

The History of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

By

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HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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Chapter XXXIX: Gothic Kingdom Of Italy.--Part I.

Zeno And Anastasius, Emperors Of The East.--Birth,
Education, And First Exploits Of Theodoric The Ostrogoth.--
His Invasion And Conquest Of Italy.--The Gothic Kingdom Of
Italy.--State Of The West.--Military And Civil Government.--
The Senator Boethius.--Last Acts And Death Of Theodoric.

After the fall of the Roman empire in the West, an interval of fifty years, till the memorable reign of Justinian, is faintly marked by the obscure names and imperfect annals of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin, who successively ascended to the throne of Constantinople. During the same period, Italy revived and flourished under the government of a Gothic king, who might have deserved a statue among the best and bravest of the ancient Romans.

Theodoric the Ostrogoth, the fourteenth in lineal descent of the royal line of the Amali, [1] was born in the neighborhood of Vienna [2] two years after the death of Attila. [2111] A recent victory had restored the independence of the Ostrogoths; and the three brothers, Walamir, Theodemir, and Widimir, who ruled that warlike nation with united counsels, had separately pitched their habitations in the fertile though desolate province of Pannonia. The Huns still threatened their revolted subjects, but their hasty attack was repelled by the single forces of Walamir, and the news of his victory reached the distant camp of his brother in the same auspicious moment that the favorite concubine of

Theodemir was delivered of a son and heir. In the eighth year of his age, Theodoric was reluctantly yielded by his father to the public interest, as the pledge of an alliance which Leo, emperor of the East, had consented to purchase by an annual subsidy of three hundred pounds of gold. The royal hostage was educated at Constantinople with care and tenderness. His body was formed to all the exercises of war, his mind was expanded by the habits of liberal conversation; he frequented the schools of the most skilful masters; but he disdained or neglected the arts of Greece, and so ignorant did he always remain of the first elements of science, that a rude mark was contrived to represent the signature of the illiterate king of Italy. [3] As soon as he had attained the age of eighteen, he was restored to the wishes of the Ostrogoths, whom the emperor aspired to gain by liberality and confidence. Walamir had fallen in battle; the youngest of the brothers, Widimir, had led away into Italy and Gaul an army of Barbarians, and the whole nation acknowledged for their king the father of Theodoric. His ferocious subjects admired the strength and stature of their young prince; [4] and he soon convinced them that he had not degenerated from the valor of his ancestors. At the head of six thousand volunteers, he secretly left the camp in quest of adventures, descended the Danube as far as Singidunum, or Belgrade, and soon returned to his father with the spoils of a Sarmatian king whom he had vanquished and slain. Such triumphs, however, were productive only of fame, and the invincible Ostrogoths were reduced to extreme distress by the want of clothing and food. They unanimously resolved to desert their Pannonian encampments, and boldly to advance into the warm and wealthy neighborhood of the

Byzantine court, which already maintained in pride and luxury so many bands of confederate Goths. After proving, by some acts of hostility, that they could be dangerous, or at least troublesome, enemies, the Ostrogoths sold at a high price their reconciliation and fidelity, accepted a donative of lands and money, and were intrusted with the defence of the Lower Danube, under the command of Theodoric, who succeeded after his father's death to the hereditary throne of the Amali. [5]

[Footnote 1: Jornandes (de Rebus Geticis, c. 13, 14, p. 629, 630, edit. Grot.) has drawn the pedigree of Theodoric from Gapt, one of the Anses or Demigods, who lived about the time of Domitian. Cassiodorus, the first who celebrates the royal race of the Amali, (Viriar. viii. 5, ix. 25, x. 2, xi. 1,) reckons the grandson of Theodoric as the xviith in descent. Peringsciold (the Swedish commentator of Cochloeus, Vit. Theodoric. p. 271, &c., Stockholm, 1699) labors to connect this genealogy with the legends or traditions of his native country. * Note: Amala was a name of hereditary sanctity and honor among the Visigoths. It enters into the names of Amalaberga, Amala suintha, (swinther means strength,) Amalafred, Amalarich. In the poem of the Nibelungen written three hundred years later, the Ostrogoths are called the Amilungen. According to Wachter it means, unstained, from the privative a, and malo a stain. It is pure Sanscrit, Amala, immaculatus. Schlegel. Indische Bibliothek, 1. p. 233.--M.]

[Footnote 2: More correctly on the banks of the Lake Pelso,

(Nieusiedler-see,) near Carnuntum, almost on the same spot where Marcus Antoninus composed his meditations, Jornandes, c. 52, p. 659. Severin. Pannonia Illustrata, p. 22. Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. (tom. i. p. 350.)]

[Footnote 2111: The date of Theodoric's birth is not accurately determined. We can hardly err, observes Manso, in placing it between the years 453 and 455, Manso, Geschichte des Ost Gothischen Reichs, p. 14.--M.]

[Footnote 3: The four first letters of his name were inscribed on a gold plate, and when it was fixed on the paper, the king drew his pen through the intervals (Anonym. Valesian. ad calcem Amm. Marcellin p. 722.) This authentic fact, with the testimony of Procopius, or at least of the contemporary Goths, (Gothic. 1. i. c. 2, p. 311,) far outweighs the vague praises of Ennodius (Sirmond Opera, tom. i. p. 1596) and Theophanes, (Chronograph. p. 112.) * Note: Le Beau and his Commentator, M. St. Martin, support, though with no very satisfactory evidence, the opposite opinion. But Lord Mahon (Life of Belisarius, p. 19) urges the much stronger argument, the Byzantine education of Theodoric.--M.]

[Footnote 4: Statura est quae resignet proceritate regnantem, (Ennodius, p. 1614.) The bishop of Pavia (I mean the ecclesiastic who wished to be a bishop) then proceeds to celebrate the complexion, eyes, hands, &c, of his sovereign.]

[Footnote 5: The state of the Ostrogoths, and the first years of Theodoric, are found in Jornandes, (c. 52--56, p. 689--696) and Malchus, (Excerpt. Legat. p. 78--80,) who erroneously styles him the son of Walamir.]

A hero, descended from a race of kings, must have despised the base Isaurian who was invested with the Roman purple, without any endowment of mind or body, without any advantages of royal birth, or superior qualifications. After the failure of the Theodosian life, the choice of Pulcheria and of the senate might be justified in some measure by the characters of Martin and Leo, but the latter of these princes confirmed and dishonored his reign by the perfidious murder of Aspar and his sons, who too rigorously exacted the debt of gratitude and obedience. The inheritance of Leo and of the East was peaceably devolved on his infant grandson, the son of his daughter Ariadne; and her Isaurian husband, the fortunate Trascalisseus, exchanged that barbarous sound for the Grecian appellation of Zeno. After the decease of the elder Leo, he approached with unnatural respect the throne of his son, humbly received, as a gift, the second rank in the empire, and soon excited the public suspicion on the sudden and premature death of his young colleague, whose life could no longer promote the success of his ambition. But the palace of Constantinople was ruled by female influence, and agitated by female passions: and Verina, the widow of Leo, claiming his empire as her own, pronounced a sentence of deposition against the worthless and ungrateful servant on whom she alone had bestowed the sceptre of the East. [6] As soon as she sounded a revolt in the ears of Zeno, he

fled with precipitation into the mountains of Isauria, and her brother Basiliscus, already infamous by his African expedition, [7] was unanimously proclaimed by the servile senate. But the reign of the usurper was short and turbulent. Basiliscus presumed to assassinate the lover of his sister; he dared to offend the lover of his wife, the vain and insolent Harmatius, who, in the midst of Asiatic luxury, affected the dress, the demeanor, and the surname of Achilles. [8] By the conspiracy of the malecontents, Zeno was recalled from exile; the armies, the capital, the person, of Basiliscus, were betrayed; and his whole family was condemned to the long agony of cold and hunger by the inhuman conqueror, who wanted courage to encounter or to forgive his enemies. [811] The haughty spirit of Verina was still incapable of submission or repose. She provoked the enmity of a favorite general, embraced his cause as soon as he was disgraced, created a new emperor in Syria and Egypt, [812] raised an army of seventy thousand men, and persisted to the last moment of her life in a fruitless rebellion, which, according to the fashion of the age, had been predicted by Christian hermits and Pagan magicians. While the East was afflicted by the passions of Verina, her daughter Ariadne was distinguished by the female virtues of mildness and fidelity; she followed her husband in his exile, and after his restoration, she implored his clemency in favor of her mother. On the decease of Zeno, Ariadne, the daughter, the mother, and the widow of an emperor, gave her hand and the Imperial title to Anastasius, an aged domestic of the palace, who survived his elevation above twenty-seven years, and whose character is attested by the acclamation of the people, "Reign as you have lived!" [9] [911]

[Footnote 6: Theophanes (p. 111) inserts a copy of her sacred letters to the provinces. Such female pretensions would have astonished the slaves of the first Caesars.]

[Footnote 7: Vol. iii. p. 504--508.]

[Footnote 8: Suidas, tom. i. p. 332, 333, edit. Kuster.]

[Footnote 811: Joannes Lydus accuses Zeno of timidity, or, rather, of cowardice; he purchased an ignominious peace from the enemies of the empire, whom he dared not meet in battle; and employed his whole time at home in confiscations and executions. Lydus, de Magist. iii. 45, p. 230.--M.]

[Footnote 812: Named Illus.--M.]

[Footnote 9: The contemporary histories of Malchus and Candidus are lost; but some extracts or fragments have been saved by Photius, (lxxviii. lxxix. p. 100--102,) Constantine Porphyrogenitus, (Excerpt. Leg. p. 78--97,) and in various articles of the Lexicon of Suidas. The Chronicles of Marcellinus (*Imago Historiae*) are originals for the reigns of Zeno and Anastasius; and I must acknowledge, almost for the last time, my obligations to the large and accurate collections of Tillemont, (*Hist. des Emp. tom. vi. p. 472--652*.)]

[Footnote 912: The Panegyric of Procopius of Gaza, (edited by Villoison in his *Anecdota Graeca*, and reprinted in the new edition of the Byzantine historians by Niebuhr, in the same vol. with Dexippus and Eunapius, viii. p. 488 516,) was unknown to Gibbon. It is vague and pedantic, and contains few facts. The same criticism will apply to the poetical panegyric of Priscian edited from the Ms. of Bobbio by Ang. Mai. Priscian, the gram marian, Niebuhr argues from this work, must have been born in the African, not in either of the Asiatic Caesareas. Pref. p. xi.--M.]

Whatever fear of affection could bestow, was profusely lavished by Zeno on the king of the Ostrogoths; the rank of patrician and consul, the command of the Palatine troops, an equestrian statue, a treasure in gold and silver of many thousand pounds, the name of son, and the promise of a rich and honorable wife. As long as Theodoric condescended to serve, he supported with courage and fidelity the cause of his benefactor; his rapid march contributed to the restoration of Zeno; and in the second revolt, the Walamirs, as they were called, pursued and pressed the Asiatic rebels, till they left an easy victory to the Imperial troops.

[10] But the faithful servant was suddenly converted into a formidable enemy, who spread the flames of war from Constantinople to the Adriatic; many flourishing cities were reduced to ashes, and the agriculture of Thrace was almost extirpated by the wanton cruelty of the Goths, who deprived their captive peasants of the right hand that guided the plough. [11] On such occasions, Theodoric sustained the loud and specious reproach of disloyalty, of ingratitude, and of insatiate

avarice, which could be only excused by the hard necessity of his situation. He reigned, not as the monarch, but as the minister of a ferocious people, whose spirit was unbroken by slavery, and impatient of real or imaginary insults. Their poverty was incurable; since the most liberal donatives were soon dissipated in wasteful luxury, and the most fertile estates became barren in their hands; they despised, but they envied, the laborious provincials; and when their subsistence had failed, the Ostrogoths embraced the familiar resources of war and rapine. It had been the wish of Theodoric (such at least was his declaration) to lead a peaceful, obscure, obedient life on the confines of Scythia, till the Byzantine court, by splendid and fallacious promises, seduced him to attack a confederate tribe of Goths, who had been engaged in the party of Basiliscus. He marched from his station in Maesia, on the solemn assurance that before he reached Adrianople, he should meet a plentiful convoy of provisions, and a reenforcement of eight thousand horse and thirty thousand foot, while the legions of Asia were encamped at Heraclea to second his operations. These measures were disappointed by mutual jealousy. As he advanced into Thrace, the son of Theodemir found an inhospitable solitude, and his Gothic followers, with a heavy train of horses, of mules, and of wagons, were betrayed by their guides among the rocks and precipices of Mount Sondis, where he was assaulted by the arms and invectives of Theodoric the son of Triarius. From a neighboring height, his artful rival harangued the camp of the Walamirs, and branded their leader with the opprobrious names of child, of madman, of perjured traitor, the enemy of his blood and nation. "Are you ignorant," exclaimed the son of Triarius, "that it is the constant

policy of the Romans to destroy the Goths by each other's swords? Are you insensible that the victor in this unnatural contest will be exposed, and justly exposed, to their implacable revenge? Where are those warriors, my kinsmen and thy own, whose widows now lament that their lives were sacrificed to thy rash ambition? Where is the wealth which thy soldiers possessed when they were first allured from their native homes to enlist under thy standard? Each of them was then master of three or four horses; they now follow thee on foot, like slaves, through the deserts of Thrace; those men who were tempted by the hope of measuring gold with a bushel, those brave men who are as free and as noble as thyself." A language so well suited to the temper of the Goths excited clamor and discontent; and the son of Theodemir, apprehensive of being left alone, was compelled to embrace his brethren, and to imitate the example of Roman perfidy. [12] [1211]

[Footnote 10: In ipsis congressionis tuae foribus cessit invasor, cum profugo per te sceptrum redderentur de salute dubitanti. Ennodius then proceeds (p. 1596, 1597, tom. i. Sirmond.) to transport his hero (on a flying dragon?) into Aethiopia, beyond the tropic of Cancer. The evidence of the Valesian Fragment, (p. 717,) Liberatus, (Brev. Eutychn. c. 25 p. 118,) and Theophanes, (p. 112,) is more sober and rational.]

[Footnote 11: This cruel practice is specially imputed to the Triarian Goths, less barbarous, as it should seem, than the Walamirs; but the son of Theodemir is charged with the ruin of many Roman cities, (Malchus, Excerpt. Leg. p. 95.)]

[Footnote 12: Jornandes (c. 56, 57, p. 696) displays the services of Theodoric, confesses his rewards, but dissembles his revolt, of which such curious details have been preserved by Malchus, (Excerpt. Legat. p. 78--97.) Marcellinus, a domestic of Justinian, under whose ivth consulship (A.D. 534) he composed his Chronicle, (Scaliger, Thesaurus Temporum, P. ii, p. 34--57,) betrays his prejudice and passion: in Graeciam debacchantem ...Zenonis munificentia pene pacatus...beneficiis nunquam satiatus, &c.]

[Footnote 1211: Gibbon has omitted much of the complicated intrigues of the Byzantine court with the two Theodorics. The weak emperor attempted to play them one against the other, and was himself in turn insulted, and the empire ravaged, by both. The details of the successive alliance and revolt, of hostility and of union, between the two Gothic chieftains, to dictate terms to the emperor, may be found in Malchus.--M.]

In every state of his fortune, the prudence and firmness of Theodoric were equally conspicuous; whether he threatened Constantinople at the head of the confederate Goths, or retreated with a faithful band to the mountains and sea-coast of Epirus. At length the accidental death of the son of Triarius [13] destroyed the balance which the Romans had been so anxious to preserve, the whole nation acknowledged the supremacy of the Amali, and the Byzantine court subscribed an ignominious and oppressive treaty. [14] The senate had already declared, that it was necessary

to choose a party among the Goths, since the public was unequal to the support of their united forces; a subsidy of two thousand pounds of gold, with the ample pay of thirteen thousand men, were required for the least considerable of their armies; [15] and the Isaurians, who guarded not the empire but the emperor, enjoyed, besides the privilege of rapine, an annual pension of five thousand pounds. The sagacious mind of Theodoric soon perceived that he was odious to the Romans, and suspected by the Barbarians: he understood the popular murmur, that his subjects were exposed in their frozen huts to intolerable hardships, while their king was dissolved in the luxury of Greece, and he prevented the painful alternative of encountering the Goths, as the champion, or of leading them to the field, as the enemy, of Zeno. Embracing an enterprise worthy of his courage and ambition, Theodoric addressed the emperor in the following words: "Although your servant is maintained in affluence by your liberality, graciously listen to the wishes of my heart! Italy, the inheritance of your predecessors, and Rome itself, the head and mistress of the world, now fluctuate under the violence and oppression of Odoacer the mercenary. Direct me, with my national troops, to march against the tyrant. If I fall, you will be relieved from an expensive and troublesome friend: if, with the divine permission, I succeed, I shall govern in your name, and to your glory, the Roman senate, and the part of the republic delivered from slavery by my victorious arms." The proposal of Theodoric was accepted, and perhaps had been suggested, by the Byzantine court. But the forms of the commission, or grant, appear to have been expressed with a prudent ambiguity, which might be explained by the event; and it was left doubtful, whether the conqueror

of Italy should reign as the lieutenant, the vassal, or the ally, of the emperor of the East. [16

[Footnote 13: As he was riding in his own camp, an unruly horse threw him against the point of a spear which hung before a tent, or was fixed on a wagon, (Marcellin. in Chron. Evagrius, l. iii. c. 25.)]

[Footnote 14: See Malchus (p. 91) and Evagrius, (l. iii. c. 35.)]

[Footnote 15: Malchus, p. 85. In a single action, which was decided by the skill and discipline of Sabinian, Theodoric could lose 5000 men.]

[Footnote 16: Jornandes (c. 57, p. 696, 697) has abridged the great history of Cassiodorus. See, compare, and reconcile Procopius, (Gothic. l. i. c. i.,) the Valesian Fragment, (p. 718,) Theophanes, (p. 113,) and Marcellinus, (in Chron.)]

The reputation both of the leader and of the war diffused a universal ardor; the Walamirs were multiplied by the Gothic swarms already engaged in the service, or seated in the provinces, of the empire; and each bold Barbarian, who had heard of the wealth and beauty of Italy, was impatient to seek, through the most perilous adventures, the possession of such enchanting objects. The march of Theodoric must be considered as the emigration of an entire people; the wives and children of the Goths, their aged parents, and most precious effects, were carefully transported; and some idea may be formed of the heavy baggage that now followed the camp, by the loss of two thousand wagons, which had

been sustained in a single action in the war of Epirus. For their subsistence, the Goths depended on the magazines of corn which was ground in portable mills by the hands of their women; on the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds; on the casual produce of the chase, and upon the contributions which they might impose on all who should presume to dispute the passage, or to refuse their friendly assistance. Notwithstanding these precautions, they were exposed to the danger, and almost to the distress, of famine, in a march of seven hundred miles, which had been undertaken in the depth of a rigorous winter. Since the fall of the Roman power, Dacia and Pannonia no longer exhibited the rich prospect of populous cities, well-cultivated fields, and convenient highways: the reign of barbarism and desolation was restored, and the tribes of Bulgarians, Gepidae, and Sarmatians, who had occupied the vacant province, were prompted by their native fierceness, or the solicitations of Odoacer, to resist the progress of his enemy. In many obscure though bloody battles, Theodoric fought and vanquished; till at length, surmounting every obstacle by skilful conduct and persevering courage, he descended from the Julian Alps, and displayed his invincible banners on the confines of Italy. [17]

[Footnote 17: Theodoric's march is supplied and illustrated by Ennodius, (p. 1598--1602,) when the bombast of the oration is translated into the language of common sense.]

Odoacer, a rival not unworthy of his arms, had already occupied the advantageous and well-known post of the River Sontius, near the ruins of

Aquileia, at the head of a powerful host, whose independent kings [18] or leaders disdained the duties of subordination and the prudence of delays. No sooner had Theodoric gained a short repose and refreshment to his wearied cavalry, than he boldly attacked the fortifications of the enemy; the Ostrogoths showed more ardor to acquire, than the mercenaries to defend, the lands of Italy; and the reward of the first victory was the possession of the Venetian province as far as the walls of Verona. In the neighborhood of that city, on the steep banks of the rapid Adige, he was opposed by a new army, reenforced in its numbers, and not impaired in its courage: the contest was more obstinate, but the event was still more decisive; Odoacer fled to Ravenna, Theodoric advanced to Milan, and the vanquished troops saluted their conqueror with loud acclamations of respect and fidelity. But their want either of constancy or of faith soon exposed him to the most imminent danger; his vanguard, with several Gothic counts, which had been rashly intrusted to a deserter, was betrayed and destroyed near Faenza by his double treachery; Odoacer again appeared master of the field, and the invader, strongly intrenched in his camp of Pavia, was reduced to solicit the aid of a kindred nation, the Visigoths of Gaul. In the course of this History, the most voracious appetite for war will be abundantly satiated; nor can I much lament that our dark and imperfect materials do not afford a more ample narrative of the distress of Italy, and of the fierce conflict, which was finally decided by the abilities, experience, and valor of the Gothic king. Immediately before the battle of Verona, he visited the tent of his mother [19] and sister, and requested, that on a day, the most illustrious festival of his life, they would adorn

him with the rich garments which they had worked with their own hands. "Our glory," said he, "is mutual and inseparable. You are known to the world as the mother of Theodoric; and it becomes me to prove, that I am the genuine offspring of those heroes from whom I claim my descent." The wife or concubine of Theodemir was inspired with the spirit of the German matrons, who esteemed their sons' honor far above their safety; and it is reported, that in a desperate action, when Theodoric himself was hurried along by the torrent of a flying crowd, she boldly met them at the entrance of the camp, and, by her generous reproaches, drove them back on the swords of the enemy. [20]

[Footnote 18: Tot reges, &c., (Ennodius, p. 1602.) We must recollect how much the royal title was multiplied and degraded, and that the mercenaries of Italy were the fragments of many tribes and nations.]

[Footnote 19: See Ennodius, p. 1603, 1604. Since the orator, in the king's presence, could mention and praise his mother, we may conclude that the magnanimity of Theodoric was not hurt by the vulgar reproaches of concubine and bastard. * Note: Gibbon here assumes that the mother of Theodoric was the concubine of Theodemir, which he leaves doubtful in the text.--M.]

[Footnote 20: This anecdote is related on the modern but respectable authority of Sigonius, (Op. tom. i. p. 580. De Occident. Impl. l. xv.): his words are curious: "Would you return?" &c. She presented and almost displayed the original recess. * Note: The authority of Sigonius would

scarcely have weighed with Gibboa except for an indecent anecdote. I have a recollection of a similar story in some of the Italian wars.--M.]

From the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, Theodoric reigned by the right of conquest; the Vandal ambassadors surrendered the Island of Sicily, as a lawful appendage of his kingdom; and he was accepted as the deliverer of Rome by the senate and people, who had shut their gates against the flying usurper. [21] Ravenna alone, secure in the fortifications of art and nature, still sustained a siege of almost three years; and the daring sallies of Odoacer carried slaughter and dismay into the Gothic camp. At length, destitute of provisions and hopeless of relief, that unfortunate monarch yielded to the groans of his subjects and the clamors of his soldiers. A treaty of peace was negotiated by the bishop of Ravenna; the Ostrogoths were admitted into the city, and the hostile kings consented, under the sanction of an oath, to rule with equal and undivided authority the provinces of Italy. The event of such an agreement may be easily foreseen. After some days had been devoted to the semblance of joy and friendship, Odoacer, in the midst of a solemn banquet, was stabbed by the hand, or at least by the command, of his rival. Secret and effectual orders had been previously despatched; the faithless and rapacious mercenaries, at the same moment, and without resistance, were universally massacred; and the royalty of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths, with the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the emperor of the East. The design of a conspiracy was imputed, according to the usual forms, to the prostrate tyrant; but

his innocence, and the guilt of his conqueror, [22] are sufficiently proved by the advantageous treaty which force would not sincerely have granted, nor weakness have rashly infringed. The jealousy of power, and the mischiefs of discord, may suggest a more decent apology, and a sentence less rigorous may be pronounced against a crime which was necessary to introduce into Italy a generation of public felicity.

The living author of this felicity was audaciously praised in his own presence by sacred and profane orators; [23] but history (in his time she was mute and inglorious) has not left any just representation of the events which displayed, or of the defects which clouded, the virtues of Theodoric. [24] One record of his fame, the volume of public epistles composed by Cassiodorus in the royal name, is still extant, and has obtained more implicit credit than it seems to deserve. [25] They exhibit the forms, rather than the substance, of his government; and we should vainly search for the pure and spontaneous sentiments of the Barbarian amidst the declamation and learning of a sophist, the wishes of a Roman senator, the precedents of office, and the vague professions, which, in every court, and on every occasion, compose the language of discreet ministers. The reputation of Theodoric may repose with more confidence on the visible peace and prosperity of a reign of thirty-three years; the unanimous esteem of his own times, and the memory of his wisdom and courage, his justice and humanity, which was deeply impressed on the minds of the Goths and Italians.

[Footnote 21: Hist. Miscell. l. xv., a Roman history from Janus to the ixth century, an Epitome of Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus, and Theophanes

which Muratori has published from a Ms. in the Ambrosian library,
(Script. Rerum Italicarum, tom. i. p. 100.)]

[Footnote 22: Procopius (Gothic. l. i. c. i.) approves himself an impartial sceptic. Cassiodorus (in Chron.) and Ennodius (p. 1604) are loyal and credulous, and the testimony of the Valesian Fragment (p. 718) may justify their belief. Marcellinus spits the venom of a Greek subject--perjuriis illectus, interfectusque est, (in Chron.)]

[Footnote 23: The sonorous and servile oration of Ennodius was pronounced at Milan or Ravenna in the years 507 or 508, (Sirmond, tom. i. p. 615.) Two or three years afterwards, the orator was rewarded with the bishopric of Pavia, which he held till his death in the year 521. (Dupin, Bibliot. Eccles. tom. v. p. 11-14. See Saxii Onomasticon, tom. ii. p. 12.)]

[Footnote 24: Our best materials are occasional hints from Procopius and the Valesian Fragment, which was discovered by Sirmond, and is published at the end of Ammianus Marcellinus. The author's name is unknown, and his style is barbarous; but in his various facts he exhibits the knowledge, without the passions, of a contemporary. The president Montesquieu had formed the plan of a history of Theodoric, which at a distance might appear a rich and interesting subject.]

[Footnote 25: The best edition of the Variarum Libri xii. is that of Joh. Garretius, (Rotomagi, 1679, in Opp. Cassiodor. 2 vols. in fol.)]

but they deserved and required such an editor as the Marquis Scipio Maffei, who thought of publishing them at Verona. The *Barbara Eleganza* (as it is ingeniously named by Tiraboschi) is never simple, and seldom perspicuous]

The partition of the lands of Italy, of which Theodoric assigned the third part to his soldiers, is honorably arraigned as the sole injustice of his life. [2511] And even this act may be fairly justified by the example of Odoacer, the rights of conquest, the true interest of the Italians, and the sacred duty of subsisting a whole people, who, on the faith of his promises, had transported themselves into a distant land. [26] Under the reign of Theodoric, and in the happy climate of Italy, the Goths soon multiplied to a formidable host of two hundred thousand men, [27] and the whole amount of their families may be computed by the ordinary addition of women and children. Their invasion of property, a part of which must have been already vacant, was disguised by the generous but improper name of hospitality; these unwelcome guests were irregularly dispersed over the face of Italy, and the lot of each Barbarian was adequate to his birth and office, the number of his followers, and the rustic wealth which he possessed in slaves and cattle. The distinction of noble and plebeian were acknowledged; [28] but the lands of every freeman were exempt from taxes, [2811] and he enjoyed the inestimable privilege of being subject only to the laws of his country. [29] Fashion, and even convenience, soon persuaded the conquerors to assume the more elegant dress of the natives, but they still persisted in the use of their mother-tongue; and their contempt

for the Latin schools was applauded by Theodoric himself, who gratified their prejudices, or his own, by declaring, that the child who had trembled at a rod, would never dare to look upon a sword. [30] Distress might sometimes provoke the indigent Roman to assume the ferocious manners which were insensibly relinquished by the rich and luxurious Barbarian; [31] but these mutual conversions were not encouraged by the policy of a monarch who perpetuated the separation of the Italians and Goths; reserving the former for the arts of peace, and the latter for the service of war. To accomplish this design, he studied to protect his industrious subjects, and to moderate the violence, without enervating the valor, of his soldiers, who were maintained for the public defence. They held their lands and benefices as a military stipend: at the sound of the trumpet, they were prepared to march under the conduct of their provincial officers; and the whole extent of Italy was distributed into the several quarters of a well-regulated camp. The service of the palace and of the frontiers was performed by choice or by rotation; and each extraordinary fatigue was recompensed by an increase of pay and occasional donatives. Theodoric had convinced his brave companions, that empire must be acquired and defended by the same arts. After his example, they strove to excel in the use, not only of the lance and sword, the instruments of their victories, but of the missile weapons, which they were too much inclined to neglect; and the lively image of war was displayed in the daily exercise and annual reviews of the Gothic cavalry. A firm though gentle discipline imposed the habits of modesty, obedience, and temperance; and the Goths were instructed to spare the people, to reverence the laws, to understand the duties of civil

society, and to disclaim the barbarous license of judicial combat and private revenge. [32]

[Footnote 2511: Compare Gibbon, ch. xxxvi. vol. iii. p. 459, &c.--Manso observes that this division was conducted not in a violent and irregular, but in a legal and orderly, manner. The Barbarian, who could not show a title of grant from the officers of Theodoric appointed for the purpose, or a prescriptive right of thirty years, in case he had obtained the property before the Ostrogothic conquest, was ejected from the estate. He conceives that estates too small to bear division paid a third of their produce.--Geschichte des Os Gothischen Reiches, p. 82.--M.]

[Footnote 26: Procopius, Gothic, l. i. c. i. Variarum, ii. Maffei (Verona Illustrata, P. i. p. 228) exaggerates the injustice of the Goths, whom he hated as an Italian noble. The plebeian Muratori crouches under their oppression.]

[Footnote 27: Procopius, Goth. l. iii. c. 421. Ennodius describes (p. 1612, 1613) the military arts and increasing numbers of the Goths.]

[Footnote 28: When Theodoric gave his sister to the king of the Vandals she sailed for Africa with a guard of 1000 noble Goths, each of whom was attended by five armed followers, (Procop. Vandal. l. i. c. 8.) The Gothic nobility must have been as numerous as brave.]

[Footnote 2811: Manso (p. 100) quotes two passages from Cassiodorus to show that the Goths were not exempt from the fiscal claims.--Cassiodor, i. 19, iv. 14--M.]

[Footnote 29: See the acknowledgment of Gothic liberty, (Var. v. 30.)]

[Footnote 30: Procopius, Goth. 1. i. c. 2. The Roman boys learnt the language (Var. viii. 21) of the Goths. Their general ignorance is not destroyed by the exceptions of Amalasintha, a female, who might study without shame, or of Theodatus, whose learning provoked the indignation and contempt of his countrymen.]

[Footnote 31: A saying of Theodoric was founded on experience: "Romanus miser imitatur Gothum; ut utilis (dives) Gothus imitatur Romanum." (See the Fragment and Notes of Valesius, p. 719.)]

[Footnote 32: The view of the military establishment of the Goths in Italy is collected from the Epistles of Cassiodorus (Var. i. 24, 40; iii. 3, 24, 48; iv. 13, 14; v. 26, 27; viii. 3, 4, 25.) They are illustrated by the learned Mascou, (Hist. of the Germans, 1. xi. 40--44, Annotation xiv.) Note: Compare Manso, Geschichte des Ost Gothischen Reiches, p. 114.--M.]