

PANAGIOTIS ANTONOPOULOS

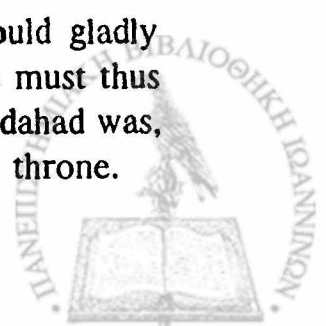
WAS KING THEODAHAD'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE EVER RECOGNIZED BY JUSTINIAN?

Many pages have been devoted to the obscure events which preceded Justinian's Gothic war. A crucial question however, remains to be answered. It is very important for anybody who counts the comprehension of the diplomatic contacts which took place between Byzantium and the Ostrogothic Court just before, and during the Gothic war among his ambitions, to determine first the position of Theodahad not merely as King of Italy —this fact is beyond dispute—, but as an accepted, *de iure* recognized member of the *Imperium Romanum*, who had obtained Imperial recognition before the death of Amalasantha and the beginning of the war, or solely as a *de facto* created King with no Imperial backing whatsoever.

This task has unfortunately, not been undertaken by our sources, who remain completely silent on the subject. Thus the only way by which we can approach this problem remains the examination of Theodahad's claims, his personality, prevailing tendencies in the definition of the Ostrogothic prerogative in Italy and obviously, any hints or comments our sources furnish us with as to the form this relationship between Emperor and King took.

To start with, Theodahad was an Amal, being the son of Theoderic the Great's sister Amalafrida from her first marriage to an unknown person, before she married the Vandal King Thrasamund. This made him count among Theoderic's possible successors, and we must presume that Theoderic himself was not unaware of such a possibility, since in *Variae* III 15, Cassiodorus gives the impression that Theodahad counted as a trustworthy man whose fame, it was suggested by his uncle, he should strive at increasing.

There is not the slightest hint at the subsequent faults which brought such a strong reaction both from Theoderic and Amalasantha. The understanding on which the future of Italy would be determined after Theoderic's death is not clear and it will be dealt with later. However, if the continuation of Gothic rule in Italy were to continue, it is unlikely that the Emperor would gladly accept the accession of any non-Amal to the throne of Italy, and we must thus conclude that after the death of Theoderic's grandson Athalaric, Theodahad was, if not the only possible, at least the only obvious candidate for the throne.



Dietrich Claude¹ suggests that the explanation for Amalasantha's decision to call Theodahad as consort to the throne is exactly what Jordanes claims, namely that due to her sex she could not impose a sense of obedience on the Goths for her regime². His origin therefore, did play an important role for the Gothic side as well.

Far more complex are the elements which constitute the picture of Theodahad's personality. According to Procopius³ he had little sympathy for his race's ancestral values with regard to manly virtues. Instead he confined himself to his Tuscan estates and became absorbed in the study of philosophy⁴, having, so Procopius tells us, turned himself into an adherent of Plato. This element could by itself, counterbalance his advantage as an Amal in the eyes of the Goths for whom the idea of an intellectual king, untried on the field, would be, to say the least, detestable. Things could have been different both for the Italians and the Imperial side, as the elevation of an intellectual King could secure the survival of Roman institutions with all its consequences on the Gothic Court, greater tolerance for the former, and a certain degree of political dependence on the latter. However, despite his philosophical inclinations, Theodahad could not overcome his avarice which led him to the illegal acquisition of land to such an extent that it was regarded a great misfortune for someone to be his neighbour. This statement of Procopius⁵ is amply confirmed by Cassiodorus in two letters written in the name of Theoderic. In *Variae* IV 39, Theoderic reproaches his nephew mildly but firmly on precisely the same ground as Procopius, namely the encroachment of someone else's property. Nevertheless, a statement on the *civilitas* borne by high-born men of royal blood which causes hatred to others when abandoned, means that at the time this letter was written

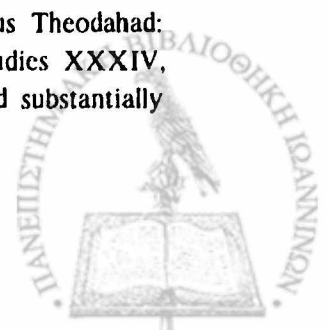
1. Die Ostgotischen Königserhebungen. (Die Völker an der mittleren und unteren Donau im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert). Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung v. 4, Vienna 1980, p. 165.

2. Jordanes, *Gettica* 306; «quom mater, ne pro sexus sui fragilitate a Gothis sperneretur, secum deliberans, Theodahadam consubrinum suum germanitatis gratia accersitum a Tuscia, ubi privatam vitam degens in laribus propriis erat, in regno locavit». Her kinship to him is also noted by Cassiodorus *Variae* X 1, 2 «Perduximus ad scepra virum fraterna nobis proximitate coniunctum, qui regiam dignitatem communi nobiscum consilii robore sustineret, ut et ille avorum suorum purpureo decore fulgeret...». See also Claude, *op. cit.* note 118.

3. *De Bello Gothico* I, 3.

4. I received the article by S. J. B. Barnish *Maximian, Cassiodorus, Boethius Theodahad: Literature, philosophy and politics in Ostrogothic Italy*. *Nottingham Medieval Studies* XXXIV, (1990) pp. 16-32, too late to utilise properly. There is however nothing that could substantially alter the conclusions of the present article.

5. *Ad loc.* as note 3.

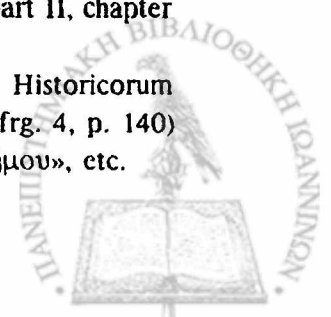


his excesses still had to reach their worst peak. Thus an even stiffer and more distinct rebuke by Theoderic revives the subject in Var. V 12. Instead of references to the *civilitas*, the dissociation of Theodahad from royal favour is explicitly pointed at. Furthermore it is reported by Procopius that, during the ensuing reign of King Athalaric, his mother Amalasantha who as regent, possessed the reins of government, was compelled to take strong action against her cousin whom she forced hand back all the invaded property to its rightful owners. According to Procopius, this earned her his eternal hatred, which proved fatal a few years later. All this turmoil almost proved an advantage to only one party, i.e. the Empire, to which Theodahad was willing to surrender his Ruscan territory in exchange for a substantial sum of money, the comfort and luxury of life in Constantinople, and his enrollment there to its Senate. The rapid course of events and Theodahad's doubledealings by his association with the Gothic nationalists which may have started at that time, prevented this plan from materializing, but it is more than certain that the Imperial side and especially the Imperial ambassador Peter the Patrician, exploited it to the full during subsequent negotiations with him¹. We can thus conclude that as personality Theodahad *did suit* the Imperial cause at the time of his accession to the throne, although this does not imply an imminent political recognition as that would ruin the agreed plan of the surrender of Tuscany.

Perhaps the most difficult part of this study is the definition of the basis on which Theodahad's accession to the throne could be justified from the Imperial point of view. This depends largely on how we interpret the information supplied by our sources as to Theoderic's constitutional position, but also on the terms under which the three intermediate successors, i.e. Eutharic, Athalaric and Amalasantha, were to be accepted. Two factors determine to a large extent this position. In frg. 214, John of Antioch states that Theoderic had been a Roman Consul during the revolt of Illus against Zeno, that is, a long time before he set out for Italy². This means that at the time of his departure for Italy, he was not considered by the Romans as a mere dangerous barbarian who had better stay away at a safe distance, but as a trustworthy man with a certain degree of Roman conscience. The second important piece of information is found in the Anonymus Valesii frg. 49 where, apart from the fact that

1. For a discussion and analysis of Peter's contacts with Theodahad, see my book: Πέτρος Πατριχίος. Ο Βυζαντινός διπλωμάτης, αξιωματούχος και συγγραφέας. Athens 1990, part II, chapter 1b, pp. 54-87.

2. Ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν Ἰλλοῦ πόλεμον στέλλει Θεωδέριχον ὑπάτον. (Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum IV, p. 620). cf. the statement by Eustathius of Epiphaneia (F.H.G. IV, frg. 4, p. 140) «Θευδερίχου... ἀνδρὸς Γότθου τὸ γένος ὑπάρχοντος, παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις τε αὐ ἐπισήμου», etc.



Theoderic is mentioned to have been both Consul and Patrician, it is stated that he would only rule over Italy until Zeno came to take charge in person¹. Zeno never came, but the statement is significant as it shows that the Roman Empire recognized *the person of Theoderic* as King of Italy, and not any Gothic ruler. Thus after the death of Zeno Anastasius appears to have started a procedure for a more concrete definition of Theoderic's constitutional position with two treaties, one in 493 and the final one in 498, whose terms are unfortunately, not entirely clear. What emerges though, is that Theoderic's prerogative was gradually restricted by tangible rules which affected both his position and privileges. This tendency we must view as a longterm one, something that puts an agreed peace-plan between Theodahad and Justinian which never took effect, under a new perspective. This is not the place to discuss the different views as to Theoderic's actual constitutional position in Italy for the rest of his life. It suffices to say that even during the worst twists in his relations with Byzantium, he was *always* recognized as the legitimate ruler of Italy².

It becomes thus obvious that each one of Theoderic's successors was obliged to obtain Imperial recognition for himself and his rights over Italy. Eutharic was lucky enough to face favourable conditions. First his marriage to Amalasantha, then in 519 his unprecedented Consulship together with Emperor Justin I and his adoption as the Emperor's son-in-arms sealed that recognition. He died before Theoderic was able to secure a similar form of recognition for his young son Athalaric who was elected king as a minor by his grandfather on his deathbed in 526. Thus Athalaric was forced to ask for Imperial recognition by means of his hereditary rights, his father's and grandfather's adoption-in-arms, and most important, his inability to wage war against the Empire while still a minor³. The adoption he had hoped for, never occurred. This can of course, be explained by his age, but there is no reason why we should not include this development to the long-term Imperial plan for the elimination of Gothic power in Italy. However, by comparison to the status of Theoderic's

1. «Cui (sc. Zenoni) Theodoricus pactuatus est, ut, si victus fuisset Odoacar, pro merito laborum suorum loco eius, dum adveniret, tantum praeregnaret». Jordanes (Gettica 290-91, M.G.H. Auct. Ant. V I, pp. 132-133) goes even further, calling Theoderic son of the Emperor.

2. See also Claude, op. cit. p. 157.

3. Cassiodorus, Var. VIII: «Vos avum nostrum in vestra civitate celsis curulibus extulistis, vos genitorem meum in Italia palmatae claritate decorastis. Desiderio quoque concordiae factus est per arma filius, qui annis vobis paene videbatur aequaevus. Hoc nomen adulescenti congruentius dabitur, qualla nostris senioribus praestitistis. In parentelae locum vester iam transire debet affectus. Nam ex filio vestro genitus naturae legibus vobis non habetur extraneus... Aliquid forsitan et amplius mereor sinceritatis, cuius nec aetas videtur esse suspecta nec generatio iam probatur extranea».

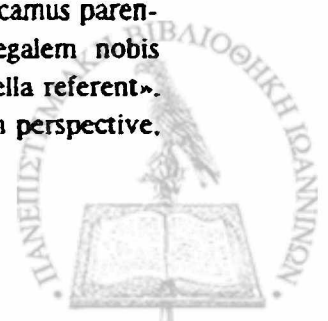


successors with the exception of his mother. Athalaric appears to have been accepted as king by the Emperor, partly because he was the son of his adopted son Eutharic, a fact which was likely to procure a greater degree of allegiance towards Byzantium, but most important, because the gradually developing pro-Byzantine policy of the regent Amalasantha proved to serve well Justinian's interests in the West. In this course of events, a degree of personal sympathy for the Gothic regent should in my opinion, not be underestimated in our attempt to extirpate all personal feeling from historical explanation.

Strictly speaking, it was the change in Amalasantha's status from regent to Queen which provided the basic means of legality for Theodahad after the death of Athalaric. We must suppose that her choice caused as much surprise in the Imperial Court, as among her own kinsmen in Italy, who knew well her strained relations with him, another indication that their relations had passed their lowest ebb at the time of Athalaric's death. Surprise, but not necessarily alarm. Theodahad was not a stranger to Imperial diplomacy by that time, since he had already proposed the surrender of Tuscany. The fact that he was to rule as Amalasantha's partner and not as sole king guaranteed, to say the least, the continuation of a pro-Roman policy. The information that emerges from the two relevant letters¹ will be considered in the following section. It is sufficient for the time being to point to the fact that a serious principle was at stake with his elevation to the throne, as this would be the first time that a king outside Theoderic's main line of descent were to be recognized. If this were to be accepted, it would lay the pattern for any future king to claim recognition, thus perpetuating, this time legally, Gothic rule in Italy. However, since Theodahad's status was at the beginning at least, to be a partnership with Amalasantha, refusal of recognition from Constantinople could not be openly proclaimed, but it could only delay its final decision. Lastly, there is another reason for which Theodahad needed Imperial recognition so urgently. He would be the first adult king of Italy not to be raised on the shield, as this custom was understood and esteemed by the Goths, i.e. as expressing the concept of the warrior king. An indication of this can be found in the proclamation of Vitigis who appears to point directly at this disadvantage of his predecessor². Obviously Vitigis's exploitation of this fact should not be overestimated, but

1. Var. X 1-2.

2. Var. X 31, 1: «Unde auctori nostro gratia humillima satisfactione referentes indicamus parentes nostros Gothos inter procinctuales gladios more maiorum scuto subposito regalem nobis contulisse praestante domino dignitatem, ut honorem arma darent cuius opinionem bella referent». For a discussion of the various aspects of this institution both from Gothic and Roman perspective, see Claude, *op. cit.* pp. 175-176.



the combination of its lack, together with the absence of war experience and the revelation of treacherous activities, all help to explain Theodahad's rapid expulsion from the throne in December 536. Hence insecurity as to his regality among the Goths, made a quick Imperial recognition even more eagerly sought.

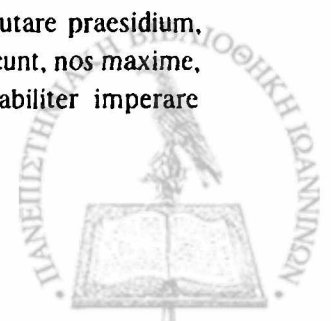
We must ultimately, consider the expressions used by the Gothic kings in their contact with the Emperors, at least so far as this is revealed by Cassiodorus. It is quite remarkable that the latter take a distinctively personal form and a clue into the relationship which existed during the time of composition of a particular letter can be reached by a classification of such terms as *caritas*, *amicitia*, *gaudium*, *concordia* and *pax*. The first example to be quoted is typical of the importance for such a classification in a letter whose purpose was a rapprochement with Emperor Anastasius after relations between him and Theoderic had reached their lowest ebb. The King's sentiments take the form of a gradual descent from the formal to the informal expression by his petition first of *pax*, then of *Concordia* and finally of *Caritas*, a fact which I believe should be treated as more than coincidental¹. However, no doubt whatsoever is casted on the fact that as king of Italy Theoderic was also recognized as such by its Roman population². The second letter of Theoderic to Anastasius³ is of an informative nature, i.e. acknowledges the accession of Felix to the Consulship, and therefore forms unsuitable ground for expressions which reflect the more personal aspects of the relationship between King and Emperor. It carries however, the point of recognition one step forward, as it would have been inconceivable for Theoderic even to contemplate the possibility of writing such a letter, had he not felt secure on his post with Imperial recognition of his power as an established fact.

There is no further indication of the steadily growing intimacy between Theoderic and the successors of Anastasius in the *Variae*. Eutharic's adoption as son-in-arms by Justin I and their sharing of the Consulship in 519 are clear signs of the firmly increasing personal intimacy between Emperor and would-

1. *Variae* I 1: «Opportet nos, clementissime imperatorum, pacem quaerere, qui causas iracundiae cognoscimus non habere... et ideo, piissime principum, potentiae vestrae convenit et honori, ut concordiam vestram quaerere debeamus, cuius adhuc amore proficimus... Quapropter salutationis honorificentiam praeferentes prona mente deprecamur, ne suspendatis mansuetudinis vestrae gloriosissimam caritatem, quam ego sperare debui, etiamsi aliis non videretur posse concedi».

2. «Vos enim estis regnorum omnium pulcherimum decus vos totius orbis salutare praesidium, quos ceteri dominantes iure suspiciunt, quia in vobis singulare aliquid inesse cognoscunt, nos maxime, qui divino auxilio in republica vestra didicimus, quemadmodum Romanis aequabiliter imperare possimus».

3. *Variae* II 1.

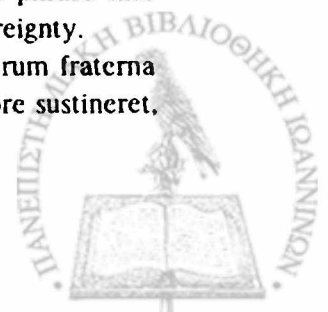


be King. His son Athalaric could use his childhood in serving his interests, but his recognition was uncertain and not automatically assumed. Hence in his letter to Emperor Justin we are faced with a mixture of tones, a formal approach in staterelations, and an informal personal one in seeking Imperial protection and through it, recognition¹.

The case of Theodahad appears to be the most interesting one, as during the changing circumstances we can notice a shift from the more personal terms such as *amicitia* and *caritas* to more formal ones such as *concordia*, term which is explicitly interpreted as state-recognition. A new factor is therefore introduced, that is, the difference between personal recognition and recognition of a regime's legality, the distinction of which seems to have been deliberately ignored so long as Theoderic and his direct descendants could at least, claim affinity with the Emperor to a much greater degree. Thus the tenth book of the *Variae* opens with two letters addressed to the Emperor, one by the already recognized daughter of Theoderic, and one by her new would-be recognized partner Theodahad. The tone of Var. X 1, is more of an announcement than a justification of her decision, the real purpose of which remains concealed². Imperial *Amicitia* and *Concordia* are expected, not taken for granted. By this arrangement we can clearly observe the above stated distinction of a personal recognition expressed by *Amicitia*, and a political one denoted by *Concordia*. Evidently both forms were related more to Theodahad's acceptance than hers. The same theme is procured in the following letter which forms Theodahad's own inaugural letter to the Emperor. He points to the custom of informing neighbouring peoples of an accomplished change of government and formulates an assured friendship with the Emperor on the basis of his association with Amalasantha. It therefore becomes clear at once that Theodahad's status was not meant to be defined independently. Hence Theodahad departs from the idea of *Amicitia* which in my opinion, would imply the attainment of personal

1. *Variae* VIII 1: «Iuste possem reprehendi, clementissime principum, si pacem vestram quaererem tepide, quam parentes meos constat ardentius expetisse... Atque ideo pacem non longinquus, sed proximus peto, quia tunc mihi dedistis gratiam nepotis, quando meo parenti adoptionis gaudia praestitistis... Pueritia tuitionem gratiae consequatur et non in totum a parentibus destituimur, qui tali protectione fulcimur... Plus in illa parte regnabitis, ubi omnia caritate iubetis. Quapropter ad serenitatem vestram illum et illum legatos nostros aestimavimus esse dirigendos, ut amicitiam nobis illis pactis, illis condicionibus concedatis, quas cum divae memoriae domno avo nostro inclitos decessores vestros constat habuisse». It becomes clear from that last phrase that *amicitia* is the key word which can be interpreted as the *de iure* recognition of sovereignty.

2. This is what she has to say in justifying her choice: «Perduximus ad scepra virum fraterna nobis proximitate coniunctum, qui regiam dignitatem communi nobiscum consilii robore sustineret, ut et ille avorum suorum purpureo decore fulgeret». (*Variae* X 1, 2 sq.).



recognition, and returns to the more formal concept of *Concordia*, an alliance which is justified by a long tradition of Amalobyzantine friendship. It becomes plain that he wants to obtain Imperial favour which means personal recognition, but his fate is still too closely entangled with that of Amalasantha.

For the Imperial Court developments in Italy must have been very embarrassing, since recognition of Theodahad would automatically mean the abandonment of his offer to surrender Tuscany. This aspect, though not harmful to any form of personal recognition (*Amicitia*), could have been the reason for the apparently delayed political recognition (*Concordia*). Theodahad made a solution possible by his hasty imprisonment of Amalasantha which led to her being strangled on an island of lake Bolsenna, a deed hardly to have been undertaken without his consent or knowledge. So it sounds ironical that we possess two more letters from each Royal partner to the Emperor concerning the receipt of a gift of marbles from Justinian. These two letters¹ would have been important for our subject, if they were proved to have been written at the same time, i.e. after Theodahad's accession².

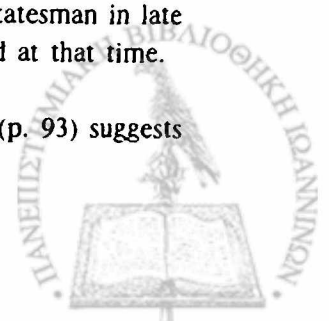
Before the most crucial letters³ are considered, we must deal with three letters whose placement in the *Variae* cannot easily justify a certain chronology. The theme in Var. X 15 written by Theodahad to Justinian is the introduction of an ecclesiastic, a subject which can contribute little to our research. There seems nevertheless, to exist a hasty and almost advisory tome, quite unsuitable for prevailing circumstances. This can be an indication that at the time of composition Imperial recognition was regarded but a formality by the King⁴. Far more important is Var. X 25, a letter which informs us of an embassy by a *Presbyter* Heraclianus, to Theodahad, which possibly concerned the election

1. Var. X 8, 9.

2. This view is supported by the author of the most recent study on the chronology of the *Variae*, Stefan Krautschick, in his book *Kassiodor und die Politik seiner Zeit*, Bonn 1983, pp. 91-92, who places all three letters, Var. X 8, 9 and 10 in the first two months of Theodahad's reign. However, the apparent reason for their composition, death of the ambassador Callogenus, makes a long interval between the first two probable. The only thing that would suggest an early placement of Var. X 9 in Theodahad's reign is that Cassiodorus's arrangement according to subject breaks down later in the book, when we encounter letters of far greater importance for the development of relations between King and Emperor. Var. X 9 however, is important in the sense that it shows that even during the most hectic political circumstances, there was still room for reference to a subject which in my view might sound trivial, a view not necessarily shared by a statesman in late antiquity. It also implies that the way to recognition was still open for Theodahad at that time.

3. *Variae* X 19-24.

4. This assessment seems to be confirmed by Krautschick's conclusions, who (p. 93) suggests a date after April 30 535, the accepted date for Amalasantha's murder.



of Anthimus as *Patriarch* of Constantinople in 535 and the relevant negotiations with the *Pope*. This Heraclianus could be the carrier of Imperial *gaudia* for Theodahad's accession to the throne, as alluded to. We know nothing more of this Heraclianus, but as the negotiations took place with Pope Agapetus, this must be dated early in 535, earlier than the preceding letters Var. X 19-24¹. However, this letter is also important in showing that other embassies moved from court to court, quite independently of the official Imperial embassy led by Peter the Patrician². There is also a reference to Imperial *gaudia*, which points to Theodahad just falling short of obtaining Imperial *Amicitia*, which would mean full personal recognition. Since this development was quite unthinkable after Justinian had heard of Amalasantha's imprisonment, this is a firm clue in favour of dating the letter early in 535. Finally, Var. X 26 is a request for the Emperor to lower the taxes of a monastery. No key words appear in it, but since it shows some dependence of Theodahad on Imperial decisions, this too must be dated in the early days of Theodahad's Kingship.

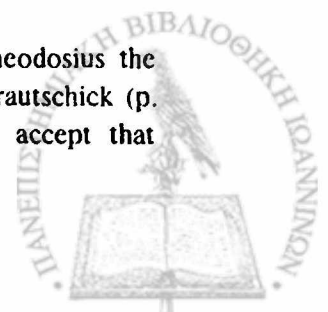
Six letters³ are written in the name of Theodahad or his wife Gudeliva to each member of the Imperial couple, with Gudeliva always addressing the Empress, while Theodahad dispatched personal letters to both Justinian and Theodora. The terminology used in these letters is of critical importance for our subject as they have the maintenance of peace as their principal theme, and, by means of internal clues, appear to have been composed as the Imperial ambassador Peter was to make his way back to Constantinople together with an ecclesiastic sent by Theodahad. By that time Amalasantha was dead, a war against the Goths had started in Dalmatia and on Sicily, and Theodahad tried all means to retain the peace. In spite of suggestions to the contrary, it is felt that those letters should be taken as referring to the same occasion, and they must be all dated early in 536⁴. It is quite remarkable that the key words tested as evidence, change in semantic use, denoting more a past relationship than a prospective future one. The term *Amicitia* occurs only once in Var. X

1. This view is contrary to Krautschick's analysis (p. 94), who considers that all seven letters Var. X 19-25 were written at the same time, i.e. between May and October 535. As it will be shown below, I believe that Var. X 19-24 *do form* a single group, to which this letter should not be included.

2. The same view is expressed in Krautschick, p. 95.

3. Var. X 19-24.

4. See J. B. Bury: *A history of the later Roman Empire from the death of Theodosius the Great to the death of Justinian*, Vol. II, p. 168 note 1. This view is not shared by Krautschick (p. 93-94) who regards evidence concerning Var. X 25 as conclusive, and does not accept that Theodahad's ambassador was in this occasion a cleric named Rusticus.



22¹. The statement of Theodahad that he is better than his predecessors, hence deserving Imperial friendship more than they, is quite astonishing. T. Hodgkin is probably right in accepting Dahn's conjecture that Theodahad claimed superiority on account of his pursuit of philosophy and culture². As for the term *Amicitia* itself, it denotes an extremely fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship of the past which he, by means of his superior culture, has every right to request. On the other hand this very same letter has an explicit reference to the gravest of all terms, *Pax*, a term which his predecessors hardly ever needed to use, even when relations with the Empire were at their lowest ebb³. Besides those two extremes, the desire for Imperial *Concordia*, i.e. political recognition, is also expressed⁴.

The terms *Pax* and *Concordia* also appear in a far less personal letter⁵, addressed by Theodahad to the Emperor, in which he refers to the benefits of maintaining the peace rather than to the merits of his own personality as in X 22⁶. In the following sentence the idea of *Caritas* is introduced, which can be combined with an allusion to Imperial joy at Theodahad's accession⁷. Despite the fact that the idea of *Gaudium* appears once more in a later letter, which as suggested, precedes Var. X 19-24, it seems to me that the ideas of *Caritas* and *Gaudium* carry no greater weight than demonstrating the Emperor's originally favourable disposition towards the King, and under no circumstances do they imply either political, or personal recognition.

Although the next letter⁸ is very significant in other respects, namely as thought to be corroborating the complicity of Theodora and Peter in the assassination of Amalasantha, it is of little relevance to our subject. Its rather pretentious tone in Theodahad's address to Theodora and his attempt to placate himself to the Imperial couple and above all to the Empress, appears indirectly

1. «Associuntur (sc. qui suis parentibus meliores se esse cognoscunt) amicitia gratuita vestris animis quos prius vobis largitatis studio iungebatis, ne bona tantum illorum temporum fuisse credantur, quae vos et copiosa benignitate vincitis et affuenti munere superatis».

2. The letters of Cassiodorus, London 1896, p. 434.

3. «Pacem siquidem sub omni sinceritate petimus, qui causas certaminis non habemus».

4. Var. X 22, 1 sq. «Retinetis, sapientissimi principum, et per legatos nostros et per virum disertissimum Petrum, quem nuper ad nos vestra pietas destinavit, quo studio concordiam Augustae serenitatis optemus».

5. Var. X 19.

6. «Quemadmodum enim pacem exorati poteritis abicere, quam pro ingenita pietate et iracundis gentibus consuestis inponere? Bona quidem vestrae concordiae non tacemus».

7. «Totum eximium, quicquid vobis fuerit praedicabili caritate sociatum» (ibid. 15-16)... «Constat enim amare vos posse, quem gaudetis ad regni culmina pervenisse» (ibid. 5-6).

8. Var. X 20.



to be pointing to an awaited recognition and a certain degree of agony both for its delay and uncertainty. Far more important is the following letter¹ addressed to Theodora by Theodahad's wife Gudeliva. Appropriately, it lacks all political sermonizing, something which would be by itself unthinkable in a letter written by a woman for a woman. The personal aspect is extensively dealt with, but the concept of *Caritas* which appears, is treated as a desideratum². The only political statement appears, somewhat unexpectedly, at the end of the letter, where the hope is expressed that a discord between the two Roman states will be averted, since a fact which had occurred should render the Royal couple even dearer to the Empress³. This combination of the desired *Caritas* and the possibility of discord between the Roman states shows clearly that both personal and political recognition were at stake, with even any favourable disposition from the Imperial couple towards its accomplishment being withdrawn.

The view expressed above is further condoned by Var. X 23, addressed by Theodahad to Theodora. Apart from the explicit admission that difficulties exist between the two states, both *Concordia* and *Caritas* are eagerly sought⁴. The bonds of *Caritas* are here combined with a new idea, that of *Foedus* together with that of *Pax*.⁵ It is not easy to test the degree of technical precision applied in the usage of the term *Foedus*, but it must be observed that as it counterbalances the term *Pax* which has just preceded it and it is followed by the *vinculum caritatis*, its application here should be conveying its full technical sense. From the point of view of political recognition it must be interpreted as the concrete expression of the state of affairs, more vaguely formed by the term *Concordia*. This dependence on the Empire, not fully assumed by the sole existence of *Pax*, would inevitably bind the Royal couple with the *vincula caritatis*, not sufficient by themselves to offer them the status of *Amicitia*, i.e. personal recognition. It becomes remarkable therefore that Theodahad concentrates in obtaining political recognition or Imperial *Caritas* at the most, having abandoned all thought of *Amicitia*.

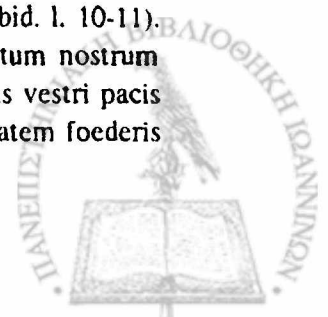
1. Var. X 21.

2. «Quid enim gratius quam si gloriae vestrae iudear caritatis participatione sociari, ut quia vos abunde fulgetis, nobis libenter de proprio splendore mutuemini, cum damnum non est lumini alteri de sua claritate largiri».

3. «Nam cum nullam inter Romana regna deceat esse discordiam, emersit tamen et qualitas rei, quae nos efficere cariores vestrae debeat aequitati». (ibid. ad fin.).

4. «Nunc est potius quod regna coniungat promissio fixa et votima concordia». (ibid. l. 10-11).

5. «Et ideo illum virum venerabilem vestris conspectibus vere dignissimum legatum nostrum ad vos specialiter credidimus esse dirigendum, ut, vobis annitentibus, serenissimi iugalis vestri pacis gratia solidetur, quatenus generalitas evidenter agnoscat merito venisse nos ad suavitatem foederis per tale vinculum caritatis». (ibid. l. 12-16).



Finally Var. X 24 which is a letter addressed by Gudeliva to Theodora, is primarily a letter of commendation for their envoy to the Constantinopolitan Court, mainly concerned with salutations. It makes no reference whatsoever to the Royal couple's desire for recognition.

We must now turn to Procopius, whose evidence as it should be expected, is both scarce and unreliable. Its scarcity is the direct result of the fact that the problem of Theodahad's legal recognition never puzzled him, since his narrative represents the Byzantine point of view: unreliability is caused by our dependence on terms whose use might have no more than stylistic aims. It may therefore be considered a paradox to state that the most valuable hint comes not in the chapters describing Theodahad's acts, but right at the beginning of the Gothic War. In narrating the events of A.D. 475-476 Procopius does not hesitate to refer to Romulus Augustulus, last Western Emperor and his father Orestes, both of whom the Court at Constantinople did not recognize. For Constantinople, Nepos still remained the legitimate sovereign. Thus the fact that Procopius describes these events as they were and not as they should have been from Constantinople's point of view, means that in compiling his narrative he does not take into account a sovereign's legal position as *understood by the Empire*, and so our task in attempting to detect information of Theodahad's legitimacy from his pages, becomes even more unavailing. Throughout the six chapters relating to Theodahad's period¹ the only indication, apparently corroborating the evidence found in Cassiodorus, that Justinian had not recognized Theodahad, comes in a dialogue between the King and the Imperial ambassador Peter. It took place in the early days of 536, when the unfavourable course of the war in Dalmatia and on Sicily had compelled the King recall the Imperial ambassador from Albanum to Ravenna with the intention of discussing the surrender of Italy. On his question what would happen, should the Emperor reject a previously agreed accord, Peter replied «you will have to fight, o brave man!»². This is not the place to discuss the implications of this strange dialogue, but it is interesting that Peter avoids calling Theodahad king, and prefers to call him just what he is not, i.e. a brave man. This may be no more than a mere stylistic choice by Procopius, but it would be tempting to associate it with the fact that for Justinian and henceforward for Peter, Theodahad *was not recognized* as King of Italy.

As already stated, this line of thought makes the need for a reassessment of the events preceding the Gothic War highly imperative. The customary view

1. De Bello Gothico I, chs. 3-8.

2. «Πολεμητά σοι τὸ λοιπόν, ὦ γενναῖε». B.G. I, 6, 9-10.



is that, under military pressure and Peter's threats for a full-scale war against him, Theodahad proposed a peace-accord which would clearly stipulate Imperial supremacy. This is the way in which Procopius depicts this accord, and thus E.A. Thomson¹ tried to draw a parallel between the accords proposed by Totila and Theodahad. An analysis of the latter's agreement with Peter shows however, that the seven clauses of the accord were definitely dictated by the Imperial envoy, who took the idea of a peaceful elimination of Gothic power in Italy a step further, by imposing specific restrictions on Theodahad's prerogative as compared with his predecessors². Had this accord been eventually accepted by the Emperor, it would automatically imply that *Concordia*, or political recognition, had been achieved. Thus we should no longer interpret this accord as product of defeat, but as a carefully calculated form of recognition, to which the unfavourable Gothic war-conduct only gave a helping hand. The murder of Amalasantha would be punished by the abandonment of any thought of *Amicitia* or *Caritas*, something that Theodahad and his wife seemed to be aware of. War on the circumference only meant that Justinian wanted to increase pressure, but avoid a fullscale war. This war became inevitable in the end, not due to Amalasantha's murder, but as a result of the arrest of the two Imperial envoys, Athanasius and Peter, and the aversion of Theodahad's promise to surrender Italy after the peace-plan agreed between him and Peter had been rejected by the Emperor.

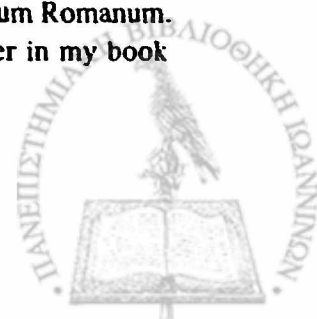
Finally a few words on the technical aspects that an Imperial recognition might have taken. Theoderic had received a *vestis regia* from Zeno which confirmed his position as King of Italy³. No information is available as to whether Athalaric received a *vestis regia*, but it can be easily assumed that he did not receive one as he was still a minor, and that he might receive one later. Amalasantha had no time to request one, and it must be held as certain that Theodahad never obtained one, as some clue of this would have survived in the *Variae*. Claude also points to the fact⁴ that Theodahad's copper-coins show him with Gothic ornaments, a fact which at least, encourages the assumption that a nationalist reaction occurred within the deeply Romanized Gothic King.

1. Romans and Barbarians. The decline of the Western Empire, the University of Wisconsin Press, p. 75, note 53.

2. See the analysis by E. Chrysos: Die Amaler Herrschaft in Italien und das Imperium Romanum. Der Vertrag von 535. Byzantion 51. (1981) pp. 430-474. See also the relevant chapter in my book on Peter the Patrician as note 1, σελ. 159.

3. See Claude, op. cit., p. 155.

4. See Claude, op. cit., p. 178.



If all his attempts towards *Concordia* and *Amicitia* with the Emperor had failed, then he was psychologically at least, ready to do away with all his Roman likes, including the desire for his recognition.



ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

ΑΝΑΓΝΩΡΙΣΘΗΚΕ ΠΟΤΕ Η ΑΝΟΔΟΣ ΣΤΟ ΘΡΟΝΟ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΥΔΑΤΟΥ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΙΟΥΣΤΙΝΙΑΝΟ;

του

Παναγιώτη Αντωνόπουλου

Ένα από τα πιο σημαντικά προβλήματα, που προκύπτει κατά την έρευνα των σχέσεων Βυζαντίου και Ιταλίας κατά τον 6ο αιώνα, είναι και το νομικό καθεστώς του Οστρογότθου βασιλιά Θευδάτου (534-536) σε σχέση με τους Βυζαντινούς και τον αυτοκράτορα Ιουστινιανό ιδιαίτερα. Το ερώτημα εάν ο Θευδάτος είχε αναγνωρισθεί απλώς *de facto* ή και *de iure* από την αυτοκρατορική Αυλή, δημιουργεί εντελώς διαφορετικά δεδομένα για την εξέταση των νομικών πτυχών του Γοθικού πολέμου του Ιουστινιανού.

Στο άρθρο αναλύονται κατ' αρχήν τα υπάρχοντα ιστορικά στοιχεία, και επιχειρείται να δοθεί η νομική και ιστορική προέκταση καθώς και οι συνέπειες μιας τέτοιας ενέργειας, εφ' όσον ο Θευδάτος θα ήταν ο πρώτος αναγνωρισμένος ηγεμόνας που δεν ήταν κατ' ευθείαν απόγονος του Θευδερίχου του Αμαλού.

Στο κύριο μέρος του άρθρου ερευνώνται διεξοδικά οι επιστολές του Θευδάτου και της συζύγου του Γκουντελίβας προς το Αυτοκρατορικό ζεύγος όπως αυτές έχουν καταγραφεί από τον Κασσιόδωρο, και με βάση τα διαφορετικά επίπεδα σχέσεων που προσδίδονται από τους όρους *Caritas*, *Gaudium*, *Amicitia*, *Concordia* και *Pax*. Σε συνδυασμό και με ορισμένες παρατηρήσεις από το χώρο της τέχνης, προκύπτει το συμπέρασμα ότι ο Θευδάτος δεν αναγνωρίσθηκε *de iure* ποτέ από τους Βυζαντινούς, καιτοι βρέθηκε πολύ κοντά στο να πετύχει αυτήν την αναγνώριση. Η συμμετοχή του στην δολοφονία της προκατόχου του Αμαλασούνθας, η ξαφνική στροφή του προς την αντιβυζαντινή παράταξη, και οι ικανότητες του Βυζαντινού διπλωμάτη Πέτρου Πατρικίου, οδήγησαν αντί για την τελική αναγνώριση του Θευδάτου στην έναρξη του Γοθικού Πολέμου.

