarians" romanized much like other provincials, the Goths found a role in Theoderic's Italy, and Gothicism as an idea became an essential component of the Roman restoration rhetoric defining the era. Gothicism complemented sentiments of renovation and Republican renaissance. Just as the Empire was once more the Republic ruled by a modest *princeps*, its soldiers again fought bravely and with honor, embodying those manly virtues that had granted Rome her mastery over the world and established the *Pax Romana*. Theoderic had literally become "what Caesar Augustus

⁹⁵ If Goffart's conclusions concerning the "happy ending" of the *Getica* are correct, then Jordanes rather intelligently reversed the gender roles of Goths and Romans (as understood in Italy) and placed their union a bit later. In Goffart's estimation, the *Getica* "traces the adventures of two lovers, Roman male and Gothic female." See Goffart (1988), chp. 2 especially. The glaring reversal seems to demonstrate the *Getica*'s value as a piece of specifically Byzantine propaganda (as Goffart, in fact, concludes).

⁹⁶ *PanTh* 48: "Illic vellem ut aetatis inmemor, Roma, conmeares. Si venires lapsantibus tremebunda vestigiis, aevum gaudia conmutarent."

⁹⁷ "Roma invicta," it should be recalled, was a prevalent theme on "Ostrogothic" coinage. See chapter 2.

had been,” far beyond the intent of Athaulf’s original wishful thinking nearly a century prior.

The “Roman” heroism and valor that the Goths had reintroduced to Italy, however, were not the only prerequisites traditionally associated with Roman emperorship. As commanders, *imperatores*, such qualities had always played an important role in maintaining a loyal army and living up to ideologies of military supremacy. But as heads of state, emperors themselves were held to higher standards than their soldiers, and those who failed to be more than just soldier-emperors were often unable to earn their more aristocratic subjects’ respect or loyalty.⁹⁸ As discussed above, long after the ideals of the principate had all but vanished, senators had continued to imagine that the emperor would be one of their own, a first among equals, cultured, learned, and of noble blood. Such expectations had been increasingly denied throughout the course of the Empire’s history, but their perceived fulfillment by a late antique ruler remained a major source of praise and admiration especially from the senatorial class. Indeed, for elites like Cassiodorus and Ennodius, the comparative lack of such finer qualities among fifth-century leaders was evidence of this period’s decadence, while their presence in their own leaders demonstrated contemporary resurgence. Cassiodorus might have praised Galla Placidia for being “distinguished by the esteem of the world and glorious in her lineage,” but her lineage was no match for Amalasuetha’s eloquence and splendid Amal blood.⁹⁹ Less sympathetic, Ennodius had faulted Odovacer for his ignoble origins and complained bitterly that he and his predecessors had “loved ignorance, and never did what was praiseworthy.”¹⁰⁰ The king’s lack of erudition and its glaring unimportance during the late fifth century were likewise symbolic of this era in

⁹⁸ Maximinus the Thracian, whom some sources claim was half-Gothic and half-Alanic (and hence a *real* barbarian), is perhaps the best example. According to his *Vita* in the *Historia Augusta*, the nobility of Rome both hated and feared him, largely on account of his savage cruelty, ignoble qualities, and ignoble/barbarous origins. Eventually the Senate literally rebelled, tellingly appointing the illustrious senators Balbinus and Pupienus as co-emperors. Pupienus himself later tried to emphasize his link to Senate and senatorial aristocracy by introducing a new motif on his coinage featuring clasped hands and the monogram “patres senatus.” See Carson (1980), vol. 2, no. 773, for an example. Maximinus was the prototype of the so-called “Danubian/Balkan” (or “military”) emperors of the third and fourth century. For these and their reception at Rome as “barbarous,” see Van Dam (2007), 35-44.

⁹⁹ For this comparison, see chapter 1.

¹⁰⁰ For ignoble origins, *PanTh* 24 (discussed in chapter 1); for loving ignorance, *PanTh* 76: “Amaverunt praecessores tui inscitiam, quia numquam laudanda gesserunt.”

general, when “no value was given to written accounts,” and eloquence, so fundamental to Ennodius’ understanding of Romanness, was ignored.¹⁰¹

Such critiques nicely demonstrate how the perceived qualities of a ruler often dictated overall assessments and impressions of his or her reign, thereby informing the *status reipublicae*. The presence of nobility and elite Roman culture in general lent legitimacy to a ruler before Roman audiences throughout the Mediterranean, but especially in Italy, where the aristocracy was tenaciously traditional and extremely proud of its Republican roots.¹⁰² For Theoderic, then, knowledge of high (Roman) culture, combined with an illustrious (Roman) career in the East, could serve to transform an otherwise “barbarian” king into a kind of new senatorial man, who shared with his Italian aristocrats a similar appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, a history of office-holding, and an understanding that both further ennobled the already noble by blood. Such qualities helped to reiterate before a less open-minded Italian audience that Theoderic was authentically Roman, and set him apart from his troops, who could be understood as Romans in their own unique way, but were nonetheless thought to be rude and semi-barbarous, like all soldiers (never mind their pride in being Gothic).¹⁰³ Theoderic’s membership in the senatorial aristocracy, moreover, reiterated ideas of his reign as a restoration of the principate, since the *princeps* had ideally been the *optimus vir senatus*, the best man of the Senate.

But given the hostility towards Greeks already encountered in this dissertation,¹⁰⁴ it is ironic (though not entirely problematic) that Theoderic’s familiarity with Roman high culture had actually been acquired in the East. He was the son of the Ostrogothic sub-king Theodemir, who had become a federate of the eastern emperor Marcian in the 450s and had been granted land in Pannonia on which to settle his Goths. Theoderic was presumably born, then, on a Gothic reservation in Pannonia and hence within the

¹⁰¹ *PanTh* 77: “in casu negotiorum nutabat eventus, quando litteris genius non dabatur.” In Ennodius’ estimation the situation rendered noble men into brutes, mirror images of their barbarian master. The idea is made clear in the contrast between bodily strength (*vis*) and knowledge (*peritia*) in *PanTh* 76. The former actually reduces the latter. For the importance of eloquence, again chapter 1.

¹⁰² This is discussed more extensively below, but see Wes (1967), chps. 1 and 2, and Jones (1964), chp. 15.

¹⁰³ It should be remembered, too, that even if Goths had found an ideological niche in Italy, the idea of Goths as barbarians, much like the idea of Gauls as barbarians, could continue to flourish in Italy (see above). Its continuance, in fact, would become the ammo of the Byzantine propaganda machine during Justinian’s reconquest. See Amory (1997), 135f, and Goffart (2006), 52-55.

¹⁰⁴ See chapter 1.

boundaries of the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁵ As discussed above, the Pannonian Goths to which he belonged had already been undergoing a process of Romanization for generations at this time and were continuing to do so into the sixth century, a process that was rendering them provincialized to an extent that could be more or less recognizable as Roman to other Romans. This Gotho-Pannonian variation on Romanness was not, however, the kind of Romanness to which Theoderic was primarily exposed. Very early in his youth, sometime around the age of eight, young Theoderic was sent to Constantinople as a hostage, ensuring the conditions of a treaty established between Valamir (his uncle) and emperor Leo I.¹⁰⁶ Here he remained for a decade, at which time he returned to Pannonia and eventually inherited from his father his uncle's position as a king.¹⁰⁷

Despite the fact that few specifics are known about this time spent in Constantinople, it should be taken very seriously. These were presumably the most formative years of Theoderic's life (indeed of most adolescents' lives), when the future king of Italy was understood by an Italian subject to have matured from the "lightheartedness of a boy" into a man.¹⁰⁸ As a royal hostage of the imperial court, Theoderic would have run within aristocratic circles and been reared as essentially the son of a Roman dignitary, exposed to all the luxury and high culture available in the eastern capital. Constantinople's ubiquitous late antique imperial monuments would have surrounded him daily with impressive reminders of Roman glory and righteousness, the emperors' names etched into these buildings perhaps serving to instill in him the importance of a ruler's reputation and legacy.¹⁰⁹ It was here that Theoderic proudly

¹⁰⁵ Jordanes, *Getica* 269, places Theudimer's territory near Lake Pelso in Pannonia at the time of Theoderic's birth. The actual date, however, is uncertain. *PLRE* 2, 1078, suggests 454, while Wolfram (1988), 261-2, argues for 451. Cf. Heather (1991), 242, who places their initial settlement in Pannonia under Attila (i.e. in the 440s). The treaty with Marcian, therefore, may have placed an imperial stamp of approval on a *fait accompli*.

¹⁰⁶ Jordanes, *Getica* 271, with Ensslin (1959), 11-13; Wolfram (1988), 262-3; and Heather (1991), 247-9.

¹⁰⁷ Theodemir, Theoderic's father, had apparently become king when his brother, Valamir, died. He was still king when Theoderic returned to Pannonia, though Theoderic may have been associated with his reign, perhaps as sub-king or co-king. See the discussion of Theoderic's *tricennalia* in chapter 4.

¹⁰⁸ *PanTh* 11: "dum adhuc de puero haberet hilaritatem." Cf. Jordanes, *Getica* 271, which refers to young Theoderic as an "infantulus" and "puerulus." Granted, human psychology and age groups are not universal and Theoderic may have been a particularly mature ten-year-old, but Ennodius' (and Jordanes') depiction would seem to suggest a carefree boy who became a man imbued with Roman *pietas*. Cf. Wolfram (1988), 262, who writes, "One needs only the most elementary knowledge of pedagogy to understand how important the years in Constantinople were in the development of the young Amal."

¹⁰⁹ Many of these monuments were located in and around the Constantinople's center (the Augusteum), such as the basilicas housing New Rome's senate, the Great Palace and its adjoining church and

asserted he had learned Roman governance and justice,¹¹⁰ and indeed here that he had largely internalized what it meant to be a Roman and a good Roman emperor. Greece, Ennodius proclaimed in his panegyric, “raised you [i.e. Theoderic] in the lap of *civilitas*, predicting what was to come.”¹¹¹

Such, of course, had been an intended consequence of Roman hostageship, transforming former hostages into admirers and practitioners of *Romanitas* and rendering them willing allies or clients upon assuming leadership roles at home.¹¹² But in Theoderic’s case, the stay in Constantinople presumably had greater repercussions than simply granting him an appreciation for Roman culture and governance. His tender age upon arriving and his long stay within Constantinople’s walls (over a decade), seemingly isolated from his Pannonian cousins,¹¹³ surely played a fundamental role in his development as a person. When he finally left the city at the age of eighteen, he had lived there for more than half his life; some of his most important, character-defining developments had occurred here. He probably spoke Greek and Latin with a local accent¹¹⁴ and doubtless had the tastes and mannerisms of the city’s elite. He had been educated in the classics¹¹⁵ and had thus been initiated into a specifically Greco-Roman

hippodrome, and Constantine’s Church of the Apostles. These buildings were testaments to, and daily reminders of, the greatness of Rome, its emperors, and the Empire. They doubtless instilled in Theoderic an understanding of Roman order. See Ensslin (1959), chp. 1, who goes into much more detail, not just about the city, but also the events occurring within it which may have made an impression on him. See also Johnson (1988), for the influence of eastern models on Theoderic’s building program at Ravenna.

¹¹⁰ *Variae* 1.1.2: “qui divino auxilio in re publica vestra didicimus, quemadmodum Romanis aequabiliter imperare possimus.” For the significance of this passage, see chapter 2.

¹¹¹ *PanTh* 11: “Educavit te in gremio civilitatis Graecia praesaga venturi...” And by this Ennodius meant *everything* that was to come, both in the East and in the West.

¹¹² See Luttwak (1976) and Braund (1984).

¹¹³ In fact, he may not have been entirely isolated, since there were Gothic peoples residing in Constantinople at the time (generally in the imperial guard) and an Arian church, where Goths may have worshipped using a Gothic liturgy. Still, these Goths, like the Alanic generalissimo Aspar, would have also been “Romanized” to some degree. For Aspar, *PLRE* 2, 164-9. For Goths in Constantinople, Wolfram (1988), 135, and Burns (1994), 172-3, both, in fact, referring to the early fifth century.

¹¹⁴ A serious rival to Greek during the fourth century, Latin was in the process of being eclipsed as the official “imperial” language of the in the East when Theoderic was in Constantinople. Cf. Van Dam (2007), chp. 7. Trilingualism (Gothic, Greek, and Latin), much like Amalasuetha’s (*Variae* 11.1.6), seems probable. Inferences from modern pedagogical studies (obviously not entirely applicable to the late antique world) likewise suggest that the age at which Theoderic relocated to Constantinople could have had a serious impact on his speech. Vocabulary, for instance, generally doubles between the ages of six and eight. For Theoderic’s appreciation of proper pronunciation, see *Variae* 4.3, to the envoy Senarius.

¹¹⁵ For the debate concerning Theoderic’s education, see (among others), Ensslin (1959), 21-24, and Baldwin (1989). The claim of *AnonVal* 61 and 71 that Theoderic was an *illitteratus* is likely mistaken.

worldview that would have been especially potent to a young boy.¹¹⁶ Characteristics like these would have marked him as a Roman elite throughout the Empire, providing a link with similarly cultured men in Italy.¹¹⁷ Constantinople, then, not simply as a physical space but also as a way of life (a rather cosmopolitan variation on Romanness), was an intrinsic component of Theoderic's persona, and had become so as he matured from a mere eight-year-old boy into a teen and finally young adult.¹¹⁸ This made him authentically Constantinopolitan, authentically east-Roman, and perhaps even put him at odds with his fellow Goths, who were becoming Roman along an entirely different, Pannonian scheme and were no doubt more in tune with their Gothic heritage.¹¹⁹ Much as Ennodius' maturation in Italy had engendered a recognizably Ligurian identity and outlook that alienated him from his fellow Gauls, Theoderic had surely developed a consciously east-Roman identity with characteristically Roman attributes that were recognizable both to other Romans and to other Goths. He may, in fact, have become so overtly Roman that at eighteen he seemed foreign before his kin and required a degree of reinvention in order to win their acceptance. War, and especially war at the expense of Rome, could help reassert his Gothiness, but a Roman Theoderic would always be.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ See Woolf (1998), 67-76, on Romanization and indoctrination through education.

¹¹⁷ The number of references to the ennobling power of a liberal education is phenomenal. Sidonius, Cassiodorus, and Ennodius share this sentiment, demonstrating its universal application. In Sidonius' post-Roman Gaul, such an education could substitute for the ennobling powers of office holding, while in the cases of Ennodius and Cassiodorus, such eloquence could further ennoble an office holder or provide proof of nobility in an individual otherwise obscured. For Cassiodorus/Theoderic (in specific reference to Italo-Roman office holders), see chapter 4. For Ennodius and Sidonius (in specific reference to post-Roman Gaul), see chapter 5.

¹¹⁸ Civic identities were still extremely important at this time, and individuals generally identified more with their native city/city-community (*urbs/civitas*) than with a larger country or ethnic group. The collapse of the Roman Empire and the establishment of local cults of saints served to increase this phenomenon in the West, Gaul being the most extensively studied region. Cf. Lewis (2000) and Van Dam (1985), chp. 1, and (1993), chp. 1.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 5.2.6-17, who claims that the Gothic aristocracy was appalled at the idea of Athalaric, Theoderic's grandson, being educated in the manner of a Roman prince. Letters, they claimed, produced cowards. The extent to which this account is trustworthy, however, is uncertain. These Goths also avowed that Theoderic himself had forbidden Gothic children to be educated as Romans, an assertion that is demonstrably untrue.

¹²⁰ There is some evidence that suggests that Theoderic had encountered difficulties securing the loyalty of the Pannonian Goths upon returning from Constantinople, perhaps for this very reason. The fact that there was another, non-Amal Theoderic (Theoderic Strabo) operating in the area probably did not help, though he too derived legitimacy and assistance from Constantinople. See *PLRE* 2, 1073-6 ("Theodericus Strabo 5"). Theoderic's early military campaigns against Strabo and the eastern Empire (seizing Sigidunum, for instance) may thus have been designed to demonstrate his legitimacy as a Gothic warrior. See Heather (1991), 264f., and Wolfram (1988), 267-78. The charisma and prestige associated with such victories as well as the spoils themselves, which would have been distributed among high-ranking warriors, certainly

Still, what may have seemed excessively Roman to Theoderic's Goths was, again, fundamental to winning acceptance in Italy, despite its potentially problematic acquisition in the East. Coming of age in "Roman" Constantinople could foster a Roman identity and a Roman understanding of the world, but even this Romanness was a variation on the Roman theme and could be questioned in the West, where eastern Romanness was regularly identified as different, complexly praised, feared, or denigrated depending on individual tastes and circumstances. It was Greece, according to Ennodius, not Rome (new or old), which had raised Theoderic, and it was the eastern Empire and its customs in which Theoderic claimed he had been steeped.¹²¹ As a representative of the East, therefore, Theoderic was either acceptably *east* Roman or alternatively foreign and Greek depending on the context. His situation thus closely resembled that of Anthemius or Julius Nepos, rather than that of the more obvious "barbarian" strongmen Ricimer and Odovacer.¹²² Like these "Greeks," Theoderic ran the risk of being construed in Italy as an imperial appointee from Constantinople, selected without Italian consultation. The resentment that this kind of interference could sometimes provoke has been discussed in an earlier chapter;¹²³ it could be extremely divisive, reminding those in Italy of their "true" Roman pedigree and the "provincial" or semi-barbarous status of others. Fear of oriental rule had a long history in Italy, but the significant role played by such oriental rulers during the perceived decline of the Empire in the fifth century exacerbated such feelings.¹²⁴ Italo-Romans might have begrudgingly accepted Byzantium's refoundation as New Rome, but when neo-Romans assumed control of the West and then completely botched its administration, it earned serious indignation. The blundering brought eastern

would have aided his position. Victory, as seen above and discussed in chapter 5, would continue to legitimize Theoderic in Italy, both among his Goths and Italo-Romans, though interestingly enough he would not lead any armies personally after 493.

¹²¹ The *Life of Epiphanius* likewise hints at the easternness of Theoderic in two instances. In the first (*VE* 110), Theoderic complimented Epiphanius to his followers by claiming that he outshone all other from the East, while in the second (*VE* 111), his Goths were described as "omnem illam, quam totus oriens vix sustinuit."

¹²² Cf. Jones (1962) and (1964), 245-8; Barnwell (1992), 134f; and MacGeorge (2002), 293.

¹²³ Even in the eyes of a "Grecophile" like Cassiodorus, it should be remembered, eastern Romans could be seen as stereotypically negative Greeks, i.e. effeminate and weak, manipulative and scheming, and prone to despotism. See chapter 1.

¹²⁴ As discussed in chapter 1, it was eastern despotism which marginalized the Italo-Roman aristocracy and its Senate; eastern despots who coveted and successfully plied away Italian lands in the Balkans; and eastern appointees who failed to defend the western Empire and continued it along its decadent path, an affirmation, perhaps, of their "Greek" effeminacy.

and western differences, otherwise acceptable, to the forefront, causing easterners who were proudly Roman to have their Romanness called into question. Theoderic, then, as a successor to Anthemius and Nepos, inherited their “bungled” Greek legacy and was therefore vulnerable (especially at the beginning of his reign) to rejection on account of his perceived Greekness.

But, again, this Greekness was not necessarily a burden. It could also serve as a very real source of praise and admiration, an ennobler, in fact, depending (once more) on the circumstances. Stereotypes are always two-sided and are easily inverted from negative to positive. As recently demonstrated, the savage aggression traditionally associated with barbarian Goths was transformed into Roman courage and valor in early sixth-century Italy, precedents for this having been established for centuries. Greekness too was flexible. In Italy, Greeks were recognized as “men of the greatest expertise,”¹²⁵ exceedingly learned both in arcane wisdom and Christian theology. They were sophisticated, wealthy, and deeply (but at times overzealously and problematically) pious.¹²⁶ Letters in the *Variae* are replete with references to Greek learning and its awe-inspiring and ennobling function. Knowledge of mathematics, music, philosophy, and natural sciences (all traditionally Greek subjects) was exceptional,¹²⁷ and, in fact, a renaissance of such learning had emerged in late fifth- and early sixth-century Italy, as educated men like Cassiodorus and Boethius were making translations and epitomes of Greek works available in new Latin editions.¹²⁸ The noblest of Italy aspired to obtain the knowledge of the East and, when they did, were loudly praised. The father of Felix, the

¹²⁵ *Variae* 5.40.5: “talibus igitur institutis edoctus Eoae sumpsisti legationis officium missus ad summae quidem peritiae viros.” Here Theoderic praised the learning of Cyprian, who was able to successfully vie with the Greeks during a mission to Constantinople. See below, fn. 130.

¹²⁶ For wealthy, *Variae* 8.9; for sophisticated, *Variae* 5.40. The western understanding of Greek piety as problematic and overzealous can be inferred from the Acacian schism, which severed eastern and western churches from 484 to 519. The meddling of eastern emperors in theological matters and their tendency towards rather narrow dogmatic stances likewise earned Justinian a bit of an implicit rebuke from king Theodahad, who was known for his own ecclesiastical learning. For this, *Variae* 10.26.4: “nam cum divinitas patiat diversas religiones esse, nos unam non audemus imponere. Retinemus enim legisse nos voluntarie sacrificandum esse domino, non cuiusquam cogentis imperio.” It was a good position for an Arian heretic, who himself had just been accused of persecuting an Arian convert to Orthodoxy, to take before the overzealous emperor. Cf. *Variae* 2.27 (Theoderic to the Jews of Gerona).

¹²⁷ *Variae* 1.45 contains a virtual encomium of the Greek learning of Boethius which treats all these disciplines. Theoderic praised Boethius for making “Greek dogmas into Roman discipline” (“Graecorum dogmata doctrinam feceris esse Romanam”), a clever turn of phrase.

¹²⁸ On this, Courcelle (1943), 257f., and Irigoien (1995). More broadly, Ensslin (1959), 267-78, and Polara (1995).

Gallic consul of 511, was hailed for having “stuffed himself with Attic honey,”¹²⁹ while Cyprian, the son of Opilio, was celebrated for having understood during an embassy to Constantinople “the sophistry with which [Greece] exceedingly prevails.”¹³⁰ In the case of the royal family, Amalasuetha, Athalaric, and Theodahad were all “adorned” with the eloquence of Attic speech,¹³¹ and it was surely no accident that Ennodius praised Theoderic for his specifically Greek education; it marked him as an exceedingly learned and refined man, validating claims that this *princeps* was a kind of “purple-clad philosopher.”¹³² A Greek education thus defined an individual as outstandingly noble and served as a means of legitimizing a potential foreigner. It aided in granting the otherwise Gallic Felix a Roman pedigree before the Senate at Rome¹³³ and functioned similarly for a Greco-Goth like Theoderic. Indeed, even Anthemius’ Greek sophistication and learning had initially provided him with a source of legitimization and esteem, eulogized by Sidonius Apollinaris in his panegyric delivered in 469.¹³⁴

More importantly, just as Greekness could be laudably Roman, so too could a “Greek” Roman Empire. Indeed, Italian resentment, the product of pressure, was not necessarily the norm. East and West were clearly different, particularly with respect to

¹²⁹ *Variae* 2.3.4: “rerum quoque naturalium causas subtilissime perscrutatus Cecropii dogmatis Attico se melle saginavit.”

¹³⁰ *Variae* 5.40.5: “Instructus enim trifariis linguis non tibi Graecia quod novum ostentaret invenit nec ipsa, qua nimium praevalet, te transcendit argutia.” For Opilio, see chapter 1; for Cyprian, see the discussion of Romans going “Gothic” (above) with *PLRE* 2, 332-3 (“Cyprianus 2”).

¹³¹ The Greek education of Athalaric is never explicitly mentioned in an Italian source, but the colorful story found in Procopius, *Wars* 5.2.6-17, would seem to suggest it (see above). His mother Amalasuetha, on the other hand, was twice praised for her deep learning, Cassiodorus claiming in one instance, “Atticae facundiae claritate diserta est.” See *Variae* 11.1.6 for this example, as well as *Variae* 10.4 for a more general comment. Theodahad’s knowledge of Greek philosophers like Plato is mentioned by Procopius (*Wars* 5.3.1; 5.6.10), his learning more generally praised in *Variae* 10.3. See also the discussions of Amalafriada and Amalaberga in the following section (below).

¹³² *Variae* 9.24.8: “...quidam purpuratus videretur esse philosophus.” This, of course, was Platonic ideal that probably also hinted at Theoderic’s Greekness.

¹³³ The Greek learning of Felix’s father was tellingly only referenced in the letter addressed to the Senate. It received no mention in Theoderic’s announcement to Anastasius or in his congratulatory letter to Felix himself. See chapter 5. Cf. Mathisen (2003), who suggests (based on nomenclature) that Felix’s father was, in fact, well connected in Rome and married a member of the Italo-Roman aristocracy. It is strange, however, that the *Variae* never allude to this “Italian” side of Felix’s family. Indeed, *Variae* 2.3 (to the Senate) would have been the perfect place to have done so. And yet, officially, Felix and his father remained conspicuously Gallic.

¹³⁴ The panegyric was recited *before* Anthemius’ falling out with Ricimer had stained his reputation. Its rather long-winded description of Anthemius’ Greek and Latin education, full of allusions to various authors, no doubt served the purposes of both flattering the emperor and demonstrating Sidonius’ own knowledge before the Romans of Rome. Ironically, then, it helped to legitimize both a “Gallo-Grecian” and a “Gallo-Roman” in the western capital. See *Carmen* 2, ln. 156-94.

the manner of emperorship expected and practiced in each region, but the eastern-style *basileus* was not denied his Roman accolades among westerners, despite glaring contradictions to Republican values. Nor was Constantinople, the seat of eastern imperial power, denied its place as a second Rome. It was, in Sidonius' words, "the queen of the East, the Rome of [that] region," and had in fact come to equal old Rome by taking up her burdens in times of need.¹³⁵ Interference might actually be welcomed, so long as it proved beneficial and the balance of power was maintained. Ideologically speaking, East and West were supposed to be separate but equal, united in their confraternity in the Roman name. Their emperors were brothers and colleagues; they shared the same governmental systems; each had its own illustrious senate comprised of office holders and their sons; each designated a consul whose name marked the year. Such had been the case into the late fifth century, at any rate, when the balance of power tipped in favor of Constantinople. Yet under Theoderic, as described in the preceding chapter, the eclipsing of the West by the East was far from complete, and ideologies of equality and fraternity continued to be fostered, though with the West now clearly holding a junior position.

This unity of Roman empires meant that glories achieved in the East were likewise those of the West, and vice versa, an idea that Theoderic had reiterated to Anastasius in the first letter included in the *Variae*.¹³⁶ It likewise meant that an illustrious career in the East could serve as a source of esteem and honor within a specifically Italian context. It was a matter of pride, for instance, that Cassiodorus had relatives like Heliodorus holding high offices in the East.¹³⁷ The occurrence caused the Cassiodori to be celebrated before Rome's Senate as "a house glorious in either realm, one which, joined gracefully to the twin senates, has shined forth with the greatest clarity."¹³⁸ The Cassiodori of the West, therefore, were (further) ennobled by the honors won by the Cassiodori of the East (and doubtless vice versa). But even for those lacking such broad connections, offices in and of themselves were worthy of admiration, and as a

¹³⁵ *Carmen* 2, ln. 30: "regina orientis, orbis Roma tui..."; idem., ln. 66-67: "concordant lancis partes; dum pondera nostra / suscipis, aequasti."

¹³⁶ For a discussion, see chapter 2.

¹³⁷ See *Variae* 1.4.15, where Theoderic claims to have personally met Heliodorus while himself resident in Constantinople. For Heliodorus, *PLRE* 2, 531-2 ("Heliodorus 5").

¹³⁸ *Variae* 1.4.15: "genus in utroque orbe praeclarum, quod gemio senatui decenter aptatum... purissima claritate radiavit."

consequence they allowed officials to transfer their allegiance from one empire to the other with seemingly few objections. The “Greek” emperors of the fifth century like Anthemius and Nepos provide the most conspicuous examples of this practice. Initially (and this is key), their illustrious careers in the East had not only recommended them as candidates for the western *imperium*, but had also rendered them acceptable as such to westerners like Sidonius, who expected non-dynastic emperors to have proven their service to the state.¹³⁹ Though less illustrious, the statesman Artemidorus provides a similar case in point for the reign of Theoderic. Appointed as Prefect of Rome in 509/10, this easterner was lauded before the Senate not only for his dedication to the western Republic, but also for his prior distinction “in his own country,” i.e. the eastern Republic.¹⁴⁰

In general, therefore, offices and honors were thought to be thoroughly Roman and could transcend those political and cultural boundaries that separated East and West. They served to indicate, foremost, an individual’s status as a noble Roman and ultimately aided his chances of acceptance throughout the Roman world. Anthemius, Nepos, Artemidorus, and others benefited from this situation, and so too did Theoderic. Indeed, Theoderic’s credentials as an east-Roman statesman were exceedingly illustrious, designated by his offices having earned him the highest rank available in the Empire, *vir inlustris*. This career had begun in 475, when the emperor Zeno had been deposed by the usurper Basiliscus and Theoderic had furnished the military aid necessary to restore him to the throne. An apparently grateful Zeno then commissioned Theoderic in 476 with a high military command in the Balkans, granting him the office of *Magister Militum Praesentalis* and making him a patrician. He likewise proclaimed him as an imperial friend (*amicus*) and adopted him as his son-in-arms. A period of intermittent hostilities, political manipulation, and open rebellion typified the close of this decade and the beginning of the next, but by 483 Theoderic and Zeno had again come to a peaceful agreement. Now the emperor promised him an ordinary consulship for the year 484 and

¹³⁹ This, at any rate, is a theme in all of Sidonius’ panegyrics in praise of emperors. And, though the offices that these men held often legitimized them as imperial claimants, their military valor truly recommended them for the task. For the specific case of Anthemius, see *Carmen* 2, ln. 193f.

¹⁴⁰ *Variae* 1.43.2: “et licet esset clarus in patria, nostram tamen elegit subire fortunam.” Whether this refers to the rank of *clarus* is unclear, however. The actual offices held by Artemidorus while in the East are not known, though he seems to have served in a diplomatic capacity under Zeno, treating, in one instance, with Theoderic himself while in the Balkans. See Martindale, *PLRE* 2, 155-6 (“Artemidorus 3”).

reestablished him as *Magister Militum*. He was honored further with the erection of an equestrian statue in Constantinople and a triumph at public expense.¹⁴¹ There was, to be sure, another period of hostility after this, but it was in his capacity as patrician and agent of Zeno (and perhaps even *Magister Militum*¹⁴²) that Theoderic was understood by many to have come to Italy in 489.¹⁴³

On the face of it, this was a very impressive and very Roman career, mirroring in many ways those of the “Greek” parvenu emperors of the fifth century like Anthemius, whose high offices and military glories, again, factored into their initial acceptance in the West.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, though the full extent and historical context of Theoderic’s eastern career may not have been known in Italy in 489, his most illustrious credentials certainly were. Educated Romans throughout the Empire, in fact, were generally aware of his time spent in Constantinople and military support of Zeno in times of need.¹⁴⁵ They also knew that the eastern emperor had bestowed upon him a number of honors and offices as a reward for his services, and that the holding of such offices was one possible explanation for why he had been allowed to rule in the West.¹⁴⁶ Italians themselves appear to have known of his patriciate and triumph, perhaps even his adoption as a son-

¹⁴¹ The sources for these offices and honors are primarily eastern, including Procopius, Jordanes, Theophanes, and the fragments of both John of Antioch and Malchus of Philadelphia. For western sources, see below. For discussions, Ensslin (1959), 39f.; Wolfram (1988), 270f.; Heather (1991), 230-9 with chps. 8 and 9; and *PLRE* 2, 1077-84 (“Theodericus 7”).

¹⁴² See Jones (1962) and Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 23f., for critiques of this suggestion, which originates with Mommsen (1889).

¹⁴³ See chapter 2.

¹⁴⁴ Anthemius’ career had also been primarily military in nature, securing him the offices of *magister utriusque militiae*, consul, and patrician during the reign of Marcian. All three were subject to praise in Sidonius’ panegyric (*Carmen* 2, ln. 205-209). His marriage to the only daughter of the emperor, Euphemia, likewise made him a potential heir to the throne of Marcian, though he was denied this upon the emperor’s death. Sidonius mentions this illustrious marriage and its implications in *Carmen* 2, ln. 216-218. According to Malchus, fr. 17, Theoderic was similarly offered the hand of Emperor Olybrius’ daughter, Anicia Juliana, but refused.

¹⁴⁵ Non-Italian sources that mention Theoderic’s stay in Constantinople include Jordanes, *Getica* 269f.; Theophanes, *AM* 5977; John Malalas 383 (15.9); and John of Nikiu 48. These same sources also reference his military assistance, as do Malchus fr. 11, 15, 17, and 18; John of Antioch fr. 214 (206); Evagrius, *HE* 3.27; and Marcellinus Comes, anno 483.

¹⁴⁶ See chapter 2. Even as Justinian was contemplating reconquest in the early 530s, Theodahad had been able to invoke this beneficial relationship struck between Amals and the eastern court, soliciting a similar friendship between “two princes.” For this, *Variarum* 10.2.3: “Neque enim nova est ista dilectio: nam si decessorum vestrorum facta recolatis, agnoscitis quandam esse consuetudinis legem cum illo imperio amicitiam Hamalos semper habuisse.” The Amals, therefore, were friends to *that* (i.e. the eastern) Empire.

in-arms and service as a *magister militum*.¹⁴⁷ But Theoderic's consulship of 484, which he served accompanied by a western colleague named Venantius,¹⁴⁸ received the greatest amount of their attention, doubtless because it was the most conspicuous and distinguished of his honors. Indeed, an ordinary consulship was the highest honor any Roman could receive and, in the West, had generally been reserved for the most noble-blooded of the Empire.¹⁴⁹ Entered forever into the consular fasti, both consuls' names literally designated the year, which meant that Romans throughout the Empire had already heard of "Consul Theoderic" years before his invasion of Italy. This consulship placed Theoderic within the highest echelon of the Empire's office-holding nobility and hence legitimized him as a member of the senatorial elite. It is little wonder, then, that Italian authors gave precedence to it, either ignoring or simply being ignorant of his other honors.¹⁵⁰

But while a consulship and the rank that it conferred could be especially ennobling and serve a legitimizing function before Italian audiences, the very means by which Theoderic was imagined to have obtained this honor could be even more prestigious. Both the *Anonymus Valesianus* account and Ennodius' panegyric comment

¹⁴⁷ For patriciate, *AnonVal* 49; for triumph, Ennodius, *PanTh* 15-16 (though the togas referred to here may simply be consular, as admitted above) and perhaps two Italian inscriptions which include the lines "Theodericus victor ac triumfator" and "triumfali viro Theoderico," respectively. These more probably refer to triumphs in the West, however. See chapters 4 and 5 for a discussion. Jordanes' *Romana* and *Getica* may also demonstrate knowledge in the West of Theoderic's other offices and honors (i.e. status as amicus, filius, and magister militum), provided that his sources for this material were western in origin (such as the lost histories of Cassiodorus, Symmachus, or Ablabius). This, of course, cannot be confirmed.

¹⁴⁸ Cassiodorus' chronicle is especially interesting in this respect because Theoderic, who is listed first, is introduced as "D[omino]N[ostro] Theoderico," despite not yet being ruler of Italy.

¹⁴⁹ Families claiming descent from the Scipiones and Gracchi monopolized this office in the West, whereas parvenus often held it in the East. This difference and its implications for Theoderic's nobility will be discussed below. Noteworthy too is the fact that emperors, members of the imperial family, and emperors-in-the-making often served as ordinary consuls. To be the colleague of an emperor, as Theoderic's son-in-law and presumed heir, Eutharic, had been, was a great honor. See chapter 4.

¹⁵⁰ Indeed, Italian narratives of the east-Roman phase of Theoderic's life tend to be rather cursory and historically inaccurate, either out of sheer ignorance or, if not altogether ignorant, perhaps in an attempt to mask the seemingly anti-Roman periods when Theoderic and Zeno had broken with each other. Cassiodorus appears to have done something like this in his sanitization of some of the more potentially damaging episodes involving Goths during the fourth and fifth centuries. See O'Donnell (1979), 38-41. There is, however, the equally strong possibility that these authors simply did not think it necessary to mention Theoderic's comparatively lesser (but still ennobling) honors in order to get their basic point across, deciding that his most illustrious office (i.e. the consulship) was sufficient. This seems to have been the case in the East, where better records were surely available. Procopius, *Wars* 5.1.9-11, for instance, simply referred to Theoderic as a patrician and ex-consul (much like *AnonVal*, see below), suggesting that both allowed him to obtain a "senatorial dignity." Cf. John Malalas 383 (15.9); John of Nikiu 47; and Theophanes *AM* 5931.

specifically on the origin of Theoderic's consulship, both authors, interestingly enough, committing an historical error by associating this origin with the role that Theoderic played during the usurpation of Basiliscus. The *Anonymus'* notice is especially terse, claiming in a single sentence that the emperor repaid Theoderic for his services, made him a patrician and consul, gave him many gifts, and sent him to Italy.¹⁵¹ Despite its brevity, the passage makes clear the links imagined to have existed between Theoderic's restoration of Zeno, his offices in the East, and his eventual deployment to the West. Ennodius' panegyric, while betraying the same basic connection, went much further. As might be expected, his version was particularly elaborate, describing Theoderic's role in near epic proportions. The result was an account that served to inscribe the affair with meaning that extended far beyond the simple laudation of loyal service in the East. The entire episode (the revolt, its aftermath, and Theoderic's consulship) was imagined as a test for Italy's future prince, one that he passed with the greatest of distinction. It demonstrated his understanding of Roman *pietas*, honor, and justice, confirming even more than his consulship his worthiness to rule as a Roman *princeps* and likewise reiterating his role as a savior of the Roman people. In Ennodius' estimation, in fact, Theoderic had rescued the eastern Roman Empire in more ways than one, foreshadowing his restoration of the West.

According to the panegyric, Greece had instilled Theoderic not just with an understanding of *civilitas* but also with a certain sense of obligation to the Roman Empire. When Basiliscus revolted, this obligation caused the young Goth to desire to "repay in a time of need the favor that [he] had received [in a time] of peace."¹⁵² This time of need was a time of chaos and turmoil, described by Ennodius as particularly disastrous to the east Roman state. The foundations of *civilitas*, law and order, had collapsed, providing a context remarkably similar to the decadent and moribund situation that Theoderic was imagined to encounter later in the West. Echoing the complaints of westerners discussed in an earlier chapter, Ennodius claimed that the eastern nobility had been concerned about its favor at court and had come to fear for its livelihood shortly

¹⁵¹ *AnonVal* 49: "Zeno itaque recompensans beneficiis Theodericum, quem fecit patricium et consulem, donans ei multum et mittens eum ad Italiam."

¹⁵² *PanTh* 12: "...aut non beneficium necessitatis tempore redderes quod pacis acceperas." The term *pietas* is not used, but certainly devotion of this sort would have been considered *pious*.

before Basiliscus' revolt. This terror soon turned to rage, typical of western barbarization, which broke its chains and "leapt forth for the testing of [Theoderic's] strength and clemency."¹⁵³ Much like Placidia's effeminate soldiers, Zeno's soldiers had had "their minds eviscerated by a long-lasting peace"¹⁵⁴ and thus failed to protect the emperor, yielding before and eventually abetting the usurper. Likewise, as in the West, reverence for the prince (Zeno) was lost, and a tyrant with ignoble blood, an analogue to Odovacer, seized control and ruled through fear.¹⁵⁵

Seemingly secure, Ennodius explained that Basiliscus believed his coup had been successful and that he would continue to reign unchallenged. But Theoderic's sense of duty compelled him, unwilling to allow the nobler cause, that of *civilitas* and a legitimate emperor, to fail while he was in a position to act.¹⁵⁶ In keeping with Ennodius' overall impression of his *princeps* as a mighty general, a theme throughout the panegyric and again not un-Roman, Basiliscus was said to have yielded as soon as Theoderic arrived with his army. There would be no battle scene, epic or otherwise, a clear indication that Basiliscus was even more cowardly than Odovacer, who "watched, not toiled" during Theoderic's conquest of Italy.¹⁵⁷ But this defeat was still powerful, transforming Theoderic into the savior of both the (eastern) Republic and its rightful emperor, who

¹⁵³ *PanTh* 11: "quando aevi purpura et flosculus supervenientis imperii promittebat sollicitis de gratiae commutatione terrorem, cum ad probationem roboris et clementiae tuae ruptis vinculis furor emicuit..." There has been some debate as to how to interpret the "aevi purpura et flosculus supervenientis imperii" reference. Cf. Rota (2002), 265-7, who ultimately suggests that the two terms are oppositional, the latter referring to Basiliscus. But if so, fear of Basiliscus' reign would have been the cause of his own usurpation! *Furor* (the revolt) seems to be in contrast to two legitimate rulers, who are emperor and soon-to-be emperor (contra Rota's association of the flosculus with an illegitimate emperor). Considering the timing of Basiliscus' revolt, it seems best to identify the emperor with Leo I and the little flower (surely a reference to a minor) with his grandson and successor Leo II. The second Leo's death soon after his elevation to the purple left his father, Zeno, who had been made co-emperor, sole emperor. Basiliscus then revolted against Zeno. For these events and commentary, see Bury (1958), vol. 1, 389-94, and Jones (1964), 224-5.

¹⁵⁴ *PanTh* 11: "...et evisceratas diuturna quiete mentes occasionis pabulo subiugavit." Admittedly soldiers are not explicitly mentioned here, so the passage may simply refer to the entire population of Constantinople or to other nobles and administrators. The theme of weakness through peace, however, is unmistakable. See chapter 1 for the Placidia reference and the prior section of this chapter for a discussion of the Goths' perceived role as masculine re-invigorators of the western Empire.

¹⁵⁵ *PanTh* 12: "...et in vacuum possessionem nullo adscitus sanguine tyrannus accessit. Qui aula potitus definivit, postquam metu hostes suos debellaverat, nihil superesse quod gereret." *Hostes* refers to those resisting the usurpation, rather than external foes. Cf. *CassChron*, anno 427 (cited in chapter 1) on Anthemius' murder.

¹⁵⁶ *PanTh* 12: "cum animos tuos sine annorum suffragio inpulit lux naturae, ne aut causa melior te coram posito subiaceret..."

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*: "in ipsis congressionis tuae foribus cessit invasor."

was described as a fugitive uncertain of his safety.¹⁵⁸ Such an act, according to Ennodius, was unprecedented: “Let us breeze through the histories; let the annals be examined. In which of these has there existed the rule of a *princeps* restored from exile, purchased by a born king at the price of his own blood?”¹⁵⁹

Leaving aside the important reference to royalty, these actions were envisioned as a clear demonstration of Theoderic’s undying commitment to (Roman) justice and order, a fact not only highlighted by his willingness to shed his own blood for the good of *civilitas*, but also reiterated by his praiseworthy moderation following Basiliscus’ defeat. Indeed, Ennodius believed that Theoderic could have easily exploited the situation to his own advantage. He had become master of Constantinople, and no one denied that he had the ability to transfer the *imperium* to whomever he had wanted.¹⁶⁰ He had the power to back a number of imperial candidates, not just Zeno, but had restrained his ambition, “greatest at that time when you [i.e. Theoderic] could have retained what you had acquired without harming your reputation.”¹⁶¹ He was even, these words implied, in a position to proclaim himself emperor and with little objection, yet had not, earning the esteem of “an especially noble man.”¹⁶² Such noble actions, moreover, had eventually paid off. Now *princeps* of the West, Ennodius addressed Theoderic with the traditional imperial epithet *incline domine* (“glorious lord”) and asserted, “praise itself respects your giving and defending the diadem.”¹⁶³ Like a certain eastern statesman and later western emperor before him, this refusal of power (*recusatio imperii*) in the East had become a useful source of honor in the West, rendering Theoderic all the more worthy of his princely office.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ Ibid: “cum profugo per te scepra redderentur de salute dubitanti.”

¹⁵⁹ *PanTh* 13: “Ventilemus historias, interrogentur annales: apud quos constitit refusum exuli, quem cruore suo rex genitus emerat, principatum?”

¹⁶⁰ *PanTh* 15: “nemo credidit non te posse ad quem voluisses transferre quod reddideras.”

¹⁶¹ Ibid: “illo maxime tempore, quo sine opinionis damno possis adquisita retinere.”

¹⁶² Ibid: “Singularis boni fructus est ambitionis refrenatio...” Both Rohr (1995), 207, and Rota (2002), 195, take “boni” as a neuter noun, meaning goodness/virtue (*Tugend* and *virtù*, respectively). Neither their translation nor my own is grammatically incorrect and both essentially claim that Theoderic was ennobled through his restraint.

¹⁶³ *PanTh* 14: “par te, incline domine, laus respicit donati diadematis et defensi.”

¹⁶⁴ The eastern statesman in mind, once more, is Anthemius. See Sidonius, *Carmen* 2, ln. 210-222, where Anthemius is lauded for refusing the (eastern) diadem, despite being worthy. As in Theoderic’s case, his refusal was seen as fortuitous, since it allowed Anthemius to become emperor of the West. On the *recusatio* tradition during the principate, see the discussion of diadems in chapter 2.

But such moderation did not stop with his refusal to usurp the diadem or in remaining the champion of the legitimate emperor. Ennodius claimed that Theoderic had been sparing in the prizes that he requested from Zeno, “as if they were sufficient,” clearly an indication that the panegyrist believed they were not.¹⁶⁵ These prizes were in fact the very consular fasces associated with Theoderic’s ordinary consulship of 484, again an historical inaccuracy on Ennodius’ part, but a very interesting one with important implications. The ordinary consulship, as discussed above, was the capstone office of the senatorial *cursus*, the most ennobling honor available to a Roman citizen and a legitimizer of Theoderic’s rule in Italy for westerners and easterners alike. Somehow, however, Ennodius believed that such an honor was insufficient for the service that his *princeps* had rendered to the eastern Republic. What prize remained beyond this was only the imperial purple, a tribute that Ennodius had already suggested Theoderic could have had, and now seemed to insinuate he should have had.

But if an intended point, Ennodius was more interested in attaching deeper meaning to the office that Theoderic actually held while in Constantinople. Indeed, though illustrious in the extreme, this dignity had not conferred additional glory to Theoderic; his actions on behalf of the Republic, after all, had already rendered him unequivocally glorious. Instead, and in a twist of irony, the person of Theoderic now served to confer glory upon the consulship and by extension the east-Roman state. Because of Theoderic, Ennodius explained, the palm-embroidered toga of a consul once more “merited its worth,” and a consul “defended the Republic through his esteem.”¹⁶⁶ Because he had been placed in the triumphal toga, the weapons of Rome’s enemies again trembled in fear.¹⁶⁷

Such an understanding clearly anticipated the reinvigoration of the effeminate toga in the West, an act imagined to have been afforded through the valor of noble Goths like Tuluin, a “disciple”¹⁶⁸ of Theoderic. By serving as consul, then, Theoderic had done more than simply establish useful Roman credentials; as far as Ennodius was concerned,

¹⁶⁵ *PanTh* 15: “Sed parcus in exigendis praemiis, quasi sufficerent ad vicissitudinem operum tuorum...”

¹⁶⁶ For not conferring glory and meriting its worth, *Ibid*: “...fasces accepisti, non quo tibi accederet genius de curuli, sed ut de te pretium palmata mereretur”; for guarding the Republic, *PanTh* 16: “ille annus habuit consulem, qui rempublicam non tam sollicitudine quam opinione tueretur...”

¹⁶⁷ *PanTh* 16: “...quo in segmentis posito quae ab hostibus sumpta fuerant arma tremuerunt.”

¹⁶⁸ *Variae* 8.9.7 (to Tuluin): “ostende te illius esse discipulum, qui numquam laboravit in cassum.”

he had in fact rescued and restored the eastern Roman Empire (yet again), providing another preview of the western assistance to come.

Theoderic: Rex Genitus

Invented, manipulated, yet based in historical reality, this understanding of Theoderic's eastern career made the ruler of Italy illustrious far beyond the rank that his offices had conferred and surely aided in demonstrating the rightness of his assumption of power in Italy. Though probably closer to the version found in the *Anonymus Valesianus* account, the knowledge or memory of this career nonetheless became an element of Theoderic's mystique, an intrinsic part of his legacy strong enough to legitimize even his successors. His grandson and immediate successor, Athalaric, for instance, invoked it before the Senate as a rationale for his own elevation to the purple. Because of his descent from Theoderic, Athalaric could be described as a "man most worthy of the Empire, descended from this [i.e. Theoderic's] family, his senatorial origin proclaimed as if he was born one of you [i.e. a senator]." ¹⁶⁹ Theoderic's eastern career could be remembered, then, as thoroughly senatorial even among Italy's noblest senators, literally making him one of them. And, in true Roman fashion, it was heritable.

But like Anthemius, whose career was in fact described rather similarly by Sidonius, ¹⁷⁰ the potential had nevertheless remained for Theoderic to be rejected in the West owing to his origins being perceived as barbarous. For men like Ennodius, Theoderic's career and upbringing in the East had made him nobly Roman and decidedly patriotic, militating against any understanding of him as a barbarian. But his name, despite its Latinization as Flavius Theodericus, ¹⁷¹ was surely a patent reminder to others of his rather un-Roman origins. The emperor Zeno, a Flavius much like Theoderic,

¹⁶⁹ *Variae* 8.2.3: "non iniuria, quoniam quaevis claritas generis Hamalis cedit et sicut ex vobis qui nascitur, origo senatoria nuncupatur, ita qui ex hac familia progreditur, regno dignissimus approbatur."

¹⁷⁰ Indeed, like Ennodius' panegyric in praise of Theoderic, Sidonius' panegyric in praise of Anthemius included an episode where its principal subject rescued the East from certain peril and refused the diadem, all for the ultimate benefit of the West. Ironically, however, Anthemius had saved the East from the very Ostrogoths that Theoderic's uncle, Valimer, was leading! For these campaigns, *Carmen* 2, ln. 223-306.

¹⁷¹ Theoderic seems to have adopted the praenomen Flavius in conjunction with his consulship of 484. See Wolfram (1988), 277. Wolfram also refers to Theoderic as "Flavius Amalus Theodericus," but the use of *tria nomina* by Theoderic does not seem to be attested, and "Hamalus" would seem more appropriate. The attempt of Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 65-7, to create a kind of honorary "Flaviate" for ex-consuls is unconvincing, especially since a number of non-consuls utilized this praenomen.

understood this problem first hand. He had originally gone by the un-Roman sounding name Tarasicodissa¹⁷² and was, in fact, an Isaurian, a member of a wild tribe from Asia Minor whose country had literally been walled-off from the Empire during the fourth century.¹⁷³ Isaurians were as much barbarians as Goths, and although Tarasicodissa, recast as the Roman Flavius Zeno, had married into the imperial family and had, like Anthemius and Theoderic, distinguished himself with a Roman career, the Basiliscus revolt had nonetheless been inspired, in part at least, by elite disapproval of an “Isaurian” emperor.¹⁷⁴ Zeno’s lot reiterates the fact that, even if “barbarians” like the Goths or Isaurians could find niches within the Roman Empire, memories of their prior antagonism survived and under the right conditions could become particularly divisive. The son of a known barbarian king and a barbarian king himself who at times opposed the eastern Empire, Theoderic therefore ran the risk of being perceived as a leader and orchestrator of specifically anti-Roman violence, a view that threatened to cast him as an Ostrogothic analogue to the Visigothic juggernaut, Euric.

But just as holding offices in the East might be interpreted by certain Italo-Romans as especially Roman or Greek depending on the context, or Greekness interpreted as complimentary or worthy of scorn, there was also a flipside to being of barbarian stock, particularly if royal. Indeed, a royal pedigree could serve to legitimize barbarians, especially in the West, where, in contrast to the East, senators prided themselves on their (doubtless often fictitious) descent from the noblest families of the late Republic and Principate, like the Scipiones and Gracchi.¹⁷⁵ The eastern senatorial aristocracy, of which Theoderic was understood to be a member, was much different, composed virtually *ex nihilo* in the middle of the fourth century from the prominent and not-so-prominent families of the region. Men of particularly low origins, sons of sausage-venders, for instance, rose through the administration here, eventually serving as

¹⁷² On the name and its other manifestations, *PLRE* 2, 1200-2 (“Fl. Zenon 7”).

¹⁷³ The *Limes Isauricus* was established in the fourth century after the Isaurians declared their independence from the Roman Empire. Isaurians continued to defy imperial rule into the sixth century. Cf. Shaw (1990) and Lenski (1999).

¹⁷⁴ For this, Bury (1958), vol.1, 389-90; Jones (1964), 224; and Lenski (1999), 427-8.

¹⁷⁵ See Jones (1964), 545-6, who writes that “it would be rash to deny that by adoptions or through the female line they may have been able to trace some tenuous link with the Republican nobility.” The extensive prosopographical study of Settapani (2000) attempts to do just this, though invention should not be ruled out either. Obviously such Republican families had never been “royal” in the same way as the Amals, but some, like the Anicii, had indeed held imperial power. For the Anicii as “princely,” see below.

consuls and siring houses that even included emperors.¹⁷⁶ So-called *novi homines* were thus typical in the East, but in the West a venerable lineage and “noble” birth continued to be exceedingly important, and men with claims to the most distinguished ancestries generally monopolized the highest offices of state.¹⁷⁷

Such veneration for noble ancestries could and often did permeate across ethnic boundaries, serving to assimilate all nobly pedigreed individuals into an elite clique. It allowed the Visigoth Athaulf to father through his Roman wife, Placidia, an heir to the Theodosian purple, aptly named Theodosius. It similarly validated before a western audience the marriage alliance struck between Ricimer and Anthemius, despite Anthemius’ later cries of foul play.¹⁷⁸ Delivering a panegyric in the city of Rome in 468, Sidonius, in fact, lauded this marriage, drawing specific attention to Ricimer’s impressive royal pedigree. The scion of two royal parents, one Gothic and the other Suevoic, “two kingdoms summoned Ricimer to rule,” allowing Anthemius to be “blessed through his son-in-law.”¹⁷⁹ Ricimer’s royalty was also correlated with the emperor’s own, Sidonius avowing to the new Augustus, “your maiden is royal, so too is my Ricimer: both glitter with nobility.”¹⁸⁰ These examples demonstrate the potential for nobility, and particularly a royal pedigree, to render acceptable in the minds of westerners an individual otherwise unacceptable owing to his perceived barbarian ancestry. Indeed, not only had Ricimer’s royal blood made him a virtual equal of Anthemius, but it had allowed him to become the representative of the West, a west-Roman, in a marriage alliance understood to strengthen the ties between both halves of the Empire.

Much like Ricimer, Theoderic’s royal lineage could also serve to legitimize him before certain Roman audiences. Rather than emphasizing his barbarian origins, it could complement his Greek education and illustrious career in the East, further demonstrating his authentic membership of the senatorial elite. Moreover, given the context of

¹⁷⁶ The most notorious example in the East is Philip, a notary and son of a sausage-seller, who was a progenitor of the house of Anthemius. See Jones (1964), 551.

¹⁷⁷ Jones (1964), 545-52, and Matthews (1975).

¹⁷⁸ For foul play, see chapter 1.

¹⁷⁹ For two kingdoms, *Carmen* 2, ln. 360-362: “Ricimerem / in regnum duo regna vocant; nam patre Suebus, / a genetrice Getes”; for blessed, idem, ln. 484: “sit socer Augustus genero Ricimere beatus.” In the former passage Sidonius contrasted the “double royalty” of Ricimer with the ignobility of the Vandal king Gaiseric, the current scourge of Rome, whom he depicted as a shameful bastard jealous of Ricimer’s nobility.

¹⁸⁰ *Carmen* 2, ln. 485-6: “nobilitate micant: est vobis regia virgo, / regius ille mihi.”

Theoderic's arrival, it could have certain restorative properties, returning dignity to the western Roman Empire by reestablishing the rule of an especially noble man. The absence of such a ruler had always troubled Rome's senators, but particularly those of the early sixth century, who believed that the stewardship of the Empire by exceedingly ignoble and ignorant men had contributed to its decline and decadence over the course of the fifth century.

The importance of Theoderic's royal descent for Ennodius (and by extension other Italo-Romans) has already been hinted in the above discussion of his panegyric's treatment of the usurpation of Basiliscus. Ennodius, it should be remembered, had proposed to the Romans in his audience that they "breeze through the histories" and "examine the annals," so that they might discover a time when a Roman emperor had been restored to his throne by "a born king."¹⁸¹ In his estimation the occurrence was unprecedented and Theoderic's status as a "born king" outstanding, in direct contrast to the very usurper, "unassociated by blood" to the imperial house, who had been put down. Later, in his discussion of Theoderic's consulship, Ennodius again turned to this royal descent, elaborating on its distinction. "When," he asked, "has such a man, begotten from kings renowned since the very infancy of the world, been chanced upon by a reader?"¹⁸² The question, of course, was loaded, anticipating a "never," while likewise highlighting the antiquity, so important to western Romans, of Theoderic's noble line. The eastern consul and later western *princeps* was more than just a born king; he was a

¹⁸¹ *PanTh* 13 (cited above). Admittedly, whether Ennodius ever recited his panegyric is unclear. See Rota (2002), 31-5. Regardless, given the highly stylized Latin and classical themes, a Roman or Roman-minded audience must be assumed.

¹⁸² *PanTh* 16: "Quando talis contigit sorte lectoris, qualem dedit ab ipsa mundi infantia regum examinata claritudo." This passage is difficult and has troubled previous translators. Here the reading of Vogel's *MGH* edition, "lectoris," has been accepted, rather than the suggested emendation of Rohr (1995), 206, "elocitoris," which was adopted by Rota (2002). The emendation finds no support in the MSS and does not seem entirely necessary. Both Rohr and Rota suggest a reading in which the election of a man like Theoderic to a consulship was a wonderful and unprecedented occurrence ("Wann wurde je durch eine Wahlentscheidung solch ein Konsul zuteil" and "Quando mai capitò in seguito al sorteggio di un elettore un tale console," respectively). But this seems problematic, since ordinary consuls were, as in Theoderic's case, appointed by emperors and thus not subject to an election (unless of course the elector here is merely the emperor). The translation provided above, which is a paraphrase, takes a cue from the earlier statement found in *PanTh* 13 (above), where Ennodius asks his audience to breeze through annals and histories for a figure like Theoderic. Similar to this, this passage now emphasizes the reader (lector) rather than the object being read, but the unprecedented nature of Theoderic's person is still the general gist. A more literal translation runs as follows: "When has such a man been produced before the lot of a reader, such as the renown of kings, tested from the very infancy of the world, produced."

king descended from kings famous from the beginning of time, a pedigree of duration unsurpassed in the West. Known members of Theoderic's family-tree were thus esteemed by all,¹⁸³ and their nobility, in fact, obliged their descendent to "nobly defend the deeds of his house," something that many descendents of illustrious families often failed to do.¹⁸⁴

This obligation, which accorded well with Roman aristocratic ideals about family honor, was one that the panegyric's Theoderic understood very well, commenting on it himself in a speech directed to his mother shortly before he joined battle with Odovacer. Here the king explained that he had to enter the conflict so that he might live up to his family name; but for Ennodius' purposes his words likewise demonstrated the laudable ancient Roman valor that the Amal line (and by extension its Goths) were understood to represent:

"Weapons must be employed, so that the glorious deeds of my ancestors do not perish on my account. In vain do we depend on our parents' glory, unless we sustain it with our own. My father stands before my eyes, a man whom fortune never mocked in battle. He acquired good fortune because his strength demanded victory. It is right for me to be compared to this leader, who was never afraid facing uncertainties, but brought success to himself."¹⁸⁵

Hoping to live up to the legacy of this glorious father, Theoderic next called for exceedingly fine robes, planning to adorn himself in such a way that he might stand out before all in battle. He avowed that these holy vestments' glimmer would make known who he was to those unable to tell from his vigor, inviting the eyes of those desirous to see the "honor of what I have put on."¹⁸⁶ The finery, therefore, would provide visual

¹⁸³ *PanTh* 17: "in tuo stemmate probati sunt qui reperti."

¹⁸⁴ *PanTh* 17: "vix paucos contigit degenerare nobiliter, cum familiae tuae debeas actus generis nobiliter custodire." *Actus generis* surely refers to the race/family of Theoderic and not the Goths in general. *Hamalorum gens* appears in contemporary sources, though Ennodius never mentions the Amals by name.

¹⁸⁵ *PanTh* 43: "telis agendum est, ut avorum per me decora non pereant. Sine causa parentum titulis nitimur, nisi propriis adiuvemur. Stat ante oculos meos genitor, de quo numquam fecit in certamine fortuna ludibrium, qui dextram sibi ipse peperit valitudine exigente successus. Hoc oportet duce contendere, qui omina incerta non timuit, sed ipse sibi secunda conscivit." Rota (2002), 206 and 339, suggests an emendation of *dextram* to *dextra*, making it an ablative of agency ("con il suo braccio"). While an interesting suggestion, it seems unnecessary, since *dextram* seems to imply *fortunam*.

¹⁸⁶ *PanTh* 44: "Qui me de impetu non cognoverit, aestimet de nitore. Invitet cupidorum oculos honor indumenti: pretiosior species feriendos exhibeat."

confirmation of the splendor already associated with his noble house, both glimmering in their own unique way.¹⁸⁷

Already in the first decade of the sixth century, then, Ennodius was associating Amal descent with Gothic victory and valor, but again, such ideals were not oppositional or ambivalent to Romanness; they were understood to be ancient Roman virtues necessary for the restoration of the western Empire.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, this episode suggested that the Amals (and by extension all the Goths) were *invictissimi*, most unconquered, an important attribute for Roman emperors and their soldiers which had been lost over the course of the fifth century through a process of feminization. The presence of Theoderic and his Goths, however, now changed this. Theoderic could rightly claim to his mother that the battlefield would “make known the gender of your son, since you begot a [real] man at the happy time of my birth.”¹⁸⁹ Such words clearly highlighted the *virtus* (manliness, courage, valor) that the Amals and their Goths both represented and restored to Italy. The Goths themselves were imagined as drawing inspiration from Theoderic and his noble house, claiming that their own invincibility in battle was derived from their *princeps*. Though “Gothic,” this collective *virtus* nonetheless served Roman ends, restoring “the Roman Empire to its former limits.”¹⁹⁰ Even in the context of the speech above, Theoderic’s filial *pietas* and courage ultimately existed for the “happy prosperity

¹⁸⁷ The link between “shininess” and nobility has already been demonstrated via Sidonius’ description of Anthemius’ daughter and Ricimer as “shining in their nobility” (see above). This terminology is ubiquitous in contemporary works and is likewise echoed in such noble titles as “*illustris*,” “*clarus*,” and “*spectabilis*.”

¹⁸⁸ See above. For a rather different interpretation, see Amory (1997), 67f., who sees the development of Amal-propaganda as a turn away from the “earlier” *civilitas* mantra, imagining it as largely oppositional or ambivalent to ideas of accommodation. Cf. Heather (2007), 45-8, who accepts Amory’s basic premise. But such conclusions seem misplaced given Ennodius’ own unabashed (and particularly early) praise for Theoderic’s royal lineage and its martial qualities. The nobility and courage that he associated with the Amal line was hardly intended to emphasize its non-Romanness.

¹⁸⁹ *PanTh* 43: “*scis... quod natalis mei tempore virum fecunda genuisti. Dies est, quo fili tui sexum campus adnuntiet.*”

¹⁹⁰ *PanTh* 65-69 provides a wonderful example of this. Here, in an epic battle against the hitherto unconquered Bulgars, Theoderic’s general Pizias is made to remind his soldiers that they fight on behalf of Theoderic’s fame, claiming (65), “*meministis, socii, cuius ad haec loca conmeastis imperio. Nemo absentes credat regis nostri oculos, pro cuius fama dimicandum est.*” The battle itself begins as a stalemate, but eventually the Goths overtake the Bulgars owing to recollections of their princeps (67: “*interea dum anceps esset fortuna certaminis et pinnatae mortes sibi aethera vindicarent, superavit nostri memoria principis, dum agerent, ut singulorum apud eum merita campus adsereret*”). Finally, the Goths are victorious, with the net result being the restoration of Sirmium to Italy’s Roman Empire (69: “*interea ad limitem suum Romana regna remearunt*”).

of the Republic,”¹⁹¹ while his sword, which decorated his side along with his fine robes, was described as “the defender of liberty.”¹⁹² And by this, of course, Ennodius meant Roman liberty.¹⁹³

Theoderic’s royal birth thus served two very important purposes within Ennodius’ panegyric. Its antiquity and fame validated his claims to rulership, much as its lack in his predecessors, immediate and not so immediate, had invalidated theirs. Secondly it evoked Theoderic’s Gothiness, but in a way complementary to his already recognizably noble and Roman qualities. The combination made him an ideal ruler in the West: pedigreed, cultured, and, most important given the military failures of the fifth century and their blow to Roman prestige, victorious. Royal birth, according to Ennodius, made Theoderic a king, but it was his valor and judgment that asserted it.¹⁹⁴ Likewise Theoderic’s noble pedigree won him approbation in Rome, but his conduct on behalf of the Republic demonstrated that he was truly “worthy to be joined among the emperors.”¹⁹⁵

Amal lineage had other functions beyond legitimizing Theoderic as a ruler through its venerability and reiteration of Gotho-Roman victory ideologies. In the *Variae* it could also demonstrate Theoderic and his family’s authentic Romanness, particularly, but not exclusively, before non-Roman audiences.¹⁹⁶ Though already uniquely Roman

¹⁹¹ *PanTh* 40: “et tamen candida reipublicae fortuna perurgebat, ne coepto desisteres.” The passage directly precedes Theoderic’s speech to his mother, where he calls for noble finery and invokes the image of his father.

¹⁹² *PanTh* 42: “dum lateri tuo vindex libertatis gladius aptaretur...” The term “vindex libertatis” cast Theoderic as a restorer of the Republic. See Béranger (1953), 64-7, and Walser (1955).

¹⁹³ On *libertas* and its specific association with Romanness, see Dauge (1981), 534-7; Moorhead (1987); and Barnish (2003), 21-2.

¹⁹⁴ *PanTh* 88: “origo te quidem dedit dominum, sed virtus adseruit. Sceptra tibi conciliavit splendor generis, cuius si deessent insignia, eligi te in principem mens fecisset.” Cf. Reydellet (1981), 165f., who seems to go too far in differentiating *reges Italiae* from *principes Romani* (particularly in his assessment of Ennodius’ *opera*). In the passage cited above, for instance, Ennodius does not even use the term *rex*, employing the more “imperial” *dominus* and *princeps* instead.

¹⁹⁵ *PanTh* 18: “ego tibi, quod admirationem vincat, oppono principem meum it ortum, ut eum non liceat improbari, ita agere, quasi inter imperatores adhuc precetur adiungi.” Ennodius may have intended the phrase “joined among the emperors” to hint at Theoderic’s imperial standing, though the context of this passage (Theoderic’s consulship and rescue of the eastern Empire) may suggest an interpretation more along the lines of “wishing to serve/be in the company of the emperors.”

¹⁹⁶ There is, again, no need to see an ideological/propagandistic shift in the later reign of Theoderic, as suggested by Amory and others (see above), particularly since (contra Amory) there are no letters penned in the name of Theoderic that explicitly conform to this model. Indeed, only three of Theoderic’s letters reference the Amals, and these, as demonstrated below, emphasize their *Roman* qualities, not Gothic ones. The connection between valor and the Amals in the *Variae* is a development that appears to post-date

through Theoderic's eastern pedigree and offices, this royal dynasty was increasingly transformed into an imperial one that endeavored to live up to the standards of being truly purple-clad. Amals became custodians, not only of the Roman Empire, but of its virtues. They could represent Romanness incarnate, and serve as beacons to everyone of proper and upstanding conduct.

Theoderic himself rarely emphasized his pedigree in the *Variae*, but when he did, it tended to link the Amals with the civilizing role that he had adopted as *princeps* of the West, stressing both the Romanness of his realm and the righteous and thoroughly Roman position he had assumed as its ruler.¹⁹⁷ He claimed to the Thuringian king Herminafid, for instance, that his new Amal bride, a niece named Amalaberga, would cause his royalty to glitter all the more brightly “with the fame of Amal blood.”¹⁹⁸ “Fortunate Thuringia,” Herminafid was informed, would possess “what Italy has reared: a woman learned in letters, refined in her proper behavior, glorious not just in her lineage, but also in her feminine dignity.”¹⁹⁹ To be sure, Theoderic had not specifically used the term “Roman” to describe these qualities, but the link between Italy and Romanness was obvious, just as learning and upstanding behavior were a mark of Roman civilization. Amalaberga was glorious, then, not simply because she was royal, but because she was a royal Roman; her specifically Roman splendor, the mark of an Amal bride, would hence allow Thuringian royalty, itself already brilliant as a function of being royal, to shine even more brilliantly. Moreover, Thuringia would also become more civilized in the process,²⁰⁰ allowing Amalaberga to function much like the cithara and citharist sent to Clovis, or the water-clock sent to Gundobad. All these “gifts” asserted a link between the Amals and *Romanitas* and likewise served to ferry the light of Roman civilization to

Theoderic, but it too is a reiteration of the very Roman role of “Gothicness” in Italy, a replay of the sentiments expressed by Ennodius in his panegyric (see above).

¹⁹⁷ See Amory (1997), 62-72, for a different interpretation.

¹⁹⁸ *Variae* 4.1.1: “ut qui de regia stirpe descenditis, nunc etiam longius claritate Hamali sanguinis fulgeatis.”

¹⁹⁹ *Variae* 4.1.2: “Habebit felix Thoringia quod nutritiv Italia, litteris doctam, moribus eruditam, decoram non solum genere, quantum et feminea dignitate...”

²⁰⁰ Ibid: “...ut non minus patria vestra [i.e. Thuringia] istius splendeat moribus quam suis triumphis.” This statement makes it clear that Thuringia, like any barbarian country, might be admired for its physical strength and prowess in war (*triumphiis*), but that it lacked Roman refinement (*moribus*) in the eyes of Italo-Romans.

traditionally barbarous peoples. An Amal bride, in other words, was as much a gift and statement of Roman superiority as any other trapping of Roman civilization.

The same can be said of Theoderic's sister, Amalafrika, who was intended to complement and ultimately improve upon the noble qualities of another barbarian house, in this case that of the Vandal king Thrasamund. Amalafrika was said to be a "unique source of celebration for the Amal race" and described as "a woman equal to your [i.e. Thrasamund's] prudence, who is not just worthy of reverence in your kingdom but can also be wonderful in her advice."²⁰¹ Again, though Romanness was not explicitly mentioned and Italy, its point of reference in the above example, is absent, the link between the Amals and Roman civilization is nevertheless clear.²⁰² Prudence and good counsel, with their obvious connection to rationality and dependability, were Roman virtues that existed in glaring opposition to stereotypically irrational and undependable barbarians.²⁰³ Such irrationality was at the very core of what had traditionally defined barbarism, and its presence even had the potential, as demonstrated in an earlier chapter, to transform an otherwise Roman emperor into an irate and immoderate savage.

Thrasamund, however, was recognizably civilized according to this letter, praised for having already obtained prudence and in proportions equal to his laudable Amal wife. On a superficial examination, then, it would seem that this Amal bride was only worthy of reverence because of her illustrious lineage and simply served as a proper match for the Vandal king, rather than as a source of improvement.²⁰⁴ But one can nevertheless detect the same subtle mix of compliment and condescension here as in the other "gift"

²⁰¹ *Variae* 5.43.1: "... germanam nostram, generis Hamali singulare praeconium, vestrum fecimus esse coniugium: feminam prudentiae vestrae parem, quae non tantum reverenda regno, quantum mirabilis possit esse consilio."

²⁰² Amory (1997), 65, does not make the connection. Instead he interprets this letter as a personal missive between kings bound through marital kinship. Letters like this, he suggests, appear to challenge the "civilitas" ideal—"mention[ing] neither Italy, nor the Romans, nor, indeed, the Goths." The Romanness, however, is implicit, while the marital kinship is merely a secondary theme which does not negate Amal claims to Roman cultural superiority.

²⁰³ Terms like *perfiditas*, *nimia fiducia*, *insania*, *inconstantia*, *furor*, *levitas* (and so forth) were hence consistently used to denigrate barbarians. See Dauge (1981), 176-177, and Heather (1999), 237-8. Such associations were inversions of typically Roman virtues like *pietas*, *fides*, *concordia*, *disciplina*, *prudentia*, *clementia* (and so forth).

²⁰⁴ Indeed, the language here almost makes it sound as if it is the Amal bride who needs to meet the high standards of her Vandal husband. But, considering the Roman understanding of women as naturally weak and mentally unstable (*levitas et infirmitas sexus*), the likening of Thrasamund's prudence to that of a woman may not have been complimentary at all. By implication he was only the equal of an Amal woman, not an Amal man. This may be reading far too much into the passage, however.

letters to barbarian kings. Gundobad had also been commended for his prudence and even hailed for helping Burgundy put down her “barbarous ways,”²⁰⁵ yet, as already seen, the Burgundians still functioned as traditionally savage barbarians who required Theoderic’s (and Rome’s) civilizing assistance in the form of a water-clock. Similarly, Amalafriada had been intended to pacify the Vandal kingdom, her prudence and good advice aiding the king and his people in their aspiration towards Roman rationalism.

It was altogether shocking to Theoderic, therefore, that Thrasamund had made a completely irrational and stultifying decision (the real crux of this letter), choosing to lend aid to a known rival and enemy of his brother-in-law, the Visigoth Gesalec.²⁰⁶ To be sure, the insult was personal,²⁰⁷ particularly because Thrasamund’s marriage to Amalafriada had entailed certain political obligations that appeared to have been violated by the Vandal’s actions. But it was equally outrageous because the gift itself, Amalafriada, and the benefits she conferred, prudence and good counsel, should have prevented such a bad policy from having been enacted.²⁰⁸ Indeed, like Gundobad’s clock, Clovis’ citharist, or Herminafriada’s equally Romanized bride Amalaberga, Amalafriada was supposed to be a beacon of Roman civilization, here of Roman prudence, but Thrasamund had simply not seen the light. Theoderic’s hostile indignation would have to force him to yield, instead, earning Thrasamund praise, when he did, as the “most prudent of kings,” a man who demonstrates that “the wise can rescue [bad] decisions,” and who does “not favor the vice of obstinacy, which seems to befall irrational men.”²⁰⁹ Once more Theoderic showered Roman praises upon a “traditional” barbarian, but again insinuated important links between himself, his family, and such praises: Amalafriada, a

²⁰⁵ *Variae* 1.46.2: “discat sub vobis Burgundia res subtilissimas inspicere et antiquorum inventa laudare: per vos propositum gentile deponit...” See above.

²⁰⁶ For the context, see chapter 5.

²⁰⁷ See Amory (1997), 65, who claims that the use of the first person singular (*ego*) in this letter, rather than the usual first person plural (*nos*), suggests that Thrasamund’s actions were taken as a personal affront. This seems fair, though it should be pointed out that Theoderic actually slips in and out of the singular and plural in this letter and that Thrasamund himself is consistently referred to in the second person plural (*vos*). In general, the letter has a tone of betrayal, perhaps an attempt to “shame” Thrasamund into submission.

²⁰⁸ *Variae* 5.43.2: “sed stupeo vos his beneficiis obligatos Gesalecum, qui nostris inimicis, ...in vestram defensionem sic fuisse susceptum.” *Beneficiis* surely means multiple benefits, despite the tendency in later authors to use the plural for the singular.

²⁰⁹ *Variae* 5.44.1: “ostendisti, prudentissime regum, post erroris eventum sapientibus subvenire posse consilium nec pertinaciae vitium vos amare, quod brutis hominibus videtur accidere.” *Bruti homines* is virtually a synonym for *barbari homines*.

prudent giver of advice, had doubtless figured among those *sapientes* (wise individuals) imagined to have changed Thrasamund's mind.

The link between Amal lineage and Roman virtues could also be expressed in Italy, both in Theoderic's lifetime and after his death. In a letter addressed to his cousin Theodahad, who would later succeed to the throne, Theoderic upbraided him for being accused of having wrongfully dispossessed a Roman nobleman of his land. Describing avarice as the root of all evil, Theoderic asserted, "It is not right for a man of Amal blood to make known his desire, since his race has the appearance of being purple-colored."²¹⁰ He reminded Theodahad that he needed to "shine with the splendor of [his] race [i.e. the Amals]" and that noblemen in general were supposed to live their lives according to the tenets of *civilitas*.²¹¹ Theodahad, then, was supposed to behave like the dignified nobleman his Amal lineage marked him out to be, acting as a model for that obedience to and defense of the laws that allowed all Goths to be considered neo-Romans.²¹² Nor were such obligations restricted to direct members of the Amal clan, or even to Goths for that matter. The ex-consul Maximus, for instance, a member of the Anicii clan of Rome, married into the Amal family during the reign of Theodahad, thus uniting the purple-clad royalty of the Amals with an ancient Roman house "equal almost to emperors," "praised by the whole world," and "truly called noble."²¹³ Because of this glorious union, Maximus was also admonished to pay more attention to his virtues: "Let your mild

²¹⁰ *Variae* 4.39.1: "avaritiam siquidem radicem esse omnium malorum et lectio divina testatur"; *Variae* 4.39.2: "Hamali sanguinis virum non decet vulgare desiderium, quia genus suum conspicit esse purpuratum."

²¹¹ *Variae* 4.39.4: "Sed quia de vobis non patimur diutius obscura iactari, qui generis claritate fulgetis, praesenti auctoritate censemus, ut imminente Duda saione nostro." The reference in this letter to Amal blood and its "purple-colored" nature (see above) seems to indicate that the *genus* in question was the Amals and not the Goths in general. For nobles and *civilitas*, *Variae* 4.39.5: "generosos quippe viros omnia convenit sub moderata civilitate peragere, quia tantum potentibus laesionis crescit invidia, quantum premi posse creditur, qui fortuna inferior comprobatur." This reference to *civilitas* demonstrates nicely the link imagined to have existed between the Amals (in general) and this ideology. Contra Amory (1997), 67f.

²¹² Indeed, when Theodahad became king he too stressed the importance of civilized behavior in a letter to one of his *homines*. See *Variae* 10.5, where Theodahad's *homo*, Theodosius, is instructed to ensure that members of Theodahad's private household obey the laws, since their behavior reflects upon his royal person. He claimed that he changed his own (nefarious) ways upon assuming his new, royal office (10.5.2: "mutavimus cum dignitate propositum").

²¹³ *Variae* 10.11.2: "Anicios quidem paene principibus pares aetas prisca progenuit"; *Variae* 10.12.2: "neque enim fas est humile dici quod gerit Anicius: familia toto orbe praedicata, quae vere dicitur nobilis..." In fact, an Anicii, Anicius Olybrius, had been emperor in the late fifth century, and his daughter had even been offered to Theoderic in marriage (see above). For Olybrius, *PLRE* 2, 796-8 ("Anicius Olybrius 6").

association be available to all... humbly attend to the business of your glory, since praise is obtained from modesty... cherish more than the other virtues patience, dear to the wise... conquer your wrath; delight in kindness.”²¹⁴ Mildness, humility, modesty, patience, self-control, kindness: such qualities were clearly antithetical to barbarism and were intrinsically linked to the ideology of Roman emperorship espoused by Theoderic (and, as this example demonstrates, his successors).²¹⁵

To be associated with the Amals, then, even if already resplendent in one’s own proudly Roman (or barbarian) lineage, meant taking on Amal qualities and thus behaving like a virtuous Roman. This, in part, had been why Theoderic had been so shocked when Thrasamund failed to behave according to the expected prudence that should have been acquired through an Amal bride. More than a decade later, Theoderic’s nephew was reiterating the same basic idea, only now to a member of one of the noblest families in Rome. Theodahad, in fact, summed up the obligation that came with Amal blood quite nicely, claiming to Maximus, “Joined now to our family, you will be thought nearest to our glorious deeds. Hitherto your family has been praised, but they were not adorned with so great a union.”²¹⁶ Indeed, whether Roman, Goth, or other, attachment to the Amals, who were truly purple-clad, was the paramount of honors.²¹⁷

Moreover, as time progressed, even the most “Gothic” of the Amals, the very progenitors of the Amal clan, could take on these same Roman virtues, granting further legitimacy and Romanness to Theoderic and his kin. Cassiodorus’ lost Gothic history, it seems, provides an excellent example of this, despite the availability of alternative interpretations.²¹⁸ While, again, the contents of this history and even its date of

²¹⁴ *Variae* 10.11.4-5: “considera quid merueris et dignum te nostra affinitate tractabis. ...nunc maior opera mansuetudini detur: nunc omnibus communitio benigna praebeatur.... ...humilis age rem gloriae, quia de modestia laus sumitur... ...Supra ceteras virtutes amicam sapientibus ama patientiam. ...Iram vince: benigna dilige.”

²¹⁵ For these qualities as antithetic, Dauge (1981), 428-40, and Heather (1999), 436-8.

²¹⁶ *Variae* 10.11.5: “qui nostro iungeris generi, proximus gloriosis actionibus comproberis. Laudati sunt quidem hactenus parentes tui, sed tanta non sunt coniunctione decorati.”

²¹⁷ *Ibid*: “nobilitas tua non est ultra quo crescat.” This letter and some of the other letters discussed so far demonstrate the extreme nobility claimed by the Amals, which conferred unsurpassable dignity even to those already exceedingly noble through marriage alliances. Other letters in the *Variae*, which also concern Amal marriage ties, also demonstrate the hyper-ennobling power of an Amal union. See *Variae* 8.9 and 8.10 (on Tuluin) and 9.1 (to Hilderic of the Vandals concerning the “murder” of Amalafriada).

²¹⁸ See below.

composition are unclear,²¹⁹ letters in the *Variae* provide important clues as to its purpose and intended message. When Cassiodorus was appointed Praetorian Prefect of Italy in 533, for instance, he penned a letter to the Senate in the name of King Athalaric, which announced his appointment and provided a rather interesting report of his achievements. Noteworthy among these was his lost history, its inclusion doubtless a reflection of both Cassiodorus' and Athalaric's (i.e. the official) estimation of the work. From the description that follows, it becomes abundantly clear that this history was prized foremost for its thorough investigation of specifically Amal history. It proved the extreme antiquity, so valued by western Romans, of the Amal dynasty and suggested that its ancientness was somehow complementary to Romanness and a source of honor for Romans. Cassiodorus, it was said, had "led out the kings of the Goths, obscured by long oblivion, from the hiding place of antiquity."²²⁰ He restored to them the forgotten "splendor of their house," and demonstrated that Athalaric himself was the seventeenth in a line of Amal kings.²²¹ He thus made "a Gothic origin into Roman history," a sentence that has troubled scholars, but perhaps would be best understood as meaning that he wrote an Amal-centered history that ultimately became Roman through this family's attainment of the *imperium* in the West.²²² The letter's description closed with a direct address to the Senate in which Athalaric asked its members to reflect on this work's specific value to them: "Consider how much he [i.e. Cassiodorus] valued you [i.e.

²¹⁹ The scholarship regarding the nature of Cassiodorus' lost history and its relationship with Jordanes' *Getica* is vast and, moreover, largely a minefield of baseless conjecture. See, among numerous others, Momigliano (1955); O'Donnell (1979), 43-54 and (1982); Goffart (1988), 20f., and (2006), 56f.; Barnish (1984); Croke (1987); Heather (1989); and Søby Christensen (2002). For my part I find the general conclusions of Goffart most convincing.

²²⁰ *Variae* 9.25.4: "iste reges Gothorum longa oblivione celatos latibulo vetustatis eduxit."

²²¹ *Variae* 9.25.4: "iste Hamalos cum generis sui claritate restituit, evidenter ostendens in septimam decimam progeniem stirpem nos habere regalem."

²²² *Variae* 9.25.5: "originem Gothicam historiam fecit esse Romanum." The same theme is featured, albeit in a very cursory manner, in Cassiodorus' earlier chronicle. For this, see chapter 1. Despite the fact that Wolfram (1988) refers to Cassiodorus' lost history as the *Origo Gothica* throughout, *Variae* 9.25.5 neither suggests that Cassiodorus' history was some sort of *Origo Gentis Gothorum* nor explicitly entitles this history as the *Origo Gothica*. Cf. Goffart (2006), 58f. Indeed, considering the fact that Cassiodorus' own description of this work is entirely Amal-centered (see below), it would seem reasonable to assume that *origo* means "family origin" and *Gothica* is simply a reference to the Amals (who are, after all, a Gothic family). The suggestion of Goffart (1988), 35-8, that the lost history contained serial biographies of Amal rulers along the lines of the *Kaisergeschichte* does, in fact, fit with such an interpretation. There seems no reason, therefore, to dismiss Goffart's interpretation as insufficient, as does Amory (1997), 68, fn. 117, particularly since such biographies were largely histories of a particular period framed around a particular reign (rather than simply biographical sketches).

senators] by praising us [i.e. Athalaric/Amals]; he showed that the family of your *princeps* was wonderful from antiquity, so that, just as you have always been thought noble through your ancestors, an ancient race of kings might thus rule you.”²²³ The antiquity of the Amal line, therefore, was intended to harmonize with that of Rome’s venerable senators, while rendering their emperor, the *princeps* Athalaric, worthy of ruling as such, *imperare*.

Such an understanding of Cassiodorus’ history seems at odds with modern attempts to connect this work with a late Theoderican shift in ideology that stressed Amal and Gothic exceptionalism at the expense of (presumably) earlier ideas of Romanness and *civilitas*.²²⁴ Obviously there is little material with which to provide a complete reconstruction, but the above description of the history’s contents and relevance suggests that the work framed Amal history in such a way that it would have been amenable to an elite Roman audience and no doubt intended for one.²²⁵ Such an audience would not have been receptive to ideas of Gothic exclusivity that devalued their Romanness, nor would it have been particularly prudent for Cassiodorus to praise an *opus* like this (or, rather, be praised for writing it) before the proudly Roman Senate. Indeed, the history was supposed to be a great honor for Cassiodorus, not just at court in Ravenna but in Rome, and Rome’s senators themselves were supposed to be glorified by its contents. This was surely a “Roman” history, then, not just because it terminated with a Roman empire ruled by a long line of Gothic kings, but also because it was Roman in essence. It proved to the Romans that the Amals, despite being Goths and sometimes enemies of the Empire, could be admirable and even “wondrous” in those virtues that they themselves valued and understood to be Roman. This, in turn, helped to render the Amals worthy, perhaps even predestined, to take up the reins of Roman governance, reinvigorating and restoring the Empire. Such a history would have been remarkably similar to Ennodius’ panegyric, which for all intents and purposes transformed a potentially Gothic king into a

²²³ *Variae* 9.25.6: “perpendite, quantum vos in nostra laude dilexerit, qui vestri principis nationem docuit ab antiquitate mirabilem, ut sicut fuistis a moribus vestris semper nobiles aestimati, ita vobis antiqua regum progenies inperaret.” Though *natio* might better be translated as “nation/race,” as a synonym for *gens*, it seems to refer to the Amals, who are again central to Cassiodorus’ point.

²²⁴ See fn. 188 with fn. 196 (above).

²²⁵ Such an elite Roman audience would have been poly-ethnic, however, including Roman Goths. See also the critique in chapter 4 of the attempt to connect Cassiodorus’ history with a Spanish/Visigothic audience. Such an audience would seem irrelevant given Cassiodorus’ comments.

Roman *princeps* steeped in Roman values, abounding in imperial virtues, and bound to save the West from its decadence.²²⁶ Cassiodorus thus reinterpreted Amal kings in the same way that Goths and, more importantly, royal Goths like Theoderic had already been reinterpreted; they too were old Romans or at least Romans in the making.²²⁷

This hypothetical reconstruction of the nature and theme of Cassiodorus' lost history not only accords well with the understanding of Theoderic and his Goths found in the sources discussed throughout this chapter, but also finds support in another letter from the *Variae* collection. Here, in a context similar to the one above, Cassiodorus himself addressed the Senate, using the opportunity to provide an encomium on Amalasuatha, Athalaric's mother and acting regent. This was the same laudation in which Cassiodorus compared Amalasuatha's regency to Placidia's, the contrast placing the Amals within a succession of Roman emperors and demonstrating the perceived glory of modern times.²²⁸ Yet Cassiodorus also appeared to draw deeply from the Gothic past in his eulogy, comparing Amalasuatha to her Amal ancestors and, in doing so, hinting at what had made them "a wonder from ancient times." To be sure, these Amals had barbaric sounding names, perhaps explaining why modern scholars tend to interpret this passage as reflective of an un-Roman, Gothic past;²²⁹ but the audience, once more, was the Roman Senate, and the purpose of these references was to praise Amalasuatha in *its* midst.

²²⁶ And indeed, in Ennodius' panegyric Theoderic's Amal past had provided him with the *virtus* necessary to do so.

²²⁷ See chapter 1 for Cassiodorus' own understanding of fifth-century decline and decadence. The theme is present in his *Variae*, chronicle, and oration of 514 (cited in chapter 4 and 5), and hence suggests that it would have been present, if not central, in his treatment of Theoderic in his lost Amal-centered history. Such a theme, however, is absent from Jordanes' *Getica*, a work that ultimately sees Gothic rule in the West as a mistake corrected by Justinian's reconquest. Cf. Goffart (1988), 62f., and (2006), 67-71.

²²⁸ See chapter 1.

²²⁹ Indeed, this passage is generally interpreted as an example of the authentic, non-Roman (and specifically Gothic) past of the Amals. Cf. Amory (1997), 67-8. Such an interpretation rests largely on the assumptions that Cassiodorus' history contained "authentically" Gothic material along the lines of Jordanes' *Getica* (a work whose own authenticity and meaning is far from clear) and that this material was somehow oppositional to Romanness. Hence, kings with clearly un-Roman names are assumed to be indicative of "un-Romanness," a problematic position given that many individuals with un-Roman names, including Theoderic and his immediate kin, were not excluded from Romanness (in Italy at any rate) by virtue of their names. More importantly, such a reading of Cassiodorus' history is overly naïve, denying him the flexibility and will to manipulate and even invent history for whatever purposes he or his literary patron deemed fit. In short, there was absolutely no need for this passage, or Cassiodorus' history for that matter, to be authentically anything.

Reiterating the venerability of Amalasuetha's house, Cassiodorus listed nine generations of Amal kings and associated each king with a virtue that clearly had nothing to do with their Gothicism; rather, their collective virtues recommended them as civilized rulers, as precursors to the very Roman family of Theoderic. "If that royal band of her relatives were to behold her," Cassiodorus asserted, "it would see its fame reflected as if in the purest mirror."²³⁰ Amal, he claimed, was famous for his good fortune (*felicitate*), Ostrogotha his patience (*patientia*), Athala his mildness (*mansuetudine*), Winitar his equity (*aequitate*), Hunimund his handsomeness (*forma*), Thorismuth his chastity (*castitate*), Walamer his faith (*fide*), Theudimer his piety (*pietate*), and her father, Theoderic, as the senators already knew well, his wisdom (*sapientia*).²³¹ These were all noble Roman virtues²³² and a source of glory for the Amal house not just in contemporary times, but all the way back to this family's very namesake, Amal. Surely this is exactly what Cassiodorus had in mind when he claimed he had made a Gothic origin into Roman history.

Amal blood, both in the case of Theoderic and his successors, therefore, could be especially useful for Theoderic and his successors because of the many ways that it could be manipulated and interpreted by men like Ennodius and Cassiodorus. The fact that it was royal, in general, could be outstanding, while its antiquity, onto which Cassiodorus' historical undertaking shed new light, was especially potent in the West, where senators prided themselves on their own venerable lineages and had been receptive to pedigreed outsiders in the past. Amals were more than just a long line of kings, however; they had internalized virtues that many claimed would have made them famous even if they lacked their noble lineage. These were qualities that first worked against an understanding of Theoderic as a barbarian, aiding in his acceptance as an elite Roman statesman, and later extended to his successors and *even* predecessors. Amals were Roman princes, even when they were Gothic kings. Amal descent, then, not only played a role in granting

²³⁰ *Variae* 11.1.19: "hanc si parentum cohors illa regalis aspiceret, tamquam in speculum purissimum sua praeconia mox videret."

²³¹ *Ibid*: "enituit enim Hamalus felicitate, Ostrogotha patientia, Athala mansuetudine, Vuinitarius aequitate, Unimundus forma, Thorismuth castitate, Vualamer fide, Theudimer pietate, sapientia, ut iam vidistis, inclitus pater."

²³² Moreover, they were *imperial* virtues regularly eulogized in panegyric. See Menander Rhetor, *Peri Epideiktikon* with Nixon and Rodgers (1994), 10-14, and Rota (2002), 82-100. Cf. Charlesworth (1937), 113f.

legitimacy to Theoderic's principate, but also became an underlying reason for how he had been able to restore the western Empire. His bloodline granted him the *virtus* of famous Gothic kings, valor which would come to Italy's rescue; it likewise bestowed upon him and his successors a sense of obligation to live and rule according to Amal standards, behaving in a way, in fact, which further demonstrated their commitment to sweet *civilitas* and an internalization of Romanness.

A bit of a mustache and longish hair were of little consequence, then. Goths were Romans, and Theoderic and his family the most Roman of all.

Chapter 4

Italia Felix

Blessedness Restored

Theoderic and his Goths, we have seen, could fit within the Roman Empire, not just as slaves or servants of the emperor, but as its primary leaders and principal defenders. Many of the developments of the later Empire, but especially of the fifth century, had made this possible, and now these acceptably, and even admirably Roman Goths had allowed for a kind of Republican renaissance to emerge. In Theoderic, Rome again had a noble and outwardly imperial *princeps*; the Goths, law-abiding and valorous warriors, likewise reinvigorated her, threatening old adversaries and protecting the Roman heartland (Italy), wrapped as they were in their Roman togas. But while the clothes and reputations of Italy's newest residents could help to spur on ideologies of imperial restoration, these factors were not the sole causes for the resounding adulation of this era, but rather a complementary facet. Indeed, contemporary understandings of restoration rested on more than just the idea that Italy was once again secure and ruled by its own Republican-style emperor. Proudly and outwardly imperial, Julius Nepos himself had managed to secure Italy's safety, if for a limited time, yet the condition of his Republic (*status reipublicae*), reduced to a mere "Empire of Italy," remained in despair and persisted in this shoddy state well into the reign of Odovacer. Italy, therefore, required greater changes than simply the return of Romulus Augustus' palatial ornaments and the arrival of another "Greek" emperor to wear them. These events had been of great significance to be sure, but they did not wipe away the memory of manifold fifth-century catastrophes or turn back the clock to a long departed era of Roman *felicitas*. For this to occur perceivable results and positive alterations were necessary and likewise quite important. They had the power to stamp Theoderic and his Goths with the ultimate seal of Italo-Roman approval and to make sentiments of a golden age more than just the

product of wishful thinking or empty rhetoric. Indeed, highly rhetorical though the act itself may have been, by early 507 Ennodius was literally hailing the restored *status reipublicae*,¹ while soon thereafter Cassiodorus was asserting before the Senate that “ancient blessedness” had been restored to his era.² There were good reasons for Italo-Romans to make such claims, and why this was the case will be the subject of this and the following chapter.

Liguria Caput Mundi

The first chapter of this dissertation drew attention to the prominent role given to Liguria in Ennodius’ *Life of Epiphanius*. It was through the eyes of Ligurians, it should be remembered, that the Goth Ricimer had been seen as a noble Roman protector and likewise through the very same eyes that the emperor Anthemius had seemed more an enraged Galatian and Greekling than the proud Roman he claimed to be. Moreover, in the time of Nepos, it had been the province of Liguria which appeared destined to be conquered by the rapacious barbarian Euric, and it had been to the nobles of this province (the *lumina Liguriaie*) that this emperor had turned, hoping to establish peace and thus restore the faltering state of his Republic. Ennodius’ hagiographical work even presented the very “fall” of the western Empire (or, better, lack thereof) in a rather Liguro-centric fashion. The civil war between Odovacer and Orestes was described in terms of its specifically negative effects on the city of Pavia, while the peace and recovery that followed rendered Odovacer an improvement of sorts over a number of his predecessors.

This Liguro-centric nature of the *Life of Epiphanius*, therefore, provides a useful model for understanding the way in which contemporary Italo-Romans thought about their world, suggesting that, for those hailing from Liguria, this province was of paramount importance. Rome could be the *ideological* head of the world for all Romans, but ideology aside, this province was home to men like Ennodius, and what happened here, of necessity, trumped developments elsewhere. Liguria, or simply a Ligurian city like Pavia or Milan, was for Liguro-Romans the *real* center of the universe. Nor should such an understanding be seen as unique to the inhabitants of this province. Throughout

¹ *PanTh* 5: *salve status reipublicae*.

² *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 466, ln. 17-18: “ad saecula nostra an- / tiqua beatitudo revertitur”

the Empire, in fact, individual loyalties mirrored those found in the *Life of Epiphanius* and were regularly predicated on a particular locale, often (though not always) centered on a specific city. Province by province and city by city, Romans formed their varying opinions of the state of the Empire and its rulers largely on the basis of those developments in their midst. As a consequence, just as emperors who neglected the city of Rome could earn the distrust and disapproval of the Romans residing in the Eternal City, so too could those neglecting Pavia or Milan lose the support of certain Liguro-Romans. Indeed, the earlier discussion of the *Life of Epiphanius* has already borne this out in the cases of Anthemius, Nepos, and Odovacer, all rulers who met with approval or disapproval based to a great degree on the relationships that they cultivated with Ennodius' Ligurian *patria*.

The fate of Liguria, to put it plainly, mattered for Ligurians, just as the fate of Aemilia or Latium mattered for those living there. And though Liguria was the *caput mundi* only for a limited number of Italians, the extensively Liguro-centric nature of the Ennodian corpus, and especially the *Life of Epiphanius*, allows much to be said about this region, providing a valuable case-study for the perceived impact of Theoderic and his Goths at a local level. Life in this province, as already seen, had been affected by the manifold disappointments and disasters of the fifth century, and Theoderic and his Goths had inherited this legacy of imperial failure when they arrived in 489. Moreover, though conditions in Liguria had improved to some degree under the peaceful reign of Odovacer, the advent of the Ostrogoths had ushered in yet another series of disastrous civil wars, centering on the north, lasting for years, and leading to further devastation in the region. The situation had thus returned to its normal (and depressing) fifth-century state, and Theoderic himself, though a supposed liberator sent in the name of a Roman emperor, had been largely responsible.

Rejection in Liguria, and by implication throughout Italy, was thus a very possible outcome of a Theoderican victory. Yet as a continued discussion of the *Life of Epiphanius* will now suggest, it would be Theoderic's exceptional benefaction and compassion, both during these wars and in their immediate aftermath, that would ultimately win for him Ligurian approval. In fact, though Ennodius would terminate his account with the year 496, the year before Theoderic's official recognition in

Constantinople, such benevolence would continue to define his reign, sowing in the hearts of those who benefited most sentiments of renewal and a golden age. Theoderic would cultivate meaningful and beneficial relationships with a number of communities within his Roman Empire, and their transformation under his stewardship would render him not simply a Roman emperor but, in the minds of those looking on in astonishment, one of the good ones.

Epiphanius and the Bonus Imperator

Again, the *Life of Epiphanius* provides many incidental details regarding the perceived condition of the Empire and its rulers during the life of its principal subject, bishop Epiphanius of Pavia. In chapter one, the discussion of these details terminated with the reign of Odovacer, at roughly the mid-point of Ennodius' narrative. Here Odovacer had at first appeared as a benevolent ruler, granting Liguria a five-year exemption from taxation and later providing speedy assistance during the corrupt prefecture of Pelagius. Italy seemed to enjoy a period of calm heretofore absent in the account, yet Odovacer's kind assistance had required frantic embassies on the part of the story's hero, Epiphanius, and these occurrences hinted at a lack of attentiveness and concern on the part of the ruler of Italy (shortcomings echoed in other sources). Such qualities, the concluding sentence of this episode makes quite clear, soon came to define Odovacer's reign. The number of embassies, according to Ennodius, became excessive in the lead-up to Theoderic's arrival, and Epiphanius himself had been forced to become increasingly vehement in his demands.³ Though regularly redeemed through Odovacer's assistance, Liguria and her inhabitants were just as frequently placed in peril through his negligence. It was partially for this reason, therefore, that Ennodius described Theoderic's coming as an act of heavenly dispensation.⁴ God had not only approved of Theoderic as ruler, but more important still, had shown mercy to Liguria in deciding to send him.

³ VE 109: "Post multas tamen quas apud Odovacrem regem legationes violentia supplicationis exegit..." But cf. Cesa (1988), 182, who suggests that this "violenta supplicationis" refers to the general "forza delle suppliche di Epifanio," i.e. the power of his supplication rather than its vehemence. Though true, she also concludes that this passage hints at "una certa freddezza tra Odoacre ed Epifanio."

⁴ Ibid: "...dispositione caelestis imperii ad Italiam Theodericus rex cum immensa roboris sui multitudine commeavit."

Theoderic soon arrived in Italy and quickly established his court at Milan, where Epiphanius, true to his established role as a peacemaker, hurried to meet him. This would be the first encounter between the bishop and the future ruler of Italy, and first impressions were obviously important. Indeed, the description of this episode is especially revealing, for it demonstrates the extent to which Theoderic, still unknown in the West, followed in the footsteps of the “good” emperors already encountered in the *Vita*, honoring (just as they did) the holy man of Liguria. “The most excellent of kings,” Ennodius wrote, looked upon the bishop “with the eyes of his heart” and “the customary measure of his judgment,” recognizing in him the existence of “all the virtues.”⁵ The Goth then asserted to his followers, “Behold [here is] a man for whom there is no equal in the entire East; to have seen him is a reward; to live with him a source of security.”⁶ Beyond hinting at Theoderic’s eastern origins, these words made clear the preeminence of Epiphanius, not just in Italy, but in the entire world (the point of the hagiographical genre), while at the same time tacitly approving of Theoderic for his very recognition. In fact, though other rulers had also acknowledged Epiphanius’ saintly qualities (perhaps more to the bishop’s credit than their own), Theoderic had not required any convincing at all; his own rather laudable virtues, virtues that made him ideal for imperial succession, made words, however eloquent, utterly unnecessary.⁷

Even more to Theoderic’s credit, the narration of the events following this meeting makes clear that the future ruler of Italy meant every word that he had said to his followers. Despite the fact that Epiphanius would remain dangerously (even if piously) neutral during the coming war, Theoderic persisted in his reverence and proved on more than one occasion that his veneration ensured the protection of the bishop’s Ligurian flock. These were obviously tumultuous times, and Ennodius, though sparing in certain details, painted a vivid picture. Soldiers from both sides regularly pillaged the Ligurian countryside, generals vacillated in their loyalty, and Theoderic’s own soldiers, many still

⁵ Ibid: “quem cum ille regum praestantissimus cordis oculis inspexisset et solita iudicii sui sacerdotem nostrum libra pensaret, invenit in eo pondus omnium constare virtutum, cuius integritatem velut fabrilibus lineis ad perpendicularum mentis emensus est.”

⁶ *VE* 110: ““ecce hominem, cui totus oriens similem non habet, quem vidisse praemium est, cum quo habitare securitas.””

⁷ Cf. the depictions of Anthemius, Ricimer, Glycerius, Nepos, and Odovacer in the *VE* (all described in chapter 1), as well as those of the barbarian kings Euric (chapter 1) and Gundobad (chapter 2 and 5). Cesa (1988), 183, concludes similarly, though only using the model of Anthemius.

qualifying as “barbarians” by Italo-Roman standards, asserted themselves within the walls of Ligurian cities like Pavia, often to the very great discomfort of established residents.⁸ Worse than any discomfort caused by such billeting, many Romans also fell into the hands of the “enemy” (whoever this might have been at any given moment) by becoming captives, and Epiphanius, true to his calling, constantly strove to redeem them.⁹ Ennodius claimed that he himself was lost for words at the number of insults and attacks that the saint sustained with a brave face,¹⁰ concluding, “[Epiphanius] spent three years under such tormented conditions, revealing to God alone his hidden feelings of grief and begging Him to furnish him with secret aid.”¹¹

Caught between two “disagreeing princes,”¹² then, Epiphanius and all Liguria were in need of a miracle, according to Ennodius, and though the purpose of the hagiographical genre was to extol saints like Epiphanius for just such miracles, it was ironically Theoderic himself, aided by God, who answered the bishop’s prayers. Indeed, not yet ruler of Italy, Theoderic remained exceptionally attached to Epiphanius, venerating him more than all the other holy men in his midst.¹³ He was grateful for the bishop’s pious intercession before God and felt duty-bound to assist him however he could. Ransoming captives provided one such occasion, and in a particularly marvelous display of piety Theoderic, apparently without solicitation, endeavored to free from servitude every Roman who had fallen into the possession of his followers “through the license of war.”¹⁴ The gesture was of great significance. Not only did it perpetuate the

⁸ For these events, *VE* 109-115. The stereotypically negative description of the Rugians, encountered in chp. 2, comes from this particular episode.

⁹ *VE* 115-116. These captives also included partisans of Odovacer who had fallen into the hands of Theoderic’s forces. Their ransoming doubtless provided a source of tension between the Bishop of Pavia and the Theoderican side. Cf. *Vita Caesarii* 1.32-33 and 36, where Caesarius’ loyalty is called into question for just this reason, and Klingshirn (1985).

¹⁰ *VE* 117: “iam si illa retexam, quas inimicorum sustinuit insolentias, quibus laboravit inmissionibus, quali procellas pessimorum virtute contempsit: ad haec enarranda lingua non sufficiet.”

¹¹ *Ibid*: “sub tali cruce triennium duxit, soli deo dolorum suorum omnia secreta manifestans, a quo ministrari sibi clandestinum posebat auxilium.” The translation above is thus a slight paraphrase. Cf. Ennodius’ *Eucharisticon* (438.20) where, in addition to the general destruction of Italy (“cum omnia... clade vastarentur...”), Ennodius mourned the passing of his aunt and guardian. He was roughly sixteen years old at the time. See also his *Dictio in Natale Laurenti Mediolanensis Episcopi* (#1.17-19), where the fate of Milan at this time is similarly described.

¹² *VE* 113: “...inter dissidentes principes solus esset qui pace frueretur amborum.”

¹³ *VE* 116: “regi aptissimus et prae sanctis omnibus venerabilis existebat...”

¹⁴ *Ibid*: “...ut quoscumque Romanorum bellandi licentia hominum eius fecisset esse captivos, mox illi restitueret, quem sola intellegebat aliorum libertate ditari.”

admirable relationship between bishop and king and reveal Theoderic's concern for the Roman population of Italy, but it did so at the expense of alienating his own soldiers, the very backbone of his power at this time. Ennodius, quite aware of this, was again lost for words. "I could not enumerate," he claimed, "how many crowds of subjugated men he returned to their own soil, how many [people] he imposed upon, lest they [i.e. the captive Romans] be vexed."¹⁵

Finally, a "wretched and bloody battle"¹⁶ put an end to the contest between Theoderic and Odovacer, leaving the former victorious. Years of warfare, however, had been particularly hard on Liguria, causing the opening of the Theoderican epoch to be a period defined largely by recovery. As he had done time and time again, Epiphanius looked towards the repair of Pavia, a city practically destroyed in the last of Italy's internecine struggles, but wondrously spared this time around. Pavia had been extremely fortunate and an exception to the rule, however. Epiphanius' prayers had saved this city from crippling devastation, but the rest of Liguria had not been so lucky,¹⁷ struck down by a "whirlwind of temporal commotion."¹⁸ Adding further insult to injury, the once beneficent Theoderic was also in the process of altering his wartime policies, wickedly desiring to punish those Romans who had, of necessity and with little alternative, failed to come over to his side.¹⁹ He soon published an edict depriving all such individuals of

¹⁵ Ibid: "deinde enumerare nequeam, quanta ille subiugatorum agmina solo proprio reddidit, quanta ne vexarentur inposuit." Admittedly, this sentence more probably refers to Epiphanius than Theoderic. The translation in Cook (1942), 79, is ambiguous, that in Cesa (1988), 101, assumes Epiphanius. Regardless, credit would still have to be given, by implication, to Theoderic's benefaction, just as the case explicitly is in the ransoming of Ligurian captives from Burgundy (VE 175-6 and 187).

¹⁶ VE 120: "Postquam vero perfuncta res est misero exitiisque bello..."

¹⁷ VE 121: "post ruinam omnium Liguriaee." Cook (1942), 209-10, suggests that this "ruin" referenced the Church and the "ruinous" absence of episcopal ordinations during the conflict, citing an epistle of Pope Gelasius (*Ep.* 14) as evidence. This is certainly possible, but given the length of the war and the later description of a destitute Liguria provided in VE 138-9 (and of northern Italy in general in #1.17, #438.20, and *PanTh* 56), it doubtless extended beyond this. Cf. Cesa (1988), 188. Beyond the dubious attempt by Brogiolo (1994), 216; (1999), 104-5; and (2007), 117-21, to connect partitioned housing with the billeting of Theoderic's soldiers at this time, referring to VE 112, little archaeological evidence has been cited for the impact of this war. Nevertheless, the attention Theoderic gave to (re)building walls and basic infrastructure in the region (evidenced both archeologically and with written sources) may be directly related to the devastation of the area, which doubtless exacerbated pre-existing urban decay. See the following section for a discussion of these projects and their significance

¹⁸ Ibid: "et licet eam precatu illius faciente nullus in vastitatem temporalis procellae turbo dispulerat..."

¹⁹ VE 122: "illos vero, quos aliqua necessitas diviserat." Ennodius himself knew some of the individuals in question, many of whom would eventually prove quite useful to the Theoderican regime. Among others these included Bishop Laurentius of Milan, Pope Gelasius, and the future Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, Liberius.

the “right of Roman liberty,” barring them from the ability to testify in court or make a will.²⁰ “All Italy,” Ennodius wrote, lay “under a lamentable cessation of justice,”²¹ and it seemed that perhaps Theoderic would prove himself a *rex barbarorum* after all.

Another “public wound” was hence remitted into the “healing hands” of the saintly intercessor Epiphanius,²² and the bishop of Pavia, accompanied by Laurence of Milan, quickly hastened to Ravenna in order to plea Liguria’s cause. Here they were received with due reverence,²³ and when it came time to make their case, Epiphanius was chosen for the task. Tellingly addressing Theoderic as “invictissime princeps,” Epiphanius began by invoking the divine assistance and Christian virtues that had allowed the Goth to become the ruler of Italy in the first place. “Sparing in your requests,” he explained, “you have always received greater benefits from our God than... you have wished for.”²⁴ Theoderic, in other words, had a history of pious moderation, and God had therefore favored him. There were, in fact, numerous instances of such heavenly assistance, and Epiphanius would eventually mention a few, but the clearest indication of this benevolence was the fact that “where your enemy was accustomed to rejoice in the possession of that very throne, we now plead the causes of your subjects with you as the *princeps*.”²⁵ God, Epiphanius argued, had assisted a goodly Theoderic

²⁰ Ibid: “Interea subita animum praestantissimi regis Theoderici deliberatio occupavit, ut illis tantum Romanae libertatis ius tribueret, quos partibus ipsius fides examinata iunxisset; illos vero, quos aliqua necessitas dividerat, ab omni iussit et testandi et ordinationum suarum ac voluntatum licentia submoveri.”

²¹ Ibid: “qua sententia promulgata et legibus circa plurimos tali lege calcatis universa Italia lamentabili iustitio subiacebat.” The use of *iustitio* here is very interesting, for Theoderic himself employed this very term in describing the condition of Gallo-Roman nobles living under Visigothic rule. See chapter 5. The suspension of justice, therefore, was clearly another way of indicating barbarization and injustice, the opposite of the rule of *civilitas* in Theoderican Italy. But see Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 185, who suggests that this passage proves that Theoderic violated his treaty of 488 with Zeno, which denied him the right to pass new legislation. By his logic, *legibus calcatis* and *iustitio* refer to Theoderic’s violation of both his treaty with Zeno and prior imperial legislation. Neither, however, seems to be the case. Not only do Ennodius’ works (in general) show no concern for Theoderic’s legal standing vis-à-vis Byzantium, but also, as Cesa (1988), 189, convincingly demonstrates, Theoderic’s intended post-war policy was actually consistent with established punishments for high treason. Theoderic, therefore, was upholding the law, not violating it, and so Ennodius’ critique was based largely on a sense of injustice and a lack of compassion.

²² VE 123: “itur rursus ad illum, qui manu medica publicis consueverat subvenire vulneribus, cuius fonte aerumnarum saepe fuerat ardor extinctus.”

²³ Ibid: “qui [i.e. Epiphanius et Laurentius] profecti una Ravennam etiam pariter pervenerunt, suscepti reverenter suscepti reverenter.” Cf. *Vita Caesaris* 1.36, discussed in chapter 2.

²⁴ VE 125: “quantus, invictissime princeps, per innumerabiles successus felicitatem tuam favor divinus evexerit, si per ordinem relegam, agnoscis te votorum parcum maiora semper a deo nostro beneficia accepisse quam optasse memineras.”

²⁵ Ibid: “sufficit tamen horum unum narrare sed maximum, quod apud te principem ibi servorum tuorum causas agimus, ubi solebat inimicus tuus huius solii possessione gaudere.”

when the odds were not in his favor, and for this reason the ruler of Italy was entreated to “give recompenses for the changes brought about through these heavenly gifts” and to devote “pity to these men [of Liguria].”²⁶

More important than invoking Theoderic’s virtues and the divine assistance they had won, Epiphanius also provided his new *princeps* with a warning, hinting at the model of Job and referencing the failures of those Italian sovereigns already encountered in the *Vita*.²⁷ “Think for sure about what kinds of men you have succeeded in your kingdom,” he advised. “If, as is proven, wickedness expelled some of them, their plight ought to instruct those following after. The ruin of those preceding teaches those succeeding: a lapse in the past is always a warning for those remaining.”²⁸ Theoderic, in other words, was supposed to consider why it was that these rulers, all at one time divinely sanctioned, had lost their thrones. He was to ponder “why your predecessor [i.e. Odovacer] had been ejected,”²⁹ lest he suffer a similar fate. And indeed the good qualities of Theoderic already lauded at the beginning of Epiphanius’ speech recommended that this pious *princeps* would listen to reason. “Your Liguria,” Epiphanius explained, “trusts in this and supplicates herself extensively along with us, that you might grant the benefits of your laws to the innocent and absolve the guilty.”³⁰ “It is heavenly,” Theoderic was reminded, “to forgive sins, earthly to avenge them.”³¹

This speech and its requests, according to Ennodius, struck Theoderic with reverent fear,³² and when the most eminent king opened his mouth, he again proved the extent to which he cherished the saint of Pavia, while likewise demonstrating that the

²⁶ VE 127-8 describes various divine aid granted to Theoderic in battle. This is followed by the quotation above, VE 129: “quotiens tibi vicit qui pro hostium tuorum utilitate certabat? his ergo donis caelestibus vicissitudinem inpensa circa homines pietate restitue.”

²⁷ I.e. Job 1.21: “the Lord has given and the Lord has taken away.” Ennodius himself does not explicitly reference this passage, however.

²⁸ VE 129: “illud certe perpende, qualibus in regno successeris. quos si, ut liquet, malitia expulit, casus illorum necesse est ut sequentes informet. ruina praecedentium posteros docet: cautio est semper in reliquum lapsus anterior.”

²⁹ Ibid: “non sine exemplo militat qui respicit, qua causa decessor eiectus est.”

³⁰ VE 130: “his freta Liguria vestra nobiscum profusa supplicat, ut legum vestrarum beneficia sic tribuatis innocentibus, ut noxios absolvatis.”

³¹ Ibid: “exigua est apud deum nostrum misericordia, si illos tantum laesio non sequatur, qui reatu carent: culpas dimittere caeleste est, vindicare terrenum.”

³² VE 131: “At eminentissimus rex inquit, quo loquente adtonita de voluntate eius corda pavor artabat...” I follow Cesa (1988), 193, in concluding that the translation of Cook (1942), 185, is mistaken. It is not the audience that is afraid, but Theoderic himself, and this happens to the Goth’s credit, for other rulers in the *Vita Epiphani* (such as Anthemius) remain haughty in the face of the Bishop of Pavia’s initial rebukes.

piety Epiphanius had just associated with him was no mere rhetoric. Referring to Epiphanius as a “venerable bishop,” he claimed that he entertained towards him esteem proper to his merits and was in addition grateful for the “many favors... shown in times of distress.”³³ Nonetheless he pleaded that the “necessity of ruling” and the “difficult business of a nascent empire” precluded the pity and compassion that had just been demanded.³⁴ In fact, so Theoderic claimed, scripture defended his actions, for the biblical king Saul had once pardoned an undeserving enemy, and God had punished him for this by inflicting upon the king the very punishment that he should have exacted on his enemy.³⁵ “He who is lenient to his enemy when he has bested him,” Theoderic opined, “either makes light of or despises the power of divine judgment... he who lets the guilty go unpunished instigates the innocent to commit crimes.”³⁶ But though this was true, like all those rulers who had argued their position before Epiphanius, Theoderic, out of reverence for the saint and fear of God, soon yielded his position, ordering a general amnesty to be proclaimed so that “the head of no one will be cast down with injury.”³⁷

So, by the opening years of Theoderic’s reign, Epiphanius had yet again accomplished a diplomatic miracle of sorts through the use of his eloquent words, and the right of Roman liberty, to Theoderic’s eventual credit, was restored to “everyone in general,” even if a few brazen offenders were sentenced to exile.³⁸ This episode as depicted in the *Life of Epiphanius*, however, was far from over. As already suggested, good rulers in this hagiographical work, men like Nepos, for instance, had been

³³ Ibid: “quamvis te, venerabilis episcopo, pro meritorum tuorum luce suspiciam et multa apud me confusionis tempore reposuisses beneficia...”

³⁴ Ibid: “...regnandi tamen necessitas qua concludimur misericordiae quam suades non ubique pandit accessum, et inter res duras nascentis imperii pietatis dulcedinem censurae pellis utilitas.”

³⁵ This is the subject of VE 131-33, the scriptural passages in question being 1 *Samuel* 15 and 28. On the identification, see Cook (1942), 213-14, and Cesa (1988), 193. That Theoderic saw fit to quote this passage is quite interesting given Philostorgius’ claim (*HE* 2.15) that the Gothic translation of the Old Testament omitted these “martial” books owing to the overly warlike tendencies of the Goths. The verbal similarities between the tribe at war with the Israelites in these passages (the Amalekites) and the dynasty of Theoderic (the Amali) is too interesting to ignore, though the connection is probably mere coincidence.

³⁶ VE 133-4: “Ultionem suscipit qui detractat inferre: vim divini iudicii aut adtenuat aut contemnit qui hosti suo, cum potitur, indulget. ...qui criminosos patitur insipere transire, ad crimina hortatur insontes.”

³⁷ VE 134: “tamen quia precibus vestris, quibus superna assentiunt, obsistere terrena non possunt, omnibus generaliter errorem dimitemus. nullius caput noxa prosternet, quoniam potestis et apud deum nostrum agere, ut sceleratae mentes a propositi sui perversitate discedant.” Cf. Cesa (1988), 193, who rightly disagrees with Cook’s reading of a suspension of capital punishment.

³⁸ Ibid: “paucos tamen, quos malorum incentores fuisse cognovi, locorum suorum tantummodo habitatione privabo, ne forte exurgens necessitas vicinos inveniatur nutritores et malorum adiuta successibus bella consurgant.”

acclaimed for their diligence in taking the initiative in matters of Italian or Ligurian prosperity. Unsolicited, they sought the assistance of their fellow citizens, not requiring intercessors like Epiphanius to bring local maladies to their attention. Theoderic, of course, had required Epiphanius' intervention to this point in Ennodius' account, but now, in keeping with this tradition of attentive and compassionate rulership, he pulled the saint of Pavia aside and revealed to him his own incredible concern for the well-being of Italy and specifically the province of Liguria.

This was a land in his estimation that was utterly ruined, and something had to be done. "You see every place in Italy devoid of her native inhabitants," Theoderic informed the bishop. "To my sadness fruitful plains bring forth thorns and useless plants, and Liguria, that mother of human harvests, for whom a numerous progeny of farmers once existed, presents to our gaze barren earth, now bereaved and sterile."³⁹ A personified and saddened Liguria, he claimed, voiced her objections to him; once "fruitful with vines," she now appeared wretched and "uncombed by plows."⁴⁰ It was grievous, Epiphanius was told, that "no liquid is poured out onto the lips of those whom antiquity called *Oenotrios* from their supply of wine."⁴¹ And indeed, though the Burgundians were largely responsible for this transformation owing to their recent inroads and seizure of Ligurian captives, it was the ruler of Italy who would take the blame if the problem was not corrected.⁴² Valuing Epiphanius (and his powers) more than any other bishop in his realm,⁴³ therefore, Theoderic asked the saint if he would, "with Christ's assistance," take up the burden of an embassy to the Burgundian king,

³⁹ VE 138: "“vides universa Italiae loca originariis viduata cultoribus. In tristitiam meam segetum ferax spinas atque iniussa plantaria campus adportat, et illa mater humanae messis Liguria, cui numerosa agricolarum solebat constare progenies, orbata atque sterilis ieiunum cespitem nostris monstrat obtutibus.”” This explanation is clearly Liguro-centric (and hence supports the regional approach argued for at the beginning of this section). Cf. Cesa (1988), 194, who suggests that "qui *Italia* dovrebbe designare la sola parte settentrionale della penisola."

⁴⁰ Ibid: "“interpellat me terra, quocumque respicio uberem vinetis faciem, cum aratris inpeza contristat.””

⁴¹ VE 139: "“o dolor! nullus umor illorum labris infunditur, quos a vini copia Oenotrios vocavit antiquitas.”” Cesa (1988), 194-5, notes echoes of a number of late antique poets in these lines and suggests that this would have rendered Theoderic's speech poetic and thus "più solenne il tono del discorso." Though true, the use of "Oenotrios" for the "ancient" inhabitants of Italy (and specifically Liguria) is rather ironic, given that the term originally referred to only the inhabitants of the southeast.

⁴² Ibid: "“haec quamvis Burgundio inimitis exercuit, nos tamen, si non emendamus, admisimus.””

⁴³ VE 136 (which introduces the private conversation between Theoderic and Epiphanius): "“gloriose antistes... cum tot in regni nostri circulo pontifices esse videantur, tu potissimum in tanta re quasi unicus eligaris.””

Gundobad, and secure the release of these Italian captives.⁴⁴ The sight of Epiphanius alone, Theoderic suggested, would be a fitting ransom,⁴⁵ and he promised that, after the bishop's return, "Liguria will live again... and happiness and fecundity [will be restored] to the soil."⁴⁶

This was an important speech within the *Life of Epiphanius*, casting Theoderic as the most caring and compassionate of all the late Roman rulers depicted in this work. And though Epiphanius, with Ennodius in his company, would soon undertake the second of his transalpine missions and secure the release of over six thousand captive Ligurians,⁴⁷ his initial response to Theoderic's words are especially revealing. Hearing that Liguria would live again, the Bishop of Pavia, himself a proven master of eloquence, was literally left speechless. "Venerable *princeps*," he addressed his lord,

"if it were possible for the amount of joy that you have placed in my heart to be embraced in speech, I would pour forth an immediate and uninterrupted [stream of] words for the wealth of your merits. But what a break in the succession of my words denies, my tears of joy make clear; tears begotten of exultation, rather than the children of grief. Know, then, that I feel more than I am able to say in rendering thanks to the best king."⁴⁸

Mixed with joyful sobbing and lost for words, the Bishop of Pavia had already said so much, and when he finally turned to specifics, he still remained unable to find the right words. "Is it in your justice, or your skill in battle, or, what is more excellent than both of these, your piety that I should mention that you have surpassed all prior

⁴⁴ VE 140: "suscipe ergo Christo adiuvante huius laboris sarcinam...."

⁴⁵ VE 141: "mihi credo, pretium captivitatis Italicae erit vester aspectus." Cesa (1988), 194-5, suggests that Theoderic's (unsolicited) decision to use diplomacy in this matter is reminiscent of the "bloodless victory" ideal urged by Epiphanius himself in so many of his earlier "royal" encounters. To Theoderic's credit, then, he offers exactly the solution that Epiphanius would have wanted.

⁴⁶ Ibid: "polliceor tibi redivivum statum Liguriae, polliceor soli laetitiam et post Transalpinam peregrinationem reducem fecunditatem. Ex accidenti aurum tibi commodatur pro qua talis legatus acturus est."

⁴⁷ For the embassy, VE 147-77. Ennodius mentions his participation at VE 171. For over six-thousand, VE 172.

⁴⁸ VE 142-3: "quanto, venerabilis princeps, pectus meum tripudio repleveris, si sermone posset ambiri, pro divitiis meritorum tuorum inmeditata et continua verba profunderem. sed quam sermoni meo interceptus denegetur successus, monstrant lacrimae gaudiorum, quas dolorum alumnas nunc parturit exultatio. proinde intellege, ad referendas optimo regi... gratias plus me sentire posse quam eloqui."

emperors?”⁴⁹ Concern for Liguria and her inhabitants, then, had rendered Theoderic not just worthy of imperial succession, but better than all those emperors who had preceded him.⁵⁰ Indeed, as far as Epiphanius was concerned, there was only one model through which a worthy comparison could be made. Theoderic was no Constantine or Trajan, but the ideal Christian ruler, King David, the very model for late antique emperorship. And, moreover, with respect to ransoming captives, even David had been no match for the new *princeps* of the West, having ransomed but one man.⁵¹

These early events, conventionally dated to 495 and hence before Romulus Augustus’ *ornamenta* had been restored to Italy, thus placed Theoderic firmly within the imperial tradition. There had clearly been problems at the beginning of his reign, but the care and compassion that he soon showed towards Liguria and its inhabitants served as an especially powerful, and ultimately legitimizing gesture. More so than Ricimer and Odovacer, more so than even Anthemius or Nepos, the Theoderic depicted in the *Life of Epiphanius* became Liguria’s patron and protector, Liguria’s emperor. Nor would this be the only instance recorded in the *Vita* where the new ruler of Italy would demonstrate his piety and kindness in this region, acts which further legitimized his claims to imperial succession and contributed to nascent conceptions of a golden age.

Shortly after returning from Gaul, for instance, Epiphanius busied himself with trying to restore to those who had been liberated all their rights and properties. He was especially concerned about impoverished and dispossessed nobles, the *lumina Liguriae* and their descendents, Romans who had once proven themselves quite useful for hard-pressed Italian monarchs like Nepos. Royal assistance, which had already played an important role in securing their freedom, was now solicited lest “their return provide [them] with a destitute livelihood and they lose the only solace of compassion [derived]

⁴⁹ VE 143: “iustitia prius an bellorum exercitatione an, quod his praestantius est, omnes retro imperatores te pietate superasse commemorem?”

⁵⁰ But cf. Cesa (1988), 198, and Reydellet (1981), 170, who both suggest that “retro imperatores” in VE 143 (cited above) is oppositional in nature, rendering Theoderic something other (albeit better) than a Roman emperor. The passage is clearly intended to highlight Theoderic’s superiority, but it seems not to exclude him from imperial succession, especially given the later reference to his emperorship found in VE 187 (discussed below).

⁵¹ For the recounting of David’s “ransoming” of Saul in 1 *Samuel* 24 (where David spares Saul when he had the opportunity to kill him), see VE 144, which ends: “deus bone, in quanta remuneratione huius factum suscipis pro tot milium oppressorum libertate tractantis, qui illum pro unius servati hominis sanguine sublimasti!”

from the detriments of their stay abroad.”⁵² Rather than journeying to Ravenna, however, Epiphanius dispatched a letter expressing his concerns to Theoderic, and “the most pious king,” consistent with prior gestures, granted the bishop everything he had asked “without hesitation.”⁵³ Through Epiphanius’ intervention and Theoderic’s generosity, Ennodius wrote, those once in exile were transformed into the wealthiest of men;⁵⁴ they had been “revived through the concessions of the excellent *princeps*,” “bestowed with their [ancient] rights,”⁵⁵ and restored, as it were, to their prior noble condition.

Moves like this assisted the province of Liguria in making a full, post-war recovery, helping to fulfill the recent promise of Theoderic that this region, so important for Italo-Romans like Ennodius, would live again. And by the end of the year the situation in this province seemed from Ravenna to have improved drastically, so drastically, in fact, that certain temporary measures no longer seemed necessary and were revoked. Liguria’s exemption from paying tribute was among these casualties, yet according to Ennodius’ account, the move had been too hasty on Theoderic’s part and Liguria was not yet capable of making such payments. The “burden of tribute,” Ennodius wrote, was “scarcely bearable to the weak Ligurians and their toiling shoulders,”⁵⁶ and again the aggrieved looked to Epiphanius for assistance. “[Your] citizens were restored to their fatherland in vain,” they told the bishop, “if you do not assist those now living in peril on their ancestral soil.”⁵⁷ Convinced, Epiphanius made straightaway for Ravenna, and, although Theoderic was to blame for this needful embassy, to his credit the sight of Epiphanius made it clear to him that he had made a serious error. Addressing a now dead Epiphanius and speaking on behalf of his fellow

⁵² VE 178: “Mox tamen ut rediit, curis ex more animum fatigat, ne forte quibus absolutionem deus noster per illum dederat, proprii census possessione turbarentur, praecipue ob nobilium considerationem personarum, quibus inmanior apud suos poterat constare calamitas, si vitam inopem reduces sustinerent et de peregrinationis incommodis sola misericordiae solacia perdidissent.”

⁵³ VE 181: “igitur omnia, quae a piissimo rege pro miseris per paginam petiit singularis antistes, incunctanter obtinuit.”

⁵⁴ VE 180 (Ennodius addressing a long-dead Epiphanius): “quantum tunc, admirande pontifex, tua plus egit absentia, quantum imperavit humilitas deprehensa, dicant illi, quos de exulibus ditissimos reddidisti.”

⁵⁵ VE 182: “Postquam tamen omnes qui revocati fuerunt indultu praeferendi principis iure suo donati sunt...”

⁵⁶ Ibid: “Nam infirmis Ligurum et labantibus umeris vix ferenda tributorum sarcina mandabatur.”

⁵⁷ VE 183 (again, addressing Epiphanius): “Doceris frustra reddidisse patriae cives, si illis in solo avito periclitantibus non adesses.”

Ligurians, Ennodius claimed, “before you even spoke, you exposed our necessities through your arrival.”⁵⁸ Theoderic, a most lofty king who had hoped eagerly to see Epiphanius, was now saddened by his presence.⁵⁹

Epiphanius then addressed his *princeps* with his customary eloquence, demonstrating once again the full extent to which he viewed Theoderic as a *bona fide* Roman emperor. “Venerable king,” he began, “understand with the accustomed tranquility of your mind the prayers of your subjects... [for] it is your condition to be continuously merciful.”⁶⁰ Referencing the imperial virtues of serenity and mercy, he continued by urging Theoderic to give “to your Ligurians” whatever resources might be available, explaining that “a momentary indulgence is the profit of future times.”⁶¹ Words echoing these sentiments would later be penned in Theoderic’s own name,⁶² but in this speech Epiphanius strove to connect such concepts with ideas of Italian resurgence and imperial stability. A “good *princeps*,” Theoderic was told, cherishes his reputation along with his virtues; he arranges his kingdom as if about to pass it on to his progeny; and takes delight in what he may give.⁶³ The *status Liguriaie*, in other words, was a reflection of the *status reipublicae* and its emperor, and more telling still, the “wealth of the land owner,” Theoderic was advised, was the wealth “of a good emperor.”⁶⁴ With these words in mind, Epiphanius asked Theoderic to grant immunity to the province for

⁵⁸ VE 184: “Exposuisti necessitates nostras adventu tuo, antequam diceret...”

⁵⁹ Ibid: “Contristatus est de praesentia tui et ille eminentissimus rex, qui te videre ambienter optabat.”

⁶⁰ VE 185: “solita, rex venerabilis, mentis tranquillitate famulorum preces intellege. ...lex tua est, ductor invicte, misereri iugiter.”

⁶¹ VE 186: “Liguribus tuis largire quod proferas, tribue quod reponas. futurorum quaestus est temporalis indulgentia.” But cf. Cesa (1988), 115 and 208, for an alternative reading, which suggests that the passage references the “gloria che Teodorico si procurerà con questa nobile azione ed al guadango che ne ricaverà in cielo.” There seems little reason, however, to interpret “proferre” as “far vanto,” since it might just as legitimately be translated as “to discover” (hence, “give to your Ligurians what you discover, grant what you are storing [i.e. in your coffers].”). Cook (1942), 107, provides a similar reading.

⁶² For such indulgences in Italy, see the following section; for Gaul, the penultimate section of the following chapter.

⁶³ VE 186: “boni principis mos est cum virtutibus amare famam et regnum ita ordinare, tamquam ad stirpis suae posteros transitorium. nutantes domini haec tantum quae accipiunt diligunt, firmissimi illa potius quae dimittunt.”

⁶⁴ VE 187: “boni imperatoris est possessoris opulentia.” It is quite surprising that Cook (1942), Cesa (1988), and Reydellet (1981) do not comment on the use of “imperatoris” in this passage. It clearly suggests, contrary to the thesis of Reydellet (adopted by Cesa), that Theoderic was being placed within a specifically imperial mold. See Moorhead (1992), 46, for a similar conclusion.

the coming year,⁶⁵ an act that would prove, by implication, that the Goth truly was a *bonus princeps* and *bonus imperator*.

Of course, language like this was deliberately flattering and intended to reveal to Theoderic the error of his ways while softening such critiques with soothing compliments. Though true, and though Theoderic was obviously guilty, the response that Ennodius soon placed in his mouth did much to exonerate him. Indeed, Theoderic's words provided a legitimate excuse of sorts for the king's otherwise unsettling behavior. Unlike a number of his recent predecessors, the restoration of Liguria's tributary status had not been an issue of neglect or greed, but one of genuine necessity. "The burden of massive expenses," Theoderic explained, "constantly constrains us," and, moreover, as these were still uncertain times for his early regime, it was quite necessary to "grant gifts incessantly to envoys for the sake of peace."⁶⁶ Liguria obviously required succor, but the needs of the many seemed to outweigh those of the few. All of Italy, not just Liguria, required peace and security; all of Italy, all of what was left of the once proud Roman Empire, needed to live again; and such a transformation could only be afforded with money and a willingness on the part of everyone to endure a certain degree of temporary hardship.

Prior obligations, Ennodius suggested, prevented Theoderic from canceling the tribute owed by the Ligurians for the coming year. But the ruler of Italy could not and did not want to fully disappoint his venerable friend, the friend of God, or his Ligurian flock.⁶⁷ "It is useful," he explained to Epiphanius, "to do whatever you enjoin; everything that you instruct is helpful."⁶⁸ He could not grant a complete exemption, of course, but he was willing to compromise in Liguria's favor, canceling two-thirds of the

⁶⁵ Ibid: "concede immunitatem anni praesentis Liguriae, qui eos ab externis, qui supplicant, reduxisti."

⁶⁶ VE 188: "ad haec princeps: 'licet nos inmanium expensarum pondus ilicet et pro ipsorum quiete legatis indesinenter munera largiamur...'" Nor was Theoderic simply making up excuses when it came to the number of embassies that had been (and would continue to be) necessary. Indeed, one particularly mobile ambassador, Senarius, even made note of his journeys on behalf of Theoderic on his epitaph (Fiebiger, vol. 3, #8, ln. 9-10: "Bis denas et quinque simul legatio nostra / signat in orbe..."). For Senarius, *PLRE* 2, 988-9. On "Ostrogothic" diplomacy under Theoderic, see Wolfram (1988), 306-324; Moorhead (1992), 173-211; Claude (1993); Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 103-155; Shanzer (1996/7); Pricoco (1997); and Gillett (2003), 148-219.

⁶⁷ VE 189: "ne.. supplicatio tua expectata patriae gaudia non reportet."

⁶⁸ VE 188: "tamen vis meritorum tuorum tractatibus nostris reverenter intervenit. opus est fieri quicquid iniunxeris, iuvat omne quod praecipis. aestimamus enim compendiis nostris adici illud, quod ipse decerpseris."

tribute owed and stipulating that the remainder needed to be paid, “lest the constriction of our treasury create greater expenses for the Romans.”⁶⁹

As the *Life of Epiphanius* drew to a close, then, Liguria had been given Theoderic’s special favor once more, seemingly benefiting from the patronage of this ruler and the special relationship that he had formed with her preeminent bishop, the hero of Ennodius’ account. In the few years that he had reigned supreme, thousands from this province had been redeemed from captivity; countless noblemen had had their livelihoods ensured by his pious intervention; and the tribute owed by everyone had been reduced or commuted altogether. Though the Theoderic described within this work was at times far from perfect and could even err towards wickedness, he was clearly the best of Italy’s late Roman rulers, an easterner to be sure, but also an unquestionably pious Christian, a *bonus princeps*, and even a *bonus imperator*. Because of Theoderic, Ennodius claimed, Liguria was indeed beginning to live again, and despite the fact that Epiphanius himself would soon depart from this world, thus providing a natural terminus for his *Vita*, the tradition of Theoderican benefaction found within his biography would live on.

From the Ashes of Cities

Epiphanius died in 496, shortly before the return of the envoy Festus and the western imperial insignia from Constantinople. As the *Life of Epiphanius* makes clear, his death coincided with a period of recovery for much of Italy, when the early Theoderican regime was making the safety and prosperity of all Romans, not just Ligurians, an important priority. All of Italy, it was hoped, would recover, and sound fiscal policies mixed with compassionate (yet controlled) benefaction would soon pave the way for this, providing tangible evidence of Italian restoration and renewal. As seen above, Epiphanius himself had once advised Theoderic to give to his Ligurians whatever resources he was storing in his coffers, suggesting that “a momentary indulgence is the profit of future times” and that “the wealth of the land is [that] of a good emperor.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ VE 189: “duas tamen praesentis indictionis fiscalis calculi partes cedemus, tertiam tantummodo suscepturi, ne... aerarii nostri angustia Romanis pariat maiora dispendia...”

⁷⁰ VE 186-7: “...largire quod proferas, tribue quod reponas. futurorum quaestus est temporalis indulgentia. ...boni imperatoris est possessoris opulentia.”

Though, as Theoderic himself had claimed, the emerging Ravenna government was still at that point too constrained by a host of other obligations to comply fully with this request, words like these did not fall on deaf ears; they would, with time, come to define the imperial benevolence of the Theoderican golden age.

Generosity, however, required financial stability, something that was initially lacking when Theoderic took up the reins of Roman government. Indeed, beyond the crippling devastation caused by years of warfare, a number of sources make clear the nearly exhausted financial resources bequeathed by the regime of Odovacer, a factor that must have rendered Italy's recovery all the more difficult. Ennodius' panegyric, for instance, decried the "failure of public resources" caused by Odovacer's lavish spending and rapacious over-taxation,⁷¹ while the account found in the *Anonymus Valesianus* claimed that Theoderic had "found the public treasury completely made of hay,"⁷² that is, dried up and emptied of monies. Though the latter source went on to credit Theoderic for quickly enriching the treasury "through his own labor,"⁷³ assistance during this time of penury was largely dependent on local Roman notables. These men, some of whom had remained partisans of Odovacer to the bitter end, understood the workings of Italy and her economy far better than the newly arrived Goths ever could have, and moreover, their preeminent role in the early days of Theoderic's reign granted it additional legitimacy in the eyes of Italian onlookers. Loyal Italo-Romans became sharers in the secrets of Theoderic's counsels, guiding their sovereign and Italy herself "towards the hope of restoration,"⁷⁴ their maintenance of power and authority making it clear that the Roman Republic, as an institution, continued to endure.

⁷¹ *PanTh* 23: "...iam attulerat publicis opibus pax intemerata defectum, cum apud nos cottidianae depraedationis auctus successibus intestinus populator egeret, qui suorum prodigus incrementa aerarii non tam poscebat surgere vectigalibus quam rapinis."

⁷² *AnonVal* 60: "...aerarium publicum ex toto faeneum invenisset..."

⁷³ *Ibid*: "...suo labore recuperavit et opulentum fecit."

⁷⁴ For sharers in counsels, *PanTh* 51: "...concutiens fecisti consiliorum participem in secretis populum iam probatum." Cf. *PanTh* 57, discussed below. For the hope of restoration, #447.3 (in reference to Liberius, discussed below): "quando tu eam [i.e. Italiam] sine intervallo temporis et ad spem reparationis..." Likewise *VE* 135 credits a certain *vir inlustrissimus* named Urbicus, who "surpassed Cicero in eloquence and Cato in equity," with the drafting of the general amnesty granted to all Romans in the aftermath of the struggle against Odovacer. For Urbicus, *PLRE* 2, 1191. There were still others, such as the senators Faustus and Festus (see chapter 2), who proved instrumental at this time, particularly when it came to Constantinople.

Theoderic's first Praetorian Prefect of Italy, for example, the noble Liberius already encountered in a prior chapter, was instrumental in this regard and would continue to be an asset to the Theoderican regime for decades. In a personal letter Ennodius recalled that at the beginning of Liberius' tenure as prefect (begun in 493) "Italy was barely supporting herself," but that he had, with divine assistance, caused "royal resources to flow forth without the wickedness of private disturbance," preventing the demands of the emperor (and by this he meant Theoderic) from becoming detrimental.⁷⁵ Similarly, Theoderic himself eulogized Liberius before the Senate for "increasing the census revenues, not by adding to them but by preserving them, while at the same time collecting with foresighted diligence those revenues that had wrongly come to be diffused."⁷⁶ "We felt that the taxes had been increased," the *patres conscripti* were told, "but you did not know that your tribute had been enlarged. The fisc grew and private utility suffered no ruin."⁷⁷

Diligence and careful attention, both on the part of Italo-Roman statesmen and Theoderic himself, then, paid off during these early years, for by the turn of the century the haystack that was once Odovacer's treasury had been replaced with glittering pieces of silver and gold. Such enrichment naturally provided Theoderic's government with greater resources with which to operate and thus more directly impact the situation on the ground in Italy.⁷⁸ Though important, the Ravenna government was not the only beneficiary of this process, however, a fact that served, in its own way, to further endear contemporary Italo-Romans to the new order of the day. "The resources of the

⁷⁵ #447.3-5: "vix pascebatur Italia publici sudore dispendii... laeti coepimus te moderante inferre aerariis publicis, quod cum maximo dolore solebamus accipere. Fuit semper ubertas nostra dispensatio tua. Iuverunt venerabile superna consilium. Nam vires vectigalium tu vel nutristi pro bono publico vel dedisti. Culminibus omnibus homo sublimior, tu primus fecisti regales copias sine malo privatae concussionis effluere. Tibi post deum debetur, quod apud potentissimum dominum et ubique victorem securi divitias confitemur. Tuta enim tunc est subiectorum opulentia, quando non indiget imperator." It is again remarkable, and a testament to the lack of attention paid to Ennodius' works (especially his *epistulae*), that Reydellet (1981), Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 180 (fn. 127), Moorhead (1992), 46 (fn. 57), and others have neglected the use of *imperator* in this letter.

⁷⁶ *Variae* 2.16.4: "is igitur infatigabili cura, quod difficillimum virtutis genus est, sub generalitas gratia publica videtur procurasse compendia, census non addendo, sed conservando protendus, dum illa, quae consueverant male dispergi, bene industria providente collegit." These "male dispergi" revenues doubtless refer to payments of tribute illicitly pocketed by those responsible for collecting them. A similar loss of revenues is recorded in *Variae* 5.14 in reference to tax collection in the province of Pannonia Savia.

⁷⁷ *Variae* 2.16.4: "Sensimus auctas illationes, vos addita tributa nescitis. Ita utrumque sub ammiratione perfectum est, ut et fiscus cresceret et privata utilitas damna nulla perferret."

⁷⁸ Cf. Ensslin (1959), 242-44, and Brogiolo and Possenti (2001), 271.

Republic,” Ennodius exclaimed in praise of his foresighted *princeps*, “grew along with the profits of private citizens... there is a diffusion of wealth everywhere.”⁷⁹ Italy’s Romans, it seemed by the early sixth century, were getting richer, and their increased disposable income likewise helped to foster trade, which served to increase contemporary standards of living. Trade, in its simplest guise, provided a source of needed goods during inevitable times of scarcity, yet more importantly, it was also the source from which conspicuously Roman luxury goods could be acquired, items that proclaimed Italy’s prosperity and even superiority through their mere availability and consumption.⁸⁰ “Merchants from various provinces,” it was said, flocked to Italy,⁸¹ allowing “anyone to acquire whatever he needed at any hour,” while the price of basic commodities like wheat and wine, once cripplingly high, was driven to historic lows.⁸²

Doubtless, certain economic policies enacted by the Ravenna government encouraged such developments. The counts placed in charge of Rome’s principal harbors at Portus and Ostia, for example, were told to treat all merchants justly. “A greedy hand,” it was said, “closes a port and, when it clenches its fingers, it likewise confines the sails of ships.”⁸³ The counts of Ravenna, whose port at Classe seems to have flourished at this time,⁸⁴ were similarly instructed to restrain their staffs with “equity” and to “pay attention to the tolls of merchants, neither exacting too much nor abandoning them through bribery.”⁸⁵ Not all of Italy’s cities were experiencing the same economic recovery, of course. Some, for instance, witnessed further decline as their prior disconnection from wider trading networks increased;⁸⁶ other, better connected cities

⁷⁹ *PanTh* 58: “creverunt reipublicae opes cum privatorum profectibus: ...opum ubique diffusio est.”

⁸⁰ Those trappings of civilization sent to Gaul, like water-clocks and cytheras (discussed in chapter 2), are primary examples of this.

⁸¹ *AnonVal* 72: “Negotiantes vero de diversis provinciis ad ipsum concurrebant.”

⁸² *AnonVal* 73: “quavis quod opus habebat faciebat qua hora vellet, ac si in die. Sexaginta modios tritici in solidum ipsius tempore emerunt, et vinum triginta amphoras in solidum.” Cf. *AnonVal* 53, where the price of wheat during Theoderic’s campaigns against Odovacer rose to “usque sex solidos modius tritici.”

⁸³ *Variae* 7.9.3: “avara manus portum claudit et cum digitos attrahit, navium simul vela concludit.”

⁸⁴ For recent archaeological discoveries in Classe, which confirm its actual expansion and continued connectedness within a larger Mediterranean economy during the Theoderican epoch, see Maioli (1994), 239-42, and (1995); Brogiolo (1994), 214.

⁸⁵ *Variae* 7.14.2-3: “negiatorum operas consuetas nec nimias exigas nec venalitate derelinquas... officium tuum aequitatis consideratione moderare.”

⁸⁶ For the continued decline of certain Italian communities as a result of disconnection from wider, pan-Mediterranean trade networks (as evidenced archaeologically), see Brogiolo and Possenti (2001), 268-71. For this process beginning largely in the late fourth/early fifth century, Brogiolo (1999), 100-109. Cf.

simply struggled to maintain themselves, requiring remissions of tribute or special trade exemptions in the face of unforeseeable hardships, such as bad harvests or foreign invasion.⁸⁷ But even these indulgences, or better the ability of Theoderic's government to provide them, were important and, moreover, indicative of the extent of economic recovery achieved over the first decade of Theoderican rule. Indeed, though Liguria itself had been granted only a partial reduction in tribute in 496, by 508/9 the Cottian Alps and other regions (including the whole of the reestablished prefecture of the Gauls) had had their entire tribute remitted and by a self-described *pius princeps*, no less.⁸⁸

Increased and surplus revenues also made it possible for Theoderic (and other wealthy nobles in his realm) to dedicate vast sums of money to traditional acts of civic euergetism, allowing "the benevolence of our reign" to "emulate its profits, so that its kindness expands its gifts to the extent that the Republic has been improved."⁸⁹ Many of these projects of civic benefaction were quite conspicuous in their day, their number constituting as a whole a true renaissance of building, the so-called *renovatio urbium* of the Theoderican epoch. This movement, in Theoderic's own words, "preserves the reported wonders of the ancients for the praise of our clemency,"⁹⁰ while adorning "new constructions with the glory of antiquity."⁹¹ Just as Italy was once again the Republic ruled by a Republican *princeps*, just as the Empire was once more protected by valiant and virtuous soldiers, so too did her cities glimmer with their venerable Republican monuments restored or with new constructions built in imitation of their ancient style. This was, beyond the restoration of lost provinces to be discussed in the following chapter, perhaps the single most important factor that contributed to contemporary

Ward-Perkins (1984), 14-25, who suggests that a change in aristocratic values ultimately spelled the end of traditional civic euergetism, and hence informed this decline.

⁸⁷ See, for example, *Variae* 2.38 and 4.36 (in reference to the Cottian Alps and the city of Sipontum). For the same kinds of exemptions in the Gallic Prefecture, see the following chapter. Such temporary measures were not limited to the reign of Theoderic; cf. *Variae* 9.10, 9.15, 12.7, 12.14 and 12.28.

⁸⁸ See the above footnote.

⁸⁹ *Variae* 2.37.1: "provectum regni nostri benignitas debet aemulari, ut tantum humanitas relaxet dona, quantum res publica suscepit augmenta."

⁹⁰ *Variae* 2.39.1: "si audita veterum miracula ad laudem clementiae nostrae volumus continere, quoniam augmenta regalis gloriae sunt, cum sub nobis nulla decrescunt, quo studio convenit reparari quod etiam nostris oculis frequenter constat offeri?"

⁹¹ *Variae* 7.15.1: "hoc enim studio largitas nostra non cedit, ut et facta veterum exclusis defectibus innovemus et nova vetustatis gloria vestiamus."

conceptions of blessedness and a golden age.⁹² In the aftermath of fifth-century devastation, Ennodius marveled that he now saw “unforeseen beauty” coming forth “out of the ashes of cities... and palatine roofs everywhere reddened [with new tiles] under the abundance of [Theoderic’s] *civilitas*.” Buildings, he exclaimed, were completed even before he learned that they had been laid out.⁹³ In his chronicle Cassiodorus likewise recorded that “very many cities were renewed under [Theoderic’s] happy Empire... and ancient wonders were surpassed by his great works,”⁹⁴ while the *Anonymus Valesianus* similarly celebrated Theoderic as a “lover of buildings and restorer of cities,” going on to list his impact in key cities like Ravenna, Pavia, and Verona.⁹⁵

Indeed, it is true that only a select few (albeit important) cities are known to have received extensive royal patronage, and even then only in the form of limited prestige projects;⁹⁶ but as the *Life of Epiphanius* has already suggested, the impression that such displays of imperial benevolence could leave at a local level was powerful. And as the words of Ennodius, Cassiodorus, and the *Anonymus Valesianus* have just demonstrated, the contemporary impact of these projects had been quite significant. Northern cities like Ravenna, Verona, Pavia, Milan, Parma, Como, Aquileia, and still others received new or improved walls, palaces, aqueducts, churches, baths, and a host of other impressive and

⁹² Cf. La Rocca (1993) and Brogiolo and Possenti (2001), whose emphases on the propagandistic nature and/or value of such works (sadly) downplays their contemporary, Italo-Roman reception and significance. Such projects were certainly “prudent,” but referring to them as “una prudente maschera” seems to go too far. Ennodius, Cassiodorus, and countless others had not been “deceived.”

⁹³ *PanTh* 56: “Video insperatum decorum urbium cineribus evenisse et sub civilitatis plenitudine palatine ubique tecta rutilare. Video ante perfecta aedificia, quam me contigisset disposita.”

⁹⁴ *CassChron*, anno 500: “sub cuius felici imperio plurimae renovantur urbes... magnisque eius operibus antiqua miracula superantur.”

⁹⁵ *AnonVal* 70: “Erat enim amator fabricarum et restaurator civitatum.” *AnonVal* 71 lists the achievements in these three cities, which included building a palace and restoring Trajan’s aqueduct at Ravenna (cf. Fiebiger, vol. 3, #7, a fistula recording Theoderic’s repair to this aqueduct); building a palace, augmenting the walls, and restoring the aqueduct at Verona; and building a palace, amphitheater, and walls at Pavia. *AnonVal* 72 begins with the line “sed et per alias civitates multa beneficia praestitit.” For these cities, see below. On the strategic, economic, and historical importance of these (primarily) northern cities, see Siena (1984) and Brogiolo and Possenti (2001).

⁹⁶ This had always been the case throughout imperial history, however, and especially after the second century. It is nonetheless largely for this reason that scholars have had mixed views concerning the impact of Theoderic’s *renovatio urbium*. Some, like Siena (1984), Ward-Perkins (1984), Johnson (1988) and Pani Ermini (1995), have viewed the movement in largely positive terms, describing it as an inversion of certain late antique trends that ultimately led to the end of the classical city in Italy. Others, such as MacPherson (1989), La Rocca (1993), Brogiolo (1994 and 1999), Brogiolo and Possenti (2001), and Christie (2006), who either look at these developments over a longer *durée* or emphasize their propagandistic value, have been more keen to point out the limitations of this program, citing its ultimate inability to stem the tide of urban decay, its restricted range of application, and/or its failure to live up to prior imperial greatness.

glorious buildings, all of which had the ability to reiterate to their respective inhabitants their own importance within a newly revived and reinvigorated Roman Empire, while connecting such ideas with the intervention of a caring and devoted *princeps*, Theoderic.⁹⁷ Other cities, such as Spoleto in the south, received monetary stipends for the upkeep of structures like bathing complexes, truly Roman amenities whose continued existence served both the good health and sheer enjoyment of local residents, again to Theoderic's credit.⁹⁸ In still other cities, private individuals were conceded the right to make use of public resources for the sake of civic beautification, so that "what has fallen down, decayed from old age, might stand back up, reused."⁹⁹ Though Theoderic might not have received recognition in every instance, the very transformation achieved fit into a larger picture of urban renewal at this time, fueling sentiments of restoration and the emergence of a golden age.

To go through all the evidence for this *renovatio urbium*, literary, epigraphic, and archaeological, though certainly possible, would nonetheless prove overly repetitious and potentially tedious for the reader.¹⁰⁰ Many cities and many individuals benefited from Theoderican patronage and generally in the same basic ways.¹⁰¹ One city, however, stands out before all the rest, not simply because of the extent of benefaction that was granted there, but also because of its historic significance within the totality of the Roman world. This was Rome, and it will be with Rome's restored prominence and prestige within Theoderic's Roman Empire (a final case-study of sorts) that this chapter will now conclude.

⁹⁷ For more extensive discussions of literary and archaeological evidence for these projects, see the authors cited in the above footnote, as well as Maioli (1994), Brogiolo (2007), and Marazzi (2007).

⁹⁸ For the specific case of Spoleto, *Variae* 2.37. Later Lombard tradition also records that Theoderic established a palace in this city, though no contemporary evidence supports this. For a discussion, Siena (1984), 524.

⁹⁹ *Variae* 4.24.1 (in this case granting the use of public spolia to the deacon Helpidius of Spoleto): "...rediviva consurgant, quae annositate inclinata corruerant." Cf. *Variae* 3.9 (regarding the use of spolia at Aestuna for construction projects in Ravenna), 3.49 (regarding the citizens of Catana spoliating their amphitheater for the beautification of their walls), and 4.31 (regarding the repair of an aqueduct by a certain Aemilianus, bishop of an unknown see).

¹⁰⁰ Moreover, syntheses of this sort are already available via the specialist literature cited above (much in English).

¹⁰¹ Hence the common distinction in the secondary scholarship cited above between "defenses" (usually walls), "sanitation/health" (usually aqueducts and/or baths), and "important public buildings" (usually palaces and entertainment complexes).

Roma Caput Mundi

Of all the cities within the Roman Empire, Rome obviously held an extremely important position both in terms of ideology and, because of her senate, in terms of practical influence. Emperors were expected, at the very least, to cultivate a deferential relationship with this ideological capital of the Empire and to honor its senate and people (shorthand for Romanness itself) as a means of demonstrating their *pietas* and reverence.¹⁰² During the later Roman Empire, as already discussed, emperors had increasingly shunned such duties, abandoning Rome for other cities and leaving the Senate to its own devices. This act might have been welcome given certain circumstances,¹⁰³ but the net result was the removal of useful and often needful patronage from the Eternal City, and Rome's inhabitants as well as other Italo-Romans became increasingly aware of the painful consequences.¹⁰⁴ As Rome was neglected, so too was her infrastructure, while her elevated standing likewise declined. The revocation of the city's tax exemption privileges in 306 provides just one example among many of the series of insults perpetrated during the later Empire and of the local outrage that such disregard could inspire,¹⁰⁵ and, again, Rome's position as *caput mundi* continued to be challenged into the fifth and early sixth century, as "New" Rome (Constantinople) steadily eclipsed her.

Despite these trends, however, "good" late antique emperors continued to understand the value (both practical and propagandistic) of revering the Eternal City, and in varying degrees they honored Rome's senate and people as a means of reconciling their more traditionally-minded audiences (local and abroad) to their reigns. Maxentius, for instance, literally resided in Rome and made specifically Roman *Romanitas* a core ideology of his epoch.¹⁰⁶ Constantine, likewise, made his home there for a time, returning to celebrate his *decennalia* and *vicennalia* with games and leaving monuments

¹⁰² This helped to qualify an emperor as "optimus princeps" in Western eyes. Cf. Wes (1967), 25-51; Cullhed (1994), 60; and the earlier discussion of *principes* in chapter 2. See below for examples of late antique emperors doing just this.

¹⁰³ Matthews (1975), 20-29.

¹⁰⁴ See especially Van Dam (2007), chapter 2, as well as the discussion of (largely) fifth-century inscriptions reflecting senatorial malaise found in Alföldy (2001).

¹⁰⁵ For this example, see chapter 2.

¹⁰⁶ See especially Cullhed (1994).

as a testament to his benefaction.¹⁰⁷ His son, Constantius II, who was primarily a resident of the East, also made a ceremonial visit, and though truly awestruck by the wondrous monuments that he saw within the city, he too ultimately left for elsewhere, never to return.¹⁰⁸ More significantly, however, the fifth century had actually witnessed the re-establishment of imperial courts at Rome on a semi-permanent and even permanent basis, while senators had not only worked closely with the emperors of this period, but even become emperors themselves.¹⁰⁹ Though Ravenna would become the only administrative capital by Odovacer's time, the memory of a Roman empire where Rome truly mattered was still fresh when the Goths had arrived on the scene.

Theoderic, as suggested in an earlier chapter, was clearly aware of the significance of the city of Rome and worked within this late antique legacy of neglect and reconciliation, making the latter an intrinsic part of the restoration sentiments of his reign. Idioms, for instance, linked his epoch with the glory days of the late Republic and Principate, to a time when Italians and Rome's senate and people mattered most within a Rome-centered Empire. Likewise, imagery, as embodied in the coinage that he minted at Rome, appealed to a specifically Roman form of *Romanitas*; to Rome as an *invicta Roma* and *caput mundi*; to Rome's senate as the source of law and legitimacy; and to Rome's foundational myths as represented in the *Lupa Romana*, *Ficus Ruminalis*, and twin eagles. In the past, such linguistic and pictorial references had been used as a means of suggesting a kind of renaissance or re-foundation for the city of Rome,¹¹⁰ and now, under Theoderic, another rebirth of sorts was being proclaimed in this city, just as in others. Reflecting in wonder at the seemingly rejuvenated capital of the world, once "slipping in

¹⁰⁷ Van Dam (2007), 45-61.

¹⁰⁸ Recorded in Ammianus, *Res Gestae* 16.10. Cf. MacCormack (1981), 39-45, who draws attention to the interdependence of Rome and Constantinople in the public oration given at Rome by Themistius during this same visit. Ironically, even when Rome took center stage, her sister and rival loomed large in the background.

¹⁰⁹ For imperial courts at Rome in the fifth century, see Gillett (2001); for the increased importance of senators and the (western) Senate in the fifth and sixth century, see Matthews (1975), 353-76, and Burgarella (2001). More broadly, Jones (1964), 523-62. Senatorial emperors of the fifth century include Priscus Attalus, Petronius Maximus, and Anicius Olybrius.

¹¹⁰ Zanker (1988), chapters 4 and 5, and Cullhed (1994), chapter 3.

her tracks,” Ennodius himself declared, “Give us your favor, sacred rudiments of the Lupercalian genius,” and proclaimed that Theoderic had made Rome young again.¹¹¹

Expressions such as these obviously had something to do with building and renovation projects, much as they did in other cities. But Rome’s situation, much like Liguria’s, was unique, and her *renovatio*, though inspiring in and of itself, was also designed to complement a host of other visual media (such as the coinage described above) that were intended to assert to everyone, Romans and Italians especially, that the empire’s newest *princeps* honored Rome above all cities. Such deference, especially when combined with restoration projects elsewhere, did much to legitimize Theoderic as a kind of Roman emperor and, indeed, one of the “good ones.” More importantly, however, it filled local expectations of specifically Roman and Italo-Roman exceptionalism. Rome, to put it plainly, was supposed to be *the* preeminent city in the whole world, and Theoderic’s activities, buildings being but one form, allowed many of his subjects to believe this again, spurring on contemporary understandings of a golden age.

Like the majority of late antique emperors, however, Theoderic had obviously not established his court at Rome, even if (and this is significant) he did come rather close to doing so and continued throughout his reign to hint that he was entertaining the idea. His early reign had naturally made establishing his court in northern Italy preferable. Not only was there already a preexisting administrative infrastructure there, but this region had also witnessed the greatest devastation during the campaign against Odovacer and remained a target of depredation from beyond thereafter. Provinces like Liguria, as we have seen, required more guided attention than Rome, ignorant as the City had been “of the dangers of the wars.”¹¹² Once fruitful, Liguria had been laid low, but Rome had long been languishing in her drawn out senescence. Still, despite this northern orientation, Theoderic was keen to develop a deferential connection with the people of Rome, particularly the senatorial elite, almost from the very beginning of his reign. Indeed,

¹¹¹ *PanTh* 56-7: “Illa ipsa mater civitatum Roma iuveniscit marcida senectutis membra resecano. Date veniam, Lupercalis genii sacra rudimenta.” Given recent questions about the celebration of the Lupercalia at Rome, which concluded with Pope Gelasius banning the holiday, Ennodius’ choice of words is somewhat striking (even if overtly metaphorical).

¹¹² *PanTh* 48 (addressing Roma): “agnosce clementiam domini tui: saporem te voluit haurire triumphorum, quam dubia elegit nescire certaminum.”

though Rome's allegiance had vacillated during the wars, her senators had remained instrumental in the early days of the new regime, particularly when it came to Constantinople. As already discussed, Theoderic was willing to forgive and to work with Rome's powerful elite,¹¹³ and it would be through the Senate's assistance that he would secure his recognition in the East, his princely position sealed when Festus, the *caput senatus*, returned from New Rome bearing the palatial ornaments of Romulus Augustus.

Throughout the 490s, then, Theoderic was cultivating a relationship from afar with members of the Senate at Rome. In the year 500, however, this long-distance relationship was altered when Italy's new master journeyed to Rome and celebrated, in true imperial style, his *tricennalia*.¹¹⁴ A number of sources record this event and its significance (already alluded to above). The *Life of Fulgentius of Ruspe*, for instance, describes the situation as "the greatest celebration, a gathering of the Roman senate and people before the delightful presence of king Theoderic," and refers to the "glorious pomp," "popular applause," and "spectacle [of] superfluous delight" that were witnessed within the Roman forum, all with the disdain proper to an ascetic.¹¹⁵ "How much more

¹¹³ Ennodius himself acknowledged this in *VE* 135 (discussed above), and *PanTh* 57 and 74-75 (discussed below). For the relationship in general, Moorhead (1978) and (1984).

¹¹⁴ The only source that specifically refers to this event as a *tricennalia* is the *Anonymus Valesianus*, which may in fact be mistaken or a simple corruption. The attempt to reconcile the year 500 as the thirtieth anniversary of Theoderic's reign has met with mixed results. Some have suggested that Theoderic's defeat of the Sarmatian king Babai and seizure of the city of Singidunum in 470/1 marked the beginning of his reign (an event that legitimized Theoderic, according to Wolfram (1988), 267, "as a lord in his own right, though without actually becoming king"). Others have suggested his inheritance of his uncle Valimer's realm in 469/70 (or 471/2), despite the fact that Theoderic did not technically become *rex* until 474. Others have even accepted 474, pointing out that it was not unprecedented of for these kinds of regnal anniversaries to be celebrated early. None of these possibilities, however, seems entirely convincing, especially since they have absolutely nothing to do with Theoderic's ruling over Romans. Why, indeed, would Romans have cause to celebrate any of these events, especially the seizure of Singidunum, which was supposed to be returned to the eastern Roman Empire? Surely celebrating Theoderic's 30-year rule over *only* the Goths would have been divisive. Two alternative (and seemingly better) explanations are readily available. First, the *Anonymus Valesianus* account might be incorrect and this visit did not commemorate an anniversary at all, but perhaps simply provided an opportunity for senatorial and popular acclamation. For such an interpretation (and possible reasons for visiting Rome at this time), see Vitiello (2005), 57-71. Second, and to my mind preferable, the manuscript is merely corrupt and *decennalia* (ten-year anniversary) is meant. Such a *decennalia* would have dated Theoderic's reign from 490 or perhaps 493 (when he became ruler of Italy), since, again, it was not uncommon for Roman emperors to celebrate their anniversaries early. Burns (1984), 90, accepts the latter reading, citing the Loeb edition, 550-51 (fn. 3), which provides this possible emendation.

¹¹⁵ *Vita Fulgentii* 10: "Fuit autem tunc in Urbe maximum gaudium: Theodorici regis praesentia romani senatus et populi laetificante conventus. ... In loco qui Palma Aurea dicitur, memorato Theodorico rege concionem faciente, romanae curiae nobilitatem decus ordinem que distinctis decoratam gradibus exspectaret et favores liberi populi castis auribus audiens, qualis esset hujus saeculi gloriosa pompa cognosceret. Neque tamen in hoc spectaculo libenter aliquid intuitur nec nugis illius saecularibus superflua

precious can heavenly Jerusalem be,” Fulgentius admonished the monks in his midst, “if terrestrial Rome glitters so!”¹¹⁶ But though this North African monk evidently found the scene revolting, those Romans participating in the fanfare seem not to have shared his sensibilities, and other, more traditional sources echo the broader appeal of this ceremonial arrival. Cassiodorus, for example, explained in his chronicle that Theoderic’s presence had been “desired by the prayers of everyone,”¹¹⁷ and that once in Rome he treated the Senate “with wondrous courtesy” and “gave provisions to the Roman plebs.”¹¹⁸ The much longer notice found in the *Anonymus Valesianus* account is similarly laudatory and likewise adds an element of piety that even Fulgentius might have appreciated, had he known of it.¹¹⁹ Here a rather devout Theoderic, reminiscent of the pious ruler found in the *Life of Epiphanius*, arrived outside the walls of the city and, before doing anything else, honored Saint Peter, “worshipping as if a Catholic” and paying respect to his successor, Pope Symmachus.¹²⁰ Following this, the entire Senate and people of Rome welcomed him within their walls “with the greatest joy,”¹²¹ his entrance developing into a procession that culminated in the Forum, in the region beside the Senate House known as “at the Palm.”¹²² It was in this location, according to the *Anonymus Valesianus*, that Theoderic addressed the Senate and people, perhaps the same address recorded in the *Vita Fulgentii*,¹²³ piously vowing to “completely preserve as

illectus delectatione consensit.” The account harmonizes quite nicely with that found in the *Anonymus Valesianus* (see below).

¹¹⁶ *Vita Fulgentii* 10: “sed inde potius ad illam supernae Hierusalem desiderandam felicitatem vehementer exarsit, salubri disputatione praesentes sic admonens fratres: quam speciosa potest esse Hierusalem caelestis si sic fulget Roma terrestri!”

¹¹⁷ *CassChron*, anno 500: “Hoc anno dn. rex Theodericus Romam cunctorum votis expetitus advenit.” Perhaps this was the *real* rationale for the visit, as per fn. 114 (above), i.e. that he was expected to come.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*: “...senatum suum mira affabilitate tractans Romanae plebi donavit annonas...”

¹¹⁹ But perhaps he actually did, for both Theoderic and Fulgentius paid their respects to the martyrs located *fuori le mura*. In fact, this is exactly what the *Life of Fulgentius* claims Fulgentius was doing during the ceremonial *adventus* of Theoderic, when the Goth himself was honoring the Prince of the Apostles, Saint Peter, outside the walls. See below.

¹²⁰ Doubtless, this was an occasion for a pious removal of his diadem. Cf. chapter 2 and Vitiello (2005).

¹²¹ *AnonVal* 65: “...ambulavit rex Theodericus Romam, et occurrit Beato Petro devotissimus ac si catholicus. Cui papa Symmachus et cunctus senatus vel populus Romanus cum omni gaudio extra urbem occurrentes.” Though himself not a Nicene Christian, i.e. Catholic (but clearly conciliatory towards the Church), the act imitated that of other “Christian” emperors. See Vitiello (2005), chp. 1 especially. Given Theoderic’s mother’s Catholicism and episodes that demonstrate Arian tolerance for Catholic rites, one wonders if this was merely “for show.”

¹²² *AnonVal* 66: “Deinde veniens ingressus urbem, venit ad senatum, et ad Palmam populo allocutus...” For a discussion of this location and its significance, Guidobaldi (1999), 52-3.

¹²³ *Vita Fulgentii* 10: “In loco qui Palma Aurea dicitur” (cited in full above).

inviolable whatever prior Roman *principes* had ordained” and later ordering these very words to be inscribed on a bronze tablet for everyone to see.¹²⁴

Such accounts, especially that of the *Anonymus Valesianus*, reveal the extent to which the mere arrival of an emperor at Rome, in this case the *princeps* Theoderic, could become a magical moment, when ruler and ruled exchanged complementary forms of legitimizing acclamation and approbation. Just as the Senate and people of Rome applauded their Empire’s new lord for the first time and placed their useful seal on his reign, so too did he behave according to their traditional expectations, acknowledging their often neglected roles as guardians of the Republic and partners in his reign. The noble lie, dating all the way back to the reign of Augustus and so essential to Rome’s senatorial class, was hence perpetuated. When in Rome “good” emperors would acknowledge that the Empire still belonged to the Senate and people and that they were simply reverent guardians humbly content with the honorary title of “first citizen” (*princeps*). The Republic, dead for over five centuries, had never died, and because Theoderic was so keen to make this known, the Romans of Rome welcomed him with open arms.

But Theoderic’s benefaction to the city of Rome extended beyond this almost “unbelievable courtesy”¹²⁵ shown to the Senate and people during his *adventus*. An emperor’s presence in any city, but especially Rome, was an opportunity for generosity on a scale that only the wealthiest coffers could afford; and since this was Rome, ideally the mistress of the world, the greatest expenses (now that they were becoming available) could not be spared. Theoderic remained in Rome for six months,¹²⁶ an impressive

¹²⁴ *AnonVal* 66: “se omnia, deo iuvante, quod retro principes Romani ordinaverunt inviolabiliter servaturum promittit” and *AnonVal* 69: “Verba enim promissionis eius, quae populo fuerat allocutus, rogante populo in tabula aenea iussit scribi et in publico poni.” The practice was seen as originating with Trajan, an avowed model for the Amals. Cf. *Variae* 9.3.5 (upon Athalaric’s ascension): “Ecce Traiani vestri clarum saeculis reparamus exemplum: iurat vobis per quem iuratis, nec potest ab illo quisquam falli, quo invocato non licet inpune mentiri.”

¹²⁵ *CassChron*, anno 500: *mira affabilitate* (cited above).

¹²⁶ Six months is inferred from *AnonVal* 70, where the visit to Rome terminates: “Deinde sexto mense revertens Ravennam, aliam germanam suam Amalabirgam tradens in matrimonio Herminifredo regi Turingorum et sic sibi per circuitum placavit omnes gentes.” There is, however, room to argue that the *Anonymus Valesianus* account has conflated two visits into one, or perhaps that a corruption has occurred within the manuscript tradition and that *mense* should actually read *anno*. This is suggested because a letter in the *Variae* (4.1) securely dates the marriage alliance with Herminifred to 506/7-11 and, given its connection in the *Anonymus Valesianus* account with Theoderic’s return to Ravenna, seems to indicate that Theoderic abandoned Rome in late 505 at the earliest. Such a connection may not have been intended, but

amount of time insofar as it superceded a good deal of his imperial predecessors, some of whom had never even set foot in the capital. Such an extended visit allowed this outsider to get to know the city and its populace (and vice versa), and more importantly provided numerous contexts for demonstrating his imperial *pietas* through lavish spending, exhibiting the kind of patronage that could serve to sow sentiments of the City's (and hence the Empire's) rejuvenation and restoration. Eager to match and even surpass the feats of the ancients, Theoderic orchestrated an imperial triumph within the walls of Rome,¹²⁷ a public expression of Roman invincibility not seen here for nearly a century and thus a rather potent indication to all present (and all who heard of it) of Rome and her empire's rising fortunes through the assistance of the Goths.¹²⁸ Already known to have celebrated a triumph in New Rome, this ruler of the west transferred its awesome power to Old Rome, to the only Rome that really mattered in Italo-Roman eyes, making his

in fact one late sixth-century chronicle (the so-called *Auctorium Hauniense*) actually supports the idea, recording the arrival of Theoderic at Rome in 504 (rather than 500) and not mentioning the fanfare described above. If this visit in 504 lasted for sixth months, a return to Ravenna followed by the marriage alliance in 506 would be chronologically conceivable. Alternatively, these sources can be reconciled by imagining a six-year stay in Rome (from 500 to 506), though it would make the most amount of sense for this six-year period to be typified by Theoderic spending most (but not all) his time in Rome. Most scholars have simply concluded that the 504 dating is incorrect, citing as evidence the *Chronicle of Marius of Avenches*, which places a similar description of events in the year 500 (Marius may have been just as confused as we are!). None, however, has seen fit to deal with the Amalberga marriage question. Cf. Vitiello (2005), 58-79. Adding further complication, *sexto mense* could simply mean "June," though there is no indication in the *Anonymus Valesianus* as to when Theoderic arrived in the first place (the *Auctorium Hauniense* places Theoderic's arrival in 504 in May). In the very least, the assertion of Barnish (2007), 328 (fn. 46), that Theoderic's stay in Rome was brief and solitary seems far from certain.

¹²⁷ *AnonVal* 67: "Per tricennalem triumphans populo ingressus palatium." But see the argument of McCormick (1986), 272-3, who suggests that the *Valesianus* account was mistaken and that this "triumph" was simply part of the *adventus* ceremony. For the connection between a triumph and *adventus*, see MacCormack (1981), 33-45. If a *bona fide* triumph, as taken above, the real question would seem to be over whom. It might simply have been an "empty" triumph, not unheard of in the Roman world, but there are a few other readily available possibilities. The defeat of Odovacer, though already seven years past, is one (and in early 507 Ennodius, *PanTh* 48, even referred to Rome's "tasting" of this and many other triumphs). Another possibility is to see this triumph as related to the marriage alliances Theoderic contracted with neighboring barbarians around the same time, an accomplishment sometimes referred to as triumphal, since it reinforced conceptions of Roman dominance over *externae gentes*. Indeed, it was actually in 500 that the Vandals, long a major threat to Italy, were pacified with an Amal bride (see *PanTh* 70 and *AnonVal* 67; cf. *PanTh* 54). If Theoderic can be placed in Rome in 504/5 (as per the hypotheses suggested above), the triumph might also have been related to defeats of the Gepids and Bulgars during the Sirmian War.

¹²⁸ The last recorded imperial triumph in Rome dates to the reign of Honorius. On this, Siena (1984), 509. Consuls were known to host celebrations referred to as "triumphal," during which they generally exhibited games and granted gifts. For this practice and examples of it during the sixth century, see Vitiello (2005), 75. But one should probably distinguish between such consular "triumphs," led by a consul, and imperial "triumphs," led by the emperor, the latter doubtless being more lavish and thus more impressive. *Variae* 3.39, in fact, suggests that some consuls were either financially unable (or perhaps simply morally unwilling) to meet such requirements.

standing as a *triumphator* as much a blessing to Italy and Rome as it had been to Constantinople and the East. From his residence on the Palatine, the same residence once inhabited by emperors, Theoderic likewise exhibited circus games and provided for the general welfare of the city and its populace. Traditional provisions, at times despaired of in the city, were granted, and arrangements were also made so that they would continue to be supplied in his absence. Moreover, “the greatest quantity of money” was set aside, so that the palace itself might be kept in good repair and the various public buildings in the city might continue to function as monuments to Rome and her Empire’s historic (and now increasingly revitalized) supremacy.¹²⁹

Such acts during this lengthy stay at Rome were so clearly within the imperial tradition that it would have been very difficult for locals to imagine Theoderic as anything other than a Roman emperor,¹³⁰ and, as we have seen, this is exactly what Italo-Romans residing elsewhere, like Epiphanius in Liguria, were already coming to believe. But more than just acting imperial, Theoderic had exceeded local expectations in a manner befitting a *good* emperor, like some new Constantine, or better still a new Trajan. Though this *bonus princeps* would, in keeping with late antique trends, eventually leave the City, this visit would nonetheless be remembered favorably (as above), and the Romans of Rome would remain appreciative, continuing to hope for their ruler’s return.¹³¹ Theoderic, of course, would not return to Rome, but the pro-Roman policies initiated during this visit would remain essential to a program of reconciliation and appeasement promoted throughout his long reign (and, in fact, beyond). Even *in absentia* this ruler of the western Roman Empire continued to make his reverence for Rome and her Senate and people well known, honoring them with laudatory language and pious generosity from afar.

Continuing to show deference to the Senate was perhaps the most valuable gesture of all, not simply because, as Theoderic informed its members, “what adorns the

¹²⁹ *AnonVal* 67: “Donavit populo Romano et pauperibus annonas singulis annis, centum viginti milia modios, et ad restaurationem palatii, seu ad recuperationem moeniae civitatis singulis annis libras ducentas de arca vinaria dari praecepit”; *CassChron*, anno 500: “...Romanae plebi donavit annonas, atque admirandis moeniis deputata per singulos annos maxima pecuniae quantitate subvenit.”

¹³⁰ Especially given the conclusions drawn in chapters 2 and 3.

¹³¹ See below for such longing within Theoderican Rome.

Roman name was founded by you,”¹³² but because senators could have powerful connections and might prove equally useful when friends as harmful when enemies.¹³³ Indeed, their approval could be one of the most legitimizing forces of all for any Roman regime and inversely their disapproval or disaffection could become its undoing.¹³⁴ Even Theoderic’s eastern colleague, Anastasius, had been keen to point this out, and, though duly respectful in the face of such admonitions, the Amal prince had made it quite clear that he did “cherish the Senate,” and hence “ruled the Romans in the manner of a [good] emperor,” governing well.¹³⁵ Although absent from Rome, this esteem for the Senate could be demonstrated in a number of ways. An earlier chapter has already discussed the value before a senatorial audience of the Republican language and imagery of the day, particularly Theoderic and his successor’s employment of the senatorial title *princeps* and the abbreviation “SC” (*Senatus Consulto*).¹³⁶ Complementary to such references, and perhaps even more effective, however, was the persistent use of laudatory and obsequious language whenever addressing the Senate, a replay of sorts of the “unbelievable courtesy” that Theoderic had demonstrated personally in 500.

Language like this served to reemphasize the Senate and its members’ unique role as leaders and guardians of the Republic, as partners with its princely master. In a number of letters Theoderic reminded his senators of this position, insisting on its fundamental importance to Rome and her civilized rule of law, *civilitas*. In one instance, senators were reminded that their order had once “provided for devotion in the provinces, decreed the laws for private individuals, and taught subjects in every region to yield happily before justice.”¹³⁷ So important a legacy, Theoderic reminded them, should not be lost, and, in keeping with their ancestors, contemporary senators were expected to act

¹³² *Variae* 2.24.1: “nam quod ornat nomen Romanum, a vobis legitur institum.”

¹³³ As already demonstrated, senators were key in establishing and maintaining cordial relations with the east Roman state. Their loyalty, therefore, was extremely valuable, and their disloyalty a cause for serious alarm (hence the executions of Boethius, Albinus, and Symmachus in 525).

¹³⁴ This was especially the case in the more traditional and Republic-minded West, where emperors were expected to be *principes* and to perpetuate ideologies of a Senate-dominated *Res Publica*. On this, see chapter 2.

¹³⁵ *Variae* 1.1.2-3: “...didicimus, quemadmodum Romanis aequabiliter imperare possimus. ...hortamini me frequenter, ut diligam senatum... ut cuncta Italiae membra componam.” For this reading of *aequabiliter*, see chapter 2.

¹³⁶ See chapter 2.

¹³⁷ *Variae* 2.24.1: “vos enim devotionem provinciis, vos privatis iura decrevistis et ad omnes iustitiae partes subiectos libenter parere docuistis.”

“with justice” and to be “an example of moderation” to all.¹³⁸ “You... owe the Republic an exertion equal to our own,”¹³⁹ they were told, and another missive (and an interesting one considering that it is not derived from the *Variae*) implies that Theoderic was quite serious. Here, as elsewhere, Rome’s senators were honored as “patres conscripti,” while the senate itself was addressed, quite incredibly, as “the conqueror of the world [and] the patron and restorer of liberty.”¹⁴⁰ These words are revealing, for they suggest just how much the senate could be idealized, in true principate fashion, as a necessary counterpart to Theoderic himself, a mere first citizen with the same credentials and societal role as those senators who hailed him (as he hailed them) as a “guardian of liberty,” “conqueror of nations,” and restorer of blessedness.¹⁴¹ Equally revealing is the content of this letter, which implied that senatorial decrees, those “regulations of your sacred assembly, pleasing to our Clemency,” could stand on their own with the force of law and were only strengthened by Theoderic’s approval,¹⁴² seemingly validating current usages of the SC abbreviation.

Respect like this doubtless played to senatorial needs, yet expressions of partnership and the (re)elevation of senatorial rank were not restricted to direct addresses to this sacred body; not mere flattery for the sake of senatorial egos, this language was ubiquitous and, owing to its traditional nature, was directly connected to perceptions of Rome and her Empire’s renewal. The Senate was, in Theoderic’s words, the “inner

¹³⁸ *Variae* 2.24.2-3: . “Et ideo non decet inde signum resultationis exire, unde exemplum potuit moderationis effulgere. ... Sic aequabiliter ordinate.” Notice, however, that in this instance the senators were not behaving properly at all, but were being exhorted to do so. Also, note the translation of *aequabiliter* as “justly,” though in this case it might also be translated “in a similar manner,” since the *sic* is prefaced by the statement “you who owe the Republic an exertion *equal* (parem) to our own” (cited below).

¹³⁹ *Variae* 2.24.3: “patres conscripti, qui parem nobiscum rei publicae debetis adnism...”

¹⁴⁰ *Praeceptum Regis Theoderici (Epistulae Theodericianae* 9): “Domitori orbis, praesuli et reparatori libertatis senatui urbis Romae Flavius Theodericus Rex.”

¹⁴¹ These are all common themes in the literature of the day, but see the following as examples. Guardian of liberty, *ILS* 827: *custos libertatis*; *PanTh* 42: *vindex libertatis* (Theoderic’s sword); Conqueror of nations, *ILS* 828: *domitor gentium*; Senigallia Medallion: *victor gentium*; Restorer of Blessedness, *CassOratReliquiae*: “quo / pugnante ...saecula nostra an / tiqua beatitudo revertitur”; *PanTh* 93 (a theme throughout): *aurei bona saeculi*.

¹⁴² *Praeceptum Regis Theoderici*: “Pervenit ad nos, patres conscripti, de ecclesiae missa utilitate suggestio et nostrae mansuetudinis grata sacri coetus vestri ordinatio corda pulsavit. Et licet post venerabilem synodum ad huiusmodi decreta vestri sufficat ordinatio sola iudicii, tamen pro vestra huiusmodi praesentibus oraculis dedimus consultatione responsum...” Theoderic hence suggested that a senatorial *ordinatio* had the force of law, but that his *responsum* could strengthen its effectiveness. Such a suggestion was clearly within the imperial tradition and lends credence to the conclusion of Prostko-Prostyński (1994), 188, that Theoderic exercised the right to pass his own legislation.

sanctum” and “hall of liberty,” “a holy order” and “honored assembly,” “most pleasing” and “glorious in its wonderful reputation.”¹⁴³ Moreover, as a constituted body, senators were described to others as “a crowd of learned men,” who were “joined together as first in the world” and provided “glorious visions of upstanding behavior” to those who beheld them.¹⁴⁴ It was splendid, Prefects of the City (who doubled as presidents of the Senate) were told, to be in their midst. “Consider how great it is to say something to these learned men [i.e. senators] and to fear the shame of error.”¹⁴⁵ Likewise it was a great source of honor for deserving men to “radiate with senatorial luster” and be “dressed with a senatorial honor,”¹⁴⁶ such offices allowing anyone already “resplendent in his own merits [and] the splendor of his birth” to be “rendered even more distinguished.”¹⁴⁷

Indeed, there was a vested interest on the part of the Theoderican regime in ensuring that the appropriate candidates were promoted to senatorial rank, not simply because (as suggested above) men like these were an asset to the state, but because (as an earlier chapter makes clear) the opposite was understood by many to have been the case during the reign of Odovacer. Ennodius, for instance, had claimed in his panegyric that under Odovacer “the most eloquent man seemed ignoble amid ploughs” and that “bodily strength negated what education” bestowed, while Cassiodorus had expressed frustration at the slow advancement of his own family during the course of the fifth century.¹⁴⁸ But now, under Theoderic, “skilled men... are sought everywhere” and “he who is worthy... holds a magistracy.”¹⁴⁹ Youths like Venantius, the son of the exceptional patrician

¹⁴³ For inner sanctum of liberty, *Variae* 3.33.3: *penetralia Libertatis*; hall of liberty, *Variae* 6.4.3: *illa Libertatis aula*; holy order, *Variae* 3.33.1: *sacri ordinis*; honored assembly, *Variae* 6.4.3: *honorate congregationis*; most pleasing, *Variae* 3.33.3: *gratissimum senatum*; and glorious in its wonderful reputation, *Variae* 6.4.1: “senatus ille mirabili opinione gloriosus.”

¹⁴⁴ For crowd of learned men, *Variae* 3.33.2: “in illa turba doctorum” and (similarly) *Variae* 6.4.3: “tot doctos viros”; joined together as first in the world, *Variae* 6.4.3: “commissos... mundi primarios”; and glorious visions of upstanding behavior, *ibid*: “inter tot morum lumina.”

¹⁴⁵ *Variae* 6.4.4: “respice tot doctos viros et considera, quale sit his aliquid dicere nec erroris verecundiam formidare.”

¹⁴⁶ Radiate, *Variae* 3.33.1: “laetamur tales viros emergere, qui senatoria mereantur luce radiare”; dressed, *Variae* 3.33.2: “Nam quid dignius, si et senatorio vestiatur honore togata professio.”

¹⁴⁷ *Variae* 2.16.2: “hinc est quod illustrem Venantium, tam suis quam paternis meritis elucetum, comitivae domesticorum vacantis dignitate subveximus, ut natalium splendor insitus ornatio collatis redderetur honoribus.” Cf. *Variae* 2.15 and *PLRE* 2, 1152 (“Venantius 2”). The Venantius in question was the son of the illustrious patrician and Prefect of Gaul, Liberius.

¹⁴⁸ See chapter 1.

¹⁴⁹ *PanTh* 74: “sollers ubicumque latet inquiritur. Magistratum... exigit qui meretur.”

Liberius, were granted senatorial offices both out of respect for their parents' lofty achievements and in acknowledgement of their own ennobling pursuit of letters, traditional requirements for high status within Roman society which aided in Theoderic's own acceptance.¹⁵⁰ Ennodius thus lauded his *princeps* for returning to "progeny what you owed to their sires, their good faith being well known to your Mildness,"¹⁵¹ and in announcing his promotion of Venantius, this was exactly the rationale that Theoderic provided to the Senate. "Weigh carefully," the *patres conscripti* were instructed, "whether we ought to leave this offspring unrewarded, whose father we remember had accomplished so many excellent things."¹⁵² Venantius, moreover, was deserving of his illustrious rank, for as an "attentive examiner," he continued to "pursue the study of letters, which is worthy of its own applause in all offices, smoothly imparting to the fame of [his] family a talent for eloquence."¹⁵³ Another senatorial appointee, Armentarius, was similarly deserving, "recommended to us both for the nobility of his parents and his own talent" for eloquent speech.¹⁵⁴ "What is more worthy," Theoderic asked, than "for a profession already wrapped in a toga to be dressed with senatorial honor so that in that crowd of learned men he whom the right of eloquence exhorts to speak may dare to utter freely his thoughts, not restrained by the fear of ignorance?"¹⁵⁵ Promotions of Romans like Venantius and Armentarius, scions of illustrious office-holders ennobled further through a pursuit of letters, hence provided yet another form of patronage to the Senate, allowing Theoderic to wrap "the crown of the Senate," as Ennodius so eloquently put it, "with innumerable flowers."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ For this legitimization through letters, see chapter 3. Cf. Riché (1976), 24-31. For Venantius' lineage, see the footnote above.

¹⁵¹ *PanTh* 75: "cuius mansuetudini tuae fides innotuerit, hereditatis iure quod auctori debueras suboli mox refundes."

¹⁵² *Variae* 2.16.6: "perpendite, patres conscripti, si hanc subolem inremuneratam relinquere debuimus, cuius auctorem tot eximia fecisse retinemus."

¹⁵³ *Variae* 2.15.4: "Litterarum siquidem studia, quae cunctis honoribus suo sunt digna suffragio, sedulus perscrutator assequeris, addens claritati generis ingenium suaviter eloquentis."

¹⁵⁴ *Variae* 3.33.2: "Hic est enim praefatus Armentarius, qui et parentum bono et suo nobis commendatur ingenio, exigens meritis quam sperat precibus dignitatem." For Armentarius, *PLRE* 2, 150 ("Armentarius 2").

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*: "Nam quid dignius, si et senatorio vestiatur honore togata professio, ut in illa turba doctorum audeat liberam proferre sententiam, nec frenetur imperitiae terrore, quem hortantur ad vocem iura facundiae."

¹⁵⁶ *PanTh* 57: "huc accedit, quod coronam curiae innumero flore velasti. Nullum de honoribus tetigit desperatio..."

The Senate, however, was only half of the equation found within the Republican shorthand for Roman society, SPQR. The commoners of Rome, the *populus Romanus*, were also vital and, like Rome's senators, they continued to receive those customary tributes that their sovereign had granted in person during his long stay. Before leaving Rome, Theoderic had arranged for 120,000 *modii* of grain to be supplied to these plebs on an annual basis, doubtless to be converted into bread.¹⁵⁷ This traditional dole, a long-established right for the Romans of Rome, had at times met with scarcity or simply neglect,¹⁵⁸ and though its fate under Odovacer is unknown, the *Variae* collection demonstrates that it remained a vigilantly guarded privilege under the Goths, who maintained other free provisions, such as pork.¹⁵⁹ Prefects of the Annona, in general, were told that their office made them glorious, since they saw to the rations of the "most sacred city" and fed "so great a people."¹⁶⁰ Prefects of Italy, likewise, were instructed to prevent corruption and to ensure that enough grain was earmarked for local consumption before allowing any to be sold abroad.¹⁶¹ There would, in fact, be times of scarcity, and Cassiodorus himself would be Prefect of Italy at a time when Rome herself actually suffered from such want.¹⁶² But even then, long after Theoderic's death, the elevated position of the Eternal City was honored, and Cassiodorus took great pains to provide

¹⁵⁷ *Variae* 6.18 demonstrates that the prefect of the annonae supervised the bakers at Rome, who presumably used this grain to make their loaves. For the provisions granted in 500, see above. The amount is considerably smaller than earlier times. Cf. Jones (1964), 697-699. However, it qualified in the eyes of the *Anonymus Valesianus* as generous (*AnonVal* 60: "Dona et annonae largitus"). Perhaps, then, the 120,000 *modii* were in addition to an already established number. Cf. Barnish (1987), 161, who suggests that the *Anonymus Valesianus* is confused and that the 120,000 represents either a confirmation of an earlier established number or an increase of 1 *modus* per head. Barnish also points out that the number 120,000 "corresponds very remarkably" with the 120,000 recipients of the pork dole in 419.

¹⁵⁸ For its rocky fortunes during the fifth and sixth century (largely the result of lost provinces and internal strife), see Marazzi (2007), 295-6.

¹⁵⁹ For pork, *Variae* 6.18.4 and Barnish (1987). Beef may also have been available, though by the time of Cassiodorus' tenure as Praetorian Prefect of Italy, the beef tribute had been commuted to cash. How long this had been the case is uncertain, and indeed the opposite (cash payments converted to payments in kind) appears to have been the case for other provinces. Cf. *Variae* 11.39, 12.22, and 12.23. For guarded privilege, see also *Variae* 12.11.

¹⁶⁰ *Variae* 6.18.1: "si ad hanc mensuram consendae sunt dignitates, ut tanto qui honorabilis habeatur, quanto civibus profuisse cognoscitur, is certe debet esse gloriosus, qui ad opiam Romani populi probatur electus. Tui siquidem studii est, ut sacratissimae urbi praeparetur annonae, ubique redundet panis copia et tam magnus populus tamquam una mensa satietur."

¹⁶¹ *Variae* 1.34.1 (to Faustus): "copia frumentorum provinciae debet prodesse cui nascitur, quia iustius est, ut incolis propria fecunditas serviat quam peregrinis commerciis studiosae cupiditatis exhauriat."

¹⁶² Cf. *Variae* 1.35 and 12.25, among others. There would also be times of plenty (referenced in *Variae* 12.25), but also evident in the munificence shown to the Gauls. Cf. *Variae* 3.41, 3.44, 4.5 (discussed in the following chapter).

these Romans with their now long (re)established dole. “Our thoughts have been so troubled that these people, having grown accustomed to their ancient delights in the most blessed times of her [Amal] rulers, might rejoice with their scarcity having been removed.”¹⁶³

With bread, of course, came circuses, and, as already seen, like most emperors Theoderic had offered such entertainments during his visit in 500. Though he occasionally (and perhaps with good reason) condemned these games as “a spectacle that drives out the most serious of morals and invites the most fickle quarrels, a drainer of honesty, a gushing fountain of discord” and a “place that preserves excess,”¹⁶⁴ their importance at Rome (and elsewhere) was nonetheless not lost on him. Patient acceptance provided “a source of honor to *principes*,”¹⁶⁵ legitimizing Theoderic’s succession as an imperial heir, and so he continued to patronize and even cherish these games as much out of “obligation to the people”¹⁶⁶ as devotion to his office. Circuses were a source of “happiness” and “relaxation” for the population of Rome,¹⁶⁷ and the fact “that the [Roman] multitude knows itself to be at leisure”¹⁶⁸ served to perpetuate contemporary (and laudatory) understandings of Theoderic and his Goths, whereby their labors were thought to secure Roman *otium*.¹⁶⁹ Long after leaving Rome, then, Theoderic continued to endure “the great burden of expenses”¹⁷⁰ demanded by these games, the salaries paid

¹⁶³ *Variae* 11.5.2: “...ideo tot angusta cogitationis intravimus, ut populus illis antiquis delectationibus assuetus beatissimis regnantium temporibus explosis necessitatibus perfruatur.”

¹⁶⁴ *Variae* 3.51.2: “spectaculum expellens gravissimos mores, invitans levissimas contentiones, evacuator honestatis, fons irriguus iurgiorum” and *Variae* 1.27.5: “locus est qui defendit excessum.” Beyond conventional aristocratic disdain, Theoderic had practical reasons to make such claims, since the games often engendered “un-Roman” behavior, factional strife, and violence. Cf. *Variae* 1.20, 1.27, 1.30, 1.31, 1.32, 1.32, 3.51, and 6.4.

¹⁶⁵ *Variae* 1.27.5: “Quorum [i.e. spectaculorum] garrulitas si patienter accipitur, ipsos quoque principes ornare monstratur.”

¹⁶⁶ *Variae* 3.51.12: “haec nos fovemus necessitate imminentium populorum, quibus votum est ad talia convenire, dum cogitationes serias delectantur abicere.”

¹⁶⁷ *Variae* 1.31.1: “spectacula voluptatum laetitiam volumus esse populorum, nec erigere debet motus irarum, quod ad remissionem animi constat inventum.” Cf. Ammianus, *Res Gestae* 28.4.28-31, for a more disdainful description.

¹⁶⁸ *Variae* 1.20.1: “Illud enim propitiante deo labores nostros asserit, quod se otiosam generalitas esse cognoscit.”

¹⁶⁹ For this, see chapter 2.

¹⁷⁰ *Variae* 1.31.1: “Ideo enim tot expensarum onus subimus, ut conventus vester sit seditionis strepitus, sed pacis ornatus.”

to charioteers alone being impressive even by eastern standards,¹⁷¹ since he understood that the “blessedness of our age is the happiness of the people” and that “whatever [the mob] thinks is delightful... is connected to the happiness of the times.”¹⁷² The circus, then, may have been “no place for a Cato,” but as Theoderic wisely informed his prefect Faustus, “sometimes is it useful to act foolishly, that we might preserve the joys desired by the people.”¹⁷³

Other entertainments in Rome, perhaps similarly subsidized during Theoderic’s official stay, also received his princely largess after 500 and doubtless for the same reasons. Letters in the *Variae* demonstrate that pantomimes and actors, often associated with the circus, continued to receive their salaries as state employees and to be regulated by the prefects of Rome and the tribunes of entertainment.¹⁷⁴ More impressive still were Rome’s *venatores*, who continued putting on their hunting shows (*venationes*) at state and consular expense well after Theoderic’s reign.¹⁷⁵ Just as with the circuses, such entertainments could insult Theoderic’s personal sensibilities, the ruler of Italy decrying the games as a “detestable act,” “unhappy contest,” “cruel game,” “bloodthirsty delight,” and “human savagery,”¹⁷⁶ and suggesting that if there were any justice in the world, “as much wealth would be given for the life of these living men as seems to be showered for their death.”¹⁷⁷ But, again, it was understood that there was “need to exhibit such things

¹⁷¹ Theoderic’s generosity in this regard was apparently well known in the East, given that Thomas, an easterner, chose “to favor the seat of our empire after abandoning his own country” (*Variae* 3.51.1). Cf. *Variae* 2.9, where an impoverished charioteer is granted a raise in salary, and *Variae* 3.39.2, where the charioteers of Milan have complained to Theoderic of being denied their customary tributes under the consulship of Felix.

¹⁷² *Variae* 1.20.1: “praesertim cum beatitudo sit temporum laetitia populorum”; *Variae* 3.51.13: “Nam quicquid aestimat voluptuosum, hoc et ad beatitudinem temporum iudicat applicandum.”

¹⁷³ For Cato, *Variae* 1.27.5 (in reference to senators being insulted by plebs at the circus): “Ad circum nesciunt convenire catones.” It is worth noting the appeal here to Cato as an exemplar, as he was a true *Republican* hero. Cf. *PanTh* 30, where Theoderic himself is compared to Cato. For Faustus, *Variae* 3.51: “quapropter largiamur expensas, non semper ex iudicio demus. Expedit interdum desipere, ut populi possimus desiderata gaudia continere.”

¹⁷⁴ For pantomimes, *Variae* 1.31 and 1.32; for actors, *Variae* 7.10 and 9.21.

¹⁷⁵ For Athalaric’s repairs to the amphitheater at Pavia, see Fiebiger, vol. 1, #203 (*CIL* 5 6418).

¹⁷⁶ Detestable act and unhappy contest, *Variae* 5.42.1: “actus detestabilis, certamen infelix, cum feris velle contendere”; cruel game, bloodthirsty delight, and human savagery, *Variae* 5.42.4: “hunc ludum crudelem, sanguinariam voluptatem, impiam religionem, humanam, ut it dixerim, feritatem.”

¹⁷⁷ *Variae* 5.42.12: “si esset aequitatis intuitus, tantae divitiae pro vita mortalium deberent dari, quantae in mortes hominum videntur effundi.” Even more so than in the case of the circuses, feelings like these (and the ones just cited above) were in keeping with late antique Roman and Christian morality.

for the people”¹⁷⁸ as much as there was an obligation to concede to the *venatores* “whatever has become a long-held custom through ancient generosity.”¹⁷⁹ Ancient custom and popular support trumped personal taste or moral conviction.

Games and entertainments, then, served as signs of *felicitas* and *beatitudo* and were a traditional expectation among the Romans of Rome that continued to be fulfilled under Theoderic’s auspices. More significant still, Rome’s spectacles actually benefited from more than one occasion of exceptional imperial generosity at Theoderic’s expense. Though the elaborate circuses that he offered in person in 500 had been a remarkable tribute to the Senate and people of Rome, these games were in fact matched, surpassed even, in 519, when he sponsored lavish hunting games in the Colosseum in honor of his son-in-law Eutharic. The event itself was extremely significant on a number of levels. Since the “purple-colored offshoot” so hoped for by Ennodius in 507 had failed to materialize, Theoderic had begun grooming Eutharic as his successor to the western *imperium*. Informed of these plans, Justin, the emperor of the East, even adopted this Goth, a “Visigoth” of (probably invented) Amal blood,¹⁸⁰ as his son-in-arms, repeating the gesture of Zeno made during Theoderic’s consulship. Further, in 518 Eutharic was nominated as consul in the West and in the following year symbolically held this office with the eastern emperor as his colleague. Not since the days of the Theodosian emperors had Italo-Romans witnessed so seemingly stable a succession plan, and such developments doubtless suggested that the future of the resurgent western Empire, along with its harmony within a greater Roman world, was secure. It was time, therefore, to celebrate (yet again) in the West, and Rome was an ideal place to do so.

Joint triumphal processions were thus ordered for Rome and Ravenna, commemorating the new agreement reached with Constantinople, the consulship of

¹⁷⁸ *Variae* 5.42.11: “necesse est talia populis exhibere...”

¹⁷⁹ *Variae* 5.42.12: “Et ideo quicquid in longam consuetudinem antiqua liberalitate pervenit, sine aliqua dilatione cecidite supplicanti, quia homicidii reatus est illis esse tenacem, quos editio vestra invitavit ad mortem.”

¹⁸⁰ On this, Burns (1984), 92-3, and Wolfram (1988), 310-11, who take Eutharic’s Amal descent (recorded by Jordanes) at face value; Moorhead (1992), 200-202, is more suspicious, while Diaz and Valverde (2007), 364-7, suggest that Cassiodorus’ lost *Historia* was intended to legitimize Eutharic as both a Visigothic Balt and Ostrogothic Amal, rendering him a perfect successor to Theoderic (who by 519 was ruling over both Gothic peoples). While disagreeing with the latter interpretation of Cassiodorus’ lost history (see chapter 3), I accept the basic rationale for choosing Eutharic (despite the fact that Amalaric, technically Theoderic’s ward, was already a royal Amal-Balt Goth!).

Theoderic's heir apparent, and doubtless Gotho-Roman dominance over barbarian peoples.¹⁸¹ Once more the populace of Rome witnessed a kind of imperial *adventus* and triumph, only now in the person of Eutharic, welcoming him in place of the *princeps* they actually desired, who was celebrating similarly in Ravenna. "The longings of everyone," Cassiodorus announced within the Senate House, "are rightly aroused before your [i.e. Eutharic's] presence: whispers arise from the love of their *princeps* and, since you are proven too often to be chosen [to come in his stead], this makes his subjects sad."¹⁸² Clearly these Romans had wanted their most clement lord, Theoderic, to come and even to stay again in the Eternal City (perhaps permanently) in the company of their new consul, for "a life is unpleasant," Cassiodorus suggested, "which is unworthy of your [i.e. Theoderic's] sight; and it is weary to cling to its own residence, when pressing need coerces you to abandon it."¹⁸³ More pressing obligations it seems, just as in the case of Liguria decades earlier, had disappointed local expectations. But though Theoderic had failed to materialize, Eutharic soon proved himself a worthy substitute. Analogous to the events recorded for 500, this *princeps* in-the-making honored the Senate, while the Senate and people of Rome "happily received him with wondrous grace."¹⁸⁴ Moreover, that year, according to Cassiodorus' chronicle, "Rome saw many wonders... and even Symmachus, an envoy from the East, was stupefied at the riches granted to both Goths and Romans."¹⁸⁵ Such expenses, in fact, helped to assert Rome's equality with, perhaps even superiority over, an often jealous Constantinople, and the triumph held within her walls was probably among those marvels that had rendered this envoy dumbstruck. Nonetheless it was Eutharic's consular games that ultimately drew the greatest amount of contemporary awe. "Patronizing the amphitheater," Cassiodorus explained, "[Eutharic]

¹⁸¹ For Theoderic's triumph in Ravenna, *AnonVal* 80 (alluded to in *CassChron*, anno 519). See below for Roman impressions of Theoderic's absence from the festivities as well as the dominance that Eutharic's games implied over the Vandals.

¹⁸² *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 470, ln. 6-10: "Iure ergo omnium / desideria in tuam praesentiam concitan- / tur: amore principis murmur exoritur / et ex eo subiectos tristes efficis, quia / nimium diligi conprobaris."

¹⁸³ This is a slight paraphrase of *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 469, ln. 21 and 470, ln. 1-6: "Hinc est, / Domine, quod te populi non patiuntur abs- / cedere, sed omnes sibi cupiunt advenire. / Ingrata vita est, quae tuos non meretur / aspectus; et taedet propriis sedibus in- / haerere, quos coactus fueris pro rerum ne- / cessitate deserere."

¹⁸⁴ *CassChron*, anno 518: "Eo anno dn. Eutharicus Cillica mirabili gratia senatus et plebes ad edendum exceptus est feliciter consulatum." The event must have occurred late in 518, given that Eutharic would spend much of 519, the year of his consulship, in Rome.

¹⁸⁵ *CassChron*, anno 519: "Eo anno multa vidit Roma miracula, editionibus singulis stupente etiam Symmacho Orientis legato divitias Gothis Romanisque donatas."

exhibited beasts of diverse types, which the present age marveled at for their novelty.”¹⁸⁶ Even Africa, pacified two decades earlier by the granting of an Amal bride during Theoderic’s own sojourn at Rome,¹⁸⁷ “sent excellent delights for these spectacles in a sign of her devotion.”¹⁸⁸ Though the Goths had not been able to restore North Africa to Roman rule, now, at least, Rome’s citizens could take delight again from the fitting tribute sent by this lost territory’s Vandal lords: beasts, worthy representatives of barbarians, viciously and symbolically cut down by Roman huntsmen before a Roman audience.

Although an everyday occurrence in the fourth century, such a spectacle would have been exceptionally moving (miraculous in Cassiodorus’ own words) in contemporary Rome, not just because of the rarity of such creatures, but also because of the kind of Roman dominance (and restoration) they easily seemed to propose.¹⁸⁹ Just as the East was put in its proper place and relegated to the position of an equal (or even inferior) partner, so too did North Africa again service Rome’s populace, providing sacrificial lambs (better, lions) for the sake of its amusement. If only for a day, it could seem as if the fifth century had never happened. And, by the end of Eutharic’s consulship, these (and probably other unnamed) gestures and expenditures had paid off, instilling the citizens of Rome “with so great an amount of love [for Eutharic]” that he gained “the extraordinary approval of everyone.”¹⁹⁰ Though this Gothic consul and intended heir to Theoderic’s throne would die before succession, his legacy would live on, helping to legitimize his young son, Athalaric, as a proper heir to the Amal purple.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Ibid: “muneribus amphitheatralibus diversi generis feras, quas praesens aetas pro novitate miraretur, exhibuit.”

¹⁸⁷ *AnonVal* 68: “Item Amalafriugdam germanam suam in matrimonium tradens regi Wandalorum Transimundo.” This was quite important given the events of the fifth century, 455 especially. Cf. Moorhead (1992), 63-5, who stresses this point.

¹⁸⁸ *CassChron*, anno 519: “cuius spectaculis voluptates etiam exquisitas Africa sub devotione transmisit.”

¹⁸⁹ The lack of sensitivity to this in the account of Ward-Perkins (1984), 116, who simply claims “all this would have been quite normal in earlier imperial times,” is somewhat surprising. Indeed, it had not been “normal” for quite some time and largely owing to western decline, ergo the enthusiasm expressed by Cassiodorus, who may have heard of such spectacles, but probably had never seen them in his entire life.

¹⁹⁰ *CassChron*, anno 519: “cunctis itaque eximia laude completis tanto amore civibus Romanis insederat, ut eius adhuc praesentiam desiderantibus Ravennam ad gloriosi patris remearet.” The *pater* in question is Theoderic, Eutharic’s father-in-law.

¹⁹¹ For Athalaric’s official appeals to his father’s legacy (to Justin), see *Variae* 8.1. Naturally he appealed more to his “purple” Amal blood and matrilineal descent from Theoderic, whom he succeeded. Cf. *Variae* 8.1-7, contra Amory (1997), 71-2, who only sees 8.5 as specifically Amal in orientation. The references to rightfully succeeding “dominus noster avus” (Theoderic) or to the “claritas generis Hamalis” in these other

Entertainments, then, whether exhibited in person by Theoderic in 500, by his representative Eutharic in 519, or simply funded from afar in the intervening years, allowed the Romans of Rome to regain and maintain their historically elevated position, helping to foster the belief that their city truly was the undisputed capital of the world, while connecting such a restored position to the pious intervention of their “Gothic” lords. Still, the lavish expenses of these spectacles, as well as the wonder that they inspired, were not the only means through which such entertainments could (and did) contribute to Theoderican inspired sentiments of renewal. Charioteers, huntsmen, and even actors required venues in which to ply their arts, and the venerable and massively monumental structures that functioned as such continued, along with similar grandiose structures, to be a source of pride for the residents of Rome and other Romans well into the sixth century.

Indeed, for Theoderic and others, Rome was literally a city of wonders,¹⁹² a miracle in-and-of herself,¹⁹³ and her greatness could be deduced “from the number of unique things she contained.¹⁹⁴ Rome was a “wonderful forest of buildings” housing a population of statues “nearly the same in number as the one nature produced.”¹⁹⁵ The ancient world had had its seven wonders, including the Temple of Diana at Ephesus and the Colossus at Rhodes, but “who would think that these are more special,” the ruler of Italy regularly asked his urban prefects, “when in one city he can observe so many objects worthy of astonishment?”¹⁹⁶ Here mighty and venerable aqueducts watered the city “as if by man-made mountains... with so great an onrush of water for so many decades”;¹⁹⁷ here “splendid sewers,” like rivers, “so stupefy those seeing them that they

letters, however, is quite revealing. The somewhat negative legacy of Eutharic as anti-Catholic/Nicene may have been partly (but not completely) to blame. For this, *AnonVal* 80.

¹⁹² *Variae* 7.6.1: “quia totum ad ammirationem noscitur exquisitum.”

¹⁹³ *Variae* 7.15.5: “Nunc autem potest esse veridicum, si universa Roma dicatur esse miraculum.”

¹⁹⁴ *Variae* 3.30.2: “hinc, Roma, singularis quanta in te sit potest colligi magnitudo.”

¹⁹⁵ Forest of buildings, *Variae* 7.15.1: *illa mirabilis silva*; population of statues, *Variae* 7.15.3: “quas posteritas paene parem populum urbi dedit quam natura procreavit”; cf. *Variae* 7.13.1: “nam quidam populus copiosissimus statuarum, greges etiam abundantissimi equorum” and the discussion of Procopius, *Wars* 8.21.13-14, who subtly complains of the theft of such statues from the Greek East.

¹⁹⁶ *Variae* 7.15.4-5: “Ferunt prisci saeculi narratores fabricarum septem tantum terris adtributa miracula... sed quis illa ulterius praecipua putabit, cum in una urbe tot stupenda conspexerit.”

¹⁹⁷ *Variae* 7.6.2: “quasi constructis montibus... tantus impetus fluminis tot saeculis”

surpass the wonders of other cities”;¹⁹⁸ here, Theoderic knew from personal experience, “to see the Forum of Trajan, however recurrent, is wondrous,” and “to scale the lofty Capitoline is to have seen human talent surpassed.”¹⁹⁹ Marvels like these marked Rome out as special, as a place where “whatever is devoted to splendor is exhibited for the joy of all,” and though Theoderic claimed he devoted “untiring care to the entire Republic,” he acknowledged at the same time that with Rome he had no choice: the power of these wonders bound him, without exception, to defend the mistress of the world and her people’s honor.²⁰⁰

Such defense, of course, required monies and goods, and, as we have already seen, sound policies were making these necessities more readily available in Italy, Theoderic himself being able, by the end of his visit in 500, to set aside certain monies for just this purpose. Portions of the city that had welcomed him at that time had been in an obvious state of decline, making Rome as a whole seem less “eternal” and more the dying old woman described by Ennodius in his panegyric.²⁰¹ Buildings, of course, were always in need of repair, not just because of man-made and natural disasters (of which there were many during the fifth century²⁰²) but because time alone destroyed even the most impressive of constructions;²⁰³ nothing seemed immune from the devastation of rapacious old age, and, by the time of Theoderic’s celebratory entrance, even some of Rome’s most impressive monumental structures had become dilapidated, converted to other uses, or long since collapsed, becoming sources of spolia.²⁰⁴ This was a trend

¹⁹⁸ *Variae* 3.30.1-2: “propter splendidas Romanae cloacas civitatis, quae tantum visentibus conferunt stuporem, ut aliarum civitatum possint miracula superare. Videas illic fluvios quasi montibus concavis clausos...”

¹⁹⁹ *Variae* 7.6.1: “Traiani forum vel sub assiduitate videre miraculum est: Capitolia celsa conscendere hoc est humana ingenia superata vidisse.”

²⁰⁰ *Variae* 3.31.1: “quamvis universae rei publicae nostrae infatigabilem curam desideremus impendere et deo favente ad statum studeamus pristinum cuncta revocare, tamen Romanae civitatis sollicitiora nos augmenta constringunt, ubi quicquid decoris impenditur, generalibus gaudiis exhibetur.”

²⁰¹ On urban decline in Rome over the course of the fifth century, Ward-Perkins (1984), 45-46; Siena (1984), 511-12; Pani Ermini (1995), 174-220; Marazzi (2007), 284-295. For Ennodius, see chapter 1.

²⁰² The various *Consularia Italica*, for instance, record five earthquakes in Italy between 443 and 502, the earliest destroying statues and a “portica nova” in Rome. They also record a ruinous fire at Ravenna in 454. A number of fifth-century inscriptions commemorating repairs likewise refer to fires, earthquakes, and barbarian attacks. For some of these, see Alföldy (2001), 11-12.

²⁰³ Indeed, in referencing the decay of the mighty Theater of Pompey, Theoderic himself proclaimed (*Variae* 4.51.3), “quid non solvas, senectus, quae tam robusta quassasti?” On time and the constant need for repairs, Ward-Perkins (1984), 12-13, and Alföldy (2001), 11-12.

²⁰⁴ For some of these collapsed or reused structures at Rome, see fn. 201 (above). Cf. *Variae* 2.7, 3.10, 3.31, and 7.13, which refer to the use of spolia from Rome for new constructions and/or repairs.

Empire-wide that had begun long before the abandonment of Rome, but its progression within the City had been exacerbated as a consequence of Rome's increasing unimportance within the Empire. Now, however, as an intrinsic component of Theoderic's Rome-centered program, serious attempts were made to stem the tide.

Many emperors before him had attempted to leave their own, unique marks in this city, but Theoderic's contribution to Rome's forest of monuments would be one of preservation and repair. To the modern beholder, this may seem rather less impressive than, say, an arch in the manner of Constantine, but this had largely become the norm in late antiquity and, more importantly, the gesture and its scale was quite significant to contemporary Italo-Romans. Ennodius put it best when he claimed that it was "more valuable to drive away collapse than to produce new beginnings,"²⁰⁵ and in a city proud of its monuments and unique historical role this certainly had been the case. New constructions were very impressive, but they mattered very little if those monuments that already served as obvious beacons of Rome's supremacy and dominance succumbed to old age. "Concern for the city of Rome," Theoderic informed one Prefect of the City, "always occupies our thoughts. For what... is more worthy than to see to the repairs of that place which is known to preserve the honor of our Republic?"²⁰⁶ Indeed, not simply the Romans of Rome, but Italo-Romans in general were proud of their forefathers' achievements, and the continued existence of their monumental legacies within Rome symbolically asserted Rome and all Romans' inherent (and inherited) exceptionalism. Their fifth-century decline and collapse had been a reflection of Rome and her republic's loss of *status*, but now their repair and continued functionality asserted quite the opposite.

This, coupled with contemporary knowledge of the era in which many of these monuments had been erected, made their preservation a powerful component of the Theoderican golden age. A number of these structures were products of the late Republic and early Empire, the very period to which the revived Empire of the early sixth century looked for its inspiration: a time of *principes*, when Rome and Italy were paramount, and Rome's mastery over the world was unchallenged. Venerating and repairing them,

²⁰⁵ *PanTh* 56: "Plus est occasum repellere quam dedisse principia." Cf. *Variae* 1.25.1: "Atque ideo maior in conservandis rebus quam in inveniendis adhibenda cautela est, quia de initiis praedicatio debetur invento, de custoditis acquiritur laudata perfectio."

²⁰⁶ *Variae* 3.30.1: "Romanae civitatis cura nostris sensibus semper invigilat. Quid est enim dignius, quod tractare debeamus, quam eius reparationem exigere, quae ornatum constat nostrae rei publicae continere?"

therefore, provided a useful link to this idealized past and yet another opportunity for Theoderic to demonstrate the traditional *pietas* that was so legitimizing for rulers in Rome. Those massive structures which housed the entertainments described above, for instance, provide instructive examples. In the awe-inspiring “immense mass” of the Circus Maximus onlookers could see reflected not just the “great accomplishment” and display of power of the first *princeps*, Augustus, but also “a construction wondrous even to the Romans.”²⁰⁷ In beholding the Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum), likewise, it was understood that the “power of princely Titus, pouring forth a river of wealth, [had] intended this building to become the source from which the capital of cities would appear mighty.”²⁰⁸ And similarly in the case of the Theater of Pompey, it was known that the ancients had “made this place suitable for so great a people, so that those who seemed to have obtained mastery over the world might have a unique spectacle.”²⁰⁹ It was for this reason alone, Theoderic suggested, that Pompey “not undeservedly... had been called ‘the Great,’”²¹⁰ and now, in the face of such enduring fame, it was necessary for Rome’s latest patron to be diligent and to prove himself a worthy heir.²¹¹

“Would that ancient *principes* might rightly owe their praises to us,” Theoderic suggested to a certain Sabinianus in Rome, “[rulers] to whose buildings we give the longest youthfulness, so that what has already been blackened with lethargic old age may glimmer with pristine newness.”²¹² Already a “new Trajan” in Roman eyes, Theoderic cultivated this image through his buildings projects, and Sabinianus, who was soon ordered to produce twenty-five thousand tiles annually,²¹³ would help him in this

²⁰⁷ *Variae* 3.51.4: “Sed mundi dominus ad potentiam suam opus extollens mirandam etiam Romanis fabricam in vallem Murciam tetendit Augustus, ut immensa moles firmiter praecincta montibus contineret, ubi magnarum rerum indicia clauderentur.”

²⁰⁸ *Variae* 5.42.5: “hoc Titi potentia principalis, divitiarum profuso flumine, cogitavit aedificium fieri, unde caput urbium potuisset.”

²⁰⁹ *Variae* 4.51.4: “fecerunt antiqui locum tantis populis parem, ut haberent singulare spectaculum, qui mundi videbantur obtinere dominatum.”

²¹⁰ *Variae* 4.51.12: “Unde non inmerito creditur Pompeius hinc potius Magnus fuisse vocitatus.”

²¹¹ *Variae* 3.31.4: “et quam miserum est, ut unde famam providentiae alii susceperunt, nos opinionem negligentiae incurrisse videamur?”

²¹² *Variae* 1.25.3: “Ut antiqui principes nobis merito debeant laudes suas, quorum fabricis dedimus longissimam iuventutem, ut pristina novitate transluceant, quae iam fuerant veteriosa senectute fuscata.” For Sabinianus, who may have been Theoderic’s official architect at Rome, see *PLRE* 2 (“Sabinianus 6”), 968.

²¹³ *Variae* 1.25.2: “dudum siquidem propter Romanae moenia civitatis, ubi studium nobis semper impendere infatigabilis ambitus erit, portum Licini deputatis reeditibus reparari iussio nostra constituit, ut XXV milia tegularum annua illatione praestaret.” Actually the total number of tiles was more than twenty-

endeavor. Indeed, the modern find-spots of a number of these very *tegulae* suggest the full extent to which Theoderic was able to insert himself, both ideologically and literally, into the legacy of the early imperial past. More than just bearing Theoderic's name, these tiles were inscribed with the restorative language of the era, asserting to contemporary readers that their placement within the fabric of once decaying structures was "for the good of Rome" and allowed for a Rome that was truly "happy,"²¹⁴ while at the same time connecting such ideas of *felicitas* with Theoderic and his reign. Tiles like these were employed in the restoration of structures of great significance to Rome and her Romans. On the Palatine, for instance, they were used to refurbish the Domus Flavia, Domus Augustana, and the so-called Stadium of Domitian,²¹⁵ all impressive structures with solid links to the "princely" first century, and, more importantly, a signal (through their restoration) to contemporary Romans that their absent *princeps* intended to return.²¹⁶ Likewise, in the Forum, such tiles were employed in the repair of the Basilica Aemilia, a massive Republican building once heavily restored by Augustus himself after a devastating fire, and a marvel which the elder Pliny had praised as one of the most beautiful buildings in Rome.²¹⁷ Here, in the classical heart of the City, Theoderican tiles were also used to refurbish the Temple of Vesta and lesser works near the gardens associated with the Basilica Nova (Maxentius'/Constantine's Basilica), while just to the southeast the marvelously vast bathing complex built by Caracalla benefited from Theoderican materials.²¹⁸ Even Rome's mighty walls contained tiles bearing the words "our lord Theoderic ruling for the good of Rome," and may have even been strengthened

five thousand, since Theoderic ordered both the Portus Licini and all the other warehouses within its vicinity to produce this many (hence, the "simul etiam portubus iunctis..." that follows the quotation above). How many of these other portus there were is unknown, however.

²¹⁴ A number of such tiles have been found. The two major variations are *ILS* 1 #828a (Fiebiger, vol. 1, #191 and *CIL* 15 1665, etc.) and #182b (Fiebiger, vol. 1, #192 and *CIL* 15 1669, etc.). These read, "Reg(nante) D(omino) N(ostro) Theode / rico bono Rom(a)e" and "Reg(nante) D(omino) N(ostro) Theode / rico felix Roma," respectively.

²¹⁵ Siena (1984), 525, and Pani Ermini (1995), 221.

²¹⁶ See Cullhed (1994), 60, for similar conclusions regarding Maxentius.

²¹⁷ See Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 36.102: "non inter magna basilicam Pauli columnis e Phrygibus mirabilem forumque divi Augusti et templum Pacis Vespasiani Imp. Aug., pulcherrima operum, quae umquam vidit orbis?" The Basilica Pauli (i.e. the Basilica Aemilia), the Forum of Augustus, and the Temple of Peace were hence the three most beautiful buildings in the world.

²¹⁸ Siena (1984), 525, and Pani Ermini (1995), 220-22.

with new towers under his auspices,²¹⁹ a later source claiming that the honor showed by Theoderic to these walls alone earned him a golden statue commissioned by the Senate.²²⁰

But tiles, while certainly quite revealing, provide only some of the evidence for the ideologically charged and ultimately complementary building projects funded in Rome under Theoderic's leadership. Other mighty structures also received his largess, either at the specific request of senatorial elites, out of (largely unsolicited) deference, or out of traditional or personal obligation, a further indication of Rome's centrality. Some time before 512, for instance, a specialist was sent to the "splendid sewers" of the Eternal City to see to their repair and cleaning.²²¹ Likewise, the upkeep of the numerous aqueducts, whose "construction is a wonder and [whose] waters' wholesomeness is unique,"²²² was regularly serviced through a countship specifically designed for the task.²²³ Counts of Rome, on the other hand, were instructed to protect Rome's preexisting splendor, lest in an absence of vigilance "wicked hands" provide the "greatest of ruin... amid [Rome's] unique beauty,"²²⁴ while resident senators were similarly admonished to prevent the misappropriation of funds sent "at the instigation of many," and apparently in addition to those already provided after 500, for the repair of the city's temples and public places.²²⁵ Rome's Prefect even had an official architect placed under his supervision, who, like the palace architect in Ravenna, was supposed to "pay attention to books and to spend his free time with the teachings of the ancients"²²⁶ so that "we

²¹⁹ Some of the tiles discussed above (fn. 214) have been discovered within the Aurelian Walls, especially in the northeast of their circuit. For these and the possibility of Theoderican work on the walls' turrets, see Pani Ermini (1995), 222-3. The date for the latter, however, is not secure.

²²⁰ Isidore, *HG* 39: "muros namque [or: enim] eius (i.e. Romae) iste redintegavit, cuius rei gratia [or: ob quam causam] a senatu inauratam stauam meruit."

²²¹ *Variae* 3.30.1: "Pronide illustris sublimitas tua spectabilem virum Iohannem nos direxisse cognoscat propter splendidas Romanae cloacas civitatis."

²²² *Variae* 7.6.2: "in formis autem Romanis utrumque praecipuum est, ut fabrica sit mirabilis et aquarum salubritas singularis."

²²³ See *Variae* 7.6 for the general letter appointing an individual to the *comitiva fabricarum* (countship of the aqueducts).

²²⁴ *Variae* 7.13.1: "gravissimum damnum potest fieri in pulchritudine singulari"; and 7.13.3: "quaeras improbas manus."

²²⁵ *Variae* 3.31.4-5: "templa etiam et loca publica, quae petentibus multis ad reparationem contulimus, subversioni fuisse potius mancipata... adhibite nunc studia, praestate solacia..."

²²⁶ *Variae* 7.15.5: "Et ideo det operam libris, antiquorum instructionibus vacet..."

might renew the constructions of the ancients [in Rome]... and adorn new [structures] with the glory of antiquity.”²²⁷

Indeed, a number of other Roman monuments became the objects of needed patronage, both on a regular and an *ad hoc* basis, but in all cases an underlying goal remained for it to seem to the Romans of Rome that “antiquity... had been rather gracefully restored in our times.”²²⁸ And though such positive alterations clearly fed into the ideological program of the era, adding to the overall feeling of Roman renaissance and renewal, it was not always the case that Theoderic took full credit for the achievement. The Theater of Pompey is a wonderful case in point. This marvel of late Republican Rome might have gone unsaved, according to the ruler of Italy, “had it not happened that we saw it ourselves,”²²⁹ and although such a statement provides an excellent indication of just how useful an imperial visitation might be for Rome’s decaying structures, it was to a proud descendent of Pompey, the senator Symmachus,²³⁰ that Theoderic turned for assistance.

Symmachus’ private foundations had already won him the reputation of being an “exceptional founder and extraordinary adorer of buildings,”²³¹ and it was primarily for this reason that he was asked to oversee the refurbishment of this monument, thereby helping to “maintain Rome in her wonders” and preventing “what has been left behind by your ancestors” from being “diminished under nobler descendants.”²³² More important still, whether accomplished “by mighty columns or devotedness to new building,”²³³ he was promised the complete financial support of Theoderic’s treasury while still being

²²⁷ *Variae* 7.15.1: “...ut et facta veterum exclusis defectibus innovemus et nova vetustatis gloria vestiamus.”

²²⁸ *Variae* 4.51.12: “nostris temporibus videatur antiquitas decentius innovata.” Cf. La Rocca (1993), with the caveat expressed in fn. 92 (above).

²²⁹ *Variae* 4.51.4: “haec potuissemus forte neglegere, si nos contigisset talia non videre.”

²³⁰ That the Symmachi traced their lineage from the House of Pompey has been inferred from *Variae* 4.51.3: “ut quod ab auctoribus vestribus in ornatu patriae constat esse concessum, non videatur sub melioribus posteris imminutum.” But see the comments of Barnish (1992), 79 (fn. 7), who suggests that this may simply refer to an earlier restoration undertaken by a member of the fourth-century Symmachi.

²³¹ *Variae* 4.51.1: “fundator egregius fabricarum earumque comptor eximius”

²³² *Variae* 4.51.1: “cum privatis fabricis ita studueris, ut in laribus propriis quaeam moenia fecisse idearis, dignum est, ut Romam, quam domuum pulchritudine decorasti, in suis miraculis continere noscaris...” See fn. 230 (above) for “nobler descendants.”

²³³ *Variae* 4.51.12: “et ideo sive masculis pilis contineri sive talis fabrica refectionis studio potuerit innovari”

allowed to acquire “the fame of good work” from the project.²³⁴ It was hence a win-win situation for both ruler and senator. On the one hand, in striving to “restore antiquity,” Theoderic was able to continue demonstrating his deference not simply towards Rome’s cultural legacies but also towards her Senate, establishing an important patron-client relationship with the rather influential Symmachus.²³⁵ On the other hand, the monies granted to Symmachus provided him with a means of perpetuating his class’ traditional practice of expressing *amor patriae* through civic euergetism, in this case refurbishing a monument of apparent historical importance for his family. Indeed, increased senatorial impoverishment and disillusionment over the course of the fifth century had resulted in the near extinction of such practices by the time of the Goths’ arrival,²³⁶ but now, even if only through “secret” royal largess, they could appear revitalized and refreshed.

Nor does Symmachus appear to be the only senator who benefited from such imperial generosity. A number of inscriptions recording contemporary building at Rome may hint at similar scenarios, some even demonstrating senatorial gratitude towards the Gothic king. The repair of the Flavian Amphitheater undertaken after an earthquake by the illustrious senator Venantius Basilius, for instance, may have been funded through Theoderic’s benefaction, even though its commemorative inscription claimed that Basilius “restored [it] at his own expense.”²³⁷ Likewise, a fragmentary inscription found within Rome’s forum and celebrating a restoration of the *atrium libertatis*,²³⁸ “which had been consumed by old [age],” famously dedicated the project to “our unharmed lords Anastasius, perpetual Augustus, and the most glorious and triumphal man Theoderic,”²³⁹

²³⁴ Ibid: “expensas vobis de nostro cubiculo curavimus destinare, ut et vobis adquiratur tam boni operis fama...”

²³⁵ Symmachus was influential enough to become *caput senatus* and (possibly) serve as an envoy of Theoderic to Constantinople. He would later be executed on the charge of treason. See *PLRE 2* (“Symmachus 9”), 1044-6.

²³⁶ Ward-Perkins (1984), chapter 2 especially.

²³⁷ Fiebiger, vol. 1, #186 (*CIL* 6 32094): “Deci(u)s Marius Venantius / Basilius v(ir) c(larissimus) et in(lustris), praef(ectus) / urb(i), patricius, consul / ordinarius arenam et // podium quae abomi / nandi terrae mo / tus ruina pros / travit sumptu pro / prio restituit.” Admittedly the inscription may date earlier, to 484, or (as implied above) to after 508. For 484, *PLRE 2* (“Basilius 13”), 218, and Ward-Perkins (1984), 44; for 508, Ensslin (1959), 249-50; Siena (1984), 525; and Pani Ermini (1995), 221. The earthquake recorded in this inscription may be the same mentioned in Fiebiger, vol. 1, #181, which led to Theoderic commissioning Count Gudila to restore a podium and statue at Faenza.

²³⁸ For this structure and its importance, Coarelli (1993), 133-5.

²³⁹ See Bartoli (1949), whose discovery of a fragment in the area around the Roman Curia allowed for a more complete version of the inscription (erroneously) recorded in Fiebiger, vol. 1, #187 (*ILS* 825, and *CIL* 6 1794), as: “[S]alvis domi[no n(ostro)...] / Augusto et gl[orio]ssimo rege / Theoderico

though suggesting that a former *comes domesticorum* named Valerius Florianus was responsible for the task. Finally, another fragmentary inscription from the forum, found on a pedestal of an ornate column discovered near the Temple of Antoninus Pius and Faustina (and perhaps associated with repairs to this building²⁴⁰), similarly dedicated some unknown project to “our unharmed lord the most glorious king Theoderic.”²⁴¹

Senators, then, were taking an active part in the rejuvenation of their city’s historic monuments with (and doubtless without) the aid of Theoderic, complementing their *princeps*’ renewed munificence and adding to the overall sentiment of Rome’s (and possibly even the senatorial order’s) rebirth. Senatorial involvement, however, could also extend beyond the sphere of public works and monuments, ultimately serving private gain. Late antique emperors had done much to try to prevent public properties and works from being usurped through acts of private *praesumptio*, and Theoderic was no different. In one missive directed to the Senate he deplored the current misuses of the aqueducts and the theft of decorative bronze and lead from public buildings, claiming that their “general utility ought to be placed before the depraved desires of one man”;²⁴² similarly he ordered all his *comites Romae* to exact the “fitting retribution of the laws” on those culprits who “defile ancient beauty by cutting off its limbs and thereby do to public monuments what they deserve to suffer.”²⁴³ Rome and her Senate’s special position within the Empire, coupled with the contemporary desire for “the City to be arranged

Va[lintinianus...] / ex com(ite) domest[icorum...] // in atrio liber[tatis...] / quae vetus[tate...]que confec[ta... / ...]fecit.” Bartoli was able to provide the following reading, which has been translated above: “Salvis domi[n]is nostris Anastasio Perpetuo / Augusto et Gloriosissimo ac Triumphali Viro / Theoderico Valerius Flori[an]us V C et Inl / ex com domest ex com [sacrar] larg Praef Urb / in Atrio Libertat[is] ...”

²⁴⁰ Given its location between the Basilica Nova, Basilica Aemilia, and Temple of Vesta (all known Theoderican sites of patronage), refurbishment of this building would fit within Theoderic’s *modus operandi*.

²⁴¹ Fiebiger, vol. 1, #189 (*CIL* 6 1795): “Salvo d(omi)n(o) [Theode]rico re[ge glorio]siss[imo].....” Why “d n” has been resolved as “domino” and not “domino nostro” is unclear. The latter seems unquestionable.

²⁴² *Variae* 3.31.4: “unius enim desiderio prava generalis debet utilitas anteferri.” For misuse of the aqueduct see *Variae* 3.31.2, for decorative bronze and lead, 3.31.4.

²⁴³ *Variae* 7.13.3: “ut fideli studio magnoque nisu quaeras improbas manus et insidiantes aut privatorum fortunis aut moenibus ad tuum facias venire iudicium et rei veritate discussa congruam subeant de legibus ultionem, quia iuste tales persequitur publicus dolor, qui decorem veterum foedant detractione membrorum faciuntque illa in monumentis publicis, quae debent pati.” In declaring that such wicked individuals ought to have their hands cut off, Theoderic appears to have been following the ruling of Emperor Majorian (*NMaj* 4.1), who ordered mutilation by the loss of hands for those who conspired with judges to (needlessly) destroy public works for private gain. Far from barbarous, then, Theoderic was again upholding the law.

with the splendor of surging constructions,” however, provided for some interesting cases of imperial flexibility. In fact, Theoderic might gladly yield Rome’s public resources and even property into private hands, just as he did elsewhere, provided the act did “not impede public utility or beauty.”²⁴⁴ Such generosity, moreover, could be seen as (yet another) sign of being a “good *princeps*,”²⁴⁵ while providing (yet another) means for Rome to shed her decrepit appearance.

The *vir inlustris* and patrician Paulus, for instance, petitioned Theoderic for the right to assume possession of certain dilapidated granaries within the city of Rome, asking for permission to repair them and pass them on as private property to his descendants. Informing the Prefect of Rome, Argolicus, of his decision to grant the request and referring to it as an act of kindness, Theoderic suggested that, in pursuing his own advantage, Paulus’ “repair of ruins confers... a gift to the Republic, especially in the City, where it is right for all constructions to shine forth, lest among so many adornments of her buildings there should appear an unsightly collapse of stones.”²⁴⁶ Such unsightliness might be sustained in other cities, the ruler of the West explained, but “in this [city], which is praised firstly by the mouth of the world, we can suffer nothing [to be] mediocre.”²⁴⁷ A similar rationale was provided to the *vir inlustris* and Patrician Albinus, who requested (and was granted) permission to build private residences and workshops within the *Porticus Curvae* of the Forum. “Everyone,” Albinus was told, “but especially those whom the Republic obligates with the highest of honors, should rightly think of the improvement of his *patria*,”²⁴⁸ and since this patrician aspired to increase “the appearance of newness amid [such] ancient constructions,” he proved himself “an

²⁴⁴ *Variae* 4.30.3: “Unde nos, qui urbem fabricarum surgentium cupimus nitore componi, facultatem concedimus postulata, ita tamen, si res petita aut utilitati publicae non officit au decori.”

²⁴⁵ *Variae* 2.29.1: “quis nesciat nostrum esse commodum supplicantis quaestum et illud bonis principibus crescere, quod benigna possunt largitate praestare.”

²⁴⁶ *Variae* 2.29.2: “quia confert magis rei publicae munus quiquis diruta maluerit suscipere reparanda, in ea praesertim urbe, ubi cuncta dignum est constructa relucere, ne inter tot decora moenium deformis appareat ruina saxorum.”

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*: “in aliis quippe civitatibus minus nitentia sustinentur: in ea vero nec mediocre aliquid patimur, quae mundi principaliter ore laudatur.”

²⁴⁸ *Variae* 4.30.1: “decet quidem cunctos patriae suae augmenta cogitare, sed eos maxime, quos res publica sibi summis honoribus obligavit, quia ratio rerum est, ut eum necesse sit plus debere, qui visus est maiora suscipere.”

inhabitant worthy of Roman constructions,” his completed works serving as a source of praise for their author.²⁴⁹

Whether through direct imperial benefaction granted to important monuments, or through the private subsidization of senatorial prestige projects, or by simply granting permission to noble Romans for the right to assume control of public works and to rebuild, the same basic outcome was still achieved. More so than she had in generations, Rome and her decaying structures received extensive and at times lavish attention, allowing ancient constructions to be restored and providing a kind of adornment not just for the Senate and people of Rome, but for all the inhabitants of Theoderic’s realm.²⁵⁰ Within this revived Roman Empire, Rome could rightly and proudly claim to be the center and capital of the world, and know that there was a *princeps* who worked hard, “lest... there be something desirable that the city of Rome was unable to have during our reign.”²⁵¹

But what more could Rome and her Romans have wanted? In 500 the Senate and people had been honored with an extended imperial visit, the traditional patronage and deference associated with it continuing long after Theoderic’s retirement. Less than a decade later, Ennodius was claiming that youth had been restored to a once pathetically geriatric Rome and was hailing the restored *status reipublicae*. Within another decade, crumbling testaments to Rome’s historic invincibility glimmered with pristine newness and even showcased wonders like North African beasts, all suggestive of a kind of restored Roman dominance not merely in the West, but everywhere. All that was missing, it seems, was Theoderic himself who, though maintaining a residence upon the Palatine, was forced by “pressing need” to abandon Rome.²⁵² Regrettable though it was, Romans were used to imperial absences, and despite their disappointment, they still had much for which to be grateful. Addressing his fellow senators in the curia at the opening

²⁴⁹ *Variae* 4.30.2-3: “ut... antiquis moenibus novitatis crescat aspectus ... quapropter rebus speratis securus innitere, ut dignus Romanis fabricis habitator appareas perfectumque opus suum laudet auctorem.”

²⁵⁰ *Variae* 1.7.1: “ut redeat in decorem publicum prisica constructio et ornent aliquid saxa iacentia post ruinas.” Cf. fn. 245 (above), regarding “gifts” to the Republic).

²⁵¹ *Variae* 3.53.6: “ne quid desiderabile putetur fuisse, quod sub nobis non potuit Romana civitas continere.”

²⁵² *CassOratReliquiae*, pg 470, ln. 4-6: “et taedet propriis sedibus in- / haerere, quos coactus fueris pro rerum ne- / cessitate deserere.”

of his consulship in 514, Cassiodorus himself suggested the extent to which he and every senator were lost in the presence of so many current blessings:

“Who could demand infinite things from me? Who could exact what he himself is unable to enumerate? ...Who could gather up with his efforts each thing that his [i.e. Theoderic’s] generous hand has poured forth into so great an age? He fills this holy place [i.e. the Senate] with your honors; he nourishes the plebs with their established expenses; he pacifies the provinces with the serenity of his justice, he bridles proud barbarians with his *imperium*...”²⁵³

Indeed, though able to provide these examples, much like Epiphanius of Pavia, what the Romans of Rome seemed at times to be lacking were the words sufficient to express their gratitude.

²⁵³ *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 465, ln. 16-18: “quis a me postulet infinita? / quis exigat, quae numerare non suffi- / cit”; and 466 ln. 5-11: “quis enim momentis omne recoli- / gat, quod tot saeculis manus larga pro- / fundit? Hoc sacrarium vestris implet / honoribus, plebem statutis pascit in- / pensis, provincias iuistitae serenita- / te tranquillat, frenat superbas gen- / tes imperio...”

Chapter 5

Restoratio Imperii: Gaul

An Empire with Provinces

Thus far this study has generally focused on Italy, since it was to Italy that the fifth-century western Roman Empire was ultimately reduced and thus Italo-Romans who maintained the belief that their land remained one of two Roman empires.¹ The preceding chapters have discussed the ideological framework that allowed the seeming paradoxes of this period to find acceptance among certain Italo-Romans. Specifically Roman niches were carved for newcomers using the language of venerable tradition, which, along with a willingness on behalf of Italy's new leadership to meet and even exceed local expectations, served to create sentiments of the Empire's rebirth and renewal. Italy was once more ruled by the kind of Roman ruler its inhabitants desired, a *princeps*, under whose watchful eyes the deplorable conditions of not only the fifth century, but even the later Empire, were thought to have been washed away. "Hail, most splendid of rivers," Ennodius had proclaimed while addressing the Adige, the site of a major battle fought between Odovacer and Theoderic, "you who washes away the filth of a great portion of Italy by taking up the scum of the earth."² Indeed, inept, greedy, ignoble, and even un-Roman men, the veritable "scum of the earth," had ceased to hold power;³ merit mattered once more for political advancement; Roman law and order preserved justice; classical learning received the support and prestige it deserved; Italy (and especially Rome) glimmered with restored, renovated, or completely new buildings: the system and its infrastructures worked. Liguria, just as Theoderic had promised in the

¹ Rather than a part of a solitary empire ruled from Constantinople. See chapter 1 and 2.

² *PanTh* 46: "Salve, fluviorum splendidissime, qui ex maiore parte sordes Italiae diluisti, mundi faecem suscipiens..." The banks of this river had been filled with enemy corpses.

³ The term "un-Roman" has been used here, as throughout, as a label for those deemed by "Romans" to be not Roman, regardless of "ethnic" labels. Hence, Theoderic, a Goth, or Ricimer, a "barbarian," can be "Roman," while Anthemius, a Roman, is "un-Roman." For this, see chapter one.

late 490s, “lived again” and Rome, the elderly mistress of the world, appeared not only young, but clad once more in her martial attire.⁴

But however glorious and worthy of celebration such developments alone might be perceived to be, the golden age of Theoderic nonetheless entailed yet another extremely important and ideologically charged component: an actual (i.e. territorial) empire that extended beyond the confines of Italy. This provided perhaps the most vital, and indeed most obvious, contribution to the contemporary idea of imperial restoration. Theoderic and his successors had not simply corrected Odovacer’s decadent Italy, but literally restored to it a number of its former (and rightful) provinces. For Italians, this was a significant turn of events. The loss of provinces, as seen in the first chapter, had been symptomatic of the western Empire’s perceived fifth-century decline and had dealt a serious blow to Roman prestige and honor. But more than simply humiliating, this absence of provinces had been dangerous, providing ample excuse for outsiders to infringe upon western imperial prerogatives and leading to a further reduction in the status of Italy and Rome. Unabashed barbarians like Euric, for instance, had felt free to behave as equals to (otherwise) superior Roman emperors like Nepos, who in turn had little recourse but to accept their (and by extension Rome’s) sorry degradation. The situation also encouraged eastern interference in the West and ultimately justified Odovacer’s desire to place Italy completely under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. The loss of provinces to barbarians and the inability to exact retribution sullied the Roman name, but this latter possibility, forestalled by Theoderic, had actually meant the abolition of the western Empire entirely, something that Italo-Romans desperately did not want. Theoderic’s restoration of Rome’s long-lost provinces, then, served to reinforce *ipso facto* the idea that Italy continued to function as the head of an independent, western Roman Empire, asserting once more Italy’s and Rome’s traditional standing.

Provinces, however, did more than justify the existence of Theoderic’s Roman empire. They also served, particularly through their acquisition, to legitimize the position that Theoderic was imagined to fill within that empire. Provinces were important linchpins dispelling potential doubts and providing additional and tangible evidence of the western Empire’s return to the conditions prevailing before the fifth century. More so

⁴ For these references, see chapter 4.

than any of his immediate imperial predecessors, Theoderic defended the Roman heartland, Italy, and extended its boundaries against its recent encroachers, barbarians and Greeks. This was a powerful gesture. It made the *princeps* in the minds of his subjects a true *imperator*, commander-in-chief, whose victories lent substance to long-since hollow imperial victory ideology. Triumphs, so intrinsically linked to the person of the emperor, asserted both Theoderic's and Italy's imperial status, and victory on such a scale clearly exceeded Italian expectations, rendering Theoderic's subjects even more amenable to him. Indeed success of this magnitude made him every bit as Roman in their eyes as his eastern career, pedigree, and appearance, perhaps more so, since it was these very conquests, in conjunction with good domestic policies already discussed, that set him apart from the other "barbarous" and "Greek" emperors who preceded him. The acquisition of provinces, then, helped Theoderic to be seen and accepted as a *bona fide* Roman emperor, a defender and extender of the Roman name, a font of Romanness.

The glorious acquisition and later proper administration of provinces likewise promoted the necessary and ultimately beneficial role imagined to be occupied by the Goths. By defeating and humiliating those who had recently humiliated Rome, Italy's Goths could be celebrated, much like her new rulers, as avengers and heroes. Italy's new soldiers were once more *invictissimi* and asserted Roman supremacy beyond the Alpine frontiers. Haughty barbarians cowered before Roman standards, just as they were supposed to, and long-lost provincials were returned to the *civilitas* and *libertas* that their imagined captivity had denied them. Roman Goths first liberated Italy from Odovacer's tyranny and then provinces from barbarians, the latter achievement allowing Rome's moral and cultural superiority and civilizing mission to persist. But it was not simply that provinces had been conquered or restored to the Roman Empire; the Roman Empire and Romanness had also been restored to the provinces, and by the Goths. This was equally important, for in the minds of those in Italy provincial subjugation to barbarians had seriously altered former Romans, requiring their correction. Now, in yet another twist of irony, the Goths, former barbarians who had become acceptably Roman, were rescuing from barbarism former provincials, Romans who had become unacceptably barbarized or in the very least were in serious danger of becoming so. More than in Italy, then, Goths were proposed as models of Roman justice and moderation in these new provinces, and

just as in Italy, a conscious effort was made by the state to promote and improve their condition. Just as Liguria would live again, so too would the provinces.

Provinces, therefore, mattered for the new Roman Empire, and so it is to these provinces, their perceived lapse, restoration, and correction, that this final chapter will turn. But while a number of lost territories were ultimately reclaimed under Theoderic and his successors, and each was celebrated in the historical record, this chapter will focus almost exclusively on the provinces of southern Gaul, which were regained as a consequence of an invasion launched in 508. To some degree this emphasis is born of necessity, for the sources for Gaul during this period are exceptionally rich, while those for other provinces, such as in the Balkans and Spain, are simply too poor to allow for extensive discussion.⁵ Southern Gaul, therefore, will have to suffice as a hypothetical model for the other, less extensively documented regions, and commonalities between this reconquered Gaul and other provinces, whenever apparent, will be pointed out. But caution must nonetheless be employed in using Gaul as a model for all restored provinces, and not just because of the lack of evidence needed for corroboration. The victory and subsequent restoration of Gaul clearly occupied an exceptional position within contemporary Italian mentalities. This province, not regions in Spain or the Balkans, was *the* restored province *par excellence*, and, as will be shown, with good reason.

Gallia Comata: Long-haired Gaul

Italo-Romans, as already seen, had resisted the idea that the fifth century had led to the utter ruin and collapse of the western Roman Empire. Their empire, as they imagined Italy to be, was in dire straits and seemingly moribund, but it was not yet dead. Indeed, the situation proved salvageable, for Theoderic and his Goths had eventually come to the rescue. Gaul's lot, however, had been much different. Gaul was lost. She had not lapsed, but had fallen, and by the time Italy was strong enough to reclaim her, a

⁵The Italian sources for Spain are especially lacking (nor do contemporary Spanish sources, of which there are very few, pick up the slack). Pannonia is represented more completely, but both regions still pale in comparison with Gaul. Indeed, the *Variae* contains nearly fifty letters dealing with Gallic matters, but only two with Spain and thirteen with the Balkans. For Spain, *Variae* 5.35 and 5.39; for the Balkans, *Variae* 1.40, 3.23, 3.24, 3.50, 4.49, 5.14, 5.15, 5.25, 8.10, 8.21, 9.1, 9.8, and 9.9. Balkan matters are also treated in Ennodius' *Panegyric*, but Cassiodorus' later oration (admittedly fragmentary) only celebrates Gallia specifically, tacitly referencing Spain and the Balkans in generalizations about *provinciae*.

full generation had passed. This amount of time had had serious repercussions for Italian perceptions of Gaul, despite the remembrance of a Roman Gaul and the continued hope for Gallic restoration. Gaul and its Roman population had been transformed in the interim, becoming a land of barbarians with but few reminders of her Roman past. The claim of one young Italo-Roman statesman was perhaps typical: “We used to only read in the annals that Gaul had once been Roman, but that was before our time and its believability wandered, doubtful.”⁶ Roman Gaul, then, had become a myth, de-Romanized and stripped of its Roman past.

But this idea that Gaul was barbarous and the Gauls barbarians was, in fact, nothing new in Italy. It was a tradition of sorts, common knowledge to educated Romans throughout the Empire for centuries, and a part of Gaul’s pre-Roman and Roman identity. Indeed barbarian or semi-barbarian Gauls loomed large in the pages of Roman history. In the fourth century BC, for instance, Gauls from Cisalpine Gaul, northern Italy, had been some of Rome’s greatest and most feared enemies, the first barbarians ever to sack the city of Rome. Though the recollection of this event and Italy’s own Gallic past persisted into the early sixth century, Cisalpine Gaul had become thoroughly Romanized and “Italian” by the late first century BC.⁷ Transalpine Gaul, Gaul proper, which inherited its cisalpine neighbor’s boogeyman status, on the other hand, had not become thoroughly Italian. Portions in the south, to be sure, could be referred to as “more Italy than a province,”⁸ and Arles, also in the south, as “little Gallic Rome,”⁹ but much of Gaul continued to betray certain indigenous elements that sometimes, but not always, inspired commentary from authors. As late as the fourth and fifth century, contemporary

⁶ The Italo-Roman in question, in fact, was Cassiodorus, who was in the act of praising the restoration of Gaul in an oration delivered to the Senate in 514. *CassOratReliquiae*, pg. 466, ln. 17-20: “Galliam / quondam fuisse Romanam solis tantum / legebamus annalibus: aetas non erat / iuncta notitiae, credulitas incerta vagabatur.” The last portion has been paraphrased in the rendering above. More literally it reads, “that time had not been joined to our notice, its credulity wandered doubtful.” For many coming of age in Theoderic’s Italy there had in fact never been a “Roman” Gaul, and books and rumors would have been the only evidence for it.

⁷ And Rome recognized this, making Cisalpine Gaul a part of Italy in 42 BC. For a discussion of the conquest and “Romanization” of northern Italy, see Williams (2001a) and (2001b). Of course, “Italian” is a rather complicated concept as well. See the collected essays in Giardina (1997). For the memory of the Gallic sack of Rome, see the playful epigram of Ennodius, #191, and the comments of Julian, *Or.* 1.29. For knowledge of northern Italy as once “Gallia” in late antiquity, see Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.5.7, Cassiodorus, *Variae* 8.12.7-8.. Both instances were a demonstration of historical knowledge, however; neither Cassiodorus nor Sidonius suggested that contemporary northern Italy was Gallic.

⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 3.31: “Italia verius quam provincia.”

⁹ Ausonius, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium (Opuscula* 19), ln. 73: *Gallula Roma Arelas*.

“Roman” Gauls could appear in written accounts as the kindred of Caesar’s Gauls. The fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus, for instance, described Gallic women as virtual Amazons, one alone able to best a whole band of foreigners, while their men, young and old, were depicted as warriors ferocious and hardened by nature.¹⁰ They were “terrible for the fierceness of their eyes, fond of quarrelling, and overbearing insolent.”¹¹ Other (later) sources depicted Gauls who still looked like Caesar’s opponents. The fourth-century *Historia Augusta*, for example, featured a defeated Gallic tyrant, Tetricus, who was paraded in Rome as a captive Gaul wearing traditional Gallic trousers, while a panegyric by the fifth-century poet Claudian included a personified Gallia who was stereotypically “wild,” with long hair, Gallic torque, and twin Gallic spears.¹²

Images like these could make it seem as if Gaul and Gauls had been completely unaffected by centuries of Roman rule, but this was not the case, nor did such depictions necessarily militate against the acceptable Romanness of Gaul and Gauls. Indeed representations like these were intentionally anachronistic, an expected *topos*,¹³ and doubtless taken with a grain of salt by a more informed and cosmopolitan audience. They were a stereotype, often failing to have substance even in the accounts that featured them. The same Gallic tyrant paraded in Rome in traditional Gallic attire, for instance,

¹⁰ Indeed a Gallic woman’s punches and kicks were like blows from a catapult. *Res Gestae* 15.12.1: “Nec enim eorum quemquam adhibita uxore rixantem, multo se fortiore et glauca, peregrinorum ferre poterit globus, tum maxime cum illa inflata cervice suffrendens, ponderansque niveas ulnas et vastas admixtis calcibus emittere coeperit pugnos, ut catapultas tortilibus nervis excussas.” Cf. Van Dam (2007), 62, for a discussion of a fourth-century depiction of Trier as an Amazon. On Gallic martialism, 15.12.3: “Ad militandum omnis aetas aptissima, et pari pectoris robore senex ad procinctum ducitur et adultus, gelu duratis artubus et labore assiduo, multa contempturus et formidanda.” Similar sentiments were expressed in the early seventh century by the Spanish encyclopedist Isidore of Seville. Cf. *Etymologiae* 9.2.105: “Inde ... Gallos natura feroces atque aciores ingenio pervidemus, quod natura climatum facit.”

¹¹ *Res Gestae*, 15.12.1, which also includes a generalization about most Gauls’ physical appearance: “Celsioris staturae et candidi paene Galli sunt omnes et rutili, luminumque torvitate terribiles, avidi iurgiorum, et sublatius insolentes.”

¹² For Tetricus: *HA, DAur.* 34.2: “Inter haec fuit Tetricus chlamyde coccea, tunica galbina, bracis Gallicis ornatus.” The Gallic significance, if any, of the yellow tunic is unclear, though the red chlamys was the attire of a Roman general. The combination may have been intentionally Gallo-Roman. For wild Gaul, Claudian, *de Consulatu Stilichonis* 2, ln. 240-242: “Tum flava repexo / Gallia crine ferox evinctaque torque decoro/ binaque gaesa tenens animoso pectore fatur.”

¹³ See Burns (2003), 3-5; Amory (1997), introduction especially; and, though somewhat later chronologically, Pohl (1998). Regarding Ammianus’ ethnographic excursus on the Gauls (discussed above), Isaac (2004), 425, concludes, “When Ammianus describes *Galli*, this suggests that he is talking about the ethnic Gauls of the first century and much of the material... derives from sources which were more than four centuries old by the time he wrote. ...Much of the digression has an anachronistic flavor...”

was also referred to as a former Roman magistrate and senator of the Roman people, and was later rewarded with yet another magistracy in, of all places, Italy.¹⁴ His participation as a captive Gaul in a triumph, symbolically meaningful, nonetheless struck others (like the author of the account, for instance, and other senators) as bizarre,¹⁵ and more importantly failed to strip him of his status as a Roman. Similarly the wild, long-haired Gaul, a caricature of the province who was in good company,¹⁶ was still a colleague of Rome and, despite her attire, was in the process of recommending for a consulship a certain general who had recently protected the Gauls against real barbarians, Germans and Franks.¹⁷ Even those Gauls who were fond of quarreling and had terrifyingly fierce eyes were remarkably neat and clean,¹⁸ and, most tellingly, were said to have been “joined to our [Roman] society in an eternal compact.”¹⁹

These, then, were not Caesar’s Gauls, though they might resemble them at times. They were Rome’s Gauls, settled and mollified by Roman law, different, yet full-fledged members of Rome’s order. The extent of their difference could vary quite considerably, from nearly Italian to nearly German (an obvious consequence of Gaul’s liminal position between both regions²⁰), but such diversity was, as already demonstrated, normal in the Roman Empire and did not necessarily exclude those on the fringes from being, in their

¹⁴ *HA, TT* 24.1: “Tetricum senatorem populi Romani praesidatum in Gallia regentem ad imperium”; and 24.4: “...Aurelianus... senatorem populi Romani eundemque consularem, qui iure praesidali omnes Gallias rexerat, per triumphum duxit.” For Tetricus’ magistracy in Italy, *HA, TT* 24.5: “...eum quem triumphaverat correctorem totius Italiae fecit” [a list of at least 10 Italian provinces follows, then]... ac Tetricum non solum vivere, sed etiam in summa dignitate manere passus est.” Other sources, such as Aurelius Victor’s *de Caesaribus* 35, suggest that Tetricus was only made governor of Lucania, an office nonetheless demonstrative of his continued Roman status.

¹⁵ That the author of the *HA* thought Tetricus’ procession as a captive in Aurelianus’ triumph was bizarre can be inferred from the citation above. That many senators sympathized with this position, *HA, DAur.* 34.4: “...senatus (etsi aliquantulo tristior, quod senatores triumphari videbant) multum pompae addiderant.”

¹⁶ In Book 2 of Claudian’s *de Consulatu Stilichonis*, Spain appeared wrapped in olive leaves (ln. 228-30); Britain was wrapped in beast skins, with tattooed cheeks, and wearing a sea-blue cloak (ln. 247-9); Africa was sun-burned, with wheat in her hair and an ivory comb (ln. 256-7); and Italy was covered in ivy and grapevines (ln. 262-64).

¹⁷ Claudian, *de Consulatu Stilichonis* 2, ln. 243-6: “qui mihi Germanos solus Francosque subegit, / cur nondum legitur fastis? Cur pagina tantum / nescit adhuc nomen, quod iam numerare decebat? / usque adeone levis pacati gloria Rheni?”

¹⁸ Ammianus, *Res Gestae* 15.12.2: “tersi tamen pari diligentia cuncti...” The Aquitanians were especially neat and clean. Isaac (2004), 424, suggests that, since cleanliness was not part of the standard Gallic stereotype, the statement may be reflective of Ammianus’ personal impression. Cf. Woolf (1998), 67f., for “neat and clean” as a form of “becoming Roman” for the Gauls,

¹⁹ *Res Gestae* 15.12.6: “Omnes Gallias... subegit Caesar dictator, societatique nostrae foederibus iunxit aeternis.”

²⁰ On this, see especially the discussion of Burns (2003), 134.

own way, tolerably Roman. Gaul could thus boast of famous Roman cities, Greek orators and Roman emperors, and at the same time take pride in her brutish and wild warriors who helped make Rome's army invincible.²¹ Romanness, itself in constant flux, allowed for such variation, and ironically the same mechanisms that created a Roman niche for Theoderic and his Goths had long been at work with respect to Gaul and her Gauls. The similarities were almost uncanny. Just like the Goths, stereotypical Gauls were once ferocious barbarians who had sacked Rome. Just like the Goths, they were conspicuously mustachioed savages who wore their hair long (in fact, Romans had once tellingly referred to their country as *Gallia Comata*, "long-haired Gaul"!). Just like the Goths, their barbarian ferocity, redirected in a Roman military capacity, was transformed into praiseworthy and Roman *virtus*. And just like the Goths, Gauls could adopt the culture of Rome's nobility, becoming highly educated Roman elites, complete with senatorial offices and noble pedigrees.²² What was once recognizably Gallic, then, either conformed to Roman expectations or somehow altered them over the course of time, in either instance becoming Roman. Just as the "Gothic" hairstyle had been internalized long before Theoderic's advent, so too had Tetricus' "Gallic" trousers.

Gaul and Gauls, therefore, had become Roman along a number of themes and had been so for centuries, but the complexities of their Romanness nevertheless had important consequences. Stereotypes, even when obviously anachronistic, remained deeply ingrained in Roman (more specifically Italo-Roman) society, and could be especially potent given the proper situation. These had, as above, provided material for exaggerated caricatures and might even be the subject of jest,²³ but under more pressing circumstances an outdated stereotype could also be transformed into a kind of suppressed reality, ultimately serving to separate Gaul and Gauls from Roman fellowship. Gallic

²¹ The Gallo-Romans featured in Ammianus' *Res Gestae* and Julian's *opera* provide great examples. Cf. *Res Gestae* 19.6 (bravery against Persians) and *Oratio* 1.34 (invincible army). This semi-barbarous status was to be expected in the ranks of the army, and was a useful kind of Romanness (see chapter 3).

²² And, indeed, unlike the Goths, there was a long-standing tradition of such office holders, especially from Mediterranean Gaul, by the later Empire. See especially Stroheker (1948), chp. 1. The extent to which Gaul became "Roman" largely informs the "crisis of identity" question associated with the fifth century. See the collected essays in Drinkwater and Elton (1992), as well as Mathisen (1993) and Van Dam (1985).

²³ The back-and-forth between Sidonius Apollinaris and a certain Italo-Roman named Candidianus (*Ep.* 1.8) demonstrates nicely the ability for a Gaul and an Italian to satirize each other's respective homelands. Cf. C Köhler (1995), 258, who identifies this letter as either invective or, what seems more likely, playful satire.

usurpation and rebellion, which were another Gallic stereotype and, in fact, linked Gauls further with barbarism, provided just such a context.²⁴ In the minds of non-Gallic observers their occurrence often entailed for Gaul a rejection and loss not only of Roman rule, but of the civilizing processes that accompanied it, transforming Rome's Gauls once more into simply Caesar's Gauls. Nature, which seemed to render Gauls predisposed to savagery, hence dictated their behavior once more, no longer restrained by Roman law and custom. Nor was anyone in Gaul apparently safe, for even the Roman senator Tetricus could, for a moment, lose his Roman veneer and become a new Vercingetorix, the Gallic arch-adversary of Julius Caesar, or worse still, a new Brennus, the first barbarian ever to sack the city of Rome: a foreign, overtly Gallic (and anti-Roman) nemesis. Nonetheless, until the fifth century such rebellions had always been quashed, and Gaul generally returned with ease to her seemingly rightful and Roman place.²⁵ Gaul, just like Tetricus, could be forgiven and ultimately corrected, the reestablishment of Roman rule trumping any Gallic inclinations towards barbarism.

It becomes clear, therefore, that Italian sentiments towards Gaul and Gauls in the aftermath of fifth-century developments could draw upon a rich history of Gallic relations and perceptions vis-à-vis the central Empire. The loss of Gaul was not an entirely new phenomenon, and there had been non-Roman and post-Roman Gauls in the past, both of which provided useful precedents for understanding contemporary developments and, more importantly, a means through which proverbially rabid Gallic wolves might be mollified and welcomed once more into the Roman fold. Still, such a history of Gallic separation did not necessarily make the phenomenon any less troubling to contemporaries, nor, for that matter, were old models, however useful, completely appropriate given the specific context of the early sixth century. The Gaul of Ennodius and Cassiodorus, after all, had a major complication that could at times demand deeper reflection: she was a *Gallia capta*, a conquered Gaul taken by force by real barbarians

²⁴ Rebellion was linked with ideas of *levitas*, *perfiditas*, *insania*, *furor*, and so forth, stock attributes of barbarians. For this, Dauge (1981), 176-7. For the link within a specifically Gallic context, see the interesting study of Urban (1999).

²⁵ Broadly, Urban (1999); on the third-century "Gallic" Empire, Drinkwater (1987).

and seemingly lost forever.²⁶ If no longer Roman, this Gaul had only become so unwillingly.

Two rather different generalizations concerning post-Roman Gaul were thus readily available to the late fifth- and early sixth-century inhabitants of Italy. Gauls could, at one extreme, remain subject to the traditional understanding whereby, having left the Roman Empire, they simply reverted to their instinctual barbarism and became, once more, objects of revulsion; or, at another extreme, they could, as captives, retain their full-fledged Roman status and become, instead, objects of pity.²⁷ There was room in the minds of Italians for much nuance and even contradiction, a reality that meant that either interpretation could be completely valid or invalid given the proper setting. But the longer Gaul remained outside Rome's political sphere, the greater the potential grew for a barbarization model to dominate. Sooner or later parts of Gallia would become Francia, Burgundia, and (Visi-)Gothia, and its inhabitants simply Franks, Burgundians, and (Visi-)Goths.²⁸ Those Romans in Gaul who were imagined as living sadly in the midst of barbarians and struggling to maintain their Roman identities were thus slowly disappearing and becoming something else. Nature and barbarian rule forced this

²⁶ Indeed, the loss of Gallic provinces over the course of the fifth century was unprecedented. Though there had been earlier instances of barbarian invasion and capture of portions of Gaul (usually cities), in almost all these cases barbarian occupation had been short-lived and the barbarians easily dislodged. In fact, some scholars have recently suggested that certain instances of capture were essentially allowed to happen, their reconquest serving to bolster claims of Roman superiority and eternal victory. Drinkwater (1997), sees Julian's recapture of Strassbourg in 357 as one such example. At any rate, from the first through fifth century, more of Gaul was lost, and more often, to "Roman" usurpers than barbarians.

²⁷ Roman law even provided for their official restoration through a process known as *postliminium*, which allowed former captives to regain their rights and property upon repatriation. The term is referenced only once in the *Variae* (2.2.2), where the Gallic consul Felix is described as returning to the Roman Empire (reconquered Provence) through a "veritable process of *postliminium*." Still, as the case of Felix and others (to be described below) will demonstrate, the legal mechanisms for something like *postliminium*, if only through special intervention, were still in existence in the sixth century.

²⁸ Indeed, as *Variae* 1.46.2 (cited in full in chapter 3) demonstrates, the Italian government was already applying the term "Burgundia" to those lands in Gaul ruled by the Burgundians. In Burgundy and southern Gaul, on the other hand, the term "Gallia" was still being employed in reference to the Burgundian kingdom. Cf. *Vita Caesarii* 1.21, 1.55, and 1.60; likewise Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 12, 93, 94, and *Passio Sigismundi* 2. The terms (Visi)Gothia and (Visi)Goths have been employed above because both the Ostrogoths and Visigoths are generally referred to as *Gothi* in fifth- and sixth-century sources (though a few letters in the *Variae*, such as *Variae* 3.1.1 and 3.3.2, do distinguish between Theoderic's *Gothi* and Alaric II's *Vvisigothi*). Despite sharing the same Gothic appellation, however, real differences were perceived to exist between both peoples. Theoderic's Goths were tolerably "Roman"; Alaric's were not. The complication can be seen rather nicely in *Vita Caesarii* 2.10, where Theoderic's Prefect of Gaul, Liberius, is nearly fatally wounded by "Goths," obviously Visigoths in the employ of the "rogue" king Gesalec. On the perceived distinction between Ostrogoths and Visigoths, see below as well as Diaz and Valverde (2007), 353-60.

transformation, but they were not alone. Time itself was driving a wedge between Gaul and Italy, while a generation reached maturity in the latter country for whom Roman Gaul and Roman Gauls had little resonance or, for that matter, relevance.

Perfecti, lapsi, barbari: Becoming post-Roman

Sentiments like the one cited at the beginning of this chapter, which betray an utter disbelief on the part of certain Italo-Romans that Gaul had ever been Roman, are relatively easy to explain. Sheltered in the south of Italy and socially oriented away from central and northern Europe,²⁹ men like Cassiodorus barely knew Gaul and, born after 476, never knew a Roman Gaul beyond the one of books and memory.³⁰ They could, in the wake of 508, be enthusiastic about a Gallic restoration, but they also may not have given Gaul much, if any, reflection before this time. Their Gaul was foremost a barbarian Gaul. But for Italo-Romans like Ennodius, northerners and Ligurians especially, the situation was very different. Men like these were uniquely positioned with respect to Gaul.³¹ Just as they were coming of age, their country was in the process of becoming the new Roman frontier, the ideological stopping point for an Empire redefining itself and its Romanness.³² The Alps, ever-present and always intimidating,³³ were the new Rhine, and its soldiers, in some places an everyday sight, provided a kind of defensible gateway for Liguria, able to be closed in the face of invading barbarians, whose oaths

²⁹ See chapter one in general.

³⁰ And in the case of books, the above discussion has already suggested that the Gaul found here was often stereotypically un-Roman, or at best, on the fringes.

³¹ Both central and southern Gaul, in fact, as Ennodius' connections to Provence and Burgundy so nicely demonstrate. Only Francia seems to have been completely alien to him (and, indeed, if the letters of Sidonius are any indication, "Belgian" Gaul had long since been written off by even those residing at its borders).

³² For the re-fortification of the Alpine region during the late fifth and early sixth century see especially Brogiolo and Possenti (2001), 259-64, and, more broadly, Christie (1991).

³³ For the terror that the Alps inspired in Ennodius, see the rather elaborate *Itinerarium Brigantionis Castellii* (#245), which describes a terrible journey from Briançon to Turin. When Ennodius finally made it through the Alps, he described himself trembling, crying, and essentially polluted (ln. 45-46: "Limina sanctorum praestat lustrasse trementem, / Martyribus lacrimas exhibuisse meas"). See also #10.4, which denigrates the so-called "natural beauty" of the Alps near Como, and #31, which admonishes the senator Asturius for becoming semi-barbarous through his proximity to the Alps. Sidonius Apollinaris found his own Alpine crossing of 467 much more comfortable, but was a bit terrified. See *Ep.* 1.5.2: "sic Alpium iugis appropinquatum; quarum mihi citus et facilis ascensus et inter utrimque terrentis latera praerupti cavatis in callem nivibus itinera mollita." Likewise, in the late fourth century, Ammianus commented on the "terrible appearance" of the Alps (*Res Gestae* 15.10.4: *visu terribile*) but also mentioned certain ways that the locals had attempted to make even winter crossings possible, such as the use of secure-lines.

could not be trusted.³⁴ This frontier status, by its very nature, served to make Gaul an “other” in the minds of Ligurians, rendering a neighboring country that was already dreadful to some for its mists³⁵ increasingly clouded and dark. Gaul not only seemed dangerous, but was in reality an actual source of peril and depredation for this province. When Ennodius claimed, for instance, that Liguria had nearly died in the late 490s and Theoderic had needed to resuscitate her, the malady from which she suffered had been caused by an invader from Gaul, that “savage Burgundian,” Gundobad, whose followers had ravaged her.³⁶ Nor was this the only occasion during the lifetime of Ennodius when imminent death would come from beyond the Alps.³⁷

But while there was real danger, there were also, as might be expected along any frontier, periods of peaceful coexistence and interdependence between cisalpine and transalpine peoples, factors that fostered a kind of frontier society which straddled the Alps.³⁸ Social realities could belie political ones, and this was especially the case with respect to Provence and Liguria, where strong social ties had linked both regions for centuries.³⁹ Indeed, Ligurians like Ennodius were ideally located to be especially sensitive to ideas of Gallic Romanness and barbarian captivity. They traveled to Gaul on multiple occasions, conducted business there, had a number of Gallic friends with whom they corresponded frequently, played host to Gallo-Romans traveling through Italy, and recommended the same Gauls to their Italian friends and patrons. They could even, like

³⁴ *Variae* 2.5.2: “qui... quasi a quadam porta provinciae gentiles introitus probatur excludere. In procinctu semper erit, qui barbaros prohibere contendit, quia solus metus cohibet, quos fides promissa non retinet.”

³⁵ Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.8.1, suggests that mists and fog were synonymous with Lyon (and perhaps, by extension, Gaul) in the minds of some Italians: “ais enim gaudere te quod aliquando necessarius tuus videam solem, quem utique perraro bibitor Araricus inspexerim. Nebulas enim mihi meorum Lugdunensium exprobras et diem quereris nobis matutina caligine obsructum vix meridiano fervore reserari.”

³⁶ *VE* 139: “Haec quamvis burgundio inmitis exercuit, nos tamen, si non emendamus, admisimus. Populatae patriae cessamus succurrere, et aurum apud nos habetur in conditis?”

³⁷ See below for a discussion of a Burgundian raid on Liguria in 507. Later, in 536 (and hence after Ennodius’ death), another failed Burgundian invasion is recorded. For this see, *Variae* 12.28. Eventually the Franks would follow in their footsteps, briefly conquering portions of northern Italy during the Gothic Wars (and continuing to be a threat thereafter until Charlemagne’s conquest of the Lombard Kingdom). As will be demonstrated, then, the extension of Theoderic’s empire into Gaul might best be explained as a means of protecting Italy, a traditional *raison d’être* for Roman Provence and doubtless the rationale behind Nepos’ own willingness in 474 to relinquish the Auvergne to the Visigoths in exchange for this region.

³⁸ On frontier societies in the Roman period see in general Geary (1988), Whittaker (1994), and Elton (1996).

³⁹ And, in fact, would continue to do so throughout the Middle Ages and early Modern Era. See the discussion above for northern Italy as “Gallic” and southern Gaul as “Italian.”

Ennodius, be born in Gaul and continue to have family ties there.⁴⁰ Yet just like Ennodius, when push came to shove, these well-connected Italians were still foremost Ligurians and Romans. They could have friendly Gallic connections and be particularly sensitive to conditions in Gaul, but, as will eventually be demonstrated, they too could be shockingly insensitive and unsympathetic to Gallic Romanness. Even they, at times, found just cause to invoke what seemed to be innate Gallic barbarism or barbarization. Southerners like Cassiodorus could be ambivalent, but men like Ennodius downright hostile, and yet, ironically, completely open-minded.

The identity of Gaul was hence complicated, but there were “real” Romans residing in this land in the early sixth century, and for Ennodius, they could be recognized foremost through their Roman erudition and especially Latin eloquence. Knowledge of the liberal arts and the ability to exhibit it in a refined way, such as through public speaking or letters, made even a Gaul a member of an elite society, a club which for men like Ennodius signified true nobility and hence true Romanness. This, of course, should come as no surprise. As already demonstrated, the idea was common in Italy and had even worked in favor of certain Goths like the Amals. The understanding, in fact, had mass appeal to Latin-speaking elites throughout the Empire, and its function within post-Roman Gaul had a history pre-dating the era of Ennodius. In the 470s, for example, when no longer residing in a Roman Gaul, Sidonius Apollinaris expressed what amounted to the same sentiment in a letter to a grammarian named Johannes. Here he explained that the societal role of teachers had become more important than ever. Without the Roman Empire, he explained, “the only token of [Roman] nobility will be a knowledge of [Latin] letters,”⁴¹ and by this he meant that Latin erudition would become the only sign of (elite) Roman status in post-Roman Gaul. This passage, often cited in

⁴⁰ Ennodius’ works demonstrate that he personally went to Gaul at least twice in his lifetime, once to Lyon and once to Briançon (see *VE* 147-177, discussed in chapter 4, and fn. 33, above). For his relations with the inhabitants of Gaul in general, see below.

⁴¹ *Ep.* 8.2.2: “nam iam remotis gradibus dignitatum... solum erit posthac nobilitatis indicium litteras nosse.” Cf. *Ep.* 5.5 to Syagrius of Lyon, who, while Sidonius was still residing within the Roman Empire, was recommended a healthy dose of Latin literature in order to maintain his noble status in the face of almost ridiculous Burgundian Germanization. Neither of these seem to be examples of the largely “invented” idea of literary decline among the elites of fifth-century Gaul, but see the discussion of Mathisen (1988) and (1993), 105-118.

modern works,⁴² illustrates nicely the importance of Roman culture, and hence Romanness, for Gallo-Romans like Sidonius, who were coming to terms with the realities of their age; but it was also important because it was absolutely correct. A generation later Ennodius and others like him⁴³ continued to recognize the Romanness of Gaul and Gauls for this very reason.

Ennodius' correspondence with the *literati* of Gaul, those of Arles especially, is demonstrative of this. These learned men (and women too) were praised above all for their Roman erudition, some even being described as veritable fountains of Latin eloquence. Nor was language like this simply fulfilling a *topos* or a case of empty flattery (though flattery was certainly a factor), since the highly cosmopolitan and intellectual communities for which southern Gaul had been renowned, particularly the city of Arles, remained intact during this period.⁴⁴ Men like Firminus of Arles, for instance, who was a relative of Ennodius and perhaps the same Firminus who published Sidonius' ninth book of letters, reminded Ennodius of just how base "rough speech" was and how special and superior were those intellectual Romans who were tellingly called *perfecti*.⁴⁵ "Residing in the citadel of eloquence," Ennodius once asked him, "who does not despise the disposition of such a person [i.e. unlearned and ineloquent]?"⁴⁶ "Love of the unlearned," he explained, "burdens the conscience of the perfected,"⁴⁷ and so corresponding with Firminus, a "learned author," was particularly joyous.⁴⁸ Indeed Firminus' letters reminded Ennodius that "the splendor of perfectly refined speech glistens forth where eloquence preserves its riches with the bridle of expertise,"⁴⁹ a rather florid (perhaps even

⁴² Cf. Van Dam (1985), 163; Mathisen (1993), 109; Harries (1994), 246-7. Van Dam even goes so far as to suggest, 164-5, that Sidonius' hyper-classicizing Latin was a coping mechanism in the face of Roman collapse.

⁴³ The Ligurian poet Arator provides a comparative example. For his praise of the Gallo-Roman Parthenius, see below.

⁴⁴ See Delage (1994), 24-9, and Fevrier (1994), 46-9. The intellectual community at Arles even made incredible gains owing to the arrival of refugees from North Africa, northern Gaul, and even Pannonia, including Pomerius, Salvian, and Anthony of Lérins.

⁴⁵ #12.2: "at ubi scaber sermo angustiam pauperis signat ingenii nec conceptum suum in ordinem digerendo noctem studio elocutionis interserit et nebulosae narrationis ambiguo quandam generat de ipsa explanatione caecitatem." For *perfecti* see the citations below; for Firminus, *PLRE* 2, 471 ("Firminus 4").

⁴⁶ #12.2: "quis non personae talis in eloquentiae arce constitutus spernat affectum?"

⁴⁷ Ibid: "Gravat conscientiam perfectorum amor indocti."

⁴⁸ #12.1: "Iucunda sunt commercia litterarum docto auctore concepta."

⁴⁹ Ibid: "illa in quibus ad unguem politi sermonis splendor effulgorat, ubi oratio dives frenis peritiae continetur."

eloquent) way of saying that he thought Firminus was a particularly learned and eloquent man.

Letters like this demonstrate that Ennodius and Firminus (and those like them) could imagine themselves as belonging to the same circle of *perfecti*, but another letter implied that Ennodius thought himself unworthy of membership and utterly failing to live up to Arlesian standards. If Romanness could be measured in terms of eloquence, which it was, Firminus and thus his Arles could actually be superior and more Roman than Ennodius and his Italy. Indeed Ennodius seemed to imply that he was a bit of a barbarian himself, his lack of good words or perhaps overly ostentatious language having offended Firminus' sensibilities, despite his good intentions.⁵⁰ Firminus required in others what "you have practiced; what you love,"⁵¹ and Ennodius had failed him. He was not eloquent enough; he was separated from Arles, "the gymnasium of scholarly learning";⁵² the meagerness of his studies revealed themselves far and away;⁵³ he was even unworthy of his lineage, a Gallic lineage that he shared with Firminus, and thus, "like a foreigner," could praise Firminus for his skills but not imitate them.⁵⁴ Gaul, then, was distant and remote, an "other" in this sense to be sure, but Firminus was clearly in a position to judge according to a Roman scheme. Requesting letters from Firminus was therefore like calling forth "certain floods of the ocean for (water) jugs of parched talent, as if intending to contest the rays of the sun with lamps."⁵⁵

This was highly rhetorical language, and indeed this last statement, which was rather skillfully constructed, in reality served to demonstrate the opposite, that Ennodius

⁵⁰ #40.2: "inperatoris loco dominatur semel penetralibus cordis infixata dilectio, credens quod non de verborum pondere vel pompa capiatur, qui de absentis propinqui est salute sollicitus, nec aestimat nasci posse offensam de gratia, hoc ad laetitiam satis esse coniciens, si optatam nuntiet epistula sospitatem." Later on in this letter Ennodius suggested that he was garrulous, #40.4: "...nisi excusetur pietate garrulitas."

⁵¹ #40.3: "quaeritis nimirum in aliis quod exercetis, quaeritis quod amatis."

⁵² Ibid: "nos ab scolarum gymnasiis sequestrati..." Though this line may very well have simply been a reference to the fact that Ennodius was now in an ecclesiastical position, the fact that he mentioned his lineage and his foreignness before Firminus (and by implication other Gauls) would seem to suggest the interpretation provided above. Cf. Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.6.2, where Rome is referred to as the *gymnasium litterarum*. By implication, Arles, once referred to as a "Little Gallic Rome," maintained its prior status.

⁵³ #40.4: "mei macies longe se monstrat studii..."

⁵⁴ Ibid: "vena quidem linguae a generis fonte trahitur et fervore genuino solet fetura nobilis incitari: ego mea sum inpar prosapia, me dotibus vestris quasi peregrinum scientiae plenitudo non tetigit, ego vos tantum laudare magis quam imitari valeo."

⁵⁵ #40.3: "...arentis ingenii guttis quaedam oceani fluentia provocamus, quasi lychnis contra solis radios pugnaturi."

was quite worthy for sure. Perhaps Firminus even said so in a later reply and suggested his own lack of talent in the face of such Latin speech, making some sort of reference to Ennodius' proximity to Rome, the true "gymnasium of letters."⁵⁶ Exchanges like this were a game, but an old game played by Roman elites for centuries, a kind of verbal badminton. That the game continued uninhibited and Gauls could appear as its star athletes illustrates well the continued Roman status of learned Gauls like Firminus.

Firminus made Gaul eloquent and hence Roman for highly literate Italian elites like Ennodius; nor was he alone. The famous teacher of rhetoric Julianus Pomerius, another correspondent of Ennodius, served a similar function. North African in origin, perhaps Mauritanian,⁵⁷ Pomerius had nonetheless become a part of Gaul and the intellectual scene centered at Arles, in Ennodius' own words an *alumnus Rhodani*, a nursling of the Rhone.⁵⁸ Pomerius was exceptionally learned, and stories of his knowledge and talents, particularly in Greek and Latin, had become known to Ennodius and his relations in Italy, much (apparently) to the rhetor's surprise. In the only extant correspondence between the two, dated to the spring or summer of 503,⁵⁹ Ennodius playfully explained the situation: "Perhaps you thought you were hiding in some place, a man whom the splendor of knowledge reveals to [us] placed far off."⁶⁰ But a man so pregnant with talent⁶¹ could not hide, even if "most separated."⁶² Indeed, it was the lack of good information, engendered by this distance and ultimately restricting knowledge of Pomerius to rumors, that ultimately led Ennodius, perhaps a bit too rashly, to initiate correspondence in the first place.⁶³ "I want to be the leading addressee of your letters,"

⁵⁶ See Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.6.2 (cited above).

⁵⁷ *PLRE* 2, 896.

⁵⁸ Or, perhaps better, a "foster-son" of the Rhone. #39.3: "in epistulis meis sine cura dictatis Romanam aequalitatem et Latiaris undae venam alumnus Rhodani perquirebas."

⁵⁹ For the date, Kennell (2000), 63, and *PLRE* 2, 896. The death of Pomerius, however, is the *terminus ante quem*, and since this is unclear, anytime during which Ennodius was writing is possible. For an excellent discussion of the contents of this letter, see Schröder (2007), 189-95.

⁶⁰ #39.1: "an forsitan putabas te in quocumque loci delitiscere, quem scientiae lux longe positorum monstrabat aspectui?"

⁶¹ #39.2: "utriusque bibliothecae fibula, perfectionis ex gemio latere venientis partes maximas momordisti, procurando ut tali ingenium tuum saturitate pinguisceret."

⁶² #39.3: "ad illud venio, in quo me seiunctissimus instruxisti." "Most separated one" is hence used as a formal address, reiterating the distance between Arles and Milan (or perhaps Pavia, if the letter is early enough).

⁶³ Lack of good information, #39.2: "et nisi me in laudibus tuis domestica quidem relatio, sed per inperitiam sui pauper angustet et amplissima meritorum tuorum praeconia relatoris artet exilitas." Too rashly, #39.1: "nolo evadere opinionem temerarii, dummodo ad notitiam possim pervenire perfecti."

he explained, “so that the wealth of Gaul may come to Italy without any loss of form happening in the process.”⁶⁴ This wealth of Gaul, of course, was Pomerius and his learning, and it was through letters and the Roman eloquence they contained that a part of Pomerius could be sent, uncorrupted, to Italy.⁶⁵

Pomerius, then, was a master of Roman erudition, even more impressive than many of his contemporaries (Gallic or Italian), whose knowledge of Greek was far less refined (or simply non-existent).⁶⁶ More so than in the case of Firminus above, Ennodius was thus willing to express feelings of being outclassed by his addressee, again demonstrating the occasional dominance of Gaul in the field of Latin letters (and by proxy, Romanness) in the minds of certain Italo-Romans. Pomerius had apparently found merit in Ennodius’ introductory letter, but Ennodius remained humble: “You have searched everywhere in my letters, which were dictated without care, for Roman smoothness and a talent for flowing Latin. I believe an anxious and diligent scrutinizer has found, while hastening through unwrought words, what revision can refine.”⁶⁷ Ennodius was quick to admit that his writings lacked polish and required re-working, suggesting that Pomerius had been too kind. It was Pomerius and Gaul who were superior, and there was nothing wrong with this in his estimation: “Latinity strengthens those residing amid the schools of her studies, even if they are natives, since (wondrous to say) it is fond of foreigners.”⁶⁸ This statement is revealing. Though residing now in a foreign land and no longer politically Roman, Pomerius’ knowledge of Latin nevertheless suggested that he was indeed still a Roman, for his erudition alone served (just as Sidonius had suggested) as a token of his Romanness.

But Julianus Pomerius (and individuals like him) had done more than just be learned. He had also taught his craft, becoming an actual source of eloquence for certain

⁶⁴ #39.1: “volo esse paginarum praeuius destinator, ut Galliarum bona ad Italiam migrent sine ullo formae suae translata dispendio.” This idea about a “loss of form” simply means that Ennodius did not want to get second-hand (and potentially altered) information. I have translated “translata,” which modifies “bona,” as “in the process” so as to avoid the redundancy of “migrent” and “translata.”

⁶⁵ This is a common theme in Latin epistles. Cf. Sidonius, *Ep.* 2.11 and 7.14, for instance.

⁶⁶ See the discussion of Greek learning and its impressiveness before an Italian audience in chapter 3.

⁶⁷ #39.3: “in epistulis meis sine cura dictatis Romanam aequalitatem et Latiaris undae venam alumnus Rhodani perquirebas. Sollicitus credo scrutator et diligens quid lima poliret invenit, dum per infabricata verba discurreret.” “Credo” is clearly parenthetical here, despite the absence of punctuation in the *MGH* edition. Schröder (2007), 192, has a similar reading and simply translates “credo” as “wohl.”

⁶⁸ #39.4: “ergo etsi indigenas et inter studiorum suorum palestra versatos fulcit latinitas, mirum dictu, quod amat extraneos.”

Gallic protégées. The role was of fundamental importance within Roman elite circles and particularly in post-Roman Gaul. As mentioned above, Sidonius had lauded the grammarian Johannes for his role as a teacher, a task which allowed “Latin speech to maintain a safe haven, though her arms [had] suffered shipwreck.”⁶⁹ Ennodius likewise thanked the grammarian Deuterius of Milan, whose instruction had ennobled his semi-barbarous Gallic nephew, Parthenius, and described instruction in general as a kind of “benevolent furnace” that transforms “hidden talent within youths” from its “solid-iron appearance.”⁷⁰ Pomerius obviously served a similar function at Arles, retaining the birthright of eloquence for the youths of Gaul. In fact, one particularly famous student of his, Caesarius of Arles, who was born not in southern Gaul but in Burgundy, was living proof (despite his rejection of “profane letters”⁷¹). Long after Caesarius’ rhetorical instruction and episcopal ordainment, Ennodius directed a letter to him which, though never explicitly mentioning Pomerius, praised his addressee for the kind of literary expertise that such a teacher could impart. True to the skills of a learned orator, Caesarius was said to have increased the gift of oration for even the greatest of writers, since his actual reading and deportment served to improve the compositions he read.⁷² “You teach even schoolmasters,” he was told, “when you impart your talents to books through their recitation.”⁷³ Caesarius, then, in and of himself, exhibited the very expertise that could continue to keep Gaul Roman in the eyes of Italians, while suggesting (indirectly) the importance of instructors like Pomerius, who passed these gifts along.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Sidonius, *Ep.* 8.2.1: “teque per Gallias uno magistro sub hac tempestate bellorum Latina tenuerunt ora portum, cum pertulerint arma naufragium.”

⁷⁰ #94.6 (*Gratiarum Actio Grammatico quando Partenius bene recitavit*): “fornacis beneficio de latentium fetibus venarum quod in solidi transit speciem ferro dominatur et effera hominum corda domitrice adfectione captivat.”

⁷¹ On his private instruction by Pomerius and rejection of classical learning, see *Vita Caesarii* 1.9, but see also Fevrier (1994), 52, who suggests that this was a common Christian trope and can be traced all the way back to Tertullian. As will soon be demonstrated, Ennodius certainly believed that Caesarius was eloquent, but the *sermo humilis* employed in Caesarius’ extant sermons does suggest a movement away from the high style of many of his contemporaries (such as Ennodius). Doubtless, this was a choice on his part, echoing the moves of churchmen like Jerome and Augustine. Cf. Bartlett (2001).

⁷² #461.5: “tibi debet quicumque ille scriptorum maximus, quod eum dote elocutionis amplificas. In te lux convenit sermonis et operis.” This seems to be the sense of *sermo* and *opus*.

⁷³ Ibid: “tu dum libris genium relatione concilias, et magistros informas.” Klingshirn (1994b), translates “relatione” as “by way of communication,” which, while correct, does not seem to convey well the sense of the passage, i.e. that Caesarius is literally reading these books aloud.

⁷⁴ Cf. Riché (1976), chp. 1 especially.

There were still others residing in post-Roman Gaul whose sweet speech and Latin letters recommended them to Italians like Ennodius, but an extensive treatment, as above, would be superfluous. Some of these individuals have already been encountered in previous chapters. There was, for instance, Leo, the counselor of Euric featured in the *Life of Epiphanius*, a correspondent of Sidonius and a winner of declamation contests.⁷⁵ There was also the father of the Gallic consul Felix, praised for his knowledge of Greek and Latin letters and natural science;⁷⁶ and indeed Felix himself, a “vestige of his paternal praises,”⁷⁷ who demonstrated while in Italy “not alien customs but Roman gravity.”⁷⁸ Perhaps Felix and his father were exceptional because of the amount of time they spent in Italy and the loyalty they showed the Empire, but there were still others with similar merits who remained, like Pomerius, *seiunctissimi*, most separated (in Gaul). Stephanus, a priest and later bishop of an unknown see, for instance, wrote “with such a pure stream” that Ennodius claimed his very innards “were drenched with secret passion.”⁷⁹ Likewise Ennodius’ sister Euprepia (then in Gaul) once poured “twice as much honey” into an epistle, rousing, as Ennodius declared, “my heart and transferring my captive mind, having left the residence of my body, to a longing for you.”⁸⁰

These were just a few of the other men and women residing in post-Roman Gaul who were conspicuously Roman through their elite education, and even they were not alone.⁸¹ Their examples suggest that in an Empire that no longer included Gaul, the connection provided by literary culture, particularly when manifested in letter-writing,

⁷⁵ See *VE* 85 and the discussion in chapter 1. Leo’s eloquence was confirmed not only by his declamation contest trophies, but also through his recognition of a similar kind of eloquence in Epiphanius, who defeated King Euric with this uniquely “Roman” weapon. Cf. *VE* 89-91.

⁷⁶ *Variae* 2.3.3-4: “litterarum quippe studiis dedicatus perpetuum doctissimis disciplinis mancipavit aetatem. Non primis, ut aiunt, labris eloquentiam consecutus toto Aonii se fonte satiavit. ...rerum quoque naturalium causas subtilissime perscrutatus Cecropii dogmatis Attico se melle saginavit.”

⁷⁷ *Variae* 2.3.5: “...ut paternarum laudum in hunc recognoscatis esse vestigium.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid*: “vixit enim inter vos, ut scitis, non consuetudine peregrina, sed gravitate Romana.” Nor was Felix alone in such gravity, since in *Variae* 2.3.4 his father was called “Nostrorum temporum Cato.”

⁷⁹ #79.2: “talīs est vestrarum ratio litterarum... et ita puro ditant gurgite, ut occulto ab eis viscera subfundantur incendio.”

⁸⁰ #268.3: “Vix quae ante direxeras blandimenta sustinui: post admonitionem meam duplicia in litteris mella fudisti, quae tota pectoris secreta concuterent et ad desiderium tui captivam animam relicta corporis sede transferrent.” Cf. #313.2, where a similar letter of Euprepia caused Ennodius to long for Gaul and even to refer to Italy as a kind of prison for his body: “dum ad dulcem sedem libertas mentis exurreret, intra Italiam me corporis captivitas includebat.”

⁸¹ One can more or less assume, given the familial relationship of Ennodius with many of his Gallic correspondents and his emphasis on style, that nearly all the “native” Gauls written to in his letters could be acceptably “Roman.” Roughly fifteen of these individuals can be found in his epistolary corpus.

served to unify like-minded elites residing in separate regions. Ennodius put it rather nicely in a letter to another Gallic correspondent, Apollinaris: “The abundance of a vigorous pen feeds a friendship preserved in the heart: ...you made me, through continuing your writing, unmindful of our separation, sowing your venerable likeness within your gentle address.”⁸² Writing, as always, created a society of letters, which, in the absence of physical contact, could make its participants forget about the realities of spatial separation. But now, in the early sixth century, such traditional separations had been exacerbated and further complicated by political and ideological dimensions. Though letters could keep Gaul very Roman for those in Italy, the situation nevertheless remained fragile. Silence was devastating, and not just to those hoping to receive word from Gaul,⁸³ but in its consequences. Without knowledge there was little to keep Gaul Roman in the minds of those beyond the Alps; without contact men like Ennodius, with their unique Gallic connections, became utterly disconnected and alienated from Gaul, much like Cassiodorus. To the same Euprepia, his sister, who had apparently been silent for too long, Ennodius wrote, “you live again among us... we see your love resurging as if from some kind of grave... since we believed through your disregard for us that a living person had occupied a tomb.”⁸⁴ Silence, therefore, was deadly, and not just to Gallo-Romans but to Gaul, yet continued writing, as Ennodius informed his sister, was a kind of antidote.⁸⁵ Indeed, as Ennodius explained to another noble lady of Arles, Archotamia, letters like hers kept Gaul in the back of his mind,⁸⁶ and moreover Romans like her made the prospect of even a journey to Gaul, however terrifying, actually possible: “I would truly like there to be a reason to desire [a journey to] Gaul, so that...

⁸² #151.1: “stili frequentia vivaci pabulo insitam diligentia in usum non reducta per paginas.” Sidonius, *Ep* 7.14.2, expressed similar sentiments: “per quem [i.e. stilum] saepenumero absentum dumtaxat institutorum tantus colligitur affectus, quantus nec praesentanea sedulitate conficitur.” For Apollinaris, *PLRE* 2, 115 (“Apollinaris 4”).

⁸³ Having read Euprepia’s sweet words, for instance, Ennodius entreated her not to “remove from a thirsty man the drink of affection already drunken at [her] bestowal” (#268.5). At least twenty other letters dispatched to Gallic correspondents mention silence.

⁸⁴ #52.1-2: “revixisti apud nos post dilectionis quem procuraveras obitum beneficio litterarum. Vidimus amorem quasi de quadam sepultura surgentem... quam credebamus per contemptum nostri viventem busta complesse.”

⁸⁵ #52.5: “poteris errata corrigere, si praesentia non vales, scriptione multiplici.”

⁸⁶ #291.1: “ego Gallias, quae totum me propter vos sibi vindicant, si oculis non inspicio, affectione non desero.”

kissing your eyes, [I] might bless you in whatever condition of suffering [you may find yourself].”⁸⁷

So there were real Romans residing in Gaul, Romans whom some in Italy were both highly aware of and deeply committed to. But Italo-Romans like Ennodius were not completely delusional. However much they accepted or regretted it, they understood that times had changed and that this was no longer Roman Gaul. *Literati* like Firminus, Pomerius, and Leo were relics from a bygone era: noble Romans who had resided in Gaul before its ultimate loss to the *barbaricum*. They could pass on their knowledge of Roman culture to coming generations, to young men like Caesarius, for instance, but the environment within which these youths of Gaul were maturing was changing, both in reality and in the minds of onlookers. Even for well-informed Ligurians like Ennodius, political detachment from Italy and the Roman Empire was acting like a catalyst, devolving Gaul and Gauls to their pre-Roman state and allowing nature to take its course. Caesar’s Gauls were reemerging from the Gallic wilderness, not just as a kind of anachronistic stereotype, but as a *bona fide* reality. Nowhere is this development more apparent than in the series of correspondence between Ennodius and his seemingly Roman and “eloquent” sister Euprepia, written during the opening years of the sixth century.

Unfortunately not much beyond the notices provided in Ennodius’ epistles is known about Euprepia. She seems, like many of the women encountered in Ennodius’ letters, to have been well-educated and to have shared a similar understanding of the importance of “sweet speech” for noble Romans, for not only was her style at times complimented by Ennodius, as above, but she was also concerned that her son, Lupicinus, receive a traditional education along the same lines.⁸⁸ Whether she was raised in Italy, like her brother, is unclear, but probable considering it was from a home in Italy that she ultimately left for Gaul, placing her son in Ennodius’ care. Her destination appears to have been Arles, where she hoped to secure the inheritance of certain family

⁸⁷ #319.7: “vere sola mihi vellem causa existeret Gallias expetendi, ut cum domno meo presbytero, utriusque osculantes manus et oculos tuos, beatem te in quavis adflictione temporis redderemus.” This “adflictio” was not “Gallic captivity” but simply the human condition; the kiss was intended, along with the priest’s, as a means of providing comfort.

⁸⁸ The fact that she ran within some of the same lettered circles in Gaul to which Ennodius appears to have been connected also seems to suggest this, though family connections might be equally responsible. These individuals included Archotamia, Bassus and his wife Viola, and Cynegia.

lands.⁸⁹ She may or may not have returned to Italy, but what is certain is that her actions during her stay in Gaul were poorly received by her increasingly estranged brother, and in part explained by him as a product of her Gallic naturalization. Long silence, already mentioned above, made Euprepia seem almost dead, and Ennodius and Lupicinus did express their concern.⁹⁰ But when Euprepia finally wrote and provided them with actual excuses, a series of rebukes followed, each demonstrating a connection between her behavior and her change in country. In Ennodius' estimation, something was amiss in Gaul, and worse still Euprepia, a classically infirm woman, had gone "Gallic."⁹¹

In one especially blunt letter, for instance, Ennodius expressed his severe disappointment with his sister's failure to correspond, an act he saw as especial neglectful of her familial duties. "In what barbarous land," he tellingly asked her, "did heretofore maternal care hide? Where did what was owed to your brother wander?"⁹² Answering his own question, Ennodius alleged that Euprepia's mind had retired to some place even farther away than Arles,⁹³ but that even this was no excuse for such neglect. "If suffering, the consort of sojourning abroad, had driven you to the farthest bounds of the

⁸⁹ Euprepia is generally assumed to have been in the vicinity of Arles owing to references in Ennodius' works to certain Arlesians with whom she was associated, such as Archotamia (see, for instance, #319.3), and a comment in one letter, #313.2, to her actually being there: "habuit Arelatensis habitatio, cum Mediolanensibus muris incluerer." That she had gone to Gaul in order to secure certain family lands is suggested by Ennodius, who likewise claimed that there was little point in her trying to secure this inheritance for her son if she completely ignored him in the process. #84.4: "quando inveniri potuit, aut quod plus amare possis a filio aut propter filium quod timere? facultatum cura debuit posthaberi, quia nunquam bene hereditas quaesita est herede contempto." Indeed, the ownership of land in Gaul by an Italian family was a more pragmatic reason to have concern for this country. Cf. #60 (to Faustus), which suggests that Lupicinus' lands in Gaul were ultimately lost, having been handed over to certain Goths in the aftermath of Gaul's "restoration."

⁹⁰ #52.2: "credimus te dura perpepsam, sed confitemur inrogasse durissima"; #52.5: "...quae te innocentem faciant causas ingessi."

⁹¹ Indeed, in one letter, #109.2, Ennodius wrote: "quocumque abscesseris, quantum res docet, mentem male credulam non omittis. Vitia nostra regionum mutatione non fugimus." This, of course, is not a specifically misogynistic comment, but does suggest that Euprepia was believed to be mentally infirm by nature (rather close to *infirmitas sexus*), and this weakness doubtless contributed to Euprepia's seeming fall from Roman civility. This is made abundantly clear in #258.4, where Ennodius, having alleged that Euprepia had become a savage Gaul, claimed, "Again your different sex and nature promises exactly as the most wise Solomon says [Pr 27:7]: A soul, which is in abundance, mocks the honeycomb." The allusion suggests that Euprepia's sex and nature granted her a perpetually incomplete soul which was prone to error, since Proverbs 27:7 finishes with "but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

⁹² #52.2: "ubinam gentium materna hactenus cura delituit? Ubi quod fratri debebatur erravit?" "Ubinam gentium" would conventionally be translated "where in the world" (hence, "En quel recoin du monde" in Gioanni (2006), 68), but the above translation seems more fitting because it emphasizes the otherness, and indeed barbarousness, that is implied throughout this letter.

⁹³ #52.2: "ad longiora animus tuus quam corpus abscesserat."

earth, the faith of a sister and the concern of a mother should have been in attendance.”⁹⁴ Foreign travel was admittedly difficult, and Gaul was far away, but family obligations, particularly to the son and brother left behind in Italy, were supposed to remain paramount. Euprepia’s behavior was thus disturbing, especially since she had not traveled to the farthest bounds of the earth or to some barbarous land, places that might account for (but not excuse) such behavior. Instead, she had gone to Arles, where, as demonstrated above, Ennodius knew there were real Romans. But were there really? In another letter to Euprepia Ennodius hinted at certain “evils of the provinces [and] onrushes of men,” and claimed that his sister had not censured the excesses of those in her midst with the reprimands they deserved.⁹⁵ Even when Euprepia was not shirking her familial duties, then, the Gaul to which she had journeyed could seem, at times, a more sinister and dangerous place, a fact indicative of its perceived otherness in the minds of onlookers like Ennodius. But when Euprepia was negligent, Gaul became even worse. “In the setting of the sun,” Ennodius continued, “next to which you claim to have been, you have kept your feelings of dutiful love cold.”⁹⁶ This was an old understanding of Gaul, one which Caesar and others would have recognized well. From the perspective of Italy, Gaul was literally where the sun set, far to the west, and this fact impacted its climate and hence its peoples.⁹⁷ Gaul was literally cold and dark, and by extension so was its population. Ennodius soon made this point quite clear, asserting, “You have accepted the mind-set of the provincials whom you have visited. You changed regions and renounced the practice of *pietas*.”⁹⁸ Disavowing association with Italy and spurning

⁹⁴ #52.3: “si te ad ultima terrarum confinia peregrinationi socia dispulisset adversitas, illic sequi debuit germanae fides et sollicitudo genetricis.”

⁹⁵ #109.2: “nolo, soror Euprepia, quidquam de provinciarum malis vel, sicut dixisti, hominum inmissione causeris. ...circa propinquos tibi fuit tale propositum, ut nec benefacta ipsorum iusta interpretatione pensares nec excessus debita tantum reprehensione corripere.” To be fair, Ennodius also claimed that she had not praised those in her midst for their good deeds.

⁹⁶ #52.3: “sed in occasu solis, cui proxima fuisse narraris, frigidum pii amoris pectus habuisti.” Indeed, the understanding of a lack of sunshine in Gaul has already been seen above in the passing reference to the playful correspondence between Sidonius and Candidianus (*Ep.* 1.8), though here its cause was too much fog and mist. See fn. 35 (above) for a full quotation and fn. 23 (above) for a discussion.

⁹⁷ See Isaac (2004), chapter 1 especially, for a thorough discussion of environmental determinism in the ancient world. Cf. Dauge (1981), 593-602.

⁹⁸ #52.4: “Suscepisti mentem provincialium, quos adisti. Mutasti regionem et propositum pietatis abdicasti.” *Pietas*, of course, has a number of meanings that English terms like “responsibility” or “sense of obligation” cannot quite suggest. It was, however, clearly a core Roman virtue. Gioanni (2006), 179, notes that *pietas* in this letter refers to familial piety, a sense of devotion towards one’s family (“piété familiale, le sens du devoir envers sa famille”), but in fact Ennodius makes clear in the next sentence that

in the process her friends and loved ones,⁹⁹ Euprepia had herself become a Gaul, a cold-hearted and irresponsible savage.¹⁰⁰ Her change in country had caused a fundamental alteration of her personality,¹⁰¹ and such occurrences meant that Gaul was not safe for civilized individuals like Ennodius. Indeed, it would have pleased Ennodius very much to cross the Alps himself and give his sister a stern reprimand in person, but the possibility was too risky. “How afraid I am,” he asserted, “to reproach your carelessness with a long conversation.”¹⁰² Visiting this Gaul, therefore, was not an option.

Comments like these are highly suggestive of the reality of the barbarian status of Gaul and Gallo-Romans before an Italian audience, even a well-connected one. But this apparent barbarization of Gaul, as discussed above, was not simply the result of a process of regression or de-Romanization in the minds of Italians like Ennodius. Other barbarians, real barbarians, had largely been to blame. Barbarians like the Visigoth Euric, who stood always armored and accompanied with weapons and who spoke only gibberish, had become Gaul’s new masters. There was room in the minds of Italians for a nuanced view of even these barbarians, especially when peace existed between the Empire and respective Gallic kingdoms, but the apparent Roman civility of such barbarians was always tenuous, always incomplete, and ultimately seen as harmful to Gaul’s Roman population.

The existence of traditional barbarians within Gaul has already been discussed to some degree in earlier chapters, and so will not receive too much additional treatment here. These were Italy and the Roman Empire’s conventional enemies, stereotypical savages who lacked Roman reason, Roman law, and Roman morality. They were the same barbarians who had stripped the Empire of its provinces during the course of the fifth century and continued to have designs on Italy into the sixth.¹⁰³ They were not, as the Gauls had been and the Goths currently were, civilized barbarians, peoples made

all contacts in Italy (*communione Italiae*), both family (*interna pignora*) and friends (*amicos*), were meant. See the full citation in the footnote below.

⁹⁹ Ibid: “nam abiurans Italiae communionem non solum circa amicos, sed etiam circa interna pignora reppulisti.”

¹⁰⁰ Such qualities were doubtless analogous to barbarian irrationality, fickleness, and lack of compassion (i.e. *levitas*, *inhumanitas*, and so forth). See Dauge (1981), 176-7; Heather (1999), 234-8.

¹⁰¹ #52.4: “postremo animae tibi mutatio adcessit cum mutatio telluris.”

¹⁰² Ibid: “quam timeo quod longis incuriam tuam incesso conloquii!”

¹⁰³ For this, see above, bearing in mind the discussions of the Burgundians, Franks, and Visigoths encountered in chapters 1 and 2.

Roman by obeying the laws and acting in the service of the Empire, though all at one time or another had been praised in this capacity and some, like the Burgundians, continued to profess their loyalty to (New) Rome.¹⁰⁴ Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths persisted in their ferocity in the minds of Italians, rendering them dangerous. Kings like Euric, though himself succeeded by a more peaceful son,¹⁰⁵ had a legacy of ruling with cruel despotism; Euric and his Goths had scorned Roman superiority and continually attacked the Empire's borders.¹⁰⁶ Others, like Clovis, were unreasonably bellicose, provoking unjust wars and threatening total annihilation to barbarian and Roman alike.¹⁰⁷ Theoderic could be a voice of moderation and Roman prudence; he could likewise actively attempt to civilize these barbarians through (Roman) cultural imperialism. His pleas, however, often fell on deaf ears.¹⁰⁸ Peace agreements and even marriage alliances may have been formed, but the use of brute force always remained an option, "since fear alone checks those whom sworn oaths do not restrain."¹⁰⁹

Gaul's barbarians, then, remained (for the most part) traditional barbarians, despite open diplomacy and sometimes obvious Roman acculturation. Indeed, while both Ennodius and Theoderic were able to recognize the Roman prudence of the Burgundian king Gundobad, he and his peoples were still "ferocious" and "cruel" in their eyes.¹¹⁰ The same Gundobad whom Ennodius described as "an articulate speaker, trusty in his speech and rich in the wealth of eloquence"¹¹¹ was likewise "that savage Burgundian," who had betrayed Italy, practically murdered Liguria, and was completely unapologetic about both.¹¹² Likewise, the same Alaric whose Goths had grown "unpracticed in war,"

¹⁰⁴ See chapter 2 for relevant examples.

¹⁰⁵ For Alaric II and his Goths as "weak," see *Variae* 3.1.1: "quamvis fortitudini vestrae confidentiam tribuat parentum vestrorum innumerabilis multitudo, quamvis Attilam potentem reminiscamini Vvisigotharum viribus inclinatum, tamen quia populorum ferocium corda longa pace mollescunt, cavete subito in aleam mittere quos constat tantis temporibus exercitia non habere."

¹⁰⁶ Despotism and spurning, *VE* 85-92 (discussed at length in chapter 1).

¹⁰⁷ For the threat of Clovis in particular, see *Variae* 3.2 and 3.3, which were directed to the kings of the Alamanni and Heruli. For their historical context, see below and the discussion in Pricoco (1997).

¹⁰⁸ This is discussed more extensively below, though see also chapter 3 for the "Roman" gifts that Theoderic granted to various "barbarian" kings.

¹⁰⁹ *Variae* 2.5.2 (in reference to the Gallic frontier before the restoration of Provence): "in procinctu semper erit, qui barbaros prohibere contendit, quia solus metus cohibet, quod fides promissa non retinet."

¹¹⁰ See, again, chapter 3. Cf. Shanzer (1996/7).

¹¹¹ *VE* 164: "Tunc Rex probatissimus, ut erat fando locuples et ex eloquentiae dives opibus et facundus adsertor, verbis taliter verba reposuit."

¹¹² Savage Burgundian and ravaging Liguria, *VE* 139, quoted above. For betraying Italy, see the speech of Epiphanius to Gundobad, *VE* 154-163, which includes lines like "quotiens pro me [i.e. Italiam], si

nevertheless needed to be reminded by the “Roman” Theoderic that “foresighted moderation” (an attribute of Romans) would preserve his people and that “rage” (an attribute of barbarians) should be a last resort, when justice (so important to conceptions of *civilitas*) could not be acquired.¹¹³ Ennodius could even suggest in one letter addressed to his sister that she was more cruel than the barbarians ruling Gaul, “surpassing the tiger in her savagery,”¹¹⁴ but this was a rhetorical technique and more a reflection of Euprepia’s lack of devotion than the barbarians’ apparent kindness. When it all boiled down, Franks, Burgundians, and even Theoderic’s Visigothic cousins had not been admitted into the Roman world, and their very existence placed Gaul’s remaining Roman population, or rather its Romanness, in peril.

As a consequence, Italo-Romans like Ennodius could imagine a late fifth-century Gaul in which Gallo-Romans were weeping at their barbarian captivity,¹¹⁵ but by the early sixth century these same individuals had long since adapted to their new environment. The process was not only readable in the literary works emanating from Gaul, works like Sidonius’ which betrayed at one and the same time staunch Romanism, feelings of captivity and betrayal, and even acceptance of barbarian masters like Euric,¹¹⁶ but could also be seen in the very Gallo-Romans themselves with whom individuals like Ennodius maintained ties. Noble and eloquent Gallo-Romans, men like Ennodius’ distant relative Laconius, were now serving barbarian masters with seemingly little

reminisceris, ferratum pectus hostibus obtulisti? Quotiens pugnasti consilio, ne bella subriperent, ne aliquis meorum duceretur in quacumque orbis parte captivus? Quos nunc detines, tu nutristi.” For Gundobad’s lack of remorse, *VE* 165, where the king declares to Epiphanius, “belli iura pacis suasor ignoras et condiciones gladio decisas concordia auctor evisceras. Lex est certantium quem putas errorem.” Indeed, here Gundobad ironically used his own Roman eloquence to excuse his seemingly barbarous behavior.

¹¹³ *Variae* 3.1.2: “moderatio provida est, quae gentes servat: furor autem instantia plerumque praecipitat et tunc utile solum est ad arma concurrere, cum locum apud adversarium iustitia non potest invenire.”

¹¹⁴ Barbarians not so bad, #84.2: “nulla sunt tam barbara iura populorum, quae non reddi filio debita materna patiantur. Quicquid in orbe gentium est, ab humanitate non discrepat. ...cuius aestimabitur esse mens illa feritatis, quae erga curam subolis posterior ab inrationabilibus invenitur?” Tiger, #84.3: “tigridem te inmanitate superasse.

¹¹⁵ *VE* 92: ...ut captivitatem flerent quos apud patriam remanere necessitas constringebat.” Though a connection with the Jewish captivity might have been implied by Ennodius, this phrase bears no specific resemblance to any passage in the Vulgate.

¹¹⁶ On the availability of Sidonius, see Arator, *Epistula ad Parthenium* 275 and Ennodius, #43 (a *dictio* on the occasion of bishop Epiphanius’ birthday). The latter outright copied passages from *Carmen* 16 and *Carmen* 2, while Arator referenced Sidonius’ poetry (*Arvernisque canis, Sidoniana chelys*). Cf. the commentary of Cesa (1988) on the *Vita Epiphani*, which points out echoes of Sidonius’ poetry in certain passages of this work (e.g. *VE* 138). All of these references may suggest that only Sidonius’ poetry was available in Italy.

internal conflict. *Laconii*, men like Laconius who were conspicuous for their noble birth and a family history of Roman office holding,¹¹⁷ were becoming Burgundians, a process that Sidonius was well aware of in the late 460s.¹¹⁸ These were not just former Romans, but, for the well-connected aristocracy of Liguria, actual kin who were becoming, at times, unrecognizable in their transformation. Laconius himself remained virtually untainted by his service to a Burgundian master; Ennodius practically begged him for letters and actually went out of his way to secure a papal ruling on his behalf.¹¹⁹ But there were other Gallo-Roman relatives of Ennodius who were not so lucky. The youths were especially susceptible to these changes, and Ennodius' own nephew, Parthenius, seemed utterly unable to escape the woes of Gallic barbarism without first escaping Gaul altogether.

Parthenius, in many ways, was paradigmatic of the Italian understanding of what was happening to the youths of Gaul, the scions of noble Gallo-Roman families, in the aftermath of barbarian conquest. He was the son of an unknown sister of Ennodius and an equally unknown man who was seemingly of meaner, perhaps even barbarian, origins.¹²⁰ Though alluding to correspondence with this brother-in-law,¹²¹ Ennodius made it abundantly clear elsewhere that he felt that this match was unworthy of his family, ironically echoing some of the same sentiments expressed by the emperor Anthemius and problematized in his *Life of Epiphanius*. As demonstrated in this work, exceptions could be made within aristocratic Italian circles, especially for Goths, but in general nobles were not supposed to marry outside their rank nor Romans outside their

¹¹⁷ *VE* 168: "At ille vocato Laconio... quem et praerogativa natalium et avorum curules per magistræ probitatis insignia sublimarunt..."

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Ep.* 5.5 (to Syagrius of Lyon), cited in fn. 41 (above). There is often an emphasis in modern scholarship on aristocratic flight to the Church in Sidonius' era, but this seems not to have struck either Ennodius or Theoderic's government as the remedy sought by most noble Gallo-Romans. They imagined, instead, either continuity of offices under barbarians or stagnation and ruin. See Van Dam (1985) and Mathisen (1993) for the former interpretation.

¹¹⁹ For begging, #38 and #86; for the papal ruling, #252.2.

¹²⁰ The nephew of Ennodius was clearly not the son of Agricola, the son of Ruricius of Limoges. Whether the interpretation provided by Mathisen (1981), 101-3, is correct, i.e. that this seemingly other Parthenius is also not the son of Agricola, but his son-in-law, and thus one and the same person as Ennodius' nephew, remains to be seen. The identification certainly is appealing. See below, where certain conclusions about Ennodius' Parthenius are drawn in reference to Agricola's Parthenius. For a discussion of prior interpretations of Parthenius' father, see Kennell (2000), 139.

¹²¹ See #368 and #369, where Ennodius refers to his brother-in-law contacting him concerning Parthenius' lack of attention to his studies. This is discussed more explicitly below.

race.¹²² Such mixtures, which were in fact emblematic of the synthesis occurring throughout the post-Roman West, were thought to be degrading by men like Ennodius, particularly when it was their own families that were in question. In Ennodius' estimation, the marriage of his sister to an obvious "other" had actually tainted an otherwise noble line and had had disastrous results for its progeny. Parthenius (and by extension other Gauls like him) was imagined to have been born with "brightness in his blood," but was "trapped in the darkness of rusticity."¹²³ There was still the potential, because of his mother, for him to become a noble Roman, but in Gaul he was literally trapped in blackness, and this fact was reflected in his uncouth speech.¹²⁴ Indeed, in Gaul he seemed to lack access to the true, uncorrupted eloquence that could act as a counteragent to his degraded blood. Romans might still recognize Parthenius because of "the names of his lineage," but without sweet speech he remained in the Gallic shadows, "concealed by blackening inexperience."¹²⁵

Traditional education and eloquence, once again, provided a link between Gaul's Roman past and her continued Roman status, but the example of Parthenius already demonstrates nicely that access to this legacy was imagined by Italo-Romans to have been reduced, and that, as a result, rustification and, rather closely related, barbarization had ensued.¹²⁶ Young men like Caesarius may have been able to partake of their birthright and in so doing remain "Roman," but others, like Parthenius, were apparently less fortunate. They were denied access to Roman erudition either because of where they lived or, even more deplorable, because of who their parents were. Tending towards barbarism or already practically barbarian, they required the greatest of remedies to ensure their noble, Roman status. Arles might offer teachers like Pomerius, but youths like Parthenius needed greater, "more Roman" attention. Italy, whose mastery of the arts

¹²² Race is a problematic term, though. Marriage to barbarians was in fact illegal and a capital crime (*CTh* 3.14.1), though what exactly this meant is unclear given that "barbarian" status was, as seen throughout this study, extremely fluid. See especially Demandt (1989), who demonstrates rather convincingly the full extent of marriage ties between "barbarian" and "Roman" nobles in late antiquity.

¹²³ #94.5: "quia bonorum semper meritorum labes est habere lucem sanguinis et nocte rusticitatis includi." The glittering beauty of his Roman blood was literally imprisoned in darkness, a nice understanding of the situation in Gaul in general.

¹²⁴ For his uncouth speech, see below.

¹²⁵ #94.5: "... prodi stemmatum vocibus et imperitia fuscante delitiscere." Darkness, as above, is at play again.

¹²⁶ See the discussion of rusticity and barbarity in chapter 3 (bearing in mind certain comments made in the relative footnotes).

had always been recognized in Gaul and where Roman erudition was said to have been born,¹²⁷ was the natural place to seek it, and the youths of Gaul apparently understood this quite well. Indeed, Ennodius was even known to act as a conduit for them when they crossed the Alps in search of their Roman inheritance. He recommended them to the proper teachers and patrons, and even kept tabs on them for their transalpine parents.¹²⁸ Marcellus, the son of Stephanus (mentioned above), for instance, was directed by Ennodius to a certain teacher in Rome, and after some time there Ennodius informed his father that his son “now holds evidence of [his] nobility through the study of the arts.”¹²⁹ Benefactors like Marcellus’ instructor thus directed “tottering [foreigners] to the glory of eloquence.”¹³⁰ They redeemed their students from their imagined Gallic captivity, bringing their glittering nobility out of the cold Gallic darkness. These were not the words used by Ennodius with respect to Marcellus, but something akin to this was in fact expressed in the case of Parthenius.

Like Marcellus, Parthenius too ventured to Italy, ultimately seeking out Rome for his education. But before doing so, he had been directed by Ennodius to a local grammarian in Milan named Deuterius, the same instructor with whom Euprepia’s son, Lupicinus, later studied. When exactly Parthenius first came to Milan is uncertain, but by 503 he had apparently finished his studies, and an impressed Ennodius dedicated a rather ornate speech in praise of his teacher as a tribute.¹³¹ According to this speech, the transformation of Parthenius was nothing shy of a miracle, and Ennodius claimed that its architect, Deuterius, had “imitated the acts of heaven in the abundance of [his]

¹²⁷ #225.2: “Romam, in qua est natalis eruditio.”

¹²⁸ Marcellus, the son of Stephanus (see below), an unnamed son of Camella (#431), and Parthenius were three Gallic youths who sought instruction in Italy and were provided with contacts via Ennodius. Beatus (#398), who is mentioned as a schoolfellow of Marcellus, may also be of Gallic descent, though a northern Italian origin is usually assumed. Cf. *PLRE* 2, 222.

¹²⁹ #357.2: “illud ad gaudium vestrum, quo uberius paterna mens exultet, adiungimus, filium vestrum in studiis liberalibus ingenuitatis testimonium iam tenere et talem se in hac cura praestare, ut avara suorum vota transcendat.”

¹³⁰ #227.1 (to Luminosus, a laymen, perhaps even schoolteacher, who provided patronage to young students in Rome): “non ignari peregrinos suscipitis nec erudiendos animatis. Expertis manus necessitatibus frequenter adhibetur, dum ad eloquentiae palmam feriato ore eos qui titubant invitatis.” For Luminosus, *PLRE* 2, 692-3.

¹³¹ For a slightly different interpretation of this *dictio*, which does not place it within a greater understanding of Gallic decline, see Kennell (2000), 50-7. Given the characteristics of Parthenius, however, the link seems undeniable.

kindness.”¹³² Indeed, he had made Parthenius, hitherto obscured in darkness, recognizable to his uncle because of his education;¹³³ he had, in an agricultural metaphor that both played on ideals of cultivation and hinted at his nephew’s former rustic status, “dislodged from [Parthenius’] heart the thorns and weeds with his hoe of knowledge.”¹³⁴ To this point Ennodius had been afraid that the mixture within his nephew, a mixture of noble and ignoble, Roman and un-Roman, in his own words, “at variance in its differences,” was about to “submit to the ways of the meaner side”; that Parthenius’ “unlearned side” would dominate his personality “according to the worthlessness of the age.”¹³⁵ But Deuterius had demonstrated to Parthenius “the things that he should learn and ...unlearn, two things descended from his blood.”¹³⁶ And now, Ennodius claimed, “one of his kin... happily recognizes Parthenius, while the other happily does not.”¹³⁷ “Now from a wintry chest and a cold heart,” similar attributes developed by Euprepia while resident in Gaul, “little flowers of eloquence spring forth and laughing buds of words embroider the flower-baskets displaying [them].”¹³⁸

Just like the spring with its fresh-smelling flowers, Parthenius had been reborn and received a new start, but despite Deuterius’ best efforts, the miracle could only extend so far. Grammar, with its emphasis on poetic reading, had provided him with the rich vocabulary of the day, fertile with allegorical meaning and able to demonstrate, when used appropriately, his Roman learning (and Romanness) to similarly educated individuals. But Parthenius’ upbringing in Gaul had nonetheless had irreversible consequences. “Behold,” Ennodius asserted, still pleased with the turn of events, “after his barbarous murmur words are poured from [Parthenius’] mouth which may indicate his

¹³² #94.12: “caelestia imitatus es ubertate beneficium...”

¹³³ #94.9: “uberes tibi coram multis, emendatissime hominum, grates refero, qui agnosci a me Partenum institutione fecisti.”

¹³⁴ Ibid: “tu de eius pectore scientiae sarculo paliuros et lolium submovisti...” For Ennodius’ use of agricultural metaphors in general, Kennell (2000), 56-7.

¹³⁵ #94.11: “quam timui, ne praefata permixtio dum ipsa diversitate discordat, in deterioris iura melior victa concederet et pro vilitate temporum facilius in ipso pars indocta regnaret!” This *vilitate temporum* may be suggestive of the decline and barbarization thought to have occurred throughout the West during the fifth century, but which, at least in Italy’s case, Theoderic had stopped and corrected.

¹³⁶ #94.10: “in una eademque persona qua arte, quod utrumque descendebat a sanguine, quid disceret et quid dedisceret, indicasti!”

¹³⁷ #94.11: “ecce Partenum propinquitus sua ex utroque generis calle descendens alia agnoscit feliciter, alia feliciter non agnoscit.”

¹³⁸ #94.12: “ecce iam ex hiemali pectore et corde algido dictionum flosculi vernant et ridentia verborum germina depingunt calathos exhibentes.”

culture.”¹³⁹ It was the words themselves that mattered most, but Parthenius’ manner of speaking, perhaps his accent, was still recognizably different before certain (e.g. Italian) audiences.¹⁴⁰ Words had the potential to demonstrate his *humanitas* despite his murmur, but, just as Ennodius hinted, they also might not.¹⁴¹ A *gentile murmur*, after all, was a prerequisite for true barbarism, a fact well illustrated by the very same term being used to describe the manner of speaking employed by the stereotypically savage Euric in the *Life of Epiphanius*.¹⁴² Without noble words, then, Parthenius was doomed to be seen, and even become, just another Visigoth, much like other youths residing in Visigothic Gaul.

This may explain, in part at any rate, Parthenius’ desire after 503 to advance his studies in Rome, the very heart of Romanness and a pilgrimage site of sorts, where total transformation could be sought. Grammar school in Milan had been an important step in the right direction, providing, at the time, welcome signs of Roman erudition, but Parthenius needed and desired more; rather than “buds” and “little flowers,” he wanted, in keeping with the floral analogy, an overflowing bouquet of aromatic flowers. With the help of Deuterius, he had proven his inner goodness and seemingly abandoned forever a cruel disposition,¹⁴³ a quality of barbarians. Now, studying at Rome, he could shed his remaining Gallic skin entirely, ultimately “unlearn[ing his] vices in the process” and gaining wise judgment, a quality of Romans.¹⁴⁴ More simply, as Ennodius informed the illustrious senator Faustus Junior, “Parthenius wishes, through the study of the liberal

¹³⁹ Ibid: “ecce post gentile murmur de ore eius, quae humanitatem significant, verba funduntur.”

¹⁴⁰ Kennell’s interpretation of the passage above seems improbable. This is clearly not a case of Parthenius’ losing knowledge of German or even ridding himself of an accent, Gallic, Germanic, or otherwise. The meaning of “post gentile murmur” is not “after losing” but simply “after,” the sentence implying that noble Roman words accompany (and hence soften) his foreign accent (and indeed, this makes sense since the first thing anyone would notice when hearing Parthenius would be his accent, followed by his actual words). Cf. Kennell (2000), 139.

¹⁴¹ This is alluded to through Ennodius’ use of the subjunctive, “significant,” when the indicative would have been grammatically acceptable.

¹⁴² VE 89: “Gentile nescio quod murmur infringens.” And, as mentioned in chapter 1, such *murmura* were the veritable *raison d’être* for “bar-bar-us” status. The “nescio quod” used in Euric’s case may suggest that there was a recognizable difference between the “barbarian” and “provincial” *murmur*, but given the convergence of the two in the minds of Italians at this time, one has to wonder how differently each would have been perceived. “Nescio quod” may simply have been a rhetorical technique employed by Ennodius to further barbarize Euric, whose knowledge of Latin is assured.

¹⁴³ #225.1 (in reference to Parthenius): “bonarum affectus artium dirum dedignatur ingenium. Ad eloquentiae ornamenta non tendunt nisi moribus instituti.”

¹⁴⁴ #226.3 (to Pope Symmachus): “sancta sunt studia litterarum, in quibus ante incrementa peritiae vitia dediscuntur. Hoc itinere cana ad annos pueriles solent venire consilia...” *Cana consilia* literally means “hoary intelligence,” but the sense is something akin to “wise judgment.”

arts, to appear noble,”¹⁴⁵ and Ennodius hoped that Faustus’ own outstanding wealth might serve to spur his nephew along in addition to his own convictions.¹⁴⁶ Milan, therefore, could make the words that Parthenius spoke indicate his nobility, but Rome would take care of the rest.

These were optimistic ideas expressed when Parthenius was first arriving in the city of letters, but whether he was successful in his endeavors is another story altogether. Judging from Ennodius’ rather hostile letters to his nephew, it would seem, on the one hand, that Parthenius believed he had been, and, on the other, that Ennodius (and others) did not. To Parthenius’ credit, he appears to have delivered an oration in Rome,¹⁴⁷ which Ennodius, in his own condescending way, found pleasing: “As far as I am concerned, the structure of your little oration, even if it stops short of the splendor of eloquence, nonetheless radiates with a taste of Latin talent. Your words did not flow inharmoniously, but must be amplified through a wealth of reading.”¹⁴⁸ Practice, in other words, would make perfect, and Ennodius suggested to Parthenius that he should in addition associate himself with honorable men, no doubt senatorial types like Faustus Junior. Ennodius similarly warned his nephew to “flee from those who soil [you] through their association as if a cup of poison,”¹⁴⁹ but this admonition seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Parthenius did, in fact, fall in with “people leading him astray” and began to neglect his studies and “undertake repulsive things.”¹⁵⁰ Word of this development traveled all the way to his father in Gaul, who begged Ennodius to intercede. Even this seemingly low-born rustic, perhaps even barbarian, was distressed

¹⁴⁵ #228.2: “Partenius... per liberalis studii disciplinas ingenuus vult videri.”

¹⁴⁶ #228.2-3: “optat, ni fallor, peculii vestri habere testimonium. ...et qui erit per visionem vestram scribente felicior, peregrinationis non patiatu adversa sentire.” Nor was this a bad idea, seeing as Parthenius’ convictions eventually did fail him in the absence of Faustus (or perhaps his father and homonym). Cf #368.1: “Partenium... diu circa diligentiam litterarum... culminis vestris metus adtraxerat. Sed nunc per absentiam vestram venerandae solutus lege formidinis molitur obscena.”

¹⁴⁷ That this is the proper meaning of (#290.1) “declarasti te scriptionis luce urbem amicam liberalibus studiis iam tenere” can be inferred from the rest of the letter.

¹⁴⁸ #290.2: “ductus mihi oratiunculae tuae etsi eloquentiae nitore non subsistit, Latiaris tamen venae sapore radiavit. Fluxit sermo non absonus, lectionis tamen opibus ampliandus.”

¹⁴⁹ #290.3: “...honestorum te obsequiis indesinenter impende: eos qui consortio suo polluunt, debens monitis nostris reverentiam velut veneni poculum fuge.” I have removed the “<se>” located between “consortio” and “suo” in Vogel’s *MGH* edition, which notes that it is omitted in some manuscripts and, if present, should probably be a “te” (a “te” is certainly implied here).

¹⁵⁰ #368.1: “...molitur obscena. Aetas illa peccatis amicior multos repperit ad errata ductores.”

that his son was neglecting his letters and failing to make any progress.¹⁵¹ Ennodius, who had vouched for his nephew,¹⁵² was likewise unimpressed. “You are completely unconcerned,” he alleged, “about the instruction gained from reading, as if you have already obtained the pinnacle of knowledge. Know, son, that its height is not held in excess unless through practice: With nimble wings knowledge flees from those neglecting her.”¹⁵³ In other letters he rebuked his nephew for his childish anger, haughtiness, feigned humility and lazy cruelty,¹⁵⁴ elsewhere threatening to physically beat him¹⁵⁵ and even avowing, “I pray to God that He remove from you what I detest.”¹⁵⁶

Despite ennobling education and even studying at the very font of Latin letters, then, it seems almost as if Parthenius could never escape his un-Roman, Gallic origins. Indeed, if he was the same Parthenius eulogized by the poet Arator and mentioned in Gregory of Tours’ *Histories*,¹⁵⁷ his Roman education would eventually give him the appearance of a Roman noble and even allow him to hold Roman offices in the custom of his ancestors.¹⁵⁸ But by the time of his death, he was once more serving barbarian masters and himself perpetrating barbarisms. Even the Franks hated him, it was said,¹⁵⁹

¹⁵¹ Ibid: “quantum patris ipsius reseravit allegatio...” and #368.2: “inplorat fidem propositi mei pater et incolumem filium loco deflet extincti. Sic faciunt quibus de profectu suorum fiducia nulla responderit.” Also #369.5 (to Parthenius): “audivi te patris tui relatione circa studia iam remissum...”

¹⁵² Perhaps the best example of this occurs in Ennodius’ introductory letter to Luminosus (#227.3): “Sed si vobis cordi sum, circa memoratum patrem reddite, ut amor mutuus de vicaria inpensione gratuletur, ut quicquid in magnitudine tua dudum laboris exhibui, mihi per alterum reformetur.” See also #226.4 (to Pope Symmachus); #225.3 (to Faustus Senior); and #228.3 (to Faustus Junior). Cf. Kennell (2000), 47-50.

¹⁵³ #369.5: “audivi te patris tui relatione circa studia iam remissum et, quasi arcem scientiae adeptus sis, ita nullatenus esse de lectionis instructione sollicitum. Nosti, fili, istius rei sumam nisi adsiduitate nimia non teneri. ...pernicibus alis neglegentes fugit scientia...” Had the little oration gone to Parthenius’ head, or had his so-called “friends” led him astray?

¹⁵⁴ For childish anger, haughtiness, and feigned humility, #258.1: “Nisi te efflictim diligerem... possem iniuriarum dolore provocatus, vel cum pueriliter irasceris vel cum adroganter supplicas, conmoveeri. Nihil enim invenio, quod sit fabricata humilitate superbius.” For lazy cruelty, #258.4: “muta, qua notus sum, lege parcendi circa desidem saevitiam sub perennitate servabo.”

¹⁵⁵ #369.1: “te per longum ferire debuit inclusa commotio, si tamen non ex toto ab humanitate discessisti.” Here, as in the above examples, Ennodius continued to hint that he still had compassion for his lapsing nephew.

¹⁵⁶ #369.4: “Deum precor, ut a te quod detestor excludat.”

¹⁵⁷ Again, this identification is disputed. See fn. 120 (above).

¹⁵⁸ Arator, *Epistola ad Parthenium* 267, addresses this Parthenius as “domino illustri, magnificentissimo atque praeclaro Parthenio magistro officorum atque patricio.” These titles may have originally been conferred by the government of Italy and perhaps held in Provence. *PLRE* 2, 833-4 (“Parthenius 3”), suggests that he was one of the first “correctores provinciae.” Arator also claims that Parthenius was eloquent (271: “mulsisti Geticas verbis felicibus aures...”) and learned (273: “Quos mihi tu libros, quae nomina docta sonabas! / Quanta simul repetens codicis instar eras! / Caesaris Historias ibi primum, te duce, legi...”).

¹⁵⁹ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 3.36: “Franci vero cum Parthenium in odio magno haberent...”

for he had murdered his innocent wife and friend, and worse still was “a pig with food... [who] used to fart loudly in public without any consideration for those who might hear.”¹⁶⁰ Perhaps, to alter the old adage, one could take the Gallo-Roman out of Gaul, but not the Gaul out of the Gallo-Roman.

Parthenius, Euprepia, and Firminus all demonstrate the varying Italian understandings of Gaul and its inhabitants in the wake of imperial loss and barbarian conquest. For Italo-Romans, Italy may have remained the Roman Empire and they the Romans, but the situation in Gaul was not so simple. Sometimes Italo-Romans were keenly aware that Gaul had once been Roman and had been wrested, unjustly, from their Empire. In this perspective Gauls lived in captivity and their Roman culture, especially erudition, could serve as a beacon of Romanness, urging outside sympathy. Other times Italo-Romans looked askance at this former province, growing increasingly alienated from it, even if fully aware of its Roman past. This Gaul had never been quite Roman anyway, and now the absence of Roman rule allowed whatever Romanness was there to degenerate, rendering Gaul Caesar’s once more. At still other times Italo-Romans could recognize all of the above and see the addition of new barbarians as a catalyst ultimately speeding up the barbarization process.

Young men like Parthenius, therefore, were largely indicative of the Gallic phenomenon vis-à-vis Italy. Sometimes fully Roman, other times completely not, often somewhere in between, Parthenius, like Gaul, was deprived of his Roman birthright and, again, like Gaul, ultimately needed Rome in order to regain it. The works of Ennodius have largely dominated the preceding discussion, but as the following section will soon show, they are indicative of a greater understanding in Italy. Gauls were becoming un-Roman and had had little choice but to accept their transformation or to flee to Italy and escape it; no choice, of course, until 508, when a Roman Empire, reinvigorated by Theoderic and his Goths, returned to them.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid: “Fuit autem in cibus valde vorax... et strepidus ventris absque ulla auditorum reverentia in publico emittebat.”

An Unwanted Restoration?

Though certain individuals in Italy may have been lamenting the developments described above, the fact nonetheless remained that most were content with this lapsed version of Gaul, provided it posed no immediate threat. There was, in fact, no ardent desire for Gaul's restoration in the early years of the sixth century, despite a sense of Gallic captivity or barbarization. Instead Rome looked (predictably) to domestic (i.e. Italian) concerns and, rather than interfering, took an active interest in maintaining the status quo in Gaul and normalizing ties with her barbarian rulers.¹⁶¹ A military alliance with the Visigoths was secured as early as Theoderic's invasion of Italy in 489.¹⁶² By the mid-490s, marriage alliances had also been formed between the Amals and the other ruling families of Gaul. Theoderic himself married a sister of the Frankish king Clovis, while two of his daughters married into the Visigothic and Burgundian royal families.¹⁶³ Likewise, as already discussed, Theoderic regularly dispatched envoys across the Alps, often conveying to these kings certain "Roman" gifts.¹⁶⁴ These trappings of Roman civilization, of which Theoderic was a self-proclaimed guardian, and especially the words that accompanied them had manifold implications, but in their simplest form they were sent (ostensibly at any rate) as markers of friendship and in good faith. Gaul, then, could remain as it was, and it was only when diplomatic measures like these failed and Italy

¹⁶¹ And, naturally, considering the situation in Italy described in the preceding chapter, such a policy was quite prudent.

¹⁶² According to *AnonVal* 53, certain Visigothic soldiers arrived at a key moment in 490, when Odoacer was advancing upon Theoderic at Milan: "His consulibus Odoacer rex exiit de Cremona et ambulavit Mediolanum. tunc venerunt Wisigothae in adiutorium Theoderici et facta est pugna super fluvium Adduam... et fugit Odoacar Ravennam..." Their assistance, therefore, was vital, but might have been solicited the prior year. Cf. Moorhead (1992), 23-4, and Wolfram (1988), 281-2. Contra Wolfram, it seems unnecessary to see their assistance as "one of the rare displays of Gothic solidarity," especially given that relations between Visigoths and Ostrogoths were typically defined in terms of confrontation (rather than assistance). For this, Diaz and Valverde (2007), 356. Rather than ethnic solidarity, their willingness to assist Theoderic may have come out of self-interest, while Theoderic may have turned to them because of their presence along the (vulnerable) Alpine frontier.

¹⁶³ For these marriages, see Wolfram (1988), 309-13; Moorhead (1992), 51-2; and Diaz and Valverde (2007), 357-8. These marriages would later allow Theoderic to invoke kinship as a rationale for keeping the peace in Gaul, though perhaps too much has been made of the "barbarian" elements at play here. If anything, alliances of this sort seem inspired by Tetrarchic practices, and, in fact, in *Variae* 3.2 (to Gundobad) Theoderic even invoked the idea of senior and junior rulers (*senes* and *ivenes*, respectively). On this letter, see below.

¹⁶⁴ For Epiphanius' mission to Gundobad (ca. 495), *VE* 147-77 (discussed in chapter 4); for gifts to Clovis and Gundobad, *Variae* 1.45-6, 2.40-1 (discussed in chapter 3); for Senarius' missions (presumably) to Gaul, Fiebigger, vol. 3, #8, ln. 8 (discussed in chapter 4); and for other missions to Gaul in the lead-up to Vouillé, see below. Cf. Gillett (2003), chapter 5 especially.

suffered the devastating consequences that Rome was dragged, practically kicking and screaming, back across the Alps. Indeed, the actual outbreak of war would come suddenly in 507, yet for as sudden as it was, it was to some extent foreseeable. After all, the oaths of these barbarians had never been particularly dependable, and the complete breakdown of peace and stability in Gaul (a patent reminder of the barbarized state into which this country had fallen) had been a long time in coming.

By 506, in fact, it had become increasingly clear from Ravenna that tensions within Gaul were mounting. To be sure, regions within Gaul had enjoyed moments of peace and security in the immediate aftermath of Roman rule,¹⁶⁵ but the political dynamics of Gaul were in a state of fundamental alteration as a consequence of the rise of the Frankish king Clovis, a process that had begun before the advent of Theoderic in Italy, but which sped up significantly at the end of the fifth century. The history of Gaul (and, indeed, much of western Europe!) was to become the history of the Franks, yet due caution ought to be observed in treating this particular period in Gallic history. Though increasingly formidable, it was not evident until long after Theoderic's death that Gaul's future would be Frankish. In fact, until the reign of Clovis, the Franks had been a minor, loose confederation of peoples largely confined to the middle and lower Rhineland. Some had been settled as federates within this region and had been employed as Roman auxiliaries perhaps as late as the 460s, but they had never posed a serious threat to the major powers of the region, Roman or otherwise.¹⁶⁶ Clovis, however, changed this. He was a young, ambitious king, and though at the beginning of his reign he was clearly outclassed by the other barbarian rulers of Gaul, brute force and out-and-out conquest soon made him their equal.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ For Visigothic Provence (especially Arles), see Février (1994), 46-51; Delage (1994), 24-9; and Klingshirn (1994a), 69-71. For Visigothic Aquitania, see Rouche (1979), 43-50, and Mathisen (2001), 105f.

¹⁶⁶ Indeed, as discussed in chapter 3, their relationship with the Empire was often mutually beneficial. See Stroheker (1955); James (1988), chp. 2 especially; Geary (1988), 73-82.

¹⁶⁷ There is no denying that Clovis was outclassed at the beginning of his reign. Not only were Gundobad's and Alaric II's kingdoms more prestigious (larger, wealthier, more unified), but the two kings also rested on mightier laurels. Alaric II, for instance, was the son of the juggernaut Euric and ruled over a people who had both sacked Rome and defeated the mighty Attila (cf. *Variae* 3.1.1). Gundobad, likewise, had held one of the highest offices in the western Empire and continued to derive prestige from this office. Clovis, on the other hand, inherited a sub-Roman governorship of a frontier province from his father and was in competition for rulership over his (and other) Franks from the beginning of his reign. Moreover, his position as a king was far less secure, for his father even seems to have been deposed from this office for a

Indeed, by the time Theoderic had secured his own mastery over Italy, Clovis had already become a key player in Gaul,¹⁶⁸ and was even beginning to show signs of wanting more than simply the respect of his royal peers. The preeminent king of the Franks, who would soon become the *only* king of the Franks (and this was quite an important political development), was fast on his way to becoming the new Euric of the West, a seemingly unstoppable and cruel savage, at the very time when Euric's own son and successor, Alaric II, and his Burgundian analogue, Gundobad, were settling down and striving to consolidate their kingdoms.¹⁶⁹ Clovis' rise to power would bring the Franks into greater contact, and thereafter conflict, with the two ranking powers in Gaul. But, again, the teleological, triumphalistic, and ultimately Franco-centric approach to this period (an interpretation which owes much to the writings of Gregory of Tours) is in dissonance with the realities of the day. Neither Alaric's nor Gundobad's kingdom would be decisively conquered by the Franks in Clovis' lifetime,¹⁷⁰ and moreover, Theoderic and his Goths, both before and after their invasion of Gaul, would do much to forestall the transformation of Gallia into Francia.¹⁷¹ As a concerned party, a relative, and an avowed patron of all of Gaul's royal barbarians, Theoderic would try his best to keep the peace, in the very least to prevent transalpine bloodshed from spilling over into Italy.

time (and by a Roman no less!). Cf. James (1988), 64-75, and Wood (1994), 38-41 (who discuss the relevant sources).

¹⁶⁸ The fact that Theoderic himself married into Clovis' family, rather than into Gundobad's or Alaric II's, may be indicative of this.

¹⁶⁹ On these developments, in general, see Collins (1983), 25-31; Rouche (1979), 43-50; Favrod (1997), 285-91; and Kaiser (2004), 46-60. The difference is also evident in contemporary Italian sources, which are, despite denigrating Gundobad, Euric, and Alaric II as traditional barbarians, nonetheless more sensitive to their quasi-civilized status. The Franks, including Clovis, on the other hand, remain consistently fierce and savage. See the discussion of Frankish, Burgundian, and Visigothic status above, and particularly Clovis, below.

¹⁷⁰ The full extent to which Visigothic Aquitaine was actually conquered in the reign of Clovis is a matter of debate. See Ewig (1953; 1976), 123-128, and Rouche (1979), 49-58. Beyond Aquitaine, the Franks did not come to control Burgundy until 534 nor Provence until 536. Septimania, on the other hand, remained a Visigothic (and then Muslim) enclave into the early Carolingian period, when it was finally conquered by the Franks. Even then it retained its specifically Gothic identity as the march province of "Gothia."

¹⁷¹ Jordanes, *Getica* 296 and 305, for instance, declares that, so long as Theoderic lived, the Goths never yielded to the Franks, but that after his death the Franks began to hold his successor in contempt and plot war. There seems little reason to reject Jordanes' basic premise, though even after Theoderic's death Amal rulers were able to both secure their territories in Gaul and even expand them (see below). Cf. Wood (1994), 49, who concludes that Clovis' conquests had rendered his kingdom the most powerful in Gaul. Contemporary Italo-Romans, however, believed they could (and did) hold their own (see below and *Variae* 11.1.12).

A series of letters in the *Variae* demonstrate nicely the extent to which Theoderic attempted to use his Roman reason and diplomacy to forestall what seems, with historical hindsight anyway, to have been inevitable.¹⁷² To Gundobad, for instance, he pressed for peaceful mediation, suggesting (perhaps rightly, though at this point a bit anachronistically) that Alaric and Clovis were impetuous youths, who might obey the prudent advice of their elders, meaning of course Theoderic and Gundobad.¹⁷³ To Clovis he likewise pled for peaceful arbitration and offered, if both parties agreed, to actually provide the necessary (impartial) mediators.¹⁷⁴ The conflict, he asserted, stemmed from mediocre causes,¹⁷⁵ and both Alaric and Clovis were “kings of the greatest peoples.”¹⁷⁶ Indeed, both kingdoms, Theoderic asserted, were flourishing,¹⁷⁷ but war, it was eerily predicted, would utterly destroy one of them, much to the delight of certain unnamed onlookers.¹⁷⁸ Finally, and in a similar vein, to his son-in-law Alaric Theoderic wrote that his quarrel with Clovis was trivial, calling it a matter of words, not of murdered kin or seized territory.¹⁷⁹ In this case too, he urged arbitration, again sending envoys to try to

¹⁷² For extensive discussions of these letters (and the missions associated with them), see Pricoco (1997) and Gillett (2003), 207-12.

¹⁷³ *Variae* 3.2.2: “nostrum est regios iuvenes obiecta ratione moderari, quia illi, si nobis vere sentient displicere quod male cupiunt. Audaciam suae voluntatis retinere non possunt. Verentur senes, quumavis sint florida aetate ferventes.” For the anachronism of *regios iuvenes*, see Hodgkin (1886), who notes that in 507 Clovis was 41 years of age. But see fn. 163 (above), for another possible interpretation of *iuvenes* and *senes*. Moorhead (1992), 177, describes the language of this particular dispatch as “a little fanciful.” Perhaps, then, Theoderic was attempting to woo the learned Gundobad (see above) with eloquence of his own.

¹⁷⁴ *Variae* 3.4.3: “a parentibus quod quaeritur, electis iudicibus expetatur. Nam inter tales viros et illis gratum est dare, quos medios volueritis efficere.” For a discussion of the style of arbitration Theoderic appears to have had in mind, see Gillett (2003), 209-10. Cf. the *Chronicle of Fredegar* 2.58, where Theoderic is described as personally mediating between both parties and intentionally bungling the job.

¹⁷⁵ *Variae* 3.4.2: “miramur animos vestros sic causis mediocribus excitatos...”

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*: “ambo summarum gentium reges.”

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*: “ambo aetate florentes.”

¹⁷⁸ Utterly destroy, *Variae* 3.4.3: “Absit ille conflictus, ubi unus ex vobis dolere potereit inclinatus.” Much to the delight, *Variae* 3.4.2: “ut multi, qui vos metuunt, de vestra concertatione laententur.” Theoderic may have been alluding to the Byzantines, who in fact had good reason (and the *modus operandi*) for meddling in western affairs. Indeed, this playing of barbarian tribes off one another was a long-standing and frequently employed tactic. For the Byzantine identification, Moorhead (1992), 182. Given Byzantine aid furnished in 508 and the honors granted to both Clovis and Sigismund in the aftermath of Vouillé, the identification seems probable.

¹⁷⁹ *Variae* 3.1.3: “nos vos parentum fusus sanguinis inflammat, non graviter urit occupata provincia: adhuc de verbis parva contentio est.”

work out the details. Barbarian rage, he avowed, should yield before justice and moderation, and war should be a last resort.¹⁸⁰

Peace and stability, then, which had typified Italy's Gallic policies to this point, were urged, but it was nonetheless prudent to have contingency plans should the hoped-for consensus fail. To Alaric alone, therefore, one final, important comment was made: "We judge your enemy to be a common evil, since he who strives to be your opponent will rightly find me to be his adversary."¹⁸¹ This remark, though somewhat (and doubtless intentionally) vague, was nevertheless revealing. Despite claiming to be and actually being an arbiter for peace, Theoderic was not entirely impartial and maintained that he would side with Alaric should war break out.

This promise of support, however, should not be seen as one of those rare cases in late antiquity of Gothic solidarity.¹⁸² Though Italy's Goths would eventually invade Gaul in the aftermath of a Visigothic defeat, it will soon become evident that they would do so out of self-interest, and that the policies that they would enact in the process would drive a wedge between themselves and their "Gothic" allies. Besides, as already demonstrated, Theoderic presented himself as a *Roman* ruler before all western barbarians, including the Visigoths, and so pan-Gothicness, while a nice idea, is utterly absent from the contemporary historical record.¹⁸³

More importantly there were other factors at work in 507 which would have made the alliance with Alaric agreeable, regardless of presumed ethnic affinities. Alaric's legitimate son and potential heir, after all, was Theoderic's grandson, and Alaric's military aid in the 490s had proven particularly helpful in securing Theoderic's own rise

¹⁸⁰ *Variae* 3.1.2: "Moderatio provida est, quae gentes servat: furor autem instantia plerumque praecipitat et tunc utile solum est ad arma concurrere, cum locum apud adversarium iustitia non potest invenire."

¹⁸¹ *Variae* 3.1.3: "Commune malum vestrum iudicamus inimicum. Nam ille me iure sustinebit adversum, qui vobis nititur esse contrarius."

¹⁸² See the discussion in fn. 162 (above) of Alaric II's military support of Theoderic during his campaign against Odovacer. For Theoderic's intervention in Gaul as a matter of protecting (or avenging) threatened (Gothic) kin, see Moorhead (1992), 180. Wolfram (1988), 309-10, is more suspicious of such a motivation, while Diaz and Valverde (2007) outright deny it.

¹⁸³ In fact, the closest evidence for such ethnic solidarity appears to be derived from Jordanes' *Getica*, a work that post-dates the Justinianic reconquest (and includes a number of instances of Goth-on-Goth violence). Such pan-Gothicness (as presented by Jordanes), therefore, may or may not have anything to do with Italian perceptions dating from the era of Theoderic. It may have more to do with Justinianic propaganda, for instance. Cf. Goffart (1988), chapter 2, and (2006), chapter 4. Likewise, if actually derived from Cassiodorus' lost history, it may be the product of Theoderic's post-Vouillé propaganda, which sought to fully (and permanently) integrate the fallen Visigothic kingdom into his realm. For this, see the discussion of Eutharic's consulship in chapter 4.

to power. Theoderic was hence not only more connected to Alaric, but had a dynastic interest in his kingdom and was likewise personally indebted to him. Indeed, ties with Visigothic Gaul were perhaps the most stable of Italy's foreign relations at this time, even if the official position in Italy was one of disdain and distrust. The Burgundians, who were clearly poised to side with Clovis, had only too recently ravaged Liguria, while Clovis was dangerously unpredictable and a proven juggernaut. Shortly before the outbreak of war, in fact, Theoderic himself had been keen to impress upon the Frankish king the need to show clemency and moderation in his conquests, practically threatening him in the case of the Alamanni,¹⁸⁴ whose defeated remnants sought refuge within the Empire in 506.¹⁸⁵

The survival of a friendly Visigothic kingdom, therefore, was defensively expedient, serving to impede Frankish and Burgundian access to Italy and providing all the benefits afforded to Rome by her client kingdoms of the past.¹⁸⁶ Nor were Alaric's Visigoths the only neighbors solicited against potential outside threats. A similar rationale can be seen in the alliances Theoderic tried to form with the lesser kings residing due north of Italy and east of Clovis' expanding kingdom, such as the Warni, Heruli, and Thuringians. Theoderic knew from personal experience that there was more than one way to invade Italy, and the prospect of Frankish neighbors sweeping down from the north was just as daunting as their doing so from the west. Like Alaric, the king of the Thuringians was also wooed through the offering of an exceptionally "Roman" bride, Amalaberga.¹⁸⁷ And now, writing to this king and his neighbors on the eve of war, Theoderic suggested that the Visigoths had always proven themselves worthy allies in the past, and, alluding to Clovis, warned that "he who is willing to act without justice will weaken the kingdoms of us all."¹⁸⁸ It was, in keeping with Theoderic's propensity for

¹⁸⁴ *Variae* 2.41.1: "sed quoniam semper in auctoribus perfidiae ressecabilis videtur excessus nec primariorum plectibilis culpa omnium debet esse vindicta, motus vestros in fessas reliquias temperate, quia iure gratiae merentur evadere, quos ad parentum vestrorum defensionem respicitis confugisse. Estote illis remissi, qui nostris finibus celantur exterriti."

¹⁸⁵ On this, *PanTh* 72-3 (describing the peaceful settlement of Alamanni) and *Variae* 3.50 (ordering Noricans to trade cattle with them). They appear to have been settled within the vicinity of Raetia. Cf. Szidat (1985), 73, and Wolfram (1988), 317-8.

¹⁸⁶ For such client kingdoms, Luttwak (1976), 24-32, and Braund (1984).

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *Variae* 4.1 (discussed in chapter 3) and *AnonVal* 70 (discussed in chapter 4, fn. 125).

¹⁸⁸ *Variae* 3.3.2: "qui sine lege vult agere, cunctorum disponit regna quassare."

foresightedness, an ominous prediction of things to come,¹⁸⁹ yet even in this case, there remained the possibility that someone in Gaul might acquiesce and obviate the need for violence.

So Clovis, more so than anyone else, was viewed in Italy (perhaps rightly given the historical circumstances) as *the* “loose cannon” in Gaul who could easily upset the *modus vivendi* reached in the West and as a consequence even pose a direct threat to Italy.¹⁹⁰ Still, though hostilities had been long-in-coming and even planned for in advance with secret alliances and strengthened defenses,¹⁹¹ the actual eruption of violence was unpredictable, and seems to have caught its intended victims by surprise. In the spring of 507 Clovis and his armies crossed the Loire, while allied Burgundian soldiers pressed south, and a Byzantine fleet of 200 warships made ready to sail West. Soon thereafter, on the *campus Vogladensis*, a location near Poitiers usually associated with the modern city of Vouillé,¹⁹² Clovis’ Franks and Alaric’s Visigoths engaged in a bloody, decisive contest. By the battle’s end, Alaric II had been slain, and the remnants of his army had fled the scene, allowing much of Aquitania to fall into Frankish hands. The military aid that Theoderic had promised had failed to materialize, and the battle in which Alaric had fallen had spelled the end of Gaul’s Gothic future, ushering in, instead, the birth of France; but not quite.

Despite the suggestion in a few later sources that Theoderic had intentionally disregarded his alliance with Alaric, intending for the Franks and Visigoths to slaughter one another so as to more easily conquer Gaul for himself,¹⁹³ the ruler of Italy should

¹⁸⁹ The Franks, who had already conquered certain Thuringians under Clovis, would conquer the remaining Thuringians in 531.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Moorhead (1992), 180, who writes, “Perhaps, then, Theoderic looked on Clovis in 507... simply as someone who threatened to upset a stable situation...”

¹⁹¹ It is probably right to place the preoccupation with Alpine defenses described in *Variae* 1.17, 2.5, and 3.48 within this historical context, though these letters could realistically be dated to any period between 506 and 511. Cf. Schwacz (1993), 790.

¹⁹² Gerberding (1987), 41, suggests Voulon; Wood (1994), 46, accepts his association.

¹⁹³ For this, the *Chronicle of Fredegar* 2.58. Moorhead (1992), 178, also cites Procopius, *Wars* 5.12.34-37. If this was intended as a critique of Theoderic, it was rather subtle. Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 5.12.24-32, where Theoderic does indeed intentionally delay sending troops to aid the Visigoths and Franks (!) against the Burgundians (and acquires territory in Gaul without a fight). The account is hopelessly confused, however. Dewing dates the event to 534, a date both out of chronological sequence with Procopius’ narrative and long after Theoderic’s death. Perhaps the event refers to the Franco-Burgundian war of 500 or to Vouillé and its aftermath. It is rather tempting, however, to associate this war with the later Gallic conquests of Tuluin, ca. 523/4, who (while Theoderic was still reigning), acquired new territory in Gaul “without peril” during a dispute between the Franks and Burgundians. See *Variae* 8.10.8.

probably not be blamed for failing to materialize at Vouillé. Playing one barbarian tribe off of another would have been a tactic wonderfully consistent with the policies of Roman imperial rule, but as already demonstrated, Rome had little intention at this time of reconquering Gaul, and tried instead to keep the peace. Moreover Clovis' invasion of Aquitaine had been sudden, so sudden, in fact, that it might have been logistically impossible for Italy's armies to provide Alaric with the necessary reinforcements in time.¹⁹⁴ One Visigothic source (admittedly written long after the fact) actually claimed that Theoderic only learned of the outbreak of hostiles through the arrival of messengers announcing Alaric's death, and that his invasion of Gaul had been launched immediately thereafter.¹⁹⁵ Regardless, even if there had been plenty of time to come to Alaric's aid, there was a more pressing issue at home which would seem to exonerate Roman participation at the Battle of Vouillé: Italy itself had been invaded, and not just by the same-old marauding Burgundians in the northwest, but by a Byzantine fleet in the southeast.¹⁹⁶ The western Romans and their Goths had been assaulted on two fronts, and Theoderic's Empire too ran the risk of crumbling with one decisive blow.

More than likely, however, this invasion of Italy by Clovis' allies had been intended to forestall the involvement of Theoderic in the more important contests unfolding within Gaul (a tactic that obviously worked). The Burgundians, though having already demonstrated their interest in Italian lands, directed most of their efforts towards Provence, while the Byzantine fleet had been sent merely to "devastate the coast" in an act of "piracy," rather than with serious intentions of conquest.¹⁹⁷ Soon, it seems, the

¹⁹⁴ Moorhead (1992), 178.

¹⁹⁵ Isidore of Seville, *Hist. Goth.* 36: "Theudericus autem Italiae rex dum interitum generi conperisset, confestim ab Italia proficiscitur, Franco proterit, partem regni, quam manus hostium occupaverat, recepit Gothorumque iuri restituit."

¹⁹⁶ For the Byzantine fleet, *Marc. Com.* 508 with *Variae* 1.16 and 2.38. The Burgundian invasion, if not actual, was certainly feared. See Schwarcz (1993), 790-1, and Delaplace (2000), 82, who follows him. The reconstruction of a Burgundian attack on northwestern Italy rests largely on the dating and context of *Variae* 1.9, 2.30, and Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 1.10 (none of which is secure).

¹⁹⁷ *Marc. Com.* 508: "...cum centum armatis navibus totidemque dromonibus octo milia militum armatorum secum ferentibus ad devastanda Italiae litora processerunt et... remensoque mari inhonestam victoriam, quam piratico ausu Romani ex Romanis rapuerunt..." These numbers were surely not enough for a serious attempt at conquest, though the ravaging was nonetheless effective, necessitating a two-year long relief from taxation for the merchants of Sipontum (*Variae* 2.38) and reduced tribute for the peoples of Apulia (*Variae* 1.16).

Burgundian raiders were checked, while the east Romans, with whom relations had been strained since the Sirmian War of 504, abandoned their efforts altogether.¹⁹⁸

But this joint invasion of Italy, however manageable, had still left its mark, providing a brilliant rallying point in the West heretofore unavailable. In June of 508 the army of the *res publica* was called to arms, but making good on an alliance with the Visigoths or avenging the death of Alaric (if, in fact, such an act required vengeance from an Italian perspective) failed to receive any mention. Italy had been attacked, and as always in Theoderic's new Roman Empire, it was Italy's safety that was paramount. Rome's soldiers became once more "Italy's defenders,"¹⁹⁹ and were to be sent to Gaul, according to the official proclamation, "for the utility of all."²⁰⁰ They were to prove once more their Gothic *virtus*, the courage of their forefathers,²⁰¹ but just as the case had been just a few years prior in the Balkans, this uniquely "Gothic" valor would serve to defend the "Roman" *res publica* and would ultimately allow Gallo-Romans like Firminus, Parthenius, and others to "return to [their] homeland, to the Roman Empire."²⁰² Troops soon poured across the Alps "like a flooding river" and "rushed forth in unison for the security of all."²⁰³ Having been attacked, then, Italy turned to Gaul in an act of defense, but Gaul's "liberation," while soon a serious cause for celebration, would be a consequence, rather than an end.

Within months of this Gothic "inundation" of southeastern Gaul a policy consistent with defending Italy was quickly put into action. Led by the general Ibba,²⁰⁴ the army began securing all of Gaul east of the Rhone and south of the Durance. Marseille fell in the autumn of 508, Arles soon after, having been relieved from a devastating Burgundian and Frankish siege. Here, it was fondly remembered over a decade later, the noble Goth Tuluin had earned his scars, testaments to his courage, while

¹⁹⁸ There is no evidence for continued Byzantine aggression, and clearly by 511 Theoderic had been able to resecure cordial relations by Byzantium, inviting Anastasius to share in his triumphal restoration of the Gauls. For this, see *Variae* 2.1 (discussed below).

¹⁹⁹ *Variae* 4.36.3: *Italiae defensoribus*.

²⁰⁰ *Variae* 1.24.1: "pro communi utilitate exercitum ad Gallias constitutum destinare..."

²⁰¹ *Variae* 1.24.2-3: "...quatenus et parentum vestrorum in vobis ostendatis inesse virtutem et nostram peragatis feliciter iussionem. Producite iuvenes vestros in Martiam disciplinam."

²⁰² *Variae* 3.18: "ad Romanum repatriavit imperium." The specific Gallo-Roman in question was a certain Magnus.

²⁰³ *Variae* 4.36.2: "transiens noster exercitus more fluminis, dum irrigavit, ... pro generali securitate frementi adunatione proruperit..."

²⁰⁴ For Ibba, *PLRE* 2, 585.

holding Arles' famous pontoon bridge against a "close-knit throng" of Franks.²⁰⁵ Other cities in the region, like Avignon, also fell at this time, while *castella* were quickly constructed along the Durance in order to hold the emerging frontier.²⁰⁶ Seemingly secured, this newly acquired territory was then permanently annexed to the Roman Empire, reestablishing the long-defunct Prefecture of the Gauls and hence recreating the buffer province lost to Euric in 476.²⁰⁷ The act, while strategically prudent,²⁰⁸ was nevertheless bold and placed Theoderic at odds with his supposed allies, the Visigoths. This was technically still their territory, and coupled with Theoderic's unwillingness to recognize Gesalec, the bastard son of Alaric, as a rightful successor, the move was tantamount to a declaration of war.

Indeed, by the next year, Rome's Goths and Gesalec's Goths were openly fighting, and Theoderic was now backing his young grandson, a legitimate son of Alaric, as the rightful king of the Visigoths. Carcassonne, the site to which some of the Gothic royal treasury had been relocated,²⁰⁹ and Narbonne fell to Ibba in 509, forcing Gesalec to flee south to Barcelona, where he was pursued and then besieged the following year. At

²⁰⁵ On the siege and Tuluin's role, *Variae* 11.10.6-8. There seems little reason to place this event during a second assault on Arles, as Sirago (1987), 72, and Schwarcz (1993), 793, do, since Cassiodorus credits Tuluin with capturing and defending Arles' pontoon bridge. For an Arlesian perspective on the siege, *Vita Caesarii* 1.28-32. For the importance of Tuluin's scars, see chapter 3.

²⁰⁶ For reconstructions of this phase of the war, Sirago (1987), 65-8; Favrod (1997), 400-1; Schwarcz (1993), 791-93; and Delaplace (2000), 83-85. For the emerging frontier along the Durance, *Variae* 3.41.

²⁰⁷ The actual date for the (re)establishment of the Gallic Prefecture is uncertain, however. An early letter in the *Variae* collection (3.17) dated to 508 demonstrates that there was already a *vicarius praefectorum* in Gaul, and hence a prefect to whom he answered. Though true, none of the *Variae* letters dated to the period between 508-11 are address to this prefect (assumed to be Liberius), and so it is generally thought that the prefect in question was the prefect of Italy, Liberius only being named Prefect of the Gauls in 510 (or later). For this, O'Donnell (1981), 44-6; Delaplace (2003), 481-5; and *PLRE* 2, 677-80 ("Liberius 3"). The absence of letters directed to Liberius, however, is not devastating, for despite Liberius' long tenure in Gaul, only one letter directed to him survives in Cassiodorus' collection (*Variae* 8.6). Likewise, the evidence for Liberius being in Italy from 508-10 is inconclusive. If Prefect of the Gauls, his stay in Italy might have been temporary and a matter of business (as the case clearly was in 512).

²⁰⁸ As suggested above, Provence had historically protected Italy from openly hostile aggressors. Delaplace (2000), 87, and (2003), 479, also points out the strategic value of Gaul's entire Mediterranean littoral with respect to controlling Spain. That Theoderic's initial intention was to conquer the entire Visigothic kingdom, however, is far from clear. Still, the original incorporation of Transalpine Gaul into the Roman Empire had in fact stemmed largely from a desire for a land-route connecting Italy and Spain. For this, Ebel (1976).

²⁰⁹ Though only Procopius, *Wars* 5.12.41, claims this. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2.37, on the other hand, claims that all of Alaric II's royal treasure fell into Clovis' hands when he took Toulouse. But if Procopius is correct, a number of rather prestigious "Roman" goods, which were lost to the Visigoths during Alaric's sack of 410, were "restored" to Italy as a result (though only temporarily). Cf. Procopius, *Wars* 5.13.6, where Athalaric returns this treasure to Amalaric.

the same time, other contingents of Italy's army continued skirmishing with Frankish forces in Septimania and within the vicinity of Arles. By 511, however, Gesalec had abandoned Barcelona for Vandal Africa, and it was at this point that Theoderic assumed nominal sovereignty over the remnants of Alaric's kingdom, serving as regent for the boy-king Amalaric until his death in 526.²¹⁰

Gesalec, of course, would receive aid from the Vandals (an act which earned a scathing and effective remonstrance from Theoderic²¹¹) and would continue to pose a threat within Gaul until his death in 514. It was his Visigothic supporters, for instance, who around this time probably ambushed Theoderic's Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, Liberius, and dealt him a near-fatal wound along the Burgundian frontier;²¹² and indeed as a result Liberius too would earn his own valorous scars in Gaul.²¹³ Likewise peace would continue to be strained at times between the Empire and the other barbarians of Gaul, namely the Franks and Burgundians, with certain southern lands in Burgundy actually being conquered, much to the elation of those in Italy, in the 520s and 30s.²¹⁴ Yet for all intents and purposes, by 511 the Roman reconquest of (southern) Gaul, and by extension Spain, was complete, and it was hence appropriate that in this year Flavius Felix, a Gallo-Roman aristocrat, was named consul.

If the Battle of Vouillé had ushered in the birth of France, no one in Italy noticed; nor was anyone claiming that a unified, Gothic super-state had arisen through Theoderic's tutelage over the Visigoths.²¹⁵ Instead, Italians were asserting that Roman Gaul and Spain had been reborn; that "Rome had gathered back to her bosom her very

²¹⁰ For reconstructions of this phase of the war, Ewig (1953; 1976), 124-8; Sirago (1987), 68-72; Favrod (1997), 401-6; Schwarcz (1993), 793-4; Delaplace (2000), 85-7; and Diaz and Valverde (2007), 360-1.

²¹¹ See chapter 3.

²¹² *Vita Caesarii* 2.10. But see O'Donnell (1981), 48, who strangely places these events between 512 and 526, arguing for a kind of "no-man's land" in this region where Visigoths and Ostrogoths continued squabbling until the end of Theoderic's tutelage. Beyond this notice, however, all evidence suggests that Gesalec's death effectively ended Visigothic resistance.

²¹³ See the discussion in chp. 3

²¹⁴ For these later conquests, *Variae* 8.10, which celebrates Tuluin's acquisition of Burgundian territory in the early 520s (see fn. 193) and *Variae* 11.1.12, which celebrates a defeat of Theoderic's Franks (otherwise unattested), during the reign of Athalaric (526-34). *Variae* 11.1.13 also hints at the return of certain Burgundian territories (recently acquired?) in exchange for tributary (perhaps even client) status. This may explain the strange notice in Jordanes, *Getica* 305, where Athalaric returns conquered territory to the Franks (another otherwise unattested occurrence). Perhaps Jordanes simply confused Franks for Burgundians, an understandable mistake given the fact that Burgundy had long since fallen to the Franks by the time he was writing.

²¹⁵ See Sirago (1987), 74. Cf. Wolfram (1988), 309-12, and Delaplace (2000), 77.

own nurslings”; that Gaul now paid her again with consuls and Spain with her ancient tributes of grain.²¹⁶

Victory, benevolence, and re-Romanization

The jubilation inspired in Italy by this turn of events has already been discussed to some extent in prior chapters. Though Italo-Romans could live happily in a Roman Empire that lacked both Gaul and Spain, their restoration to the Empire was, as the case had been with lands in the Balkans just years earlier, a serious cause for celebration.²¹⁷ The victory, in and of itself, but especially over *real* barbarians, was especially important and an obvious contrast to the triumph celebrated years before, when the Danube had been made “Roman” again. In the former case, territory had been seized from other Romans, and though this fact could be sanitized with careful language, wars of this sort almost always bore the ignominy of fratricide.²¹⁸ The defeat of the Franks, Burgundians, and even Gesalec’s Visigoths, however, lacked such associations. As already described, all three had remained the same stereotypically savage and cruel barbarians that they had always been. They had actually been responsible for the loss of Gaul and Spain in the first place, and not content to keep these wrongfully wrested lands, had even dared to attack Italy. A decisive avenging blow had thus been dealt to the very same barbarians largely responsible for the Empire’s fifth-century decline, and Roman dominance over the barbarians, an intrinsic ideological claim for the Empire, was given additional substance, persisting from this point onwards for decades.²¹⁹

Already basking in a golden age, these victories in Gaul suggested even more that the prosperity of the Roman Empire would know no bounds, and so rightly Theoderic, as guardian of the Republic, and his Goths, as agents of Roman power, were honored for their instrumental roles. It seems likely, for instance, that the series of triple solidi

²¹⁶ For Nurslings, *Variae* 2.1.2: “*alumnus proprios ad ubera Roma recolligat*”; paying with consuls, *Variae* 2.3.1 (referencing the Gallic consul Felix): “*gaudet provincias... vobis pendere consulares*”; and grain tribute, *Variae* 5.35.1: “*...aequum iudicavimus Hispaniae triticeas illi copias exhibere, ut antiquum vectigal sub nobis felicior Roma reciperet.*”

²¹⁷ Cf. *PanTh* 69.

²¹⁸ For Ennodius’ sanitization of the Sirmian conflict, *PanTh* 63-68; for Cassiodorus’ treatment of a similar conflict with the Byzantines in the early 530s, *Variae* 11.1.10-11. Cf. Marc. Comes 508, who refers to the Byzantine raid on Italy discussed above as an “*inhonestam victoriam, quam... Romani ex Romanis rapuerunt...*”

²¹⁹ See chapter 3.

represented today by the Senigallia medallion was minted at Rome to commemorate these very triumphs. The dating is not secure, but the message of *imperium*, dominance, and victory over (multiple) barbarians is unmistakable.²²⁰ These Gallic campaigns, more so than any other, made Theoderic a *princeps invictissimus semper*, and likewise a *victor gentium* who could legitimately hold the conquered world in the palm of his hand. The famous set of inscriptions erected by the illustrious ex-consul Basilius Decius was probably also dedicated at this time,²²¹ and indeed their words too seem to hint at transalpine victories. Theoderic was applauded as a conqueror and a celebrator of triumphs, as one who had subdued the barbarians. It was these acts that made him worthy of being hailed as “semper Augustus,” “guardian of liberty,” “propagator of the Roman name,” and “born for the good of the Republic.”²²²

Other sources, with dates that are more certain, echo this same celebratory language, demonstrating nicely the links between victory in Gaul, prosperity at home, and the enthusiasm felt by a number of Italo-Romans for the Theoderican regime. In one instance their amazement and joy was appropriately expressed in the Senate House by Theoderic’s newest panegyrist, Cassiodorus. Here, for all the conscript fathers to see and hear, Cassiodorus referred to his *princeps* as an “untiring celebrator of triumphs,” and shouted bravo, asserting, “he bridles the barbarians with his *imperium*; he pacifies the provinces with justice. The tired limbs of the Republic are revived and blessedness is restored to our era. We used to only read in the annals that Gaul had once been Roman.”²²³ Gaul’s restoration, in Cassiodorus’ estimation, had been the culmination of a series of rebounds initiated by Theoderic, successes that had returned not only lost

²²⁰ The coin is often thought to have been issued in commemoration of Theoderic’s official visit to Rome in 500. For this, Kraus (1928), 79, and Wroth (1966), xxxii. For 509, Grierson and Blackburn (1986), 35, and Moorhead (1992), 187-8. Not only are the ideological claims presented on the coin more consistent with the 509 dating, but the absence of any reference to a tricennalia celebration (e.g. “vot/anno xxx”) is revealing. Alternative dates (either earlier or later) have also been suggested, largely on the grounds of assumed constitutional limitations on Theoderic’s right to mint gold coins. Cf. Metlich (2004), 15-6, who (unconvincingly) attempts to place the minting of this coin to before 497.

²²¹ *Variae* 2.32 and 2.33, which announce Decius’ project, are conventionally dated to 507-11, and so the inscription is likely a post-Vouillé creation.

²²² Fiebiger, vol.1, #193 (*ILS* 827 and *CIL* 10 6850-2): “dominus noster gloriosissimus adque inclutus rex Theodericus, victor ac triumphator, semper Augustus, bono rei publicae natus, custos libertatis et propagator Romani nominis, domitor gentium....” Cf. McCormick (1986), 278-80.

²²³ *CassOratReliquiae*, pg 466, ln. 9-19 (partially cited in fn. 6, above): “...provincias iustitiae serenitate tranquillat, frenat superbas gentes imperio... Macte, infatigabilis triumphator, quo / pugnante fessa rei publicae membra / reparantur et saecula nostra antequam / tiqua beatitudo revertitur. Galliam / quondam fuisse Romanam solis tantum / legebamus annalibus...”

provinces to the Roman fold, but blessedness, *beatitudo*, to modern times. Such an understanding, of course, was in keeping with the ideas expressed only a few years earlier by Ennodius, whose own panegyric had also emphasized glorious victories (primarily in the East) and concluded with the assertion that a golden age had dawned.²²⁴ Now, however, Ennodius' very own birth-*patria* had been reclaimed and his own relatives and friends, dear ones whose barbarization was at times painfully obvious, had been redeemed. Writing to the prefect Liberius, who had once proven instrumental in the Theoderican recovery of Italy,²²⁵ he could not help but express his elation:

“The Gauls agree with me in this statement: that through the aid of the living God Christ, you have corrected those to whom you conveyed *civilitas* after the passing of many years and have restored to your Italy (while we demanded and they insisted) those who happened not to taste of Roman liberty before you came.”²²⁶

For Ennodius, then, Gaul's restoration had been a miracle, for Cassiodorus a blessing, and for Decius and doubtless others, a sign of Theoderic's exceptional stewardship over the Republic. The golden age, at least in Italy, continued and even wondrously increased in its profits. But the situation in Gaul itself was a bit different. Again, it needs to be borne in mind that until the invasion of 508, many in Italy had completely given up on Gaul, and even those like Ennodius, who were sensitive to developments within Gaul, were often on the verge of doing the same. Gaul, like other “lost” provinces, had gone its own way in the decades following barbarian conquest and Roman abandonment. The process, as already described in this chapter, could be generalized from the standpoint of increasingly inward-looking Italo-Romans as barbarization, but clearly Gallo-Romans residing in Arles like Julius Pomerius, Firminus, and even Caesarius probably felt otherwise. Life had continued in southern Gaul much as it had under Roman rule, and in fact many Gallo-Roman families had benefited during

²²⁴ See the discussion in chapter 3.

²²⁵ Ennodius' letter begins by referencing Liberius' role in the aftermath of Theoderic's defeat of Odovacer. For this, see the discussion in chapter 4.

²²⁶ #447.6: “... mecum Galliae in hac adstipulatione conveniunt, ut Christo deo vivo disponente ordinatis illis, quibus civilitatem post multos annorum circulos intulisti, quos ante te non contigit saporem de Romana libertate gustare, ad Italiam tuam et poscentibus nobis et illis tenentibus reducaris.” For the connection between *libertas* and Romanness in Theoderican Italy, Moorhead (1987) and Barnish (2003), 21-2.

the reigns of Euric and Alaric II, proving themselves loyal subjects in the face of Clovis' hostile invasion.²²⁷ Ennodius, then, could imagine a late fifth-century Gaul where Gallo-Romans were literally weeping at their barbarian captivity, but such tears were not shed by all and, moreover, by the early sixth century the lamentation was largely over. Alaric's Gauls might have continued thinking of themselves as Romans, or they might have been in the process of becoming, or already become Visigoths, but their loyalties, of necessity, had long since been altered.

There was hence the need for the Roman government to be sensitive during this period of reintegration, especially since from a Gallic perspective it was probably not a given that Italy was the reinvigorated and resurging Roman Empire that it claimed to be. Others in Gaul, for instance, clearly recognized the Byzantines as the only legitimate Roman power at this time, if only for obvious political reasons.²²⁸ And while it is true that both Italy and Rome continued to be regarded in Gaul as the preeminent sources of *Romanitas* in the West,²²⁹ it was still evident from a Gallic perspective that Italy had ultimately shared in its own fifth-century fate. Italy too had been conquered by barbarians, and had ultimately come to be ruled by a Gothic *rex* whose name, Theoderic, had been, and would continue to be, associated with other barbarian rulers in their midst.²³⁰ Well-connected Gallo-Romans, like those with whom Ennodius corresponded, might have been aware of certain continuities and contemporary developments within Italy, but Rome's newest provincials had not been fully exposed to the uniquely Romanizing language of the day, and so required initiation and doubtless convincing.

Some might reject these ideas (just as there were some in Italy who did the same) but others did not. The idea of a Roman Empire, even if seen as perverted by fifth- and sixth-century adaptations, was nonetheless powerful, and Theoderic's Roman empire,

²²⁷ Apollinaris, a son of Sidonius Apollinaris who fought on behalf of Alaric II at Vouillé, is the most conspicuous. For him, *PLRE* 2, 114 ("Apollinaris 3"). See fn. 165 (above) for Gallic continuity.

²²⁸ For the Burgundians, Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 93 and 94; for the Franks, Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2.38.

²²⁹ The continued desire on the part of Gallo-Romans to seek out education in Italy and especially Rome is clearly suggestive of this. For examples, including Ennodius' nephew Parthenius, see above.

²³⁰ Assuming, of course, that names like "Theodericus" had not become acceptably Roman by this point. They very well may have, especially since by 508 Gaul had already known three royal Theoderics (Theoderic I and II of the Visigoths and Theoderic/Theuderic I of the Franks). *PLRE* 2 features seven Theoderics, three of which had held high Roman offices. Moorhead (1992), 177, fn. 13, is surely right to see no significance in Clovis naming his son Theoderic, contra Geary (1988), 84, who suggests that he named him after his brother-in-law, Theoderic the Amal. But cf. *Variae* 11.1.12, where Cassiodorus claims that Theoderic I of the Franks was unworthy of his mighty name.

with its working senate, traditional senatorial offices, and highly traditional language, surely looked and sounded genuine. Moreover, Gallo-Romans, as a rule, had often had entirely different expectations when it came to both Roman emperors and Romanness, and were on the whole much more flexible with both categories than those in Italy. In Gaul, it should be remembered, highly Romanized military men of barbarian origins had been proclaimed or accepted as emperors in the past.²³¹ And here even the blue-blood Sidonius, who seemed to long for a new Caesar to re-conquer Gaul, could see fit to eulogize both Ricimer and Euric as near-imperial figures who defended Romanness in the face of utter barbarism.²³² The flexibility of men like Sidonius, many of whom were still living at this time, combined with their nostalgia and proven loyalty to the imperial cause, could make them extremely amenable to the claims of Roman restoration issuing forth from Italy.²³³ Go-betweens like Ennodius, men fully indoctrinated and supportive of Theoderic's regime and well-connected in Gaul, also helped, for they were all too willing to assure their contacts of this Roman empire and its emperor's legitimacy. A certain Aurelianus, for instance, who had been stripped of his patrimony during the course of Gaul's restoration, was informed by Ennodius that the injury had been fortuitous. It had drawn the attention of his "most invincible lord," and the loss of substance was hence a good thing, since "the notice of a glorious *princeps* has been acquired from the expense."²³⁴ Now Aurelianus had acquired "the love of the highest lord," and "the greatest power," Ennodius claimed, "supports your roof [and provides] a source of honor for you."²³⁵

²³¹ Gaul had played host to a number of emperors, legitimate and illegitimate, of "barbarian" ancestry. These included the Franks Magnentius and Silvanus, and (if we take Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2.28 at face value) Clovis himself. That Clovis was, in fact, a Roman emperor is doubtful, but that Gregory saw fit to describe him as such is telling.

²³² For new Caesar, see Van Dam (1985), 174. For Euric and Ricimer, see chapter 3.

²³³ To the youths of Gaul, on the other hand, who had never known Roman rule, there may have been little reason to question (or for that matter care about) these claims; one master had simply been replaced by another, and whether that master called himself "Roman" or not was perhaps of little significance. Cf. *Vita Caesaris* 1.34 and 2.45, which recount the transition from Visigothic to Ostrogothic Arles and from Ostrogothic to Frankish Arles. The latter demonstrates the importance of a specifically "Catholic" identity by the 530s.

²³⁴ #270.2: "tamen sub hoc titulo invictissimi domini multum locupletem gratiam comparavit. Bona est iactura substantiae, si incliti notitia principis dispendiis invenitur."

²³⁵ #270.2-3: "Summi domini amor adquiritur. ...facta est lucri mater et honorum via... cum culmini tuo contigerit maxima iam tenere." Another letter (#412) makes clear that Aurelianus later availed himself to Theoderic's Roman justice.

There was room in Gaul, therefore, for the idea of a Roman restoration, and from the very beginning of Italy's military intervention in Provence, Theoderic's government was keen to employ its rhetoric. In an important letter written late in 508 and directed to all the provincials residing in Gaul, Theoderic assumed the traditional role of a benevolent Roman *princeps* and attempted to reach out to his subjects. Once full-fledged Romans, they were told that they had regrettably fallen under the influence of barbarians, and like Parthenius or Euprepia, were said to have developed certain uncivilized characteristics, such as cruelty and tendencies towards violence. Now, however, Rome had saved them both from the barbarians and from themselves. They were literally welcomed back to the Roman Empire, to their birthright, and to civilization, and were enjoined to become Romans once more, right down to their very togas. "Roman custom," Theoderic admonished, "must happily be obeyed by you who have been restored to it after a long time. Recalled to your ancient liberty, cast off barbarism, abandon cruel minds, and clothe yourselves in the morals of the toga. It is not right that you live like foreigners in our just times."²³⁶

Words like these drew the traditional, clear-cut distinction between civilized and barbarian, Roman and non-Roman, and tried to impress upon the inhabitants of Gaul that they rightly belonged with the better (i.e. Roman) sort. The inhabitants of Italy professed that they themselves were still the Romans, whether Italo-Roman or Gotho-Roman, and that the Gauls had once been, and now should want to be Romans as well. "It is welcome," they were told, "to return to that place from which your ancestors are known to have profited."²³⁷ Now safe, they were supposed to "enjoy what you used to only hear about" and to realize that "men are preferred not by their bodily strength but their reason."²³⁸ Gauls were told to live peaceful lives, and to rely once more on their intellect, a prerequisite of civilized men, rather than brute strength, so typical of iron-fisted barbarians.

²³⁶ *Variae* 3.17.1: "Libenter parendum est Romanae consuetudini, cui estis post longa tempora restituti. ... Atque ideo in antiquam libertatem deo praestante revocati vestimini moribus togatis, exuite barbariam, abicite mentium crudelitatem, quia sub aequitate nostri temporis non vos decet vivere moribus alienis."

²³⁷ *Ibid*: "quia ibi regressus est gratus, ubi provectum vestros constat habuisse maiores."

²³⁸ *Variae* 3.17.5: "fruemini quod tantum audiebatis. Intelligite homines non tam corporea vi quam ratione praeferrari et illos merito crescere qui possunt allis iusta praestare."

With reason would likewise come the ability to obey and revere the laws, and this too was envisioned as a rather necessary improvement. “A restoration that is good,” Theoderic wrote, “should not be troublesome. Love the things from which your security is derived and your conscience profits. It is barbaric to live according to pleasure.”²³⁹ Indeed, as already discussed, lawlessness was another condition of barbarism and one which had once excluded Goths from holding imperial power.²⁴⁰ It was their own defense of and obedience to Roman law, in fact, that had made the Goths themselves, in part at least, tolerably Roman, and now the Gauls, much like the Pannonians before them, were asked to follow a Gothic lead. Gauls were told that the laws were “the most certain comforts of human life,” and were asked to “recover little by little the customs of administering justice.”²⁴¹ Roman law, of course, had remained in effect in Visigothic Gaul under Euric and Alaric II, and Theoderic even recognized their compilations as binding.²⁴² The issue here was hence a matter of practice and application rather than necessarily straightforward existence. In a Roman Gaul where reason could now flourish, justice, so important an ideology for the Theoderican regime, was to reign supreme as well, and legitimate justice could only be afforded by having recourse to (and actually utilizing) the laws. A similar sentiment was expressed to the inhabitants of Pannonia when Theoderic prohibited the trial-by-arms: “why should you, who do not have bribable judges, have recourse to personal combat? Put down your sword, you who lack an enemy! You are most wickedly raising your arm against your kin.”²⁴³

Reason not brawn, laws not swords, togas not furs: so far as Theoderic’s newest subjects were informed, the restoration of Roman Gaul was intended to return Gaul and its inhabitants to their prior, fifth-century state, transforming contemporary, barbarized

²³⁹ *Variae* 3.17.3-4: “Non sit novitas molesta, quae proba est. ...amate unde et securitas venit et conscientia proficit. Gentilitas enim vivit ad libitum.”

²⁴⁰ See the discussion of Athaulf and his Goths in chapter 3.

²⁴¹ *Variae* 3.17.4: “recipite paulatim iuridicos mores. ...iura publica certissima sunt humanae vitae solacia.”

²⁴² See *Variae* 4.12, where Gemellus and Marabad are instructed to “defer to whichever model of ancient law is established between” two Gallo-Roman litigants; *Variae* 4.17, where church exemptions granted by Alaric II at Narbonne are to be upheld; and *Variae* 5.39, which deals with the reestablishment of certain governmental procedures to their status under Euric and Alaric (apparently abuses had arisen under Theoderic’s tutelage). For the status of Roman law in Visigothic Gaul, Collins (1983), 25-9.

²⁴³ *Variae* 3.24.4: “Cur ad monomachiam recurratis, qui venalem iudicem non habetis? deponite ferrum, qui non habetis inimicum. Pessime contra parentes erigitis brachium...” Cf. *Variae* 4.12.3 (cited above), where Theoderic similarly claims, “quia non decet per vim eos aliquid agere, qui ad nostra meruerunt regimina pervenire.”

Gauls into the upstanding Romans that their ancestors had once been.²⁴⁴ Noblemen like Parthenius, by implication, would no longer have to cross the Alps in order to secure their (Roman) birthrights; their Romanness would simply be a given.

Such transformations had always been a kind of self-appointed moral obligation for the Roman Empire and its rulers, but in Theoderic's case this (re-)“romanization” of Gaul was especially important, as it had numerous implications for his own status not just as a Roman ruler, but as a glorious one. Indeed, Theoderic believed that Gaul in particular had been acquired “for our praises” and that the re-extension of *civilitas* to this province would “sow the fame of our name.”²⁴⁵ In Italy, as recently demonstrated, successes in Gaul really did earn Theoderic the adulation and fame that he sought, but the acceptance and adoration of his newest subjects, the Gauls, was likewise desired. The *princeps* of the West hoped that the Gauls would “rejoice in being conquered,”²⁴⁶ and suggested to one governor that being “more concerned about those from whom an increase of triumphs [has] come”²⁴⁷ would help realize this goal.

It was important, therefore, to have able administrators, referred to in official correspondence as “prudent governors,” “good overseers,” and “exceptional men,”²⁴⁸ on the ground and responsible for the situation in Gaul. These men were direct agents of the emperor, his empire, and its *Romanitas*, and so they needed to behave with the utmost integrity in order to assure Gallic loyalty. The Vicar Gemellus, for instance, was informed as early as 508 that his duty was to “correct” the Gauls, and was instructed:

²⁴⁴ Sirago (1987), 74-5, concludes similarly: “gli abitanti locali non cambiano semplicemente padrone, ma tornano nell’ antica situazione, quella precedente all’ occupazione Visigotica. Non è solo atteggiamento teorico, ma realizzazione pratica: gli abitanti devono tornare a vivere da romani, secondo le antiche abitudini basate sul predominio della legge, e non sull’ arbitrio personale.”

²⁴⁵ *Variae* 3.38.1 (To Wandil, a count at Avignon): “quamvis pietatis nostrae constet esse votum, ut ubique civilia, ubique moderata peragantur, maxime tamen optamus bene geri in regionibus Gallicanis, ubi et recens vastatio non portat iniuriam et ipsa initia bene plantare debent nostri nominis fama.” Clearly *civilia* is simply another way of referencing *civilitas*, hence the rendering above, which avoids the potential confusion which might be caused by using *civilia* over *civilitas*. Neuter plurals of this sort are habitually used in sixth-century Latin as synonyms for *-itas* nouns. For Gaul as a source of prestige, see also *Variae* 3.16.2 (cited below).

²⁴⁶ *Variae* 3.16.3 (an injunction to Gemellus): “effice ut victam fuisse delectet.”

²⁴⁷ *Variae* 3.16.2: “quando ad illos populos mitteris corrigendos, quos nostris laudibus specialiter credimus acquisitos. Cara est principi gloria et necesse est de illis amplius esse sollicitum, unde sibi triumphorum venisse sentit augmentum.”

²⁴⁸ Prudent governors, *Variae* 4.16.1: “novitatem quippe sollicitam prudentes convenit habere rectores”; good overseers, *Variae* 3.34.1 (to the Massilienses): “ut et provincialium ratio sublevetur et utilitas publica bonis praesidentibus augeatur”; exceptional men, *Variae* 3.16.3: “Desiderat viros egregios coacta cladibus suis.”

“hate unrest and avoid avarice so that the tired province may accept you as the kind of judge they know a Roman *princeps* might send.”²⁴⁹ Likewise the inhabitants of Marseille were told that their new count, Marabad, would “bring solace to the lowly, throw before the insolent the severity of his rule, and, finally, suffer none to be oppressed by unjust presumption, compelling all to the justice by which our Empire always flourishes.”²⁵⁰ This was what living in the Roman Empire was supposed to be like, and justice of this sort, afforded by able administrators, was supposed to cause “subjects to grieve that they had not acquired our rule earlier.”²⁵¹

But governors served other purposes in Gaul as well. The presence of civil officials like the Praetorian Prefect Liberius and his vicar,²⁵² Gemellus, was especially important. These men were blatantly Roman, the former practically exuding *Romanitas* and proven dedication to the state.²⁵³ Indeed, Liberius’ reputation for service and eloquence was already well-known in Ennodius’ circle of Gallic contacts, and while Prefect he would continue to move seamlessly within local (and not so local) aristocratic circles.²⁵⁴ Even the bishop of Burgundian Vienne, Avitus, tried to solicit his letters.²⁵⁵ His selection by Theoderic, then, was doubtless a prudent choice, for unquestionably Roman men like him served as ready reminders to the Gauls that they were being

²⁴⁹ *Variae* 3.16.3: “turbulenta non ames: avara declina, ut talem te iudicem provincia fessa suscipiat qualem Romanum principem transmisisse cognoscat.” The use of *Romanum principem* here provides undeniable proof that Theoderic wished to be seen in Gaul as such. For more examples, see below.

²⁵⁰ *Variae* 3.34.2: “minoribus solacium ferat, insolentibus severitatem suae districtiois obiciat, nullum denique opprimi iniqua praesumptione patiat, sed omnes cogat ad iustum, unde semper floret imperium.”

²⁵¹ *Variae* 3.33: “...ut subiecti se doleant nostrum dominium tardius adquisisse.”

²⁵² *Variae* 3.17 states that Gemellus was Vicar of the Prefect and not, as Rouche (1979), 50, and Delaplace (2000), 88, claim, Vicarius Septem Provinciarum. Whether he initially answered to the Prefect of Italy or Gaul is debated. See fn. 207 (above).

²⁵³ Liberius’ credentials have been discussed throughout this dissertation. For Gemellus’, see *Variae* 3.16 and 3.17, where he is described as a *vir spectabilis* and identified as having already proven his integrity to Theoderic in prior offices. Rouche (1979), 50, is simply wrong to see Gemellus as a native Gallo-Roman (unless, like Ennodius, he is a transplant).

²⁵⁴ O’Donnell (1981), 34 and 45, suggests that Liberius himself may have been a Ligurian and that his wife, Agretia, of Gallo-Roman descent. If true, a number of pre-existing Gallo-Roman contacts would be likely. While prefect in Gaul he received a letter from Avitus of Vienne (*Ep.* 35, discussed below), and befriended both Caesarius of Arles (*Vita Caesarii* 2.11-13) and Apollinaris of Valence (*Vita Apollinaris* 10). He likewise built and dedicated a basilica at Orange (its dedication is recorded in the minutes for the Council of Orange). Cf. Delaplace (2003), 497-9.

²⁵⁵ In *Ep.* 35, Avitus describes himself thirsting for Liberius’ letters (“hactenus sitiendi litteras vestras”) and asks for frequent correspondence (“qui fecisti me absque verecundia respondentem, reddite, ut cupio, frequentia debitorem”).

reintegrated into a *bona fide* Roman Empire.²⁵⁶ Moreover the offices that these Roman men held in and of themselves served as evidence of a specifically Roman restoration, regardless of whether they were available to Gallo-Romans or not.²⁵⁷ Many administrative posts had presumably vanished under Visigothic rule,²⁵⁸ and so now long-since defunct positions, that of the Praetorian Prefect being the most conspicuous, had been revived. The presence of Liberius, in short, announced that Gaul was again a Roman province.

The military administrators of Gaul, who for the sake of simplicity can be said to have represented the “Gothic faction,” also served important, complementary functions. Foremost, of course, they did exactly what they had done in Italy and earlier “restored” provinces. They were to “see to whatever pertains to security” and “defend [the Gauls] by arms” against the *real* barbarians.²⁵⁹ But in Gaul, as elsewhere, Goths were also supposed to be on their best behavior and to demonstrate their own uniquely Roman obedience to the laws. While stationed at Narbonne, for instance, the famous general Ibba was exhorted to render himself “as extraordinary in *civilitas*” as he was “famous in war.”²⁶⁰ His prestige as a warrior, in fact, was imagined as so glorious that not even “wicked men” would resist his injunctions, demonstrating nicely another means by which “Gothic” arms might ultimately be employed for the sake of “Roman” *civilitas*.²⁶¹ Wandil, a count residing in Avignon, was similarly informed. “Whenever the army is deployed, it must be thought to defend rather than be a burden. You should suffer there to be no violence. Let our army live according to *civilitas* among the Romans.”²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Delaplace (2003), 481-2. For a different interpretation, which nonetheless envisions Liberius as a prudent choice, O’Donnell (1981), 44-5.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Sirago (1987), 68 and 74, Delaplace (2000), 87f. There is no evidence (positive or negative) for Gallo-Romans holding high offices at this time, but they doubtless continued holding local posts.

²⁵⁸ For the loss of secular offices over the course of the fifth century, see Mathisen (1993) especially.

²⁵⁹ Defend by arms, *Variae* 3.43.1 (to the Spatharius Unigis): “delectamur iure Romano vivere quos armis cupimus vindicare,” and *Variae* 4.12.1 (to Marabad): “Propositi nostri est, ut provincias nobis deo auxiliante subiectas, sicut armis defendimus”; whatever pertains to security, *Variae* 3.34.2 (to the Massilienses regarding Marabad): “ut quicquid ad securitatem vel civilitatem vestram pertinet.” For Unigis, *PLRE* 2, 1182; for Marabad, see below.

²⁶⁰ *Variae* 4.17.3: “ut qui es bello clarus, civilitate quoque reddaris eximius.” For Ibba’s role during the reconquest of Gaul, see above.

²⁶¹ Ibid: “improbis enim non potuisse resistere non praevalere excusare, quando omnes tibi libenter cedunt, quem gloriosum in bellorum certamine cognoverunt. Ignavus forte audacibus iubere nihil possit: nemo plus praesumentibus imperat, quam quem sua facta commendant.”

²⁶² *Variae* 3.38.1-2: “et ubi exercitus dirigitur, non gravandi, sed defendi potius existimentur. ...nulla fieri violenta patiaris. Vivat noster exercitus civiliter cum Romanis.” For Wandil, *PLRE* 2, 1149.

Goths, then, were to continue leading by example, and one Goth, Arigern, was even praised before the Roman Senate for doing just this, earning a fitting eulogy, according to Theoderic, as one who had “restored the glory of *civilitas* [to the Gauls] and [thus] repaid what he diligently learned in your midst.”²⁶³ Gaul afforded the Goths yet another opportunity to demonstrate their new-found civility and Romanness both at home and abroad, further assuring their acceptance in the new Roman Empire.

But concern for new provincials extended beyond simply friendly rhetoric and exceptional governors, whether “Roman” or “Gothic.” Regardless of her condition under Visigothic rule, this was a land already ravaged by war in 508, and one which would continue to be war-torn into the next decade. Preaching to his flock in the midst of the devastation, the bishop Caesarius of Arles commented in one sermon, “our country has been left a wasteland by our enemies... we have lost everything that we loved in this world,”²⁶⁴ and in another, “dire calamity has struck our eyes... everywhere there is great agony and grief.”²⁶⁵ Among Italians, likewise, Gaul was described as a “tired province,” “devastated by attacks of the savage enemy,” and “suffering want on our behalf.”²⁶⁶ Far beyond simply re-instilling Roman law and customs, there was thus a serious need for assistance and an obligation on the part of Gaul’s supposed liberators to provide it.

To a large extent this was exactly what Theoderic had had in mind when he expressed the desire to show extra concern for those so recently conquered, and aid packages financed primarily by the rest of the Empire were an excellent way of demonstrating this. As early as 508, in fact, such packages were being dispatched to Gaul, along with pledges of more assistance to come and ample thanks for loyalty in the face of such difficulties. Ideally such relief was designed to allow Gauls to “feel nothing

²⁶³ *Variae* 4.16.1: “his rebus ad nostra vota compositis et gloriam civilitatis retulit et quod inter vos didicit diligenter ostendens et bellorum insignia reportavit.” For Arigern, whose career was rather illustrious and often placed him in the midst of the Romans of Rome, *PLRE* 2, 141-2.

²⁶⁴ *Sermo* 6.6: “deserta remaneret ab hostibus terra nostra... totum quod in hoc mundo amabamus perdidimus.”

²⁶⁵ *Sermo* 70.2: “oculos nostros dira calamitas et tempore obsidionis percusserit... cruciatus in utroque magnus et dolor...” This particular sermon recycled much material from the *de tempore barbarico* of the fifth-century North African bishop Quodvultdeus, who witnessed the capture of Carthage by the Vandals. The extent to which it is an accurate description of the situation in Gaul, therefore, is questionable (though, of course, not entirely). Certainly the devastation was real, but scenes of children thrown to birds and dogs and of unfeeling, savage barbarians may be intentionally over-the-top. Cf. Klingshirn (1994a), 113-4.

²⁶⁶ Tired Province, *Variae* 3.16.3: *provincia fessa*, and *Variae* 3.41.2: *fastigata provincia*; devastated, *Variae* 3.40.2: “hostili feritate vastatis pro qualitate lesionis”; suffering for us, 3.32.1-2: “qui nostris partibus... penuriam pertulerunt... qui pro nobis in angustiis esurire maluerunt.”

in the same way that nothing was suffered when she asked for Rome.”²⁶⁷ But in reality Gaul had suffered much, and these gifts were seen as necessary “remedies,” as a kind of “medicine” in the face of barbarian devastation,²⁶⁸ and served not just to alleviate her difficulties, but to link their relief with the traditional style of imperial kindness and piety that Theoderic wanted associated with his times.

Throughout this period, for instance, Theoderic’s agents were busy using Italian monies in an effort to try to ransom Gallo-Roman captives from wrongful barbarian masters. According to Caesarius of Arles, “whole provinces” had been “led into captivity,”²⁶⁹ and though room must be given for rhetorical effect, many a southern Gallo-Roman, including Ennodius’ own relatives, had succumbed to this fate.²⁷⁰ Liberated, they would owe their freedom to their Roman guarantors in a way that other “liberated” Gallo-Romans would never know; and just as the case had been with Ligurian captives years before, their return would help restore fecundity to a nearly dead province.²⁷¹ Though not requiring ransom money, others, like Ennodius’ friend Aurelianus, his nephew Lupicinus, and a certain unknown Magnus, would similarly owe their livelihoods to these same imperial agents, their lost properties having been restored to them as a result of direct governmental intervention.²⁷²

But beyond these individual cases, measures were also implemented on an *ad hoc* basis in order to provide succor to those communities simply struggling to survive. Provinces and provincials were supposed to provide revenues to the state, or in the very least pay for their own upkeep, but (as the case had been in Liguria a decade earlier) it was understood that this was only to be expected from “those at peace, not those who

²⁶⁷ *Variae* 3.16.3: “nihil tale sentiat, quale patiebatur, cum Romam quaereret.”

²⁶⁸ Remedies, *Variae* 3.40.1 (to all the Gauls): “festine tamen remedia vestrae utilitatis aspeximus”; *Variae* 3.42.1 (to all the Gauls): “non occurritur sub principe benigno remedia postulare suietos”; and *Variae* 3.44.1 (to the Arlesians): “ut largitatis remedio civibus consulamus”; medicine, *Variae* 3.40.1: “nam agrescentibus morbis laesio debacchari permittitur, cum medicina differtur.”

²⁶⁹ *Sermo* 70.2: “quando totae provinciae in captivitatem ductae sunt.”

²⁷⁰ Ennodius (#457) solicited the aid of Liberius in an effort to secure the release of his relative (*parens*) Camella. Cf. Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 35, where efforts by Liberius to free captives in Burgundy are mentioned. Caesarius himself used monies acquired from Theoderic to free captives in western Gaul (who they were goes unmentioned). For this, *Vita Caesarii* 1.43-4 with Klingshirn (1985), 192.

²⁷¹ See chapter 4.

²⁷² For Aurelianus, see above; for Lupicinus, #60, where Ennodius seeks Faustus’ aid in securing the return of his Gallic patrimony; for Magnus, see fn. 202 (above).

have been besieged.”²⁷³ Even Ennodius, writing to Liberius in 512, commented on the need for mercy in these trying times, urging that it was not right for those in Gaul to “provide for the nourishment of the aforementioned [i.e. Italy], while the burdens of the treasury are drawn off from ...their little huts.”²⁷⁴ Theoderic agreed, sending wheat directly from Italy in 508 to feed the soldiers stationed along the Durance, “lest the tired province become annoyed by their provisioning.”²⁷⁵ Later that year the entire province was exempted altogether from paying for military expenses. “Under a benign *princeps*,” the Gauls were informed, “subjects should not have to demand remedies... since it is right for a *princeps* to always decree what is more humane.”²⁷⁶ The army that had been sent to defend Gaul, therefore, was to be “nourished by our kindness” and both money and supplies would be sent from Italy, so the possessors might think “that only aid [had been granted] to the province from so great an assembly [of troops].”²⁷⁷ Similarly, in 510, a series of tax cancellations was enacted in Gaul in the face of renewed Frankish aggression.²⁷⁸ The entire population of Arles, which seems to have suffered the brunt of the devastation, was exempted from monetary tribute. The Arlesians had proven themselves “faithful” and “devoted ...in sorrowful times,”²⁷⁹ and so Theoderic announced to the vicar Gemellus, “let those who preferred to hunger on our behalf in their difficulties take satisfaction in their freedom. The costly tribute of their faith has already been given to us. It is unjust for those, who have shown glorious scruples, to pay

²⁷³ *Variae* 3.32.2: “non decet statim de tributis esse sollicitum, qui casum vix potuit declinare postremum. a quietis ista, non obsessis inquirimus.” This was a standard policy in other “devastated” provinces as well. Cf. *Variae* 2.38, 4.19, 4.36, 11.15, and 12.28.

²⁷⁴ #457.4: “Generis mei patronus quod in Italia positus praestitit, non neget in Gallia, ut vel de casellulis ipsius ordinatione vestra dum ab eis fisci onera derivantur, ad praefatae alimenta sufficiant.” The use of *casellula* doubtless served to strengthen the sense of Gallic impoverishment.

²⁷⁵ *Variae* 3.41.2: “ne fastigata provincia huius praebitione laederetur.”

²⁷⁶ *Variae* 3.42.1-2: “non occurritur sub principe benigno remedia postulare subiectos... quia licet principem semper humaniora censere.”

²⁷⁷ *Variae* 3.42.2: “sed ut nec minima possessores illatione gravarentur, ex Italia destinavimus exercitiales expensas, ut ad defensionem vestram directus exercitus nostris humanitatibus aleretur solumque auxilium provinciae de tam magna congregatione sentirent.”

²⁷⁸ For reconstructions, Sirago (1987), 69, and Schwarcz (1993), 796.

²⁷⁹ *Variae* 3.32.1: “constat apud nos fidelium non perire servitia, sed in tristibus impensa recipere in meliore fortuna.”

us worthless money.”²⁸⁰ The loyalty of Arles was considered payment enough, and soon other effected areas in Gaul would be similarly exempted.²⁸¹

Such indulgences, again, were a temporary expedient, pragmatic gestures necessary for Gaul’s post-war recovery to be truly successful and to ensure that new provincials would accept the rule of Rome once more. But while these factors always provided an underlying motive, simple recovery was not enough. War-torn Gaul, once “happy” and “prosperous,” was not just to survive, but to flourish, and in this way come to participate fully in the Empire’s golden age, becoming “fully Roman” in the process. Indeed, sixth-century Gaul was an analogue to the devastated Italy that Theoderic had liberated at the very beginning of his reign; and just as “unforeseen beauty” had come forth “from the ashes of cities” years prior in Italy, so too was it hoped that Roman Gaul might resurge and “live again.” Gallic abundance was desired, and while it would obviously benefit Italy’s coffers, a prospect not lost on her new masters,²⁸² its repercussions were even more important for her seemingly barbarized and now devastated population. Their lives would not only be significantly improved, but their enrichment would serve as yet another positive indicator, both at home and abroad, of their very real Roman restoration.

Indeed, Roman nobility, Theoderic had informed his Gallic provincials in 508, was a combination of both “good morals and splendid goods.”²⁸³ Yet under barbarian rule both had fallen into desuetude. Noble Gallo-Roman families, like Ennodius’ own, had adopted “alien customs,” like the *gentile murmur*, while at the same time hiding

²⁸⁰ *Variae* 3.32.2: “satiatur in libertate qui pro nobis in angustiis esurire maluerunt: sint laeti qui tristitiam fideliter pertulerunt. ...pretiosum vectical iam nobis dederunt fidei suae. Iniustum est ut viles pecunias exigantur qui gloriosas conscientias obtulerunt.”

²⁸¹ Cf. *Variae* 3.40, where effected areas in the entirety of Gaul are exempted (509/10), and possibly *Variae* 4.26, where exemptions are granted to Marseille (ca. 508/11). Sirago (1987), 69; Schwarcz (1993), 796; and Delaplace (2003), 486, suggest placing 4.26 within this context.

²⁸² *Variae* 3.32.1 (in reference to Arles): “tributa nostra relaxat humanitas, ita ut futuro tempore ad solitam redeant functionem.” This idea is even more explicitly expressed in *Variae* 4.36, which not only exempted the Cottian Alps from tribute in the wake of Gaul’s invasion, but also refers to the Gauls themselves as new taxpayers: “Providentissimi principis est graviter imminutis relinquere tributariam functionem, ut redivivis studiis ad implenda sollempnia recreentur qui pressi damnorum acerbitate defecerant. Nam si fessis minime relevetur onus, necessitate cernitur iacere prostratus. Melius est enim praesentia damna contemnere quam exiquo quaestu perpetua commoda non habere. ...miscantur potius laetitiae qui viam Italiae defensoribus praestiterunt. Tributa enim non debent tristes exigi, per quos tributarios feliciter acquisivi.”

²⁸³ *Variae* 3.17.4: “quia tantum quis nobilior erit quantum et moribus probis et luculenta facultate reluxerit.”

“their riches in faraway places”²⁸⁴ or choosing, through their ignoble matches, to be “trapped in the darkness of rusticity.”²⁸⁵ Consistent with the understanding of barbarization, Gaul had become an impoverished land,²⁸⁶ the squalor and pathetic “little Gallic huts” mentioned by Ennodius above being typical of the imagined situation, which recent devastation had helped to make a reality for many. But the reestablishment of Roman rule was supposed to change all this. Now defended by Rome’s valiant soldiers, now that they were “safe and free,” the Gauls were told to “show off your wealth” and to “let the possession of your parents... be brought back into the light,”²⁸⁷ an act which, in keeping with Italian perceptions, would help turn back the clock yet again to Gaul’s pre-barbarian age.

Gallo-Romans, then, were not simply supposed to behave like Romans, but to *look* like them as well; they were, in a sense, both to wrap themselves, figuratively, in the “morals of the toga” and at the same time wrap themselves, quite literally, in the linens of the toga. A specifically Roman mode of consumption, long since a prerequisite for Romanness,²⁸⁸ was thus necessary; and though bringing back into the light certain “hidden” Roman heirlooms could be a step in the right direction (provided such goods still existed!), economic policies complementary to the exemptions already discussed were likewise initiated.

As in Italy, trade was especially important for this endeavor, both of subsistence goods and of more prestigious luxury goods. Subsistence items, such as wheat, wine, and oil, helped new provincials to maintain a basic standard of living that looked acceptably Roman,²⁸⁹ a potentially serious problem for a country suffering the effects of war. Sometime between 508 and 511, for instance, grain from Sicily was explicitly ordered to

²⁸⁴ *Variae* 3.17.4: “bona longo situ recondita”

²⁸⁵ Ennodius, #94.5: “quia bonorum semper meritorum labes est habere lucem sanguinis et nocte rusticitatis includi.”

²⁸⁶ On the connection between barbarism and a society’s state of development, Dauge (1981), 486-91. Ennodius’ depiction of the *patria* of the refugee Alamanni, who fled to Italy ca. 506, provides a nice sixth-century example. Here (*PanTh* 72-73) he specifically contrasted the “opulence” of Italy’s soil with the filthy “mud” of Germany.

²⁸⁷ *Variae* 3.17.4: “vos iam securi ostentate divitias: parentum bona longo situ recondite prodantur in lucem.” For now free, *Variae* 3.17.1: “Atque ideo in antiquitatem libertatem deo praestante.”

²⁸⁸ See Woolf (1998), chp. 7 especially.

²⁸⁹ Especially if these goods were shipped in conspicuously “Roman” containers.

be conveyed by ship to Gaul.²⁹⁰ Little more than this is known regarding the intended fate of this cargo (we learn instead that the entire shipment was lost at sea), but the grain may have been intended for general sale, perhaps at a reduced price given the circumstances, or, if dated to 508, to supply the army stationed along the Durance in accordance with the exemption enacted that year.²⁹¹ In the very least, this grain had probably been earmarked originally for Italian consumption (Sicily and southern Italy had become Italy's breadbasket), and so its redirection to Gaul is suggestive of a grave absence there.²⁹² Another, less ambiguous example of the same kind of redirection in the face of want is also datable to this period. Here a general scarcity of subsistence goods in Gaul had led to rampant inflation and profiteering, and as a result Gallic consumers had suffered further impoverishment, unjustly denuded of their resources through provisions being "sold at a price more lavish than their meager value (should permit)."²⁹³ The problem grew so serious, in fact, that state intervention was deemed warranted, and so Theoderic instructed private merchants from Campania, Lucania, and Tuscia to go to Gaul to sell their wares. Flooding the market, or at least giving it a needed influx of goods, it was hoped, would "promote the utility of those who are devoted [i.e. the Gauls],"²⁹⁴ while providing merchants with a ready market where they might negotiate to everyone's advantage.²⁹⁵ It was a win-win situation, for buyer, seller, and facilitator.

Similar policies were also enacted in the hope of spurring on the trade of luxury goods, their possession by the Gallo-Roman elite (as Theoderic claimed) being an essential component of their noble, Roman standing, and a sure sign of Gaul's increasing fecundity. Sometime before 511, for instance, the *Siquilaticum* (a type of sales tax) was cancelled on grain, wine, and oil. This was, in Theoderic's words, "princely foresight"

²⁹⁰ *Variae* 4.7

²⁹¹ For the exemption, *Variae* 3.41 (discussed above).

²⁹² For other indications of this grave absence, cf. *Variae* 3.32 (above), 4.5 (below), 3.44 (below), and *Vita Caesarii* 2.8-9.

²⁹³ *Variae* 4.5.1: "in Gallicana igitur regione victualium cognovimus caritatem, ad quam negotiatio semper prompta festinat, ut empta angustiore pretio largius distrahantur."

²⁹⁴ Ibid: "nullum decet nostras gravanter suscipere iussiones, quae magis utilitates noscuntur extollere devotorum."

²⁹⁵ *Variae* 4.5.1-2: "sic evenit ut et venditoribus satisfiat et illis provisio nostra subveniat. Atque ideo devotio tua praesenti auctoritate cognoscat omnes navicularios Campaniae, Lucaniae sive Tusciae fideiussoribus idoneis se debere committere, ut cum victualibus speciebus tantum proficiscantur ad Gallias, habituri licentiam distrahendi sic ut inter emptorem venditoremque convenerit." Cf. Sirago (1987), 68-9, who reads this move as a reaction to the loss of (what he presumes to be free) grain recorded in *Variae* 4.7 (above).

and would allow “those who are worn-out” to enjoy some respite, providing for their (future) good-health in the process.²⁹⁶ The grant, of course, would reduce the cost of basic necessities, an act in keeping with those grants recently discussed, but this was not exactly what Theoderic had in mind. “Let the ship coming to our ports not be afraid,” he instructed Gemellus. “Right now, while we desire to be kind to our provincials, let us have regard for our lords of commerce: who would not be aroused to sell more lavish things to those whose usual expenses have been taken away?”²⁹⁷ A little extra money, it was hoped, would go a long way. Doubtless the same idea lay behind the so-called “preservation” of “ancient privileges” enacted at Marseille around the same time.²⁹⁸ Marseille, after all, was one of the most important centers of trade in Gaul during this period and was fast on its way to becoming the preeminent emporium of the region.²⁹⁹ Privileges of this sort often included reductions or exemptions from certain tariffs and, moreover, were a mark of distinction, emblematic of a special relationship between the city in question and its patronizing emperor. Marseille, then, stood to be enriched as a result of Theoderic’s new imperial patronage; the city had been vindicated from new and unjust presumptions and now the “immunities... acquired through the favor of [Roman] *principes*” had been “restored after a long time.”³⁰⁰ Nor was this restoration, emblematic in and of itself, entirely sufficient. Just as Theoderic preserved and restored the favor of ancient princes, his own “princely munificence” now granted a temporary remission of taxation for the city, an act which was tellingly described as perfect *pietas*.³⁰¹

The inhabitants of cities like Marseille thus benefited from war-time policies designed both to address their immediate needs and to provide for their future prosperity.

²⁹⁶ *Variae* 4.19.1: “Decet principalem providentiam fessa refovere... ut haec remissio solutionis copiam posit praestare provincialis et respirent aliquatenus fessi praesentis salubritate decreti.”

²⁹⁷ *Variae* 4.19.3: “quis enim ad bendendum non incitetur largius, cui solita dispendia subtrahuntur? Portus notros navis veniens non pavescat: ... sit hoc forsitan sub quiete tolerandum: nunc autem, dum provincialibus praestare cupimus, mercium dominis interim consulamus.” For the enactment of like-minded economic policies in Italy, see chapter 4.

²⁹⁸ *Variae* 4.26.1: “libenti animo antiqua circa vos beneficia custodimus...”

²⁹⁹ Loseby (1992), 180f, and Delaplace (2003), 491-2.

³⁰⁰ *Variae* 4.26.1-2: “servare quippe terminos ignorat humanitas et novellis decet blandiri beneficiis post longa tempora restitutis. Proinde immunitatem vobis, quam regionem vestram constat principum privilegio consecutam, hac auctoritate largimur nec vobis aliquid novae praesumptionis patiemur imponi, quos ab omni volumus gravimine vindicari.”

³⁰¹ *Variae* 4.26.2: “censum praeterea praesentis anni relaxat vobis munificentia principalis.... Ipsa est enim perfecta pietas, quae antequam flectatur precibus, novit considerare fatigatos.” The remission, therefore, came unsolicited.

But re-Romanization and enrichment could also extend beyond the individual to the community as a whole. Cities, as already seen, were vital in Theoderic's Empire, and building projects within Italian cities, whether restitutive or new, had played an important role in the contemporary Italian understanding of a golden age even before Gaul's reconquest. Cities in Gaul, too, had witnessed their share of decay and transformation into the late Empire, though some, like Arles and Marseille, had actually fared rather well.³⁰² Even so, there was room in Gaul for the same kind of urban patronage and renewal witnessed in Italy, and the same general implications would stem from such projects. In Arles, for instance, Theoderic saw to the rebuilding of the city's walls. These were doubtless in serious need of repair, for the "glorious siege" lifted by Ibbas and his Goths in 508 had merely been one in a long succession of sieges stretching back to the early fifth century.³⁰³ "A certain quantity of money" was thus directed from Italy to be used for the project, as well as provisions to "relieve expenses."³⁰⁴

Walls were obviously important for defensive reasons, but they also had meaning attached to them that extended beyond the pragmatic. Foremost, their presence could provide the community that they encircled with a sense of security, a benefit historically associated with Roman rule and one that Theoderic was keen to have associated with his

³⁰² Arles, as an imperial and then prefectorial residence, for example, received a fair amount of attention into the fifth century, and though witnessing some decline, kept much of its classical infrastructure and amenities into the sixth century. Its population and urban spaces were increasingly Christianized to be sure, but there was still room in Arles for classical learning and even the occasional circus race. Cf. Loseby (1992) 179; Heijmans and Sintès (1994); Delage (1994), 28-32; Klingshirn (1994a), chp. 1, Heijmans (1999); and Delaplace (2003), 488-491. For Marseille, see above.

³⁰³ In the fifth century, Arles was besieged by Gerontius (ca. 410), Constantius III (ca. 411), Theoderic I (ca. 425, 430, and 436/7), and Euric (475 and 476). There is no evidence that Euric had these walls repaired following his final capture of the city, but given Arles' importance as an occasional royal residence, it seems probable. Regardless, the walls must not have been too decrepit, since they proved effective in blocking the Frankish and Burgundian onslaught in the wake of Vouillé.

³⁰⁴ *Variae* 3.44.2-3: "pro reparatione itaque murorum Arelatensium vel turrium vetustarum certam pecuniae direximus quantitatem. Victualia quoque, quae vestras relevare videantur expensas, fecimus praeparari, ut vobis destinentur, cum tempus navigationis arriserit." It can be suggested in passing, though without ready corroboration, that the money sent to Gaul at this time would have included Theoderic's coinage, yet another means of Gallic indoctrination (see chapter 3). The provisions, too, may have included building materials in addition to foodstuffs, such as bricks or tiles bearing Theoderic's monogram (see chapter 4). No Theoderic's coinage appears to have been minted in Gaul, though coinage from Italy has been found in the region. For these, see Lafaurie and Pilet-Lemière (2003). For known instances of money being sent from Italy to Gaul, *Variae* 3.42, 3.44, 5.10, and 5.11, and *Vita Caesaris* 1.43. Likewise, no building materials bearing the Theoderic's monogram have been found in Gaul, though archaeological work (still very much ongoing in important cities like Arles) may prove fruitful. The circus in Arles, for instance, seems a likely beneficiary of Theoderic's patronage, not only because this would fit his *modus operandi* (see chapter 4), but also because Arles' circus remained in use into the 550s.

times. Equally important, however, was the wonder and beauty of their construction. By their very existence, walls made a late Roman city a city;³⁰⁵ but glorious, venerable, and beautiful walls likewise made for a glorious, venerable, and beautiful city. Indeed, in his late fourth-century *Ordo urbium nobilium*, the Gallic poet Ausonius had made it a point to describe as veritable monuments the walls of Toulouse, Trier, Milan, and Aquileia, going on to praise his native Bordeaux for her “walls.. so lofty with their soaring towers that their peaks penetrate the airy clouds.”³⁰⁶ Walls, then, were as much an ornament as a necessity, and the former understanding was obviously not lost on Theoderic. “It is right,” he explained to the inhabitants of Arles, “for the prosperity of a city... to be demonstrated by the beauty of its works,”³⁰⁷ and so he now claimed to “hasten to return ancient walls to their splendor.”³⁰⁸ Arles, his patronage promised, would boast again of her impressive and ancient walls (much like Ausonius’ Bordeaux), and the resources sent from Italy would act as yet another remedy designed to engender loyalty and to demonstrate the rightness of Roman rule.³⁰⁹ “Relieve your minds,” the Arlesians were told, “and, revived by our promise and maintaining hope in future supplies, have faith in divine favor, since there is no less to our words than what is held in your granaries.”³¹⁰ Arles, and presumably other cities like her, could continue to count on Theoderic’s patronage.

By 511, then, it would seem that Gaul and her inhabitants were well on their way to becoming a part of Theoderic’s revived and resurging Roman Empire and were beginning to benefit from its so-called golden age. Like the inhabitants of Pannonia Secunda (and to some degree even Italy), Gallic provincials were being corrected and restored to their prior, civilized state through the imagined (and not so imagined) re-

³⁰⁵ For this, Loseby (2002).

³⁰⁶ *Ordo* 20, ln. 13-14: “Quadrua muruorum species, sic turribus altis / ardua, ut aerias intrent fastigia nubes.”

³⁰⁷ *Variae* 3.44.1 “Sic enim fiet, ut fortuna urbis... fabricarum quoque decore monstretur.”

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*: “et ad cultum reducere antiqua moenia festinemus.”

³⁰⁹ Insofar as they demonstrated Theoderic’s princely “pietas” and provided relief to the aggrieved (as in Marseille). *Ibid*: “Quamvis primum sit laesos incolas refovere et in hominibus magis signum pietatis ostendere...”

³¹⁰ *Variae* 3.44.3: “relevate nunc animos et de nostra promissione recreati futurae copiae spem tenentes divino favore habetote fiduciam, quia non minus est quod nostris verbis quam quod horreis continetur.” This last line about grain presumably refers to the shipment of Italian grain to the city of Arles, perhaps unrelated to the supplies sent to feed Italian soldiers that same year, since this grain was kept at Marseille (*Variae* 3.41.2: *Massiliensibus horreis*).

implementation of Roman customs and law. They had been liberated, both from barbarian rule and barbarian captivity, and were now beginning to act accordingly, some Gallo-Romans even availing themselves of the Empire's justice from as far away as Theoderic's *comitatus* in Ravenna.³¹¹ Like all of the Empire, Gaul now also had Gothic soldiers, civilized heroes who had vindicated and defended her inhabitants from *real* barbarians, and who served as examples of proper, Roman conduct. There were likewise now conspicuously (Italo-)Roman governors in Gaul, men whose offices alone demonstrated Gaul's Roman restoration and whose integrity and assistance while in these offices helped to make such a restoration welcome. Gaul even had a Roman *princeps* again, and though not in residence, his official dispatches, traditional acts of benevolence and patronage, and good stewardship over the entire process of reintegration, all acted as constant reminders of his position as a *bona fide* Roman emperor who ruled over a *bona fide* Roman Empire. Finally, like Italy, wealth and beauty, though perhaps slow in coming, were beginning to emerge from devastated cities like Arles, and many others would continue to prosper under a long, Roman peace.³¹² Happiness was in the air, and the glory of the Roman Empire, now including Gaul, appeared secure on both sides of the Alps.

The “happy year” revisited

As alluded to throughout this study, a final, crowning achievement came in this very year, in 511, when, for the first time in over a half a century,³¹³ a Gallo-Roman was proclaimed consul. Felix, the son of a prudent and learned Gallic senator,³¹⁴ a scion of a Gallic family said to have been “oppressed,” “deprived of its honors,” and “lying dead in

³¹¹ Within Gaul, for instance, Marabad and Gemellus were forced to try a case twice concerning the apparent misappropriation of a patrimony by a certain widow named Aetheria (*Variae* 4.12, 4.46, and Ennodius #412). Aurelianus, on the other hand, earned the direct attention of Theoderic when he was stripped of his patrimony (see above). Likewise Caesarius of Arles was forced to plead his innocence before Theoderic at Ravenna (*Vita Caesarii* 1.36-38 and Ennodius #461). Finally, Marcellus' father, Stephanus (discussed above), seems to have traveled to Milan and then Ravenna seeking arbitration in a case involving a certain cleric (Ennodius, #71). On Stephanus, Kennell (2000), 33-5, who suggests (unnecessarily) that he lost his case. In general, the need to avail oneself to Theoderic's *comitatus*, while available, was discouraged because of the difficulties such travels could place on the parties involved. Cf. *Variae* 4.46 and 5.15 (regarding litigants from Pannonia Savia).

³¹² But cf. Klingshirn (1992a), chp 5, and Delaplace (2003), 481, for “Pax Ostrogothica.”

³¹³ The last “Gallic” consul was Magnus Felix in 460, making the total lapse 51 years.

³¹⁴ *Variae* 2.3.3: “...pater, qui prudentiae facibus ita praeluxit in curia... literarum quippe studiis deditatus perpetuam doctissimis discipulinis mancipavit aetatem.” For more on Felix's father (unknown), see below.

Gallic stagnation,”³¹⁵ was granted this doubly illustrious honor, giving his meaningful name to an equally meaningful year. “Let a happy year begin with this consul,” it was said, “let the occasion offered by such a name pass through the gate of auspicious days!”³¹⁶ Gaul and Gallo-Romans had been restored to the Empire, and Felix was put forth both at home and abroad as unquestionable proof. “What can be thought more desirable,” the emperor Anastasius was asked, “than that Rome is gathering back to her bosom her very own nurslings and numbers the Gallic senate in the company of her venerable name?”³¹⁷ Gauls, the emperor of the East was informed, were in the western Senate House again, and Rome’s senators would once more “recognize the splendor of Transalpine blood, which not once covered [the Senate’s] crown with the flower of its nobility.”³¹⁸ Now, because of Rome’s intervention and Felix’s emblematic consulship, all the youths of Gaul, “who deserved to come into the highest honor[s] of the Republic,”³¹⁹ had reclaimed their stolen legacy, liberated from the cold Gallic darkness.

As Theoderic’s senior colleague, Anastasius was thus asked to rejoice and to share in this triumph, an act that was doubtless bittersweet in Constantinople since these very developments were consequences of the emperor’s own hostilities and intrigues in the lead-up to 508. “You who can delight in the profits of both republics with indistinguishable grace, unite your applause and feelings with our own: A man is worthy to be chosen by the judgment of us both, who deserves to be promoted to so great an office.”³²⁰ Anastasius’ acknowledgment, then, while not entirely necessary from a western standpoint, was nonetheless solicited, for it would provide yet another source of honor for this “felicitous” year and place an eastern seal of approval on yet another Theoderican *fait accompli*. Indeed, Felix would be the first western consul recognized in the East since the Sirmian wars of 504, and his recognition would do much to help

³¹⁵ *Variae* 2.3.2: “Iacebat nobilis origo sub Gallicano iustitio et honoribus suis privata peregrinabatur in patria. Tandem pressos divina levaverunt.”

³¹⁶ *Variae* 2.1.1: “Felix a consule sumat annus auspiciam portamque dierum tali nomine dicatum tempus introeat faveatque reliquae parti fortuna principii.”

³¹⁷ *Variae* 2.1.2: “quid enim vobis credi possit optatius quam ut alumnos proprios ad ubera sua Roma recolligat et in venerandi nominis coetu senatum numeret Gallicanum?”

³¹⁸ Ibid: “agnoscit curia Transalpini sanguinis decus, quae non semel coronam suam nobilitatis eius flore vestivit.”

³¹⁹ Ibid (in specific reference to Felix): “nec passi sumus eum inglorium relinquere, qui ad honorem rei publicae meruit pervenire.”

³²⁰ *Variae* 2.1.4: “atque ideo vos, qui utriusque rei publicae bonis indiscreta potestis gratia delectari, iungite favorem, adunate sententiam: amborum iudicio dignus est eligi, qui tantis fascibus meretur augeri.”

normalize the heretofore strained relations between eastern and western courts. Gaul's restoration, in a twist of irony, had also led (in a roundabout way) to a kind of restoration of the imperial fraternity and harmony that was ideal in a divided Roman Empire, neither being decisively broken until long after Theoderic's death.

Senators at Rome were also told to rejoice and were asked for their own, validating approval. They had, as demonstrated above, already been doing so and would continue to do so for years, celebrating especially Rome's newly-invigorated (and highly traditional) dominance over her old adversaries. But with Felix's consulship they were likewise asked to embrace the moral repercussions that accompanied Rome's military victories abroad and to accept as Roman a land and population which had seemed anything but just a few years prior. Indeed, it was too easy to write to Constantinople claiming that the western senate once more recognized the splendor of transalpine blood. The situation, as this chapter has suggested, was much more complicated at home, and surely many senators required some convincing before they would refer to anything Gallic as splendid, especially after over a generation of separation. For some, Gaul may have seemed little more than an object of conquest, a *Gallia recapta*, a source of new revenues and prestigious offices. But in his official announcement of Felix's consulship Theoderic proposed something other than the traditional spoils of war that might be expected. "A tribute of offices," they were told, "has been returned to you; provinces unaccustomed to do so for a long time now pay you with consuls."³²¹ Italo-Romans like Liberius, Gemellus, and others, therefore, would benefit from the availability of new offices in Gaul, but Rome's senators were also informed that such benefits traveled along a two-way street. The Gauls, too, were Romans and their ancestors had once participated in the glorious offices of the Republic. Their "tribute," the spoil of war Italians were asked to embrace, would thus be their reclamation of these offices. "Gloriously," Theoderic announced, "they have regained Rome and plucked the ancient laurels of their ancestors from the honored grove of the Senate."³²²

³²¹ *Variae* 2.3.1: "gaudete, patres conscripti, redisse vobis stipendia dignitatum: gaudete provincias longa aetate desuetas viros vobis pendere consulares et de tali auspicio maiora promittite." *Consulares*, while technically meaning those who have already held a consulship, doubtless implied here future *consulares* (and by extension future consuls).

³²² *Variae* 2.3.2: "Romam recepere cum gloria et avorum antiquas laurus ab honorata curiae silva legerunt."

Nor was Felix, a stand-in for the entire Gallo-Roman nobility, an unworthy representative of this Gallic restoration to the Senate House. Senators were reminded of his unnamed father, a man in his own time already “preeminent in the Senate for the brilliance of his prudence,” though only a *clarus*.³²³ He was “the Cato of our times,” “truly dedicated to the study of letters,” and had “stuffed himself with Attic honey.”³²⁴ Just like the other “foreigners” with whom Italian senators had had to come to terms in new Roman Empire, Felix too was “descended from a splendid line [and] shone forth with ancestral goods and merits.”³²⁵ And like his father he also demonstrated before Italians “Roman gravity, not alien customs,” and as a result had come “not unworthily into the insignia of the Senate.”³²⁶

Doubtless a similar letter was also directed to the Gauls, announcing Felix’s consulship, idealizing their Roman restoration, and promising the availability of like honors to other worthy men. Cassiodorus, however, did not see fit to include this letter in his *Variae*,³²⁷ though a third letter, directed to Felix himself, may hint at the language that would have been employed in this missing missive. Here, in a vein reminiscent of the general “welcome-back” letter of 508, Felix was informed that he had been rescued, that Theoderic’s hands had filled him up with kindness; and that the promises of a *bonus princeps* had caused him to seek out the Roman Empire.³²⁸ A man “recommended by the fame of his race,” had not been allowed to remain inglorious,³²⁹ and indeed with Felix’s

³²³ *Variae* 2.3.3: “...nobilissimus pater, qui prudentiae facibus ita praeluxit in curia, ut haberetur merito clarus inter tot lumina dignitatum.” But cf. Mathisen (2003), 67, who does not interpret *clarus* as a reference to Felix’s father’s rank, taking instead *nobilissimus* to indicate his attainment of a high office. Mathisen’s paraphrase of *Variae* 2.3.3, however, does not seem to catch the sense of the Latin, i.e. that Felix’s father’s prudence allowed a lower-ranking man to spend time with the illustrious (high-ranking) members of the Senate. *Nobilissimus*, on the other hand, seems to be a reference to Felix’s father’s blood, the *antiquam prosapiem* mentioned in the same sentence. Cf. *Variae* 8.17, where similar sentiments are expressed concerning the father of Opilio.

³²⁴ Truly dedicated, *Variae* 2.3.3: “litterarum quippe studiis dedicatus”; Cato and Attic honey,” *Variae* 2.3.4: “fuit quidam nostrorum temporum Cato... Attico se melle saginavit.”

³²⁵ *Variae* 3.3.6: “huic igitur, patres conscripti, avitis bonis cum suis meritis relucenti vestrae gratiae praestate fulgorem. ...qui de speciosa stirpe descendit.”

³²⁶ *Variae* 2.3.5: “Vixit enim inter vos, ut scitis, non consuetudine peregrina, sed gravitate Romana”; and *Variae* 3.3.6: “Non impar ad curialium insignia venit.”

³²⁷ Indeed, we are lucky that three letters dealing with the consulship *were* included, surely a sign of this consul’s contemporary significance.

³²⁸ *Variae* 2.2.2: “Currat quin immo honorum gratia per parentes, sub imperio boni principis omnium fortuna proficat. ...excepit te noster affectus, implevit beneficiis macus fecitque esse votum, quod nostrum expetisses imperium.”

³²⁹ *Ibid*: “non enim relinqui inglorios patimur, qui generis claritate praedicantur.”

change in lords had likewise come a change in fortune.³³⁰ Now, Felix was told, “through you the consulship returns to a transalpine family and you have renewed parched laurels with your green bud. Behold the holy city [of Rome] striving after your desires. Stay on the path of praises, that you might surpass your ancestors, whose honor you restore, in virtue.”³³¹ It was an injunction that any Roman aristocratic, Gallic, Italian, Gothic, or otherwise, could appreciate.

Felix’s consulship, by way of conclusion, was a sure sign that Gaul had been restored to the Roman Empire, and that the Gauls were officially Romans again. There had always been the potential for this to happen before the invasion launched in 508. Felix, like other Gauls, had Roman nobility in his blood and had been able to demonstrate his Roman qualities before an Italian audience even before Gaul’s restoration. But families like his remained firmly rooted on the Gallic side of the Alps, and when finally forced to choose Gaul over Italy, they appeared deprived of their honors, oppressed, and slowly (but surely) barbarized. By 511, however, Felix and nearly all the seemingly lost youths of re-Romanized Gaul, with or without Italian connections, could walk in their forefathers’ footsteps over the menacing Alps and straight on to Ravenna and Rome. The frontier had shifted yet again, and the new Rhine had become a series of rivers appropriately located in transalpine territory. Now those Gallo-Romans residing within these new boundaries could benefit, like Felix and Parthenius, from Roman *civilitas* and stand a chance of surpassing their ancestors in glory.

Indeed, their ability to do so was seen as a kind of tradition, a tradition which Felix’s consulship openly announced had been restored. “Frequently,” Theoderic reminded his senate, “Rome has chosen office holders from Gallic walls, lest she disregard their special qualities to her own ruin or their proven excellence cease to exist, having been dishonored.”³³² It was a fitting statement, reminiscent of a speech made by

³³⁰ Ibid: “Mutatur enim fortuna cum dominis.” This is doubtless an allusion to Alaric II and hence an example of anti-Visigothic sentiments in the aftermath of southern Gaul’s reconquest.

³³¹ *Variae* 2.2.5: “rediit per te Transalpinae familiae consulatus et arentes laurus viridi germine renovasti. Sacram urbem tuis votis aspice candidatam. Tende igitur ad laudum celsa vestigium, ut priores tuos, quos honore reparas, virtute transcendas.” The rendering “stay on the lofty path of praise” (above) is a paraphrase of the especially ornate “keep your step near the highness of praises.”

³³² *Variae* 2.3.7: “Legit enim frequenter Roma fasces de moenibus Gallicanis, ne aut in damno suo praecipua contemneret aut probata virtus inhonora cessaret.”

another *pius princeps*, Claudius, nearly half a millennium earlier.³³³ Claudius had opened the door for Gallic service in the imperial administration, and now Theoderic did so again, confident in their beneficial participation for years to come. If only for a generation, a Roman Gaul had been reborn.

³³³ Cf. the speech recorded in the so-called “Lyon Tablet” (*ILS* 212) and poorly reproduced in Tacitus, *Annals* 11.24.

Epilogue

Hindsight is twenty-twenty. Looking back from the perspective of the early sixth century, it was easy for Italo-Romans like Cassiodorus, Ennodius, and others to find a place for Theoderic and his Goths. There were precedents for individuals just like them, equally barbarous and equally Roman, in the immediate and not so immediate past. There was likewise the memory of a once mighty Roman Empire that had only recently crumbled and given way to “barbarian” successor states, had only recently had its sovereignty contested by rapacious “little Greeks,” and had only recently had its time-honored values challenged from within. Traditions like the Republic and the venerability of the city of Rome were powerful and, when combined with the stings and humiliations witnessed over the fifth century, provided the perfect context from which a hero like Theoderic could emerge. As a traditionally *bonus princeps*, he met and even exceeded expectations and, assisted by his uniquely Roman Goths, he redressed those grievances that had defined the preceding era, reasserting Rome’s rightful place in the West. Hindsight, therefore, perpetuated the understanding of an Italy that remained the western Roman Empire, despite aberrations, and engendered the belief among certain Italo-Romans that a golden age had truly dawned.

Teleology, on the other hand, can be blinding. In 511, when the Gaul Felix stood for his consulship, there was not the slightest indication that the history of the West would unfold as it actually did twenty years later. Gallo-Romans did not appear fated to become Franks or Frenchmen, nor did Theoderic’s Roman Empire seem destined to fall prey, yet again, to east-Roman imperialism. The same can be said of 519, when Theoderic’s son-in-law Eutharic stood for a consulship with the eastern emperor Justin as his colleague, or 527, when Athalaric, still a youth, was able to succeed his grandfather to the purple with seemingly little opposition. Even as Belisarius was beginning his “liberation” of Italy in 533, the Senate could beg for the restoration of imperial

harmony and a return to the *status quo ante*, contented with its Amal *principes* and their western Empire the way that it was. Indeed, though Procopius and others writing in the aftermath of Justinian's conquest of Italy could insinuate that Theoderic's kingdom had been a barbarous deviation, a kingdom of the Goths, and a regrettable mistake that had ultimately been corrected, such sentiments had not been shared by those Italo-Romans living just two generations earlier. The difference, however, is understandable.

Procopius, after all, was operating with a different kind of hindsight, one that allowed Justinian to reconquer the West in the name of Rome; but ironically, just two generations earlier, Theoderic had already done so.

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