Vandals, Romans and Berbers
New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa

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Edited by
A. H. MERRILS

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Acknowledgements

The genesis of the present collection was in a series of conference sessions under the broad title ‘Early Medieval Africa’, held at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in July 2000. For the organization of those sessions, and the subsequent determination to collect many of the papers together in published form, the present editor and the contributors to this volume are greatly indebted to Mark Handley. It was through his continued enthusiasm and support that the fascinating history of North Africa was given an appropriate platform at the Leeds conference, and eventually emerged as the present volume. The sessions themselves prompted lively and vigorous discussion over a number of days, and did a great deal to unite individuals working on disparate strands of North African history. Since those flagship sessions, the Leeds Congress has hosted a number of other panels devoted to North Africa within the early medieval period, thanks, in no small part, to the organization of Roland Steinacher and Walter Pohl.

While the origins of the present collection certainly lie in the Leeds sessions of 2000, the individual contributions come from a variety of sources. Several papers were first given at the ‘Vandals’ Colloquium at the Open University, organized by Richard Miles in the summer of 2001. Again, the discussion generated by this gathering, under the expert guidance of Dick Whittaker, reflected the growing fascination for matters North African. Other papers arose more tangentially from the conferences themselves, but all reflect a vibrant new interest in early medieval Africa.

It is one of the privileges of the editor to be able to offer thanks to individuals who have been particularly helpful in the compilation of a volume. In the present case, I must express especial gratitude to a number of people, all of whom have displayed great patience and understanding as the collection which follows emerged. My thanks are due primarily, of course, to the contributors, who suffered my endless badgering for references or corrections, and coped with shifting deadlines, with admirable aplomb. The Department of Prehistory at The British Museum kindly provided the photograph for the front cover of the volume, and I am also grateful to The Darwin Press for allowing reproduction of excerpts from Elizabeth Savage’s *A Gateway to Hell, A Gateway to Paradise. The North African Response to the Arab Conquest* (1997), and to Frank Cass and Company Ltd. for allowing reproduction of passages from Robert Montagne’s *The Berbers: Their Social and Political Organisation* (1973).

John Smedley, at Ashgate Press supported the project throughout, and offered
invaluable advice. Mike Clover lent his expert opinion on matters Vandalic and otherwise, and has been a huge source of support. For advice regarding compilation, contributions and various complications, I am also very grateful to Simon Loseby, Rosamond McKitterick, Walter Pohl, Eric Blaum and Dick Whittaker.

King’s College, Cambridge kindly supported me throughout this project, and I owe a particular debt to Stefan Hoesel-Uhlig and the members of the ‘History and Theory of Description’ Group. Finally, I offer my deepest thanks to J.R-B, for endless discussions of post-colonialism, North Africa, and for far more besides.
Chapter 8

The So-called *Laterculus Regum Vandalorum et Alanorum*:
A Sixth-century African Addition to Prosper Tiro’s Chronicle?¹

*Roland Steinacher*

In 1898 Theodor Mommsen identified three manuscript fragments as the remains of a more detailed chronicle of the Vandal kingdom. Mommsen found these fragments in four codices: Par. Lat. 4860, which he defined as a copy of a so called *Augiensis*,² Matr. univ. 134 from Madrid, Codex No. 223 from Augsburg and Codex Osmensis, known only from descriptions. In his edition of the *Laterculus Regum Vandalorum et Alanorum*, which he distinguished from the chronicle of Prosper, Mommsen suggested that the text was composed as a separate chronicle. Holder-Egger had not recognized this independence in his own examination of Prosper’s Chronicle, written shortly before Mommsen’s edition. Scholarship since Mommsen has used only this edition in the *Chronica Minora* III and has valued the text chiefly for its supposed use of diplomas and hence the precision of its dating.

This chapter argues that the text of the Laterculus did not originate in diplomas, but belonged to an African version of Prosper’s chronicle. I propose a new edition, which puts the text back in its original context. Rather than looking for ‘good’ and ‘bad’ texts according to nineteenth-century categories, I try to analyse the specific character of each manuscript under consideration.


The starting point for any such study must be the edition provided by Mommsen in the *Chronica Minora* III. Introducing his edition, Mommsen discusses the manuscripts he used for his work:


The fifteenth-century Codex 223 in the Staats- and Stadtbibliothek Augsburg was not analysed, given that the versions of the chronicles of Eusebius/Jerome and Prosper were taken from Par. Lat. 4860, and the text is nearly identical in each. Consequently, the codex is chiefly of interest for the history of scholarship because Heinrich Canisius used it for his edition of Prosper. The codex Osmensis used by Villanueva in his ‘*Viage literaro à las iglesias de España*’ is lost, although the transcriptions made at the time were used. For the following work, however, the codices from Paris and Madrid were most important.

**THE NINTH-CENTURY VERSION OF PARIS, BN FONDS LAT. 4860**

The text called *Laterculus Regum Vandalorum et Alanorum* by Mommsen is situated on a single page (fol. 49v). The text takes up about two thirds of this page. On fol. 49r the chronicle of Prosper in the version of *Prosper Augustanus* is written. Quire 6 ends with fol. 49bis immediately after the text of the Laterculus. The chronicle of Cassiodorus is written on the following quire. After the entry for King Geilamer there is some free space on the parchment. In this edition medieval

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contractions are phased out and emendations are surrounded by square brackets. The medieval spelling was not changed, the e-caudatae, for example, not corrected to ae. Names of places and persons are capitalized. The paragraphs of the edition follow the columns of the manuscript. The specific variations of Augsburg Codex 223 are mentioned in the footnotes and taken from Mommsen’s edition. UUandalii written in this way corresponds with the manuscript. Vandalii is the usual Latin form, but the scribe wanted to pronounce it Wandali. W is not used before the eleventh century. The double u is the usual sound notation. Contemporary authentic records are rare, but an obvious example is the inscription on a silver bowl of King Gelimer: Geilamir Rex Vandalorum et Alanorum.

The names of the consuls Theodosius and Festus, the bishop Eugenius, the martyr Agileus, the emperors Avitus and Valens are written in the form familiar from other sources. Carthago (as a noun and as an adjective) and the province of Africa correspond to other sources. But the bishop Bonifatius is written Bonefacius. The names of the Vandal kings are not consistent. One can find Geisericus and Geisiricus, Hunerix and Henerici (but two times the correct genitive Henerici), Guntamundus, Gento, Hiltirix and Geilamer.

Edition I: The Reichenau Version from Par. Lat. 4860, Fol. 49v

Post consulatum Theodosii XVII et Festi: Geisericus UUandalorum rex Carthaginem ingressus est die XIII Kalendas Nouembris. Qui regnavit in eadem Africa civitate annis XXXVII mensibus III diebus VI.

Post hunc regnavit Hunerix filius eius annis VII mensibus X diebus XXVIII. Qui in fine anni VII regni sui catholice ecclesie persecutionem fecit omnesque ecclesias clausit et cunctos domini catholicos sacerdotes cum Eugenio Carthaginensi episcoxo exilio religavit. Qui Dei iudicio scatens vermibus vitam finivit.


X autem anno regni sui ecclesias catholicorum aperuit et omnes Dei sacerdotes petente Eugenio Carthaginensi episcoxo de exilio revocavit. Quae ecclesiae

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9 19 October.
10 Augustanus 223: eandem africanam civitatem.
11 Augustanus 223: dies XVIII.
12 Augustanus 223: filium.
13 Augustanus 223: praecipit.
14 Augustanus 223: carthaginensi.
fuerunt clause annos X mensibus VI diebus V.\textsuperscript{15} Hoc est ab VIII anno Henerici, id est ex die VII Idus Februarii, usque in X annum regis Guntamundi in die III Idus Augusti in quo completi sunt supra dicti anni X menses VI dies V. Qui memoratus Guntamundus rex postmodum vixit annos II mensem I.
Post quem regnavit Trasamundus Gentunis filius annos XXVI menses VIII dies IIII. Ab exordio ergo imperii Aviti usque annum XXVI Trasamundi..........................XVIII. A XIII autem anno imperii et morte Valentis usque in annum XXVI Trasamundi anni sunt CXVIII.
Post quem regnavit Hiltirix\textsuperscript{16} filius Hunericci annos VIII dies VIII.\textsuperscript{17} Qui in exordio regni sui Bonefacium episcopum apud Carthaginem in ecclesia sancti Agilei ordinari praecipit et omnibus catholicis libertate[m] restituit.
Quo regnante adsumpta tyrannide Geilamer regnum eius invadit in quo fecit annos III menses III. Qui tanta homicidia scelestus commisit, ut nec parentibus parceret.

Fiunt ergo ab exordio regni Geisirici regis usque ad exitum UUandalorum anni XCIII menses X dies XI.
Ab interitu ergo Valentis quod erat\textsuperscript{18} in XIII anno regni eius usque ad supra dictum tempus sunt anni CLIII.
Collecta ergo omnium\textsuperscript{19} summa annorum ab Adam usque ad UUandalorum perditionem fiunt anni VdccXXXIII.

THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY MADRID VERSION OF A PROSPER EPITOME TAKEN FROM A CODEX OF THE BIBLIOTECA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE, CODEX 134

In this codex the text is situated on fol. 47v and is separated at the beginning of the computus following Jerome (\textit{Colliguntur a principio mundi ...}) with a chapter sign from the epitome of Prosper’s text. Immediately after \textit{Gheilamir in fugam verso postea capto} the \textit{Chronica maiora} of Isidore is written: \textit{Seriem temporum per generationes (...).} The S is done as a Fleuronnée and takes up five lines.

The text is not further structured. In the edition which follows, the text written immediately before the \textit{Laterculus Regum Vandalorum et Alanorum} is also included. Passages from Prosper are italicized. The citations from Prosper are identified in the footnotes so that one can study the work of the medieval scribe producing an epitome.

Medieval spelling is not changed. \textit{Affrica} is unusual, but used consistently by this scribe. The scribe is not familiar with the Vandal kings, Huneric is called

\begin{itemize}
\item[15] Augustanus 223: \textit{annis XI}.
\item[16] Augustanus 223: \textit{hildrix}.
\item[17] Emendation following Courtois, \textit{Les Vandales}, pp. 405ff.: \textit{annis VII dies VIII}.
\item[18] Augustanus 223: \textit{quod erat} not written.
\item[19] Augustanus 223: \textit{omnis}.
\end{itemize}
Hugneribus, Hilderic once Hildrix and later Hildericus, Geiseric mostly Geisericus, but once in the epitome Gersericus. UUandalis is consistently used in this Spanish codex as well.

**Edition II: The Madrid Version from Matr. Univ. 134**

Valentinianus regno potitur Occidentis et decreto Theodosii Augustus appellatur. 20 Gens UUandalorum ab Ispania Affricam transit. 21 Augustinus episcopus moritur VIIIo anno ante ingressum Carthaginis. 22 Pax cum UUandalis facta data ad habitandum per Trigetium Ipponie regie. 23 Rex Geisericus intra habitations suae limites volens catholicam fidei Arriana impietate subvertere quosdam nostrorum episcopos, eatenus persecutus est, ut eos privatos iure basilicarum suarum etiam civitatibus polleret. 24 Valentinianus filiam Theodosii in matrimonio accipit. 25 Per idem tempus IIII Hispaniae viri Archadius, Probus, Paschasius et Euticius in Arriam sectam transire nolentes diversis mortibus interempti illustri martyrio mirabiliter occubuerunt. Puer autem Paulillus nomine frater Paschasii et Euticii pro catholica fide ad infimam servitutem dampnatus est. 26 Gersericus tribus annis Ypone regio exemptis Cartagine occupat sub die XIIII kalendas Novembris omnesque opes eius exercratiis diverso tormentorum genere civibus in suum ius vertit. Ecclesias expoliavit ut iam non divini cultus loca sed suorum esse in [habi]tacula iussit universum captivi populi ordinem saevus, sed praecipue nobilitati et religioni infensus ut non discerneteretur, hominibus magis an Deo bellum intulisset. 28 Eo tempore archidiaconus urbis Rome Leo nomine gaudenti patria Romane ecclesie episcopus ordinatur. 29 Cum Geiserico autem Valentiniano Augusto pax confirmata certis spatium Affrica inter utrumque divisa est. 30

Colliguntur a principio mundi usque ad novissimum annum Trasamundi anni VDCCVIII hoc modo: ab Adam usque ad Abraham anni IIIICLXXXIII a nativitate Abrahe usque ad vocationem anni LXXXV a prefato anno promission[iis] Abrahe usque ad exitum Israhel de Egipto anni CCCC.XXX

21 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1295, p. 472.
22 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1304, p. 473: Aurelius Augustinus episcopus per omnia excellentissimus moritur V. kl. Sept., (...).
23 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1321, p. 474.
24 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1327, p. 475: The names of the most famous of these bishops Posidius, Severianus and Novatus were not mentioned by the compiler. Instead of polleret Mommsen used pelleret.
25 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1328, p. 475: Valentinianus Augustus ad Theodosium principem Constantinopolim profiscitur filiamque eius in matrimonium accipit.
26 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1329, p. 475.
27 My emendation: sub die XIII kalendas Novembris.
28 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1339, p. 477: my emendation: tacula as written in the Matr. univ. 134 does not exist as a Latin word, habitacula as in Prosper is preferred.
29 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1341, p. 478.
30 See Mommsen, Chronica Minora, I, 1347, p. 479.
Moyses in heremo fuit anni XL
Isuue in terrae promiseionis anni XXVII
sub iudiciis anni sunt CCLXXXVIII
sub Hely saecrato anni XL
in regno Saul anni XL
a David usque ad transmigrationem Babilonis anni sunt CCCCLXXXV
a transmigratione Babilonis usque ad nativitatem domini nostri Iesu Christi anni DLXXXVII dominus Iesus Christus hic in corpore positus annis XXXIII
a passione domini usque ingressum UUandalorum Cartagine anni CCCCXXXIII.

Geisericus rege\textsuperscript{31} in Africca annos XXVII menses II. Hugneribus filius eius rege\textsuperscript{32} Cartagine annos VII menses X. Guntamundus nepos ex filio Geiserici Gentune regnavit Cartagine annos XI menses VIII. Trasamundus frater Guntamundi regnavit apud Cartaginem annos XXVI menses IX ac sic agitur hodie LXXXIII anni ab ingressu Cartaginis. Deinde Hildrix Hucnerici filius, Geiserici atque nepos regnavit Cartagine annos VII diebus XIIII. Gheilamir tirранide assumpta Hilderico regno pulso eiusque origine truncata dominatus est Afris anni III menses III. Ingressus est Belisarius magister militiae cum exercitu Orientis Cartaginem sub die [XVII] kalendas Octobris.\textsuperscript{33} Gheilamir in fugam verso postea capto.

\textbf{ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND THE TEXT}

First we have to consider whether the dates given in the texts edited above are really so unique as the scholarly tradition has assumed them to be. Vandal regnal dating provides the chronological framework for both versions. In the chronicle of Prosper which appears immediately before the Laterculus in Par. Lat. 4860, consular annals are used for dating. The chancellories of Germanic \textit{regna} used the Roman calendar for dating the day. The chancellories of the Burgundian King Sigsimund and the Gothic King Alaric II both used regnal years, which appeared between the day and the place of production.\textsuperscript{34} The two diplomas of the Vandal King Huneric included within the \textit{Historia} of Victor of Vita were also dated using the king’s regnal years:

\textsuperscript{31} In the manuscript \textit{rege} can be identified. This is part of a so called shortened \textit{ablativus absolutus}. A single noun or participium can be a complete \textit{ablativus absolutus}. See H.-J. Glücklich, R. Nickel and P. Petersen, \textit{Interpretatio. Neue lateinische Textgrammatik} (Würzburg, 1980), p. 79.

\textsuperscript{32} The same shortened \textit{ablativus absolutus}!


On the Tablettes Albertini, the date is given in the same way. Merovingian diplomas bear such a date, but also an *apprecatio*. The ostensible similarity of the dating clause in the Laterculus and in Merovingian diplomas is responsible for a widespread misconception about the origins of the former. Schmidt characterizes the text from Matr. univ. 134 as ‘addenda important for us’. In his opinion, the text must have been written after the fall of the Vandal kingdom, but its sources must have been ‘older, very reliable and exact records’. By this, of course, Schmidt meant diplomas. Christian Courtois argued that the Laterculus could have been written by a cleric during the Byzantine occupation of Africa. He considered the reference to the persecution of Hilderic and the note concerning Gelimer in the Reichenau text to be evidence that the text could not be a direct product of the royal chancellery. Courtois also suggested, however, that the passage in the Madrid version, in which Gelimer first tries to escape and is then captured by Belisarius’ troops, must have resulted from the author’s use of official documents from the royal chancellery. He assumed that such exact dates could only be taken from diplomas. This, however, cannot be proven.

The next obvious question is whether the Laterculus is really so unique within our written tradition, and why scholars have been so sure that diplomas must have formed the basis for the text. The answer to both questions is found in examining the edition of Mommsen. The two volumes of the *Chronica Minora* contain a great deal of material related to the Laterculus. After his edition of the so-called *Epitome Carthaginensis*, Mommsen notes of our text: *Sequitur laterculus regum Wandalorum cum similibus editus.* Mommsen identifies a similarity to king lists and especially to the *Laterculus regum Visigothorum*.

The term *Laterculus* was generally used since Tertullian to signify a list or a register. The *Notitia Dignitatum* contains the *Laterculum maius*, a register of all military and civilian offices used by the *primicerius notariorum*, who issued the employment contracts for these offices. It is very likely that the *Laterculum maius* was a kind of card index. Since Theodosius I, the *Laterculum minus* was used in the East. Titles and responsibilities of tribunes, prefects and other offices were recorded there. Later the *quaestor sacri palatii* used it for employment contracts. There were officers called *laterculenses* responsible for these records.

The *Laterculus regum Visigothorum* is a list of kings beginning with Athanaric, which was added to the codex of Visigothic law, and was probably written in

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36 Courtois et al., *Tablettes Albertini*, pp. 82ff.
emulation of the emperors’ list in the Codex Theodosianus. In many manuscripts the list is entitled *Chronica regum Visigothorum*. In this case, however, the very name *Laterculus* was Mommsen’s own addition. The nineteenth-century title *Laterculus Regum VVandalorum et Alanorum* was chosen by Mommsen and does not appear in the manuscript tradition. This is very important to note, as Mommsen’s nineteenth-century designation has been employed several times as evidence for the use of the title *Rex Vandalorum et Alanorum* in the fifth century. In fact, the title is only documented in the two diplomas in Victor of Vita’s text and in an inscription from the period of King Gelimer.

The context of the so-called *Laterculus Regum VVandalorum et Alanorum* is also very different from the Laterculi mentioned above. It is a local continuation of Prosper’s chronicle and differs from it only in its system of dating. There are several late antique chronicles that do not use the dating system of the consular annals, including John of Biclarum, the Spanish continuator of Victor of Tunnuna. This chronicler, educated in Constantinople and writing in Spain, used the regnal dates of both the eastern emperors and the Visigothic kings. Marcellinus Comes drew on the consular annals as well, but also used the indiction for the first time. The Gallic *Chronicon imperiale* used only the years of the eastern and western emperors. Conspicuously, John of Biclarum and Marcellinus Comes both produced their chronicles in the second half of the sixth century and the Gallic *Chronicon imperiale* ends with the year 511. These chronicles were thus written in the same period as the Laterculus and belong to the same genre. The chronological

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dating of the Laterculus is not unusual, therefore, and there is no reason why this text in particular should be thought to be dependent upon diplomas.

Prior to Mommsen’s edition in 1898, scholars did not regard the Reichenau version as an independent text. The fifteenth-century Augsburg version of Prosper’s chronicle (in the above mentioned Codex 223) was treated at length by the early nineteenth-century scholar Felix Papencordt. In this work, Papencordt used the Prosper edition of Thomas Roncallius, dating from 1787 and printed in Passau. In this eighteenth-century edition the section later isolated by Mommsen and entitled ‘Laterculus’ was printed without any special separation from Prosper’s text. Papencordt had interpreted it as an appendix dealing with the history of the Vandal kings and noted the rather exact dates used. He was fully aware that Prosper’s chronicle was repeatedly revised and augmented with elements of local significance in late Antiquity. As a result, therefore, Papencordt effectively regarded the final sequence of the Augsburg version as a local continuation of Prosper’s chronicle. His conclusions were thus very near to the results presented in this paper.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

The first date given in the Reichenau version is the 13th day of the calendae in November after the 17th consulate of Theodosius and Festus. The Madrid version offers the 14th day of the calendae of the same month, without specifying a consulate, and in a part taken directly from Prosper’s text. Confusing the Roman numerals III and IIII is the most common error in the Madrid manuscript.

The great persecution, persecutio catholicae ecclesiae, is dated to the end of the seventh year of Huneric’s reign. This would mean the year 484 AD.

In the third year of Gunthamund the text speaks of restoring Eugenius as archbishop of Carthage. In his tenth year the Catholic churches were opened again. These dates would refer to 487 and 494 AD respectively. Thus the churches would

have been closed for ten years, six months and five days. Eugenius is made bishop of Carthage in 480–81, after the diocese has been vacant for 24 years. He is given the first position in the *Notitia Proviciarum* for Africa Proconsularis.50

The entry on King Thrasamund (496–523) in the Reichenau version is particularly insubstantial. For the most part, two dates are used to fix the regnal years of the Vandal kings: the beginning of the reign of Emperor Avitus (455–56) and the fourteenth year of the reign of Valens (364–78) – namely the battle of Adrianople in 378. These two dates 455 and 378 are used as a basis for calculating to the 26th year of Thrasamund’s reign. The second of these calculations is, in fact, in error and gives the year 496 – the first year of Thrasamund’s rule. The scribe or the copyist would thus seem to have confused the first and the 26th years of the king’s reign.

The Reichenau manuscript has a gap here. At the right end of the parchment the numeral XVIII is written with another, lighter pen. Courtois proposes that the numeral LXVIII had been initially written in the gap. Sixty-eight years, obviously, is the period between the beginning of Avitus’ reign in 455 and the 27th year of Thrasamund’s reign in 523.51 But Courtois overlooked the fact that the gap in the text is much bigger than the numeral L. Why did the mid ninth-century Reichenau scribe omit a part of the text? Only two thirds of fol. 49v are filled, so it was not lack of expensive parchment. Neither is there a hand change. The scribe copied from a longer version and only used the information which seemed valuable to him. He had started to create a new text, but did not finish his work.

The Madrid version states that only 84 years had passed between the capture of Carthage and Thrasamund’s accession to the throne: *Trasamundus frater Guntamundi regnavit apud Cartaginem annos XXVI menses IX ac sic agitur hodie LXXXIIII anni ab ingressu Cartaginis*. The Madrid version begins by speaking of *hodie* and of the *novissimus annus Trasamundi*. 5708 years passed from the creation of the world up to this event.

The above-mentioned years in the Reichenau version do not only refer to the emperors, but are also linked to the end of Jerome’s chronicle in 378 and the first continuation of Prosper’s chronicle in 455. The continuation of Prosper is written in Par. Lat. 4860 as in Augustanus No. 223.52

Felix Papencordt believed there were two phases in the creation of the pattern of the Reichenau version. The first phase would be the 27th year of Thrasamund’s reign, the second would have taken place after the fall of the Vandal Kingdom. His point was that from these two dates the original scribe calculated back to the end of Jerome’s chronicle and the beginning of Prosper’s.53 The MGH editor Oswald Holder-Egger argued against Papencordt and suggested that the restitution of ecclesiastical rights by King Hilderic would have been a reason to start a new

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52 Holder-Egger, ‘Untersuchungen über einige annalistische Quellen’, p. 47.
calculation before his reign.\textsuperscript{54} With respect to the Reichenau version, indeed, this theory is plausible, given that the text effectively takes the Vandal kings as a framework for an ecclesiastical history. Although Papencordt was unaware of the Madrid version, the Spanish text gives strong evidence for a compilation in two phases with the entries novissimum annum Trasamundi and ac sic agitur hodie. Given that the Madrid version was part of an epitome, only the chronological framework was copied, with little additional information. The ninth-century Reichenau scribe used more of the original text, but he changed the text in such a way that Papencordt was able to deduce the original two phases only from the fragmentary entry on Thrasamund. The Reichenau version gives a detailed account of the closing of the African churches and the return of the shrine of St Agileus to the Catholics. The complete list of Vandal kings is used as a framework around which the history of the African Church and its metropolitans is built. This structure can be seen in the longer and more narrative Reichenau version. There is no doubt that the text originally had a local African background, and that the Carolingian compiler created a new structure, perhaps highlighting the ecclesiastical history as a parallel framework. Holder-Egger’s objection that the restitution of ecclesiastical rights by King Hilderic would have been a reason to start a new calculation before his reign can be rejected on the basis of the Madrid version.\textsuperscript{55} Holder-Egger’s idea – that it was ecclesiastical, rather than political events which formed the framework for the work – was thus based on the ninth-century concept.

At the end of the Reichenau version another calculation is made. From the beginning of Geiseric’s reign (exordium) to the destruction of the Vandal kingdom (exitium) the text provides 93 years, 10 months and 11 days. From the death of Valens (ab interitu ergo Valentis) to the supra dictum end of the kingdom the number given is 154 years. This timeframe stretches from 378 to 532. The last date integrates the text again into Prosper’s world chronicle with the 5733 years from Adam to the perishing of the Vandals. Summed up, the regnal years in the Reichenau version result in 94 years, 10 months and 27 days. The end of Vandal reign would be the 15 September 534, the first anniversary of Belisarius’ capture of Carthage.

Courtois disputes the dates for Hilderic’s reign and prefers the information provided by Procopius and Victor of Tunnuna, both of whom state that the king ruled for seven years and several months. Courtois thus proposes an emendation for the Reichenau version: Instead of annos VIII dies VIII he suggests annos VII dies VIII on the assumption that the scribe may have confused the similar numerals.\textsuperscript{56} Again the Madrid version supports this argument. There, the length of Hilderic’s reign is once more given as seven years. The total of 93 years would thus be correct, and 533 AD would be the year of the end of the Vandal kingdom.

\textsuperscript{54} Holder-Egger, ‘Untersuchungen über einige annalistische Quellen’, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{55} Holder-Egger, ‘Untersuchungen über einige annalistische Quellen’, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{56} Courtois, \textit{Les Vandales}, pp. 405ff.
The Reichenau version’s sum of 93 years, 10 months and 11 days still has a discrepancy of 16 days in its addition of the dates; a point which Courtois also explains. Counted from 19 October 439, 30 August 533 appears as the date for the end of the Vandal reign within the Reichenau text. This might be equated with the date of debarkation of Belisarius’ troops on the African shore. Procopius writes in his history of the Vandal War that the Byzantine campaign lasted for 16 days.\textsuperscript{57}

The starting point for this argument is that Belisarius captured Carthage on 15 September. Papencordt made this suggestion, bearing in mind the date of St Cyprian’s Day on 14 September.\textsuperscript{58} Procopius notes that on St. Cyprian’s Eve the Arian priests prepared the church of this saint in Carthage. Ammatas, the king’s brother, marched against the Byzantines on the 13th. In the afternoon the battle against King Gelimer took place. Belisarius spent the night of 13 to 14 September at Decimum. The following day he arrived at Carthage and ordered the army to erect a camp there. On 15 September Belisarius captured Carthage.\textsuperscript{59}

The Madrid version identifies 14 September as the day Carthage was captured. \textit{Ingressus est Belisarius magister militiae cum exercitu Orientis Cartaginem sub die XVIII kalendae Octobris.} Bearing in mind the dates of Procopius, this date should be changed to \textit{XVII kalendae Octobris}.\textsuperscript{60} Again the scribe was confused by the numerals. The Reichenau version does not name Belisarius at all.

With respect to other dates, the Reichenau version seems to be more exact and also provides the lengths of Vandal reigns in days. The Madrid version only numbers the months. However some dates vary significantly in the two versions. There is a difference of one month regarding Geiseric’s reign (Reichenau: three months; Matr.: two), for Huneric the same discrepancy is seen, the length given for Gunthamund’s reign also differs by a month (Reichenau: nine months; Matr. eight) and Thrasamund’s reign is one month longer in the Madrid version than in the Reichenau version. Matr. univ. 134 allows seven years for King Hilderic, but the Reichenau text prefers eight. For Gelimer the dates are the same. The date of the end of Vandal rule is included only in the Madrid version.

The Madrid version seems to be taken from an addition to Prosper, which was twice revised, as has been discussed. The versions from Paris and Madrid derive from the same sixth-century African textual tradition. This does not imply a canonical or fixed text. A complete reconstruction of this primary text is not possible. Information about this text is not transmitted in any other sources. The African continuation of Prosper’s chronicle (which was also treated as such by Mommsen) cannot be separated from the appendix discussed here. Moreover, the compilators of the ninth and tenth centuries did not use the text in isolation.


\textsuperscript{58} Papencordt, \textit{Geschichte der vandalischen Herrschaft}, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{59} Procopius, \textit{BV.}, I.21.

\textsuperscript{60} See also Schmidt, \textit{Die Wandalen}, p. 139, n. 2.
Analysing the manuscripts is not enough. In an effort to gain a better understanding of its form, the text needs to be compared with parallel sources on Vandal Africa.

**The day Geiseric captured Carthage**

The exact date of Geiseric’s raid on Carthage is given in the Reichenau version as *Post consulatum Theodosii XVII et Festi* and was shortened in Mommsen’s edition to *Post consulatum Theodosii et Festi*. Prosper Tiro mentions the capture of Carthage on the 14th of the calenda of November 439. Most of the Prosper manuscripts contain this date of 19 October as the day Carthage was taken by the Vandals. Furthermore, Prosper mentions that from 146 BC the town was a Roman one for 585 years. Marcellinus Comes takes up the same day and year. Hydatius provides 19 October in the fifteenth year of the reign of Valentinian III. Cassiodorus’ chronicle contains the same year but no day. The seventh-century Byzantine *Chronicon Paschale* dates by the month Hyperberetaeus – October – and the consulate of Theodosius XVII et Festus, as well as by the 31st year and the seventh indiction of Theodosius II’s reign. There is an agreement among these different sources concerning the year but they differ in the specific day given. The date of 19 October is important because King Geiseric used it for dating some of his coins. Mommsen tried to base his argument for a general chronology for the Vandal kingdom upon the Madrid version’s *ab ingressu Carthaginis*.

**HUNERIC THE CRUEL PERSECUTOR AND HIS PUNISHMENT**

The Reichenau version contains five details concerning King Huneric’s *persecutio* at the end of the seventh year of his reign. The great persecution started, all Catholic

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61 Courtois, *Les Vandales*, p. 171, n. 4 seems to know only Mommsen’s edition. He argues that the *post* should not be taken to serious because this would be contradictory to the other sources. The meaning proposed by Courtois for the *post* is: ‘immediately after the consulate’ (‘après l’accession au consulat de Théodose et de Festus’). The *post* is used by the scribe for many entries.

62 Prosper, 1339. The exact date *XIII kal. Nov.* was written in six manuscripts used for the MGH edition. The version of Prosper’s chronicle in Par. Lat. 4860 (manuscript R in Mommsen’s edition) contains neither the day nor the duration of Roman government in Carthage.

63 Marcellinus Comes, 439 AD.

64 Hydatius, n. 304, a.439.

65 Cassiodorus, *Variae*, T. Mommsen and L. Traube (eds), MGH, AA XII (Berlin, 1894), 1231.

66 *Chronicon Paschale*, L. Dindorf (ed.), Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn, 1832), Olympiad 304, ad 439.

67 Fichtenau, ‘‘Politische’ Datierungen’’, p. 189.

churches were closed and many priests together with bishop Eugenius were exiled. The main source for these events is, of course, Victor of Vita’s history, but we have to look further for a text that parallels the information given by the Reichenau version. Victor of Tunnuna and Marcellinus Comes report on Huneric’s persecution. Victor of Vita and the Passio beatissimorum Martyrum take up the story that King Huneric died ‘gnawed by worms’ (scatens vermibus vitam suam finivit). The final part of the Historia Persecutionis contains the story that worms grew in the body of the living king, that he started to rot and that only parts of his body were buried.69 Most of the nineteenth-century editors thought this part of the Historia to be a late medieval interpolation. In Chapters 64 to 70 Victor gives a theological interpretation of these events as an African cry for help towards the Catholic world and to return to an event out of its historical context seems strange. The sudden reference to the Donatists and to the otherwise unknown Nicasius further confuses the final sequence of Victor’s history. Analysing the manuscripts provided insufficient grounds for identifying an interpolation, so many scholars tried to interpret the strange story of Huneric’s death as a late medieval addition.70 The story of a persecutor riven with worms, rotting and being buried in parts is in fact derived from biblical and Greek tradition. The death of King Antiochos Epiphanes in the second book of Maccabees and the punishment of King Herodes Agrippa in the Acts of the Apostles are the most important examples of these images in Jewish and Christian literature. The motif first appeared in Herodotus’ fourth book and reached a Greek, Roman and Jewish-Christian audience. Victor of Vita’s account may also be associated with a more recent tradition, beginning with Lactantius’ report on the death of the Emperor Galerius in his De mortibus persecutorum. Cassiodorus’ Historia Tripartita contains the story of the uncle of Julian the Apostate, also named Julian, who violated the church at Antioch and was punished in the same way. Each of these late antique accounts used the biblical tradition and recreated it; Victor’s final sequence is part of a fifth-century text.71

In manuscripts the Passio septem monachorum is always written together with Victor’s history. The text describes the martyrdom of seven monks in southern

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Byzacena. Within it, Huneric’s death is outlined in a way very similar to that included in the Reichenau text. *Qui tamen dei iudicio post non multos dies turpissima morte praeventus scatens vermibus exspiravit*. The *iudicium dei* derives from the theological systems of Cyprian of Carthage, Eusebius, Orosius and Augustine. In the chronicle of Victor of Tunnuna, King Huneric dies in the same way as Arius the heretic when his bowels burst out of his body. Isidore of Seville took up this version word for word. Gregory of Tours used few sources for Vandal history as can be seen from his identification of a certain Guneric as the successor of King Thrasamund. Nevertheless, Gregory reports that Huneric was possessed by a demon and mangled himself: the motif of Huneric’s strange death was known in sixth-century Gaul.

GUNTHAMUND AND THE ARIAN-CATHOLIC DÉTENTE

Huneric had two brothers, Theoderic and Genton. Genton was a son of Geiseric, mentioned by Procopius and Victor of Vita. In an effort to secure the succession of his own sons, Huneric initiated a purge of his relatives. Theoderic’s wife and her eldest son were executed, Theoderic and Genton’s son Godagis both died in exile. Genton’s sons Gunthamund and Thrasamund survived and subsequently succeeded to the throne. The Reichenau version reports that King Gunthamund restored the shrine of Agileus to the Catholics and that bishop Eugenius was allowed to return to Carthage during his reign; the only text to contain this information. The reopening of the Catholic churches and the return of the exiled clergymen after an intervention of Eugenius are dated precisely. The churches had been closed for ten years, six months and five days: from 7 February (*VII Idus Februarii*) of the eighth year of Huneric’s reign (484 AD) to 10 August (*III Idus Augusti*) of the tenth year of Gunthamund’s reign (494 AD). The dates are even repeated again. This information shows that the scribe who produced the original text used also sources unknown to us.

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73 Schwarcz, ‘Bedeutung und Textüberlieferung der Historia Persecutionis’, p. 117.
75 Isidore of Seville, *Historia*, T. Mommsen (ed.), MGH, AA, XI (Berlin, 1894), c.79
Victor of Tunnuna mentions only that Gunthamund recalled the exiled clergy immediately after having become king (qui nostros protinus de exilio revocavit).\textsuperscript{81} Schmidt interpreted the Reichenau version’s omnes Dei sacerdotes as ‘the rest of the orthodox clergy, held back for specific reasons’. He also totally rejects Victor of Tunnuna’s account.\textsuperscript{82} Courtois, however, suggested that only laymen were allowed to return immediately, on the grounds that the Reichenau text suggests that Eugenius was excluded from the Carthage until 487 AD. The clerics returned in 494 AD. In 487 AD the shrine of Agileus was returned, but the Catholic churches were not opened again until 10 August 494.\textsuperscript{83}

The martyr Agileus was killed during one of the persecutions in Carthage shortly before the Edict of Milan in 311. His name appears variously as Ageleus, Agilegius and Galeus in medieval manuscripts. His feast was dated 25 January in the Carthaginian calendar and in the martyrology of Jerome. The Roman martyrology uses 15 October.\textsuperscript{84} The basilica and the cemetery (cymeterium sancti martyris Agilei) were apparently highly regarded in Carthage and the populace awaited Fulgentius and the other clergy returning from exile in front of the martyr’s basilica.\textsuperscript{85} The great synod held on 5 February 525 with 60 bishops took place in secretario basilicae sancti martyris Agilei.\textsuperscript{86} The grave of Agileus with the church was situated outside Carthage near the sea. Some of his relics were sent to Pope Gregory the Great by Archbishop Dominicus of Carthage in 601.\textsuperscript{87} The church at Bir el Knissia south-east of Carthage has been identified as the shrine of Agileus, but this is far from certain.\textsuperscript{88} It is striking that the church and the cemetery of Agileus are mentioned twice in the Reichenau version.

Eugenius was made bishop of Carthage in 480–81 and was the first to hold the office for 25 years, since the death of Bishop Deogratias in 456–57. Given that

\textsuperscript{81} Vict. Tun., a.479.2.
\textsuperscript{82} Schmidt, Geschichte der Wandalen, p. 112f.
\textsuperscript{83} Courtois, Les Vandales, p. 300.
\textsuperscript{85} Ferrandus, VF., 29.56.
\textsuperscript{86} G. D. Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio (Florence, 1767; repr. Graz, 1960), vol. 8, col. 636.
Eugenius’ appointment took place through the intervention of Emperor Zeno and Placidia, and that his Greek name is rare in Africa, it is highly probable that the bishop was of eastern origin.89 The vir inlustris Alexander was sent to Carthage with imperial authority to secure the appointment of a new bishop.90 In Victor of Vita’s prologue a pupil of Diadochus is named as the patron of the history.91 This person may have been the bishop Eugenius.92

The testimony of Procopius and a letter of Gelasius do, however, challenge the image of Gunthamund’s ecclesiastical policy as it appears in the Reichenau version. Procopius reports that Geiseric’s grandson fought many battles against the Moors, but also that he persecuted the Catholics more harshly than his predecessors.93 Procopius reported nothing else and simply assumed the persecutions to have continued.

The 95th letter of Gelasius, written on 1 February 496, describes Huneric’s persecution and the resistance of the African Catholics. Apparently, these persecutions continued down to the time of writing: (hodieque persecutoribus restistere non omittunt).94 The text is essentially a generalized attack upon the Arians and Vandals. Diesner argued that Gelasius’ persecutor was intended to refer to Gunthamund personally, but the text speaks generally of persecutors, not of a particular king.

Victor of Tunnuna suggests that the dying King Thrasamund tried to convince his successor Hilderic not to reopen the Catholic churches and not to restore the privileges of the Church.95 The Reichenau version describes the contrary actions of the new king: Bonifatius became the new bishop of Carthage in St Agileus’ basilica and all anti-Catholic measures were cancelled, events only reported by analogy by Victor of Tunnuna.96 The Vita Fulgentii records the same events, but omits the name of bishop Bonifatius (in office 523 AD–36 AD).97 The people of Carthage are presented with an antistes.98 Immediately after this the Vita describes the entrance of the confessores beatores – Fulgentius and other exiled clergy – into Carthage. After having traversed the city and having visited the basilica of St. Agileus, the crowd arrived at bishop Bonifatius’ palace and started to pray together with him.99

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89 Courtois, Victor de Vita, pp. 21ff.
90 PCBE, pp. 362–5; Vict. Vit., HP., II.3ff. refers to this story at length.
91 Vict. Vit., HP., Prol. 2.
93 Procopius, BV., I.8.
95 Vict. Tun., a. 523.2; Schmidt, Geschichte der Wandalen, p. 121.
96 Vict. Tun., a. 523.2.
97 Bonifatius 26, in PCBE, p. 159 f.
98 Ferrandus, VF., 28.55: Mors enim Trasamundi regis, et mirabilis bonitas Hilderici regnare incipientis, Ecclesiae catholicae per Africam constitutae libertatem restituit, Carthaginensi plebi proprium donavit antistitem, cunctisque in locis ordinationes pontificum fieri clementissima auctoritate mandavit.
99 Ferrandus, VF., 29.56.
GELIMER AND THE END OF THE VANDAL KINGDOM

Both Procopius and the Corippus’ *Iohannis* allude to a Moorish defeat of a Vandal army under the command of Hoamer, Hilderic’s nephew.100 After this disaster, a group of Vandal aristocrats started a putsch and made Gelimer, Genton’s grandson, king in 530 AD. Hilderic, Hoamer and other members of the family were incarcerated.101 Hoamer, the Achilles of the Vandals in Procopius’ view, was either blinded, according to the Byzantine historian, or killed, to judge from the account of Victor of Tunnuna.102 The entry on Gelimer in the Reichenau version: *tanta homicidia [...] commisit ut nec parentibus parceret* refers to these facts. Victor of Tunnuna’s text is very similar: *Geilimer apud Africam regnum cum tyrannide sumit et Carthaginem ingressus Hildericum regno privat et cum filis custodiae mancipat atque Oamer Asdingum multisque nobilium perimit.*103 This passage seems to be the source for the scribe who condensed the information concerning the royal family and even used the equivalent expression *tyrannide sumere.*

CONCLUSIONS

The attempt to compare the more narrative Reichenau version with other sources shows that the text is embedded in the tradition of chronicles and historiographical texts dealing with Vandal Africa. The narrative of Huneric’s death is related to the *Passio septem monachorum* and the final sequence of Victor of Vita. Victor of Tunnuna’s chronicle must also have been used by the scribe (or the scribes) when compiling the text. The great persecution of Huneric is most familiar from the writing of Victor of Vita, but even here the text relating to these events is nearer to Victor of Tunnuna’s chronicle entry. The facts concerning the restitution of ecclesiastical rights by King Hilderic and the entry on Gelimer both appear to be shortened versions of Victor of Tunnuna’s text. The return of bishop Eusebius, the story of St. Agileus’ shrine and the period the Catholic churches were closed are only mentioned in the Reichenau version. Why Thrasamund’s reign was not discussed cannot be established with any certainty. It seems likely, however, that the Carolingian compiler responsible for the text never had the chance to finish his work.

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103 Vict. Tun., a.531.