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CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN
LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

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VOLUME 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IDENTITY II

Post-Roman Multiplicity and New Political Identities

Edited by

Gerda Heydemann and Helmut Reimitz

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Historiography and Identity in the Post-Roman West: An Introduction	
HELMUT REIMITZ	1
Debating Ethnicity in Post-Roman Historiography	
WALTER POHL	27
Clinging to Empire in Jordanes' <i>Romana</i>	
MAYA MASKARINEC	71
From Scythian, to Getan, to Goth: The <i>Getica</i> of Jordanes and the Classical Ethnographic Tradition	
RANDOLPH FORD	95
Two Tales — Two Peoples? Goths and Romans in Jordanes' Works	
PHILIPP DÖRLER	121
Celtic Britain and Ireland: An Arena for Historical Debate	
T. M. CHARLES-EDWARDS	147
Genre and Identity in Merovingian Historiography	
HELMUT REIMITZ	161

The Appropriation of History: The Austrasians, Gregory of Tours, and Fredegar ANDREAS FISCHER	213
History-Writing and Education in Late Antique and Early Medieval Iberia VICTORIA LEONARD and JAMIE WOOD	237
The Ties that Bind: Diagnosing Social Crisis in Julian of Toledo's <i>Historia Wambae</i> MOLLY LESTER	269
Bede's <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> and Anglian Northumbria IAN WOOD	297
Historical Writing in the Lombard Kingdom: From Secundus to Paul the Deacon WALTER POHL	319
Index	351

CLINGING TO EMPIRE IN JORDANES' *ROMANA*

Maya Maskarinec*

In the early sixth century the Roman Empire, reduced to a fraction of its former expanse, could no longer be taken for granted. With a series of ambitious military campaigns the emperor Justinian (r. 527–65) sought to reconquer the empire; with a similarly ambitious programme of legal reform, he also attempted to strengthen the empire from within. Both efforts were underpinned by a highly articulated Christian imperial ideology that championed a more tightly-knit integration of Roman imperialism and Christianity than had ever been previously envisioned. Such circumstances correspondingly prompted a rethinking of the Roman past.

This paper considers one attempt to articulate a model of a Christian Roman Empire suitable for the times, that of Jordanes' mid-sixth-century *Summary of the Ages or the Origin and Deeds of the Roman People* (*De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*) — hereafter referred to as the *Romana*.¹ I focus on the motif of arms and laws, emphasized by Jordanes as key to the empire's success, to demonstrate how, in line with contemporary Justinianic

* I am grateful for the comments of Patrick Geary, Michael Maas, Walter Pohl, Gerda Heydemann, and Francesco Borri, which have improved this article. This article was completed in 2014. For a careful contextualization of Jordanes in mid-sixth-century Constantinople see now Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen, 'The Historiography of Crisis.'

¹ Throughout this article I follow the MGH edition by Theodor Mommsen, *Romana* (1882). The title, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, is attested to in ninth-century manuscripts. For the identification of Jordanes' sources I rely on Mommsen's edition.

Maya Maskarinec is assistant professor of History at the University of Southern California.

imperial ideology, Jordanes' conception of empire attempts to fit traditional Roman political ideals seamlessly into a world governed by Christian morality and Christian law.

Jordanes was the author of two texts, the *Romana* and the more studied *Origin and Deeds of the Goths* (*De origine actibusque Getarum*), which begins with the mythic prehistory of the Goths and, like the *Romana*, continues through the reign of Justinian.² Although these texts had different dedicatees, Jordanes, by his own account, interrupted work on the *Romana* to write the *Getica* and sent both texts to Vigilius to whom the *Romana* is dedicated; in the manuscript tradition the two texts are most often transmitted together.³ Accordingly, they may be read side by side as shedding light on Jordanes' conception of Roman history, and so throughout this article I will at times also draw on the *Getica*.

Jordanes' self-proclaimed Gothic identity in the *Getica* notwithstanding, he was writing in Constantinople and steeped in Roman and late Roman histo-

See also Girotti, *Ricerche sui 'Romana' di Jordanes*. Regarding 'models' of the Christian Roman Empire see Pohl, 'Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule'.

² Cf. the articles by Dörler, 'Two Tales — Two Peoples?' and Ford, 'From Scythian, to Getan, to Goth' in this volume. In addition to the older MGH edition by Mommsen there exists a new edition of the *Getica*: Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, which I use throughout the article. The bibliography on the *Getica* is vast: see Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, pp. 100–69. Regarding the *Getica*'s relationship to Cassiodorus's lost Gothic history, see Soby Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths*; Croke, 'Cassiodorus and the "Getica" of Jordanes'. Regarding the historical value contrast Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 20–111, with Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*. See also Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 34–67; Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy*, pp. 291–307. For a more extensive bibliography on Jordanes see Buonomo, 'Introduzione alla lettura delle opere di Giordane'.

³ Discussion of manuscripts: see Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, pp. xlv–lxxiii. The *Romana* was addressed to a certain Vigilius, whom some scholars have argued to be Pope Vigilius (r. 537–55), see for example Luiselli, 'Sul "De summa temporum" di Iordanes', but there is no firm evidence other than the name to support this theory. For the relationship between the texts see Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, esp. pp. 21, 47–58, who divides the *Romana* into two parts, a universal history and a Roman history, which he regards as parts of a three-part set together with the *Getica*. The overarching aim of the *Romana* has been variously interpreted; contrast Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, with Giunta, *Jordanes e la cultura dell'alto medioevo*, the latter of whom interprets the text in pro-Byzantine terms, and O'Donnell, 'The Aims of Jordanes', who argues that the work is meant to 'deny the significance of secular history' (p. 240). Rather than focus on Jordanes' purpose in writing the text, this article focuses on the presentation of empire in the text.

riographical traditions.⁴ As a *notarius* Jordanes was presumably well-versed in bureaucratic procedures and may well have had a legal education.⁵ Meanwhile both the material he includes in the *Romana* and the structure of his work show a markedly Eastern bias; Jordanes was certainly working with earlier Constantinopolitan chronicles, in particular the *Chronicle of Marcellinus*, or perhaps its source.⁶ That the *Romana* is written in Latin is no counterargument. Latin was still the bureaucratic language of sixth-century Constantinople and likewise the *Chronicle of Marcellinus*, written shortly before in Justinian's capital, was also in Latin.⁷ Thus it is with respect to this Constantinopolitan context that we should read his text.⁸

In his preface, Jordanes states that the aim of the *Romana* is to explain, 'in what way the Roman republic began and ruled and how it subjugated nearly the entire world and even now, at least ostensibly, rules over it.'⁹ In the opening

⁴ Jordanes tells us about his identity as a Goth in two often quoted passages in the *Getica*: Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, L.265, pp. 109–10; LX.315–16, pp. 129–30. For an introduction to later Byzantine chroniclers' attitudes toward ancient history see Jeffreys, 'The Attitudes of Byzantine Chroniclers towards Ancient History'. For sixth-century Byzantine attitudes to history see Brodka, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie*, and also the collected essays of Scott, *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century*. For discussion of the traditions of Roman and Christian historiography still fundamental is Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.', esp. pp. 86–87.

⁵ Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, L.265, p. 110. Croke, 'Jordanes and the Immediate Past', p. 2, discusses the duties of a *notarius*. In this same passage Jordanes speaks of himself as *agram(m)atus* and mentions that he underwent some sort of *conversatio*, 'conversion', both descriptions which have been much disputed. Croke, 'Cassiodorus and the "Getica" of Jordanes', p. 4, emphasizes that 'when Jordanes describes himself as *agram(m)atus*, [...] he is not confessing ignorance and illiteracy but is simply implying that he had bypassed the conventional training in *grammaticae*'. Regarding Jordanes' 'conversion' see the relevant bibliography in Lawo, 'Jordanes', p. 76.

⁶ See Croke, 'A.D. 476'.

⁷ See Cameron, 'Old and New Rome'; Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his Chronicle*; Rapp, 'Literary Culture under Justinian'.

⁸ Cf. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, pp. 162–67, for a reading of the *Getica* with respect to its Constantinopolitan context.

⁹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 2, p. 1: 'quomodo Romana res publica coepit et tenuit totumque pene mundum subegit et hactenus vel imaginariae teneat' (I follow Goffart's translation of the unusual phrase 'vel imaginariae', Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 53). O'Donnell, 'The Aims of Jordanes', p. 224 n. 4, notes that '*imaginariae* is adverbial: = *imaginarie*' and translates the passage: 'how the Roman empire began, how it grew, how it subjected virtually the whole world to its domin-

lines of the *Romana* he further elaborates that the purpose of the text is to ‘collect in the form of a little story both the succession of years and also the deeds of those men who strove mightily in the state’.¹⁰

To do so Jordanes has pieced together earlier texts, both world chronicles and Roman histories, to provide his readers with a manageable introduction to Roman history. The resulting text is universal in its perspective, although it focuses on the Romans. It begins with Adam and proceeds all the way through to 552.

Throughout the text Jordanes is very explicit about his reuse and simplification of earlier material.¹¹ For example, when introducing the age of the Roman Republic he explains that:

Since to write down the names and deeds of all the consuls is tedious for me and for you who read this, I have sought to avert this tedium, in that selecting certain [consuls] I have passed over many, since I know that this is discussed by others and this work is an abridgment.¹²

The advantage of Jordanes’ text, as he himself readily admits, is its simplicity and accessibility, not its theoretical or historical complexity. Rather than delve into the complexities of dull details, Jordanes wishes to provide his readers with the essentials they need to understand the Roman Empire.

ion, and how it continues to hang on to its hegemony (at least in pretense) even now’. Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine*, pp. 291–93, discusses possible meanings of the very rare *imaginariae*. He notes that elsewhere it is found in the sense of *simulate* or *per speciem*, that is, the empire has become a fiction, but Reydellet considers this meaning unlikely in this context. Instead, he draws attention to the fact that the word occurs in theological contexts with the sense of *allegorice*, that is, allegorically or symbolically. Thus he translates it as ‘d’une manière symbolique’, that is, the empire continues to persist in a symbolic manner (p. 292).

¹⁰ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 6, p. 3: ‘in modum storiunculae tam annorum seriae quam etiam eorum virorum, qui fortiter in re publica laboraverunt, gesta strictim breviterque collegere’ (trans. by Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 21 n. 5).

¹¹ This is made clear in the preface: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 6, p. 3: ‘ex diversis voluminibus maiorum praelibans aliqua floscula pro captu ingenii mei in unum redigere’.

¹² Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 114, p. 14: ‘et quia omnium consulum nomina actosque conscribere et mihi tedium et tibi, qui legis, fastidio fore praecavi, aliqua exinde praelibans multa supersedi, quod pene a nonnullis iam usurpatum esse breviatumque opus cognovi’; cf. Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 2, p. 1; chap. 86, p. 10.

To simplify matters even further Jordanes begins the *Romana* by explaining, very straightforwardly, the rationale of Roman success: 'The Romans, as Iamblicus says, employing arms (*arma*) and laws (*leges*), made the world their own: indeed if by arms they built [their empire], by laws they preserved it'.¹³

As suggested by Mommsen, the Iamblicus in question may have been a certain legal critic, referred to by another Justinianic jurist, Stephanos.¹⁴ This immediately alerts us to the Byzantine legal context as the lens through which Jordanes interprets Roman history. The trope of attributing Rome's success to arms and laws was certainly nothing new in the sixth century; already in the Augustan Age, two of Rome's literary giants expressed arms and laws as the cornerstones of Romanness. Virgil begins the *Aeneid*: 'Arma virumque cano'; Livy in his Roman history relates that, 'When Romulus had duly attended to the worship of the gods, he called the people together and gave them the rules of law (*leges*), since nothing else but rights (*iura*) could unite them into a single body politic'.¹⁵ Yet in the sixth century, as Justinian ambitiously sought to

¹³ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 6, p. 3: 'Romani, ut ait Iamblicus, armis et legibus exercentes orbem terrae suum fecerunt: armis si quidem construxerunt, legibus autem conservaverunt'. Throughout the *Romana* Jordanes rarely names his sources (in contrast to his practice in the *Getica*).

¹⁴ Mommsen, 'Iamblichos bei Jordanes'. It has been argued that Jordanes' quote is nothing more than a 'Schulflöskel', a textbook trope with which all school children would have been familiar: Kappelmacher, 'Jordanis', col. 1916. Given the frequency with which the phrase occurs in the prefaces to Justinianic legislation, this seems possible, but it is significant that Jordanes references an outside authority for the trope. On the basis of her interpretation that Jordanes' text was dedicated to Pope Vigilius, Mastandrea, 'Armīs et legibus' argues that this phrase is meant as a political damnation of Justinian. Although this contextualization is not convincing, as I discuss in the conclusion, Jordanes' pessimistic view of the contemporary state of the empire certainly suggests that he was not convinced with regards to the success of the Justinianic restoration.

¹⁵ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, ed. and trans. by Foster, 1.8.1, p. 30: 'Rebus divinis rite perpetratis vocataque ad concilium multitudo quae coalescere in populi unius corpus nulla re praeterquam legibus poterat, iura dedit' (trans. by Foster, p. 31 with translation of 'iura' modified from 'law' to 'rights'). *Ius* refers to un-enacted law or right, *lex* refers to enacted law. The difference is similar, for example, to the German distinction between *Recht* and *Gesetz*. See Barry, *An Introduction to Roman Law*, p. 14. Often (especially when quoting from earlier authors) Jordanes uses *ius* and *lex* consistently according to these standard meanings, but at times, such as in describing how in the early fifth century the province of Africa was lost to the Romans, 'ius' is used in the sense of domination/jurisdiction (Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 330, p. 42: 'Africana provincia per Bonifatium comitem Vandalis tradita et a Romano iure subtracta est'). This usage is consistent with other late antique authors. I am grateful to Walter Pohl for this observation.

reconquer the former expanse of the empire and just as ambitiously undertook to reform the Roman legal code, these concepts acquired reinvigorated contemporary resonance. For example, the preface confirming Justinian's *Code* begins:

The safety of the state proceeds out of two things, the force of arms (*arma*) and the observance of laws (*leges*); for this reason, the fortunate race of the Romans, having established their own power, achieved precedence and control over all nations in former times, and will do so forever, if God is propitious.¹⁶

Similar statements are found in the prefaces to Justinian's *Digest* and his *Institutes*, as well as in other contemporary authors, such as Cassiodorus.¹⁷ Similarly we may read Jordanes' *Romana* as an extended demonstration of this model of empire (conquest by arms, fortification by laws) at work in Roman history.

This is already apparent in Jordanes' presentation of Rome's origins. These passages are excerpted from Florus, a late first-/early second-century abridgement of Roman history, for the most part excerpted from Livy, which focuses on the wars waged by Rome. Using Florus's account, Jordanes — in sharp contrast to other Christian historians such as Orosius, who described Roman history before Christ as a series of unmitigated disasters — presents the bloody origins of Rome in positive terms, as foretelling Rome's future strength: 'Being thus victorious in augury, he [Romulus] began to build the city, full of hope that it would prove warlike, for the birds, accustomed to bloody prey seemed to indicate this'.¹⁸ Concerning Romulus's murder of Remus, we are told, while

¹⁶ *Codex Iustinianus*, Const. Summa, 7 April 529, ed. by Krüger, preface, p. 2: 'Summa rei publicae tuitio de stirpe duarum rerum, armorum atque legum veniens vimque suam exinde muniens felix Romanorum genus omnibus anteponi nationibus omnibusque dominari tam praeteritis effecit temporibus quam deo propitio in aeternum efficiet' (trans. by Pazdernik, 'Justinianic Ideology and the Power of the Past', p. 209 n. 55).

¹⁷ *Institutiones*, Const. Imperatoriam, 21 Nov. 533, ed. by Krüger, preface, p. xxiii: 'Imperatoriam maiestatem non solum armis decoratam, sed etiam legibus oportet esse armatam'; see n. 34 below for the preface to the *Digest*; Cassiodorus, *Variae*, ed. by Mommsen, III.12, p. 119: 'Propositi nostri est, ut provincias nobis deo auxiliante subiectas, sicut armis defendimus, ita legibus ordinemus'. Honoré, *Tribonian*, p. 35 n. 375, cites these and other examples. As Justinian also makes explicit in the prefaces to his law code, he considered his legal reforms parallel to his military reconquests; both are presented as restorative actions undertaken to buttress the Roman Empire. See also Dannenbring, 'Arma et leges'.

¹⁸ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 89, p. 10: 'sic victor augurio urbem excitat, plenus spei bellatricem fore: id assuetae sanguine et preda aves pollicebantur', based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Forster, I.1.1.7, p. 10; trans. by Forster, p. 11. Contrast Orosius, who emphasizes the lawless violence that Rome's foundation portended: Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos*, ed. by Zangemeister, II.4.1–4, p. 88:

it is uncertain whether Remus was killed on the orders of his brother, his blood consecrated ('consecravit') the fortification of the new city.¹⁹

Although the city was born through the force of arms, Rome's second king, Numa Pompilius (whom Orosius's narrative omits) brought civil law to the war-like people.²⁰ Again following Florus, Jordanes explains, 'In a word, he [Numa Pompilius] induced a fierce people to rule with piety and justice an empire which they had acquired by violence and injustice'.²¹ From the beginning, the Romans' strength lay both in their military prowess and in their ability to rule justly.²² Similarly, in narrating the rise of Rome Jordanes generally presents the Roman Empire as expanding through arms, but within its framework of law, while confronted with lawless and ferociously hostile barbarians.²³

'urbs Roma in Italia a Romulo et Remo geminis auctoribus condita est. cuius regnum continuo Romulus parricidio imbuat, parique successu crudelitatis sine more raptas Sabinas, inprobris nuptiis confederatas maritorum et parentum cruore dotaui. itaque Romulus, interfecto primum auo Numitore dehinc Remo fratre, arripuit imperium Urbemque constituit; regnum aui, muros fratris, templum soceri sanguine dedicauit; sceleratorum manum promissa impunitate collegit. primus illi campus ad bellum forum Urbis fuit, mixta simul externa ciuiliaque bella numquam defutura significans'. Jordanes used Orosius's history extremely rarely (and seldom for more than a sentence) among his sources for the period after Augustus. At times Jordanes does use Orosius to supplement the Roman history with Christian history, as with the emperor Maximinus, where he uses Orosius's history to describe Maximinus's actions against Christians (Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 281, p. 36, based on Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos*, ed. by Zangemeister, VII.19.1, p. 477).

¹⁹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 89, p. 10: 'dubium an iussu fratris, occisus est. prima certe victima fuit munitionemque urbis novae sanguine suo consecravit', based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Forster, I.1.1.8, p. 10.

²⁰ Florus/Jordanes refers to the Romans explicitly as barbarians (*barbari*) who are 'civilized' by Numa (Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 95, p. 11, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Forster, I.1.2.3, p. 14).

²¹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 95, p. 11: 'eo denique ferocem populum redegit, ut quod vi et iniuria occuparat imperium, religione atque iustitia gubernaret', based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Forster, I.1.2.4, p. 14; trans. by Forster, p. 15.

²² This is true notwithstanding a few unfortunate incidents, as when, for example, early on Horatius, having won a crucial victory for the Romans, kills his sister because she is grieving for the enemy. Although a crime according to the laws ('ut auderet leges, nefas'), this does not lead to punishment for Horatius, who is instead glorified for his military exploits: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 96, pp. 11–12, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Foster, I.1.3.6, p. 16, though Florus's text reads slightly differently in this passage: 'citavere leges nefas'.

²³ A different type of law also contributes to expanding and integrating foreign territory into

Much more detail describes how arms extended the Roman Empire than how laws maintained the state; nonetheless, throughout the text, (Roman) law serves its traditional Roman function as the dividing line between civilization and barbarism. When the Gallic Senones, a people said to be particularly uncivilized and ferocious, begin to attack Roman allies and the Romans protest in vain, Jordanes, quoting Florus, interjects indignantly: 'Quod ius apud barbaros?' (But what sense of law/justice is there among barbarians?).²⁴ Implied, of course, is that there is none. Similarly, Jordanes (again following Florus) relates a tragic incident where the Romans suffer terrible losses because they are so attentive to observing treaties. Unwilling to go to war before they have lodged a complaint in the proper form ('more legitimo'), the Romans watch helplessly as the Carthaginians massacre their allies.²⁵ In turn, conquest by the Romans entails the acquisition of Roman law; in summarizing material in Festus, but in his own words, Jordanes tells how Augustus forced certain Germanic peoples (Germani, Galli, Brittoni, Spani, Hiberes, Austures, and Cantabres) 'to live by Roman laws' ('coegit Romanisque legibus vivere').²⁶ The remarkable success of the Romans is due to their capacity for total military victory, followed by bringing those defeated under the umbrella of Roman law.²⁷

the Roman Empire, that of inheritance (*ius hereditarium*). For example, the *Romana* describes how the Romans' first territory in Asia was left to them by the testament of the King Attalus: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 222, p. 28, based on Festus, *Breviarium*, ed. by Eadie, x., p. 53.

²⁴ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 131, p. 16, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Foster, I.7.13.6, p. 42. See also Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 180, p. 22, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Foster, I.11.5, p. 92.

²⁵ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 182, p. 23, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Foster, I.2.6, p. 94. In particular, as Florus/Jordanes expresses it, 'summa foedorum Romanis religio est' ('The highest reverence for the Romans is of their treaties').

²⁶ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 249, p. 32 (no direct source identified).

²⁷ Throughout the *Romana* Jordanes emphasizes the completeness of Roman victory. For example, regarding the defeat of the Samnites, Florus/Jordanes remarks that they were so thoroughly subjugated that 'today it is hard even to imagine how the territory could have provided booty for so many triumphs': Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 144, p. 17, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Foster, I.11.16.8, p. 52; describing the sea battle which concluded the Carthaginian war, Florus/Jordanes stresses that the victory was so great that there was no point in demolishing the enemies' walls: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen,

The *Romana* contrasts Roman civilization and military might with the barbarism of its enemies. There are, however, two exceptions. One is the Jews, whom I discuss below; the second is the Goths — although only in the *Getica*, not in the *Romana*.²⁸ Early on in the *Getica*, while still a young and uncivilized people, the Goths are made by their perspicacious leader, Dicineus, to live under their own laws, which, as Jordanes comments, they still maintain 'usque nunc' (to this day).²⁹ The Goths also acquire from him ethics, logic, and further accoutrements of civilization. As with the Romans, we hear of how the Goths in conquering many peoples made them live by their (Gothic) laws.³⁰

As presented in the *Getica*, the Goths are also a people who rival the Romans in their military prowess. The *Getica* describes that Caesar, 'the first of all Romans to assume imperial power and to subdue almost the whole world [...] was unable to prevail against the Goths, despite his frequent attempts'.³¹ Later Roman emperors rely on the Gothic troops for military support and are described as being unable to conquer without them.³² By endowing the Goths with the quintessential markers of Roman civilization, arms and laws, Jordanes' *Getica* places the Goths on par with the Romans.

Contrary to what one might expect, however, the Goths figure only marginally in the *Romana* and do not disrupt the overall picture of Roman conquest followed by a process of civilization.³³ Roman exceptionality is not undermined

chap. 176, p. 22, based on Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio*, ed. by Foster, II.18.2.37, p. 88.

²⁸ Cf. Dörler, 'Two Tales — Two Peoples?' (in this volume).

²⁹ Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, XI.69, p. 32: 'nam ethicam eos erudiens barbaricos mores conpescuit; physicam tradens, naturaliter propriis legibus vivere fecit, quas usque nunc conscriptas "belagines" nuncupant; logicam instruens, rationis eos supra ceteras gentes fecit expertos'. Compare also Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, IV.40, p. 19, praising the wisdom of the Goths.

³⁰ For example, regarding the ruler Hermanaric: Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, XXIII.116, pp. 51–52: 'Hermanaricus nobilissimus Amalorum in regno successit, qui multas et bellicosissimas arctoi gentes perdomuit suisque parere legibus fecit'.

³¹ Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, XI.68, p. 31: 'Caesar vero, qui sibi primus omnium Romanum vindicavit imperium et pene omnem mundum suae dicioni subegit [...] Gothos tamen crebro pertemptans nequivit subicere' (trans. by Mierow, p. 70).

³² At the time of Constantine, Jordanes describes, 'sine ipsos [Gothos] dudum contra quasvis gentes Romanus exercitus difficile decertatus est' (Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, XXI.111, p. 49). The Goths' efforts are described as particularly crucial in the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains: Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, XXXVIII.–XLI.197–217, pp. 82–89.

³³ Polk, "Getica" and "Romana" of Jordanes, pp. 83–100, discusses Jordanes' treatment of

for the sake of promoting the Goths; rather it is stressed as something worth rivalling. Accordingly, the *Romana* retains a very traditional ethnography of the Roman Empire that would have seemed familiar to a Roman or late Roman historian — unsurprisingly, given that Jordanes' account of Roman republican and early imperial history is, for the most part, a compilation of extracts from various Roman epitomes. In particular, as mentioned above, Jordanes' account relies heavily on Florus's summary of Roman history: less frequently used are the late fourth-century epitomes by Eutropius and Festus. All three of these texts provided panegyrical depictions of Rome from an insider perspective: Romans celebrating Rome, in particular Rome's many military conquests. In excerpting from their texts, Jordanes retains their triumphalist outlook of Roman imperial history as a series of conquests only rarely interspersed with some setbacks.

This narrative of triumph is, however, only part of Jordanes' picture; equally critical for Roman success is Christianity. The preface confirming Justinian's *Code*, quoted above, states explicitly that the Roman Empire, buttressed with arms and laws, will continue to be preeminent forever among peoples, granted God is propitious ('deo propitio'). Justinianic ideology repeatedly harps on this sentiment; the preface to the *Digest* begins:

Governing under the authority of God our empire, which was delivered to us by the Heavenly Majesty, we both conduct wars successfully and render peace honourable, and we uphold the condition of the state. We so lift up our minds toward the help of the omnipotent God that we do not place our trust in weapons or our soldiers or our military leaders or our own talents, but we rest all our hopes in the providence of the Supreme Trinity alone, from whence the elements of the whole world proceeded and their disposition throughout the universe was derived.³⁴

The Roman Empire, past, present, and future, hinges on God's will.³⁵

the Goths in the *Romana*. He suggests Jordanes rarely goes out of his way to include Gothic history in the *Romana* and usually presents the Goths in at best a neutral, at worst, negative, light.

³⁴ *Digesta, Const. Deo Auctore*, 15 Dec. 530, ed. by Mommsen and Krüger, preface, p. 8: 'Deo auctore nostrum gubernantes imperium, quod nobis a caelesti maiestate traditum est, et bella feliciter peragimus et pacem decoramus et statum rei publicae sustentamus: et ita nostros animos ad dei omnipotentis erigimus adiutorium, ut neque armis confidamus neque nostris militibus neque bellorum ducibus vel nostro ingenio, sed omnem spem ad solam referamus summam providentiam trinitatis: unde et mundi totius elementa processerunt et eorum dispositio in orbem terrarum producta est' (trans. by Watson, p. xlvi).

³⁵ See Garnsey and Humfress, *The Evolution of the Late Antique World*, pp. 132–69, esp. 141–42. Regarding Justinian's legislation on Christian doctrine see also Maas, *Exegesis and Empire in the Early Byzantine Mediterranean*, pp. 54–60.

Likewise, in an ambitious, if perhaps not quite successful, attempt, Jordanes transplants this key tenet of Justinianic ideology into his interpretation of history. In tandem with his presentation of Roman history in terms of arms and laws at work in their traditional Roman function of subjugating and civilizing, Jordanes attempts to subordinate Roman history to God's providence.³⁶

To do so Jordanes melds together Roman and Christian historiographical traditions. Although Jordanes' accounts of specific events in Roman history are drawn from Roman epitomes, both the structure and the content of the *Romana* relies heavily on world chronicles, in particular Jerome's continuation of Eusebius's *Chronicle*. The opening section of the *Romana* is composed primarily of extracts from Jerome.³⁷ These passages include the Romans, but do not discuss Roman history in depth; instead they tally the noteworthy events, primarily conquests, of the earlier kingdoms which preceded the Romans: the Assyrians, the Medes/Persians, and the Greeks. Jordanes indicates that following the prophecy of Daniel he interprets the Roman Empire as the last and final of this succession of empires.³⁸ Only when Jordanes reaches the reign of Augustus, does he begin to discuss the Romans in greater depth and even disrupts the chronology of his narrative to jump back in time to tell of Rome's infancy.³⁹ From here on out Jordanes focuses more exclusively on the Romans.

In this part of the *Romana*, Jordanes continues to align Roman and Christian history. In the reign of Augustus, described as conquering all peoples, north

³⁶ Jordanes' attitude may be compared to that of Procopius, who likewise has a Christian teleological view of history, but allows for an even greater degree of human agency: Brodka, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie*, pp. 14–151, 228–34.

³⁷ Although Jerome's *Chronicle* began with Abraham, Jordanes begins instead with the origin of the world (by quoting the relevant sections of Genesis).

³⁸ This is made most explicit with Jordanes' description of the transfer of power from the Greeks to the Romans under Augustus: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 84, p. 9: 'regnumque eorum in Romanorum imperio devenit, ubi et usque actenus, et usque in finem mundi secundum Danielis prophetia regni debetur successio'.

³⁹ Jordanes explains that since he had been asked to explain the origins and deeds of the Romans it is necessary for him 'to revisit the beginnings of the city of Rome and to explain the origin of Romulus, its [Rome's] founder and to demonstrate clearly the years and dates of the kings and consuls succeeding him': Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 86, p. 10: 'et quia Romanarum rerum ordine actosque inquirere statuisti et nos breviter tuis percuntationibus respondere sumus polliciti, necessarium est ergo nobis ea interim, que ad tempora Augusti imperatoris dicuntur, omittere et rursus ad Romanæ urbis primordia repedare originemque Romuli eius conditoris exponere simulque successorum eius regum consolumque annos actosque ad liquidum demonstrare, qui sunt hi'.

to south, east to west, in the whole circumference of the ocean and establishing peace throughout all these lands, Jesus Christ is born.⁴⁰ Thus the first Roman emperor and God's incarnation on earth occur simultaneously. A similar synchronization takes place later in the text during the reign of Philip the Arab. Jordanes describes that: 'He [Philip] was the first of all the emperors to be made Christian. In the third year of his reign he celebrated festivities for the city of Rome which had completed its 1000th year'.⁴¹ A thousand years of Rome and the first Christian emperor coincide.

Jordanes' description of Rome's imperial history often also aligns Christian and Roman morals. Caligula both forces a husband to give him his wife and places a statue of Jupiter in the temple of Jerusalem.⁴² Emperors who are morally appalling (and often persecute Christians) are usually harmful to the state. Nero, who bathes himself in hot and cold perfumes and watches as Rome burns, persecutes Christians and is even responsible for the deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul. Unsurprisingly, he is of no profit to the state.⁴³ Or Domitian, who for the first time commands that he as emperor be called lord (*dominus*), persecutes Christians, as well as killing and exiling Roman nobles, so much so that even the Romans cannot stand his cruelty and murder him.⁴⁴ By correlating 'bad' emperors with the persecution of Christianity, Jordanes (usually following Jerome) also diminishes the impression of a 'break' in Roman history. Before and after the advent of Christianity good and, more often, bad emperors rule the empire.

This picture of imperial continuity is accentuated by what may be an unusual coincidence: the surviving text, despite the generally good manuscript tradition, is missing any account of Constantine or the Christianization of the

⁴⁰ This event is described twice; first it marks the point in the succession of empires when the empire of the Greeks passes to the Romans: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 85, pp. 9–10. Then the birth of Christ is retold, in similar terms, during the reign of the emperor Augustus: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chaps 255–56, p. 33.

⁴¹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 283, p. 37: 'ipseque [Philippus] primus omnium imperatorum Christianus effectus est tertioque anno imperii sui festivitatem Romanae urbis, millesimo anno quod expleverat, caelebravit'.

⁴² Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 259, p. 33.

⁴³ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chaps 261–62, p. 34.

⁴⁴ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 265, p. 34.

empire. As mentioned above, the mid-third-century emperor Philip the Arab is said to have been the first Christian emperor, but this is the text's first and only mention of the empire's conversion to Christianity. After telling of Diocletian's persecutions against Christians, the text jumps to Constantius II's death.⁴⁵ We subsequently hear of Julian converting back from Christianity to pagan idolatry and persecuting Christians.⁴⁶ Thus the fourth century is not portrayed as radically different from previous centuries. Nor, is there subsequently, where Jordanes' text resumes, any qualitative shift in imperial rule.

The success of the Roman Empire hinges on God's providence, but this does not mean that a Christian empire need be successful. Indeed, Jordanes has a grim view of imperial history after Constantine. It is the Christian emperors of Late Antiquity who have caused the decline of the empire built up by Rome's early, pagan, emperors. Christianity does not per se provide an answer to preserving empire; nor does Christianity in any way replace the category of empire. Military skill and good governance remain as critical as ever in a Christian empire.

Jordanes' appreciation for the traditional qualities of a 'good' emperor are readily apparent in the case of the pagan emperor Julian. Although, following Jerome, Jordanes tells of Julian's idolatry, he also includes an excerpt from Eutropius praising Julian as a remarkable man ('vir egregius'), indispensable to the republic ('rei publicae necessarius'), in that he waged war against the Persians.⁴⁷ Regarding the Christian emperor Valentinian, Jordanes, following Jerome, writes that he would have been a remarkable man ('vir egregius'), in that he was similar to (the pagan emperor) Aurelian in character — except that his sternness and frugality were seen as cruelty and greed, vices which throughout the *Romana* cause the downfall of emperors.⁴⁸ A similar line of reasoning

⁴⁵ There is no lacuna in any of the manuscripts, although some scribes noted the gap in the margins. Cf. Amici, 'Jordanes e la tradizione su Costantino', who suggests that neither an 'orthodox' nor 'Arian' Constantine was appropriate to Jordanes' narrative. This does not, however, explain the large extent of the gap.

⁴⁶ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chaps 304–05, p. 39.

⁴⁷ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 304, p. 39: 'Iulianus apostata regnavit an. uno m. VIII, relictaque Christianitate ad idolorum cultura conversus est multosque blanda persecutione inlicitens ad sacrificandum idolis conpult. ipse si quidem vir egregius et rei publicae necessarius Parthis ingenti apparatu intulit bellum', based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 362 p. Chr., p. 242 and Eutropius, *Breviarium*, ed. by Santini, x.16, pp. 69–70.

⁴⁸ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 307, p. 39: 'ipse vero egregius et Aureliani similis moribus, nisi quod severitatem eius nim-

is found in the *Getica*, where the Roman emperor Maximian, of Gothic parentage, is praised for his bodily strength and military skill: he is a successful emperor until his persecutions of Christians cause him to lose both his title and his life.⁴⁹

Christian morality, in Jordanes' *Romana* (as well as in the *Getica*), operates as a set of individual responsibilities, which, when exercised in official capacities, have consequences for the state. Good Christians tend to make good emperors. Theodosius is described as 'shining forth exceedingly as a devout propagator of the Church and an excellent defender of the republic'.⁵⁰ With him Christian piety and military conquests go hand in hand. Likewise, it is 'with divinely inspired forethought' ('divina provisione') that Marcian conducts wars and makes peace treaties that restore what his effeminate ('delicati') predecessors had lost.⁵¹

But individuals like Theodosius are exceptional; most leaders are morally corrupt, bringing further ruin upon the empire. As a general under the emperor Leo, Basiliscus is driven by greed to sell off the city of Carthage to the Vandals.⁵² So too, in the *Getica*, it is Roman avarice (*avaritia*), combined with Roman treachery, that provokes the Goths to rebel against the Roman emperor Valens.⁵³ It is in the context of such corruption that Jordanes, in the *Romana*, like Marcellinus, interprets Odovacer's deposition of Romulus

iam et parcitatem quidam crudelitatem et avaritiam causabantur', based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 365 p. Chr., p. 244.

⁴⁹ Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, xv.83–88, pp. 38–40.

⁵⁰ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 315, p. 40: 'ammodumque religiosus ecclesiae enituit propagator rei publiceque defensor eximius'.

⁵¹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chaps 332–33, p. 41.

⁵² Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 337, p. 43: 'Basiliscum cognatum suum, id est fratrem Augustae Verinae Africam dirigens cum exercitu, qui navali proelio Chartaginem saepe adgrediens ante ea victus cupiditate pecuniis vendidit regi Vandalorum, quam in Romanorum potestatem redigeret'.

⁵³ Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, xxvi.134–37, pp. 58–60. In the *Romana* Valens is portrayed negatively, but not so explicitly as in the *Getica*. In the *Romana*, Valens, swayed by Arianism, persecutes the orthodox and even passes a law that commands monks to fight; he is cremated in the Battle of Adrianople by the Goths whom he had infected with heresy: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 302, pp. 38–39; chap. 312, p. 40; chap. 314, p. 40. Jordanes offers a much more explicit interpretation of this event in the *Getica*: Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. by Giunta and Grillone, xxvi.138, p. 60.

Augustulus in 476 as marking the end of the Western Empire.⁵⁴ And the decline continues. Concerning Anastasius (495–518), who is generally harmful to the state, Jordanes, in the *Romana*, adds: 'nor did he serve the laws of the church' ('ecclesiae iura').⁵⁵ Or, more specifically, sins committed by Justinian's army on the day of Holy Saturday lead to the Romans' stinging defeat against the Persians.⁵⁶

For the most part, this Christian slant to Roman history derives from Jordanes' close adherence to his sources. However, one example in which Jordanes differs slightly from the *Chronicle of Marcellinus* makes clear his interest in highlighting how the lack of Christian values has undermined the Roman state. Regarding the usurpation of the Nestorian Basiliscus against the late fifth-century emperor Zeno, the *Chronicle of Marcellinus* reports:

He [Basiliscus] boasted loudly before he could stand repentant. When Zeno was restored to his former empire Basiliscus was sent into exile with his son and his wife Zenonis, and in a village called Limnis in Cappadocia he wasted away with hunger and died.⁵⁷

Jordanes' account reads:

But by the will of God (*volente deo*), he [Basiliscus] boasted loudly before he could stand repentant. For when Zeno returned again to his own kingdom, he arranged for his [Marcus's (Basiliscus's son's)] exile and that of his father and mother, in a village, Lemnis, in Cappadocia. For since the love of god (*caritas dei*) and their neighbors had frozen in them, they were consumed by cold and lost their lives with their kingdom.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 345, p. 44: 'sic quoque Hesperium regnum Romanique populi principatum, quod septingentesimo nono urbis conditae anno primus Augustorum Octavianus Augustus tenere coepit, cum hoc Augustulo periit anno decessorum regni imperatorum quingentesimo vicesimo secundo.'

⁵⁵ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 359, p. 47: 'sicut nec ipse ecclesiae iura servavit.'

⁵⁶ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 363, p. 47: 'postea vero facientibus peccatis in die sabbati sancti paschae inito certamine, exercitui et non ducis instinctu in fluvio Eufrate, fugiens Parthos, Romanus numerosus ruit exercitus.'

⁵⁷ Marcellinus, *Chronicon*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 476, p. 91: 'ante inflatus crepuit quam paenitens stare potuerit. Basiliscus cum filio suo et cum Zenonida uxore sua, iam Zenone pristinum ad imperium remeante, in exilium missus est atque in oppidulo, quod Limnis in provincia Cappadociae dicitur, trusus fame extabuit' (trans. by Croke, p. 26).

⁵⁸ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen,

With only slight modifications to Marcellinus's account, Jordanes subtly adds a Christian interpretation. What happened was God's will and demonstrates that Christian morality is at work in the progression of events in Roman history — even if the consequences of that are a shrinking empire brought about by incompetent and immoral Christian rulers.

In addition to its impact on the 'arms' of the empire, however, Jordanes' introduction of Christianity also required him to add complexity to the meaning of law in the text. Although the term 'law' in the *Romana* most frequently refers to *Roman* law, Jordanes' narrative also tells of the origins of Christian, that is, Jewish, law.⁵⁹ This involves, on the one hand, the incorporation of the Jews as a people into the Roman Empire and, on the other, the appropriation of Jewish texts into Christianity.

Throughout the *Romana* Jordanes presents the Romans as confronted with lawless barbarians at their borders. The notable exception is the Jewish people, who are characterized as a political entity, complete with their own laws, the quintessential marker of civilization. For example, a series of entries taken from Jerome, although very abbreviated, pertaining to Moses' role among the Jews, may be compared to those describing the role of Numa Pompilius for the Romans. Moses is described as leading the Hebrew people ('populum Hebraeum') out of Egypt and laying down the law for them ('legem exponit') in the reign of Astacades.⁶⁰ That the Jews lived by their established laws is made explicit again later when we are told how Antiochus acts 'contra legem Iudaeorum' (against the law of the Jews) in the reign of Ptholomeus.⁶¹

chaps 342–43, p. 44: 'sed volente deo ante inflatus crepuit quam penitens stare potuerat. nam revertens Zenon rursus in regno proprio et eum et patrem et matrem in exilio oppidi Lemni provinciae Cappadociae destinavit. Ubi quia caritas dei et proximi in illos refrixerat, frigore consumpti sunt vitaeque cum regno amiserunt' (following the translation of Croke above).

⁵⁹ The issue of Christianity's relationship to Jews and Jewish law in particular is complex. While the church fathers were often dismissive of Jewish law, many, such as Tertullian and Origen, simultaneously expressed more positive attitudes. For Augustine, among other theologians, the Jews were necessary vestiges for Christianity: Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*; cf. Boustani, 'Augustine as Revolutionary?'; see also Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe*, pp. 110–20. For Christian concern with Jewish law in the context of the development of 'canon law', see Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity*, pp. 196–213, esp. 200–02. For the legal position of Jews in the Roman world (a combination of tolerating Jewish worship and persecuting Jews) see Rabello, 'The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman World'.

⁶⁰ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 28, p. 5, based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 1513 a. Chr., p. 43a.

⁶¹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 78, p. 9, based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 169 a. Chr., p. 139.

The Jews continue to function as a political unit, a persistent undercurrent, throughout the reigns of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Greeks, until finally, right before Augustus takes control, they are subsumed into the Roman Empire. While Cleopatra is ruling in Egypt, Jordanes reports that 'the Jews joining themselves in friendship with the Romans now live by their laws (*legibus*)'.⁶² This phrase is particularly interesting in that, although Jordanes' narrative follows that of Jerome's *Chronicle*, the reference to Roman law is Jordanes' own.⁶³ At this crucial juncture of history, when Augustus rules all peoples in a time of peace and Christ is born, Jewish history comes to an end; Christianity has superseded Judaism and the Jewish people cease to exist as a political entity.

As well as describing how Christ appeared on earth to fulfil Jewish scripture, Jordanes also indicates how Jewish scripture, in its concrete physical sense, became available for incorporation into Christianity. Throughout the *Romana*, both before and even after Augustus, Jordanes shows a particular interest in the composition and translation of Jewish scripture. Jordanes notes when the book of Esther and the book of Wisdom were composed.⁶⁴ He tells of how Aristobolus, a Jewish philosopher, wrote commentaries on the books of Moses.⁶⁵ Then, in no less than six passages, Jordanes records the translation of Scripture from Hebrew into Greek or the mysterious discovery of scriptures.⁶⁶

⁶² Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 84, p. 9: 'Cleopatra ann. XXII. qua regnante Iudaei in amicitias Romanorum se sociantes eorum iam legibus vivent, quia Pompeius regnum ab Aristobolo sublato Hircanum fratrem eius praefecerat'. The latter part of this phrase (regarding Pompey and Aristobulus) follows Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 67 a. Chr., p. 153.

⁶³ For 46 BC under the reign of Cleopatra, Jerome reports a senate decree confirming an alliance with the Jews: Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 46 a. Chr., p. 156: 'Decretum senatus, et Atheniensium ad Iudaeos mittitur, qui per legationem amicitiam postulant'. Already for 159 BC Jerome had reported that the Jewish king Judas Macabaeus sent legates to Rome and that the Roman senate had decreed the Jews to be friends and allies of the Romans: Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 159 a. Chr., pp. 141–42: 'legatos Romam dirigit; decrevitque senatus Iudaeos amicos et auxiliatores Romanorum habendos'.

⁶⁴ Book of Esther: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 68, p. 8, based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 405 a. Chr., p. 117; book of Wisdom: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 75, p. 9, based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 232 a. Chr., p. 133.

⁶⁵ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 78, p. 9, based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 176 a. Chr., p. 139.

⁶⁶ The first of these, taken from Jordanes' usual source, Jerome's *Chronicle*, records how the high priest of the Jews (*pontifex Iudaeorum*), Eleazarus, had the divine scriptures translated from Hebrew into Greek with the aid of seventy translators: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel orig-*

Five of these examples occur after the reign of Augustus and are taken from the Greek text of the fourth-century bishop Epiphanius, *On Measures and Weights* (Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν) — which Jordanes uses nowhere else in the *Romana*.⁶⁷

Again, Jordanes' interest in the language of Scripture reflects contemporary concerns; in 553 (shortly after Jordanes had completed the *Romana*) Justinian even intervened in Jewish disputes regarding the question whether Jews could read their holy scriptures in Greek rather than Hebrew.⁶⁸

To conclude: Jordanes' *Romana* attempts to project the political-religious landscape of the Age of Justinian back into the past. Roman arms and law are presented as the means by which Rome's enemies were subjugated and civilized, but the overarching framework is that of Christianity. Jordanes strives to create a Roman identity that has synthesized Jewish history and internalized Christian law; Christian and Roman pasts are manoeuvred into harmonious alignment.

Yet unlike the confident outlook of Justinianic propaganda, Jordanes has a much gloomier outlook on the future of the Roman Empire. The preceding centuries of Christian emperors have weakened the empire. Although Jordanes presents Justinian as an emperor striving to maintain the empire and describes his military conquests in favourable terms, Jordanes remains sceptical as to whether Justinian can stem the tide of decline.⁶⁹ He concludes by remarking:

ine actibusque gentis Romanorum, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 74, p. 8, based on Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. by Helm, a. 283 a. Chr., p. 129.

⁶⁷ Jordanes describes how a certain Aquila and a certain Symmachus, a Jewish proselyte (*proselitus Iudeorum*), made translations of the divine scriptures from Hebrew to Greek: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 270, p. 35; chap. 276, pp. 35–36. Another individual, Theodotion, compiles an edition of scripture, and two further editions of scripture are mysteriously found in jars: Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 277, p. 36; chap. 280, p. 36. Epiphanius's text describes each of these translations in greater depth: Epiphanius, *Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν* (*De mensuris et ponderibus*), ed. by Dindorf: Aquila: 13, p. 16; 15–16, pp. 18–19; Symmachus: 16, pp. 19–20; Theodotion: 17, pp. 20–21; translations found in wine jars: 18, pp. 21–23. Cf. the Syriac version Epiphanius, *De mensuris et ponderibus* (syr.), ed. by Dean: Aquila: 13, p. 29; 15–16, pp. 31–32; Symmachus: 16, pp. 32–33; Theodotion: 17, pp. 33–34; translations found in wine jars: 18, pp. 34–36.

⁶⁸ Justinian concluded that the texts could and should be read in any language understandable to those assembled: *Novellae*, ed. by Schöll and Kroll, CXLVI., pp. 714–18. For an introduction to these disputes see De Lange, 'Jews in the Age of Justinian', pp. 417–18.

⁶⁹ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by

These are the calamities of the Roman Republic in addition to the daily threats of the Bulgars, the Antes, and the Sclavi/Sclavini. Whoever wishes to know about them [the threats], let him unroll the annals and the consular list without scorn, and he will find the republic of our time worthy of a tragedy (*tragediae*). He [the reader] will know whence it [the Republic] began, in what way it grew, the manner in which it subjugated all lands to itself, and in what way it lost them again at the hands of ignorant rulers.⁷⁰

Through imperial ideology the Romans still 'ostensibly' rule over an empire; the Christian framework of empire with its arms and laws is still in place, but what this actually means on the ground is more uncertain.

Mommsen, chaps 363–87, pp. 47–52. In general it seems from Jordanes' presentation that the responsibility for the empire's decline does not rest with Justinian, but with his predecessors. A similar logic is found as part of Justinian's imperial ideology where Justinian faults earlier emperors for their failure to keep the empire together and notes the confusion of law before him. See Pazdernik, 'Justinianic Ideology and the Power of the Past'.

⁷⁰ Jordanes, *De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. by Mommsen, chap. 388, p. 52: 'Hi sunt casus Romanae rei publicae preter instantia cottidiana Bulgarum, Antium et Sclavinorum. que si quis scire cupit, annales consulumque seriem revolvat sine fastidio repperietque dignam nostri temporis rem publicam tragediae. scietque unde orta, quomodo aucta, qualiterve sibi cunctas terras subdiderit et quomodo iterum eas ab ignaris rectoribus amisit'.

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