

The End of Roman Spain

by

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'The End of Roman Spain' narrates the history of the last years in which the Iberian peninsula formed part of the Roman empire and argues that the lapse of Roman control came around the year AD 460, much later than the traditional date of 409. The first chapter sets the scene and discusses Spain in the fourth-century. The second, 'The Defence of Roman Spain', presents an analysis of the confused sources for the late Roman army in Spain and is linked to an appendix on the *Notitia Dignitatum* which argues that that document was in origin a single base text, composed at the eastern court around 394. The third chapter revises the traditional chronology of usurpation and barbarian invasion in Gaul between 405 and 413, in the course of which events Roman authority in Spain was first challenged by barbarian invaders. The fourth chapter traces the history of the peninsula between 425 and 455, examining the effects on Roman control of a barbarian presence in the Spanish provinces. Chapter five looks at the Goths, whose role in the end of Roman Spain is crucial, and argues that their initial settlement in Gaul in 418 was designed by the central imperial authorities to prevent their provincial Roman subjects from supporting further usurpations. Chapter six, finally, examines the careers of the last two emperors to take an interest in Spain, showing how they maintained their authority in the peninsula by using the Goths as their instruments. It argues that after Majorian left the peninsula in 460, having failed to mount a campaign against the Vandals in Africa, Roman Spain ended, because the structure of imperial office-holding in Spain disappeared.

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Abbreviations

The following works are referred to frequently in the text and are cited by short reference. Journal abbreviations follow *L'Année philologique*.

Burgess	R.W. Burgess, <i>The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana</i> (Oxford, 1993).
Bury, <i>LRE</i>	J.B. Bury, <i>History of the Later Roman Empire from the death of Theodosius I to the death of Justinian</i> . 2 volumes (London, 1923).
Cameron, <i>Claudian</i>	Alan Cameron, <i>Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Arcadius</i> (Oxford, 1970).
<i>CLRE</i>	Roger S. Bagnall, Alan Cameron, Seth R. Schwartz, K.A. Worp, <i>Consuls of the Later Roman Empire</i> (Atlanta, 1987).
Collins, <i>Spain</i> ²	Roger Collins, <i>Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000</i> ² (London, 1995).
Drinkwater and Elton	J. Drinkwater and H. Elton, edd., <i>Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?</i> (Cambridge, 1992).
García Moreno, <i>España</i>	L. García Moreno, <i>Historia de España visigoda</i> . (Madrid, 1989).
Harries, <i>Sidonius</i>	Jill Harries, <i>Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome</i> (Oxford, 1994).
Heather, <i>Goths</i>	P.J. Heather, <i>Goths and Romans, 332-489</i> (Oxford, 1991).
<i>HEp</i>	<i>Hispania Epigraphica</i>
<i>HGEA 2</i>	<i>Historia General de España y América 2: Constitución y Ruina de la España Romana</i> (Madrid, 1987).
<i>Hispania Antiqua</i>	Th. Hauschild, et al., <i>Hispania Antiqua: Denkmäler der Römerzeit</i> (Mainz, 1993).
<i>IRC</i>	<i>Inscriptions romaines de Catalogne</i> . Paris, 1984ff.
<i>IRG</i>	<i>Corpus de Inscripciones Romanas de Galicia</i> . Santiago de Compostela, 1991ff.
Jones, <i>LRE</i>	A.H.M. Jones, <i>The Later Roman Empire, 284-602</i> . 3 volumes (Oxford, 1964).

Loyen, <i>Recherches historiques</i>	A. Loyen, <i>Recherches historiques sur les panégyriques de Sidoine Apollinaire</i> (Paris, 1943).
Matthews, <i>Aristocracies</i>	J.F. Matthews, <i>Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, 364-425</i> (Oxford, 1975).
MEC	P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, <i>Medieval European Coinage I: The Early Middle Ages</i> (Cambridge, 1986).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	<i>Auctores antiquissimi</i>
Epp.	<i>Epistulae</i>
SRM	<i>Scriptores rerum merovingicarum</i>
Montenegro, <i>España romana</i>	A. Montenegro Duque, J.M. Blázquez, and J.M. Solana Sáinz. <i>Gredos Historia de España 3: España Romana</i> (Madrid, 1986).
Orlandis, <i>Época visigoda</i>	J. Orlandis, <i>Gredos Historia de España 4: Época visigoda</i> (Madrid, 1987).
PLRE	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> . 3 volumes (Cambridge, 1970-91).
RIC	<i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> , 10 volumes
RIT	G. Alföldy, <i>Die römischen Inschriften von Tarraco</i> . 2 vols. (Berlin, 1975).
Schmidt, <i>Ostgermanen</i> ²	L. Schmidt, <i>Geschichte der deutschen Stämme I: Die Ostgermanen</i> ² (Munich, 1933).
Schmidt, <i>Wandalen</i> ²	L. Schmidt, <i>Geschichte der Wandalen</i> ² (Munich, 1942).
Seeck, <i>Regesten</i>	O. Seeck, <i>Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.</i> Stuttgart, 1919.
Seeck, <i>Untergang</i>	O. Seeck, <i>Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt</i> (Vol. 5 ¹ : Berlin, 1913; Vol. 6 ¹ : Berlin, 1920).
SFI	R.W. Mathisen and H. Sivan, edd., <i>Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity</i> (Aldershot, 1996).
Stein, <i>Bas-empire</i>	E. Stein, <i>Histoire du Bas-empire I</i> . ² J.-R. Palanque, ed. (Paris, 1959).
TCCG	N. Gauthier and J.-Ch. Picard, edd. <i>Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII-e siècle</i> (Paris, 1986ff).

Thompson, *Romans and
Barbarians*

Wolfram, *Goths*

E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*
(Madison, 1982).

Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*. T. Dunlap,
trans. (Berkeley, 1988).

Introduction

The end of Roman Spain is not a topic which has occasioned much interest among the scholars of the English-speaking world. It is frequently mentioned in passing, usually as a model of catastrophic barbarian invasion, but it is the subject of no detailed study. In Spanish, on the other hand, the end of Roman Spain has produced a literature of almost unmanageable bulk. Much of this simply presents the opinions of the fifth-century chronicler Hydatius in modern dress. Both scholarly traditions are, however, agreed in presenting the end of Roman Spain as a rapid and cataclysmic event which can be dated precisely to the year 409.

The past thirty years have seen an explosion in the study of the later Roman empire and the period of Late Antiquity in general. This new interest has been accompanied by a decided shift in the way the period is viewed. Instead of posing questions in terms of decline and fall, we now speak of transformations, or the still less emotive transition. The same decades that have seen the Late Antiquity boom have also seen a boom in the study of medieval Spain, in large measure because of modern Spain's new openness in the post-Franco era. It is perhaps surprising, then, that no one either in Spain or outside it has wedded the new history of Late Antiquity to the new history of medieval Spain and in the process asked whether the end of Roman Spain was really everything it is traditionally thought to have been.

Undoubtedly, part of the reason no such work has appeared is that the case for 409 seems to be self evident. In that year, Vandals, Sueves, and Alans crossed the Pyrenees, and brought pillage, pestilence, and

famine in their wake. Two years later in 411 they divided the peninsula amongst themselves. And that, as they say, is that. Roman Spain has ended. Shortly thereafter, in 415, the Goths appear in the peninsula and their intermittent presence there in the next half century culminates eventually in the foundation of a Visigothic kingdom in Spain. For convenience, therefore, it is customary to begin the history of Visigothic Spain in 411. But things are never that simple.

The end of Roman Spain, like all historical 'events', was a process and therefore not instantaneous. One can surely say that the years between 409 and 411 were significant for the end of Roman authority in Spain. As a historical process, however, that ending took much of the rest of the century. A more decisive transition occurred at the end of the reign of Majorian, after whom no emperor appointed officials to serve in Spain. If one wishes to fix an endpoint to Roman Spain, 461 is a considerably more suitable date than 409 or 411.

Even were the later date to win instant acceptance, the victory would be no more than semantic if it were not accompanied by a revised understanding of the Iberian peninsula in the first two-thirds of the fifth century. Scholars give precise dates to complex issues as a form of shorthand. The practice is universal and often necessary, as well as perfectly harmless as a means of telescoping difficult arguments into workable forms for the sake of discussion. Inevitably, however, the practice entails distortion. This too is unavoidable, and, again, usually harmless—so long as those involved in the discussion remember that there are subtleties and difficulties which the agreed-upon shorthand disguises. The dangers arise when we forget what the shorthand stands for, and assume that the brief form is in fact an adequate definition of

something which requires no explanation. This is what seems to have happened with the problem of the end of Roman Spain.

Using 409 as a cataclysmic terminal point for the history of Roman Spain misshapes our understanding of the peninsula's history. The decades after 409 are most certainly not Visigothic. If they are not allowed to be Roman, they tend to end up being nothing at all, falling between the interests of classicists and medievalists, and, at best, forming a messy sort of prelude to histories of the Goths in Spain. Fifth-century Gaul has not suffered from this problem because the careers of Constantius, Aëtius, and Attila were played out on its soil and therefore no one asserts that fifth-century Gaul was anything other than Roman, if not perhaps Roman in the same way that second-century Gaul had been. Because of this general agreement, the history of fifth-century Gaul has received adequate attention, and continues to do so. What is more, it has done so on its own terms, as an autonomous historical period, during which Roman Gaul slowly and irregularly became Frankish Gaul. In Spain, on the other hand, the universal reliance upon the invasion of 409 as a sharp turning point has meant that the fifth century has never been studied in its own right. If one consequence has been that we underrate the achievement of the last emperors, another is that we still have an inadequate understanding of the environment in which a genuinely Gothic Spain arose.

The point, at one level, is a matter of semantics, just a matter of fixing a new date for the end of Roman Spain and therefore changing the shorthand we use to discuss a historical process. It is not merely semantics, however. On the contrary, because of the peculiar circumstances brought about by long consensus, by fixing a time when

Roman Spain ended, we also fix an understanding of how it ended. That is the real point. The date 409 is permanently wedded to a theory of cataclysm. By arguing for a different date one is arguing against an apocalyptic understanding of the end of Roman Spain. The Roman province did not cease to exist overnight in a chaos of blood and fire. Rather, it petered out gradually, bits and pieces of it drifting in and out of Roman control until eventually that control ceased to be reestablished once lost. It is of course true that since the very notion of Roman Spain is an abstraction one cannot really speak of its ending, however broadly conceived. Some aspects of Roman Spain lasted for only part of the Roman period there, while others continued to exist long into the Visigothic age and beyond. The cultural heritage of Visigothic Spain was, after all, almost entirely Roman.

To speak of the end of Roman Spain therefore demands that we explain the criteria with which we define it. There are any number of possibilities, but the one used here is strictly political. The Roman empire was a political phenomenon. Its provinces were originally *provinciae*, spheres of action assigned to annual magistrates and commanders rather than territories. When the word *provincia* had come to approximate more closely our own word province, the administrative provinces of the empire were defined by the boundaries of different magistrates' jurisdictions. At a fundamental level, the existence of the Roman empire was defined by the existence and the jurisdiction of its magistrates, so that the empire existed in those places where Roman magistrates exercised jurisdiction in the name of the emperor. If, conversely, the Roman empire did not exist in those places where its magistrates did not act on the emperor's behalf, then the absence or the

withdrawal of those magistrates can be taken to signal the end of the empire in any given place.

In Spain, therefore, Roman Spain ends in 460 or 461, after which time no Roman officials were appointed by the emperor to exercise jurisdiction there. This criterion is one which views the historical situation exclusively from the perspective of the centre. It is a hegemonic perspective, which does not take into account the outlook of the periphery. There is, however, evidence that, at certain social levels, this was the criterion used by those very Romans who lived on that periphery. That is to say, the disappearance of an imperial framework of office-holding meant the end of the empire to provincial elites in the fifth century. This perspective has been examined in Gaul, in the correspondence of Sidonius Apollinaris. It should hold valid for Spain, where comparable evidence is lacking.

In adopting this criterion for the end of Roman Spain we have to recognise that it is necessarily imperfect, and ignores other potentially valid criteria. It brings with it certain advantages, however, and is a useful framework within which to discuss Spain in the fifth century. If we posit the end of office-holding in an imperial hierarchy as the criterion for the end of Roman Spain, then we instantly do away with the talismanic power of the year 409. Roman office-holding and Roman administration continued in Spain after 409, continued, in fact, for just over half a century longer. Realising this, we can reexamine the years of barbarian invasion between 409 and 411 with fewer preconceptions. We can accept that though they were perhaps a cataclysm for the inhabitants of Roman Spain they were not a cataclysm for the Roman authorities. For imperial officialdom, 409 was a brief interruption of

imperial control, neither worse nor better than many others. From the emperor's point of view, Roman Spain did not cease in 409. There is no reason that it should do so for us.

These arguments, presented here only in synopsis, are not perhaps earth shattering. They do not, at first glance, add up to much more than a plea for a shift in definitions, a shift which alters in a minor way a standard tool of periodisation. But in this instance the question of periodisation is more than a matter of convenience. Rather, it predetermines our historical understanding of fifth-century Spain, and therefore of many issues from both earlier and later centuries. If some of the arguments presented here are couched in the language of periodisation, this stems from a conviction that fifth-century Spain must be studied as if it had an autonomous history, rather than as a hasty postscript to the Roman era or a jumbled prelude to the Visigothic. Only by granting this, and by accepting that most of the fifth century in Spain was an integral part of its Roman period, can the history of Spain in Late Antiquity cease to be an exceptional and marginal backwater and be integrated into the wider history of late Roman and early medieval Europe. Then, perhaps, it may help to shed new light on that wider history.

Chapter One

Spain before Honorius

The Spanish provinces of the Roman empire have no history. This is often the fate of peaceful lands in peaceful times, and the High Empire is not the only time that Spanish history turns a blank face to meet the historian.¹ By the beginning of the first century AD, the whole of the peninsula had been forcibly brought under Roman control. The forces of romanisation, the cultural and material advantages of Roman civilisation, operated swiftly thereafter, and by the beginning of the second century, Spain was among the most heavily romanised and well-integrated provinces of the empire. After AD 69, the peninsula knew almost continuous peace, wedded to considerable material prosperity. It is this very prosperity that makes the silence of sources so profound. In strict terms, Spain's history is a blank from Vespasian to Theodosius. One cannot write a narrative.²

Spain had been Rome's first overseas province, and perhaps the hardest won.³ Those parts of the peninsula which were accessible by ship had been occupied by the Romans very early. The basin of the Guadalquivir River and the whole Mediterranean littoral were especially

¹See J.H. Elliot, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (New York, 1964), 156, who observes that during the latter part of the reign of Charles V 'the government ran so smoothly...that it almost seems as if for twenty or thirty years the country had no internal history'. Similar observations on imperial Italy are made by F.Millar, 'Italy and the Roman Empire: Augustus to Constantine', *Phoenix* 40 (1986), 295-318.

² Attempts at writing a narrative of the Spanish province tend to become general histories with extrapolation in the direction of Iberia. See, e.g., A. Balil, 'De Marco Aurelio a Constantino: una introducción a la España del Bajo Imperio', *Hispania* 27 (1967), 245-341.

³See in general, J.S. Richardson, *Hispaniae: Spain and the Development of Roman Imperialism, 218-82 BC* (Cambridge, 1986), reprised in less detail in *idem, The Romans in Spain* (Oxford, 1996), 9-126; L.A. Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (London, 1991), 24-54; A.E. Astin, *Scripto Aemilianus* (Oxford, 1967), 35-47.

favoured by Roman settlers, and were thus most open to the cultural influences which encouraged romanisation. Other parts of the peninsula were occupied only late and partially, and only the consolidating wars of Augustus brought the whole of the peninsula under Roman sway.⁴ The process had been bloody. The Romans had first entered Spain in the course of the Punic wars, and it was two hundred years before the fighting finally stopped and the whole of the peninsula experienced the benefits of a Roman peace won through war. In its early years, Roman imperialism there had a distinctly unsystematic cast to it.⁵ By the late Republic, however, Spain harboured a large army which had largely determined the course of Roman settlement.⁶ This was the army used by Augustus to subdue the northern tribes and so subordinate the whole peninsula to imperial authority once and for all.⁷ Roman Spain was to experience one final convulsion before the silence of the imperial peace descended upon it, and the historian finds himself deprived of material.

After Augustus' conquest, three legions remained in Spain until 42, while after 63 there was only a single legion in the peninsula.⁸ Galba used this last army as a power base for his usurpation in 68. That year of four emperors showed that an emperor could be created elsewhere than at Rome. This *arcanum imperii* was fully understood by the

⁴On patterns of romanisation, P. Le Roux, *L'armée romaine et l'organisation de les provinces ibériques d'Auguste à l'invasion de 409* (Paris, 1982), to be read in conjunction with the comments of G. Alföldy, 'Hispanien und das römischen Heer', *Gerión* 3 (1985), 379-410 = *Römische Heeresgeschichte* (Amsterdam, 1987), 482-513. Le Roux, esp. 18-20, stresses the role of the army in welding diverse Iberian peoples into *Hispani*.

⁵See in general, A.M. Eckstein, *Senate and General* (Berkeley, 1987), 187-232; Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 41-82.

⁶Richardson, *Hispaniae*, 177-8. The defining role of the army in the development of Roman Spain has been richly documented by among others Le Roux, and J. Roldán Hervás, *Hispania y el ejército romano* (Salamanca, 1974), but its social role can be exaggerated. In Baetica, for instance, Roman forces had practically no impact at all: Alföldy, *Gerión* 3 (1985), 403.

⁷R. Syme, 'The conquest of northwest Spain', *Legio VII Gemina* (León, 1970), 83-107 = *Roman Papers II* (Oxford, 1980), 825-54.

⁸See Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 157.

victorious Vespasian, who saw that a large army in Spain would be a standing threat to the emperor at Rome. He therefore reduced the Spanish garrison to a single legion, the VII Gemina, posted in the far north at Legio (= León).⁹ With this event, any narrative of the history of Roman Spain must come to an end. It can only be taken up again almost four centuries later, when the chronicle of the bishop Hydatius begins as a continuation of the universal chronicle of Jerome and goes on as a history of fifth-century Spain.

By the end of Vespasian's reign, Spain was at peace and remained so for the century to come. It was now that the urban elites of the peninsula entered fully into the public life of the empire and soon produced the emperors Trajan and Hadrian.¹⁰ The century that followed Vespasian was also one of economic prosperity, richly documented archaeologically in the sumptuous architecture of urban sites and the magnificent villas of the second century. Archaeology also tells us something of the life of Spain in the later first and second centuries, documenting as it does widespread Spanish participation in the religious and municipal culture of the empire.¹¹ Archaeology, however, remains our primary resource for the whole of the period, for apart from a very few episodes, nothing of Spain's second- and third-century history is known from other sources.

⁹The army to AD 68: Le Roux, 83-125; Galba: 128-39; Flavian reforms: 140-52 and Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 127-210.

¹⁰Economics: S.J. Keay, *Roman Spain* (Berkeley, 1989) with full bibliography. Politics: R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), 585-610; K.F. Stroheker, 'Spanische Senatoren der spätrömischen und westgotischen Zeit', *MM* 4 (1963) = *Germanentum und Spätantike* (Zurich, 1965), 55-8; Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 213-19.

¹¹Religion: R. Étienne, *Le culte impérial dans la péninsule ibérique* (Paris, 1958). Municipal life and politics: N. Mackie, *Local administration in Roman Spain, AD 14-212* (Oxford, 1983) and L.A. Curchin, *The local magistrates of Roman Spain* (Toronto, 1990).

One Cornelius Priscianus appears to have revolted in the peninsula in 145.¹² Under Marcus Aurelius, African tribesmen raided into the south.¹³ In the civil wars after the murder of Commodus, Spain threw in its lot with Clodius Albinus and suffered accordingly from the vengeance of Severus, whose general Tiberius Candidus campaigned in the peninsula against the partisans of Albinus.¹⁴ In 238, finally, we may note that the governor of Tarraconensis and future emperor Q. Decius Valerinus held Spain loyal to Maximinus when other provinces joined the senatorial opposition.¹⁵ The later third century may have brought something of a downturn in Hispania's fortunes, but it does not do to paint too gloomy a picture.¹⁶ Around 260, under Gallienus, an invading force of Franks passed through Spain.¹⁷ According to one author, they lingered for twelve years,¹⁸ though the destruction caused seems on the

¹²The sole evidence is *Fasti Ostienses* = AE 1936.98: *De Cornelio Prisciano in sen(atu) iudictum* / *(cor)am factum quod prouinciam Hispaniam hostiliter / (in)quietauerit*.

¹³The invasion is generally painted in particularly lurid colours and has engendered a vast bibliography, e.g., Montenegro, *España romana*, 310-14. See instead the sober account of J. Arce, 'Inestabilidad política en Hispania durante el II siglo d.C.', *AEspA* 54 (1981) = *España entre el mundo antiguo y el mundo medieval* (Madrid, 1988), 33-52, largely repeated in *HGEA II*, 279-85.

¹⁴*CIL* 2.4114 = *RIT* 130. See A. Birley, *Septimius Severus*² (New Haven, 1988), 121-8 for Severus' wars against Albinus.

¹⁵R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (Oxford, 1971), 192, 195-6. No excuse permits the use of the *Historia Augusta* to fill in the blanks, maintaining, for example, a programme of road-maintenance by Severus Alexander and the Danubian emperors (Montenegro, *España romana*, 318, 320).

¹⁶J.M. Blázquez, *Estructura económica y social de Hispania durante la anarquía militar y el bajo imperio* (Madrid, 1964) = *Economía de la Hispania romana* (Bilbao, 1978), 485-618, compiles an imposing mass of evidence. For more focused studies of individual economic issues see J.C. Edmondson, 'Mining in the later Roman empire and beyond', *JRS* 79 (1989), 84-102, and J. Arce, 'Los caballos de Simmaco', *Faentina* 4 (1982) = *España entre el mundo antiguo y el mundo medieval*, 136-46.

¹⁷Victor, 33.3; Eutropius 8.8.2; Jerome, s.a. 2280 (= Helm, 221). The episode clearly derives from the *Kaisergeschichte*. On the problem of Franks at this early date see T.D. Barnes, 'The Franks before Diocletian', in G. Bonamente and F. Paschoud, edd., *Historia Augustae Colloquium Genevense* (Macerata, 1996), 11-18.

¹⁸Orosius 7.41.2. Apart from this episode, there is no authentic documentation on third-century Spain. The usurper Bonosus existed, but there is no good reason to think he was a Spaniard (though Montenegro, *España romana*, 326 is joined by *PLRE* 1.163 in admitting the evidence of *Quadr. tyr.* 14.1).

whole to have been limited.¹⁹ However, the late third century did witness a spate of wall-building, the results of which still stand in many Spanish cities.²⁰ This development need not be linked directly to the Frankish invasions, but some lines of Ausonius show that some cities which had flourished under the early empire had decayed terribly by the late fourth century.²¹ Rightly or not, most would attribute their decadence to third-century events.

The fourth century brings no improvement in the sources of Spanish history. A narrative is still entirely wanting.²² However, there are two related issues on which there is ample information—the administrative role of Spain within the imperial hierarchy, and the organisation of the Spanish provinces. Both of these have their roots in Diocletianic times, though both underwent many changes in the reigns of his successors. Both topics, moreover, are of some importance to a discussion of the end of Roman Spain. A narrative is unattainable for fourth-century Spain, but when in the fifth century we can again write one, it can only be elucidated through an understanding of the underlying political and administrative structures which took shape in

¹⁹J. Arce, 'La crisis del siglo III d.C. en Hispania y las invasiones bárbaras', *HAnt* 8 (1978) = *España entre el mundo antiguo y el mundo medieval*, 53-67, largely repeated in *HGEA* II, 285-91, is a useful corrective to the endlessly recycled vision of a cataclysmic break between the old prosperity of Antonine Spain and the harsh but moderately prosperous late empire, e.g., Montenegro, *España romana*, 504-5.

²⁰I. Richmond, 'Five town walls in Hispania Citerior', *JRS* 21 (1931), 86-100, is the classic treatment but see now T. Hauschild, 'Traditionen römischer Stadtbefestigungen der Hispania', *Hispania Antiqua*, 217-31. For an annotated list of late Roman fortifications in Spain, see A. Balil, 'La defensa de Hispania en el Bajo Imperio', *Zephyrus* 10-11 (1959-60), 179-97. Very few of these walls have been dated in controlled excavations and many may be fourth-century.

²¹Aus. *Ep.* 21.57-9: *Birbilis aut haerens scopulis Calagurris habebit / aut quae delectis tuga per scruposa ruinis / arida torrentem Sicorin despectat Ilerda?*. It is worth noting—without making any claims for its significance—that the four Spanish cities most successful in weathering the various storms of the third to the eighth centuries were not *municipia* but rather the *coloniae* Emerita, Caesaraugusta, Tarraco, and Barcino.

²²The best (and only really good) account of post-Tetrarchic Spain is K.F. Stroheker, 'Spanien im spätrömischen Reich (284-475)', *AEspA* 40-2 (1972-4), 587-605.

the fourth century. We may turn first to the question of diocesan and provincial organisation.

The provincial organisation of the Spanish diocese

Diocletian thoroughly re-ordered the administrative system of the Roman empire, splitting up the Severan provinces and more than doubling their number, while grouping them into regional dioceses.²³ Spain was affected along with the rest.²⁴ Since the reign of Severus the peninsula had been divided into three provinces, Baetica, Lusitania, and Hispania Citerior.²⁵ Under Diocletian, the Severan provinces of Lusitania and Baetica remained unaltered, but Citerior was split into Gallaecia, Tarraconensis, and Carthaginiensis. To these five provinces was added Mauretania Tingitana, roughly the Atlantic portions of present-day Morocco, across the straits of Gibraltar from Spain.²⁶ Together the six provinces formed the diocese of Spain, and they appear as such in the *Laterculus Veronensis*, which dates to 314.²⁷ A parallel reform altered the status of Spanish provincial governors. By 289, the governor of Citerior had ceased to be a senatorial legate and had become an equestrian *praeses*.²⁸ A corresponding but undateable reform must

²³In general, W. Seston, *Diocletien et la Tetrarchie* (Paris, 1946), 1.334; T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 224-5.

²⁴The standard treatment is E. Albertini, *Les divisions administratives de l'Espagne romaine* (Paris, 1923), 117-26.

²⁵There had been an ephemeral *nova provincia Hispania Citerior Antoniniana* under Caracalla. See G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 49-50, 106-8; Le Roux, 368-70. Attempts to determine its borders with precision come to nothing. The fourth-century usurper Maximus also attempted to create a new Spanish province without lasting result.

²⁶Between 369 (the date of the *Breviarium* of Festus) and c. 395 (Polemios Silvius, the *Notitia Dignitatum*) the Balearic islands were separated from Carthaginiensis and formed into the province of Baleares.

²⁷See now T.D. Barnes, 'Emperors, panegyrics, prefects, provinces, and palaces (284-317)', *JRA* 9 (1996), 550. The information provided by the list has at times been grossly misrepresented: Montenegro, *España romana*, 334.

²⁸The last known senatorial legate was M. Aurelius Valentinianus, *vir clarissimus*, *leg. Augg. pr. pr.* (CIL 2.4102 = ILS 599), who held office under Carus. Postumius Lupercus

have taken place in the other two Spanish provinces, Baetica and Lusitania.²⁹

One can fix a precise date to neither administrative change, though it is likely that the entire Diocletianic programme of provincial division and diocesan creation was implemented at a stroke in 293.³⁰ The change in the rank of the governor, however, seems not to have coincided precisely with the division of Citerior, so while the change from a senatorial to an equestrian governor had occurred by 289, *praesides* of the three new provinces are not actually attested until the first decade of the fourth century.³¹ It is absolutely certain, however, that the diocese of Spain had been created by 30 October 298 when the *vicarius* Aurelius Agricolanus appears at Tingi in Mauretania Tingitana.³²

Agricolanus is the first attested *vicarius Hispaniarum*. He appears not in Iberian Spain, but in Tingitana. This point seems at first rather insignificant. In fact, however, it suggests an interpretation which not only changes the accepted understanding of fourth-century Spain, but also explains many of the uncertainties in that understanding.

Diocletian did not break up provinces and group them together at

was the first equestrian governor, a *vir perfectissimus*, *praeses Hispaniae Citerioris* (CIL 4104, dated 288/9). Julius Valens, *v.p.*, *p.p. Hisp. Cit.* (AE (1929), 233) cannot be dated securely.

²⁹Baetica was proconsular under the Severans: CIL 8.12442; 21451. An *agens vices praesidis*, Aurelius Julius, appears in 276 in Italica, but this need not imply that the reform had been implemented. The first securely attested *praeses Baeticae* is Octavius Rufus, between 306 and 312. There is no information for Lusitania, where the first *praeses* is attested between 293 and 305. See Appendix 1.

³⁰Barnes, *New Empire*, 225. A whole complex of objections to this has been raised by K.L. Noethlichs, 'Zur Entstehung der Diözesen als Mittelinstanz des spätromischen Verwaltungssystems', *Historia* 31 (1982), 70-81, but they falter on a consideration of imperial politics between 305 and 314. See M. Kulikowski, 'Vicars and the law in Late Antiquity', in R.W. Mathisen, ed., *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity II: The Transformation of Law and Society* (Aldershot, Hants., forthcoming), n. 7.

³¹See Appendix 1.

³²In the *Passio Marcelli*, for the text of which see G. Lanata, 'Gli atti del processo contro il centurione Marcello', *Byzantion* 42 (1972), 509-22. There are two recensions of the *Passio*. In the earlier version, Agricolanus appears at Tingi. In the second he appears at Legio in Gallaecia.

random. His reforms had a logic to them, and when these were not modified by his successors, we may assume that they were found satisfactory. The historian's task, then, is to look for the logic behind the reorganisation and to explain how it might have made sense. Modern scholars write the history of late Roman Spain as a history of the Iberian provinces. Tingitania is given a brief nod and thereafter ignored.³³ This makes good sense in terms of modern political geography and nationality, but much less sense historically. Modern history, and perhaps especially the isolationism of Franco's Spain, have conditioned us to think of the straits of Gibraltar and the Pyrenees as natural and inevitable frontiers, which they are not. Just as a common culture flourished on both sides of the Pyrenees during much of the Middle Ages, so too for more than half a millennium the straits of Gibraltar formed not a frontier but rather a highway between the Muslim cultures of Morocco and Andalusia. Such examples help demonstrate how modern a phenomenon the sharp definition of the frontiers of Spain is. They thus make it somewhat easier to realise that under the late empire, Spain was understood to include both the northern and southern shores of the straits of Gibraltar.

That being the case, we must entertain the possibility that for Diocletian Mauretania Tingitana was no mere appendage to the Iberian diocese, that on the contrary, the Iberian provinces were a vast hinterland for Tingitania. This perspective has the great merit of dispelling many of the presumed puzzles of fourth-century Spain. Throughout the empire, the Diocletianic dioceses were oriented towards their respective frontiers. Each frontier both defended its hinterland and

³³Arce, *Último siglo*, 46-7; HGEA II, 303-4; Le Roux, 373-7.

was also supported by it.³⁴ The example of the Gallic dioceses and the Rhine frontier has perhaps been the most extensively studied. Let us propose, for the sake of argument, that what the Rhine was to Gaul, Tingitania was to Spain. It requires an enormous mental effort to visualise the Spanish diocese as an integral unit, conditioned as we are to generations of maps which illustrate late Roman Spain as the Iberian peninsula alone.³⁵ It is effort well spent, however.

The first puzzle dispelled by viewing the diocese as a whole is the position of the diocesan capital. Diocletian fixed this at Emerita Augusta (= Mérida), tucked away in the southwest of the peninsula. This position has engendered various theories about an 'Atlantic-shift' in the equilibrium of the Spanish provinces during the late empire. Yet if one looks at the whole of the Diocletianic diocese, Emerita is central. A similar clarity appears on the subject of Spain's proverbial demilitarisation. This supposed demilitarisation has been one of the main bases for the reconstruction of a hypothetical internal *limes* in the Cantabrian mountains.³⁶ If we look at the whole of the diocese, however, we discover that fourth-century Spain was not demilitarised. Rather, its garrison lay along its actual frontier, which lay not in the Iberian provinces but in Tingitania. It is true that there were very few troops anywhere in the diocese compared to other parts of the empire, but it is their presence in Tingitania that is significant.³⁷ It suggests that the

³⁴See C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, 1994).

³⁵Examples are legion and there is no need to cite them. A laudable exception is J. Vicens Vives, *Atlas de Historia de España*¹³ (Barcelona, 1986), map 20.

³⁶See Chapter Two below.

³⁷There were nearly half again as many troops in Tingitania as there were in the other Spanish provinces combined: *Not. Dig. Occ.* 26.11-20 (8 units under the *comes Tingitaniae*) versus *Occ.* 42.25-32 (6 units under the direct command of the *magister militum* divided between Gallaecia and Tarraconensis). On the *Notitia Dignitatum* see Appendix 2.

diocese as a whole faced south. To envisage this, we need to rotate our mental map, so that the Spanish diocese seems to focus on Tingitania just as the Gauls focus on the Rhine, while the Pyrenees, in this view, mark only the transition line between two large and peaceful hinterlands.

There is a problem with this hypothesis, and that is a lack of positive evidence. The sources for late Roman Spain, as we have already noted, are notoriously sparse, and there are no anecdotes with which we can document the relationship of the Spanish provinces proposed above. That our reconstruction helps explain some of the more troubling puzzles of fourth-century Spanish history is some support. But we can perhaps also make out a logical reason for Diocletian to have organised the Spanish provinces in this way.

At the accession of Diocletian, Roman Spain, at the time still excluding Mauretania, was a peaceful province. It had no external borders and had produced no usurpers.³⁸ Not so Africa. Moorish tribesmen were a persistent nuisance and civil disturbance regularly fermented there. By attaching European Spain to Tingitania Diocletian would have simultaneously accomplished two objectives. First, the Mauretanian *limes* would be provided with a rich hinterland to supply its requirements, a hinterland considerably more accessible, in fact, than were the other provinces of Roman North Africa. Second, the European provinces were safeguarded from any disturbances in North Africa. No matter how used moderns are to seeing them as such, neither the straits of Gibraltar nor the Pyrenees were borders to the Romans. They were, in fact, just the opposite, conduits and channels of communication. The

³⁸For the supposedly Spanish Bonosus, see n. 17 above.

straits, as sporadic Moorish raids in Baetica had shown, might require some defence. By integrating the Iberian provinces and Tingitania, that defence was rendered effective. The Pyrenees, far distant from any conceivable threat, required no defences. They stood in the middle of an immense, pacific land that took in Iberian Spain, Aquitania, and Narbonensis. Administratively, Spain faced southwest, Gaul northeast in perfect balance. In the middle spaces, far from either frontier, a kindred culture grew up between the aristocracies of southern Gaul and Iberian Spain, well-documented in the fourth century.

We can, then, postulate logical reasons for Diocletian's reorganisation of Spain. If the hypothesis is correct, we may also affirm that the measures he took were effective. Fourth-century disturbances in Africa left Spain untouched, as they had not in the third century. Moreover, Moorish raids were once again combatted effectively. If, then, the joining of the Spanish provinces to Mauretania Tingitana was designed to insulate Europe from African disorder, it succeeded. The new system, however, created a situation in which the European provinces of Spain were entirely at the mercy of events in Gaul, as fourth-century history regularly showed. That is to say, when emperors ceased to reside in Gaul and disturbances became commonplace there, Spain's orientation became a liability to the legitimate emperor in Italy. Since the Spanish diocese faced south and the Pyrenean passes were entirely open, whoever controlled Gaul controlled European Spain as well. Thus Gallic usurpers almost inevitably rallied the Spanish diocese to their support.

Under the later tetrarchy the Spanish diocese was governed by Constantius. On his death, it went with Britain and Gaul to his

successor Constantine. It remained in Constantine's hands for the whole of his reign.³⁹ It pertained thereafter first to Constantinus, then to Constans, and finally, with Constans dead, to Magnentius. This is controversial, and one wonders why.⁴⁰ Several milestones, all but one concentrated in Gallaecia, commemorate Magnentius and his brother and Caesar Decentius.⁴¹ The recognition of Magnentius illustrates the relationship of Spain to Gaul. The latter held most of the western army and decisions taken there could not be declined in the peninsula. The experience of Magnentius was repeated by Julian, Maximus, Eugenius, and Constantine III. Constantine, it is true, met some resistance, but it came not from the provincial hierarchy but from relatives of the Theodosian house. These patterns, then, are a direct legacy of Diocletian's provincial reorganisation. The rationale behind it has been suggested, with security in Tingitania, not to mention security from Tingitania, bought at the expense of vulnerability to events in Gaul. This reconstruction must remain hypothetical, though it explains some of the recurring puzzles of fourth-century Spanish history. If nothing else, it illustrates the fact that we must not try to explain the situation of the Iberian provinces without remembering that they belonged to a diocese which included more than the peninsula alone.

³⁹Barnes, *New Empire*, 197-8; Arce, *Último siglo*, 23-4. There is no justification for thinking that Spain rallied to Maxentius.

⁴⁰Arce, *Último siglo*, 25-6; Montenegro, *España romana*, 342.

⁴¹Magnentius: *CIL* 2.4744; 2.4791; 2.4765; 2.4840 = *IRG* 4.38; *IRG* 3.18; *HEp* (1990). 562a = *BAUR* (1974), 130. Decentius: *CIL* 2.4827, 2.6221; *IRG* 3.14; 2.4692 (Cartama, Baetica). There may be one milestone of Magnentius from Tarraconensis, but the reading is dubious: *IRC* 1.164. There is, however, a funerary inscription from Tarraco which is dated by the consulate of Decentius and Paulus: *RIT* 943. It is possible that Spain resumed allegiance to Constantius after his victory at Mursa, but the evidence is ambiguous: Zosimus, 2.53.3, merely states that Magnentius was unable to flee to Mauretania through Spain.

The Magistrates of fourth-century Spain

A changed perspective on the Diocletianic organisation of the Spanish provinces helps one understand some of the patterns in their late antique history. A second body of evidence also helps fill part of the void left by the absence of any literary evidence for imperial Spain before the early fifth century. A prosopographical study of the administrative hierarchy of late Roman Spain suggests that in the fourth century the diocese was one of the better postings a bureaucrat could receive.⁴² Between 298 and 420, sixteen *vicarii Hispaniarum* are attested and datable.⁴³ Three fourth-century *comites* (one of whom had also been *vicarius*) are attested as well.⁴⁴ These offices were essentially identical, as the terminology and jurisdiction of diocesan officials were variable under Constantine and became regularised only under his sons.⁴⁵ This rate of attestation is considerably better than in most other dioceses in the same period.⁴⁶

What is more, the men who held the Spanish vicariate were promoted fairly frequently by comparison to those in other dioceses. C. Annius Tiberianus, vicar and then *comes* in 332, went on to a praetorian prefecture.⁴⁷ His predecessor in the vicariate, Septimius Acindynus, was consul in 340. Flavius Sallustius, a new man who had held two vicariates besides that of Spain, became prefect of Gaul and consul

⁴²The fundamental study remains A. Chastagnol, 'Les Espagnols dans l'aristocratie gouvernementale à l'époque de Théodose', *Les empereurs romains d'Espagne* (Paris, 1965), 269-92.

⁴³See Appendix 1. A seventeenth vicar, M. Aurelius Consius Quartus, belongs to an uncertain date in the fourth century.

⁴⁴For Constantinian *comites*, Chastagnol, 271-3.

⁴⁵Kulikowski, *Shifting Frontiers II*.

⁴⁶Only Africa (thirty-four dated *vicarii*) and the city of Rome (twenty-six) surpass Spain, while Asia (nineteen) equals it.

⁴⁷For the dates and attestations of Tiberianus and the other magistrates discussed here, see Appendix 1.

under Julian. Macrobius, *vicarius* in the last decade of the century, held the proconsulship of Africa in 410. By contrast with Gaul, Italy, Britain and the Balkan dioceses, Spain seems to have been a good post, showing roughly as many promotions as does the vicariate of the city of Rome. It could not, however, compare with the vicariates of Asia and Africa, both of which showed much higher rates of promotion. The latter, too, attracted the majority of aristocratic magistrates.⁴⁸ The only Roman senator to hold the Spanish vicariate was Volusius Venustus in 362-3. One must also be careful to see those *vicarii Hispaniarum* whose later careers were a success against the three (Venustus amongst them) who rose no higher in the administrative hierarchy.⁴⁹ However, the prosopography of the Spanish vicariate does suggest that it was a desirable post in the imperial hierarchy, and one which offered fairly good chances of promotion.

A similar look at the provincial governors of the diocese yields less profitable results. Gaps in the *fasti* heavily outnumber attestations, and out of nineteen known governors, fully thirteen cannot be traced outside the one office.⁵⁰ Those whose careers are known, however, show a very high rate of promotion, promotion, in fact, to the highest posts.⁵¹ Caecilianus, *praeses* of Lusitania under the Tetrarchy or Constantine, went on to the vicariate of Italy. This was not, admittedly, a particularly good post. On the other hand, Decimius Germanianus and Aco

⁴⁸For these figures see the tables in M. Kulikowski, *The Late Roman Vicariate*, forthcoming.

⁴⁹Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius, Venustus, and Marius Artemius. The ten vicars not discussed here are attested in no other posts.

⁵⁰There is also the anomalous case of Antonius Maximinus (CIL 2.4911) who was *consularis* of a new province carved out of Tarraconensis by Magnus Maximus. This province was ephemeral and no other record of it exists. See Chastagnol (1965), 284-5.

⁵¹Of the six governors the rest of whose careers are known, only Paulinus shows no higher office. His title too is anomalous. Ausonius, *Par.* 26.9-12, calls him *corrector Tarraconensis*, though this is surely mere poetic licence for *praeses*.

Catullinus both went on to praetorian prefectures, while Tanaucius Isfalangius, *consularis Baeticae* under Valentinian I, became urban prefect at Rome. The famous Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, who held both urban and praetorian prefectures and was at his death consul designate for 384, had been *praeses Lusitaniae* early in his career. All of this seems to imply that a Spanish governorship was a respectable stage in an official career. Still, the scantiness of the information forbids too definite conclusions. It is also important to note that none of the officials seem to have been Spaniards themselves, while Spanish aristocrats enter imperial politics on a large scale only in passing, during the reign of Theodosius.⁵²

Prosopographical inquiry thus discloses something of the nature of the Spanish diocese in the fourth century, showing it to have been an important region in which respectable stages of the *cursus honorum* could be passed. This finding comes as something of a surprise, for Spain makes so little impression on our literary sources that one is tempted to call its importance into question. A measured look at both the administrative organisation of the diocese and at the bureaucrats who administered it adds a new dimension to the picture. It cannot give the diocese a fourth-century history, however, and no amount of striving can do so. How, then, are we to envisage the Spanish world into which first usurping armies and then barbarian peoples broke in the early fifth century, thus beginning the long process that was the end of Roman Spain?

Spain in the late fourth century

⁵²Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 107-15.

If one entered Spain by the coast road from Narbonensis in 395, the first major city at which one would arrive was Barcino, modern Barcelona, in Tarraconensis. Tarraconensis was one of the three provinces created out of the old Hispania Citerior by Diocletian in the 290s, and though its capital was Tarraco, modern Tarragona, in wealth and prestige, it had been surpassed by Barcino by the end of the fourth century.⁵³ Along the way, one would have passed Emporiae and Gerunda, famous cities from Roman Spain's past, which now played little part in the life of the late empire.⁵⁴ Barcino and Tarraco were the two Spanish cities that remained most completely integrated with the rest of the Roman world in the late empire. Barcino played an important role in the political history of the era. Its mint issued coins in support of the usurper Maximus in the first decade of the fifth century, and a few years later it was the base of the Goths under Athaulf during their stay in the peninsula. Tarraco, meanwhile, had shrunk since the days of the high empire. The city had been the capital of the province of Citerior since Julio-Claudian days and under the Flavians had been furnished with the magnificent forum still in use in the late empire.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, by the fourth century, a smaller area was now encompassed within the city's walls, and the population seems to have shrunk. Despite this, Tarraco remained part of the Mediterranean economy throughout the fifth century, and was sufficiently tied to the rest of the empire for an inscription of the late fifth century to record the names of the emperors Leo and Anthemius.⁵⁶

⁵³Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 273; S.J. Keay, 'Tarraco in Late Antiquity', in N. Christie and S.T. Loseby, edd., *Towns in Transition* (Aldershot, Hants., 1996), 18-44.

⁵⁴Emporiae had never recovered from severe destruction in the third century: M. Koch, 'Animus ... Meus ... Praesagit, Nostram Hispaniam Esse', *Hispania Antiqua*, 37.

⁵⁵Koch, *Hispania Antiqua*, 27 and 324-5.

⁵⁶RIT 100. See Keay, 'Tarraco', 28.

The coastal region of Tarraconensis had always been one of the most important, prosperous, and accessible regions of the peninsula. Areas inland were less so. The river Ebro has its source in the Cantabrian mountains about a hundred miles south of the coast of the Bay of Biscay. It rises in the mountains near Iuliobriga, which is shown as a military station of the late empire in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.⁵⁷ Those same mountains harboured in them tribal groups on whom the advance of Roman culture had had almost no effect. The whole course of the Ebro runs through Tarraconensis, and the lower and middle reaches of its valley were early colonised by Romans and remained important regions in the late empire. The greatest city of inland Tarraconensis was Caesaraugusta, modern Zaragoza, the principal crossing point of the Ebro in the peninsula's interior. Caesaraugusta was to become the fifth-century capital of one usurping emperor. By contrast, Ilerda, which lies between Caesaraugusta and Tarraco on the coast, had, if the evidence of Ausonius is to be believed, fallen into decay by the end of the fourth century.⁵⁸

If our traveler from Gaul, tarrying at Tarraco, decided not to turn inland to Caesaraugusta but instead to carry on down the coast, he would eventually cross into Carthaginiensis, the great silent province of late imperial Spain. Its main city was Carthago Nova, once the great centre of Carthaginian power in the peninsula, and in the late empire capital of its province. We know very little of either the city's or the province's life in Late Antiquity, though it was to prove an occasional target for the barbarians resident in the peninsula after 411. The rest of the province, which had formed the vast centre of the old Severan

⁵⁷For this evidence see Chapter Two below.

⁵⁸Aus., Ep. 21.57-9.

province of Citerior, consists of the mountainous Sierra Morena, and the Meseta of modern New Castile. Agriculturally and environmentally, Carthaginiensis contains the poorest regions of the peninsula, regions which, so far as we can tell, were never subject to a great deal of Roman colonisation or settlement. Nevertheless, it was from the family estate at Cauca in Carthaginiensis that Theodosius was called out of retirement by Gratian after Valens' death at Adrianople.

On passing down the coast from Carthaginiensis, however, our traveler would have entered what, under the high empire at least, had been the most fertile and important region of the Spanish province. It was early subject to a great deal of Roman settlement, and was the one region of the peninsula where the Roman army played little ongoing role in the process of romanisation.⁵⁹ Baetica was centred on the rich, fertile valleys of the river Guadalquivir. The province's two most important towns, Hispalis and Corduba, lay along its course. It was Baetica that had produced the emperors Trajan and Hadrian, and a good measure of its profoundly Roman character may be found in the high concentration of Roman funerary architecture found in the province.⁶⁰

The other great river of southern Spain is the Guadiana. For most of its course, it marked the boundary between Baetica and the neighbouring province, Lusitania. Parts of Lusitania were very rich, others barren and desolate. Some of the most difficult of the Roman wars of conquest had been fought in the region, and there were many parts of it in which Roman culture and civilisation never penetrated very deeply. It is, however, precisely in the fourth century that the

⁵⁹See A.T. Fear, *Rome and Baetica* (Oxford, 1996).

⁶⁰H. von Hesberg, 'Römische Grabbauten in den hispanischen Provinzen', *Hispania Antiqua*, 179. Only coastal Tarraconensis is comparable in this respect.

westernmost regions of Lusitania were populated by a wealthy, villa-dwelling population not previously resident there.⁶¹ Augusta Emerita had prospered since its foundation as a colony for the veterans of Augustus' Spanish wars. In the late empire it was the most important city in the peninsula, the diocesan capital in which dwelt the vicar and his entourage, and finally a city which survived the collapse of Roman government in Spain to enjoy a post-Roman renaissance in the sixth century.⁶² In Emerita spectacular remains have survived from the whole of the imperial period, and in the late empire it had a new circus built for it by the emperor Constantius. Unusually for an era which saw a general shift in wealth from city to countryside, the urban townhouses of Emerita were rebuilt in the fourth century.⁶³

Emerita lies on the upper course of the Guadiana, almost on the border of Lusitania with Baetica. If our traveler were to continue through inland Lusitania, through what is now largely Portugal, he would eventually arrive at the Duero river. This formed the boundary between the provinces of Lusitania and Gallaecia, and the confluence of the Duero with the Esla River marked the point at which Lusitania and Gallaecia met the border of Carthaginiensis. Gallaecia itself was a fertile but remote region, lying at the very western edge of the Roman world. Its green coastline is separated from the rest of the peninsula by the mountain chains of the north, and the provincial capital at Bracara Augusta lay at the end of the peninsula's road network. In Gallaecia were stationed some of the only Roman garrisons we know to have existed in the fourth-century peninsula, at Lucus Augusti, Legio, and

⁶¹Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 279.

⁶²R. Collins, 'Merida and Toledo, 550-585', in E. James, ed., *Visigothic Spain* (Oxford, 1980), 189-219.

⁶³Richardson, *Romans in Spain*, 277.

Paetaonium.⁶⁴ Lucus, Bracara, and other Gallaecian towns like Asturica and Gígla (= Gijón) remain famous for their extant fourth-century wall circuits.⁶⁵ More importantly still, Gallaecia is famous for the depredations it suffered at the hands of the Sueves, recorded in great detail by the fifth-century chronicler Hydatius. As we shall see, however, that chronicle gives a somewhat exaggerated impression of the importance of Gallaecia to late Roman Spain. It was a distant region, as accessible to the rest of the world by sea as by land.

To return to Gaul, the traveler in Gallaecia could use the roads which skirted the southern edge of the northern mountains, passing through Pompaelo, modern Pamplona, and crossing the Pyrenees into Novempopulana and then Aquitaine.⁶⁶ The general aspect of fourth-century Spain would have been familiar to a Gallic visitor. Cities still flourished, but those that did so were the recipients of imperial patronage. Local civic pride and local euergetism were in decline by the end of the second century and had died out entirely by the third. The great urban public spaces were frequently converted to new uses. Civic display was the prerogative of the emperors, and local impulses towards monumental construction were on the whole channeled into church building. But in Spain as elsewhere in the Roman west, the most striking feature of the fourth-century landscape is the growth of large rural villae and estates, at the expense of the cities which became more

⁶⁴See Chapter Two below.

⁶⁵Hauschild, *Hispania Antiqua*, 217-31.

⁶⁶On Roman roads in Spain see A. Nünnerich-Asmus, 'Straßen, Brücken und Bögen als Zeichen römischen Herrschaftsanspruchs', *Hispania Antiqua* 121-57 with 146-8 on the late empire, a more accessible introduction than J. Roldán Hervás, *Itineraria Hispana* (Madrid, 1975).

and more the focuses of imperial administration and less and less the centres of provincial life.⁶⁷

This was the world into which, in the years after 409, barbarian invaders would penetrate on the heels of a civil war between the armies of two separate usurpers. So far as we can tell, neither usurpers nor barbarians met the organised resistance of any Roman army. This fact has inspired a great deal of comment and conjecture on the question of the defence of Roman Spain. The problem is complicated enough to require a chapter of its own.

⁶⁷See J. Gorges, *Les villas hispano-romaines* (Paris, 1979). The most famous example is Centcelles in Tarraconensis.

Chapter Two

The Defence of Roman Spain

The defence of Roman Spain in the late fourth and early fifth centuries is a matter of some controversy, if only because the sources which bear on the problem are rich compared to the general standards of Roman Spain. There are three main sources. The first is the evidence for Spanish troops given in two chapters of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a list which documents the bureaucracy of the later empire. The second is a letter preserved in a Spanish codex from the emperor Honorius to certain unspecified troops. The third source is of a somewhat different sort, the archaeological evidence from cemeteries in the Duero river valley.

The three sources together clearly reveal a military presence of some sort in Spain during the Theodosian era and later. The difficulty lies in dating that presence, and in explaining its role in the history of the early fifth century. Unfortunately, and despite its relative abundance, we can derive only very limited conclusions from the three main pieces of evidence. We are, in the end, able to assert only two things. First, around 394 some units of the Roman army were presumed by officials at Theodosius' court to be stationed in the northern parts of Spain. Second, during the reign of Honorius and probably after 411, a substantial detachment of field-army units appeared in the peninsula. The context and the interrelationship of these points is, as we shall see, a matter for speculation only.

The problem is complex. In the first place, all three sources are inherently problematic and taken individually offer little enlightenment. Their analysis, however, is made considerably more difficult by a long-

standing tendency to weld them together into a single scholarly construct, the so-called *limes Hispaniarum*.¹ In bare outline, the *limes* theory runs thus. The *Notitia Dignitatum* shows that the Roman army deployed two sorts of troops in Spain, both mobile troops of the field army (*comitatenses*) and frontier troops (*limitanei*).² These *limitanei*, unlike the *comitatenses*, were tied to specific garrisons which run in a line extending from Lucus Augusti (= Lugo) in the west to Veleia (= Iruña) in the east, with a further garrison at transpyrenean Lapurdum (= Bayonne). This line is taken to be a static defence against something, a sort of internal frontier or *limes*. The object of defence is often left unspecified, but the many rich *villae* or the mining operations of the Spanish north are frequently proposed. Given the location of the garrisons, the danger against which they guard must then be the Asturians, Cantabrians, and Basques.³ The Basque threat can be assimilated to a more generalised unrest, which is thought to be evidenced by those Tarraconensian *Bacaudae* that Hydatius mentions in the fifth century, and by Priscillianism, which is taken to have in it a large component of social protest.⁴

¹R. Grosse, *Fontes Hispaniae Antiquae* 9 (Barcelona, 1947), 25; M. Vigil and A. Barbero, 'Sobre los orígenes sociales de la Reconquista', *BRAH* 156 (1967), 271-339; A. Barbero and M. Vigil, 'La organización social de los Cántabros y sus transformaciones en relación con los orígenes de la Reconquista', *HAnt* 1 (1971), 197-232; J.M. Blázquez, 'Der Limes im Spanien des vierten Jahrhunderts', *Actes du IX-ème Congrès international des études sur les frontières romaines* (Bucharest, 1974), 485-502; idem, 'Rechazo y asimilación de la cultura romana en Hispania (siglos IV-V)', *VI-ème Congrès international des études classiques* (Bucharest-Paris, 1976), 63-94; idem, 'Der Limes Hispaniens im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert: Forschungsstand', *Roman Frontier Studies XII* (Oxford, 1980), 345-94.

²Proponents of the *limes* theory accept a traditional definition of *limitanei*, a definition which has been proved incorrect. See n. 9 below.

³Vigil-Barbero, *BRAH* 156 (1965), 277: The Spanish troops, together with those at Lapurdum in Novempopulana 'se nos presenta como un cerco alrededor de cántabros y vascones, prueba evidente de que estos pueblos eran considerados como peligrosos por las autoridades romanas'.

⁴Vigil-Barbero, *BRAH* (1965), 290-8; Blázquez (1974), 502; A.J. Domínguez-Monedero, 'Los ejércitos regulares tardorromanos en la Península ibérica y el problema del

A picture is thus drawn of a fourth-century Spain suffering from severe social disruptions, a world of 'inquietud interna y amenaza exterior', which requires the strong Roman military presence attested by the *Notitia Dignitatum* to keep it in check.⁵ A further such garrison, not shown in the *Notitia*, is cited from the *Epistula Honorii*, the manuscript tradition of which connects it to Pamplona. The burials scattered through the valley of the Duero complete the picture, when interpreted as Roman garrisons dedicated to the defence of the internal *limes*.⁶

This concatenation cannot withstand much scrutiny and few defend it any longer.⁷ It continues, however, to make its way into standard manuals on late Roman Spain, and thus makes an unbiased approach to the sources more difficult.⁸ Objections to the internal *limes* theory can be summarised as follows. In the first place, it has recently been shown that the modern use of the term *limes* retrojects a twentieth-century idea of frontiers into the Roman past. However, rather than some sort of Maginot line, a late Roman *limes* was actually an

pretendido *limes hispanus*', *Revista de Guimarães* 93 (1983), 115-16. Priscillianism: A. Barbero, 'El priscillianismo: ¿herejía o movimiento social?', *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 37 (1963), 21ff.; propagated by A. Balil, 'Aspectos sociales del Bajo Imperio', *Latomus* 24 (1965), 894; Blázquez (1974), 502; Blázquez (1987), 435. The notion is revived by R. Sanz, 'Aproximación al estudio de los ejércitos privados en Hispania durante la antigüedad tardía', *Gertón* 4 (1986), 225-6, which also perpetuates the theory of a Basque threat to the mines and *latifundia* of northern Spain.

⁵The phrase is from A. Balil, 'La defensa de Hispania en el Bajo Imperio: amenaza exterior y inquietud interna', *Legio VII Gemina* (León, 1970), 601-20.

⁶P. de Palol, 'Las excavaciones de San Miguel de Arroyo', *BSAA* 24 (1958), 209-17; idem, 'Cuchillo hispanorromano del siglo IV d. J.C.', *BSAA* 30 (1964), 67-102; idem, 'Necrópolis hispanorromanas del siglo IV en el valle del Duero III: Los vasos y recipientes de bronce', *BSAA* 36 (1970), 205-36.

⁷There have always been dissenters. A. Balil, 'La defensa de Hispania en el Bajo Imperio', *Zephyrus* 10-11 (1959-60), 196, spoke of 'un sistema defensivo en profundidad', but not of a *limes*. See also J. Arce, 'La *Notitia Dignitatum* et l'armée romaine dans la *diocesis Hispaniarum*', *Chiron* 10 (1980), 593-608; A. Balil, in *Legio VII Gemina* (León, 1970), 601-20; P. Le Roux, *L'armée romaine et l'organisation de les provinces ibériques d'Auguste à l'invasion de 409* (Paris, 1982), 393-5. In his most recent works, even one of the most vocal proponents of the *limes* theory has recanted: J.M. Blázquez in Montenegro, *España romana*, 355: 'En conclusión podemos afirmar que estos factores anulan o invalidan la hipótesis del *limes* del Duero'.

⁸Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 17.

administrative district on the frontier under the command of a *dux limitis*, not unlike a medieval march.⁹ Recent attempts to describe what Roman frontiers were like observe no features applicable to Roman Spain.¹⁰ The difficulties with the theory of an internal *limes* run deeper than such questions of nomenclature, however, for the evidence used in defence of the *limes* theory rarely shows what it is claimed to show.

The *Notitia Dignitatum*, in the first place, is a document fraught with difficulties. Its evidence is applicable to only a very narrow period of time and cannot be taken to reflect a consistent disposition, as the *limes* theory requires it to. The letter of Honorius presents considerably worse problems, particularly a textual corruption which encourages partisan emendation. It is also no more generally applicable than the *Notitia*. What is more, no evidence of any sort suggests that the Basques or other northern tribes posed any problems at all in the fourth century.¹¹ Priscillianism, it seems certain, had no social component, and its harsh asceticism was no more a political ideology than was any other ancient heresy.¹² Bacaudic activity is unattested in Spain until the 440s when

⁹B. Isaac, 'The meaning of "limes" and "limitanei" in ancient sources', *JRS* 78 (1988), 125-47, traces the use of the term *limes* to mean 'defended border' back to Mommsen 'Der Begriff des Limes', *Ges. Schr.* 5.456-64, and goes on to show through careful study of the ancient testimonia that at no stage of its ancient semantic development did it have that significance. In the early empire, *limes* meant first a military road, then any sort of marked land border, while 'from the fourth century onward it is a formal term used to designate a frontier district under the command of a *dux*. It denoted an administrative concept', not, that is, a defended frontier. Moreover, it is clear that there never was any Latin term corresponding to that modern definition.

¹⁰See C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, 1994). The same holds true of the picture presented by H. Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (London, 1996), although, on p. 64, he seems to subscribe to the notion of internal frontiers and includes the north of Spain among them.

¹¹The *limes* theory as a whole relies on an exaggerated picture of a barely romanised north. More realistic portrayals in C. Fernández-Ochoa, *Asturias en época romana* (Madrid, 1982) and R. Collins, *The Basques*² (Oxford, 1990), 38-58. It is true that Paulinus does call the Basques barbarians (Ep. 10.218-20: *ac si Vasconicis mihi vita fuisset in oris / cur non more meo potius formata ferinos / poneret in nostros migrans gens barbara ritus?*), but this surely says as much about Paulinus as it does about the Basques.

¹²H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila* (Oxford, 1976), 57-110, is a comprehensive

other circumstances explain its development.¹³ The entire Bacaudic phenomenon has been exaggerated beyond what the sources warrant even for Gaul, and there is no evidence at all for Bacaudae in fourth-century Spain.¹⁴ The Duero necropoleis, finally, are imprecisely dated, and similar sites exist all over the peninsula. The cemeteries, in fact, are more likely to represent villa sites than any sort of military installation.¹⁵ Even were that not the case, the Duero valley is, moreover, a very long way from the mountains in which the hypothetical threat is supposed to have dwelt.

Most of these objections have been made before.¹⁶ Those who have made them, however, have too frequently tried to find a new theory with which to replace the old one. This tendency derives from a desire to maintain the coherence of the few fragments of evidence we possess. Thus, the *limes* theory can be rejected while its component units are transformed into a system of maritime defence, or described as repressive agents of the status quo whose job it was to keep the proletariat down.¹⁷

examination of the teaching of Priscillian. In exploring what Priscillianism was, Chadwick shows what it clearly was not: a national or social movement of any sort. In this he follows the lead of A.H.M. Jones, 'Were ancient heresies national and social movements in disguise?', *JTS*, n.s. 10 (1959) = *The Roman Economy* (Oxford, 1974), 308-29.

¹³Hydatius 117, 120, 133. The first two notices are to the same group of bandits.

¹⁴On Bacaudae the classic work is E.A. Thompson, 'Peasant revolts in late Roman Gaul and Spain', *Past and Present* 2 (1952) = M.I. Finley, ed., *Studies in Ancient Society* (London, 1974), 304-20. Full and recent bibliography in R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, 1985).

¹⁵A. Fuentes Domínguez, *La necrópolis tardorromana de Albaete de las Nogueras (Cuenca) y el problema de las denominadas "necrópolis del Duero"* (Cuenca, 1989).

¹⁶Arce, *Chiron* 10 (1980), 601-2; Le Roux, 394-5.

¹⁷Arce, *Chiron* 10 (1980), 601, reiterated in idem, *El último siglo de la España romana* (Madrid, 1982), 69 and *HGEA II*, 312. If the considerable distance of the garrisons from the shore is not refutation enough, one may refer to the findings of C. Fernández-Ochoa and A. Morillo Cerdán, 'La ruta marítima del cantábrico en época romana', *Zephyrus* 46 (1994), 225-31. Excavations along the Cantabrian coast, at La Coruña, Gijón, Santander, Castro Urdiales, and Irún, all show primary habitation into the fifth century. These were rich sites and a defensive system placed a hundred kilometres to their rear would not have availed them against piracy and would have positively encouraged mountaineers to look coastwards for profit. Clearly neither threat existed, and Arce has since changed his views: *Notitia Dignitatum Occ. XLII y el ejército de la Hispania*

There is, however, no reason to assume that the various elements of the surviving evidence do actually fit together. It is better, in fact, to take the sources for the military presence in late Roman Spain as interconnected only in those instances where they are proved to be so. In examining them, the presumption must be that they do not in fact have any bearing on each other, that one source will not help explain the next. Operating thus, we may in fact draw some enlightenment from our three sources, when bundling them together only produces a deeper obscurity.

We may turn first to the least intractable of the sources, the Duero necropoleis. Their comparative clarity derives from a frank acknowledgement of the sort of testimony they cannot provide. The cemeteries at issue occur not only in a band on both sides of the Duero River, but throughout the Iberian peninsula. The goods contained in these burials are of various sorts, and some display decorative patterns normally associated with military sites on the Rhine frontier. This fact has encouraged some scholars to identify the graves as belonging to *laeti*, according to a broadly conceived notion of that term.¹⁸ Others have seen them as *limitanei*, or even as the field army shown by the *Notitia Dignitatum* as stationed in Spain.¹⁹ The most considered treatment of the topic, however, views the necropoleis as civilian sites, perhaps

tardorromana', in A. del Castillo, ed., *Ejército y Sociedad* (León, 1985), 53-4. Balil, *Legio VII Gemina* (1970), 603, rejects the notion of a *limes* and instead sees the soldiers as warriors in the class struggle, agents, that is, of the status quo and among the causes of his 'inquietud interna'.

¹⁸K. Raddatz, 'Zu den spätantiken Kriegergrabern von Tañine (prov. de Soria),' *MM* 4 (1963), 133-40, who does not, to his credit, speak of a *limes*.

¹⁹Blázquez (1980), separates the problem of the Duero necropoleis from that of the *limes* (though retaining the latter notion), in contrast to Blázquez (1974) which combines the grave finds with the *Notitia* to support the larger theory. *Comitatenses*: Domínguez-Monedero, *Revista de Guimarães* 93 (1983), 122.

associated with villa culture, and not as military burials at all.²⁰ This latter view is likely to be correct, but even if it is not, the nature of the cemeteries cannot be characterised with enough certainty for them to play any useful role in a discussion of the defence of Roman Spain.

The next fragment of evidence is that provided by the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The document is notoriously difficult.²¹ A list of late Roman officials both civilian and military, it is divided into eastern and western halves. In origin, the *Notitia* was an administrative tool for the eastern army of Theodosius when he set out to put down the usurpation of Eugenius in 394. Its eastern portion delineated the army and bureaucracy of the part of the empire controlled by Theodosius. Its western one, meanwhile, laid out the forces available to Eugenius, Flavianus, and Arbogast, in so far as these were known in the east. The picture is of course more complicated. The copy of the *Notitia* which we possess is western, and a working copy to boot. When after Theodosius' death in 395 administrative relations between east and west were effectively severed, the eastern portion of the *Notitia* ceased to be of any use to the bureaucracy at Ravenna. The western portion, on the other hand, underwent a long series of progressively overlaid revisions. This has repercussions for the use of the *Notitia* as evidence.

With only very minor reservations, the eastern half of the *Notitia* can be used as evidence for the state of the eastern army c. 394. The western list, by contrast, can hardly be used at all. Its base text has been subjected to an indeterminable number of later alterations, which extend at least as far as 419. Some may be later still. No hypotheses,

²⁰See Fuentes Domínguez, *La necrópolis tardorromana de Albaete de las Nogueras*, *passim*.

²¹For the arguments summarised here, see Appendix 2.

therefore, can be founded on the western list. Entries not confirmed by testimony external to the *Notitia* are all potentially revisions, while confirmatory evidence is applicable only to the individual items it confirms. No extrapolation is permissible. The authenticity of the information need not be doubted and units are unlikely to be wholly fictitious. But when they existed is open to question, since the bureaucrats who had charge of the document were none too scrupulous about deletions, and duplications are frequent. Dating is the real problem, and an insoluble one. Consequently, the usefulness of the western *Notitia* is negligible when it comes to specifics.²² The evidence which the *Notitia* gives for Spain, then, must be dealt with very cautiously and with only the most limited expectations.

The *Notitia* shows two sets of troops in Spain, in its seventh and forty-second chapters. The troops in Occ. 7 are *comitatenses*, members of the mobile field army of the late empire which grew up in the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine. They therefore lack any definite station. The troops in Occ. 42, by contrast, are garrison troops, units tied to a specific location. Though traditionally referred to as *limitanei*, one should hesitate before granting them that title, since its precise meaning is very much open to question. If one accepts traditional views, all units shown by the *Notitia* as tied to fixed positions are *limitanei*. This view, it seems certain, is erroneous. *Limitanei* are nothing more than troops who

²²It is not entirely without utility, however, since, taken as a whole, the western list supplies valuable evidence for the disruption of the western provinces in the twenty-five years after 395. That is to say that the textual confusions produced by two and a half decades of progressive revision accurately mirror the operational confusion of the western army. Yet it is only in this very generalised fashion that the western list can be used safely, and it must be admitted that cautious inquirers have always taken this course. Though Jones was overly optimistic in his conclusions on the *Notitia* in the appendix he devoted to it, in the body of his text he took the route caution dictated (see *LRE*, chapter 17).

happen to have been stationed in a region under the command of a *dux limitis*.²³ The Spanish troops are surely then not *limitanei*, and we lack a technical term with which to describe them. That, however, is a matter of no great importance. What we should really like to know about the units in both Occ. 7 and Occ. 42 is when, precisely, they were actually in Spain. Yet, given the limits of the *Notitia* as a source, this is not possible.

Occ. 42 shows the following units: the Legio VII Gemina at Legio under a prefect, the cohort II Flavia Pacatiana at Paetaonium (= Rosinos de Vidriales), the cohort Lucensis at Lucus Augusti (= Lugo), the cohort Celtiberiae at Iuliobriga (= Reinos), the cohort I Gallicae at Veleia (= Iruña), and the cohort II Gallicae at *cohortem Gallicam*, a location as yet unidentified.²⁴ These cohorts are under the command of tribunes, and the whole force is listed as under the command of the *magister peditum in praesenti*.²⁵ Place these units on a map, and you are confronted with a rough line running east to west about seventy miles south of the the Bay of Biscay.²⁶ From this line sprang the notion of the *limes* discussed above.²⁷ That notion is discredited, and we must ask what these units were for, or whether they even existed.

²³Isaac, *JRS* 78 (1988), 140, 146. The time-honoured picture of the *limitanei* as inferior troops, degraded soldier-farmers, has long since been discarded. This is not to deny that soldiers cultivated land which they owned (see R. Macmullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* [Cambridge, Mass., 1963], 1-22), but rather to state that these arrangements were in no way institutionalised. Scholars who have rejected the notion a Spanish *limes* have at times gone on to maintain that the troops in Occ. 42 are *limitanei* nonetheless, e.g., K.F. Stroheker, 'Spanien im spätrömischen Reich (284-475)', *AEspA* 40-2 (1972-4), 589; Arce, *Chiron* 10 (1980), 608.

²⁴See A. García y Bellido, 'El ejército romano en Hispania', *AEspA* 49 (1976), 80 with fig. 21.

²⁵Occ. 42: *Item praepositurae magistri militum praesentalis a parte peditum*.

²⁶As by Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 16. He reprints the map in *HGEA II*, 466.

²⁷Occ. 42.19, *Tribunus cohortis Nouempopolanae, Lapurdo*, also figures in the theory.

The question has been posed as follows.²⁸ If these units existed in the north of Spain where the *Notitia* says they were, why then did they make no resistance either to the forces of the usurper Constantine III or to the barbarian invaders of 409? And why is there no archaeological record of late Roman occupation at the sites which have been excavated? Are the units shown in Occ. 42 not in fact imaginary paper garrisons, which existed only on the pages of the *Notitia*? The archaeological problem admits no easy answer, but the question of resistance is answered by a well-known passage of Orosius, in which Constantine III sent *iudices* to Spain where they were accepted.²⁹ These *iudices* were provincial governors, and the passage clearly indicates that they met no resistance in Spain. That the units of the Spanish army are not attested in this context is perfectly consistent with their acquiescence in the new regime, and implies nothing at all about their continued existence.

One cannot therefore affirm that the units of Occ. 42 never existed. The *legio VII Gemina*, for one, had a long and richly documented history. On the other hand, the units make no mark on early fifth-century history. Since in origin the *Notitia* was an eastern document with a base text of c. 394, one can only state with certainty that around 394 officials in Constantinople thought that the garrisons shown in Occ. 42 existed.³⁰ They may have lingered there for the entire working life of the *Notitia*. Or they may have been swiftly transferred, disbanded, or

²⁸J. Arce, in *Ejército y Sociedad*, 53-4.

²⁹Oros. 7.40.5.

³⁰One cannot argue that the units were late arrivals which did not come to Spain until after 407. The VII Gemina had long been there and its presence in the *Notitia* therefore goes back to the base text. One may note that well into the High Empire León had no urban existence independent of its legionary camp: F. Vittinghoff, 'Die Entstehung von städtischen Gemeinwesen in der Nachbarschaft römischer Legionslager: ein Vergleich Leons mit Entwicklungslinien im Imperium Romanorum', *Legio VII Gemina* (León, 1970), 339-52. The case for the other units is less clear cut, but probable all the same.

upgraded to the *comitatus*, thus explaining the silence of other sources.³¹ Nothing, however, warrants dismissing their existence as a way out of the quandary.

The troops in Occ. 7 pose less vexing questions. No one can plausibly deny their existence. Even though Occ. 7, the *distributio numerorum*, is a structural anomaly within the *Notitia*, the units which it shows as being in Spain also occur in the *magister peditum*'s list, Occ. 5.³² Two, moreover, were part of the eastern army in 394.³³ These were real units, then. Eleven are *auxilia palatina* and five *legiones comitatenses*, and together they comprise a moderately strong force.³⁴ The same difficulties encountered with Occ. 42 occur here as well. Why, that is, do these units turn up in no other source, and why do they make no appearance in the events of the early fifth century? Similar answers might be redeployed. The units might have submitted to the jurisdiction of Constantine III. Or they might no longer have been in the peninsula. Or, and this possibility is new, they may not yet have arrived. As is not the case with Occ. 42, the units in Occ. 7 admit some possibility of dating. The *Ascarii seniores* and *iuniores* were eastern units in 394. Their incorporation into the western army must therefore have taken place at some date after the battle of the Frigidus in September 394. How long after cannot be said, though one might be disinclined to go

³¹Occ. 42.30 shows a *tribunus cohortis Celtiberarum, Brigantiae, nunc Iuliobriga*, and thus a relocation, though with no key to date. The *nunc* may indicate a late correction introduced into the base text some time in its working life. Or it may indicate that the Theodosian draughtsmen knew that the Celtiberian cohort had been transferred from Brigantium to Iuliobriga.

³²With one possible exception: The *Salli iuniores Gallicani* (Occ. 7.129) need not necessarily be identical to the *Salli Gallicani* (Occ. 5.210).

³³The *Ascarii seniores* and *iuniores* (Occ. 5.166-67 = Occ. 7.119-20 = Or. 9.24-25).

³⁴*Auxilia* (Occ. 7.119-29): *Ascarii seniores*, *Ascarii iuniores*, *Sagittarii Nervii*, *Excusatores iuniores*, *Tubantes*, *Felices seniores*, *Inuicti seniores*, *Victores iuniores*, *Inuicti iuniores*, *Britones*, *Brisigaudi seniores*, *Salli iuniores Gallicani*. *Legiones* (Occ. 7.130-34): *Fortenses*, *Propugnatores seniores*, *Septimani seniores*, *Uesontes*, *Undecimani*.

very much beyond that year, given the political division of the empire.³⁵ After 395, then, for the *Ascarii*.

Does the same hold for their fellow *comitatenses*? The *Notitia* lists troops in order of seniority. Late additions, in fact, frequently betray themselves precisely by breaking the ranking by seniority. The two *Ascarii* are the most senior *auxilia* shown for Spain in Occ. 7, and the other units follow them in the lists. Since ranking by seniority is preserved, one is tempted to view the Spanish troops in Occ. 7 as an integral group sent to Spain together some time after 395. But this cannot be proved. There remains the possibility that we have before us a thoroughgoing revision which hides a transfer to Spain of the very senior *Ascarii* at some point after the other units were already in the peninsula. The difficulties, though, do not end here, for is it not possible that they were sent after the usurpation of Constantine in 407? The status of their commander has a bearing on that question.

The two *Ascarii* and the other units with which we are dealing are shown as *intra Hispanias cum uiro spectabili comite* (Occ. 7.118). Who, we may ask, was this *comes Hispaniarum*? Civilian magistrates called *comites Hispaniarum* are attested in Spain under Constantine, but these are unrelated to the military *comites* which appear both in the *Notitia* and throughout the chronicle of Hydatius in the years after 420.³⁶ While the *comes* of the *Notitia* and that of Hydatius are self-evidently the same official, we are not justified in using Hydatius to date the Spanish troops of Occ. 7. It is entirely possible that the *Notitia* is the earliest extant

³⁵D. Hoffmann, *Die spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (Dusseldorf, 1969), 25ff., thought that the *Ascarii* must have been sent west in 410 based on his dating of *Notitia Dignitatum*, Or. 9. This cannot stand. See Appendix 2.

³⁶See Chapter One for the Constantinian officials, and Chapters Four and Six for the later *comites*.

attestation of the *comitiva Hispaniarum* which is first attested by a literary source only in 420. The office can therefore have existed, or have been created, at any time between 394 and 420. Still, some measure of hypothesis is permissible here.

The office of *comes Hispaniarum* is unlikely to have been created during the Stilichonian era. The *generalissimo* was notoriously shy of delegating and kept the reins of power firmly in his own grasp. The *comes Hispaniarum* commanded an improbably large number of troops to have served under Stilicho. Furthermore, Spain under Stilicho was a peaceful province, in which it would have been senseless to station crack troops. The units shown in Occ. 7 almost certainly arrived in the peninsula only after the usurpation of Constantine and the death of Stilicho. If this is granted, their arrival must be further postponed until after the defeat of all the usurpers of the century's first decade, that is to say, after 412 and the deposition of Maximus. The units shown by the *Notitia* might then be troops who were sent by the legitimate government to deal with the usurper. On the other hand, they may not have gone to Spain until later, perhaps after Spain had been reconquered for the imperial government by Wallia's Goths. As we shall see, the narrative history of the era suggests that the latter possibility is more likely.³⁷ On its own terms, however, the *Notitia* allows no easy decision.

We can, in the end, make only two statements with certainty based on the evidence of the *Notitia*. First, there was a comitatensian army, shown in Occ. 7, in Spain between 395 and 419, probably between 407 and that same year. Second, at some point in the working life of the document the garrison troops of Occ. 42 were stationed in the north of

³⁷See Chapter Four below.

the peninsula, though every indication points to their having been there in 394, the year of the base text's composition. These results, meagre though they are, have the merit of putting no greater weight on the evidence than it will safely bear.

There remains, however, one further piece of significant evidence for a discussion of the defence of Roman Spain. This is the *Epistula Honorii*. Those who find the *Notitia* too perplexing a document will shrink in horror from the *Epistula*. It is preserved in a tenth-century Roda codex, now in the library of the Real Academia de la Historia de España in Madrid, among a miscellany of documents having to do with the city of Pamplona.³⁸ The transmitted form of the *Epistula* consists of three parts of different provenance and date, that is, a title, a prefatory incipit, and the letter proper. The text has thrice been presented in shapes which enshrine editorial assumptions.³⁹ In fact, the text is quite hopelessly corrupt, so corrupt that one may freely project onto it whatever one wishes, confirming supposition with judicious emendation. On the other hand, the document lacks all sense if presented without emendation.⁴⁰

³⁸The 232 folio Codex 78, Bibl. Acad. Hist. Madrid, falls into two sections, the first of them a complete Orosius which once circulated independently from the second half, the *Rotense* itself. The *Rotense* begins on 156v (156r is blank) and contains among other things Isidore's histories, the chronicle of Alfonso III, the *chronica Albeldense*, various regnal lists and other *laterculi*, and a small collection of texts on Pamplona. The most careful examiner of the *Rotense* believes that the *Epistula Honorii* entered the Roda codex in a dossier of documents relating to Pamplona and that the textual corruptions of the letter were present in the copy from which the *Rotense* scribe worked. See M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías en la Rioja altomedieval* (Logroño, 1979), 32-42.

³⁹The *editio princeps* is in J.M. Lacarra, 'Textos navarros del código de Roda', *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón* 1 (1945), 268-9; Jones, *LRE* 3.36; E. Demougeot, 'Une lettre de l'empereur Honorius sur l'*hospitium* des soldats', *RHDF* 34 (1956), 25-49; H. Sivan, 'An unedited letter of the emperor Honorius to the Spanish soldiers', *ZPE* 61 (1985), 273-87; Balil, *Legio VII Gemina* (1970), 616, reproduces Jones' text.

⁴⁰Restoration of the *Epistula* is tricky and reference may be had to the discussion in Appendix 3 where a diplomatic text is given for comparison. I emend as follows.

Incipit sacra Honorii imperatoris quam de Roma detulit militi(a) urbis Pampilonensis cum Sauriniano patricio qu(o)d(a)m tempore +erede+ pr(a)elatus in Spaniam profectus est ob infestatione diuersarum gentium barbarorum.

The title and heading are late additions. The manuscript calls the letter *De laude pampilone epistula*, which bears no relation to the letter's contents and is presumably the work of the tenth-century copyist. The heading is a more difficult matter. It contains authentic-seeming material not derived from the letter's text, but it also presents suspicious features. Only the heading gives context to the letter, which is itself unenlightening. In judging the historical value of the *Epistula* we need to determine whether or not the heading can be accepted as valid evidence. Without it, the letter itself is nearly worthless historically.

We may take the letter first. Its text is almost certainly genuine, since its contents can have inspired no forger, and forgers generally take care to make their work intelligible. The letter is addressed to a number of units of soldiers, among them a senior/junior pair whose by-name is missing, an unidentified unit of *Britannici*, and an unidentifiable unit of *speculatores*.⁴¹ These soldiers are certainly in Spain. That the letter was originally intended for more than one provincial army has been suggested, but this seems unlikely.⁴² Rather, the plurality of *comites* and *magistri* conceals specific individuals whose identity would have been obvious to contemporaries. The significant difficulty with the *Epistula*

*Honorius imperator gloriosus perpetuus triumphator semper A(u)gustus uniuersis militibus nostris *** senioribus, iunioribus, Speculatoribus ac Britannicis. gaude(a)t(i)s sanctissimi comitones nostri communium remuneratione meritorum [et] omnes iusta exultatione gaudentes hi[c] enim maxime splendor inlustris qui pari cunctos luce perfu(n)dit. a(d) uos quos magnifici comites [h]ac magistri utriusque militi(a)e ad similitudine(m) *** nostr(a)e clementi(a) constituti *** constituta si(n)t uobis stipendia Gallican(o)rum quae const(ant)iae uest(r)a(e) porrexi(m)us, ut +eundem uir esset+ forma uirtutis quibus excellens una deuotio est. proinde instructissimi *** et nobis cuncta subdita sint in (H)ispania, et +amplica+ congru(a)m et dignitatis augmentum quae serenitas nostra (uest(r)is) pr(a)estiterit usibus gratanter agnoscimus, ut ubi (alibi) utuendi degendique tempus extiterit, omni alacritate atque uirtute abeat(is) hospitii obsequamini. quapropter fore equidem ut confidimus ut muneris resoluti(o) incitet potius quam restringat ardore(m). optamus comitones nostros per multos annos bene agere. et alia manu: bene ualete. amen.*

⁴¹On the *seniores/iuniores* distinction see Appendix 2.

⁴²Sivan, *ZPE* 61 (1985), 278, 280.

comes in understanding its purpose. Depending upon one's inclination, it either holds out to these soldiers the promise of *augmentum dignitatis* upon their successful engagement in Spain, or else it grants them this reward, the work having already been done. On one's choice in this matter depends a reading of the final part of the letter. The transfer or demobilisation implied in *alibi uiuendi degendique tempus* is either a hazy prospect or a very real possibility. Nothing elsewhere in the *Epistula* makes a solution here any easier. And, be it noted, that nowhere in the text of the letter itself is there the slightest clue to dating.

That comes in the heading, if it is admitted as evidence. It informs us that the letter of Honorius was brought from Rome by the soldiers of Pamplona with a certain Sabinianus, a patrician who went to Spain on account of its occupation by a diversity of barbarian tribes. One cannot help but notice the difficulties. First, the place from which the letter was brought. Honorius, it has been pointed out, was a rare visitor to Rome.⁴³ He spent much of 404, and short stretches of 407, 408, 411, 414, and 416 there.⁴⁴ Of these years, the first three are ruled out by the *infestatione barbarorum* of the heading itself. Spain was free of barbarians in those years. Likewise 411: Honorius' writ then ran nowhere west of the Alps. Only the last two dates, 414 and 416, are possible, and neither is readily explicable. At any rate, they founder on the second major difficulty, Sabinianus' title. In the west for most of Honorius' reign, only his future co-regent Constantius bore the title of patrician. Three possibilities obtrude: one, Patricius is in fact Sabinianus' cognomen; two, Constantius was not the only bearer of the

⁴³Demougeot, *RHDF* 34 (1956), 39.

⁴⁴Seeck, *Regesten*, 306-32.

patrician title under Honorius but instead shared it with this otherwise unattested Sabinianus; or three, the heading was written at a time when patricians were rather more common and the title seemed plausible to its author. Of these, one is very much inclined to favour the third.⁴⁵

That being so, what value can we assign the heading? As to date, any time after the mid-fifth century seems plausible but before such a time that the title *patricius* would have been meaningless.⁴⁶ This then implies that the title, for Sabinianus, was inauthentic. The receipt of the letter at Rome, too, is suspect. It should also be noted that nothing in the letter itself hints at a connection to Pamplona, and the *militia Pampilonensis* described in the heading are quite possibly a fiction. Thus, although the dispatch of some sort of officer by the legitimate government *ob infestatione barbarorum* is wholly plausible, one cannot put much faith in the heading. At best, the ensemble of heading and letter communicates what we already know from elsewhere: at some point during the reign of Honorius there were *comitatenses* loyal to the legitimate dynasty in Spain. If one grants validity to the heading, the date is narrowed to between 409 and 423, in any of which years Spain might truly be said to have suffered from a barbarian plague. To draw further conclusions from the *Epistula Honorii*, given the uncertainty of its purpose and date, would be imprudent.

That, in full, is the evidence for the defence of Roman Spain in the last years of the fourth century and the first few of the fifth. It is a meagre harvest, especially for those accustomed to the richly detailed pictures so frequently drawn from it. In fact, however, the evidence

⁴⁵PLRE 2.966 declines decisive comment.

⁴⁶The early seventh century, one imagines, is the outside limit.

warrants only the sketchiest outline of the military state of Roman Spain just before the usurpation of Constantine III. Before the reign of Honorius, so far as we can tell, there was a garrison in the European provinces of the Spanish diocese attested by Occ. 42.1 and with a numerical strength of at most 6,000 men.⁴⁷ During the reign of Honorius, however, Spain acquired a comitatensian field army under the command of a *comes Hispaniarum*. That is the clear testimony of both the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the *Epistula Honorii*.⁴⁸ The testimony of the two documents must be treated as independent, however. Though both attest to the presence of *comitatenses* in Spain, that does not justify supplying the lacuna in one document from the evidence of the other.⁴⁹ Some of the units mentioned in the *Epistula Honorii*, the unnamed *senioris/iunioris* pair in particular, may be identical with some of those in Occ. 7. On the other hand, they need not be. Still, since the information in neither document can be dated closely, the prohibition on pooling their evidence does little to impede our reconstruction.

The Spanish comitatensian army was almost certainly the product of the turbulent years after the usurpation of Constantine and the death of Stilicho. Before that, the European provinces of the Spanish diocese were largely undefended. From New Year's Eve 405 Honorius' government faced an empire in crisis. The emperor and his generalissimo Stilicho seem on the whole to have been unprepared to meet it. If this was true of Britain, Gaul, and Italy, it was considerably more true of Spain. The diocese, as we have seen, had first been designed by

⁴⁷Their number is a matter of some controversy and, as with so much in this chapter, unsusceptible to proof. Le Roux, 390, places the maximum total strength of the Spanish army at no more than 6,000 men, which is perhaps overly optimistic. See also Balil, *Legio VII Gemina* (1970), 612.

⁴⁸Le Roux, 389, reaches similar conclusions by a different route.

⁴⁹As does Jones, *LRE*, 3.36.

Diocletian to face threats from the south. At its other end, it was at the mercy of events in Gaul. It was from this direction that usurpers and barbarians arrived in the early years of the fifth century. The whole course of fifth-century Spanish history has its roots in the invasions and usurpations of the century's first two decades. First a usurper's officials, then his soldiers, and finally a series of barbarian groups crossed the Pyrenees into Spain in the years from 407 onward. None encountered resistance from the forces of the legitimate emperor, for, as we have now seen, the defence of Roman Spain at the turn of the fourth to the fifth century amounted to very little indeed.

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UMI

Chapter Three

Constantine and Gerontius: The End of Roman Spain?

In the autumn of 409, the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans arrived in Spain over the Pyrenees. This barbarian invasion took place in the course of a civil war which had engulfed the western provinces of the Roman empire since 407, and it must be understood as just one of many episodes in that conflict. The war had begun when the usurper Constantine III crossed from Britain to Gaul, won the allegiance of the army there, and established his capital at Arles. Constantine was himself threatened by usurpation after his general Gerontius set up his client Maximus as a rival emperor in Spain. Gerontius then incited the barbarians in Gaul against Constantine but failed to stop them entering the Spanish provinces as well. They had become an established presence in Spain by 413, when all the western usurpations had been suppressed by Constantius, the chief general of the legitimate emperor Honorius.

The events of 406-411 are essential for any understanding of the end of Roman Spain, in the first place because in the course of them the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans came to occupy parts of the Spanish diocese. The year 409 has therefore achieved a sort of mystical significance in the historiography of the period, and become synonymous with the end of Roman Spain. That significance is exaggerated and follows from an imperfect understanding of the course of events. If the invasion of 409 is viewed within the wider context of an imperial civil war, the year loses its symbolic importance in the history of Spain. Instead of the cataclysmic end of Roman authority in the province, the events of 409 are seen to be an early stage in a gradual process in which imperial authorities lost

their hold on the peninsula. This process took the better part of the fifth century, but in order to realise that, it is first necessary to place 409 in its proper perspective.

That perspective depends upon a careful reconstruction of the civil war of 406-11, in which the invasion of Spain in 409 was just one event. The barbarians entered Spain because of the preoccupation of Roman commanders elsewhere. As was the case with the third-century invasions, barbarian groups could achieve real success only when Roman armies were distracted in fighting one another. These conclusions emerge from an unusually knotty context. The tangle of incident between 406 and 411 is difficult to unravel. It is, unlike much fifth-century history, richly documented in the extant sources, but this is not an unmixed blessing. The sources are sometimes internally contradictory, and they frequently contradict one another. Worse still, the good sources are fragmentary, the bad ones full but muddled. We therefore face the task of separating good information from bad, of extracting coherence from confusion. The work has been done many times before, but not always comprehensively or with a suitable awareness of the limitations of the sources.¹ One must approach the sources with strict regard for their relative value. They are not a palette of facts from which the most convenient can be selected to paint a modern narrative. Not every statement which bears on the years 406 to 411 is of equal value. On the contrary, there is a readily observable

¹The classic accounts are Seeck, *Untergang* 5.377ff.; 6.42ff.; Schmidt, *Wandalen*², 16-25; Stein, *Bas-Empire* 1.249-64; Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain* (Paris, 1951), 376-96 (to which her account in the *Hommage à Andre Dupont* [Montpellier, 1974], 83-125, adds little); C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), 38-58; C.E. Stevens, 'Marcus, Gratian, Constantine', *Athenaeum* 35 (1957), 316-47. Very few more recent accounts come to grips with the sources themselves, two exceptions being Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 307-20, and J. Arce, 'Gerontius, el usurpador', *España entre el mundo antiguo y el mundo medieval* (Madrid, 1988), 68-121.

hierarchy to the sources, from which we should depart only with careful justification.

The best of the lot is the Greek history of Olympiodorus, from which two other eastern accounts derive. Writing soon after 440 at Constantinople, Olympiodorus was close to the centre of the eastern court. His history, at least as extant, lays stress on the close ties of east and west, and of the strong support given by the east to the west.² The extant narrative, however, is almost purely western and, as a diplomat of some three decades standing, Olympiodorus was in a position to know what he was writing about. Unfortunately, his history survives only in the summary of Photius' *Bibliotheca*, and in the derivative accounts of later historians.³

These are not always helpful. The church historian Sozomen, a near contemporary of Olympiodorus, used extensive pieces of the latter historian to eke out his own narrative. Where these run parallel to the fragments preserved by Photius, they often reveal themselves as somewhat fuller. The sixth-century writer Zosimus also used Olympiodorus extensively.⁴ He recast his source's precision in a vaguer and, according to the fashions of the age, more dignified style all his own, but succeeded only in importing confusion and misunderstanding. Nevertheless, both Sozomen and Zosimus, along with Philostorgius, preserve valuable information missing in the fragments of Olympiodorus transmitted by Photius, but they must be dealt with cautiously. Sound method requires that, where all four survive, the epitome of Photius be

²A. Gillett, 'The date and circumstances of Olympiodorus of Thebes', *Traditio* 48 (1993), 1-29.

³See J.F. Matthews, 'Olympiodorus of Thebes and the history of the west (A.D. 407-425)', *JRS* 60 (1970), 79-97.

⁴See A. Cameron, 'The date of Zosimus' *New History*', *Philologus* 113 (1969), 106-10.

trusted over those later historians who used Olympiodorus as a source, unless specific justification can be offered for not doing so. Sozomen remains very helpful nevertheless. Zosimus, on the other hand, is often best disregarded. His goals were not those of the modern historian and his narrative therefore leaves much to be desired. His contradictions are frequent and can frequently be resolved only by speculation. And, because Zosimus' skills as an epitomator were elementary, his chronology should not be trusted very far. When his indications tally well with other sources, they can import valuable support, but little faith should be placed in arguments based on Zosimus alone.

The other sources are western, less full than their eastern counterparts, and of similarly disparate value. The Spanish historian Orosius might be reckoned a good witness, as he was a strict contemporary of the events he describes in the last book of his *Historiae adversum paganos*. That work was written under Augustine's influence, and its apologetic concerns are to the fore. Orosius was intent on demonstrating that despite present circumstance the empire had actually been worse off before its conversion to Christianity, and accuracy is not among his foremost concerns. Frequently wrong on distant events, he nevertheless adds a great deal to an understanding of Spanish problems. Another western narrative survives only in fragments. Gregory of Tours, in book 2.9 of his *Historiae*, preserves fragments of the Gallo-Roman historian Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, who seems to have recounted the course of the usurpation and invasions at length. The fragments preserve information found nowhere else, and have the appearance of great verisimilitude. As such, they are universally relied upon, though it must in fairness be stated that little corroborating evidence survives with

which to test their actual value. Finally, there are the shards of information preserved in the various *chronica minora*, the best of which are those of Prosper and Hydatius, the latter of whom provides useful information for his native Spain.

The foregoing survey is no more than a set of cautions. The sources are numerous, and of unequal value. This is not to dismiss those sources whose usefulness as a mine of factual information is limited. A source which is sloppy by this standard can nevertheless offer valuable testimony of other sorts. Thus Orosius is rarely much help on points of fact, sometimes too careless, sometimes too ill-informed. He does, however, tell us a great deal about how an educated contemporary understood the events of his era. Similarly, there exist from this period a great many testimonies, worthless from the factual point of view, which nonetheless speak volumes about the hazards of life in this turbulent era. One may reckon among them Orientius' *Commonitorium*, the anonymous *Carmen de diuina providentia*, the so-called *Epigramma* of Paulinus, and, written somewhat later, Salvian's polemic *De gubernatione Dei*.⁵ Again, these add flesh and colour to the bare bones of the narrative we build from other sources. Still, before we can appreciate that contribution, we must have a firm grasp of the historical narrative into which it fits.

The Vandals, Sueves, and Alans who eventually settled in Spain first arrived in the empire from across the Rhine near Mainz.⁶ When did

⁵On these see M. Roberts, 'Barbarians in Gaul: the response of the poets', in Drinkwater and Elton, 97-106.

⁶On a subject as often treated as the present, no one can plausibly claim originality. Many individual points made in the exposition which follows have been made before, usually in one of the studies cited in note 1 above. The larger narrative I present is my own, however. Modern works will not, then, be noted in every case where I find myself in agreement with them and given that stricture it would be invidious to cite them in those cases that I think them in error.

this happen? The standard answer has long been 31 December 406.⁷ This misinterprets the only explicit evidence of dates which we possess. Both Prosper and the Copenhagen *Additamenta* to his chronicle give the consular year for the invasion as Arcadius and Probus, which is 406. In Prosper one finds the day of their crossing given as *II k. Ian.*, in the *Additamenta*, as *pridie kl. Ianuarii*.⁸ The day intended by Prosper and the *Additamenta* is therefore 31 December, which seems straightforward enough. The problem arises with the year involved, for despite the traditional date of 31 December 406, 31 December 405 should be understood.

The format of the chronicle genre, in fact, suggests a date in 405, because chronicle entries record the events which took place within the consular year at issue. The purpose of Prosper's entry on the Rhine crossing is to record the destruction which the barbarians wreaked in Gaul in the year under which he gives the information. This year is 406. Therefore the barbarians were active in Gaul in 406, but had crossed the Rhine on the last day of the previous year. If the 31 December date was meant to refer to 406, the body of the entry would instead be applicable to the following year, when we in fact find Prosper recording other information. Prosper's entry, *Arcadio VI et Probo. Wandali et Halani Gallias traiecto Rheno ingressi II k. Ian.*, should thus be translated 'In the consulate of Arcadius for the sixth time and Probus [406] the Vandals and Alans entered the Gauls, having crossed the Rhine on the day before the kalends of January [= 31 December 405]'. As we shall see, this

⁷The lone voice of dissent was N. Baynes, 'Stilicho and the barbarian invasions', *JRS* 12 (1922) = *Byzantine Studies* (London, 1955), 326-42. He dated the Rhine crossing on the basis of Prosper, but only as a corollary to a misdating of Radagaisus' invasion of Italy. This was unfortunate, as it has allowed his sound arguments to be comprehensively dismissed in subsequent literature.

⁸Prosper 1230 (= *MGH.AA* 9.465); *Add. Haun.* 535 (= *MGH.AA* 9.299).

reading eliminates all the historical contradictions raised by the traditional chronology.

The old date has never provided a satisfactory chronology, and in order to sustain its appeal has been made to the dubious internal chronologies of Zosimus and Hydatius.⁹ Zosimus should never be privileged over other sources, and Hydatius' statement is suspect. The source problem is not the worst of them, however. The actions of the generalissimo Stilicho in the years surrounding the Rhine crossing have never been satisfactorily explained in terms of the traditional chronology. That is to say, Stilicho's failure to do anything about the situation in Gaul has been a long-standing puzzle. It has inspired a good deal of convoluted theorising, because if the Rhine crossing is dated to 31 December 406, there is no reason Stilicho should have been unable to deal with it.¹⁰ If the invasion is dated to 31 December 405, however, this ostensible puzzle disappears. Stilicho made no move against the barbarian invaders because he was fully occupied with events closer to home, that is to say, the campaign in Italy against Radagaisus.

The problem requires more detailed examination. Two major problems occupied Stilicho in the first decade of the fifth century. The first was Alaric, whose manoeuvrings in Illyricum and northern Italy had been temporarily checked by 402.¹¹ The second was the invasion of

⁹Zos. 6.3.1 implies that the elevation of Constantine was a direct response to the invasion of Gaul by the barbarians. Hydatius states that Constantine was killed after three years of rule. Constantine was executed in 411, therefore rose late in 407, and thus the Rhine crossing must have come at the beginning of that year. Thus Seeck, *Untergang*, 5.590, 13, but the chronology has been asserted from Gibbon (Bury, ed., 3.282) onward. See, e.g., Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.250, n. 160, n. 161; Courtois, *Vandales*, 38; Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 275. Only Demougeot, *Unité*, 381, n. 155, admits that the traditional chronology requires the dismissal of Prosper and the *Additamenta*, though she nevertheless conforms to it.

¹⁰E.g., W. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops* (Oxford, 1989), 64.

¹¹The best accounts of this campaign are now Heather, *Goths*, 199-213 and Cameron, *Claudian*, 156-88.

Radagaisus, who invaded the north Italian plain from Rhaetia in 405.¹² We do not know when in 405 the Gothic leader crossed the Alps, but Stilicho was engaged in fighting him until August of the following year. Alaric and Radagaisus were the two problems with which Stilicho was consistently occupied from 404 to 406.

A great deal has over the years been made of Stilicho's plot to take over eastern Illyricum from the regime of Arcadius in precisely these years. Part of this issue derives from the prejudice of hostile sources against the half-Vandal general.¹³ The willingness of modern commentators to accept this slander at face value is in part due to the puzzle of chronology. If Stilicho did not act against the barbarian invaders of Gaul in 407, it must have been because he was otherwise occupied. Neither Alaric nor Radagaisus posed any threat in 407. Therefore, Stilicho must have been too preoccupied with his plot to take over Illyricum to deal with the barbarians in Gaul. Now, the supposed plot against eastern Illyricum is almost certainly a fiction. The only possible evidence for it, besides the vague assertions of Zosimus, is the appointment in 407 of Jovius as praetorian prefect *per Illyricum*.¹⁴ Regardless of the supposed plot, however, Stilicho took no action whatsoever with reference to it, whether in 405, 406, or 407. The Illyrian project cannot therefore be used to explain his inaction over events in

¹²*Add. Haur.* (= MGH.AA 9.299): [in margin] *Post Alarici introitum sequitur alius exercitus Gotorum et rege Radagaiso Italiam ingressus Italiam vastat. contra quem anno sequenti Stilico cum exercitu et robore militum apud Florentiam Tuscorum urbem occurrit commissoque proelio Radagaisus victus et captus est et ante portas civitatis capite truncatus.* [in text] *Radagaisus in Tuscia multis Gotorum milibus caesis ducente exercitum Stilichone superatus et captus est apud Florentiam urbem ante portas X k. Sept.*

¹³Zos. 5.26.2 tells us that Stilicho was planning to annex Illyricum even before he dealt with Radagaisus. There is no reason to believe him.

¹⁴*PLRE* 2.623 gives the correct dates. This appointment may or may not have signalled Stilicho's intention to wrest eastern Illyricum from the administration of Arcadius. The point, however, is that no evidence allows us to push the inception of the supposed Illyrian plan further back than 407.

Gaul when those events are dated to 407. That is to say, within that traditional chronology, his failure to take any action against the invaders of Gaul must remain inexplicable.

There is one further historical puzzle which rejecting the accepted chronology instantly solves. The revolt of Constantine, we are told, took place in 407, but was preceded by two earlier British usurpations, those of Marcus and Gratian.¹⁵ Now, the internal chronology of Olympiodorus demands that these earlier usurpations took place in 406. Within the traditional chronology, it is impossible to find a reason for them. If one reads Prosper and his *Additamenta* as showing a date of 31 December 405 for the Rhine crossing, the earlier revolts of Marcus and Gratian are readily explained. The invasions of northern Gaul and the inability of the imperial government to do anything about them combined to inspire revolt in Britain. And though this revolt started in 406, it was not until a satisfactory candidate was found in Constantine III, that is in 407, that the usurpation shifted to Gaul.

There are therefore three principal reasons to reject the accepted date for the barbarian crossing of the Rhine. First, the structure of chronicles suggests that the date of the crossing is 31 December 405, not 406. Second, the historical puzzle of Stilicho's inaction disappears if the earlier date is accepted. He failed to act in Gaul because he was taken up with fighting Radagaisus in Italy. Third, the chronology of usurpation in Britain is explained, without emendation, as a reaction to the invasion of Gaul. In combination, these three points make it necessary to reject the conventional date for the invasion, and instead place its beginning on the last day of 405. A detailed narrative of both

¹⁵Zos. 6.3.1.

the invasion and the civil war which followed it will make matters clearer.

It is useful at the start to lay out the few precise chronological indicators for the years 405-411 between which one must accommodate the relative chronologies of individual sources. First, Radagaisus. The *Additamenta* to Prosper show that he invaded Italy in the consulate of Stilicho and Anthemius, therefore in 405. The same source states that he was defeated by Stilicho in the following year, *X k. Sept.*, 23 August 406.¹⁶ Next we have the date for the Rhine crossing, that is 31 December 405.¹⁷ Next, the date of the usurpation of Marcus in Britain, which Olympiodorus gives as *prin e Honorion to hebdomon hypateusai*, that is, before Honorius' seventh consulship, thus in 406.¹⁸ Prosper gives 407 as the year of Constantine III's usurpation.¹⁹ And Hydatius states that on either 28 September or 12 October 409, the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans entered Spain.²⁰ Finally, Prosper, Hydatius, and the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* are united in giving 411 as the year of Constantine's execution.²¹ That, unfortunately, is the sum total of explicit dates vouchsafed by the sources. Other chronological indications are all relative, occurring within the fragments of Olympiodorus, and the narratives of Sozomen and Zosimus.

¹⁶Prosper 1228 (= MGH.AA 9.465) places both Radagaisus' invasion and his death in 405, while Marcellinus (= MGH.AA 11.68) places his invasion in 406 and does not mention his death at all. These contradictions are reconcilable. The invasion spanned two years, 405 and 406, as stated in the *Additamenta*. Prosper and Marcellinus each compressed events into a single year and each picked a different one of the two available. The *Additamenta* preserve the correct chronology.

¹⁷Prosper 1230 (= MGH.AA 9.465); *Add. Haur.* 535 (= MGH.AA 9.299).

¹⁸Olymp., frag. 12 (Müller) = 13.1 (Blockley).

¹⁹Prosper 1232 (= MGH.AA 9.465): *Honorio VII et Theodosio II. Constantinus in Brittania exoritur et ad Gallias transit.*

²⁰Hyd. 34: *Alani et Vandali et Sueui Hispanias ingressi aera CCCCXLVII. Alii III kl. alii idus Octobris memorant, die tertia feria, Honorio VIII et Theodosio filio III consulibus.*

²¹Prosper 1243 (= MGH.AA 9.466); Hyd. 42; *Cons. Const.* s.a. 411 (= Burgess, 243).

Some time in 405, then, Radagaisus crossed the Alps and invaded Italy. This very imminent danger immediately occupied Stilicho's attention. The campaign against Radagaisus cannot be traced with any sort of precision, since Stilicho's panegyrist Claudian, who provides so much information on the general's earlier campaigns, had died in 404. The campaign lasted until August of 406, and while it was in progress Stilicho had no time for other matters.²² This explains his failure to react to an invasion of Gaul in winter 405/406. Until Italy was safe, Gaul was on its own. What is more, the provincials knew it. This allows us to understand the otherwise nonsensical passage in Zosimus in which he describes the British revolts of Marcus, Gratian, and Constantine as reactions to the barbarian advances in Gaul.²³ The barbarians invaded Gaul on the last day of 405. Stilicho was too preoccupied with Radagaisus to do anything about it, so the inhabitants of Britain raised up a usurper to take charge of things.

When Stilicho was finally rid of Radagaisus in August 406 he may well have turned his attention to Gaul. We cannot be certain, however, for the sources are silent. Mustering an army to send to Gaul was at any rate a slow process, as later attempts show.²⁴ Before Stilicho could move in that direction, the usurper Constantine had brought the invaders to a halt. We may ask how their invasion developed. At the very end of 405 and in January 406, Vandals, Sueves, and Alans crossed the Rhine near Moguntiacum (= Mainz).²⁵

²²Its rigours are demonstrated by *CTH* 7.13.16, a law of 406 in which Honorius permitted the arming of slaves in order to combat the danger.

²³Zos. 6.3.1. Since this revolt was already in progress by New Year's Eve 406, it cannot have been a response to an invasion which began on that day. If, however, we accept a date of 31 December 405 for the invasion, Zosimus' statement can stand.

²⁴The army (Zos. 5.32.4) which had gathered at Ticinum by Spring 408 to fight Constantine III had taken more than half a year to put together.

²⁵The Vandals, Alans, and Sueves are the peoples mentioned by most of our sources. It

Why they were there at all is a matter of controversy, into which we need not enter here.²⁶ In the immediate instance, the barbarians had only been waiting on opportunity, and towards the end of 405 it arose. Perhaps the river had frozen, though none of our sources says so.²⁷ The Rhine defences had earlier been weakened to raise troops for the war against Alaric, and this no doubt eased the crossing.²⁸ More recently still, the distraction provided by Radagaisus would have helped the invaders. In the event, there was no organised Roman defence at Moguntiacum. The Vandals, Sueves, and Alans had been opposed by Franks living on the right bank of the Rhine. These may have been Roman federates, though that identification is inference not fact.²⁹ The invasion was also hindered by fighting between different groups of Alans. Gregory of Tours preserves one of those flashes of excitement that enliven the bare record of these years. When the Vandal king Godegisel fell in battle with the Franks, his people would have been wiped out entirely had the Alans under Respendial not come to his aid.³⁰ But the

is difficult to know whether Jerome, *Ep.* 123.16 (*Quadus Vandalus Sarmata Halani Gypedes Heruli Saxones Burgundiones Alamanri et - o lugenda respublica! - hostes Pannonii vastarunt*) represents genuine knowledge or an advertisement of ethnographic virtuosity.

²⁶See Courtois, *Vandales*, for their earlier progress. There is no reason to accept the view that the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves were fleeing the Huns as P. Heather, 'The Huns and the end of the Roman empire in western Europe', *EHR* 110 (1995), 4-41 and idem, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996), 107, insists.

²⁷This is recognised by H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe* (Oxford, 1996), 78.

²⁸Claudian, *Get.* 419-29: *agmina quoniam etiam flavis obiecta Sygambri / quaeque domant Chattos immansuetosque Cheruscos / huc omnes vertere minas tutumque remotis / excubitis Rherum solo terrore relinquunt. / ullane posteritas credet? Germania quondam / illa ferox populis, quae vix instantibus olim / principibus tota poterat cum mole teneri, / tam sese placidam praebet Stilichonis habenis, / ut nec praesidiis nudato limite temptet expositum calcare solum nec transeat annem, / incustoditam metuens attingere ripam.*

²⁹The identification is universal in the literature but neither Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= *MGH.SRM* 1.55) nor Oros. 7.40.3 goes beyond affirming that the Rhine was crossed after Frankish defenders were defeated. This is a long way from calling the Franks federate troops. The inference that they were is plausible, however, if only because there were Roman-sponsored Frankish settlements in the region, on which see Demougeot, *Unité*, 200-3. But there is no way to be sure.

³⁰Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= *MGH.SRM* 1.55): *Interea Respendial rex Alanorum Coare ad Romanos*

Franks were overcome, and the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves crossed over into the Gallic provinces.³¹

They then set out south and west, and their itinerary can be variously traced.³² How specifically one does so depends entirely on the faith one reposes in indifferent sources. The soundest information comes from Jerome, who reports the destruction of Worms, Reims, Amiens, Arras, Thérouanne, Tournai, Speyer, and Strassbourg, and goes on to note the damage wrought upon Aquitaine, Narbonensis, and Novempopulana.³³ This information is precious, and not only when taken at face value. It will be noticed that the named cities are all in the two Belgicas and Germania I. The news from the *Quinque Provinciae*, on the other hand, is very vague. Jerome had a taste for detail, and rarely disdained to invent it where none was handy. Had he known the names of other cities struck by the invaders he would have deployed them.

This permits a conclusion, and imports a date. At the time of writing, Jerome had no precise knowledge of barbarian devastations outside Germania I and the Belgicas. Of the regions south of Belgica he knew only that they had been threatened, and that Toulouse had been

transgresso, de Rheno agmen suorum conuertit, Wandalis Francorum bello laborantibus, Godigyselo rege absumpto, actae viginti ferme milibus ferro peremptis, cunctis Wandalorum ad internitionem delendis, nisi Alanorum uis in tempore subuenisset.

³¹Seeck, *Untergang*, 5.589, n. 378.7, maintains that the Vandals and Alans crossed first, while the Suevi formed a second wave of attackers. There is no reason to object save the lack of evidence.

³²See especially Demougeot, *Unité*, 385-7 and Courtois, *Vandales*, 43, who rejects as false the neat course plotted by Schmidt, *Wandalen*², 17-18.

³³*Epp.* 123.15 (= CSEL 56.92): *Mogontiacus, nobilis quondam ciuitas, capta atque subuersa est et in ecclesia multa hominum milia trucidata, Vangiones longa obsidione finiti, Remorum urbs praepotens, Ambiani, Atrabatae extremique hominum Morini, Tornacus, Nemetae, Argentoratus translatae in Germaniam, Aquitaniae Novemque populorum, Lugdunensis et Narbonensis prouinciae praeter paucas urbes cuncta populata sunt, quas in ipsas fors gladius, intus uastat fames. non possum absque lacrimis Tolosae facere mentionem, quae ut hucusque non rueret, sancti episcopi Exsuperii merita praestiterunt. ipsae Hispaniae iam tamque perturbae cotidie contremescunt recordantes irruptionis Cymbricae et, quicquid alii semel passi sunt, illae semper timore patiuntur.*

defended successfully. The letter was addressed very late in 409 or early in 410.³⁴ We may, for the sake of argument, exaggerate the slowness with which news reached Jerome in Bethlehem and assume that his information was half a year out of date. Even so, it appears that by mid-409, that is to say more than three years after the Rhine crossing, the Vandals and others had only just passed beyond the northernmost provinces of Gaul. Thus, while Jerome had precise knowledge of their devastations in the north, he knows of only their presence in the south. They did, at some point, appear in Aquitania and Narbonensis, but they are attested there neither at specific sites nor at definite times.³⁵ Elsewhere in Gaul, where their depredations are universally asserted in the modern literature, the only attestation comes from late hagiographical sources whose value as evidence is negligible.³⁶ A sober assessment of the evidence therefore shows that from January 406 until January 409 at the earliest, the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans had confined

³⁴F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: sa vie et ses œuvres* (Louvain, 1922), 2.52, dates the letter to 409 on the basis of the references to the invasions and to the ransoming of Rome by the traitor Stilicho, who must therefore have been dead at the time of writing. The actual date may be as late spring 410. The sack of Rome is the true *terminus ante quem* since, given his topic, Jerome would have mentioned it had it already occurred.

³⁵The literary evidence for barbarian devastation in the south of Gaul is considerably less copious than one might imagine. Jerome records Exsuperius' defence of Toulouse in Narbonensis, while Soz. 9.12.3 mentions the barbarians in southern Gaul. Jerome offers no precise date, and Sozomen explicitly ties the barbarian presence in the south to the rebellion of Gerontius against Constantine III, which occurred in 409. A number of other sources from the south of Gaul, among them the *Carmen de diuina providentia* and the *Epigramma* of Paulinus, give eloquent testimony of the trauma which the invasions caused. This testimony incidentally guarantees the presence of the invaders in some of the southern provinces. It has no bearing at all on questions of date. The only evidence which might be thought to contradict that of Jerome is the statement of Orosius that the barbarians rushed as far as the Pyrenees immediately upon crossing the Rhine, only being turned back upon Gaul by the mountains themselves. (Oros. 7.40.3: *Rhenum transeunt, Gallias intradunt directoque impetu Pyrenaeum usque perueniunt: cunctis obice ad tempus repulsae, per circumiacentes provincias refunduntur*). Orosius' chronology is generally suspect and very frequently telescoped. He is here condensing into a single, brief episode the events of three whole years between the Rhine crossing and the entry of the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves into Spain, the correct chronology of which will be established in the reconstruction that follows.

³⁶Fully canvassed by Courtois, *Vandales*, 44-7, where their value is questioned even though they are employed on the map of the barbarian itinerary.

themselves to Belgica I and II and Germania I, which is to say the area north of the Seine, Marne, and upper Moselle.³⁷

We should probably give part of the credit for this feat to the usurper Constantine III, who was raised to the purple in 407 and almost immediately crossed to Gaul. His predecessors had been Marcus and Gratian. The former, as was noted, had been elevated before the seventh consulate of Honorius, that is, in 406.³⁸ He was swiftly killed by the British soldiers, though when precisely is unknown. His successor Gratian lasted four months.³⁹ Constantine, the third in line, was to prove luckier. The string of usurpations had been inspired by the presence of the barbarians in Gaul and by the lack of imperial response to them.⁴⁰ Though Stilicho had finally defeated Radagaisus in August 406, there had not yet been time to organise any action in Gaul, and the prefect's government there had actually retreated from Trier in the face of the invasion.⁴¹ At any rate, it is clear that within the year of the Rhine

³⁷There is no explicit evidence for Germania II and therefore no certainty as to its fate. Given, however, that its only direct communication with the other Roman provinces was through the Belgicas where barbarian occupation is explicitly attested, one is probably justified in adding it to the list of provinces traversed by them.

³⁸Olymp., frag. 12 (Müller) = 13.1 (Blockley).

³⁹Ibid.; Soz. 9.11.1.

⁴⁰Zos. 6.3.1 gives the activities as the barbarians as the reason for the usurpations.

⁴¹A. Chastagnol, 'Le repli sur Arles des services administratifs gaulois en l'an 407 de notre ère'. *RevHist* 249 (1973), 23-40. Chastagnol demonstrates conclusively that the transfer of the praetorian prefecture from Trier to Arles did not take place in 395 as commonly asserted, and argues persuasively, though not conclusively, that it took place in reaction to the Rhine crossing. His chronology needs some slight adjustment, largely because he accepts the traditional date of 31 December 406 for the Rhine crossing. This requires that the removal of the prefect's government from Trier and its move to the south take place within the very cramped time-span of early 407. It also requires him to argue that the prefect Petronius, who organised the withdrawal from Trier, remained prefect until 408, and was then replaced by that Limenius who had fled Gaul before Constantine III. But Petronius' attestation as prefect, *CJ* 11.74.3, can date from anytime between 402 and May 408, and is not therefore much use as a chronological guide. Chastagnol's arguments stand, however, if one accepts the transmitted date for the Rhine crossing, that is 31 December 405. The invasion of Vandals, Alans, and Sueves did indeed prompt the withdrawal of the prefecture from Trier to Arles, but in the course of 406. This abandonment was one more cause, along with the lack of military response from Stilicho, for the rebellion in Britain. This revised, more spacious, chronology also allows for the firm establishment of the prefectural apparatus at Arles, and provides

crossing, the tribes had pushed as far as Belgica II, the only province in which they are soundly attested from which they could possibly have threatened Britain. Marcus and then Gratian was made emperor in order to deal with the barbarians. They seem to have failed in that task, though it is equally possible that their successive murders were the result of other factors. One might speculate that the British troops wanted to go on the offensive and the failure of their nominees to do so led to their murders. But there is no evidence, and in the end one must rest content knowing very little about the British usurpation.⁴² What it became under Constantine is much clearer.

Though a common soldier not an officer, Constantine was raised to the purple on the strength of a name which portended great things.⁴³ How far we need trust that assertion is open to question, but whatever the British rebellion had initially been about, Constantine swiftly turned it into a usurpation similar to that of Magnus Maximus. The presence of barbarians in Belgica II was the immediate cause of Constantine's Channel crossing, but his own goals were clearly personal. He wished to gain recognition as a legitimate Augustus and found a dynasty. One of his sons was pulled from a monastery to this end and married, no doubt with a view to producing heirs.⁴⁴ Both he and his brother were given new

enough time for Petronius to have been succeeded by Limenius. For Chastagnol's arguments on the council of Turin see M. Kulikowski, 'Two councils of Turin', *JTS* n.s. 47 (1996), 159-68, and note that despite the abandonment of Trier, there is no evidence for its sack at this time: H.H. Anton, 'Trier im Übergang von der römischen zur fränkischen Herrschaft', *Francia* 12 (1984), 1-14, who attributes to the Franks the first of four sacks attested by Salvian. Note also that Trier retained a functioning mint under Constantine III: *RIC* 10.146-7.

⁴²Much needless controversy has revolved around the supposed fact that Gratian was a civilian and therefore an inexplicable choice as emperor in the face of a military threat. The evidence, however, is Oros. 7.40.4, *municeps eiusdem insulae* (sc. *Britanniae*), which simply means that Gratian was British. The use of *municeps* to signify nothing more definite than citizen is attested as early as Cicero (*Brut.* 70, 246).

⁴³Soz. 9.11.2; Oros. 7.40.4.

⁴⁴Oros. 7.40.7: *Constantinus Constantem filium suum - pro dolor! - ex monacho Caesarem*

names, Constans and Julian respectively, which also attest to dynastic ambitions.⁴⁵ One need not attribute some sort of atavistic 'Constantinian dream' to Constantine III in order to understand his adoption of Constantinian imagery.⁴⁶ The propaganda value, and the assertion of kinship and dynastic continuity implied by his styling himself officially Flavius Claudius Constantinus, is obvious. And as with all such fictive claims to kinship, their symbolic value in the politics of the late empire did not depend on anyone's believing them to be literally true. Be that as it may, the invented heritage of Constantine will be left out of the reckoning in what follows. We cannot know whether Constantine believed his own propaganda, but his actions are perfectly explicable without asserting that he did.

In 407, then, upon the deposition and murder of Gratian, Constantine was raised to the purple, probably very early in the year. He seems to have immediately conceived the plan of crossing to Gaul, either to fight the barbarians or to secure a firmer base for his usurpation. The options are not mutually exclusive. Before departing Britain, at any rate, he appointed as *magistri militum* Justinus and Nebiogast and then crossed over to Bononia (= Boulogne).⁴⁷ He met no resistance from the imperial establishment in Gaul. The troops of Gaul and the *Quinque Provinciae* rallied to him before he advanced any further and the provincial governors of Spain recognised the usurper before he had

factum. The marriage emerges from Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= *MGH.SRM* 1.56), who tells us that Constans left his wife behind him in Caesaraugusta when he departed Spain for Arles in 409.

⁴⁵The names are not entirely unproblematic. The young Julian's namesake, while the last Constantinian emperor and a success story in Gaul, was nevertheless a pagan and extremely hostile to his forebears. The rationale for choosing the name is thus somewhat opaque.

⁴⁶Arce, 'Gerontius', where the 'sueño constantiniano' appears as an explanation for Constantine's actions in no fewer than three separate places, viz. 90, 98, 108.

⁴⁷Olymp., frag. 12 (Müller) = 13.1 (Blockley).

advanced very far into Gaul.⁴⁸ As for the barbarians, we have seen that they did not pass south of the Belgicas, that is south of the Seine, until 409. Their progress until the arrival of Constantine was determined by a logic of its own. Afterwards, they were confined north of Lugdunensis by his efforts. This was achieved by some combination of force and treaty.⁴⁹ That he won at least one victory over them is suggested by the legend of his earliest coins, which portray him as *Restitutor Rei Publicae*.⁵⁰ That this victory was effective, even in those regions through which the barbarians had passed, is proved by Zosimus' statement that Constantine regarrisoned the Rhine, and by the fact that the mint at Trier continued to function and struck coins in his name.⁵¹ At any rate, as we shall see, it was not until Constantine faced the rebellion of his Roman subordinates that the barbarians again became a problem.

In 407, however, no word of them is heard. The pace of Constantine's advance from Bononia can in part be traced by the flight of the legitimate emperor's officials before him. The epitaph of Eventius from Rome shows that Constantine had advanced through Lugdunensis as far as the region of Vienne before July 407.⁵² Eventius had been the

⁴⁸See below.

⁴⁹Battles (Zos. 6.3.2) and treaties (Oros. 7.40.4).

⁵⁰RIC 10.144. It is possible, of course, that the legend merely proclaims Constantine's intention of fighting the barbarians and restoring the *respublica*.

⁵¹Zos. 6.3.3; RIC 10.146-7.

⁵²H.-I. Marrou, 'L'építaphe vaticane du consulaire de Vienne Eventius', REA 54 (1952), 326-31. The epitaph reads: *Hic situs est claro quondam qui nomine causas / orauit meruitque pater conscriptus haberi / nec longo post aevo dixit iura Viennae / inde iter Italiam magno cumulandus honore / ni luctu tristem linquens Eventius urbem / neu vitae merito sanctis sociandus obisset / bis vicinos vixit quarto recessit in anno / et geminam prolem sexu ex utroque reliquit / coniuge faustina físus quae victa dolore / transigeret uita sed tenta pignore caro / (sustine)t ut paruos defuncto debet amorem / (atque) viro castam promisit ducere vitam / aug DDNN Honorio VII et Theodosio II Augg Conss.* Marrou acknowledges that the connection between Eventius' departure from Vienne and the advance of Constantine cannot be proved, but the hypothesis is plausible and the evidence of the inscription cannot be dismissed by fiat, as does Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 275.

consularis of Viennensis and died at Rome in July or August, probably after fleeing his post in the face of Constantine's invasion. Other Gallic officials had also fled before Constantine, namely the praetorian prefect Limenius and the *magister equitum* Chariobaudes, though their departures cannot be dated.⁵³ Constantine was perhaps making for Italy, but his immediate goal was Arelate (= Arles), the most important city in the *Quinque Provinciae* and the site to which the prefecture of the Gauls had moved in the course of 406.⁵⁴ He did not get there unopposed.

Stilicho now had matters in hand in Italy. Constantine had dealt with Gaul's barbarian troubles, but was himself a much greater threat to Stilicho's Italian regime. The *generalissimo* therefore sent the reliable Gothic general Sarus to intercept Constantine. Sarus met the usurper at Valentia (= Valence) in the Rhône valley half way between Vienne and Arles. Constantine's general Justinus had advanced to meet Sarus at a forward position but was defeated and killed, whereupon the Goth besieged Constantine in Valentia.⁵⁵ Constantine's other *magister*, Nebiogast, entered into negotiations with Sarus.⁵⁶ From the narrative of Zosimus it is unclear whether he did so on his own behalf or on that of his emperor. Either he proposed to negotiate a truce for Constantine with the eventual goal of his recognition as legitimate Augustus, or he intended to betray Constantine to Honorius' general. Though it is usually assumed that Nebiogast was conducting the defence of Valentia, this too is unclear and was probably not the case.⁵⁷ At any rate, Sarus

⁵³They were at Ticinum (= Pavia) in August 408, where they were killed by the rioting troops: Zos. 5.32.4.

⁵⁴See note 40 above, which adjusts the chronology of Chastagnol, *RevHist* 249 (1973), 23-40.

⁵⁵Zos. 6.2.3.

⁵⁶Zos. 6.2.4.

⁵⁷If Nebiogast had been inside Valentia with Constantine, then the emperor himself would have been described as making the decision to negotiate with Sarus. The logical

accepted the *magister's* overtures, only to murder him upon their first meeting. Constantine's reaction was to appoint new *magistri*, Gerontius and Edobich, whose sally put Sarus to flight a mere seven days into the siege of Valentia.⁵⁸ Whether the prefect Limenius fled now or had already done so, the way to Arles was thus opened to Constantine, and by late 407 he was clearly in control of the whole of Gaul.⁵⁹

Difficulties now arise in the narrative. While the sequence of events can be reconstructed with some measure of precision from the internal chronologies of the various sources, no firm dates on which these relative chronologies can depend offer themselves. The next precise date to occur in the sources is Hydatius' specification of either September or October 409 for the entry of the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans into Spain. But much had happened in the meantime. Constantine was secure in Arles by late 407. His magistrates had already been well-received in Spain shortly after his arrival in Gaul. This was only to be expected. Fourth-century usurpations had shown that Spain rapidly swung into line when a coup had taken place in Gaul.⁶⁰ The recognition of Constantine by the Spanish government upset certain of the Spanish relatives of Honorius, however.⁶¹ We know of four members of the Theodosian dynasty in Spain at this time, Didymus, Verinianus, Theodosiolus, and Lagodius. The latter two appear to have

reconstruction is as follows: Constantine had advanced into Gaul separately from and perhaps a bit behind his *magistri*. With the advance of Sarus, Justinus' army had gone out to do battle, Nebiogast's had been held in reserve, while Constantine himself took up position in Valentia. With Justinus defeated, Nebiogast contemplated betrayal instead of the relief of Valentia. He was himself betrayed, after which Constantine promoted new generals with greater success. This is speculative, but fits the sources well.

⁵⁸Zos. 6.2.4.

⁵⁹Constantine's writ also ran in those regions where the barbarian invaders of 405/406 had settled, as coins (RIC 10.146-7) and inscriptions (IG 14.2559) from Trier show.

⁶⁰See Chapter One.

⁶¹Oros. 7.40.6.

acquiesced in the usurpation.⁶² Didymus and Verinianus on the other hand, despite being on bad terms with each other, put aside their differences and raised an army from amongst their dependants.⁶³

The order of events must be deduced from the contradictory sources. Tortuous efforts have been made to harmonise the accounts of Orosius, Sozomen, and Zosimus. This cannot be done. Zosimus and Sozomen share similar narratives which derive from Olympiodorus, but Zosimus introduces blatant error and confusion. If his testimony is discarded, the contradictions between Sozomen and Orosius are less formidable. The temptation exists to discard Orosius, so often muddled on dates, and follow only Sozomen, the best guide to the reliable Olympiodorus. But Orosius was a Spaniard and a contemporary of the events he described and in this instance his testimony deserves a hearing.

One learns from Sozomen that the usurper raised his son Constans to the rank of Caesar in preparation for dispatching him with an army to Spain.⁶⁴ The sources do not offer a firm date for this, but clearly place it shortly after Constantine's establishment in Arles. Consensus has assigned the elevation to early 408, but there is no good reason that Constans' promotion and the expedition to Spain cannot have occurred in the autumn of 407.⁶⁵ But why was the campaign necessary at all? European Spain, as we saw in Chapter Two, possessed

⁶²Despite the statements of various handbooks, neither Theodosiolus nor Lagodius took any part in the resistance. Soz. 9.12.1 is explicit on this point.

⁶³Soz. 9.11.4; Oros. 7.40.6.

⁶⁴Photius' abbreviation of Olympiodorus is silent on this point, but Sozomen 9.11.4 is united with Zosimus 6.4.1 in linking the promotion with the mission to Spain, and both imply that the incidents took place directly Gaul was secure. The time scale, however, is imprecise.

⁶⁵*PLRE* 2.310 gives Constans dates as Caesar as 408-409/410, following the majority of earlier researchers.

no army to speak of, and no previous usurper had needed to secure Spain by force. This anomaly has been insufficiently remarked. The solution, it emerges, lies in the relative chronology of Orosius. In a famous passage, Orosius says that Constantine sent *iudices* to Spain who were received there obediently. Typically, he gives no clue as to date. However, he makes it clear that the resistance contemplated by Honorius' relatives was a response to the arrival of the usurper's magistrates.⁶⁶ They took some time collecting a private army from their estates, and Constans' campaign in Spain was a reaction to this. Constans was sent to Spain not to capture the province for Constantine, but to put down a rebellion in a province that had already submitted to him. This interpretation does no violence to the sources and also explains the otherwise puzzling anomaly of an army having been needed in Spain in the first place.⁶⁷ Since there was no effective garrison in Spain, Constantine's officials there could not stop Didymus and Verinianus from mustering an army.⁶⁸ They could, however, deny them what regular troops there were. This explains the brothers having to arm farmers and servants.⁶⁹ In the end, Constantine had to send an army from Gaul to suppress them.

⁶⁶Oros. 7.40.5: [*Constantinus*] *misit in Hispanias iudices: quos cum prouinciae obedienter accepissent, duo fratres iuuenes nobiles et locupletes Didymus et Verinianus non assumere aduersus tyrannum quidem tyrannidem sed imperatori iusto aduersos tyrannum et barbaros tueri sese patriamque suam moliti sunt.*

⁶⁷The only potential obstacle is Soz. 9.11.4 which implies that Constans installed his own *archontes* after his victory over the Theodosian brothers. It is not insurmountable, since he did, perhaps, do so. The *iudices* of Orosius had not managed to stop Didymus and Verinianus from revolting, so Constans may well have replaced them with officials he thought more competent. Perhaps, on the other hand, Sozomen or his source telescoped the initial reception of Constantinian officials in Spain and the later campaign of Constans into a single incident. One cannot tell.

⁶⁸For the units in the European portion of the Spanish diocese, see Chapter Two.

⁶⁹Soz. 9.11.4 speaks of *agroikon kai oiketon*.

A date for this is of course not forthcoming. But we have seen that the elevation of Constans to Caesar coincided roughly with the taking of Arles. The Spanish expedition therefore set off late in 407. Didymus and Verinianus would by then have had about half a year in which to make their preparations, the site of which raises the next point of controversy. The sources are united in recording two battles, the first a victory for the Spanish rebels, the second a total defeat.⁷⁰ Sozomen, and thus Olympiodorus, placed both battles in Lusitania. Orosius, on the other hand, states that the brothers set up their defences in the Pyrenees, but does not place the site of the second battle specifically. He does, however, add the circumstantial detail that the brothers had crossed the peninsula unopposed.⁷¹ This fact has been too little remarked. It fits very well both with a Lusitanian power base of the brothers, and with the presumed inability of Constantine's Spanish officials to hinder their progress. Nevertheless, certainty is impossible since any solution requires discarding some part of either Orosius or Sozomen. The Pyrenean defence is accepted here, though we are perhaps looking at skirmishes in the Pyrenees followed by decisive fighting in Lusitania.

One battle, at any rate, was fought in Lusitania. Constans may have remained behind with the prefect Apollinaris at Caesaraugusta, the city which he later made his residence.⁷² Gerontius, whom Constans

⁷⁰Soz. 9.11.4-12.1; Oros. 7.40.7-8.

⁷¹Oros. 7.40.6.

⁷²Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= MGH.SRM 1.56) shows that Constans later had his court in Caesaraugusta, but whether this was already the case is uncertain. It is perhaps curious that Apollinaris should be sent with Constans to Spain as prefect. The western prefects had by now been seated in Gaul for more than half a century. Two explanations offer. Perhaps Constantine was deliberately reviving the Constantinian practice whereby each ruler had his own prefect. On the other hand, and this is more likely, he may simply have felt Constans, the ex-monk, incapable of governing without assistance, civilian as well as military.

had brought with him as *comes* and *magister militum*, will therefore have conducted the actual campaign. The Caesar and his general had, however, underestimated the capabilities of their opposition. Didymus and Verinianus were victorious in their first battle and were only taken after the usurper had called in re-enforcements.⁷³ There remain problems of date which are very difficult to resolve, but a contingent narrative can be offered first. Didymus and Verinianus were taken on the second attempt, and, seeing this, Lagodius and Theodosiolus fled Spain, the former seeking refuge with Theodosius II at Constantinople, the latter with Honorius at Ravenna. Constans allowed certain of his troops to sack the *campi Pallentini*, presumably the region of Palantia (= Palencia).⁷⁴ These troops were the *Honoriaci*.⁷⁵ Constans left them behind in Spain under the command of Gerontius.⁷⁶ He left his wife and court at Caesaraugusta, himself escorting the Theodosian prisoners back to Constantine at Arles.⁷⁷ When did all this take place? As has been

⁷³Soz. 9.12.1. Zos. 6.4.3-4 is muddled, introducing Lusitanian troops (which at no time existed) in place of a battle in Lusitania.

⁷⁴Soz. 9.12.1; Oros. 7.40.7-8. This latter notice is perplexing, in that it contradicts the notion of a Lusitanian power base for Didymus and Verinianus. It does no good to fudge and claim that Pallentia is close enough to Cauca, the birthplace of Theodosius, which is itself close enough to Lusitania, and therefore all the transmitted information fits. It does not. However, it is not likely that any landowner of substance possessed properties in only one province.

⁷⁵Orosius describes them as *barbari*, but given their title they were clearly a regular unit of the Roman army.

⁷⁶This too is fraught with controversy. Orosius (7.40.9-10) and Sozomen (9.12.3) both record that Constans left his own soldiers (Orosius makes them the *Honoriaci*) to guard the Pyrenean passes in defiance of an old custom whereby local *rustici* had that duty. One cannot simply dismiss this out of hand as it is recorded in two independent sources, but the information is inexplicable. Who these traditional guardians were can only be guessed at, and the guesses have been many indeed. They were obviously not regular troops, and indeed the Pyrenees seem never to have been systematically defended. Conjecture is pointless, but once Constans had beaten Didymus and Verinianus there is no conceivable reason for his having garrisoned the passes. Against whom? The least unlikely possibility is that he left behind his own troops precisely to guard against the designs of the *rustici* whose customs he ignored. A solution to this problem will not be forthcoming, however.

⁷⁷Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= MGH.SRM 1.56). He will have taken Apollinaris back with him as well, for when the latter fell from grace and was replaced by Decimius Rusticus,

said, there is every reason to think that Constans was despatched to Spain before the end of 407. The campaign there against Honorius' relatives must, if two engagements are to be accommodated, have lasted into 408. Constans would therefore have returned to Arles some time in the course of that year. No further precision is possible and even these dates, while logical, are no more than hypothesis.

Constantine, meanwhile, seems simply to have stayed put in his court at Arles from the point in late 407 when it fell to him. There was no reason for him to do otherwise, since the Rhine had been regarrisoned, the invaders of January 406 remained confined in northern Gaul, and his Caesar was dealing with affairs in Spain. Perhaps it was now that he began to indulge the drunkenness and gluttony for which he was censured by Frigeridus.⁷⁸ He at any rate began to trumpet his own legitimacy, and coins of the Lugdunum mint declare the *concordia* of four Augusti, viz. Arcadius, Honorius, Theodosius, and Constantine himself.⁷⁹ Honorius' government was having none of this pretence however. Stilicho had from the beginning counselled resistance, and had for that reason sent Sarus against the usurper in 407. After that plan failed, and with Alaric under some sort of control, Stilicho had set about gathering an army to send against the usurper. It was this force, mustered at Ticinum, which revolted and perpetrated the massacre of officials there on 13 August 408.⁸⁰ After Stilicho was executed on the

Constans was at Arles: Zos. 6.13.1.

⁷⁸Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= MGH.SRM 1.56): *Constantinus gulae et ventre deditus*.

⁷⁹RIC 10.143-9. These replace the earlier *Restitutor rei-publicae* issue and demonstrate the changed priorities of the usurper. Where first he was proclaiming his triumph and thereby justifying his usurpation, his subsequent concern was to advertise his collegiality with the ruling emperors.

⁸⁰*Excerpta Sangallensia*. s.a. 408 (= MGH.AA 9.300): *Ticeno multi maiores occisi sunt id. Aug.* Full, undated, narrative in Zos. 5.32.2-7.

22nd, Honorius was badly weakened as Alaric and the various partisans of Stilicho raised havoc.⁸¹

Constantine was thus providentially delivered from the threat of an invasion from Italy, and sat quietly at Arles allowing Honorius' position to deteriorate still further, until the time was right to bid for the recognition which would turn his self-proclaimed legitimacy into the real thing. He sent an embassy to make overtures to Honorius as soon as the opportunity arose late in 408. The date of this is not entirely certain because Photius' abridgement of Olympiodorus is here very severe, and we have instead to rely on Zosimus.⁸² The latter places Constantine's embassy at the same time as the treaty with Alaric was agreed, that is late in 408. According to Zosimus, Didymus and Verinianus were already dead, though Honorius had not yet learned of their deaths.⁸³ As we have seen, their execution can probably be dated to the middle of 408. On this evidence, Constantine's embassy will have set off for Ravenna some time in the autumn of 408. With his hands full in Italy, and lacking a competent general to press his cause, Honorius acknowledged Constantine as his colleague and sent him an imperial robe.⁸⁴ In January 409, Constantine and Honorius shared the consulate as imperial colleagues, though this was not recognised outside Constantine's own *pars imperii*.⁸⁵ Having got what he had long wanted, Constantine remained free to linger at Arles.

⁸¹*Excerpta Sangallensia* s.a. 408 (= *MGH.AA* 9.300): *occisus est Stilico Ravenna XI kl Septembres*.

⁸²Olymp., frag. 12 (Müller) = 13.1 (Blockley); Zos. 5.43.1-2.

⁸³Zos. 5.43.2.

⁸⁴Zos. 5.43.2. Olymp., frag. 12 (Müller) = 13.1 (Blockley), states only that Honorius recognised Constantine temporarily on account of the troubles he faced in Italy.

⁸⁵IG 14.2559 (Trier) has Honorius and Constantine as joint Augusti. Hydatius, Prosper, Victor of Aquitaine, Marcellinus, Cassiodorus, the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, and the *Chronicon Paschale* all give the consular year as *Honorio VIII et Theodosio III*. The *Consularia Italica* offers neither information nor consular date for 409, which leaves

This period is another instance where our sources give a very deceptive view of the time-frame of events. The relative chronologies preserved by Sozomen and, especially, Zosimus, suggest that the Caesar Constans, having hauled Didymus and Verinianus back to Arles, was immediately sent back to Spain with a new *magister* to replace Gerontius. This impression, which has deceived more than one inquirer into misdating Constans' victory in Spain, is belied by the rest of the narrative. What is never stated but must nonetheless be inferred is that Constans, upon returning to Arles with his prisoners in 408, remained there with his father until the summer of 409. The date is established as follows. Gerontius revolted when or just before Constans returned to Spain. The barbarian invasion of Spain was a direct consequence of Gerontius' revolt. This invasion of Vandals, Alans, and Sueves occurred at the latest on 12 October 409. So Constans' return to Spain must be fixed some time in the summer of that year. In the sources, another spate of compressed incident follows on the revolt of Gerontius and the retreat of Constans, and it too must be unravelled to a more plausible pace. Zosimus' narrative stops short, but Sozomen again suggests that the revolt of Gerontius, the flight and death of Constans, and the siege, defeat, and capture of Constantine, each followed immediately on one another. But as we have seen, Gerontius' revolt dates to the late summer of 409, while Constantine did not fall till summer 411. The recorded incident can be spread quite reasonably over those two years, as long as one first recognises that the pace of our surviving narratives is misleading.

open a very slight possibility that the joint consulship of Honorius and Constantine was at some point acknowledged in Italy and later excised. But see *CLRE*, 353.

The year 409, then, opened propitiously for Constantine. He had been acknowledged by Honorius and could claim to share the consulate with him. He and Constans were safely at Arles. The Spanish resistance had been crushed and Spain was securely held by Gerontius. But Constantine overplayed his hand. He raised Constans to the rank of Augustus and again despatched him to Spain, at the same time purging his son's high command. Apollinaris was replaced as prefect by Decimius Rusticus.⁸⁶ Gerontius too looked set for supersession, since Constans set off for Spain with the general Justus in tow.⁸⁷ The motive for this last appointment is among the most discussed incidents of this entire era, and no solution is satisfactory.⁸⁸ Gerontius, at any rate, was to be replaced. Understandably enough he objected to this, raised the standard of revolt, and stirred up the barbarians in Gaul against Constantine.⁸⁹ The barbarians are conspicuous by their silence in the foregoing years. The evidence of Jerome, as we have seen, strongly suggests that until 409 they had remained in the Belgicas in northern Gaul. Gerontius encouraged them to move.

It is this period, the second half of 409 and early 410, to which the record of their devastation in Aquitaine and Narbonensis belongs. Southern Gaul had known unbroken peace for many decades now, even when the north had been gravely threatened.⁹⁰ The southern economy

⁸⁶Zos. 6.13.1.

⁸⁷Zos. 6.5.2.

⁸⁸See, e.g., Arce, 'Gerontius', 114. It is entirely possible that Gerontius revolted for some unknown reason and that Constans' second mission to Spain, in the company of Justus, was in response to this revolt. That is to say, the sources allow for this by their silence. This scenario is not adopted here because of the situation of Apollinaris. His replacement by Rusticus took place at Arles not in Spain, and was therefore probably not connected with Gerontius' revolt. Rather it and the projected replacement of Gerontius, are here interpreted as a purge of Constantine's high command, which then sparked Gerontius' rebellion. There is no means of deciding the point.

⁸⁹Zos. 6.5.2.

⁹⁰See especially A.L.F. Rivet, *Gallia Narbonensis* (London, 1988) and the relevant

remained strong throughout the fourth century, and the political class of the region had enjoyed an unprecedented ascendancy in the century's last decades.⁹¹ The shock of the invasion was all the more severe for these facts. The literary sources paint a dark and dramatic picture, and one which is perhaps most noteworthy for the surprise it registers. Such things simply were not supposed to happen. An anonymous lament complains of peace having left the world, of all suffering equally by sword and disease, hunger and cold, and captivity.⁹² Another poem, an *Epigramma* attributed to one Paulinus, makes special reference to the Vandals and the 'swift Alans', their arson and their looting.⁹³ But the same poem reproves the victims of these atrocities for swiftly returning to their old way of life. The *Carmen de divina providentia* and Orientius' *Commonitorium* also evoke the horrors of life during wartime, and the catalogue of ills is similar in every case: famine, disease, random murder, pillage, looting, and burning.⁹⁴ No summary can do justice to the Latin of the originals, where genuine feeling is visible behind the walls of late antique rhetoric.⁹⁵

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⁹¹Fourth-century urban life: J. Harries, 'Christianity and the city in late Roman Gaul', *The City in Late Antiquity* (London, 1992), 77-98, though a less rosy picture is presented by S.T. Loseby, 'Arles in Late Antiquity: *Gallula Roma Arelas* and *Urbs Genesii*', in N. Christie and S.T. Loseby, edd., *Towns in Transition* (Aldershot, Hants., 1996), 45-70. Gallo-Romans in politics: K.F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948), *passim*, and Matthews, *Aristocracies*, esp. 56-87.

⁹²*Poema coniugis ad uxorem* (CSEL 30.344 = *Clavis*³ 531).

⁹³*Epigramma* (CSEL 16.503 = *Clavis*³ 1464): *Et tamen, seu si quid uastauit Sarmata, si quid / Vandalus incedit ueloxque abduxit Alanus, / ambiguis spebus licet et conatibus aegris / nitimur in quendam speciem reparare priorum.*

⁹⁴*Carmen de divina providentia*, PL 51.617-38 (= *Clavis*³ 532). Orientius, CSEL 16, 1.205ff. (= *Clavis*³ 1465). On these and the works cited in the preceding notes see now M. Roberts, 'Barbarians in Gaul: the response of the poets', in Drinkwater and Elton, 97-106.

⁹⁵P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*³ (Paris, 1964), 79-101, collects these sources and more, and brings them to life with unsurpassable skill. Like the closing chapter of Piganiol's *L'Empire Chrétien*, Courcelle's book was written when the memory of a more recent German occupation of Gaul was still raw. If this perhaps coloured historical vision, it contributed immensely to the sympathy with which both authors handled their Roman sources.

Such were the responses to a barbarian presence which began to make itself felt in the southern provinces perhaps half-way through 409. How long did that presence last? It is usually assumed that once the passes to Spain were opened, all three peoples poured into the peninsula and stayed there. But things were hardly that neat, and two points need to be remembered. First, the Pyrenees would form no sort of impediment to movement between Spain and Gaul unless a special defence was mounted, and secondly, with Gerontius and Constans occupied in fighting one another, no such defence was attempted. The mountains could be crossed and recrossed at will. And while it is clear that Gerontius wished the barbarians to cause trouble for Constantine, it is by no means certain that he had any intention of letting them into Spain. Events exceeded his power to control them. The passes, either neglected or, less plausibly, betrayed, offered no hindrance, and Spain as well as southern Gaul lay open to the barbarians.⁹⁶

It is, however, a mistake to think that once the barbarians had crossed into Spain they stayed there exclusively, especially as Sozomen states very definitely that after the collapse of Constantine's power, which is to say after the revolt of Gerontius, the barbarians wreaked havoc on both sides of the Pyrenees.⁹⁷ The important point is that nothing in the sources points to the presence of the barbarians in southern Gaul before 409, while there is no reason to take Hydatius' date of October 409 as a *terminus ante quem* for their activities there. The true *terminus ante quem* is 411, that is, after the tribes shared out

⁹⁶Oros. 7.40.9 blames the *Honoriaci* for betraying the passes. Soz. 9.12.6 says merely that those who were to have been guarding the passes failed in their duty. If Gerontius was as wholeheartedly occupied in fighting Constans as the sources imply, it is no wonder than he wasted little effort on garrisons.

⁹⁷Soz. 9.12.3.

the Spanish provinces among themselves to settle in, and, coincidentally, after the suicide of Gerontius and the suppression of Constantine. Between 409 and 411, however, it is likely that the barbarians were active on both sides of the Pyrenees.

In late summer 409, then, the tribes entered southern Gaul at the instigation of Gerontius. Constantine, in the mean time, had designs on Italy. He sent another embassy to Honorius at about the time of Alaric's first march on Rome.⁹⁸ Conducted by Jovius, it altered nothing, but offered the chance of subverting one of Honorius' generals, the *magister equitum* Allobich.⁹⁹ Constantine therefore determined to lead an army into Italy, ostensibly, perhaps, to assist his imperial colleague against Alaric. This action is once again hard to date, but it is very likely that he advanced into Italy in spring 410.¹⁰⁰ He got no further than the Po, however, and turned round at Liberona when he heard of Allobich's death.¹⁰¹ He reached Arles at the same time as his son Constans, who had had troubles of his own in Spain.¹⁰²

Gerontius had revolted in summer 409. The sources once again compress the time frame excessively. Constans arrived at Arles at the same time as Constantine on his return from Italy—spring 410 or

⁹⁸Zos. 6.1.1.

⁹⁹Allobich was almost certainly in correspondence with Constantine. He was executed on suspicion of just that, but the proof lies in the fact that Constantine called a halt to his invasion of Italy upon hearing of Allobich's death: Olymp., frag. 14 (Müller) = 15.1 (Blockley); Soz. 9.12.5.

¹⁰⁰There is no way to extract a date from the sources here, and, as has been said, the relative chronology is unduly compressed by Sozomen. Logic dictates that if the embassy which preceded the invasion took place late in 409, the invasion itself would have been put off to the next spring's campaigning season. A small element of doubt is introduced by Sozomen 9.12.4, however. He states that Constantine went round the Cottian Alps to enter Liguria. This means he took the coast road via Aix, Frejus, and Nice. Did he bypass the mountains on account of winter snows?

¹⁰¹The location has given trouble. Either it is Libarna, on the Po in Liguria, or Verona, which is not in Liguria. See Blockley, 2.214, n. 37. The problem is not soluble.

¹⁰²Soz. 9.12.6.

thereabouts. He and Justus had waged war against the revolting *magister* and been defeated. The modern literature describes Constans fleeing ignominiously without a fight. The sources, however, attest to a retreat undertaken after a contest of arms had been tried and failed. Father and son, imperial colleagues, conferred at Arles and presumably decided upon a plan of action. Despite Constantine's abortive invasion, Honorius could be relied upon to do nothing, given his record up to that point. This, at least, explains the apparent lack of precaution taken against any challenge from Italy. Gerontius was the main threat, and with him certain unspecifiable barbarians in Gaul.¹⁰³ Edobich, Constantine's *magister militum*, was sent to the Rhine to secure the assistance of Frankish soldiers.

Constans, meanwhile, went back against the usurper one more time and was yet again defeated. This time, however, Gerontius succeeded in killing him at Vienne. That is puzzling, as Vienne does not lie on any logical route between Spain and Arles. The sources, meanwhile, are somewhat unclear. Photius' abbreviation of Olympiodorus states merely that Gerontius pursued Constans and killed him.¹⁰⁴ Sozomen, on the other hand, says both that Gerontius killed Constans on the way to confronting Constantine, and that Constantine had sent Constans out to defend Vienne.¹⁰⁵ Whatever solution one adopts will be arbitrary, insofar as it is unclear which statement of Sozomen represents an accurate reflection of Olympiodorus' original. Vienne is not readily explicable as the site of the final battle between the

¹⁰³It is very likely that the doubtful treaties which Constantine had often made with the barbarians (Oros. 7.40.4: *saepe a barbari incertis foederibus inlusus*) date to this period during which he and Gerontius competed for the service of the barbarians.

¹⁰⁴Olymp., frag. 16 (Müller) = 17.1 (Blockley).

¹⁰⁵Soz. 9.13.1.

two. It is therefore proposed that the battle which Constans was sent out to fight took place somewhere on the road from Arles to Spain. Defeated, he took refuge at Vienne, where Gerontius chased him down. Other reconstructions are possible, but this one has the virtue of accommodating the proposition that Gerontius set out from Spain against Constantine. Constans, however, intercepted him and diverted him briefly from his original plan.

All this must have taken some time. At any rate, we are told that by the time Gerontius had succeeded in killing Constans, Honorius' generals Constantius and Ulfila had crossed the Alps into Gaul.¹⁰⁶ And since the end of Constantine followed quickly, we have now arrived at spring 411. The campaign of Gerontius against Constans, then, occupied much of 410, and the son's death will have preceded his father's by only a few months, that is, early in 411. In the meantime, much had taken place.

Photius' abbreviation is once again too radical, and the narrative of Sozomen preserves a better guide to Olympiodorus. Gerontius, upon deciding to revolt, immediately set up his own emperor.¹⁰⁷ This was Maximus, one of his clients and a *domesticus*.¹⁰⁸ Gerontius chose for his residence Tarraco, the provincial capital and in easy communication with

¹⁰⁶Olymp., frag. 16 (Müller) = 17.1 (Blockley).

¹⁰⁷Olymp., frag. 16 (Müller) = 17.1 (Blockley) says that Gerontius created his own emperor only after Constans had been put to flight, but this suggests abbreviation where the fuller narrative of Soz. 9.13 places the usurpation at the same time as the rebellion. The latter account has the advantage of logic, though some will still prefer Photius' version, with perfect justification since proof is impossible.

¹⁰⁸The status of Maximus vis-à-vis his sponsor is the subject of endless controversy. Maximus appears as *pais* and *domestikos* in Olympiodorus and *oikeos* in Sozomen. For Gregory of Tours (2.9 = MGH.SRM 1.56), he is *unum e clientibus suis*, while Orosius (7.42.5) contents himself with a *Maximus quidam*. Both possibilities have numerous advocates, though client tends to be preferred (e.g., PLRE 2.744). That Maximus was allowed to live after his patron's suicide (Prosper 1245 = MGH.AA 9.466) may argue against a blood kinship.

Gaul.¹⁰⁹ The mint at Barcino immediately began producing issues in Maximus' name.¹¹⁰ Gerontius may have secured his own rear by treating with such barbarians as were then in Spain, but there is no evidence of his having done so.¹¹¹ It is, at any rate, unlikely that Gerontius had ever wanted the barbarians in Spain. His intention, after all, had been for the Gallic barbarians to harass Constantine in Gaul. They nevertheless got into Spain shortly after the start of Gerontius' revolt, and their activities and eventual settlement are treated in chapter four. For the present, while some ran wild through Spain and others may have remained at large in Aquitaine and parts of Narbonensis, Gerontius fought with Constans, first in Spain, where the latter was defeated, then in Gaul. These campaigns occupied the better part of 410, and Gerontius did not succeed in destroying Constans until early in 411. That done, he took up his intended pursuit of Constantine.

The latter seems himself never to have left Arles after his Italian failure. He was still waiting for Edobich's return from the Rhineland when Gerontius advanced down the Rhône from Vienne to Arles.¹¹² He besieged his former master there, but fled when the army of Constantius and Ulfila, which had apparently met no resistance at the Alps, arrived before the city walls. Most of Gerontius' troops went over to Constantius, who, presumably with their help, pressed on with the siege begun by Gerontius.¹¹³ Constantine refused to submit, placing his trust in the arrival of Edobich. When news of the latter's advent arrived at

¹⁰⁹Soz. 9.13.1.

¹¹⁰RIC 10.150-1.

¹¹¹See Chapter Four. The supposed betrayal of the passes by the *Honoriat* (Oros. 7.40.9) is frequently taken as evidence of a treaty with the barbarians by which Gerontius opened the passes and allowed them into Spain. This distorts the testimony of Orosius out of all recognition.

¹¹²Soz. 9.15.1.

¹¹³Soz. 9.13.3.

Arles, Constantius and Ulfila advanced to meet him. They had to cross the Rhône to do so, since Roman Arles straddled the river with buildings on both sides.¹¹⁴ The main road south from the Rhineland, along which Edobich was presumably returning, runs along the left bank of the river. Ulfila and Constantius had therefore been conducting their siege from the right bank. Crossing the Rhône, they marched north to intercept Edobich, trapping him between two sections of their army.¹¹⁵ Constantine's general was routed. While his troops surrendered, he himself fled to Ecdicius, to whom he was bound by ties of friendship. Despite these, the Gallic nobleman put him to death and took his head to Constantius.¹¹⁶

This latter had with Ulfila returned to the siege of Arles. Faced with certain defeat, Constantine retired to a church and had himself ordained.¹¹⁷ The gates of the city were opened, Constantius and Ulfila entered victorious, and took Constantine and his surviving son, the *nobilissimus* Julian, prisoner. They were sent to Honorius in Italy and executed beside the river Mincio.¹¹⁸ The date was September 411. On the 18th of that month, the usurper's head was displayed on a stake at Ravenna.¹¹⁹ Constantius applied himself to restoring order in the western provinces. Gerontius, meanwhile, had committed a dramatic suicide: besieged by his own soldiers, his last refuge in flames around him, he killed his faithful servant and his devout wife, before falling on

¹¹⁴For maps see Rivet, *Narbonensis*, 192, and TCCG 3.75. See, however, Loseby, *Towns in Transition*, 46-8, for the suggestion that there was almost no late antique habitation on the right bank of the river.

¹¹⁵For the strategy see Elton, *Warfare*, 254.

¹¹⁶Soz. 9.14.2-4. His reward was a lapidary reprimand on the duties of hospitality.

¹¹⁷Soz. 9.15.1.

¹¹⁸Olymp., frag. 16 (Müller) = 17.1 (Blockley); Soz. 9.15.2-3; Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= MGH.SRM 1.56).

¹¹⁹*Cons. Const.*, s.a. 411 (= Burgess, 243).

his dagger.¹²⁰ His client Maximus, bereft of all support, put aside the purple and departed to live amongst the barbarians who had by now partitioned much of Spain among them.¹²¹

Before moving on, it will perhaps be useful to recapitulate the conclusions of the foregoing discussion, the density of which has been much increased by the necessity of arguing each point in detail. The summary which follows omits the hesitations and caveats which hedge about its many probabilities and possibilities. The events of 406-411 are essential for an understanding of the end of Roman Spain, for they serve to demonstrate that the magical year 409, the traditional end of Roman Spain, lacks the significance conventionally assigned to it. The crossing of the Pyrenees in 409 was simply one incident in a Roman civil war, and neither it nor the end of that civil war signalled the end of Roman Spain. The presence of the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans in Spain was thenceforth a factor with which the Romans had to reckon, but Roman authority in Spain persisted for many years to come.

In the winter of 405/406, Vandals, Sueves, and Alans took advantage of Stilicho's preoccupation with Radagaisus and crossed the Rhine at Mainz. After facing the resistance of some Franks in which the Vandal king was slain, they advanced through Germania I, and Belgica I and II, where for the time being they stopped. Their advent precipitated the withdrawal of the praetorian prefecture from Trier. The barbarian advance and the lack of imperial reaction inspired a rebellion in Britain by late summer of 406. First Marcus, then Gratian, was raised to the

¹²⁰Soz. 9.13.4-7.

¹²¹Oros. 7.40.5.

purple, but neither pleased the soldiers and both were soon killed. Early in 407, Constantine III was made emperor, and having appointed the *magistri* Justinus and Nebiogast, crossed to Bononia to fight the barbarians. This he did successfully, declaring himself *restitutor reipublicae*. Gaul and Spain submitted to him immediately, and he advanced as far south as Valentia before an army under Sarus, sent by Stilicho from Italy, forced him to stop and fight late in the summer. Sarus defeated Justinus and murdered Nebiogast, after the latter had attempted to betray his emperor. Constantine then appointed Edobich and Gerontius *magistri* and these generals chased Sarus back to Italy. In early autumn 407, Constantine set up his capital in Arles and ruled over all of Gaul, having confined the German invaders of 406 north of the Lugdunenses whether by force or treaty.

Meanwhile, the Spanish provinces of Constantine's empire had been disturbed by a rebellion under Didymus and Verinianus, relatives of Honorius. Constantine responded by creating his son Constans, an ex-monk, Caesar and sending him to Spain with Gerontius. The campaign lasted into 408 and, after some initial success, Didymus and Verinianus were defeated and captured. Constans permitted his victorious troops the luxury of some looting, and then left Gerontius behind in Caesaraugusta, returning to his father at Arles with the captives, who were then executed. In the meantime, Stilicho's plans to unseat the usurper were thwarted by a mutiny of the troops at Ticinum and by his own execution soon thereafter. Honorius was faced with an Italy gripped in the disturbances of Alaric, and was thus forced to recognise Constantine as an imperial colleague when the latter sent an embassy to him in autumn 408.

In early 409 Constantine and Constans were at the height of their success, and Constantine celebrated his joint consulship with Honorius. His ambitions overreached his abilities, however, and by raising Constans to the rank of Augustus and initiating a purge of his high command, he set his kingdom toppling round him. Gerontius, knowing that he was to be replaced, revolted and caused the barbarians in the north to rise as well. They headed south and by late summer or early autumn of 409 entered Aquitaine and Narbonensis I, while in September and October of that same year some of them crossed the Pyrenees into Spain. The neglect of Gerontius permitted this, since after having made his client Maximus Augustus at Tarraco, he himself concentrated on defeating his former master Constantine. His battles against Constans occupied him throughout the following year, while the barbarians in Spain went unchecked.

Constantine, meanwhile, perhaps reckoning Gerontius less of a threat than he proved to be, set his sights upon Italy. Having entered into correspondence with Honorius' *magister equitum* Allobich, he marched into Italy in early spring 410. Honorius came to suspect Allobich and had him executed, whereupon Constantine withdrew back to Arles where he was to remain until his final defeat. He and Constans, the latter having retreated before the victorious Gerontius, met at Arles in spring 410 and concocted a plan to rescue their crumbling dominion. The *magister* Edobich was sent to the Rhineland to gather reinforcements, while Constans was once again despatched to fight Gerontius. Defeated again, he retired to Vienne where he was killed. Gerontius then advanced on Arles but fled at the approach of the army of the legitimate emperor and committed suicide soon afterwards when his

troops deserted him. Honorius' army, under the command of Constantius and Ulfila, won the loyalty of Gerontius' deserting troops, defeated the returning Edobich somewhere east of the Rhône, and pressed home the siege of Arles. Hopeless now, Constantine laid down the imperial purple, retired to a church, and had himself ordained. Arles opened its gates to Constantius, and the usurper-turned-cleric was hauled from his sanctuary and sent to the victorious Honorius, though both Constantine and his son were executed before they reached Ravenna.

The historian Orosius thought that Honorius was the special favorite of a God who allowed him so providentially to defeat the serried ranks of usurpers that faced him during his long reign.¹²² Honorius was not an active emperor and one may well seek some explanation for his successes. These were, indeed, providential, but he was blessed not by God but by the incompetence of his opponents. The sources for the reign of Constantine III are rich compared to those for many late imperial episodes, and the account of Olympiodorus and his abbreviators even permits some estimate of the character of Constantine, Gerontius, and the rest. Much romantic fancy has thus passed into the record, though it is contradicted by sober reflection.

Constantine was an ambitious opportunist. He won Gaul through force of circumstance, Spain through its dependence on Gaul. His recognition by Honorius was Alaric's doing, not his own. His single success was against the barbarian invaders of 405. It would, in fact, be hard to imagine a less active usurper. He could not even pick effective

¹²²Oros. 7.42.15-17.

subordinates, as the successive fates of Justinus and Nebiogast, Edobich and Gerontius show. As for this last, despite the beguiling story of his last hours, his failure was unmitigated. His first victory, against an army of rural clients, came only on a second attempt. He could not control the force he unleashed in the shape of the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves. And it took him more than a year to defeat the ex-monk Constans, the only general of the era less competent than himself. A rigid disciplinarian who could nevertheless win no victories, it is no wonder that his troops deserted him intent upon murder.

It is also, in the end, small wonder that Honorius emerged, if not victorious, at least still in possession of his throne. Had he been faced by a Magnentius or a Magnus Maximus, events would likely have unfolded differently. But the singular inability of his challengers made it inevitable that the advent of a competent general would seal their fates. Constantius, in the event, was more than merely competent. A good thing, too, for the defeat of Constantine left a great deal to be done in Spain and Gaul. Gerontius, in his haste to do down his former emperor, left behind him a terrible mess in Spain. The Vandals, Sueves, and Alans had divided up the provinces and settled down to stay.¹²³ The effects of their settlement on the history of Roman Spain are the subject of the next chapter. In it, we shall see how instead of coming abruptly to an end in 409, Roman authority was quickly reestablished in Spain, partly through imperial initiative and partly through the use of the Goths, a barbarian people who enter our narrative in 415 and remain central to it in everything that follows.

¹²³Oros. 7.40.10; Hyd. 41.

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Chapter Four

Roman Spain from Maximus to John

In the immediate aftermath of the invasions of 409, we begin to see the outline of political patterns that dominated Spanish history until the death of Majorian more than fifty years later. There was no cataclysmic break with the past in 409, and the history of Spain after that year should not be considered post-Roman. Instead, we see a Spain in which imperial authority survived, in control of the administrative machinery of all the provinces save Gallaecia, but kept constantly off balance by barbarian settlers. The government was unable to eliminate them and tolerated a high level of localised instability, while consistently repulsing them from the urban nodes of administration in the provinces of Lusitania, Baetica, Carthaginiensis, and Tarraconensis. The Roman emperors maintained their authority largely through the use of Gothic military support. While that support is sometimes misconstrued as independent Gothic aggression, it must be remembered that until the reign of Majorian, the Goths acted in the peninsula only as instruments of Roman policy. That, at any rate, is the general picture which emerges from the sources.

Hydatius and the end of Roman Spain

Those sources pose certain well-known problems, however. In the first place, we grow gradually more dependent upon Hydatius as the fifth century progresses. Until about 418, he is one among many sources for the history of Roman Spain. For the next decade he is the major source. After 429, he is to all intents and purposes the only one. This is not

necessarily a bad thing. The accuracy of Hydatius has repeatedly been vindicated, especially in comparison to the other fifth- and sixth-century chroniclers.¹ The real problem lies elsewhere, and is not the fault of Hydatius. Any time only a single source is available to us, there is a temptation simply to paraphrase it at length and write *finis*. In part, this arises from a natural unwillingness to disregard precious information. Where sources are plentiful, we pick and choose among them, leaving aside the tangential or superfluous. But when all we possess is a single source, we are disinclined to leave out anything it tells us. As if to compensate for not knowing more, we are compelled to record every scrap we have regardless of its relevance. Just as many histories of Anglo-Saxon England are paraphrases of Bede, so many histories of fifth-century Spain do no more than transcribe Hydatius. But Hydatius demands a more nuanced approach.

There are two key points at issue when dealing with Hydatius. The first is inherent in the genre of the chronicle. Events of one year are presented much as are the events of another, and the conventional means of signalling the importance of different facts are absent.² This difficulty is particularly acute in Hydatius, who with the lone exception of the Gothic campaign of 456 never presents any event as being of greater significance than any other. The second point is the geographical limitations of Hydatius' chronicle, which mostly records events in Gallaecia. What is more, Hydatius records both purely local and farther-ranging information with no change of emphasis. This lays a trap into which the modern historian can easily walk. Gallaecia was not Spain,

¹Burgess, 6-10.

²S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth-century Chroniclers* (Leeds, 1990), 8-47.

and it does our understanding of late Roman Spain no good to imagine otherwise. We cannot simply extrapolate conditions in Gallaecia into the rest of the Spanish provinces, or imagine that the confusion which reigned in the one place was also the rule elsewhere.³ Yet the wholesale reproduction of Hydatius in a modern narrative has precisely this effect, because Gallaecia is granted narrative space out of all proportion to its importance.

Yet, in recognising that Hydatius concentrates heavily on Gallaecia, we should not make the mistake of thinking him isolated and incapable of recording anything more than he actually did record. Too much can be made of the gaps in Hydatius' knowledge.⁴ The information networks of the late Roman world were not good judged by any modern standard.⁵ It is possible that the things Hydatius did not know are evidence for the growing gulf between Suevic Gallaecia and the rest of the Roman world, but we have no grounds for comparison. A fourth-century bishop in an obscure Gallaecian town is unlikely to have been dramatically better-informed than was Hydatius in the fifth century. Hydatius' sources, in so far as they are visible to us, were perfectly normal. News could come directly from the east via Hispalis.⁶ For the most part, however, Rome and Gaul are the centres from which information reached Gallaecia. It is possible that much of the Italian news which finds its way into Hydatius was mediated through Gallic

³Muhlberger, *Chronicles*, 245-56, notices some of the problems of extending Hydatius' Gallaecian testimony too far.

⁴He was unable, for instance, to discover the date of the deaths of Jerome or of John of Jerusalem, and he did not realise that Cyril directly succeeded Theophilus at Alexandria: Hyd. 97, 53. See Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 147-8, for extended comment on Hydatius' ignorance.

⁵A.D. Lee, *Information and Frontiers* (Cambridge, 1993), *passim*.

⁶E.g., Hyd. 97, 170.

informants, since most of the sources he names are in fact from Gaul.⁷ There is, however, one explicit reference to direct contact between Rome and Gallaecia, when the Gallaecian deacon Pervincus brings back to Spain the anti-Priscillianist writings of pope Leo I.⁸ What is more, correspondence between Rome and Asturica (Astorga) in Gallaecia survives from the very years when Hydatius was writing.⁹ The chronicle of Hydatius presents the historian with many problems, but the isolation and ignorance of the chronicler is not among them.

On the other hand, the way in which Hydatius presents his material is a problem to be reckoned with. We must always distinguish between the actual events which Hydatius records, and the way in which he strives to make his reader interpret them. Hydatius saw the world as a bleak and terrible place, and was at pains to make the reader feel the same despair of its goodness as he did himself.¹⁰ Hydatius constantly glosses events as pessimistically as he can. We need not accept his interpretation as our own at every turn.¹¹ The facts he records in the local history of Gallaecia are certainly compatible with his interpretation of them. In the rest of Spain, however, there is a discrepancy between the events he records and the interpretation he gives them. If we accept his interpretation in these instances we are seriously misled. To reconstruct a history of late Roman Spain it is necessary to look at what Hydatius says, while often rejecting the way he says it. By doing so, we

⁷Hyd. 65, 137, 143.

⁸Hyd. 128.

⁹See Chapter Six.

¹⁰Hydatius' most recent editor, Burgess, esp. 9-10, sees in his work an obsession with the end of the world, in which his chronicle becomes an account of the last days before the apocalypse. He develops the argument further in 'Hydatius and the final frontier', *SF* I, 321-32. One need not concur wholeheartedly with this view to agree with its implications for Hydatius' historical method.

¹¹The persuasiveness of Hydatius' rhetoric is demonstrated by Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 332, where Hydatius' tone is adopted as his own by the modern historian.

dispel the traditional picture of fifth-century Spain as a post-Roman chaos. There emerges instead a picture in which the imperial authority retains its efficacy for more than fifty years after 409, the year in which it is usually said to have disappeared.

The invasion of 409 and its aftermath

The entry of the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves into Spain was an episode in a Roman civil war, a by-product of the manoeuvres of Roman generals against one another. The barbarian entrance was nevertheless an invasion and not a controlled or regulated affair. Gerontius had encouraged the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves, who had been in the northern provinces of Gaul since 406, to renew hostilities against Constantine III. After reaching Aquitaine and Narbonensis I, the barbarians crossed the Pyrenees and entered Spain as well, though some of them may have stayed in the southern Gallic provinces until the fall of Constantine.¹² The crossing into Spain was possible only in the confusion caused by intra-Roman conflict, because Gerontius was too intent upon harassing Constantine to prevent it. This failure has sometimes been taken to imply connivance, perhaps a treaty between Gerontius and the invaders. There is nowhere any evidence for this, and we are constrained to view the crossing of the Pyrenees in 409 as sheer opportunism and nothing more.

Hydatius paints a bleak picture of the violence which the barbarians inflicted on the helpless Spanish provinces in 409 and 410. His testimony is usually taken to describe the total destruction of Roman power in Spain, with the barbarian settlement of 411 marking its

¹²On this possibility, see Chapter Three.

final expunction.¹³ It is worth quoting Hydatius' description of the years 410 and 411 in full, to see precisely what it does and does not say:

As the barbarians ran wild through Spain with the evil of pestilence raging as well, the tyrannical tax collector seized the wealth and goods stored in the cities and the soldiers devoured them. A famine ran riot, so dire that driven by hunger humans devoured human flesh; mothers too feasted upon the bodies of their own children whom they had killed and cooked themselves; wild beasts, grown used to feeding on the bodies of those slain by sword, famine, or pestilence, killed even those men who were quite strong and, feasting on their flesh, everywhere became brutally set upon the destruction of the human race. And thus with the four plagues of sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts raging everywhere throughout the world, the annunciation foretold by the Lord through his prophets was fulfilled.¹⁴

Thus the apocalypse as reported by Hydatius. Nothing in the whole catalogue of horrors which comprises the rest of his chronicle is painted in quite so black colours. The tropes of cannibalism and rampaging wild beasts are perhaps literary flourishes, symbols of a

¹³E.g., J. Arce, 'Gerontius el usurpador', *España entre el mundo antiguo y el mundo medieval* (Madrid, 1988), 110: 'La invasión desastrosa y apocalíptica del 409 d.C. en España'. The title of L. García Moreno, 'Hidacio y el ocaso del poder imperial en la península ibérica', *RABM* 79 (1976), 27-42, well exemplifies this attitude, though the author gives no consideration to what an 'ocaso del poder' might actually have entailed.

¹⁴Hyd. 40: *Debaccantibus per Hispanias barbaris et seuiente nihilominus pestilentiae malo opes et conditam in urbibus substantiam tyrannicus exactor diripit et milites exauriunt. Fames dira crassatur adeo ut humanae carnes ab humano genere ut famis fuerint deuoratae; matres quoque necatis uel coctis per se natorum suorum sint paste corporibus; bestie, occisorum gladio fame pestilentia cadaueribus adsuatae, quosque hominum fortiores interimunt eorumque carnibus paste passim in humani generis efferantur interitum. Et ita quatuor plagis ferri famis pestilentie bestiarum ubique in toto orbe seuientibus, predictae a domino per prophetas suos adnuntiationes implentur.* Translation: Burgess, 83, with modifications.

widespread destruction in keeping with the rhetorical tone of the passage.¹⁵ Still, the violence soon came to an end as Hydatius describes:

When the provinces of Spain had been overturned by the course of the aforementioned disasters, by the mercy of God the barbarians turned to the establishment of peace. They divided the regions of the provinces into shares for themselves to live in. The Vandals and Sueves took Gallaecia, located at the western edge of the Ocean sea. The Alans obtained the provinces of Lusitania and Carthaginiensis, and the Siling Vandals Baetica. In the cities and strongholds the Spaniards who survived the blows of the barbarians who were lording it over the provinces submitted themselves to servitude.¹⁶

That is the whole of Hydatius' testimony for the last years of the civil war in Spain. These years, between 409 and 411, might be better described as the reign of Maximus, Gerontius' client and puppet emperor. From the moment of Gerontius' revolt in late summer 409, Maximus was the imperial power in Spain. Yet can one speak of his reign? That is to say, did Maximus maintain an imperial regime in Spain? Few have thought so, though there is good evidence that he did. The narrative of Hydatius may be grim, but it also bears witness to the continuation of Roman government in Spain. Who, after all, are the *tyrannicus exactor*

¹⁵Cannibalism also appears in the account of Olympiodorus, who records that the famine which afflicted Spain during the Vandal invasion was so bad that one woman ate all four of her children in succession, after which her neighbours stoned her to death (Olymp., frag. 30 (Müller) = 29.2 (Blockley)). This has the circumstantial detail of an authentic anecdote, true or not, while Hydatius' is rhetorical flourish. The two accounts need have no relationship to one another.

¹⁶Hyd. 41: *Subuersis memorata plagarum crassatione Hispaniae prouinctis barbari ad pacem ineundam domino miserante conuersi, sorte ad inhabitandum sibi prouinciarum diuidunt regiones. Calliciam Vandali occupant et Suaeui sitam in extremitate Oceani maris occidua. Alani Lusitaniam et Carthaginiensem prouincias et Vandali cognomine Silingi Beticam sortiuntur. Spani per ciuitates et castella residui a plagis barbarorum per prouincias dominantium se subiciunt seruituti.*

and the voracious *miles* if not Roman officials and soldiers? In his entry for 410, Hydatius clearly shows the simultaneous presence of barbarian invaders and Roman government officials. What is more, his words make clear that these were active in the very same parts of the peninsula. The barbarian scourge and the tax collector's impositions are parallel and simultaneous afflictions.¹⁷

All this implies that during the last years of the civil war, Roman authority and governmental power continued to function in Spain, even in those regions which had been invaded by Vandals, Sueves, and Alans. That Roman government must have been active in the service of Maximus, for no other emperor's writ could have run in Spain.¹⁸ The extent of Maximus' authority thus becomes the next question. It is generally asserted that from 409 on only *Tarraconensis* remained Roman in the sense of subject to Roman administration.¹⁹ The provinces of *Carthaginiensis*, *Baetica*, *Lusitania*, and *Gallaecia*, in this view, ceased to function as Roman provinces and became a no-man's land of competing barbarian groups. A sharp contrast is drawn between *Tarraconensis*, free of a barbarian presence, and the rest of the peninsula, completely overrun. There is, of course, little evidence for any of this reconstruction, essentially just the passages of Hydatius quoted

¹⁷Hyd. 40.

¹⁸The revolt of Gerontius had severed Spain from Constantine III's regime, just as Constantine had done from that of Honorius. Spanish officialdom had ceased to recognise Honorius in the first days of Constantine III's usurpation, thus occasioning the private war of Didymus and Verinianus. Maximus is therefore the only emperor who can fit the evidence of Hydatius. The theory of J.C. Raña Trabado, 'Priscus Attalus y la Hispania del s. V', *Actas del primero congreso peninsular de Historia Antigua* 3 (Santiago, 1988), 277-85, according to which Attalus exercised a brief rule in Spain independently of the Goths is based upon a misreading of Orosius. Likewise, the theory of Seeck, *Untergang*, 6.392, according to which *Tarraconensis* was held against Jovinus by Honorius' prefect Dardanus, is impossible, resting as it does on the sole grounds of the Tarraco mint not having produced any coins of the usurper. The conjecture is rightly ignored in *PLRE* 2.346.

¹⁹E.g. Matthews, *Artstocracies*, 332.

above. Yet these passages contradict the usual assumptions, and demand a different interpretation.

In the first place, it is nowhere stated, or even implied, that Tarraconensis was spared the fury of the invaders, who would, of course, have had to pass through the province to reach the rest of Spain. The assumption to the contrary stems from the siting of Maximus' capital at Tarraco and his mint at Barcino, and from the fact that when the invaders divided the peninsula among themselves in 411 they left Tarraconensis out of the reckoning. Neither point, however indisputable, implies that the province was exempt in the intervening years. In the second place, Hydatius shows that in those same parts of Spain where the barbarians were running wild, Roman *exactores* and *milites* made matters worse for the provincials.²⁰ How does one proceed?

We can know little more of Maximus' government than that it existed. Hydatius records its functioning in those same regions where barbarians were present, that is in other provinces besides Tarraconensis. It certainly had the capacity to levy taxes and maintain soldiers out of their receipt, and to do this the regime of Gerontius and Maximus must have been able to coexist with the barbarian invaders of the diocese. That coexistence requires explanation. It is frequently asserted that Gerontius or Maximus concluded some sort of treaty with the barbarians.²¹ The details of the treaty are subject to endless, speculative permutations. And yet it will be noted that neither Hydatius nor any other source even hints at a treaty between Maximus and the

²⁰Hyd. 40.

²¹E.g., W. Reinhart, *Historia general del reino hispánico de los Suevos* (Madrid, 1952), 299; K.F. Stroheker, 'Spanien im spätrömischen Reich (284-475)', *AEspA* 40-2 (1972-4), 596. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 109, envisaged 'ein Vertrag mit der kaiserlichen Regierung', without specifying which emperor he had in mind.

invaders of 409.²² In fact, the accounts of their crossing of the Pyrenees require the contrary interpretation since Olympiodorus shows us that the barbarians were only able to cross the mountains because the Roman commanders had turned their backs. Even when Gerontius is absolved of complicity in the Pyrenees crossing, it is frequently asserted that he must have patched up an agreement with the invaders after they had arrived. Otherwise he would not have dared to leave Spain to fight Constantine. In fact, however, it is precisely when Gerontius actually departed for Gaul in 411 that the barbarians ceased merely to plunder and divided the provinces to live in.

Between 409 and 411, however, we must accept that Maximus' government and the barbarian invaders coexisted in the Spanish provinces. Apart from the Hydatian evidence, the activity of Maximus' government is attested only for the coastal regions of Tarraconensis. That is, Olympiodorus informs us that Gerontius established the capital of his emperor at Tarraco, while, as we have seen, the mint at Barcino struck coins in Maximus' name. Hydatius has shown that his officials continued to operate in the other Spanish provinces, continued to levy taxes, probably in kind, and continued to supply an army. This army must be the campaign force of Gerontius, which was being supplied out of the Spanish cities' taxes. It will be remembered that for most of 410, the very year in which Maximus' government is attested at work in the Spanish cities, Gerontius was fighting Constans, not in Constantine's territory, but rather in Spain. It is only in 411 that Gerontius pressed home his rebellion by pursuing Constans into Gaul.²³ In 410, during the

²²As was recognised by Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 153, the Latin of Oros. 7.43.14 actually excludes the possibility of a treaty.

²³See Chapter Three.

first campaign against Constans, Gerontius' army was in Spain, presumably in Tarraconensis. It was perhaps the *exactores* mentioned by Hydatius that continued to furnish it with supplies, levying them on the peninsula's cities. To do this they must have found some way to coexist with the barbarians.

Spain is a large place, and outside the dusty Meseta, a fertile one. It is spacious enough to have accommodated even a large barbarian influx. The picture drawn by Hydatius, which combines a functioning Roman government with devastations that range the length and breadth of the peninsula, is explicable in this kind of environment. Barbarians rarely succeeded in taking cities, and thus did not affect the basic Roman administration which was centred on urban sites.²⁴ This general observation is borne out by the Spanish evidence, as it is not for another decade and a half that we find the Spanish invaders becoming a danger to Roman towns.²⁵ In the countryside, however, things were probably rather different. Widespread but also localised devastations combined with disease and famine to spread misery. Neither disease nor famine affected the question of imperial control, however. In some places, disturbances would have interfered with the mechanisms of Roman power, but in others, as Hydatius shows, they ended neither Roman jurisdiction nor the demands of the Roman authorities on their subjects. This situation provides a context for the well-known testimony of Orosius that some Romans preferred poverty and liberty amongst the barbarians than the burden of Roman taxes, and the fact that this choice was available attests to the continuance of Roman

²⁴See H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe* (Oxford, 1996), 82-6.

²⁵See Chapter Six.

administration.²⁶ There is no way to gauge the true extent of its reach, but it is possible that for most of the reign of Maximus, that is to say from 409 until early in 411, his authority extended throughout the peninsula, even in those areas which had experienced barbarian raids. We may be certain, however, that Maximus did nothing at all to fight the barbarians. He was able to coexist with them, but even before his government fell, his authority in the peninsula had contracted. This seems to have happened as soon as Gerontius carried his campaign into Gaul, and once again a barbarian success is linked directly to the events of the Roman civil war.

The settlement of 411 and the end of Maximus

It may seem likely a priori that the extension of barbarian power in the peninsula was linked to the fall of Maximus. One might certainly draw that inference from Hydatius when he states that in 411 the barbarians made peace and divided the Spanish provinces among themselves.²⁷ His narrative contrasts a period in 410, when the provincials suffered under the exactions of Roman authorities, with one in 411, when the Roman civil authority ceases to be mentioned. These periods, however, do not coincide with the evidence for the fall of Maximus. Though Gerontius was dead by late summer 411, Maximus, according to Prosper, did not resign the *imperium* until 412.²⁸ This means that Maximus' regime survived its main supporter by at least

²⁶Oros. 7.41.7: *trouentantur iam inter eos quidam Romani, qui malint inter barbaros pauperem libertatem, quam inter Romanos tributariam sollicitudinem sustinere.*

²⁷Hyd. 41: *Spani per ciuitates et castella residui a plagis barbarorum per prouincias dominantium se subiciunt seruituti.* Courtois, *Vandales*, 53, dated the settlement to 412, which, inexplicably, prefers the evidence of the Gallic Chronicle of 511 to that of Hydatius.

²⁸Prosper 1245 (= MGH.AA 9.466).

several months. Hydatius' dates for the extension of barbarian control in Spain, and the retraction of Roman authority which it accompanied, therefore precede the fall of Maximus.²⁹ The explanation for this is simple. The contraction of Roman power in Spain did not accompany the fall of Maximus, but rather the departure of Gerontius from the peninsula. Until early 411, the general had been fighting Constans in Tarraconensis. The barbarians had therefore been content to plunder without challenging imperial authority in any more systematic fashion. When in 411 Gerontius carried the war to Gaul, they divided the provinces of Spain amongst themselves without reference to Roman authorities. When Maximus fell in 412, his empire had more or less disappeared already.

The end of Maximus is recounted by Orosius. He tells us that Maximus was deserted by his Gallic soldiers, who then moved on to Africa. This presumably implies that they had returned to the allegiance of the legitimate emperor Honorius and were redeployed to Africa at his general's command.³⁰ Maximus, meanwhile, went off to live among the barbarians.³¹ Prosper tells us that, having laid aside the purple, Maximus was granted his life on account of his inoffensive character.³² This means that Maximus was not pursued by the agents of the imperial government. The reasons for this seem clear, for, confronted by the new

²⁹This may be confirmed by the internal chronology of Hydatius, who places the division of Spain (Hyd. 41) before the fall of Constantine (Hyd. 42) though dating both events to 411.

³⁰Perhaps in order to fight Heraclian.

³¹Oros. 7.42.5: *Maximus exutus purpura destitutusque a militibus Gallicanis, qui in Africam transieci, deinde in Italiam reuocati sunt, nunc inter barbaros in Hispania egens exulat.* Orosius' *nunc* is 417.

³²Prosper 1245 (= MGH.LAA 9.466): *Maximo in Hispania regno ablato vita concessa eo quod modestia humilitasque hominis affectati imperii truidiam non merebatur.*

usurpation of Jovinus, Constantius could spare no troops to fight in Spain.

So much for the end of Maximus. His brief reign lasted from 409 to 412, while his effective reign was briefer still. It was in 411 that the barbarians who had entered Spain in 409 divided the Spanish provinces amongst themselves as a result of the departure of Gerontius. Just as Maximus went unpursued by the legitimate authorities, so the Spanish barbarians were left to their own affairs. Orosius tells us that they took up farming, but he does so in stereotyped language which may be no more than the familiar literary topos of beating swords into ploughshares.³³ Nevertheless, his testimony confirms the statement of Hydatius that the barbarians stopped fighting and turned to peace. How they arrived at this point, that is to say, the nature and the mechanisms of their settlement, is the subject of controversy, as one would expect of a topic for which evidence is so scarce.

The nature of the settlement will be discussed below. Its mechanism can be stated very briefly. Despite scholarly efforts to fit the division of the peninsula into a scheme of late Roman *receptio*, to make it the organised work of Roman authorities, the evidence of Hydatius is explicit.³⁴ The barbarians *sorte ad inhabitandum sibi prouinciarum*

³³Oros. 7.41.7: *barbari exsecrati gladios suos ad aratra conuersti sunt*.

³⁴T.S. Burns, 'The settlement of 418', in Drinkwater and Elton, 49-63, restated, at times almost verbatim, in idem, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington, 1994), 251-69. The phrase *sorte ad inhabitandum* (Hyd. 41) is taken to represent the policy decision of Gerontius or Maximus according to which the barbarians were received and settled. There is no need to so brutalise Hydatius' Latin when a clearer meaning lies at hand. The notion of Maximus' participation in the settlement of the invaders has a long history, however. See, e.g., Reinhart, *Suevos*, 29, 35; Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 25-6. The presumptive treaty with Maximus is worked into an elaborate relationship with the supposed internal frontier of northern Spain in Collins' standard textbook: Collins, *Spain*², 18. Schmidt, *Wandalen*², 22, instead envisages a treaty between the invaders and the legitimate government of Honorius, in which the Spanish land was granted in exchange for their accepting the status of *foederati*.

diuidunt regiones. This statement is more opaque than it looks. The ablative *sorte* is usually taken to imply that they divided the peninsula by lot. It might, on the other hand, simply mean that they divided the provinces into shares in which they would then live. What is clear, however, is the agency of all this. The barbarians made the division themselves, and did so for themselves. Hydatius' language does not necessarily exclude the participation of some Romans, but by ascribing the whole initiative to the barbarians it does exclude the possibility of any official participation by imperial Roman authorities.

We can thus state with confidence what the 411 settlement was not. What it actually entailed is rather more difficult to decide. Any reading of the exiguous evidence is necessarily subjective. First, there is the question of the casting of lots. Hydatius' *sorte ad inhabitandum* need not imply one. It is sometimes imagined that a lot would have been a useful way of avoiding competition among the barbarians for living space.³⁵ There are two objections to this. First, the division was unequal, with the Alans receiving two provinces, the Siling Vandals one, and the Asdings and Sueves sharing a single province between them. In the second place, the idea that a lot was somehow meant to alleviate competition founders on its assumption of barbarian numbers. Spain is a huge place and outside the Meseta a fertile one. Any single one of the Spanish provinces would have accommodated all the invaders comfortably. The casting of lots can thus be ruled out on historical as well as linguistic grounds. What is more, there is a certain logic to the division which has not been recognised. Among their two provinces the

³⁵Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 155. M. Torres, *Historia de España* 3², R. Menéndez Pidal, ed. (Madrid, 1963), 144, denied the existence of a lot altogether.

Alans received Lusitania. In that province lay Emerita, the diocesan capital of Spain. It is surely not mere coincidence that the same people who received the diocesan capital of Spain were identified later in the decade as more powerful than any of their neighbours.³⁶

There is a great deal which cannot be known about the settlement of 411, but we can at least establish those assumptions which we are not permitted to make. Chief among these is any assertion that Roman imperial authority was involved in the settlement. While it would be foolish to state categorically that no Romans took part in the events of 411, our evidence explicitly excludes any imperial participation or sanction. The barbarians shared out the provinces among themselves on their own authority, and the inhabitants of Spain surrendered themselves to servitude.

One uses the word servitude because Hydatius does: 'In the cities and strongholds the Spaniards who survived the blows of the barbarians who were lording it over the provinces submitted themselves to servitude'.³⁷ This brief notice is virtually our only evidence for Roman life amongst the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans. The servitude need mean no more than that the Spaniards had lost the government of a legitimate emperor, and there is no way of knowing if Hydatius meant to imply a

³⁶Hyd. 60: *Alani, qui Vandalis et Suevis potentabantur*. There is a second point worth registering about the Alans' share of the division. Though they are recorded as taking Carthaginiensis along with Lusitania, there is no subsequent record of barbarian presence in Carthaginiensis until the 440s. Thus when Constantius set the Goths upon the Vandals and Alans, they campaigned in Baetica and Lusitania. Both provinces were accessible only via Carthaginiensis and there is no hint of any fighting there. Secondly, a Gothic army attempted to cross the straits of Gibraltar in 416, only to be decimated in a storm. There are no grounds for thinking that it met any opposition on its way through Carthaginiensis to Gades (= Cadiz). It is thus entirely possible, as Bury, *LRE*, 1.203 recognised, that the allotment of Carthaginiensis to the Alans was more theoretical than actual.

³⁷Hyd. 41: *Spani per ciuitates et castella residui a plagis barbarorum per prouincias dominantium se subiciunt seruituti*.

worsening of their lot in life. Despite this, the modern literature tends to paint a picture of the decade after 411 that is black indeed. It is usually built up by extending the conditions described by Hydatius for the year 410 into the whole of the next decade.³⁸ Given, however, that the worst parts of Hydatius' account are explicitly dated to 410, and that the evidence of Orosius and Salvian which is sometimes adduced is valid for 417 and 441 respectively, there is no justification for portraying Spain as a shattered wasteland in the decade after 411.

In fact, every piece of evidence we have implies that the half decade between the settlement of 411 and the campaigns of Wallia's Goths in 416 was a period of peace in the peninsula. Orosius, a contemporary of the events he describes, speaks of the barbarians turning from the sword to the plough and living in peace with their new Roman neighbours.³⁹ Although highly rhetorical, this topos nevertheless confirms the account of Hydatius. Together, they contradict the black portraits drawn by modern scholars. Even as he speaks of barbarian mastery, Hydatius expressly testifies to its peacefulness: 'by the mercy of God the barbarians turned to the establishment of peace'.⁴⁰ More importantly, the peace is attested by Hydatius' record of events. Between 411 and 425 he records no unprovoked aggression of the Vandals, Alans, or Sueves against the Roman provincials. When the barbarians fight, they fight

³⁸See e.g. S.I. Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta* (Chicago, 1968), 109, who uses Hyd. 40-41 to describe the period *after* the defeat of Maximus, or L. García Moreno, 'Hidacio', 32, where notices drawn from throughout the chronicle are taken to describe the situation of the 410s. Salvian, *De gub.* 4.21 (*Hispaniae, quibus solum nomen relictum est*) is often added to the testimony of Hydatius, thus importing still darker tones into the modern reconstruction.

³⁹Oros. 7.41.7: *barbari exsecrati gladios suos ad aratra conuersi sunt residuosque Romanos ut socios modo et amicos fouent.*

⁴⁰Hyd. 41: *barbari ad pacem inuendam domino miserante conuersi.*

amongst themselves, and it was the aggression of Constantius which again turned the Spanish barbarians to violence in 416.

From 411 to 416 the peninsula gives every indication of having been at peace. It was precisely this relative peace that allowed the imperial authorities to ignore Spain for more than half a decade from the moment that Maximus was deposed. From the point of view of the imperial authorities, the calculation would have been simple. Gaul, Italy, and Africa always had and always did take precedence over Spain, and the affairs of those dioceses stopped Constantius taking any action in Spain after Maximus' defeat. The consecutive usurpations of Jovinus and Heraclian required far more immediate attention than did the Spanish barbarians, for it will be remembered that usurpations regularly took precedence over barbarian invaders in the eyes of the imperial authorities. Spain offered no threat comparable to those of Jovinus and Heraclian, and Constantius accordingly devoted himself to their defeat.

What is more, Spain could actually be viewed as loyal to the legitimate emperor, even though, thanks to the barbarians, imperial control was only nominal. Spain nevertheless remained imperial in the sense that, with Maximus gone, it gave its allegiance to no usurper. Despite any problems, the diocese could therefore be safely ignored. Nominal control was enough. Constantius did nothing about Spain in 412 because he saw it as more safely part of the empire than Gaul, and later Africa. Barbarians, experience had shown, could always be dealt with.⁴¹ Usurpers, on the other hand, had to be met swiftly and defeated. For the Italian government, then, Spain presented no sort of problem in 412. It was simply a loyal province in a time of usurpation. Only when

⁴¹For a general analysis of this attitude, Elton, *Warfare*, 44.

civil disturbances ceased to menace Honorius did he turn his attention to Spain and decide that its nominal loyalty was to be made a reality. The instruments of this imperial reconquest were the Goths.

The imperial reconquest under Wallia

The opportunity for employing the Goths did not come till 416. It was then a matter of using a convenient tool which was already at hand.⁴² The revolt of Heraclian in 412 had cut Rome's European provinces off from the supply of African grain. This, it has been hypothesised with some probability, made Constantius' government unable to supply the Goths in accordance with the terms of the treaty established in exchange for Gothic help against Jovinus.⁴³ The Goths reacted promptly and once again took up arms against Honorius, raising Attalus to the purple for a second time. This was the real reason that Constantius began a strenuous campaign against Attalus' sponsor Athaulf, since usurpations were consistently the worst of threats. In 415 Constantius forced Athaulf out of Gaul into Spain where the Gothic king took up residence at Barcino.⁴⁴ There he was murdered by one of his followers.⁴⁵ He was succeeded by Sigeric, whose reign lasted a mere seven days. Thereupon Wallia succeeded to the Gothic throne, having

⁴²The fortuitousness of the situation is registered, perhaps unconsciously, by J.M. O'Flynn, *Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire* (Edmonton, 1983), 72.

⁴³Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.266.

⁴⁴Prosper gives the consular date for this as *Honorio X et Theodosio VI*, that is 415. This must be correct despite Hydatius' placing the same events in 416, since the Paschal Chronicle (Bonn, 572) states that the news of Athaulf's death reached Constantinople on 24 September 415.

⁴⁵There are two anecdotes extant about Athaulf's murder, viz. that a Gothic retainer called Dubius avenged Athaulf's earlier murder of his old master by killing the Gothic king (Olymp., frag. 26 (Müller) = 26.1 (Blockley)), and that a Goth called Everwulf murdered Athaulf because the king was in the habit of mocking his shortness (Jord. 163 = *MGH.AA* 5.100).

undertaken a purge of potential competitors.⁴⁶ Either late in 415 or at least by early in the next year, Constantius negotiated a treaty with the new king of the Goths, according to which Galla Placidia was returned to the Romans after the Goths had been supplied with the 600,000 *modii* of wheat they required to feed themselves.⁴⁷ Before the end of that year the Goths were fighting in Roman service against the Vandals and Alans of Baetica and Lusitania.⁴⁸

Thus runs the briefest of narratives, but there follow from it important conclusions for the state of affairs in Roman Spain. In the first place, the residence of Athaulf in Barcino confirms that part at least of Tarraconensis was not in the hands of any other barbarian group. The occupation of Barcino appears, moreover, to have been peaceful, though this inference from our poor evidence can stand very little pressure. The subsequent course of this first Gothic presence in Spain, however, confirms many of the hypotheses advanced above. Most important is the absence of evidence for any conflict between the Goths and the other barbarians until the former were prodded into fighting by the treaty with Constantius. There is no case, that is, for the peninsula being so thoroughly occupied by other barbarians that the advent of the Goths caused insurmountable pressures to arise between the groups.⁴⁹ In 415 the peninsula quite comfortably accommodated Vandals, Sueves, Alans, and Goths, and there is no evidence of conflict between them.⁵⁰ Our limited evidence in fact testifies only to peaceful trade between the

⁴⁶Prosper 1257 (= *MGH.AA* 9.46): *regnumque etus [i.e. Athaulfi] Wallia peremptis qui idem cupere intellegebantur invasit*.

⁴⁷Olymp., frag. 31 (Müller) = 30 (Blockley).

⁴⁸Hyd. 52: *succedens Vallia in regno cum patritio Constantio pace max facta Alanis et Vandalis Silingis in Lusitania et Betica sedentibus adversatur*.

⁴⁹Contrary, that is, to Bury, *LRE*, 1.202, who clearly envisaged a situation in which the presence of the other invaders made Gothic movement outside Tarraconensis impossible.

⁵⁰As already recognised by Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 460.

barbarian groups. The Goths had been forced into Spain by a blockade which caused an artificial scarcity. Once there, they remained without sufficient food supplies. This deficit was gladly made up by the Vandals, who sold the Goths grain at a usurious rate.⁵¹ The fact that the Vandals had enough grain to sell some of it helps confirm the view of Spain in 415 and early 416 as relatively peaceful and stable.

The entry of the Goths into the peninsula did not impinge upon the other barbarians settled there, and the Goths themselves were most of all concerned with finding a means of feeding themselves, which they did in the first instance through trade with the Vandals. One must imagine that they also looked for other ways of sustaining themselves, and it is universally asserted that Wallia attempted to cross to Africa with the idea of finding a country in which he could feed his people.⁵² Perhaps he entertained thoughts of such an expedition, but we can firmly deny that he ventured upon it in reality. Orosius is our only source for this and though he certainly speaks of a Gothic army trying to reach Africa, there is no hint that either Wallia himself or the Gothic people as a whole were involved.⁵³ Wallia, he says, 'was terribly frightened at the judgement of God, since in the previous year, when a large army of Goths furnished with arms and ships strove to cross to Africa, it was struck by a tempest within twelve miles of the straits of

⁵¹Olymp., frag. 29 (Müller) = 29.1 (Blockley). The Vandals named the Goths *Truli* on this occasion because they bought grain at the rate of one *solidus* to the *trula*. Wolfram, *Goths*, 26, regards this as an archaic term of derogation, equivalent to our troll, but Olympiodorus ought to be taken at his word, as by Heather, *Goths*, 6 n. 5.

⁵²E.g., Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 460; Seeck, *Untergang*, 6.59; Bury, *LRE* 1.202; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.267; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 138; Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 29; Wolfram, *Goths*, 170. The assertion is perhaps coloured by a notion well-expressed by Seeck, *Untergang*, 6.64, in which Africa 'solange für die Germanen das Ziel der heißesten Wünsche war'.

⁵³Isidore, *Hist. Goth.* 22 speaks of Wallia himself attempting the crossing to Africa, but his account is wholly derived from Orosius and his few verbal modifications cannot be used to supplement or correct the Orosian account.

Gibraltar, and died a wretched death. Remembering as well the disaster suffered under Alaric, when the Goths attempted to cross to Sicily and were miserably shattered and drowned in the sight of their own people, he made a most favourable peace with the emperor Honorius, giving up many noble hostages'.⁵⁴

Not a word, then, of the Gothic people attempting to cross from Gades to Africa, nor of Wallia leading them on this adventure. To the contrary, the failure of a Gothic army to do just that convinced Wallia that this course was not a viable option and recalled to his memory Alaric's ill-fated attempt on Sicily. Buying grain from the Vandals at a *solidus* a scoop was not an arrangement that could be sustained in the long term. All that remained was peace with the Romans, and by means of that peace, sustenance. The point, however, is that there is in 415 and early 416 no evidence that the Goths as a whole, and certainly not their king, ever left the vicinity of Barcino in Tarraconensis. Standard accounts have the whole Gothic people wandering down the Mediterranean coast of Spain before turning back in distress from a failed crossing at Gades. This has no basis in the sources. On the contrary, it seems that the Gothic people stayed near Barcino, where Athaulf had led them in 415, until pressure by the Roman authorities once again set them on the move.

This has some bearing on our understanding of the Spanish situation before Constantius instigated the reconquest of the western provinces. The diplomacy of Euplutius, who conducted the negotiations

⁵⁴Oros. 7.43.11-12: *hic [sc. Vallia] igitur – territus maxime iudicio Dei, quia cum magna superiore abhinc anno Gothorum manus instructa armis navigisque transire in Africam moliretur, in duodecim milibus passuum Gaditani freti tempestate correpta, miserabili exitu perlerat, memor etiam illius acceptae sub Alarico cladis, cum in Siciliam Gothi transire conati, in conspectu suorum miserabiliter arrepti et demersi sunt – pacem optinam cum Honorio imperatore, datis lectissimis obsidibus pepigit.*

between Wallia and Constantius, is not normally localised, since the whole Gothic people is envisaged as moving up and down the Mediterranean coast of Spain, first heading for, then retreating from Africa. This gives a rather more amorphous picture of affairs than the sources actually require. If Orosius is read correctly, there is no reason to think that the body of Goths or their king ever travelled much beyond Barcino. The whole controversy surrounding Placidia's return and the supply of the Goths will then be seen to have resolved itself within the narrow confines of coastal Tarraconensis. The inability of the Goths to feed themselves might thus be seen as a continuation of the artificial scarcity with which Constantius had forced them from Narbonne. The Goths had not really moved very far from Gaul by the time they decided to make peace.

We can thus begin to understand the policy of Constantius. By 413 he had eliminated the last usurpers, Jovinus and Heraclian. But on account of Heraclian's interference with the corn supply, the Goths had again become a problem. Spain had been ignored during the usurpers' reigns since it could be counted as loyal and untroublesome despite the presence of Vandals, Alans, and Sueves on its soil. Force of necessity compelled Constantius to continue to ignore the peninsula in the period of Athaulf's hostilities. Active in the south of Gaul, the Goths under Athaulf posed a far more pressing danger than did the entirely quiescent barbarians in Spain. When, however, Gaul had been rescued and Constantius found himself with a Gothic people in residence at Barcino and bound by some sort of treaty to Rome, the time had finally come for action in Spain. The peninsula had long been the lowest of imperial priorities apart from Britain, but it had not been abandoned. When

more pressing matters elsewhere had been put to rest, as by 414 they had, Constantius was free to act forcefully in Spain. This, by Gothic proxy, he did.

Wallia's campaigns against the other barbarians in Spain are well-attested.⁵⁵ They are, however, little known. One can say only that from late in 416 until some time in 418 the Goths fought the Vandals and Alans, though not the Sueves, and succeeded in exterminating the Silings and virtually eliminating the Alans before Constantius called off the Gothic offensive.⁵⁶ Orosius was a close contemporary, and Wallia's campaigns are the last political events he records.⁵⁷ His account, however, is vague and generalised.⁵⁸ Hydatius remains a better witness. His narrative has little colour but is explicit enough, and it is from him that we can with some measure of certainty reconstruct events.

Wallia's campaigns were undertaken with Roman authorisation and directed against the Alans and the Siling Vandals in Lusitania and Baetica.⁵⁹ Thus from the very beginning the theatre of conflict was these

⁵⁵Hyd. 52, 55, 59-61; Oros. 7. 43.13-14; *Chron. Gall.* 511 562, 564-5 (= MGH.AA 9.654f.); Sid. Ap., *Carm.* 2.362-5: *simul et reminiscitur illud, / quod Tartesiadis avus huius Vallia terris / Vandalicas turmas et iuncti Martis Halanos / stravit et occiduam texere cadavera Calpen.*

⁵⁶It is to this period, specifically late in 416, that one should date the difficulties experienced by Orosius in getting to Gallaecia. See Severus of Minorca, Ep. 4.1: *Qui [sc. Orosius] postquam transvehi ad Hispanias, sicut desiderabat, nequivit, remeare denuo ad Africam statuit.* The date is established in S. Bradbury, *Severus of Minorca: Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (Oxford, 1996), 25.

⁵⁷Oros. 7.43.15: *itaque nunc cottidie apud Hispanias geri bella gentium et agi strages ex alterutro barbarorum crebris certisque nuntis discimus, praecipue Valliam Gothorum regem insistere patrandae paci ferunt.*

⁵⁸One point on which Orosius is not in the least bit ambiguous has nevertheless been frequently misinterpreted. One often reads that the Alans, Vandals, and Sueves against whom Wallia was sent were themselves bound by treaties to Rome. But let us see what Oros. 7.43.10-14 actually says: *Deinde Vallia...pacem optimam cum Honorio imperatore, datis lectissimis obsidibus pepigit...Romanae securitati periculum suum obtulit, ut aduersus ceteras gentes, quae in Hispanias consedisent, sibi pugnaret et Romanis utinceret quamvis et ceteri Alanorum Vandalorum Sueborumque reges eodem nobiscum placito depecti forent mandantes imperatori Honorio.* This can only mean that the Alans, Vandals, and Sueves had hoped to obtain a treaty with the empire and instead found themselves confronted by a Gothic army in the imperial service.

⁵⁹Hyd. 52: *Vallia...Alanis et Vandalis Silingis in Lusitania et Betica sedentibus aduersatur.*

two southwestern provinces, and in them Wallia was immediately successful.⁶⁰ There is no way of telling in what sequence or locale these campaigns were fought, and there is no record of individual battles. One might deduce from the order of Hydatius' account that the Alans were the first object of the Gothic offensive. Since the Alans, as he says, were more powerful than the Vandals and Sueves, it would have been logical for the Goths to have dealt with them first. On the other hand, Hydatius records the defeat of the Silings before that of the Alans.⁶¹ There is not, in the end, enough information to go on and we can only affirm that between late 416 and some time in 418 the Goths campaigned in Baetica and Lusitania.⁶² The fighting did not, however, extend into Gallaecia as is frequently affirmed.⁶³ The Gallic Chronicle of 511, it is true, does imply a Gallaecian campaign of the Goths, but the chronicler is here entirely dependent on Hydatius. The latter says nothing about the Asdings or the Sueves in his account of the campaigns, save to tell us that the remnants of the Alans sought refuge with Gunderic's Asdings, and the report of the chronicler is clearly a misunderstanding of Hydatius' words.⁶⁴

There is not the slightest evidence that Wallia fought in the capacity of *magister militum*, as suggested by Seeck, *Untergang*, 6.62.

⁶⁰Hyd. 55: *Vallia rex Gothorum Romani nominis causa intra Hispanias caedes magnas efficit barbarorum.*

⁶¹Hyd. 59: *Vandalis Silingi in Betica per Valliam regem omnes extincti.* Hyd. 60: *Alani, qui Vandalis et Suevis potentabantur, adeo cesi sunt a Gothis ut extincto Addace rege ipsorum pauci qui superfuerant oblito regni nomine Gunderici regis Vandalorum, qui in Gallicia resederat, se patrocínio subiugarent.*

⁶²The death of the Alan king Addax is well attested (see previous note) but the capture and death of a Vandal king Fredbal is to be rejected as a late, and unfounded, interpolation. See Burgess, 55.

⁶³E.g., PLRE 2.1148 (Vallia).

⁶⁴*Chron. Gall. 511* 562, 564-5 (= MGH.AA 9.654f.): *Iubente Constantio intermisso bello, quod intra Gallaeciam supererat, reuersi Gothi ad Gallias sedes accipiunt a Tolosa in Burdegalam ad oceanum uersus.* This entry can easily be derived from a conflation of Hyd. 60 (*Vandalorum, qui in Gallicia resederat, se patrocínio subiugarent*) and Hyd. 61 (see next note).

For the better part of two years Wallia's Goths undertook the work of a Roman reconquest of the Iberian provinces, acting primarily in Baetica and Lusitania, possibly in Carthaginiensis, certainly not in Gallaecia. The Goths stopped fighting only when Constantius told them to in 417, before recalling them to Gaul.⁶⁵ His reasons for this have engendered a great deal of speculation. Most of this speculation has correctly sought to explain Constantius' action by reference to the state of affairs in Gaul, and the matter will be discussed in more detail in chapter five. Here it is enough to determine whether in 418 the imperial authorities could have judged it possible to leave the matters in Spain as they stood. By that year the Goths had emptied Baetica and Lusitania of their Vandal and Alan occupants. This left the Asding Vandals, along with whatever Alanic remnants had fled to them, and the Sueves still unmolested in Gallaecia. Some have sought to explain the abandonment of the campaign by imagining that Constantius was trying to maintain a balance of power among barbarian groups and stop any one group becoming too powerful.⁶⁶ This overlooks a more logical explanation based on the administrative structure of the Spanish diocese.

Imperial authorities had no objection to a barbarian presence as such, so long as the imperial governing structure continued to function.

⁶⁵Hyd. 61: *Gothi intermisso certamine quod agebant per Constantiam ad Gallias reuocati sedes in Aquitania ad Tolosa usque ad Oceanum acceperunt*. Prosper 1271 (= MGHAA 9.469): *Constantius patricius pacem firmat cum Wallia data et ad inhabitandum secunda Aquitania et quibusdam civitatibus confinium provinciarum*.

⁶⁶Advocates of the balance of power theory explain that the Goths could simply not be allowed to become as powerful as they would have done had they been allowed to complete the reconquest of Spain. The first, and greatest, advocate of this view was Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 461, and he has been followed in it by among others Reinhart, *Suevos*, 37, and Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 153. T.S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome*, 270f. combines the balance of power theory with the idea that the Asdings and Sueves were preserved as pools of manpower and recruits.

Even when barbarians interfered with this functioning, they remained a lower priority than did usurpers. Only when the field was clear of the latter, could action be taken against the former. There is no evidence, as we have seen, that Spain actually functioned within the imperial diocesan system after the settlement of 411. That fact is precisely what activated Constantius' Gothic reconquest when his hands were finally freed in 416. The goal of that reconquest would have by definition to be the reintegration of Spain into the imperial system, its restoration, that is, as a functioning diocese. And to bring this about, the most important step would be the reconquest and revival of the diocesan government. This was located in Lusitania, at Emerita Augusta (= Mérida). It is no wonder that the Gothic campaigns concentrated on Lusitania and Baetica, the latter en route to Lusitania and, in the high empire at least, the richest of the Iberian provinces. Since by 418 Lusitania had been cleared of Alans, Emerita could be restored as diocesan capital and the Spanish diocese could thus begin to function within the imperial system once again. We should note that it is precisely now, after the reconquest of Baetica and Lusitania, that we once again have evidence for a diocesan vicar in Spain.⁶⁷

Gallaecia, by contrast, was of far less importance. Though fertile in places, it did truly lie at the ends of the earth. It was precisely the sort of region, in fact, which Roman governments had always been willing to let go of when necessity required it.⁶⁸ To say all this is not to imply that the cession of Gallaecia was planned, or indeed even

⁶⁷This is Maurocellus, active in 420: Hyd. 66.

⁶⁸Examples can be drawn from any era of imperial history, among them, for example, the cession of the region between Hadrian's and the Antonine Walls in Britain, Dacia under Aurelian, or the various piecemeal occupations of the Franks on the lower Rhine in the fourth century.

admitted. Nor does it imply that Constantius had not intended for the Goths to make a clean sweep. It does, however, mean that, when circumstances suggested to him that the Goths could be of more use to the empire in Gaul than in Spain, the situation in Spain was favourable enough to allow a transfer.⁶⁹ Spain, that is to say, had been brought back into the fold of Roman administration. The diocese was once again functional.

And so the Goths withdrew. The Asdings and Sueves remained undisturbed in Gallaecia, where they seem to have occupied themselves as peaceably as they had since the sharing out of the provinces in 411. In fact, the next time we find Romans in conflict with the barbarian settlers it is again the result of Roman initiative. In 420, we glimpse the *comes Hispaniarum* Asterius attacking the Vandals in Gallaecia, forcing them to break off their attack on the Sueves. This violence between the two barbarian groups had begun in 419, for a reason which Hydatius does not record. The Vandal king Gunderic besieged the Sueves under their leader Hermeric in the Erbasian mountains.⁷⁰ One ought to refrain from speculating on the causes of the conflict, for Hydatius is so laconic that there are no grounds for even the smallest hypothesis.⁷¹

About the Roman action, however, we may venture some opinions. Hydatius describes it thus: The Vandals gave up their siege of the Sueves because of the presence of the *comes Hispaniarum* Asterius, and after some men under the vicar Maurocellus had been killed in their flight

⁶⁹For the situation in Gaul which prompted the withdrawal see Chapter Five.

⁷⁰The site has not been identified. E. Florez, *España Sagrada IV*³ (Madrid, 1689), 218, was inclined to identify the Erabasian mountains with the Arvas between León and Oviedo, a reasonable guess wholly beyond confirmation. The name is perhaps derived from the *Narbasoi* noted in Ptolemy 2.6.48, who have not themselves been localised with any certainty: Schulten, P-W 16.2, 1700.

⁷¹Hyd. 63: *Inter Gundericum Vandalorum et Hermericum Sueuorum reges certamine orto Sueui in Erbasii montibus obsidentur ab Vandalis.*

from Braga, the Vandals left Gallaecia and crossed into Baetica'.⁷² Asterius' campaign is frequently explained as an attempt by the Romans to protect the Sueves and thus preserve the balance of power in the peninsula.⁷³ This, however, is not in Hydatius, and Asterius' aggression looks more like a seizure of the main chance. The wrangling of two barbarian leaders offered the *comes* an opportunity to finish the work begun by Wallia.

It is possible, however, that the campaign of Asterius should be tied to the second usurpation of Maximus, Gerontius' puppet emperor from 409 to 412, who resumed the purple at some point around 420.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, the information derives from the Gallic chronicler of 452, a source at best rather shaky on dates and worse than usual on Spanish ones.⁷⁵ The whole episode might be held suspect and dismissed as a misplacing of Maximus' original usurpation were it not for the fact that the chronicler's account of the defeat of Maximus is confirmed by other evidence. We learn that Maximus was defeated and then led in triumph at the celebrations of Honorius' tricennalia in 422.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the

⁷²Hyd. 66: *Vandali Sueuorum obsidione dimissa instante Astrio Hispaniarum comite et sub uicario Maurocello aliquantis Bracara in exitu suo occisis relictis Gallicia ad Beticam transierunt*. The language of Hydatius is more than usually opaque here. Syntax suggests that the men who died at Braga be Romans under the command of Maurocellus and not Vandals. The succeeding clause, however, must refer to the Vandals. The obscurity would be eliminated if the *sub* were not present, for then the text could be taken to record a Vandal defeat. It is, however, securely attested in the manuscript tradition. The possibility, however, remains that the *sub uicario Maurocello* should be understood as making Maurocellus the agent by which some Vandals were killed at Braga.

⁷³Thus Jones, *LRE* 1.189: 'Asterius...intervened on behalf of the defeated party'. The alternative explanation offered here is far simpler and does no violence to the words of Hydatius.

⁷⁴*Chron. gall.* 452 85 (= *MGH.AA* 9.656): *Maximus tyrannus Hispaniarum dominatum ut optinet*.

⁷⁵See in general Muhlberger, *Chroniclers*, 146-51.

⁷⁶*Chron. gall.* 452 89 (= *MGH.AA* 9.656): *Maximus tyrannus de regno deicitur ac Ravennam perductus sublimem spectaculorum pompam tricennalibus Honori praebuilt*. Marcellinus Comes, s.a. 422 (= *MGH.AA* 11.75): *In tricennalia Honorii Maximus tyrannus et Iovinus ferro utincti de Hispanias adducti atque interfecti sunt*. *Ann. Rav.*, s.a. 422: *His consulibus adducti sunt de Hispania Maximus et Iovinianus cum alen ... tricennalia Honori*

precise date of Maximus' second usurpation is beyond reckoning. When Orosius wrote in 417 Maximus was still in exile amongst the barbarians. The first entry in the Gallic chronicle after the notice of Maximus' usurpation which we can date is the elevation of Constantius to the purple in February 421. The usurpation must therefore have taken place between 417 and February 421.⁷⁷ A connection between the second usurpation of Maximus and the campaign of Asterius against the Vandals is generally accepted.⁷⁸ This is reasonable granted Maximus' barbarian connection.⁷⁹ It is even possible that Maximus seized the purple with barbarian backing, but the actual sequence of events is beyond reconstruction. However, because Hydatius gives no hint that the campaign of Asterius was directed against a usurpation, it is here treated as nothing more than opportunism on Asterius' part.

Asterius' attack on the Vandals is frequently portrayed as a success, a victory in which the balance of barbarian power in Spain was preserved. The Romans, perhaps in accordance with the obligations of a treaty, saved the Sueves from destruction.⁸⁰ One can leave aside the issue of whether Asterius had anything to gain from saving the Sueves, and simply affirm what Hydatius clearly implies: Asterius' campaign was a disaster. Instead of completing the good work of Wallia, Asterius reversed all its advances. The main proof of this is the campaign's

et ... ducti sunt in pompa ferro ...

⁷⁷Seeck, *Untergang*, 6.63, 398, placed the usurpation in 418 on the basis of a solar eclipse, but he himself thought that 'ist diese Zeitbestimmung sehr unsicher'.

⁷⁸E.g., Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.269. Seeck, *Untergang*, 6.63 has Maximus raised to the throne by Gunderic before the latter's campaign against the Sueves, though this defies both logic and the testimony of Hydatius. Any connection at all is denied by Schmidt, *Wandalen*², 26 n. 3.

⁷⁹Oros. 7.42.5: *Maximus exutus purpura destitutusque...nunc inter barbaros in Hispania egens exulat*.

⁸⁰With variations, Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.267-9; Bury, *LRE*, 1.204; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 110; Schmidt, *Wandalen*², 26; Jones, *LRE*, 1.188; Stroheker, *AEspA* 40-2 (1972-4), 597; O'Flynn, *Generalissimos*, 73.

consequence, that the Vandals left Gallaecia for Baetica, a province which Wallia had retaken for Constantius. The language of Hydatius is difficult here, but among the various possible interpretations, a precipitate flight of the Vandals is unlikely.⁸¹ It is instead more plausible to see in Gunderic's actions a vicious riposte. Asterius inspired the Vandal king to leave off fighting the Sueves and fight the Romans instead. This he did successfully, chasing off Asterius, killing some of Maurocellus' men in Bracara, and then occupying Baetica, a most desirable prize.⁸² Though the Vandals might have been content to be left to themselves in Gallaecia—the withdrawal of the Goths had after all prompted no action on their part—Gunderic was ready to fight back when attacked. We must, then, admit that Asterius' campaign against Gunderic was not a success.⁸³ His failure to defeat the Vandals having once provoked them rolled back the successes which Wallia had won in Spain. The whole issue in fact raises questions about the state of Spain in 418, that is, after the Gothic forces withdrew.

The restoration of 418 and the Roman army

It was asserted above that the withdrawal of the Goths was possible because Roman administration had been restored in nearly all the Spanish diocese. This assertion falls short of proof, but is certainly

⁸¹Hyd. 66, quoted at note 71.

⁸²The men killed at Braga are *sub vicario Maurocello* and must therefore be Romans. Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.269, Schmidt, *Wandalen*², 26, and Bury, *LRE*, 1.208, thought that Hydatius was referring to a Roman victory over the Vandals, while Reinhart, *Suevos*, 38, and García Moreno, *España*, 50, assert that the episode refers to the Vandals killing Sueves.

⁸³Asterius was soon raised to the patriciate: Greg. Tur. 2.9 (*cum autem Asterius codicillis imperialibus patriciatum sortitus fuisset*). The notice must date from between Asterius' campaign in Baetica and the campaigns of Castinus to which the notice is linked. It is possible that the promotion was in recognition of his defeat of Maximus, but that is speculative.

implied by the renewed presence of a diocesan vicar in the peninsula. If the diocesan administration was revived, however, one may still wonder how it was sustained. Chapter two consisted of a long inquiry into the role of the army in late Roman Spain. The generally negative results of that inquiry were presented detached from any narrative context. There are in fact relatively few periods to which the evidence examined in chapter two can refer, and the likeliest is that between Wallia's reconquest and Asterius' campaign.

A variety of different evidence was examined, among it the so-called *Epistula Honorii* and the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Both documents are beset with problems, and a great deal of space was devoted to showing how much they are unable to prove.⁸⁴ There was, in fact, only one secure conclusion. Both the imperial letter and the *Notitia* demonstrate that at some point during the reign of Honorius there were units of the field army, the *comitatus*, in Spain. From the evidence internal to the documents, however, one can tell neither where nor when they were present.

We can now go a little bit further. The narrative of Spanish history from the usurpation of Constantine III to the reconquest of the peninsula under Constantius has been examined in some detail. We may thus begin by asking when, in the course of the early fifth century, a Roman field army such as that shown in the *Notitia* could possibly have been present in Spain.⁸⁵ We should reject the period immediately before the usurpation of Constantine in 407. The circumstances surrounding the usurper's reception in the Spanish diocese are unusually well

⁸⁴See Chapter Two.

⁸⁵The evidence of the *Epistula Honorii* will here be left aside entirely, for reasons discussed in Chapter Two.

documented, and there is no hint of any field army in the diocese save that which Constantine himself sent into Spain from Gaul.⁸⁶ Now, since the army is registered in an imperial document and one emanating from official circles, it is unlikely to have registered the dispositions of usurpers unless they were later retained by the legitimate government. This eliminates from consideration the years between 407, when Constantine was acknowledged in Spain, and 412, when Maximus retired after losing the support of Gerontius' soldiers.

Now it might be thought that the Gallic soldiers who deserted Maximus are the units described by the *Notitia*, but there are two objections. First, we have the explicit statement of Orosius that these troops moved on to Africa and thence to Italy, seemingly without tarrying in Spain.⁸⁷ Second, there is no record of these units having any contact with the Spanish barbarians, who seem to have lived undisturbed by anyone from 411 until 416. That the *Notitia* registers these soldiers is possible, but does not seem likely.

If not 412, when? The four years from the retirement of Maximus to the arrival of Athaulf in Spain can be rejected. There was, it has been shown, no imperial presence in the peninsula during this time. Likewise the years of Wallia's reconquest. The wars he undertook at Constantius' behest are well-attested if indifferently described. The only Roman force involved was the Goths themselves. We then come to 418 and Constantius' recall of Wallia from Spain. After this, we have two full years of silence before the campaign of Asterius in Gallaecia, a campaign

⁸⁶The period between 395 and 405 cannot altogether be dismissed, but one would be hard pressed to find a reason for the presence of a large army in the peninsula in those years. The arguments for dating the *Notitia's* field army after 407 appear in chapter two.

⁸⁷Oros. 7.42.5: *Maximus exutus purpura destitutusque a militibus Gallicanis, qui in Africam traecti, deinde in Italiam reuocati sunt.*

undertaken by Roman troops under a Roman commander. One is tempted to locate in those two silent years the troops shown in the *Notitia*.

There are good reasons for doing so, though of course the whole matter lies beyond definitive proof. When the army of Asterius appears in 420 it is already in the peninsula. As *comes Hispaniarum* he was not sent from outside the peninsula to fight the Vandals, but was instead Rome's man on the spot. That is to say, he was not in charge of an emergency measure, but rather in command of a settled establishment. If that is so, then the establishment of the Roman force which he led might logically have accompanied the withdrawal of Wallia's Goths and the concomitant reconstruction of Spain's provincial system and its reactivation as a functioning diocese. In 418, however, Spain required a field army on hand as it had not done in the fourth century. The establishment was perhaps planned as a permanent measure to ensure that the reconstituted imperial authority in Spain could be maintained. As such the troops were registered in the *Notitia*.

It must be admitted that this conclusion is speculative, but it has two special merits. First, the argument places no weight at all on the internal evidence of the *Notitia* and thereby sidesteps the danger of circularity. Second, in a narrative constructed independently of the *Notitia*, the years between Wallia's reconquest and the defeat of Asterius represent the only period to which no positive objection can be raised. We can place the *Notitia*'s units in Spain between 418 and 420 on the basis of no positive evidence. But unlike any other period during the reign of Honorius, there is no positive evidence against doing so. The argument by elimination is thereby a little strengthened. There are, to be

sure, other Roman campaigns in Spain after the defeat of Asterius to which the units shown by the *Notitia* might be assigned. All these possibilities founder on the fact that these later armies were sent to Spain from outside the peninsula, whereas Asterius commanded a force on the spot. Be that as it may, we can now turn to the first of these subsequent campaigns, commanded by the general Castinus, and the last Spanish venture of Honorius' long reign.

Castinus

Hydatius records that in 422 the *magister militum* Castinus was sent to Spain to attack the Vandals in Baetica.⁸⁸ His campaign, however, is more widely attested. Unlike so many episodes in fifth-century Spain's history, Hydatius is not our only source since the Spanish campaign impinged on the story of the famous general Boniface and was therefore of greater interest to contemporaries. The decision was made to send Castinus into Spain to fight the Vandals, and is perfectly explicable on the basis of prior events. Even if Asterius had succeeded in defeating Maximus' recent usurpation, he had nevertheless failed to maintain the dispositions of 418. The Vandals were now in Baetica, though the actual nature of their presence there is beyond recovery. To dislodge them, Castinus took a Roman army along with Gothic auxiliaries. The army was to have included Boniface, but a quarrel between him and Castinus led the former to desert and go to Africa.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Hyd. 69: *Castinus magister militum cum magna manu et auxiliis Gothorum bellum in Betica Vandalis infert; quos cum ad inopiam ui obsidionis artaret adeo ut se tradere iam pararent, inconsulte publico certamine confligens auxiliorum fraude deceptus ad Terraconam uictus effugit.*

⁸⁹Prosper 1278 (= MGH.AA 9.469): *Hoc tempore exercitus ad Hispanias contra Wandalos missus est, cui Castinus dux fuit. qui Bonifatium virum bellicis artibus satis clarum inepto*

It is often implied that Castinus' campaign was a disaster because of the loss of so prodigious a warrior. That is to read more into the sources than we actually find there. One discovers only that the campaign of Castinus was a great success and that the Vandals, besieged, had been reduced nearly to surrender when Castinus ventured an open battle. Deserted or betrayed by his Gothic auxiliaries, he here met defeat and fled to Tarraco.⁹⁰ This has always been taken to imply that Spain at this time remained essentially outside the Roman sphere, that the flight to Tarraco must imply the cession of the rest of the peninsula to the barbarians. This need not be true, but the assertion in turn contributes to a perspective in which Roman authority was essentially eliminated in 409 and never successfully reimposed. This, as we have seen, was not the case. On the contrary, Wallia's campaigns actually signalled the reimposition of Roman administration. There can be no question that the movement of Gunderic's Vandals into Baetica represented a major setback for that administrative authority, but there is no reason to think that setback equivalent to an elimination. Castinus' flight to Tarraco does not imply that there was no other place in the Spanish diocese where imperial authority could find succour, since a better interpretation exists. Castinus had led an army into Spain, that is to say, had used an army from elsewhere rather than troops already at hand in the peninsula. Defeated, he will have needed a new source of troops. The easiest access to these was from the

et iniurioso imperto ab expeditionis suae societate avertit. nam illo periculosum sibi atque indignum ratus eum sequi, quem discordem superbientemque expertus esset, celeriter se ad Portum urbis atque inde ad Africam proripuit.

⁹⁰Hyd. 69: quos [sc. Vandalos] cum ad inopiam vel obsidionis artaret adeo ut se tradere iam pararent, inconsulte certamine confligens auxiliorum fraude deceptus ad Terraconam uictus effugit. The *fraus auxiliorum* does not imply that the 'contingent...des Visigoths passa aux Vandales pendant la bataille', as Stein, *Bas-empire*, 1.275, would have it.

Mediterranean ports of the Spanish coast. Tarraco, moreover, had the additional advantage of being easily accessible to Gaul by land. The general's flight there can thus be explained militarily without reference to a collapse of Roman power in the peninsula.

It happens however that the defeat of Castinus marks if not a turning point then at least a significant stage in the decline of Roman authority in the peninsula. Within the year Castinus, and with him the whole of the western empire, was diverted from the Spanish situation by far more pressing matters in Italy. When Honorius died in 423, the western empire was usurped by Iohannes, and Castinus himself took a hand in the usurpation.⁹¹ The Spanish diocese, along with the rest of the non-Italian west, was neglected by the subsequent administration, and it was quite some time before the nascent Theodosian dynasty under Valentinian III had time to again think of Spain. Neglect, however, was not equivalent to renunciation. The emperors and their ministers never renounced Spain, and it is not until the death of Majorian in 461 that one sees the imperial government recognising that Spain lay outside the empire's reach. The story of the ongoing imperial interest in Spain is also that of the Gothic federates and will form the subject of the next chapter.

Here we need only outline the significance of the last years of Honorius' reign. The reconquest set in motion by Constantius and carried out by Wallia and his Goths was a success. It allowed the resurrection of the Spanish provincial system and its renewed functioning within the western diocesan network. The maintenance of

⁹¹Prosper 1282 (= *MGH.AA* 9.470): *Honorius mortitur et imperium eius Iohannes occupat conivente, ut putabatur, Castino, qui exercitui magister militum praeerat.*

this revived structure was probably entrusted to the field army whose existence is noted by the *Notitia dignitatum*. In 420, the misjudged aggression of a Roman commander provoked the Spanish barbarians into their first war against the Romans since 409. Much of the work of Constantius and Wallia was undone in the aftermath. The soldiers used by Asterius were no longer available to Castinus two years later, and the latter's initial success in no way mitigated his subsequent failure. His flight to Tarraco may have been no more than a tactical retreat for reenforcement. But, as we have so often seen in the case of Roman Spain's history, events elsewhere drew all eyes off the peninsula.

Castinus devoted himself to the politics of the imperial succession at Rome. John's government was unstable and lacked the leisure to take action in the western provinces. Such Roman officials as remained in Spain were therefore left once again to their own devices. Having been stirred into renewed aggressions by the Romans themselves, the Vandals were not slow to take advantage of the imperial government's distraction. The disturbance at the heart of the empire which marked John's usurpation also marked the beginnings of widespread Vandal aggression. Their campaigns did not spell the end of Roman authority in Spain, but that authority had now to struggle to make itself felt, and had often to assert itself by force of arms. The instruments of that armed presence were frequently the Gothic federates of Toulouse, and it is to their establishment in Gaul that we must turn before we can make sense of their intervention in Spain.

Chapter Five

The Goths in Gaul and Spain

The Goths played a decisive role in the history of late Roman Spain. Then, after imperial authority finally came to an end in the peninsula, the Goths were the strongest of the many groups that it left behind it. In the sixth century, after a hundred years during which Spanish history was shaped by fragmented, localised communities in conflict with one another, the Goths under Leovigild founded a kingdom which many have seen as the most sophisticated of Rome's western successors.¹ The Visigothic kingdom flourished throughout the seventh century, coming to an end only with the Arab conquest of 711. There is a tendency among medievalists whose primary interest lies with this kingdom to look at the fifth century as nothing more than a prelude to it.² The Goths of the fifth century, however, bear almost no resemblance to the inhabitants of the kingdom which Leovigild created in the 570s. What is more, the fifth-century history of the Goths in Spain has only a very tenuous connection with the rise of the later Spanish kingdom. Gothic history in the fifth century is centred on Gaul. It is a part of late Roman history, and Gothic involvement in Spain was for many years a by-product of Gotho-Roman relations. It is in this light that we must examine it.

In 418 the patrician Constantius recalled Wallia's Goths from Spain and settled them in Aquitaine. Here they built a kingdom centred on the city of Toulouse. Gothic expeditions to Spain were launched from

¹This is, for obvious reasons, the view of most Spanish medievalists, but see also P. Linehan, *History and Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford, 1993).

²E.g., Orlandis, *Época visigoda*; Collins, *Spain*².

this Gallic platform. For many years these expeditions took place at Roman behest and, initially, under Roman command. That this was the case was a direct result of the way in which Gotho-Roman relations developed in the years between 418 and 446.³

The course of Gotho-Roman relations in the early fifth century was in many ways predicated on the Gothic settlement in Aquitaine. Gothic history before that year is a matter of great controversy, and centres on the question of Gothic ethnogenesis, that is on whether the Goths who settled in Toulouse possessed a genuine continuity with the Goths who crossed the Danube in 376, or were on the contrary created from ethnically heterogeneous groups who became 'Goths' by fighting in a Gothic army and participating in Gothic traditions that were transmitted by a genuinely Gothic nobility. Ethnogenesis is a subject with many different facets, all of them problematic in one way or another, and most of them far-reaching in as much as they require an enquiry into such very basic matters as the nature of early medieval ethnicity. Most of the controversy is irrelevant to the present study, since we are on the whole concerned with the Goths of Toulouse and there is a general consensus that from 418 the Goths were a definably national unit which can be studied as such.⁴ The Goths whom Constantius recalled to Gaul were the group which had defeated the Vandals and Alans in Spain, and who before that had caused the imperial government substantial difficulties under Athaulf.⁵ The nature of their settlement in Aquitaine is of great

³The history of these relations is still best read in the standard accounts of Stein, Bury, and Jones, to which A.M. Jiménez Garnica, *Orígenes y desarrollo del reino visigodo de Tolosa* (Valladolid, 1983) adds nothing.

⁴The ethnogenesis-wars have generally been fought over the earlier stages of Gothic history. For a brief discussion of the diverse literature see Appendix 4.

⁵The continuity of Athaulf's Goths with the followers of Alaric before him has been disputed by proponents of a continuous Gothic ethnogenesis. There is no reason to dispute the matter here.

importance, because it is the foundation on which much of the fifth-century history of the western provinces is based. The nature of that settlement is, however, a matter of great controversy, since both the purpose and the means of the settlement raise a number of questions.

Contemporary sources for the settlement are extremely limited, only a phrase of Philostorgius, derived from Olympiodorus, and a couple of lines in the western chroniclers.⁶ None of these is enlightening. Prosper and Hydatius tell us only that Constantius ordered the Goths to stop fighting in Spain and sent them to live in Aquitaine and some of the cities in the adjacent provinces. Philostorgius, on the other hand, telescopes four years' narrative into a single statement, saying that the Gallic settlement was a reward for returning Galla Placidia to the emperor.⁷ He does, however, inform us that the Goths were given lands to farm in Gaul. The sources, then, are meagre and tell us very little. For many years, however, their testimony was combined with the much later evidence of the barbarian law codes to describe a very precise model of settlement, which was taken to be valid for all the various settlements of barbarians on Roman soil.⁸

This model was conveniently described as the *hospitalitas* system, and posited that two-thirds of the land and possessions of every land owner in Aquitaine was handed over to a Gothic guest, in accordance

⁶Philostorgius 12.4; Prosper 1271 (= MGH.AA 9.469): *Constantius patricius pacem firmat cum Wallia data et ad trihabitarum secunda Aquitanica et quibusdam civitatibus confinium provinciarum*; Hyd. 61: *Gothi intermisso certamine quod agebant per Constantium ad Gallias reuocati sedes in Aquitanica a Tolosa usque ad Oceanum*. The Gallic Chronicle of 511 is not an independent witness.

⁷Wolfram, *Goths*, 161-73, takes the opposite tack and distinguishes between a treaty of 416, according to which Wallia campaigned in Spain, and another of 418, by which the Goths were settled. There was probably only one treaty, however.

⁸*Codex Eurici* 277 is the favourite text from Gothic law, but parallels from the Burgundian and Lombard Codes are frequently cited as well.

with the supposed practices of Roman military quartering.⁹ This basic model was first proposed a century and a half ago and has been restated with increasingly baroque variations ever since.¹⁰ It is now thoroughly discredited.¹¹ The Gothic settlement in Aquitaine was certainly not managed according to the rules of military quartering and cannot have meant mass expropriations for every landowner in the province.¹² What it consisted of is somewhat less easy to determine. The essential problem was finding the Goths a reliable means of sustenance. One possibility is that they were given a portion of the tax proceeds of their new province as a salary and lived off this.¹³ There is not, however, any evidence for this method until more than a hundred years after the settlement in Aquitaine, and the evidence of Philostorgius speaks

⁹The proof text is CTh. 7.8.5, which deals with quartering.

¹⁰The notion of a landed division was first reduced to a coherent model by E.T. Gaupp, *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landtheilungen in den Provinzen den römischen Westreiches* (Breslau, 1844). Cf. F. Lot, 'Du régime de l'hospitalité', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 7 (1928), 975-1011.

¹¹This was the work of W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans* (Princeton, 1980). He has (40-9) in the first place shown that Roman military quartering did not entail the loss of land but merely required the provision of shelter. In the second place military quartering, cannot have been the legal basis of settlement. The connection between military quartering and barbarian settlement was drawn simply because both deal with the division of assets into fractions. But the fractions in each case are different, both between quartering and barbarian settlement and among the various barbarian settlements, Visigothic, Burgundian, Ostrogothic, or Lombard. Such very common fractions as one-third, one-half, and two-thirds occur in all sorts of contexts, and their diverse appearance in the various barbarian settlements cannot establish even a superficial likeness with quartering (Goffart, e.g., 163). Goffart's demolition of the old model of barbarian settlement has won general acceptance, but the old nomenclature continues in use: A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity* (London, 1993), 48-9. R. Krieger, *Untersuchungen und Hypothesen zur Ansiedlung der Westgoten, Burgunder, und Ostgoten* (Bern, 1991), 30-55, revives the older model *contra* Goffart.

¹²No protest was raised against the settlement either by the Gallo-Roman landowners or by the many vocal detractors of Roman rapprochement with barbarians. This would not have been the case had fully two-thirds of all the private property in Aquitaine been handed over to the Goths. See Goffart, 111 and *passim*.

¹³This is the contention of Goffart, 40-55. A refinement of this model, endorsed by Goffart in the same volume, is J. Durliat, 'Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares (Ve-Vie siècles)', in H. Wolfram and A. Schwarcz, edd., *Anerkennung und Integration* (Vienna, 1988), 20-72, elaborated in *Les finances publiques de Diocletien aux Carolingiens* (Sigmaringen, 1990).

explicitly of farming, which implies landed settlement, not tax revenue.¹⁴ The way in which the Gothic settlement was managed must therefore remain open to question, though it is most unlikely to have entailed the massive expropriation of land envisaged by many modern scholars.

The reasons for the Gothic settlement admit somewhat greater possibility of solution. A vast number of potential explanations have been put forth, but it is most of all necessary to see the Gothic settlement as one part of the larger Gallic organisation undertaken by the imperial government in the years after 416.¹⁵ In 418, a *concilium septem provinciarum* was set up to give the Gallic upper classes a focus for their political ambitions and a forum for their provincial concerns.¹⁶ In the same year, the Goths were settled in the region of Aquitania II. In explaining this arrangement, we should not be misled into looking for a monolithic Roman interest which it served, and remember instead the great diversity of Roman interests. In so doing, we come to realise that the Gothic settlement was meant to serve only one Roman interest: the imperial one.

Two fundamental questions have inspired a welter of theorising about the settlement. First, why did Constantius withdraw the Goths from Spain before they had finished wiping out the other barbarians? And second, why did he settle them in Aquitaine of all inexplicable places? The usual answer has been to postulate a threat which the

¹⁴The evidence from the Ostrogothic kingdom bulks large in any argument for settlement according to tax revenue: e.g., Goffart, 103 ('Italy is the model case for barbarian settlement'). Despite the reservations of S.J.B. Barnish, 'Taxation, land, and barbarian settlement', *PBSR* 54 (1986), 170-95, the case for the distribution of tax allotments in Ostrogothic Italy is proved by Goffart, 58-102. As we have seen, however, there is only a single piece of contemporary evidence for the settlement of 418, Philostorgius 12.4, and it speaks of land for farming.

¹⁵For Gaul in the early decades of the fifth century see Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 314-51.

¹⁶*Ep. Arelat.* 8 (= *MGH.Epp.* 3.13, which is to be cited in preference to Haenel's *Corpus legum* 238).

Goths were needed to counter, since only something really frightening could have justified a premature withdrawal from Spain.

One famous explanation of the Gothic settlement links it to a wider theory of the class struggle in the Roman world.¹⁷ The Goths, in this view, were needed to protect the Gallo-Roman landlords from their own discontented tenants and from the rebellious peasants in neighbouring Armorica whose suppression in 417 is noted by Rutilius Namatianus.¹⁸ As with most appeals to class conflict in the late Roman world, this one requires the combination of evidence from disparate sources and different eras in order to make its case.¹⁹ It must also be said that there is not the slightest evidence that Aquitaine was ever troubled by servile unrest of any sort, and whether modern notions of class conflict are in fact applicable to the ancient world is itself open to question.²⁰ It has also been customary to find a threat to the Romans among the Goths themselves, or among other barbarian invaders, perhaps Saxon pirates.²¹ There is a venerable tradition that Constantius was at constant pains to orchestrate and maintain a balance of power

¹⁷E.A. Thompson, 'The settlement of the barbarians in southern Gaul', *JRS* 46 (1956) = *Romans and Barbarians*, 23-37.

¹⁸*De red. suo* 1.213-16, on Exuperantius: *cuius [sc. Paladii] Armoricas pater Exuperantius oras / nunc postliminium pacis amare docet: / leges restituit libertatemque reducit / et servos famulis non sinit esse suis*. The equation of these rebels with Bacaudae we owe to Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 31-2.

¹⁹Thompson's major work on servile unrest in the later empire is 'Peasant revolts in late Gaul and Spain', *Past and Present* 2 (1952) = M.I. Finley, ed., *Studies in Ancient Society* (London, 1974), 304-20. For the parallel case of a supposed Bacaudic-cum-Basque threat to the Spanish provinces see Chapter Two.

²⁰Thompson believed in a similar sort of class conflict within the Gothic nation which developed on account of the Gothic nobility's corruption by Roman customs: Cf. 'The Visigoths from Frithigern to Euric', *Historia* 12 (1963) = *Romans and Barbarians*, 38-57. This view of Gothic history has been systematically condemned by P. Rousseau, 'Visigothic migration and settlement, 376-418: some excluded hypotheses', *Historia* 41 (1992), 34-61.

²¹As was done by J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Gothia and Romania', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 44 (1961) = *The Long-Haired Kings* (London, 1962), 28-9. In a postscript to *Romans and Barbarians* (251-5), Thompson acidly dismissed Wallace-Hadrill's twenty-year old proposal and restated his commitment to the Bacaudae thesis.

among the barbarians.²² This approach is open to almost limitless variation. Thus the Goths were withdrawn to control them, but also to spare the Suevi as potential recruits. Meanwhile, the Goths could act as a check on the Suevi and the Gallic Alans, who in turn checked them, and so on.²³

All these hypotheses falter because they cannot provide convincing reasons for Gallo-Roman *possessores* to have acquiesced in the settlement. None of the threats was on a sufficient scale to justify the imposition of a Gothic people on the peaceful province of Aquitania II.²⁴ If none of many answers solves the question, we must ask whether the terms of the question have in fact been properly posed. Instead of simply looking for a reason which compelled the Romans to act as they did, we should ask what we mean by the Romans. The meaning of such terms as the Romans and 'the Roman interest' is not self-evident, the categories are not homogeneous, and not every Roman wanted the same thing as every other Roman. If we realise this, then the question of the settlement begins to look less puzzling. In 418 the settlement served the purposes of the imperial government very well indeed, and that government was in a strong position to dictate terms. Provincial interests were entirely beside the point.

The greatest challenge to the government of Honorius throughout his long reign had not been barbarian invasion but Roman usurpation,

²²Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 461, is at the root of this notion's continued popularity, as witnessed by Krieger, *Ansiedlung*, 44-54, who argues that Constantius moved the Goths to Gaul just in time to forestall their forcing him into doing so. This argument rests on a romantic ideal of the Goths rather than the evidence.

²³B.S. Bachrach, 'Another look at the barbarian settlement in southern Gaul', *Traditio* 25 (1969), 354-8.

²⁴Saxon raiders cannot be proved to have existed in 418, and Thompson is only able to make the Bacaudae a large-scale threat by combining evidence separated by more than a century. As to the barbarians, if they themselves were the problem, better means of dealing with them existed than the constant and costly juggling of their numbers.

and in 418 the last of these usurpations was still a recent memory. Between 405 and 413 Honorius' authority was challenged simultaneously by barbarian groups and Roman usurpers, with only brief intervals when one threat or the other was in abeyance. In every case where both threats were present, usurpations took priority. What is more, nearly every western usurpation had found either its inception or its centre of gravity in Gaul. We may cast the net as far back as Magnentius and take in the Caesar Julian along the way, though these usurpations followed their own pattern, pitting west against east. Later usurpations, those of Magnus Maximus, Arbogast and Eugenius, Constantine III, and finally Jovinus all pitted some western provinces against others. In every instance Gaul was the centre from which imperial authority was resisted.

We may distinguish two strains in the Gallic usurpations. On the one hand we find the impetus of a Roman army, as in the case of Magnus Maximus. On the other we find local Gallic elites. Every usurpation involved at least the passive participation of local authorities, but some had benefitted from their active connivance. Among these latter had been the regimes of Constantine III and of Jovinus, the two cases that would have been fresh in the mind of the patrician Constantius in 418. Constantine had made a point of appointing Gallic aristocrats to his regime.²⁵ Jovinus, meanwhile, was himself an aristocrat, and based his regime on the support of his peers along with Burgundian and Alan warlords.²⁶ The suppression of his usurpation had entailed the execution of many noble supporters and the

²⁵Witness Apollinaris, grandfather of Sidonius, and Decimius Rusticus.

²⁶See the recent comprehensive study of R. Scharf, 'Jovinus, Kaiser in Gallien', *Francia* 20 (1993), 1-13.

imposition of heavy extraordinary taxes on the Auvergne.²⁷ The frustration of the Gallic nobility with lack of representation in Italy is also well-documented.²⁸

Against such a background, we can see how the whole arrangement of 418 was designed to eliminate the possibility of further Gallic challenges to imperial authority. The most salient fact of recent Gallic history had been the readiness of its leading men to side with usurpers against the central government. From an imperial point of view this was the point which had most to be addressed.²⁹ Constantius' settlement of 418 therefore presented the Gauls with both a carrot and a stick. The new Gallic council was meant to give the Gallo-Roman *possessores* a voice and to keep that voice fixed within a system centred on the imperial government.³⁰ The council confirmed their positions locally and

²⁷Frigeridus *apud* Greg. Tur. 2.9 (= MGH.SRM 1.57): *Hisdem diebus praefectus tyrannorum Decimius Rusticus, Agroetius, ex primicerio notariorum Iovinii multique nobiles apud Arvernus capti a ducibus Honoriantis et crudeliter interempti sunt. Fines: Sid. Ap. Carm. 7.207-10: Nec minus haec inter civilia iura secutus / eligitur primus, iuvenis, solus, mala fractae / alliget ut patriae poscatque informe recidi / vectigal*, on which see Loyen, *Recherches historiques*, 38.

²⁸K.F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948), with the remarks of Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 348-51.

²⁹Two recent studies come close to the answer without actually hitting on it. V. Burns, 'The Visigothic settlement in Aquitaine', *Historia* 41 (1992), 362-73, links the inauguration of the *concilium septem provinciarum* to the Visigothic settlement as if the insight were new, and mentions usurpations among the various potential threats which the Visigoths might have to counter. He appears to believe, however, that usurpers were an external enemy against whom the Gallo-Romans needed defence rather than a common challenge to imperial authority. A similar tendency to view all Roman interests as identical marks R. Scharf, 'Der spanische Kaiser Maximus und die Ansiedlung der Westgoten in Aquitanien', *Historia* 41 (1992), 374-84. Scharf links the Gothic settlement to the second usurpation of Maximus in c.419 and speculates that the Goths were moved to Gaul to prevent their joining the Vandals in support of the usurper. Even leaving aside Scharf's chronological errors, we may note that the circumstances of Maximus' second usurpation are far too sketchily known to support the interpretation he presents. See Chapter Four.

³⁰*Ep. Arel.* 8 (= MGH.Epp. 3.13-14): *Nam cum propter privatas ac publicas necessitatis de singulis civitatibus non solum de provinciis singulis, ad examen magnificentiae tuae vel honoratos confluere, vel mitti legatus, aut possessorum utilitas aut publicarum ratio exigat functionum: Maxime opportunum et conducibile iudicamur, ut, servata posthac quod annis singulis consuetudine, constituto tempore in metropolytana, id est in Arelatensi urbe, incipiant Septem Provinciae habere concilium.*

provided them with a means of asserting their interest short of outright rebellion. Its counterpart was a Gothic settlement meant to inspire fear. Should usurpation again seem tempting, there was always the prospect of Gothic aggression, which could be used to put down a new usurper as Athaulf had put down Jovinus. Explanations of the Gothic settlement have long foundered because they try to make it serve the interests of the Gallo-Romans when it was never meant to do so. On the contrary, it was meant to ensure that Gallic interests were kept subservient and loyal to the interests of the imperial government.³¹

Why Aquitaine was chosen as the site of the settlement allows no more than unsatisfactory speculation. The province is not known to have provided a large measure of the support for either Constantine or Jovinus. The latter came from Narbonne and his government had been centred on Valence. His supporters, meanwhile, had been purged in Lugdunensis.³² On the other hand, the centre of Gothic power was Toulouse, which lay in Narbonensis not in Aquitaine. It is worth noting that the Gothic settlement was far from the administrative centre of Gaul at Arles, and had no presence along the coast road to Spain.³³ More importantly, it lay close to the heartland of the Gallic aristocracy.

³¹It is possible to object to this reconstruction, which envisages the Gothic settlement as a tool for defending imperial interests, on the grounds that the Goths themselves had posed a threat to imperial interests for quite some time. This is true, but they had proved themselves more easily manipulated than the Gallic nobility, and barbarians were regularly accounted less of a threat than usurpers. A second objection to the present reconstruction might be the timing of the settlement, since Constantius withdrew the Goths from Spain before they had completed its reconquest. We have seen, however, that by 418 the diocesan government of Spain had been restored by the reconquest of Emerita (chapter four above). What is more, the Gallic settlement could not have proceeded until 418, for not only was Emerita retaken in that year, but Exsuperius had finished putting down the Armorican revolt only a year before.

³²See Scharf, *Francia* 20 (1993), 7 n. 25 above.

³³There is a long-standing scholarly tradition which talks about Visigothic 'isolation' in Aquitania, e.g. Burns, *Historia* 41 (1992), 367-71, though the idea goes back at least as far as Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*², 456-62.

That heartland was now flanked by imperial Arles, readily accessible to Italy, and Gothic Toulouse, the home of imperial federates. The argument for a carrot and stick policy on the part of Constantius is thus strengthened.

Regardless of this, however, we may be certain that the foundations of the Gothic settlement in Gaul were imperial, and that the Goths were settled in Toulouse as allies of the imperial government. They were not perhaps the most reliable allies, but they had proved themselves more amenable to control than had the provincial aristocracy in Gaul. With hindsight, modern historians can state that the settlement of 418 laid the foundation for an independent Gothic kingdom of Toulouse in what had once been a Roman province. But in 418 that foundation had not even begun to be dug.³⁴ Constantius settled the Goths in 418 as part of the government's structure of control, and there was no question of ceding that structure to Gothic authority. We may be sure of this, for in 418 Aquitania II and Novempopulana were still to have Roman governors.³⁵ Whether they were able to function normally alongside the Gothic settlement is another question, and one to which the sources allow no answer. It is also beside the point. Constantius ceded no province to the Goths. He planted them in a Roman province, with a view to keeping its loyalties firmly fixed on Rome.

³⁴Matthews, *Aristocracies*, 336, completely misrepresents the situation in asserting that we should see the council 'as a deliberate counterpart to the foundation of the Gothic kingdom of Toulouse, an assertion of Roman prestige at a moment when it seemed most severely challenged'.

³⁵*Ep. Arel.* 8 (= *MGH.Epp.* 3.14): *ita ut de Novempopulana et secunda Aquitania, quae provinciae longius constitutae sunt, si eorum iudices occupatio certa retenuerit, sciant, legatus iuxta consuetudinem esse mittendos.*

Goths and Romans, 418-461

This is the light in which we need to view subsequent Gothic history in Gaul, for the circumstances of the settlement coloured the history of relations between Goth and Roman for the rest of the fifth century. By settling the Goths to serve imperial ends, Constantius had effectively created a new power group competing for influence within late Roman Gaul. The Goths were not a hostile body attacking Roman power from the outside. They were a part of the late Roman polity, acting within that polity, and trying to control as much as they could of it from within. This is what makes the model of resistance and collaboration so misleading in a history of the fifth-century west.³⁶ We instinctively tend to view Goths and Romans as something different, to assume that all Romans were naturally closer to one another than any Romans were to the Goths. Therefore, any Romans who helped the Goths were collaborators. This interpretive model is the legacy of more recent German occupations of Gallic soil, and misrepresents fifth-century conditions entirely. In terms of the role they played, the Goths at Toulouse were every bit as much a part of the late Roman system as were the Gallo-Roman provincials or the local representatives of the imperial government itself.

All of this follows directly from the fact that the settlement of 418 was an act of imperial policy. It does not, however, make the task of explaining the history of the Goths in Gaul any easier. The course of Gotho-Roman relations between say 418 and 450 can be outlined in

³⁶Thus Courcelle divided his famous *Histoire littéraire*, the first edition of which appeared in 1948, into three sections, viz. l'invasion, l'occupation, and la libération, clearly patterned on the events of 1940-44. See also A. Loyer, 'Résistants et collaborateurs en Gaule à l'époque des Grandes Invasions', *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 23 (1963), 437-50; E.A. Thompson, 'Barbarian invaders and Roman collaborators', *Florilegium* 2 (1980), 71-88.

about two paragraphs, simply because cause and effect escape us entirely. In fact, between Orosius' anecdote about Athaulf in Narbonne and Sidonius' pen-portrait of Theoderic II fifty years later we lack any indication at all of Gothic motives for anything. We must also ask ourselves what our sources mean when they speak generically of Goths doing this and Goths doing that. It is often hard to know whether we are dealing with actions of the Gothic nation, directed by its king, or whether at times we are in fact seeing the activities of independent Gothic bands.³⁷ It is usually possible to argue both sides according to taste in every instance, since the sources are so intrinsically ambiguous.³⁸

Still, the facts are these. Between 418 and 439 the Goths proved disappointing allies. The Gallic nobility was quiescent, Gaul took no part in the disruptions that followed Honorius' death, and it is possible that the Goths were in part responsible for this. However, the Goths themselves required a series of imperial expeditions to keep them in their place. In 425, they marched on Arles but were repelled by Aëtius.³⁹ In 430, a Gothic army was defeated by Aëtius, again, not far from Arles.⁴⁰ In 436, the fighting centered on Narbonne, which was besieged by the

³⁷Thus Hyd. 82 (*Per Aetium commitem auct procul de Arelate quaedam Gothorum manus extinguitur Anaolso optimate eorum capto*) is generally taken to refer to a Gothic chieftain acting quite independently of king Theoderic though the inference is speculative. Conversely, Wolfram, *Goths*, 175, supposes that Theoderic himself ordered the Gothic betrayal of Castinus in 422 (chapter four above), though Hydatius breathes no word of it.

³⁸The standard accounts of the years between 418 and the death of Theoderic II in 466 regularly fit the scanty evidence into larger theories of Gothic society, e.g., Wolfram, *Goths*, 172-81; E.A. Thompson, 'The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric', *Historia* 12 (1963) = *Romans and Barbarians*, 38-57.

³⁹Prosper 1290 (= MGH.AA 9.471): *Arelas nobile oppidus Galliarum a Gothis multa vi oppugnatum est, donec imminente Aetio non impuniti abscederent*. Loyen, *Recherches historiques*, 40.

⁴⁰Hyd. 82.

Goths and rescued by the heroic action of Litorius.⁴¹ More fighting in the next year saw Hun auxiliaries being used against the Goths.⁴² These conflicts between Goths and Romans are opaque to explanation. We do not know why they were fought or who provoked them, and there is no satisfactory way forward.

In 438 and 439, however, a full scale war was fought. At first things went well for the Romans.⁴³ Then the Goths captured Litorius on account of his own rashness.⁴⁴ In the end, however, the Romans emerged the winners, and the praetorian prefect Eparchius Avitus negotiated a peace with Theoderic I.⁴⁵ Roman victory ensured future Gothic subservience and for more than twenty years, save for a brief interlude under Thorismund, the Goths were loyal allies of the imperial government.

It is in the period after 439 that the Goths became active in Spain. In 446, a Gothic army accompanied the Roman general Vitus on a

⁴¹Prosper 1324 (= MGH.AA 9.475): *Gothi pacis placita perturbant et plerque municipia vicina sedibus suis occupant, Narbonensi oppido maxime infestū. quod cum diu obsidione et fame laboraret, per Litorium comitem ab utroque periculo liberatum est, si quidem per singulos equites binis tritici modis advectis strenuissime et hostes in fugam verterit et civitatem annona impleverit; Sid. Ap. Carm. 7.246-7: Litorius Scythicos equites tum forte subacto / celsus Aremorico Geticum raptabat in agmen.*

⁴²Prosper 1326 (= MGH.AA 9.475): *Bellum adversum Gothos Churis auxiliantibus geritur.*

⁴³Prosper 1333 (= MGH.AA 9.476): *Adversum Gothos in Gallia quaedam prospere gesta. Hyd. 104: Gothorum caesa VIII milia sub Aetio duce.*

⁴⁴Prosper 1335 (= MGH.AA 9.476): *Litorius, qui secunda ab Aetio patricio potestate Churis auxiliaribus praeerat, dum Aetii gloriam superare appetit dumque haruspicum responsis et daemonum significationibus fidit, pugnam cum Gothis imprudenter conservit fecitque intellegi, quantum illa, quae cum eodem perit, manus prodesse potuerit, si potioris consiliis quam sua temeritate uti maluisset, quando tantam ipse hostibus cladem intulit, ut, nisi inconsideranter proelians captivitatem incidisset, dubitandum foret, cui potius parti victoria adscriberetur. Hyd. 108: Bello Gothico sub Theodorico rege apud Tolosam Litorius Romanus dux inconsultius cum auxiliari Vnorum manu intruens caesis his ipse vulneratus capitur et post dies paucos occiditur. Sid. Ap. Carm. 7.300-303: capto terrarum damna patebant / Litorio; in Rhodanum proprios producere fines / Theodoridae fixum, nec erat pugnare necesse, / sed migrare Getis. See Loyen, *Recherches historiques*, 47-50.*

⁴⁵Prosper 1338 (= MGH.AA 9.477): *Pax cum Gothis facta, cum eam post ancipitis pugnae lacrimabile experimentum humiliter quam unquam antea poposcissent. Hyd. 109: Inter Romanos et Gothos pax efficitur. Sid. Ap. Carm. 7.308-9: foedus, Avite, novas; saevum tua pagina regem / lecta domat; iussisse sat est te, quod rogat orbis. Chron. Gall. a. 452 (= MGH.AA 9.660): Pacatus motibus Galliarum Aëtius ad Italiam regreditur.*

campaign into Carthaginiensis and Baetica. In the early 450s, the Gothic prince Frederic led a campaign on Roman authority to crush Baccadae in Tarraconensis. Finally, in the reign of Avitus, Theoderic II undertook the reconquest of the entire Iberian peninsula in the imperial name.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, even after 439 the imperial alliance with the Goths required assiduous cultivation. Their participation in the campaign against Attila had to be negotiated.⁴⁷ The death of the first Theoderic and the succession of Thorismund, meanwhile, brought a brief downturn in the alliance.⁴⁸ His murder by Theoderic II and Frederic renewed an allegiance which became considerably stronger after the Goths participated in the creation of an emperor. Avitus was made emperor by a coalition of local Gallic interests, provincial and Gothic together, and his reign was clear evidence of the Gothic integration within the imperial polity. Though in 418 Constantius had created the Gothic settlement as a check on the power of other local interests, over time Gallic interests, Gothic and Gallo-Roman, combined to create an emperor who, however briefly, reunited much of the Roman west.

It was under Avitus that the whole of Spain again became an imperial province. The agent of that reconquest was a Gothic army, and Avitus' achievement was secure so long as the Gothic interest marched in step with that of the emperor. Its stability was called into question with the death of Avitus. The Gothic king Theoderic withheld judgement on Majorian, holding Spain with an army, but himself returning to Toulouse to await events. As it transpired, Majorian succeeded in

⁴⁶Hyd. 126; 150; 166-8, and chapter six below.

⁴⁷Sid. Ap. *Carm.* 7.316-56.

⁴⁸Chron. Gall. a. 511 (= *MGH.AA* 9.663): *Thurismundus rex Gothorum Arelatem circumspectat*.

winning to his cause the various local interests in Gaul. The Gallo-Roman nobility rallied to him, and, having faced the new emperor in battle and lost, Theoderic too acknowledged Majorian.⁴⁹ He therefore delivered an intact Spanish diocese into imperial hands and it was from Spain that Majorian planned to launch his African campaign.

When the Vandals thwarted this and Ricimer killed Majorian, the Goths, like such Gallo-Romans as Aegidius, went their own way. Those Gallo-Romans who chose to remain loyal to the imperial centre were few. The Italian emperors who succeeded Majorian had a harder and harder time maintaining the loyalties of the Gallic provinces closest to Italy. The Goths in Aquitaine were left to themselves. They ceased to act in the imperial interest and began to act in their own. This may already have been the case in the last years of Theoderic II. It certainly became the case under Euric. In the 470s, the Goths helped put an end to the last tenuous toehold of the imperial government in Gaul. By this point there were few, Roman or Goth, who mourned its passing. Spain, in the meantime, had ceased to be a Roman diocese when the successors of Majorian abandoned all interest in it. Theoderic maintained order there for a short time after 460, but when Alaric II decided to add Spain to his kingdom in the 490s he had to fight for it. Roman Spain had ended by default in 460, but no Gothic Spain replaced it. As in 418, so in 460, the Gothic zone of interest lay in Gaul. The final disintegration of Roman Spain was an accident noticed by no one. But it took a long time in coming.

⁴⁹Priscus, frag. 27 (Müller) = 36.1 (Blockley); Hyd. 192, and Harries, *Sidonius*, 82-102.

Chapter Six

Avitus, Majorian and the End of Roman Spain

After the defeat of Castinus in 422, the Romans did not again use the Goths in Spain until the 440s. In the interim, imperial authority in the peninsula was challenged first by the Vandals, then by the Sueves. During the whole of this period and until the death of Majorian, however, the reigning emperor laid claim to the Spanish diocese and was generally able to give substance to that claim. If Spain did not cease to be Roman in 409, as we have argued it did not, then a central problem in studying the rest of its fifth-century history is deciding at what point we should in fact cease to speak of Roman Spain. To discuss the end of Roman Spain is in fact no more than a historical convention for fixing a date on a historical process whose borders were never, in reality, sharply defined. The criterion for establishing that convention adopted here is the political participation of the imperial government.

Throughout its history, what made the Roman Empire a unit was an emperor or emperors at its centre. Without that unifying centre, the various provinces of the empire would have been no more than independent regions participating in a culture absorbed to a greater or lesser extent from a Graeco-Roman model. On those grounds, we can use the withdrawal of imperial authority as our measure of the end of Roman Spain.¹ The validity of this approach is confirmed, moreover, because we know that fifth-century Romans themselves used it. It has recently been stressed that Sidonius Apollinaris not only participated in

¹H. Elton, 'Defining Romans, barbarians, and the Roman frontier', *SFI*, 126-35, argues that cultural and geographical definitions are so fluid that political allegiance is the only consistently useful criterion for separating Romans from barbarians.

the end of Roman Gaul, but was fully aware of its passing. His criterion was the imperial cession of Provence to the Goths in 475, that is to say, the disappearance of the superstructure of office-holding and rank which went with the imperial authority. Without it, Roman Gaul ceased to be.² The same judgement is readily applicable to Spain. When we speak of the end of Roman Spain we mean in fact the end of imperial Spain.

If we accept that convention, there is actually a fairly precise date at which Spain ceases to be Roman. There was on the one hand a gradual diminution of imperial control throughout the first half of the fifth century, but this was punctuated by periods of almost total reconquest. With the death of Majorian in 461 after the failure of his campaign against the Vandals, the emperors ceased to take an interest in the preservation and maintenance of the Spanish provincial system. In 461, Spain ceased to be Roman. In the meantime, however, we should regard Spain as Roman, and try to understand the means by which it was kept inside the imperial system.

Our main source for this, and frequently our only one, is Hydatius. Some of the problems this engenders have already been discussed.³ Perhaps the largest problem is the preponderance of Gallaecian material in Hydatius' narrative. This has meant that those histories of fifth-century Spain which adopt Hydatius in full automatically extend to Spain the conditions which he describes in Gallaecia. Fifth-century Spain has therefore been depicted as totally anarchic because fifth-century Gallaecia frequently was. In fact, however, the first point does not follow from the second. If one reads Hydatius with care, separating

²Harries, *Sidonius*, *passim*.

³See Chapter Four.

carefully what he says about Gallaecia from what he does and does not say about the other Spanish provinces, a different picture emerges. There was no anarchy. Most of the Spanish provinces continued to function normally within the imperial administrative structure, and even in the cases of those that did not, there was no notion of their having ceased to be parts of the empire. Generally speaking, between 429 and 460 Lusitania was a target of Suevic expansion from Gallaecia, while Carthaginiensis and Baetica were subject to periodic Suevic raids. These latter provinces, however, were usually subject to imperial control, while Tarraconensis was so at all times. All this emerges from a narrative of the years between 423 and 461, but there are other indications as well.

Several topics which interested Hydatius occupy a great deal of space in his chronicle. They are not directly relevant to an attempt at constructing a coherent narrative of the first half of the fifth century in Spain. In fact, the tremendous detail with which Hydatius treats some of his favourite themes distorts their actual importance to the history of the period. However, these themes are at the same time good illustrations of some of the structural problems in the history of the period, and, viewed separately, complement a narrative.

History in Hydatius

The first large theme to which Hydatius gives great prominence is diplomacy.⁴ Hydatius records a large number of embassies in the years between 429 and 460, tracing and retracing their steps across the northern half of the peninsula, to and from Gallaecia. We find envoys

⁴See A. Gillett, 'Envoys and Diplomacy in the Early Medieval West', (Diss. Toronto, 1994), Chapter Two.

from the Goths, from the imperial authority as represented by Aëtius, from 'Romans' more generally, all going to the Sueves. We find Suevic envoys heading in the other direction, and, in opposition to the Sueves, we find embassies from the Romans of Gallaecia. Hydatius, it is clear, had a special interest in the topic, and indeed he himself was part of a delegation to Aëtius.⁵ A dire interpretation has been put on these embassies, and on fifth-century diplomacy in general, as visible signs of the Roman empire's inability to accomplish anything.⁶ Yet what do the embassies really tell us?

Internal diplomacy was a commonplace of late antique life and had been so well before there were any half-autonomous barbarians settled on Roman soil. This diplomacy was the oil which kept administrative machinery running smoothly, and kept the regions of the empire in touch with and tied to the imperial centre.⁷ Though no doubt of great importance at the local level, such embassies were too mundane to be worthy of record in most of the historical sources which have come down to us. They bulk so large in Hydatius because he had been an envoy himself and seems to have taken an interest in the subject, not because they were of unusually great importance for developments in fifth-century Spain. They were not, which is why they seem never to accomplish much of anything. Hydatian diplomacy, in fact, illustrates not the total breakdown of imperial authority, but its relative continuity.

⁵Between 429 and 460, Hydatius devotes a full ten per cent of his entries to the record of embassies, viz.: Hyd. 88, 92, 103, 147, 153, 163, 165, 170, 186, 192. Hydatius went to Aëtius in 432, Hyd. 88: *Censorius comes legatus mittitur ad Sueuos supradictu secum Ydatio redeunte.*

⁶Diplomacy in Spain: Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 33-46; García Moreno, *España*, 49-67. The pessimism about imperial capabilities is very evident in Harries, *Sidonius*, 24-5.

⁷See F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1977), 363-463.

The Hydatian picture of diplomacy in the peninsula actually shows the integration of barbarian groups into the empire at a certain level. The embassies he shows travelling between Sueves, Goths, provincials, and imperial authorities may not be identical to provincial embassies to court, but they are a direct outgrowth of them, and had largely the same purpose. They accomplished nothing earth-shattering because they were not meant to do so. Instead, they kept open the lines of communication. Importantly, they ensured that competing groups, Suevic or Gothic, imperial or provincial, knew more or less what the others were doing at any given time. What had changed was that some of the political groups involved in the diplomacy were able, and often willing, to fight the imperial authorities. This was new and important. The structure within which this diplomacy took place, however, was the same as it had been in the fourth century. In adapting themselves to it, the Goths and even the Sueves expressed their intention of existing within the Roman polity.⁸ The Hydatian embassies cannot, then, be taken as symbols of the decay of Roman authority.

The persistence of an imperial system is also suggested by another favourite theme of Hydatius, that of ecclesiastical politics. Local church history has a relatively small part in the chronicle as a whole, for ecclesiastical news from around the Roman world interested Hydatius more. The inaccuracies of Hydatius' information on the topic has occasioned much comment and been taken as evidence for the sundering of Suevic Gallaecia from the rest of the Roman world.⁹ However, we have seen that Hydatius' ignorance is vastly exaggerated, and that there is no

⁸These issues are discussed in great detail by Gillett, 'Envoys', though he starts from the assumption, not accepted here, that the arrival of the Sueves, Goths, or other barbarians automatically meant the end of imperial authority in a region.

⁹Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 146.

reason to think him any more isolated or ill-informed than any of his fourth-century predecessors.¹⁰ What is more, the local affairs of the Spanish church give no hint of any isolation.

Hydatius records the affairs of the Spanish church in two theatres. The first runs on an axis from Gallaecia to Lusitania, more precisely, to Emerita, the civil capital of the Spanish diocese. We find Hydatius and his fellow bishop Thoribius rooting out Manichees in Asturica, trying them, and then reporting on the affair to Antoninus of Emerita in 445.¹¹ Thoribius sought the advice of pope Leo in that same year, and the reply which he received in 447 suggested that he organise a Spanish synod to investigate Priscillianists and restore orthodoxy.¹² Antoninus, meanwhile, captured Pascentius, one of the Manichees who had fled, and tried him in Emerita, afterwards expelling him from Lusitania.¹³ This demonstrates the ongoing ties between Gallaecia and Lusitania. The links of these provinces with the rest of the peninsula are attested not only by the correspondence of Leo with Thoribius, but by the fact that the Gallaecian deacon Pervincus brought back Leo's letter *ad Hispanienses episcopos* as a whole.¹⁴

On the other hand, there is some evidence that in regions touched by the Suevi, churchmen had to enter the political struggles caused by their new neighbours. The evidence is slight but suggestive. First, there is the fact that Hydatius never once mentions the bishop of Bracara (= Braga), which was the metropolitan see of Hydatius' own province of

¹⁰Above Chapter Four.

¹¹Hyd. 122.

¹²Thoribius' letter to Leo is not preserved but we do have Leo's lengthy reply, PL 54.677-92. However, we also have an earlier letter of Thoribius to Hydatius and Caepionius which discusses the issues he surely raised with the pope: PL 54.693-5. See the discussion of S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth-century Chroniclers* (Leeds, 1990), 237-9.

¹³Hyd. 130.

¹⁴Hyd. 127.

Gallaecia. The explanation must surely be political, though whether we are to infer Suevic involvement or only the hostility of Hydatius to the incumbent at Bracara is unclear. More interesting is the puzzling story of Sabinus, bishop of Hispalis. This city, the capital of Baetica, had been raided by both Sueves and Vandals in the past, but was actually taken by the Sueves under Rechila in 441.¹⁵ In that same year, Sabinus was expelled from his see and replaced by one Epifanius, whose ordination Hydatius declares fraudulent.¹⁶ The coup was the work of a faction, but that faction was perhaps one whose politics favoured the Sueves. This speculation is confirmed by the date of Sabinus' return, 458.¹⁷ This was a little less than two years after Theoderic the Visigothic king, had, on behalf of the emperor Avitus, reconquered the entire peninsula and put an end to the Suevic kingdom: *regnum destructum et finitum est Sueuorum*.¹⁸ What is more, Sabinus returned to Hispalis from Gaul, the seat of Gothic power. The coincidence may be merely fortuitous, but there is every possibility that we here have evidence for barbarian leaders both recognising the importance of leading churchmen, and manipulating them as best they could.

These activities are abundantly evident in Gaul, where both Theoderic II, and even more so his brother and successor Euric, took constant notice of episcopal activity. Theoderic's brother Frederic wrote to pope Hilarus in 462 in an attempt to have Hermes of Narbonne dismissed from his see on canonical grounds.¹⁹ Euric, for his part,

¹⁵Hyd. 115: *Rex Rechila Hispali obtenta*.

¹⁶Hyd. 116: *Sabino episcopo de Hispali factione depulso in locum eius Epifanius ordinatur fraude non iure*.

¹⁷Hyd. 187: *Sabitus episcopus Ispalensis, post annos XX quam certauerat expulsus, de Gallis ad propriam redit ecclesiam*.

¹⁸Hyd. 168.

¹⁹Epp. Arel. 15 and 18 (= MGH.Epp. 3.22-8), with Harries, *Sidontus*, 135-6.

prevented a large number of sees in his kingdom from being filled.²⁰ The Spanish evidence is as always far less substantial, but we do know of one case where a Spanish bishop, Symphosius, acted as an envoy on behalf of the Sueves.²¹ If there had been large scale interference in the episcopate by the Sueves, Hydatius would cheerfully have decried one further example of Suevic *perfidia*.²² That he does not do so suggests that the problem was not commonplace. And yet it seems likely that the Sabinus affair is evidence for a situation we might on the whole expect. Not every Spanish provincial, not every local strongman, had a problem with the Sueves, or an interest in resisting them.²³ One imperial campaign seems in fact to have largely been concerned with punishing provincials for just such acquiescence.²⁴ If the ecclesiastical evidence gives an ambiguous picture of life in fifth-century Spain, its great merit is to remind us of the subtlety of the situation. In it, Roman authority survived, though in competition with other centres of power. That the imperial government now needed to compete with other authorities was new to the fifth century, and contributed to a change in society visible across the western Roman world. That the change took place in Spain as well as elsewhere is made clear by Hydatius' testimony.

From the reign of Honorius on, effective government passed largely into the hands of soldiers. As the fifth century progresses, we have records of fewer and fewer civilian officials.²⁵ The history of the west was

²⁰Sid. Ap. Ep. 7.6.7.

²¹Hyd. 92. This brings to mind the Gallic negotiators of 475, Basilius of Aix, Leontius of Arles, Graecus of Marseilles, and Faustus of Riez (Sid. Ap., Ep. 7.6.10), not to mention the evidence of the *Vita Orientii* which shows Roman bishops actively favouring their Gothic neighbours over imperial officials. On this see Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 145-6.

²²Hyd. 203 refers to Suevic ambassadors as *legati gentis perfide*.

²³On the conflicting loyalties among Gallo-Romans of the period see Harries, *Sidontus*, 164-6.

²⁴The campaign of Vitus in 446 (Hyd. 126) on which see below.

²⁵A glance at the fasti, PLRE 2.1274-80, makes this clear.

no longer made as much by governors and prefects as by *comites* and *duces*.²⁶ This is starkly illustrated in Spain where after 420 there is no unequivocal reference to a civilian official.²⁷ Though they must have continued to exist, we meet only *magistri*, *duces*, and *comites* in the pages of Hydatius. Between 425 and 460 the chronicler records the *magister* or *dux* Asturius, the *magistri* Merobaudes and Vitus, and the *comites* Censurius, Mansuetus, and Fronto.²⁸ This preponderance of military officials is particularly striking when we remember that until the reign of Honorius there were practically no soldiers in Spain.²⁹

The new militarisation of society was a characteristic Spain shared with the other western provinces of the era. It signalled a retreat from civil life, since it was largely the holding of imperial office that gave the provincial elites their sense of participation in the empire.³⁰ Elsewhere in the west, however, there remained civil institutions in which the provincials could participate, for instance the *concilium septem provinciarum* in Gaul. Spain had no similar institution and as the century wore on, its links to the imperial power were maintained militarily.

Nevertheless, Spain was not entirely cut off from the civil administration of the empire. Just as in Gaul, members of provincial elites could still pursue successful careers in the imperial service. The evidence for Gaul is far better, mostly thanks to Sidonius, but the similar condition of Spain is well-illustrated by Merobaudes. A native of

²⁶If one were to transpose into the fifth-century the techniques and approach of Matthews, *Aristocracies*, its cast of characters would look entirely different.

²⁷The last is the *vicarius* Maurocellus (Hyd. 66).

²⁸Asturius: Hyd. 117 (*dux*), 120 (*magister*); Merobaudes: Hyd. 120; Vitus: Hyd. 126; Censurius: Hyd. 88, 91, 103, 113, 131; Mansuetus: Hyd. 147; Fronto: Hyd. 147, 163.

²⁹See Chapter Two above.

³⁰On this see Harries, *Sidonius*, 23-35.

Baetica and of good birth, he left Spain to seek a career in Ravenna.³¹ We do not know his age, but he would have lived through the time of troubles at the beginning of the fifth century. There is no hint that his decision to follow an official career in imperial service was a response to evil conditions in Spain. To the contrary, Merobaudes seems to have made an altogether typical move for a member of the provincial nobility, illustrating that it was still possible to do so in the Spain of the early fifth century. His career, moreover, was a success, for we meet him first as *comes sacri consistorii*, then honoured with either the patriciate or the honorary consulate for his skill as an orator.³² But the growing intersection of the military and civilian spheres which we have already seen also finds an illustration in Merobaudes, for his final attested office is as *magister militum* in Spain. That he was recalled from this post on account of intrigues at court reminds us once again that Spain was still a part of the world in which the imperial power took an interest.³³

The various themes which run through Hydatius' chronicle help explain the structure of Spanish history in the first half of the fifth century, and suggest its firm integration into the system of imperial government. Militarised, fought over in places and occupied by Sueves in others, this last era of Roman Spain shows no signs of anarchy. It is analogous, rather, to contemporary Gaul, where new power groups and new interests jostled against one another to find a favourable position within preexisting boundaries. The game of political life was still played

³¹*Sid. Ap. Carm.* 9.297; *Hyd.* 120. See F.M. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes* (Philadelphia, 1971), 8, who, however, thinks that Merobaudes was born in Gaul and then moved to Spain.

³²For the *comitiva*, *CIL* 6.1724. On the problem of his patriciate, T.D. Barnes, 'Patricii under Valentinian III', *Phoenix* 29 (1975), 159-63 and A. Cameron 'Theodorus Triseparchos', *GRBS* 17 (1976), 269-86 on honorary consulates.

³³*Hyd.* 120: *Mox nonnullorum invidia perurgente ad urbem Romam sacra preceptione reuocatur.*

by the rules which the imperial government had written long ago. What had changed was the ability of that government to dictate the winner of the game. In the fourth century, the imperial government had had an overwhelming advantage in politics, and while certain of its representatives could be challenged or attacked, the state itself always won. By the middle of the fifth century, certainly by the 440s in Spain, this order had broken down, and the imperial government met opposing interests, barbarian and provincial, on level ground. As long as it held out and continued struggling to maintain its interests, as it did in Spain until the death of Majorian, we can still speak of Roman Spain. A narrative of its last years can now be attempted.

The reign of Valentinian III

When we last looked at the Spanish diocese, the Vandals had just repulsed the attempt of Castinus to dislodge them from Baetica. The years which followed would see one of the periodic contractions of imperial authority in the peninsula. The usurpation of John, who was backed by Castinus, had distracted imperial attention from any further action in Spain. The Vandals used this lapse to their own benefit. In 425 they sent expeditions to the Balearics and to Mauretania Tingitana, pillaged Cartago Nova in Carthaginiensis, and sacked Hispalis in their base province of Baetica.³⁴ They did not retain control of the latter city, however, because they captured it again in 428. King Gunderic died there and was succeeded by his brother Gaiseric.³⁵ The latter, who would

³⁴Hyd. 77: *Vandali Balaricas insulas depredantur quique Carthagine Spartaria et Spali euersa et Hispaniis depredatis Mauritaniam intradunt.*

³⁵Hyd. 79: *Gundericus rex Vandalorum capta Ispali cum impie elatus manus in ecclesiam ciuitatis ipsius extendisset, mox dei iudicio demone correptus interit; cui Gaisericus frater succedit in regno.*

for so long be the greatest threat to the peace of the Mediterranean, may have defeated a Roman army soon after his accession though the evidence is very uncertain.³⁶ Regardless, he led his people to Africa in May 429 after killing a Suevic leader who tried to capitalise on the Vandals' departure.³⁷

In all this, we hear little of the Spanish provinces other than Baetica. Neither in Tarraconensis nor, despite the sack of Cartago Nova, in Carthaginensis does there appear to have been any appreciable barbarian presence. Even in Baetica, as we have seen, the Vandals did not retain control of major cities having once captured them, and there is explicit evidence for the continuing Roman control of strongpoints in Gallaecia, which we are accustomed to think of as entirely Suevic territory.³⁸ The evidence of Roman-held fortresses is ambiguous.³⁹ What is certain, however, is that after Gaiseric's departure in 429, the only barbarian presence in the peninsula was that of the Sueves, and this despite Gaiseric's having killed the Suevic king Hermenegarius just before he sailed.⁴⁰ Any efforts the imperial government might make at restoring its position in Spain would therefore have to be directed against the Sueves.

³⁶Chron. Gall. a. 452, 107 (= MGH.LA 9.658): *Viginti ferme milia militum in Hispaniis contra Vandalos pugnantium caesa*. When this event should be dated is unclear.

³⁷Hyd. 80: *Gaisericus rex de Beticae provinciae litore cum Vandalis omnibus eorumque familiis mense Maio ad Mauritianiam et Africam relictis transit Hispaniis; qui priusquam pertransiret, admonitus Heremigarium Suevum vicinas in transitu suo provincias depraedari, recursu cum aliquantis suis facto predantem in Lusitania consequitur; qui aud procul de Emerita ... maledictis per Gaisericum caesis ex his quos secum habebat, arrepto, ut putavit, euro uelocius fugae subsidio in flumine Ana diuino brachio precipitatus interit.*

³⁸For Gallaecia, Hyd. 81: *plebem quae castella tutiora retinebat*.

³⁹That is to say, did the Sueves run riot in the province at large while the Gallaecians cowered in towns, or did the possession of the strongpoints indicate a sort of division of power between provincials and Sueves in which neither could gain the upper hand? The first option is traditional, the second equally plausible.

⁴⁰Hyd. 80.

No such efforts were made for quite some time however. This is explained by the sanguinary contests of Valentinian's generals amongst themselves. First Felix, then Boniface, then Aëtius bid for supreme power within the western empire. It should be emphasised, however, that despite this continued distraction of the imperial authorities, the Sueves confined themselves to Gallaecia for nearly a decade. In the meantime, Aëtius had by 433 succeeded in eliminating his rivals and control of imperial policy was therefore in his hands. The rest of the 430s were taken up with a variety of campaigns in and around Gaul. Hence we find a series of battles against Burgundians, Franks, Iuthungi, rebel Nori, and, repeatedly, the Goths.⁴¹ The years before 439 brought the Goths into conflict with Aëtius and his subordinates on many occasions, but the hostilities were entirely confined to southern Gaul. They did not impinge on Spain directly at all, though they did add to the sum of pressing business which kept imperial authorities from acting against the Sueves in Spain. The diocese was, as far as we can tell, peaceful in the 430s, but in so much as that peace was disturbed it was the Sueves who caused the disturbance.

The Suevic king at the time was Hermeric, and he, like all the Sueves, has rather an unsavoury reputation. He had been king since at least 419, and one is accustomed to see him as the first of a line of perfidious Suevic rulers whose first aim was to break any agreement into which they entered.⁴² We may note that the evidence only half bears this

⁴¹*Sid. Ap. Carm.* 7.233-4; *Chron. Gall.* a. 452, 106, 118 (= *MGH.AA* 9.658-60); *Hyd.* 85, 88, 99, 102; *Prosper* 1322 (= *MGH.AA* 9.475). For the hegemony of Aëtius in general, *Bury, LRE* 1.240-313; *Stein, Bas-Empire* 1.317-50. On the Gothic wars, see Chapter Five above.

⁴²It is impossible to find a general history, either of Spain or of the late empire, in which the Suevi do not figure as the epitome of a barbarism at least partly mitigated in the Goths and even the Vandals.

out. First, Hermeric is never once known to have acted outside Gallaecia. Second, even in Gallaecia only four years of a nineteen-year reign were taken up with aggression against the locals.⁴³ That is still a lot of fighting, and it seems that in the last year of his reign, just before his abdication, Hermeric had once again been fighting with some of the Gallaecians.⁴⁴ But this is a far cry from the random savagery presented in some modern histories, and, more importantly, a far cry from the terms in which Hydatius described the first years of barbarian occupation in the peninsula. We must most of all remember, however, that Hermeric in all his reign never once disturbed the peace of the other Spanish provinces. The assumption must therefore be that, with the Vandals gone and the Sueves fighting to assert themselves in Gallaecia, those other provinces returned to a more or less normal life.

The peace of the Spanish diocese was broken in 438. The cause was a change of leaders among the Sueves. Hermeric was a sick man, and he abdicated in favour of his son Rechila. Rechila took to the offensive, surely because the Suevic power base in Gallaecia had been secured by his father. In 438, he campaigned in Baetica, defeating one Andevotus and capturing his treasure.⁴⁵ The identity of this Andevotus is wholly uncertain. Some would have him a Roman general, others a Vandal chieftain who had remained behind after 429.⁴⁶ Either guess might be right, though he is most likely to have been a powerful landowner or local aristocrat in Baetica.⁴⁷ Regardless, this first

⁴³Hyd. 81; 86; 91.

⁴⁴Hyd. 105: *Sueui cum parte plebis Callectiae cui aduersabantur pacis iura confirmant.*

⁴⁵Hyd. 106: *Hermericus rex morbo oppressus Rechilam filium suum substituit in regnum; qui Andeuotum cum sua quam habebat manu ad Singillionem Beticae fluvium aperto Marte prostravit magnis eius auri et argenti opibus occupatis.*

⁴⁶See e.g., García Moreno, *España*, 56, and PLRE 2.86.

⁴⁷Isidore, *Hist.* 85 (= MGH.AA 11.300) has *Andeuotum Romanae militiae ducem*. This we may ignore. That he was a local notable is suggested by the normal practices of

campaign of Rechila was a minor one, a prelude to more ambitious exploits to come.

In the next year, 439, Rechila invaded Lusitania and took Emerita.⁴⁸ It was a rich prize in more senses than one. Emerita was the metropolitan capital of the Spanish diocese and from the point of view of a Roman administrator the most important city in Spain. The symbolic value of taking it from imperial hands would have been high. In purely material terms, moreover, it was a rich city, and one of the few in Spain which continued to prosper right through the Visigothic period into the seventh century.⁴⁹ For these reasons, Emerita became the first target of Rechila's campaigns.

He took the city in 439, and seems to have planned on conquering all of Lusitania at the same time. We find him in that same year accepting the surrender of a Roman *comes* at Myrtilis (= Mértola) far to the south down the Guadiana River.⁵⁰ This official, the count Censurius, had earlier been one of numerous imperial envoys to the Sueves, and Myrtilis lay along a line of retreat from Emerita.⁵¹ Turning north from southern Lusitania, Rechila went on to take Hispalis in Baetica in 441, and thereafter, according to Hydatius, he brought Baetica and Carthaginiensis under his *potestas*.⁵² We cannot be sure what the authority exercised by Rechila in those provinces consisted in.

Hydatius. When describing officials, he invariably gives their office, and when describing barbarians, he normally specifies Sueve, Vandal, or Goth, so we may suspect that Andevotus belonged to neither category.

⁴⁸Hyd. 111: *Rechila rex Suevorum Emeritam ingreditur*.

⁴⁹R. Collins, 'Mérida and Toledo, 550-585', in E. James, ed., *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford, 1980), 189-219.

⁵⁰Hyd. 113: *Censurtus comes, qui legatus missus fuerat ad Suevos, residens Martyli obsessus a Rechila in pace se tradidit*.

⁵¹His earlier contact with the Sueves is noted at Hyd. 88 and 103 and he reappears in 449 (Hyd. 131).

⁵²Hyd. 115: *Rex Rechila Hispali obtenta Beticam et Carthaginiensem prouincias in suam redigit potestatem*.

He did not conquer and hold the provinces in any systematic fashion. In fact, since all subsequent evidence shows the Sueves based in the vicinity of Emerita, we should presume that Rechila's conquest was largely nominal.

Though Baetica and Carthaginiensis were not actually occupied, the imperial administration of the provinces seems to have stopped. This may have occurred with the acquiescence, or perhaps even the connivance, of powerful provincial interests. In the year of the Suevic conquest there occurred the Sabinus affair, in which the bishop of Hispalis was evicted from his see and replaced uncanonically by another. There is some evidence, then, that the Suevic expansion into Lusitania, and the element of control they exercised in Baetica and Carthaginiensis, was not wholly unwelcome to certain groups of provincials. Whether we allow that much or not, the fact remains that in 441 imperial control lapsed in most of the peninsula. It would be restored once again, but matters in the further provinces had to wait while the generals of Valentinian dealt with a more pressing threat to imperial Spain, in the hitherto peaceful province of Tarraconensis.

In the same year that Rechila campaigned across the peninsula, we hear for the first time of Spanish *Bacaudae*. *Bacaudae*, organised groups of rebellious peasants, are mentioned sporadically in Gaul throughout the fourth and fifth centuries.⁵³ At one point in the fifth century, much of northern Gaul seems to have risen in a *Bacaudic* revolt.⁵⁴ In Spain,

⁵³The classic account, still controversial, is E.A. Thompson, 'Peasant revolts in late Roman Gaul and Spain', *Past and Present* 2 (1952) = M.I. Finley, ed. *Studies in Ancient Society* (London, 1974), 304-20. See more recently, J. Drinkwater, 'The *Bacaudae* in fifth-century Gaul', in Drinkwater and Elton, 208-17.

⁵⁴Chron. ad 452, 117 (= MGH.AA 9.660): *Gallia ulterior Tibattonem principem rebellionis secuta a Romana societate discessit, a quo tracto initio omnia paene Galliarum servitia in Bacaudem conspiravere.*

however, *Bacaudae* appear only briefly, in the 440s.⁵⁵ Their range of action was limited to *Tarraconensis*, more precisely, the upper and middle Ebro valley.⁵⁶ They were a threat with which imperial authorities had to deal before any thought could be given to the Sueves. Unlike barbarians, *Bacaudae* did more than threaten to withdraw a given region temporarily from imperial control. They instead threatened to overturn the whole basis of that control. And so *Bacaudae* were dealt with brutally. In 441 and again in 443 Roman generals were sent to crush the Spanish rebels.⁵⁷ They did so, apparently to their own and the imperial satisfaction. The *Tarraconensian Bacaudae* were not entirely vanquished, and they reappeared in 449.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the defeat in 443 seems to have been sufficient for a time. The imperial government, at any rate, experienced no trouble from them when it undertook the next of its campaigns against the Sueves in Spain.

The Sueves had been left unmolested by the imperial government for five years, because that government was occupied elsewhere. Suevic expansion in 440 and 441 had taken place during the years of extreme Vandal pressure on the empire. It is possible that Rechila seized his moment precisely because the Vandals were active simultaneously and he calculated that the empire would reckon them a greater threat. If so, the

⁵⁵Hyd. 117, 120, 133-4; 150. Despite efforts to integrate these *Bacaudae* into a larger picture of social unrest in late Roman Spain, we are better off listening to our source and regarding the outbreak of *Bacaudic* brigandage as a limited phenomenon. For the role of *Bacaudae* in various elaborate reconstructions of the defence of Roman Spain, see chapter two above. For an attempt to assimilate our fifth-century *Bacaudae* to the Basques, Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 36-40.

⁵⁶For the geography, Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 39.

⁵⁷Hyd. 117, a. 441: *Asturlus dux utriusque militie ad Hispanias missus Tarraconensium caedit multitudinem Bacaudarum*. Hyd. 120, a. 443: [*Merobaudes*] *breui tempore potestatis suae Aracellitanorum frangit insolentiam Bacaudarum*. It is possible that Mer., *Par.* 1, frag. 2A.23 contains a reference to this campaign. See F.M. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes* (Philadelphia, 1971), 37-8.

⁵⁸Hyd. 133-4.

calculation had proved correct. First the capture of Carthage, then the raids on Sicily fixed imperial energy on the Vandals to the exclusion of other matters. The peace treaty of 442 put a temporary stop to Vandal aggression, and it is in those very years directly after 442 that one sees Aëtius fighting again in Gaul, after a period of inaction.⁵⁹ At the same time as the Vandal threat was cooling, the campaigns against the Bacaudae in Tarraconensis were being won. Only then, when Africa, Gaul, and Gaul's near neighbour Tarraconensis seemed well in hand, did an imperial army try to do anything about the situation in the farther reaches of Spain.

In 446 a certain Vitus, of whom we know nothing else, advanced into Carthaginiensis and Baetica in command of both Roman and Gothic forces: Vitus was made *magister militum* and sent to Spain supported by the aid of a fairly large army. After he had harassed the inhabitants of Carthaginiensis and Baetica, when the Sueves arrived there with their king, he fled driven by a pitiful terror when the Goths who had come to aid him in plunder were defeated in battle as well'.⁶⁰ This record of the campaign, though short, is also unusually informative. In the first place, Vitus is described as harrying the inhabitants of Carthaginiensis and Baetica. It was, of course, the usual practice of late Roman armies to despoil the provincial territories through which they marched.⁶¹ As we have seen, however, there is some evidence that parts

⁵⁹The Gallic evidence comes from the Chron. ad 452, 127-8 (= *Chron. min.* 1.660), a not very reliable source whose chronology for the Vandals is demonstrably wrong and whose relative chronology is thus not especially sound.

⁶⁰Hyd. 126: *Vitus magister utriusque militiae factus ad Hispanias missus non exigue manus fultus auxilio, cum Carthaginienses uexaret et Beticos, succedentibus cum rege suo illic Suevis, superatis etiam in congressione qui ei ad depredandum in adiutorium uenerant Gothis, territus miserabili timore diffugit.* The language of Hydatius requires us to see the Goths as a separate unit under his command.

⁶¹See R. Macmullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 77-98.

of provincial society in Carthaginiensis and Baetica had colluded with the Suevic occupiers in 440 and 441. Vitus' campaign may confirm this, and his depredation of the provincials may imply that, in the eyes of the imperial government, they had colluded in the Suevic occupation and therefore needed punishing. That the Suevic army arrived from outside Baetica, that is to say from the Suevic base in Lusitania, implies that there was no actual Suevic occupation of the former province. We may thus regard Vitus' campaign as directed in part against rebellious provincials as well as against the Sueves. Regardless, it was an abject failure. The Sueves defeated both the Roman general and his Gothic auxiliaries, and proceeded to plunder both Baetica and Carthaginiensis.⁶²

There is still no hint of their permanently occupying those provinces, though both certainly remained vulnerable to Suevic incursions. The Sueves, however, themselves remained based in Lusitania.⁶³ At any rate, Rechila died at Emerita in Lusitania a year and a half after his defeat of Vitus.⁶⁴ In the meantime, it is likely that Baetica and Carthaginiensis were again under imperial control, as is suggested by a couple of points. In 449 we again find the Roman *comes* Censurius in Spain, this time in Hispalis, the chief city of Baetica. He was assassinated there, for reasons unknown, by another commander, who would later become a minister of the Gothic king Theoderic.⁶⁵ A

⁶²Hyd. 126: *Sueui exim ilas prouincias magnas depredatione subuertunt.*

⁶³There is no reason to think that they were recognised by the imperial government. Hyd. 163 speaks of a *iurati foederis promissa*, which contrasts with his usual use of *pax* to describe agreements with the Sueves, but this is as likely to be elegant variation as it is to indicate an official treaty with the imperial government.

⁶⁴Hyd. 129.

⁶⁵Hyd. 131: *Per Agiulfum Spali Censurius iugulatur.* Despite the doubts of PLRE 2.34, 39, the identification of this Agiulf and the Aioulfus who later accompanied Theoderic II on his Spanish campaign is very likely.

second point which suggests the imperial control of Carthaginensis and Baetica after 446 is that the next campaigns against the Sueves were fought not in either of those provinces, but in Gallaecia and Lusitania.⁶⁶ What is more, in 455 we find the Sueves attacking regions of Carthaginensis which, we are told, they had previously returned to the Romans.⁶⁷ Not one of these points is, strictly speaking, probative, but their sum suggests that the campaign of Vitus succeeded in restoring imperial government in Baetica and Carthaginensis.

At any rate, in 446 the campaign of Vitus established a new status quo in which the Sueves remained in control of Lusitania and the diocesan capital of Spain. Rechila died there in August of 448, and was succeeded by his son Rechiar who inaugurated his reign with a plundering expedition, perhaps in Gallaecia.⁶⁸ Rechiar was to be the most assertive of Suevic kings, and one who seems actively to have rejected imperial authority instead of just fighting for a share of it. Rechiar has the distinction of being the first barbarian king to mint coins in his own name.⁶⁹ This is tremendously important. In the late empire, minting was a declaration of independence. Imperial

⁶⁶See below.

⁶⁷Hyd. 161: *Sueui Carthaginenses regiones quas Romanis rediderant depredantur*. Hydatius' language here is open to two contrasting interpretations and cannot be pressed too hard. It can, of course, mean that the Sueves attacked regions of Carthaginensis which they had returned to the Romans at the same time as they retained other regions of Carthaginensis for themselves. On the other hand, it may simply mean that the Sueves attacked those parts of Carthaginensis which they had returned to the Romans, which were the only parts they had taken.

⁶⁸Hyd. 129: *Rechila rex Sueuorum Emerita gentilis moritur mense Augusto; cui mox filius suus catholicus Rechiarus succedit in regnum...Obtento tamen regno sine mora ulteriores regiones intravit ad predam*. Burgess, 99, translates 'farthest reaches <of Gallaecia>' for *ulteriores regiones*. This reading equates the regions assaulted by Rechiar with the *sitam in extremitate Oceani maris occidua* allotted to the Sueves in 411. This may be correct, though it is hard to understand why Rechiar should need to assault the one region of the peninsula which had been firmly under Suevic control since the initial conquest. Everything hinges on how one reads *ulterior*, which, if a provincial designation, could mean Gallaecia or Lusitania, or, if merely a descriptive adjective, should mean far away from Emerita, and therefore Carthaginensis or Tarraconensis. One cannot tell.

⁶⁹MEC 1.77-80.

usurpations were announced by the striking of coinage, without which there was no usurpation. This principle would have been known to the barbarians. We possess many coins of the early fifth century struck in regions which had come under barbarian control, but they are coins struck in the name of the ruling emperor.⁷⁰ They were therefore advertisements of loyalty, which demonstrated that these barbarian regions remained parts of the empire. Not just the Goths, whose general faithfulness no one questions, but even the Vandals, minted only in the imperial name until the very end of the century. We cannot, of course, know Rechiar's mind. However, by placing his own monogram on the coinage, he was in effect declaring his withdrawal from the *imperium Romanum*. That, at least, is how any Roman contemporary would have understood his action.

Rechiar's aggressiveness is further demonstrated by the whole course of his career. His father and grandfather had been opportunists. They had snatched at Roman territory close at hand at such times as it seemed safe to do so. Rechiar was far bolder. The first action of his reign was a march to Toulouse, where he married a daughter of the Gothic king Theoderic.⁷¹ The wedding must have taken place late in 448, for Hydatius records the Suevic king's attacks on the Basques on his return journey in the following February. He went to Toulouse again in July of 449 and his return march coincided with a renewed outburst of

⁷⁰MEC 1.1-80.

⁷¹Hyd. 132: *Rechiarus accepta in coniugem Theodori regis filia auspiciis tritio regni Vasconias depredatur mense Februario*. This wedding implies no anti-imperial policy on the part of the Goth, but rather a hedging of bets. Visigothic princesses had been married to Suevic and Vandal leaders in the past without causing the Goths the least hesitation in fighting against their peoples. It had, in fact, been just such a Gotho-Suevic alliance that produced the patrician Ricimer: A. Gillett, 'The birth of Ricimer', *Historia* 44 (1995), 80-4.

Bacaudic activity.⁷² Rechiar joined the Bacaudic leader in pillaging the territory of Caesaraugusta.⁷³ Ilerda was entered and some of its population seized soon afterwards, but it is impossible to say whether this was the work of Basilius, Rechiar, or the two in combination.⁷⁴

This is the final news we have of Rechiar until after the assassination of Valentinian III, when, as Suevic leaders had been accustomed to do, he seized the opportunity of chaos within the Roman ranks to again attack some of the Spanish provinces. Between 449 and 455, however, the Sueves seem to have contented themselves with those provinces which were then firmly under their control, that is, with Gallaecia and Lusitania. The threat from Attila forestalled any Roman action against them, and the Sueves used the distraction of the Hun invasion to once again break the peace.⁷⁵ On the whole, however, the Spanish provinces seem to have been quiet. Carthaginiensis and Baetica remained governed by the empire, even if some parts of inland Tarraconensis continued to suffer from Bacaudic uprisings. These were dealt with soon after the defeat of Attila.

In 453 or 454, Frederic, brother of the Gothic king Theoderic II, went to Tarraconensis and campaigned against the Bacaudae, apparently with success for we never hear of the bandits again.⁷⁶ This campaign has

⁷²Hyd. 133: *Basilius ob testimonium egregii ausus sui congregatis Bacaudis in ecclesia Tyriassone foederatos occidit.*

⁷³Hyd. 134: *Rechiarus mense Iulio ad Theodorem socerum profectus Caesaraugustanum regionem cum Basilio in reditu depredatur.*

⁷⁴Hyd. 134: *Irrupta per dolum Elerdensi urbe acta est non parua captiuitas.* This supplies no clear agent for the attack.

⁷⁵This is the logical inference from Hyd. 147, a. 452/3: *Ad Sueuos Mansuetus comes Hispaniarum et Fronto similiter comes legati pro pace mittuntur et optinent condiciones iniunctas.* If peace had been broken and reimposed, this presupposes recent Suevic aggression, certainly between 449 and 451, and most plausibly in 451 given the concentration of all imperial forces on the threat posed by Attila.

⁷⁶Hyd. 150: *Per Fredericum Theuderici regis fratrem Baucaude Terraconenses caeduntur ex auctoritate Romana.*

a symbolic importance far beyond its immediate effect. The Goths had intervened in Spain on Roman behalf before, but not since the days of Wallia several decades earlier had they done so under their own command. The Spanish campaigns since the Gotho-Roman treaty of 439 had been undertaken by Roman generals, commanding joint Gothic and Roman armies. In the very last years of Valentinian's reign we encounter a phenomenon which would dominate the last years of Roman Spain. Frederic fought the *Bacaudae ex auctoritate Romana*, but not under Roman command. The task of maintaining imperial control in Spain had thus been delegated to the Goths. During the reigns of Avitus and Majorian this pattern would be intensified. The attachment of Spain to the empire was maintained only through Gothic energies. This ultimately meant that when the Goths ceased to act on behalf of the emperor, Roman Spain ceased to be.

Avitus and the last Roman reconquest

Valentinian III was assassinated on 16 March 455. Whether he had instigated Valentinian's assassination or not, Petronius Maximus profited by it, declaring himself Augustus on 17 March. His reign was not a happy one. The Vandal king Gaiseric used revenge for Valentinian as a pretext to sail on Rome, and Maximus was killed on 31 May as he tried to flee the city. During his brief reign Maximus had appointed a Gallic aristocrat and former praetorian prefect as *magister militum* and sent him to treat with the Visigoths, one presumes in order to convince them to recognise Maximus' accession. This envoy was Eparchius Avitus, and his success was so complete that when the news of Maximus' death arrived at Toulouse, the Gothic king urged Avitus to take up the

purple.⁷⁷ We know far more about Avitus than about other ephemeral emperors of the fifth century because the Gallic emperor had an able panegyrist in the person of his own son-in-law, the poet Sidonius Apollinaris.⁷⁸

Avitus' reign was brief, lasting less than two years. It is of considerable significance for the end of Roman Spain, however, for it was under Avitus that the last concerted effort was made to reestablish imperial control of the peninsula, an effort which was rewarded by almost complete success. Avitus was at Toulouse when the news of Maximus' death arrived and the Gothic king Theoderic urged him to take up the purple. Avitus travelled to Arles near which he was proclaimed emperor on 9 July 455. From there he proceeded to Rome where he took the consulate on 1 January 456 and heard the panegyric composed by Sidonius for the occasion. He also sought recognition from the eastern emperor Marcian, but this was not forthcoming.⁷⁹ The Sueves, meanwhile, profiting from the confusion at the heart of the empire, invaded Tarraconensis. When Avitus had been proclaimed, both he and Theoderic had sent embassies to Rechiar. These embassies were not extraordinary, but rather the normal means of inaugurating a new reign. Rechiar, however, responded with an invasion of Tarraconensis.⁸⁰ Until that point, Avitus might have been willing to let the Sueves alone in Gallaecia and Lusitania, but an attack on Tarraconensis could not be

⁷⁷For dates and attestations, R.W. Burgess, 'The third regnal year of Eparchius Avitus: a reply', *CP* 82 (1987), 335-45. On the reign, J. Harries, *Sidonius*, 54-81, and C.E. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris and his Age* (Oxford, 1933), 19-35.

⁷⁸On this panegyric see now the sensitive commentary of Gillett, 'Envoys and Diplomacy', chapter three.

⁷⁹*CLRE* 447.

⁸⁰*Hyd.* 163:....*omni iurationi uiolata Suaeui Tarraconensem prouinciam, quae Romano imperio deseruebat, inuadunt.*

tolerated.⁸¹ Theoderic launched a full scale war against the Sueses at

the new emperor's behest and put an end to the Suevic kingdom within

the year.

Early in the autumn of 456, Theoderic led a large Gothic army into

northern Spain and marched on Gallaecia.⁸² On 5 October, he met

Rechiar in battle near the river Urbicus outside Asturica (= Astorga). The

Sueses were routed and a great many fled the battlefield, Rechiar among

them.⁸³ Rather than leave matters there, Theoderic seems to have been

intent on eliminating Suevic power entirely. His route through the

Spanish provinces ran straight through the heart of Suevic territory. By

the end of October he had arrived at the Suevic capital at Bracara, which

he sacked on the 28th.⁸⁴ Theoderic stayed at Bracara for several months,

perhaps using it as a base from which to put down continued Suevic

resistance in Gallaecia. Rechiar was captured at Portus Cale (= Oporto)

and killed at Bracara in December.⁸⁵ For Hydatius, this marked the end

of the Suevic kingdom and his judgement is suitably lapidary: *regnum*

destructum et finitum est Suenorum.⁸⁶

⁸¹Hyd. 165 records a second Gothic embassy and a second Suevic attack on

Tartacconensis: *Legati Gothorum rursum ueniunt ad Suenos; post quorum aduentum rex*

Suenorum Rechiarus cum magna suorum multitudine regiones prouintiae Terraconensis

inuat.

⁸²Jordanes, *Get.* 44 (= *MGH-AA* 5.117) records a Burgundian presence in the Gothic

army but one is never sure how much credence to give this source.

⁸³Hyd. 166: *Max Hispanias rex Gothorum Theodoricus cum ingenti exercitu suo et cum*

uoluntate et ordinatione Auiti imperatoris ingreditur; cui cum multitudine Suenorum rex

Rechiarus occurrens duodecimo de Asturecensi urbe milario ad fluium nomine Urbicum III

non. Octubris, die VI feria, trito max certamine superatur. Caesis suorum agminibus,

aliquantus capitis plurimisque fugatis ipse ad extremas sedes Gallaciae plagatus uix euadit

ac profugus.

⁸⁴Hyd. 167: *Theuderico rege cum exercitu ad Braccaram extremam ciuitatem Gallieciae*

pertinente V kal. Nouembri, die dominico, est inuenta, fit tamen satis maesta et

lacrimabilis eiusdem direpto ciuitatis.

⁸⁵Hyd. 168: *Rechiarus ad locum qui Portum Cale appellatur profugus regi Theuderico*

captiuis adductur. Hyd. 171: Occiso Rechiaro mense Decembri.

⁸⁶Hyd. 168.

Despite the chronicler's assertion, Theoderic himself seems not to have been so sure of the situation. He advanced into Lusitania, which had for a time been second only to Gallaecia as a centre of Suevic power.⁸⁷ The Gothic king apparently considered sacking Emerita which may imply that he met resistance there.⁸⁸ He did not, in the end, sack the city, and instead set up his winter residence there. In the meantime, Gallaecia experienced the inevitable aftermath of a full blown war, an outburst of banditry and the small-scale reorganisation of survivors amongst the vanquished Sueves.⁸⁹ Theoderic, for his part, had achieved what he set out to do *cum uoluntate et ordinatione Auiti imperatoris*, that is, destroy the Suevic kingdom and restore its provinces to Roman control. The diocesan capital was restored to the empire for the first time in fifteen years.

Avitus, meanwhile, had been less lucky. Driven from Rome in early autumn, he was defeated by Ricimer in October 456 and then consecrated bishop of Placentia. He was murdered very soon afterwards by the general Majorian, who would become emperor a year later.⁹⁰ The news reached Theoderic early in the next year and in early April he set off to Toulouse, presumably to guard his own position in Gaul. He left behind him garrisons to enforce his settlement.⁹¹ Hydatius puts the

⁸⁷Hyd. 171: *Occiso Rechiaro mense Decembri rex Theodoricus de Gallacia ad Lusitaniam succedit*. Burgess, 109, badly distorts the sense of the passage when he translates *succedit* as 'withdrew'.

⁸⁸Hyd. 175: *Teudericus Emeritam depredari molens beatae Eulaliae martyris terretur ostentis*.

⁸⁹Hyd. 172: *In conuentus Bracarensis latrocinantium depredatio perpetratur*. The Sueves who remained in *extrema parte Galleciae* set up one Maldras as their king (Hyd. 174), but as events would show, he had none of the unchallenged authority possessed by Rechiar and his predecessors.

⁹⁰Burgess, CP 82 (1987), 344.

⁹¹Hyd. 179: *Theudoricus aduersis sibi nuntiis territus mox post dies paschae, quod fuit II kal. Aprilis, de Emerita egreditur et Gallias repetens partem ex ea quam habebat multitudine uariae nationis cum ductibus suis ad campos Galleciae dirigit; qui dolis et perturtis instructi, sicut eis fuerat imperatum, Asturicam, quam iam praedones ipsius sub*

worst possible construction on their intentions, and it seems that a number of cities and fortresses in Gallaecia were sacked by the Gothic garrison. The looting will no doubt have appealed to the troops in and of itself. The army's mission, however, was explicitly to put down the remnants of the Sueves and all the violence which Hydatius records took place in formerly Suevic territory. What is more, Hydatius himself records that the Gothic army was acting on Roman authority. The Hispano-Roman provincials suffered at the hands of the Gothic army, but that suffering implied the restoration of imperial authority.⁹²

At the local level, we begin to see in these years the start of the patterns which would dominate post-Roman Spain, patterns of local notables in competition with small Suevic forces and the Spanish representatives of the Gothic king at Toulouse. The difference in the years between 456 and 460, was that the Goths who kept the peace did so for the sake of the emperor and the imperial government. For Avitus, Theoderic had truly been what Sidonius later called him: *Romanae column salusque gentis*.⁹³ The Gothic king had conquered Spain for Avitus, and the order he established there was maintained under Majorian as well.

Majorian

specie Romanae ordinationis intrauerant, mentientes ad Sueuos qui remanserant iussam sibi expeditionem, ingrediuntur pace fucata solita arte perfidiae ... Palentina ciuitas simili quo Asturica per Gothos perit exitio. Vnum Couiacense castrum tricesimo de Asturica miliario a Gothis diutino certamine fatigatum auxilio de hostibus et obsistit et praeualet.

⁹²Modern scholars are accustomed to see this Gothic action in Gallaecia as exceptionally brutal, but the violence of soldiers towards civilians was neither novel nor peculiar to the Goths because of their barbarism. Throughout the history of the Empire, Roman garrisons had imposed just as violently on the provincials on whom they were quartered. See R. Macmullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 194-7, and idem, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 77-98.

⁹³Sid. Ap., *Carm.* 23.71.

Majorian was proclaimed Augustus at Ravenna on 28 December 457, more than a year after the defeat of Avitus.⁹⁴ In the interim the empire had had only one emperor, at Constantinople, first Marcian, then Leo. Meanwhile, Majorian had set about gaining the support of enough local interests to be able to rule a united western empire.⁹⁵ Behind him stood the figure of the patrician Ricimer. The latter was playing his own game, and having already made a name for himself under Avitus he would soon step into the full light of history as the kingmaker of the western empire's last years. It was to be Ricimer who brought the reign of Majorian to a premature end in 461.

It is during the reign of Majorian that we can for the last time speak of Roman Spain. Majorian continued to assert imperial claims to the Spanish diocese, and under him the holding of imperial office in the diocese remained possible. On his death this ceased to be the case, and we can no longer sensibly claim that Spain remained Roman. Political control of the Spanish diocese was handed to Majorian by Theoderic II, for on the death of Avitus the province lay in the gift of the Goths. We have seen that Theoderic had reconquered the whole of the peninsula in Avitus' name. In early spring 457, Theoderic had marched back to Toulouse in order to secure his position in the new dispensation. He withheld recognition of Majorian until 458 or 459, and then gave the new Augustus his allegiance only on account of a military defeat.⁹⁶ Theoderic's motives in this are beyond recovery. It is entirely possible

⁹⁴Auct. Prosp. 455.8 (= MGH.AA 9.492).

⁹⁵Harries, *Sidonius*, 82-102.

⁹⁶Hyd. 192, s.a. 459: *Legati a Nepotiano magistro militiae et a Sunerico comite misi ueniunt ad Galletios nuntiantes Maiorianum Augustum et Theudoricum regem firmissima inter se pacis iura sanxisse Gothis in quodam certamine superatis*. This campaign was probably won by Aegidius and corresponds to that mentioned by Paul. Petricord. *VMart.* 6.111-12. See Loyen, *Recherches historiques*, 82.

that he wished to expand the regions of Gaul held by the Goths, that the Gothic kingdom had begun on the expansionism clearly visible under Euric. Certainly this has been a widely held view. On the other hand, it is just as possible that Theoderic was in effect sulking, that having once had a hand in the creation of an emperor, he resented not having been consulted in the case of Majorian.

In the meantime, however, Theoderic maintained control of the Spanish provinces effectively enough that he could hand them to Majorian as soon as the two had come to terms. The remnants of the Sueves had returned to their customary occupation of harassing the Gallaecians, though much of the Suevic history recorded by Hydatius for this period concerns a struggle for power among the Sueves themselves. Theoderic, at any rate, seems to have been more concerned about holding the southern provinces. He sent an army to Baetica in 458, and it is at precisely this time that Sabinus, the old bishop of Hispalis who had been exiled nearly twenty years before when the city fell to the Sueves, returned and reclaimed his see.⁹⁷

By 459 Theoderic and Majorian had patched together an agreement, and Majorian could plan to use Spain as the base from which to launch a major campaign against the Vandals. The local preparations for this campaign were presumably undertaken by the Gothic army which had been keeping the peace of the province. One must assume as much, for although command of the Gothic army was shared by a Roman, there is no hint of a Roman army in the peninsula before the emperor marched there himself in 460. The Gothic army was commanded jointly by a

⁹⁷Hyd. 185: *Gothicus exercitus <cum> duce suo Cyrila a Theudorico ad Hispanias missus mense Iulio succedit ad Beticam.* Hyd. 187: *Sabinus episcopus Ispalensis, post annos XX quam certauerat expulsus, de Galliis ad propriam redit ecclesiam.*

Roman, the *magister militum* and *comes* Nepotianus, and a Goth, the *comes* Suniericus. It is difficult to be precise about the authority under which these two men were serving.⁹⁸ Nepotianus was probably a Roman general who transferred his allegiance to Theoderic when Majorian was killed, refusing to recognise his successor as did many other Roman commanders at the time.⁹⁹ At any rate, the preparations for the African campaign would have taken up the winter and early spring of 460. In May of that year Majorian marched to Spain with an imperial army. He had got no further than *Tarraconensis* when news of a heavy blow reached him. Traitors had warned the Vandals of the Spanish preparations and they struck preemptively, seizing the ships while they lay at harbour in *Carthaginiensis* and destroying them. Thwarted, Majorian went no further but turned and retraced his steps to Gaul.¹⁰⁰

The Gothic army, meanwhile, stayed on, under the command of Suniericus and Nepotianus. Their attempts to maintain order were successful only briefly and both were recalled in 462.¹⁰¹ Nepotianus was replaced by one Arborius, who was still in Spain in 465 but was recalled in that year.¹⁰² By that point he himself is the only evidence for a Gothic army in the peninsula, and the narrative of Hydatius now begins

⁹⁸Hyd. 192 leaves open the possibility that Nepotianus was one of Majorian's generals, but Hyd. 196 shows Suniericus and Nepotianus as joint commanders of a Gothic army (*Pars Gothici exercitus a Sunierico et Nepotiano comitibus ad Galleciam directa*) and Nepotianus was eventually relieved of his post on Theoderic's orders (Hyd. 208: *Nepotianus Theuderico ordinante Arborium accipit successorum*).

⁹⁹The most famous example of comparable disaffection after Majorian's murder is of course that of Aegidius. For a different view on Nepotianus see R.W. Burgess, 'From *Gallia romana* to *Gallia gothica*: the view from Spain', in Drinkwater and Elton, 25.

¹⁰⁰Hyd. 195: *Mense Maio Maiorianus Hispanias ingreditur imperator; quo Carthaginiensem provinciam pertendente aliquantas naues, quas sibi ad transitum aduersum Vandalos praeparabat, de litore Carthaginiensi commoniti Vandali per proditores abripiunt. Maiorianus ita a sua ordinatione frustratus ad Italiam reuertitur.* The *Carthaginiensem...pertendente* implies that he can have got no further than *Tarraconensis* despite the general tendency to extend his march all the way to Gades.

¹⁰¹Hyd. 207, 208.

¹⁰²Hyd. 226.

to document the anarchy it is often thought to show throughout. If there was no Gothic army by 465, there was certainly no Roman one. The force that accompanied Majorian was the last Roman army to set foot on Spanish soil, in the company of the last emperor to do so. After 460 neither Roman arms nor Roman emperors again glanced towards Spain so involved were they with turbulence far closer to home. Spain, in the process, had ceased to be Roman.

The above account of Majorian begs the question of whether Roman Spain had not already come to an end before that emperor's accession, whether, that is, the Gothic conquest, even if undertaken in the name of Avitus, did not signal the end of the Roman province. The case can certainly be made that it did, that the Spain into which Majorian briefly marched was no more than a Gothic hinterland, in reality more or less outside the control of everyone. We ought, however, to consider the end of Majorian's reign as more appropriate for two reasons. As we have argued, it was the disappearance of the imperial government and the holding of office within it that marked, for contemporaries, the end of Roman rule. Under Majorian there were still imperial offices to be held in Spain. We have the testimony of Sidonius himself on this, writing of one Magnus, who was *magister*, perhaps *magister officiorum*, in Spain.¹⁰³ In the second place, we have the actions of Majorian. He was in no doubt that Spain was part of his empire or he would not have planned a campaign against the Vandals based on the peninsula. We have seen how long ago under Honorius, Spain was reckoned a loyal province of the empire even at a time when hardly any of

¹⁰³Sid., *Carm.* 15.155-7: *ille magister / per Tartesiacas conspectus splenduit urbes / et quibus ingestae sub temporae praefecturae / conspicuus sanctas reddit se praesule leges.* Trygetius, whose journey as far as Gibraltar Sidonius discusses in *Ep.* 8.12.1-2, presumably went on private business, and the date of his trip is unknown.

it was subject to direct imperial control. It was not then in open revolt, and its *de facto* independence was soon eliminated. It did not cease to be a Roman province because it was temporarily lost hold of, but remained one, because Honorius continued to assert that it was one. The same holds of Majorian. As long as the emperor remained interested in the province, remained committed to asserting imperial authority there, Spain remained a Roman province. Majorian did both these things. His successors did not. The death of Majorian thus marks the passage from Roman to a post-Roman Spain.

Aftermath

Majorian left Spain in May of 460 and Theoderic tried to maintain the situation. As we have seen, the generals who had held Spain during the rapprochement with Majorian remained in the peninsula until 462. They received successors, which means that Theoderic continued his efforts in the following years. Nevertheless, Spanish events slipped beyond his control. His generals had not only to fight Suevic warbands under their own competing kings, but also cities, presumably in the hands of provincials, which resisted the Gothic army.¹⁰⁴ Although Hydatius continued his account until 468, the order which was once observable in it disappears. After the recall of Nepotianus and Suniericus in 462, there was nothing Theoderic could do to stem the centrifugal forces of local powers, Suevic or provincial.

One is tempted to assert that Theoderic largely gave up the task after 462, that he tried to keep order until the murder of Majorian by Ricimer and then threw up his hands. After 464, the Goths were clearly

¹⁰⁴Hyd. 201: *Suniericus Scallauim, cui aduersabatur, optinet ciuitatem.*

no longer in control of events. In 464 or 465 we find Theoderic treating with the Sueves as equals for the first time since his campaigns against them under Avitus. He even returned the wife of the Suevic king Remismund, whom he had been keeping as a hostage.¹⁰⁵ Local provincials were left to come to terms with local Sueves as best they could, forging alliances and breaking them without interference from outside the province. One thinks of the case of Olisipo (= Lisbon), betrayed to the Sueves by the local notable Lusidius.¹⁰⁶ The most the Goths could manage was ineffectual plundering.¹⁰⁷

In all this, for the most part, the Roman institutional framework of daily life seems to have survived the disappearance of the imperial government which created and sustained it. The superstructure disappeared, in particular the opportunity to hold office in an imperial government, but the substructures seem to have remained. This is most evident in the ongoing relevance of the Roman provincial system to the future of the peninsula. The *conventus* system of regional divisions survived Majorian and Theoderic, and is attested by Hydatius in the last years of his chronicle.¹⁰⁸ With minor changes based on the sixth-century frontier between Gothic and Suevic territory, the provincial system was maintained wholesale in the ecclesiastical organisation of seventh-century Visigothic Spain. At a more local level, the disappearance of imperial authority seems to have made no difference to the Roman church, and we possess correspondence between the popes

¹⁰⁵Hyd. 222, s.a. 464/5: *Legatos Remismundus mittit ad Theudoricum, qui similiter suos ad Remismundum remittit, cum armorum adfectione uel munerum directa et coniunge quam habet.*

¹⁰⁶Hyd. 240. Lusidius later acted as Suevic envoy to the emperor (Hyd. 245).

¹⁰⁷Hyd. 244: *Gothi circa conuentum pari hostilitate deserviunt; partes etiam Lusitaniae depraedantur.*

¹⁰⁸Hyd. 243, 244, s.a. 468. For *conventus* see E. Albertini, *Les divisions administratives de l'Espagne romaine* (Paris, 1923), 83-104.

and the bishops of Spain from the later fifth century.¹⁰⁹ To the rhythms of daily life, in so far as those are accessible to us, the disappearance of an imperial government seems to have made very little difference. Provincial life seems to have continued according to patterns long established within the imperial system. The provincials themselves continued to consider themselves Romans, and the distinction between *Romani* and *Gothi* was preserved right into the seventh century. Yet there were no longer Roman officials, and no more imperial offices which Hispano-Romans could hold.

If we maintain that Roman Spain ended with the death of Majorian and the subsequent failure of any imperial government to assert itself in the peninsula, we are justified in asking what replaced it. The conventional answer is that Spain became Gothic, but that, as we have already seen, grossly overstates Gothic ability to control events in the peninsula. The fact is that Spain did not become a Gothic state until the reign of Leovigild in the late sixth century. Until then, the peninsula presents a picture of conflicting local interests, none strong enough to maintain any sort of control over the others. It is true that the Goths, first from Toulouse and after 507 from Tarraconensis and Septimania, were the strongest single power in Spain but they were not predominant. The century between the end of Roman Spain and the establishment of a consolidated Gothic kingdom under Leovigild offers enough material for a full length study of its own. In outline, however, what happened was this.

Theoderic, we have seen, maintained a real presence in Spain until 462, while a certain amount of desultory Gothic interference continued

¹⁰⁹See Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, 149.

thereafter as well. When Euric murdered his elder brother in 466 he adopted a policy which seems to have aimed at real independence from the remnants of imperial authority in Italy and Provence. Political necessity required him to train most of his attention and resources on Gaul. Spain was very much a secondary concern, as it had so often been to imperial governments in the past. With neither an imperial nor a Gothic authority to bind them together, the Spanish regions fell back upon their own resources. Hydatius' chronicle ends in 468 and with it ends all our detailed knowledge of Spanish history. His last entries clearly show the disintegration of unity in the peninsula, but for the last third of the century we must rely upon inferences drawn from very scanty notices in other chronicles. These confirm the fragmentation and localisation of power in as much as they show us the Goths being forced to reconquer the peninsula inch by inch.

In the early 470s we see Gothic generals gradually conquering Tarraconensis. Precise dates are impossible to determine, but our source, the Gallic chronicle of 511, records the series of Gothic campaigns directly after noting the death of Anthemius, who was murdered in July 472. First the *comes* Gauterit took Pampilona (= Pamplona) and Caesaraugusta (= Zaragoza).¹¹⁰ Then other Gothic generals took Tarraco and other coastal cities.¹¹¹ These campaigns cannot have been decisive, however, because in the 490s we find the same ground being fought over once again. In 494, we are told that the Goths entered Spain, an obscure statement often taken to indicate

¹¹⁰ Chron. Gall. a. 511 (= MGH.AA 9.664): *Gauterit comes Gothorum Hispanias per Pampilonem Caesaraugustam et vicinas urbes obtinuit.*

¹¹¹ Chron. Gall. a. 511 (= MGH.AA 9.665): *Heldefredus quoque cum Vincentio Hispaniarum duce obsessa Terracona maritimae urbes obtinuit.*

migration but not in itself decisive.¹¹² Two years later they faced an imperial proclamation, when a certain Burdunelus raised the standard of resistance against them.¹¹³ This, at least, is the inference we should draw from the statement that he *tyrannidem assumit*. If our source describes him as *tyrannus*, he would presumably have described himself as Augustus.¹¹⁴ At any rate, he was betrayed by his own supporters, taken to Toulouse, and there burned alive in a bronze bull.¹¹⁵ Once again we see among the Hispano-Romans the same sort of factionalism which characterised their earlier fifth-century history. Burdunelus was not the last Spanish pretender, for in 506 we learn of the death of Petrus, who had also proclaimed himself emperor, presumably in response to the Gothic settlement which had taken place at the same time as the execution of Burdunelus.¹¹⁶

This Gothic settlement in Spain was presumably accelerated in the years immediately after 507, when Clovis' Franks defeated and killed Alaric II at Vouille.¹¹⁷ It is now, however, that the disorder and penchant for civil violence, which would characterise the next sixty years of Visigothic history, takes over.¹¹⁸ A succession disputed between the infant Amalaric and the adult but illegitimate Gesalic led eventually to an Ostrogothic protectorate under the great Theoderic. Amalaric himself

¹¹²Chron. Caes. (= MGH.AA 11.222): *Gothi in Hispanias ingressi sunt*.

¹¹³Chron. Caes., s.a. 496: *Burdunelus in Hispania tyrannidem assumit*.

¹¹⁴For this use of the history of the term *tyrannus* used of usurpers see V. Neri, 'Usurpatore come tiranno nel lessico politico della tarda antichità', in F. Paschoud and J. Szidat, edd., *Usurpationen in der Spätantike* (Stuttgart, 1997), 71-86.

¹¹⁵Chron. Caes., s.a. 497: *Gothi intra Hispanias sedes acceperunt et Burdunelus a suis traditus et Tolosam directus in tauro aeneo impositus igne crematus est*.

¹¹⁶Chron. Caes., s.a. 506: *Dertosa a Gothis ingressa est. Petrus tyrannus interfectus est et caput eius Caesaraugustam deportatum est*. For the settlement see previous note.

¹¹⁷For this battle and the Frankish campaigns south of the Loire in the reigns of Clovis' successors see now I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms* (London, 1994), 41-54 and 100-2.

¹¹⁸For the narrative see Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 62-91; García Moreno, *España*, 85-109; Collins, *Spain*², 32-41.

was succeeded by the Ostrogoth Theudis, who had married a Hispano-Roman noblewoman and ruled with the help of her immense wealth. His death in 548 initiated twenty years of civil violence, the history of which is remarkably obscure. The conflict of the Goths among themselves allowed the emperor Justinian to gain a Byzantine foothold in the peninsula in 551, a foothold which would help to catalyse the rise of a genuinely Gothic Spain. Leovigild, the great architect of Visigothic Spain, patterned his reign to a very large extent on Byzantine models.¹¹⁹ He devoted the greater part of his reign to bringing the non-imperial parts of the peninsula firmly under the control of the Gothic monarchy.¹²⁰ Thereafter the Byzantine regions formed a focal point against which Gothic unity could be maintained. By the death of Leovigild, thanks entirely to his own energetic rule, it is finally possible to speak of a Gothic Spain. A chronicle of his reign, however, is a steady record of the battles he had to fight to impose unity on his kingdom.¹²¹ It is thus testimony to how thoroughly disunited the peninsula had become in the hundred years since the end of imperial authority in it.

The century between 460 and 570 is an era of communities in conflict, of political fragmentation which reduced Spain to a merely geographical expression. Fifth-century Spain has long been envisaged as an anarchic no man's land in which Sueves and Goths wrangled over the spoils of Roman corpses. As we have seen, this was not so. For half a century after the barbarian invasion of 409 the imperial authority maintained control of the peninsula, regularly reasserting itself when

¹¹⁹J.N. Hillgarth, 'Coins and chronicles: propaganda in sixth-century Spain and the Byzantine background', *Historia* 15 (1966), 483-508.

¹²⁰On Leovigild, K.F. Stroheker, 'Leowigild', *Die Welt als Geschichte* 5 (1939) = *Germanentum und Spätantike* (Zurich, 1965), 134-91; Orlandis, *Época visigoda*, 91-109; García Moreno, *España*, 111-31.

¹²¹The main source is John of Biclar, *MGHAA* 11.207-20.

that authority lapsed or was challenged. Roman Spain ended only when the emperors gave up trying to keep it, gave up asserting that the peninsula was part of the empire they ruled. This happened under the successors of Majorian. No sudden change can be perceived. No new power took up the reins which the imperial government had let go of. Roman Spain ended quietly, almost by default. For more than a hundred years, nothing took its place.

Appendix 1

Magistrates of Late Roman Spain

The following tables are meant to show at a glance the known magistrates of late Roman Spain, with their dates, full names, and attestations. Principles of inclusion are fairly rigorous. *Fasti* which include the more doubtful cases can be found in *PLRE* 1.1080, 1089-90. Any study of the late Roman administration of Spain must acknowledge a tremendous indebtedness to A. Chastagnol, 'Les espagnols dans l'aristocratie gouvernementale à l'époque de Théodose', *Les empereurs romains d'Espagne* (Paris, 1965), 269-92.

Diocesis Hispaniarum

*Vicarii*¹

298, 30 Oct.	Aurelius Agricolanus 513ff.)	<i>Passio Marcelli</i> (<i>Byzantion</i> 42 [1972],
306/37	Q. Aeclanius Hermias	<i>CIL</i> 2.2203 = <i>CIL</i> ² 2/7.263
?324/6	Septimius Acindynus	<i>CIL</i> 2.4107 = <i>RI</i> 97
?332, July 15	C. Annius Tiberianus	<i>CTH</i> 3.5.6 ²
341, April 7	Albinus	<i>CTH</i> 11.36.5
355/76	Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius	<i>CIL</i> 6.510 = <i>ILS</i> 4152
?357	Clementinus	<i>Coll. Avell.</i> 2.33-8
before 361	Flavius Sallustius	<i>CIL</i> 6.1729 = <i>ILS</i> 1254
363, January	Volusius Venustus	<i>Amm.</i> 23.1.4
365, Sept. 8- 366, Nov. 25	Valerianus	<i>CTH</i> 1.16.10; 9.1.9
369, May 14-		

¹M. Aurelius Consilius Quartus was *vicarius Spaniarum* at an unknown date in the fourth century: *CIL* 6.1700 = *ILS* 1249.

²Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 145, n. 17.

370, June 1	Marius Artemius IRG 1.87	CTh. 11.26.1; 8.2.2; AE (1915), 75 =
383, May 27	Marinianus	CTh. 9.1.14; Symm. Epp. 3.23-9
395, July 27- 397, Dec. 18	Petronius	CTh. 4.21.1; 12.1.151; 4.6.5; 4.22.5
399, Aug. 29- before 400, Dec. 9	Macrobius	CTh. 16.10.15 ^s ; 8.5.61
401, Sept. 10	Vigilius	CTh. 1.15.16
420	Maurocellus	Hyd. 66
<i>Comites</i>		
316, Dec. 4- 317, Jan. 19	Octavianus	CTh. 9.1.1; 12.1.4
332, Oct. 17	C. Annius Tiberianus	CJ 6.1.6
333, May 4- 336 May 19	Severus	CTh. 8.12.5 + 11.39.2; 8.18.3; 13.5.8
Baetica		
<i>praeses</i>		
306/312	Octavius Rufus, <i>praeses</i>	CIL 2.2204 = CIL ² 2/7.261
before 324 2/7.264	Faustinus, <i>praeses</i>	CTh. 9.9.2; CIL 2.2205 = CIL ²
<i>consularis</i>		
337/361	Decimius Germanianus, <i>consularis</i>	CIL 2.2206 = CIL ² 2/7.265
357, Aug. 28	Q. Attius Granius Caelestinus, <i>consularis</i>	CTh. 9.42.3
368/371	Tanaucius Isfalangius, <i>consularis</i>	Amm. 28.1.26
Hispania Citerior		
<i>praeses</i>		
286/293	Julius Valens	AE (1929), 233 = RIT 91
288/289	Postumius Lupercus	CIL 2.4104 = RIT 92

Hispania Tarraconensis

praeses

312	Valerius Julianus	<i>CIL</i> 2.4105 = <i>RIT</i> 94
316, May 6	Julius Verus	<i>CTh.</i> 2.6.1
324/326	Badius Macrinus	<i>CIL</i> 2.4106, 4108 = <i>RIT</i> 95, 96
before 382	Paulinus	<i>Aus., Par.</i> 26.9-12 ³

Lusitania

praeses

293/305	Aurelius Ursinus	<i>CIL</i> 2.5140
c.300/c.320	Caecilianus	<i>CIL</i> 11.831 = <i>ILS</i> 1218
315/319	C. Sulpicius -s	<i>CIL</i> 2.481
336	Numerius Albanus	<i>CIL</i> 2.191 = <i>ILS</i> 5699
337/340	Julius Saturninus	<i>AE</i> (1927), 165
before 362	Vettius Agorius Praetextatus <i>CIL</i> 6.1779 = <i>ILS</i> 1259	<i>CIL</i> 6.1777 = <i>ILS</i> 1258; <i>CIL</i> 6.1778;

proconsul

382/3	Volventius, <i>proconsul</i>	<i>Sulp. Sev., Chron.</i> 2.49.1
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Gallaecia

praeses

before 338	Aco Catullinus	<i>CIL</i> 2.2635
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³Ausonius styles Paulinus *corrector*. This is surely poetic licence for *praeses*.

Appendix 2

The *Notitia Dignitatum*

The *Notitia Dignitatum* is a list which itemises the administrative hierarchy of the late Roman empire, in both civil and military spheres.¹ It is divided into two halves, a *Notitia Orientalis* and a *Notitia Occidentalis*. Within these halves, the administrative structure of each *pars imperii* is first tabulated. Thereupon succeed chapters, which list the *officia* of each official in roughly hierarchical order. Before each chapter stands an illustration which shows the salient attributes of the province or office then described. Within each chapter of the civilian bureaucracy, offices are listed hierarchically. In the military chapters, units of the *comitatus*, the late Roman field army, are listed by seniority, while those of other units are not.² The *Notitia* is quite long, and runs to two hundred and twenty five pages in the standard critical edition. Moreover, it gives the appearance of great completeness. As such, it is one of our greatest surviving sources for the military and civilian bureaucracies of the later Roman empire. Unfortunately, however, the *Notitia* is deeply obscure, and its study is bedevilled with thorny questions that admit of no sure answers.

In the first place, the *Notitia* lacks a self-evident context. That is to say, we cannot be sure what it was for. We possess deluxe copies of a lavishly illustrated Carolingian copy of a late Roman original.³ What

¹O. Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et Laterculi prouinciarum* (Berlin, 1876) is the standard edition. It is to be preferred to the reconstruction of D. Hoffmann in the Beiheft to *Die spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (Düsseldorf, 1969), which enshrines conjectures argued in the text of the book.

²A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), Appendix 3, 3.348. This remains the best overall treatment of the *Notitia* and its problems.

³The illustrations are shown schematically in Seeck's edition where the drawings do

purpose that original served is a matter of controversy. We cannot know for certain whether that original was a unique example, drawn up for a specific purpose or, as most assume, one of many such administrative lists which played a regular part in the functioning of late Roman government. This question of context cannot be resolved. For scholars, therefore, the question has long been a matter of how the *Notitia* can be used. As a source for the government of the late empire it seems to offer so much more than do others, and gives every indication of being official, authoritative, and exhaustive. This impression may well be correct, but that does not make the document any easier to use. For the *Notitia* to be useful as a source, it must be pinned to a date which its contents reflect. Scholars have long recognised this, and so a cottage industry in *Notitia* studies has prospered. Because the question of function is so obscure, most research has tended to focus on the document's date. Once established, the *Notitia* is then regularly used to illuminate both the administrative and the political history of the late empire.

This approach is fraught with hazards, because we simply cannot date the *Notitia* as a whole. It is a base text which has undergone many years of progressively overlaid corrections to one of its halves. We can frequently explain the circumstances of this correction. Yet that exercise yields no further result, because where information in the *Notitia* is not corroborated by external sources, we cannot distinguish between original material and corrections. It is, however, possible to date the base text of the document with some precision. This brings with it a number of

little justice to the rich colours of the manuscript. A number of the illustrations are shown in T. Cornell and J. Matthews, *Atlas of the Roman World* (New York, 1982), 202-3. J.H. Ward, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum*', *Latomus* 33 (1974), 397-8, propounds an attractive theory for the original *Notitia*'s codicological history. It cannot, however, be proven.

benefits, primarily through allowing us to define the sorts of questions which the *Notitia* can be expected to answer, and those which it cannot.

Many theories have been offered on the nature of the *Notitia*. Here we may affirm that it was in origin a single base text, divided at the time of composition into eastern and western *partes*. It can be dated with certainty to between 386 and 394. In all likelihood, however, it comes from shortly before the latter date, and represents the state of Roman administration at the start of Theodosius' campaign against Eugenius. The document is thus eastern, and its western section in origin represented the forces and administrative system which the eastern army would have to face. However, we possess a western copy which ceased to be updated in its eastern portion after the final division of the empire in 395. Its western portion underwent continual revision until at least 419, if not much later. This western half is therefore not susceptible to precise, unitary dating. This has consequences for the use of the *Notitia* as a source, for while the extant list is reliable evidence for the eastern empire around 394, it cannot be used at all to document the state of the western empire at any given time, because only those pieces of information confirmed by other sources are open to reliable dating.

This interpretation is not uncontroversial and diverges in many particulars from others which have been offered. In particular, the *Notitia* is not generally regarded as a single base text, but rather as two separate texts joined some time after their initial composition. As we have said, the *Notitia* is divided into eastern and western halves, each of which begins with a list of the offices of its imperial *pars* in roughly hierarchical order. In the chapters that follow, the *officia* and the *comitatus* are listed according to rank, while other troops are not. This

simplified schematic hides many severe discrepancies, not only between the organisation of the eastern and western halves, but also within each *pars imperii*. Some are not significant. For instance, while the first chapters of both eastern and western lists are normally described as indices, elaborate hypothesis is not necessary to explain divergencies between them and the chapters which they precede.⁴ On the other hand, many discrepancies within the chapters themselves are significant, and provide important evidence for dating the document.

The bifurcation of the *Notitia* has encouraged many to view it as a cobbling-together of two separate base texts, one eastern and one western.⁵ By this device, the chronological discrepancies between eastern and western lists can be explained away. It has long been recognised that nothing in the eastern half of the *Notitia* is post-Theodosian, while the western list is riddled with later information, most of it dating from the reign of Honorius (395-423), but some arguably

⁴A suggestion of Ward, 399, has great merit. He views Or. 1 and Occ. 1 as recapitulations which group like officials together for quick reference, rather than as indices which locate officials hierarchically within the *Notitia*.

⁵The usual solution has been to view the extant *Notitia* as a western stitching-together of two separate base texts. Thus J.B. Bury, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum*', *JRS* 10 (1920), 131, refers to it as 'the document (or rather two documents) which has come down under the title *Notitia Dignitatum*...', a verdict accepted by F. Lot, 'La *Notitia Dignitatum utriusque imperii*, ses tares, sa date de composition, sa valeur', *REA* 38 (1936), 285-338. This approach can be taken with greater and lesser degrees of incaution. On the one hand, there can be posited a western base text as late as its latest citation appended to a substantially earlier eastern text. Thus Hoffmann, 22. Another approach is to ignore the eastern list, admit that the western text contains too many anomalies to allow of a single, unitary date, and therefore date it according to the bulk of its datable entries while discarding the rest as later corrections. Thus, E. Demougeot, 'La *Notitia Dignitatum* et l'histoire de l'Empire d'Occident au début du V-e siècle', *Latomus* 34 (1974), 1133: 'La date de cette rédaction s'établit en fonction des données récentes les plus nombreuses, qui ne sont pas nécessairement les plus récentes de toutes, celles-ci pouvant n'être que des retouches apportées au document déjà rédigé'. She is followed in this approach by W. Seibt, 'Wurde die *Notitia Dignitatum* 408 von Stilicho in Auftrag gegeben?', *MIÖG* 90 (1982), 339-46 and J.C. Mann, 'The *Notitia Dignitatum*-dating and survival', *Britannia* 22 (1991), 215-19. G. Clemente, *La 'Notitia Dignitatum'* (Cagliari, 1969) and 'La *Notitia Dignitatum*', *Atti del Convegno Lincei* 45 (1980), 39-49, follows more or less the same approach, though he maintains that both eastern and western sections accurately represent the situation of the early fifth century.

pointing to that of Valentinian III (425-55).⁶ No amount of ingenuity can make all the information, in both eastern and western lists, consistent. That is to say, the text of the *Notitia* as extant can correspond to no single date in the history of the later empire. If two base texts are posited, each can be dated with greater or lesser precision and the work of mining their contents can begin.

This approach is not necessary, and worse, usually requires the discarding of one or more pieces of contradictory evidence. By positing a single base text which has undergone a long series of corrections and accretions in only one of its sections, all the text's anomalies are explained while none have to be explained away. The main objection to seeing the *Notitia* as in origin a single unitary document has been its portrayal of the status of the Balkan dioceses. These dioceses of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia, often imprecisely referred to as the prefecture of Illyricum, are divided between the eastern and western *partes imperii* in the *Notitia*. This division, it is argued, can only obtain after c. 396. Therefore, even though the contents of the eastern half of the *Notitia* are entirely Theodosian, the western list must date from 396 or later. A date of unitary composition cannot be maintained.

There are two problems with this argument. First, the consistency of the diocesan division throughout the *Notitia* in fact argues for, not against, a unitary composition. Second, there are periods before 396 when the Balkan dioceses may have been divided between east and west. The first point needs only brief demonstration, the second rather longer investigation. The division of the Balkan dioceses cannot, it emerges, be

⁶But see n. 7 below. Though all his evidence is Theodosian, Jones, *LRE* 3.347-349, actually maintains that the extant list represents a thorough revision of 395. Hoffmann, chapter one, adds necessary precision to Jones' conclusions in respect of the eastern *comitatus*.

proved conclusively for any date before 396. Nor, on the other hand, can their constant unity before that date be demonstrated. However, even the possibility of their division before 396 removes the main objection to viewing the *Notitia* as single base text. As we shall see, all the rest of our information confirms that hypothesis.

The first point, though, is that the consistency of the division of the Balkan dioceses actually points to a unitary original composition. The division is not only entirely consistent throughout the *Notitia*, but also integral to its composition. Macedonia and Dacia pertain to the east, Pannonia to the west. Nowhere in the western list do any offices with reference to Macedonia or Dacia occur; nowhere in the eastern list is there reference to offices in Pannonia. The illustrations of insignia reflect the same division. Under the eastern prefect of Illyricum, one finds depicted personifications of two dioceses only, viz. Dacia and Macedonia (Or. 3.2,3). Correspondingly, under the praetorian prefect of Italy, one finds personifications of the three great regions subject to him, Italy, Africa, and Illyricum (Occ. 2.2-4). Illyricum, in this instance, means only the six provinces of the diocese of Pannonia (Occ. 28-34), as the subsequent list makes clear.

The division is borne out by the later chapters as well. All the Balkan dependencies of the west are found within the diocese of Pannonia. There are military commands for Valeria and first and second Pannonia (Occ. 32-5). Illyrian *fabricae* subject to the *magister officiorum* are all Pannonian (Occ. 9.16-22), as are the fiscal servants of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* (Occ. 11.10-11; 21-25; 46-48) and the *comes rerum privatarum* (Occ. 12.20). The eastern list is exactly parallel. Under the *magister officiorum*, there are *fabricae* only in Dacia and Macedonia (Or.

11.35-9), while Illyrian military commands occur only in Dacia (Or. 41, 42).

Eastern and western lists are thus perfectly consistent in the picture they draw, and this consistency is unlikely to be the result of late revision. In no other case of revision have the scribes of the extant text succeeded in removing all trace of previous dispositions, hence the large number of discrepancies with which the western list is littered.

Furthermore, it is particularly significant that the illustrations also confirm the division, since they are especially hard to explain as late corrections. If the division of the Balkan dioceses were the result of correction, some discrepancy would surely be visible. None is, and their division between east and west is integral to the composition of the extant *Notitia*. This strongly suggests that the document was in origin a single base text, to which a single date of composition can be assigned.

The consistency of the division is not the only issue, however, since the date at which such a division was possible has also occasioned objections. That is our next point. The literature on the status of the three dioceses of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia is vast, and tends to be referred to as the problem of Illyricum.⁷ Two tendencies encumber many discussions of the topic. The first is a legal formalism which privileges theoretical models of constitutional history over the empirical analysis of political history. That is to say, the question of what ought to have happened is given more attention than the question of what did happen. The second encumbrance is the traditional means of stating the problem, which does so in terms of prefectures rather than dioceses.

⁷V. Grumel, 'L'Illyricum de la mort de Valentinien I-er (375) à la mort de Stilicon (408)', *REB* 9 (1951), 5-48 with references to earlier literature.

Now, these latter were the basic building blocks of the Roman administrative system. Dioceses were created long before regional prefectures developed, and prefectures were created out of them. If we take a prefecture of Illyricum as the normative model for Balkan administration we miss the point. Prefectural jurisdiction can be observed to vary according to circumstance, but the diocesan structure of the region stays unaltered from Diocletian forward. Illyricum was a word to describe a region without juridically definite shape, a region whose boundaries changed according to circumstance. The Balkan dioceses, however, did possess juridically definite shapes. Each was a clearly defined administrative unit. None, however, possessed a necessary jurisdictional connection to any other.

It is true that, generally speaking, they were administered together, as part of the prefecture of the Italian prefect. Very occasionally, the three dioceses were administered together as a separate prefecture of Illyricum, but this situation was an anomaly that occurred only in response to specific crises. The 'problem of Illyricum' can thus not be posed as such. Instead, the dioceses of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia must be examined in light of their separate histories. Until 379 all three dioceses were subject to the praetorian prefect of Italy, and thus to the western emperor. This changed with the disaster at Adrianople and the appointment of Theodosius as Augustus on 19 January 379 with a view to restoring order to the Balkans.⁸

Under Valentinian and Valens, the dioceses of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia had been administered by the prefect of Italy.⁹ The

⁸See now R. M. Errington, 'Theodosius and the Goths', *Chiron* 26 (1996), 1-27, and the more detailed study of P. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332-489* (Oxford, 1991), 147-181.

⁹Grumel, 6-7.

disaster at Adrianople inspired Gratian to create a separate prefect to administer the Balkan dioceses in 378. He chose Q. Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius.¹⁰ By January 380, following Olybrius' promotion to the consulate, the historian Eutropius appears as prefect of Illyricum.¹¹ At this point, however, the three dioceses were subject to the eastern emperor Theodosius. They had probably been transferred to the jurisdiction of the eastern emperor at the beginning of the fiscal year of 379, that is on 1 September, in order to help organise the Gothic war.¹²

The three dioceses remained subject to the eastern emperor, under their own prefect, until just before the conclusion of the Gothic war. This war lasted longer in Thrace than it did in any of the Illyrian dioceses, and so the jurisdiction of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia was returned to the western emperor at the start of the indiction of 381.¹³ The three dioceses had pertained to the eastern empire for just two years, during which time one finds Theodosius directing a law to the *vicarius Macedoniae*.¹⁴ As soon as the government of the three dioceses was resumed by the western emperor, the separate prefecture of Illyricum was eliminated and Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia were once again subordinated to the prefect of Italy, as surviving legislation makes clear.¹⁵

¹⁰*CIL* 6.1714 = *ILS* 1271 and *Aus., Grat. Act.* 12.55. See *PLRE* 1.640-1.

¹¹The earliest law addressed to Eutropius as prefect of Illyricum is *CJ* 1.54.4 of 6 January 380. Thereafter he received a very long series of laws in that capacity, the latest of which, *CJ* 5.34.12, dates from 28 September 381. See *PLRE* 1.317.

¹²This is the very plausible contention of Errington, 24. By placing the date of the transfer at the start of the indiction in September, one can explain the fact that Gratian was still legislating for Illyricum on 5 July 379 (*CTh.* 13.1.11).

¹³Errington, 25.

¹⁴*CTh.* 13.1.11, 27 March 380.

¹⁵See *CTh.* 11.13.1, a law of 19 January 383 addressed to Petronius Probus, the praetorian prefect of Italy.

Purely formalist arguments about the constitutionality of the Balkan administration in this period may be left out of the picture. Much effort has been expended trying to establish the precise constitutional jurisdiction of the so-called *Mittelreich* of Valentinian II, but this speculation is unnecessary. When Gratian and Theodosius divided the task of ruling between them, Valentinian was of no concern to them.¹⁶ After Gratian's murder and before Maximus' invasion of Italy, the Balkan dioceses remained subject to the Valentinian II and his prefect of Italy.¹⁷

Maximus' invasion of Italy, however, changed the position of the Balkan dioceses once again. Maximus invaded Italy in May 387. Valentinian fled to Thessalonica in Macedonia. Theodosius had been ready to accept Maximus while he confined himself to Gaul. Whatever the emperor's own feelings, Maximus was unquestionably a more useful imperial colleague than either Gratian or Valentinian. The invasion of Italy, however, could not be tolerated, and Theodosius' response was immediate. His first move was to secure Illyricum, for which we find him legislating in a law which probably belongs to June 387, that is to say, only a month after Maximus had crossed the Alps.¹⁸ Theodosius may have hoped to forestall the difficulties which the emperor Constantius had faced during the revolt of Magnentius, when the Balkans were only saved for the legitimate emperor by a loyalist coup.¹⁹ At any rate, though

¹⁶The supposed 'decision' of Gratian and Theodosius to put an end to a 'constitutionally anomalous' position and reunite Illyricum is a scholarly construct, Grumel, 11-12. The meeting at Sirmium to which this decision is ascribed never took place: Heather, 154 with Errington, 25, n. 140.

¹⁷*CTh* 1.32.5, of 26 July 386, shows him legislating for the specifically named regions of Macedonia, Dacia, Moesia, and Dardania.

¹⁸*CTh* 8.4.17. Grumel, 17 n.1, is correct in emending the date of this to 387.

¹⁹See J. Sasel, 'The struggle between Magnentius and Constantius II for Italy and Illyricum', *Ziva antika* 21 (1971), 205-16.

he assumed command of the Balkan dioceses in 387, Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia were almost certainly administered by the western prefect of Italy after Theodosius conquered Maximus in 388. This prefect was one Polemius, twice attested in the early months of 390.²⁰ His successor was Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, the great pagan aristocrat, who was the recipient of a long string of laws between August 390 (CTh. 9.40.13) and April 392 (CTh. 10.10.20).²¹ Then the usurpation of Eugenius supervened.

The status of the Illyrian dioceses in the years between 392 and 394 is confused by contradictory evidence. This confusion, as we shall see, is the result of contemporary propaganda and shows that both Theodosius and Eugenius claimed control of the Balkan dioceses by appointing competing officials to govern them. Which emperor's officials actually administered the dioceses remains somewhat unclear. The value of the different pieces of evidence is, however, susceptible to some analysis.

Valentinian II died on 15 May 392. As recently as 4 April, a law of Valentinian and Theodosius was addressed to Nicomachus Flavianus as *PPO per Illyricum*. By 28 July, the Code shows a different man, Apodemius, in that post.²² Apodemius is again named in that office on 15 February 393, and appears as *PPO Illyrici et Italiae II* on 9 June 393.²³ At the same time as all this, however, Nicomachus Flavianus reappears as prefect of these regions, that is, *PPO Italiae, Illyrici, et Africae iterum*.²⁴

²⁰CTh. 15.1.26, 16 January; 15.1.28, 4 April.

²¹PLRE 1.348 for other citations.

²²CTh. 12.12.12: *PPO Illyrici et Africae*. See PLRE 1.82-3.

²³CTh. 13.5.21, following the necessary emendation of PLRE 1.82; CTh. 11.30.51. Apodemius also appears as prefect, without any geographical designation at CTh. 12.12.13, 10 September 392.

²⁴CIL 6.1783.

There is a contradiction here which requires explanation. Most solutions have involved the emendation of one or more of our texts.²⁵ The dates in the Code do frequently require emendation, but offices are usually attested more accurately. We should therefore be cautious in accepting conclusions which require the emendation Apodemius' prefecture from Italy to Africa or ignoring its iteration in *CTh.* 11.30.51. A different solution is available.

In civil wars, the loyalty of prefects was much sought after, since loyalty of the prefect brought with it the resources of the territory he governed. Theodosius may not have felt confident in the loyalty of Flavianus after Valentinian's death. In moving to secure the Balkans, he would have appointed a new official in his place. Flavianus, rather than putting down his office, simply transferred his allegiance to Eugenius and continued on.²⁶ This solution makes good sense of the available evidence, and also explains the evidence of the simultaneous tenure of Flavianus and Apodemius in the same office. The iteration expressed in Flavianus' inscription in this scenario simply acknowledges the transfer of his allegiance from Theodosius to Eugenius. We cannot, however, be sure of how much control Flavianus actually retained in the Balkan dioceses. Yet that same uncertainty applies to Apodemius as well. His jurisdiction may in part have been fictitious. That is to say that the Balkan dioceses may have remained under the control of Flavianus, although Africa's loyalty to Constantinople was probably continuous.²⁷

²⁵Grumel, 23, Hoffmann, 210-11.

²⁶*PLRE* 1.348 and 1052 maintains that Flavianus stepped down from his prefecture in 392 and then re-entered it after he decided to join Eugenius. It is more likely that he never left office.

²⁷See *CTh.* 9.7.9, 30 December 393, to Gildo.

This confusion in the sources is itself an important point. The prefectures of Apodemius and Flavianus represent propagandist impulses, of a kind with the mutual rejection of consular nominees by Theodosius and his opponent, and the raising of Honorius to the purple. That is, they represent the refusal of each government to recognise the other's legitimacy, which each signals by appointing rival officials to the same offices. The iteration of Apodemius' prefecture can be seen in the same light. The attestation of Apodemius as prefect of Italy is not an error, but a declaration of war. Theodosius reappointed Apodemius—hence the iteration—to an office in which Eugenius recognised Flavianus. No part of the evidence, then, requires emendation in order to be explained. On the other hand, no part of the evidence can be taken to faithfully reflect the actual situation of the Balkan dioceses in the years after Eugenius' usurpation.

That situation cannot be described with confidence. Three pieces of evidence are relevant. First, the final battle between Theodosius and Eugenius was fought at the Frigidus, a tributary of the Isonzo on the Italian side of the Julian Alps.²⁸ Second, Claudian describes Eugenius hiding behind the Alpine passes.²⁹ Finally, on his way west at some date after 20 June 394, Theodosius halted at Sirmium in Pannonia and minted a very large stock of coins there.³⁰ This evidence is inconclusive. It is probably safe to assume that no fighting took place east of the Julian Alps. This does not, however, imply that Theodosius controlled the Balkan dioceses right from the start of Eugenius' usurpation. The

²⁸The Julian Alps had been the geographical frontier between east and west in the civil wars earlier in the century: Sasek, 205.

²⁹*III Cons.* 89f.

³⁰*RIC* 9.160-2. For the date, Seeck, *Regesten*, 284.

coins minted at Sirmium are usually thought to have been minted in order to pay the army, and are thus taken as evidence for eastern control of the Balkan dioceses. This may be so, but if the coins were minted to finance the campaign against Eugenius, they should have been struck at Constantinople, the mint of which was fully functional.³¹ We might do better to see the Sirmium issue as yet another propaganda exercise, which made public the adherence to Theodosius of a diocese that had hitherto been loyal to Flavianus. We simply cannot tell. It is possible that Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia remained loyal to their then prefect Flavianus in 392 and equally possible that Theodosius secured their allegiance with the appointment of Apodemius. Alternatively, the dioceses may have been split between east and west. We can only say with certainty that by some time between late May and early September 394 the westernmost of the three dioceses had been brought into the eastern camp.³²

The uncertainty of the status of the three dioceses between 392 and early 394 is, however, very important to a discussion of the date of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. When one realises that the Illyrian dioceses may have remained subject to the west in 392, the strongest objection to a unitary date of composition for the *Notitia* disappears. As we have seen, the division of the Balkan dioceses between east and west is integral to the structure of our document. Such a division may well have existed in the first years of Eugenius' usurpation. These are precisely the years to which the eastern half of the extant *Notitia* can be shown to date. The

³¹Jones, *LRE* 1.437.

³²It seems likely that the three dioceses were subject to Constantinople at the time of Theodosius' death. Zosimus 4.59.4 shows that Illyricum belonged to the inheritance of Arcadius, while Cameron, *Claudian*, 60-1, enlists Claudian (*Ruf.* 2.153f; 304f.) to demonstrate the same thing. None of this can have made much difference with Stilicho standing at the head of the united *comitatus* of both *partes imperii*.

way is thus clear for us to date the initial composition of the entire *Notitia* to those years, with a structural division that reflects the political realities of the time.

Before that possibility can be pursued, however, we must turn to the date of the extant eastern list, which can be determined with some precision. The internal evidence of the *Notitia* shows clearly that nothing in the eastern list must post-date the death of Theodosius in January 395.³³ Such discrepancies as there are represent either clerical errors or changes which may be post-Theodosian, but may equally well date from his reign.³⁴ The military lists, on the other hand, are certainly Theodosian.³⁵ Units named after Theodosius, Honorius, and Arcadius occur in an order which can have arisen only before the death of Theodosius and the beginning of the cold war between eastern and western empires.³⁶ On the other hand, there are only five Arcadian units, too low a number to date very far into his own reign, especially when contrasted with the western lists which contain 17 Honorian

³³The only real obstacle to a Theodosian date is the entry for a *tabularium dominarum Augustarum* in the *castrensis* chapter (Or. 17.8), which might be taken to mandate a date after 423 when there were in fact two Augustae. The entry is better explained as a standing office in place for such times as there was an Augusta, the plural mere tradition, dating back perhaps to Constantine under whom there were, briefly, two Augustae, Helena and Fausta. Thus Ward, 400-1, whose argument surely explains more than the 'blunder' proposed by Jones, *LRE* 3.349.

³⁴For clerical errors in the civil lists of the east, Ward, 398-408. Substantive errors are given at Ward, 408. None of them need post-date 394. The correctorship of Paphlagonia first appears in other sources in July 395 (*CTH* 2.8.22), but the *Notitia*'s reference may in fact be the earliest. Likewise, Macedonia Salutaris may already have been dissolved by 394. If the 394 date is correct, the arguments of T.D. Barnes, 'Claudian and the *Notitia Dignitatum*', *Phoenix* 32 (1978), 81-2, for a division of Galatia by Eutropius, cannot be accepted. There is no positive reason that the division of Galatia should not be Theodosian. The hierarchy of *honorati* also provides no firm dates. Jones, *LRE* 3.349, rightly dismisses the question of the rank of the *praepositus sacri cubiculi*. His position in the *Notitia* directly beneath prefects and *magistri* may have been attained as early as 385. Other questions of rank, as discussed by Demougeot, 1083-93, are not probative.

³⁵Jones, *LRE* 3.347-48; Hoffmann, 22.

³⁶That is, some Arcadiani and Honoriani are senior to some Theodosiani and must therefore have been raised before the death of Theodosius. Neither brother is likely to have named units after the other during the years of mutual antagonism. One may contrast the eastern case with the western lists, where no Arcadian units appear at all.

units. Finally, the *officia* of three of the eastern field armies are clearly temporary, since they are administered by *officia* drawn from the army, and not, as normally, the civil service: *Officium autem magisteriae ... potestatis in numeris militat et in officio deputatur*.³⁷ By contrast, the second praesental magister and *magister per Orientem* are served by bureaux drawn from the civil service: *Officium autem magisteriae per Orientem potestatis cardinale habetur*.³⁸ If the difference indicates a distinction between campaign armies and field armies on regular service, a context is suggested by the preparations for the campaign against Eugenius.

To reiterate, nothing in the eastern lists necessitates a date later than 394, and the *officia* of the field armies certainly suggest a campaign force. A *terminus ante quem* for the list is thus established by the departure of Theodosius' army from Constantinople.³⁹ It had left by 20 May 394.⁴⁰ Even those who accept this date as the *terminus ante quem* for the bulk of the eastern list have felt that Or. 9, the army of the *magister militum per Illyricum*, must post-date it.⁴¹ Part of the reason for this is the assumption that Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia cannot have been separated from each other before 395. As we have seen, this need not be the case, and the division may have existed in 392.

There is another problem, however. The Illyrian list contains a correction which must have been made after the other eastern lists were

³⁷Or. 5.67; 8.54; 9.49.

³⁸Or. 6.70; 7.59.

³⁹Hoffmann, 52.

⁴⁰Seeck, *Regesten*, 284.

⁴¹If the dioceses of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia are held to have been divided between east and west only after 395 then even those who accept a Theodosian date for the other eastern army lists are forced to see Or. 9 as a post-395 addition. Thus Hoffmann, 19-21, followed by Demougeot, 1094. As we have seen, however, the dioceses may have been separated from one another in 392.

first redacted. However, this fact does not make the list significantly later than the other oriental lists and there is certainly nothing in it that must be post-Theodosian. It has been observed that when, in the military lists of the *Notitia*, identically named units appear in more than one list, the phenomenon is to be explained as a troop transfer.⁴² Thus, when the Illyrian *Equites sagittarii seniores* (Or. 9.19) reappear in the Thracian list (Or. 8.30), one may confidently postulate a transfer. Either the Thracian or the Illyrian list has been slightly corrected after the initial redaction of the eastern list as a whole. It is marginally more likely that the Thracian list is earlier than the Illyrian rather than the reverse, and we may assume for the sake of argument that the Illyrian list preserves a correction recording a troop transfer.⁴³ Regardless, the *Equites* unit is certainly Theodosian or earlier.⁴⁴

This alone does not show the Illyrian list to be Theodosian, but other factors do. In the first place, Or. 9 describes a campaign army, an observation confirmed by the fact that it lists nine units of *pseudocomitatenses*, or units raised from the garrison army into the *comitatus*.⁴⁵ This is an unusually high number, and eight of the nine units are certainly of Theodosian origin.⁴⁶ The army shown in Or. 9 is thus entirely consonant with preparations for a major campaign. This

⁴²This is one of Hoffmann's most original and important observations, at 28. Earlier opinion had inclined towards seeing these duplications as separate units bearing the same name, or, at best, as new units formed out of old. Jones, *LRE* 3.356, recognises the possibility of *limitanei* having been upgraded to the *comitatus* without making any statements about troop transfers.

⁴³The *Equites sagittarii seniores* appear in Thrace with their sister-unit, the *Equites sagittarii iuniores* (Or. 8.31), but alone in Illyricum, so their stationing in the Illyrian army is likely to be the later of the two.

⁴⁴This must be the case because it appears in the Thracian list ahead of a definitely Theodosian unit, the *Equites primi Theodosiani*, Or. 8.32.

⁴⁵Or. 9.40-48.

⁴⁶Or. 9.41-48. There are no *pseudocomitatensian* units in the first praesental or the Thracian armies, only one in the second praesental army (Or. 6.69), though there are eleven in *Oriens* (Or. 7.49-58).

evidence cumulatively suggests that the Illyrian list is nearly contemporary with the rest of the eastern *Notitia*, or, better put, that it is precisely contemporary with the rest save that it contains a single correction not registered elsewhere.

The *terminus ante quem* for the eastern *Notitia* is therefore 20 May 394. A *terminus post quem* is much harder to discover. It has recently been customary to fix it in 392 on the basis of the eastern *Notitia*'s military lists. The argument runs as follows. Troops which must have been western before the defeat of Maximus in 388 appear in the eastern lists.⁴⁷ Their incorporation into the eastern army must therefore post-date 388. Since Theodosius did not return to Constantinople with the eastern army until July 391, it must in fact date to that year, while some minor points probably refer to 392.⁴⁸ The logic is impeccable, but it is founded on error. The argument assumes that units with the by-name *seniores* must be western in origin, those with the by-name *iuniores* eastern. One may thus trace troop movements in the distribution of units with this nomenclature.⁴⁹ This assumption is demonstrably incorrect. The by-names *seniores* and *iuniores* do not in fact originate with a division of the *comitatus* by Valentinian and Valens in 364.⁵⁰ An archaeology of the troop movements enshrined in the *Notitia* cannot be

⁴⁷Hoffmann, 488.

⁴⁸Hoffmann, 490-506. The 392 date is derived from subsidiary arguments, Hoffmann, 516-19.

⁴⁹Hoffmann, chapters five and eight, is devoted to the topic. His conclusions are accepted by Demougeot, 1094. The same conclusion was reached independently by R. Tomlin, *Seniores-Iuniores in the late Roman field army*, *AJPh* 93 (1972), 253-78, and restated in his review of Hoffmann, *JRS* 67 (1977), 186-7.

⁵⁰T. Drew-Bear, 'A fourth-century Latin soldier's epitaph from Nakolea', *HSCP* 81 (1977), 257-74. The epitaph belongs to one Flavius Aemilianus, a *ducenarius* in the Cornuti *seniores*, who died *DDNN Constanti VIII et Juliani c(ori)s(ulatu)*, that is in 356. This clearly shows that the by-names *seniores* and *iuniores* existed already in 356 and may well date back still further. For Herculanii *seniores* under Julian, see D. Woods, 'Ammianus Marcellinus and the deaths of Bonosus and Maximilianus', *Hagiographica* 2 (1995), 31-7.

conducted on the basis of this assumption.⁵¹ Only units attested independently in outside sources can be claimed with certainty as belonging at any point to eastern or western armies. If the *seniores-iuniores* criterion is discarded, units identified as west-east transfers of 388 may in fact have belonged to the eastern army for many decades before. The 388 *terminus post quem* thus disappears, and with it the derivative date of 392.

One is therefore left to establish an outside date for the eastern list from other sources. In the civil portions there are some indications of date, the two firmest of which are the inclusion of the provinces of Honorias and Arcadia.⁵² The province of Honorias in Pontus, which appears in the list, was founded between 384 and 387.⁵³ The province of Arcadia in Egypt, which also appears in the list, was founded after

⁵¹Hoffmann, 117-30, and Tomlin, 259-60, maintain not only that the *seniores-iuniores* division dates back to 364, but that in that year *seniores* were allocated to the western army with the senior brother, *iuniores* to the eastern with the junior. For Hoffmann, moreover, the *iuniores* represented the inferior troops, the *seniores* the superior. This, in his view, helps account for the annihilation of the eastern army at Adrianople. The distinction, however, is most valuable to Hoffmann as a tool of textual archaeology. Any occurrence of *seniores* in the east and *iuniores* in the west must be accounted for by specific, and thus determinable, historical circumstances. Troop transfers are carefully plotted, the original postings of units excavated, and hypothesis is stacked on hypothesis, until it is concluded that certain units which appear as eastern in the extant *Notitia* must until 388 have been western. In this way 388 becomes the *terminus post quem* for the eastern *Notitia*.

Nakolea, however, is in the east. Aemilianus served in the Cornuti *seniores*, who were stationed there before 356 (Drew-Bear, 269). The assumed connection between *seniores* units and the western army cannot stand. The result undermines nearly the whole of Hoffmann's work. Almost every conclusion in his chapters eight, nine, and ten, no matter what immediate logic it is based on, ultimately turns upon the 364 army division. Nearly every conclusion is thus suspect, though many are not implausible. None, however, is susceptible of proof. There are equally grave consequences for Hoffmann's chapters six and seven, on the *comitatus* through the reign of Julian. For here many units are excluded from consideration on the basis of the *seniores-iuniores* nomenclature. The direst consequence is reserved for the 388/391 *terminus post quem*. It is founded on a reconstruction based on a false premise. Without that foundation, it stands wholly unproved.

⁵²Ward, 411-13, lists the points which he thinks date the eastern *Notitia* to between 388 and 395. Apart from the cases of Honorias and Arcadia, his citations are suggestive rather than probative.

⁵³Libanius, Or. 19.62. See Jones, *LRE* 3.348.

February 386.⁵⁴ By this same year there were also two provinces of Cappadocia which the *Notitia*, too, describes.⁵⁵ The earliest *terminus post quem* one can fix, therefore, is 386. The military lists tend to confirm the picture, since Honorius was born in 384 and units named after him appear in the eastern *Notitia*.⁵⁶ Some arguments have been ventured on the basis of the nomenclature of command, but its evidence is ambiguous.⁵⁷ The *terminus post quem* of the eastern *Notitia* must therefore remain 386. We can, however, say with certainty that the eastern *Notitia* dates from between 386 and May 394.

That being so, the western list will have originally been composed at the same time. Because the division of Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia between east and west is integral to the structure of the whole *Notitia*, both its eastern and western halves should be presumed to have a common origin unless the contrary can be proved. The common origin has been denied on the grounds that the division of the Balkan provinces cannot have obtained before the death of Theodosius. As we have seen, there might very well have existed just such a division in the years between 392 and 394. The *Notitia* in this context should be viewed as a document drawn up during the preparations of Theodosius' campaign against Eugenius. It was probably simply a new draft of a document with a long history. That at least is the general consensus among investigators. It need not be in any way representative of other

⁵⁴*CTh.* 1.14.1.

⁵⁵*CTh.* 13.1.11 and *Or.* 1.105-6.

⁵⁶As Jones, *LRE* 3.348, notes *contra* Bury, 136, there is no justification in thinking that such units must reflect the period after his becoming Augustus.

⁵⁷Hoffmann, 496-8. The argument turns on the discrepancy between the eastern generals, who are *magistri utriusque militiae*, and the western ones, who are *magistri peditum* and *magistri equitum*. Attestation from outside the *Notitia* is contradictory, and there is no sure way of determining why two different command systems should have existed simultaneously.

notitiae which preceded or followed it. The draft which lies behind the version we possess must be assumed to be unique in its all its details. We may therefore propose the following reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding its genesis as follows.

In May 392 Valentinian died. Theodosius realised that accepting the *fait accompli* could not reflect well on him, since the death of Valentinian had done his own dynasty a service. He temporised anyway. The delay forced the hand of Arbogast, who proclaimed Eugenius Augustus. Theodosius made no open show of hostility, but set about preparing for war. He appointed Apodemius to the prefecture of Illyricum, but this was in part a fiction. The diocese of Pannonia remained subject to the praetorian prefect of Italy, an office held by Nicomachus Flavianus who had been reappointed to that post by Eugenius. Dacia and Macedonia, however, were made subject to Constantinople, and it is this situation which is reflected in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. This was set down at some point between 391 and 394. Its eastern half showed the campaign army recently organised by Theodosius, and included many Illyrian pseudocomitatenses, perhaps raised as a counterweight to the Pannonian units which had adhered to the west. The western list showed the forces which Theodosius expected to find opposed to his own army. It would reflect as much information as was retained in imperial files, though this would not necessarily have matched the actual dispositions of Arbogast and Flavianus. In broad outline, however, it should have been correct.

The army described in the eastern half of the *Notitia* set out from Constantinople by May 394, and Theodosius advanced as far as Sirmium unopposed. At Sirmium the emperor halted to strike an issue of coins.

These had the dual function of paying the troops and advertising the resumption of Pannonia by Theodosius. Possibly at this point, the *Equites sagittarii seniores* were transferred from the command of the Thracian *magister* to that of the *magister per Illyricum*. If any battles were fought between the stop at Sirmium and the confrontation at the Frigidus, they are not recorded. On 6 September, Theodosius was victorious, and Eugenius executed. Arbogast killed himself on the 8th. In the same month, Theodosius moved on to Milan. Henceforth, the whole *comitatus* was united under the command of the emperor himself in north Italy. In such circumstances, the *de iure* position of the three Balkan dioceses hardly mattered, but they were perhaps administered by the prefect mentioned in a funerary inscription from Concordia.⁵⁸

The army remained together near Milan at the time of Theodosius' death and continued thus under the command of Stilicho until the revolt of Alaric forced him to lead it to Illyricum. This move may not have been wholly legal, in that Claudian seems to indicate that Illyricum fell within the purview of Rufinus and would certainly not have admitted anything of the sort had necessity not compelled it.⁵⁹ Having led the army to Illyricum to suppress Alaric, Stilicho was greeted with the open hostility of the eastern court.⁶⁰ Arcadius, that is to say Rufinus, commanded the return of the eastern *comitatus* and the breaking off of the campaign. Alaric was thus granted a reprieve, while Stilicho was forced to relinquish command of the army which might otherwise have allowed him to act the arbiter of the whole empire. He did as he was

⁵⁸PLRE 1.1006 (Anonymus 10). The prefect, noted in the epitaph of another bureaucrat, is anonymous, but there is no reason that he should not be identical with Apodemius.

⁵⁹We may here reckon further with the testimony of Zosimus (4.59.4), which places Illyricum within Arcadius' inheritance.

⁶⁰On this see Cameron, 156-88, and Heather, 193-213.

asked, for he could not do otherwise and still maintain his claim to be acting in the interests of both imperial brothers. Despite that, however, he kept back for himself the best units of the eastern *comitatus*.⁶¹ This no doubt accounts for a number of the duplications between the eastern and western lists of the *Notitia*, as eastern units were incorporated into the western army.⁶² Stilicho then returned to Italy with the now-strengthened western *comitatus*. The murder of Rufinus by Gainas' troops led to an entente between Stilicho and the *magister officiorum*'s successor, the *praepositus* Eutropius. It is likely that this rapprochement saw the diocese of Pannonia re-incorporated into the western empire, becoming again subject to the Italian prefecture, while the eastern dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia remained subject to Constantinople as they had been since 392.⁶³

⁶¹Zosimus 5.4.2.

⁶²Thus Hoffmann, 25-39. He attempts to distinguish between those units, duplicated in eastern and western lists, which were transferred in 395 by Stilicho, and the six units sent to Honorius by Theodosius II in 410 (Zosimus 6.8.2; Sozomen 9.8.6). These dates, he determines, are the only two times between 394 (his correct *terminus ante quem* for the eastern *Notitia*) and 423 (his mistaken *terminus ante quem* for the western list) at which a transfer from east to west would have been possible given diplomatic relations between the two *partes imperii*. One may agree with that judgement, though with nothing further. His sorting process depends upon the Illyrian list (Or. 9) being later than 395, in which case the Ascarii seniores and iuniores, which appear in the Illyrian list (Or. 9.24-5) and then in Spain (Occ. 7.119-20), must belong to the transfer of 410. But, as shown above, the Illyrian list need not be later than 394. The selection criterion is therefore valueless.

Hoffmann also contradicts his own dictum, p. 28, that duplicated units must represent transfers, when he denies that the Equites sagittarii seniores which appear in Thrace (Or. 8.30) and Illyricum (Or. 9.19) are identical with the Equites sagittarii seniores which appear in Tingitania (Occ. 6.84 = 7.208). The consequence is that of the seventeen (not sixteen, Hoffmann, 26) units which appear in both eastern and western lists, not a single one can be fixed with certainty to either the 395 or the 410 troop transfers. One may agree with some of his hypotheses, that, for instance, crack units would not have been sent willingly in 410 and thus the Schola gentilium seniorum, Cornuti iuniores, Bracchiati iuniores, and Batavi seniores went west in 395. This remains speculative.

⁶³The date of the transfer cannot be stated with precision. The evidence of Claudian, *Theod.* 201-2 is probably valid only for the time of composition, and so cannot be used to postulate a transfer before Theodorus' prefecture of 397. See T.D. Barnes, *AJPh* 96 (1975), 419.

With Stilicho back in Italy, the original of the *Notitia* which we possess would have served its purpose. The campaign against Eugenius had long since been won, and the *de facto* partition of the Balkan dioceses was now recognised in theory as well. The document's basic structure already reflected the situation which now became a lasting reality. There was therefore no reason for any structural revision. The eastern section fell into abeyance during the protracted cold war between the two *partes imperii* which began as soon as Eutropius proved less pliable an ally than Stilicho had hoped he would be. The extant *Notitia Orientalis* therefore still reflects the situation at the time of Theodosius' death. The western list, however, began its long career of progressive revision.

The most obvious alteration is the appearance of the *Distributio Numerorum* (Occ. 7), which has no parallel in the eastern lists.⁶⁴ There are also many internal contradictions. Changes in one part of the list show no corresponding corrections elsewhere.⁶⁵ Hence, *limitanei* upgraded to the *comitatus*—of which there are a great many examples—appear in both the *Distributio numerorum*, and in their original chapters. There are countless other changes, the latest of which date from July 419 or later. Valentinian III was born on 2 July of that year, and this is the earliest date at which the units named after him could have been formed.⁶⁶ No other changes need date later than this, though some very

⁶⁴Other additions include the *comes Gildoniaci patrimonii* (Occ. 12.5), which must be later than 398.

⁶⁵The case of the Pannonian Valeria is the most obvious. A clerical error, Jones, *LRE* 3.351, it was long taken as confirmation for a statement of Marcellinus Comes (*Chron. mtr.* 2.76) on the Hunnic occupation of Pannonia: O. Seeck, 'Die Zeit des Vegetius', *Hermes* 11 (1876), 61–83.

⁶⁶E.g., the *Placidi Valentinianici felices* (Occ. 7.36) and the *Equites constantes Valentinianenses* (Occ. 7.165). It should be noted that this does not allow Occ. 7 to be 'precisamente datata', Clemente (1980), 48, since it merely provides the date of the latest correction. Other Valentinian-units (Occ. 7.47;61;71), are as likely to have been called

well may. A large percentage of the remaining alterations are plausibly explained by events in the last years of Stilicho's regency. The great disorder of the Gallic armies, both in the *comitatus* and amongst the *limitanei*, is surely the result of the invasions of New Year's Eve 405 and the subsequent usurpations in the region.⁶⁷

Such revisions make the western *Notitia* almost worthless as a source of precise information about the late Roman army. A base text with a large number of later alterations, it allows no hypotheses to be built upon it. Every entry not confirmed explicitly by outside evidence is potentially a revision of the base text. Confirmatory evidence is valid only for the individual items to which it pertains. There are no follow-on consequences.⁶⁸ One dateable revision in a given chapter says nothing about the other entries in that chapter. No conclusions, moreover, can be drawn from indirect comparison with external evidence. Because a *comes hispaniarum* does not appear in outside sources till 420 does not mean his entry in the *Notitia* dates from close to that time. The possibility that the *Notitia* gives the earliest extant attestation of an office always remains open, if not subject to proof.

Finally, there is no indication that any effort was ever made to delete obsolete offices or destroyed or disbanded units. Therein lies the great failing of the western *Notitia* as a source. If it is useable only where it can be dated, and if it can be dated only in those precise cases where external evidence duplicates the information it provides, then it is not in

after Valentinian II as Valentinian III. That Valentinian's father Constantius only became Augustus in 421 has no bearing on the question, since Valentinian's dynastic claims passed through his mother Galla.

⁶⁷Demougeot, 1120ff.; Clemente (1980), 47. For the date see chapter three above.

⁶⁸Thus, the great efforts expended by Lot, *passim*, and Demougeot, 1095-1104, while they clarify many disturbances within the western *Notitia* through the testimony of outside sources, tend towards the circular since they simultaneously use the *Notitia* to explain outside testimonia.

fact useable. The *Notitia*'s most perceptive interrogator thought that the eastern list provided a fairly accurate picture of the eastern empire at the end of Theodosius' reign.⁶⁹ In this he was correct. He thought, however, that the western list did the same for its subject around the death of Honorius, and in this he was mistaken. The western half of the *Notitia* has long been drawn upon, section by section, to confirm or deny any number of arguments on which it has some potential bearing. This employment, however, has rarely taken account of the larger issue of its composition and date as a whole. When that is examined, it becomes clear that no piece of the western list can fairly be used in isolation—and that taken as part of a whole, each piece loses much of its potential utility.

⁶⁹Jones, *LRE*, 3.355.

Appendix 3

The *Epistula Honorii*

The *Epistula Honorii* is preserved in Codex 78, Bibl. Acad. Hist. Madrid, usually known as the *Rotense*. The manuscript has 232 folios and falls into two sections. The first is a complete Orosius which once circulated independently from the second half, which is the *Rotense* itself. The *Rotense* begins on folio 156v after the blank 156r, and is best described as a miscellany. Among other things, it contains Isidore's histories, the chronicle of Alfonso III, the *chronica Albeldense*, various regnal lists and other *laterculi*, and a small collection of texts on Pamplona. The *Epistula Honorii* probably entered the Roda codex in a dossier of documents relating to Pamplona. According to M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías en la Rioja altomedieval* (Logroño, 1979), 32-42, whose treatment of the *Rotense* is the best available, the textual corruptions of the letter were present in the copy from which the *Rotense* scribe worked.

As was stated in Chapter Two, the whole *Epistula Honorii* (hereafter EH) is one large textual problem. In approaching it textually, one must be careful to see it as much as is possible outside of any historical context. To do otherwise risks importing assumptions about that context into the letter itself. The subsequent discussion deals only with the textual logic of the EH. The question of its function as a historical document and the relationship of its preface to its content has been discussed in the main text (see chapter two above). There follows a diplomatic text of the letter to which is appended a conjectural restoration. It does not claim to be an edition, in that it neglects the

editor's duty of making a text readable.¹ However, to render a document as corrupt and lacunose as the EH comprehensible is to prejudice its contents and purpose. The restoration which follows therefore distinguishes between emendations which simply make sense of what is uncontroversial and those which import assumptions from elsewhere. The latter are avoided, and even pure nonsense is left nonsensical.

What follows is thus no improvement on previous editions. It is, if anything, a step backwards. This, however, is precisely the point. Emendations beyond those given below are an impediment to an honest understanding of the historical value of the EH. Unless otherwise stated, references are to A.H.M. Jones, *LRE* 3.36; E. Demougeot, 'Une lettre de l'empereur Honorius sur l'*hospitium* des soldats', *RHDF* 34 (1956), 30-31; H. Sivan, 'An unedited letter of the emperor Honorius to the Spanish soldiers', *ZPE* 61 (1985), 274.

The text of the EH appears in the manuscript as follows:

- 1 De laude pampilone epistula.
- Incipit sacra Honorii imperatoris quam de Roma detulit militie
urbis Pampilonensis cum Saviniano patricio quidem tempore erede
prelatus in Spaniam profectus est ob infestatione diversarum
5 gentium barbarorum. Honorius imperator gloriosus perpetuus
triumphator semper Augustus universis militibus nostris
senioribus iunioribus speculatoribus ac britannicis. gaudentes
sanctissimi comilitones nostri communium remuneratione
meritorum et omnes iusta exultatione gaudentes his enim maxime

¹Indeed, in a document as corrupt as the EH, even to punctuate a transcription represents an editorial intervention that can prejudice interpretation. A similar observation is made of the Verona List by T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 201-8.

10 est splendor inlustris qui pari cunctos luce perfudit. a quos vos
 magnifici comites hac magistri utriusque militie ad similitudine
 nostre clementie constituti constituta sit vobis stipendia
 gallicanarum quae constitutioni vestrae porreximus ut eundem vir
 esset forma virtutis quibus excellens una devotio est. proinde
 15 instructissimi et nobis cuncta subdita sint in spania et amplica
 congruum et dignitatis augmentum quae serenitas nostra aurias
 praestiterit usibus gratanter agnoscimus ut ubi ubi vivendi
 degendique tempus extiterit omni alacritate atque virtute abeat
 hospitii obsequamini. quapropter fore equidem confidimus ut
 20 muneris resolutis incitet potius quam restinguat ardore. optamus
 comilitones nostros per multos annos bene agere. et alia manu:
 bene valete. amen.

I restore thus:

1 De laude Pampilone epistula.
 Incipit sacra Honorii imperatoris quam de Roma detulit militi(a)
 urbis Pampilonensis cum Sauinian(us) patrici(us) quidem tempore
 +erede+ pr(a)elatus in Spaniam profectus est ob infestatione
 5 diuersarum gentium barbarorum. Honorius imperator gloriosus
 perpetuus triumphator semper A(u)gustus uniuersis militibus
 nostris *** senioribus, iunioribus, Speculatoribus ac Britannicis.
 gaude(a)t(i)s sanctissimi comilitones nostri communium
 remuneratione meritorum [et] omnes iusta exultatione gaudentes.
 10 hi(c) enim maxime est splendor inlustris qui pari cunctos luce
 perfu(n)dit. a(d) uos quos magnifici comites [h]ac magistri
 utriusque militi(a)e ad similitudine(m) *** nostr(a)e clementi(a)e

constituti [...] Constituta si(n)t uobis stipendia Gallican(o)rum
 quae const(antiae) uestr(a)e porreximus, ut +eundem uir esset+
 15 forma uirtutis quibus excellens una deuotio est. proinde
 instructissimi *** et nobis cuncta subdita sint in (Hi)spania, et
 +amplica+ congru(a)m et dignitatis augmentum quae serenitas
 nostra (uestris) pr(a)estiterit usibus gratanter agnoscimus, ut ubi
 (alibi) uiuendi degendique tempus extiterit, omni alacritate atque
 20 uirtute abeatis hospitibus obsequamini. quapropter fore equidem
 confidimus ut muneris resoluti(o) incitet potius quam restinguat
 ardore(m). optamus comilitones nostros per multos annos bene
 agere. et alia manu: bene ualete. amen.

Notes:

line 6: There must be a lacuna after *nostris*, as *senioribus* and *iunioribus* do not occur without the unit-title they modify unless that title forms an antecedent nearby. There is no justification in supplying the unit-names from the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Occ. 7) as does Jones. While the *iunioribus* and *senioribus* of the EH might be thought to harmonise quite well with the two *Ascarii* at Occ. 7, that is presumption. The *speculatores* of the EH do not occur in Occ. 7 and are not equivalent to the *Excultatores*. As to the *Britannici* the *Notitia* contains five units with titles derived from *Britannia*. The equivalence of the *Britannici* of the EH and the *Brittaniciani* of Occ. 7 is far from established.

lines 8 and 9: One, at least, of the manuscript's *gaudentes* must be a hortatory *gaudeatis*, and the other can be. There is not much to choose between retaining the *et* in line 9 and emending both verbs, or retaining the second *gaudentes* while omitting the *et*.

line 10: The manuscript's *his* is nonsense. Either *hic* or *is* will do in its place.

line 11: The arguments of Sivan, 280, for *ad uos quos* as against Jones' *atque uos quoque* are compelling. That is to say, the letter should not switch addressees half way through, and thus the *comites ac magistri* ought to be the subject of a verb now hidden under the lacuna in line 13.

line 12: There must be a lacuna after *similitudinem*. Sivan's 'set up in the likeness of our clemency' is meaningless. Jones' emendation to *similitudinem Galliarum sunt provisione nostrae clementiae constituti*, though it makes good sense, presupposes a greater certainty about the letter's contents than we in fact possess.

line 14: *Constantiae* (or something similar) is necessary for the manuscript's *constitutioni*. The manuscript's *eundem uir esset* etc. has produced unsatisfactory emendations from both Jones (*eorundem una esset*) and Demougeot/Sivan (*eadem uirescat*). I follow the counsel of despair and leave this in its present corrupt state; the content here is not substantive at any rate.

line 15: This is the crux of the letter. At least corruption and perhaps a lacuna lies behind *instructissimi*. One must decide whether Honorius is holding out the rewards in line 16 as future hopes or acknowledging them as a present reality. In the former case, one *agnoscimus* must become *agnoscemus* (thus Jones). A related question is whether the *cuncta subdita* are *in Hispaniam* or whether the *augmentum* is to be valid there. The key lies behind the (meaningless as extant) *instructissimi*. A reasoned decision is not possible. It is on this point that the historical use of the EH founders (see chapter two).

line 15: *amplica* is meaningless. It should disguise a feminine noun in the accusative. Jones' *amplificationem* is felicitous, his *amplificationem annonarum* too courageous.

line 16: Note that while the late form *Spaniam* is perfectly conceivable in the preface (where one is tempted to leave the object of *ob* in the ablative as extant), it cannot stand in the text of a letter written between 395 and 423.

line 18: *ubiubi* is inconceivable (*contra* Demougeot). Sivan's *alibi* has the advantage of plausibility over Jones' *otio*. Either will do grammatically.

line 20: *abeatis hospitibus obsequamini* is strained grammatically, but it imports fewer assumptions than Jones' *oblatis hospitibus*, or, worse still, Demougeot's *habeatis hospitium obsequium*.

line 23: *amen* is clearly a late addition. See Demougeot, 38.

As we have stated, the result is unsatisfactory, even in terms of the narrowly textual commentary given here, and impartial attempts at emendation fail. Historical problems, like the definition of the *stipendia Gallicanorum* or the *dignitatis augmentum*, could be given equal or even greater space. Since, however, the date and context of the *Epistula* are beyond retrieving, to do so seems otiose. Sensible speculation is at any rate available from Jones and Sivan, but since it is not susceptible of proof, it cannot be admitted as evidence in a discussion of the defence Roman Spain. As argued above in the main text, the EH can be used to show no more than the presence of *comitatenses* in Spain after 411. What the EH offered those troops is anyone's guess.

Appendix 4

Ethnogenesis and the Goths

Ethnogenesis is a term used to describe the coming into being of a people, an *ethnos*. Currently fashionable as a way of interpreting early barbarian history, it has more or less completely overturned older ways of looking at the barbarians of antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Until thirty years ago, and more recently still among English speaking scholars, it was possible to write the history of the barbarians without pausing to define the terms of the argument. There was a general consensus that barbarian groups were tribes possessed of definite ethnic identities and continuous histories. Ethnogenesis theory has shattered that old consensus, calling into question the ethnic continuity of barbarian peoples and attempting to uncover the ways in which ethnic ties were constructed. At present, the theory is in the process of becoming a new orthodoxy.

The word ethnogenesis is a coinage of anthropologists to describe the creation of an *ethnos*, what in Latin would be termed a *gens* or a *natio*. The ethnogenesis theory now familiar to classicists and medievalists was developed by German scholars and is a hybrid of anthropological method crossed with the theoretical models of post-war *germanistische Stammeskunde*.¹ The theory found ready acceptance in Germany, and the past thirty years of German scholarship have largely been concerned with fitting pre-war theories of Germanic antiquity into the new framework of historical ethnography.² The concept was slow to

¹The application of anthropological theories to the barbarians was essentially the invention of R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung, Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln-Graz, 1961).

²Wenskus' book is massive and digressive, pursuing a series of long dialogues with the

enter the world of Anglophone scholarship, but a sea change is visible in the late 1980s which coincides with the translation of one of the German school's seminal works and with the publication in English of a widely-read work of advocacy.³ The rapid progress of the concept of ethnogenesis as a way of understanding early medieval barbarians may be judged by its recent appearance in an undergraduate textbook.⁴ The speedy success of ethnogenesis theory has carried with it a large number of unexamined assumptions and inherent problems which attend the theory.⁵ It has become sort of an academic package deal which carries with it a series of logically unconnected, and sometimes quite unsound, propositions.

The simplest way of defining ethnogenesis is as the coming together of any number of disparate, heterogeneous elements into a

scholarship of its predecessors and bringing their findings into line with its own historical ethnography. The work of Wenskus' chief apostle, H. Wolfram, has meanwhile been extensively concerned with integrating the ideas of Wenskus with pre-war German ideas of charismatic leadership. A representative sample of the new German literature will be found in H. Wolfram and W. Pohl, ed., *Typen der Ethnogenese* (Vienna, 1990).

³I.e., H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. T. Dunlap (Berkeley, 1988). The second, and standard, German edition of the book had appeared in 1979, though the English edition introduced new material since incorporated into the third German edition (1990). P. Geary, *Before France and Germany* (Oxford, 1988), is by the author's own admission only an attempt at bringing to an Anglophone audience the work of 'Continental' (by which is meant German) scholars. The book does not actually offer a considered synthesis of recent German scholarship. It prefers instead to restate the ideas of Wenskus and Wolfram more or less wholesale, which makes its subsequent translation into French and German all the more surprising. The recent work of N. Christie, *The Lombards* (Oxford, 1995), on the other hand, gives ethnogenesis theory no notice whatsoever, and indeed makes many of the assumptions of pre-ethnogenesis scholarship with regard to ethnic continuity.

⁴T.F.X. Noble, et. al., *Western Civilization: The Continuing Experiment* (Boston, 1994), 246-47.

⁵The immensely confusing introduction to Wolfram, *Goths*, 1-18, illustrates the problem. Many of the same points are made in his 'Gothic history and historical ethnography', *JMH* 7 (1981), 309-19, which is an equally good illustration of the several, indifferently related topics (e.g., charismatic leadership, Scandinavian origins, tribes as armies) which make up Wolfram's notion of historical ethnography. Wenskus' methodological programme, *Stammesbildung*, 1-112, though longer and much denser in its argument, is actually less confusing than Wolfram. The latter's most recent work, *Die Germanen* (Munich, 1995), is in large part a hundred-page abridgement of Wenskus' *Stammesbildung*, and proceeds as if thirty-five years of research had not intervened since that book's original publication.

single group. The various elements adopt the traditions of one smaller group among them, and the new, larger group maintains its collective identity on the basis of a shared belief in this common descent. Put another way, ethnogenesis occurs when groups of people in no way related to one another come to believe, or choose to believe, in a blood relationship which need not in fact exist. This means on the one hand that early barbarian peoples could tolerate a great deal of ethnic heterogeneity in their makeup, and on the other that for the barbarians the shared blood relationship, which both ancient and modern concepts of ethnicity assume, was frequently fictitious.⁶

This way of looking at the early barbarians is in large part well-justified. We can affirm without hesitation that the barbarian groups which we encounter in the late Roman sources were not consistently ethnically homogeneous, even though they were perceived as being so by our sources. Problems arise, however, when we come to ask further questions, to inquire into what gave an originally heterogeneous *ethnos* its specific ethnic character. In other words, why were disparate barbarians, with different ethnic backgrounds, able to become Goths? The answer for German scholars lies with the idea of *Traditionskerne*, nuclei of ethnic memory around which *ethne* could coalesce.⁷ The idea of *Traditionskerne* is in fact intimately connected to the old question of

⁶Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, 14-112.

⁷This concept originates with Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, 54-82, but has been much elaborated in Wolfram, *Goths*, and is summarised in idem, 'Einleitung oder Überlegung zur *Origo Gentis*', *Typen der Ethnogenese*, 20-31. The notion of *Traditionskerne* has found much less favour among Anglophone scholars than have other aspects of ethnogenesis-theory. See e.g. P. Amory, 'The meaning and purpose of the ethnic terminology in the Burgundian laws', *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (1993), 1-28, and the rather better I.N. Wood, 'Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', *Typen der Ethnogenese*, 53-69. R. Collins, 'The ethnogenesis of the Basques', *Typen der Ethnogenese*, 36-44, uses the term ethnogenesis in so idiosyncratic a fashion as to bear no relation to the other works in the volume.

'Germanic' origins. It was long held that the barbarian peoples in general, and the Goths most of all, originated in Scandinavia, whence they departed in order to appear eventually on Roman soil.⁸ German scholarship has been deeply concerned with establishing a Germanic continuity from ancient times through the Middle Ages and then on to the modern era. Scandinavian origins were thus very dear to the old theories of *Germanentum*. Archaeology has systematically refuted the possibility of any such large-scale migrations.⁹ Ethnogenesis-theory, however, has provided a means of resuscitating the belief in Germanic continuity, a continuity which it locates in the *Traditionskerne*.¹⁰

Traditionskerne, as noted, are nuclei of ethnic traditions which are passed on through the ages and around which *ethne* can form themselves. These nuclei, it is argued, are transmitted through the centuries by noble families who can trace their origins back to a divinity,

⁸The idea originated with Jordanes and is fundamentally unhistorical. Jordanes was less a Gothic writer than a Byzantine one. The three soundest studies are B. Croke, 'Cassiodorus and the *Getica* of Jordanes', *CP* 82 (1987), 117-34; W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, 1988), 20-111; and P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 332-489 (Oxford, 1991), 3-70. Although these differ materially from one another in many respects, none would accept Jordanes as a reliable guide to Gothic origins.

⁹See e.g. V. Bierbrauer, 'Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten vom 1.-7. Jahrhundert, Versuch einer Bilanz', *FMSt* 28 (1994), 51-171. Other recent summaries of archaeological findings on the early barbarians, though they pay lip service to the impossibility of tracing ethnic identity in material remains, nevertheless devote a great deal of space to doing just that. See e.g., Christie, *Lombards*, and P.J. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996).

¹⁰Wolfram, *Goths*, 29-43, and elsewhere, has revived the theory with a vengeance. For him, the Gothic royal line of the Amals carried the Gothic identity from Scandinavia to the ends of the earth, as is recorded by the *Origo Gothica* of Cassiodorus (the imaginary name he accords Jordanes' *Getica*). See, e.g., Wolfram, *Germanen*, 15: 'Ebenso wie Skandinavien nach der Völkerwanderungszeit keine Massen von Heeren und Völkern samt deren Traditionen importierte, so exportierte es vorher keine Völkerschaften, sondern vielmehr hervorgehobene sakrale Traditionen, die weite Strecken überwinden konnten, entweder mit kleinen Traditionskernen oder noch häufiger ohne direkte Vermittlung'. Through Wolfram, the dogma has reentered the scholarly literature, and passed rapidly into such popularising works as M. Kazanski, *Les Goths* (Paris, 1991), 15-18. The success of Wolfram's revamped framework for Gothic history may be judged by recent article of Bierbrauer (see previous note), who feels compelled to structure his own work strictly according to Wolfram's narrative even when his own findings consistently show how little connection the material evidence has with that narrative.

the exemplary case being the Gothic Amals.¹¹ In this linking of ethnic traditions to noble houses, one sees another way in which ethnogenesis-theory is closely entangled with the broad theories and assumptions of both pre- and post-war German scholarship, which has consistently emphasised the power of kings and nobles as motive forces in early Germanic society.¹² The success of the noble house is then taken to determine the success of the *Traditionskern*. When it is successful, that is to say victorious in battle, heterogeneous units join themselves to the tradition-bearing noble house, partake in the *Traditionskern* of ethnicity, and in so doing form an *ethnos* and assume a fictive community of descent.¹³ The notion of *Traditionskerne* can be objected to on any number of grounds, but one argument is conclusive. The Goths are usually taken as the proof case for ethnogenesis, with the Amal family as the primary bearer of traditions. It has, however, been demonstrated that those who led the Goths after their advent on Roman soil show no continuity at all with Gothic leaders before the Danube crossing.¹⁴ That is to say, both Amals and Balths post-date the Gothic arrival within the *limes*. For this reason, if for no other, there is no reason to accept a

¹¹For the divine origins of *Königssippen* see, e.g., Wolfram, *Germanen*, 58-9.

¹²A doctrine summarised by W. Schlesinger, 'Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft in der germanisch-deutsch Verfassungsgeschichte', *HZ* 176 (1953), 225-75 = *Beiträge zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des Mittelalters I* (Göttingen, 1963), 9-52. The partial translation of the article as 'Lord and follower in Germanic institutional history', in F.L. Cheyette, ed., *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1968), 64-99, omits crucial documentation in the notes.

¹³Wolfram, *Germanen*, 10-11: 'Wann immer in den Quellen ein antikes oder frühmittelalterliches Volk auftritt, so besteht es aus vielen Völkern, die in einem Heer zusammengefaßt sind. Die erfolgreichste Führungsgruppe dieser Völker bildet...den 'Traditionskern', der sich gleichsam als Abstammungsgemeinschaft aus Überlieferung versteht. Solange Traditionskerne erfolgreich sind, geben sie den Anstoß zur Bildung, Abspaltung und Umbildung von Völkern. Die gentile Überlieferung ist die Kunde von den 'Taten tapferer Männer'. This passage states every main contention of modern German ethnogenesis-theory in an exemplary fashion.

¹⁴P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans* (Oxford, 1991), 157-92.

connection between supposed *Traditionskerne* and the processes of barbarian ethnogenesis.

There is, however, another component of ethnogenesis theory which is particularly visible in the Anglophone scholarship. This is the idea that the ethnically diverse groups who would eventually come together to form new *ethne* were wandering armies until the point of ethnogenesis.¹⁵ As an argument, the idea follows directly from the perfectly acceptable proposition that the early barbarian groups were not ethnically homogeneous, but rather heterogeneous units on their way to becoming *ethne*. Therefore what linked individuals or small groups to the larger body was the ability to fight. The notion has been most fully developed in the case of the Goths. Alaric did not lead a people, the theory goes. He led an army, in which anyone who could fight automatically became a 'Goth'. It was only when, after a twenty year peregrination, these 'Goths' settled down in Aquitaine that they ceased to be an army and became an *ethnos*, their perception of ethnic community having been formed in the twenty intervening years of shared adversity.

The notion that Alaric's Goths were an army rather than a people is deeply misconceived and relies on a systematically mistaken reading of the extant sources. The problem lies with our modern definitions of an army. If we view the Goths from 395 to 418 as an army, then we are constrained to interpret their behaviour in accordance with the way in

¹⁵This notion is present in the work of both Wenskus and Wolfram, but is articulated most fully by J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops* (Oxford, 1991), 48-88, and idem, 'Alaric's Goths: nation or army?', in Drinkwater and Elton, 75-83. Citing Liebeschuetz, Amory, *EME* 2 (1993), 1, is able to maintain that 'it is a commonplace today that...the barbarian groups were no peoples or tribes, but motley collections of soldiers under the military leadership of a king'. He is right, but that is no cause for celebration.

which we expect an army to act. Thus, we must maintain that the main goal of the Goths was incorporation into the Roman command structure, consistent access to the supply system of the *annona*, and booty with which to supplement the *annona*, or replace it when it was not forthcoming. We must also deny the presence of Gothic non-combatants beyond a small number of camp followers in train. Finally, we are asked to believe that the Goths could be manipulated in just the same way as could any mutinous unit of the Roman army.¹⁶ And yet not one of these propositions is sustained by a reading of our sources.

In the first place, the sharp dichotomy between army and people is artificial. If most Goths could fight, the line between army and people is blurred. More importantly, though our evidence is not particularly abundant, it consistently shows Alaric's Goths to have been much more than a wandering army unit. First we have the evidence of Claudian which clearly shows enough women and children in the Gothic camp to interfere with Alaric's military efficiency.¹⁷ Then there are Alaric's demands, which consistently ranked among them a place to settle.¹⁸ Finally, we may adduce the perception of contemporary observers, which clearly viewed the Goths as recognisably Gothic, on the basis of criteria which we cannot with certainty define.¹⁹ Orosius had much to say on the matter in his final book, and he called the Goths *Gothi*, and not, for instance, *milites Illyrici* as he would have done had he seen them more as Roman soldiers than a Gothic people.²⁰ If we are to view Alaric's Goths

¹⁶These are the contentions of Liebeschuetz.

¹⁷In *Ruf. il.* 124; *in cons. Hon.* 466; *cons. Stil.* 1, 94-5; *Get.* 604ff.; 83ff.

¹⁸Zos. 5.48.3; 5.50.3. We may also take account of Philostorgius, *HE* 12.4-5 and Pacatus, *Par. lat* 12.22.3, both of whom depict the Goths as farmers.

¹⁹Claudian, for instance, calls them a *gens* at *in cons. Hon.* 474 and *Get.* 99, 134, 169, 533, 645-7.

²⁰After all, he describes as *milites Gallicani* the Roman soldiers sent to Spain from Gaul.

as an army, we have systematically to ignore or suppress this evidence. Given the sparseness of the sources, we should on general principle resist the temptation to define our terms too closely. However, it is surely incorrect to insist that between 395 and 418 the Goths were a mobile army unit and not a Gothic people, however one chooses to interpret the latter term.²¹

As a method of envisaging the barbarians, ethnogenesis theory has the great merit of emphasising their basic heterogeneity, of showing how barbarian groups could come together or separate and form new identities over short periods of time. The means by which this took place, however, are not open to definition by modern scholars. The sources are too obscure, and the scope for baseless hypothesis too great. At the same time as the ethnic diversity of barbarian groups has been underlined by recent research, another strand of modern scholarship has shown a basic homogeneity in the material culture of all the barbarian peoples.²²

The most comprehensively studied barbarian culture is the Cernjakov-Sintana de Mures culture, named after its most representative sites.²³ The Sintana de Mures culture is slightly younger than and

²¹For different arguments to the same effect, see Heather, *Goths*, 166-78.

²²For the material culture see the succinct statements of M. Todd, *The Northern Barbarians, 100 BC - AD 300* (Oxford, 1987), which is little changed from the first edition (London, 1975), and remains preferable to the author's more recent *Early Germans* (Oxford, 1992). The basic homogeneity of barbarian culture is recognised in the methodology of H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe* (Oxford, 1996), the first two chapters of which treat all the barbarians indifferently for the purposes of establishing their martial techniques.

²³The best synthesis is Bierbrauer, *FMS* 28 (1994), 98-134, with references to the vast Polish and Russian literature on the subject. Despite his use of a narrative framework derived from Wolfram's imaginative reconstructions, Bierbrauer carefully distinguishes that narrative from what we can maintain on the basis of archaeological evidence, and his article is preferable to the other two readily accessible introductions: Kazanski, *Goths*, 39-60, is superficial and unannotated, while P.J. Heather and J.F. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991), 51-101, bunches together a great deal of evidence rightly kept separate by Bierbrauer.

probably originated from the Cernjakov culture, but together they covered an area from the middle Danube to the plains of the present-day Ukraine north of the Black Sea.²⁴ They are characterised by a number of clearly-defined cultural traits, which combine a material culture similar to more northerly cultures with certain traits of the nomadic steppe culture, and, especially in the Sintana de Mures regions, a heavy Roman influence.²⁵ Their society was sharply stratified socially. The mass of the population farmed. The *Oberschicht* did not, but lived on the produce of those who did. When necessary, all fought. Archaeological research has consistently shown that the economic life and technological level of barbarian regions was essentially identical to that on the Roman side of the *limes*, with the exception of a greater degree of socio-economic specialisation among the Romans and the absence of the elite culture of towns and villas in the *barbaricum*.²⁶

Recent research has also shown that many of the institutions and social structures of the barbarians which were long thought to have been survivals of old Germanic custom in fact reflect close contact with and adaptation of Roman models.²⁷ The whole tribal basis of barbarian society has even been called into question and shown persuasively to be

²⁴Bierbrauer, *FMSI* 28 (1994), 131, accepts the equivalency of Tervingi with Visigoths and Greuthungi with Ostrogoths asserted by Wolfram as going back into the third century, and equates the Ostrogoths with the Cernjakov culture, the Visigoths with the Sintana de Mures. Heather, *Goths and Romans*, has shown that this way of looking at Gothic continuity is untenable. This fact in no way affects Bierbrauer's analysis of the archaeological material.

²⁵Bierbrauer, *FMSI* 28 (1994), 124; Kazanski, *Goths*, 49-55.

²⁶This point is made more explicitly for the Sintana de Mures-Cernjakov culture by Heather and Matthews than by Bierbrauer, but remains true not only on the lower Danube, but also along the whole Rhine-Danube frontier. See especially, C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, 1994), 98-131, with the works of M. Todd, cited in n. 21 above.

²⁷A.C. Murray, 'The position of the *graffo* in the constitutional history of Merovingian Gaul', *Speculum* 64 (1986), 787-805; and idem, 'From Roman to Frankish Gaul: *Centenarii* and *Centenae* in the administration of the Frankish kingdom', *Traditio* 44 (1988), 59-100.

both less unique and, in a sense, more Roman than the older scholarship could ever have admitted.²⁸ Appeal has been made, in fact, to a set of common late antique or early medieval social structures which comprehensively ignore those boundaries which were once thought to separate the Romans from the barbarians, Germanic or otherwise. All of these points show that there were few substantive differences between Goths and Romans, that the civilisations of the two groups were not alien to one another.

The relevance of this observation to the concerns of the present work is evident. The end of Roman Spain has long been told as the story of a cataclysmic confrontation between *Germanitas* and *Romanitas*, as if conflict were inevitable on the basis of cultural incompatibility. This is not the place for closely defined arguments, but the increasing evidence for close parallels between barbarian and provincial Roman cultures should cause us to mistrust on principle arguments for a necessary, self-explanatory conflict between Goths and Romans. That same evidence helps clear the way for a contention offered in the body of the present work, that the Goths who settled in Aquitaine in 418 and intervened in Spain in the decades thereafter, participated in the politics of the western empire as one local interest group among several, not dissimilar from the others in any essential way. As to the question of ethnogenesis, of how the Goths whom we meet in the fifth century came to comprise the people they then were, the sources allow room for wide-ranging speculation, but none at all for definition or certainty.

²⁸A.C. Murray, *Germanic Kinship Structure* (Toronto, 1983). These findings seem not to have had the slightest impact on the German literature which goes on believing in a large measure of Germanic continuity, however envisaged: cf. Wolfram, *Germanen*, 107. Anglophone scholars, however, seem to be beginning to take notice: I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms* (London, 1994), 60-70.

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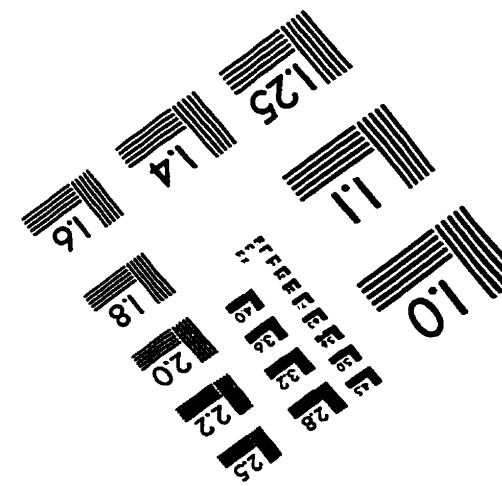
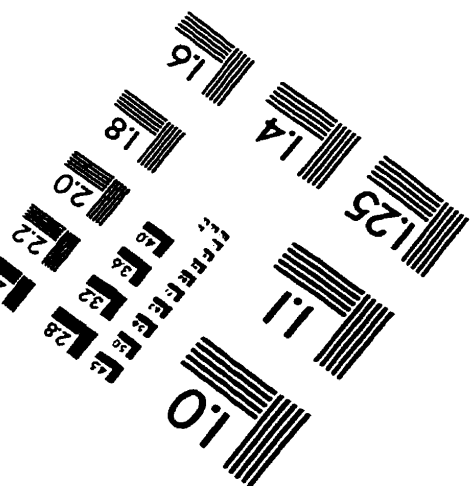
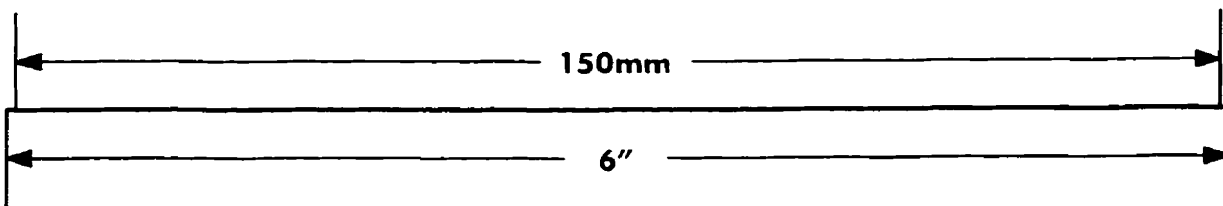
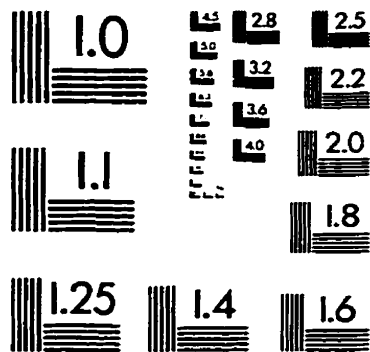
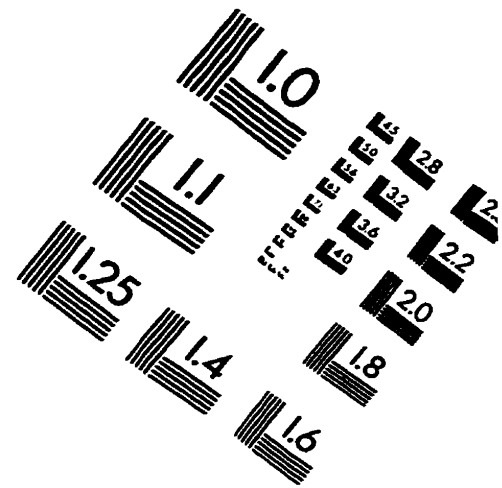
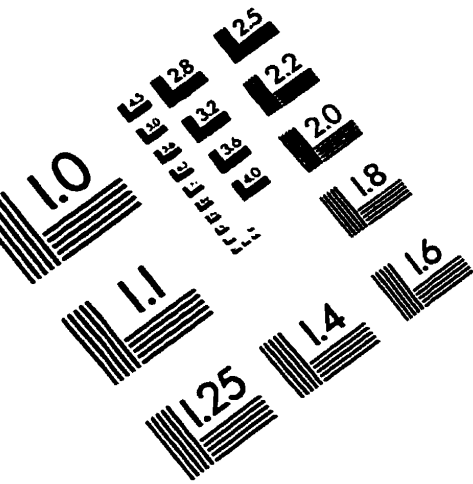
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