Rome's relations with the Goths, AD 376-382: exorcising the spectre of Adrianople

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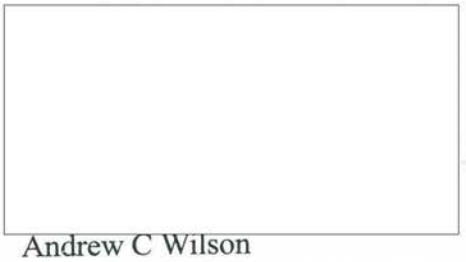
Except where specific acknowledgment is made to quoted sources this work is the result of my own research carried out under the supervision of Dr. Peter Brennan, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Ancient History, University of Sydney.



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Writing a doctoral thesis must be one of the lonelier occupations that can be taken up by an urbanised westerner. Social life and friendships are put on hold, and other significant people suffer from neglect. One's awareness and grasp of current events sinks to almost nothing, and even test cricket passes by unnoticed! The last year before submission, in particular, places almost intolerable strains on one's relationships. Nevertheless, this thesis would not have been finished without the support, understanding, and friendship of many people who had to endure my uncertainties and insecurities about this thesis. The list of those who deserve thanks is long and I cannot hope to mention them all. But, some must be acknowledged.

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Abbreviations

Blockley	R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: formation and conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*, Leeds 1992.
CTh	*Codex Theodosianus.*
Elton	H. Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe AD 350—425*, Oxford 1996.
HA	*Historia Augusta*, ed. D. Magie, London, 1921- 1932.
Heather	P. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332-489*, Oxford, 1991.
Jones	A. H. M. Jones, *The later Roman Empire, 284-602: a social, economic and administrative survey*, Oxford 1964, paperback reprint 1986.
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies.*
Matthews	J. F. Matthews, *Western aristocracies and imperial court A.D. 364-425*, Oxford, 1975.
MGH AA	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi.*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca.*
PL	*Patrologia Latina.*
PLRE	A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Vol. I, Cambridge 1971.
RIC	J. W. E. Pearce, *Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. IX, Valentinian I to Theodosius I*, London, 1931.
Whittaker	C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a social and economic study*, Baltimore, 1994.
Wolfram	H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. T. J. Dunlap, Berkeley 1988.

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The spectre of Adrianople: ancient and modern

"Certain it is that scarcely a third part of our army escaped. The annals record no such massacre of a battle except the one at Cannae..." (Amm. Marc. XXXI 13.18-19).

With these doom-laden words Ammianus Marcellinus ends his account of the defeat of an eastern Roman army at Adrianople in 378. The spectre of Adrianople has haunted modern analyses, not only of the consequences for Roman foreign policy, but also of scholarship on the period preceding Adrianople, which often seems to be waiting for Adrianople to happen, as it were. The Roman defeat at Adrianople has, thus, been retrojected so that it forestalls any proper analysis of the death of Valentinian I and its consequences, or of the events of 376. And, the battle of Adrianople and the decline and fall of the Roman Empire remain almost inextricably entwined elements in modern scholarship. This is even the case among those who argue that the actual physical losses at Adrianople were not so large as to be unmanageable. The reasoning is rarely spelled out, but it is clear enough and goes something like this. The psychological impact of the losses, alongside the actual losses (regardless of their extent) and other socio-economic and military pressures, forced Theodosius to make an agreement in 382 for a new type of autonomous barbarian settlement within the Empire. This agreement is seen as leading inexorably to a number of features in the traditional catalogue of decline and fall: the increasing dependence of Rome on barbarians for its military strength; the cancerous movements of Alaric's Goths around the Roman Empire from 395 onwards; the barbarian settlements of the fifth century for which the *foedus* of 382 (rather than other agreements between Rome and barbarians) is seen as the prototype.

One effect of all this is to cast Theodosius and his policies, suitably impugned, in a starring role in the decline and fall. Is this the case, though? How did Theodosius manage the impact of Adrianople, both the military losses and subsequent Roman foreign policy towards the Goths? This must be seen in its contemporary context, not in the light of later, and often quite different, policies and circumstances. Contemporaries recognised, and, except for those constrained to official views (fewer than we might suppose), exaggerated the physical and ideological impact for their own very different purposes, but in the next century the battle of Adrianople plays a remarkably small place in the recording of Roman history. It was left to later times to turn Adrianople into one of the decisive battles and turning points in world history. Hindsight does have its advantages, if not used tendentiously, but here it has joined the vestigial dots of history into a progressive mosaic that depends on several leaps of faith and fails to contextualise Theodosius' actions.

This dissertation cannot deal with all the separate parts of the long ongoing processes which contributed to the ultimate fragmentation of the empire that becomes so evident in the fifth century. Its aim, rather, is to show that the physical impact of Adrianople was manageable, that the availability of military resources was not a major factor in Roman policy towards the Goths after 378, and to show that Roman policy towards the Goths was an extension within the contemporary context of one of the options of traditional Roman foreign policy.

The Significance of Adrianople: ancient and modern assessments

Whatever the current paradigm of late antique history (whether decline and fall or transformation), the battle of Adrianople and its aftermath, and in particular the foreign policy of Theodosius I, are seen as pivotal—and yet Theodosius, and his response to Adrianople, have figured less in extant historiography, both ancient and modern, than one might expect. The seamless thread of history cannot be cut off at 378 (the battle of Adrianople) or at 382 (Theodosius' treaty with the Tervingi), but this period, under the significant influence if not dominant control of perhaps the last

Roman emperor to direct the forces of history rather than be buffeted and led by them, supposedly saw a quantum change in the strategy of managing barbarian settlement and relations within the Roman Empire.

The defeat of a Roman army within the Empire by 'barbarians' was one of those events whose ideological impact, irrespective of the size of the opposing armies or the actual number of Roman losses, far surpassed its practical consequences. The failure of Roman military might to overcome the Gothic forces rippled down the years until the battle of Adrianople has come to be seen by some as a turning point in Roman history, if not in the history of the western world. Ferrill is typical of this view, labelling Adrianople as "one of the greatest military crises in Roman history, perhaps in the history of the western world".[1] Even earlier, as Lenski points out, historians in the first half of the twentieth century viewed the battle of Adrianople as "a turning point between antiquity and the Middle Ages".[2] Today we would label such views as extreme, but undoubtedly Adrianople was, and often still is, seen as an event of profound significance to the Roman world. Adrianople has been seen to have such an overall significance because the impact of that defeat of a Roman army by a Germanic enemy was manifested in the ideological, political, military and civilian arenas of the Roman world.

To be more specific, the effects of the loss at Adrianople can be measured by examining the immediate local impact of the defeat of a Roman army on the army itself, the immediate impact on the local populations and any ongoing consequences, the use of the defeat in Christian eschatology and imperial propaganda, the consequences of the Roman failure to defeat barbarians for the ideology of power and world conquest that was an integral part of the *Weltanschauung* of Rome, Roman attitudes to barbarians, the appearance of Adrianople as a turning point or even a rhetorical *topos* in writings of the fifth and later centuries, and the actual practical

1 A. Ferrill, T*he Fall of the Roman Empire: the military explanation*, London, 1986, 57.
2 N. Lenski, "*Initium mali Romano impero*: contemporary reactions to the battle of Adrianople", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997), 128, quoting M. Bang's 1924 statement: "The Battle of Hadrianople introduces the last act of the great drama, the most pregnant with consequences which the history of the world has ever seen".

consequences of the loss of men and officers for the army and for Roman foreign policy. Because this thesis cannot deal with everything in that list I have chosen to limit my own examination of the Roman defeat at Adrianople in this thesis to the impact of the loss on the military in both physical and ideological terms, and the consequences for foreign policy of the impact on the military. Before doing so I want to examine the treatment of the impact of Adrianople in the ancient and modern literature.

There is no doubt that the immediate local impact of the defeat was severe, but little work has been done on the effects of the Roman defeat on the inhabitants of the Empire. In 1943, J. Straub examined the effect of the barbarian victory at Adrianople on the treatment of barbarians in literary sources, but until Noel Lenski's recent article, no-one, as he points out, had investigated how the impact of the defeat was represented in the writings of contemporaries of the battle.[3]

We know from Ammianus that after their victory, the Goths, in quick succession, and against the advice of Fritigern who had earlier warned them to be at peace with walls,[4] invested Adrianople and then Constantinople. Adrianople lured them because they had found out that Valens' treasury was inside its walls;[5] they were similarly drawn to Constantinople, after giving up their siege of Adrianople, by the vast wealth they believed they could plunder there.[6] Failing in both these attempted sieges the Gothic bands spread over the Thracian provinces and beyond as far as the Julian Alps.[7] Crops were burnt, undefended towns plundered, and the inhabitants captured or killed.[8] Travel and communication were made almost impossible. Certainly, in the immediate aftermath of the battle the roads were not safe: Victor was forced to take a circuitous route through Macedonia, Thessaly and Moesia in order to reach Gratian

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3 J. Straub "Die Wirkung der Niederlage bei Adrianopel auf die Diskussion über das Germanenproblem in der spätrömischen Literatur", *Philologus* 49 (1943), 255-86; Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 128.
4 *parietes*: Amm. Marc., XXXI 6.4.
5 Amm. Marc., XXXI 15.2.
6 Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.4.
7 Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.7.
8 Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.1, 3, 7.

who was at *castra Martis* in Moesia.[9] Ammianus recounts that when the siege of Adrianople was lifted those who had left the city to seek Valens avoided the public highways—the conclusion that is intended to be drawn is that the roads were unsafe because of the presence of armed and marauding Goths.[10] Basil of Caesarea, writing to a communicant, Eusebius of Samosata, who was living in exile in Thrace, hesitated to send his letter by messenger because of the dangers of travelling.[11]

Security, too, for those living outside walled towns may have been almost non-existent. The Goths seem to have plundered and pillaged at will, driving off, killing or taking prisoner the inhabitants,[12] and the archaeological record suggests extensive damage to a number of towns.[13] But this was not widespread across the lower Danube area, and many places show very little, or no, damage. The evidence seems conclusive that most communities, even small villages, survived the Gothic depredations of the late 370s and early 380s, even when the archaeological remains show traces of damage for this period.[14] Themistius' celebration of the peace of 382 announces that "roads are open...road stations and lodgings come back to life and cover the ground, providing rest as of old",[15] and, although such claims fit the conventions of the genre, it is unlikely that conditions in the Balkans returned to something like their normal level of safety for travellers until the time of the peace treaty of 382. However, within a year after the appointment of Theodosius some sort of stability and order had returned, at least to Thrace and it is not unlikely that travel conditions had become comparatively safe.[16] Thus, the immediate physical

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9 Although Zosimus believes Gratian was in Pannonia: Zos., IV 24.3. The route given by Zosimus is criticised by F. Paschoud (ed.), *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle*. 3 vols, Paris, 1971-1989, vol. ii.2, 384, as "hautement fantaisiste". Heather, 149 n. 60, believes it accurately describes a journey down the via Egnatia "and then north via Scupi and Naissus". See also Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 133. Gratian's location is given by Amm. Marc., XXXI 11.6.

10 Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.2.

11 Basil, *Ep.* 268, cited by Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 133.

12 Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.3; Libanius, *Or.* 24.15.

13 Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 135.

14 T.S. Burns, *Barbarians within the gates of Rome. A study of Roman military policy and the barbarians, ca. 375-425 A.D.*, Bloomington, 1994, 35-8.

15 Them., *Or.* 16.212, translation of Heather and Moncur.

16 Zos., IV 25.4. An optimistic assessment, according to Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2 388. Contrast with Whittaker, 189, who shares the optimistic view of Zosimus: "...within a year Theodosius, the new emperor, had restored order in the provinces".

consequences of the Roman defeat at Adrianople in 378, while chaotic and certainly severe in the immediate short-term, led to little actual ongoing disruption for the Balkans.

Likewise with morale: there was an initial problem, at both military and civilian levels, but one seemingly soon overcome. The immediate effect on army morale, for which we have no direct evidence, is unlikely to have been inconsequential. Although historians like Ferrill can comment that the defeat at Adrianople "robbed the Romans of their advantage in morale", no evidence to support the view is offered, and there is little that can be adduced to support such a position.[17] With good leadership Roman military forces could still beat enemy forces in the field, and they continued to do so throughout the 380s. Zosimus reports successes of Modares against the Goths, and of unnamed commanders against Sciri and Carpodaces in the early 380s.[18] A large force of Greutungi attempting to cross the Danube in 386 were completely routed by the *magister militum* Promotus, indicating that army units in Thrace were as effective a fighting force as they had always been.[19] In 388, and again in 394, elements of the eastern army successfully fought western armies led by usurping emperors. And in the end it was the western, not the eastern, army that succumbed and the western empire that disintegrated. Adrianople cannot be the culprit for this. The morale of the eastern army, if we measure it in terms of success against enemies, seems to have been every bit as good in the 380s as it had been in earlier decades.

The efforts of the central government to convince the populace that successes against the Goths were being achieved certainly points to a concern to bolster the morale of the civilian population. As early as December of 379 victories against Goths, Alans, and Huns were announced in both Rome and Constantinople.[20] In the very next year victories of both *augusti* were announced, and Theodosius entered Constantinople in

17 Ferrill, *Fall*, 127.
18 Zos., IV 25, 34.
19 Zos., IV 35.
20 Symm., *Ep.* 1 96; *Cons. Const.*, a. 379, 380.

triumph in late 380.[21] It is usual to dismiss these announcements as propaganda only, but there is no need to deny actual successes as reported by Zosimus, however trifling in reality. Further morale boosting strategies can be seen by comparing the number of victory celebrations before and after Adrianople. As McCormick has acutely observed, "in the seven decades between the accession of Constantine and the death of Valens, there are twelve explicitly documented victory celebrations or announcements, or less than two per decade. In the first decade after the defeat, the figure leaps to six...".[22]

All this no doubt served a purpose and achieved its aims, but Adrianople continued to irritate the Roman mind. Pacatus' panegyric, delivered in 389, says of the post-Adrianople situation that "the state was lying grievously afflicted, or should I say rendered lifeless...", and the panegyrist goes on to comment "not only is the recollection of calamities vivid in itself, but in addition I am afraid of darkening the brightness of this present joy by recalling sad events",[23] so there is some evidence that even after a decade the memory of Adrianople continued to be painful, and the defeat still "gnawed at the Roman psyche".[24] However, it is also likely that by the time Pacatus was reciting his panegyric to Theodosius, Adrianople had become one of those *topoi* brought out to demonstrate learning and emphasise how much better things were now, and its ideological use in this context cannot be disregarded. Note, too, that Pacatus was living in Bordeaux when the battle occurred and is hardly likely to have received any first hand accounts of Adrianople or its immediate aftermath.[25] What he says is founded only in rumour, hearsay and imagination, and is constructed in terms of his genre of panegyric. It is a neat parallel that the most shrill responses to Alaric's sack of Rome in 410 (another event of greater ideological than physical

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21 Zos., IV 33.1. Although Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2 402, maintains that Zosimus only says the emperor entered as if in triumph, M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: triumphal rulership in late Antiquity, Byzantium and the early medieval West*, Cambridge, 1986, 42 n. 30, argues persuasively that Zosimus indeed reports a triumph but implies that it was for something insignificant.

22 McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 43.

23 Pac., *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 3.3-4.

24 Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 145.

25 C.E.V. Nixon, *Pacatus: Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*, Liverpool, 1987, 3.

significance) come from the fringes far away—Jerome in the Holy Land, and Augustine's sermons in Africa, even if they had first-hand sources.

Thus, the military failure at Adrianople soon lost whatever intrinsic significance it might have had and became, and remained a focus for pagans, Christians, panegyrists, orators, politicians, historians, and others, to pursue their own agenda. For pagans like Zosimus and his source, Eunapius, the defeat demonstrated the consequences of the abandonment of traditional religion. Libanius saw in it the result of the failure of the state to avenge the death of Julian a decade and a half earlier.[26] For Christians, the outcome of the battle signalled a field day in their attacks on pagans and heretics. The loss in battle and the death of the emperor were a manifestation of God's wrath at the Arianism of Valens, and an apocalyptic foretaste of the long-prophesied downfall of the Roman empire.[27] Jerome, in a splendid example of perfect hindsight, blames the Hunnic invasion of 395 on the Roman loss at Adrianople and dated the beginning of the decline of the Empire to that fateful August day in 378.[28]

Others like Vegetius, with more military hobby-horses to ride, used the result to urge the new emperor Theodosius to return to traditional Roman military values, eschewing barbarian recruits and re-emphasising the virtues of republican-style discipline and training.[29] For such people, and Synesius in the 390s is another, the defeat was due to the decline in military prowess of the Roman army, caused by the retreat from traditional recruiting and training methods and the 'barbarisation' of the army. One can picture Theodosius beset on all sides by clamouring voices: the 'hawks' shouting for a more aggressive response; the 'doves' demanding truces, treaties and negotiation; the pagans maintaining the need for a return to state sponsorship of traditional religion; and Christian voices insisting on a final end to paganism and all heresies. No wonder that tensions appear amongst these competing

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26 Lib., *Or.* 24, 16.
27 See the long discussion in Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 155-60.
28 Jerome, *Ep.* 123.16; Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 159.
29 Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris, passim*; see Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science,* tr. N.P. Milner, Philadelphia, 1993, second edition 1996, 1ff, for the Theodosian date. Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 148.

voices. All these different ideological uses of Adrianople demonstrate multiple discourses with competing political aims and strategy options. Thus, instead of looking at why Theodosius made the choices he did, historians ever since have been criticising Theodosius for the decisions he made, basing their assessment on long term outcomes in different circumstances rather than on the contemporary context of the decisions.

The ideological uses made of the defeat by both ancient and modern writers are both more notable and longer lasting than the immediate impact of Adrianople on Roman physical and mental states. Those ideological uses are complex, continuing and deeply entrenched. The victory celebrations and announcements described above should not just be seen as morale boosters. They had another function in emphasising and continuing the Roman ideology of victory and conquest. Pacatus for example, as any good panegyrist, exaggerates, in the passage quoted above, the gravity of the situation before the object of his panegyric became emperor, so he can proceed to magnify the success of the incumbent. Not only does he describe Theodosius as the best, the only man for the job of setting the Empire to rights, but later in the speech, where Pacatus is contrasting Theodosius' life style with his power, he refers to the Emperor as "ruler of the world, master of lands and men".[30]

Themistius, too, uses the same language of 'world rule' that appears in Pacatus, and which had, in fact, been an essential part of Roman imperial ideology since the time of the republic. Between the accession of Theodosius and the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Goths, Themistius wrote and delivered three major panegyrical orations , and in each of them the imperial ideology of world rule appears. In his first oration to Theodosius, given in 379, Themistius refers, somewhat elliptically, to the new Emperor as the ruler of mankind.[31] Again, in Themistius' next oration to the Emperor, spoken in late January 381, Theodosius is described as "a mortal who

30 Pac., *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 3.5-6 and 13.3.
31 Them., *Or.* 14 182a.

commands and jointly rules virtually the whole earth and sea".[32] The third oration given by Themistius was to the Senate in 383, to celebrate the entry into the consulship of Saturninus, chief architect of the peace treaty with the Goths reached the year before. In this speech, delivered in the Senate in the presence of both Emperor and consul,[33] Theodosius is "the man who holds sway over all things".[34] Themistius' most consistent rhetorical theme is the ideology of imperial rule, in particular the importance of *philanthropia* as the guiding principle for emperors. These three speeches delivered following the momentous defeat at Adrianople do not reveal any special emphasis on the need for military prowess in an Emperor, which we might expect as one reaction to the military defeat. Nor is the particular ideology of Rome's rule of the *orbis terrarum* stressed in a time when that piece of imperial ideology was under threat. In each of the Orations 14-16 the particular imagery of world rule makes only a single appearance and the point is not laboured.

Other ancient accounts of Adrianople must be examined. Ammianus Marcellinus, Themistius, and Pacatus offer a note of optimism amidst the largely pessimistic voices of the religious. Themistius and Pacatus were authors of panegyrics, and optimism was part of the job description of a panegyrist, so their optimism is to be expected and integral to the genre within which they were writing. Lenski identifies Ammianus' description of the result of Adrianople as an attempt by the historian to show that Adrianople was neither unique, nor the worst defeat Rome had suffered, and that recovery would follow.[35] Lenski, however, prefers to see the historian as a lone voice rather than as a guide to contemporary reactions. Ammianus was writing his history in the early years of the last decade of the fourth century, twelve years or more after the battle of Adrianople. Why should we agree with Lenski that Ammianus' reaction was less indicative of a general feeling than the eschatological doom-saying of Jerome and Ambrose? Ambrose, as early as 379, was arguing that

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32 Them., *Or.* 15 196d.
33 J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the imperial court: oratory, civic duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius*, Ann Arbor, 1995, 205.
34 Them., *Or.* 16.202b.
35 Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 162.

the defeat had been predicted by scripture in the guise of Ezekiel's prophecy of Gog: "Gog is the Goth whom we now see to have come forth".[36] Jerome, too, expressed similar views. In 396 he wrote that the bloodshed had been unceasing for twenty years, in 409 that it had continued without let for thirty years—but we know that, to the contrary, there was virtual peace on the northern frontiers between 382 and 395, the civil wars aside.[37] Therefore, why should we not take at face value the assessment of one contemporary who understood military life and the nature of warfare, in preference to the ideologically tainted statements of churchmen who neither understood soldiering nor empathised with the imperial Roman state? As Whittaker has so pungently observed in a different context: "in any age voices of gloom and despondency in contemporary or near-contemporary sources are rarely as credible as their volume or stridency would suggest".[38]

Despite the preponderance of shocked reactions to Adrianople in contemporary or very near contemporary writings, by the mid-fifth-century writers had largely lost interest in the battle as the source of the Empire's troubles or as a prognostication for the future. Orosius' views of the evils and consequences of paganism "were too perverse to carry any conviction to any reasonable man",[39] but even for such a biased observer the only lesson to be taken from Adrianople was the consequence of heresy, and the death of Valens as an example to posterity of the wrath of God.[40] The chronicles, too, do not treat the battle as anything more than one more fact to be recorded. The *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, for example, reports the battle but fails to mention the death of Valens. The only consequence listed is that the Goths were in Thrace, Scythia, and Moesia plundering the cities and living in them at the same time. Neither Socrates, Sozomen, nor Theodoret, place any emphasis on the Roman loss at Adrianople, or give it any particular significance except as evidence of

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36 Ambrose, *De fide* 1.137-8, cited by Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 157. In 389 Ambrose, *Ex. evan. Lucae* 10.10, was arguing that Adrianople represented the start of the end of the world prophesied in the book of Luke 21.9.

37 Jerome, *Epp.* 60.16 and 123.16; Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 158.

38 C.R. Whittaker, "*Agri Deserti*" in M.I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property*, Cambridge, 1976, 140.

39 Jones, 1025.

40 Orosius, *Historia contra Paganos*, VII.33.

the error of the Arianism of Valens. Even for Zosimus it was not Adrianople that was the cause of the empire's misfortunes but the neglect of traditional state religion by the quintessential Christian emperors Constantine and Theodosius, and the latter's love of barbarians.

Nevertheless, the view of the doomsayers has won out. Modern commentators on Adrianople and the later fourth century have, by and large, reflected the desolate assessments offered to posterity by the religious zealotry of the ideologues, Jerome and Ambrose. The more 'upbeat' perception visible in the panegyrists and at the end of Ammianus' history has been neglected in favour of an attempt to establish Adrianople as the point from which the Empire began that long descent into darkness which no imperial state can evade.[41] Modern views of Adrianople attribute to the defeat a number of military consequences that were of enormous significance for the empire. There are two principal strands in this view. The first is that the battle demonstrated the superiority of cavalry over infantry and heralded the age of the medieval knight. The second is that the eastern armies were so weakened by the defeat and their losses that throughout his reign Theodosius was forced to negotiate from a position of weakness in his dealings with the Goths.

Though there would seem to be adequate rebuttal of the long-held view which sees this battle as the one that first demonstrated decisively the superiority of cavalry over infantry, this view is sometimes echoed even in recent studies. This dissertation makes little further contribution to this issue, except to set out the case that Adrianople and its aftermath represented no significant changes in military tactics involving the use of cavalry. Gibbon suggested, long ago, that the Roman forces, predominantly infantry, were surrounded by "superior numbers of horse" and thus vanquished.[42] Sir Charles Oman, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, set the scene in his study of the rise and decline of heavy cavalry and framed the view thus: "The military importance of Adrianople was unmistakable; it was a victory of cavalry

41 J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a study*, third edition, London, 1938, 367-8.
42 E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. III, ch. XXVI.

over infantry".[43] Until recently few historians of the late Empire have differed from this judgement. However, more recent modern analysis of Adrianople rejects this assessment. Thomas Burns' 1973 article on Adrianople, for example, persuasively argues that Adrianople was, in essence, a battle of "infantry over infantry" and that cavalry numbers were hardly enough to win the battle on their own.[44] Even Arther Ferrill, who otherwise blames the defeat at Adrianople for all the subsequent evils which beset the empire, accepts that Adrianople was an infantry battle, and that the numbers of cavalry were small in proportion to the total numbers involved.[45] More recently Williams and Friell, in their narrative of the reign of Theodosius, have reinforced this point, noting that even without the presence of Gothic and Alan cavalry the result would have been the same, for "Valens and his army failed tactically".[46]

Indeed cavalry, generally, was not as significant a military force in this period as is often assumed. Elton observes that "It is often suggested that the army was increasingly composed of cavalry during this period [350-425], though there is little evidence for this in the fifth-century".[47] By the time of Justinian, cavalry had assumed greater importance but, in Elton's words, "precisely why or when this change occurred is unknown".[48] If Adrianople demonstrated the superiority of cavalry over infantry, we would expect the Empire to have taken the lesson to heart and increased the number and strength of cavalry units. Yet in the late Roman army, as reflected in the later *Notitia Dignitatum*, only about a quarter (26 percent) of the units of the 'mobile' field army were cavalry units.[49] Compare Julian's army at Strasbourg (AD 357), which consisted of about 3,000 horse and 10,000 infantry (30 percent), with an Eastern field army of 478, comprising 8,000 cavalry and 30,000

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43 Sir C. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, London, 1885 (reprinted Cornell, 1953), 4. Note that Oman does not say 'Gothic' cavalry.
44 T.S. Burns, "The Battle of Adrianople: a reconsideration", *Historia* 22 (1973), 336-45.
45 Ferrill, *Fall*, 60. See also Wolfram, 127.
46 S. Williams and G. Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay*, London, 1994, 176.
47 Elton, 105.
48 Elton, 105-106.
49 T. Coello, *Unit Sizes in the Late Roman Army*, *BAR* International Series 645, Oxford, 1996, 16.

infantry (26 percent), and there is very little change.[50] The assertion that the battle of Adrianople was a cavalry victory that led to an increasing predominance of cavalry in the Roman and barbarian armies is simply untrue. For over a century before 378, Roman armies had been successful against Gothic armies of varied size and composition which included cavalry units. To suppose that in 378 the Goths, when not even operating within or supplied from their own territories, were suddenly able to introduce a new military force or tactic strains credulity. Elton, summarising barbarian tactics in the period AD 350-425, concludes "claims of growing tactical sophistication, increasing numbers of cavalry, or use of horse archers appear unjustified".[51] This is not to deny that cavalry could turn the tide of, or even win, battles, but the orthodox view that Adrianople represented a turning point in the significance of cavalry within Roman and barbarian armies simply cannot be sustained. It would seem more discerning to conclude that the loss at Adrianople was brought about by Roman tactical failures and not by a sudden superiority of Gothic arms or cavalry.

There is little foundation for the large edifice often built on the bare fact of the existence of units of Gothic cavalry. The nature of the reception of the Tervingi into the empire suggests that the horde, however vast, came on foot. The Romans sent vehicles (*vehiculi*) to transport the Goths, and ferried them across the river in boats, rafts and hollowed-out tree trunks.[52] Obviously, since Fritigern and some of his advisers escaped from Lupicinus at Marcianopolis on horseback, shortly after the crossing,[53] some horses had been transported or had swum across the river with the Goths. In the period of time between the river crossing and the battle of Adrianople the Tervingi certainly could have obtained more horses and fielded a cavalry force, perhaps even received reinforcements of cavalry from across the Danube. Ammianus records a battle outside the Thracian town of Dibaltum (Deultum) in which the

50 Figures given in Elton, 106.
51 Elton, 263.
52 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.5.
53 Amm. Marc., XXXI 5.7.

Roman forces under the command of the tribune Barzimeres were finally overwhelmed and surrounded by the charge of a large force of cavalry.[54] Earlier, too, at the battle *ad Salices* both sides used cavalry forces to pursue fleeing men.[55] Clearly, then, the Goths in Thrace had with them a cavalry force of some size. But what size a cavalry force is possible? Horses had to be fed just as did men, and a horse on active campaign needs at least as much feed as a man. The Goths, in the time from the crossing of the Danube up to August 378, were not settled but roamed over Thrace pillaging and foraging for food. Of course, we cannot know what the Gothic military priorities were at this time but in such circumstances it does not appear feasible to support a large number of horses as well as men, women and children. Nor did the horse seem to have much of a role in Gothic warfare or Gothic society generally.[56]

Indeed cavalry were not a significant part of any Gothic military force at this time, whatever the situation in later centuries[57] All that we know of Gothic warfare indicates that the armies of the Tervingi included limited numbers of horsemen, that, in fact, the "Tervingian tribal armies were composed of unmounted warriors" with cavalry forces being supplied by the Taifali, and, as at Adrianople, Alans and occasionally Huns.[58] There is no evidence from the widespread so-called 'Sintana De Mures-Cernjachov Culture', north of the Danube, that the horse played a significant role either within Gothic society as a whole, or as part of the tribal armies, as Wolfram observes.[59] The wholesale transplantation of the Tervingi to Roman territory south of the Danube would hardly, by itself, have brought about such a radical change in the composition of Gothic armies or their battle tactics. And it is not even certain that the tribal lands north of the Danube, or the areas of Thrace

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54 Amm. Marc., XXXI 8.10.

55 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.13.

56 The discussion of Gothic armies in Wolfram, 97-100, points to the relative rarity of cavalry forces within Gothic military forces at all times.

57 Oman's citing (on page 6) of the emperor Maurice's *Artis Militaris*, written over two centuries after Adrianople, as proof of the importance of cavalry to the Goths in 378 is disingenuous.

58 Wolfram, 98.

59 The identification of this culture north of the Danube with the Goths seems certain. See J. F. Matthews and P. Heather, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, Liverpool, 1991, 94, and the whole of chapter 3 for a useful summary of the archaeological evidence.

around which the war bands roamed, could have supplied large numbers of horses or provided the Goths with enough fodder to maintain a sizeable force of cavalry. We know from Ammianus' history that there were Alans with the Gothic forces,[60] and that Farnobius and his Greutungi, who were defeated and banished to northern Italy by Frigeridus, had Taifali with them.[61] The presence of more than just Gothic cavalry at Adrianople is indisputable, and their importance in achieving the Gothic victory is not in doubt, but to conclude from this that the presence of cavalry on the Gothic side at Adrianople represented a new style of warfare or a new advantage that barbarian armies had over Roman armies is simply not warranted.

For other modern historians of the Empire, less interested in the place of Adrianople in military tactics, the Roman defeat carries different messages. I identify three distinct readings of the Roman defeat. One view, represented at its most extreme by Arther Ferrill, holds that Adrianople was a disastrous defeat for the Roman army and that its long-term consequence was the fall of the west. Ferrill goes so far as to account Adrianople "one of the world's most decisive battles".[62] The consequences of the defeat, which included the barbarisation of the army and the existence of autonomous settlements of Goths within the Empire, in Ferrill's hypothesis, "began almost immediately to undermine the marvellous military machine of the Roman state".[63] This reading goes on to state that the army's inability to defeat the Goths under Alaric, who later rampaged around the Empire, was a direct result of the process of undermining which Theodosius had instigated. The fall of the west was the inevitable result and directly attributable to Theodosius' treaty of accommodation in 382.

This perception of the enormous importance of Adrianople for the subsequent history of the Roman empire, the west in particular, has been accepted as an article of faith among many of those writing about the late Roman empire. Lenski writes, as his

60 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.17.
61 Amm. Marc., XXXI 9.5.
62 Ferrill, *Fall*, 61.
63 Ferrill, *Fall*, 83.

view of the military consequence of the defeat, that "the battle of Adrianople ranks among the most serious setbacks in Roman history. This decisive defeat...left the emperor Valens dead and the eastern army weakened for years to come—some would say, forever"[64] As a consequence of the defeat and devastation of the eastern army, the new emperor Theodosius could only negotiate with the Goths from a position of military weakness. The far-reaching outcomes of this weakness include the establishment of Goths on Roman soil in semi-autonomous tribal enclaves, the barbarisation of the Roman army, the rise of Alaric and the sack of Rome, and the fall of the western empire.[65] There are many modern proponents of these views. Williams and Friell, for example, call the Roman losses at Adrianople "staggering" and assert that the treaty of 382 was based "on Roman weakness".[66] Nevertheless, in an attempt to have it both ways they conclude that "it was not necessarily the 'beginning of the end' for the empire", but then accept the notion that "Roman losses were so great that, after this, the strategic balance was permanently changed".[67] Liebeschuetz declares that "the losses could not be replaced by mass conscription...the units that replaced those lost at Adrianople were neither as effective as the old units, nor in many cases as reliable".[68] He goes on to state that "it was an innovation—and a disastrous one—that units were now also being provided by allies who were permanently stationed within the borders of the empire".[69] And, Matthews describes Adrianople as "one of the decisive moments of Roman history", because afterwards Rome could not defeat or control the Goths, and Theodosius allowed them to settle as "a federate people with their own rulers".[70] Matthews also suggested that this extension of Roman policy had longer term consequences because it was a settlement not based on military superiority, and therefore affected

64 Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 129.
65 Lenski, "*Initium mali*", 129.
66 Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 34.
67 Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 19 and 162.
68 W. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: army, church, and state in the age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, Oxford, 1990, 25.
69 Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 35.
70 Matthews, 88 and 93.

subsequent diplomacy, especially in the west.[71] He did not go on to conclude from this that Adrianople and Theodosius' subsequent policies were the cause of the downfall of the western empire, although there is that implication.

A second strand of modern historiography accepts the severity of the loss without adopting wholesale the idea that the defeat led to serious long-term consequences for the Empire. Wolfram, who accepts Hoffmann's argument for losses of around 20-27,000, argues that the impact of Adrianople "on the history of the late empire can also be easily exaggerated" and concludes that it "was certainly not a decisive battle".[72] Similarly, Thomas Burns suggests that Adrianople was a "grave disaster" but plays down the effects of the defeat and its consequences for eastern foreign and military policy.[73]

More recently, some scholars have tended to minimize the impact of the defeat on the Roman army.[74] Peter Heather believes that the impact of the defeat was minimal, judging the consequences for the eastern army a "temporary weakness" only.[75] Hugh Elton argues that the problems which led to the defeat at Adrianople "were not structural failures".[76] The Roman army lost the battle, not because the barbarians were in any way superior but because there was a serious failure of leadership, rather than of the men of the army. Adrianople "was a military disaster, but one no different to that of Varus in Germany in AD 9, a loss blamed on Varus, not on his army".[77]

This study also holds that we should lay the blame for the loss at Adrianople squarely where it belongs—with Valens—and not with an incompetent eastern army or with tactically and numerically superior Gothic cavalry. While the second and third strands in modern historiography both seek to separate the significance of the battle

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71 Matthews, 99.
72 Wolfram, 127 and 130.
73 Burns, *Barbarians*, 42 and 54.
74 But the idea that Roman losses were immense has not yet disappeared. A quite recent work still refers to the enormous losses ("les énormes pertes") at Adrianople: A. Chauvot, *Opinions Romaines Face Aux Barbares au IVe Siècle AP. J.-C.*, Paris, 1998, 273.
75 Heather, 223.
76 Elton, 266.
77 Elton, 266.

and the Roman losses at Adrianople from the longer term consequences for the empire sometimes attributed to this event, they often fall back, implicitly, into connections, particularly in the case of those who regard the actual losses at Adrianople as more serious. Thus, what is still needed is a hard-nosed critical assessment of the actual losses at Adrianople and the Roman ability to manage these losses. With the exception of Hoffmann and Heather, modern scholars do not attempt to critically examine the question of the size of the Roman army at Adrianople or number of Roman deaths in the battle. But such an analysis is of fundamental importance for any attempt to understand the significance of the defeat and its consequences for the Empire. I shall attempt (in Chapter Two) to recreate such an assessment of the Roman loss at Adrianople, and the consequences of that loss for the eastern Roman army.

Assessments of Theodosius and his achievements

This dissertation also examines the crucial role played by the emperor Theodosius in dealing with and resolving the 'Gothic problem', subsequent to the battle of Adrianople. Theodosius' appointment as emperor looks like a watershed in many ways. The new emperor was a Spaniard whose father had served a western emperor, Valentinian I, and been executed in the west under mysterious circumstances shortly after that emperor's death, perhaps under the authority of his son Gratian.[78] Theodosius was born and educated in the west, and it is probable that he was "brought up as a western Christian".[79] His military service was undertaken only in the west, in Britain and on the Rhine. Yet for all this, Gratian, after the death of Valens, made Theodosius Emperor of the east.

This was the last time a westerner was made emperor in the east, and Theodosius was the last emperor to rule over an undivided empire. During his reign the myth of imperial unity was swept away, and after his death the empire was never again

78 Note 18 in Nixon's translation of Pacatus' Panegyric states "Orthodox opinion is that Gratian gave the orders for the execution..."

79 N. Q. King, *The Emperor Theodosius and the Establishment of Christianity*, London, 1961, 12.

unified, either politically, socially, or culturally, despite sixth century attempts to bring this about. He is commonly referred to as 'Theodosius the Great' for his part in repressing heretical Christianity and ending the public expression of polytheistic religion. For a large part of the next century, emperors, in fact all the Theodosian dynasty apart from its founder, were weak rulers dominated by forceful military commanders, often of non-Roman origin.

All these pieces of evidence are indications that the Roman world of the fifth century was a very different beast from that of the fourth. The period 379 to 395 was instrumental in bringing about a monumental change in outlook and practice, but how much of the state of the fifth-century empire can be the responsibility of Theodosius? Do the roots of the changes lie in the 390s or was Theodosius, who so dominated the last quarter of the fourth century, the prime agent of change? Was Theodosius caught up in an historical process he was both unaware of and could not control? This examination will only investigate a small part of those larger questions, that of policy towards the Goths, but it is an aspect which many modern scholars have seen as leading inexorably to developments in the empire of the fifth-century. What it attempts to do is examine the evidence for Theodosian foreign policy, in particular how Theodosius related to and dealt with the demands of non-Romans for settlement within the empire, with a view to determining whether the treaty with the Goths of 382 was really the disastrous innovation it is usually labelled by modern scholars. *Receptio* of barbarians was nothing new.[80] Yet Eunapius, Zosimus, and Synesius, condemn this particular practice of Theodosius. Neither Gratian, nor Valens, nor Valentinian, nor any earlier emperors, are criticised by either historian for the same activity. Why was this procedure unacceptable from Theodosius, but of no concern when implemented by Valens or Valentinian, or Gratian for that matter? The difference surely must lie in Theodosius' overall policy towards 'barbarians', a policy—portrayed as an innovation—that rejected the aggressive, exclusionist option

80 G. E. M. de Ste. Croix has made an admirable collection of the evidence for barbarian settlements in his *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, London, 1981, Appendix III, 509-518. See below, chapter 5.

of Roman foreign policy and aimed instead at the option of assimilation and accommodation.

Theodosius has generally had a good press, with the notable exceptions of the two non-Christian Greek historians Eunapius and Zosimus, and the Arian Philostorgius. Eunapius and Zosimus blame the state of the empire, uniformly degraded, on Theodosius for his abandonment of the old religious ways, for abolishing state support of polytheistic religion, in essence for his rejection of *mos maiorum*. Zosimus, closely following Eunapius in this regard, reserves his harshest censure for Constantine and Theodosius, the two emperors with the most profoundly Christian reputations. This religious condemnation colours all the historian's statements about Theodosius, not just in regard to religious affairs. For Zosimus, Theodosius has an indolent, lazy, indulgent lifestyle, he employs unworthy men in the high offices of state, he changes the administration for no reason, merely to burden the people further with extra officials, and, even worse, he is accommodating to barbarians, people with not enough civilisation to understand the civilised nature of the emperor's behaviour.

Philostorgius, in Photius' epitome, praises Theodosius for his piousness, and says of him that "he died on his own bed the happiest of deaths, obtaining, as it seems to me, this reward of the burning zeal which he cherished against the worship of images". Nevertheless, as Photius points out, "when the impious Philostorgius speaks thus concerning Theodosius, he is not ashamed to traduce him at the same time as given to intemperate living and immoderate pleasures, saying that it was by this means that he contracted his fatal dropsy".[81]

Clearly, Philostorgius' view of Theodosius was that shared by Eunapius and Zosimus but is, just as clearly, based on the Arianism of the ecclesiastic. He serves as a useful corrective to the rather different views of Theodosius held by later writers of ecclesiastical histories. In this regard it is perhaps instructive, given the later

81 Both quotations are from Philostorgius, XI.2.

adulation of Theodosius by the church, that both Socrates and Sozomen, writers of ecclesiastical histories around the mid-fourth century, have little to say in praise of Theodosius' piousness and anti-paganism, apart from a comment on his general worthiness to become emperor. There is none of the fulsome praise Theodosius is given in later works for his persecution of christian heretics and 'pagans'. In Socrates, Theodosius is praised for expelling Arians because it was 'prudent',[82] and for his veneration of religion (generally not specifically),[83] but the report of the emperor's death is not taken as an occasion to heap praise on him for his piety or anti-pagan activities. Sozomen treats Theodosius similarly. He does state that the Emperor "was always zealous in promoting the glory of the Church",[84] and after his death characterises him as one "had contributed so efficiently to the aggrandizement of the Church",[85] but other examples of such praise are practically non-existent.

John Malalas, the first 17 books of whose history were composed around 530,[86] calls him Theodosius the Great, and this might be the first use of this phrase in reference to Theodosius. Malalas characterises Theodosius as "a Christian, and a sensible, pious and energetic man". In the next sentence we are told why: "he immediately returned the churches to the orthodox, issuing rescripts everywhere and expelling the Arians" [344]. Ever since, Theodosius has been distinguished with the epithet 'great', and seen as the quintessential Christian emperor.

We have to start with Gibbon to understand how modern historians of the ancient world have seen Theodosius. For Gibbon, too, the division of the power and government of the empire was "a dangerous novelty" [General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West], and he specifically blames the "degenerate successors of Theodosius" for betraying the empire to its enemies. The roots of the fifth-century events may not lie much further back than the time of Theodosius' sons, yet Theodosius himself played a crucial role in the eventual break-up of the empire.

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82 Soc., V.10.
83 Soc., V.14.
84 Soz., VII.16.
85 Soz., VIII.1.
86 John Malalas, *Chronicle*, tr. E. Jeffreys et al., Melbourne, 1986, xxiii.

Gibbon has generous praise for Theodosius. He says of the choice of Theodosius by Gratian "the whole period of the history of the world will not perhaps afford a similar example of an elevation, at the same time so pure and so honourable",[87] and even applies the epithet 'great' to him, a description which he believes Theodosius did merit for his actions immediately following his elevation.[88] Of his administration the historian remarks: "The wisdom of his laws and the success of his arms rendered his administration respectable in the eyes both of his subjects and of his enemies"; and of his character "he was chaste and temperate".[89] The only criticisms Gibbon makes of Theodosius are that he could be indolent and "inflamed by passion".[90] Gibbon sees the unexpected death of Theodosius as an "irreparable loss" and the degeneracy and effeminacy of his sons as making a direct contribution to the 'fall' of the empire. For Gibbon, Theodosius is the last emperor worthy of the name, until those in the later fifth and the sixth centuries who would try to reunite the empire into a single entity once again.

Gibbon's assessment of Theodosius has been largely followed by subsequent historians, and the common perception of the emperor is of his greatness. Nevertheless, there have been surprisingly few subsequent monographs which seek to assess Theodosius' achievement (compare Constantine or even the briefly-reigning Julian), and these have focussed on his religious policy. Thus, the monographs by W. Ensslin (in German 1953)[91] and N. Q. King (in English 1960).[92] Ensslin's book was published in 1953, and in the fine German tradition of meticulous scholarship allows the ancient sources, particularly the laws in the *Codex Theodosianus*, to present their evidence for themselves. Ensslin neglects the evidence available from coins and archaeological investigation, and limits himself strictly to a discussion of Theodosius' religious policies. He examines the relationship between Ambrose and Theodosius, and argues that the emperor's capitulation over the massacre at

87 Gibbon, *Decline*, 121.
88 Gibbon, *Decline*, 123.
89 Gibbon, *Decline*, 166.
90 Gibbon, *Decline*, 168.
91 W. Ensslin, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Theodosius der Grosse*, Munich, 1953.
92 N. Q. King, *The Emperor Theodosius and the Establishment of Christianity*, London, 1961.

Thessalonica was really about the penitence of a sinner rather than about the victory of the Church over the State on matters of principle.[93] An important point made by Ensslin is that where the interests of the empire conflicted with those of the Church Theodosius did not hesitate to act contrary to the prejudices of the bishops.[94]

For King, Theodosius is, after Constantine, the greatest of the Christian emperors. King's Theodosius is intelligently aware of all the subtleties and byways of doctrinal dispute, is a theologian in his appreciation and understanding of the Nicene Creed, and a statesman in his application of a conscious and determined policy to make all inhabitants of the empire toe the Nicene line. The theme of the book is the relationship between church and state under Theodosius. King is certainly quite unsympathetic towards totalitarian regimes, be they religious or secular ones.[95] One feels that his (unstated) opinion is that Theodosius at times led the empire dangerously close to totalitarianism. King sees the conflict between Ambrose and Theodosius very much as a case of the Church insisting on its spiritual supremacy and Theodosius, being a good Catholic, accepting it, even if it occasionally took some time before he was willing to do so. King's picture of Theodosius is often dependent on Ensslin's, and Seeck's (in *Regesten der Kaiser und Papste*),[96] and is essentially the traditional one of an emperor determined to stamp out the unorthodox, and to end the aberration of paganism.

There are only two wider-lens monographs of the twentieth century on Theodosius, and both of these are somewhat disappointing. Lippold suggested nothing new to add to the traditional view of Theodosius.[97] His work does stand out for offering discussions of religious, social, economic and political issues, without turning into an imperial biography. In this sense, it was an advance on the two previous books discussed. Instead of focussing solely on religious policy, Lippold tried to cover the

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93 Ensslin, 75.
94 See the review by R. L. P. Milburn in *JRS* 46 (1956), 178-80.
95 Pointed out in all the reviews of the book. See, for example, the review by D. F. Hockey in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, LVII (1962), 717; or that of A. H. M. Jones in *Journal of Theological Studies*, (1962), 433-4.
96 See the review by Erhardt in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XIV (1963), 216.
97 A. Lippold, *Theodosius der Grosse und seine Zeit*, 2nd. edition, Munich, 1980.

whole range of matters to which an emperor is forced to direct his attention. His book is a considered examination of the age of Theodosius, but he has, perhaps, too kind a view of the emperor. No monographs appeared between the work of Lippold in 1968 and the 1994 work by Williams and Friell. This most recent work is, in many ways, the least satisfactory. One reviewer of Lippold's book suggested that "despite the undoubted importance of his reign there has been relatively little recent research on Theodosius I...",[98] but Williams and Friell, despite writing 26 years after Lippold, offer little beyond a coherent chronological biography of the emperor and a synthetic review of scholarship on aspects of his reign. Nothing new is said about any of the crucial matters of Theodosius' reign and no new interpretations of the emperor, his policies, or his character are presented. In many ways this work is too superficial to be entirely acceptable as a serious attempt at analysing the reign of this significant figure. As if to suggest that there is not enough material on Theodosius to write a book of acceptable length, the authors devote the last section of their book (all of Part IV) to a discussion of Stilicho's activities in the period 395-408, and his role in the fragmentation of the western empire.

Despite the relative lack of serious monographs dealing with Theodosius, there has been a massive scholarship in recent decades which has involved, under a specific theme, some assessment of Theodosius' reign and achievements. Some are not related to issues of foreign policy but deal with significant figures of the period. Thus, McLynn's comprehensive study of Ambrose of Milan engages in discussion of the bishop's relationship with the eastern emperor.[99] And two recent works by John Moorhead, one on Ambrose of Milan,[100] the other on the post-Theodosian divided Empire,[101] provide useful discussions of some of the issues dealt with in this thesis, in particular interaction with barbarians/non-Romans. A second category of works are those which focus more specifically on issues of foreign and military policy and

98 Review by W. E. Kaegi in *Byzantinisches Zeitschrift*, 62 (1969), 365.
99 N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: church and court in a Christian capital*, Berkeley, 1994.
100 J. Moorhead, *Ambrose: church and society in the late Roman world*, Harlow, 1999.
101 J. Moorhead, *The Roman Empire Divided, 400-700*, Harlow, 2001.

which, while not specifically about Theodosius, cover the period of his reign. [102] In 1980 H. Wolfram published a much needed detailed study of the Goths, which was translated into English and revised in 1988.[103] Unfortunately, the study is looking dated, and more recent, differing, views of the Goths have found wider acceptance. Most significant of these is Heather's 1991 work on Romans and Goths.[104] Heather offers a timely reassessment of Jordanes as a source for Gothic history and deals with the vexed issues of Gothic tribalism and political institutions. W. Liebeschuetz has attempted to study the age of Arcadius and John Chrystostom and discusses important aspects of Rome's relations with the Goths in the eastern empire. The monograph contributes much to the study of the late fourth-early fifth century beside Roman-Gothic relations or foreign policy. A monograph by Blockley specifically on east Roman foreign policy, deals with many of the issues that are discussed and analysed in this study, albeit over a much longer time span and therefore, for my period, somewhat more superficially.[105] Vanderspoel's major recent study of Themistius deals somewhat more directly with foreign relations.[106] Themistius has been much neglected, and often dismissed as a court propagandist, and such a study is long overdue. Vanderspoel helps us see Themistius more clearly as an important independent contributor to discourse in governing circles in the eastern empire. In this thesis, the views of each of these writers will be critiqued in my detailed examination of the issues in subsequent chapters.

Two more works cannot be overlooked. The first is A. H. M. Jones' magisterial study of the late Roman period based on an exhaustive study of the ancient sources.[107] This work is one of the most authoritative studies of the later Roman empire and is essential background reading for an analysis of any aspect of the period. The second

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102 J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and bishops: army, church, and state in the age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, Oxford, 1990.
103 H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. T. J. Dunlap, Berkeley, 1988.
104 P. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332-489*, Oxford, 1991.
105 R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*, Leeds, 1992.
106 J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court. Oratory, Civic Duty and Paedia from Constantius to Theodosius*, Michigan, 1995.
107 A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: a social, economic, and administrative survey*, 3 vols., Oxford, 1964.

is D. Hoffmann's in-depth study of the *Notitia Dignitatum*.[108] Even if Hoffmann's thesis does not quite stand up it is a magisterial study of the late Roman army based on the *Notitia*. It is required reading for any attempt to study aspects of Roman military organisation in the late Roman period.

Sources

The fourth century is often regarded as one of the best documented periods of Roman history.[109] An enormous and varied corpus of writing from the century has survived, including a large amount of Christian writing, as we would expect, but also an unparalleled quantity of secular writing. I have thought it best to deal with the sources according to categories which are dependent on the use being made of each source.

Historical Overviews

The lack of a proper extant narrative history written between the time Ammianus finished his work, and the time Zosimus began to compose his own flawed "new history" is frustrating but cannot be rectified. Ammianus, writing around the early 390s, and the best historian of the empire after Tacitus, chose, inconveniently from our point of view, to remain silent about events after the battle of Adrianople in 378, except for the inclusion of the actions of Iulius in the immediate aftermath, and a few 'flash forwards' such as Vitalian. Ammianus attempted to write a traditional history, that is, one that was at the same time critical, objective and complete. His work is indispensable to any study of the fourth century. There is now Matthews' magisterial study of Ammianus, which contains a detailed and comprehensive treatment of the historian and his work.[110]

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108 D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, Epigraphische Studien 7, 2 vols., Dusseldorf, 1969-70.

109 Matthews, 389, for example, characterises it as "a period of rich and varied documentation".

110 J. F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, Baltimore, 1989.

Zosimus, the next historian, chronologically, who was not an ecclesiastic, wrote, it is now generally accepted, sometime in the period 498-518.[111] Zosimus' 'New History' is tendentious, bigoted, anti-Christian, anti-barbarian, conservative, and also at times highly amusing. Zosimus reproduces a large part of the lost history of Eunapius of Sardis, the author of another work generally known as 'Lives of the Sophists'. Zosimus shares Eunapius' attitude towards Christian emperors—for both ancient historians Constantine and Theodosius were the two arch villains of the fourth-century. Zosimus' attacks on Theodosius in particular are personal, aimed at revealing his sloth and intemperance, and political, criticising the religious, foreign, and administrative policies of the emperor.[112] All this makes Zosimus a difficult, though crucially important, source to use. He preserves information otherwise unknown, and his voice is the only one raised in opposition to the many eulogistic ecclesiastical histories and panegyrics.

The Church historians are numerous, occasionally helpful, also tendentious, and every bit as superstitious as the 'pagan' Zosimus. Those of most relevance for Adrianople and its aftermath, are Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. All wrote ecclesiastical histories, concentrating on religious affairs at the expense of secular narrative and chronology. Rufinus is usually dismissed as being of no interest, the best parts of whose history are preserved in Socrates and Sozomen but this does him an injustice, since his history contains detail about Theodosius' activities immediately before Adrianople that do not appear elsewhere. Socrates and Sozomen are perhaps the best of the ecclesiastic historians. Sozomen depends heavily on Socrates, but from time to time surprises the reader with information not found in any of the others. Theodoret, who depended on Socrates in particular, has a better reputation for accuracy than Rufinus and preserves information missing from both Socrates and Sozomen. One other church history deserves a mention. This is Philostorgius' *Ecclesiastical History*, existing, unfortunately, only in the epitome of

111 W. Goffart. "Zosimus, The First Historian of Rome's Fall", *American Historical Review*, 76 (1971), 421.

112 See the discussion in R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, 2 vols., Liverpool, 1981, vol. 1, 19-21.

Photius. Philostorgius' Arianism gives his work a distinctive character and it has the added advantage of being almost contemporary with the events.

Next in significance are the Chronicles. This form of history, "the ultimate epitome" is a development peculiar to the late empire and one that was extremely popular with the public.[113] For a long period they have been dismissed as superficial and incomplete, and it is only in the last twenty years that historians have begun to take them seriously. There are many that cover the period of Valens and Theodosius, for example, the continuations of Jerome's continuation of Eusebius, ie. Prosper Tiro, the Gallic Chronicle of 452, Hydatius, the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, and the chronicle of Marcellinus *comes*. The bareness and dryness of the information presented in the chronicles presents its own difficulties to the historian used to fuller narrative histories, but they can be a rewarding source for the historian of late antiquity.

There are a number of other, minor, historical works that are useful in an attempt to understand the late fourth century. Jordanes' *Getica* and *Romana* both preserve information from a different, late, non-Roman tradition; both are critical for an understanding of some aspects of Roman society of the period, and the *Getica* especially for its encapsulation of foundation myths and traditional history of the Goths. Secular historical works, antidote to the ecclesiastical histories, are also useful. Aurelius Victor's *Caesars* can be helpful for the period up to the reign of Constantius, as can Eutropius' *Breviarum* up to the death of Jovian. The anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus*, written about the same time, contains information not found in other secular histories. Malalas, confused and difficult as he is, contains some minor information not found anywhere else. The anonymous *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*, although it is dated to before Theodosius, is a particularly useful minor work, filled with delightful characterisations of the non-Roman inhabitants of the world.

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113 S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452*, Leeds, 1990, 3.

An important work that must be mentioned is a contemporary narrative history covering part of the fourth century that is no longer extant. This is the source often referred to as the lost *Annales* of Nichomachus Flavianus, and which has left its traces in later works such as the *Historia Augusta*, Ammianus Marcellinus, and the *Epitome de Caesaribus*. The traces in other sources reveal that the lost history is a "high level work, pagan in sympathy, which reflects the ideology of the Roman senatorial aristocracy and the attitudes at the end of the fourth century, written in Latin".[114]

Contemporary and near-Contemporary Sources (non-historical)

1 Panegyric

Panegyrics are often dismissed as being shallow, overtly tendentious pieces with little value for the historian. They are, on the contrary, of inestimable value to any historian with more than a narrow interest in the 'facts' of politics and diplomacy. Non-Christian panegyric is important and often more interesting and useful than the religious sources. Libanius' Orations are sometimes heavy going but they are an invaluable source for understanding eastern society in the second half of the fourth-century. Themistius is of prime importance not only for any understanding of Theodosius' policies but also for an insight into Constantinopolitan society, but his works are often cited for their unreadability. Until the recent substantial book by Vanderspoel, there was not even a monograph in English on this crucially important figure.

Another panegyric source that is of overriding importance to the historian of the post-Adrianople world is the panegyric of Pacatus, delivered to the emperor Theodosius in Rome in 389, after his defeat of Maximus the previous year. Although Pacatus is infuriatingly indirect and his language overblown, a patient study of his panegyric is

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114 F. Paschoud, "Nicomaque Flavien et la Connexion Byzantine (Pierre le Patrice et Zonaras): à propos du Livre recent de Bruno Bleckmann", *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), 71-82, a review of B. Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras*, Munich, 1992.

richly rewarding. It contains much about Theodosius and his world that is not preserved elsewhere, much that can be inferred from his circumlocutions. Pacatus should be an important 'port-of-call' for any historian of Theodosius.

Not exactly panegyric, but with similarities to many aspects of that genre, are obituaries, particularly the *elogia* associated with the deaths of famous people. Those of Ambrose on the funerals of Valentinian II and Theodosius are especially important examples of the genre which deserve to be read.

2 *Christian Orations and Letters*

The other contemporary sources are the Christian sources. Religious sources proliferate in the fourth century because of the establishment of Christianity as the official religion and the consequent huge increase in the number of churchmen whose works have been preserved. Religious sources are problematic at best, being biased, tendentious, and often uninterested in any standards of objective reporting. The most important of the religious literature for Theodosius' reign are the letters and sermons of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan; a small number of the orations and the letters of the hypersensitive and unworldly Gregory of Nazianzus, briefly Bishop of Constantinople in 381; Jerome's letters and some of the other writings, although the sheer volume of Jerome's output and his character make these very hard going; and the works, notably the letters, of John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople from 389, for their picture of eastern Christian society. The polemical writings of Orosius in his *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*, are an often under-valued source because taken to be a clone of the views of Ambrose and Jerome. However, Orosius, at least for his own period, is of much interest because his work is based on personal communications from individuals and takes up a number of contemporary views. Salvian's *De gubernatione Dei* also preserves fascinating insights into later assessments of just when the 'rot set in', and the contributions of various emperors such as Theodosius, to the process of decay. Also to be mentioned is the life of

Ambrose of Milan, composed in the early 420s by his secretary Paulinus and containing some interesting tidbits about Ambrose's attitudes.

3 Other

There are a number of other authors whose writings are not so easy to categorise but whose works are integral to understanding of the late Roman period. Symmachus has been well treated by scholars, and once again his letters are crucial for what they reveal about late antique non-Christian society of Rome. For the western empire Ausonius remains a much under utilised source, although John Matthew's excellent and thorough 1975 monograph makes extensive use of the letters and poems.[115] There is an important recent study of Ausonius and his place in Gallic society by Hagith Sivan.[116]

Synesius of Cyrene, Bishop of Ptolemais, deserves a separate mention. He is an interesting author because of what his letters display about cultural and ideological attitudes of one group of participants in late Roman politics in the east. Synesius' pseudo-philosophical works such as the *de Regno* and *de Providentia* provide a vivid picture of the attitudes of an 'opposition' group to barbarians and Roman policies in the period immediately after the death of Theodosius. Although a Christian ecclesiastic, Synesius' attitudes reflect conservative upper class Roman values rather than any religious viewpoint. They are not particularly influenced by Synesius' Christianity so much as his background and upbringing.

The *Historia Augusta* is a source that must be considered by any historian of the late fourth century. Purporting to have been composed by six different authors, the work consists of biographies of second and third century emperors from Hadrian to Carinus. The consensus of modern opinion is that the work was written by a single author in the late fourth century,[117] and that many of its fabrications have their proper

115 J. Matthews, *Western aristocracies and Imperial court, A.D. 364-425*, Oxford, 1975.
116 H. Sivan, *Ausonius of Bordeaux: genesis of a Gallic aristocracy*, London, 1993.
117 R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography: studies in the Historia Augusta*, Oxford, 1971.

cultural and historical context in the world-view, or even events, of the reign of Theodosius.

Two military works of the late fourth-early fifth century, Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris*[118] and the anonymous *De rebus bellicis,*[119] both reward interested study. They can be of great use for their pronouncements on Roman army tactics and policy, and as representative of the views of a set of individuals apart from the emperors and their courts.

There are other written sources, almost too numerous to list, that can contribute to the construction of a detailed picture of life in the late fourth century Roman world, and which are ignored at the historian's peril. Chief among these are the poems and panegyrics of Claudian, Prudentius, particularly his *contra Symmachum*, *The Lausiac History* of Palladius, the *Liber Pontificalis*, and the *Chronicon Paschale*.

Documentary

Last, but by no means least in importance, are the non-literary sources: law-codes, coins, inscriptions of all sorts. All are useful, each presents its own idiosyncratic problems for the unwary. The *Codex Theodosianus* is a source of supreme importance for the fourth and fifth centuries. The laws are used not only to interpret religious, foreign and domestic policies, but also to reconstruct imperial itineraries, to ascertain names of office holders and their careers, and to establish administrative structures. Unfortunately, the use of law codes is full of traps. Mommsen, whose edition is the standard one, took numerous liberties with the text, particularly in changing the headings and subscriptions when he felt these to be incorrect. And incorrect they frequently are, a result of the whole process by which the laws were collected and transcribed for inclusion in the *Codex*.[120] The only way to deal with the transmission errors, which are of utmost significance when establishing dates and

118 Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science,* tr. N.P. Milner, Philadelphia, 1993, second edition 1996.
119 Anonymus, *de Rebus Bellicis*, ed. and tr. M. W. Hassall and R. I. Ireland, *BAR* S63, Oxford, 1979.
120 See J. Harries and I. Wood *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of late Antiquity*, London, 1993, in particular the chapters by J. Matthews and B. Sirks.

addressees of laws, is to establish a hierarchy of the elements which might contain errors and use this as a guide to interpreting the text of each law individually.[121] The other factor that must be taken into consideration, and which is usually ignored or forgotten, is that the laws in the code are not complete but are extracts from longer pieces of legislation: this is clear from the *novellae* which are complete in themselves. The Codes are used often indiscriminately, and too often uncritically, and must be approached with caution. That said, they remain of paramount importance for any historian of late antiquity.

The *Notitia Dignitatum* cannot be ignored in any examination of military policy for the late Empire. Its setting out of the detailed arrangements of the civil and military offices of the Empire make it an indispensable guide to bureaucratic functioning. The *Notitia* must be used with extreme care, however, since it is a document that functions on many levels. A recent article by Brennan brings attention to the multi-stranded and ideological nature of the *Notitia*.[122] Brennan sheds light not only on how most current scholarship ignores the ideological elements of the extant *Notitia* lists, and also on the way in which patterns existing at the last working date of lists are assumed by scholars to be the same as those in the earlier history of lists. We must be wary of making simplistic deductions from the arrangements laid out in the extant lists of the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Inscriptional evidence is more problematic, if only because it is less readily dated. In addition, there is evidence that the 'epigraphic habit' was being abandoned in the late empire.[123] Nevertheless monuments like the Obelisk of Theodosius and the Column

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121 "the most consistently reliable is probably the name of the official addressed...Next most reliable are the place names in the subscription...Next in order come the month and (less so) the day in the date. Numbers (of course) are always liable to be corrupted...Least reliable are the imperial names in the heading...the consular dates are only a little more reliable": R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz and K. A. Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, Atlanta, 1987, 72-3.

122 P. Brennan, "The *Notitia Dignitatum*" in *Les littératures techniques dans l'antiquité romaine. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* XLII (1996), 147-178; P. Brennan, "The Users Guide to the *Notitia Dignitatum*: the Case of the Dux Armeniae (ND Or. 38)", *Antichthon* 32 (1998), 34-49.

123 R. MacMullen, "The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire", *American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982), 233-246; and E. A. Meyer, "Explaining the Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire: the Evidence of Epitaphs", *JRS* 80 (1990), 74-96.

of Arcadius present ideological messages that cannot be ignored and can be useful for drawing inferences about events.

Aim and significance of this dissertation

Too much weight has been given to the Roman defeat Adrianople and too little to events that happened in the years before 378. This prejudice of modern scholarship has seriously distorted our view of the actions and decisions of Theodosius in the years after 378. It is the thesis of this dissertation that Roman military losses at Adrianople were significant but far from disastrous, and that the impact of the defeat has been greatly exaggerated ever since, both physically and ideologically. Far from weakening permanently the Roman army, the eastern army's losses at Adrianople were accommodated within the normative recruiting practices of the Empire, in the short term by troop transfer and in the medium term by the existing recruitment processes. When Rome's policy towards the Goths is viewed in the wider perspective of personnel, the decision making processes, and the established policy options of government, Theodosius' actions are seen not to depend on Roman military weakness but are in accord with processes leading to the inclusivist strand of Roman policy towards barbarians.

Specific events in the ancient world do not determine dividing lines between one state and its successor. The defeat of the Roman army at Adrianople does not signal the breakdown of the legions as a successful fighting force, nor does it mark a sharp divide between an empire ruled by strong leaders and one ruled by weak leaders. Adrianople is not the cataclysmic event it is so often portrayed as, and not even as important in the process of transformation as other events, such as the death of Valentinian I. The new emperor Theodosius recognised that traditional policies of aggression and expulsion were not a viable option and made efforts to incorporate this lesson of Adrianople into his vision of Roman foreign policy, as had his predecessor Valens. We must not see Adrianople as a demarcation, a finality, an end-point, or even as a starting point for the process of decline either, for it is none of

these things. It is merely a milestone, marking a stage in a long voyage of change. The Roman empire was not a static unchanging state. Diocletian proved that Roman society could be changed. What needs to be insisted on is the holistic nature of the process of transformation of the Roman world of late antiquity, not random events. This process of transformation is ongoing, necessary, adaptive, and unstoppable. For all these reasons, it is a process occurring in the ancient world that must be examined and analysed.

2

Military losses at Adrianople: extent and management

The Battle of Adrianople

Ammianus gives the story. In 376 a large confederation of Gothic tribes people, collectively referred to as the Tervingi, sought admission to the Empire because the Huns had descended on them from out of the east, and driven them from their homes. Valens, eastern Emperor at the time, taking the advice of his *consilium* agreed to allow the Tervingi to cross the Danube and to settle in Thrace (*Thraciae partes*).[1] Once the tribesman had crossed into the Empire, the Emperor ordered that they be given food to see them through their current dearth, and fields to farm.[2] However, the greed and cupidity of the Roman military officials overseeing the dispersal of the Goths from the right bank of the Danube, who reportedly denied the Tervingi the promised food but sold them dogs in exchange for slaves, forced the Tervingi into open rebellion as a remedy for their ill-treatment.[3] The next two years saw the Romans engaged in incessant fighting with the Tervingi and groups of Greutungi (including Taifali and some Alans) who had managed to cross the river during the disorder surrounding the reception of the Tervingi in 376.

The Greutungi seem to have fared badly. Those under the leadership of Farnobius were roundly defeated in Thrace by Frigeridus, probably *comes rei militaris* in Illyricum, in 377, and the few survivors resettled around the towns of Mutina, Regium and Parma in Northern Italy. It is interesting to note that although these Goths were defeated in the east in Thrace, their settlement was in the western part of

1 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.4.
2 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.8.
3 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.11 and 5.2.

the Empire. Ammianus says they were settled as rural cultivators, 'rura culturos', after having entreated Frigeridus to spare them.[4] This is very suggestive of a formal surrender following defeat in battle, which would support the view of Demougeot, followed by Heather, that the survivors were settled as *deditícii*.[5] The Tervingi did somewhat better, skirmishing with Roman troops over the course of 376, and much of 377, and fighting a larger inconclusive battle against a combined force of western and eastern Roman army units under the overall command of Richomer in a location usually referred to as *Ad Salices*.[6] The juxtaposition of these various passages from Ammianus gives the impression that an almost continuous state of warfare existed between Romans and Goths in Thrace.

That affairs in Thrace were not the first priority of the eastern court is apparent in Valens' preparations for a war with Persia, towards which he had been manoeuvring over the course of 376. Ammianus reports that Valens was preparing to invade Persia with three armies (*agmines*) towards the end of the winter of 376/7 i.e. early in 377, and was busily hiring Scythians as *auxilia*.[7] The mention of three armies is interesting, implying that Valens was planning a serious invasion of Persia and was willing to denude most of the eastern Empire of troops in order to prepare a large expeditionary force to invade Persia. In fact, a three army formation was the predominant tactic for Roman emperors invading Parthia/Persia and Ammianus' statement confirms that Valens' intentions were overtly hostile and aimed at winning military renown for himself. Trajan had adopted such a plan when invading Parthia in 116.[8] Although there is no direct evidence of such a division of the expeditionary armies under Lucius Verus in 165, the presence of three of the Empire's most successful military commanders, Statius Priscus, Avidius Cassius, and P. Martius

4 Amm. Marc., XXXI 9.4.

5 *colons déditices*: E. Demougeot, "Modalités d'établissement des fédérés barbares de Gratien et de Théodose" in *Mélanges d'Histoire Ancienne offerts à William Seston*, Paris 1974, 145; Heather calls them simply *coloni*: Heather, 166, see also n. 32.

6 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.5-16.

7 Amm. Marc., XXX 2.6. The chronology of these events is unclear from Ammianus' version. A plausible reconstruction is suggested by R. C. Blockley, "The division of Armenia between the Romans and the Persians at the end of the fourth century A.D.", *Historia* XXXVI (1987), 227.

8 Cassius Dio, LXVIII 30.1-2.

Verus, may imply that the Roman forces were divided into three groups each with its own commander for this invasion.[9] Similar tactics were employed during Septimius Severus' Parthian campaigns. Cassius Dio relates that three military commanders, Lateranus, Candidus, and Laetus, were sent in various directions through Parthia and "proceeded to lay waste the barbarians' lands and to capture their cities".[10] Again, the implication is that the army was divided into three parts and each part operated independently of the others.

Far from considering the Goths, who were seeking admission into the Empire in 376, as a potential threat to the Empire, Valens was content to leave his local commanders in Thrace to deal with admission and resettlement. He had, perhaps, dreams of glory in the east, as so many Roman emperors before him, and to that end he was willing enough to enrol these same Goths in the army he was preparing for his eastern war. In fact, the Goths might have seemed some sort of answer to his military needs in the east with their undertaking to supply units of auxiliaries if required.[11] Indeed, this might have allowed him not to detach Thracian units for his expedition. The admission of a large number of Goths into Thrace was not seen as a possible threat to the Empire nor a significant enough incident to prevent preparations for war against Persia. Nor did it hinder the Empire's normal practice of recruiting barbarians as troops for such expeditions and perhaps for regular Roman units (such as those killed by Iulius in 378). This suggests that, although the reception of such a large body of non-Romans might not have been a frequent occurrence, it was at least not seen as so unusual that it could not be managed in the ordinary course of provincial administration.

Despite the apparent seriousness of the news Valens received in late 376 or early 377 in Antioch—the revolt of the Goths and the ensuing devastation of Thrace—he lingered in the east and did not reach Constantinople until the spring of 378. It

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9 HA, *Lucius Verus*, VII.1.
10 Cassius Dio, LXXV 2.3.
11 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.1. See also Blockley, 37.

appears that in 377 the eastern emperor still did not take the Gothic threat seriously enough to change his priorities. Presumably, he considered that the Armenian legions he had sent to Thrace under Profuturus and Traianus would be sufficient to deal with the situation.[12] Nevertheless, Ammianus reports that Victor was sent to Persia to negotiate over the fate of Armenia, which Persia was hoping to remove as a source of conflict between the two states.[13] Ammianus reports that Valens was distressed by the news that he had received about events in Thrace and associates the mission of Victor with the news, but however distressing it was not enough to move Valens from his base at Antioch.[14] Valens also requested aid from Gratian after receiving the news about events in Thrace, but did not himself consider transferring his attentions from the eastern frontier, despite sending some legions from Armenia.[15] The fact that Valens requested aid from Gratian at this time suggests that he did not consider the events in Thrace as insignificant, but his intention to remain in Antioch shows that his highest priority was still to achieve a resolution of the Roman/Persian situation. Eventually, Ammianus tells us, Valens left his base at Antioch and began the journey west: *his forte diebus Valens tandem excitus Antiochia* (Amm. Marc. XXXI 11.1).[16] Socrates enlarges on this, telling us that Valens left Antioch in alarm at the depredations of the Goths in Thrace, news of which had reached him in the city.[17] Socrates dates the arrival in Constantinople to 30 May 378,[18] so for at least 12 months after he had received news of the Gothic uprising in Thrace which so distracted him, Valens had remained in Antioch concentrating his attention on a resolution of the problem of Armenia and paying less attention to the so-called Gothic threat to his west. There is some evidence that Valens was detained in Antioch by two other events: a revolt of the Armenians following the withdrawal of the Roman garrisons; and an uprising among Arabs in the Sinai under Queen

12 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.1-2.
13 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.1; Blockley, 36.
14 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.1.
15 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.3.
16 Amm. Marc., XXXI 11.1.
17 Soc., IV 35; also Soz., VI 37.
18 Soc., IV 38.

Mavia.[19] Solving these problems again required the diplomacy of Victor and necessitated the continuing presence of Valens in Antioch. With both Persians and Romans reconciled for the time being to the independence of Armenia, and the demands of the Arabs met, Valens was at last able to move to Constantinople.

From there he travelled slowly towards Thrace via Melanthias, perhaps delaying so as not to anticipate the arrival in the province of Gratian with reinforcements from the west. Ammianus reports that Valens was apparently disgruntled by the military success being enjoyed by the younger emperor,[20] and was driven to engage in manoeuvring with the Gothic forces in the plains between the Haemus range south of the Danube, and the city of Adrianople, a 'great and rich city' of Thrace.[21] Valens and his troops dug in on the outskirts of the city and waited for Gratian and information on the disposition of the Gothic forces. There, Valens was met by Richomer, Gratian's *comes domesticorum*, who arrived bearing a letter from Gratian advising his uncle of his imminent arrival with more troops.[22] On learning this Valens called together his consistory and discussed what should be done. Some, with Sebastianus to the fore, advised Valens to attack at once, while others, notably Victor, *magister equitum*, counselled the emperor to await the arrival of Gratian and his army.[23] Valens' ego won the day, says Ammianus, egged on by flatterers who urged him to take the fight to the Goths at once so he would not have to share the glory with Gratian.[24] Possibly, Valens was swayed also by the reports of his skirmishers (*procursatores*) that the Tervingian battle force consisted of only ten thousand men.[25]

We will probably never know what finally drove Valens to decide to engage the Tervingi, except for his desire to fight a battle he expected to win without having to

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19 Blockley, 37-8.
20 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.1.
21 Amm. Marc., XXVII 4.12.
22 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.4.
23 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.5-6.
24 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.7.
25 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.3.

depend on reinforcements from his younger colleague. The Roman army advanced from Adrianople over rough ground in the heat of the day. At two o'clock, in hottest part of the afternoon, the Roman column came unexpectedly on the Gothic wagons, drawn up in the traditional defensive circle or laager.[26] The army hurriedly deployed into its battle formation and awaited the onslaught. A respite occurred while the two sides discussed the exchange of hostages, Richomer offering himself as the Roman hostage to the Goths. Unfortunately for Valens, Richomer never got away from the Roman lines.[27] One wing of the Roman forces, impelled early to battle by the impetuous engagement of two units with some of the Gothic troops, gave way before a fierce charge of the Gothic cavalry. A few hours later Valens was dead, and, says Ammianus, "barely a third" of the Roman army escaped: *constatque vix tertiam evasisse exercitus partem* (Amm. Marc. XXXI 13.18). 'Barely a third' has an ominous ring about it. The loss of two-thirds of the army makes Adrianople sound like an enormous and significant defeat. And so it was. Yet its real significance has been exaggerated. What does this phrase 'barely a third' signify? What were the actual Roman losses in the battle? What was the real and lasting significance of the battle of Adrianople and the Roman defeat?

Roman numbers and Roman losses at Adrianople

Much of the modern assessment of the defeat depends on a too-literal interpretation of Ammianus' conclusion to his account of the battle. Ammianus says that Roman history records no other such massacre, except for (*praeter*) the battle of Cannae during Hannibal's invasion of Italy.[28] Ammianus simply states what he took to be a fact. He does not elaborate on its significance. As if to anticipate the traditional doom-laden interpretation of historians, Ammianus had compared a little before the death of Valens to the similar fate suffered by the emperor Decius, who disappeared while fighting the Goths in 251, and whose body was never recovered.[29] However, as

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26 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.11.
27 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.15-16.
28 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.19.
29 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.13.

Wolfram perceptively argues, the point of Ammianus' comparison was not to emphasise the magnitude of the defeat and the horror of the death of an emperor on the battlefield. Ammianus, by mentioning Decius here, points back to an earlier passage in which he mentions Decius. The earlier passage (Amm. Marc. XXXI 5.16f) reminds the reader that after the death of Decius and his son Decius, the next emperors, Claudius II Gothicus and Aurelian, destroyed the Gothic armies and between them almost annihilated the Goths. If anything, this strikes a note of optimism as a preface to the gloomy story of Adrianople which Ammianus is about to recount, but Ammianus is remarkably reticent about the ongoing significance of the defeat. Ammianus, finishing the last book of his history in 391, had reason to be optimistic. There was peace on the eastern frontiers; the treaty of 382 with the Goths still held and they had been quiescent for almost 10 years. There had been little to disturb the state since the overthrow of Maximus in 388—the death of Valentinian II and the usurpation of Eugenius were still a year away.

Even the mention of Cannae can be taken to imply optimism. Following Cannae, as Ammianus' readers were sure to know, Rome regrouped and ended the Punic war by defeating Hannibal at Zama.[30] It is also worth noting that Ammianus ends his history with the uplifting story of the murderous action by Iulius, *magister militum per Orientem*, in ridding the East of any threat from the Gothic recruits stationed there. It is a suitably optimistic note with which to round off the story of the calamitous defeat at Adrianople. Here is a note of hope and optimism to leaven the gloomy tale of calamity and defeat—and the inference is that Adrianople had no lasting impact on the Roman army or the Empire.

If Adrianople was not the shattering end of Roman might that writers like Jerome and Ambrose took it to be, neither was it another Cannae in terms of Roman losses. In that earlier disaster over half the total number of Roman troops under arms was killed

30 Wolfram, 128. The idea of Rome rising better from defeat is not restricted to Ammianus alone. It certainly appears in connection with an event of at least equal ideological impact – the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410. See Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, ll 120ff, especially 131-2.

or captured (62 percent on Livy's numbers). Reported figures for Cannae are immense – and suspect. Polybius gives figures of staggering proportions: 5,600 cavalry lost; 10,000 infantry captured, and 70,000 killed on the field of battle; 3,000 infantry and 400 cavalry alone survived.[31] Livy, whose figures are lower and generally accepted as more accurate than those of Polybius,[32] reports that 48,200 Roman troops died at Cannae and a further 6,500 were taken as prisoners, out of a total complement of 87,200.[33] The numbers seem absurd, exaggerated in a way that we have come to accept for statistics in ancient sources. Yet, Cannae undoubtedly ranks as the greatest single loss of Roman troops ever, with important consequences for Roman military policy—attrition of the Roman peasantry and the resulting inability to fill the legions, increasing length of service in the field, and the secession of most of Rome's allied states—that are not mirrored after Adrianople, as I shall argue.[34] Cannae is also the more significant because the losses in that disaster were from the totality of men under arms; those at Adrianople from a portion only of the entire eastern field army. Even on the largest figures assessed for Adrianople, the losses are not nearly as large or significant as the figures for Cannae. Like Adrianople, Cannae remained in Roman memory as a significant event in Roman history, even if by the time of Ammianus it was a rhetorical marker without particular emotional content.

Perhaps another Roman military defeat is a better point of comparison: the so-called 'Varian disaster' (the *clades Variana*) in 9 AD. This defeat of a Roman army under the ex-consul Publius Quinctilius Varus resulted in the loss of legions as well as a number of auxiliary units. The units which disappeared in the Teutoburg forest were three legions, the 18th, 19th and 20th, plus three *alae* of cavalry, and six cohorts.[35] This would have amounted, at full strength and with total loss, to some 22,500 men

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31 Polybius, III 117.
32 A. J. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy. The Hannibalic war's effects on Roman life*, London 1965, vol. ii, 68.
33 Livy, XXII 49.
34 Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy*, vol. ii, chapters 2 and 3.
35 Vell. Pat., II 1.17.

(3 legions of 6,000 men, 3 *alae* of cavalry at 500 men each, and 6 auxiliary cohorts at 500 men each) but even at a discount for units under strength, soldiers on secondment, and individual survivals, this was, as we will see, a more significant loss in manpower terms than Adrianople. It represented about six percent of the total army—compare this with Adrianople where the total loss (as discussed below) of about 13,000 men was 12.5 percent of the eastern field armies but only 3.5 percent of the total eastern army, on Jones' estimate for the eastern army of 352,000.[36] Neither the legions, nor cohorts and *alae*, which had been lost in the Teutoburg forest, were reconstituted, and the manpower losses were made up by increased recruiting and conscription, but there is no evidence that Roman military ability, except in the short-term, was compromised in any way.[37] The Empire coped with this disaster and, even though the defeat had ramifications for Roman foreign policy—the virtual end of expansion under Augustus—and continued to be seen as one of the more significant events in Roman history, it did not impair Roman military effectiveness or put more than a temporary halt to Roman territorial expansion. In the matter of numbers, in both absolute and proportional terms, Adrianople is better compared to the loss at the Teutoburg forest than to Cannae. One should examine how Rome dealt with losses after Adrianople to see whether it coped, rather than assume that it did not do so.

The impact of Adrianople on the Roman army and Roman foreign policy cannot be properly assessed until we have an idea of the numbers involved in the battle and the resulting Roman losses. Essentially, the argument is one about the size of the armies involved and the number of casualties is used as a starting point. For Adrianople, Ammianus' statement on the proportion lost is the only quantitative evidence. How many men were lost at Adrianople is obviously a function of the total number of Roman troops engaged in the fighting, assuming that Ammianus knew, at least roughly, these numbers. How Ammianus might have known these figures is unclear. The phrase *albentes ossibus campi* in his description of the battle *ad Salices* might

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36 Jones, 1449-1450.
37 Cassius Dio, LVI 23. See also Dio, LVII 5.

suggest that the historian had actually travelled the countryside of Thrace to work out the lie of the land and seen the bones, prior to writing his history.[38] Equally it might be nothing more than a turn of phrase for which Ammianus is indebted to a similar phrase in one of the orations of Libanius.[39] If it was a tour of the battlefields that gave him vivid images to work with, it did not reveal the actual number of dead and, in any case, no such imagery is used of the plains around Adrianople. It has been argued that, for his account of the battle, Ammianus had access to official sources in the headquarters of the eastern *magister militum* in Antioch.[40] While this is possible, Ammianus' connection with Ursicinus in the 350s and 360s hardly seems enough reason for him to be given an entrée to the archives of the *magister* in the 380s or early 390s. And it seems unlikely that Ammianus would be quite so unspecific about the Roman numbers at Adrianople if he had had access to official sources. Certainly, his account of Adrianople contains a lot of detail but it does not follow necessarily that he therefore had access to official sources.[41] It might be that a published account of the battle circulated in Rome and that Ammianus had seen it, or that he had access to another history that no longer survives.[42] It may be that his only sources for the battle were the stories, rumours and hearsay that he picked up by talking to survivors and put together into a coherent detailed whole.[43] We cannot be certain that Ammianus even had any idea of the numbers of Roman troops involved.

The size of Valens' army, as with any other question of numbers in the ancient world, continues to generate much debate. Ammianus gives no direct figure, and

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38 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.16.

39 Libanius, *Or.* 24.4. The point is made by G. Sabbah, *La Méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* Res Gestae, Paris 1978, 282.

40 Sabbah, *La Méthode*, 212.

41 This suggestion is made by Heather, 141.

42 F. Paschoud, "Nicomaque Flavien et la Connexion Byzantine (Pierre le Patrice et Zonaras): à propos du Livre recent de Bruno Bleckmann", *Antiquité Tardive* 2 (1994), 71-82, a review of B. Bleckmann: *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras* (Munich 1992), summarises the thesis of Bleckmann which finds traces of the same source in Ammianus, the *Historia Augusta* and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* as well as Peter the Patrician and Zonaras. Bleckmann deduces that the common source is the lost history of Nichomachus Flavianus.

43 J. F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, London 1989, 379.

makes only one specific statement about the Roman forces, when he states that Valens marched out from Melanthias with "a varied force, but one neither to be despised nor unenergetic (*segnes*); for he had joined with them also a large number of veterans..." (Amm. Marc. XXXI 12.1). Ammianus offers the only certain evidence about the size of the losses claiming, after a description of the confrontation, a general consensus (*constat*) that *vix tertiam evasisse exercitus partem* (Amm. Marc. XXXI 13.18). These two statements are the only direct guide to Roman numbers involved but are hard to quantify further. The first statement is too vague to be of much use, although it might mean that the units involved were at full strength with such reinforcements. As to the second, what precisely did Ammianus mean? Is it credible that he is referring to the total number of survivors, i.e. that two-thirds were killed, since the experience of modern warfare suggests it is usual for the injured to greatly outnumber the dead?

In fact, Ammianus' proportion of one-third survivors is a typical experience for defeated armies in ancient battles. It was observed by Delbrück some time ago that it was normal for a defeated army to suffer heavy losses and that this proportion cannot be used to infer the Gothic forces vastly outnumbered the Roman ones,[44] but this has been ignored or forgotten by later analyses of Adrianople. Gabriel and Metz have analysed the reported toll in ancient battles and found that a defeated army invariably suffers monumental losses.[45] This is principally brought about when the vanquished troops break formation and flee. Until then losses are comparatively small but once the battle formation disappears "the ancient soldier was at very great risk of death or injury".[46] This is precisely what happened at Adrianople. After some hours of fighting the Roman line was broken and, "since that was the only resort in their last extremity, they took to their heels in disorder".[47] In such a situation, the defeated

44 H. Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, Berlin 1902 (reprinted 1921), vol. ii, 289.
45 R. A. Gabriel and K. S. Metz, *From Sumer to Rome: the military capabilities of ancient armies*, New York, 1991, 83.
46 Gabriel and Metz, *From Sumer to Rome*, 84.
47 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.7.

army could expect that "about one-third of the force would be killed and another third wounded severely enough to die or shift for themselves on the battlefield".[48] Although Gabriel and Metz confined their analysis to the period 4000 BC to 100 AD, we should not suppose that military and medical conditions 300 years later were much different, or that proportions of battle casualties had significantly changed, since military technology and battle tactics had changed very little in the intervening period. Ammianus' proportion, which barely seems credible, bears out the results for the losing side and, on the basis of the Gabriel and Metz analysis, implies that two-thirds of the Roman troops, irrespective of the real number, were casualties and lost to the army. But, this does not help calculate the actual numbers of men involved on the Roman side. Is Ammianus' two-thirds, two-thirds of 60,000 or two-thirds of 15-20,000, the range of the modern estimates?

The ongoing modern debate about army size ranges around two positions. One argues for a large army, the other for a small army, with calculation of losses dependent on the starting point of army size.[49] The question is critical to any discussion of Adrianople and its impact because the consequences of losses of 20,000 to 40,000 men (based on the range of large army sizes of 30,000-60,000) are more far-reaching and serious than the consequences of losses of from 10,000 to 16,000 (based on the range of small army sizes of 15,000-25,000 men). Modern estimates of the size of the Roman army at Adrianople range from 15,000 at the low end up to 60,000 at the high end. Most round numbers between these extremes have their supporters. As one would expect, the issue of the size of the losses at Adrianople is a crucial factor in assessing the overall impact of the defeat on subsequent Roman military and foreign policy. The larger the losses the greater the time and effort required to restore the eastern Roman army to its pre-battle strength and the more likely that the impact on Roman foreign policy was significant. The

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48 Gabriel and Metz, *From Sumer to Rome*, 88. The actual proportions are 37.7 percent killed (page 86) and 35.4 percent wounded seriously enough to be abandoned on the battlefield (page 87).

49 Here, and elsewhere in this thesis, the word 'large' in the context of army size will be used to refer to an army of 30,000 men or more; the word 'small' will refer to an army of less than 30,000.

smaller the losses, the more likely the eastern Roman army could be restored relatively rapidly to effectiveness through the normal transfer and recruiting processes. The consequences for foreign policy will have been minor, and the Roman defeat at Adrianople cannot be a sound basis for interpreting foreign policy under Theodosius.

The arguments for a large Roman army go back to the work of Stein and Schmidt in the earlier 20th century.[50] Stein's major argument used the analogy of Julian's Persian army of 65,000 to argue that Valens had 30-40,000 men with him.[51] This argument has been criticised by Austin, who points out that Julian's Persian army took twelve to eighteen months to assemble, so comparisons with Adrianople are not useful, since no such amount of time was available or used to gather troops for the Thracian campaign.[52] Austin is right to criticise Stein's analogy but rather misses the point, since the problem with the Stein view is not one of time, as Valens too took about 18 months, but of the different basis for mobilisation. Julian's expeditionary force included a large part of the western army which he had assembled earlier for his confrontation with Constantius, and which he then brought to the east with him following the latter's death. Incorporated with this sizeable Western army were significant numbers of eastern troops.

Neither the Gallic nor Illyrian troops who formed the major part of Julian's expeditionary army were involved at Adrianople. The situation was very different in 378, as is shown by an analysis of troop movements of the western Roman army given by Ammianus. In 377, Pannonian and transalpine auxiliaries moved east under Frigeridus. A short time later, as Ammianus reports, Richomer, Gratian's *comes domesticorum*, hastened to Thrace with some *cohortes nomine tenus*[53]—most of

50 E. Stein, *Geschichte des spätrömischen Reiches* I, Vienna 1928, 292 and 189; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung: Die Ostgermanen*, Munich 1934 (1969 reprint), 408.
51 Julian: Zos., III 13.1; Valens: Amm. Marc., XXVII 12.16.
52 N. J. E. Austin, "Ammianus' account of the Adrianople campaign: some strategic observations", *Acta Classica* XV (1972), 82.
53 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.4.

whom (according to Ammianus) had deserted to defend Gaul, at the instigation of Merobaudes. When the western troops met with the eastern troops led by Profuturus and Traianus, Richomer took command of the whole western force because Frigeridus (presumably the senior western officer) was disabled by gout.[54] Richomer was in command of the western troops for the indecisive but bloody battle *ad Salices*. At the end of the summer, Richomer was recalled to Gaul to bring more troops east. Frigeridus moved to Beroea and dug in, following which he fought with Greutungi and Taifali in the course of which fighting the Gothic leader Farnobius was killed.[55] The Gallic troops brought east by Richomer and which had fought with the Illyrian army are likely to have remained attached to that army under the command of Frigeridus on Richomer's recall, since both were part of the western army. They will not, then, have been with Valens' army at Adrianople since they remained in western Macedonia, now under the command of Maurus, guarding the Succi pass.[56] In early 378, Gratian, in order to defend the West against an incursion of Lentienses, recalled the troops which had been sent ahead into Pannonia.[57] Richomer did return to Valens, bringing with him a letter from Gratian in which the latter promised to be with his uncle soon (*mox*).[58] The presence of troops with Richomer is not confirmed (or denied) by Ammianus, but the implication is that Richomer was sent ahead as an emissary, without army units. Valens, thus, had few or no western troops with him when he met the Goths at Adrianople, and there is no basis for a comparison of his forces with those put together by Julian. Hence, Stein's analogy cannot be sustained.

Stein's second argument uses Ammianus' report that 35 tribunes were killed to support a figure of 30-40,000 for the Roman forces.[59] Ammianus clearly says, also, that some of these tribunes were *vacantes*, i.e. they were not in command of units, therefore we cannot extrapolate from the number of tribunes alone (killed or not) to

54 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.5. Or by unwillingness to fight according to his detractors, but his later activities give the lie to this statement.
55 Amm. Marc., XXXI 9.1-5.
56 Amm. Marc., XXXI 10.21.
57 Amm. Marc., XXXI 10.6.
58 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.4.
59 E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, Bruges 1959, vol. 1, 190 n. 189.

the number of units in the battle. Additionally, Ammianus specifically names two tribunes killed who were not commanders of field units: the *tribunus stabuli*, Valerianus, and the *cura palatii*, Aequitius.[60] Unattached tribunes served on the staff of the Emperor and also that of the *magister militum*,[61] so we would expect higher casualties among the tribunes when an Emperor and one *magister* were killed in battle, as at Adrianople where Sebastianus died as well as Valens. Ammianus reports the loss of ten tribunes in a clash with Alamanni in 355 but it has never been suggested either that ten units were lost or 10,000 men killed in this minor engagement.[62] Ammianus reports the death of Potentius, *tribunus equitum promotorum,* at Adrianople[63] but the unit, whether *seniores* or *iuniores*, survived the battle to be listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or. V 28 and 39)—so one cannot assume that a dead tribune equals a destroyed unit. Basing the number of units, and thus troop numbers, on inferences from the loss of 35 tribunes alone can only result in misleading figures.

Apart from the major study of Hoffmann in 1969, which is discussed separately below, there has been little further development in the arguments for a large army size at Adrianople. Wolfram, more recently, accepts the arguments for a large Roman army at Adrianople. He believes that "older estimates probably set the strength of Valens' troops too low, today one calculates thirty to forty thousand men..." (with consequent losses of 20-25,000 men). In this Wolfram is following Schmidt, as supported by Hoffmann, and gives no arguments of his own to support the figure.[64] His analysis (or lack of it) does not further the arguments for a large army at Adrianople.

In 1973, Thomas Burns, in surveying the battle of Adrianople, started a hare based on his misunderstanding of Jones, a hare that was later followed by Ferrill (see below).

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60 Amm. Marc,. XXXI 13.18.
61 Jones, 640.
62 Amm. Marc., XV 4.8.
63 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.18.
64 Wolfram, 124 and note 45.

Burns attributed to A. H. M. Jones the extraordinary claim that the Roman army at Adrianople numbered about 60,000 men.[65] Ferrill, in his 1986 examination of the military explanation for the fall of Rome, adopts the same figure.[66] He estimates Valens' army at "nearly sixty thousand", although he gives no reference for this and does not discuss how he arrived at such a figure.[67] Not least of the problems with this unsupported assertion is how a Gothic army of a sufficient size to defeat 60,000 Roman troops could have continued to be perceived as 10,000 by the Romans, and how such a huge Gothic army could remain unreflected in the sources. In any case, Ferrill's figures do not compute. He believes that Valens led "nearly sixty thousand" men, and also accepts Ammianus, stating that "as many as two-thirds of the Roman army perished".[68] Thus, on Ferrill's own assessment, as many as 40,000 soldiers were lost. However, he also asserts, again without argument, that Theodosius raised at least 20,000 new troops to replace the losses. If we are to assume that the rest of the losses (up to 20,000) were not replaced, then Ferrill neither says this, nor deals with its implications or other problems in his totally speculative reconstruction.[69] It is best noted and left aside. The real problem with Ferrill's argument is his unsupported assertion of 60,000 as the size of Valens' army—all that flows from this is equally worthless.

Ferrill's numbers may ultimately derive from Burns' incredible assertion that A. H. M. Jones argued for a Roman army of 60,000 at Adrianople, a claim purporting to be made on the basis of Jones' calculation from the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the number of new units raised by Theodosius post-379, and Jones' estimation of unit sizes.[70] Burns gives the figure without analysis in his 1973 article. He gives his reasoning in his 1994 monograph, again citing the figure of 60,000 which, as we will see, is unsupported by Jones' actual text, and criticises Jones for over-large estimation of

65 T. Burns, "The battle of Adrianople: a reconsideration", *Historia* XXII (1973), 344.
66 A. Ferrill, *The fall of the Roman Empire: the military explanation*, London 1986.
67 Ferrill, *Fall*, 61-2. It is most likely that he derived the figure from Burns' 1973 article, which he cites elsewhere in his notes.
68 Ferrill, *Fall*, 63.
69 Ferrill, *Fall*, 65.
70 Burns, "The battle of Adrianople", 344, cited in Ferrill, *Fall,* at n. 80.

the size of legions, "probably by as much as three times".[71] Burns declared that on the Jones analysis Theodosius recruited "about 20,000 men distributed into 30 new units" and that this "must reflect the magnitude of the Roman losses at Adrianople".[72] A calculation of the number of men in the 30 new units reckoned by Burns as replacements for Adrianople, on the basis of the Jones estimates for unit sizes, gives a figure of 15,500, not "about 20,000", ie. five *vexillationes palatinae* of 500 men, one *vexillatio comitatensis* of 500, eleven *auxilia palatina* of 500, one *legio comitatenis* of 1000, and twelve *pseudocomitatenses* of 500. Note, too that Jones stated that Theodosius raised these units "to fill the gaps caused by the battle of Adrianople and the heavy fighting with the Goths which followed, and later for his campaigns against Maximus and Eugenius", so not just as replacements for Adrianople alone.[73]

Although Jones assesses the battle as a "shattering defeat" in which "the slaughter was immense", he nowhere gives a figure for either the size of the Roman army at Adrianople or the number of men lost in the battle.[74] He would have rejected Burns' claim for an army of 60,000 on many grounds. Firstly, not all of the new Theodosian units were recruited to replace the losses at Adrianople, as Jones explicitly points out. Secondly, Burns' assertion that the 30 units represented "about 20,000" (when it is almost 25 percent less than this) is an exaggeration of the actual number we can calculate from Jones' estimates, and seems intended to magnify the number of men lost and therefore to justify the 60,000 figure Burns claims for Jones. If Jones had

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71 Burns *Barbarians within the gates of Rome: a study of Roman military policy and the Barbarians, ca. 375-425 A.D.*, Bloomington, 1994, 31, and note 146. Since Jones' estimate for field army legions is 1000 (Jones, 681), and legions of 300 men would be unlikely, Burns would seem to be basing this criticism on over-large unit sizes on Jones' estimate for the size of legions in the limital armies (3,000). It is of more concern that Burns in a later note actually acknowledges that Jones' calculation "includes replacements for losses and troop buildups for war against two major usurpers, Maximus and Eugenius, as well as replacements for the dead at Adrianople", see note 156 on page 307. So, even Burns' later analysis of Jones shows that Jones never claimed Valens' army numbered 60,000, and Burns admits that the troop replacements were for all losses in all of Theodosius' wars, as Jones originally argued. Yet Burns hides this fact in a note, leaving his misrepresentation of Jones to stand in the main body of his work.

72 Burns, "The battle of Adrianople", 344 n. 55.

73 Jones, 1419.

74 Jones, 154.

done the calculations Burns does for him, the replacements over Theodosius' whole reign would have numbered only around 20-25,000 and the losses at Adrianople could not have been 40,000 men as Burns implies. Jones' actual analysis is discussed separately below. Fourthly, if Jones had done his own figures, he would have excluded the 9 units in the Illyrian army (since that army was not involved in the losses at Adrianople) and perhaps the 5 eastern units. Finally, Burns' himself has no consistent view of how Jones would have calculated the numbers of replacement units. Despite the figure of 20,000 for replacement units given in his earlier article, Burns, in the more recent monograph, makes the improbable claim that Jones' 30 new units represented "about 60,000 by his unit strengths".[75] Burns' assessment and calculations are so bedevilled with errors, confusion and misrepresentation that they must be rejected as shedding any clear light on the question of Roman numbers at Adrianople. Hoffmann aside, nothing of value has been added to the arguments for a large Roman army size since the work of Stein.

The case for a small Roman army at Adrianople was put by H. Delbrück as long ago as 1902. Delbrück, followed by Grosse, believed that the Roman army at Adrianople "was probably a few thousand men stronger [than 10,000]".[76] Delbrück's argument is based on Ammianus' statement about the strength of the Gothic army as reported to Valens, and his related consideration of the actual number of Goths opposing Valens. The size of the Gothic force facing Valens outside Adrianople is just as critical for the analysis of the impact of Adrianople on the Empire as the size of the Roman army, and it might help in estimating the probable size of Valens' army. Ammianus refers to Gothic numbers only once, when he records that Roman skirmishers reported that the Goths numbered only 10,000. This figure was later shown to be incorrect since Ammianus goes on to say that how they came to make

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75 Burns, *Barbarians*, 306 note 146. Implying, on Burns' analysis, a Roman army at Adrianople of 90,000 men! This is so ridiculous as to be meaningless.

76 Delbrück, *Geschichte*, vol. ii, 294; R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Berlin 1920, 254.

the mistake (*error*) is uncertain (*incertus*).[77] So, Ammianus knows that the Goths numbered more than 10,000 but he does not feel it necessary to give the actual figure. Delbrück feels justified in taking this to mean that the Gothic numbers were only slightly in excess of this figure. He argues that if the difference was really significant then Ammianus would have been sure to report the real total because it would have become apparent to the Romans during the manoeuvring prior to the battle that they were facing a much larger army than the 10,000 anticipated.[78] I find the precise argument above far from compelling, although I accept the general tenor of the argument from relative sizes, supported as it is by a complete lack of evidence for a large Gothic army in every other source. For what it is worth, Zosimus says, not once, but twice, that the barbarian numbers were small. Commenting on Sebastianus' successes against the Goths in Thrace, Zosimus says that "he [Sebastianus] had destroyed the greater part of the barbarians...", and then has Sebastianus "saying the barbarians were almost all destroyed", in the context of his urging of Valens to join battle at Adrianople.[79]. Ammianus is a corrective to this simple tendentiousness of Zosimus who, directly between the two passages cited above, quotes Sebastianus as telling Valens that the enemy were numerous. Ammianus tells us that an apparently optimistic Sebastianus wrote continually to Valens exaggerating his deeds (Amm. Marc. XXXI 12.1: *subinde scribens facta dictis exaggerebat*)—presumably his success against the Tervingi was one of the exaggerations. Delbrück's argument concludes with his view that the Goths were "perhaps 12,000 men, or at the very most, 15,000 strong".[80]

There is little detailed discussion about the size of the Gothic forces in the modern writing on Adrianople. Eunapius reports that 200,000 Goths crossed the river in 376, which would imply a fighting force of 40-50,000, but the tendentious nature of Eunapius' history means that his figures must be treated with caution. Heather briefly

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77 Amm. Marc., XXXI.12.3.
78 Delbrück, *Geschichte*, 288-91.
79 Zos., IV 23.5 and 24.1.
80 Delbrück, *Geschichte*, 291.

addresses the issue, but only to cite Paschoud in support of his view that "reconstructions based on Eunapius' 200,000 Goths (fr. 42) will be misleading".[81] He gives no arguments of his own. Paschoud believes that Eunapius' figure (which is not given by Zosimus) is grossly exaggerated and cites Schmidt's figure of 18,000 Gothic fighters and a total of 90,000 for men, women and children, but provides no discussion.[82] Ammianus indicates that the Tervingi were too numerous to count,[83] and also supplies evidence that a second group of Goths, this time Greutungi, crossed the Danube after the Tervingi had been admitted, without authorisation.[84] This does not help us very much. All that can be said is that there were two groups of Goths in the Empire, one of Tervingi, the other of Greutungi.

It is difficult to see how a group of the size suggested by Eunapius could move easily and quickly around Thrace—and this is the impression of the Gothic movements we get from reading Ammianus. Even supposing that the main body of Eunapius' 200,000 Tervingi were encamped in some remote and secure location, the fighting force which carried out the raids and depredations would still have been around 50,000 strong. The practical difficulties of moving a group of this size, travelling with wagons (that the group was travelling with wagons is clear from Amm. Marc. XXXI. 7.5 and XXXI 12.11), would seem to support Delbrück's conclusion that the number of Goths was substantially smaller, "perhaps 12,000 men, or at the very most, 15,000 strong".[85] Even if the group was split into a number of smaller parties, as Ammianus suggests, it is stretching credulity to believe that 4 or 5 bands of 10,000 fighting men could have pillaged their way around Thrace without Valens' commanders finding out about it. If the Gothic force at Adrianople was around 12-15,000 strong this adds weight to Delbrück's final conclusion, based on his

81 Heather, 139 and n. 44.
82 F. Paschoud, *Zosime. Nouvelle Histoire*, ii.2, Paris, 1979, 376 n. 143.
83 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.6.
84 Amm. Marc., XXXI 5.3.
85 Delbrück, *Geschichte*, 291.

assessment of Gothic numbers, that Valens' army was a few thousand men stronger than 10,000.[86] This might be too small a figure.

Heather reaches a conclusion about the number of Roman troops engaged in the battle similar to that of Delbrück, although proposing slightly higher numbers. Heather argued that it was elements of the eastern field army which was involved, and accepted Hoffmann's argument about destroyed units as a basis for estimating total losses. However, Heather implies, which Hoffmann does not do, that the 16 missing units discovered by Hoffmann were the total of the losses for all of Theodosius' wars (as Jones argued in 1964), and concludes that "losses of c. 10-12,000, implying an original force of c. 15,000-20,000 seem more likely" than the losses of 20-26,000 based on an army of 30-40,000, as Hoffmann argued.[87] Granted Hoffmann's assumptions then it is better to increase the numbers as Hoffmann does, not to decrease them as Heather attempts. Later, I will show reasons for not accepting the basis of Heather's analysis. Heather does have a further argument, using the analogy of British losses at the battle of the Somme during World War I. He points out that "on the first day of the Somme, the British lost 21,000 men; Hadrianople is unlikely to have been more destructive".[88]

Burns, at second go, also suggests that the size of the Roman army was 15-20,000, although he does not support this figure, either, with any argumentation, save the lack of "credible evidence of a major disproportion of forces" and his misguided criticism of Jones' supposed implied numbers.[89] To arrive at his figure of 15,000-20,000 via a criticism of Jones for a number he never gives is unpardonable (see above), and to get there by no argument of his own is hardly less so! With an army of 15-20,000 losses will have been in the order of 10-13,000. This is a sizeable number and

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86 Delbrück, *Geschichte*, 294

87 Heather, 146-7. See D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, Düsseldorf, 1969, 450-8.

88 Heather, 147 n. 56. The figure apparently comes from the official British war history: see M. Middlebrook, *The first day on the Somme, 1 July 1916*, London, 1971, 263.

89 Burns, *Barbarians*, 31. This is a change from the 1973 article cited above, where he accepts the figure of 60,000 based on his erroneous interpretation of Jones.

certainly immense in proportion to the total numbers involved but even if it warrants Burns' description of "a very grave disaster", it was far less significant when viewed in context. Over the range of modern estimates for the size of the eastern Roman army, ie. both *comitatenses* and *limitanei* (see Appendix 1), the loss of 13,000 men represents only a proportion in the range 3 - 5.3 percent.

To estimate troop numbers at Adrianople one must try to establish which parts of the Roman army were present on the ground with Valens. The eastern *scholae palatinae*, although not noted by name in any source, were probably involved, certainly so if Speidel is right.[90] Both praesental *magistri militum*, Victor and Sebastianus (see Appendix 2), were present, presumably with all or most of the units in their commands. No doubt the Thracian comital army and its commander, whoever that was, and it might have been Profuturus, will have been involved. There is evidence for the participation of regional limital armies in offensive campaigns, although there is no evidence to suggest that such forces took part in defensive wars, so it is just possible that some part of the Thracian provincial army was present also. Most of the limital army will have remained in its frontier garrisons. Iulius, *magister militum per Orientem*, was not present but remained in the East, probably with much of the army under his command, granted the suspect holding power of the recent hastily reached peace with Persia. Few, if any, units from the western armies were involved. Those units which had come from the west under Richomer and Frigeridus remained east of the Succi Pass under the command of Maurus and do not appear to have been available to Valens at Adrianople (see the discussion above). There is no need to, or any sign that we should, attach any different units to the other commanders noted as taking part in the battle. Traianus, previously *magister peditum*, and Saturninus, previously acting *magister equitum*, most likely acted as *magistri vacantes* as part of

90 M. Speidel, "Sebastian's strike force at Adrianople", *Klio* 78 (1996), 434-7. There are problems with Speidel's interpretation, however, not least his unquestioning belief in the technical nature of Ammianus' words in the relevant passage (Amm. Marc., XXXI 11.2), his unsupported assertion that Valens' had an army of 30-40,000 with him (page 435), and use of the erroneous (and unsupported) view that this was a time when "cavalry ruled battlefields" to justify his argument that Sebastian's strike force was drawn from the *scutarii* (page 436).

the general command staff given particular operational commands, but in any case do not mean extra troops from outside these sources. In summary, then, only the eastern Roman army was involved. It included at a maximum the *scholae*, praesental cavalry and infantry, Thracian cavalry and infantry, possibly part of the two Thracian provincial armies, part of the Oriental cavalry and infantry. Troops were left to guard Constantinople, and Ammianus reveals that legions were left to guard the imperial treasury and insignia at Adrianople.[91]

How does one turn these sources for troops into figures? Two modern authors, Jones and Hoffmann, though not primarily interested in the loss at Adrianople, have attempted to use the so-called *Notitia Dignitatum* to calculate the size of the Roman army and/or its losses at Adrianople. This is a way of going beyond the general arguments given by Stein in support of larger numbers and Delbrück for smaller ones.

The Notitia Dignitatum *and the Battle of Adrianople*

Both Jones and Hoffmann used the *Notitia Dignitatum* to calculate the size of the Roman army at Adrianople from a different body of evidence to that of Stein and Delbrück.[92] Jones' argument is, in essence, that Theodosian creations in the lists of the *Notitia* represent replacement of losses in 378 or in wars under Theodosius. Hoffmann's argument, based on a hypothetical reconstruction of the existence and distribution of paired units named *seniores* and *iuniores* in 378, connects the losses at Adrianople with the loss of *iuniores* units which are not registered any longer in the *Notitia*.

The *Notitia Dignitatum* is a very problematical document, imbued with meaning extending far beyond its ostensible and sometime use as a list of the high offices in the eastern and western empires. It must be used with great care. A recent article, referred to by one writer as "much the most important work to have appeared on the

91 Constantinople: Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.5-7; Adrianople: Amm. Marc., XXXI 15.
92 Jones; Hoffmann.

Notitia since the exhaustive study in Appendix 2 of A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, (Oxford 1964), 3.348-80",[93] focuses attention on the multi-stranded and ideological nature of the *Notitia*.[94] Brennan is casting doubt not only on how ideological elements of the extant lists are being ignored, but also on the way in which patterns existing at the last working date of lists were assumed to be the same as those in the earlier history of lists. This is a new and significant perception of the ND, and one that has not informed the analyses of Jones and Hoffman, who here use the ND as if it was what it appears to be on the surface: an unproblematic source for administrative and military history of the late Roman Empire.

The Jones Argument

Jones set out to analyse the *Notitia Dignitatum* and what it could tell us about the size and composition of the Roman army in the later Empire. Jones might be responsible for initiating a line of argument which has been significant in subsequent work, ie. detecting and arguing from patterns and anomalies in the *Notitia* lists. For the eastern lists Jones seems to have favoured a date of around 395, or possibly a little later for the latest revision. Jones argued that Theodosius created 30 new units for the eastern field armies to replace losses in 378 and later and that this might be used as a means of showing the number of units that were lost in battle. However, of these 30 units, 9 were units of *pseudocomitatenses* in the Illyrian army and therefore, Jones says, probably raised from the ranks of the *limitanei* when the new eastern prefecture of Illyricum was created immediately before or just after the death of Theodosius. Whether they are taken to represent replacement for losses (either in war or through the retention of Illyrian troops by Stilicho in 395), they relate to the Illyrian army, which was not involved in the loss at Adrianople. This leaves 21 Theodosian units. One more probably should be removed from Jones' list of certain Theodosian units. Jones counts a unit of *pseudocomitatenses* appearing in the lists of

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93 M. Kulikowski, "The *Notitia Dignitatum* as a historical source", *Historia* 49 (2000), 358, n. 3.
94 P. Brennan, "The *Notitia Dignitatum*", *Les littératures techniques dans l'antiquité romaine. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* XLII (1996), 147-178.

the second *magister praesentalis* as Theodosian (see his Table V). This is a unit of *pseudocomitatenses* appearing in *ND Or.* v 69. There is nothing to support this allocation. Certainly the unit appears following the list of palatine auxilia but, as in all other lists, pseudocomitatensian units appear to form a separate category. Therefore, the position of the *auxilarii sagittarii* after the last unit of palatine auxilia, a definite Theodosian unit, the *IV Theodosiani*, cannot be taken to mean that this pseudocomitatensian unit was later and thus also Theodosian. The number of certain Theodosian creations in the eastern field army, which Jones takes to have been created to fill gaps in the ranks during Theodosius' lifetime, must be reduced to 20. This is why historians like Burns are wrong to take figures for Jones from his unit numbers alone.

Jones' 20 units comprise five palatine vexillations, one comitatensian vexillation, 11 palatine auxilia, one comitatensian legion, and two pseudocomitatensian legions (in the list of the *mag. mil. Or.*). This is a total of 10,500 men, on his unit sizes (1000 for legions, 500 for all other types).[95] And, as Jones says: "...the majority [I take this to mean all the new units except for the nine new units of pseudocomitatenses in the Illyrian army] of the new units were probably replacements of losses incurred in the battle of Adrianople and later wars. If so, approximately one-seventh of the *comitatus* was destroyed in these wars".[96] It must be admitted (as Jones does but Hoffmann would not because of the placement) a small number of other units in the lists may also be creations of Theodosius. Jones is creating a minimum number of units by only listing as Theodosian units which clearly are Theodosian by virtue of a dynastic name or placement.

Clearly, Jones believed that the losses from the eastern army between 378 and 395 were accommodated by the new units, since on his analysis there were 21 new Theodosian units (not including the 9 units raised to the *comitatus* for the Illyrian

95 By way of contrast these units represent 13,800 men on Hoffmann's units sizes (see below).
96 Jones, 1425. Jones includes the army of Illyricum as part of the eastern *comitatus*. Removing the Illyrian units from the calculations, the proportion is closer to one-sixth.

army) out of a combined unit total for the eastern field armies of 131, the total without the Illyrian units. These wars include, apart from Adrianople, the regular fighting that occurred up to the signing of the treaty in 382, the battles against the Greutungi in 386, and the civil wars against Maximus and Eugenius. However, this calculation ignores another great unknown in the attempts at calculating army size and losses, ie. the number of men lost from units that were not destroyed or disbanded. Jones was calculating the number of units lost, not the actual numbers lost so he did not take account of this. It is inconceivable that the only losses were from units so severely depleted that they were disbanded. Perhaps such losses were roughly equal to those surviving in lost units and the two cancel each other out? Hoffmann has attempted to guess at a figure for such losses (see below), but since there is no reason to believe that it would be consistent from battle to battle there is no obvious manner of calculating such numbers. Hoffmann believes that as a different calculation, one should take account of those who die but do not come from lost units.

The methodology underlying these calculations is very problematic. It needs to assume that it was Roman policy to replace lost units with new ones, rather than pursue other options involving a smaller or a larger army. Further, it has no means of detecting units created by Theodosius unless they carry a dynastic name or are listed after units carrying such names, as Jones recognised.[97] But if Jones is roughly right in arguing that only 1/6th (approximately) of the eastern Roman field armies available to Valens in 378 was lost, and if this represented 2/3 of the army at Adrianople, then only a very small part of that field army was present at Adrianople. Or else the field armies represented in the *Notitia* were far different in their numbers and/or distribution than the field armies of 378. That would not in itself be surprising, since Theodosius is known to have made many significant changes in the organisation of the field armies. We shall return to this.

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97 Jones, 1418-9.

The Hoffmann Argument

Hoffmann, too, detected a pattern in the Notitia lists. From it he has constructed a hypothesis about the distribution and history of *seniores-iuniores* pairs in the army lists. Ammianus reports that in 364 Valentinian, emperor of the west, and Valens, emperor of the east, divided the *comitatus* between them.[98] The existence in the *Notitia* of homonymous military units differentiated by the appellation *seniores* and *iuniores* led Hoffmann to argue that the division of the army in 364 resulted in the halving of many of the existing army units into *seniores* and *iuniores*. Since Valentinian was senior emperor it seemed obvious to Hoffmann that the units named *seniores* went west with Valentinian, while those named *iuniores* went east with Valens, the junior emperor.[99] Although most of the units called *seniores* are in the western lists and, conversely, the majority of *iuniores* units appear in the eastern lists, this is not a blanket rule, and there are many *seniores* units in the east (some 24) and *iuniores* units in the west (43 in *ND Occ.* v and vi, 46 in *ND Occ.* vii). In order to explain these deviations from his expected distribution, Hoffmann posited frequent and complex troop movements from their disposition in 364 (the date of the original list) to their place in the lists in the final *Notitia*.[100] Two other assumptions underlie Hoffmann's analysis:[101] firstly, the continued pairing of army units; and secondly, where one half of a *seniores-iuniores* pair is missing this indicates a unit that has disappeared since the division of the army in 364. This is the foundation for Hoffmann's analysis of the status and disposition of military units under emperors from Julian to Theodosius.

Hoffmann's analysis of the size of the Roman army at Adrianople is based on his analysis of the total number of army units available to Valens, using the hypothesis

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98 Amm. Marc., XXVI 5.1-3.

99 Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 1.122-30, 325-6. A similar hypothesis, but seeing the existing units as doubled, was developed independently by R. Tomlin, "*Seniores-iuniores* in the late Roman field army", *American Journal of Philology* 93 (1972), 253-78. See also J. Barlow and P. Brennan, "*Tribuni Scholarum Palatinarum c.* A.D. 353-64: Ammianus Marcellinus and the *Notitia Dignitatum*", *Classical Quarterly* 51 (2001), 237-254, for further analysis.

100 Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 1.28.

101 Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 1.117-130.

briefly outlined above. This analysis of total units available to Valens concludes that total comitatensian forces in the eastern empire consisted of 6 palatine *scholae*, 30 vexillations, 40 legions and 15 units of auxilia, a total of 70-80,000 men.[102] Hoffmann believes that from this total it should be estimated that Valens had 30-40,000 men with him at Adrianople, as proposed by Stein and Schmidt, not the 12-15,000 suggested by H. Delbrück.[103]

Hoffmann's estimate of troop losses rests on the assumption that *iuniores* units missing from the lists in the *Notitia* were wiped out at Adrianople. By this process he shows that 16 *seniores* units have no corresponding *iuniores* unit, and Hoffmann argues that these units disappeared as a result of Adrianople and were never replaced.[104] The total number of men in these units which disappeared is about 14,000, which compares remarkably closely with the 13,800 men calculated using Hoffmann's unit sizes for Jones' new units (see above). Two-thirds of an army of 30-40,000 is 20-27,000 men, and Hoffmann suggests that the extra 6,000-13,000 were losses of men in units that were not wiped out at Adrianople and continued to exist.[105]

New inscriptional evidence, published later than Hoffmann's work, undermines the most fundamental assumption on which his analysis is based. A funerary inscription from Nakolea in northern Phrygia, dated to A.D. 356, gives the name of the dead man's unit as NUMERUM IOCORNSEN. This is usually expanded to *io(vii)* or *io(vani) cornuti seniores*, and identified with the *cornuti seniores* of ND Occ. 5.158.[106] The many ramifications of this inscription for Hoffmann's analysis of the *Notitia* need not concern us here, but the date of 356 for a unit of *seniores* destroys the major

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102 On the basis of unit sizes of 500 men for scholae and vexillations, 1000 for legions, and 800 for auxilia: Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 444 with n. 138. Using Jones' basis of unit sizes, this would be 12,500 men.

103 Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 444.

104 Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 450-8. The missing units themselves are listed at page 449.

105 Hoffmann, "Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer", 455-6.

106 T. Drew-Bear, "A fourth century Latin soldier's epitaph at Nakolea", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 81 (1977), 267-8 and 272.

foundation for his work. If a unit of *cornuti seniores* existed before 364 then there is no reason not to believe that other *seniores* and *iuniores* units existed at this time. Since this is the case, it is impossible to set a single date for the creation of *seniores* and *iuniores* units; instead such duplication of units was an ongoing process occurring at no specific time but at many times.[107] Thus, the division of units in 364 posited by Hoffmann did not take place in the manner he suggests and no deductions can be made from the location and existence or non-existence of particular *seniores* and *iuniores* units. One consequence is that grave doubt must be cast on Hoffmann's deductions concerning the number of men killed at Adrianople and the total size of Roman forces at the battle. Hoffmann's arguments using troop movements is too problematic and his deductions about missing units based on pairings is suspect.

Both the Jones and Hoffmann arguments are too flawed to be decisive. Hoffmann explicitly, like Jones implicitly, assumes that the eastern field armies in 378, indeed in 364, were essentially structured as they were in the *Notitia* at a date close to 395. That may not be the case. We do not have independent evidence, leaving aside retrojection from the later *Notitia* lists, of the distribution and extent of the field army forces in 364 or 378. It is a reasonable alternative starting point that the eastern praesental armies were relatively small, containing only units categorised as *palatini*. This is a category first attested in 365[108] and probably created to distinguish units in the praesental armies from those in the regional field armies, categorised as *comitatenses* or *pseudocomitatenses*. If this were the case, the regional field army *per Orientem* may originally have included many of the *comitatenses* units who are later found in the *Notitia* in praesental armies, a change of distribution which may reflect the different priorities post-Adrianople.[109] If this is the case, then a far larger proportion of the eastern field army may have been left with the *magister* Iulius on the eastern front in the uncertain situation of the recent, but unsatisfactory, peace

107 Barlow and Brennan, "*Tribuni scholarum*", 239.
108 *CTh* VIII 1.10.
109 Zos., IV 27.1-2 places the restructuring in 380, although most scholars consider it took place later than this.

with Persia than is generally allowed. Part of the reason for requesting help from Gratian in the west will have been the need to retain a major Roman military presence against Persia. In such a scenario the size of the Roman army with Valens at Adrianople would fit with the other indications that it was relatively small.[110]

To summarise, the material is too inconclusive to allow certainty on the actual number of losses. However, evidence to support a larger army size is circumstantial and the arguments are unconvincing. The analogy with Julian's army has little weight, not because of the time taken in preparation[111] but because Julian's invasion force included a large part of the western army, which he brought to the east. The argument based on the number of tribunes killed also fails to convince because Ammianus explicitly says that some of these tribunes were not in command of fighting units and there is no evidence to justify the assumption that one tribune equates to one unit. Any attempts to justify a size for the army based on the loss of 35 tribunes alone cannot succeed. Statements of an army of 60,000 are based on a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Jones and cannot be taken seriously. In addition, suggestions that the force fielded by Valens was in the region of 40-60,000 men are not supported by what we know of late Roman army sizes. Such a large figure would suggest that the forces dealing with a regionalised incursion of barbarians approached the size of the army taken by Julian to invade and conquer Persia, which was from both parts of the Empire, and for which Zosimus gives a figure of 65,000.[112] Also, it is characteristic of this period that, with the exception of Julian's army of invasion, "attested expeditionary and combat armies are smaller" than under the principate.[113] For instance, Julian had only 13,000 troops in Gaul when he won his great victory over the Alamanni; the *comes* Theodosius had only

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110 I owe the genesis and development of these ideas to my supervisor, Dr. P. Brennan.

111 Assembling an army for any campaign in the fourth century took what seems to be an extraordinary length of time. Valens took over 18 months to assemble his forces for his Gothic campaign in 365/6: Elton, 235.

112 Zos., III.13.

113 P. Brennan, "The last of the Romans: Roman identity and the Roman army in the late Roman near east", *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998), 194. See also R. MacMullen, *Corruption and the Decline of Rome*, New Haven, 1988, 174, with n. 12, 273.

four units with him when he took over Britain, *Heruli*, *Batavi*, *Iovii*, and *Victores*; and the army under Mascezel sent by Stilicho against Gildo in 397 numbered perhaps no more than 5,000 men.[114]

The arguments for a smaller army rest on a different set of deductions. An erroneous report to Valens estimated the Goths at 10,000.[115] This was later shown to be an underestimate but it is hard to believe that the Roman intelligence system got the numbers wrong by more than 50 percent.[116] If the Gothic forces numbered at most 20,000, it is implausible that a Gothic army of this size could have killed 20-25,000 Romans. Therefore, if Valens' army was of the larger suggested size, the Goths must have numbered considerably more than the 10,000 erroneously reported to Valens; in fact, to have inflicted such losses we must accept that the Goths numbered at least 25-30,000. It seems fantastic that the scouts and forward units of Valens' army could have remained in the dark about the true size of the Gothic force, if such a large group of Gothic warriors was moving around Thrace, and even if split into a few smaller bands. That such a disparity between the reported 10,000 and a Gothic army of even 20,000 is not reflected in the sources is incredible and suggests that the 10,000 reported to Valens cannot have been out by more than few thousand.[117] Valens was encouraged to attack on hearing the erroneous figure of 10,000 Goths, so we can infer that Roman numbers were sufficiently greater than 10,000 to make the emperor think that victory was within his grasp.

There is no agreement about the actual size of the Roman forces at Adrianople either among those who argue for a small army or those who argue for a large one. Estimates of the size range from the low of 12-15,000 argued for by Delbrück to the

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114 Julian: Amm. Marc., XVI 12.2; Theodosius: Amm. Marc., XXVII 8.7; Gildo: Claudian, *In Gildonem,* ll 418-23. See T. Coello, *Unit sizes in the late Roman army*, BAR International Series 645, Oxford, 1996, 27.

115 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.3.

116 See N. J. E. Austin and B. Rankov, *Exploratio: Military and political intelligence in the Roman world from the Second Punic War to the battle of Adrianople*, London, 1995, 242: "A comprehensive and accurate intelligence picture…was able to be developed and maintained throughout". They further argue that there was no intelligence failure, rather "what went wrong was the human factor, not the system", 143.

117 As observed by Delbrück, *Geschichte*, 290-1.

high of 60,000 erroneously attributed to Jones by Burns and taken up by Ferrill. The arguments set out in the preceding paragraph, coupled with Heather's analogy with the Somme and Jones' analysis of the new units in the eastern *comitatus* created by Theodosius, and my alternative interpretation of the material in the *Notitia* lists, convince me that there was only a small Roman army at Adrianople, numbering around 15,000 men, certainly no more than 20,000. If we accept this assumption, then Roman losses at Adrianople were around 10-13,000 men. This was a large short-term breach in the ranks of the eastern field armies but not a huge proportion of the total number of troops in the eastern Roman armies. To put the figures into context, a loss of 10,000 men represents between 9.6 and 12.7 percent of the eastern field army; a loss of 13,000 men represents between 11.5 and 13.8 percent of that army. The same numbers represent between 2.3 and 4.1 percent (10,000), and between 3.9 and 8.6 percent (13,000) of the total eastern Roman armies (see Appendix 2).

Restoring Roman army effectiveness

It is a widely held opinion that Theodosius faced a recruiting crisis because of the loss of men at Adrianople, though the scale and significance of this 'crisis' is interpreted variously and rarely with much awareness of the processes available to Theodosius to restore Roman military losses and effectiveness. A.H.M. Jones makes the simple observation that on his elevation Theodosius was faced with "the difficult task" of filling up "the depleted ranks of the army...and the laws of the code show that conscription was rigorously applied".[118] The authors of a more recent work on the Roman army go much further in making the unsupported assertion that "due to the depletion that the eastern army suffered, Theodosius I was unable to activate sufficient military strength to deal with the resultant Gothic threat".[119] A recent biographical study of Theodosius goes far beyond, even against, what evidence we have in stating "his [Theodosius'] great shortage was of men, not officers. As his

118 Jones, 516.
119 P. Southern and K. R. Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, New Haven, 1996, 71-2.

recruitment policy shows he clearly had to accept a decline in standards of physical fitness and training, as well as hiring and enrolling Goths and other Germans in large numbers and on more relaxed conditions, and probably weakening the frontier garrisons too".[120] For one thing, with 35 tribunes killed at Adrianople plus the *magister* Sebastianus, the ex-*magister* Traianus and the "manifold loss of distinguished men"[121] Theodosius was clearly deficient in officers as well as men. For another, the decline in standards (lowering of heights, removal of heavy armour) are attributed to Valentinian and Gratian, not Theodosius. Further, there is simply no evidence that the proportion of Goths (or other Germans) in the army was increased above the existing ratio or that there was any change in the conditions under which non-Romans were enrolled.

I have argued, in the previous section, that the manpower losses at Adrianople were at the lower end of the range of numbers offered in modern interpretations, with total Roman losses in the order of 10-13,000 men. There is no indication that these losses in the eastern armies could not be replaced or were not replaced either in the short term or the long term. If that is so, then Roman military effectiveness will not have been a determinative factor in Roman foreign policy. We need to answer the critical question of how difficult would it have been to replace these missing men? Did the need to fill the ranks of the army with this number of new men cause an insoluble and ongoing recruiting crisis within the Empire? Does the evidence suggest that losses at Adrianople could not be made up through the normal recruiting processes?

A slightly earlier historical scene provides a useful context for reading the impact of the losses at Adrianople. In 351, in the major battle of the civil war Constantius defeated Magnentius' forces at Mursa. Eutropius says of the battle "vast forces of the Roman empire were destroyed in that conflict, forces which were sufficient for any foreign wars and which might have provided many a triumph and much security".[122]

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120 S. Williams and G. Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay*, London, 1994, 89.
121 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.18.
122 Eutropius, *Breviarium* X.12.

Zosimus confirms the huge loss of life, saying "great numbers fell on both sides".[123] Zonaras estimates that the combined losses from both sides in the battle was the mind-boggling figure of 54,000 men.[124] Little is known about the battle of Mursa but the sources are unanimous in their agreement that the loss of life was enormous. Yet the army of the Empire recovered from this disaster (and the enormous cumulative losses in all the civil wars of this period, as well as the large losses at Singara in 348). None of the modern historians of this period suggest that the loss was insurmountable and could not be made up through the Empire's normal recruiting processes or that the losses had military consequences for the Empire. We have little evidence as to how these losses were made good, though the plan to use *aurum tironicum* suggests that the conscription processes were a major ongoing part of the strategy. There is no suggestion that Constantius recruited barbarians in larger numbers than usual to replace these losses in the field armies. In the case of the ancient sources this is an argument from silence; one might have expected modern scholars who think so much of the battle of Adrianople to have posed the same questions about Mursa. Nothing obvious occurred in the 27 years between Mursa and Adrianople that would justify a change of situation. The Roman army had recovered from quite appalling losses in the past and nothing in the intervening period indicated that it could not continue to do so.

So, what then of Adrianople? The situation itself cannot be directly compared to Mursa, since that was a battle during civil war and involved both eastern and western troops. The significant point is that the enormous losses in that battle did not have ongoing consequences then and there is no reason to suppose that the losses at Adrianople would have had any different effect. The Empire had long established processes for replacing army losses, whether those losses were the result of battle or the normal retirement or incapacity of long-serving soldiers. In the short-term, reinforcements for eastern armies in the war-zone could be supplied firstly by greater

123 Zos., II.50.
124 Zon., 13.8.

use of garrison armies and we can perhaps see evidence for this in the existence of *pseudo-comitatensian* units in the *Notitia*. Secondly, replacement of losses could be accomplished by transfers from other eastern armies, as we see in Zosimus' story of the Egyptian units transferred to Thrace.[125] Finally, in the short term, reinforcement could be, and was, achieved by the assistance of the army of Illyricum. Over both the short-term and the longer-term reinforcement needs could be met by use of the various processes available to the state.

Assuming that the losses were made good, an assumption of all scholars, and made explicit in the arguments of Jones and Hoffmann, what was the scale of recruitment needed? It has been observed recently that the Roman army "was by far the largest single employer in the Roman empire".[126] Such a fact comes as a surprise to us who live in the modern western world. Armies of the size of Rome's are unheard of outside totalitarian regimes. For an employer of such a size there was an ongoing need for a constant supply of recruits to replace those retiring as veterans, the dead, and those invalided out due to their wounds, and for a coordinated process to fill the need. The normal recruitment processes must have the flexibility to cope with abnormal one-off recruitment, such as in the aftermath of Mursa or Adrianople, or in the putting together of particular expeditionary armies for civil or foreign wars. In 379, the replacement of the 10-13,000 men lost at Adrianople was additional to the replacement of normal annual wastage in retirement or loss. This makes Theodosius' immediate need greater, but it must be noted that it was essentially a one-off problem, not one with ongoing implications.

The normal replacement needs are estimated variously by different scholars. K. Hopkins, looking at the cost of the Roman army, estimated that from a legionary army of 150,000 men recruited at age 17, only 4,400 of the expected retirement

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125 Zos., IV 30.

126 M. J. Nicasie, *Twilight of empire: the Roman army from the reign of Diocletian to the battle of Adrianople*, Amsterdam, 1998, 83.

cohort of any one year would survive to retire after 25 years service.[127] In theory, for a service period of twenty-five years we would expect that one twenty-fifth of the army would retire each year, a total of four percent. In an army of 150,000 this would amount to 6,000 men. Although Hopkins does not calculate it directly, his figure for veteran retirements implies that slightly more than one percent of the army (1600/150000 = 1.06 percent) was lost every year to causes other than age retirement. On Jones' estimate for the total size of the eastern army, 352,000, this would mean that approximately 3,500 men were lost in battle, through disease, or invalided out every year, and some 10,500 retired each year. The total recruiting needs on these calculations would be about 14,000 men per year, assuming that service in all units was 25 years. Using other proposed sizes for the eastern Roman army (see Appendix 2), the total recruiting needs range from a low of 9,800 to a high of 17,000.

On the basis of recruitment and discharge figures in dedications, J. C. Mann calculated that for the second century AD approximately 2.3 percent of the men in a legion were lost each year to death and disease, or some 140 men out of the expected 240 who would retire each year.[128] B. Shaw in an article critical of E. Fentress's work on the army in Numidia suggested that only 135 men, out of the expected annual veteran retirement of 200 for legions of 5000, survived for twenty-five years. The other 65, representing 1.3 percent of the legion's strength were lost each year through death, disease or incapacity.[129] The higher figure for loss through causes other than retirement estimated by Mann might be because it is based on actual evidence for survival of legionary recruits, rather than in models of populations as in the work of Shaw and Hopkins.

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127 K. Hopkins, "Taxes and trade in the Roman Empire (200 BC – AD 400)", *JRS* LXX (1980), 124. The figure is based on UN model life tables.

128 J. C. Mann, *Legionary recruitment and veteran settlement during the Principate*, London, 1983, 59: "All told, it is unlikely that the number of veterans discharged from a single legion in any one year will have much exceeded 100, on the average".

129 B. Shaw, "Soldiers and society: the army in Numidia", *Opus* 2 (1983), 139.

Recently, Elton has argued for higher Roman recruiting needs than Hopkins, Mann, or Shaw. He believes that recruitment needs to replace those retiring as veterans alone were in the order of 5 percent per year, based on periods of service of twenty-four years in the legions and vexillations and twenty years in units of the limital armies.[130] Replacement needs for losses from disease, battle or desertion were over and above this 5 percent, but Elton does not hazard a guess at what they might be. On Elton's argument, the replacement need for retirements alone for the estimated sizes of the eastern Roman army (see Appendix 2), range from 12,240 to 21,325. Coello makes a similar claim: "In theory a service period of 25 years might leave a unit expecting to retire 1/25 of its strength each year but a reasonably low life expectancy would increase this considerably in practice, perhaps to more like 1/12".[131] For an eastern army of Jones' size (352,000) this is approximately a 29,500 replacement need every year, for the range of estimates for eastern army size this amounts to between 20,400 and 35,500. However, unlike Mann, Hopkins, and Shaw, neither Elton nor Coello base their assumptions about life expectancy on model life tables, or in an analysis of the epigraphic evidence for survivals from annual legionary intake groups. Their assumptions about losses due to death, disease, desertion or incapacity, are just guesses and must be treated as such.

The most recent detailed analysis of the demography of the Roman imperial army reaches quite different conclusions.[132] In a closely argued examination of the epigraphic evidence, Scheidel reaches a number of conclusions which affect all arguments for estimating recruitment needs. First, as had been identified in earlier studies, age rounding to ages which are multiples of five is more frequent on soldiers' tombstones than in the population at large and this makes demographic considerations much more prone to error than has been usually taken into account.

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130 Elton, 128. The premises of 20/24 years service increases the total number of recruits needed.

131 Coello, *Unit sizes*, 37 n. 39. The source of the proportion of 1/12th is a personal communication to Coello from R. Tomlin, and is not supported by any calculations or evidence.

132 W. Scheidel, *Measuring sex, age and death in the Roman Empire: explorations in ancient demography*, Journal of Roman Archaeology supplementary series 21, Ann Arbor, 1996, in particular chapter 3: "The demography of the Roman imperial army".

Scheidel concludes from his analysis of tombstones, taking account of age rounding, that the mean age at enlistment during the principate was 20 years.[133] Secondly, Scheidel's study reveals that, "barring costly military engagements", the life expectancy of legionary soldiers was similar to that of the population at large.[134] Scheidel argues for legion size in the Principate of from 4,600 to 5,000 men and takes period of service to be 25 years by the second century.[135] Scheidel suggests that all earlier studies are flawed in one way or another: some ignore decrement during service which means that assumed recruit numbers equals the number of discharges; some assume decrement rates without basing them on the epigraphic evidence or adjusting recruitment numbers to account for the decrement; and some get the mathematical calculations wrong.[136] Scheidel's analysis concludes that for a legion size of 5,000 men and a period of service of twenty-five years, each year there would be 120 veterans (2.4 percent) and 280 recruits (5.6 percent) needed. For shorter periods of service the number of both recruits and veterans increase; for smaller legion sizes the number of recruits needed decreases.[137]

The foregoing survey of changing views ends with Scheidel, whose methodology is better. Scheidel's calculations imply that for an army of 100,000 the annual recruiting need to keep the army to about full strength would be 5,600 men. If we take Jones' estimate for the size of the eastern army at 352,000 the recruiting need would be 19,712 men per year. On the basis of other estimates for the total size of the eastern Roman army (see Appendix 2) the recruitment needs range from 13,700 at the low end of estimates to 23, 900 at the high end. The loss of 10-13,000 men at Adrianople would need to be replaced in addition to the normal recruiting need, and is an increase of between about 54 percent and 95 percent (on the lowest estimate for army size) of normal recruiting needs. It must be noted that this is a one-off impost not an

133 Scheidel, *Measuring*, 98ff, 111.
134 Scheidel, *Measuring*, 124.
135 Scheidel, *Measuring*, 121 and n. 79.
136 Scheidel, *Measuring*, 121 n. 80.
137 Scheidel, *Measuring*, 122.

ongoing need. There is no denying that this extra need was over and above the normal replacement figure and could not have been met without extra effort, but this is not to say there was any long-term recruiting or manpower crisis. The Roman army replaced its losses through a recruiting system that had met its needs for hundreds of years and continued to meet those replacement needs, at least in the east, well into the sixth century, and was flexible enough to meet a one-off jump in needs. This is not the place for an exhaustive investigation of the development of Roman recruiting processes under the Empire. Many such studies exist within longer monographs on the Roman army.[138] However, a brief overview of the sources for army recruits is essential.

One always available option for filling gaps in the ranks was internal transfers of men from one part of the Empire to another. There had long been a process for transferring recruits between different imperial jurisdictions. Thus, in 360 Julian undertook to send laetic recruits to Constantius for enrolment in his *scutarii et gentiles*. However, in the same letter, he refuses to send Gallic recruits or auxiliaries to far distant foreign countries (*ad peregrina et longinqua*).[139] Although this episode has its own particular circumstances, Ammianus' words suggest that the recruiting of men in Gaul for service in the legions or as auxiliaries in the East was unusual, but the sending of *laeti*, and perhaps defeated barbarians, was still possible. Other recruiting processes can be effectively summarised under the two categories of recruiting within the Empire, and recruiting from outside the Empire. Although we hear occasionally of citizens who volunteer for the army, such as the future emperors Marcian and Justin, the least significant source in terms of numbers was probably citizen volunteers. The second internal source of recruits was the system of hereditary obligation known from a law of 313, but probably instituted by Diocletian, by which

138 For instance, G. Webster, T*he Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D.*, London, 1969. A number of other modern secondary works discuss, summarise, or encapsulate the history of Roman army recruiting practices. See, for example, Nicasie, *Twilight*, 83-96; Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, 67-75; Jones, 614-9; Elton, 128-154; P. A. Brunt, "Conscription and volunteering in the Roman Imperial army", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 1 (1974), 90-115.

139 Amm. Marc., XX 8.13-16.

sons of veterans initially, later extended to sons of soldiers, were required to enter the army in their turn.[140] Another source for recruits was the system of conscription, probably established by Diocletian as a reorganisation or adaptation of existing arrangements, and which was an obligation on all landowners.[141] Finally, recruits came from non-Roman groups settled within the Empire who were required to supply recruits as a condition of settlement. This category included those referred to variously as *laeti*, *dediticii*, *gentiles*, and *tributarii*, although the distinction between the groups is not clear.[142] From outside the empire, recruits came to the army as volunteers, sometimes in large numbers, and the Roman army seems to have always accepted willing non-Romans into service. Yet another external source was those recruits supplied under treaty by tribes defeated by Rome in war, such as the recruits promised by the Limigantes in 358.[143]

Volunteers came from within the Empire, although we hear almost nothing of them, and particularly from barbarians outside the Empire. For these non-Romans service in the Roman army was likely to have been an attractive career at all periods,[144] and the sources name many individual non-Romans whose recruitment into the Roman army will have been as volunteers. It is generally assumed that by the late Empire citizen volunteers, although never entirely absent, were few and far between and were usually quite insufficient to meet the replacement needs of the army.[145] Views differ, however. By way of contrast, M. Nicasie's synthetic work on the Roman army from Diocletian to Adrianople observes: "this [voluntary recruitment] remained an important source of manpower during the later Empire".[146] The statement is not, however, supported with any evidence and voluntary recruitment is not likely to have been a major source of recruits, except in the phenomenon of barbarian recruits and

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140 Jones, 615; *CTh* VII 22.1.
141 Jones, 615; M. Whitby, "Recruitment in Roman armies from Justinian to Heraclius (ca. 565-615)", in A. Cameron (ed.), *The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East*, vol iii: States, resources and armies, Princeton, 1995, 66.
142 Elton, 129.
143 Amm. Marc., XVII 13.3.
144 Jones, 619.
145 Jones, 615: "the bulk of citizen recruits were undoubtedly conscripts of one type or another".
146 Nicasie, *Twilight*, 83.

those deserting their obligated occupations. A shortage of volunteer recruits certainly seems to be behind the law attested for 313, which assumes the earlier obliging of sons of veterans to serve in the army.[147] If veterans' sons are not volunteering then those with no military connections are little likely to do so either, indicating problems in the supply of recruits. In the context of Diocletian's insistence on the hereditary obligations of professions and trades, such a law is, of course, less remarkable. The rule was reinforced by Constantine again in 326 (although with an alternative),[148] and re-appears from time to time under later fourth century emperors. Despite these sorts of measures, which aimed to increase the supply of recruits from other sources, most commentators accept that the main source of new recruits remained the *dilectus*, a system of conscription that is believed also to have been established by Diocletian.[149]

The *dilectus* in its late Roman form is a system of conscription in which property owners were required to supply recruit(s) to the army depending on the size of their property holdings, but it differed from what we today regard as conscription in that it was not an obligation to serve in the army imposed on individual citizens by the state.[150] The levy of recruits is generally assumed to have been an annual imposition on landowners with an option to commute the supply of a recruit to a monetary payment, often referred to as the *aurum tironicum*, that could be chosen and imposed by the government where and when needed.[151] The longevity of the system of *dilectus* is amply illustrated by Aelius Aristides who, writing in the mid-second century, makes explicit reference to such a recruitment process in his panegyric to the city of Rome: "You [i.e. Rome] asked from each [city] only as many [recruits] as would cause no inconvenience to the givers".[152] Although the existence of the

147 *CTh* VII xxii.1. Interestingly, some later laws specify sons of soldiers and veterans.
148 *CTh* VII xxii.2.
149 See the quote from Jones, 615, above. A much more recent book by Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, makes the same claim on page 67: "the majority entered under the label of conscripts...annual conscription seems to have been initiated under Diocletian".
150 As summarised by Jones, 615.
151 See for example *CTh* VII 13.13-14.
152 Aelius Aristides, *The Roman Oration* 76, ed. tr. J.H. Oliver as *The Ruling Power*, Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 43, Philadelphia, 1953, 903, cited in

conscription process is well established, evidence for the practice of commutation of the recruit to a payment of gold is less obvious. The analysis is complicated by the fact that the term *aurum tironicum* is used to allude to two different things: the money paid to recruits for their equipment; and the money demanded in lieu of the actual body of the recruit.

It has been assumed, on little evidence, that commutation of the recruit as a regular practice dates back to the reforms of Diocletian. C. Zuckerman has looked recently at the evidence for conscription in the fourth century in some detail and suggests that the practice of regular conscription with the associated possibility of *adaeratio* only dates from the time of Valens.[153] Before then, Zuckerman argues, the *dilectus* was applied irregularly: "recruits were levied at need, with no steady schedule".[154] Zuckerman argues that Valens' recruiting law of 375 (*CTh* VII 13.7) established the regular practice of conscription and an earlier law of 370 (*CTh* VII 13.2) enshrined the possibility of its commutation. But the earlier irregularity might have been due to the fact that references to *dilectus* before Valens relate not to the regular practice but to extraordinary needs in extraordinary times; for it is only the extraordinary, usually, that needs legislation. With a major confrontation with Persia looming, Valens' situation in 375 was anything but ordinary, and his need for extra troops was great. Further, *CTh* VII 13.7 makes it clear that the practice of demanding money instead of recruits was an existing practice that needed better regulation to stamp out abuses. The earlier law, *CTh* VII 13.2, also indicates that commutation was an already established practice in 370, since it extends its application to imperial estates. Certainly, Ammianus Marcellinus associates the idea of *adaeratio* with Constantius' plans in the 350s to admit large numbers of Limigantes.[155] Zuckerman minimises this report on a number of grounds: as an unrealised intention; as a practice not

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C. Zuckerman, "Two reforms of the 370s: recruiting soldiers and senators in the divided empire", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 56 (1998), 92.

153 Zuckerman, "Two reforms", 79-139.

154 Zuckerman, "Two reforms", 100.

155 Amm. Marc., XIX 11.7.

evidenced otherwise before the 370s; and as a retrojection by Ammianus.[156] But this is special pleading. In any case, it seems clear that by the 370s, ie. before the crisis of 378, both the regularity of the *dilectus* as an annual impost and the possibility of commutation of the recruit into gold were well established practices. This system thus had the flexibility needed to cover, either by gold or recruits, the particular needs of situations requiring an increase in soldiers. It has been observed that commutation was probably favoured anyway by all the parties involved, and that "actual recruits were generally only required when there was a shortfall in recruitment from other sources". [157] However, since the system and its processes, and its annual rather than extraordinary nature, were in place by the 370s, the conscription system was available to Theodosius to supply, either in actual recruits or in gold, a large recruiting need. It was more than just a 'back-up', to be applied when there was a shortfall from other sources.

So, how did Theodosius respond to the army's post-Adrianople recruiting needs? There is some indication in the *Codex Theodosianus* that legislation was a significant part of the initial measures used to fill the gaps in the eastern field army, but little evidence that there were any significant changes to normal Roman recruiting processes. Lenski observes that "the three years after Adrianople witnessed the highest concentration of recruiting laws in the Theodosian Code".[158] While there is some truth in this statement, it is a risky business drawing historical conclusions from statistical deductions based on the appearance of laws in the Theodosian Code. Of course, Theodosius had to do what he could to fill the ranks as soon as possible, and a number of laws show him to be reinforcing the normal recruiting processes. Two laws of 380 were directed at ensuring that sons of veterans and soldiers did not evade their hereditary obligations to serve in the army.[159] Laws in this vein were issued

156 Zuckerman, "Two reforms", 97 note 54.
157 Brennan, "The last of the Romans", 197. See also Nicasie, *Twilight*, 96.
158 N. Lenski, "*Initium mali Romano impero*: contemporary reactions to the battle of Adrianople", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997), 138, citing *CTh* VII.13.8-11 and VII.22.9-10, a total of six laws, but they do not all apply to the eastern situation.
159 *CTh* VII 22.9 and 22.10.

from the early fourth century up to the middle of the sixth century but the fact that such laws continued to be issued does not necessarily imply the existence of ongoing recruiting problems, as is often assumed. Rather, as Jones points out, it need indicate nothing more than the fact that there were no bureaucratic mechanisms to ensure the law was enforced particularly in times of military need, and there was a need for periodic reinforcement of the law and a flushing out of those who had managed to evade their hereditary obligation.[160] The laws themselves do not provide any evidence about the scale of the problem, despite the certainty in modern analyses. At the same time this legislation was being issued, Theodosius also enacted legislation denying the ability to serve in the army to slaves, those in workhouses, and cooks and breadmakers.[161] All these are sources of men one would expect to be tapped if there really was a recruiting crisis or a manpower shortage following Adrianople, as even slaves were tapped in the crisis of 406 (*CTh* VII 8.16-17).[162] Rome still felt it necessary and possible to restrict its conscripts to traditionally acceptable sources and, as *CTh* VII 13.9 says, 'from suitable regions'.

Other aspects of recruitment in the late Empire were addressed by Theodosius' legislation. A law of 381 required that those who had mutilated themselves to escape conscription (a practice which, although condemned by various earlier laws, still enabled a potential conscript to escape service) should nevertheless undergo military service, and two such mutilated recruits were to be supplied and considered the equivalent of one whole man.[163] This is hardly a law useful for a fighting army *per se,* and is evidence of a change in actual recruiting practices in accord with harsher exemplary use of law. It may have recommended itself because it would free up able bodied men from administrative tasks. As well, this law relaxed the penalty for self-mutilation, which under Valentinian was punishable by death.[164] Laws against self-

160 Jones, 615.
161 *CTh* VII 13.8, 380.
162 Elton, 153.
163 *CTh* VII 13.10.
164 *CTh* VII 13.4, of 367.

mutilation do not necessarily imply that army service was any more unpopular in the late Empire than earlier, since the phenomenon of self-mutilation is known to have existed under Augustus when service in the army was supposedly much more popular.[165] Taken with the existence of a quite extensive range of laws on deserters, however, the laws against mutilation do suggest that army service was unpopular in some quarters, although we should be careful not to over-exaggerate the extent and strength of the unpopularity. Unpopularity seems largely confined to the conscription process, as we might infer from the laws against desertion, often in the first year or years of service, and the undoubted "recruit tax scams".[166] A number of laws which legislate against the enrolment of men who were not legally entitled to serve do suggest that army service was still a popular career choice, or at least more popular than certain other obligated careers, a point made also by the anonymous writer of the *De rebus bellicis*.[167] Nor are desertion or unwillingness to serve cited by Vegetius as problems confronting the Roman army of his day whose defects he was trying to remedy.[168]

Other laws of Theodosius reinforced the traditional unsuitability of slaves for army service (see above)[169] and continued to ensure that those whose hereditary status required them to serve as decurions could not escape this obligation.[170] There is, thus, some evidence that Theodosius was determined to reinforce the traditional processes whereby army numbers were renewed, as well he might, given his need for troops following the losses at Adrianople. But these laws re-asserting the unsuitability of certain classes of people imply that the army's needs were being met

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165 Discussed in Nicasie, *Twilight*, 91, citing Suetonius *Aug.* 24.1. Suetonius refers to a disciplinary action of Augustus against the practice, rather than a specific law.

166 Brennan, "The last of the Romans", 198.

167 For example *CTh* XII 1.87 (381) concerning the recall of decurions who have enlisted; and *CTh* X 20.11 (384) disallowing the enrolment of pack animal drivers. Brennan, "The last of the Romans", 198.

168 Discussed by Brennan, "The last of the Romans", 198.

169 *CTh* VII 13.8, 13.11. We might contrast the law on slaves with *CTh* VII 13.16 of 406 which exhorts slaves to offer themselves for military service.

170 *CTh* VII 2.2 (385), XII 1.87-89 (381-382).

through the traditional recruiting processes and that any recruiting crisis was not so severe as to induce major changes.

The problem of desertion is another issue addressed in the legislation of the 380s.[171] The number of laws in this period dealing with the problem, six laws out of seventeen for the title (*de desertoribus et occultatoribus eorum*) or more than one-third, suggests that desertion was a particular problem following Adrianople. However, of the six laws for the period 379-83 (*CTh* VII 18.2-7) only three were issued in the east: *CTh* VII 18.3 posted at Antioch in 380; *CTh* VII 18.5 issued to Neoterius (*mag. mil. Or.*) in 381; and *CTh* VII 18.7, issued at Constantinople to the vicar of Pontus in 383. In any case, the western laws show that the problem with desertion in this period, whatever it was, was not confined to the eastern empire, even if its immediate cause was the defeat at Adrianople. Both eastern and western laws might be dealing with problems one would expect from a one-off increase in the *dilectus* requirements, for it is possible that some of the replacements for the losses of 378 came from the western recruiting system as well as the eastern one. Desertion within the first year of recruitment was not confined to the early 380s, but it was likely to be far greater in these years for a variety of reasons. If there had been a *dilectus* which doubled the number of recruits required from each tax-paying unit or consortium, even if it was only a one-off situation, then the number of unsuitable recruits, men liable to desert in the first year or so, would have multiplied. In such circumstances, the pressganging of vagrants, the choice of those perceived as idle among one's farm-workers and forced into service, the scams entered into between the producers of recruits and recruits will all have been exacerbated. Such a super-tax or doubled *dilectus*, might well have also applied in all or part of the west, with the recruits being sent to fill up eastern units.

Too much can be made of these laws. They demonstrate that there was a problem with desertion in 379 and the next few years; they do not tell how effective was the

171 *CTh* VII 18.2-7.

solution to this problem. Any conscription system will have its share of deserters, especially where some, at least, of the recruits were forced into service by landowners.[172] After Adrianople Theodosius was required to find extra men for the army rapidly, but not on an ongoing basis. It may be that the laws about deserters end in 383 because the problem, induced by unintended consequences of a very heavy, but one-off, *dilectus*, had gone away. One strategy for ensuring that enough men were found was to enforce existing practices in regard to recruiting more strictly, and the laws on deserters fit neatly into such a course of action. They do not have any particular message to tell us about long-term attitudes to military service following Adrianople.

These laws are a response to the situation that existed after the Roman losses at Adrianople but in this context they point merely to the continuing traditional "coherent management and development of the normative recruitment processes for the Roman standing army", in the context of a temporary recruiting crisis.[173] Suggestions that standard recruiting procedures had ceased to work cannot be taken seriously; indeed the normal practices touched on in the law codes—conscription, hereditary service, rounding up of deserters, and recruitment of barbarians into regular units—continue to function until at least the mid-fifth century.[174]

So far I have said little about the third main way of replacing losses—incorporation of barbarians into standing army units. Writers, such as Ferrill, who believe in an ongoing recruiting crisis, blame Theodosius for the barbarisation of the late Roman army.[175] They argue from an implied premise that there was an increase in the number of barbarians in regular Roman army units, because the Empire could not fill up the gaps in the ranks. The shortfall had to be met by increasing the recruitment of barbarian soldiers, particularly as *auxilia*. Although much discussed, the evidence has

172 Jones, 618.
173 Brennan, "The last of the Romans", 196.
174 Brennan, "The last of the Romans", 197.
175 Ferrill, *Fall*, 84: "'Barbarization', the use of Germans on such a large scale that the army became German rather than the Germans becoming Roman soldiers, begins with Theodosius the Great". Compare with MacMullen, *Corruption*, 176, who blames Constantine.

not been systematically studied. In a recent monograph, developed from his doctoral thesis, Elton has attempted to make deductions about the composition of Roman units on the basis of names recorded in epigraphic and literary texts.[176] Contrary to the orthodox view, Elton's study of soldiers' and officers' names in the period from 350 to 425 "suggests that the majority of regular Roman regiments continued to be composed mostly of non-barbarians".[177] The methodology of Elton's study is flawed by a too rigid acceptance of the ethnic affiliation of names, resulting, for example, in the turning of Charietto into a Roman.[178]

Elton may minimise the extent of the 'barbarisation' of the Roman army but at least his attempt is grounded in an analysis of the onomastic evidence. Ferrill certainly overstates the case but only through unsupported assertions. There is nothing conclusive in these arguments of Elton and Ferrill and no strong evidence for an increase in the number of barbarians in regular army units. Synesius attacked the employment of barbarians in his *De Regno*, suggesting that the army was too full of barbarians. But the political context of the work makes such remarks tendentious, maybe even anachronistic, since they are grounded in the situation in the early fifth-century. The empire had always enrolled barbarians (ie. non-Romans) within the ranks, so if there was any change it was an increase in numbers in existing units rather than the initiation of any new practice. But, the evidence for an increase in the proportion of barbarian recruits is equivocal at best. Adrianople does not seem to have catalysed any significant change. These are not the signs of a system in anything other than temporary crisis, and they show a system operating as it was intended to, occasional fine-tuning notwithstanding.

Conclusion

The presumed weakness of the eastern army post-Adrianople is not supported by any observable dysfunction or crisis in Roman recruiting practices. Of course, those who

176 Elton, 145-152.
177 Elton, 151-2.
178 Pointed out in Barlow and Brennan, "*Tribuni scholarum*", 247 n. 54.

argue that there was a recruitment crisis do so on the implicit basis that the eastern empire needed to find 20-40,000 (the losses based on the range of larger estimates for army size) men to fill the ranks after Adrianople. Although the loss of 10-13,000 men (based on the smaller army estimates) should not be considered insignificant, Adrianople did not bring the eastern Roman army to its knees and cannot be shown to have had any long-term effect on Roman military strength or success. There was no general collapse of the Roman frontier on the lower Danube and by 381 the empire was again in control of Thrace.[179] In fact, the army was quickly restored as an efficient fighting force and in 386 a sizeable force of Greutungi attempting to cross the Danube was soundly defeated by units under the command of the *magister militum* in Thrace, Promotus.[180] In 388 and 394, it could form an expeditionary army for civil war in the West.

It was portions of the eastern field army that were destroyed at Adrianople, yet it was the western armies which eventually proved inadequate to the task of defending the empire, not the eastern. It may be that Theodosius' policy vis-à-vis the Goths was eventually to make the task of western armies harder, although this itself is far from certain, but it is clear that the fall of the western empire a century later should not be blamed on a weakening of the eastern Roman army as a result of Adrianople. The normal recruiting processes of the army were not dismantled, there was no manpower shortage and the eastern army seems to have been quickly returned to strength and effectiveness. Whatever the explanation for the fall of the west, and this thesis is not the place for any further investigation of the matter, it must be looked for elsewhere. Adrianople and Theodosius for too long have been scapegoats, used by those modern historians who want uncomplicated causes for complex events. Thus, the military consequences of Adrianople were not irremediable in manpower terms in the short term, or indeed in the long term. It is not, therefore, correct to make a postulated

179 Whittaker, 189.
180 Zos., IV 38-9; Claudian, *de IV cos. Hon.*, ll 623-637.

weakness of Roman military forces in the East a major determinant of Theodosian foreign policy vis-à-vis the Goths.

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Personnel, 376-382: continuity and change

This chapter focuses on the personnel of government in the Imperial court, particularly in the early years of Theodosius. My aim is to search for continuities and discontinuities in office holding and to examine their implications for my specific topic of military and foreign policy. I begin with a survey of the major changes in the personnel of the western court which took place after the death of Valentinian I, and by mid-376. Secondly, I examine the choice of Theodosius as replacement for Valens. The third part of this chapter looks at holders of the top civilian posts at the eastern court. Finally, I investigate office holding in the important military posts in the east.

Changes in the western court before the accession of Theodosius

Much can be said for the view, particularly from a political perspective, that the death of Valentinian in late 375 was a more significant turning point than the death of Valens at Adrianople in 378. Valentinian I died of apoplexy at Brigetio in late 375, while venting his rage on some hapless ambassadors from the Quadi, upon whom the emperor was about to make war.[1] Eight years earlier, Valentinian had made provision for the succession by appointing his son Gratian as junior Augustus. Gratian had been left behind in Trier while his father was campaigning and the loyalty of the Gallic troops must have been assured by his presence in the imperial capital. Members of Valentinian's *comitatus* acted quickly and decisively to forestall any moves against the Pannonian dynasty. The war preparations were abandoned, and commanders in good standing with their troops, such as Sebastianus, were moved out of temptation's way.[2] At almost the same time, the *magister equitum* Theodosius was

1 Zos., IV 17; Amm. Marc., XXX 6.1-6.
2 Amm. Marc., XXX 10.3. Matthews, 64.

executed in Carthage, at the shortest possible interval between the death of Valentinian and the arrival of the necessary orders from Pannonia. He had just successfully brought the rebellion of Firmus to an end and had, according to Ammianus, "returned to Sitifis in the guise of a triumphing general, where he was received with applause and commendation by all, regardless of rank".[3] His stocks must have been very high, this achievement coming on the heels of successful military actions against the Sarmatians, and Theodosius' earlier brilliant record on the lower Rhine, in Batavia, Britain, and against the Alamanni. In Ammianus' history, and perhaps in fact, Theodosius senior was probably the most brilliant and successful military commander of the time, and an obvious contender if the troops decided to nominate a candidate once they heard news of Valentinian's death. A group in the western court, Merobaudes, *magister peditum,* among them, had activated plans to ensure the continuing loyalty of the army units in the field. The deceased Emperor's four year old son, Valentinian II, was brought to the court at Aquincum with his mother Justina and installed as Emperor, a mere six days after his father's death.[4].

Following the death of Valentinian the highly placed group of Pannonians, upon whom the emperor had placed so much faith, was purged. A new group of men, supporters and advisers of the young Gratian, rose to the top, promoted by the young emperor now that he was free of his father's influence.[5] Matthews sees Gratian's actions as a "deliberate attempt to achieve a political *rapprochement* between the emperor and the senate", whose members had been treated harshly by Valentinian and his officials; a series of laws from 376 and 377 reinforces this view.[6] The effect of the changes was to bring into prominence a number of eminent senators from Gaul, in particular the poet Ausonius, who had been Gratian's tutor, and his family. As well, Spaniards like Fl. Claudius Antonius begin to make their appearance.

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3 Amm. Marc., XXIX 5.56.
4 Matthews, 64.
5 Matthews, 65.
6 Matthews, 66.

By early in 376 the Ausonii had made their appearance in the ranks of Gratian's officials and most of the male members of the family were honoured with office.[7] Decimius Hilarianus Hesperius, son of the poet, was made proconsul of Africa in March 376 and then praetorian prefect of Gaul in 378, an office he may have jointly held with his father.[8] The poet himself, already *quaestor sacri palatii* at the death of Valentinian, followed the prefecture of Gaul with that of Italy and was consul for 379. His father, Iulius Ausonius was made prefect of Illyricum in 377, probably dying in office after a short tenure. Ausonius' son-in-law, Thalassius, was appointed *vicarius* of Macedonia in 377, and at a later date his nephew Arborius was *comes sacrarum largitionum* in 379.[9]

The hated Maximinus, ex-vicar of Rome, and now praetorian prefect of Gaul was one of the Pannonians to disappear early in the new reign. His Pannonian assistant on the treason trials, Leo, appointed *magister officiorum* in 371, was dismissed by Gratian soon after the death of his father. These two were rapidly followed by Simplicius and then Doryphorianus, Maximinus' successors as *vicarius urbis*, and continuators of the treason trials which had so alienated the senate of Rome. Maximinus' replacement in the office of prefect of Gaul was the Spaniard Claudius Antonius, a relative of the future emperor Theodosius, and western *quaestor sacri palatii* immediately before his promotion.[10] The replacement for Leo as *magister officiorum* was Siburius, Ausonius' fellow-native of Bordeaux. Siburius, for whom no previous office is known, was later to become praetorian prefect of Gaul following the joint prefecture of the Ausonii.[11]

In the office of urban prefect of the city, crucial for the emperor's attempts to build bridges with the senate of Rome, Gratian appointed Aradius Rufinus. Significantly, Rufinus was born in Rome and was a pagan. He had held the post of *comes Orientis*

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7 For a corrective to Matthews' rather eulogistic view of the Ausonii see A. Alföldi, *A conflict of ideas in the late Roman Empire. The clash between the Senate and Valentinian I*, Oxford 1952, 18-19 and 84ff.

8 *CTh* XV 7.3. Matthews, 69.

9 Matthews, 69-71.

10 *PLRE I*, Antonius 7. He was in office by May 376, *CTh* XIII 3.11.

11 *PLRE I*, Siburius 1.

under Julian in the period 363-4 and then returned to Rome prior to his appointment as *praefectus urbis Romae*.[12]

There seems to have been little change in the high military offices under Gratian after his father's death. Merobaudes, appointed as *magister peditum* by Valentinian, remained in office under Gratian. Gratian's *magister equitum* was possibly Vallio, killed by Maximus in 383.[13] Equitius, apparently *magister* in Illyricum under Valentinian, and instrumental in securing the elevation of Valentinian II, did not continue in office and was probably replaced by Frigeridus, for whom no previous office is known.[14] We do not know how or when Equitius disappeared. The next *magister militum* in Illyricum we know of was Bauto, a Frank, who was sent by Gratian with an army to assist Theodosius in 380. Richomer, another Frank, was Gratian's *comes domesticorum* by 377; the name of his predecessor is unknown. Cerealis, Valentinian's *tribunus stabuli* and brother of Valentinian II's mother, was one of the group responsible for the promotion of Valentinian II who has no further appearances in the sources. There are only three clear changes in military appointments. Firstly, Theodosius was replaced as *magister equitum*. Secondly, Equitius was replaced for an unknown reason. Thirdly, Sebastianus left his post in the West. There is one significant continuity in Merobaudes and uncertainty about all the rest of the military appointments (since the arguments that might be made are based on silence in a very thin source base)

The incomplete nature of the fasti and the enigmatic silence of Ammianus on most western affairs between 376 and 378, means obvious patterns are not easily discernible. However, the evidence suggests that Gratian was ridding himself of many of his father's appointments and putting his own stamp on his *comitatus*.[15] There are few signs of any major power struggles, although the removal and

12 *PLRE I*, Rufinus 11.
13 *PLRE I*, Vallio.
14 *PLRE I*, Frigeridus.
15 Although whether these changes were due to Gratian or the influence of Ausonius and his followers, or even of Merobaudes, is a complex issue. Perhaps the military influence on Gratian's court is underestimated? See Alföldi, *Conflict*, 88ff.

execution of Maximinus, Simplicius and Doryphorianus is suggestive of some sort of organised manoeuvres against those responsible for the worst excesses of the treason trials in Rome during the latter part of Valentinian's reign.[16] The new appointments in the west suggest that Gratian would now have the room to make his own policies, throwing off the sorts of policies asserted by the *auctoritas* of Valentinian, including the latter's focus on *limites*. Sebastianus, whose movements are unexplained, may well have been out of favour with Gratian's court because he represented the old-style uncompromising policies of Valentinian, and was not in-line with the new policy approaches adopted by Gratian. There was clearly some political rivalry between Sebastianus and Merobaudes, and Merobaudes seems to have come out on top. The situation does not seem to have changed markedly with the appointment of Theodosius.

The choice of Theodosius

Although the early years of Theodosius' reign are notable for the exiguity of the sources, a coherent picture can be constructed, albeit one lacking in fine detail. The unexplained question about the accession of Theodosius is why he was chosen at all. The conventional view is that after the death of his father, the *comes* Theodosius, in late 375 or very early 376, Theodosius junior, previously *dux Moesiae*, had retired to his family property in Spain enjoying a life of leisure and following agricultural pursuits.[17] Objectively, there seems nothing to have recommended Theodosius to Gratian over anyone else. That he had some military reputation is indisputable, for even the usually hostile Zosimus says he was "an aggressive and skilful commander",[18] and of Theodosius' successful defence of Moesia during his time as *dux* Zosimus reports that he "was renowned for this victory".[19] Furthermore, he was son of the man who was probably Valentinian's most successful military commander.

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16 One of whose victims was Theodosius the elder. Alföldi sees in the removal and execution of these men "traces of a conspiracy of the Gallo-Hispanic *factio* of Theodosius against Valentinian and his agents", Alföldi, *Conflict*, 91.

17 Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* XII (II), 9.1-5.

18 Zos., IV 24.4.

19 Zos., IV 16.6.

The younger Theodosius, on this view, which takes as a given that he retired from imperial service on his father's execution, had been detached from both imperial politics and army life for over two years by the time of Valens' death. In this reading, the call from Gratian must have been completely unexpected not only to Theodosius but to his family and, one imagines, everyone else outside the immediate court circles. Is it possible to explain?

Many of the most important military commanders of the east had been slain at Adrianople, among them Traianus, perhaps *comes rei militaris* (maybe even *magister vacans*) following his recall,[20] and Sebastianus, eastern *magister peditum*. In any case, it is unlikely that anyone associated with, and surviving, the debacle of Adrianople can have been seriously considered as Valens' successor, whatever his individual merits.[21] There were other men whose names might have been considered as possible candidates when Gratian came to choose Valens' successor. A number of candidates from the civil bureaucracy might have been considered—men such as Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus, consul in 371 and praetorian prefect twice by this date, and yet aged only in his early fifties, Q. Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius, a relative of Probus, prefect of Rome 369-70 and praetorian prefect of Illyricum in 378, and perhaps Flavius Hypatius, consul in 359, prefect of Rome in 379, and highly praised by Ammianus Marcellinus.[22] None of these men were considered as far as we know and, indeed, apart from Secundus Salutius after the death of Julian, and the usurper Eugenius in 392, no civilian officials were ever considered as imperial candidates in the fourth century.

A simpler explanation for not considering a civilian official is that the military situation in Thrace demanded someone of military competence, rather than a civilian. There were a number of men whose military skills might have suggested that they be considered, men such as Nannienus or Vitalianus or even Frigeridus. Many other

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20 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.1.
21 Matthews, 91.
22 Amm. Marc., XXIX 2.16.

successful military commanders would not be considered because of their barbarian origin—in this category we might include Merobaudes, Richomer, Victor, and Hormisdas. In any case, promotion from the lower ranks was the usual source for emperors of military competence, as revealed by the elevation of Jovian and Valentinian. Jovian was *primicerius domesticorum*, and Valentinian *tribunus scholae secundae scutariorum* at the time they were made emperor. Note too, that Equitius, who had been considered as a possible emperor, was also *tribunus scutariorum* at the time. But hindsight will not help us. Who would have thought before the event that either Jovian or Valentinian would have become Roman emperor? There is little to be gained from such canvassing of possible candidates, either civilian or military.

Theodosius in this context was no more likely to be made emperor than any other person with the right socio-economic background, nor any less likely. He did, however, have two possible virtues apart from his military image. Firstly, he had not been part of Valentinian's imperial entourage, and was uncontaminated by the politics of Valens' court. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly from Gratian's point of view, he was an adherent of the Nicene version of Christianity. Gratian, unlike his uncle Valens, had been brought up a Nicene Christian, and "in piety and religious fervour he excelled almost all the previous rulers".[23] The chance to end religious squabbles in the east and unite the Empire under a single creed may have been the final factor that led to the choice of Theodosius. Lastly, the appointment of Theodosius by Gratian also argues for, as probably the most significant factor, the existence of highly placed advocates for his claims.[24] But we should not, just by the fact of his elevation, assume the existence of a conspiracy in Gratian's *comitatus* to have Theodosius appointed. It is more likely that his advocates, who indeed would have been members of Gratian's *comitatus*, simply seized upon a propitious opportunity to bring Theodosius' qualities to Gratian's ears. These advocates

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23 Ruf., *HE* XI.13.

24 I follow Matthews, 95: "the accession of Theodosius is an expression of a visible change in the politics of the imperial court; but this cannot provide a full explanation of his selection as a candidate for empire…the choice of Theodosius would imply the existence of a wider group of supporters within court circles: above all in the army".

included two relatives of Theodosius: Eucherius, an uncle, who was rewarded with the consulship of 381, and Claudius Antonius, related by marriage, whose advocacy was rewarded with the consulship of 382. One impediment to this reading of events remains. How could Gratian have overlooked the fact that Theodosius *pater* was executed at Carthage, at around the time of the death of Valentinian in late 375 or early 376?

The positive favour showed to Theodosius *filius* by Gratian implies that Theodosius the elder was not killed for any treasonable behaviour. Activity of that nature would have cast its shadow over the son, whatever his distance from it. It is tendentious to suggest that Theodosius *filius* did not die because he was not involved in his father's treasonable activities. It is clear that innocence was never a defence at Rome, and imperial history demonstrates that the family members of a traitor suffered, irrespective of their guilt or innocence. It was only 60 years before that Licinius had had the families and followers of his fellow tetrarchs murdered following the death of Maximinus II Daia in 313. More recently, under Constantius the friends and associates of Silvanus were put to death following that unfortunate commander's own death at the hands of soldiers in Cologne,[25] and the infamous 'Paul the chain' was sent to Britain to hunt down followers of Magnentius.[26] Valens, following the defeat of Procopius in 365 "took ruthless vengeance on his real or supposed supporters".[27] The conclusion must be that Theodosius *pater* was not involved in treasonable activities and that his death, by whomsoever ordered, was due to more personal motives. Gratian, then, could well have been attempting to redress the wrong done to the father by favouring the son. On the other hand, Gratian might simply have seized upon the putting forward of the name of one person with both a good military reputation and other favourable qualities who was quite unassociated with the recent events in Thrace. Theodosius was untainted by the disaster and came from a family of distinguished reputation, despite his father's enigmatic death. Even

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25 Amm. Marc., XV 6.1-4.
26 Amm. Marc., XIV 5.6.
27 Jones, 139. See Amm. Marc., XXVI 10.

if the explanation for Theodosius' promotion is no more complex than this, it can only have occurred because certain officials in Gratian's court spoke up for Theodosius.

Whatever the reason for the execution of Theodosius the elder, the generally accepted story is that Gratian called for Theodosius to travel to Sirmium where he was given a high but unnamed military office,[28] possibly that of *magister militum*, and sent on an expedition against a barbarian group, probably Sarmatians.[29] Having been successful in this action, Theodosius returned to Sirmium where, on 19 January 379, Gratian proclaimed him emperor responsible for administering Illyricum and the eastern provinces.[30]

John Vanderspoel first cast doubt on several aspects of this account.[31] Apart from anything else the timing for all this activity seems very tight. Adrianople was fought on 9 August 378 and Gratian, then at Sirmium, was only informed some days later by Victor, the praesental *magister equitum* of Valens, who escaped from the battlefield and then rode through Macedonia, Thessaly and Moesia to Pannonia to warn Gratian. On a direct route the distance between Adrianople and Sirmium is about 500 kilometres which could have taken Victor up to 15 or 16 days to cover.[32] The fastest recorded journey by horse seems to be that following the mutiny of the legions on the Rhine in 69 AD when the news was brought to Rome in 8 or 9 days, an average of 150 miles a day, for a messenger travelling night and day.[33] But this was unusual, and Victor is unlikely to have been able to travel at such a pace given the disturbed nature of Macedonia and Thessaly, and his route was circuitous. Even if we allow him just 10 days to cover the distance to Sirmium he will not have arrived until 19

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28 Theodoret, *HE* V 5.1-2.
29 Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* II (XII), 10.2; Them., *Or* 14 182c. Wolfram, 131, refers to Theodosius' opponents in this action as Tisza Sarmatians.
30 Soz., VII 4.2.
31 Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 188-91 – this thesis builds on Vanderspoel's approach, though it does not accept all his conclusions.
32 And this is the average distance for those who had access to the *cursus publicus,* which it is doubtful was available to Victor post-Adrianople. See L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, Baltimore, 1974, 315.
33 Casson, *Travel*, 188.

August or so. If we allow no more than a week for Gratian's *consilium* to have met, discussed the disaster and decided to recall Theodosius, it is not until late August that a messenger will have set off to fetch Theodosius. The vagaries of travel in the ancient world are by now well-known and the summons to Theodosius and his return journey to Sirmium cannot have taken less than two months. It is difficult to believe that he could have reached Sirmium before the end of October at the very earliest. This would only just allow enough time for the prospective emperor to have taken troops (western troops?) into Pannonia or Thrace, defeated a band of barbarians (Sarmatians?) and returned to Sirmium before the depths of winter made campaigning impossible, although it seems an improbable schedule. In other campaigning seasons emperors, at least, returned to their winter quarters by September, [34] but this was an untypical time and not amenable to norms.

The whole scenario is inherently unrealistic, apart from the almost impossible tightness of the chronology. What was Theodosius doing in Sarmatia, ie. across the Danube west of the old province of Dacia, when the danger was in Thrace? Neither Sozomen nor Socrates is very explicit or detailed about the sequence of events following Adrianople. Neither throws any light on events between Adrianople (9 August 378) and the elevation of Theodosius on 19 January 379, apart from giving the version of the recall and elevation usually accepted. Rufinus is even more sparing of information about the choice of Theodosius. Only Theodoret, of the ecclesiastical historians, provides any detail at all. In his version of events Theodosius, at the time living in Spain because of the envy of his rivals, is appointed by Gratian to an unspecified military command and sent against the barbarians in Thrace. Theodosius' rapid success and complete destruction of the enemy lead Gratian to appoint him as emperor of the east. Alas, no other source supports this neat tale.

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34 O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.*, Stuttgart, 1919, 255, 259, 265. Winter campaigns were possible but certainly not the preferred time of the year for fighting. See Elton, 235f.

We must turn to panegyric for confirmation, or otherwise. The two almost contemporary sources, Pacatus and Themistius, agree in placing Theodosius' first action in Sarmatia. Pacatus, in his Panegyric delivered after the overthrow of the usurper Maximus, compresses the speed of events but says clearly that Theodosius went from Spain to the shelter of tents in Sarmatia.[35] The commentary of Nixon on this passage assumes, although without authority, that Theodosius received the summons "more than two years after his retreat to Spain (early 376)..."[36] Themistius is equally firm about the location of the action. His Oration 14 delivered before the new Emperor in Thessalonica,[37] unequivocally places Theodosius' military successes, prior to his elevation, in Sarmatia.[38]

There is clearly some confusion, with resultant difficulty of interpretation, in these versions of events. Theodoret might be correct about the speed and scale of Theodosius' success but his placement of this military activity in Thrace is clearly, and irrefutably, contradicted by the Panegyric of Pacatus and the Oration of Themistius.

Most modern analyses fail to deal adequately with the problem. Sivan, arguing that Theodosius was a usurper, takes Theodoret at face value, using Themistius to give the identity of the barbarians being fought in Thrace. She does not deal with the evidence of Pacatus that Theodosius was in Sarmatia before his accession.[39] Equally telling against Sivan's reconstruction is her belief that the "decision to recall Theodosius was taken some three months after Adrianople", ie. almost mid-November.[40] Even with the best travelling conditions possible one doubts that Theodosius, if in Spain as Sivan accepts, could have been in Thrace before mid-

35 We might note that 'in Sarmatia' is an interpretation of the phrase 'Sarmatian tents' in Pacatus. Pac. *Pan Lat* II (XII) 10.2: *vix tecta Hispana successeras: iam Sarmaticis tabernaculis tegebaris*.

36 C. E. V. Nixon and B. Rogers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini*, Berkeley, 1994, 460 n. 38.

37 J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court. Oratory, Civic Duty and Paedia from Constantius to Theodosius*, Michigan, 1995, 195-6.

38 Them., *Or.* 14 182c.

39 H. Sivan, "Was Theodosius I a usurper?", *Klio* 78 (1996), 198-211.

40 Sivan, "Was Theodosius I a usurper?", 199, without citing a source for the information about the delay.

January—mid-winter and at least two months after the usual end to the military campaigning season. The timing of a defeat of Sarmatians in mid-winter (and what were Sarmatians doing in Thrace anyway?), a return to Sirmium, and proclamation as emperor by 19 January seems too improbable to be realistic. In any case, it is very hard to accept that if Theodosius had been a usurper there would be no trace of this at all in those historians hostile to him, Eunapius and Zosimus.

A different scenario is possible, indeed more likely. John Vanderspoel in a recent book and R. Malcolm Errington in a recent article, argue that Theodosius had in fact been appointed to a military command under Gratian at a much earlier date than is usually accepted.[41] The complex argument of Errington posits an investigation of the death of Theodosius the elder, and the rehabilitation of the son following Gratian's punishment of the instigators of the purge which followed Valentinian's death in 375. The rehabilitation was fairly immediate, since a relative by marriage of Theodosius, Fl. Claudius Antonius, was praetorian prefect of Gaul by May 376,[42] within a short time of the execution of Theodosius the elder.[43] In Errington's reconstruction, Theodosius had returned to a military command by late 377 or early 378, possibly as *dux Moesiae*, and was campaigning on the Danube against an incursion of Sarmatians. A victory there gave Theodosius a promotion, perhaps to the post of *magister equitum*, although the complete failure of any source to mention the office suggests that the promotion was not to the position of *magister*. The victory was real enough, at least, to allow Gratian to take the epithet *Sarmaticus*.[44] Following the defeat of eastern troops at Adrianople, and soon after his Sarmatian victory, Theodosius was appointed Emperor.[45]

Errington's interpretation of the accession seems the most plausible, and is partly supported by Pacatus' compression of events at *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 10.2. It does away

41 Vanderspoel, 190; R. M. Errington, "The accession of Theodosius I", *Klio* 78 (1996), 438-53.
42 *CTh* XIII.3.11.
43 Errington, "The accession", 448.
44 Aus., *Grat. act.* 2.8.
45 Errington, "The accession", 449. Sivan, "Was Theodosius I a usurper?", 206, argues that his troops proclaimed Theodosius emperor following his military success, and that Gratian was eventually forced to accept this.

with the almost impossible timing of a summons to Theodosius in Spain following Adrianople and persuasively explains why the panegyrists Pacatus and Themistius both refer to Theodosius' campaign against Sarmatians on the middle Danube, rather than against Goths in Thrace where the immediate post-Adrianople crisis was located.

A final difficulty is to explain why Gratian did not adopt a different option. He already had an imperial colleague in the person of the young Valentinian II, his half-brother. Gratian had his own court and although he had been acting as his half-brother's guardian, we should not suppose that a separate *comitatus* did not form around (or was not imposed on) Valentinian II, even if it was not a full imperial court parallel to the 'governing' courts. There seems no obvious reason why one of them could not have held the east, and the other the west. Even if Valentinian's *comitatus* was suspect, there was nothing to stop Gratian, as the senior Augustus, sending Valentinian to the east with a carefully chosen court. What the Empire needed was not a redivision of the empire between the existing emperors, but a militarily able emperor for the eastern parts.[46] The choice provides an interesting counterpoint to the comment of Dagalaifus to Valentinian I on choosing a partner: "if you love your relatives choose your brother, if the state seek another".[47] But, there was always the threat of usurpation. When one emperor was a teen and one a pre-teen, in a dynasty that had been established only a little over 10 years usurpation was a very real possibility. Theodosius, not beholden to either the eastern or western courts, and with a military reputation, might have seemed an ideal compromise candidate.

Theodosius' civilian appointments

Who Theodosius was listening to, is of course critical to an understanding of his policy options and choices. Certain years in any emperor's reign assume importance by virtue of what was happening both domestically and externally. In such nodal

46 See the discussion in Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 188-190 for the problem and a slightly different conclusion.

47 Amm. Marc., XXVI 4.17.

years appointments to political office assume an especial significance. Although we might expect the year of appointment to be a nodal year in an emperor's life, this is often not the case. This first year is, of course, a very crucial year in the emperor's life, the time of his rise to ultimate power, and an awareness of those advisers and supporters with whom he surrounded himself is critical to understanding his reign and the directions of policy. Many emperors spend the first year or two consolidating their position and these initial years show great continuity in office holding and policy direction. The usual view of Theodosius' appointments is that his elevation signalled the rise of a group of westerners to high office, particularly Spaniards and Gauls.[48] However true this perception might be over the whole course of Theodosius' reign, in 379 it cannot be demonstrated. Not surprisingly there was continuity in office holding, and, understandably, certain appointments of Gratian, made in the aftermath of Adrianople, were still in place. Theodosius was still feeling his way and any favouritism that might have been shown to Spaniards, and to a lesser extent Gauls, was yet to make itself apparent.

If there is evidence that Theodosius' policy was different from the traditional Roman foreign policy it will be important also to explain how this change might have come about. Theodosius' background and upbringing were similar to those of most other upper class male Romans, with one important distinction. What must be noted is the particularity of his associations before he became emperor. His father, Theodosius the elder, was a senior military commander under Valentinian I, perhaps the most successful military man of his time (according to Ammianus). As western *comes rei militaris* Theodosius senior was sent to Britain in 368/9 to campaign against invading bands of Scots and Picts, and it is likely that his son, the future emperor, served under him on this campaign.[49] By virtue of his success in Britain Theodosius senior was then appointed *magister equitum*, campaigning successfully against the

48 For example, Jones, 390, "It is noticeable how many Pannonians rose to high office under the Pannonian brothers Valentinian and Valens, and similarly Spaniards came to the top under Theodosius"; and Matthews, 113, "The Spanish relatives and intimates of Theodosius were the clearly dominant group among the eastern officials of the emperor".

49 Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 8.3; Zos., IV 35.3.

Alamanni, Sarmatians, and Firmus in Africa.[50] As the son of a highly visible and successful military commander the younger Theodosius is likely to have seen at first hand the operation of aggressive Roman foreign policy, at least in Britain (but perhaps like other sons of generals he had been *protector* and thus involved in 'staff college' assignments), and to have had experience of the process of foreign policy decision making on the ground. It would not be surprising if foreign policy under the emperor Theodosius differed little from that for which his father was an agent of execution. However, on his elevation as emperor Theodosius came within the sphere of influence of a new body of associates, some perhaps appointed by Gratian, some carried over from Valens' reign. We must look to this group of men to establish what factors might have influenced Theodosian foreign policy.

Continuity of office holding under Valens and Theodosius might well explain an apparent similarity of approach to the Goths, at least up to the time of the treaty of 382. Conversely a demonstrated lack of continuity in office holding might suggest that any similarities in foreign policy approaches are due to factors other than who held office. It is striking that a number of the men, particularly military officials, who served in the eastern/Thracian part of the empire under both Constantius and Valens also served under Theodosius. Saturninus, perhaps the most significant of these, is dealt with below. There is less evidence for continuity in influential civil offices. Themistius is perhaps the best known of those whose careers span the reigns of Constantius, Valens, and Theodosius, but he held no significant civil office. The only two posts he occupied were under Constantius as proconsul, and under Theodosius, as *praefectus urbi* at Constantinople. Neither of these offices gave the holder *ex officio* membership of the consistory, but Themistius was clearly in a position of some influence at the courts of all three emperors. He may have been in the consistory anyway when it met in Constantinople, since appointing members of that body was always the prerogative of the emperor. I have discussed elsewhere the consistent strand in Themistius' orations from Constantius to Theodosius—this may

50 C. E. V. Nixon, *Pacatus Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*, Liverpool 1987, Appendix.

help explain continuity of policy in dealing with the Goths over the course of 30 years.

What also needs to be noted is the presence of other categories of advisers to the new emperor, quite apart from those holding high civilian and military offices. Influence is not restricted to those holding office or present in the consistory. In particular, religious authorities begin to rise to more prominence as sources of advice to the emperor. As early as 380, during his illness at Thessalonica, Theodosius received from Acholius not only baptism, but advice concerning the state of the church in the east—advice which led to the promulgation of a law directing Romans to follow the religion of Peter—according to Sozomen.[51] In fact the law was issued before the illness or baptism, as Ensslin has established.[52] Nevertheless, the real point, that a bishop, Acholius, was giving advice to the Emperor, is not invalidated.

Eutropius the historian represents another interesting case of continuity and influence. Late in the reign of Constantius, Eutropius was appointed *magister epistularum* (before 361). He served as *magister memoriae* in 369 and *proconsul Asiae* in 370/371, under Valens.[53] Again, neither of these offices gave access to the consistory and perhaps the actual influence of Eutropius under these two emperors was of less significance. His career after the death of Constantius was slow, and may not have advanced under Valens until the publication of the *Breviarium*. Even so, after Eutropius' proconsulship he held no offices for the remaining 7 years of Valens' reign. Fortunately for Eutropius, he prospered under Theodosius, holding the office of praetorian prefect of Illyricum in 380-381, and finally serving as one of the consuls for 387.[54] But the case of Eutropius is not so simple. His star waned after the early 370s and he was accused of treason by his successor Festus but acquitted. In the late 370s he was with Gratian's court and it is possible that his appointment as prefect of Illyricum was due to Gratian. He signifies a different strand of consistency,

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51 Acholius: Soz., VII.4; legislation: *CTh* XVI 1.2.
52 W. Ensslin, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Theodosius der Grosse*, Munich 1953, 17ff.
53 We must note the problematic nature of this source for the early career of Eutropius. It says Constantine, not Constantius: *Scr. Orig. Cpl.* II 144, cited in *PLRE I* Eutropius 2.
54 *PLRE* I, Eutropius 2. See also Matthews, 96-7.

one that is not as straightforward as the simple continuity between office holders under Valens who reappear under Theodosius.

Eutolmius Tatianus, advocate under Constantius, *praefectus Augustalis* and *consularis Syriae et comes Orientis* under Valens, and then *comes sacrarum largitionum* from 374 to 380, is another who had a distinguished career under Theodosius. As *comes sacrarum largitionum* under Valens, Tatianus was a member of the consistory but his authority after the death of Valens is questionable. Although Theodosius appointed him out of retirement as praetorian prefect of the East 388-92, following the death of Cynegius, and then as consul for 391,[55] he was probably not influential during the crucial years between 380-388 while he was out of office and living in retirement in Lycia.

Clearchus is another who seems to have been an important office holder under Theodosius. An easterner, he held a number of unknown posts under Constantius and went on to become *vicarius Asiae* and then *proconsul Asiae* and urban prefect of Constantinople under Valens. In 382 Theodosius appointed him as *praefectus urbi* again, and in 384 he became consul with Richomer.[56] Although none of his offices gave *ex officio* membership of the emperor's consistory the fact that he had been made consul suggests that he was high in the Emperor's favour and he might well have been a participant in policy debates and decisions. We might deduce some influence at court from his numerous offices but the offices themselves were not those which gave formal access to the highest tiers of power.

One more career bureaucrat makes his appearance under three emperors. This is Hypatius, consul in 359 under Constantius, with his brother Eusebius. Presumably he had held other offices before this. The pattern of his office holding is not simple. The family were originally from Thessalonica and his brother Eusebius (*cos.* 359) was a holder of offices in the east.[57] One other connection of Hypatius might be noted—his

55 *PLRE* I, Tatianus 5.
56 *PLRE* I, Clearchus 1.
57 *PLRE* I, Eusebius 40.

sister, Eusebia, wife of Constantius II, is significant to his consulship, so it is not necessary to posit many earlier posts for Hypatius. Hypatius apparently lived in Antioch after his consulship and was there, following his rehabilitation after an accusation of treason, when appointed *praefectus urbis* of Rome in 378/9. Interestingly, his predecessor as *praefectus urbis Romae*, Martinianus, was also an easterner. Perhaps both represent Valens' influence in Gratian's court over matters involving westerners. These two appointments suggest much closer links between the two courts in the period 376-80 than is generally believed. Hypatius went on to hold the office of praetorian prefect of Illyricum and Italy in 382-3 but was in Constantinople in 381. It is unclear whether his appointment was made by Gratian or Theodosius, but the weight of evidence suggests it was Gratian.[58] Hypatius was a man of some influence, clearly, and his presence in Constantinople in 381 immediately before he took up office as praetorian prefect could indicate a rôle as a source of advice at the eastern court. There is a wider context to the presence of Hypatius and maybe Martinianus, as suggested by J. Matthews.[59] What we see in these appointments, and others to be discussed below (eg. Eutropius, the Syagrii), is the return of an eastern group which had fallen out of favour, but not otherwise suffered through the early 370s—and perhaps Martinianus is an early sign of the restoration of this group to favour.

So much for continuity from Constantius through Valens to Theodosius. What of those with whom Theodosius surrounded himself after his elevation? Matthews has argued for a preponderance of westerners, Spaniards in particular, at the court of the new emperor.[60] The reality of such a coterie does not conflict with the existence of other voices and advisers, some of whom continue to be an influence from the time of Valens. There was change, as we would expect, after the accession of a new

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58 *PLRE* I, Hypatius 4. The question of whether he was appointed by Gratian or Theodosius depends on who controlled Illyricum at the time of his appointment. The evidence is contradictory and ambiguous but cannot be dealt with here.

59 Matthews, 96ff.

60 See J.F. Matthews, "Gallic Supporters of Theodosius", *Latomus* XXX (1971), 1073-99, and Matthews, 113: "The Spanish relatives and intimates of Theodosius were the clearly dominant group among the eastern officials of the emperor".

emperor but there was, not unexpectedly, some continuity of advisers. Exactly how much continuity is hard to judge. After the death of Valentinian the highly placed group of Pannonians was purged and a new group of men, supporters and advisers of the young Gratian, rose to the top.[61] But such wholesale elimination was not a common occurrence after the death of an emperor. Undoubtedly, new emperors wished to have their own supporters and friends around them, but the process by which this was achieved was usually more orderly than in the years immediately following the death of Valentinian I.

379

The year 379, the year Theodosius was appointed, was an important year in terms of office holding. This is the most crucial year of the emperor's life but often the tenor of the reign is not apparent until some time has passed. Change and continuity in office holding at this time are significant and can provide some indication of the direction of policy. Most important of the great civilian offices in the empire was the post of praetorian prefect. The prefect was:

> "the emperor's second in command...chief of staff, adjutant-general and quartermaster rolled into one...he exercised an appellate jurisdiction...a general administrative authority over all provincial governors...and finally...had become *de facto* the principal finance minister of the empire".[62]

The praetorian prefects in the eastern empire are a highly significant group of appointees. The first we encounter under Theodosius is Q. Clodius Hermogenianus Olybrius, also consul for 379, and praetorian prefect of Illyricum and the East in 378.[63] The prefecture of Illyricum presents numerous problems for anyone trying to track the praetorian prefects. To begin with, one of the most indispensable tools for the modern historian of the Empire, the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire (PLRE)*, has assumed that the office of prefect of Italy and Africa also included Illyricum unless a specific named prefect of Illyricum is known to exist. There may or may not be grounds for such an assumption, which cannot be tested without

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61 Matthews, 65.
62 Jones, 371.
63 *PLRE* I, Olybrius 3.

rigorous analysis, but there is an issue to do with the dynamic and fluid nature of territorial jurisdictions of praetorian prefects, in contrast with the static situation in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which is too often taken to be the norm rather than a frozen moment in the history of the praetorian prefectures. The problems of knowing who held the appointment at any one time are thus compounded by the changing location of Illyricum within overall imperial jurisdiction; at some periods it was in the western portion of the Empire, at others within the eastern, so it is not always clear in whose hands lay the power to appoint a prefect of Illyricum.

What is the evidence for the existence of prefects of Illyricum from 377/8 onwards, and by whom were they appointed? *PLRE* I says in its *fasti* at the end of the volume that "In late 378 and ?379 Decimius Magnus Ausonius 7 and Decimius Hilarianus Hesperius 2 were joint praetorian prefects over Gaul, Italy, Africa and Illyricum".[64] Hesperius' colleague was his father, the poet Ausonius, and the joint prefecture of the two Ausonii is referred to in Aus. *Grat. Act.* II 7. It seems significant that Ausonius, commenting on his own prefecture, never refers to himself as prefect of Illyricum, naming only Gaul, Italy, and Africa.[65] However, the poet's father, Iulius Ausonius, was praetorian prefect of Illyricum in 377/8, and referred to as such by the poet.[66] In view of this specific reference to his father's prefecture I suggest that if Ausonius' prefecture had covered Illyricum he would have included it in his poetic references to the office. The only extant law issued to D. Magnus Ausonius as praetorian prefect, *CTh* VIII.5.35 (20 April 378), is concerned with the *cursus publicus* and does not offer any geographic help. The only useful internal evidence from the laws issued to Hesperius as praetorian prefect is in *CTh* XIII.1.11 (5 July 379) which refers to the collection of lustral taxes in Italy, Illyricum, and Gaul. None of the other laws refer, in their superscriptions or their texts, to the geographical area of the prefecture.[67] I do

64 *PLRE* I, 1050.
65 Aus., *Praef.* 36; *Epiced.* 41. In fact Ausonius only refers to 'Gallias, Latio, and Libyae'. Libya is used poetically for Africa.
66 Aus., *Epiced.* 52.
67 Laws issued to Hesperius as PPO: VII.18.2 (2 June 379, Aquileia); XIII.1.11 (5 July 379, Aquileia); XIII.5.15 (21 July 379, Constantina); VIII.18.6 (31 July 379, unknown); XVI.5.5 (3 August 379, Milan); VI.30.4 (6 December 379, Sirmium); X.20.10 (14 March 380, Aquileia).

not want to further delve into the problems of conjectural "joint prefectures", but I believe it is possible to sort out some of the confusion over the territorial areas of the prefectures.[68] It is clear from *CTh* XIII.1.11 that Hesperius at that time (379) was prefect over Gaul, Italy, and Illyricum (Africa is not mentioned). Possibly the poet was jointly prefect of Gaul and Italy with Hesperius, but solely responsible for Africa, while his son had sole responsibility for that part of Illyricum which remained with the western empire after the elevation of Theodosius in January 379. There is nothing in Hesperius' career that might recommend him to Theodosius, and it is far more likely that he was an appointee of Gratian's. Gratian might well have felt the need to demonstrate imperial control over the Balkans in the aftermath of Adrianople by ensuring continuity in appointments to the praetorian prefecture. Indeed it is possible that *CTh* VI.30.4 supports the appointment of Hesperius to the office by late 378, and implies that he was definitely appointed by Gratian. The subscription which refers to the consulship of Hesperius and Ausonius, and to Sirmium, dates the law to 379. Seeck, thus accepting that the consular pair is incorrect, redates this law to 378 because Gratian was at Trier in late 379, not Sirmium.[69]

Theodosius was proclaimed Augustus by Gratian at Sirmium on 19 January 379, following the defeat and death of Valens at Adrianople. According to Sozomen, Gratian gave Theodosius, as his sphere of control, Illyricum and the east,[70] confirmed by the fact that Theodosius moved to Thessalonica (Macedonia in eastern Illyricum) which he made his headquarters for the duration of his campaign against the Goths, and by his appointment of Eutropius as praetorian prefect of Illyricum by January 380. Theodosius' control at this time of eastern Illyricum can also be directly inferred from a law, issued by him from Thessalonica, concerning cessation of torture at Paschal. The law is addressed to Albucianus, vicar of Macedonia, and is dated 27

68 Jones' definitive article on collegiate prefectures, "Collegiate Prefectures", *The Roman Economy. Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History*, Oxford, 1974, 375-95 [originally published *JRS* LIV (1964), 78-89] shows a similar confusion to that of *PLRE*. On page 385 Jones notes that "Gaul, Italy and Illyricum are mentioned in Hesperius' law of 379 (XIII, 1, 11)". Yet in the table of prefectures on pages 394 Hesperius is not listed as prefect of Illyricum although his putative predecessor Olybrius is.

69 Seeck, *Regesten*, 86.

70 Soz., VII.4.

March 380 [*CTh* IX.35.4]. It seems likely, then, that Theodosius was given control of eastern Illyricum (the dioceses of Macedonia and Dacia) until the security of the Danube frontier had been re-established.[71] It is plausible that Olybrius, initially appointed by Gratian to replace Iulius Ausonius as prefect of Illyricum, was appointed prefect of the East following the death of Valens at Adrianople and Gratian's imposition of his control over the east during the interregnum. Perhaps Olybrius also remained responsible for the part of Illyricum that had gone to the east.[72] His subsequent appointment as consul for 379, designated while in Sirmium with Gratian, also provided an eastern consul for the year. However his territory was delimited, Olybrius was clearly an appointee of Gratian so there is no continuity evident here.

Of the other offices represented in the consistory, the occupants in 379 are unknown with the exception of the two major financial offices: *comes sacrarum largitionum* and the *comes rei privatae*. Fl. Eutolmius Tatianus was appointed *comes sacrarum largitionum* by Valens in 374[73] and seems to have remained in office until 380.[74] His long tenure of this office is unusual, perhaps more so because he was a pagan.[75] The financial responsibilities of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, in particular his responsibility for collecting the *aurum tironicum*,[76] were perhaps particularly crucial in the context of Valens' desire to accept barbarians into the Empire in order to allow the commutation of the recruitment tax into gold. In the unsettled conditions following Adrianople, Gratian and Theodosius will have felt the need for continuity in this office. In the east the first *comes rei privatae* we know of after Fortunatianus (370/7), was appointed by Theodosius in 379. Pancratius is attested as *comes rei privatae* for the period 17 June 379 to 20 September 380.[77] He was to follow this

71 V. Grumel, "L'Illyricum de la mort de Valentinian Ier (375) à la mort de Stilicon (408)", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 9 (1951), 7. Note that the arguments for whether part or all of Illyricum was assigned to Theodosius are hotly debated, but generally inconclusive.
72 J-R. Palanque, "La Préfecture du Prétoire d'Illyricum au IVe Siècle", *Byzantion* XXI (1951), 8.
73 *CTh* X 20.8.
74 *CJ* VIII 36.3.
75 *PLRE I*, Tatianus 5.
76 Jones, 432.
77 First appearance: *CTh* X 1.12; last appearance: *CTh* X 10.14.

office with the office of *praefectus urbis Constantinopolitanae* from 381 to 382. Nothing else is known of him unless the suggested identification of this Pancratius with the Pancratius who had been governor of an eastern province before 360 is correct.[78] This would indicate earlier experience in office and demonstrate some longevity of career, with a possible suggestion of continuity.

There might have been a little more diversity in the civilian posts if more of the civilian office holders were known. Of those we do know, the eastern consul was an appointee of Gratian, and the eastern *comes sacrarum largitionum* an appointee of Valens. The only praetorian prefect we know of in the east, Olybrius, was certainly appointed by Gratian (see above). There is little evidence for independent appointments by Theodosius. There are three areas of continuity demonstrated by this examination: continuity from Valens, eg. Tatianus; appointments by Gratian, eg. Olybrius; and appointments by Theodosius, eg. Pancratius. It is not advisable to draw any particular conclusions about continuity of policy or advice on this slight evidence.

380

By 380 Theodosius has settled more firmly into his rôle and we would expect that any new appointments for this year, to the offices represented in the consistory in particular, would be a better reflection of Theodosius' personal choices. Imperial practice seems to have been that a new emperor became consul in the year immediately following his elevation as Augustus[79], so the consuls for the year 380 were the two emperors Gratian (for the fifth time) and Theodosius.

In 380 the first praetorian prefect of the East appointed by Theodosius, Flavius Neoterius, makes his appearance.[80] Neoterius began his career in the west as a *notarius* under Valentinian I in 365. Between this year and 380 nothing is known of

78 *PLRE I* Pancratius 3 and 4.
79 R.S. Bagnall et al., *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, Atlanta, 1987, 23.
80 *PLRE I,* Neoterius. He is attested in office between January 380 (*CTh* IX 27.1) and January 381 (*CTh* VII 18.5).

him, but we can be sure he had occupied more offices before this first prefecture than just that of *notarius*. It is plausible that Neoterius is one of those Spanish or Gallic supporters of Theodosius who came to the east with him in 378 or 379. The first prefecture of the East was to be succeeded by those of Italy in 385 (in opposition to Maximus' nominee), and of Gaul in 390 (imposed by Theodosius on Valentinian II's court).

The other praetorian prefecture under the control of Theodosius, that of Illyricum, was filled by Eutropius the historian, who has been discussed above, in 380.[81] A native of Bordeaux he accompanied Julian's entourage at the time of the emperor's Persian campaign and then seems to have settled in the east, where he became proconsul of Asia in 371. At some point following this, Eutropius went to Gratian's court and visited Rome,[82] and it might be hypothesised that his appointment as praetorian prefect for Illyricum for 380 to 381 was a collaborative appointment by both emperors, Gratian and Theodosius. Although Eutropius was a native of the west, his service had all been in the east and it might have been his western origins that recommended him to the emperors in 380.

Florus, *magister officiorum* from 380 to 381 may be another of the western adherents of the new emperor whom he brought with him to the east. This was such a significant administrative position, having control of the public post and, in particular, audiences with the emperor, that it is almost necessary to posit a prior connection with Theodosius. Perhaps more importantly, the *magister officiorum* had control of the *scholae palatinae* and the *agentes in rebus.* It was a pivotal post in the court. Matthews, on the basis of a similarity of nomenclature between Florus, Aemilius Florus Paternus, *comes sacrarum largitionum* in 396, and Aemilia Materna Thermantia, has suggested a connection with Maternus Cynegius and Theodosius.[83]

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81 *PLRE I,* Eutropius 2. Attested in office from January 380 (*CJ* I 54.4) to September 381 (*CTh* VII 13.10).

82 Symm., *Ep.* III 50.

83 J. F. Matthews, "A Pious Supporter of Theodosius I: Maternus Cynegius and his Family", *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S. XVIII (1967), 444.

If so, then Florus is another early representative of the rise of westerners to prominence in the eastern court under Theodosius.

381

As pointed out by Pacatus, and observed by the authors of *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, "Theodosius seems to have been more concerned than his immediate predecessors to treat the consulate as a reward for deserving subjects...".[84] Appointment of consuls was, theoretically at least, a joint activity by both emperors; in practice it seems each emperor appointed one consul.[85] Who then did Theodosius choose as his first 'eastern' consul? The two consuls for 381 were Flavius Syagrius and Flavius Eucherius. The latter is called by Zosimus the uncle of Arcadius,[86] although he seems in fact to have been uncle of Theodosius (according to a reference in Themistius *Or* 16 203d, Theodosius honoured his uncle with a consulship early in his reign - this is taken to mean Eucherius in 381), and therefore Arcadius' great-uncle. The only known previous office for Eucherius was as western *comes sacrarum largitionum* in 377-9,[87] so he was a contemporary in office in the west of Claudius Antonius, another relative of Theodosius who later appears at the eastern court. Eucherius was presumably appointed to the position of *comes sacrarum largitionum* by Gratian, and as a relative of Theodosius, it is reasonable to assume that he moved to the east after the elevation of his brother's son. The other consul for the year was Syagrius, *magister officiorum* in 379 and praetorian prefect of Italy for the period 380-382. Although it is easy to confuse the two Flavii Syagrii, presumably related, who were consuls in successive years, this Flavius Syagrius was the western appointee to the consulate for the year 381. The Syagrii are another Gallic family whom Gratian favoured, and whose family remain prominent in political life in the west well into the fifth century.[88]

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84 Bagnall et al., *Consuls*, 5.
85 Bagnall et al., *Consuls*, 16.
86 Zos. V.2.
87 *PLRE I*, Eucherius 2, but see also the discussion in J.R. Martindale "Note on the Consuls of 381 and 382", *Historia* XVI (1967), 254-6.
88 Matthews, 75-6.

Neoterius, as praetorian prefect of the East, was succeeded by Florus, previously *magister officiorum*. Florus is attested in office as praetorian prefect by July 381 and remained until at least March 383.[89] Matthews, on the basis of elements of names, suggests that Florus might be a relative of Theodosius, and another of those Spanish supporters of the family who travelled to the east.[90] In the absence of any evidence of outstanding ability, we might suppose that the important offices held immediately in succession by Florus (*magister officiorum* and prefect of the East) implies some sort of connection to the Emperor. In the Illyrian prefecture, Eutropius, who was appointed in 380, is attested only until September 381, but his period in office should certainly be extended through the rest of 381, and perhaps to as late even as May 382.[91] Certainly we know of no successor to Eutropius until the law of 18 August 382 addressed to Virius Nichomachus Flavianus, praetorian prefect of Illyricum and Italy.[92]

In the civilian offices we know nothing about the holders of the offices of *quaestor sacrii palatii* or *comes rei privatae*. Florus, *magister officiorum*, is not attested in office after January 381, but appears as praetorian prefect of the East by 30 July 381.[93] Palladius, the next *magister officiorum*, is not attested until March 382. Palladius, however, was *comes sacrarum largitionum* in 381, in office by July, and attested until November 381.[94] He was a native of Athens and teacher of rhetoric at Rome, where he apparently knew Symmachus. In 379 he was summoned to Gratian's court and evidently found favour subsequently with the new emperor.[95] His transfer from the west to the east may hinge on his link with Eutropius and be part of the same network and process which saw the historian transfer his service to the eastern court and become Theodosius' prefect of Illyricum in 380.[96]

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89 First: *CTh* XII 1.87; last: *CTh* XII 1.96.
90 Matthews, "A pious supporter", 444.
91 R. M. Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", *Chiron* 26 (1996), 24 with n. 135.
92 *CTh* IX 40.13.
93 *CTh* XII 1.87.
94 *CTh* IV 13.8; *CTh* X 24.3.
95 *PLRE I,* Palladius 12; Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 2.
96 See the discussion in Matthews, 97.

382

The consuls for 382 included a Syagrius, the Flavius Afranius Syagrius who had been praetorian prefect of Italy in 382, and was, therefore, the western appointee to the consulate. The eastern appointee in this year was another relative by marriage of Theodosius, Claudius Antonius.[97] The exact nature of his relationship to the emperor is not known, but Antonius had been a *magister* (perhaps *magister scrinii*) in the early 370s, praetorian prefect of Gaul in 376-7, and the prefect of Italy in 377-8. Although these are all western offices, the evidence for his appointment by Theodosius is unassailable.[98] It is plausible that he, like Eucherius, came to the east with other relatives and supporters of the new emperor, following Theodosius' accession. The continuity between his appointments under Gratian and his consulate suggest he was a person of influence in the eastern court, and one whose presence links the policies of that court to those of the western court.

In the east Florus remained praetorian prefect throughout 382, and in Illyricum Eutropius was replaced sometime during this year, by August 382 at the latest (see above). If Illyricum had indeed returned to the western administration by this date, as Errington argues,[99] the fact has important ramifications for the military and diplomatic activities of Theodosius. I shall return to this in chapter six. Florus, who became prefect of the East by July 381 (see above) was succeeded as *magister officiorum* by Palladius, although the latter is attested in office only from 24 March 382, having held the post of *comes sacrarum largitionum* prior to this in 381.[100] Florus remained in office until 16 September 384, a relatively long incumbency.[101]

Nebridius, another Spanish relative of Theodosius, was *comes rei privatae*, in office from 20 May 382 to 30 March 384.[102] He married Olympias, daughter of Seleucus and scion of a leading senatorial family of Constantinople, during his prefecture but

97 *PLRE I,* Syagrius 2 and Antonius 5.
98 Martindale, "Note", 255-6.
99 Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 22-7.
100 *PLRE I*, Palladius 12.
101 *CTh* VII 8.3.
102 *PLRE I*, Nebridius 2.

Nebridius died within two years of the wedding. He was possibly a brother-in-law of Flaccilla, Theodosius' first wife, by an earlier marriage.[103]

To summarise, the civil appointments reviewed here suggest a number of trends in office holding. Firstly, it is not possible to establish with any certainty that there was continuity of office holding in the short-term after the death of Valens. What we do know, the presence of Eutropius for example, is suggestive but hardly definite. One interesting development is the increasing influence of those who appear to sit outside the formal governing circle of the imperial court, such as Themistius, and bishops of the eastern sees like Acholius. A second, perhaps related, development is the rise to prominence of westerners, some of whom had held posts in the western court, and some who were 'new men'. From 380/1 we begin to see the more frequent appearance of men with Spanish connections, as Matthews has pointed out.[104]

Theodosius' military appointments

The immediate situation demanding Theodosius' attention in 379 was a solution to the problem of the Tervingi running untrammelled around Thrace—ejection was only one of a number of policy options for dealing with the situation. Civilian officials are important for the general tenor of the reign and for signs of continuity in advice and in implementation of financial and monetary policy. We must remember that foreign policy was not always decided on purely military grounds. But, the military officials are crucial because of the significance of the military situation facing the eastern empire in the years 379-382. The identity of those military careerists who were already operating in the eastern court and those whom Theodosius chose to fill the top military posts tell us much about the advice the emperor was receiving and the possibility of continuity or change in east Roman foreign policy. Continuity, or lack of it, between West and East, and between the courts of Valens and Theodosius will be important, and perhaps a signifier of continuity or change in Gothic policy.

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103 Matthews, 109.
104 Matthews, 108ff.

Continuity between the reigns in the military sphere is less than obvious. One might expect that in the aftermath of Adrianople, when scapegoats were being sought, military office holders would be the first to lose their positions. Contrary to what we might assume, however, not all those *magistri* of Valens who survived Adrianople were retired or replaced immediately. Perhaps the most significant sign of continuity is Saturninus, responsible for the signing of the peace treaty with the Goths in 382. Saturninus had been a military officer under Constantius in about 350, *comes rei militaris* in about 373, and then acting *magister militum* under Valens, but perhaps not in this position by the time of Adrianople.[105] Even so, the *Life of Isaac* calls Saturninus by the title *magister* in 380/1 and his temporary position might well have been a permanent one by this date.[106] Unfortunately, we cannot be certain, especially as it is unlikely that the author of the life was using the term in any strict technical sense. Saturninus was able to withdraw from the slaughter of Adrianople and subsequently remained in favour in the east.[107] He was again *magister militum* in 382, appointed by Theodosius, and was rewarded with the consulship of 383 for his part in the settlement of the Gothic problem in 382.

Two other *magistri* of Valens, Iulius and Victor, were certainly in office at the start of Theodosius' reign but there is little evidence to show whether either remained in office long after his accession, or were present at the court, once Theodosius arrived in Constantinople at the end of 380. Victor, a Sarmatian by birth, had had an unusually long occupation of the post of *magister equitum*, apparently serving from the time he was promoted by Jovian in 363 until after the battle of Adrianople, an almost unheard of longevity, particularly in such an important military command. Before Adrianople, Victor had openly criticised Valens' decision to attack the Goths without waiting for Gratian's troops and called on him to stop his persecution of Nicenes. Later on that August day, it was Victor who went looking unsuccessfully for

105 *PLRE I,* Saturninus 10. A temporary assignment in the context of the Gothic war, on the basis of Amm. Marc., XXXI 8.3.
106 See Matthews, 130.
107 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.9.

the Batavian auxiliaries to bring them to Valens' succour during the battle.[108] Perhaps his piety saved him; at any rate he survived Adrianople, managing to withdraw his troops intact.[109] It was Victor who rode west to find Gratian and tell him of the catastrophe.[110] What happened to him after Adrianople is obscure but he was retired by 382/3 at the latest. The *Life of Isaac* calls him *magister* in the context of Theodosius' reception of Isaac in Constantinople, presumably in 381, but the date is not secure and the word probably not used with any technical meaning.[111]

Likewise, the fate of Iulius is obscure. The episode of the killing of the Gothic hostages in the east, for which he was responsible, took place after Adrianople. It occurred either in late 378, before the appointment of Theodosius as emperor according to Ammianus,[112] or after it in early 379 in Zosimus' version.[113] Paschoud observes that since "it is absolutely certain that Ammianus has not included in his work any event that occurred under Theodosius",[114] it is his chronology that is to be preferred to Zosimus'. Iulius' subsequent career is unknown; clearly he was neither rewarded nor condemned for his action. But his disappearance from office may indicate that his execution of the Goths in the east was the last throw of the dice for the conservatives who believed the only good Goth was a dead one. Theodosius' policies and attitudes were very different, and representatives of the more intolerant policy that had prevailed under Valentinian I were not in favour. The last appearance of Iulius in a source is in the context of a visit made by him, Victor and Sapor to the ailing Libanius in 381.[115]

The presence of Sapor on this visit to Libanius is interesting, since he is claimed to have been appointed *magister* in the east before the elevation of Theodosius; it is

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108 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.9.
109 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.9.
110 Zos., IV 24.3.
111 *V. Isaaci,* II 10. Cited and discussed in Matthews, 130. However, Greg. Naz., *Ep.* 133 in 382/3 also calls him *magister* when he was explicitly retired, so use of the term is not a good indication of current service.
112 Amm. Marc., XXXI 16.8.
113 Zos., IV 26.5-27.1.
114 F. Paschoud (ed.), *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle.* 3 vols, Paris 1971-1989, vol. ii.2 n. 154, 389.
115 Lib., *Or.* II.9.

possible but we simply do not know.[116] Iulius seems to have remained as *magister per Orientem* for some time after Adrianople and there does not seem to be room in the fasti to have Sapor as *magister* in the east in 378. The passage in Theodoret used to support the appointment date says nothing about Sapor's post.[117] Sapor, according to Theodoret, was given the task of restoring bishops to the sees. He might well have been given a special commission and post to carry out this task, but he may also have been appointed to the post of *magister*, for his Persian name could suggest a past which made him suitable to oversee affairs on the Roman-Persian front in light of the recent hastily concluded peace.

What of Maiorianus? The only evidence for his occupation of the office of *magister*, is Sidonius' panegyric on his alleged grandson, the emperor Maiorianus. From this it is usually inferred that Maiorianus was *magister utriusque militiae* in Illyricum from early 379, appointed by Theodosius,[118] but he remains an otherwise obscure figure—unknown to any other source. His presence at Aquincum in Sidonius' poem has been taken to imply that all of Illyricum had been transferred to Theodosius' control in 379.[119]

379

The eastern incumbent of the post of *comes domesticorum* in 379 is unknown, but might possibly have been Richomer. This office was especially important because the occupant headed the Emperor's personal bodyguard. Richomer, a Frank, was western *comes domesticorum* in 377 when he was sent east by Gratian with troops to aid Valens against the Goths. He was present at Adrianople, still as *comes domesticorum* (though whether he commanded any western troops in the battle is doubtful), and managed to survive the defeat.[120] Since all Richomer's subsequent posts were held in the east it is likely that Gratian, or perhaps Theodosius, appointed him as eastern

116 In *PLRE I,* Sapores.
117 Theod., *HE*, V 2-3.
118 Sid. Ap., *Carm.* V 107-112.
119 See for example, Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 23.
120 Amm. Marc., XXXI 13.9.

comes domesticorum after Adrianople. Theodosius would have required the post to be filled, and we know of another western *comes domesticorum* in 378, Mallobaudes, so it is entirely plausible that Richomer retained the position he had held in the west, but in the east under Theodosius.[121] This post was "often the stepping-stone to the mastership of the soldiers"[122] and Richomer, appointed *magister equitum* by 383, is evidence to support this assessment of the significance of the position. In 384 Richomer was rewarded for his service and loyalty with the position of consul, sharing the consulate with Clearchus, *praefectus urbis Constantinopolitanae*.

What is most interesting about Richomer, and gives particular significance to his obvious influence in the eastern court, is that he is a Frank who transfers himself and his 'cultural baggage' from the west to the east. His career in the east is a precedent for the careers of some Goths which parallel the achievements of Richomer and other Franks in the west. The point is that under Valens there seems to have been a relative absence of Germans in high command (the only 'barbarian' being the Sarmatian Victor). Richomer's presence with Bauto/Arbogastes, brings to the east the model for barbarian input which could be extended to Goths, like Modares, who were now beginning to have a major rôle in the eastern high command. As a Frank acculturated by Rome, Richomer serves as a model for the possibilities of a new type of relationship between Goths and east Romans (see Modares below). He represents a new type of barbarian in a position of great influence in the imperial court in the east, held in high esteem by the 'old' Romans and by emperors. Note the earlier high profile of Franks/Alamans at the court of Constantius after his defeat of Magnentius. We might see in Richomer, Bauto, Arbogastes (nephew of Richomer), and Modares, among others, the formation of a Romanised barbarian clique high in favour, well-connected to, and respected by, Roman governing circles. Connections between this putative group and Romans, both in the army and in the Roman nobility, although not particularly well-attested, do exist. One example is that between Promotus, *cos.*

121 If Richomer and Mallobaudes were both western *comites domesticorum* in 378, as Ammianus seems to imply, then this might well be the first evidence for the splitting of the *domestici* into *equites* and *pedites* at a date much earlier than is normally assumed (ie. early fifth century).

122 Jones, 143.

389, a Roman who rose through the ranks of the army, and Bauto whose daughter, the future wife of Arcadius, was living in Promotus' household in 395. Richomer, too, was well-connected with the 'old' Roman aristocracy especially, and perhaps unexpectedly given that he was based in the eastern court, with senators at Rome. Symmachus received consular gifts from Richomer, and he in turn received the rhetorician Eugenius at Constantinople, as a protégé of Symmachus. Eugenius was subsequently promoted to a western court office on the recommendation of Richomer.[123]

There was another potential, non-Roman, influence on Theodosius in 379, in the person of a non-Roman military commander in a senior military command, Hormisdas. He was the son of another Hormisdas who had deserted from Persia to Rome in 324 and had served under Constantine, Constantius, and Julian. The younger Hormisdas had been proconsul of Asia under the usurper Procopius, and had displayed notable military ability, coming close to beating Valens at Thyatira in 366.[124] His support for Procopius did not harm his career, at least under Theodosius, but we know of no post under Valens, so his is probably another resurrected career. Early in Theodosius' reign Hormisdas held a military command over a barbarian unit, possibly as *comes rei militaris*.[125] Intermediary military commanders, like Modares and Hormisdas might well have been very influential with the young Theodosius, especially those who were at the court, even if not holding posts as senior as *magister*. We may infer from the survival of the attachment of Hormisdas' name to property in Constantinople (if indeed it alludes to this Hormisdas), that he remained a person of some influence in the east.[126]

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123 N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: church and court in a Christian capital*, Berkeley 1994, 168. Even if the gift-giving was exploratory, as McLynn suggests in n. 40, it is significant as an indication of the acceptance of a non-Roman within the traditional circles of power and influence. The appointment of Eugenius speaks volumes for the influence of Richomer at both courts.

124 Zos., IV 8.1.

125 *PLRE* I, Hormisdas 3.

126 Mentioned in Matthews, 119, citing R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine: développement urbain et répertoire topographique*, Paris (1964), 358f.

To summarise, none of the military office holders in 379 whose names we know were appointed by Theodosius, except possibly for the completely obscure Maiorianus. All the others of whom we know were appointees of either Gratian or Valens in the first instance. This was sensible if nothing else. Theodosius had been away from the circles of power for some time between 375 and his appointment to a military command in 377 (if Errington is right) or 378/9 in the traditional view, indeed might have been made emperor for this very reason. His relative unfamiliarity with the court and potential office holders suggests that Gratian made these first appointments himself out of necessity. This happened whatever Theodosius' feelings in the matter and because in some cases continuity with Valens' appointments was not desired. Maiorianus may, however, have been known to him from his prior appointments.

380

The year 380 was spent consolidating the Roman military position in Thrace, with some military successes, probably of a minor nature. There was little change in the ranks of the military office holders in this year, apart from the appearance of Modares. We know very little about Modares, certainly not the time of his transfer to the Empire, except that he was of Gothic origin.[127] Zosimus says he was a member of the Scythian royal family who had recently come over to Rome and been appointed as a military commander (στρατηγός) because of his loyalty.[128] The dating is uncertain but Zosimus places the episode involving Modares at the same time as Theodosius was in Thessalonica, so in late 379 or the first half of 380. Such an instantaneous promotion as that implied by Zosimus is not only unlikely but also unparalleled. Possibly, Modares entered the Empire and joined the army following Athanaric's desertion by the majority of his followers in 376; thus he could have been in the Roman army for about 3-4 years before the military successes reported in

127 *PLRE I*, Modares.
128 Zos., IV 25.

Zosimus.[129] The position of Modares and his possible influence on Theodosius assume even more interest in the context of the reception of Athanaric in Constantinople in very early 381. Modares was possibly related to Athanaric and, whether *magister* or not, he was in a strong position to have his voice heard by Theodosius. The reception of Athanaric, a public expression of a policy towards barbarians that had never before been seen in the Empire, could well have been a result of Modares' influence as well as being a statement by Theodosius of his new Gothic foreign policy. The real significance of this should not be overlooked. If true, and there is certainly strong circumstantial evidence to suggest it is, then it is the first example we have of a Roman emperor taking advice from a Goth. In this, Modares probably represents the first expression of a new confidence in Gothic relations with Rome and the first appearance of a Goth in a position of equivalent influence to that of other Germans, such as the Franks Merobaudes and Bauto in the west and Richomer in the east.

Bauto, another Frank, makes his appearance in the east at this time, even if not permanently, and if not in 380 then by early in 381. It has been suggested that Bauto was appointed *magister* in Illyricum in 380 on the basis of Zosimus IV 33.1,[130] but Zosimus, as we know, is bedevilled by chronological uncertainty and Heather argues convincingly for 381 as the date of this appointment and Bauto's subsequent actions in the east (see below).[131] Bauto's career prior to his first appearance in Zosimus is unknown. He was sent to the east by Gratian, in company with Arbogastes, to deal with the military situation in eastern Illyricum which Theodosius seemed unable to control.[132] He might have been *magister militum* in western Illyricum or, like Arbogastes, *comes rei militaris* under Gratian, but once in the east he seems to have held the position of Theodosius' *magister* in Illyricum. Zosimus praises his military

129 Discussed by Heather, 189-90, who argues that Modares, being of the "Scythian royal family", was closely tied to Athanaric. Paschoud, *Zosime*, vol. ii.2, 388, concludes that "on peut admettre que Modarès a obtenu officiellement le grade de *magister militum*".

130 *PLRE I,* Bauto.

131 Heather, 155.

132 Zos., IV.33.1.

qualities, and he was successful in forcing the Goths in Macedonia and Thessaly away from the western empire and further east into Thrace.[133] In 384 Bauto was operating out of Valentinian's court and earning the enmity of Maximus,[134] but his close friendship with Promotus—inferred from the presence of Bauto's daughter in the house of one of Promotus' sons in Constantinople[135]—suggests that he made his home in the east. His presence at Valentinian's court might well have been Theodosius' doing.[136]

381

Of the other *magistri* in 381, Sapor probably remained as *magister per Orientem* with Modares still *magister* in Thrace. If there were any praesental *magistri* we are uninformed about their names. This seems remarkable stability in office holding, considering that Theodosius by now will have 'settled' into his reign and might well have felt the need to begin imposing his own stamp on the eastern administration. Perhaps the early appointments were made with his agreement, even before his elevation. This is really quite uncertain, however. Interpreting the posts of Sapor and Modares involves much speculation and it would be surprising if Saturninus was not a praesental *magister*—but note that the whole structure of praesental and Thracian *magistri* is itself quite conjectural.

382

The year 382 was a crucial one for Romano-Gothic relations. In this year Saturninus, now appointed as *magister militum* (perhaps *per Thracias*?), finalised a peace treaty with the Tervingi. The 'Gothic problem' had reached a solution. Zosimus confuses the *receptio* of Athanaric and his subsequent death with the occasion of the treaty and fails to provide any details of what must have been delicate and drawn-out

133 Zos., IV.33.2.
134 Ambrose, *Ep.* 24.4.6.
135 Zos., V 3.2.
136 Of course the inference is highly speculative, even if plausible. We know little of Bauto's relationships (eg. his wife) and there is a long gap between Bauto's death in 385/388 and these events of 395.

negotiations.[137] Themistius' sixteenth oration is in the nature of a panegyric and says nothing of detailed substance.[138] There is a direct implication in Themistius that Saturninus was appointed in the same year the treaty was finalised.[139] Although no laws substantiate this, there is no reason to doubt that Saturninus became *magister militum per Thracias* in 382 replacing Modares.

In light of my interpretation of the significance of Richomer, Bauto, and Modares above, it is interesting to note the appearance of two more Germans as eastern *duces* at a slightly later date: Cariobaudes in Mesopotamia in the period 383-92; and Merobaudes in Egypt.[140] In this connection, Munderichus must also be included. Munderichus held some sort of position of influence under Athanaric before Adrianople. At some stage after this he served as *dux* on the Arabian frontier. It is tempting to see this appointment as the result of Athanaric's *receptio* in Constantinople in 380/381. All these men, Cariobaudes and the second Merobaudes along with Richomer, Munderichus, and Modares, are suggestive of the new type of relationship between Rome and Germans that was emerging in the east, following its successful appearance in the west. Processes of integration long evolving in the west were now being tried in the east. This had been brought about by the changing nature of the relationships on the lower Danube (perhaps best epitomised by the whole Athanaric scenario with its Modares connection), and because of the transfer of western military figures, especially Frankish chieftains, to the east.

To summarise, there was some continuity in eastern personnel, and a major transfer of personnel, both civilian and military, from the west to the east with consequent implications. As well, we can see that continuing strong connections remained between eastern and western governing circles.

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137 Zos., IV 35.5-6.
138 Them., *Or* 16.
139 Them., *Or.* 16 208b-c.
140 *PLRE I*, Cariobaudes and Merobaudes 1.

4

Making Roman foreign policy: processes and options

In a previous chapter I have tried to show that Roman losses at Adrianople were not as large as most modern commentators conclude, and that there was no enduring manpower shortage or recruiting crisis in the Roman eastern army. A subsequent chapter examined changes in the personnel of government to show that the order of the day was continuity in those in the important civil and military offices. In this section of the thesis I will discuss the making of foreign policy generally, in an attempt to demonstrate that Theodosius' Gothic policy was not an aberration and not the great innovation it is usually held to be, but fitted into the normal Roman foreign policy framework. Thus, I reject as a starting point views that paint Theodosius as the great destroyer of the Empire, as the emperor whose Gothic policy opened the floodgates which resulted in the sack of Rome and the dissolution of the western empire. This traditional judgment is that typified by R. C. Blockley, who puts the view that, taken with the debacle of Julian's Persian expedition,

> "the heavy losses suffered in the battle [of Adrianople]...called into question the wisdom of the traditional policy of dealing with foreign peoples mainly by confrontation on the field of battle. The reappraisal of policy that resulted, together with the pressure of circumstances in the years immediately after Adrianople, caused Theodosius I to initiate a radical change in the Roman Empire's approach to its foreign relations".[1]

This chapter generally will examine the framework of Roman foreign policy and how it dealt with foreigners. The individual sections examine a number of factors that

1 R. C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: formation and conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*, Leeds, 1992, 39.

affected the making and conduct of Roman foreign policy, specifically, information or intelligence, barbarian stereotypes and established policy practices.

Ask a fourth century Roman about the Empire's foreign policy and he would have looked at you as if you were crazy. The Roman Empire was not an ancient equivalent of a modern bureaucratic state, with separate offices responsible for advising legislators (ie. Emperors) about high-level policy issues. Policy decisions were made 'on the fly', and based on purely pragmatic considerations. The focus of this section will be the decisions made at court—which is not to deny that they were affected by the consequences of local decisions and not to presume that they are part of a **grand** strategy. I assume, then, that the court was responsible for choosing policies, whether *ad hoc* or in terms of more enduring goals over larger space or time spans, from a range of options, in accord with the factors that will be set out in the rest of this chapter.

Bureaucratic specialisation in the high offices was unusual and career bureaucrats could, and often did, hold successive office in areas as varied as legal advising, financial regulation, and army recruitment.[2] The existence of offices with such specific names as *magister ab epistulis* should not beguile us into thinking that such officials had fixed duties that in any way correspond to our idea of the activities of modern bureaucrats. We might expect that secretarial functions relating to foreign or diplomatic affairs were carried out by these officials but the sparse evidence suggests otherwise.[3] In fact there is no evidence for a specific rôle of any of the 'secretarial' *magistri*. Certainly there was no court official who was directly charged with responsibility for foreign policy, nor is there evidence that any of the bureaucratic *officia* were involved in foreign policy making or implementation, with the possible exception of the *magister officiorum*.[4]

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2 F. Millar, "Emperors, Frontiers and Foreign Relations, 31 BC to AD 378", *Britannia* XIII (1982), 1-23, is a critical reference for this issue.

3 Millar, "Emperors", 5.

4 Millar, "Emperors", 6, points out that if emperors did have secretarial officials concerned with military matters all trace of them has disappeared.

If any court official functioned as a 'minister for foreign affairs' it was the *magister officiorum*. The office of *magister officiorum* may have been an innovation of Constantine, since the first recorded *magister officiorum* was Heraclianus, to whom a law of 320 is addressed,[5] but the fact that the position existed in both parts of the Empire by 323/4 suggests its creation was earlier and very likely tetrarchic.[6] From the outset the *magister officiorum* regulated audiences with the emperor. The *magister officiorum* had a collection of other responsibilities, not least being his administrative and disciplinary control of the *scholae* and his position as head of the *agentes in rebus*. His power over audiences with the emperor extended to individuals, delegations and envoys from foreign states, for whom he supplied interpreters. It was in connection with his power to grant audiences to foreign envoys that his role in foreign affairs manifested itself and as a result the *magister officiorum* often served as ambassador in treaty negotiations with foreign powers.[7] Direct evidence for the performance of such duties does not appear in the sources prior to the fifth century so it is not possible to state with any certainty that the *magister officiorum* acted as de facto foreign minister during the fourth century.[8]

The major source of advice for an emperor when making decisions was the circle of advisers and office holders surrounding him. Policy decisions themselves, however, were ultimately the sole prerogative of the Emperor. The Senate's policy making days were long behind it by the fourth century, and more effective power lay with the consistory, the lineal descendant of the *consilium* of the Principate.[9] An emperor's consistory was a moveable feast - while there might have been a fixed nucleus of *ex officio* members, emperors could, and did, add to its numbers as and when they felt like it. Membership was fluid and mutable and, as it was "always dependent on the

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5 *CTh* XVI 10.1 (320). Jones, 103. John Lydus, *de mag* II.25 (quoting Peter the Patrician) knows Martinianus as the first *magister officiorum*, but Martinianus cannot be dated more securely than 323/4.

6 M. Clauss, *Der magister officiorum in der Spätantike (4.-6. Jahrhundert). Das Amt und sein Einfluss auf der kaiserliche Politik*, Munich, 1980, 12ff.

7 Jones, 103, 368-9.

8 A.D. Lee, *Information and frontiers. Roman foreign relations in late antiquity*, Cambridge, 1993, 41-2.

9 Millar, "Emperors", 4.

personal choice of the emperor", it can never have been rigid.[10] Since the consistory seems to have contained a large number of non-official members it is difficult to be certain about who was in or out at any one time. Generally, the sources do not find membership of the consistory significant enough to mention in connection with named individuals, which suggests, perhaps, that the very fluidity of membership meant it was impossible for anyone outside the Emperor's immediate circle to know who the members were. Thus, we cannot know with any certainty, indeed cannot even guess at, membership of the consistory outside the obvious *ex officio* nucleus on any particular occasion. The *ex officio* members are a significant enough group, even if the total membership of the body is uncertain, and even if *ex officio* membership was, itself, *ad hoc* rather than formalised.[11] The *ex officio* members usually accepted as part of the consistory in the late fourth century included the chief civilian ministers—*quaestor sacri palatii*, *magister officiorum*, *comes sacrarum largitionum*, *comes rei privatae*, and the praetorian prefects, presumably (like the *magistri utriusque militiae* after the creation of regional commands) only those based at court or where the court happened to be—as well as the important military officials, ie. *comes domesticorum*, and the *magistri militum praesentales*, and the *magister* of the region in which the Emperor happened to be.[12] In the late fourth century there is increasing use of non-official/traditional sources for advice. In particular, the reign of Theodosius saw the rise to prominence of a group of churchmen as advisers to the emperor, whether or not such advice-giving was so formalised as to be delivered or offered in sessions of the consistory.

In addition to the difficulty in establishing membership at any one time, it is not clear what role, if any, the consistory had in the making of foreign policy. It seems likely that policy was made directly by the emperor in consultation with particular advisers and officials. Consequently, policy will often have been dependent on whatever

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10 Jones, 332.

11 D. A. Graves, *Consistorium Domini: Imperial councils of state in the later Roman Empire*, unpub. Ph.D. thesis, City University of New York, 1973, 122.

12 Jones, 333.

clique or individual was in ascendancy in the court.[13] If a forceful personality or a dominant clique was able to maintain its position in the consistory we could expect to see consistency in foreign policy over time. Thus, if an examination of office holders under a particular emperor reveals continuity of office bearers with the previous emperor we might expect to notice also consistency in policy decisions or approaches. Even so, Emperors' power was absolute and they could, and did, make decisions without first consulting the consistory.[14] Nevertheless, the consistory had an important and significant rôle in giving advice and providing information, and strong and forceful personalities within the consistory could effect policy changes and decisions.

The above discussion shows that the conduct of foreign policy at Rome was not centrally administered or coordinated in the way that modern governments and bureaucracies run their affairs. This does not mean, necessarily, that successive Roman emperors did not follow a consistent and rational foreign policy. Luttwak has argued influentially for the existence of a centralised 'grand strategy' in Roman foreign/frontier policy that informed the decisions of Roman emperors from the first century A.D. to the third.[15] Luttwak's study is insightful and systematic, but, as has been pointed out, it is grounded in the secondary literature, accepting its *a priori* assumptions, and is not based on a direct examination of the ancient sources.[16] Despite the lucid arguments of Luttwak, there is no strong evidence that Roman emperors or administrations thought about foreign/frontier policy in the systematic and consistent manner he would have us accept, or that adequate infrastructure existed to allow them to do so. Nothing like consistent policy or strategic direction in foreign policy across successive administrations can be shown to have existed at a

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13 Blockley, 135.

14 Millar, "Emperors", 7: "immediate tactical, strategic and diplomatic decisions by the Emperor could only be taken on the spot wherever he and his entourage were...whatever advice he received, these decisions were taken by the Emperor in person". Jones, 333-341, has a full discussion of the rôle and composition of the consistory.

15 E. N. Luttwak, *The grand strategy of the Roman Empire, from the first century AD to the third*, Baltimore, 1976.

16 B. Isaac, *The limits of empire. The Roman army in the East*, rev. edn., Oxford, 1992, 5.

high level in the Roman bureaucracy.[17] Roman politics and the operation of policy were pragmatic to a fault. A tactic that had been shown to work remained in use until its failure in practice forced a re-think and a change in policy direction. In practical terms there was no such thing as an ongoing 'Roman foreign policy' that was consistently applied or that formed the basis for future decision making. In many cases strategic foreign policy was decided and executed by local military commanders without reference to the central bureaux except *ex post facto*. This is not to say that high-level policy decisions were not made at the imperial courts, or that those decisions were not equally as *ad hoc* as those made by commanders on the ground, but we may accept that some form of central decision making and policy direction existed without having to adopt the whole of Luttwak's position. The decisions made by an emperor were informed and influenced by his knowledge of what had been done and what had worked in the past, but we do not need to see them as guided by an ongoing 'grand strategy' that influenced and constrained imperial decision making across the centuries. And we must not forget the always important place of an imperialist ideology that influenced the normal presentation of a pragmatic foreign policy, whatever the actuality of that policy.

Information/Intelligence

Central to any process of decision making, wherever decisions were made and whoever the protagonists, is the information available to emperors and their advisers. As Lee has pointed out "access to information is a crucial determinant of political power generally", and crucial to decisions about external relations.[18] An important factor affecting the ease with which information or intelligence could travel or be gathered across the lines of demarcation which mark frontiers, was the actual nature of those frontiers. What was happening on the frontiers (however or wherever

17 Isaac's book (previous note) is a sustained and credible argument for this viewpoint. However, E. Wheeler, "Methodological limits and the mirage of Roman strategy", *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993), 7-41 and 215-240, has argued recently in favour of Luttwak's views and against the revisionist approach of both Isaac and Whittaker.

18 Lee, *Information*, 1, citing R. Wirsing, "Political power and information a cross-cultural study", *American Anthropologist* 75 (1973), 155-6.

delineated) was of crucial strategic significance for intelligence gathering and the use that could be made of that intelligence. By the middle of the fourth-century some frontiers were becoming more yielding and more permeable, allowing more cross-frontier movement to take place. The nature of these changes and the relationship between Roman and non-Roman across the frontier zone is a significant, and often underestimated, factor which influenced intelligence gathering and, hence, policy making.

It is traditional to regard frontiers as fixed boundaries, separating 'us' from 'them', keeping the in-group together, excluding the out-group, ensuring that the civilised on one side were not infected by the uncivilised on the other. Roman ideology reinforces these assumptions about the place of frontiers in the world. It was, after all, Aelius Aristides, a Romanised Greek who wrote that "an encamped army, like a rampart, encloses the civilised world in a ring".[19] But this is public rhetoric of a particular ideology, made, perhaps, to justify the inactivity of Hadrian and his like-minded successor Antoninus Pius.[20] There is nothing new in the assumption that frontiers were fixed boundaries keeping one group of people away from another group who were deemed—or identified as—inferior because of their existence beyond the frontier. In particular the Roman frontiers are often perceived to be what kept apart the 'civilised' Roman and the 'uncivilised' barbarian. A later view of the wall around the Empire, written from a fourth century perspective, saw it as a mechanism to separate (*dividere*) the barbarians from Romans.[21] But in fact, the reality, and more contemporary perceptions of that reality, were quite different. Aelius Aristides contradictorily praises Rome because "you recognise no fixed boundaries nor does another dictate to what point your control is reached".[22] The reality was more complex than we usually assume, and frontiers themselves were becoming an increasingly fluid concept in the fourth century.

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19 Ael. Arist., *Ad Rom.*, 82.
20 Whittaker, 37.
21 *Historia Augusta*, Hadrian, XI 2.
22 Ael. Arist., *Ad Rom.* 10.

Far from being established because of strategic or tactical considerations, frontiers merely demonstrate where the Roman army ran out of steam. In this sense frontiers are indicative of the failure of the Roman ideological drive for expansion.[23] Frontiers, thus, establish the zone of economic and ecological limits to imperial expansion but were not the *cordon sanitaire* they are often imagined to be by modern commentators.[24] Increasingly, the continuous flow of trade and individuals across and through the frontier zones ensured that parts of the zone on either side of the frontier line came to resemble each other more closely than they did the hinterlands on either side of the zone. This gradual process of assimilation of those living near the borders meant that "in the end it was unclear who were the barbarians and who were the Romans".[25] This increasing blurring of the boundaries suggests that it became less and less important which side of the frontier or frontier zone the barbarians were settled. This has crucial ramifications for the context in which Roman foreign policy was derived.

In a recent modern study of Roman frontiers C. R. Whittaker has concluded that "the frontiers were imprecise, more zonal than linear, despite the illusion of walls".[26] In this incisive work Whittaker makes the point that, far from being fixed, natural lines of demarcation, "frontiers are, and always were, ethnically confused."[27] The Rhine and the Danube in continental Europe, the deserts in Arabia and Africa, the wall in Britain, did not serve to keep Romans and barbarians apart but primarily to control transhumance (in the desert zones in particular) and economic activity, so as to ensure that Rome obtained her fair share (and often more!) of the commerce that flowed continuously between the empire and those outside it. The frontiers were not fixed lines but shifting zones of ambiguity. Rome had long encouraged the controlled "immigration" of border tribes into the Empire and the differences between those on

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23 Whittaker, 64. Whittaker acknowledges that this is a paraphrase of a point made some time ago by J. C. Mann in his article "The Frontiers of the Principate" in H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt*, Berlin, 1972 - , II. 1:508-31.

24 Whittaker, 85. In this Whittaker agrees with Owen Lattimore's similar conclusions about imperial China.

25 Whittaker, 130, 133.

26 Whittaker, 8.

27 Whittaker, 62.

'barbarian' side of rivers such as the Rhine and Danube, and those on the Roman side had decreased.

It is in this context that we must consider the actual practical processes of intelligence gathering within and across the frontier zones. What evidence there is shows that the formal gathering of intelligence was a remarkably haphazard pastime and, when done consciously, directed towards specific immediate ends. The journey of Ammianus to Corduene to discover the line of march of the Persian army is a typical example of such short-term aims,[28] and the mission of Hariobaudes across the Rhine to gather information about the plots of the Alamanni, is evidence of similar activities on the northern frontier.[29] By and large, it was military commanders at the frontiers who made most efforts to collect military intelligence and such *ad hoc* activities cannot have been directed from the emperor's court. Nor will they have been centrally guided by any highly developed empire-wide strategic policy or *mandata* communicated to local *duces* and *comites* beforehand.

The actual amount of explicit and implicit intelligence gathering reported by Ammianus for the eastern frontier, and on the Rhine and upper/middle Danube is remarkable.[30] Hariobaudes' mission, mentioned above, is one example. The apparent ease with which Charietto crossed the Rhine into hostile territory in order to capture an Alaman, is another.[31] A relative absence in Ammianus of such activities on the lower Danube might reflect Ammianus' particular sources and interests, but might also reflect a different nature of the frontier where Goths and Romans interacted with each other. Some semi-official intelligence will have reached the emperor and his officials through the medium of embassies from rulers outside the empire, but such an avenue was not controlled by emperors or their military commanders and the resulting information only irregular and uncoordinated. In any case, ambassadorial traffic between Rome and the Goths was in no way equal to the number of embassies

28 Amm. Marc., XVIII 6.20-2. See Blockley, 132.
29 Amm. Marc., XVIII 2.2. Lee, *Information*, 172.
30 Lee, *Information*, 171: "The history of Ammianus Marcellinus includes many references to intelligence-gathering activities".
31 Amm. Marc., XVII 10.5.

between Rome and Persia, and it does not appear that embassies from the north were ever an important source for information about the tribes across the Rhine and upper/middle Danube.[32] Ambassadorial traffic across the lower Danube is little recorded for the fourth century, and the behaviour of Athanaric when signing a treaty with Valens in 369 might suggest why, without explaining it—Goths usually would not enter the empire in this period except as raiders.

Less formal mechanisms for the collection of information existed, and cross-frontier movement that was not based in state sponsored activities is the most obvious. In the east more or less regular movement of pilgrims, students, priests, merchants and mercenaries across the border between Rome and Persia meant the existence, for Rome, of a number of informal sources for information about activities in Persia (and vice-versa of course).[33] The experience of the hermit Malchus in the mid-fourth century confirms the interest of the military in gleaning information from such cross-border movement in the east.[34] Such cross-border movements were less common, certainly less noticeable in some ways, across the northern frontiers on the Rhine and upper/middle Danube for a number of reasons, but did occur and were probably quite significant. Clearly, there were major barriers of language and religion that did not exist to the east to the same extent. Christian cross-border traffic in the fourth century was less significant than in the east or in the north at a later time, and the obvious frontier zone interaction to the north of the Empire will have been largely confined to mercenaries and merchants.[35] The nature of the intelligence gathered through these types of contacts, especially that of mercenaries, will have been more important than that collected from students, pilgrims and priests—the best type of 'spying' comes from those who live the lives of those about whose culture and actions information is being gathered, not from those passing through. But of course, this sort of intelligence went both ways—double agents did exist in the ancient world. There were other strategies for cross-border contacts and relations on the Rhine and upper

32 Lee, *Information*, 169.
33 Lee, *Information*, 161-2.
34 Jerome, *Vita Malachi*, 10; Lee, *Information*, 165.
35 Lee, *Information*, 72-8.

Danube, most obviously the continuing presence of northern barbarians in the Roman army, particularly Franks and Alamans. Recruiting of barbarians by Roman military outposts in *barbaricum*,[36] or the movement of such barbarians into the Empire across these riverine frontiers in order to sign up for military service, will have enabled an ongoing flow of information, however narrow its focus. When it comes to the lower Danube there is a quantitative difference in the amount of evidence for such movements. The presence of Goths in the Roman armies was not particularly significant numerically until the late fourth century,[37] and the cross-border movements that were a feature of the eastern frontier and, to a lesser extent, the Rhine and upper Danube, were much less a feature on the lower Danube. The archaeological evidence shows that this frontier, the one that we assume to have been under most pressure in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, did not dissolve but lasted intact into the seventh century.[38] Thus, it seems that for systemic reasons, information gathering on the lower Danube, the *ripa Gothica*, was even harder than in other areas of the northern frontiers. For this reason we cannot be sure of the impact knowledge of the Huns had on Roman perceptions of their relationships with barbarians across the lower Danube. The Huns were a new factor in the equation in the later fourth century but we are not able to tell how or what knowledge of the Huns came to Rome. It may be, however, that Roman policy towards the Goths from 376 on was dependent on less than accurate and precise Roman knowledge of the Huns and what they were doing north of the Danube.

In essence then, the actual information which reached an emperor from the frontiers was largely dependent on "the interests and objectives of persons...beyond the Empire, or on the presumptions of governors or military commanders on the

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36 Whittaker, 179, identifies the presence of Roman military outposts north of the middle Danube. Such men might have been actively engaged in recruiting and information gathering and might have had contact with the regions across from the lower Danube. Lee, *Information*, 25ff.

37 There is no Goth before the time of Theodosius in the tabulation in R. MacMullen, *Corruption and the decline of Rome*, New Haven, 1988, 199-201, if one excludes Alica (who commanded Gothic auxiliaries helping Licinius in 324) and Arinthaeus (whose presumed Gothic origin is unrecorded and extremely unlikely).

38 Whittaker, 183.

frontiers".[39] Both formal and informal mechanisms for information gathering existed, and these were to some extent interdependent.[40] As well, the slowness of communication and travel meant that there was a danger that information would be out of date and irrelevant before it reached the right ears.[41] However, it is important not to over-emphasise the significance of the slowness of travel. Travel times applied equally to individuals as to armies, and such things as army preparation and movements will have been apparent to observers well before an army was ready to travel. In such circumstances, travel times might not have been such a hindrance to the collection of timely information about troop and army movements.[42] Despite the lack of one of those 'secret services' to gather information and intelligence which are a feature of nearly all modern states, the Roman empire had a number of means for getting good information when it had the time and felt the need to gather it. Useful intelligence, then, was gathered and used by Rome when and as necessary, and was clearly a significant factor in military and foreign policy decision making, even if on occasion issues of timeliness and comprehensiveness limited its effectiveness.

Roman foreign policy itself was directly concerned with the relationships between Rome and those peoples not within the Empire.[43] In essence, particularly on the Rhine and Danube, foreign policy was policy about and for the frontiers, and this made it very much a policy about the use of the army within and beyond those frontiers. The Roman army was at one and the same time an information source for foreign policy decision-making, and the instrument for carrying out those policy decisions. This is not to suggest that there was no rôle for diplomacy, in its sense of

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39 Millar, "Emperors", 21.

40 Lee, *Information*, 182.

41 As Elton, 178, comments, "urgent information would often be weeks old by the time it reached the Emperor, routine information older still".

42 See Lee, *Information*, 163.

43 See Isaac, *Limits*, 394-401, for a persuasive discussion of the idea that Rome's view of her Empire was based on control of peoples rather than territory *per se*.

the carrying out of foreign policy through state-to-state negotiations,[44] but the main instrument for implementing Roman foreign policy was always the army.

Barbarian stereotypes

In the relative absence of 'hard' facts or intelligence about those over the borders who were interacting with, or likely to threaten, the Roman state, stereotypes form a larger part of the presentation of policy. In particular, Roman stereotypes of barbarians set up a discourse of polarity that established the possibility of determining policy responses towards barbarians based on their "otherness". However, we must remember that barbarian stereotypes are part of multiple discourses about difference, no single one of which is necessarily dominant in foreign policy. When it comes to the actual making of decisions about foreign policy the discourse is discordant, and it may have played a more significant role in presenting rather than in determining foreign policy.

The word barbarian, borrowed as it was from the Greeks, came with all the baggage of self-definition the word had come to hold for the Greeks. For the Greeks the opposition of Greek and barbarian was a reflection of polarities: civilisation and primitivism, order and chaos, "observance of law and taboo" and transgression.[45] The latinised form of the word first appears in Plautus,[46] and thus seems to have been an early borrowing from Greek. By the time of Cicero the word is being used to describe anyone—even another Roman—whose character and behaviour appeared uncivilized, ignorant, rude, even savage.[47] Perhaps this is the primary meaning of the word for Roman writers—as a signifier of a lack of civilisation.

As indicated by Cicero's application of the word, and as Walter Goffart has perceptively argued, 'barbarousness' was not a fixed category but a social

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44 The definition is from S. P. Duggan, "The Fundamentals in a Scientific Study of International Relations", in E. A. Walsh (ed.), *The history and nature of international relations*, New York, 1922, cited in Blockley, 1.

45 E. Hall, *Inventing the barbarian. Greek self-definition through tragedy*, Oxford, 1989, 51.

46 Plaut., *Rudens*, 2.7.25.

47 For example Cicero, *Balb.* 19.43; *Verr.* 2.4.50 and 112; and many other references.

construction, otherwise it would not have been applied to such diverse peoples as Jews, Dacians, Persians, and Vandals. Thus, to quote Goffart, the term is "a contrast term, basically signifying 'the other, the not-us'; it could be used neutrally as well as pejoratively".[48]

Over the course of the four centuries after Cicero the word barbarian was widely and indiscriminately used of just about every non-Roman people. By contrast with this non-specific use of the term, Tacitus, while not obviating the civilised/uncivilised dichotomy uses the contrast between the so called civilisation of Romans and the uncivilised barbarians to castigate the degenerate behaviour of those who believed themselves to be civilised Romans.[49] Tacitus is, however, atypical. More typical of the general literary approach of the second century is Lucian, whose writings about the eastern wars of Lucius Verus in the 160s often refers to the Parthians as barbarians.[50] It is an interesting fact that Lucian was from Samosata on the Roman/Parthian border, and his attitudes are shaped by the Latin/Greek and Roman/Persian tensions in his world.

A further second-century development, related to the world-view encapsulated in Hadrian's approach to foreign policy is the categorisation of the world evident in Aelius Aristides' *Roman Oration*. Aristides declares that "beyond the outermost ring of the civilised world you [i.e. Rome the state] drew a second line...an encamped army, like a rampart, encloses the civilized world in a ring".[51] Aelius proposes a new structural dichotomy for the world, separating it into Romans, that is those who are part of the civilised world, and non-Romans, those who live outside the civilised world. It is clear that Aelius is really only applying new labels to categories he, as a Greek, would hitherto have labelled Greeks and barbarians. Here, there is the old equating of 'civilised' with Rome and 'uncivilised' with barbarian (non-Roman).

48 W. Goffart, "The theme of 'the barbarian invasions' in late Antique and modern historiography" in E.K. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (eds.), *Das reich und die Barbaren*, Köln, 1989, 96.

49 In particular see Tacitus, *Germania* 19: "There is no arena with its seductions, no dinner tables with their provocations to corrupt them...good habits have more force with them than good laws elsewhere".

50 For example, Lucian, *How to Write History*, XII.

51 Ael. Arist., *Ad Rom.*, 81-82.

What is new in Aristides is the view that those who are outside the civilised world were there because they had been refused entry by Rome.[52] Such people, as Appian contemporaneously and contemptuously pointed out, were to be pitied because of their utter worthlessness as "poverty stricken and profitless tribes of barbarians".[53] The empire had rejected them, since it was not worth its while to take them in. Whether this was true is not the issue—what is significant is the attitude revealed in these words and the use of such attitudes to present and justify a particular foreign policy option.

Uses of the word barbarian typified by Aelius Aristides and Appian epitomise the barbarian as the outsider ignorant of the benefits of Roman civilisation and certain to stay that way. But there was always an element of hostility bound up with the concept barbarian that is not revealed by this restructuration. Aristides and Appian were Greeks, citizens of a Roman world empire, yet always Greek, despite a lifetime of exposure to Roman ways.[54] As such, their re-conceptualisation of the world into civilisation (Rome) and the rest (barbarians) was only representative of one way of viewing the empire of the principate. This view has, perhaps, been over-emphasised as consistent with a retreat from the ideology of expansion inherent in Hadrian's rejection of military activity, Antoninus Pius' disinterest in the army, and Marcus Aurelius' soul searching about the intolerable burden of his duties as emperor. As I have tried to show elsewhere,[55] Hadrian and Antoninus Pius are not exemplars for Roman foreign policy but merely indicators that a certain ideological option had come to the fore. The foreign wars of Marcus Aurelius, despite his angst, and Lucius Verus, and Septimius Severus, all show that the pendulum had swung back, and an ideology of expansion held sway once again.

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52 Ael. Arist., *Ad Rom.*, 63.

53 Appian, *Roman History*, 7.

54 G. Woolf, "Becoming Roman, staying Greek", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994), 128, argues that the Greeks remained Greeks and did not feel that their identity was threatened because they adopted aspects of Roman material culture.

55 A. C. Wilson, *Image and Ideology: Roman imperialism and frontier policy in the second century AD*, unpublished MA thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1992.

Still, barbarian was used to signify anyone whose *Weltanschauung* was different from whoever was using the term. Thus, barbarian, as an epithet, could be applied to a whole raft of differences. Most obviously, it was applied to all manner of habits and practices that differentiate one person, one tribe, from another. Language of course, was a traditional way of categorising people. It was their common tongue that made the diverse communities of the Hellenes Greek, and originally, of course, the Greeks defined barbarians as anyone who did not speak Greek. The us-them dichotomy was thus established originally as a language divide. Echoes of such use of the word still appear as late as the fifth century when Sidonius Apollinaris tells Arbogastes (descendant of that Arbogastes who was *magister militum* of Valentinian II) "you speak the true Latin of the Tiber: you are intimate with the barbarians but are free of barbarisms...",[56] or in a similar vein when Sidonius tells Syagrius that in his presence the barbarian is afraid to commit a barbarism in his own language.[57]

Other cultural traits are shared by those who are classed as barbarians. They dress differently from Romans and Greeks; thus Priscus can say of a stranger that he was "someone whom I took to be a barbarian from his Scythian dress...".[58] Barbarians have no musical or poetic sense: Sidonius refers to the barbarian thrumming (*barbaricis plectris*) of the Burgundians, and claims the Muse (Thalia) has spurned the six-footed metre since she saw the seven foot high patrons.[59] Barbarians are savage;[60] they are treacherous and faithless: "the perfidious designs of the barbarians";[61] "that pliant and treacherous race of barbarians.[62] More tellingly, perhaps, barbarians do not understand the rule of law: "the Goths, by reason of their unbridled barbarism, could not by any means obey laws...".[63] These are differences of culture.

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56 Sid. Ap., *Ep.* IV.17.
57 *barbarus barbarismum*: Sid. Ap., *Ep.* V.5.3.
58 Priscus, 11.2 l. 407.
59 Sid. Ap., *Carm.* XII, lines 9-11.
60 Ambrose, *Ep.* LXI.1: "the cruelty of a barbarian robber".
61 Ambrose, *Ep.* XL.22.
62 *Pan. Lat.* X.11.4.
63 Orosius, *Hist.*, VII.43. This statement is part of a longer, exceptionally interesting, passage put into the mouth of Athaulf, explaining why he changed his aim from establishing Gothia within Romania

Religion was another significant way in which barbarians differed from Romans, as was becoming clear by the last quarter of the fourth century. During the debate between Ambrose and Symmachus over the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the Senate at Rome, Ambrose states that "this alone was common to me with the barbarians, that of old I knew not God".[64] Even more significant is the contemptuous reference in a letter of Gregory of Nazianzus, to a Bishop of Armenia, Eustathius, as a "downright barbarian" because he followed the Arian rather than Nicene doctrine.[65] Here, in the words of the impractical Gregory, is an extreme equation of barbarian with everyone who was not a Nicene Catholic.

In fact, the contempt of a Nicene for an Arian bishop displayed by Gregory is part of a general trend of exclusion within the dominant culture apparent by the later fourth century. In this process of redefinition of the identity Roman, the term barbarian came to be equated with those who did not share the culture, political institutions, and religion of the Roman 'world state'. In other words barbarians were outsiders of any description, whose particular 'otherness' depended on context. In some contexts these barbarians were *hostes*, those who fought against the state, but in the fluid foreign policy context of the late fourth century this status could, and did, change with some regularity.

As Whittaker has capably demonstrated it became more and more difficult to tell Roman and barbarian apart in the frontier zones. And it was in just these zones on both sides of any "border", where no clear demarcation lines existed, that many of the 'barbarians' were settled. With barbarian troops also stationed in towns and cities in the frontier hinterlands it is feasible that the process of assimilation whereby Romans and barbarians became indistinguishable from one another went on in areas far removed from the frontiers. Barbarian is used too loosely today to be able to

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to one of "restoring and increasing the Roman name by the forces of the Goths". This is a telling statement about the difference between Romans and non-Romans that reinforces the notion that the aim of those Goths within the empire was to become Roman. See also E. A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians. The decline of the Western empire*, Madison, 1982, 45-46.

64 Ambrose, *Ep.* XVIII.7.

65 Greg. Naz., *Ep.* LXII.

describe those outside the empire in any meaningful way. As Whittaker points out the word barbarian has too many overtones of a struggle between civilised Romans and uncivilised intruders to be useful in disentangling the complexities of cross-border relations in the later fourth century.[66]

It seems doubtful that we can approach the question of a proper definition of the word that renders it useful to describe Romans and non-Romans in the late fourth century. It is, perhaps, more pragmatic to adopt the simple meaning of barbarian given by Whittaker (and implicit in many discussions of the late empire) as merely an indicative term for peoples outside the formal administrative frontiers of the empire. Of course such a definition fails to account for Roman attitudes to groups settled within the frontiers of the empire who continued to be referred to as barbarians, nor does it allow for the continuing acculturation of non-Romans in the frontier zones beyond the administrative boundaries of the empire. But these are wider issues about a discourse of otherness that, in the end, cannot have been a major contributing factor to foreign policy decision making, whatever their place in the presentation of decisions once they had been made.

Foreign policy practices

Rome had always exercised the option of choosing to make war or not. As W. V. Harris has so clearly demonstrated for the Republic, the choice of war was motivated more often than not by the aggressive desire for territorial expansion which was "one of the overriding and persistent aims of...external policy".[67] If this mind set operated in 70 B.C., as Harris argues, there is no good reason to suppose it disappeared suddenly from the aristocratic ethos at Rome, even after the establishment of the Principate. Despite the belief of many scholars, Augustus was by no means the last of the Roman imperialists, whatever the shock of the *clades Variana* in 9 A.D. Indeed, assessment of post-Augustan external policy has placed too much emphasis on the loss of Varus' three legions and the consequent *consilium coercendi intra terminos*

66 Whittaker, 132.
67 W. V. Harris, *War and imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.*, Oxford, 1979, 105.

imperii. Over the course of the first and second centuries, Roman foreign policy was still influenced by an ongoing belief in Rome's destiny to world rule, and dependent on the persistent functioning of an ideology of expansion in Roman imperial politics.[68] Even in peace time in this period, an overtly martial imagery of emperors, as portrayed in coin issues, was the rule rather than the exception, and reinforces the ongoing place of ideas of externally directed military aggression in the functional ideology of imperial rule. Military glory, actual or symbolic, remained a desirable aim for Roman emperors.[69] Aggressive expansion was not the only option available to Roman emperors, and not the only strategy evident in foreign policy under the Empire. There was a dichotomy in approaches to Roman external policy at least during the first two centuries of the principate. But the aberrations are those emperors, such as Hadrian and Commodus, who chose not to pursue the expansionist option and focussed their foreign policy efforts elsewhere. What was different was that the idea that expansion was desirable had moved, from being an undisputed assumption about the conduct of foreign policy in the republican period, into the realm of discourse under the Empire, so that different views about foreign policy making were being expressed, even if not taken up.[70]

Hegemonial imperialism, of course, took forms other than only wars of conquest beyond the *limes*, even if there was a particular glory associated with increasing the size of the empire, especially when marked out as by ritually extending the *pomerium*. And, since a state of permanent hostility with all one's neighbours is "mutually damaging and draining", it was not likely to be a condition that even the most ardent Roman expansionist wished to put up with endlessly.[71] Thus, the use of different strategies, such as the establishment of client kings and kingdoms, or Christian conversion, or transplantation of peoples to other areas outside or inside the Roman empire, remained an important possibility in late Roman foreign policy.[72]

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68 Wilson, *Image and Ideology,* chapter 2 *passim*.
69 G. Woolf, "Roman peace" in J. Rich and G. Shipley (eds), *War and society in the Roman world*, London, 1993, 183.
70 Woolf, "Roman peace", 183-4.
71 D. Braund, *Rome and the friendly king: the character of the client kingship*, London, 1984, 181.
72 Braund, *Rome and the friendly king*, 187, 190; Blockley, 122-3, 140ff.

Whatever the immediate tactics, though, ultimately the strategy for dealing with relations between Rome and barbarians was the management of a variety of options.

It is a common perception of the late imperial period that the main military aim of the Roman state was territorial security, seen as the desire to defend the empire at almost any cost, ie. "the defence of the Empire, its territory, population and fabric from attack both internal and external".[73] There is an implication that larger foreign policy aspirations, such as the establishment of relationships with barbarians that would put an end to incursions, had no place in the new empire handed on by Diocletian and Constantine, and little room for the idea that barbarian settlements were predicated on meeting important internal needs of the Roman state, not just territorial security. After Diocletian, however, who did have a real and serious military crisis to deal with, that cannot be shown to have been the case and other policy options, such as the traditional one of expansive aggression, were evidently chosen. Both Constantine and Julian saw no reason not to pursue a policy of aggression towards outsiders, both Goths and Persians. Constantine's creation and use of the mobile field armies suggest that, for him, the army was an "instrument of a policy that was militarily and politically aggressive, even expansionist";[74] and he put his new armies to good use in a campaign against the Goths in 332, and intended to do likewise in an expedition against the Persians in 337.[75] Julian modelled himself on Trajan and Alexander, and his foreign policy seems to be a return to the aggressive military postures of the great soldier-emperors for whom territorial expansion beyond the borders was a very real foreign policy option.[76] For these emperors traditional foreign policy aims were a very real choice and their gaze, whatever its ultimate object, was outwards, not inwards.

The choice between the expansionist or non-expansionist options, whatever was chosen for a particular 'theatre of operations', was a high-level one about the conduct

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73 Epitomised by Blockley, 106.
74 Blockley, 9.
75 Blockley, 9 and 12.
76 Amm. Marc., XXIV 3.9.

of foreign policy. At the level of strategic choices for dealing with non-Romans on a day-to-day basis there were a variety of options for managing the relationship between Romans and 'outsiders'. The two primary options were exclusion or inclusion. Exclusion could be attempted by one of two military strategies. The first was exclusion of those outside via a strong limital defence, Luttwak's "preclusive defence", which certainly was a major aim of Diocletian's military policies.[77] A second method was to control the movement of outsiders through a mix of limital and central field armies (the conjectural post-Constantinian model), without trying to interdict their movement into the Empire, but ensuring that unwanted incursions could be dealt with and the intruders removed.[78] Both these strategies pre-suppose the existence of demarcated frontiers established with precision in the best places to meet specific tactical aims, and the existence of military units stationed on these 'scientific' frontiers as the first line of defence. There are problems with this view. Firstly, it is a dubious assumption at any time to think that the borders were so well-located or chosen.[79] Secondly, Isaac has convincingly questioned modern assumptions about the location and role of *limitanei*,[80] and it might not be the case that Luttwak's Constantinian model is a reflection of the actuality of fourth century frontier strategy. The statement of Aelius Aristides about the existence of frontier troops,[81] used particularly by Luttwak as evidence for an ancient contemporary appreciation of 'grand strategy', is just rhetoric, and the frontier garrison army, whatever its composition, was "never meant to be a rampart keeping out barbarians".[82] Whether the structures so carefully detailed by Luttwak ever existed is questionable, and the use of 'defence-in-depth' might not have been a real military option for controlling barbarian incursions in the fourth century, even if it could be shown that the aim of fourth century foreign policy was exclusion or removal of

77 Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, chapter 2.
78 This is a simplified description of the concept of 'defence-in-depth' detailed by Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, 130ff.
79 Whittaker, 66, summarises the arguments.
80 B. Isaac, "The meaning of the terms *limes* and *limitanei*", *JRS* LXXVIII (1988), 125-147.
81 Ael. Arist., *Ad Rom.*, 80-4.
82 P. Brennan, "Barbarian impact on the late Roman army: review of Nicasie, M.J., *Twilight of empire: the Roman army from the reign of Diocletian to the battle of Adrianople*, Amsterdam, 1998", *Tijdschrift Voorgeschiedenis* 114 (2001), 261ff.

barbarians who forced their way into the empire. And, this is a dubious proposition, as I show later in a detailed discussion of Theodosius' Gothic policy.

By the fourth century, direct territorial annexation outside the 'borders' of the empire was mostly a thing of the past, although Theodosius' incorporation of part of Armenia shows that annexation was never completely ruled out as part of the management of foreign policy via a range of different strategies. The campaigns of Constantine against the Goths, his impending campaign against Persia, Constantius' expedition in the east, and Julian's invasion of Persia were not aimed directly at hegemonic expansion, but were more in the nature of actions aimed generally at strengthening Rome's strategic position or re-establishing existing treaty conditions.[83] Lack of interest in, or capacity for, annexing territory does not equal a lack of desire to control or the non-existence of a public stance of control, and Romans never gave up their claims to "former Roman territories that had been lost or abandoned, nor did they cease to be active beyond the borders of the Roman Empire".[84] After his defeat of the Goths, Constantine issued coins bearing the legend *Gothia*, suggesting that the victory was portrayed as having resulted in territorial annexation. And, one of Julian's criticisms of Constantine was of the falseness of his apparent claims to have extended the Empire.[85] Constantine's subsequent adoption of the title *Dacicus Maximus* in 335/6 also implies that he had re-conquered at least part of the abandoned province of Dacia.[86] The defeat and surrender of the Tervingi—they were most likely left in the condition of *dediticii* after the victory[87]—and their settlement with some sort of dependent status outside the defended borders of the empire "explain Constantine's claim to have added *Gothia* to the Empire",[88] and show a Roman conceptualisation of the view that barbarians outside the frontiers were as much within the Roman *imperium* as those within the line of perimeter

83 Blockley, 107.
84 Blockley, 107.
85 Julian, *Caesares* 329 C.
86 Heather, 108-110.
87 G. Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners in the fourth century" in W. Pohl (ed.), *Kingdoms of the empire: the integration of barbarians in late antiquity*, Leiden, 1997, 41-2 with n. 118.
88 Heather, 113; Blockley, 8.

defence. This was not an ideological viewpoint restricted to Constantine. The ideological conception is implicit in Constantius II's speech to his troops in 354, that the Alamanni who had voluntarily agreed to pass under the yoke (ie. make an act of *deditio*) would henceforth be subject to Roman power and control, even though settled outside the frontiers of the empire.[89] In another case, in 358 Constantius restored liberty to the Sarmatians, described by Ammianus as "semper Romanorum clientes" who had been defeated and persecuted by the Limigantes, their erstwhile slaves. It is not clear just where these Sarmatians were situated, although they were obviously over the Danube, since Ammianus relates that they sought help from the Victohali. But, wherever they were located it was somewhere where Rome's writ ran unhindered, and Ammianus says they were treated as Roman clients, and therefore they were within the Roman *imperium*. Constantius not only gave them back their freedom but set a king, Zizais, over them and enjoined them to obey no-one but himself and the Roman generals.[90] The point, it seems to me, is that although this was over the Danube and therefore ostensibly outside the borders of the Empire there is no sense that Constantius, in any of his actions, was operating anywhere but within the Empire. In Whittaker's formulation of the frontiers, Constantius was operating within the frontier zone, all of which was treated by Romans as if part of the Empire. Therefore for political and ideological purposes this settlement of Sarmatians was within the Roman Empire, yet in practical terms they retained all their tribal institutions and leaders. Finally, we should note that Valentinian died of apoplexy brought on by the claims of the Quadi, who lived beyond the borders, to be independent.[91]

The other way Romans tried to manage barbarians was by settling them directly on lands within the imperial boundaries. Such direct incorporation of barbarians into the empire was nothing new in the fourth century. It had been going on for centuries and was consistent with the Roman attitude of acculturation of non-Romans and their

89 Amm. Marc., XIV 10.14.
90 Amm. Marc., XVII, 12.19-20.
91 Amm. Marc., XXX 6.2-3; Whittaker, 48 and 206.

assimilation into the empire. In fact, such an attitude had a very long history and acculturation of defeated and captured non-Romans had long been a plank of Roman foreign policy. The methods were many but the ultimate aim was the same: to turn a non-Roman into a good Roman citizen. For just one early imperial example, there was nothing extraordinary in the statement by Claudius in 48 A.D., in a speech to the Senate concerning the admission of Aedui as senators, that the state should be succoured by transferring to Rome all the outstanding, wherever they might be found.[92] In the Tacitean version of the same speech Claudius remarks that the fatal mistake made by Sparta and Athens was their policy of excluding the conquered as alien-born (*victos pro alienigenis arcebant*). Thus, the attitude that inclusion of foreigners as a 'good thing' was always a significant part of the Roman *Weltanschauung*, and the main features of the late imperial manifestation of the policy of assimilation had probably been established by the time of Augustus.[93] Even in the first and second centuries and before, the period which is often characterised as when the Empire was controlling barbarians on its borders by the establishment of client kingdoms or by direct annexation of territory, we can find examples of internal settlements of barbarian groups, such as the settlement of the Ubii by Agrippa in 38 B.C. or the 50,000 Getae settled by Sextus Aelius Catus, early in the first century A.D., in what later became Moesia.[94]

There were various circumstances which might be followed by acceptance and settlement of barbarians within the empire. But, it has been argued, in all cases, irrespective of the actual manner in which barbarians sought or were given permission to settle inside the empire, such settlement would not have happened without a formal surrender of some kind and that *deditio*, ie. a formal act of surrender

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92 Lyons tablet: *Fontes Iuris Romani Anteiustiniani* I no. 44; Tacitus, *Annals* XI xxiv: *transferendo huc quod usquam egregium fuerit*. Note that this is Tacitus' reformulation of the speech, the actual speech on the Lyons tablet is not as generalised as this, although the inferences that Tacitus draws are not extreme. The survival of this view into the late empire is amply demonstrated by the passage at *Pan. Lat.* IV 35.2: 'sensisti Roma tandem arcem te omnium gentium...cum ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros curiae tuae pignerareris ut senatus dignitatas...ex totius orbis flore constaret'.

93 Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners", 25.

94 Strabo, VII.iii.10. See G. E. M. de Ste Croixe, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*, London, 1981, 510.

and submission to the Emperor, was a precondition for treaties with barbarians.[95] The act of *deditio* played such an important role in arrangements for incorporating barbarians that by the late empire it seems to have become a precondition for any sort of treaty arrangement with barbarians. As Wirth points out, "inevitably, *deditio*...must have become the determining approach to foreign policy for Rome".[96] The act of *deditio* itself could be occasioned by different circumstances. The most obvious situation in which it figured was after barbarians had been defeated in battle by Roman forces. Following their formal surrender, the defeated could be resettled within the boundaries of the empire as *dediticii,* often, though not always, with an obligation to supply recruits to the army.

The settlements of the Suevi and Sygambri in 8 B.C.;[97] that of a large number of surrendered Marcomanni made by Marcus Aurelius in the 170s A.D.;[98] and the defeated Alamanni settled around the river Po about 370, are all examples of internal settlement of barbarians following an act of *deditio* for which there is direct evidence from the sources.[99] Barbarians could also be settled within the Empire at their own request, or with the agreement of Rome, but not as a consequence of military defeat. In Wirth's view the mechanism for allowing such settlements to take place would still require a formal act of *deditio* by the barbarians, however symbolic this might have been.[100] Settlements in this category include the well-known case of the horsemen provided under treaty by the Sarmatian Iazyges to Marcus Aurelius in 175;[101] the settlement of 12,000 Dacians by Commodus in 180;[102] and the Salian Franks allowed by Julian to remain where they had settled in Gaul, in 358.[103] Settlements, such as that of large numbers of Bastarnae and Sarmatians who were given land about 303, or the 300,000 Sarmatians distributed throughout Thrace,

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95 Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners", 25 n. 53.
96 Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners", 31.
97 Suetonius, *Augustus* 21; with *Tiberius* 9.
98 *Historia Augusta*, Marc. Aur. 22.2.
99 Amm. Marc., XXVIII 5.15.
100 Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners", 30f.
101 Cass. Dio, LXXI xvi.2.
102 Cassius Dio, LXXII 3.3.
103 Amm. Marc., XVII 8.3-4.

Scythia, Macedonia, and Italy by Constantine in 334, also seem to fit this category of settlement and show the very large numbers of people involved in some of these settlements, supporting, indirectly, the idea that some parts of the empire, at least, were seriously denuded of inhabitants.

Often, it seems, settlement of barbarians within the empire was an alternative to either outright annexation of their territories or settlement under treaty conditions outside the borders of the empire, but it served much the same purpose as these other options for inclusion. The choice between different options was due to Rome's other needs, not simply a desire to enhance or protect her territorial integrity. In general, then, the late Roman imperial policy of accepting barbarians (non-Romans) into the empire should not be regarded as any radical departure from the way the empire had been dealing with barbarians for centuries. What was done, and how it was done in each specific set of circumstances depended on other factors than just a desire to solve a particular barbarian problem, in particular the Empire's ongoing need for both farmers and soldiers.

Much of the modern debate about barbarians in the Roman army has focussed on the process of 'barbarisation', as if this was an end in itself pursued by various Roman emperors and the implication is that 'barbarisation' was bad in itself. A conspicuous aspect of this debate is that 'barbarisation' was a feature of the fourth century and the direct result of foreign policy decisions, in particular by Theodosius. Such a view ignores critical features of the Empire in the fourth century which influenced and informed foreign policy decision making. Recruitment of barbarians was a long and honourable Roman activity. From the time of the republic there had been barbarian (in the sense of non-Roman citizen) troops in the Roman army, although with only certain inhabitants of the empire holding citizenship until AD 212 this is, perhaps, not saying much. There will probably always be arguments about just when the barbarian contingents became the main strike force of the Roman army. There is no doubt that throughout the imperial period increasing numbers of barbarians were enrolled in the

army to replace the citizens who would, or could, not enrol. Most emperors enrolled barbarians in the army during their reigns, usually in *auxilia*, for example the 5,500 Sarmatian horsemen sent by Marcus Aurelius to Britain in around 175 A.D. The casual enrolment of ambitious barbarians, and the enrolment of larger numbers of defeated barbarians living in the frontier zones was haphazard and *ad hoc*. Did it ever become official policy to recruit barbarians in larger numbers? It is impossible to answer this particular question, but increasing number of wars between Rome and barbarians from further afield or with the large barbarian confederations resulted in unprecedented numbers of barbarians entering the army, either as individual recruits or as a condition of treaty arrangements.

In the third and fourth centuries Roman emperors made a habit of settling groups of barbarians together on Roman soil, usually with an obligation to supply recruits to the army. But, even in the second century such settlements were not altogether unusual, and one particular incident has close parallels with the Gothic settlement two centuries later. In about 171, the Astingi asked for land and money in return for an alliance (presumably a military one). Their initial request was rejected but they were able to leave their wives and children under the care of Clemens while they went off to conquer the Costoboci so they might have somewhere to settle outside the Empire. Having overcome the Costoboci, the Astingi, in their turn, were vanquished by the Lacringi and, in consequence of their entreaties to the emperor, received from Marcus Aurelius both money and an entitlement to ask for land if they "should inflict some injury upon those who were fighting against him [ie. Marcus]".[104] Dio adds that "this tribe really did fulfil some of its promises". We are not actually told that the Astingi were settled within the Empire and Dio does not specifically say that their demands were granted, but the possibility existed then that they could have been, and nothing Dio says excludes the possibility that the Astingi did achieve what they sought. A band of Cotini, similarly settled around the same time, failed to live up to their side of the bargain, refusing to attack the Marcomanni as agreed, according to

104 Cass. Dio., LXXI.xii.2.

Dio. There is some suggestion in this passage that the Cotini were operating as an independent tribe within the empire at this time, since they are said to have received Tarrutenius Paternus, the emperor's Latin secretary, "on the pretext that they wished to make a campaign with him against the Marcomanni".[105]

We can see the further development of such arrangements in the third century settlement of a group of Burgundians and Vandals defeated Probus, in 278.[106] There is a direct implication that these captives were enrolled into the army, since Zosimus records that the tribesmen were all sent to Britain where they were "very useful to the Emperor in subsequent revolts".[107] A later group of barbarians defeated by Constantius in about 296/7, were settled as the original *laeti* in Gaul. Clearly, this group was compelled to supply contingents for the army, and one of the Gallic panegyrists says of these settled barbarians: "if he is summoned to the levy he comes running and is crushed by discipline; he submits to the lash and congratulates himself upon his servitude, calling it soldiering".[108] The selfsame treatment was meted out to a group of barbarians defeated sometime around 300, although the actual identity of the settlement is in doubt.[109] These settlers, probably Franks, were said to "both promote the peace of the Roman Empire by cultivating the soil, and Roman arms by swelling the levy".[110]

So, enrolment of barbarians in the Roman army was not something that suddenly began to happen in the fourth century, nor is there evidence to show that there was a great increase in the practice over the fourth century. Certainly non-Roman military commanders stand out in the sources, but this might be due merely to the fact that it was more unusual to have a non-Roman commander than a Roman one, so the name is given more attention. Quantitative analysis does not support a perception of an increasingly 'barbarised' army in the fourth century. Recent studies of the

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105 Cass. Dio., LXXI.xii.3.
106 *Historia Augusta*, Probus XVIII.1-3 reports settlements of a number of different tribes, probably anachronistically: Bastarnae, Gepids, Greuthungi(!) and Vandals.
107 Zos., I.68.
108 *Pan. Lat.*, VIII, 9.4.
109 de Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle*, 513.
110 *Pan. Lat.*, VI, 6.2.

composition of the army suggest that less than a third, at the very most, of the officers were of non-Roman origin.[111] A similar situation existed in the rank and file of the army.[112] All this goes to suggest that, while non-Roman sources were a significant element in Roman army recruiting they were not the most important.

Whether recruitment of barbarians, whatever the mechanism by which they entered the army, was necessary for Rome to maintain its standing armies is a much more difficult question to answer. There is no suggestion in any source that the Empire deliberately waged war on barbarians in order to take prisoners who could be drafted into the army. Neither is there any implication that treaties with non-Roman tribes were intentionally sought in order to ensure a supply of recruits for the army, although there can be no doubt that this was a factor that was given serious consideration. On two occasions we have direct evidence that settlement of barbarians so they could be a source of army recruits was a factor in decision making. The first of these was in 359 when the Limigantes sought permission from Constantius to be settled within the Empire. Ammianus reports that Constantius agreed to their request because his advisers persuaded him that "he would gain more child-producing subjects and be able to muster a strong force of recruits".[113] The second occasion was in 376 when the Tervingi sought from Valens permission to enter and settle within the Empire. The historian records that Valens' advisers urged him to concede the request and he would be "brought so many young recruits from the ends of the earth, that by the union of his own and foreign forces he would have an invincible army".[114] Although these are the only two cases which supply specific evidence that a source of army recruits was an important factor in agreeing to

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111 Elton, 147: "fewer than a third of the army officers were of barbarian origin". Although this statement refers to the totality of Elton's figures, the proportions still hold if only the fourth-century data is taken into account. Similarly, M. J. Nicasie, *Twilight of Empire. The Roman army from the reign of Diocletian until the battle of Adrianople*, Amsterdam, 1998, 102: "about seventeen percent [of the *magistri militum*] are known, or can reasonably be assumed, to have been of barbarian origin. If we add those about whom we have no further evidence, but who might have been barbarians, the total number of *magistri* of barbarian provenance rises to...a maximum of just under thirty percent".

112 Elton, 147; Nicasie, *Twilight of empire*, 106.

113 Amm. Marc., XIX 11.7.

114 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.4.

barbarian settlements, this should not be taken to mean that the silence on other occasions means this factor was not taken into account. The two cases are mentioned in the sources because they were regarded as determinative. In similar circumstances the same consideration would still apply. In no case, however, is warfare said to be initiated by Rome for such purposes. Rome's policy, as so often, was reactive to situations created by others.

The incidents of the admission of the Limigantes in 359 and the Tervingi in 376, discussed above, contain evidence for another aspect of the Roman need for barbarian settlements, connected to the issue of army recruitment, which is to do with the consequences for the recruiting tax. The general method for recruiting within the Empire was through a system of annual levies of recruits on landholders or groups of landholders. Each landholder (or group) was required to provide a certain number of recruits based on the size of the landholding. The supply of actual men was not required every year, and there are indications that the state often chose to commute the levy into an actual cash payment, known as the *aurum tironicum*.[115] There was even an office for collecting the commutation money for recruits.[116]

In 359 on the occasion of the Limigantes' request to settle within the Empire, Ammianus makes the comment that "the provincials are glad to contribute gold instead of their bodies, a hope which has more than once proved disastrous for the Roman state".[117] The wording is compressed but Ammianus seems to be suggesting that the settlement of the Limigantes was urged on Constantius because army recruiting needs could be filled from the new settlers who would be required to provide recruits as part of their settlement, thus allowing the Roman state to commute the normal recruit levy on landholders into a cash payment, increasing the revenue to the treasury. The statement is interesting for a number of other less obvious implications. Ammianus implies that citizen recruits were better than

115 Nicasie, *Twilight of empire*, 95.
116 *CTh* VII 13.7 (375).
117 Amm. Marc., XIX 11.7.

barbarian recruits. We need not take these criticisms at face value, since there is little evidence to support them. On the contrary, it is clear that barbarian recruits were every bit as good as citizen recruits and just as trustworthy and reliable, and that service in the army was not as feared as is implied here.

The same reasoning appears in Ammianus' report on the Tervingian request to settle within the Empire in 376. Valens' advisers are criticised for suggesting to the Emperor that he should accept the Tervingi because "instead of the levy of soldiers which was contributed annually by each province, there would accrue to the treasuries a vast amount of gold".[118] Again the description is compressed but it is the same reasoning as in 359—the recruits which would be supplied by the Tervingi would allow the commutation of the recruitment tax into a cash payment which would fill the treasury coffers.

There is some suggestion, then, that there were financial problems in the Empire in the fourth century, which might have led Emperors to look forward to accepting barbarian settlers as a way of commuting the recruitment tax and increasing the Empires cash revenues. It is ironic that the tax revenues gained from commuting the recruitment levy mostly went to paying the army, the biggest single need the Roman state had for tax. Actual financial problems are difficult to trace. Although almost every single writer of the late Roman period complains about the tax burden, there is precious little evidence that there was a tax problem. Some time ago C. R. Whittaker showed that "the tax expenditure burden was not particularly oppressive; it was the local incidence that was the problem".[119] In the same article Whittaker argued that there was almost no price inflation and that the cost of paying the army in the fourth century had hardly increased from a century before.[120] In such a context, the

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118 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.4.

119 C. R. Whittaker, "Inflation and the economy in the fourth century A.D." in C. E. King (ed.) *Imperial revenue, expenditure and monetary policy in the fourth century a.d., The fifth Oxford Symposium in coinage and monetary history*, BAR International Series 76, Oxford, 1980, 13.

120 Whittaker, "Inflation", 8-9: "there is no reason to suppose the larger army of the fourth century could not have been paid for by the surpluses off the land"; 13 (on price inflation).

commutation of the recruitment tax seems to have little purpose, other than to enrich the treasury and provide Roman emperors with surplus cash that they could spend.

The Empire's other ongoing need was for farmers and many of the settlements of barbarians already discussed explicitly feature settlement of barbarians as both soldiers and farmers. Settlement of deserted agricultural land is a recurrent feature of discussions of the settlement of barbarians within the Empire. Although it is a recent trend in modern scholarship to question the nature and extent of the movement of rural populations, it is an ever-present theme in the panegyric corpus and later writers. Salvian's bleak picture of depopulated and burning lands is well known, and even if exaggerated for ideological purposes represents at least one person's perception of what was occurring in the west in the fifth century. We have a lot of evidence for land depopulation, even in the late third century. The panegyric of Constantius (297) mentions repopulation of deserted lands a number of times. Barbarians are forced to cross the Rhine after being defeated in order to restore to cultivation "lands long since deserted".[121] And the panegyrist has observed barbarians "parcelled out to the inhabitants of your provinces for service, until they might be led out to the desolate lands assigned to be cultivated by them".[122] The same panegyric contains evidence for internal resettlement programs carried out by Diocletian, by whose orders "Asia filled the deserts of Thrace by the transfer of its inhabitants", and later under Maximian, at Diocletian's bidding, the Franks have "cultivated the empty fields of the Arvii and the Treveri". In a similar vein the panegyric of Constantine (c. 310) praises the Emperor for the barbarians who "having been settled in the deserted regions of Gaul...promote the peace of the Roman Empire by cultivating the soil and Roman arms by swelling the levy".[123]

The evidence for wholesale depopulation of large areas of the agricultural land of the Empire has been increasingly questioned, however. Whittaker suggests that the views

121 *Pan. Lat.*, VIII 8.3.
122 *Pan. Lat.*, VIII 9.1.
123 *Pan. Lat.*, VI 6.2.

expressed in the Panegyrics and in the speeches of such writers as Libanius and Theodoret were confined to very narrow local observations.[124] Population levels have many short-term fluctuations and there is a danger of taking the situation at particular time as representing a permanent state. The evidence for population decline is patchy and inconsistent, and cannot be taken to imply that the empire faced a manpower shortage or a food production crisis.[125] However, even if depopulation was not widespread enough to support the concept of '*agri deserti*' the numerous mentions of this in the ancient evidence certainly point to it as a feature of some areas of the Empire in the late antique period. It might be best to regard depopulation as a temporary problem that was unlikely to have been a major factor in deciding whether to settle barbarians, although it could well have played a part in determining where such settlements were located once decisions had been made.

Conclusion

Inclusion of external groups (non-Romans) could be managed through a wide range of strategies aimed at managing those groups using non-warlike mechanisms, although if politics is the making of war by other means, as Foucault would have it,[126] then any political response to the problem of how to control outsiders is a form of war. However that may be, the non-warlike mechanisms included conversion, subsidies, settlement of barbarians within the empire, annexation, and even the establishment of what amounted to client kingdoms on the imperial frontiers.[127] The establishment of client relationships with barbarians outside the empire's borders can be viewed as a way of managing perimeter defence, but it is ideologically blinkered to assume that exclusion was the only choice for Roman emperors or that the satisfaction of external needs was the only component of foreign policy decisions. Exclusion of non-Romans seems never to have been Roman policy on its own, even

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124 C. R. Whittaker, "Agri deserti" in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property*, Cambridge 1976, 137.

125 Whittaker, "Agri deserti", 164.

126 M. Foucault, *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, New York 1980, 123, cited in Woolf (1993), 171.

127 As Braund, *Rome and the friendly king*, 182, so perceptively points out: "friendly kingdoms *were* the frontiers of the Roman empire".

under Valentinian I, perhaps the last emperor whose attitude to barbarians was generally aggressively exclusionist, and was only one part of a wider policy which dealt with barbarians using a mix of strategies. What we need to note is that inclusion of non-Roman peoples within the empire was a significant option that had often been used, and an option that was a variant of the establishment of clients (kings, *gentes*, states) outside the empire. Removing barbarians and protecting the frontiers was clearly one option that had been an essential element of policy of some emperors, but it always went with other strategies. It was not adopted as a strategy on its own, and the choice was not between competing strategies, ie. the choice of which option to use was not an exclusive one. Other strategies were used in a balanced and blended response to the 'barbarian' problem.

5

Relations between Romans and Goths: to 378

Rome's relationship with the Goths had been slowly evolving since the empire's first military encounters with them in the third century. Over the course of the fourth century, this relationship evolved further. From treating the Goths as a barbaric tribe of semi-nomads, Roman emperors had begun to treat them as a distinct people whose military prowess was respected (Julian aside), and whose on-going interaction with the empire had to be regulated in some manner other than through continuous warfare. When Theodosius came to power, Rome and the Goths had been interacting for some one hundred and fifty years. Over such a period the relationship naturally matured into a more complex one which placed additional demands on the Empire as both sides struggled to work out a viable *modus vivendi*. Opposition characterised the relationship for much of the third century and the early fourth century; by the end of the fourth century assimilation was the main aim and purpose of Roman policy towards the Goths.

Romano-Gothic relations in the late fourth century were influenced and informed by the chaotic events of the 3rd century. The first reliable reports of contact with Gothic tribesmen occur in 238.[1] In 250 a large Gothic incursion devastated Dacia and crossed the Danube to lay waste to Moesia, and succeeded in capturing Philippopolis. In 257 a Gothic fleet, in concert with a land army, had sailed to Chalcedon, which was taken with little opposition, and then captured successively Nicomedia, Nicaea, Apamea and Prusa. During their return to the north, the Goths again passed through

1 Dexippus fr. 20. *HA*, Caracalla X.6, notes that Caracalla had defeated the Goths on his way to the east, and *H,A* Maximini Duo IV.4 records that Maximinus the elder "trafficked continually with the Goths". These references to Goths are undoubtedly anachronistic and are not supported by more reliable sources such as Herodian, IV 8.1.

Nicaea and Nicomedia, both of which were destroyed. Around 262 another Gothic fleet landed in Asia Minor and destroyed the temple in Ephesus. In 268 a band of Gothic tribesmen and allies of "unprecedented size" invaded the Aegean Sea and after ravaging the Balkans and Macedonia finally captured Athens. Following this destructive time, the successful campaigns of Claudius in 268 and 269 and the subsequent decisive defeat of the Goths by Aurelian in 271 seemed, at the time, to have ended the Gothic threat to the Empire.[2] Indeed, Ammianus states that as a consequence of that defeat the Goths "remained quiet and inactive for many generations"[3] and only entered the empire in small bands as raiders to their own detriment.[4]

The appearance of 'federate' Goths on Galerius' Persian campaign in 297[5] has been taken, on very little evidence, to indicate that some part of the Goths had reached a *foedus* with Rome before 296.[6] Wolfram's contention that a *foedus* was the final consequence of the war against the Bastarnae and Carpi begs many questions. On the basis of his own discussion of this period, the Dacian Carpi and the Bastarnae were former allies of the 'western' Goths (Tervingi) but had now become territorial rivals in a struggle which resulted in complete success for the Goths. Consequently, the Bastarnae were admitted into the Empire in large numbers.[7] In 295 (or around this year, the exact date is very uncertain), Galerius undertook a vigorous and successful campaign against the Carpi (and possibly groups of Bastarnae), who had probably been pushed south by pressure from the Goths and settled large numbers of them on Roman territory south of the Danube.[8] For Wolfram to suggest that this Romano-Carpic war, a war that resulted in a Roman victory over rivals of the Goths, would cause the Goths to then seek a *foedus* (whatever form that might take) with Rome,

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2 For more detail of a long chain of events starting in the early 230s and culminating in 271 see Wolfram, 43-56.
3 Amm. Marc., XXXI 5.17: *per longa saecula siluerunt immobiles.*
4 Amm. Marc., XXXI 5.17.
5 Jordanes, *Getica* XXI 110.
6 Thus Wolfram, 57, and 59: "we may infer that the Bastarnic and Carpic war of 295 had ended with a regular gothic *foedus*".
7 Zos., I 71; *HA,* Probus 18.1.
8 Wolfram, 56.

with all the obligations that a treaty could impose on them, is incongruous. In any case, as a passage in the panegyric of 297 makes quite clear, Romans clearly differentiated between Goths and Carpi,[9] so a victory over the latter implied nothing in regard to Rome's relations with the former.

A slightly different scenario is plausible. Evidence does suggest the possibility of a Gothic treaty or arrangement of some kind. Although the evidence is entirely exiguous, it was a treaty that had no connection to the war with the Carpi. The argument rests on suggestive evidence for the adoption and dropping of the title *Gothicus* by Diocletian. The title, if genuine, was in use by 295. The argument is that Diocletian took the title in the period 292-4 after a defeat of Goths on the lower Danube. Following Galerius' humiliating defeat in the east, he returned to the Danube to collect reinforcements from the Danubian armies and also included in his new troops Gothic auxiliaries. If Diocletian had taken and dropped the *Gothicus* title by this time, Brennan suggests that he did so to smooth the diplomatic negotiations which took place to secure the supply of Goths for the eastern war. As Brennan remarks, the title "might well have rankled with the Gothic leaders".[10]

Whatever the explanation, there was little apparent conflict between Rome and the Goths in the late third and early fourth century, and for two generations at least, "peace and quiet prevailed along the lower Danube, until the system of the tetrarchy broke down in the civil war between Constantine and Licinius".[11] Nevertheless, there is some evidence for Gothic raiding before open hostilities began, and one source records that Goths crossed the Danube and ravaged Thrace and Moesia before being driven off by Constantine who had been in residence at Thessalonica.[12] Subsequently, a separate group of Gothic auxiliaries are said to have fought with Licinius against Constantine in 324,[13] and, after the death of Licinius, Constantine

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9 *Pan. Lat.*, VIII (V), 10.4.

10 P. Brennan, "Diocletian and the Goths", *Phoenix* 38 (1984), 142-146, especially 145.

11 Wolfram, 59.

12 *Anon. Val.* 5, 21; Zos., II.21. This group is often referred to as 'Sarmatians', but modern consensus believes them to be Tervingi. See Blockley, 172, n. 1.

13 *Anon. Val.* 5, 27. There may be nothing in this story of Gothic auxiliaries fighting with Licinius. Jordanes has a confused belief that Gothic auxiliaries were sent to Constantine for the war against

turned his attention to the Danube defences, building fortifications and roads into the interior.[14] In 332, the Sarmatians, who were being harried by the Tervingi, asked Constantine for help, and a Roman army led by Constantine's son Constantinus inflicted a crushing defeat on the Tervingi.[15] Constantine was able then to impose his will on the Tervingi, establishing a treaty which restricted their rights but allowed them to re-settle on the lands north of the Danube on which they had formerly dwelt.[16]

Unfortunately, as with every other conjectural treaty between Rome and the Goths, few details of the *foedus* of 332 are recorded in the sources. There is a passing reference in Julian's *Caesares* to Constantine continuing to pay an annual amount to the Goths after 332.[17] This, of course, begs the question of the nature of such payments since the Goths had been decisively defeated by Rome.[18] Payments were a common feature of Roman relationships with non-Roman tribes and were an effective part of Roman diplomacy and cannot be regarded as an unusual feature of Constantine's settlement with the Tervingi.[19] Secondly, in an oration on the peace of 369, Themistius makes mention of the restriction of the "unlimited control over the commercial activities and markets which during the previous peace they were able to conduct with impunity wherever they wished".[20] Although it is indirect evidence, Themistius is apparently talking about the commercial and trading rights enjoyed by the Tervingi under the treaty of 332. Whether the treaty actually established such

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Licinius but the *Anon. Val.*, alone, relates that Licinius was supported by Gothic troops brought by Alica. Wolfram, 60, has taken the *Anon. Val.* at face value. Constantine's subsequent actions against the Goths were certainly motivated by something, however, and support for Licinius presages Valens' similar justification for his Gothic War of 367-9.

14 Wolfram, 60-1. Blockley, 8, succinctly summarises Constantine's activities.

15 *Anon. Val.*, 6, 31.

16 Wolfram, 61-2.

17 Julian, *Caesares*, 329a.

18 Heather, 114-5, explains the continued payments as a Roman diplomatic tactic to adopt Gothic mores of gift-giving and face-saving behaviour in order to maintain the relationship between the two states. He concludes (115): "annual gifts—and, indeed, occasional service alongside Roman armies—are a standard part of fourth-century treaties which maintained Roman hegemony on Rhine and Danube and do not require particular explanation". What is significant is not so much Constantine's policy as Julian's tendentious misrepresentation and rejection of it.

19 D. C. Braund, *Rome and the friendly king*, London, 1984, 62-3.

20 Them., *Or.* X 135/205-6, translation of P. Heather and J. Matthews, *The Goths in the fourth century*, Liverpool, 1991, 43-44.

unlimited commercial activity is another matter, and Themistius might just be referring to the practical consequences of the treaty which had not worked in favour of Rome. There is no other evidence for the treaty conditions. Nevertheless, that has not stopped historians believing that they can deduce the conditions of the treaty somehow. Wolfram, who is less inventive than many historians, adopts a minimalist position for the conditions, believing that the treaty required the Goths to provide auxiliary troops for an annual payment and allowed them to resume their cross-Danube trade.[21] The implicit suggestion that the payments disparaged by Julian were for the supply of auxiliary troops might explain their continuation from 332 to 369, but the existence of even such minimal conditions remains open to doubt. Ammianus, for instance, reports that in 360 Constantius had to ask the Goths for *auxilia*.[22] Even this limited assumption, that the treaty provided for an ongoing regular supply of men for military service, cannot be supported by the sparse evidence that does exist.[23] The truth of the matter is, as with other treaties, that we just cannot know, and any attempt to deduce the conditions must recognise their speculative nature.

In another passage in Ammianus, Valens dismisses as trivial the Gothic excuse for sending men to Procopius, ie. that they were bound by their treaty with the house of Constantine to supply men for service as auxiliaries when requested.[24] This might suggest that the *foedus* of 332 only required the supply of troops when directly requested but even so limited a condition is an inference only, and cannot be supported by any more specific evidence. Whatever the details of the conditions imposed by the treaty, Constantine's *foedus* of 332 seems to have achieved a number of political aims and, in addition, demonstrates that Roman foreign relations were characterised by complex responses to difficult situations. It subdued the Goths (there was no, or very little, warfare for over 30 years), settled them as Roman allies,

21 Wolfram, 62.
22 Amm. Marc., XX 8.1.
23 Heather, 110.
24 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.2.

and, finally, enabled Constantine to boast that he had enlarged the empire.[25] Thus, although there is little that can be said about the treaty of 332, it was a *foedus* in a broad sense that left the Goths only nominally subject to Roman suzerainty.[26]

What Constantine's arrangements with the Goths demonstrates is the existence of different policy options for use by emperors when a situation demanded a different response. Although coin issues with the legend *Gothia* might suggest that Rome had re-annexed part of the Trajanic province of Dacia given up by Aurelian,[27] it seems that Constantine neither adopted an aggressive policy of expansion nor a policy (at least in its public expression) of retention of existing limits to the Empire. The use of the *Gothia* legend, usually indicative of a territorial addition to the Empire, may be explained as an announcement of Roman hegemony over Gothic lands north of the Danube.[28] Having shown the Goths that the Empire remained militarily superior, Constantine did not set out to take over their lands but to make them into allies of the empire in an attempt to ensure a lasting peace, which objective he sought to achieve by means of the treaty of 332. Constantine's policy appears to have been an attempt to end once and for all the hitherto hostile relations between Rome and the Tervingi. By forcing them to submit to Roman military might, by then treating them as allies rather than as *dediticii*, and by leaving them settled autonomously north of the Danube, he hoped to turn them into friends of the Empire instead of its enemies. In Heather's words, "the treaty of 332 thus established the Tervingi as a Roman client power".[29] Both the settlement made by Constantine and the Roman tradition of absorption of foreign peoples, suggest that Constantine's longer term aims for the Goths were to see them eventually incorporated within the Empire when longer-time interaction between Romans and Goths had prepared the ground for such incorporation.[30] This was not new or radical but one of the traditional options for

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25 Heather, 113.
26 Heather, 113.
27 *RIC*, VII, 215 no. 531; 216 no. 534.
28 See Heather, 112-3 for a full discussion.
29 Heather, 115; cf 116: "Constantine's policy...had attempted to safeguard Roman interests through close relations with the Tervingi".
30 Blockley, 119.

dealing with aggressively hostile tribes. It might well have been the ultimate end of the more overtly aggressive war actions of Aurelian or Diocletian/Galerius earlier. The ideological claims that might be made for the significance or meaning of treaty arrangements do not hide the use of fundamentally traditional strategies for dealing with barbarians.

Regardless of the actual details of the treaty, there were no hostilities with the Tervingi between 332 and 365, although Libanius records that in 348 Constantius II negated the anger of the Scythian kings by soothing words rather than battle and then persuaded them to fight for him against Persia.[31] The first real trouble for over 30 years came when the Tervingi supported Procopius—legitimately related to the house of Constantine—against Valens, a Pannonian upstart (as they saw it).[32] In their eyes they were, as they said, merely abiding by the terms of the treaty they had made with Constantine in 332 to provide military support to his dynasty when asked.[33] Ammianus does record unrest among the Goths earlier in 365, which forced Valens to return from an expedition to the east preparing for a war against Persia. Ammianus goes on to say that the Goths were, at that time unsubdued (*intacta*), and were making preparations to cross the frontiers of Thrace.[34] According to Ammianus, this was some months before the usurpation of Procopius, but the chronology of these events is unclear and can be disputed, and the preparations might not have been for anything more significant than cross-border plundering or raiding. Indeed, too much has been made of what amounts to nothing more than Ammianus' representation of the presumption of Valens' generals about the Gothic state of mind. Blockley, for instance, states that the sources say the Goths "were hostile and raiding" when they only refer to Gothic preparations for plundering.[35] Heather believes that those, like Chrysos and Wolfram, who deny there was overt Gothic aggression prior to the war

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31 Lib., *Or* LIX 89-90.

32 There is a hint at Amm. Marc., XXII 7.8 that the Goths were being troublesome in the early 360s but Julian's reaction to the suggestion that he attack them, putting aside the rhetorical rejection of the Goths as a worthy enemy, hardly suggests that there was any real military insecurity.

33 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.1.

34 Amm. Marc., XXVI 6.11: *conspirantem in unum ad pervadenda parari collimitia Thraciarum.*

35 Blockley, 187, nn. 6 and 10; but see his n. 8 which directly contradicts the statement on page 31-2 that "the Goths had begun their raiding before the accession of Valens…"!

against Procopius "fail to take proper account of AM 26.6.11ff...".[36] But Ammianus says only that the Goths were savage because they were '*intacta*', and were making plans to invade Thrace. Contrary to Ammianus, Zosimus has a completely different chronology for his version of the events of the period. In his account, the Goths offered to send men to Procopius only after the latter had taken Cyzicus,[37] long after Valens had become aware of the usurpation and had begun to march his troops back from Cappadocia, where he had been gathering them prior to making war on Persia, to Constantinople. Zosimus does not mention any Gothic conspiracy aimed at taking over Thrace.

On the basis of this evidence it is difficult to agree with Heather's contention that Gothic hostility to the treaty of 332 was "the real cause of Valens' first Gothic war" (in 369) even if Libanius does report that the Goths sent an embassy to Julian in 362 asking for a change in the treaty.[38] The change of emperor was, by itself, enough to explain an embassy which sought, among other things, to negotiate the terms of any treaty made with a previous Roman emperor. A new generation of Goths might have had different ideas about the relationship between themselves and Rome from those who made the treaty in 332, but hostility is the wrong way to characterise such a change in sentiment. A deputation to the emperor asking for changes does not seem like aggression or hostility. Despite the deputation, and Julian's dismissive reply, (Libanius records that the deputation was told the treaty could only be changed by warfare), the army Julian took east for his Persian war contained Scythian (Gothic) auxiliaries,[39] perhaps even following a request for assistance under the provisions of the *foedus* of 332. There is only very scanty evidence to suggest that the Goths were acting aggressively in 365, apart from the contribution to Procopius' forces. Ammianus, who is the only source for this supposed unrest prior to the attempted usurpation, merely says that the Goths were conspiring together and making

36 Heather, 116, n. 107.
37 Zos. IV.7.
38 Lib., *Or* 12.78 cited in Heather, 117.
39 Amm. Marc., XXIII 2.7.

preparations to invade Thrace.[40] He does not have them enter the empire before the revolt of Procopius, and nor does Zosimus/Eunapius. It is equally clear that Valens originally intended his war to be against Persia before something happened to change his priorities. News of Procopius' revolt certainly will have changed his priorities and thus we do not need any aggressive action by Gothic forces across the Danube to explain it. The chronology in Ammianus reads more like official *post facto* rationalisation for the subsequent wars against the Goths than any real evidence of pre-emptive hostility.[41]

Valens, needing a military victory to reinforce his position, obviously found the Goths far worthier opponents than had Julian, but otherwise it was an offensive war of the same kind as Julian had intended in Persia.[42] Valens' first Gothic war ran over a period of three years, from 367 to 369. Although there were a number of confrontations, none was on the scale encountered later at Adrianople where Valens certainly seems to have been the aggressor. Ammianus' statement that the Goths were conspiring to invade the Empire in 365 is pure speculation on his part—how could he know this, since they did not invade? It is nothing more than a Roman rationalisation for Valens' aggression against the Goths over the Danube, an aggression Ammianus obviously thinks was justified. For example, Ammianus states Valens' decision to attack was influenced by a just consideration (*ratione iusta permotus*),[43] and he calls the Gothic justification, that Procopius was a legitimate heir of the Constantinian dynasty and therefore entitled to their services, the emptiest of excuses.[44] Valens at this time was still under the influence of Valentinian, and we read in Ammianus that Valens' decision to attack the Goths was "in accordance with the desire of his brother whom he consulted and by whom he was guided".[45] Valens'

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40 Amm. Marc., XXVI 6.11.
41 Blockley, 31: the war with Procopius "was indirectly the cause of war between Valens and the Tervingi".
42 Blockley, 32.
43 Amm. Marc., XXVII 4.1.
44 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.2: *excusationem vanissimam*.
45 Amm. Marc., XXVII 4.1.

aggressive Gothic policy in 365 was really the policy of his brother, the senior Emperor.

Over the course of three years fighting, the only successes were some engagements with Athanaric and his warband in 369 and even Ammianus refers to these as relatively slight (*leviora*). Ammianus next reports that Athanaric was forced to flee on account of his extreme fear,[46] but this statement is not supported by Ammianus' own reports of the skirmishing that had taken place. Heather believes that the Goths and Athanaric were "seeking merely to harass Valens" rather than wanting to bring about a pitched battle, particularly because Athanaric seems to have had only a part of the Gothic forces with him.[47] Athanaric might have chosen the wisest course if he was only able to muster part of the fighting force of the Gothic tribes. Both Ammianus' and Zosimus' accounts of the campaign certainly confirm that the Goths were unwilling to engage in any pitched battles with Roman forces, and both sources confirm that the Goths were afraid of the Roman army. This might well have been due to the fact the Goths knew they could not hope to overcome the Roman army in the field.[48] Valens could not have repeated Constantine's decisive victory over the Goths because the Goths in 367-9 were not willing to face the Roman army, even in their own territory.[49] But this is a long way from suggesting, as Heather does in his discussion of the agreement, whether formal treaty or not, of 369, that the advantage was with the Goths after the campaigns of 367-9.[50] This does not mean that the peace did not contain some elements of compromise in both the Gothic and Roman demands, but to use a brief mention of Gothic success in Themistius' panegyric

46 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.6.
47 Heather, 117.
48 See Wolfram, 68: "More likely, Athanaric had no intention of offering the Romans a decisive battle, which his tribal confederacy could hardly win".
49 In any case, Ammianus' account is confused, not least in his belief that Athanaric was leading the Greutungi. Wolfram's view that the Goths had united in the face of Valens' warlike posturing after the defeat of Procopius, might explain Ammianus' account. See Wolfram, 67.
50 Heather, 118: "Valens compromised because he had been unable to win on the battlefield…the peace-settlement conceded something of the Goths' demands".

(which Heather has just dismissed as nothing more than imperial propaganda) to support his position is to keep a foot in each camp.[51]

Heather justifies his position with the statement that Valens was unable "to win a decisive victory".[52] Insofar as it was the case that Valens was unable to win a decisive victory in the face of an absolute Gothic refusal to meet the Roman army in a major confrontation in the field (confirmed by both Ammianus and Zosimus) Heather is correct. However, there is other evidence glossed over by Heather which supports an almost opposite interpretation of the results of Valens' Gothic war. The fact that no large confrontation of the type that was to take place outside Adrianople nine to ten years later occurred during this so called first Gothic war of Valens, does not mean that what fighting there was did not result in a Roman victory. It might be significant that Zosimus says of the campaign "so many were destroyed in this way [i.e. due to the Roman tactics] that the rest asked the Emperor for peace" but we cannot take this too far.[53] Zosimus, who is anti-barbarian but also anti-Christian (and not interested in the subtleties of Christian heresy), would not want to give Valens more praise for his successes than he actually needed to. It might be reasonable to accept that Valens was able to impose Roman treaty conditions on the Goths in 369, even without a decisive military engagement. Pressure on the Persian front, the relief of which had been delayed by Valens' desire to teach the Goths a lesson, would certainly have meant that Valens' was forced to negotiate an agreement that was not as favourable to Rome as it could have been under different circumstances. Even though a Roman army was sent to the east, it did not engage directly with Persian forces, and Roman actions in 370 were concentrated in attempting to restore the independence and neutrality of Armenia, not at confronting Persia. Ammianus' account supports an interpretation of a Roman position of strength in the negotiations with the Goths in 369. He reports that the Goths "often sent suppliant deputations to

51 Them., *Or* 10 135. Heather, 117, charges Themistius with being the Emperor's "mouthpiece". See also Heather, 80.
52 Heather, 118.
53 Zos., IV.11.3.

beg for pardon and peace",[54] and further relates that the Goths agreed to the conditions which were offered by the Empire.[55] However, the action of Valens' meeting Athanaric in the middle of the Danube is perhaps more eloquent that Ammianus' assertions about Gothic suppliants, and is the only suggestion that perhaps Valens did not have everything his own way.

All this seems to point to a condition of stalemate with neither Rome nor the Goths having the upper hand. Given the wider needs of both sides at this time a *foedus* would have to have been mutually acceptable. In neither Zosimus' nor Ammianus' histories is there any evidence for dispute over the peace conditions or any prolonged discussions about those conditions. The Goths needed to re-establish their access to Roman markets and traders and Valens needed to appear to have had a military victory. Although Themistius claims that the Goths consented to submit to Roman rule,[56] Ammianus provides indirect evidence that things were not done at Roman behest alone.

What then were the conditions of the treaty of 369? As usual, the sources contain almost no evidence for the actual details of the *foedus*. The only evidence for the conditions is in a panegyric of Themistius spoken before Emperor and Senate at Constantinople following the treaty negotiations and the meeting between Valens and Athanaric in the middle of the Danube, probably in early 370.[57] In this oration, Themistius clearly refers to the ending of the payments to the Goths which had been a condition of the treaty of 332, and to the restriction of Gothic trading activities to two towns. The orator tells of the removal of the Goths' usual source of provisions, limitation of their access to markets and commercial activities, and restriction of their access to trading posts to two specific places on the river.[58] Heather notes this restriction of Gothic commerce with the empire as well as the end of subsidies. He

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54 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.7.
55 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.9-10.
56 Them., *Or.* 10 212.
57 J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the imperial court*, Ann Arbor, 1995, 173.
58 Them., *Or.* 10 135/205-206.

then pushes the restriction into the background as 'drawbacks", when they really seem more significant losses than the supposed Gothic gain. The treaty represents, also, a marked change from the position formalised in 332, and is a significant variation to the former relationship between Rome and the Tervingi, which does not suggest that it was the Goths who were negotiating from a position of comparative strength, as Heather argues.[59] Such a change to trading rights could never be in Gothic interests, since one sure way of bringing the tribes to their knees was to restrict or cut off their access to the commercial opportunities provided by the Empire.[60] Another condition of the treaty seems to have been a requirement for the Goths to stay on their side of the Danube and to keep out of the Empire's territory.[61] This appears as an attempt to set up some sort of impermeable frontier between Romans and Goths on the lower Danube, and might well represent Valentinian's policy rather than that of Valens. Since the war was apparently motivated by Roman belief that the Goths were preparing to raid south of the Danube, such a condition, far from representing a compromise by Valens, indicates that the war had achieved most of the outcomes sought by the Empire. In Themistius' tenth Oration, we are told that the Emperor conceded to the Tervingi on only one point, which is not detailed, although the reference is made in the context of the restriction of Gothic trading rights.[62] The sparse evidence for the arrangements of 369 do not suggest that the Romans had to make many concessions or that the Tervingi were the actual 'winners' in the arrangement.

Heather argues that the peace demonstrates a *volte face* in Valens' policy for dealing with the Goths, a change from confrontation to negotiation, and argues that this about face is signalled in another panegyric of Themistius, delivered before Valens at Marcianopolis in early 368.[63] It is necessary to note, however, that Heather's outlook on the negotiations of 369 seems coloured by his view of Themistius. He believes

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59 Heather, 119.
60 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.7, reports that the Goths were "distressed by the extreme scarcity of the necessities of life" because commerce had been cut off.
61 Them., *Or.* 10 202.
62 Them., *Or.* 10 205.
63 Them., Or. 8. Heather, 118.

that Themistius was nothing more than the Emperor's mouthpiece, and thus charged with the task of justifying Valens' policies.[64] Themistius should be credited with more independence than that.[65] Daly, in an examination of Themistius orations, has argued that Themistius' statements on foreign policy and how peoples outside the Empire should be dealt with present a consistent view over the long period from Constantius to Theodosius, and do not change to represent the policy intentions of whoever was the current emperor.[66] The art of the panegyric had a long history and Themistius, despite his unconventionality of structure, was the fourth century's greatest exponent of the form. Themistius' panegyrical speeches were speeches of praise, as panegyric always was, but Themistius was intelligent and independent enough to create his own version of the traditional speech.[67] That Themistius' panegyrical orations flatter the subject of the speech does not indicate emptiness of thought or lack of independence as Heather would have us believe. The orations of Themistius contain much valuable information about foreign policy in the fourth century and cannot be dismissed as crude propaganda. Themistius' argument in Oration 8 is that philosophy is more beneficial to an Emperor than constant waging of war and that peace is the most desirable aim. He had been pushing this line since his first oration to Constantius in the 340s.[68]

It is probably more accurate to interpret the change between Valens' outright aggression in 367 and his willingness to make peace in 369, as a change in military tactics, rather than a reversal of Valens' Gothic policy. Valens began the war as the aggressor and ended it with the Tervingi still outside the Empire but with their trading rights severely controlled. The Emperor's most important aims had been achieved. On any reasoned analysis of the war and the treaty, Valens' policy towards the Tervingi remained consistent until 376—if any significant change occurred it was

64 Heather, 80. See also Heather and Matthews, *The Goths in the fourth century*, 15: "he [Themistius] must be seen as a publicist for successive imperial regimes".
65 Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 169, n. 42.
66 L .J. Daly, "The Mandarin and the Barbarian: the response of Themistius to the Gothic challenge", *Historia* XXI (1972), 351-379.
67 Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 6-7.
68 Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 74, and Daly (note 33).

after the death of Valentinian in 375. In fact, a generally consistent policy towards the Goths can be seen through the whole of the fourth century, although with different strategies used in different circumstances, but all involving settlement of Goths either inside or outside the Empire.

Valens' appointment as co-emperor by Valentinian cannot have been unanimously popular. Dagalaifus, Valentinian's *magister equitum*, is reported to have told Valentinian when advice was asked for, that if he loved his family he had a brother, if he loved the Empire he would choose someone else.[69] The family ties proved strongest and Valentinian appointed his younger brother Valens as co-Emperor. Valens' military career before this was hardly noteworthy, so it is no surprise that, needing military success in an attempt to legitimise himself in the eyes of the army, he headed for Persia, traditional arena for military glory but also the scene of Rome's recent disastrous losses including loss of territory—Valens' decision need not have been totally politico-ideological. His attention was diverted towards the Goths by Procopius' usurpation; perhaps they presented an easier target and he chose to manufacture an excuse for a war with the Goths. Irrespective of the real situation in 369, Valens' propaganda would portray the result as a victory for Rome.

By 376 much had changed. For one thing, Valentinian was dead and there was a changing of the guard at the western court. For another, in 376 the larger part of the Tervingi under the leadership of Alavivus, forced south by a Hunnic invasion of the Gothic heartland, occupied the banks of the Danube and sought permission to enter and settle in the Empire, promising to supply auxiliary troops if matters required.[70] Although explaining barbarian invasions of the Roman empire as the result of tribal migrations is currently unfashionable, to the Romans the sudden appearance of the Huns and the pressure they put on the tribes living north and north-east of the Danube seemed to be the direct cause of the southward movement of the Gothic peoples. Enticed by the prospect of being able to recruit large numbers of Goths into

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69 Amm. Marc., XXVI 4.1.
70 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.1.

the army, thereby enabling the commuting of much of the annual recruitment levy into gold to enrich his treasury, Valens agreed to allow the Tervingi to cross the Danube and settle in Thrace.[71] Heather argues that Valens had no choice but to admit the Tervingi, because he did not have enough troops in the field to stop both them and the Greutungi under Alatheus and Safrax crossing the river.[72] This is an odd view when it is clear that during the period of time it took for the Gothic request to be sent to Valens, duly considered, a response made and returned to the Danube, the Tervingi remained confined to the north side of the Danube, either due to the presence of the Roman army or to their own cooperative lack of aggression.[73] As well, Ammianus is quite unequivocal in stating that the Tervingi had been given permission to cross long before the Greutungi had sought a similar permit from Valens.[74] Again, as Ammianus makes clear, the Greutungi were able to cross at a quite different part of the river while the Tervingi were being ferried across.[75] The Greutungi were able to cross because the part of the Danube they had chosen was unguarded which is why they chose it. So, the fact that some part of the Danube banks a long way from where the Tervingi were being brought across was unguarded, need not indicate anything more than the diversion of *limitanei* from their normal posts to assist with the mass crossing of Tervingi. Whatever dearth of troops in the field this might have caused, it was only temporary and geographically limited. It cannot, and should not, be taken to mean that Roman army numbers were insufficient. Still, it is apparent that Valens' agreement to allow the Tervingi into the Empire signals a break with the strategies signalled by his aggressiveness in 367. It is the new policy of Valens in 376 that needs explaining as much as that of Theodosius in 382.

A significant difference between 367 and 376 was that Valentinian had died in 375. Valens' policy was, therefore, no longer under the influence or direction of

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71 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.5.
72 Heather, 134.
73 Wolfram, 72.
74 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.13-5.1.
75 Amm. Marc., XXXI 5.3.

Valentinian and it would be wrong to assume that Valens had necessarily adopted the same attitude he had towards the Tervingi in 367. Indeed, by 376 Valens had had time to develop an independent policy in relation to the Tervingi in relation both to the evolving circumstances beyond the lower Danubian frontier and to the general needs of the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

It must be asked, on what basis and why, were the Tervingi admitted in 376? At first sight there does not appear to be much precedent for the admittance of such a large group of non-Romans, who had not been defeated in war, as settlers, especially if it was without a formal treaty. Unfortunately, none of the ancient sources is interested enough in the legal position of the Goths to mention their status as immigrants in 376. Orosius believed that "the Goths were received by Valens without the negotiation of any treaty",[76] and there is no evidence that there was any formal basis for the admittance of the Goths. But, Orosius' tendentiousness apart, this argument from silence is not particularly persuasive. We can interpret the actions of the Tervingi as seeking a voluntary *deditio* to ensure their survival. All that happened subsequently, even the actions of the Roman commanders, can be seen as confirmation that the Goths had undergone an act of *deditio in fidem*.[77] Any conditions on their admittance which we read about, such as a requirement for the Tervingi to give up their arms, might well reflect the existence of some sort of treaty setting out the entry and settlement conditions. The fact that the Goths seem not to have given up their arms does not deny the existence of a treaty requiring them to do so. It might be that this was the result of the lax behaviour of the Roman officials on the spot, since surrender of arms was a usual requirement of *deditio*.[78] These are arguments from silence, however, and we are not in a position to decide if there really was a formal treaty of admission.

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76 Orosius, VII 33.

77 G. Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners in the fourth century" in W. Pohl (ed.), *Kingdoms of the Empire: the integration of barbarians in late antiquity*, Leiden, 1997, 47ff, with note 147.

78 Note that both Orosius and Prosper Tiro specify that the Tervingi did not give up their arms, while neither Zosimus nor Ammianus, who were writing much closer to the events, mention it or any such requirement of admission.

Ammianus reports that the Tervingi, when admitted, would supply so many recruits that the recruit levy on landholders could be converted to gold. The church historian Socrates, scoring a point about the defects of Valens' character, repeats the commutation argument and also gives an extra piece of information. The Tervingi, he says, presented themselves and asked for admission into the Empire to escape the Huns, undertaking to be subject to the Emperor and to do whatever he should command them. Valens "ordered that the suppliants should be received with kindness...".[79] The notion that Valens received the Goths with kindness is belied by the facts of the actual treatment meted out to the Tervingi once they had crossed the river and were inside Roman territory. Ammianus implies that there was a direct connection between the savagery with which Lupicinus and Maximus treated the settlers and the revolt of the Goths.[80] This cannot have been Valens' aim, and blame for such treatment must be laid directly with the two local commanders.

Apart from their treatment by Roman officials, the intention to settle the Goths in 376 was not a new phenomenon. Ammianus discusses an earlier example of a barbarian settlement which has been considered to have a similar basis to the proposed settlement of the Tervingi in 376.[81] In 359 the Sarmatian Limigantes asked Constantius II for admittance as prospective settlers.[82] In this respect the two situations were comparable. In one other particular too, the situations were the same. The striking parallel is in the argument used to justify accepting the barbarians into the Empire. In both cases the argument Ammianus says was decisive, was the desirability of commutation of the recruiting levy into gold, because the barbarian settlers would be a source of supply of recruits for the army's replacement needs.[83] The resemblances end there, however, for the Limigantes "struck by savage madness" attack the Roman troops gathered to supervise their admittance into the

79 Soc., IV.34.
80 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.9.
81 For example, by Wolfram, 118-9, who apparently fails to realise that the episode of the Sarmatian submission after defeat in battle (Amm. Marc., XVII) and the request of the Limigantes for settlement (Amm. Marc., XIX.11.6f) are two different situations occurring on two separate occasions.
82 Amm. Marc., XIX 11.6-7.
83 Compare Amm. Marc., XIX 11.7 and XXXI 4.4.

Empire without provocation, and are destroyed.[84] Indeed, the resemblance might be an artificial one in any case. The argument is, more precisely, an Ammianus editorial rather than direct evidence, so the earlier case might be a retrojection by Ammianus of the tax issue which was decisive in the later case. Or, the commutation of the recruit tax into gold might have been "a topos of imperial propaganda" as Heather argues, although in this case one would have to accept that Ammianus was merely another propaganda mouthpiece for the imperial courts—and surely this is not an acceptable point of view.[85]

Other settlements of barbarians inside the Empire might provide a better model.[86] In fact settlement of barbarian tribes who had not been defeated in battle had a long history as an option in Roman foreign policy. There are numerous examples of such settlements prior to the fourth century. The practice can be dated to at least as early as 38 BC when the Ubii were allowed to settle on the left bank of the Rhine, at their own request, by M. Vipsanius Agrippa.[87] The Ubii were settled as a complete *civitas* and we must presume they retained their own leaders, albeit within a Roman context. In about 50 A.D. Vannius, ex-king of the Quadi, and his followers (*clientes*), were settled in Pannonia having sought refuge in the Empire after being defeated in a battle with the Iazyges.[88] Cassius Dio records many occasions when barbarians were settled within the Empire. A number of such settlements took place around 170-1. Dio records that groups of barbarians received land in Dacia, Pannonia, and Moesia from Marcus Aurelius.[89] At about the same time, the Astingoi were possibly settled

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84 Amm. Marc., XIX 11.10-17. Note that Wolfram, 118, compares the Limigantes to the Tervingi, saying neither intended to honour their promises of peace. Presumably this statement is based on the subsequent attack by the Limigantes and the uprising of the Tervingi. However, the situations were quite different, at least in Ammianus' view of them, and in this are not comparable. The attack of the Limigantes was entirely unprovoked, that of the Tervingi brought to a head by grievous mistreatment by Roman officials.

85 Heather, 133f.

86 The listing of all settlements of barbarians mentioned in the sources, made by G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, in Appendix III of *The class struggle in the ancient Greek world*, London 1981, 509-518, is an invaluable source for any analysis of the nature of barbarian settlements and I am indebted to his listing for the material that follows. I have listed here only those settlements of barbarians where it is indubitable that there was no prior defeat in battle and which seem to have been voluntary.

87 Strabo, IV.iii.4.

88 Tac., *Annals* XII xxx.

89 Cassius Dio, LXXI 11.3-5.

by Marcus Aurelius in Dacia at their own request.[90] Similarly, Dio says that 3,000 Naristae were given land within the Empire at their own request.[91] In 180, the governor of Dacia, C. Vettius Sabinianus Julius Hospes, promised land in the province of Dacia to 12,000 Dacians who had been driven from their own lands.[92] Gallienus, possibly in return for military assistance, ceded part of Pannonia to the Marcomanni for settlement in the period 258-60.[93] The emperor Probus admitted the greater part of the Bastarnae and settled them in the empire around 280. The Bastarnae had not been defeated in war and were admitted into the Empire at their own request. Zosimus says that they were received after submitting to the Emperor and settled in Thrace.[94] Probus is said, also, to have settled within the Empire some Franks who applied for a place to live.[95] Many settlements of barbarians were made in the time of the tetrarchs, but most of these seem to have followed military defeat. One exception might be the settlement of Franks, referred to in the panegyric to Constantius (297), who are said to have been "admitted to our laws".[96] The formal submission to the Empire, the act of *deditio*, which seems to have been a feature of settlement following defeat in battle, is only reported for the settlement of the Bastarnae who are said by Zosimus to have submitted to Probus.

It seems then, that the practice of admitting into the Empire as settlers barbarians who had not been defeated in battle was a continuing and often used feature of Roman foreign policy. Valens had worthy precedents for his decision to admit the Tervingi in 376. In spite of Heather's belief that Valens' action was "exceptional when compared to other occasions where foreign tribal groups were admitted to the Empire",[97] the settlements detailed above represent over half of the known examples listed by de Ste Croix for the period before the fourth century. Although not the most obvious mechanism for settling barbarians in the Empire, admission of barbarians at

90 Cassius Dio, LXXI 12.3. Their first request was rejected, but Dio may imply a later settlement.
91 Cassius Dio, LXXI 21.
92 Cassius Dio, LXXII 3.3.
93 *Epit. Caes,* 33.1.
94 *HA, Probus* XVIII.1; Zos., I.71.
95 Zos., XLI.2.
96 *Pan. Lat.,* VIII (V) 21.1: *receptus in leges Francus.*
97 Heather, 128. For de Ste Croix see note 86.

their own request occurs often enough for it to have been a normal and accepted foreign policy option. The examples used by Heather to show the "exceptional" nature of Valens' decision are selective. He does not examine any of the settlements of barbarians discussed above, none of which was preceded by Roman military victory. Heather does cite the case of the Limigantes in 359, who had been defeated by Constantius in 358 and asked to settle in regions away from the Roman frontiers.[98] Their request in 359 for lands inside the Empire was made entirely upon their own initiative and was not forced upon them by another military defeat and is, again, a close parallel to the settlement of the Tervingi in 376. Contrary to Heather's opinion, there was nothing exceptional about Valens' decision to settle the Tervingi within the Empire at their own request and it does not "stand out" from the established Roman practice which provides many examples of similar settlements.

It might be that Valens was motivated to admit the Tervingi for reasons more connected with his desire to force a Roman victory in the east: the supply of troops would enable him to keep his eastern armies supplied with men, and a settlement of Goths in northern Thrace to guard the Danube crossings would ease a military flash point which had the potential to distract him from his efforts to pursue a hard line in his dealings with Persia.[99] He had abandoned confrontation on the Empire's northern borders in order to pursue a confrontationist policy on the Empire's Persian frontier which remained, throughout the imperial period, the frontier to which Emperors seeking military glory turned. The subsequent revolt of the Tervingi and the defeat of the Roman army at Adrianople together represent a failure of Roman leadership and military tactics, but should not be taken to prove shortcomings in the overall direction of Roman foreign policy.

Conclusion

Over the course of the century Rome had tried different strategies in dealing with the Goths with a large degree of success. In 332, Constantine defeated them by force of

98 Heather, 129.
99 See Blockley, 36-7.

arms and forced them to accept a treaty. Constantine's policies for all their apparent radicalism, fitted well within the normal operations of Roman foreign policy.[100] In 348, Constantius II seems to have put an end to Tervingian unrest through negotiation—always an option in the practice of foreign policy and, again, nothing out of the ordinary. The real change to the conduct of Roman relations with the Goth since 332, came in 369 when Valens, a less competent military strategist than Constantine or Constantius, sought to punish the Goths by the use of an aggressive (and probably unjustified) policy designed to change the nature of Rome's relationship with the Goths and to keep them at arms length from the Empire. In the end, he was forced to achieve these aims through a combination of military force and negotiation, but his initial aggressive intention should not be dismissed. But, the real watershed was 376. With Valentinian I dead, Valens and Gratian were free to try different policy options, and Valens' decision to admit the Tervingi as settlers in 376 was a radical departure from the conduct of Roman foreign policy over the previous decade. Accommodation was being tried, not as something entirely new, but as just one other policy option that had been tried in the past and which could be tried again. But for the unconscionable behaviour of Lupicinus and Maximus, Valens' strategy might well have succeeded and we would have no Adrianople to write about.

100 See Heather, 113: "there was thus nothing out of the ordinary in Constantine's relations with the Goths".

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Relations between Romans and Goths: 379-382

When Theodosius was promoted to Emperor by Gratian in January 379, he was faced with a situation of some urgency. Events immediately subsequent to the Gothic victory at Adrianople—the failure to capture any cities save Nikopolis which gave itself up, and the farce of the Gothic advance on Constantinople—had demonstrated the essentially limited nature of Gothic military success in the fourth century, but immediate decisions and action were essential. The most evident and attendant outcome of the Gothic victory in 378 was that bands of armed Goths were free to roam Roman territory in the Balkans (Thrace and Macedonia) with some degree of, but not complete, impunity. Yet, there was no question of the still depleted Roman army forcing such dispersed bands back across the Danube and keeping them there. There is, however, no evidence, or any reason to presume that such an aim was the preferred policy option of Gratian after the disaster, or of Theodosius after his accession, or even that it had been Valens' intention post-376. No doubt, the military defeat of 378 caused the new Emperor and his consistory to re-evaluate the conduct of foreign policy on the Danube with a view to finding some means, not limited to a military one, of seizing the initiative, and of dealing with the outcomes of Adrianople in a positive way. But, the measures taken seem to be considered and not such as to support the view, held typically by Blockley, that the defeat at Adrianople in 378, following so closely on the 363 debacle of Julian's Persian expedition and "the reappraisal of policy that resulted, together with the pressure of circumstances...caused Theodosius I to initiate a radical change in the Roman Empire's approach to its foreign relations".[1] Blockley's evidence for the "radical

1 Blockley, 39.

change in policy" consists only of the Empire's treaties with the Goths of 380 and 382. I will deal with these treaties below.

There is no doubt that the empire needed to display military superiority over the Goths inside the Empire, even if this was not aimed at expelling them from the Empire. Public sentiment needed encouragement after the wildness of the stories and rumours circulating post-Adrianople and the army had to be shown to be in control of Roman territory. Public statements of military success were, therefore, crucial to Theodosius' aims and his dynastic ambitions, irrespective of his longer term aims for settling with the Goths, and it is not surprising that any Roman successes in 379 and 380 were magnified into and publicised as significant victories. However, we should beware of assuming that this rhetorical need meant that the victories were 'fake' in some way.

Few facts about the campaigns in the 379 are known and they are tendentious or confused. Zosimus records an early success of Modares against a large band of Goths and notes that 4,000 wagons were captured.[2] There is little context for dating this action, although Zosimus places it during the period Theodosius was in Thessalonica. On the basis of the law codes it appears that Theodosius had arrived in Thessalonica by June 379 (*CTh* X 1.12) and was still there in late September 380 (*CTh* X 10.14). If Zosimus' chronology is correct, the action of Modares can therefore have occurred only during the campaigning seasons of 379 or 380, and 379 is the more likely date.[3] An announcement in Constantinople, in the middle of November 379, of victory over Goths, Huns and Alans, strengthens the case for dating Modares' action to 379.[4]

Modares was a Goth and a member of the royal family, Zosimus tells us,[5] and a recent defector to Rome. Zosimus also relates that he had been recently appointed to a military command because of his loyalty. This command is usually assumed to be

2 Zos., IV.25. The *Consularia Constantinopolitana* records the announcement of a victory over Goths Huns and Alans late in the year, s.a. 379.
3 Accepted by Wolfram, 131, and Heather, 150, although *PLRE*, Modares, has 380 as the date. See also F. Paschoud (ed.), *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle*, vol. ii.2, Paris 1979, 387.
4 *Cons. Const.* a. 379.
5 Zos., IV.25.

that of *magister militum per Thracias*, but it seems unlikely that so recent a defector could have reached the high position of *magister militum* this soon after his arrival in the empire. The post of *comes* might be a more a realistic conjecture for Modares' appointment. Athanaric and his Goths were defeated by a large Hunnic force in 376 somewhere in Moldavia. This defeat, and the impossibility of the Tervingi holding onto this territory in the face of the Hunnic aggression, caused the majority of the Tervingi to break away from Athanaric and, under the leadership of Fritigern and Alavivus, seek entry into the Empire.[6] The cause and timing of this upheaval in Gothic society is an appropriate context for the defection of Modares to the Roman army. There are a number of interesting aspects to the case of Modares. Firstly, it might seem surprising that a Goth was able to reach a senior military command at this time, given the strong anti-Gothic sentiments implied in Iulius' pre-emptive strike against the Gothic recruits in the east following Adrianople. Iulius' action, however, could have been a pre-emptive strike in the circumstances to serve the immediate situation immediately after Adrianople, rather than an out-pouring of anti-Gothic sentiment. Secondly, Modares was a christian, one acceptable to Gregory of Nazianzus, and therefore a Nicene Christian rather than an Arian. This suggests that his conversion happened after his arrival in the Empire. Finally, it is surprising that a Goth of royal rank would desert to the Empire—suggestive of growing internal dissension among the tribes that made up the Tervingi and a general climate in Roman-Gothic relations against which to measure ongoing Roman policy towards Goths. Modares is also the first Goth noted in a high command post in the army. All these are indications of the flux in Roman-Gothic relations in these years.

The rôle of Modares raises questions about who his troops were. Can we assume that a successful campaign against elements of the Gothic bands in Thrace means that some elements of the eastern army at least were back to being an effective military force? Given the complexities of the situation in Thrace in the period immediately after Adrianople it is difficult to know who Modares was commanding and the

6 Wolfram, 71-2.

question is problematic, with no straightforward answer. Were his troops regular eastern army units, or an irregular force of some sort - perhaps other Goths who had defected? Zosimus' version of the action leaves no doubt that he is talking about regular army units—he refers to the soldiers disdaining to wear their heavy armour in order to close on the enemy more quietly.[7] But the question must be left open, since we cannot hope to answer it.

Theodosius and the Goths in 380

During 380, for part of which year Theodosius was lying ill in Thessalonica, the Tervingi seem to have regained some of the ground lost in the previous year, raiding across Moesia and into Illyricum. The Tervingi then seem to have had unfettered access to the provinces of Macedonia and Thessaly, although even Zosimus comments on their restraint in treating with the cities of the provinces.[8] It is also in this year that Zosimus relates a defeat of units of the eastern field army in Macedonia.[9] There is some evidence that the Tervingi changed their tactics to remedy the reverses of 379. Jordanes describes the Goths being divided into two, with half moving to Pannonia and the rest plundering Thrace.[10] With the army still depleted after Adrianople, such tactics might well have been beyond the resources of the remnants of the eastern army in Thrace to deal with. It is hard to see what the Goths hoped to achieve for themselves by such a tactic. Had they employed the whole of their available fighting force in Thrace it would have been even more difficult for Rome's eastern resources to cope. As it was, the division of the Gothic forces was sure to bring western troops into the picture, making it doubtful that the Goths had any serious military ambitions in Thrace.

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7 Zos., IV.25.2. Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2, 387-8 note 153, assumes they were Goths.

8 Zos., IV.31. 5.

9 Zos., IV.31 reports a battle where a Roman military force containing at least some infantry units was defeated by Goths. It certainly cannot have been the Emperor's "whole army" as Zosimus reports, since he almost immediately states that they were "vastly outnumbered". Perhaps the reason for the defeat lies in a dearth of talented local commanders?

10 Jordanes, *Getica* 140. Wolfram, 132.

A serious defeat in 380 might be confirmation of the pessimists' view of the Roman army following Adrianople, but by the time of the campaigning season of 380, Theodosius could have made only very modest headway in replacing the 10-13,000 men lost at Adrianople. Zosimus explicitly states that the Roman forces were vastly outnumbered in this confrontation in 380, and the units involved were probably still understrength, so the defeat is really no indication of the overall strength of the eastern armies, or indicative of any weakness in overall Roman military strategy. However, it does suggest that an exclusionist military solution to the 'Gothic problem' was for the time being out of Theodosius' immediate reach even if that had been his chosen foreign policy aim. Nevertheless, despite the defeat of Theodosius and the resultant stalemate,[11] 380 saw a second proclamation of victories of both Augusti.[12] However, there is no evidence that Theodosius actually entered Constantinople in triumph as Zosimus relates.[13] The victory announcement was a piece of propaganda timed for Theodosius' arrival in his capital and designed to appease the worries of those in the east.

The 'Peace' of 380

As Heather observes, "it has been a commonplace of modern historical reconstruction that in 380 Gratian made a separate peace with the Greutungi of Alatheus and Saphrax, settling them in Pannonia".[14] Examples of this attitude are easily found. Wolfram, for instance, states: "the western Emperor—after consultation with Theodosius—settled the Greutungi and their defeated allies as federates in Pannonia II and probably also in Savia and Valeria".[15] Émilienne Demougeot has a similar view suggesting that "les deux Augustes se réunirent à Sirmium, le 8 Septembre 380, pour établir les conditions de paix à imposer aux barbares", and she follows Jordanes in arguing that Gratian concluded a *foedus* with the Goths, a *foedus*

11 So the position at the end of 380 is described by Wolfram, 132.
12 *Cons. Const.* a. 380.
13 Zos. IV.33.
14 Heather, 334.
15 Wolfram, 132.

that was accompanied "de livres et de dons".[16] More recently, Burns has asserted that "Gratian acted to relieve the pressure by concluding an agreement admitting groups of barbarians into the Empire. This concession was made on condition that the newcomers would be deployed to strengthen the garrisons along the Drau, not as front-line troops", without citing any evidence for the condition or the agreement.[17] A recent biography of Theodosius by Williams and Friell comes to a similar conclusion, declaring that "He [Gratian]...came to a treaty agreement with them [the Goths of Alatheus and Saphrax] which allowed them to settle in Pannonia".[18]

The modern reconstructions place the whole weight of their interpretation on a couple of sentences in Jordanes, and a single fact dredged out of an utterly confused passage of Zosimus. Despite this strong consensus of opinion, there is only one source that records this peace arrangement, the *Getica* of Jordanes. The passage reads:[19]

> So he [Gratian] entered on a truce with them and made peace, giving them provisions. XXVIII. When the Emperor Theodosius afterwards recovered [from the illness that had laid him low in Thessalonica in 380] and learned that the Emperor Gratian had made a compact between the Goths and the Romans, as he himself had desired, he was very well pleased and gave his assent.

Zosimus refers to Gratian being forced to allow Gothic groups to settle in Pannonia and Upper Moesia but does not specifically mention a peace treaty or other arrangement.[20] The account of Zosimus is hopelessly confused, however; Paschoud even refers to it as "gravement troublé".[21] Chronologically, Zosimus positions the occupation of Pannonia and Upper Moesia following directly on from the crossing of the Danube, but he has the Goths (whom he calls German peoples from across the

16 E. Demougeot, "Modalités d'établissement des fédérés barbares de Gratien et de Théodose" in *Mélanges d'Histoire Ancienne offerts à William Seston*, Paris, 1974, 145-147.
17 T. S. Burns, *Barbarians within the gates of Rome*, Bloomington, 1994, 73.
18 S. Williams and G. Friell, *Theodosius: the Empire at Bay*, New Haven 1994, 32.
19 Jordanes, *Get.* 141-2, in Mierow's translation, 91.
20 Zos., IV.34.2.
21 Paschoud, *Zosime*, vol. ii.2, 406 (n. 166).

Rhine) leaving Gaul and crossing the Danube back into the Empire (presumably first going back across the Rhine, and then travelling east and south to the Danube). He places the desertion of Athanaric by the majority of the Tervingi immediately after the crossing of the Danube, and follows this with Athanaric seeking refuge in the Empire, which actually occurred over four years after the crossing of the Danube. We can hardly rely on Zosimus as evidence for Jordanes or any other view on these matters.

Heather, rightly, casts substantial doubt on this usually accepted fact of late Roman-Gothic relations. Zosimus' statement in IV.34 is confused and lends itself to a number of interpretations. Heather, while not denying the possibility of a Gothic occupation of part of Pannonia, argues that the whole passage in Zosimus conflates a number of different events of the period 376-382 and cannot be used to support Jordanes in this matter. The passage in Jordanes itself seems to be confused about chronology and is bedevilled by errors. Jordanes has Athanaric as successor to Fritigern, while the actual situation is far more complex (see below), and says Athanaric made a goodwill visit to Constantinople,[22] whereas the more reliable Ammianus Marcellinus says that he was forced to flee from his stronghold behind the Carpathian mountains to the succour of Constantinople.[23]

According to Heather, Jordanes implies that the peace treaty put an end to the war between Rome and all the Goths.[24] Quite clearly this did not occur until 382, as confirmed by the Chronicles, and so Heather believes that Jordanes is speaking, in some confused fashion, of the settlement made with the Goths in 382, which really did end the hostilities, at least for some years.[25] However, this is not a necessary implication of Jordanes words, and it is quite possible that Jordanes is referring only to some arrangement which Gratian made with the Goths in Pannonia to which Theodosius gave his assent. He does not necessarily mean that this arrangement was

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22 Jord., *Getica* 142.
23 Amm. Marc., XXVII 5.10.
24 Jord., *Get.* 141.
25 Heather, 337.

a solution to the totality of Roman-Goth relations and the passage does not explicitly say that all hostilities were ended by the peace treaty.

It might be argued that Themistius' silence on the matter of the supposed peace of 380 is really all that needs to be adduced to dissipate any lingering traces of support for such a peace. Then again, the only oration close in time to 380 is Oration 15, probably delivered in Constantinople in January 381.[26] In this oration, Themistius deliberately intends to speak of peaceful things, not wars and it is his thesis that justice serves the ruler better than military prowess.[27] It could be that Gratian's peace is not mentioned because Themistius is concerned to focus on Theodosius and not Gratian, or that what was portrayed as a military victory against the Goths simply does not fit the theme of his speech. Or, it could simply be that there was no treaty to mention—after all, in the context of an oration about peace it would seem fit and proper to mention a recent treaty of peace if such a thing had occurred. More forceful is the argument put by Heather that at this stage of his reign Theodosius was still dependent on the support of Gratian, and would not have risked alienating him by allowing Themistius to ignore a significant success, such as a peace treaty. Hence, the silence of Oration 15 is meaningful.[28]

To conclude, both Jordanes, and, in his confused way, Zosimus, indicate an agreement either explicitly or implicitly between Gratian and the Goths in Pannonia. Heather has argued that there must be grave doubts about even the fact of such an agreement, let alone its nature (which is totally irrecoverable). He concludes, "It remains possible that Gratian settled Goths in Pannonia, but it is much more likely that he did not".[29] But his argument is based on silence, and it is quite possible that Jordanes is referring to some arrangement which Gratian made with the Goths in Pannonia to which Theodosius gave his approval. This would seem to be the most obvious meaning of Jordanes words, and the absence of Pannonian Goths from the

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26 J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court. Oratory, Civic Duty and Paedia from Constantius to Theodosius*, Michigan, 1995, 200.
27 Them., *Or.* 15 185a. Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 201.
28 Heather, 338.
29 Heather, 344.

historical record in the following decades, granted the nature of our evidence, should not be given greater weight than it deserves. Indeed, if Gratian did come to some agreement with the Goths in Pannonia, it may have been a foretaste of the policy Theodosius was himself to apply to the Tervingi in his part of the Empire in due time. Despite Zosimus, Gratian can hardly have been forced into such a policy. Neither need Theodosius.

Theodosius and the Goths in 381

As a consequence of the near disaster related by Zosimus, Theodosius was forced to ask Gratian for help, and western forces under Bauto and Arbogastes were moved east into Illyricum, probably in 381. Zosimus is unclear about the dating of this action, although in his narrative it is placed after Theodosius' entry into Constantinople, and so dates to 381.[30] The campaign orchestrated by these two men succeeded in driving the Tervingi out of Illyricum and confining them to Thrace.[31] At the same time, a victory of Theodosius over "Sciri, Carpodaces and Huns" led to a general alleviation of the trying conditions prevalent in Thrace, according to Zosimus.[32] Although significant or interesting enough to be recorded by Zosimus, this success did not result in any victory announcements across the Empire, as had the seemingly less meaningful successes of 379 and 380.

The most significant and symbolic event of 381 was the reception of Athanaric by Theodosius in Constantinople. Athanaric dominates the history of the Tervingi for the whole period from 365 to 381. He was not a king of the Goths but in all likelihood held the position usually referred to as *iudex*, 'judge'.[33] In 367-9, he had managed to keep his people together in the face of Roman aggression north of the

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30 The modern consensus, with which I see no need to disagree generally, is that the activities of Bauto and Arbogastes in Macedonia took place in 381. See Heather, 155, and R. Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", *Chiron* 26 (1996), 3 and 17.

31 Heather, 155, to be preferred to Wolfram who places this action in 380, and says the Goths were driven into lower Moesia, 132.

32 Zos., IV.34. Zosimus is not specific about the location of this success but since Bauto and Arbogastes were harrying the Goths plundering Illyricum this success of Theodosius' commanders presumably took place in Thrace.

33 Wolfram, 64-7; Heather, 99-100.

Danube, yet in 376 he had been unable to resist a Hunnic invasion of the Tervingian homeland. Subsequently, a rival leadership of Alaviv and Fritigern, representing a pro-Roman Christian faction, deserted Athanaric with the majority of the Tervingian people.[34] The immediate events leading up to Athanaric's flight to Constantinople are lost in the obscurity which always surrounds those Goths who remained outside the Empire. Wolfram suggests that "an intrigue engineered by Fritigern...probably led to Athanaric's fall",[35] and while this is plausible there is little evidence one way or the other, although it is possible to read Zosimus this way.[36] Whatever the cause, Athanaric left the Tervingian lands and placed himself under the protection of the Empire in early 381. The *Consularia Constantinopolitana* gives the date of his entry into the city as the third day before the ides of January, ie. 11 January 381.[37]

The formal nature of the ceremony on Athanaric's arrival as described by Zosimus, suggests that the whole performance had been arranged beforehand, possibly even in late 380. Theodosius, we are told, went out from the city to meet Athanaric.[38] Such behaviour was unprecedented. Never before had a 'barbarian' been honoured in this way. There are elements of a formal *adventus* of the Gothic judge in the sparse descriptions in the sources—the public nature of his entrance to the city, the welcoming delegation of the emperor himself—which all seem to have been designed to honour Athanaric above any other 'barbarian' received into the Empire and to make public an imperial policy towards the Goths. Recently analyses suggest that too much has been made of the significance of this event, because Athanaric was almost powerless in 381 with few, if any, followers.[39] Perhaps so, but whatever position he might have held in the hierarchy of Tervingian leadership, Athanaric is the only leader whose name is known to us between 380 and the early 390s, when Fravitta and Eriulf appear. The other named leaders of the Tervingi of this period,

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34 Wolfram, 71-2.
35 Wolfram, 73.
36 Zos., IV 34.3-4.
37 *Cons. Const*, a. 381.
38 Zos., IV 34.4.
39 Wolfram, 72-4, detailing the events which resulted in the desertion of Athanaric by the great majority of the Tervingi and his reception into the Empire in early 381.

Fritigern, Alatheus, and Saphrax, make no further appearance in the sources after the military actions of 380. Possibly they were killed in the course of the year, although other scenarios are possible also.[40] Athanaric might well have been seen as the only possible successor to Fritigern if that leader had been killed and the confused passage in Jordanes might contain a garbled version of the political realities of Tervingian leadership in the 380s.[41]

We cannot know for certain Theodosius' motivation for the grandiloquence of his reception of Athanaric, but a number of possibilities suggest themselves. If Athanaric was the only remaining Tervingian leader of any standing it is plausible that Theodosius hoped, by accommodating Athanaric and being seen to treat him so lavishly, to win the Goths to Rome without further fighting.[42] The scale of the reception certainly suggests a display of wealth and power meant to impress the impressionable.[43] Theodosius' gesture, in this context, implies that he was at the same time making a public statement of a policy towards the Goths of accommodation rather than aggression, but accommodation that recognised the superiority of Rome, a very traditional policy. Alternatively, it has been argued that Theodosius was attempting to create division between the two groups of Tervingi (those with Athanaric and the rest) by his generous treatment of Athanaric.[44] The fostering of division between groups of the enemy was not a new tactic in Roman foreign policy and there would be nothing unusual if this was Theodosius' chosen *modus operandi*. Jordanes relates that Theodosius made an alliance with Athanaric, implying a treaty of some sort.[45] While the confusion of Jordanes' history make this treaty suspect, and no other source confirms it except for Orosius,[46] the making of such a treaty is not in itself implausible, if Theodosius was trying to widen the rift

40 As Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 19 n. 108, speculates. Heather, 157, draws the same conclusion.
41 Jord., *Get.* 142.
42 Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 19, makes this point.
43 See Blockley, 40. Theodosius behaviour does not necessarily signal "a change in Roman policy" as Blockley describes it (page 39), however, but a change in tactics.
44 A. E. Thompson, "The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric", *Historia* 12 (1963), 107-8.
45 Jord., *Get.* 142.
46 Orosius, *Adv. Pag.* VII.34.

between Athanaric and Fritigern or publicly undermine the position of Fritigern (assuming he was still alive, even though invisible in the sources).[47] Athanaric's remaining followers, and they might not have numbered many, were accepted into Roman service and, so Zosimus relates, used to fortify the forts along the Danube.[48] It is plausible to imagine the dissension this could give rise to among those Tervingi struggling to feed themselves and their families from the denuded lands of Thrace which had been so thoroughly stripped bare by the Tervingi over the previous two years.

When Athanaric died, after barely two weeks in Constantinople, Theodosius used the occasion to make another public display of respect to the Gothic leader. In Zosimus' account, Theodosius buried Athanaric in a royal tomb whose lavishness so amazed the 'Scythians' (in Zosimus' reconstruction it is not clear just who the 'Scythians' are) that they returned home without annoying the Romans further.[49] Jordanes adds the extra embellishment that Theodosius so respected Athanaric the emperor walked behind the Gothic leader's bier as he was carried to burial.[50] The royal tomb, the publicly grieving emperor, the whole lavish scale of both the arrival and departure of Athanaric, leave a strong impression that Theodosius wanted to be seen to be treating Athanaric as royalty, as a legitimate Gothic king, whatever his status in the eyes of those Tervingi who were at large in Thrace and Pannonia. Unfortunately, there is no commemoration of the event in the coins and it is impossible to speculate further about Theodosius' treatment of Athanaric.

Theodosius and the Goths in 382, and the Treaty

The year 382 was a critical one. After years of desultory and generally inconclusive fighting between 379 and 382, Theodosius reached a lasting accommodation of some

47 Blockley, 192, n. 5.
48 Zos., IV.34.5. Supported by Jordanes, *Getica* 145, where the implication is that these Goths became regular Roman army units.
49 Zos., IV 34.4-5.
50 Jord., *Get.* 143.

sort with the Tervingi in the autumn of 382.[51] If there were any engagements between Gothic and Roman forces in this year we hear nothing of them, and it is clear that the treaty was not forced on either side by any decisive defeat or victory in battle. The peace brought about by the settlement lasted for almost thirteen years, despite the suggestions of unrest in 391, and brought stability and order to the whole of the Balkan peninsula. Despite this achievement, the peace of 382 is conventionally portrayed by modern commentators as demonstrating the weakness of Theodosius' negotiating position because he was 'forced' to allow the Tervingi to settle in Thrace, supposedly in a distinct ethnic enclave, a radical departure from previous practice. Theodosius has been severely chastised ever since for this decision. Even later ancient sources condemn the settlement, although it is difficult to see that their criticism is based on anything more than the events of the late 390s and early 400s, events which Theodosius can have neither foreseen, nor planned. For example, a passage in the history of Zosimus, almost too well known to need repeating, charges Theodosius with allowing the Empire to diminish and become a home for barbarians.[52] And the treaty later came to be seen to have had such dire consequences for the Empire that Hydatius, writing in the 460s,[53] says of the event, "the Goths surrendered to the Romans under the terms of a treacherous peace".[54]

The treaty

There are two issues that need to be settled: whether there really was a treaty of some sort in 382; and if there was, what were its terms? Theodosius' *magister militum* in Thrace, Saturninus, is recorded as author of the treaty and he was to be rewarded for this success with the eastern consulship for 383. However, few of the sources make mention of the *foedus*. Zosimus has, perhaps, a confused reference to the ensuing peace at Book IV. 34. 6, but it is difficult to reconcile his narrative with other sources.

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51 The fifth day before the nones of October, according to the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, sa. 382.

52 Zos., IV. 59.4.

53 R. W. Burgess (ed.), *The* Chronicle *of Hydatius and the* Consularia Constantinopolitana. *Two contemporary accounts of the final years of the Roman empire*, Oxford, 1993, 5.

54 Hydatius, *Chronica*, s.a. 382.

The *Consularia Constantinopolitana* (s.a. 382) records that all the Gothic peoples with their king surrendered (*se tradiderunt*) to the Romans, and gives the date of the treaty as *die V non. Oct* (i.e. 3 October). The treaty is mentioned only briefly by Marcellinus *comes*,[55] and in the Chronicle of Hydatius, where it is called a 'treacherous peace' (*infida pax*).[56] Pacatus' panegyric refers to "Goths admitted into service to supply soldiers for your [i.e. Theodosius'] camps and farmers for your lands",[57] which can be construed to be a reference to one of the outcomes of the treaty. And, although Themistius' Oration 16 is directly concerned with the peace engineered by Saturninus acting for Theodosius, it makes no specific reference to a treaty with the Goths.

Thomas Burns in his *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* interprets Themistius' silence about any treaty to mean that there was no 'peace treaty', despite other references to some sort of arrangement, even if not called a *foedus*.[58] Burns holds that all that happened in 382 was "the formal reception of some group of barbarians by Roman officials …there is absolutely no evidence in Themistius that there was a great treaty signing in 382".[59] Further, Burns thinks this because he believes such a treaty signing "would certainly have involved the emperor and not his general", and it can be shown from the laws in the Theodosian Code that Theodosius was in Constantinople during the whole of the crucial time. Burns thereby deduces that Saturninus' achievements in 382 were nothing more than a continuation of the military tactics in place since 379, and his consulship in 383 simply a reward for his "three decades of service…".[60] This is almost too bizarre to be taken seriously. Among the more potent criticisms of Burns' flight of fancy stands the fact that this was Theodosius' quinquennial year, a year in which he would almost certainly have held one of the consulships himself, or else given it to his about to be empurpled son,

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55 Marc. *comes*, *Chronicon*, s.a. 381-2.
56 Hydatius, *Chronica*, Olympiad 290.
57 Pac., *Pan Lat.* XII (II) 22.3: *dicamne ego receptos seruitum Gothos castris tuis militem, terris sufficere cultorem*?
58 Burns, *Barbarians*, 87.
59 Burns, *Barbarians*, 86-87.
60 Burns, *Barbarians*, 87-88.

Arcadius. That he would stand aside in order to merely reward Saturninus' thirty years of service is a laughable suggestion.

Nevertheless, the lack of direct mention of a treaty by Themistius is puzzling. This omission might carry even more weight when placed against the silence of both Zosimus and Jordanes on the matter. However, to set against this there are the words of the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* for 382: "*ipso anno universa gens Gothorum cum rege suo in Romam se tradiderunt...*"; and the report in Hydatius' *Chronica* for the same year: "*Gothi in infida Romanis pace se tradunt*". Pacatus, too, must be referring to something specific when he speaks of "Goths admitted into service to supply soldiers for your camps and farmers for your lands".[61] The position of this sentence in its chapter, before the mention of peace made with the Persians, places the admission of the Goths before 384 (the year of a peace treaty with Persia). There is no event in any of the sources between 379 and 384 to which Pacatus can be referring but the peace of 382 mentioned in the two chronicles. It is likely that such a peace was established by a treaty, since there would need to have been some sort of formal setting out of the conditions to which each side had agreed. Themistius, although never referring directly to a treaty, makes much of the peace in 382, providing the only solid evidence for the treaty conditions. It might be also, that Zosimus' reference to other successes enjoyed by the Romans and to farmers being able to attend to their land and farm animals to graze without fear,[62] is a confused description of the results of the treaty of 382.

There is enough evidence to conclude that there was a treaty with the Goths in 382. Enough of the sources mention an arrangement that we should not dismiss it out of hand, and Burns is the only modern scholar who refuses to accept its existence. His arguments are superficial and not at all convincing. This thesis continues its investigation on the basis of the reality of the treaty of 382.

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61 Pac., *Pan. Lat.* XII (II) 22.3.
62 Zos., IV.34.5-6.

The treaty conditions

The bare facts of the event are that Theodosius, through his *magister militum* Saturninus, entered into a peace treaty with the Tervingi under which they were settled inside the empire. What we can know about the treaty of 382 with any precision—and the evidence for the treaty conditions is almost non-existent—indicates that it was not as different from earlier settlements with the Goths as is generally assumed. From the minuscule evidence available, modern historians of Theodosius' reign have fashioned a mighty stick with which to belabour the Emperor, based largely, it seems on events after that Emperor's death—the rise of Alaric, the sack of Rome in 410 and the internecine warfare of the period 399-406. Lenski's comment is typical of the modern criticisms of the settlement of 382: "he [Theodosius] was compelled to accept a Gothic protectorate within Roman territory".[63] Piganiol goes much further, making no bones about his belief that Theodosius' Gothic policy shown in the treaty was indicative of his defeatism and that Themistius' lack of mention of a treaty was designed "to flatter the inertia of the prince".[64] I cannot agree with this severe point of view and believe that modern interpretations of the settlement of 382 are entirely unsatisfactory. The little we know about the treaty shows it is to be placed within conventional Roman ways of treating barbarians who sought admission to the Empire.

There is very little direct evidence for the treaty. A. H. M. Jones has listed the passages which contain evidence for the treaty: Themistius *Oration* 16 211, and *Oration* 34 20-24; Synesius *de Regno* 14-15; Zos. IV.34 and V.5; and Philostorgius XII.2.[65] There is little enough in these passages to construct any detail of the treaty

63 N. Lenski, "*Initium mali Romano imperium*: contemporary reactions to the battle of Adrianople", *Transactions and Procedings of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997), 143. Again, Lenski is not alone in this assessment: Jones, 157, believes that the Gothic people was allowed "to retain its political and military cohesion"; for Blockley, 40, the Goths became "a people settled autonomously on Roman territory"; Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 34, go so far as to state that the Goths were "in effect, a foreign nation in arms established on Roman territory". Even C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: a social and economic study*, Baltimore, 1994, 189, who is generally more judicious, believes that the Goths were settled with "autonomous federate status".

64 A. Piganiol, *L'Empire Chrétien*, Paris, 1972, 214 and 213 n. 82.

65 Jones, 1099, n. 46.

conditions. Despite this, and the seemingly insurmountable problem of establishing exactly what the treaty's conditions were, almost all scholarship has interpreted the exiguous evidence the same way, or accepted the commonly held view that the treaty was a disaster for the Empire.

Almost without exception modern scholars assume the worst. Jones says of the treaty that:

> The settlement was, in fact, a grave breach with precedent. Barbarians had served in large numbers in the Roman army, but under Roman officers and discipline. Barbarian refugees and prisoners had been settled in the provinces, but they had either been planted in small groups as *laeti* under Roman prefects, or assigned individually to landowners. Barbarian contingents, sent by foreign kings, had fought side by side with the Roman army in individual campaigns but had returned to their homes when the war was over. Now a foreign people of substantial numbers—the Goths are said to have contributed a contingent of 20,000 men to Theodosius' forces in 393—was given a home within the empire but was still allowed to retain its political and military cohesion.[66]

In a somewhat different context, with other bones to pick, Ramsay McMullen in his pessimistic study of Roman public morality and the decline of the western empire, says of this treaty:

> Others [i.e. other Goths], by a far different arrangement of October 3, 382, were scattered over a region in Thrace to live there under their own laws and rulers. They had attained something they might truly call Gothia in Romania. Both treaties [McMullen accepts the reality of the treaty of 380] proved effective in 388, producing a major part of the very large barbarian contingents in the army which Theodosius directed against the pretender Maximus.[67]

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66 Jones, 157.
67 R. McMullen, *Corruption and the Decline of Rome*, New Haven 1988, 185-8.

John Matthews in his seminal study of the late fourth and early fifth centuries believes that:

> Late in 382 the general Saturninus negotiated a peace treaty with the other leading Gothic king, Fritigern, according to which the Goths were permitted to settle as federate people, with their own rulers, on the Roman side of the Danube. If this extension of traditional policy had both its critics and supporters, the emperor could offer a complete defence: necessity.[68]

W. Liebescheutz in an intriguing study of the period of Arcadius and Chrysostom relates that:

> the settlement [i.e. of Goths in 382] starts a new epoch in the history of the Empire. For good or ill it set a precedent which had many subsequent imitators...it is quite likely that Goths were settled in the frontier region under their own chieftains....[69]

R. C. Blockley says the treaty with Goths of 382 marks "a watershed in Roman-barbarian relations" because it was "made with a people settled autonomously on Roman territory".[70] Likewise, Elton speaks of "the appearance of independent barbarian groups within the Empire after the Gothic settlement of 382 in Thrace...".[71] Similarly, P. Heather, in comparing the treaty of 382 with that of 332, says: "In reality, however, it marked a new departure, for the Goths were now a semi-autonomous unit on what was otherwise directly governed Roman soil".[72] Williams and Friell in their superficially useful study of Theodosius: "the treaty [of 382] ratified a whole new shift in the strategic balance...the Visigoths were...acknowledged as an allied people with their own territory....they were, in effect, a foreign nation in arms established on Roman territory".[73] Even the usually iconoclastic Whittaker accepts the modern view, holding that: "the novelty was that

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68 Matthews, 92-3.
69 J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and bishops: army, church and state in the age of Arcadius and Chrysostom*, Oxford 1990, 28.
70 Blockley, 40.
71 Elton, 228.
72 Heather, 165.
73 Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 34.

now, for the first time official recognition was given to communities of independent peoples, "barbarians", living within the Roman Empire".[74]

There are two common threads in all these interpretations: firstly, that the Goths were settled autonomously on Roman territory under their own rulers; and secondly, that the treaty was a grave mistake that eventually brought calamity to the empire. The second depends on the first. But is it possible to be so confident about the terms of the treaty and to be so unanimous in dismissing it as a disaster? It is of crucial importance to try to disentangle exactly what the sources say about the treaty and to grasp the essence of the treaty's conditions.

We need to reconstruct the terms of the treaty of 382 in order to judge whether the settlement made by Theodosius really was the radical shift in Roman foreign policy it is held to be. It now seems impossible to know the exact details of the settlement. This is the position adopted by more recent interpretations of the period, even those such as Blockley who consider Theodosius at fault for the arrangement: "no description of the treaty survives"; Wolfram: "the exact details of the *foedus* of 382 are not known..."; Liebescheutz: "it is impossible to reconstruct the agreement with any degree of certainty".[75] Yet, having made these declarations, each of these authors proceeds to give not just an outline of possible treaty clauses but such details as the actual provinces in which the Goths were settled, and the tax arrangements, as if the treaty is known in detail and all argument superfluous! However that may be, there is a general consensus that the treaty applied the following provisions to the Goths:

1. They became subjects of the Romans, "but remained barbarians and as foreigners had no *conubium* with Romans";
2. They were given tax-exempt land in the northern part of the dioceses of Dacia and Thrace, i.e between the Danube and the Balkan mountains;
3. Their land "remained Roman sovereign territory but the Goths were considered autonomous";

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74 Whittaker, 189.
75 Blockley, 40; Wolfram, 133; Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 28-30.

4. They were obliged to provide military assistance to Rome, "but their own tribal leaders were to receive only subordinate commands";
5. They lived with provincials "under one roof"; and
6. They were entitled to annual payments of an unknown amount.[76]

Unfortunately Wolfram, from whom this list derives, gives no specific references for any of these points so we do not know how he arrived at them. Can we work out how Wolfram has deduced these conditions? Do any of the ancient sources say anything useful about the treaty? Let us see if it is possible to reconstruct any of the details of the treaty from the ancient sources listed above.[77]

A passage in Philostorgius is used as a source for the origins of Alaric and his band of Goths when they began roaming the east in 395. According to Philostorgius, Alaric collected his army in the "upper parts of Thrace" and from there made his way into Achaea and took Athens.[78] This has been used as evidence for the location of the Goths settled under the treaty of 382 and as some indication of the size of the body of men with Alaric. A possible connection between Alaric and the Goths settled in 382 is supposedly established on the basis of a reference in Claudian to Alaric's Goths possessing "the purple robes and other spoils of Valens",[79] which suggests, although it does not prove, that some, at least, of the Goths victorious at Adrianople were among those fighting with Alaric in the period after the death of Theodosius.[80] Heather makes much of Claudian's references to Alaric's Goths, interpreting the poet's verses as confirming that Alaric was in command of "a large force" of Goths, a "sizeable social phenomenon".[81] But Heather is over generous in his translation of

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76 Summarised from Wolfram, 133, but Blockley, 40, and Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 29-30, repeat almost exactly the same provisions.

77 Them., *Oration* 16 211, and *Oration* 34 20-24; Synesius, *de Regno* 14-15; Zos., IV.34 and V.5; and Philostorgius, XII.2.

78 Phil., XII.2.

79 Claud., *de Bello Gothico*, 610. Argued by Heather, 194.

80 Indeed, since the poet immediately tells us that Valens perished by fire and we know that the Goths did not get their hands on Valens' baggage train which was shut inside Hadrianople (Amm. Marc., XXXI 15.15), I wonder where the purple robes came from. This reference can be nothing more than poetic licence.

81 Heather, 194.

the 'size' words used, and to use the many references in Claudian to the number of Gothic dead as support for the size of Alaric's warband is just misleading. The few passages in which Claudian actually refers to the Goths with a word denoting size mostly do not support Heather's view. In one verse referring to Alaric, the 'size' word used by the poet is *caterva*.[82] In its military sense the word refers to an indeterminate number certainly, but a number that categorises a group of men as a company of troops, or a band of fighters, not as a large army. On another occasion Claudian uses the word *manus*.[83] Again, as a way of denoting size this is indeterminate. In its military usage it refers to an armed force, or in extension beyond the purely military to 'a host', or 'a number', or 'a company', when it does suggest a large number. It is equally possible to interpret *manus* as meaning 'a force' of no specific number. But, this is the only place in which the poet's words imply that Alaric's forces were large. Other references cited by Heather in support of his view are too rhetorical to be used as evidence of anything except that Claudian's poems are verse panegyrics. For example, in *IV Cons. Hon.* 459ff there are no size terms of any sort except in reference to the number of dead; *Stil.* I 94ff is again a reference to a 'vast slaughter' of Bastarnae, but it has nothing to do with the size of Alaric's force; *Stil.* I 183ff is a reference to 'countless dead' (*plurima*) and heaps of slaughtered Goths (*acerva*). It is problematic to use all this as evidence for the large size of Alaric's force and to then use this to infer that Alaric had with him "the Goths covered by the 382 agreements".[84] More so, when the evidence only says that Alaric got his troops from the "upper parts of Thrace". The general view of the settlement of 382 is that Goths were settled in Moesia, Pannonia, and possibly Thrace. By what means do the Goths in Thrace become "the Goths covered by the 382 agreements"? Surely, at most it is no more than one part of them. Heather will not countenance much of the evidence in Themistius because of the panegyrical nature of the

82 Claud., *In Ruf.* II 3608.
83 Claud., *Get.* 163.
84 Heather, 195.

Orations, why then is Claudian more reliable? Are poets inherently more honest than philosophers?

It is difficult to untangle the confused meandering of Zosimus over this period. However, certain sections of chapter 34 of book IV seem to refer to the events of 381/2. Zosimus relates the story of the reception of Athanaric at Constantinople and his death a fortnight later. He follows this with the statement that "the dead chief's followers strengthened the guard on the banks of the river and for a long time prevented attacks on the Romans".[85] Immediately before this statement, Zosimus reports that the Scythians returned home without troubling the Romans anymore. It is unclear exactly what Zosimus is talking about here. Since Athanaric's followers presumably did not return home and strengthen the Danubian defences at the same time Zosimus would seem to be talking about two different groups. The passage may indicate that some Goths (Zosimus' 'Scythians') were actually forced back across the Danube. There is more confusion evident, however, since Zosimus has erratically interpreted the reception and generous funeral of Athanaric as the cause of the peace some twenty months later, or else he is giving very late notice of Gratian's treaty of 380 if it existed.[86] We might interpret this as referring, albeit confusedly, to the actual disposition of Athanaric's followers, who were treated differently to the Tervingi who had crossed the Danube in 376. Whatever Zosimus is trying to describe, it is clear that there were a number of ways of dealing with the Goths, ie. different policy options, and that Theodosius treated different groups differently—there was not a single solution for dealing with all the Goths. Some were accommodated within the Empire, and on some occasions groups of Goths were forced back outside the Empire. There is little else of value in Zosimus except, perhaps, the statement that following a defeat of the Sciri and Carpodaces the army recovered heart and farmers were able to farm their land and graze their animals

85 Zos., IV.34.5.
86 See the clear and lucid discussion of Zosimus' evidence in Appendix B in Heather, 334-35.

without threat from the barbarians.[87] It is tempting and perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest this as a reference to some of the consequences of the peace treaty.

The panegyric of Pacatus, behind the formulaic structure, might contain much information about the period before 388. Unfortunately, the extravagance of the adulation of Theodosius drowns out most of the sense we might have obtained from this western onlooker. There is one helpful statement about the Goths and the treaty of 382: "Shall I speak of the Goths admitted into service to supply soldiers for your camps and farmers for your lands?".[88] There is nothing this could be referring to except for some formal arrangement between the Empire and Goths. The tone and intent of this part of the panegyric suggest that Pacatus is referring to Goths settled in the Empire under the terms of the treaty of 382. Although usually taken as evidence of the contents of the treaty arrangements, the words of Pacatus imply only that some Goths were given land to farm, and were required to supply soldiers for the (eastern?) armies. They say nothing that would help us locate or identify these Goths. There is no reason that the passage could not be referring to the terms of an arrangement with another (smaller) group of Goths settled at another time in another place from those in 382.

Certain passages in Synesius' *de Regno* add support to Pacatus and supply extra information. Speaking of Theodosius' reception of the Goths, Synesius says: "he [Theodosius] made allies of them and accounted them worthy of citizenship. Moreover, he threw open public offices to them and made over some part of the Roman territory to their bloodstained hands...they will either till the soil in obedience to orders...".[89] This seems an unambiguous statement about the Goths receiving Roman land to farm. The statement about citizenship is intriguing and suggests that the Goths (or some at least) became Roman citizens.

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87 Zos., IV.34.6.
88 Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* XII (II) 22.3.
89 Synesius, *de Regno*, 15, Fitzgerald's translation.

In fact, there is a lot of information in chapters 14 and 15 of Synesius' work. Ostensibly a panegyrical speech to accompany the presentation by Synesius of a gold crown to the emperor Arcadius, it has a highly critical attitude to both the emperor and his officials, and it is unlikely that it was ever delivered as a speech to Arcadius.[90] It is more likely that it was circulated as political pamphlet of some kind, extolling the particular policies espoused by those who were conservative/traditionalist in respect to foreign policy. Consequently, as Barnes and Heather both argue, the *de Regno* does not reflect imperial policies but is the voice for the views of a group, of whom Aurelianus was the head, which Barnes' labels 'outs', indicating that they were not part of the Emperor's consistory and thus were in no position to decide or influence imperial policy.[91] In this context, it is no surprise that Synesius is highly critical of Theodosius' response to the 'Gothic problem' since it gave a lesser place to the traditional (and conservative) Roman response of aggression.

Although the whole passage is an anti-Scythian (read Gothic) tirade there is valuable detail about the condition of the Goths within the empire. Synesius remarks, "nor must the legislator give arms to those not born and brought up under his laws, for he has no guarantee of their good conduct from such as these. Truly it is the part of a foolhardy man or of a prophet to see and have no fear of this mass of differently bred youth pursuing their own customs…".[92] Synesius here defines Roman for himself and his audience as someone born and brought up under Roman laws, and this reference to the giving of arms to those not born and brought up under Roman laws is crucial. What is Synesius saying? Were Goths settled in the Empire allowed to bear arms as a matter of course, unlike all other citizens? Or, is Synesius merely referring, as I believe, to the enrolment of these Goths in the army?[93] It would be drawing too

90 T.D. Barnes, "Synesius in Constantinople", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 27 (1986), 105 and 108. See also P. J. Heather, "The anti-Scythian tirade of Synesius' *de Regno*", *Phoenix* 42 (1988) upon whose reinterpretation of the work most later studies depend, and the long discussion in A. Cameron and J. Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius*, Berkeley 1993, 127-133.

91 Barnes, "Synesius", 112; Heather, "The anti-Scythian tirade", 166.

92 Synesius, *de Regno* 14 [1088].

93 Heather, "The anti-Scythian tirade", 157, assumes the latter meaning.

long a bow to suggest that the reference to youths pursuing their own customs means anything other than that the Goths tried to retain their culture, much as any ethnic group does in a modern multicultural society, or indeed in the Roman provinces of the early Empire.[94] In fact, Synesius' concern does not seem to be with the ethnic separatism perhaps implied in his words but with the (stereotypical) perfidy of the Goths who are not to be trusted and who will fall upon the Romans the moment they think such an attempt will succeed.

The orations of Themistius are the last of those contemporary (or near-contemporary) sources which make mention of what might be the provisions of a treaty with the Goths in 382. Themistius' 16th Oration, a panegyric and *gratiarum actio* delivered before the Emperor Theodosius on 1 January 383[95], is a celebration of the peace treaty and of Saturninus, the *magister militum* who had brought it about. Themistius' words convey his attitude to peace and give his audience some idea of the conditions of the treaty:[96]

> Would it be better to fill Thrace with bodies or farmers? To show it full of graves or men? To walk through wild or cultivated fields? To number the slain or the ploughmen? To resettle the Phrygians and Bithynians, if it comes to this, or to cohabit with those we have subdued? I hear from those who come from there that they have now made the iron of their swords and armour into mattocks and sickles and that they greet Ares at a distance and worship Demeter and Dionysus.

We can infer from these words that the Goths were given land in Thrace to cultivate, but not that they were settled under the principle of *hospitalitas*. The term 'cohabit' need not, and probably does not, suggest the sort of institution that was referred to as *hospitalitas* in the fifth century. There is no mention of the diocese of Dacia or a statement about the tax status of the land. The reference to resettling Phrygians and

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94 There is a mass of modern scholarship on the retention of local cultural elements, such as R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, Cambridge 1966, and more recently G. Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and The Civilizing Process in the Roman East", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 40 (1994), 116-43.

95 Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 205.

96 Them., *Or.* 16 211a-b, Vanderspoel's translation.

Bithynians is intriguing. It implies that internal resettlements of citizens was a well-known practice by this period and that there was a real depopulation crisis in the Balkan peninsula. Depopulation of Thrace particularly seems to have been an ongoing problem for the Empire. A panegyric to Constantius has a clear reference to an occasion some eighty years earlier, when "Asia filled the deserts of Thrace by the transfer of its inhabitants...".[97] Taken together, these suggest that the need for cultivators was a major factor in the prioritising of options in foreign policy, as in other administrative policies.

Further, the oration might contain definite evidence that there was a formal act of surrender, *deditio*: "we have seen leaders and chieftains, not making token concession of a tattered banner, but giving up their weapons and swords with which up to that day they had held sway, and clinging to the knees of the emperor...",[98] and other sources use the language of *deditio*, referring to the Goths as 'loyal slaves', and 'suppliants'.[99] The surrendering of arms and the supplication before the Emperor are the acts of those entering the Empire through a formal process of surrender. Unfortunately, neither Themistius nor Theodosius were present at the surrender, so the use of the language of *deditio* in this context must be purely rhetorical. However, the oration also gives support to the conjecture that the Goths were potential Roman citizens, in a passage in which Themistius envisages the Goths becoming Romans and sharing the rights and duties of other Roman citizens.[100]

Thus, the consensus of opinion about the conditions of the treaty, represented by Wolfram, Blockley and Liebescheutz is fundamentally flawed. The evidence that the Goths could become Roman citizens seems conclusive, the contemporary account of Themistius to this effect being supported by the slightly later version of Synesius. The fact that Fravitta had to request special permission of Theodosius to marry a

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97 *Pan. Lat.* VIII (V), 21.1.
98 Them., *Or.* 16 210c-d.
99 See the discussion in Heather, 158.
100 Them., *Or* 16 211d. H. Sivan, "On *foederati*, *hospitalitas*, and the settlement of the Goths in 418", *American Journal of Philology* 108 (1987), 762.

Roman wife,[101] has been taken to mean that the Goths settled in 382 did not have the *ius conubii* and therefore were not Roman citizens. We do not know when, or in what circumstances, Fravitta entered the Empire, or when he asked for permission to marry a Roman wife, except that it was before 393. There is no necessary reason for believing that Fravitta was among those Tervingi settled under the treaty of 382 and that his request was subsequent to that event. He could equally have been a Gothic soldier in the Roman army who had not held high enough office to have been granted citizenship,[102] or even a post-382 immigrant to whom the conditions of the treaty of 382 did not apply. It is even possible that the Tervingi settled in 382 were granted a limited form of citizenship. A law of Constantine considers the plight of a Roman citizen who loses that status and becomes a Latin (*latinus*),[103] while another law of about the same date specifically assigns Latin status to the children of a freeborn mother and fiscal slave father.[104] The relevant point is that different degrees of Roman citizenship were still used and apparently widespread. Although there is no specific evidence, it is possible that the Tervingi were given a citizenship status which did not give them full citizenship rights.

The first point of the consensus list of conditions—that the Goths remained barbarians and had no *conubium*—cannot be decided one way or the other, although the weight of the contemporary evidence suggests that the Goths were given citizenship albeit with some deficiencies. Neither can the second point, that the Goths were given tax-exempt land, be supported from the evidence. In fact, Themistius suggests the very opposite when he refers to the Goths sharing the public duties of other Romans. This seems to be a roundabout way of indicating that the Goths were required to pay taxes, so again the consensus view cannot be supported

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101 Eun., fr. 60.

102 R. C. Blockley, "Romano-Barbarian marriages in the late Empire", *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 64, agrees with Mommsen's view that high military office endowed the holder with Roman citizenship, if he was non-Roman.

103 *CTh* 2.22.1, 320 or 327.

104 *CTh* 4.12.3, 320 or 326.

on the evidence. Although not unlikely, there is no evidence to support the additional point that the Goths were settled in the diocese of Dacia, as well as Thrace.

Wolfram's third point is that the land settled by the Goths "remained Roman sovereign territory but the Goths were considered autonomous". Despite being accepted widely by modern commentators, the second part of this statement has no support from any of the evidence. Although it is unquestionable that the land remained "Roman territory" since it remained inside the Empire and the Goths were probably required to pay tax, nothing in any of the sources even hints that the Goths remained 'autonomous'. This assumption is based on questionable interpretations of indirect evidence (see below).

The provision of military assistance is one of the few clear conditions of the treaty, supported by the evidence of Pacatus, Themistius, and Synesius. The supposition that the Gothic leaders only received 'subordinate' military commands is generally accepted, although what Wolfram means by 'subordinate' is unclear. Wolfram argues that the young Alaric felt slighted at being under the command of Gainas and not having an independent command. [105] Perhaps the discontent reflected more on internal Gothic politics than on the reason given by Zosimus. If Alaric saw himself as a potential leader of the Tervingi, as he later became, then being subordinate to another Goth, Gainas, might well have exacerbated the frustrations of the young Goth. Certainly the lack of an independent command is the reason given in Zosimus for Alaric's revolt,[106] but there is nothing to suggest that this was a general condition of the settlement and not something specific to Alaric. Nor is it likely that such a condition, ie. that the Goths settled under the arrangements of 382 could not hold independent commands over their fellow tribesmen, would have been written into a treaty, especially in view of Theodosius' willingness otherwise to employ non-Romans in senior military positions. Gainas has already been mentioned, and at a later date Fravitta was appointed *magister militum*. The existence of this condition in

105 Wolfram, 138.
106 Zos. ,V.5.4.

the modern reconstructions of the treaty arrangements seems to be based on nothing more than Alaric's complaint, but surely this is a flimsy basis for the argument, and not supported by what we know of other Gothic leaders?

The fifth condition suggested by Wolfram is that the Goths lived with the provincials "under one roof'. The only suggestion that the Goths were settled under the principle of *hospitalitas* comes in Themistius' reference to cohabiting with those who had been subdued. While this is, of course, possible, it does not seem very likely since there is no evidence that the *hospitalitas* system extended to anyone other than soldiers in this period.[107] More likely, Themistius is choosing rhetoric over fact to make the point that Goths and Romans were now living side by side as equals. Wolfram's last point is that the Goths received annual payments of an unknown amount from the Romans. This is based on a statement of Jordanes that after the death of Theodosius his sons deprived the allies (ie. the Goths) of their customary gifts.[108] Again, there is no other direct evidence for this although such a condition might have been suggested by Jordanes' belief in the similarity of the treaty of 382 to that of 332. Possibly Jordanes is being anachronistic, projecting a later situation back to the late fourth century.

To summarise, then, the direct evidence of the ancient sources about the provisions of the treaty of 382 is limited and often ambiguous. It seems fairly certain that after the signing of the treaty this group of Goths received some form of citizenship but it is unlikely that they were made full Roman citizens. They were settled as farmers on lands along the Danube in the diocese of Thrace and were required to supply troops to the imperial armies when required, although the Gothic leaders only held subordinate military commands. The major question that remains to be settled is how to explain the prevailing modern view that the Goths retained their autonomy, that, in short, the settlements were a form of Gothia in Romania?

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107 See the discussion in Jones, 249-53.
108 Jord., *Get.* 146.

The settlement of barbarians on vacant lands had a long history in the Empire and in this regard there was nothing exceptional about the settlement of the Tervingi in Thrace. If these barbarians did retain their autonomy, as most modern interpretations hold, then that would indeed be a radical decision. The information we have about the treaty conditions, however, exiguous at best, gives no support for such a view and beliefs in Gothic autonomy depend on inference from later events. The indirect support for the view comes, primarily, from Synesius, with perhaps some less direct corroboration from Jordanes. Although this is not the significant part of Synesius' assertions, he does state in the *de Regno* that Theodosius took the Goths as allies.[109] Jordanes, too, refers to the Goths becoming allies, but this is in the context of his likening their condition to that which prevailed under the treaty of 332 so must be treated circumspectly. Whether the description of the Goths as allies in both Jordanes and Synesius is a formal technical use of the term is doubtful. It probably refers to their status as *foederati*, a term which had different meaning in the early fifth century to its use a quarter of a century before.[110] We should probably not regard the term as holding a particular meaning about the legal status of the Goths settled in 382. We cannot even be sure if it is correct to infer from this that the Tervingi supplied 'federate troops' to Theodosius when requested. Synesius' reference to the Goths continuing their own customs is surely unexceptional. It was part of the Roman tradition of inclusiveness to allow peoples incorporated into the empire to continue to follow their own beliefs, habits and customs.[111] Synesius' rhetoric is tendentious, intended to make a particular chauvinistic point about the dangers of allowing barbarians into the empire, and must be interpreted in the context of the overall purpose of the *de Regno*.

Heather has a detailed argument for the continuing 'semi-autonomy' of the Goths, based on the fact that they did become Roman citizens but continued their internecine struggles for political pre-eminence, as the rise of Alaric supposedly shows. This

109 Synesius, *de Regno* 14.
110 Elton, 92.
111 Shown irrefutably in Fergus Millar's masterly study of *romanitas* and acculturation in the eastern empire, *The Roman Near East, 31BC - AD 337*, Cambridge, 1993.

proves to Heather that Gothic political institutions were unchanged after the treaty.[112] Although such a reading is possible, it makes too much of some very ambiguous evidence for the continuation of the Gothic way of life. If we accept Themistius' implication that the Goths had the same public obligations as other Roman citizens this negates the possibility of the Goths remaining autonomous, or even semi-autonomous. The fact of Alaric's rise does not on its own imply that Gothic institutions remained as they were before the treaty, since his rise is likely to have been an individual response to a particular situation he found intolerable, as Zosimus points out. As well, a major point of Heather's work is to correct Wolfram's dated interpretation of Gothic society and history. He makes the point that there is "no meaningful continuity between Tervingi and Visigoth and Greuthungi and Ostrogoth"[113] and shows that any idea of Gothic unity or continuation of political institutions after the crossing of the Danube is incorrect.[114] In such a context it is not clear that anything can be meant by referring to the autonomy of the Goths settled under the treaty. If there was no political continuity, as Heather argues, there cannot have been continuity in political institutions, so to speak of the Goths being settled under their own leaders is an anachronism. In any case, all communities had their own leaders, and each had its own administrative jurisdiction which linked it to other bureaucratic institutions in the state. There appear to be tribal groups, at least in the western empire, which had their own form of government, even though under a Roman titular head (such as the laetic settlements listed in the *Notitia*). This on its own does not make such settlements autonomous; each had its own institutions and civic rights. The existence of seemingly independent political institutions linked to the Gothic settlements, and that such institutions existed anyway is dubious, does not make the Gothic settlements any different from other communities, and is not evidence for political autonomy, unless it can be definitively shown that the Roman state did not and could not participate in the selection or approval of the ruling

112 Heather, 164-5.
113 Heather, 16.
114 This summary is drawn from a review article by H. Elton, "Romans and Goths: recent approaches", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996), 566.

cliques. This last issue cannot be settled one way or another. If, as Elton argues in a review of Heather's monograph, the "foundation of Gothic kingship needs to be looked for inside the Roman Empire..." then we can place little reliance in modern views that suggest there was no Roman involvement in the leadership of the Gothic settlements made under the treaty.[115]

The treaty of 332

It might be, as Jordanes says, that the conditions of the treaty of 382 were a return to the arrangements in the treaty made by Constantine with the Goths in 332.[116] This possibility is raised by an interpretation of Jordanes' confused rendering of the events of 381 and 382. Jordanes says that the Goths submitted themselves to Roman rule and by doing so returned to the allied status they had had under Constantine.[117] So, is it possible to deduce the conditions of the treaty of 382 from those of the treaty of 332?

Unfortunately, the treaty of 332 is as much a mystery as that between the Tervingi and Romans fifty years later. Is it significant or possible that Theodosius saw himself as a new Constantine, repeating the latter's successful conclusion to his own Gothic problem? There is very little evidence for any of the conditions of the treaty of 332, apart from a passing reference in Julian's *Caesares* to Constantine continuing to pay an annual amount to the Goths after 332.[118] Wolfram adopts a minimalist position for the conditions of this treaty, believing that it required the Goths to provide auxiliary troops for an annual payment and allowed them to resume their cross-Danube trade.[119] However, even this is open to doubt. Ammianus reports that in 360 Constantius had to ask the Goths for *auxilia*, so it seems that automatic military service was not a necessary obligation imposed on the Goths by the treaty of 332.[120] Although the Goths supplied men to fight in Roman armies three times between 332

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115 Elton, "Romans and Goths", 567.
116 Modern commentators have also made the same observation. See Heather, 165.
117 Jord., *Get.* XXVIII.145.
118 Julian, *Caesares*, 329a.
119 Wolfram, 62. The commercial activity is perhaps supported by Them., *Oration* X 135.
120 Heather, 110.

and 369, it seems that the arrangements required negotiation on each occasion. The treaty of 332, made with the Tervingi (as was the later treaty) was a *foedus* in some sort of broad sense that left the Goths nominally subject to Roman suzerainty, but certainly not Roman citizens.[121]

There is little enough in what can be known of the treaty of 332 to help with that of 382. Certainly the position of nominal dominion over the Goths enjoyed by Rome after 332, if applied to the later treaty, does not help the case of those who argue for Gothic autonomy within the Empire. The major difference between the two treaties is, of course, that the earlier treaty was made with Goths settled outside the Empire, across the Danube, although there was a sense in which the land settled by these Goths was considered Roman territory.[122] We have to conclude that the treaty of 332 is of little value in helping to elucidate the conditions of the treaty of 382.

Summary 379-82

Although it would be wrong to characterise this period of activity (379-382) as one in which the Empire made no headway against the Tervingi, nevertheless it is true that an aggressive military solution—either the expulsion or complete subjugation of the Goths—was not reached. Whether these outcomes had really been sought is another matter. When Valens decided, or agreed, to admit the Goths in 376 he was not pursuing an aggressive policy which rejected Gothic needs because of a threat to Roman security. We do not have to accept, along with Heather, that Valens' intention all along had been to force a confrontation with the Tervingi in order to eject them from the Empire.[123] For Heather does not establish that Valens had no choice but to admit the Tervingi, which would be in opposition to Ammianus' claims of the emperor's aims in admitting them. Nor does Heather establish that Valens was behind the mistreatment of the Goths, and he goes too far in implying that Valens condoned or ordered the activities of Lupicinus and Maximus. Such a policy is again

121 Heather, 113.
122 Heather, 112-3.
123 Heather, 165.

in opposition to Ammianus' words about Valens' initial treatment of the Tervingi once they had been admitted. Finally, Valens' marshalling of troops from the East and the attempt to source troops from the West could have been intended either to eject the Goths or settle them more successfully after defeating them, ie. in the latter case an adoption or confirmation of the policy pursued by Frigeridus in 377.[124] But Heather has not shown that ejection was Valens' aim, and we might ask ourselves, if it was, why did Valens bother to admit the Tervingi in the first place, since to accept that ejection was the aim means rejecting Ammianus?

The message of Themistius' orations to Theodosius, his first oration to the emperor aside,[125] is that it is better to achieve peace through wielding *philanthropia* than through arms, that benevolence is better than violence.[126] Oration 14 is a short private speech delivered in person to Theodosius in Thessalonica before the start of the military campaigning season, and not a public speech delivered in front of a large audience, like orations 15 and 16.[127] The context of the oration—delivered to a small audience, probably only Theodosius' consistory in Thessalonica, before Themistius had come to know Theodosius personally—suggests that on this occasion Themistius was not voicing public opinion (whatever that might have been) but the feelings of himself and his peers.[128] Although Themistius looks forward to receiving news of Theodosius' victory over the Goths this voice is muted and Themistius instead concentrates on those virtues which fit Theodosius to be emperor. Near the end of his speech Themistius returns to his persistent theme when he names the forefathers of the new emperor as those who were renowned for mildness and philanthropy.[129]

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124 Amm. Marc., XXXI 9.1-4.

125 Them., *Or.* 14.

126 L.J. Daly "The Mandarin and the Barbarian: the response of Themistius to the Gothic challenge", *Historia* XXI (1972), 371.

127 Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 8 n. 50, perceptively points out that Oration 14 is only 119 lines long, whereas Oration 15 is 514 lines, and Oration 16, the longest in Themistius' *oeuvre*, is 670 lines.

128 See the discussion in Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", 9, and, especially, 13 n. 76, although I do not agree with Errington's final conclusion that the question of the aims of the war was "still open".

129 Them., *Or.* 14.183a-b. Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 191-2.

By the time of Orations 15 and 16 Themistius had come to a better understanding of Theodosius and his views, and the occasions on which these two speeches were delivered, that is before the Senate of Constantinople and in the presence of the Emperor, imply that Themistius is giving his own version of Theodosius' policy, rather than the orator's personal views. Heather views Oration 15 as a speech by the mouthpiece of the Emperor preparing public opinion for a change of policy.[130] But Heather is misled by his bias against Themistius and his conviction that the philosopher was not an independent voice. Thus he believes that Oration 14 presents imperial policy in early 379, and that Oration 15 introduces a different imperial policy, that at the end of 380 or beginning of 381. However as Errington has convincingly argued (see above), Oration 14 is a purely private speech and cannot represent Theodosius' views on the conduct of the war.[131] Oration 15 was delivered before the Senate of Constantinople and in the presence of Theodosius and took as its theme the idea that "justice is the greatest of imperial virtues".[132] The public occasion and the nature of the audience might suggest that there are less of the philosopher's personal views on show and, since Themistius had had enough time to become properly aware of imperial policy, that the sentiments of the speech are more of a reflection of that policy (assuming Themistius is nothing more than a mouthpiece for the emperor). Following the introductory remarks where the theme of justice is set out, the Oration continues to develop this message. The humanitarian justice of Theodosius is given concrete form in the lines describing his reception of Athanaric,[133] however much of an addition these might have been they do not detour from the overall theme of the speech. The policy put forward in this speech is that the best way to subdue and win over enemies is by non-violent means and that a more lasting peace will be achieved that way.[134] Since Theodosius had only very recently

130 Heather, 167.
131 See above n. 127.
132 Vanderspoel, *Themistius,* 199-200.
133 Them., *Or.* 15 190c-191a.
134 See especially Them., *Or.* 15 190c-191a.

celebrated a victory,[135] it is unlikely that less than two months after his arrival in Constantinople imperial propaganda would be putting out the message that a military victory was unachievable.[136] There might well be traces of imperial foreign policy in this speech, but Themistius cannot be dismissed as a merely the mouthpiece of imperial policy. His role was that of commentator, not propagandist.

Two years later Themistius again spoke before the Emperor in Constantinople in a speech on the peace treaty of 382. Like Oration 15 the context of the speech was a formal public occasion in the Senate chambers, although the audience was more limited.[137] And like Oration 15, this speech, which is a *gratiarum actio* for both the peace and Saturninus' consulship, emphasises the superiority of *philanthropia* as a way of life. Theodosius is praised for preferring the power of persuasion to the application of force, and for his view that "Roman strength lay not in the apparatus of war, but in divine wisdom and the ability to persuade the enemy to make peace".[138] Next Theodosius is commended for equipping Saturninus with his own virtues of forbearance, mildness and *philanthropia*.[139] It was the Emperor's *philanthropia* that encouraged the barbarians to submit to Rome and agree to the peace treaty, and it is his justice and mildness that will allow him to resolve his foreign policy problems with Persia in the same way.[140] There is a remarkably consistent world view on display in these Orations of Themistius. Either most Roman emperors from Constantius to Theodosius shared the same outlook, or else Themistius, even while incorporating elements of traditional panegyric into his speeches (such as implicit comments on foreign policy and praise of the Emperor), had spent his lifetime urging successive imperial governments to adopt a policy of accommodation rather than

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135 *Cons. Const.* a. 380.

136 Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 200. Vanderspoel makes the acute observation that "the lack of emphasis on the military at a time when the emperor was celebrating his successes against the Goths is striking and suggests that Themistius was not ready to swallow wholesale the imperial propaganda on this point".

137 Vanderspoel, *Themistius,* 205, where the date for the speech is given as 1 January 383.

138 Them., *Or.* 16.207b-208b. The quote is from Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 206. The discussion in this paragraph is indebted to the lucid analysis of Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 205-8, on Oration 16.

139 Them., *Or.* 16.208c-d.

140 Them., *Or.* 16. 212d.

aggression.[141] Either way Themistius lived to see the humanitarian programme he had been advocating for a period of over thirty years given life in Theodosius' settlement of the Goths in 382.

Public ceremonial, even under Theodosius, laid a stress on proclaiming military victories and on the military image of the emperor.[142] Themistius' ongoing emphasis on *philanthropia*, in the face of the dominant place of military spectacle and aggressiveness towards barbarians in public ceremonies, is a good argument for him being his own spokesperson. On the evidence of Themistius it is doubtful that Theodosius' aim was the ejection of the Tervingi. In this we can see an important continuity between what can be deduced of Valens' attitude to the Goths after 376, and Theodosius similar policy of accommodation, which has been censured by modern historians as spineless and short-sighted. Themistius' orations hold to a consistent theme from the time of Constantius to the age of Theodosius: "The substance of his recommendations to successive imperial governments for dealing with the barbarian tribes then threatening the Mediterranean world state was a policy of accommodation and assimilation".[143] Throughout the public orations we see a preference for privileging the moral aspects of imperial rule over the military ones, in keeping with Themistius' emphasis on *philanthropia* as the "cardinal virtue of public office".[144] It is tendentious of Heather to claim that Themistius' advocacy of peace and civic duties as the true duties of an emperor in 368 is just an attempt to prepare public opinion for a change in policy, just as it is tendentious to make the same claim about a speech with the same message delivered in 381.[145] Heather's view can only be justified if Orations 8 and 15 represent a change from Themistius' previous positions and they clearly do not. The emphasis on the superiority of the philosophical ruler (*philanthropos basileus*) and the need for humanity in dealing

141 Daly, "The mandarin", 374.
142 M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: triumphal rulership in late Antiquity, Byzantium and the early medieval West*, Cambridge 1986, 41ff.
143 Daly, "The mandarin", 355.
144 Daly, "The mandarin", 354-5.
145 The first addressed to Valens during his Gothic war and the second to Theodosius during his. Heather, 117 and 167.

with enemies, which is evident in the philosopher's first Oration spoken in 347 in Ancyra, appears again and again in Themistius' subsequent orations.[146] In fact, Themistius' ongoing stress on *philanthropia* argues for his independence as a spokesperson, against Heather's view. This stress in Themistius was not the stress of 'public opinion' or of public ceremonial under Theodosius, which was directed at convincing the public at large of the continuing success of Roman military might. Indeed, it seems that Themistius had found his *philanthropos basileus* in Theodosius, and Theodosius, by following the moral precepts emphasised by Themistius, had achieved a lasting peace with the Tervingi.

Theodosian foreign policy, 379-382

Theodosian foreign policy in the period up to 382 followed much the same course as that under previous emperors, i.e. it started from the actual situation and, within certain policy parameters, proceeded on an 'off the cuff' basis.[147] For good or ill the Tervingi were in the Empire, having been received by a Roman emperor, and had to be treated with. It is important we start from the basic propositions that, firstly, Theodosius was not intent on expelling them, though ejection of some barbarians was used, presumably on consideration of the particular circumstances. Secondly, putting an end to hostilities and resettling the Tervingi in Thrace, as originally intended in 376, was a specific policy aim of Theodosius. Although there was no insurmountable recruiting or manpower crisis following Adrianople, we must allow that even a gap of 10,000 men would not be filled overnight and that the armies available to Theodosius were not likely to have been back to full strength in 379, so it was probably not until 380 or later that the numbers had been made up. From then on, Theodosius' military activities were designed with one aim in mind: to pressure the Goths into a position where it was in their best interests to negotiate peace with the Empire. The Goths *en masse* might have been formidable foes but Roman armies

146 The arguments for this date and place of the first Oration are set out convincingly in Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 73-77.

147 In the words of Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 28: "Theodosius' strategy of recovery was one of marked pragmatism, opportunism and caution".

had shown time and again that with good leadership and sound tactical judgement, imperial armies could not be defeated by Goths in the field. Theodosius did not seek to draw the Tervingi into a major battle whose objective was their annihilation because that was not his strategic aim. As Blockley points out: "It is a well-known tendency of most Roman emperors from Constantius II onwards to avoid battlefield conflict and conserve manpower if at all possible".[148] The best way to conserve manpower is to settle disputes through means other than fighting. The Romans knew that a hitherto unknown people, the Huns, was pressing on the northern reaches of the Empire,[149] and expelling the Goths would only force both Rome and the Goths into a cycle of repetitive warfare as well as costing many Roman lives. As well, there were positive reasons for settlement if done properly. The Tervingi within the Empire had a long history of close relations with successive imperial governments and had been cultivated as a military asset since at least 295.[150] I cannot accept the view of Heather that Valens' was forced to admit the Goths.[151] The Tervingi fleeing from the Huns were not a political unity or a nascent Gothic state that had to be dealt with in the way Rome dealt with Persia, and their political structures show them to be more like those of other contemporary barbarians such as the Sarmatians and Franks. There was clearly little continuity between the Tervingi and the group who later became the Visigoths, and signs of continuity in political units are impossible to find.[152] Valens' admission of the Goths, and the act of *deditio* that accompanied it, resulted in the shattering of existing political and social organisation, a necessary step before integration could take place. As Wirth points out, "no side had in mind the continued political existence of the group as a whole, or even of sub-groups anymore".[153]

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148 Blockley, 139.
149 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.2ff.
150 W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans AD 418-584. The Techniques of Accommodation*, Princeton 1980, 34.
151 Heather, 165. I find the basic premise of Heather's argument, ie. that Valens' aim was to force a confrontation with the Goths after 376, misguided.
152 Heather, 32.
153 G. Wirth, "Rome and its Germanic partners in the fourth century" in W. Pohl (ed.), *Kingdoms of the empire: the integration of barbarians in late antiquity*, Leiden, 1997, 47-8.

By 382, too much had happened in the previous fifteen years for Rome to return to the policy of aggressive opposition that had distinguished relations with the Goths in the third century. In a state of such enormous size with a shrinking population,[154] and a history of successful assimilative mechanisms for incorporated populations, the opportunity to reinforce the watches on the Danube and depopulated land with assimilated tribes was not something to be lightly thrown away.

Epilogue: relations with the Goths, 382-394

The treaty of 382 was a continuation of the Roman practice of assimilation, and established an environment for the peaceful coexistence of Romans and Goths within the Empire. Not all the Tervingi sought admission into the Empire in 376. A group remained north of the Danube under Arimir, and possibly the barbarians overrun by Odotheus' Greutungi in 386 were also Tervingi.[155] One other thing is a clear consequence of the treaty of 382. Henceforward, social and political development of the Tervingi settled in the Empire and those who remained outside its borders would take different courses.[156] The period up to the death of Theodosius saw little of the hostility that had characterised the years from 376 to 382 but it was not all 'plain sailing'. We hear of nothing that disturbed the peace between the signing of the treaty in 382, and 386, and even that disturbance was not connected with the Tervingi within the empire.

In 386, Odotheus, a leader of the Greutungi (called king by Claudian but this is likely to be rhetorical), attempted to cross the Danube with a large group of his tribesmen and others, but was soundly defeated by the Roman commander in Thrace, Promotus, who might have been *magister militum*, although the word στρατηγός, used by Zosimus, is ambiguous.[157] Claudian, perhaps guilty of too much adulation, says 3,000 vessels filled with Goths attempted to cross the river but were crushed by the

154 Jones, 1042-3.
155 Zos., IV 38.1. Arimir's Goths are discussed in Wolfram, 82 and n. 314 (412).
156 Wolfram, 135, and n. 109 (429).
157 Zos., IV 35.1 and IV 38-39.

Roman forces.[158] The size of the invading force is unrecoverable, although Zosimus, too, refers to it as huge, but two points are significant. Firstly, eight years after Adrianople the eastern army was an effective fighting force, and secondly, this threat came from outside the Empire, not from those Goths settled within it. The battle seems to have been mostly a naval one, although Zosimus does refer to Promotus as commander of the army in Thrace, and might not be any indication of the military effectiveness of the Thracian regional army.[159] But, the implication is certainly that Rome, when she wanted to, was able to stop barbarians from crossing the Danube into the Empire. This might not have been an invasion, of course, and the Greutungi, or this group of them anyway, might only have been trying to achieve what the Tervingi had achieved in 382, ie. settlement on lands within the Empire, as Zosimus says implicitly.[160]

It is important to realise that this episode shows different policy responses operating in respect of different groups of barbarians or different circumstances, implying that the Roman response was neither set in stone, nor inflexible. The *Consularia Constantinopolitana* lists the victory and records that the Greutungi were led into the Empire as captives. It was proposed by Seeck that these captives were identical with the Greutungi who, led by Tribigild, pillaged Lydia in 399.[161] Claudian's *In Eutropium* certainly lends strong support to this view with an unambiguous statement that the Greutungi were conquered, given laws and somewhere to live and fields to till.[162] Surprisingly, Claudian makes no mention of any requirement for military service—evidence that there was no fixed consistent set of conditions applied to every treaty made with people being settled internally? Theodosius seems to have been on hand for this victory—laws in the *Codex Theodosianus* recording his presence in Constantinople up to early August, at the otherwise unknown Valentia in

158 Claud. *Cos,. IV Hon*, 624.
159 Zos., IV 38.1-39.4.
160 Zos., IV 38.1.
161 Zos., V 13, 15.
162 Claud., *Eutr.* II 176, 194-197, 576ff. Seeck's view cited in Paschoud, *Zosime*, 429. See also G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*, London, 1981, 515.

September, and back in Constantinople in October—and both Zosimus and Claudian imply that Theodosius was either present or very close at hand.[163] Following the defeat of the Greutungi the Emperor entered the city in triumph and celebrated the victory by erecting a column in the *forum Tauri*.[164]

Events of the years 388 to 391/2 are difficult to untangle from the confusion in the reporting of Zosimus. Zosimus tells of trouble in Macedonia on the eve of Theodosius' campaign against Maximus, so probably in 388. Paschoud observes that the events as reported by Zosimus are probable.[165] So what do we have in Zosimus? Some barbarians, we are not told which ones, deserted when it was revealed that Maximus had bribed them to go over to him in the course of the campaign. They fled and hid in the marshes of Macedonia, but were dealt with quickly enough not to impede the campaign.[166] Wolfram's confident assertion that the barbarians had "among them no doubt also Moesian Goths" might be plausible, but is entirely unproved.[167] The rebels/deserters might not have counted Goths in their number at all—other barbarian ethnic groups were enrolled in the armies, not just Goths.[168] Heather suggests that these troops were in all likelihood barbarian auxiliaries rather than legionary units but does not take them to be Goths necessarily. Again this is a plausible view but cannot be supported by the evidence. It is a circular argument based on the supposed treaty condition which required the supply of men to the armies. Zosimus uses the word τελος which can mean troops generally, but sometimes has the specific meaning of a body of troops of a size taken to be equivalent to a Roman legion. It might be correct to interpret Zosimus as referring to barbarians who were actually in Roman legions. In any case, this does not matter ultimately. The evidence, what there is, simply cannot be made to say that the Goths

163 Zos., IV 39.5; Claud., *IV cos. Hon.*, 632-3. O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.*, Stuttgart, 1919, 271.
164 *Cons. Const.* a 386. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 43.
165 Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2 440 (n. 190).
166 Heather, 183.
167 Wolfram, 136.
168 Zos., IV 45.3.

settled under the treaty of 382 rebelled or deserted, or in fact caused any trouble of any kind in 388.

There are signs of further unrest three years later, in 391, but the sequence of events, the timing, even what happened, is confused and hard to disentangle. What do we have? Zosimus gives a detailed story of events in Macedonia involving Theodosius and Promotus.[169] Zosimus seems to be conflating two different episodes. The first occurred when Theodosius was journeying to Thessalonica on his way back to the east, after spending three years in the west following the defeat of Maximus. The Zosimus version of events describes how the emperor and his retinue were waylaid by the rest of those deserters who, in 388, had been almost all killed,[170] and who had been plundering Macedonia uninterruptedly ever since. After discovering a spy, Theodosius and the army attacked the barbarians, and "destroyed them all...the slaughter was considerable".[171] Not least of the problems with the story is the timing of this incident. In Zosimus' version of the story the encounter took place while the Emperor was returning to Constantinople from Milan. Seeck has shown that Theodosius was in Aquileia as late as 19 June 391, and had returned to Constantinople by 18 July 391.[172] He was still there on 17 September 391,[173] and Socrates records that Theodosius entered Constantinople on 10 November 391. Socrates implies that this was the end of the emperor's return journey from Milan to the east.[174] So, if there was any sort of campaign against Gothic bands in Macedonia, or even the incident as set out in Zosimus IV 48, it happened between 17 September and 10 November 391. And, it is necessary to assume that Theodosius returned to Constantinople by early summer 391 and then made a journey back to Macedonia in autumn. As Paschoud rightly observes, the episode of Theodosius scouring the countryside incognito with only five followers, staying in a small inn, questioning an old woman and discovering a mysterious spy, "tient plus du roman d'aventures que

169 Zos., IV 48-9.
170 Zos., IV 45.3.
171 Zos., IV 48.7.
172 *CTh* XIII 9.4.
173 *CTh* V 11.2. Seeck, *Regesten*, 279.
174 Soc., V 18.14.

de la réalité historique".[175] Zosimus is the only source for the whole episode, and it is a necessary vignette in his history so he can make the contrast with Theodosius' behaviour after this, which comes in the chapters following Zosimus' narrative of the second part of the episode. While there might be a kernel of truth in the story, the facts (whatever they are) are so overlaid with the hostility of Eunapius and the malicious intent of Zosimus as to be almost unusable.

The second episode, related in Zosimus IV 49, which has been conflated with the earlier events and which seems to me to be a different incident altogether involves Theodosius and Promotus. Zosimus' story is that Theodosius calls off the army on Timasius' advice because they were thirsty and hungry after their exertions, although they had not finished off the enemy.[176] Having eaten and drunk their fill the soldiers are so tired that they drop off to sleep. The surviving barbarians (ie. those surviving after the army had "destroyed them all" in Zos. IV 48.7), attack the sleeping troops and almost overpower the emperor and his whole army.[177] Promotus, who has already been summoned by the emperor, comes along with, presumably, an army of his own and saves the day.[178] In another example of the inconsistencies with which this episode is laced, we are told that Promotus meets the fleeing emperor and, telling him to save himself, comes upon the still sleeping(!) soldiery and kills the barbarians.

Heather and others would connect this uprising with the death of Promotus described by Zosimus in a later chapter. Promotus, having been publicly insulted by Rufinus, strikes the latter in the face and is sent away from the court by Theodosius, to "train the soldiers for war". On his way to Thrace, Promotus is ambushed by a band of 'barbarians' sent by Rufinus and killed.[179] There is nothing obvious to connect the two episodes, save the association of Promotus with both.[180] More information is ostensibly supplied by Claudian. A passage in the *In Rufinum* is cited by Heather as

175 Zos., IV 48.3-5. Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2 446.
176 Zos., IV 49.1
177 Zos., IV 49.1-2.
178 Zos., IV 49.3.
179 Zos., IV 51.1-3.
180 Despite Heather, 184, Zosimus does not say that Theodosius then left the conduct of the war to Promotus. Zosimus, in fact, does not refer to any war in this connection.

support for the avenging by Stilicho of Promotus' death.[181] But, there is no reason to date this particular allusion to 391 as Heather assumes without argument of his own. It does not mention Promotus, and is undatable from internal evidence. It is just as likely to be referring to the Gothic war of 395 and, indeed, the editors of *PLRE* take it to be so doing. According to Heather, a second reference in Claudian, which goes much further than Zosimus, directly connects the actions of Stilicho with Promotus' death, and the treachery of Rufinus, which ended in the escape of Alaric and another *foedus* with the Goths.[182] But the problem in this instance is that, although there is a direct reference to an action by Stilicho against Visi[goths], those who caused Promotus' death, and on whom Stilicho takes his vengeance, are said to be *Bastarna*e, a poetic anachronism as Heather realises but that does not get us any closer to knowing which tribe(s) was actually involved.[183] The Goths are not mentioned in connection with this particular success of Stilicho's, and the reference to a *foedus* is not directly connected at all with the specific action against either the *Bastarnae* or the *Visi*. .

Heather illogically joins all these references together because Promotus is involved in both. But, *prima facie* they seem different, since one is set in Macedonia, the other in Thrace. Heather further complicates the issue by introducing Claudian's references to Alaric blocking the Hebrus to Theodosius, the dating and circumstances of which event are entirely unclear.[184] The literal meaning, which Heather, *contra* Paschoud, sets aside,[185] has Alaric in Thrace preventing Theodosius crossing the Hebrus into Thrace, perhaps on his return journey from Milan to Constantinople in 391. Whenever it was, it was probably only a very minor skirmish or else it would have made an appearance in Eunapius/Zosimus, especially if Theodosius had been defeated. There are no other grounds whatsoever for suggesting that Alaric was already at this early date in revolt against Rome, and Heather's vision of an ongoing

181 Claud., *Ruf.* 1 314ff. Heather, 184.
182 Claud., *Cons. Stil.* 1 94-6, 115.
183 Heather, 185.
184 Claud., *Get.* 524-5; *VI Cons. Hon.* 104ff. Heather, 184.
185 Heather, 184 n. 74. Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2 447 n. 196.

revolt by Alaric resulting in a peace (before 394) on the same terms granted the Goths in 382 and from which Alaric rebelled in 395 is hard to accept.[186]

Perhaps it is best to keep the fighting in Macedonia separate from that in Thrace, although both perhaps took place in 391, accepting Zosimus' view that Promotus died before Rufinus became consul and praetorian prefect in 392.[187] The two incidents are only joined by the presence of Promotus in both, and by the identification of a stand-off between Alaric and Theodosius at the Hebrus with both, although it is not easy to relate it to either. The joining together of the two, as in Liebeschuetz or Heather, going back to Schmidt, seems unnecessary and less likely, especially as even in Zosimus' version, Promotus' two campaigns are separated by a period in Constantinople where he ran foul of Rufinus.[188] The Alaric references remain a conundrum for, as Liebeschuetz points out, they can only be literally true on an occasion when Theodosius was crossing the Hebrus from Thrace, ie. going west, so only in 388 or 394.[189] Such a problematic source cannot bear the precise weight given it by modern interpretations. Its contrived place in the Claudian passage—where it is set as a doublet with both father (Theodosius) and son (Honorius) opposing Gildo and Alaric, with neither earlier confrontation evidenced outside Claudian—makes its historicity even more dubious.

One further incident discussed in Zosimus warrants our attention, ie. the dispute between Fravitta and Eriulf. At a dinner given by Theodosius one evening, a debate arose between a faction which argued that the Goths should reject the oaths made when they surrendered to the Romans, while another faction argued that they should abide by their undertakings. Eriulf was of the faction that wanted to throw over the oaths, while Fravitta was in the smaller faction and wanted to honour the Gothic agreement with the Empire and remain faithful to the treaty arrangements. The two

186 Heather, 184ff.

187 The clarity and development of this view of the episode owes much to discussions with my supervisor, Dr P. Brennan.

188 Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 51-2; Heather, 184-5; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung: Die Ostgermanen*, Munich, 1934 (1969 reprint), 424.

189 Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 51 n. 26.

men quarrelled about these matters over dinner, with the result that Fravitta killed Eriulf.[190] Paschoud dates the event to the end of 392 or in early 393, on the basis of its placement in Zosimus, and suggests that it is best to accept this tentative dating from Zosimus, allowing for a margin of error, but it is possible that it should be dated to an earlier period.[191] Heather connects the quarrel with an embassy from Eugenius which had arrived almost immediately before the dinner,[192] and suggests that the focus of the dispute was whether the Goths should support Theodosius' war against Eugenius.[193] The problem with Heather's subsequent interpretation is that it is based on his assumption that the Goths were crucial to Theodosius' military preparations, and this has not been demonstrated. The whole episode does seem to reflect an internal power struggle among those in the higher echelons of Gothic society, and related to Gothic leadership inside the empire. It is going too far to see in this a debate about the future of Gothic society within the empire, since this view is underpinned by an assumption about the complete political autonomy of the settled Goths.[194] As Rousseau points out, this is a far cry from seeing widespread hostility among the settled Goths towards the empire.[195] Theodosius' unwillingness to take sides in the dispute reflects his attitude of treating the Goths as another element of imperial society, as, in my view, they were.[196] It was not in Theodosius' interest, or in keeping with his policy of assimilation, to interfere in the working out of the debate.

There is a general assumption, including by Wolfram and Heather,[197] that Fravitta was isolated from Gothic society as a consequence of this incident, since we hear no more of him until after the rise of Alaric in 395. If this is so, there is a consequent inference that the faction of Eriulf, which in any case was the larger, won the debate.

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190 Zos., IV 56.
191 Paschoud, *Zosime*, ii.2 461 n. 206.
192 Zos., IV 55.3-4.
193 Heather, 186-7.
194 Heather, 190.
195 P. Rousseau, "Visigothic migration and settlement, 376-418: some excluded hypotheses", *Historia* 41 (1992), 353.
196 Zos., IV 57.
197 Wolfram, 147; Heather, 187: "hounded out of Gothic society".

And yet, Goths still took part in Theodosius' wars against Eugenius, over twelve months later, and there was no uprising of Goths against the treaty conditions or against the empire until after the death of Theodosius. Should we, then, accept the reality of the dispute as Zosimus and Heather's interpretation would have it and see in it evidence that the empire was still seeking the complete subjugation of the Goths?[198] In any community that is even marginally free, there are going to be different shades of opinion, competing views for the 'hearts and minds' of the people. We should not be surprised to see this being worked out in Gothic communities settled in the Empire, nor should we reject the idea that there were disagreements about the settlement conditions. We should not make the larger leap to seeing in this dispute a desire on both sides to destroy the arrangements of 382.[199]

Conclusion

It is an error to try to show that Roman aims in dealing with the Goths were always achieved through military supremacy, or always accomplished by diplomatic bargaining. The conduct of Roman foreign policy was flexible to a degree unrecognised by those who seek consistency and certainty in affairs of state. It was pragmatic to a fault, embracing whatever strategies might prove successful in a given situation. Therefore, there was nothing unusual in Theodosius, when military domination of the Goths seemed unattainable in the short term, attempting to achieve by diplomacy what he could not by military strength. It does not seem, then, that Theodosius' approach to the Goths was structurally different in any way to established Roman policy. After 378, the Empire would continue to deal with the Goths using a combination of negotiation, warfare and divisiveness, just as it had before the battle of Adrianople. Different situations required different policy responses and it is not necessary to believe that Theodosius' general policy had as its aim the complete subjugation of the Goths inside the Empire, as Heather argues. Themistius unequivocally believed that Theodosius' policy was one of assimilation

198 Heather, 192.
199 Heather, 192.

and acceptance. Means are not ends, of course, and assimilation might be seen as subjugation by non-military means, but we would be wrong to reject this view out of hand, simply because it is difficult to see past the propaganda aspects of the philosopher's orations.

The crisis in the Roman world was not Adrianople, which was recovered from, but after 395 when Alaric has his career, and when there are signs of a continuing crisis which is unresolved. The career of Alaric is an artefact of the space created by the mutual hostility and political complexities of the post-Theodosian courts. It was not the first time that barbarian settlements had caused problems to Roman emperors; that Arcadius and Honorius were not able to control them was no more the fault of Theodosius than of his predecessors.

7

Conclusion

This dissertation covers the years 376 to 382, with a brief excursion into the period up to 395, a span of time which is often supposed by modern scholarship to have sown the seeds for the disintegration of the western Roman empire in the late fifth century. In particular, I set out to examine the admission of the Tervingi into the Empire in 376 and the battle of Adrianople in 378, and the consequences of these two events for Roman foreign and military policy. In modern scholarship there is an inextricable link between the defeat of a Roman army at Adrianople and the decline and fall of the western empire, but we should be wary of accepting this dominant view without questioning the actual evidence and the assumptions which underlie its interpretation. The dissertation has attempted to answer two fundamental and related questions. What effect did the defeat at Adrianople have on Roman foreign and military policy? Was Theodosius I the great foreign policy innovator that modern scholarship would have us believe? Essentially, I am querying the consensus that the defeat at Adrianople weakened Rome irremediably, in terms of military numbers and strength, of military morale and of her ability to project her use of force to the Thracian and Illyrian areas, and ultimately anywhere, and the consequent teleological discourse, with Adrianople playing the role of the final paralytic stroke leading slowly but surely to the end.

After setting out ancient and modern views of the military and ideological impact of the battle of Adrianople, this study makes a detailed examination of the evidence for the Roman and Gothic numbers involved in the battle. There has been a long debate about the issue of army sizes, with some scholars arguing for a small Roman army of perhaps 15-20,000 men and others arguing that the Roman army was much larger, in

the order of 40-60,000 men. Clearly, the size of the Roman army at Adrianople, coupled with Ammianus' statement that 'barely a third of the army escaped' is critical for assessing the military impact of the Roman defeat, and the subsequent effect of this defeat on Roman foreign policy. An examination of the probable units who were with Valens and the evidence for troop replacements in the years after Adrianople, taken together with Valens' confidence when he heard that the Goths numbered no more than 10,000 men (irrespective of whether this was correct or not), lead to the conclusion that Roman army numbers at Adrianople were in the region of 15-20,000 men, no more. Roman losses of two-thirds of this number were about the same as the annual replacement needs of the eastern Roman army. Although the need to find the equivalent of an additional yearly intake caused a short term recruiting problem, as seen in the law codes in particular, there is no evidence that this caused an ongoing recruitment crisis or manpower shortage for the eastern field armies. Traditional recruiting processes were strengthened and applied more firmly but the extra need for military forces was met, through recruiting and troop transfers from within the east and across from the western Empire, and the eastern field army suffered no long-term degradation in numbers or fighting quality.

Since my examination of the military impact of Adrianople rejects the often-held view that saw Rome, post-378, negotiating with the Goths from a position of military weakness, I look for the roots and the factors underlying Theodosian foreign policy in other areas. The personnel of government is a significant indicator of continuity or discontinuity in policy decisions and thus the study of personnel over this period will help explain the decision making and decisions within the eastern court. A study of this aspect of the courts of Valens and Gratian suggest that both courts were fairly traditional in their composition, with close connections and cross-postings between the two courts pointing to an integrated policy making in the period 376-378. Signs of significant change in some personnel in the western court, following the death of Valentinian I, left space for both Gratian and Valens to throw off the conservative policies asserted by the *auctoritas* of Valentinian I, including his focus on *limites*,

and to resume a closer communication between the two courts than had been the case earlier, a situation that was strengthened rather than changed by the appointment of Theodosius. The evidence for cooperation between the courts of Valens and Gratian leading up to the battle of Adrianople, not to be minimised because of the failure to cooperate in the battle itself, is continued in the joint actions in the following years between the courts of Gratian and Theodosius. One consequence of this was much greater evidence of coherence in policy towards the Goths than is generally believed. It is possible that the financial officials at court had much greater influence than is generally believed, given the military costs and other internal taxation and land settlement needs of the Empire.

The examination of changes in the eastern and western courts and of Theodosius' appointments shows a number of things that are important indicators of the trends that form the context for decision making on the 'Gothic problem'. It is apparent that a significant change in civilian, and probably military, personnel took place in the western court immediately after the death of Valentinian I and before Adrianople—thus allowing a change from Valentinian's policy even before Adrianople. Chief in significance among these changes are the marginalisation of Sebastianus and the choice of Theodosius in 378/9.

There were continuing links between the western and eastern courts in the years immediately after Adrianople in both civil and military posts: civil—as well as Spaniards, what might be called the 'Eutropius group', ie. those who move to eastern posts via Rome (and Gratian's court and Symmachan correspondence, eg. Palladius and Hypatius), even if they have had earlier experience in the east, it is only part of the reason for their appointment; military—especially Richomer and his link by ethnicity to the Franks (probable ethnicity of Merobaudes, certainly of Mallobaudes, Bauto, and Arbogastes, noted as Richomer relative; possibly Ellebichus, probable successor of Richomer about 383, was also a Frank and part of this group).

We can also see a degree of continuity in the east in both civil and military posts. Perhaps Tatianus is the only evidence for continuity in civil posts, but we should not forget important figures at Constantinople, like Themistius. Among the military posts there is more continuity than is generally believed. Saturninus, in whatever post, is a significant figure, and it is probably unlikely that Victor and Iulius did not remain *magistri* for some time after 378, and retained their influence at court regardless of official posts. We perhaps place too much emphasis on searching for structures in magistral posts as set out in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. In practical terms, it is more important to focus on the influence of significant military figures like Modares and Sapor (or even Victor and Saturninus), perhaps most titled *comites rei militaris*, than on their actual posts.

Finally, there is the possible change introduced to the eastern court by the arrival of Richomer. His appearance in the east—and the subsequent presence of Bauto and Arbogastes soon after, by virtue of their Illyrian commands—is crucial for transferring from the west to the east the modes of Roman-barbarian interaction prevalent on the Rhine and upper and mid-Danubian frontier zones, and providing a model for the use of similar models in the east, eg. the employment of Modares, recalling that of Charietto in the late 350s on the Rhine, and the reception of Athanaric.

Having examined continuity and change in office holding, it is important to set up the institutional framework for the making of Roman foreign policy, and its limitations. There are a number of components that feed into the decision making process—contemporary intelligence about barbarian actions and aims, stereotypes and the wider discourse about barbarians, and the range of practices used in managing foreign policy, one of the most important being those which involved settlement of foreigners within the Roman Empire. There are some methodological dangers in this approach. One must be wary of analytical models which seem to presume for Romans, and even barbarians, the equivalents of modern think-tanks

feeding them policy but one must not deny them the ability to formulate policy options and decide between them, even if in *ad hoc* terms. In this case, I note that Rome's past practice (in the case of foreigners within its borders) offered a number of options—ejection, punishment, settlement, accommodation—and the barbarians too had a number of options. The concept of a 'preferred option' is a flawed one. Without a background study of the historical circumstances, to make ejection the preferred option of Rome, as opposed to it being the preferred option of some Romans at some times, or to make either conquest or settlement the preferred option of the barbarians, as opposed to one or the other being the preferred option of some barbarians at some times, is just to accept modern prejudices about Roman foreign policy in the late fourth century and its consequences. At almost no time in the fourth century was ejection of foreigners an end pursued for its own sake. Ejection, if used as a strategic aim, was only part of an overall strategy and never a simplistic solution to the barbarian problem. The usual Roman policy towards foreigners was their management by settlement, sometimes outside, sometimes within the Empire. The Empire had ongoing needs for soldiers and farmers and settlement of foreigners was a way for these internal needs of the Empire to be met. We must be wary of assuming that all Roman foreign policy was aimed at satisfying external security needs alone. As I show, Theodosian policy towards the Goths was very traditional in its aims and strategies, and not something new or 'doomed' because essentially untried or unworkable.

A specific summary of Rome's relations and military practices towards the Goths up to 378 shows that a number of options, including that of external and internal settlement, were implemented. This fits within the general framework of foreign policy practices established in the previous chapter. There is no quantum leap between the settlement of barbarians outside the 'frontiers' (like the Goths in 332 and the Sarmatians in 358) but within the Roman *imperium* as subject communities like those in the Empire, and the settlement of barbarians inside the Empire in much the same terms (hypothetically for the Tervingi in 376, 382, perhaps for the Franks in

Toxandria, and less autonomously for the laetic settlements in the west in the late third and early fourth centuries). At different periods in different circumstances, different options were appropriate. No one option could have been successful on every occasion. The Goths were essentially a people in flux up to this time and no nascent Gothic state can be shown to have existed. More importantly, Roman actions vis-à-vis the Goths, at least up to 376, aimed at exploiting differences between the tribal strands that made up the people collectively referred to as the Goths, as one strategy for managing their presence within the Empire. The Tervingi entered the Empire in disarray in 376 and seem to have remained so up to the rise to prominence of Alaric in 395.

Based on this examination of foreign and military policy it is clear that Theodosius acted in the 380s from a position of increasing strength when one considers his position overall; available and potential military forces are a major part of this, as is the position of the barbarians. A detailed examination of relations between Theodosius and the Goths up to the treaty of 382 demonstrates that in this period the eastern Empire rapidly restored its military strength, and that both Gratian and Theodosius acted in a concerted manner in their dealings with the Goths. The evidence for Gratian's putative treaty of 380 is insubstantial at best and we cannot ultimately know whether he did make an agreement to settle the Goths in Pannonia in 380. However, if such a settlement did occur, then it shows Gratian pursuing a policy of accommodation with Goths in 380, rather than trying to exclude them from the Empire, when he certainly should have had the military strength to do so if he wished. And, if Jordanes can be believed, he had Theodosius' support for this policy. In light of this, there can be even less justification for labelling Theodosius' settlement of the Tervingi in 382 as a policy innovation, whether disastrous or not. The reception of Athanaric in 381 is also of crucial significance as evidence of changing parameters of the situation with the Goths in the eastern Empire, but it is still within an overall policy of accommodation and assimilation.

The treaty of 382 is often seen as the turning point on which the fall of the western Empire hangs because it was said to have allowed an autonomous (or 'semi-autonomous') tribe of barbarians to settle within the Empire, thus allowing the unchecked rise of Alaric in 395. Contemporary accounts of the treaty conditions are almost non-existent and very little is known of the arrangements under which the Goths were settled. This has not stopped modern historians of the period from making detailed analyses of what they suppose to have been the conditions of the treaty, the most momentous of which is the 'autonomous' status of the Tervingi settled in 382. These conditions often seem to be read back from the often equally exiguous details of fifth century treaties in the west. Some level of autonomy is possible. And, this is not so surprising since the model for the Gothic settlements seems to have been other local government communities in the Roman Empire, ie. communities which had certain rights and duties—and a key feature of late Roman society was that individuals and communities were given legislated obligations and immunities. Why should a settlement of foreigners, who were being turned into Romans, necessarily have been established under any different model? This is speculative, of course, and it might be that the model for the Gothic settlements was even earlier, in the situation of the Batavians in the first century AD, whose subjection to Rome was shown by their provision of recruits for the army in lieu of taxation.

Finally, I reject the notion that the rise of Alaric in 395 was foreshadowed in the supposed 'autonomous' Gothic settlements in 382. Alaric, opportunist that he was, had a specific gripe that existed irrespective of the political or social status of the settled Goths. He made much of this in his first appearance as a problem. But, we should not fall into the trap of blaming Theodosius for the fact that neither Honorius or Arcadius were able to control Alaric as he had controlled earlier Gothic leaders, or that they were unable to find a solution to the 'Gothic problem' of the 390s and early fifth century. It was not the first time Rome had been unable to control barbarians,

and the difficulties in this case were exacerbated by the political tensions and shared distrust of the courts, both east and west.

The Goths had been inside the empire since Valens willingly admitted them in 376. From 382 at the latest (perhaps from 380 if Gratian did make a treaty), it would be more sensible to consider them in the same light in which we consider Isaurians or Pannonians or Illyrians—inhabitants of the empire with their own recognisable culture and way of life, but Romans nonetheless. Ancient and modern analyses of the event and its aftermath are bedevilled by a consistent refusal to treat the Goths as anything but outsiders, as invaders who had to be ejected before the empire was safe. The Goths had been formally admitted to the empire, some of them might even have been made citizens; they were not invaders. Their culture was different but Rome was used to this, the empire was a heterogenous collection of peoples and cultures, not a monolithic cultural empire of upper class Romans. It is a mistake to think that what we call the Roman empire, an enormous portion of the earth's surface, stretching from Wales in the west to Armenia in the east, and from the North Sea to the headwaters of the Nile, was a homogenous monocultural monoethnic entity.

Ejecting the Goths from the empire was only one option among a range available to Theodosius and there is no evidence that it was a Theodosian 'preferred option', though it was part of Theodosius' solution. That Theodosius did not take up the option of exclusion alone says nothing about the military ability of the eastern armies. That he is still criticised today for not doing so says more about the blindness, biases, and teleological presumptions of modern historians of the late Roman empire than about Theodosius' position vis-à-vis the Goths. Other options were no doubt aired and discussed by the Theodosian *comitatus*; those hinted at in sources of these decades (such as the Anonymous *de rebus bellicis*, the *Historia Augusta*, Vegetius, and Synesius), and we must not forget that some Goths were excluded (the Greuthungi in 386, for example). Theodosius often chose differently from those who believed the only good Goth was a dead one or at least one beyond

the pale. To condemn Theodosius in hindsight is bad history, and unprofitable besides. The options open to Theodosius have been investigated in an attempt to understand how he acted in the context of his time. Instead of wasting time castigating him because he did not act in the way we might wish he had, we would be better to accept that he acted faithfully within his Roman context. His policy choices, hampered by limitations of time and history, were the best that could be achieved in his time. If his sons and successors did not have the military strength within a political cooperative framework to make similarly effective choices, that was not his fault. If one seeks a turning point in the history of Rome in the late fourth century, the battle of Adrianople would have to give precedence to the death of Theodosius I in 395, or even the death of Valentinian I in 375.

Appendix 1

Estimates of Roman army size, based on the *Notitia Dignitatum*

There is a useful summary of the various estimates for the size of the late Roman army all based on the *Notitia Dignitatum*, in E. Luttwak *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the first century A.D. to the third*, Baltimore, 1976, page 189. The following table is adapted from that summary, with the addition of the estimates made by MacMullen.

Army Source	Mommsen[1]	Nischer[2]	Jones[3]	Várady[4]	Szilágyi[5]	MacMullen[6]
Eastern comitatus		94,500	104,000	96,300	79,000	93,400
Western comitatus		111,000	113,000	123,800	94,000	99,400
Total comitatus	194,500	205,500	217,000	220,100	173,000	192,800
Eastern limitanei		332,000	248,000	165,700	201,500	151,400
Western limitanei		200,000	135,000	138,000	122,000/130,000	87,400
Total limitanei	360,000	532,000	383,000	303,700	323,500/331,500	209,800
Total Eastern		426,500	352,000	262,000	280,500	244,800
Total western		311,000	248,000	261,800	216,000/224,000	186,800
Total Army	554,500	737,500	600,000	523,800	496,500/504,500	431,600

1 T. Mommsen, "Das römische Militärwesen seit Diocletian", *Gesammelte Schriften* vi (1910), 206-83.
2 E. Nischer, "The army reforms of Diocletian and Constantine and their modifications up to the time of the *Notitia Dignitatum*" *JRS* 13 (1923), 1-55.
3 Jones, 1417-1450.
4 L. Várady, "New evidences on some problems of late Roman military organisation", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Hungaricae* 9 (1961), 333-396.
5 J. Szilágyi, "Les variations des centres de prépondérance militaire dans les provinces frontières de l'empire romain", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Hungaricae* 2 (1953), 119-219.
6 R. MacMullen, "How big was the Roman imperial army?", *Klio* 62 (1980), 451-460.

Appendix 2

Magistri militum at Adrianople

Who were Valens' *magistri militum* at Adrianople? Volume I of *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* gives a confusing picture of the number and location of the supreme military commands in the east under Valens. The list at page 1113 provides the following scheme:

Victor	*mag. equ. (in praesenti)*	363-c.379
Arinthaeus	*mag. ped. (in praesenti)*	366-78
Lupicinus	*mag. equ.* (East)	364-7
Iulius	*mag. equ. et ped.* (East)	371-78
Saturninus	*mag. equ.* (Thrace)	377-78
Traianus	*mag. ped.* (Thrace)	377-8
Sebastianus	*mag. ped.* (Thrace)	378

Part of the difficulty with the office holding revealed in this table is the lack of specific dates for the period of individual commands. On the face of it there seem to have been six *magistri* under Valens in 378. Six *magistri* under any emperor at any period is unprecedented, and the number cannot be explained away by assuming that some of the appointments were concurrent. How can we make sense of the military appointments for this year?

To begin with, we must beware of imposing a structure apparent in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which is certainly not pre-Theodosian, on the high military offices prior to 379. Secondly, the situation in regard to the number of *magistri* was fluid and there are no grounds for supposing that each emperor had the same number of *magistri* as his predecessor, or in the same commands. All we can be reasonably sure

of is that each emperor usually had two *magistri in praesenti*. In the east it was usual to have an additional *magister* in the regional command of the Orient. Other regional commanders, such as those in Illyricum and Thrace, are generally designated as *comes*, not *magister*, except for Equitius who, appointed as *comes*, was rewarded for specific loyalty to Valentinian I with the rank of *magister*.[1] What, then, are we to make of the three *magistri* in Thrace listed in *PLRE* for 378? The following interpretation presents itself.[2]

There is no difficulty with Lupicinus (not the Thracian commander of the same name), *magister equitum* in the East, who is followed by Iulius, *magister equitum et peditum*. Iulius remains in the East after Valens leaves for Thrace.

Arinthaeus, who had been praesental *magister peditum* from at least as early as 366,[3] is assumed to have been replaced in 378. We cannot tell when he died, and the letter of Basil used in *PLRE* for this purpose is not securely dated to 378.[4] Basil's reference to Arinthaeus as στρατηλατης cannot be taken to mean that he was still in office at the time of his death. We should not assume, therefore, that he was *magister* in 378.

The most obvious replacement for Arinthaeus is Traianus. Ammianus reports that Traianus was replaced as commander of the infantry by Sebastianus, without giving either a recognisable military title.[5] However, in a later passage we are told that Traianus, a little while before, had been *magister armorum*.[6] It is not clear, however, when Traianus was actually appointed *magister peditum*. He was sent west by Valens in 377 with Profuturus and legions from Armenia, but Ammianus merely calls them both rector (*ambo rectores*), qualifying this with the addition that they were ambitious but not suited for war.[7] A passage in Theodoret implies that Traianus,

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1 Amm. Marc., XXVI 5.3, 11.
2 I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Peter Brennan, for some of the ideas which form the basis for this analysis.
3 *PLRE* I, 103.
4 Bas., *Ep*. 269.
5 Amm. Marc., xxxi 11.1.
6 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.1.
7 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.12

Arinthaeus and Victor were *magistri* at the same time.[8] These allusions do not fit easily together. Possibly, Arinthaeus had been replaced by Traianus but was still at court in an unofficial capacity? It is plausible that Arinthaeus was replaced by Traianus at the time the latter was in Thrace, possibly in 377. Traianus was then replaced by Sebastianus in 378 after a confrontation with Valens at Constantinople in 378. Shortly after this, Traianus was recalled by Valens along with other veterans.[9] It is in this context that Ammianus says Traianus was of high rank but had shortly before been *magister*. Clearly, Traianus' recall did not involve a promotion to his previous rank. Whatever his position, he took part in the battle of Adrianople and was killed. Sebastianus replaced Traianus in 378 as *magister peditum* and was killed at Adrianople.[10]

This leaves Saturninus and Victor. Saturninus was given temporary command of the cavalry in 377/378.[11] There is no evidence that he was *magister equitum* at Adrianople so he might have been only temporary *mag. equ.* in place of Victor. Conversely, he might have been given temporary command of the cavalry with his rank of *comes* unchanged. Victor had been sent to negotiate with Persia in 377 (at the same time as Traianus and Profuturus had been sent to Thrace). Saturninus might well have been given temporary command of the cavalry in Victor's absence, in order to lead to, and command in, Thrace the praesental cavalry. Victor travels to Thrace with Valens in 378 and Saturninus is then relieved of his temporary command. Victor survived Adrianople and escaped to carry the news to Gratian at Sirmium.[12]

A speculative reconstruction of the relevant commands in 377/8, might be as follows: Lupicinus, *comes* in Thrace, makes a mess of his dealings with the Tervingi and instigates a revolt.[13] Valens asks Gratian for help and is sent Illyrian and transalpine

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8 Theod. *HE*, IV. 30. More precisely Theodoret says "they were also στρατηγοι".
9 Amm. Marc., XXXI 12.1.
10 Amm. Marc., XXXI 11.1.
11 Amm. Marc., XXXI 8.3. Note that Saturninus is never actually called *magister equitum* by Ammianus, although it is a plausible inference.
12 Zos., IV 24.3.
13 Amm. Marc., XXXI 4.9-10.

troops under Frigeridus, probably *comes per Illyricum*, and Richomer, one of Gratian's *comites domesticorum*.[14] At the same time Valens sends Traianus and Profuturus with troops to Thrace, perhaps simply as *comites*, although Traianus might have been *magister peditum* replacing Arinthaeus by this time. Profuturus might have been sent out as a replacement for Lupicinus. For there surely was a regional commander of Thrace, although one cannot be identified in the events of 378. We might speculate that Profuturus suffered the fate of Traianus and lost his post. Following the indecisive battle *ad Salices* Richomer returns to the west and Valens sends Saturninus, temporarily *magister equitum* in place of Victor, who might still have been engaged in diplomacy with the Persians, out to Thrace with Victor's praesental troops. Meanwhile, Frigeridus returns to Thrace and is replaced by Maurus as *comes per Illyricum*. Valens moves to Thrace, bringing with him Victor who presumably takes back his command from Saturninus. Sebastianus comes to the east and replaces Traianus who has been unsuccessful in engagements with the Goths.

A better list of the *magistri* of Valens, based on my speculative reconstruction above, would look like this:

Lupicinus	*mag. equ. et ped.* (East)	364-7
Victor	*mag. equ. (in praesenti)*	363-c.379
Arinthaeus	*mag.ped. (in praesenti)*	366-77
Iulius	*mag. equ. et ped.* (East)	371-378/9
Traianus	*mag. ped.* (*in praesenti*)	377-378
Saturninus	temporary *mag. equ.* (*in praesenti)?*	377-78
Sebastianus	*mag. ped.* (*in praesenti*)	378

14 Amm. Marc., XXXI 7.3.

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