

Southern Illinois University Carbondale
OpenSIUC

Honors Theses

University Honors Program

5-1999

Constantius and the Visigothic Settlement in Gaul

George Andrew Sole
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses

Recommended Citation

Sole, George Andrew, "Constantius and the Visigothic Settlement in Gaul" (1999). *Honors Theses*. Paper 126.

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

CONSTANTIUS
and the
VISIGOTHIC SETTLEMENT
in GAUL

Senior History Thesis

Independent Study of Antique Gaul
under Dr. Stocking
Spring Semester 1999

Andy Sole

After the death of Theodosius the Great in A.D.395 there were a string of seventeen emperors in the Western Roman Empire, beginning with Theodosius's son Honorius, and ending with the last Roman emperor Romulus, who was deposed by the Germanic general Odoacer in 476. The longest reign of any single emperor was thirty years, a record held by Valentinian III (A.D. 425-455). The next runner up was Honorius with twenty-eight years (A.D. 395-423). These two emperors were the exception, however, for the average reign of any western emperor between the times of Honorius and the ascension of Odoacer was two and one-half years. This great number of rulers within a period of eighty-one years leaves one wondering just what the problem may have been; why could a single person or family not retain power? Moreover, many of these emperors' reigns overlap, creating a further mystery as to how two western Augusti could rule at the same time. The answer to these questions can be summed in one word: Gaul.

The emperor Honorius made an attempt during his reign to calm the turbulent region of Gaul by assigning one of his generals to the area and appointing him as the head of the regions armies. This man was Constantius, and as *magister militum* in the west he fought and defeated most of the opponents he faced, presumably on behalf of his benefactor Honorius. Constantius is most remembered for his settlement of the Visigoths in the Gallic provinces of Aquatania Secunda and Narbonensis in the year 418. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that he was elevated to the position of Augustus by Honorius after he had temporarily pacified the region of Gaul. A major part of Constantius's program of pacification had been moving the powerful Visigoths into the region. At this time the mighty barbarian tribe was allied to the Romans, and under the direction of Constantius were given lands and allowed to establish a court in the Gallic city of Toulouse. Their presence provided a high degree of protection for the local

inhabitants against the assaults of other barbarian tribes, as well as quashing any local uprisings or attempts at usurpation.

Constantius's rise to the position of Augustus, that in theory made him an equal to Honorius, was in fact a usurpation of sorts. Placing himself in the position to be offered the title of Augustus, and the *imperium* which accompanied it, made Constantius a player in the ongoing struggle for power, and in accepting the offer he accomplished exactly what he had fought so fervently to prevent others from doing. Elevating Constantius to the position of Augustus, a more than generous reward, also seems out of character for Honorius, or any emperor, because the retention of sole power was the legitimate emperor's goal when he appointed Constantius as *magister militum* in the first place. Constantius's acceptance seems a one hundred and eighty degree turn in character according to the amiable accounts given of him by ancient authors such as Paulus Orosius, creating a question of just what Constantius's goals were, and why an emperor would offer to share power.

The most credible solution to this paradox is that Constantius had designs of his own, and had decided either from the beginning, or at some point during his tenure, to put himself in a position to don the purple robes. With the power of the Visigoths behind him, and the presence of the civil unrest that permeated the Gallic provinces during the first part of fifth century, Constantius found himself in a position in which he could make an attempt to gain *imperium*, and in fact did so. Since the existence of a second Augustus was so contradictory to Honorius' original aims, no other solution really makes sense, especially when one considers the ties that developed between Constantius and the Visigoths. An understanding of the situation within Gaul at this time-- the pressures with which he dealt, and other players in the struggle for power with which he contended, lends further credence to this hypothesis.

GAUL AT THE TURN OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the 400s Gaul was no longer a single province. It was a territory which had been divided into seventeen separate provinces by Diocletian's restructuring of the empire in the first part of the fourth century. This division of the province into many smaller political units was accompanied by a new system of land assessment¹ meant to gain more tax revenue from the large estates. Both reforms were aimed at easing the burden of taxation on the small land-holding peasant, for Diocletian's greatly expanded army created a need for increased taxation. Although he meant this new system to be beneficial to the lower classes, it had the opposite effect in the provinces of Gaul, for the senatorial class there remained exempt from taxation. Thus the burden, as it had before the reforms, fell on the small Gallo-Roman land owners, and it was a burden they could not bear for long. The great reforms of Diocletian were focused primarily on improving the Eastern empire. Even so, under Diocletian Gaul did begin to experience a renewed imperial presence with the establishment of an imperial capital at Trier.² His revived interest in the western province may have been an attempt to secure the wool industry of the northern Belgic provinces³ against the interruptions caused by raids from east of the Rhine. These were common since the mid-third century when Gaul had been basically abandoned by the emperor Gallienus (253-268) in order to conduct campaigns in Raetia, Noricum, and Pannonia.⁴ The need of money to support his army makes this the probable aim, but whatever Diocletian's intentions, his restructuring of Gaul and the

¹ A.H.M. Jones *A History of Rome Through the Fifth Century* in two volumes. (New York: Walker and Company, 1970); vol. II, p.83.

² Ralph Whitney Mathisen *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1993); p.17.

³ *Ibid.*; p.30.

establishment of the court at Trier had another effect as well: an expanded bureaucratic aristocracy, for an expanded administration requires an increased number of bureaucrats.

The situation in Gaul one hundred years after the reign of Diocletian was much different, however, for the *imperium* of Rome had once again retreated from the Gallic provinces. After 350 usurpers were raised to the position of emperor so often that it became commonplace, often times without their consent. The forced ascension of Julian in 355⁵ is a fine example of this, showing the power and unrest of the provincials as well. Such acts of rebellion against the government of Ravenna were a response to the lack of protection given to the provincials. Raids by the Franks and Alamanni were common occurrences, as were peasant uprisings, and since protection was not forthcoming from the legitimate emperor, the population began looking elsewhere for leadership which would give them the security they desired.

GALLIC ARISTOCRATS, CURIALES, AND PEASANTS

The natural leaders in Gaul were the Gallo-Roman aristocrats, who were primarily the owners of the vast estates in Gaul, called *latifundia*, although the remnants of Diocletian's expanded bureaucracy was still present in the form of advisors to the Church, the aristocrats, and even the barbarian leaders. The rich land owners enjoyed the wealth attained from the agricultural produce of the rich provincial soil while disregarding the once important governmental offices their status made available to them.⁶ The luxurious life led by these aristocrats on their provincial estates leaves little wonder as to why most chose to remain on

⁴ *Pan. lat.*; IV. 10.

⁵ Julian's troops hailed him Augustus in spite of his many apparent protests. See *A.M.* XX. 4.

⁶ Thomas Cahill *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); p.18. & Mathisen; p.20-4.

their *latifundia* instead of moving to Ravenna or Arles⁷ and involving themselves in the politics of the Empire. Another reason many of these aristocrats were able to obtain such great wealth was their exemption from taxation, which was due either to their class or their own machinations. The aristocrats who were not exempt manipulated the social and political aspects of provincial life creating a situation in which they could disregard the tax collectors without fear of reprisal.⁸ This can be attributed to the combined natures of the Roman taxation system and the Roman patron-client system.

Diocletian's reforms, which were not greatly altered after put in place (except his policies toward Christians), forbade citizens any career other than that of their fathers, making the office of tax collector, or *curialis*, hereditary. The trouble in being a *curialis* was that whatever tax money failed to be collected had to be made up by the *curialis* himself. Thus, the position of tax collector was indeed a poor one, for eventually his coffers would be drained by the expense of paying what the poor farmers could not. This problem of the *curiales*, along with that of the small landholder who did not have the funds to pay his taxes, left an ever increasing majority of provincials in dire need of financial assistance. This aid was forthcoming, however, from the owners of the *latifundia*, in a convoluted form of the old Roman patron-client system.

The patron-client system had begun in the republican days of Rome. Based on the principle of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," the republican leaders gained support from the citizens of Rome in exchange for policies which would benefit the supporters. Both sides (more or less) got what they sought: the politician gained an office and the constituents a helpful administration. This system was adapted by the estate-owning aristocrats of Gaul by

⁷ The new location of the legitimate Gallic court.

offering loans to the less fortunate citizens surrounding their estates. To secure these loans the small farmers had to offer their own lands as collateral, including the *curiales*, who often needed money more than the peasants. Eventually, since tax burdens were not reduced, the aristocrats would foreclose on the property and annex the small farms into their *latifundia*. The result of this was twofold: ever increasing land holdings by a select few individuals; and, an ever increasing landless population. This was not a problem for the aristocrats at all, in fact it was to their advantage.

In the case of the *curiales*, it was indeed beneficial to the estate owners to have tax collectors owing them, for the *curiales* also assessed the lands. Therefore, if an aristocrat had a tax collector “in his pocket,” he could choose to not pay his taxes without fear of any repercussion.⁹ The former owners of the small farms were dealt with differently, for the lands acquired by the aristocrats were valueless without the labor needed to farm them. To capitalize on their new land acquisitions the owners of the *latifundia* would allow the former residents to remain on the land that was once theirs, but now they farmed for the aristocrats, keeping only a small portion of what they produced for themselves. Since the availability of slave labor had been reduced drastically since the end of imperial expansion in the days of the first emperor Augustus Caesar, this was a most beneficial arrangement for the estate owners. With this arrangement the former owners of the small farms retained a place to live, and did not have to resettle their family elsewhere. Furthermore, they could now count on the aristocrats for protection. This was a major consideration, for the provinces were full of marauding bands of

⁸ Mathisen; p.20.

⁹ Cahill; p.27.

barbarians, and now it was the lands of the aristocrats' which were being pillaged, not that of a poor, small land-holding farmers.

Many Gallic aristocrats attempted to rise to the challenge of becoming the protectors needed by the peasants, or they became the supporters of prominent military leaders who sought to rise above their current station. These men became known as the Gallic Emperors, and they did not lack the support of the local population in their attempts, for the locals needed security and seemingly supported anyone able to give it to them. In fact, as Raymond Van Dam argues, the constituents of the Gallic emperors supported these local leaders wholeheartedly by becoming members of their army. Van Dam shows that in many instances this was the true nature of the rebellious peasant group(s) known as *Bacaudae*.¹⁰

It was noted by the anonymous author of *A Description of the Entire World and Its Nations* that Gaul "always has need of an emperor; it makes one of its own."¹¹ It seems the message intended is that the constant need of security due to almost incessant marauding by barbarians and frequent uprisings by rebellious peasants left Gaul in need of the imperial presence, for Rome had always calmed the barbarians and quieted rebellions in the past.¹² In the latter part of the fourth century, however, the security provided by the presence of the imperial administration had been withdrawn from Gaul, and as Van Dam illustrates, this was the time the *Bacaudae* began to resurface.¹³

¹⁰ As in the case of the Gallic emperor Amandus. Raymond Van Dam *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985); p. 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; p.18.

¹² See Van Dam; p.33.

¹³ *Ibid.*

The term “Bacaudae” was a generic term applied to any group who were disruptive or outside the bounds of normal society. Some of the groups deemed “Bacaudae” appear to have been farmers and shepherds¹⁴ who revolted against the system either when backing a local leader or when the heavy burden of taxation became too much.¹⁵ Other groups of Bacaudae seem to have been no more than bandits who would waylay travelers as well as attack farms or small villages, acting much like the barbarians.¹⁶ Although both of these groups were assigned the same name, it is clearly evident that they were not a coherent band of rebels acting under the direction of one leader or body of leaders. Even so, neither the agricultural group of Bacaudae nor the bandits known by the same name could easily be discounted by Honorius, for they were either potential supporters of an alternative government or a criminal group which needed to be policed.

To address the potential of usurpation Honorius chose Constantius to be *magister militum* in the region. His duty as such was to keep peace within the territory, and to do so it was imperative to keep the inhabitants peaceful. Therefore, any group that could be rebellious needed to be pacified or purged from the area. Since the aristocrats were the individuals who offered the protection which the peasants demanded, and the peasants who supported any possible usurper, Constantius needed to gain the support of the first and eliminate the grievances of the latter. This called for a force on which he could rely to protect the interests of both groups. This he found in barbarian Visigoths.

¹⁴ *Pan. lat.* II.4.

¹⁵ Constantius of Lyon *The Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre*; XIX

¹⁶ *Pan. lat.*; II.4, “*barbarum suorum cultorum rusticus vastator imitatus est.*”

Another group also existed that posed a threat to Constantius's aims--the Church. Christianity was a growing element in the empire, and it was led by aristocrats and bureaucrats who were also growing in importance. This presented another group with which Constantius had to deal in order to become the most powerful man in the territory.

THE CHURCH

There is little wonder as to the reason for banditry in the Gallic provinces, for many farmers had been dispossessed of their land and had no other recourse for livelihood (see above). The bandits' apparent disregard for authority and dislike toward traditional authority can be illustrated by the attack upon S. Martin of Tours during a journey through the Alps.¹⁷ Although his biographer, Sulpicius Severus, paints the picture that Martin had the appearance of a tramp, one must conclude he had at least some display of wealth about him, for no highwayman would take the time to bind and interrogate a mere pauper. Upon discovering Martin's status as a member of the clergy, the would-be murderers freed him and sent him upon his way. Severus goes on to tell that Martin founded a monastery outside the city of Poitiers¹⁸ and was later asked to become the bishop of Tours,¹⁹ both of which were areas lacking the imperial presence since the court had been moved from Trier to Arles. As was the case with the aristocrats, this presented the clergy with an opportunity to gain the support of the population, and as seen in the in the account of S. Martin's capture and release, even the Bacaudae were willing to give them the chance.

¹⁷ Sulpicius Severus *The Life of Saint Martin of Tours*; p.9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; p.11.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; p.13.

Although Catholicism was the popular religion within the empire by this time, Arianism, which opposed Catholic Christianity, was still popular, as well as the belief in the traditional pagan deities, which had not been completely suppressed by far.²⁰ Therefore the support given to the clergy by the populace was not merely due to religious piety, but also to what the Church leaders could offer. In the biography of S. Germanus it is evident that he too sought to come to the aid of the general population. It is told that he undertook the task of lessening the tax burden of “his people,”²¹ and later, perhaps more importantly, it seems that he made an ally of Goar, king of the Alans, when he prevented the barbarian warlord from devastating the people of Armorica, which was an area then controlled by Constantius’s Visigoths.²²

If Constantius was to realize his goal and become the sole power in Gaul, the problem presented by the growing power of the clergy needed to be addressed as well as that of the aristocrats. This required the elimination of their support along with that of the aristocrats, and a willingness to violate any perceived immunity the Church might offer to potential rivals Constantius encountered. To do so the future Augustus needed support enough of his own, both politically and militarily, to eliminate all opposition. The remainder of this study will show that he used the Visigoths to accomplish that very thing.

²⁰ See Bede *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Paulus Orosius *Seven Books Against the Pagans*, Constantius, and Severus. Indeed, one study of the religious beliefs in sixteenth-century Italy show that even a thousand years later aspects of Greco-Roman paganism were still believed in rural lands once belonging to the empire (See Carlo Ginzberg *The Cheese and the Worms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992)).

²¹ Constantius; XIX.

CONSTANTIUS and the VISIGOTHS

Barbarian looting and plundering had been a problem in Gaul at various times since the beginning of Roman occupation in the time of Julius Caesar.²³ Various tribes roamed the countryside sacking villages and raiding farms, being led in the traditional manner by warlords who maintained their status by steadily supplying their followers with booty. To combat this the Roman government established a policy in which they made alliances with certain tribes: the barbarian tribe would agree to fight for the interests of the Romans and the Romans, in turn, would allow the barbarians to remain within the empire and allot them certain areas of land. This policy of *hospitalitas* was as old as the province of Gaul itself,²⁴ and the Romans, who were always reverting to “the ways of their ancestors,”²⁵ saw no reason to change this practice. In the fifth century, however, a new aspect to the problem of accommodating the barbarians was present, that was the admission of the Visigoths into the empire as *foederati*. This had been done in 382 by the emperor Theodosius the Great²⁶ after the strong tribe had defeated Valens at the Battle of Adrianople in 378. Although the Visigoths were required to allocate troops upon demand, they were allowed to reside within the borders of the empire under the command of their own kings.²⁷ This arrangement led to disaster for Rome when the Visigothic king Alaric decided to alter this agreement.

²² Ibid.; XXVIII.

²³ Julius Caesar *Bellum Gallicum*. I.10.

²⁴ See *B.G.*; I.35.

²⁵ “*mos maiorum*”

²⁶ A.D. 382

²⁷ Jones (1970); p.174.

Although the treaty of 382 between the Visigoths and Theodosius the Great allowed the Visigoths to remain under the control of their own kings while they resided within the empire, the Visigothic troops that were provided to the emperors were not allowed to be led by their own generals. Instead, they fell under the command of a Roman general.²⁸ This, unfortunately, did not sit well with the Goths themselves, and when Alaric became king of the Visigoths c. 390, this discontent began to show. Alaric led his Visigoths out of Illyricum on a savage march westward. Looting and pillaging as they went, the march did not end until they had reached the gates of the Eternal City itself in the early summer of 410, and eventually sacked the city on 24 August. After a failed attempt at crossing the Mediterranean from southern Italy, the Visigoths reversed their direction and headed north through Italy again, plundering as they went.

Alaric died after the withdrawal from Rome, and under the leadership of the new king Athaulf, the Visigoths finally left Italy behind them and moved into the territory of Gaul. This brought an opportunity for the emperor Honorius to use the tribe in his fight against the Gallic-emperor Iovinus. In return for the help of the Visigoths Honorius offered to settle them in Gaul and restore their annuity of grain.²⁹ Honorius reneged on the deal, however, and southern Gaul became the romping ground of the Visigoths until the year 414.

The famine produced by the Visigoth's overzealous destruction in Gaul caused them to seek peace, however, for they needed food and had realized that they were not going to overcome the Romans by force.³⁰ Athaulf then married Galla Placidia, the sister of emperor

²⁸ Herwig Wolfram *History of the Goths* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988); p.133.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; p.162.

³⁰ Orosius; VII.43.

Honorius, having captured her during the sack of Rome in 410.³¹ With this stroke Athaulf became the ally of Rome, and resolved that henceforth he would not seek to supplant *Romania* with *Gothia*, but would endeavor to make Rome strong once more.³² It seems here that Athaulf had decided to no longer try supplanting the Roman government by direct means, but to seek power in a more covert and obscure method by becoming the power “behind the scene.” In proclaiming himself a supporter of Rome and then marrying the sister of the emperor, Athaulf believed he could make himself important enough to manipulate his rise to power. His plans did not come to fruition however, for he was killed by his own men for his seeming allegiance to Rome, as was his successor Sigeric, who ruled the Visigoths for less than a year. It was then that Wallia came to rule the Visigoths. He too sought peace with Rome, and accepted the offer made by Constantius to resettle the tribe in the Gallic province of Aquatania Secunda. This placed them just south of the Loire and north of the Garrone, a very rich area that included many *latifundia*. What was more incredible than the placing of a strong and somewhat volatile people in an area which the Romans considered quite important³³ was the land allotted to these barbarians: two-thirds of the arable land, one half of the pasture land, and much of the wooded lands.³⁴ This vast amount of land could not just be conjured by Constantius, it had to be appropriated from the estates of the Gallo-Roman aristocrats. Although the scholar Walter Goffart in *Barbarians and Romans* argues that the land did not necessarily have to be taken from the *latifundia*, E.A. Thompson’s theory that the aristocrats conceded their land appears the

³¹ Isidore of Seville; *HRG 19*, in Kenneth Baxter Wolf *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1990); p.90

³² Peter Heather *The Goths* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996); p.149.
Orosius; *VII.xliii*

³³ Thompson claims this area was called the “marrow” of the Gallic provinces. p.29.

more believable, for as he demonstrates, there is no extant evidence that shows any type of overt dissent against the settlement of the barbarians in what was basically the aristocrats' backyard.³⁵ Unless the resettlement was something which the aristocrats did not mind, or even willingly accepted, one would expect to find some type of argument, for the land owners were going to lose a great portion of their land. The lack of security provided by the Romans, and the unrest of the peasants during this period, would have made the settlement of a strong people who would protect the region against raids by other barbarians something desirable to the aristocrats.

Along with the lands they received in the resettlement, the Visigoths were allowed to establish their capital in the city of Toulouse, lending credence to the report of Salvian which said the Visigoths also controlled sections of the Novempopulana and Narbonensis Prima,³⁶ as well as Aquatania II. The lands obtained by the Visigoths gave them the first *patria* they had had since they had been driven across the Danube by the Huns; thus giving a homeland to defend. Since the aristocratic estate owners retained a goodly amount of land (considering the initial sizes of the estates before their divisions), which was located directly next to the lands of the Visigoths, the patrician owners of the *latifundia* were pacified by now having protectors of their own. Indeed, this could well have been the reason for the lack of complaints against the Visigothic settlement, for since the great invasion across the Rhine in the winter of 406 by hordes of barbarians, the Gallic countryside was continually being plundered by the Germans. With the imperial court at Trier having been removed to Arles between 395-407, Gaul was

³⁴ Ibid.; p.26.

³⁵ Thompson; pp.26-30.

³⁶ In Thompson; p.23. (note that Toulouse was located within the border of Narbonensis I)

definitely in need of protection.³⁷ Perhaps the Gallo-Romans of Aquatania II decided that losing a part of their estates in exchange for a tribe of defenders was a better alternative than eventually losing everything to the pillaging of the Germans. To the Gallic provincials this change in area leadership could not have meant much, for the most prosperous still retained enough of their holdings to maintain their lifestyles.³⁸ After all, their land was still considered Roman territory, only now the “nation of the Goths” resided next to them.³⁹

Just as Athaulf had attempted to do by marrying Gallia Placidia, Constantius, it seems, chose to tie himself to the royal family by doing the same. The use of the Visigoths in his plan, however, necessitated that they be the dominant coherent force within the empire, or at least within Gaul, which is where most of the power struggle was occurring in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. This called for the suppression of any other force in the area which could offer him trouble.

Constantius is displayed as a true supporter of the legitimate emperor Honorius, and fought to suppress the usurpers who rose during his tenure, including Constans, Gerontius, Maximus, Jovinus, and Attalus.⁴⁰ But is it safe to assume that he did not have aspirations of his own? Although the man for whom he fought, Honorius, was considered a good Christian, being described by the Christian writer Paulus Orosius as a man “worthy of victory over this

³⁷ Something that had always made the barbarians at least think twice before pillaging. See Tacitus; *Histories* IV.63.; Bede; p.57; and Severus; p.301.

Salvian declares that many Gallic aristocrats were still wealthy even *after* they had been plundered by barbarians. In Mathisen; p.28.

³⁹ *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* .58. In Mathisen; p.28.

⁴⁰ Orosius; p.359.

entire series of manifest usurpers ...because of his high religious feeling,”⁴¹ Constantius seems not to have revered the Church too highly. He even rewarded the assassins of the usurper Constantine even though Constantine had been consecrated a priest.⁴² Thus showing disregard and perhaps even animosity toward the Church. Although the usurper in all likelihood was consecrated in the hope of avoiding retribution, Constantius shows little or no reluctance in violating the sanctity of the Church. The scholar E.A. Thompson argues that Constantius resettled the Visigoths in order to quiet the rebellious Bacaudae.⁴³ Although this may have just been a use for which he used the barbarian tribe, it certainly presented him an opportunity to suppress the support the Bacaudae gave to any potential rivals, weakening not only the position of the aristocracy, but also that of the clergy.

Constantius undeniably had close ties to the Visigoths. He was married to Gallia Placidia, the widow of the former Visigothic king Athaulf and sister to the emperor Honorius. This in itself points to a strong link between him and the barbarian tribe, for Gallia Placidia obviously maintained loyalty to the Visigoths and their interests. This is evident by the loyalty and enthusiasm her Visigothic retainers showed for her after the death of Constantius in 421. In the hope of maintaining her position of Augusta they dominated the riots in Ravenna after the death of the emperor, but their aspirations were not realized, and Gallia Placidia was forced to flee to Constantinople.⁴⁴ Afterward, with their two major supporters in the Roman

⁴¹ Ibid.; p.360.

⁴² John Matthews *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975); p.313.

⁴³ Thompson; p. 30.

⁴⁴ Ibid.; pp.378-9.

government either dead or forced to flee, the Visigoths eventually became of lesser import in Gaul.

Although they maintained their power in Gaul for a while, the new alliances formed by other generals, such as Aetius with the Burgundians, allowed other kingdoms to be set up as well. By the later part of the fifth century the Visigoths had lost their superiority and in due time were driven into Spain by Clovis and his Franks.⁴⁵

It can not be denied that during the first part of the fifth century the Visigoths were the power to be reckoned with in the western portion of the empire, and bringing them under the yoke was something the Romans surely would have wanted to do. It was Constantius who achieved this, but one can not be expected to believe that he alone was immune from the temptation of becoming emperor. With the Visigoths as his muscle, he gained the support of the Gallic aristocrats and weakened the power of the Church, either by force (shown by his willingness to execute a member of the clergy), or by diminishing its local support by suppressing the Bacaudae. Using the Visigoths as a power base Constantius became the most powerful man in Gaul, allowing him to eliminate rivals and present himself as the protector of Gaul. He made himself someone whom Honorius would definitely want as an ally, and although his tenure as Augustus was not a long one, he did achieve his goal.

⁴⁵ This immigration began c. 494.

Bibliography

- ❑ Ammianus Marcellinus *Rerum gestarum libri XXXI*. Edited by T.E. Page et al.
Cambridge:Harvard University Press, 1950. Translations by the author.
- ❑ Bede *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Penguin Books: New York, 1990.
- ❑ Cahill, Thomas *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.
- ❑ Caesar *Bellum Gallicum*. Edited by Otto Seel. Leipzig: B.G. Tevbner, 1968.
(Supplemented by Hadas, Moses *The Gallic War and other writings of Julius Caesar*. (Toronto: Random House Inc., 1957).)
- ❑ Constantius of Lyon *The Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre*. In *The Western Fathers*, ed. F.Hoare (Sheed & Ward: New York, 1954) pp. 284-320.
- ❑ Gibbons, Edward *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire v.II*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1843.
- ❑ Goffart, Walter, *Barbarians and Romans*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980.
- ❑ Heather, Peter *The Goths*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996.
- ❑ Jones, A.H.M. *Decline of the Ancient World*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1966.
----- *A History of Rome Through the Fifth Century*. New York: Walker and Company, 1968.
- ❑ Matthews, John *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- ❑ Mathisen, Ralph W. *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1993.
- ❑ Orosius *Seven Books Against the Pagans*. In *The Fathers of the Church* ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press,1964.
- ❑ *Panegerici Latini* Paris: University of France, 1949. In Latin and French. Translations by the author.
- ❑ Severus, Sulpicius *The Life of Saint Martin of Tours*. Willitis:Eastern Orthodox Books.
- ❑ Thompson, E.A. *Romans and Barbarians*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1982.

- ❑ Wolf, Kenneth B. *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*. Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1990.
- ❑ Wolfram, Herwig *History of the Goths*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1988.
- ❑ Van Dam, Raymond *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press.