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Tel. 050 2212056 – Fax 050 2212945

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Răzvan Adrian Marinescu

# A Created Enemy: 'Barbarians' in spite of Religious Conversion. Visigoths and Byzantines in 6th-Century Iberia

ESTHER SÁNCHEZ-MEDINA  
University of Alcalá

## ABSTRACT

This study<sup>1</sup> approaches the concept of resistance as a tool for historical analysis during Roman Late Antiquity, especially with respect to the identity construction and the creation of physical or mental borders between Byzantines and Barbarians. From the Greek world's application of the term Barbarian only to those who did not speak the dominant culture's language to, centuries later, in the Roman period, its usage to define all those who destabilized imperial power, Roman ideology, that had a lasting effect through history, saw the birth of a new political understanding underpinned by a different interpretation of the Roman world: one based on civilized opposition to Barbarians. This is what we find most often espoused in sources from Late Antiquity.

This case study is focused on defining the identity of Byzantines and Visigoths in the 6th-century Iberian Peninsula. This identity construction promoted fierce loyalties based on difference, serving to maintain imperial frontiers: ethnic, religious and territorial ones. The reader will observe how late Roman power recovered ancient ideological models in order to improve, through propaganda, its unsteady position in the Western Mediterranean world against the stronger Visigothic Kingdom.

*Este estudio intenta aproximarse al uso que el concepto de resistencia puede tener como instrumento de análisis histórico durante la Tardoantigüedad, especialmente en lo referido a la construcción identitaria y la creación de fronteras físicas o mentales. El conflicto surgido entre visigodos y romanos tras la reconquista de estos últimos de algunos territorios del sudeste de la Península Ibérica durante las campañas del emperador Justiniano en el año 552 d. C. se articuló sobre las diferencias confesionales existentes entre ambos pueblos: arrianismo versus catolicismo.*

*En aquel momento los visigodos, no participaban de la Vera Ecclesia, lo cual justificó inicialmente su diferenciación identitaria de los Romanos. Más tarde, tras la comprensión del problema, el reino visigodo se convirtió al catolicismo, oficialmente durante el Tercer Con-*

*cilio de Toledo, terminando así con cualquier aspecto de dogma que pudiera distanciarlo de la población hispano-romana de Iberia. Tras la conversión de los Visigodos al catolicismo, el Imperio, sin argumentos que esgrimir, se vio obligado a recuperar una serie de antiguos modelos ideológicos previos a la articulación de la identidad sobre aspectos religiosos, en un intento desesperado por atraer hacia su órbita a la cada vez más escéptica población hispano-romana.*

*En este estudio recurrimos a la famosa inscripción cartaginense de Comitiolus para mostrar un ejemplo de la evolución del discurso ideológico de Roma tras la conversión de los visigodos. A través de esta notable muestra de propaganda romana se pretende la afirmación simbólica de su debilitado poder, atendiendo a antiguos planteamientos de oposición entre la antigua Romanitas y las fuerzas del Caos, encarnadas por los bárbaros. Sin embargo, esta reformulación no fue aceptada por la población, puesto que los bárbaros satisfacían realmente ya todos los requisitos requeridos y se adaptaban mejor a las necesidades de la población. La construcción ideológica que Roma propugnaba ante los habitantes de Spania a través de testimonios como el epigráfico aquí presentado, que no debió ser más que uno de tantos del programa oficial del emperador, no parece que diera resultado. La resurrección del viejo esquema de oposición Romano-Bárbaro (sin matices religiosos) no tuvo el efecto deseado por las fuerzas imperiales, pues la población peninsular terminó por colaborar con los visigodos. Al fin y al cabo, el visigodo no era más que un enemigo creado por Roma que, desde el punto de vista pragmático, suponía un control más laxo de su realidad diaria.*

## ASPECTS OF RESISTANCE, SELF-IDENTITY AND THE FRONTIERS OF OTHERNESS IN THE LATE ROMAN WORLD

In this first section, although not having the space to explore every facet of views of resistance, self-identity and otherness in the Late Roman world, we examine some of the themes surrounding these concepts. The issue of resistance has been at the forefront of ancient historical investigation since the origin of the discipline. It is clearly premised in innumerable discussions concerned with the roots of the Mediterranean cultures<sup>2</sup>. When attempts were made to understand the concept of resistance, it was often through devices evoking concepts of 'simple' and 'complex' societies which repeat the worst excesses of the discourse of primitivism and general evolution especially since the 19th century<sup>3</sup>. Therefore researchers have emphasized the nature of differences and the conditions that promoted change and continuity. It has been evident that one of the major issues in comprehending the historical complexity has been inequality. This historical characteristic has impelled human action to achieve the elimination of differences, understood as forms of domination and oppression.

On the other hand, and more interesting for this case study, focused as it is on the identity-making processes of Byzantines and Visigoths in the 6th-century Iberian Peninsula, it has also impelled a promotion of fierce loyalties based on difference, serving to

maintain identities and frontiers: ethnic, religious, etc. The type or nature of difference has created categories through historical development, and also processes of subordination. The 'other' became the outsider, through several forms of differentiation. This ensures that power relations and their role in social reproduction can be fixed strongly. In this study the reader will observe how late Roman power utilized ancient ideological models or terms to improve its unsteady position in the Western Mediterranean world against the growing power of the Visigothic Kingdom.

The ideological dominance of the ruling Roman Empire<sup>4</sup> was effected through institutional forms and practices – ideological systems (cultural, religious, educational, political, etc.) – diffusely linked to much more unified repressive state systems (law, army, etc.). This was the symbolic order of Rome: Roman ideology created the cultural archetypes to be 'supporters' of social relations with *Barbari* [Barbarians] and inserted people into places predefined by the structures of the social formation and by its needs; it allowed it to perform a role in securing Roman social domination. Nevertheless in Late Antiquity, Barbarian groups engaged in 'a war of positions' – using Gramsci's term<sup>5</sup> – in which they gradually built up their influence and then took over a wide variety of elements within society before any formal overthrow of the previous power: the Roman Empire; so its culture was the 'support' of social and also mental needs.

A series of approaches have been developed to grapple with Roman ideological thoughts about Barbarians<sup>6</sup>, showing that a comparative perspective is absolutely essential in order to avoid ethnocentrism and reductionism. This analysis is especially interesting and necessary for Late Antiquity, inasmuch as most of the preserved evidence belongs to the Roman sphere; a culture which has been traditionally considered as more highly developed.

In this case the necessary analysis was carried out because ancient societies, and even modern ones, do not always recognize the symbolic signification concerning the legitimacy of the political order that is not always directly dependent on physical violence. The fact is that the most obvious and visible form of social domination is effected through physical force, directly restricting the population. Nevertheless, there are more effective forms of social violence which are especially interesting: influencing indirectly people's perceptions<sup>7</sup>. Romans, and later the Byzantines, were experts in influencing perceptions and in manipulating opinions<sup>8</sup>, especially through public manifestations of power as epigraphy, as an important Roman reflection of their way of thinking. In short they were early propagandists.

The interest in positions of authority is evident, as these positions allow the virtual monopoly over all forms of violence, even ideological ones. This is the principle of exclusionary closure, which is the attempt by one group to secure privileges for themselves by employing various tactics<sup>9</sup>. There are many case studies working on exclusion and the subsequent possible usurpation in the Ancient World, the majority based on ethnic differentiation<sup>10</sup>. Exclusionary practices closed off access to privileges to those defined as

inferior, the Barbarians, in this case the Visigoths, by those monopolizing the definition of values, the Byzantines.

But power, as a built-in attribute, is not something distributed or allocated throughout society in a fixed way, but is constituted by forms of changeable social thinking that define membership or non-membership of it, in this case, membership to *Romanitas* [Romanness]<sup>11</sup>. So much so that a wide variety of groups may ally themselves at moments of historical transitions in order to effect a major social change against the dominant group. We are thinking about the alliance between the Hispano-Roman population and the Visigoth ruling class in Late Antiquity Iberia. In this case study, the exclusion by the ideological dominant group, the Byzantines, may have been so powerful as to, at least, try to deny the inferior group, the Visigoths, any possibility of creating its own closure and therefore of combating its underprivileged *status* in the Iberian Peninsula due to religious differences. Here we will see how the identity of the Visigoths was created by the Byzantines in a way that was far from the actual truth.

#### LABELLED AS 'RESISTERS', HIDDEN UNDER A FALSE IDENTITY: BARBARIANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY ROMAN THOUGHT

The problem of resistance can be observed from different perspectives. One of them, situated in Late Antiquity, shows resistance almost forming a label that Roman power imposed on *barbari gentes* [Barbarian peoples] through ancient literary and iconographic sources. Quite simply when using the Roman Empire as our example we find that the resisters are those who Rome decides they are: the Barbarians. However there was no voluntary decision on the part of the Barbarians to become resisters themselves or to put themselves in any kind of opposition to *Romanitas*, at least in a theoretical field<sup>12</sup>.

The archetypal Barbarian created by Rome conforms to an ancient Greco-Roman framework. This label of Barbarian was often applied without discrimination to any people foreign to the Roman orbit<sup>13</sup>. This Roman performed differentiation has left a list of Barbarian peoples with well-shaped characteristics<sup>14</sup> that allow us to apply the concept of resistance to the Roman lifestyle, or, at least, what Romans thought it was. Nevertheless, other evidence demonstrates that the true Barbarians' attitude, lifestyle, etc. was both different and close to *Romanitas* during Late Antiquity, especially in the cases of the Visigothic or Ostrogothic Kingdoms<sup>15</sup>. Certainly the Barbarian peoples themselves would not have seen themselves as less civilized than many of their Roman counterparts. In fact the Empire was actually populated by Barbarian peoples; many of those adopted Roman customs. Despite this the Roman idea of the Barbarian as a resister could be summed up as follows:

- They were reluctant to assimilation inside the homogeneity of the Empire.
- They persisted with performing particular Barbarian traditions which were born in lands beyond the *limes*, or even inside Roman territories after the migration movements.

- They also formed heterogeneous peripheral cultures/communities in opposition to the Roman civilization centred on the Mediterranean Sea<sup>16</sup>.

However, the Barbarians actually existed and they often came into conflict with the Roman world. We cannot deny that Barbarians, although in many ways a created enemy, also actually fought and resisted especially their initial integration into the Roman Empire. But the main reason for this eternal fight was to avoid falling into insignificance, to try to be inside the system and to be a full part of Romanness, and not in a secondary or peripheral way as often was the case<sup>17</sup>.

To this Barbarian problem, we might add the difficulty the Romans/Byzantines had in defining themselves during the late imperial centuries. We can observe that the search for a definition could sometimes be mixed with the elaboration of an enemy's definition, through the creation of an opposition; 'true' Roman ideal characteristics must be totally different from Barbarian ones. Especially from the 4th century onwards, when the Empire experienced a new process of characterization due to the appearance of Christianity as a new form of worship and identity<sup>18</sup> coupled with the arrival at the *limes* of 'different' peoples, the concept of Roman self-identity became more complicated. So much so that the Romans/Byzantines needed to be different, it was necessary for them to distance themselves from the Barbarian peoples, at least in their theoretical identification. The definition of Barbarians by Romans/Byzantines has actually duplicated the frontier on the rhetorical level, adding to the existent physical frontier a new protectionist ideological tool.

The advance of the *Goti* [Goths] and of other Northern *gentes*, i.e. other Germanic peoples through the Empire's Southwest, was interpreted by some intellectuals of Late Antiquity as a clear indication of the abandonment of divine favour or even as an announcement of the approaching end of time. The Barbarians were for many, without a doubt, the *indignatio Dei's* divine punishment against the Roman Empire. As Brezzi asserts Christian intellectuals began to draw some conclusions from the coming of the Barbarians and discovered a providential sign, seeing it as a fair punishment for sinful humanity<sup>19</sup>.

This interpretation occurred because writers like Ambrose of Milan (337-397)<sup>20</sup> – one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the 4th century – and most of all, Prudentius (348-c.413)<sup>21</sup>, had some time before combined two concepts that would become indissoluble during Late Antiquity and that would have a great influence on the definition of the Barbarian: *Romanitas* and *Ecclesia* [Church]. The first one was not conceivable unconnected to the consolidation of Orthodox Christianity, nor was a true Christianity possible outside of the civil politics established by Rome.

Due to this new conception, the Barbarians would also become known as heretics; they did not conform to Rome's new religious identity. Nevertheless the Barbarian would no longer be just a being external to the *Romanitas*, but it might also be a member of

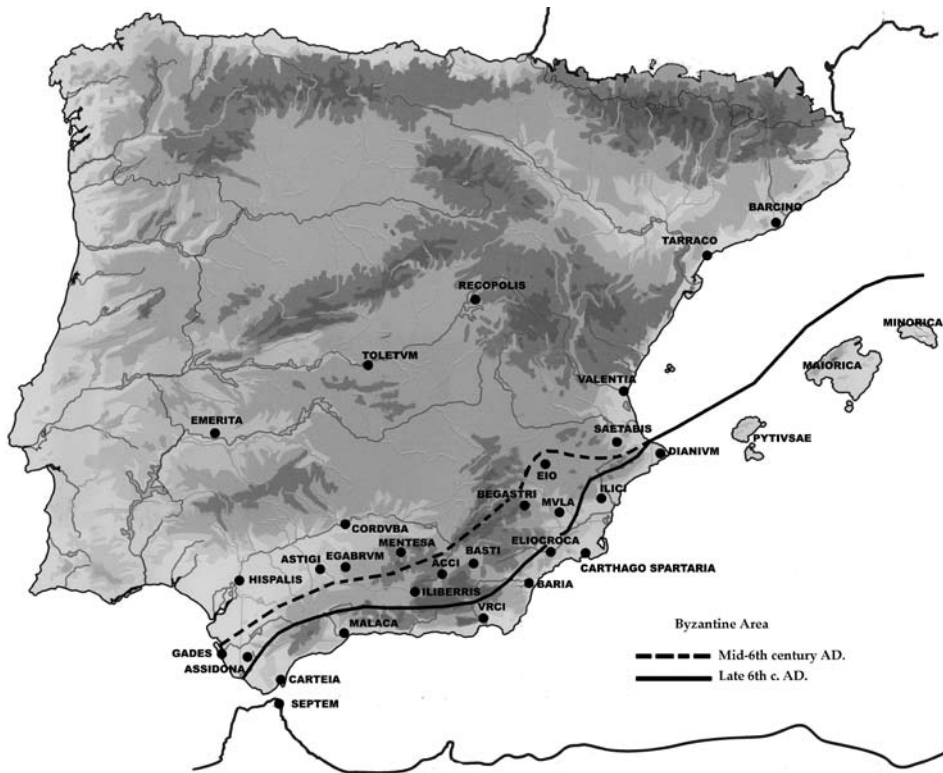
it, due to belonging to one of the many Christian sects that had nestled between different peoples during the late Empire. In other words, the Roman Empire could claim all Christians as being subject to Roman authority but these subjects would have to perform the rites imposed upon them by the Roman Church. One of those ancient sects, Arianism of Arius<sup>22</sup> (religious teachings of the 4th century, which regarded God's Son as a created being, in contrast to the current principal Trinitarian Christological dogma) provoked several theological controversies which divided the early Christian Church, one of them in late Iberia.

#### A CREATED ENEMY: VISIGOTHS, 'BARBARIANS' IN SPITE OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

Rome, conceived as a Universal Empire, was opposed to a Barbarian space and time that, without doubt, was no more than an usurped space and time to the great historical project that Emperor Justinian's (483-565)<sup>23</sup> intellectuals revisited during the early 6th century and, later, Emperor Maurice's (539-602)<sup>24</sup> vision. As has been seen, in fact, Rome was always the entity defining the complex frontiers of the *Barbaria* – the otherness – and the key reason for this is very simple: the lack of standing of all those powers that attempt some sort of political, ideological, territorial, economic usurpation through their actions, which are not always related to former ethnic differences. This had been the case for the Visigoths who had settled in the Iberian Peninsula from the 5th to 8th centuries<sup>25</sup>, as one of the Germanic successor/usurper kingdoms of the Roman Empire.

The Visigoths, despite being Christians, were considered to be heretical for being Arians. However the problem was not particularly complex until the Visigoths came into direct conflict with Byzantines, newly arrived in the Iberian Peninsula in 552<sup>26</sup>. From that moment on, the awareness of exclusion was mainly expressed when surrounding a confessional matter. This was more specific and more appropriate for the ideological dispute than other more complex contexts in which the *Romanitas* had already come into play, altering them. Iberia was a peripheral part of the Roman Empire and had undergone various invasions across its changing frontiers. In this context the ideological singularities and the evolution of political Roman/Byzantine discourses in relation to Barbarians and *Spania* [the Byzantine province in Iberian territory from 552-624] during the late 6th century are demonstrated through high-value epigraphic evidence such as the inscription of Comitolus.

From 589 to 602, some areas of the Iberian Peninsula were the objects of intense disputes over sovereignty and legitimacy between two struggling powers: Emperor Maurice's *Romani* or *Romaioi* [Romans/Byzantines] and King Reccared's Visigoths (reigned 586-601). Emperor Maurice had regained the ambitious political exterior of his predecessor, Emperor Justinian I, who with his *Renovatio Imperii* [Restoration of the Empire and conversion to Orthodoxy] had managed to extend Rome's control to the occidental confines of the Mediterranean during the first half of the 6th century, including Iberian territories<sup>27</sup>.



Map 1

The Visigothic Kingdom around the death of Liuvigild in 586, showing recent Visigothic conquests.

Source: J. Vizcaino Sánchez, *La presencia bizantina en Hispania (ss. VI-VII). La documentación arqueológica*, Murcia 2009, p. 48.

Conflicts of a religious nature that had occurred in the Visigothic Kingdom between Liuvigild (reigned 569-586)<sup>28</sup>, the father, and Hermenegild (reigned 564-585)<sup>29</sup>, Recared's brother, probably provoked a favourable situation for foreign action. As a result of marriage diplomacy, Hermenegild married the Orthodox Roman Princess of the Franks, Ingund<sup>30</sup>, whose influence helped to convert the prince. His father, King Liuvigild, demanded he returned to Arian Christianity but instead of this, Hermenegild started a revolt, mainly supported by the Catholic bishops from *Baetica*, the southern Visigoth province. The prince was executed and the revolt quelled.

Emperor Maurice also took advantage of the problems that the hypothetical collaboration between Hispano-Romans and Visigoths, the new Germanic ruling power, could raise regarding religion. This happened to such an extent that, even though the Byzantine part of the Peninsula paid higher taxes, the population collaborated actively with Byzantine power until the year 589<sup>31</sup>. During the course of this year, however, Recared,



the new Visigothic King (reigned 586-601), organized the Third Council of Toledo and turned his realm into a Christian Orthodox Kingdom, which, religiously speaking, did not differ whatsoever from Rome<sup>32</sup>. This clever decision meant that there would no longer be a confessional problem for Hispano-Romans or even for those residents of the unstable imperial territories of Byzantine *Spania*, who would negotiate with them. Religious unification created a new reality which made necessary a new investment of cultural capital that would contribute to the symbolic and material affirmation of, from then onwards, weak Byzantine imperial power.

The conversion of the Visigoths to Roman Orthodoxy complicated the traditional discourse of opposition between the Romans/Byzantines and the Barbarians. The Barbarian Visigothic Kingdom had just become *Vera Ecclesia* and, therefore, had also just been rightly 'baptized' into the *Romanitas*. What arguments could the Byzantines now put forth to distance their allied population from falling into the temptation of collaborating with the Visigoths? At that time, Byzantines felt the imperious need to discredit the Goths and to do this by means of official imperial propaganda: epigraphy was one of their most important means in the Ancient World<sup>33</sup>. An extraordinary example is the inscription preserved in the Archaeological Museum of *Carthago Spartaria* [modern Cartagena] in which the imperial authorities, in this case the *magister militum per Spania* [Master of the soldiers for the *Spania* province], Comitiolus, sent out the message that the Visigoths were still *barbari* and, hence, *hostes* [enemies]<sup>34</sup>.

This inscription of Comitiolus<sup>35</sup>, dated 589, is the principal historical artefact testifying to the presence of the Byzantine Empire in Spain. The inscription reads:

*† quisquis ardua turrim miraris culmina / vestibulvmq[ue] vrbis duplici porta firmatvm /  
dextra leuaq[ue] binos porticos arcus / quibus superum ponitur camera curia convexaq[ue] /  
comenciolus sic haec ius sit patricius / missus a mauric[i]o avg[usto] con<t>ra hostes barbaro[s] /  
magnus virtutem magister mil[itum] spaniae / sic semper <hi>spania tali rectore laetetur /  
dum poli rotantur dumq[ue] sol circuit orbem / ann[o] viii avg[usti] ind[ictio] viii.*

[Whoever you may be, you will admire the high sections of the tower and the vestibule of the city, constructed over a double entrance. To the right and left are attached two porches with double arcs on which a convex curved room is superposed. The patrician Comitiolus commissioned its construction, dispatched by the Emperor Mauricius against the barbarian enemy. Great for his virtue, master of the soldiers of Spain, thus always Hispania will be indebted for such a director while the poles turn and while the sun surrounds the orb. In the year VIII of the Emperor. Indiction VIII].

The date of the inscription (September 1, 589 - August 14, 590) poses a problem since the general seems no longer to have been in charge in August 589. It probably has to do with the fact that he assigned the repairs before his departure, which are commemorated in the plaque<sup>36</sup>.

The text is not ambiguous: the Visigoths have been again converted, by means of the official discourse, in *hostes barbari* [Barbarian enemies], and Rome kept on considering



Fig. 1

The *Inscription of Comitiolus*, dated 589 AD., is the principal historical artefact testifying to the presence of the Byzantine Empire in Spain. It is in the Archaeological Museum of Cartagena.

that they were still not part of the Roman world even though they were Catholics<sup>37</sup>. Rome tried once more to consolidate its political ideology through the creation and recreation of the enemy; an enemy which nevertheless satisfied all the necessary requisites for its inclusion within the *Romanitas*, including participation in Christian Orthodoxy. Furthermore, the official vision that Rome offered transformed the Visigoths into the destroyers of Roman civilization.

Scholar M. Vallejo Girvés states: “It seems evident that the Imperial authorities’ calling the Visigoths *hostes barbari* precisely in the years around the Third Council of Toledo was clearly an element of propaganda and praise for the Byzantine-Roman nature before their Hispano-Roman subjects and an important statement of intentions”<sup>38</sup>. While the Visigoths showed themselves as completely Roman in their ways, the imperial ideology became more radical by taking up a classical model of *Barbaria* that had already been rejected in the 5th century. It had been replaced, as we know already, by a religious model of differentiation. If the religious difference had disappeared from the Third Council of Toledo, the only possibility was the recovery of the traditional model, a set of *topoi*, in which it can be demonstrated that the Visigoths no longer fitted into.

The Empire’s desire for complete territorial recovery was strongly opposed by the Visigoths. This made a campaign legitimizing imperial actions in the Iberian Peninsula necessary. This campaign was governed by the idea of a pre-existing loyalty between Hispano-Romans and the imperial authorities before the migration of the Visigothic *gens* [people]. The constant reminiscence back to the days of Roman government in the province of *Hispania* until 409<sup>39</sup> attempted not only to consolidate the loyalties of those residing in the controlled imperial territories, but also to break the loyalties of those residents in Visigothic territory who felt a special connection to the old Roman tradition.

However, the results were not what Emperor Maurice had desired. Although one could speak of a small increase in territory during his rule<sup>40</sup>, the lasting consolidation of control over the peninsula was not realized<sup>41</sup>. The lower taxes of Visigothic power, like the lower intervention in the ecclesiastical politics of the Visigoths, favoured the progressive collaboration of people from the peninsula with their new Germanic lords<sup>42</sup>. The local population seemed to forget the “insurmountable” differences between what, theoretically, was barbarous and civilized and took advantage of the new situation, the consolidation of the power of the Visigoths who decided to take the lead in pragmatic bargaining with the local population.

We can conclude, as M. Vallejo states:

It is a paradox that the Visigothic conversion to Catholicism, the ‘True Faith’, which Justinian had used as a reason to justify his *Renovatio Imperii*, could become so detrimental to the future of Roman *Spania*. For this reason, the Roman Empire had to put into operation all of its propagandistic efforts – as we could observe in the inscription of Comitiolus – in order to convince its subjects that the Visigoths were not civilized simply because they had converted to Catholicism. For Maurice and his people, the Visigoths on the Iberian Peninsula were *hostes barbari* who had to be fought out of necessity in order to prevent the Roman nature from disappearing from *Spania*<sup>43</sup>.

In other words, in order to reinforce an idea of themselves as privileged the Roman Empire needed to create an inferior identity for the Barbarian peoples. When these Barbarian peoples were living on the *limes* or had little power within the Roman Empire this task had not been difficult. After the 5th century, and the incorporation of more and more Barbarian peoples into the Empire, the Roman authorities had attempted to keep Roman and Barbarian separated. This had largely failed since the Barbarian peoples had grown in power and numbers over time. Eventually the Roman army was largely indistinguishable from a Barbarian army<sup>44</sup>. Barbarian Kings soon adopted Roman style governance but still differed somewhat in religion making them outsiders to the Orthodox Romans/Byzantines. Once the Barbarian Kings converted to the accepted faith all reasons for maintaining difference had effectively disappeared. However Byzantine authorities, especially intellectuals reminiscing of a romanticized past, still wished a difference to remain between ‘chaotic’ Barbarian and ‘civilized’ Roman. This way they could attempt to justify their privileged positions within society.

Without a doubt, the Hispanic episodes of this history simply proved the crisis of an empire that had lost its universal control in time and space and that had been forced to reformulate the traditional opposition between *Romani* and *Barbari*, an opposition that was not yet clearly perceived by the Hispano-Roman population. In reality, they failed to convince the people of the day who largely collaborated with the new Barbarian kings. Gradually the Byzantine Empire in the West became more insignificant.

Finally a rapid although difficult assimilation of Visigoths and Hispano-Romans especially with regards to those in power was mostly due to the work of intellectuals like

Isidore of Seville (c.560-636)<sup>45</sup>. These writers contributed to create an imaginary social fusion between peoples that was required for proper social performance. But obviously there were stronger and stronger pragmatic reasons for fusion between Hispano-Romans and Visigoths in existence (not only an intellectual/philosophical justification) such as marital connections between elites, land ownership, trade, etc. This complicates the whole perspective but has been taken into consideration in other studies.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AE = *Année Epigraphique*

Bicl. = John of Biclaro

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

CLE = *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*

Greg. M., *Epist.* = Gregory the Great, *Letters*

Greg. Tur., *Hist. Franc.* = Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*

HEp = *Hispania Epigraphica*

IHC = *Inscriptiones Hispaniae Christianae*

ILCV = *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*

PLRE = *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my PhD advisor M. Vallejo Girvés for her help with this study.

<sup>2</sup> See the introduction to this section.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to this image, during the 18th and 19th centuries Nationalism created differentiated models of barbarian peoples in which to base the emergence of their national spirit taking the theoretical-literary archetypes that Rome had constructed and ending up with the mental construction of barbarian peoples as brave and resistant.

<sup>4</sup> Until the 16th century, the Empire was known to its inhabitants as the Empire of the Romans (*Imperium Romanorum*, *Basileia tôn Rhōmatōn*). Historiographically the Empire is often called the Eastern Roman Empire during the period from 395 to 610. From the 6th century onwards the term Byzantine Empire usually appears.

<sup>5</sup> See A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, eds. and trans. Q. Hoare, G. Nowell Smith, London 1971, p. 232. The war of position is exclusively intellectual, it is a search for a social dominant voice, but we can say that Barbarians also started a 'war of manoeuvre', historiographically named 'Barbarian invasions' during Late Antiquity.

<sup>6</sup> See T.J. Haarhoff, *The Stranger at the Gate. Aspects of Exclusiveness and Co-operation in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Oxford 1948; Y.A. Daugé, *Le Barbare. Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation*, Brussels 1981; Y. Syed, *Romans and Others*, in S. Harrison (ed.), *A Companion to Latin Literature*, Oxford 2005, pp. 360-371.

<sup>7</sup> For other examples of symbolic violence in Late Antiquity see E. Sánchez Medina, *La violencia, el imaginario colectivo antiguo y las gentes africanas de Coripo*, in G. Bravo, R. González Salinero (eds.), *Formas y usos de la violencia en el mundo romano*, Madrid 2006, pp. 93-104.

<sup>8</sup> See N. Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*, Aarhus 1986.

- <sup>9</sup> In Late Antiquity barbarians were obliged to find some new ways to act. W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418-584. The Techniques of Accommodation*, Princeton NJ 1980.
- <sup>10</sup> Probably one of the most important studies is H.W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, W. Pohl, *Regna and gentes: the Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, Leiden 2003.
- <sup>11</sup> R. Laurence, *Territory, Ethnonyms and Geography*, in J. Berry (ed.), *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, London 1998, p. 102 ('Understanding Romanness'); see also J. Huskinson, *Looking for culture, identity and power*, in Id. (ed.), *Experiencing Rome. Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*, London 2000, pp. 3-28; R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity and Empire*, London 2005, p. 72. About *Romanitas* we must say that this Latin word is rarely attested in Latin literature, and nowhere before the poet Tertullian, although it is very useful as a conceptual framework in current historiography.
- <sup>12</sup> Perhaps here we could link the status of the 'Barbarians' to the status of the Border Surnames, who also had great difficulty being accepted by their more 'civilized' counterparts. See the study by Andrew Sargent and Kieran Hoare in this section.
- <sup>13</sup> See the introduction to this section.
- <sup>14</sup> It would be interesting to see concrete examples: *feritas, immanitas, ferocia, belli furor, vanitas*, etc. Cf. Daugé, *Le Barbare* cit., p. 402.
- <sup>15</sup> A first official sample of this closeness to *Romanitas* was the approval of the Codex of King Eurico, cf. A. D'Ors, *Estudios visigóticos II – El Código de Eurico*, Rome - Madrid 1961, p. 2. See also M.R. Valverde Castro, *Ideología, simbolismo y ejercicio del poder real en la monarquía visigoda. Un proceso de cambio*, Salamanca 2000.
- <sup>16</sup> See the introductory chapter to this volume. The performance of traditional ceremonies has often been seen as resistance in many cultures. See E. Kalivodová's contribution on Protestant resistance in the Bohemian lands of the Habsburg Empire, in this section; see also K. Hoare, A. Sargent, *The Recusancy Revolt*, in this section.
- <sup>17</sup> About the status of barbarian people within the Roman army M. Wass, *Germanen im römischen Dienst*, Bonn 1971.
- <sup>18</sup> See P. Siniscalco, *Il cammino di Cristo nell'impero romano*, Bari 1987; and more recently L. Pietri (ed.), *La nascita di una cristianità (250-430)*, Rome 2000.
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. P. Brezzi, *Romani e barbari nel giudizio degli scrittori dei secoli IV-VI. Il Passaggio dall'Antichità al Medioevo in Occidente*, Spoleto 1962, p. 582; see also B. Luiselli, *La cultura latina dei secoli IV-VI di fronte ai Barbari invasori dell'Impero*, in M. Rotili (ed.), *Incontri di Popoli e culture tra V e IX secolo*, Benevento 1997, pp. 19-30. The main author is Salvian of Marseille. Providentialism can be observed in his work *De Gubernatione Dei*.
- <sup>20</sup> For Ambrose see F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, Oxford 1935; A. Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, Notre Dame 1964; C. Morino, *Church and State in the Teaching of St. Ambrose*, Washington DC 1969; N.B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*, Berkeley CA 1994; K.E. Power, *Ambrose of Milan: Keeper of the Boundaries*, in "Theology Today", 1998, 53, pp. 15-34.
- <sup>21</sup> *Aurelius Prudentius Clemens*. In his work *Libri contra Symmachum* [Invective against Symmachus], he shows the identification between the Church and Rome and preserves that ancient belief in the eternity of the Roman Urbs. Christianity has come to crown the Roman institutions.
- <sup>22</sup> C. 250-336. He was a Christian priest from Alexandria. Around the year 318, he was involved in a theological dispute, maintaining that 'the Son of God' was not consubstantial with God the Father. Arius was excommunicated, but the debate continued throughout the Eastern Roman Empire, with

- various councils condemning and approving this new dogma. See F.L. Cross, E.A. Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, London 1974, pp. 83-84, 87.
- <sup>23</sup> *Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus*, known as Justinian I or Justinian the Great, was the second member of the Justinian Dynasty and Eastern Roman Emperor from 527 until his death.
- <sup>24</sup> *Flavius Mauricius Tiberius Augustus* was Eastern Roman Emperor from 582-602; during his reign he faced numerous troubles on all frontiers.
- <sup>25</sup> A. Ferreiro, *The Visigoths in Gaul and Spain, A.D. 418-711. A Bibliography*, Leiden 1988; *A supplemental Bibliography 1984-2003*, Leiden 2006; *A supplemental Bibliography – update – 2004-2006*, Leiden 2008.
- <sup>26</sup> The Kingdom, independent from the Byzantines, suffered from imperial attempts to re-establish Byzantine authority in Iberia. The causes of the attempted recovery of the territories by the Byzantines must be looked for in the civil war between Agila I (549-554) and Athanagild (died 567), which provoked Justinian I's intervention sending an army and shaping the new Byzantine province of *Spania* (nowadays southern Spain). The following Visigothic King, Athanagild (552-568) was obliged to formally acknowledge Imperial establishment.
- <sup>27</sup> The whole coast from the Strait of Gibraltar to Denia. See Map 1.
- <sup>28</sup> See L.A. García Moreno, *Leovigildo. Unidad y diversidad de un reinado. Discurso de ingreso en la RAH, leído el 1 de junio de 2008*, Madrid 2008.
- <sup>29</sup> L. Vázquez de Parga, *San Hermenegildo ante las fuentes históricas*, Madrid 1973; L.A. García Moreno, *La coyuntura política del III Concilio de Toledo. Una historia larga y tortuosa, XIV Centenario del III Concilio de Toledo (589-1989)*, Toledo 1991, pp. 271-306; B. Marcotegui Barber, *El tratamiento historiográfico de San Hermenegildo*, in "Anuario de historia de la Iglesia", 2003, 12, pp. 289-302.
- <sup>30</sup> Bicl. a.a., 579, 2; Greg. Tur., *Hist. Franc.*, IV, 3, 8, and V, 38.
- <sup>31</sup> M. Vallejo Girvés, *Comentiolus, Magister Militum Spaniae missus a Mauricio Augusto contra hostes barbaros*, in "RomanoBarbarica", 1996-1997, 14, p. 296. See further M. Vallejo Girvés, *Bizancio y la España tardoantigua (ss. V-VIII) un capítulo de historia mediterránea*, Alcalá de Henares 1993.
- <sup>32</sup> See E.A. Thompson, *The Conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism*, in "Nottingham Mediaeval Studies", 1960, 4, pp. 4-35; C. Godoy, J. Vilella, *De la fides gothica a la ortodoxia nicena: inicio de la teología política visigoda*, in "Antigüedad y Cristianismo", 1987, 3, pp. 117-144; C. Navarro Cordero, *El giro recarediano y sus implicaciones políticas: el catolicismo como signo de identidad del reino visigodo de Toledo*, in "Ilu. Revista de ciencias de las religiones", 2000, 5, pp. 97-118.
- <sup>33</sup> See J.P. Bodel, *Epigraphic Evidence. Ancient History from Inscriptions*, London 2001, about the significance of inscribed writing in the Ancient World and its social effects; L. Keppie, *Understanding Roman Inscriptions*, Baltimore MD 1991.
- <sup>34</sup> M.C. Díaz y Díaz, General introduction to: *Isidore of Seville, Etimologías*, Madrid 1982, p. 52.
- <sup>35</sup> *PLRE* IIIa, pp. 321-324. The most recent work about Comitiolus and the problematic of his name is A. Prego de Lis, *Nueva lectura de la inscripción de "Comenciollo" del Museo Municipal de Arqueología de Cartagena, XXIV Congreso Nacional de Arqueología*, Cartagena 1999, 5, pp. 31-38.
- <sup>36</sup> For the above see, IHC 176; CIL II, 3420; J.M. Abascal, S.F. Ramallo, *La ciudad de Carthago Nova: la documentación epigráfica*, Murcia 1997, no. 208; ILCV 792; CLE 299; HEp 7, 444; AE 1998, 694; M. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his historian Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*, Oxford 1988, p. 289.
- <sup>37</sup> Vallejo Girvés, *Comentiolus* cit., p. 297.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.
- <sup>39</sup> See G. Halsall, *Barbarian migrations and the Roman West, 376-568*, Cambridge 2007 and also the classical study E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians. The Decline of the Western Empire*, Madison WI 1982.

- <sup>40</sup> Cf. M. Greg, *Epist.*, IX, 229, *In Anagnostico*; see M. Vallejo Girvés, *The Treaties between Justinian and Athanagild and the Legality of Byzantium's Peninsular Holdings*, in "Byzantion", 1996, 66, I, pp. 208-218.
- <sup>41</sup> See R. Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409-711*, Oxford 2004, p. 49: "The Byzantine province of *Spania* was never extended very far inland and received relatively little attention from East Roman authorities, probably because it was designed as a defensive bulwark against a Gothic invasion of Africa, which would have been an unnecessary distraction at a time when the Persian Empire was a larger threat in the East."
- <sup>42</sup> See R.L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589-633*, Ann Arbor MI 2000, mainly chapter 1, *Holy Authority and the Holy Spirit in Sixth-Century Iberia*. The collaboration emerged with special urgency because of political instability.
- <sup>43</sup> Cf. Vallejo Girvés, *Commentiolus* cit., p. 306.
- <sup>44</sup> See P. Southern, K. Ramsey Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, Newcastle 1996.
- <sup>45</sup> See H. Wace, *A Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature to the End of the 6th Century A.D., with an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies*, London 1911, pp. 641ff.



Man with Turban, Venice.