Andreas Kjeldsen
January 2009
http://voxindeserto.wordpress.com/

Conflict or Accommodation?

Perceptions of Ethnicity in the Letters
of Sidonius Apollinaris

"Aquitania Gothis tradita" – so concisely does the *Gallic Chronicle of 452* describe the establishment of a Gothic political entity in the Roman provinces in south-western Gaul in the early fifth century.[1] But things were not so simple in reality. This brief phrase covers a long, complicated and sometimes violent process that changed the political and cultural landscape of southern Gaul, and of which the establishment of the Gothic polity itself was only the beginning.

For the Goths, the settlement, which was formalised through a treaty from probably the year 418,[2] marked the end of more than forty years of peregrination inside the Roman Empire. Beginning with the crossing of the Danube in 376, this period had been characterised by shifting conflicts and alliances with the Roman authorities, and had witnessed numerous attempts by the Goths to negotiate, claim or conquer a permanent settlement in the Empire. But even as the settlement in Aquitainia brought an end to the Gothic wanderings, it also brought up new problems and challenges, both for the Goths and the Romans. For the Goths, it marked their transition from an ambulatory and more or less outlawed group to one that was settled in and exercised a reasonably legitimate authority over a particular area, surely a new role that required significant changes in mentality and social structure; while for the Romans, the settlement in Aquitania of course also had consequences for the local aristocracy and other power elites that were already in the area and now had to adjust to the arrival of a new group of rulers that did not conform at all to their own values and expectations.

In this essay, I will focus on this last issue. How did the relations evolve between the old, established power structure and the new foreign rulers – two groups which most likely differed significantly in values, world view, religion, and a number of other characteristics? Were there accommodation, conflicts, or both? And which role did ethnicity play as a factor in these processes, and how?

To try to understand these issues better, I will use a selection of letters from the collection by the Gallo-Roman aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris as a primary source for the interaction between Romans and Goths in the mid-fifth century, concentrating on the reign of King Euric, and complemented by recent secondary literature.

---

1 Burgess: ' The Gallic Chronicle of 452', p.75.
2 For dating of the treaty, see Mathisen & Sivan: 'Forging a new identity', p. 8; and Schwartz: 'The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitainia: Chronology and Archaeology', p. 15-18

I

The question of ethnicity and ethnogenesis has been present in practically any historiographical discussion about the Goths for at least the last five or six decades and should also be briefly addressed here. Although the debate is complex and has involved a wide range of different points of view, one prominent theory is that of Herwig Wolfram who has proposed the existence of a so-called *Traditionskern* among the leaders, which preserved a continuous sense of Gothic identity and awareness of ethnic origins, while the bulk of the force remained more fluid in nature.[3] There are, however, several criticisms that can be raised against this theory, not least that the specific, common Germanic traditions that Wolfram proposes should form the core of this identity are excessively systematised and employ the few sources that are available in ways that are highly questionable.[4]

In his book *The Goths*, Peter Heather has proposed a different interpretation which views the Goths as an ethnic group in the more classic sense, but one which had become highly militarized. Even when joined by segments from other ethnic groups during the itinerant period, this group of ethnic Goths remained in the majority in the force, and ensured that it remained "Gothic" throughout both the itinerant period and after the Aquitanian settlement.[5] However, Heather never seems to define what exactly defined this "Gothicness", nor how it remained unchanged throughout a period that saw such fundamental changes in the Gothic way of life. Likewise, Heather's discussion of whether the Gothic force were an 'army' or a 'people' seems somewhat semantic to me, since in the end, there is probably very little practical difference between a small 'militarised people' and a large 'army with followers'.

However, it is interesting to note that if we consider their actual behaviour, the Goths actually do seem to have behaved very much like an "army" both before and after the settlement, and indeed a quite Roman one at that. In particular, the Goths – by necessity – involved themselves heavily in Roman politics throughout their itinerant period, even at the Imperial level. We see examples of this in negotiations with both the Emperors in Constantinople and with Stilicho, in the marriage of the Gothic leader Athaulf to Galla Placidia,[6] their involvements with the usurpers Attalus and Iovinus, and later the support for the Gallic emperor Eparchius Avitus. These events show a general willingness to attempt to translate military power into political power, in a way that is not unlike how other Roman armies had done for centuries, if we account for the specific circumstances that the Goths were under during the four decades of wanderings in a mostly hostile territory.

This leads me to the more general point that it is necessary to understand the "Goths" as behaving and existing within a fundamentally Roman framework. And it is very difficult to see how they could be anything else in light of the fact that the group that was settled in Aquitania in 418 had spent forty years – almost two generations – within the Empire, with no permanent homeland and

---

3   Wolfram: *Germanic Peoples*
4   See Halsall: *Barbarian Migrations*, p. 457-462, whose criticism I agree with.
5   Heather: *The Goths*, p. 166-178
6   A political move which Attila attempted to repeat with Iusta Grata Honoria in 450 and 451; perhaps an indication that the Huns, too, were more a part of the Roman framework than they are usually considered.

surrounded by Roman culture, Roman language, and Roman politics.[7]

This is not to say that there were no perceived differences between the Goths and the Romans – certainly there were, but it is important to keep in mind that these perceived differences are typically communicated to us by a very small group at the top of Roman society who had very specific ideas about what was and what was not properly Roman. The fact that these people perceived the "Goths" as not-Roman barbarians, such as it is often expressed in the letters of Sidonius, does not mean that we should accept this world view at face value, much less allow it to unduly influence our own ideas about ethnicity when other explanations may lead to a better understanding of the period.

II

With these issues in mind, I will take a look at a selection of letters from Sidonius's collection, beginning with a few words about the origin and the nature of this collection of letters as a primary source.

Sidonius Apollinaris (properly Gaius Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius) (c. 430-485?) came of a Gallo-Roman praetorian family, probably from Lyons. He was involved in Imperial politics during the 450's and 60's, supporting Avitus and opposing Majorian, but was reconciled with the latter in 468 and appointed praefectus urbi of Rome for a year. In 469 he was elected bishop of Clermont, but exiled for two years by King Euric when the city was surrendered to the Goths in 475. Upon his return, he resumed his episcopate which he held until his death sometime between 480 and 490.[8]

As his biography shows, Sidonius was a member of the very top of Gallo-Roman society, and as such he participated in a community of shared values that defined an ideal of aristocratic *romanitas*: The Roman *optimus vir* was of good ancestry and reputation, classically educated, aimed for public office, and respected *amicitia* with others of his social circle.[9] The "barbarians", on the other hand, played the part of a constitutive Other to this community of values, representing everything that the *optimus vir* was not: Uneducated, unsanitary, violent, lacking in culture, *barbaria* represented the antithesis to *romania,* allowing the latter to define itself against something external.[10] Actual knowledge of the barbarians and their society and culture was extremely limited, on the other hand.[11] This is the intellectual environment in which Sidonius's letters were created, and so we should always keep in mind that when we meet the barbarians in the letters, we see them through this filter, which may not have much similarity with the historical reality.

Another important thing to keep in mind that when these letters were published, they were not intended as a collection of source materials, but rather as a presentation of the author's literary ability to be circulated among his circle of correspondents. Some letters may have been edited before publication, either to improve the text itself or to remove material that could have been

7 Schwarcz, Andreas: 'The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitainia: Chronology and Archaeology'
8 *PLRE II,* p. 115-118
9 Mathisen: *Roman Aristocrats*, p. 10-16
10 Ibid., p. 39-49
11 Ibid., p. 40

considered inappropriate, while others would have been excluded altogether. As such, these letters do not necessarily present the full extent of Sidonius's correspondence, or even a representative selection of it.

We find an interesting example of this contradiction between the Othering of the barbarians and the role that they had actually come to play in mid-fifth century Gallic society in a letter written by Sidonius to the otherwise unknown Euodius.[12] Sidonius wrote in reply to Euodius's request for a poem to be inscribed on a silver basin that was to be a gift to Euric's Queen Ragnahilda to support Euodius's attempts to gain the patronage of the court. Two lines of the poem read: "...*et munus parvum magnum patrona cape / Euodiumque libens non aspernare clientem...*"[13] Anderson chooses to translate these lines to the somewhat anachronistic "...*accept as a great **protectress** this small gift, and be pleased not to spurn Euodius as thy **vassal**...*" (my emphasis), but there seems to be no reason, other than perhaps *a priori* beliefs about the "Germanic" character of Euric's court, not to assume that Sidonius in fact means exactly what he writes: That the queen should accept Euodius as a client and act as his patron.

Sidonius did not have very high thoughts about the literary character of Euric's "barbarian" court ("...*plus charta vestra quam nostra scriptura laudabitur.*"[14]), but his use of the *patrona/cliens* terminology in this context still suggests that even the Goths could be and were understood within a fundamentally Roman framework and as credible sources of patronage in the Roman sense, rather than something alien. Indeed, the fact itself that Euodius thought it worthwhile to invest the extra effort and expense in having his gift inscribed with a poem could suggest that the Gothic court was not quite as unreceptive to the classical literary virtues as Sidonius pessimistically predicted.

Whether Euodius had any luck with his attempts to gain patronage is unknown, but he was not the only one to seek patronage at the Gothic court, even from among Sidonius's circle of correspondents. His collection contains several letters and references both to a certain Leo who served as advisor to king Euric[15] and to a poet named Lampridius.[16] Membership in this exclusive circle was by itself a mark of both social and literary distinction,[17] and it is apparent from Sidonius's letters that he had high regards for both – Lampridius was worthy of a lengthy lamentation poem and letter after his death,[18] and he wrote of Leo that he would *"rightly take precedence of Tacitus"*[19] and praised his *"poetic measures"* and *"renowned oratory"*.[20] The letters also specifically praise Leo's work for Euric, mentioning in particular *"...those much-acclaimed declamations which you compose as the royal spokesman..."* and which are put in the context of Euric's government, foreign policy and legislation.[21] The *Codex Euricianus* from 477 also reveals the presence of one or more

---

12 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 4.8
13 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 4.8.5
14 Ibid.
15 *PLRE II,* p. 662-663
16 *PLRE II,* p. 656-657
17 Mathisen: *Roman Aristocrats*, p. 105-118
18 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 8.11
19 Sid. Apol. *Epist*. 4.22.2
20 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 8.3.3 – although this letter was probably written in an attempt to enlist Leo's aid at the Gothic court during Sidonius's exile.
21 Ibid.

Roman lawyers at his court: While the Code was largely based on the actual conditions and issues in the Gothic kingdom at the time, and not particularly Roman in composition or content, it did draw on a Roman legal tradition and vocabulary on certain points, just as the art of codified legislation by a sovereign itself was an intrinsic part of the Roman political culture.[22]
Although we do not know much else about Euric's court, it is interesting to compare it with that of Clovis, which is only a few decades younger. In his article 'Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan', William M. Daly has argued that contrary to the conventional understanding of Clovis as a more or less exclusively Germanic ruler, he was in fact deeply immersed in Roman culture and values.[23]
And even though the Goths and the Franks came from considerably different backgrounds, there is really no convincing reason to assume that Euric should have different significantly from this picture. Seen in this light, it seems likely that the roots of Sidonius's disparaging remarks in this and other letters should be found partly in his dichotomous Roman-barbarian world view, and partly in specific political differences with Euric, who had territorial ambitions on Auvergne, rather than in the characteristics of the Gothic court itself.

III

But even though the Gothic kingdom, and presumably also the Frankish and Burgundian kingdoms, were indeed considered credible sources of patronage for the Gallic aristocrats, opportunities for social advancement were limited in the fifth century. Whether they were held back by political or religious differences, or simply by a lack of available positions at the courts, not all aristocrats had the opportunity or the desire to enter service with the barbarians, and unfortunately for these men, there were not many alternatives open to them. As the Imperial administration diminished along with Imperial fortunes, so did the otherwise traditional possibility of seeking public office. By the middle of the 5th century, the Imperial administration was more or less effectively confined to Italy itself, And in line with the general provincialisation that seems to have taken place at this time, most of the offices available were filled by Italians.[24] Majorian's appointment of Sidonius as urban prefect of Rome should probably be seen as somewhat of an exception, perhaps even as a token appointment to placate the Gallo-Roman aristocrats who had served Eparchius Avitus and who might have seen the elevation of a Gallic emperor as the beginning of increased access to Imperial offices and patronage.

Under these circumstances, many aristocrats found an alternative in ecclesiastical offices, especially in bishop's sees, to such a degree that one can even speak of an outright 'aristocratisation' of the Gallic church.[25] Not only was a bishop often considered one of the leaders of the community,[26] it also offered a social position that was more than comparable to what one could expect from a secular office – Sidonius mentions in one letter that, *"...according to the view of the best men, the humblest ecclesiastic ranks above the most exalted secular dignitary."*[27] According to Gregory of

---

22 Harries: 'Not the Theodosian Code'
23 Daly, William M.: 'Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?'
24 Mathisen: *Roman Aristocrats*, p. 17-26
25 Ibid., p. 89-104
26 Ibid., p. 93
27 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 7.12.4. Although this comment is written against *"those who would disparage this profession"*,

Tours, the Frankish king Chilperic complained in the middle of the sixth century that, *"There is no one with any power left except the bishops. Nobody respects me as King: all respect has passed to the bishops in their cities"*[28] – and considering the degree to which the fifth century aristocrats came to dominate the ecclesiastical offices in Gaul, it does not seem unlikely that the Gothic kings of the time would have been in a situation to make similar complaints. In one letter, probably from 470 AD, Sidonius even refers to his fellow bishop Agroecius of Senonia as "*Senoniae caput*" – "*the ruler of Senonia*"[29] – and even though it is possible that this should be understood in an honorary or ecclesiastical rather than in a literal sense, it does point at the highly prominent position of the bishop in the civic community.

Considering this prominent role of the bishops, it is not surprising that the Goths attempted to influence the episcopal elections and appointments in the dioceses within both their own and neighbouring territories. One of the tactics that they seem to have employed was to prevent an appointment from taking place altogether, presumably in order to disrupt the functions of the local church until the city agreed to elect an acceptable candidate. We find an example of this in the previously mentioned letter to bishop Agroecius, which was written by Sidonius to enlist his support in filling the vacant see of Bourges. Although the letter does not directly mention Gothic interference in the episcopal election, it seems quite likely that Sidonius's need to call for support from outside Aquitania is caused by interference from the Goths.[30] Further, Sidonius mentions that the population of Bourges is "*per studia divisus*"[31] – perhaps an indication that the Goths were attempting to cause internal dissension. This may also be the cause behind a passage in a letter of 473 or 474 to Constantius of Lyon[32] in which Sidonius mentions that Clermont was *"...made desolate no less by civic dissension than by barbarian assault..."* and that *"It was by [Constantius's] admonition that [the people] returned not only to a united town but also to a united policy..."*[33] – it sounds as if a significant part of the population were prepared to surrender to the Gothic expansion, and although we cannot know this for certain, it is possible that there has been an outside influence behind this.

Returning to the situation of the church in Gothic Aquitaine, another letter by Sidonius paints an even more depressing image of situation. Sidonius laments that numerous sees remain vacant following the deaths of their bishops due to Euric's *"assault on Christian laws."*[34] Some have seen this as an sign of persecutions against Catholics carried out by the Arian Euric, beginning with Gregory of Tours in the *History of the Franks* , claiming with reference to this letter that Euric:

> *"...began a terrible persecution of the Christians in Gaul. Without more ado, he*
> *cut off the heads of all who would not subscribe to his heretical opinions, he*
> *imprisoned the priests, and the bishops he either drove into exile or had*

---

which might suggest that this point of view was not yet universally accepted.
28 Gregory of Tours: *History of the Franks* 6.46; Also Mathisen: *Roman Aristocrats*, p. 94
29 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 7.5
30 Epist, p. 310, n.2
31 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 7.5.1
32 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 3.2
33 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 3.2.2
34 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 7.6.6

executed."[35]

However, as far as the actual events under Euric's reign are concerned, Gregory's account can be rejected out of hand as an even more hyperbolic interpretation of the already somewhat hyperbolic letter by Sidonius. We have no other contemporary source that mentions such persecutions, and as mentioned above, Euric otherwise seems to have had no objections to extending patronage to Catholic Gallo-Romans at his court. As such, Gregory's assertions must be seen as a part of the general pro-Frankish (and thus anti-Gothic) tenor of his work.

Indeed, the experience of Sidonius himself suggests that these ecclesiastical conflicts were primarily political rather than doctrinal in nature. Like several other bishops in the same situation, Sidonius was exiled by Euric following the Gothic conquest of Clermont in 474, but remarkably, he was allowed to return to his see only two years later. The fact that a Catholic and aristocratic bishop like Sidonius, who seems to have been no particular friend of the Goths and had been highly prominent in the Auvernian resistance against them, was allowed to return to his see and remain there for at least some years until his death casts considerable doubt on the Gothic ability to efficiently establish dominion over the cities in their territories, much less carry out anti-Catholic policies or even outright persecutions.

This lenient policy, combined with the apparent Gothic attempts to influence the elections of bishops, also suggests that the Goths were to some degree dependent on the aristocratic bishops with their networks and their prominent local positions in carrying out the administration of the towns and cities of their domains. This is to be expected, since in general, the Gothic civil administration seems to have been quite limited in size and scope. Although the Gothic kings did employ some civilian advisers at their court, it was only in the 460s, after Euric's accession, that Romans began to enter the Gothic administration in any significant numbers,[36] and even then, most still seem to have held essentially military rather than civil positions.[37] Further, those civil positions that were created seem to have been mostly at the provincial level and above, rather than on the local level.

As Mathisen and Sivan also notes, *"One recalls, for example, the aforementioned penalty that violators of the land claims legislation were to pay "a pound of gold to whomever the king commands" – as if it was unclear just who this would be."*[38] Under such circumstances, it seems like the Goths would have had virtually no choice but to rely on the existing Roman administration in the cities – which at this point in many cases most likely were controlled or at least strongly dominated by the bishops – when it came to actually collecting taxes and other income from their domains.

---

35 Gregory of Tours: *History of the Franks* 2.25
36 Wolfram: *Roman Empire*, p. 157
37 Mathisen & Sivan: 'Forging a new identity', p. 31
38 Ibid.

IV

That Goths and Gallo-Romans appear to have negotiated an accommodation and a working relationship in general does not mean that there was an absence of conflicts. On the contrary, despite all treaties and agreements and professions of *amicitia*, the objectives of the Gothic polity and the Western Imperial government were not fundamentally compatible, especially after the accession of King Euric in 466. Where his predecessors had only occasionally challenged their Imperial neighbours while devoting most of their attention to Hispania, Euric eventually switched to a considerably more expansionistic policy in Gaul, aiming in particular at gaining control of the neighbouring Roman and Burgundian territories in Auvergne and Provence. Meanwhile, the Empire on its side attempted to tread a fine line between on the one hand preventing the Goths from expanding to become a threat to the Imperial heartlands in Italy, while at the same time also preserving their forces to use as one out of many weights in the complex and precarious balance of power between the different forces in Gaul.[39]

Such conflicting objectives meant that Roman officials and aristocrats who tried to navigate these political waters could easily find themselves in serious troubles, such as it happened for Arvandus who was *praefectus praetorio* for Gaul 464-468. Although he apparently highly respected for his accomplishments during his first prefectorate and immediately reappointed, his second term was so marred by maladministration that he was arrested in 468 and brought to trial before the Senate in Rome.[40] Sidonius, who at that time had recently given up his office as *praefectus urbis* of Rome, describes in a letter how Arvandus conducted himself with excessive pride and self-confidence but up to and during the trial itself, even when a letter was presented which supposedly had been sent by Arvandus to the Gothic King Euric. According to Sidonius, the letter

> *"...[dissuaded Euric] from peace with the "Greek Emperor," insisting that the Britanni settled to the North of the Liger should be attacked, and declaring that the Gallic provinces ought according to the law of nations to be divided up with the Burgundians, and a great deal more mad stuff in the same vein, fitted to rouse a warlike king to fury and a peaceful one to shame."*[41]

Sidonius further explains how Arvandus rashly *"without waiting to be questioned, cried out that he had dictated it..."* and even *"...repeated his avowal two or three times..."*[42] Although Sidonius himself ascribes this rash behaviour to legal ignorance, *"...realising all too late that a man could be declared guilty of high treason even although he had not aspired to the purple",*[43] his translator W. Anderson rightly notes that *"Arvandus, with his wide legal experience, cannot have been as ignorant as Sidonius supposes"* and further suggests that, *"[t]he reason of his astounding confidence may have been that Ricimer had secretly supported his treasonable designs and Arvandus counted on his potent help."*[44]

---

39 Wolfram: *Roman Empire*, p. 153
40 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 1.7.3; *PLRE II*, p. 157
41 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 1.7.5
42 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 1.7.10
43 Sid. Apol. *Epist.* 1.7.11
44 Ibid., n. 1

That is a credible interpretation, but another possible explanation is one of political ignorance or naïvety due to the changing circumstances in Gaul: Arvandus may in fact not have been aware that his conduct in relation to Euric could be considered treasonable – the Goths had been federates of the Empire for decades, and similar agreements to hand over territory in exchange for military support had been made before, not least in the original settlement treaty of 418. It does not seem unlikely that Arvandus had been trying to enlist Euric's assistance against the Britanni, and by implication of the proposed division also against the Franks, in return for a vague promise of territory. At any rate, it is difficult to see how Arvandus could otherwise have profited from such a division, unless he in fact believed that he would have more to gain by casting his lot in with the Goths, but this does not seem credible considering the very high position he had already attained in the Roman administration.

(Of course, one thing that Sidonius does not mention regarding the Arvandus incident is that as *praefectus urbi*, he would have been expected to preside over this trial, but he had in fact left given up his position and left the city shortly before it began.[45] This is not surprising, since considering

the politically charged nature of the trial, as a Gallo-Roman aristocrat and a friend of the accused, he could very well have been at risk himself.)[46]

In any case, although the exact motivations behind Arvandus's actions remain unknown, regardless of whether he acted for personal gain or in a misunderstood attempt to promote Roman interests, the case does illustrates the problematic nature of the Imperial-Gothic relations in the late 460s. The Goths were beginning to assert their dominance of Southern Gaul, turning the former ambiguous Imperial *foederati* into opponents, not only of the Imperial government, but also of those Gallo-Romans who now found themselves targeted by the Gothic expansion. Among these was also Sidonius, who came to play an important role in the defence of Clermont in the early 470s, and who were exiled when Auvergne was handed over to the Goths by treaty in 475. However, as discussed above, he was allowed to return after only two years – possibly as a result of his contacts with Leo and others at Euric's court – and he seems to have resumed his position with few, if any problems.

V

The examination of the selection of letter and the comparison with the historical record in this essay has shown instances of both accommodation and conflict in the relations between Goths and Romans. However, most of all, it has shown how the Goths and the Romans ultimately shared a common cultural frame of reference, enabling both to negotiate a practical co-existence despite the prejudices that may have existed among the Goths and certainly did among the Romans.

One further development during this period which I believe to be crucial was the aristocratic shift from secular to ecclesiastical offices. This shift happened as a response to the declining availability

---

45 Sid. Apol. *Epist*. 1.7.9; *PLRE II* p. 117
46 Halsall: *Barbarian Migrations*, p. 274

of secular offices, but it also allowed the aristocrats to maintain their earlier social networks and positions, even under very different circumstances. It is also possible – and this is merely an unsupported hypothesis – that the presence of this strong ecclesiastical aristocracy prevented the Goths from effectively extending their dominion over the cities, ultimately weakening their power and making them more vulnerable to the Frankish advances in the late fifth and the early sixth century. But that is quite beyond the scope of this essay.

Instead, I will finish with a general comment on the question of ethnicity. It seems that there is a certain difference in the way that Roman and Gothic ethnicity has been treated in the literature. Unlike the case of the Goths, few historians would probably think of suggesting the existence of a "Roman *Traditionskern*", or seriously discuss whether the Romans were a "people" or an "army" or similar theories. And yet in many ways, Roman ethnic identity was just as fluid and ambiguous as the Gothic identity seems to have been. So perhaps the Romans and the Goths were actually not so different as they have usually been presented, at least in the way they constructed their ethnicity? Both appear to have been characterised by a considerable ability to renegotiate their understanding of both themselves and of the Other according with changing circumstances, and to integrate new elements from outside, while still keeping an internal integrity through a shared set of values and a shared narrative. In the end, approaching both the Goths and the Romans in this way would in my opinion lead to a better understanding than trying to resort to either the problematic constructs of Wolfram or the unchanging ethnicity of Heather.

Bibliography

Burgess, Richard: 'The Gallic Chronicle of 452: A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction', in: Mathisen, Ralph W. and Danuta Shanzer (eds.): *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 52-84

Daly, William M.: 'Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?' *Speculum*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Jul., 1994), p. 619-664

Gregory of Tours: *The History of the Franks*, ed. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth, 1974)

Halsall, Guy: *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge, 2007)

Harries, Jill: 'Not the Theodosian Code: Euric's Law and Late Fifth-Century Gaul', in: Mathisen, Ralph W. and Danuta Shanzer (eds.): *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 39-51

Heather, Peter: *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996)

Kulikowski, Michael: 'The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitainia: The Imperial Perspective', in: Mathisen, Ralph W. and Danuta Shanzer (eds.): *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 26-38

Martindale, J. R.: *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Volume II, A.D. 395-527* (Cambridge, 1980) (Cited as *PLRE II*)

Mathisen, Ralph W and Hagith S. Sivan: 'Forging a new identity: The Kingdom of Toulouse and the frontiers of Visigothic Aquitainia (418-507)', in: Ferreiro, Alberto (ed.): *The Visigoths. Studies in Culture and Society* (Leiden, 1999), p. 1-62

Mathisen, Ralph W.: *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D.C., 1989)

Mathisen, Ralph W.: *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul. Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin, 1993)

Sidonius Apollinaris: *Poems. Letters I-II*, ed. W. B. Anderson, Loeb Classical Library 296 (Cambridge, MA, 1936)

Sidonius Apollinaris: *Letters III-IX*, ed. W. B. Anderson, Loeb Classical Library 420 (Cambridge, MA, 1965)

Schwarcz, Andreas: 'The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitainia: Chronology and Archaeology', in: Mathisen, Ralph W. and Danuta Shanzer (eds.): *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 15-25

Wolfram, Herwig: *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples* (Berkeley, 1997)