

Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte

Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris

(Institut historique allemand)

Band 34/1 (2007)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.2007.1.51104

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Gideon MAIER, *Amtsträger und Herrscher in der Romania Gothica. Vergleichende Untersuchungen zu den Institutionen der ostgermanischen Völkerwanderungsgeschichte*, Stuttgart (Franz Steiner) 2004, 363 p. (Historia-Einzelschrift, 181), ISBN 3-515-08505-X, EUR 68,00.

»Romania Gothica« is Maier's term for the first four, relatively short-lived, Germanic successor kingdoms in the west: those of the Burgundians, Visigoths, Vandals and Ostrogoths. Maier's study of their chief administrators comprises two main elements. The first (forming the second part of his book: p. 121–334) is a painstaking collection and analysis of the evidence, in the best tradition of German scholarship. (The work derives from a Freiburg dissertation of 1997.) Here Maier tirelessly (albeit sometimes also discursively and repetitively) catalogues all known officials and their responsibilities and competencies, from centre to periphery, both royal Germanic and residual Roman. This is a topic which has, of course, long attracted attention. Maier's achievement is, for the first time, to present a comprehensive and coherent treatment of the material, with generous acknowledgement of previous work (e. g. that of Burns and Wolfram).

Administration is a complex topic, always clarified by tables. Oddly, however, Maier provides none, which in places makes him difficult to follow. To help fill this gap, and to indicate the substance and shape of Maier's material (his closing »Resümee«, p. 315–325, does not really do him justice), I offer the following (necessarily simple) representation of his hierarchy of senior royal officials (i. e. omitting residual Roman posts and financial officers: p. 262–289, 289–314):

[>»m.« = *maiores*; >»c.« = *comites*.]

	Ostrogoths	Visigoths	Burgundians	Vandals
Sovereign	<i>rex</i>	<i>rex</i>	<i>rex</i>	<i>rex</i>
Privy Council	<i>comitium-</i> members	<i>consiliarii</i>	<i>consiliarii</i> <i>domestici</i>	<i>domestici</i>
Chancellery	<i>QSP</i> <i>referendarii</i>	<i>referendarii?</i> <i>notarii?</i>	<i>QSP?</i>	<i>notarii?</i>
Special commissioners	<i>m. domus</i> <i>spatharii</i> <i>comites</i> <i>saiones/</i> <i>comitiaci</i>	<i>spatharii/</i> <i>armigeri</i> <i>comites</i> <i>saiones?</i>	<i>m. domus</i> <i>spatharii</i> <i>comites</i>	<i>m. domus</i> <i>comites</i> <i>comitiaci?</i> <i>ministri</i>
Executive officials	<i>apparitores</i> <i>executores</i>	 <i>compulsores</i> <i>executores</i>	 <i>apparitores</i> <i>executores</i> <i>witiscalci</i> <i>faramanni</i>	 <i>executores</i> <i>servi regis</i> <i>baiuli</i>
Regional officials Civil/military	<i>c. Gothorum</i> <i>c. provinciae</i> <i>c. civitatis</i> <i>?millenarii</i>	 <i>c. civitatis</i> <i>?millenarii</i> <i>thiuphadi</i> <i>vicarii</i>	 <i>c. civitatis</i>	 <i>millenarii</i>
Military	<i>duces</i>	<i>c./duces</i>	<i>praepositi</i>	

The principal historical lesson that Maier draws from his work is that the administrations of the first successor-states distinguished strictly between *Germani* (*Gentiles*) and Romans. Thus, even in Ostrogothic Italy, there emerged new, strong, flexible and pervasive Germanic structures of government, very royal and very »corrective«, quite distinct from the Roman even when decked-out in (frequently obsolete) Latin titles (cf. p. 21–22, 36–37, 60–61, 118–19, 153–154, 216: »ethnischer Dualismus«). Thus the *Romania Gothica* that actually came into being was very different from that envisaged by Athaulf in Orosius' »Histories« (7.43.5).

This brings us to the second element of Maier's study. The preceding interpretation derives from a range of axioms presented in the first part of his book (p. 13–120). These are that Burgundians, Visigoths, Vandals and Ostrogoths all originated as major Eastgermanic raiding-bands that migrated into the Empire in search of land (p. 41–56). After they had settled, their common origins and near-contemporary experiences produced similar responses to similar challenges (p. 14–15). With respect to their administrations, this allows us to make the most of the little we know of each. (Sometimes, indeed, they learned from each other: e. g., p. 185.) A composite picture – the comparative approach of Maier's sub-title – enables us to build a general structure for all. From this it emerges that their kings had to favour their Germanic subjects because, as legitimised war-leaders (»Heerkönige«: p. 65–67), they were always in need of their (military) support (e. g. p. 73, 97, 108, 215). So arose ethnic polarisation. This section of Maier's book is much less straightforward because the origins and development of these, and other, peoples, are still highly contentious issues. Some problems are, apparently, approaching resolution. One thinks, for example, of the wide rejection, accepted here by Maier (p. 290–293), of Goffart's theories on the mechanisms of *hospitalitas*. However, many other matters concerning ethnicity and ethnogenesis remain difficult, and I wish that I was as confident as Maier in feeling that I knew so many of the »right« answers. These days, it is not enough simply to cite Wenskus. I would like to have been told precisely who, and how many, comprised the original »große Verbände«; and precisely how such »Verbände« became »Stämme« (cf. p. 42, 48–50, 66, 119–120). More complex relationships between *Germani* and Romans have been proposed, other than that suggested by Goffart. (It is significant that Maier does not cite Amory's »People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy« [1997], though he is aware of Amory's earlier work.) In addition, Burgundians, Visigoths and Vandals were inside the Empire well before Maier's key-date of the mid-fifth century (p. 42–43). And Maier's view of the later Roman government as highly impersonal and institutionalised (p. 317) does not sit well alongside, for example, Constantius II's use of court eunuchs as imperial troubleshooters: very like the corrective style of administration noted by Maier in respect of the Germanic kings. (As Maier notes elsewhere – p. 209, cf. 50 – emperors, too, had »Gefolgschaften«.)

Overall, however, whether one accepts Maier's main argument or not, his book is to be welcomed as a significant contribution to post-Roman studies. It will help us towards a better understanding of individual careers (see Index 2) and, more generally, enable us to appreciate such things as (another *fil rouge*) the role of Reccared in the administrative development of the Visigothic kingdom.

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