reurs ou lapsus restent très rares: p. 244, c’est Paul et non pas Jean qui prêche à Ephèse; p. 268 n. 68: Faustine I est morte en novembre 140 d’après les Fastes d’Ostie et non en 141.


Nancy

François Kirbihler


Andreas Goltz’s (from now on G.) book represents an impressive contribution to the study of Ostrogoths and the related Völkerwanderungen and Sixth Century. The reader understands immediately how, long after the masterpieces of Gibbon, Dahn, Hodgkin, Bury, Stein, and Ensslin’s biography on Theodoric, an accurate analysis of the evidence can still reopen the discussion of the sources in a fresh, renewed interpretation of an epoch.

In the new elaboration of his dissertation of 2005 on Theodoric in the Byzantine tradition, G. extends his study to include the Western sources in a wide bow
of time covering three centuries, in order to fill the need for a systematic analysis and comparison of the evidence. In the introductory Chapter I, he discusses the state of the question in the huge literature on Theoderic, his methodological criteria – including the terminology –, and the purposes of the monograph. The investigation of the evidence follows a chronological and at the same time Eastern-Western order. A short introduction to each author’s life, work and perspective, helps the reader understand the historical environment which produced the sources, as well as the audience to which they were addressed. In a final resume for each section G. discusses the results of his investigations by explaining the political/religious backgrounds of the authors, whose works deal with different aspects of Theoderic’s life.

Chapter II concerns the Byzantine authors until Anastasius I’s death (518 C.E.), i.e. the quadriga Malchus, Eustathius, Theodorus Anagnostes and Damascius, the first of whom is an important source for Theoderic’s period in the Balkans. The main result of the analysis is an essentially positive image of the King. Such an image, however, it is not echoed by the authors writing a generation later, who, under the Empire of Justinus and Justinian, characterized Theoderic in a strongly negative way. This is the case of Count Marcellinus – to whose Chronica G. gives insightful discussion, also considering the Problematik of the year 476 and of the idea of renovatio imperii – and of John of Antiochia, whose fragments offer interesting connections with other sources. The analysis of the perspectives of both these authors, to whom is dedicated the first part of Chapter III, brings G. to the astonishing conclusion «daß in erster Linie Justinian und sein näheres Umfeld durch die Etablierung und Verbreitung eines negatives Theoderich-Bildes... für die veränderte Sichtweise auf den Ostgotenkönig in der Überlieferung der 520er/530er Jahren verantwortlich waren» (158). It is likely that years before the Gothic war the idea of a «Wiedergewinnung» or an «engere Anbindung» of Italy to the East had already formed in Constantinople (cf. 159–66). Justinian’s environment may have strongly influenced the tendencies of historiography, particularly after 523 (for the events in the Kingdom cf. 160–4).

In the second part of Chapter III G. investigates the evidence of the Byzantine authors writing in the middle/late Empire of Justinian. The attention is on John Malalas and Procopius of Caesarea – whose terminology G. investigates thoroughly (e.g. rex = tyrannus) –, and also on Jordanes, who, despite his mysterious origins, wrote the Romana in Constantinople with a Byzantine perspective. The connection of the Getica to Cassiodorus’ lost Historia Gothorum makes of this source a particular case, which G. appropriately discusses also referring to the secondary literature. He rightly decides to introduce Jordanes with the discussion of Momigliano’s and Goffart’s theories, which are still accepted by many scholars (cf. 273–6). The result of this part of the investigation is not less astonishing than the previous one: despite the war, the authors of this period – and the same Justinian in the Pragmatica Sanctio – restored a positive image of Theoderic, which is less judgmental and more objective. This change probably happened after Theoderic’s death and before the Gothic war. At that time Theoderic was not more a reason for polemizing against the Gothic Kingdom, and Justinian could find in Theodatus, murderer of Amalasuintha, a solid pretext to conquer Italy. G.’s explanations for the change of views in the Byzantine sources is an
important contribution to the study of the imperial ideology of the first half of the sixth century (cf. 208–10, 300–6, 629).

Chapter IV is also made of two parts, respectively dedicated to the Western sources before the 520s and sources of the years 520/30. Bishop Ennodius († 521) is a significant voice for understanding Theoderic’s image. Important are also the first edition of the Liber Pontificalis and Cassiodorus’ Chronica. G.’s conclusions about the positive view of Theoderic by the Roman Senate and Church (cf. 346–54) brings the reader to further reflections: as in the East, environment and historical events have a decisive importance in Italy, where in the 520s the image of Theoderic is subject to a change. Reasons for the condemnation of the King are this time neither the legitimacy of his position nor his foreign policy but three years of internal mistakes: the trial against Boethius, who before his execution condemned the King in the Consolatio Philosophiae (and to which G. dedicates remarkable pages);¹ the murder of Symmachus, Boethius’ father-in-law and caput senatus, which had a bad impact on the Roman aristocracy (cf. Procopius’ and Gregory the Great’s accounts on Theoderic’s death); the captivity and death of Pope John I. At this stage the previously solid relationships of the King with the Roman Senate and Clergy were compromised. These events, however, apparently did not have in the other Kingdoms a strong impact: cf. the evidence in Chapter V on Theoderic’s image outside of Italy.

Chapter VI is dedicated to italic sources after Theoderic’s death. The second edition of the Liber Pontificalis – of which G. makes a remarkable analysis – shows a change in perspective from the previous one. Two tendencies are also in the Anonymus Valesianus II, the first part of which represents Theoderic as an «idealisierter Herrscher», the second one as «Tyrann und Verfolger». G. agrees with the generally accepted dating of this biography, which depends in part from Byzantine sources,² to the second half of sixth century (likely in Ravenna). After the triumph of Justinian over the Goths, Theoderic’s last years could be condemned without censure. This however, did not mean a damnatio memoriae of the King, as G. proves well in the last section of the chapter: this is dedicated to buildings and inscriptions of Theoderic’s time, and to the changes brought to the mosaics of Ravenna under Byzantine rule. The material evidence balances the perspectives of the literary sources.

The two final Chapters VII and VIII on the Eastern and Western evidence between the end of the sixth and the ninth century show the positive/negative reception of the image of Theoderic after the Gothic war. Authors with different goals rely generally on previous sources. Well studied are the Eastern authors, Ps.-Zacharias, Evagrius, Chronicon Paschale, Theophanes. The Western section is more cursory. Paul the Deacon perhaps deserved more attention; the Historia

¹ In answer to the lack of informations about a reception of the Consolatio Philosophiae before eight century (G. 388–9) I would like to refer to F. Troncarelli: La più antica edizione della ‘Consolatio Philosophiae’, NRS 72, 1988, 521–52; id.: Boezio a Costantinopoli: testi, contesti, edizioni, Litterae Caelentes 1, 2008, 201–17.
Romana occasionally contains elements missing in Jordanes and the Liber Pontificalis (cf. also XV 18, deriving from the same sources of Anonymus Valesianus II) and could be helpful for the understanding of Theoderic in Lombard Italy.

G.’s systematic analysis shows clearly the evolution of Theoderic’s image until its reception in the Middle Ages. Theoderic, who as rex Gothorum left the Balkans, conquered Italy and ruled it in the name of the Emperor, eventually became – as happens to many great leaders – a victim of his own power. The mistakes at the end of his life «zeigten negative Wirkungen und überschatteten die Erinnerung an die positiven Seiten und Leistungen des Amalers, die mehr und mehr in Vergessenheit gerieten» (p. 3), and ruined irreparably his image. From the bad reputation of tyrannus hereticus he would never be redeemed. It is worthwhile to add that many years later (according to the tradition of the early Medieval lives of Gregory) Gregory the Great delivered from hell to save ‘Paradies’ the Emperor Trajan. However, he did not forgive Theoderic – about whose assimilation with Trajan he probably did not know –, condemning him to the hell of Volcanos through the same Symmachus and Pope John I who had perished under his tyranny (Dial. IV 31, 3-4).

G. gives his reasonable explanations for omitting a section on Cassiodorus’ Variae (cf. 143). Nevertheless, I think that this fundamental source – even if considered on the basis of the results of the works he lists at p. 342 nt. 179 – would bring a better understanding of the image of Theoderic, and would also aid in the interpretation of some evidence in the sections III.2.3 and IV.1. This, especially if G. belongs to the scholars who do not give to the Variae a solely rhetorical value (cf. 247). This collection is the best surviving example of a royal ‘Propaganda’. Although with a Roman senatorial imprint, it comes from deep inside the Gothic Kingdom and even borders on self-representation (in a Roman way) of the King. Cassiodorus’ letters represent Theoderic as a Roman princeps and contain cornerstones of his italic propaganda: e.g. the civilitas, the building program,1 the idea of imitatio of Antiquity, the position of the King in front of the Emperor – which Giardina has recently discussed in his analysis of Var. I 12. Through the Variae can also be interpreted other documents belonging to the same propaganda: e.g. CIL X 6850–1 together with Var. II 32–33, and part of the central section of the Anonymus Valesianus II, whose similarities with Cassiodorus’ Chronica G. does not consider properly in his deep analysis of both the sources (I suggest some solutions in Chiron 2006, 113–133 and Latomus 2009, 146–163). The Variae also allow one to follow the evolution of the official image of Theoderic between the 510s and 520s. This aspect G. discusses carefully for other sources. The differences between books One through Four, referring to events of 507/11, and the documents of books Five and Eight, concerning the period 523–7/8 and showing the ‘official’ (not condemnatory) image of Theoderic in his last years and soon after his death, allow a direct comparison of images for these two periods from inside the same work: this is more than welcome. Theoderic did not have ambitions to replace the Emperor, but considered himself better than the any other rex gentium and

1 Cf. recently V. Fauvinet-Ranson, Decor civitatis, decor Italiae. Monuments, travaux publics et spectacles au VIe siècle d’apres les Variae de Cassiodore, Bari 2006.
boasted his rule over the former Western Roman Empire (Var. I 1) – cf. his representation on the gold medallion from Morro d’Alba. Ennodius, who is less involved in politics than Cassiodorus, shapes the image of the King with the repertoire of the best panegyrical production, although he omits words like imperator or Augustus (cf. G. 319–20, with the exception at p. 326). Cassiodorus does the same in his letters and panegyrics (the fragments are published in MGH AA XII), and uses regularly the word princeps. Both of the authors breathed the air of felicitas Italiae under Theoderic’s Kingdom (cf. Anon. Va les. 59, Cassiod., Chron. s.a. 500). We can add the inscription(s) CIL X 6850–1, in which Theoderic is celebrated in an almost ‘imperial’ way and with the inappropriate title of Augustus (I). Giardina attributes the text to Cassiodorus but considers as «iniziativa a titolo personale» the inscription,¹ which nevertheless represents an example of Das Bild Theoderichs in der Überlieferung. Procopius, who, of the Byzantine authors, knew better the West, evokes Theoderic ruling as princeps in BG I 1, 26 and 29, on which G. rightly comments «daß Theoderich sich nicht die westliche Kaiserwürde annahme und als Imperator auftrat... aber wie ein vorbildlicher Kaiser herrschte» (219–20, also 225 and the explanation at 229, «daß er gemäß den Herrschertugenden eines idealen Kaisers regierte: statt äußerem Schein innere Werte und vorbildliche Herrschaftsübung!»). This idea finds further support in G.’s considerations on Theoderic as «Kontrastfolie» to Justinian (cf. 252–5). I wonder therefore whether it would be appropriate to add to the title of G.’s book the word Princeps, which is not to understand as ‘Kaiser/Emperor’ but which, together with Barbar, König and Tyrann, expresses one of the surviving images of Theoderic in the early sixth century.

My observations are not intended to diminish the value and importance of G.’s book, about which I would like to associate my very high opinion with the one of Joachim Gruber: «Die klar aufgebaute, methodisch sicher durchgeführte Studie stellt ohne Zweifel einen gewichtigen Beitrag zur Person und Wirkungsgeschichte Theoderichs dar, an dem künftige Forschung nicht vorübergehen kann. Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis... bilden ein willkommenes Instrumentarium für die weitere Arbeit an den Texten der besprochenen Epoche».²

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Fergus Millars These vom (quasi-)demokratischen Charakter der späten römischen Republik, zusammengefaßt in ‘The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic’ (1998),³ hat bekanntlich ein geteiltes Echo gefunden, aber eine lebhafte Debatte

¹ Cassiodoro politico, 73–99 and 134–9.