

DETAILED RESEARCH PROPOSAL

by

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THE EASTERN INFLUENCE UNDER GREAT THEODERIC'S REIGN: A COMPLEX ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

The migrations of the fourth and fifth centuries from eastern and central Europe saw new group formations. Theoderic, the Ostrogoth came to Italy and established a powerful kingdom in 493, with that Western Europe had moved into a post-Roman period. The deposition of the last emperor in 476 was registered by Byzantine authors of the sixth century: they saw it as a major change, but the Western aristocracy was still the same. The aim of my dissertation is to take a detailed analysis of the political and social relations between the Eastern Roman empire and the Ostrogothic Italy with assistance of both traditional and new interdisciplinary academic methods.

The chronological boundaries of the research project are marked by the fact that under Ostrogoths' reign was an agreement between Theoderic and Zeno which defined the legal relationship between the two states. This pact might have served as a fund for the bilateral relations until the Gothic War. However, Zeno was not a traditional Eastern Roman Emperor

because in 474 Emperor Leo died, his successor, the younger Leo was crowned. Before the end of the year he died, and with this moment the power fell to the Isaurian chieftain, Zeno.

In 493 Anastasius, the new emperor did not legitimate Theoderic's reign immediately, so missions sailed towards East to legitimate the ostrogothic leader's rule, but at the same time several riots broke out in Italy. In his monograph about Emperor Anastasius, Carmello Capizzi examines that Theoderic was a dependant on the Emperor, but also strong enough for Anastasius to fear the chance of an attack. Unfortunately Capizzi's theories are marginalized in recent historiography. There are many reasons which support the slightly rival atmosphere of relations between the states before 504. Recent historiography missed to analyse in detail the Italian aristocracy, which belonged to a totally different group with different measurable cultural characteristics. Theoderic recruited widely into his army and palatine bureaucracy from among indigenous Italian groups. Former members of Odoacer's army, together with large number of native Romans, were incorporated into the bureaucracy establishment of the Ostrogothic Kingdom. The conception is very comprehensive, therefore, it must be noted that the analysis undertakes primary aspects of the social, ecclesiastical and diplomatic relations.

Some views claim that this process facilitated their rapid assimilation into Italian societies, but it seems that the competition starts between different wings. The most important event was the Laurentian schism. Although it was mainly ecclesiastical, the senatorial aristocracy played an important role in it. At the beginning of the 5th century the wheels of the senatorial order continued to turn in their regular way, but it reduced in size by the end of the century. It was not a hegemonic social class; it was defined through family connections.

In the early 5th century the anti-Germanic reactions existed and they were visible throughout the century. In 408 Honorius passed to the anti-Germanic party, and Stilicho was killed. The apparatus of Byzantium still seemed open to an anti-Germanic fate. Nonetheless, in the very days of Alaric he inducted the Senate to create a new emperor in opposition to Honorius. The Senate chose choose the urban prefect Priscus Attalus, an orator and poet of Eastern origin.

Nevertheless, in modern historiography it is generally accepted that a distinguished family, the Anicii promoted Aetius's rule, but after Aetius's violent death in a series of accords and conflicts, the most contradictory relations were woven between the Gallo-Roman aristocracy, the Roman senate, the Roman military commanders, the emperors at Ravenna and the Germanic people who were federating the Empire in Gaul.

Following the decline of Odoacer's rule in Theoderic's *presumptio regni*, fewer great families offer appropriate brides for the sons of their peers their prosperity and the influence it bought actually increased the imperial power in the Ostrogothic West. The Italian aristocracy reached a new peak under the barbarian kings of Italy, a few great families ruled over the public life of Rome and worked in those which Theoderic conceded to them. A clear sign of this meeting of forces was the influence that senator Basilius, who was both praetorian prefect of Italy and Odoacer's official representative at the same time, exercised over the election of Pope Felix III, who was the son of a Roman priest of the great senatorial family. Significantly that Felix III was the first pope who announced his election in a humble letter to the Eastern Emperor.

In this time there were many prominent members of the senate, but there are two, which are often cited in Sidonius Apollinaris' work who was in Rome at the time of his visit in 467: “two consulars of the highest distinction, Gennadius Avienus and Caecina Basilius, stood out above their peers” ,consequently, in 467 Gennadius Avienus and Caecina Decius Basilius consul 463 was the most prominent senatorial member in the city of Rome. Much have been written about the above mentioned families, the Anicii and Decii.

Unfortunately, Gennadius Avienus and his son Anicius Probus Faustus are often identified as members of the *gens Anicii*, but the fact that they are members of the Corvini such as Rufius Magnus Faustus Avienus. The first scholar who gave credit to the *gens Anicii's* political supremacy was Arnaldo Momigliano. He examined that the most distinguished senators, such as Boethius, Cassiodorus, Symmachus and Ennodius belonged to this gens and they had strong

influence on almost the entire Italy. Unfortunately, this old hypothesis struck roots in modern historiography and it is the most recently published, too. However, these families' part in the political and ecclesiastical life of the late fifth century was an important, but undeservedly neglected and misunderstood part of the Ostrogothic history. Inside the state, schisms, competing aristocratic factions, and the absence of social cohesion weakened the central state's ability to adapt to the challenges of this new environment. It seems that this *integration* was not a long-sustained thing in Italy.

From the middle of the 20th century, sociologists and anthropologists were interested in the subject of larger group identities. Most of them took the view that human identity was not only objectively measurable (customs, language, customs or dress) but unchanging. In the beginning of the 1990s, historical and social studies were confronted with a new kind of scientific research on social, as well as economic and historical phenomenon based on the conception of compound systems. This is the so-called complexity turn, in which quantitative and mathematical methods are used to analyse social structures, and it is proposed that these models capture dynamics of real-world phenomena and even have few prognostic value. At the same time, this new method claims to be more suitable for the analysis of social and historical dynamics than the earlier calculation, which was based on the thinking of 19th century. In 2003 a mathematical ecologist, Peter Turchin published his work (*Historical Dynamics: Why States Rise and Fall.*) in which he examines that the signs of political instability could be anticipating.

Already in the Late Antique and Early Medieval Times, several differentiated communication systems emerged such as politics, religion or economy and these elements provided a good criteria for selection. Scholars of the Early Medieval Italy have massive letter collections, such as Paulinus of Nola, Symmachus, Cassiodorus, Ennodius or epitaphs whose illuminate their societies in ways that are often not allowed by other sources. It seems that already in the early 5th century it could be anticipated that the Ostrogothic Kingdom won't be a long-sustained kingdom in Italy because Theoderic recruited widely into his army and palatine bureaucracy

from indigenous Italian groups, similarly to members of Odoacer's army, together with large numbers of native Romans, who were incorporated into the bureaucracy establishment of the Ostrogothic Kingdom. This process creates new avenues that allow a few Italian aristocrats to join the ostrogothic elite.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

- 1) Detailed network analysis of the considerable senatorial aristocrat families: *Anicii*, *Decii*, *Corvini*, *Symmachii*. The above mentioned senatorial families lived in peace under before the Ostrogothic rule, therefore the main question is: What caused violence between the families? Their conflict began during the Laurentian schism, but the families' altercation appeared later as well (507-508 circus riot, middle of the years of 510 and in Boëthius' case).
- 2) To identify their social/political connections with the Eastern Roman Empire and its intensity
- 3) To paint a more subtle picture about the Ostrogothic integration into the Roman society and they role in central and rural bureaucracy
- 4) To investigate that the „idea of recapture of Italy” was the point of the issue during the 490's and early 500's
- 5) To investigate the influence of senatorial families to the most important violence, such as the Laurentian schism, the riot in the circus of Rome in 508 and the execution of Boëthius (case studies).

I integrate conventional instruments of text analysis, prosopography, epigraphy and new methods of research like social network analysis. My attempt is to combine the tradition of network research in social sciences with the results of research on complex networks. I count with the numbers of followers of the various political and ecclesiastical factions in 5-6th

century Ostrogothic Italy.

My research concentrates on the ecclesiastical, political, and social history of the Early Medieval Italy in comparison with other premodern and modern politics. I analyse the usefulness of concepts from the Social Network Analysis (SNA), which have never been used for research on the Late Antique Italy. This project aims at a new analysis of the last years of Later Roman Empire. With a detailed analysis of these families, the research will show more clearly the reign of Ostrogoths in Italy. A few long debated and unsolved problems will be clearer.

PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS

MGH A.A. = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum.*

MGH L. = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Legum.*

PL = *Patrologia Cursus Completus. Series Latina*

PRIMARY SOURCES

AGATHIAS = Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum libri quinque. *Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae* 2.Series Berolinensis. Rec.: Keydell, R. Berlin, 1967.

A. VALESIANUS = Consularia Italica. Anonymi Valesiani Pars Posterior. *MGH A.A.* 9. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1892.

ACTA SYNHODORUM = Acta Synhodorum Habitarum Romae. *MGH A.A.* 12. Ed.: Mommsen T. Berlin, 1898. 393-455.

AD EPISCOPOS = Gelasii papae I: Epistolae et decreta. Tituli Decretorum Papae Gelasii. In.: *PL.* 59. Ed.: Migne, J. P. Paris, 1844-1849.

ANAGNOSTES = *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte.* Hrsg.: Hansen, G. C. Berlin: Akademie, 1995.

ANASTASIUS EP. = *Epistolae Romanorum pontificium genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilario usque ad Pelagianum II.* Tomus 1. Ed.: Thiel, A. Hildesheim – New York, 1867.

ANECDOTA = Procopius: *The Anecdota or Secret History.* Loeb Classical Library. Trans: DEWING, H. B. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993.

BELLO GOTHICO = *Prokop Gotenkriege.* Übers.: VEH, O. München: Heimeran, 1966.

CASS. CRONICA = Cassiodori Senatoris Chronica. *MGH A.A.* 11. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin,

1894.

CASSIODORUS INSTITUTIONES = M. Aurelii Cassiodori de Institutione Divinarum Litterarum.

In: *PL*. 70. Ed.: Migne, J. P. Paris, 1844-1849.

EDICTUM THEOD. = Edictum Theoderici Regis. *MGH L* 5. Ed.: Richthofen v. K. Berlin, 1892.

ENN. EPIFANI = Vita Beatissimi Viri Epifani Episcopi Ticinensis Ecclesiae. *MGH A.A.* 7. Ed.: Vogel, F. Berlin, 1885.

ENNODIUS EP. = Magni Felicis Ennodi Opera. *MGH A.A.* 7. Ed.: Vogel, F. Berlin, 1885.

ENNODIUS PAN. = Ennodius: Panegyricus dictus clementissimo regi Theoderico. In: *ROHR* 1995. 195-263.

EP. THEOD. = Epistulae Theodericianae Variae. *MGH A.A.* 12. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1898.

FELIX EP. = Felicis papae III Epistolae et Decreta. In: *PL* 58. Ed.: Migne J. P.. Paris, 1844-1849.

GELASIUS EP. = *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilario usque ad Pelagianum II*. Tomus 1. Ed.: Thiel, A. Hildesheim – New York, 1867.

IGO ZF. = Fiebiger, O.. *Inscriptionensammlung zur Geschichte der Ostgermanen, Zweite Folge*. Denkschriften der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, philosophisch-historische Klasse 72.2. Vienna, 1944.

ILCV = *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*. 3 vols. Ed.: Diehl, E. Berlin: Dublini et Turici apud Weidmannos, 1925-31.

IORDANES = Iordanes: De origine actibusque Getarum. *MGH. A.A.* 5. Ed. Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1882.

LIBER PONTIFICALIS = Libri Pontificalis Pars Prior. *MGH. Gestorum Pontificum Romanorum*. Vol. 1. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1898.

FRAG. LAURENTIUS = Laurentian Fragment In: *DAVIS* 1989. 97-100.

LYDUS = John the Lydian On the Magistracies of the Roman Constitution (De Magistratibus). Trans.: CARNEY, T. F. Lawrence: Corando, 1971.

MALALAS CRON. = *The Chronicle of John Malalas*. Trans.: JEFFREYS, E. – JEFFREYS M. – SCOTT, R. *Byzantina Australiensia* 4. Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986.

MALCHUS FRAG. = *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of The Later Roman Empire Euanapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*. Trans.: BLOCKLEY, R. C. Liverpool, 1981.

MARCELLINUS = Marcellini V. C. Comitum Chronicon. *MGH A.A.* 11. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1894.

PITAL. = *Die Nichtliterarischen Lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445-700*. Hrsg.: Tjäder, Jan- Olaf. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1955.

PRAECEPTIO REGIS = Praeceptio Regis. *MGH A.A.* 12. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1898. 424.

PROSPER = Properi Tironis Epitoma Chronicon. *MGH A.A.* 9. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1892.

SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS = Gaii Sollii Apollinaris Sidoni Epistulae et Carmina. *MGH A.A.* 8. Ed.: Lütjohann, C. Berlin, 1887.

THEOPHANES = *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Trans.: MANGO, C, – SCOTT, R. Oxford, 1997.

VARIAE = Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris Variarum Libri Duodecim. *MGH A.A.* 12. Ed.: Mommsen, T. Berlin, 1898.

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- c. 350-600 AD. *Papers of the British School at Rome* 55 (1987) 157-185.
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