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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
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A LITERARY-HISTORICAL PORTRAIT OF STILICHO

Monique Forthomme Nicholson

The focus of the thesis is on the difficulties of interpreting the evidence concerning the character of Flavius Stilicho, magister utriusque militiae of the Western Roman Empire. Particular attention is devoted to the role of propaganda in distorting Stilicho's actions.

This thesis has been presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the M.A. in Classical Studies.

Thesis adviser: Dr. Denis G. Brearley.

March 1984.



Monique Forthomme Nicholson, Ottawa, Canada, 1984

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These acknowledgments would be incomplete if they omitted mention of my debt to Alan Cameron for his perceptive interpretation of Claudian, doctus poeta, whose name will always be linked to Rome and Stilicho.

"gener Augusti pridem fueras,  
nunc rursus eris socer Augusti.  
quae iam rabies livoris erit?  
vel quis dabitur color invidiae?  
Stilicho socer est, pater est Stilicho."  
(Claudian, ad Stilichonem)

"te sospite fas est  
vexatum laceri corpus iuvenescere regni."  
(Claudian, de consulatu Stilichonis II)

"Nonne mori satius, vitae quam ferre pudorem?  
nam quae iam regio restat, si dedita Mauris  
regibus Illyricis accesserit Africa damnis?"  
(Claudian, de bello Gildonico, I)

"at nunc, qui foedera rumpit,  
ditatur; qui servat, eget. vastator Achivae  
gentis et Epirum nuper populatus inultam  
praesidet Illyrico."  
(Claudian, in Eutropium, II)

"plus est servasse repertum,  
quam quaesisse novum."  
(Claudian, de consulatu Stilichonis, II)

"and yet I grieve  
that envy pays back noble deeds."  
(Pindar, Pythian 7)

## ABBREVIATIONS

The principal reference work used to identify the primary sources will be A.H.M. Jones - J.R. Martindale - J. Morris. The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Cambridge, 1971 and 1980. This work will be referred to as Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE.

The titles of Claudian's works follow the Index of the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, Leipzig, Teubner, 1904.

The abbreviations CC, CSEL, FHG, GCS, MGH, Migne PL and PG, CTh, Exc. de ins., Gr. Schr., Loeb, Budé, Teubner, OLD are those used in L'Année Philologique, TLL and Clavis Patrum Latinorum (Sacris Erudiri).

All dates are to be read as A.D. unless noted otherwise.

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## Résumé

Stilicho's historical portrait has been affected by 15 centuries of tendentious and negative interpretation which started to appear immediately after his assassination. I propose to study the portrait of Stilicho painted first by writers favourable to him such as Claudian (who died circa 404) and Olympiodorus (d. after 425) as preserved by Photius, then by Zosimus (d. after 498) who is ambivalent towards Stilicho, and finally by those authors who are hostile to him such as Orosius (d. after 417), Sözomen (d. circa 450), Philostorgius (d. circa 430/440), and St. Jerome (d. about 420).

On the death of Theodosius I in January 395 the Roman Empire was divided between his two sons, Arcadius (the elder son) living at Constantinople and Honorius living at Milan. On his deathbed Theodosius I asked Stilicho to protect both his sons and to guard the safety of the Empire.

Stilicho's policy aim was to maintain a unitary Theodosian state, by ensuring the concordia fratrum and a continuing unity of purpose between the two Roman armies (with the barbarian foederati as constituent parts of those armies). For Stilicho Rome remained the centre of the world. However, Stilicho soon encountered what Santo Mazzarino calls the coherent, decisive and constant anti-Stilichonian prejudice of the Eastern Roman Empire. (1) Mazzarino emphasized that all the politicians successively in charge in Constantinople (Rufinus, Eutropius, Aurelianus, Gainas or Anthemius) followed an anti-Stilichonian policy without exception. They often even preferred Alaric's Gothic army to the Western Roman army. Another factor increasing the tension and animosity between

East and West was the contrast between Rome and Milan, the old and the new capital respectively of the Western Empire. Mazzarino notes<sup>(2)</sup> that Rome was the centre of tolerant or paganizing Christians, and Rome's Senate was itself the centre of paganism, whereas Milan, where the court now resided, was in sharp contrast a city of intransigent Christians who wanted to maintain their links with Christian Constantinople.

In this context, while Stilicho hesitated and shrank from open conflict, the gap between Constantinople and Rome on the one hand, as well as between Rome and the barbarians on the other was steadily widening. Constantinople was constantly being reinforced, and Rome weakened. In order to save the unity of the Theodosian Empire, Stilicho was forced to seek a form of coexistence with the barbarians which later led to the "fall of Rome" but which, as Mazzarino says, was in Stilicho's policy "the first sign of an explicitly Western political consciousness, and also an anti-Byzantine one."<sup>(3)</sup>

After the fall of Rome we discern changing attitudes in a civilization which remained imperial and which maintained strong religious beliefs, both Christian and pagan. For instance, propaganda began to predominate in assessing and transmitting the literary-historical portrait of Stilicho. Contemporary envy of Stilicho compounded by fear of the alien barbarians ensured the success of this propaganda for centuries to come.

In reassessing the evidence this study will trace and analyze the interpretations of Rudolf Keller, Santo Mazzarino, Ernst Nischer-Falkenhof, Emilienne Demougéot, John Matthews and Alan Cameron; it will also take into account the viewpoints of Edward Gibbon, Otto Seeck, Theodor Mommsen and J.B. Bury.

The method will be: to examine the references to Stilicho in Latin and Greek inscriptions and literary texts;<sup>(4)</sup> to evaluate these references and their interpretation by later writers and historians, and finally to see whether a positive appraisal of Stilicho is possible.

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(1) Santo Mazzarino, Stilicone. La Crisi Imperiale Dopo Teodosio Rome, 1942, p. 79.

(2) \_\_\_\_\_, p. 245.

(3) \_\_\_\_\_, p. V.

(4) These are collected in The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire ed. by Jones-Martindale-Morris, Cambridge, 1971.

W.D. Nicholson.

21 March 1984

## AIM AND INTRODUCTION

"... il mondo occidentale, invece, con a capo Stilicone, era condotto, proprio per salvare l'unità teodosiana dell'impero, a quelle formule di convivenza coi barbari che ne determinarono quella che comunemente si suole chiamare 'la caduta' e che è, piuttosto, il primo accenno di una coscienza politica spiccatamente occidentale, e pertanto antibizantina."<sup>(1)</sup>

Writing here on the post-Theodosian crisis that led to the formation of two worlds, the Eastern Byzantine and the Western Catholic, Santo Mazzarino points out that while the pars orientis found its natural defence against the barbarian element in a traditionalist and deeply religious public opinion, the occidental world, on the contrary, with Stilicho at its head, was led, in order to save the Theodosian unity of the empire, to those formulas of coexistence with the barbarians which determined what is usually called its fall but which is rather the first sign of a specifically occidental and also anti-Byzantine political conscience.

This key sentence of Mazzarino's Preface to Stilicone. La Crisi imperiale dopo Teodosio suggests a modern reappraisal of the historical portrait of Flavius Stilicho. Mazzarino has the added merit of refusing to accept the equivalence between Later Roman Empire and "decadence and fall". The problem Mazzarino chooses to emphasize was that of the partitio imperii, an event that had been relegated to isolated studies for too long and that is still perceived as contentious by many.

The primary and contemporary evidence on Stilicho is scant. Although Claudian and Olympiodorus consider themselves poets first, their sympathetic testimony concerning Stilicho remains part of the historical record and should not be neglected.

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Claudian did not exaggerate when he made Stilicho the bulwark of the Western Roman Empire. (2) This is the opinion of W.E. Kaegi Jr.: "Unlike the political and military situation of the first years of the century, when the western empire waxed strong under the leadership of Stilicho, magister utriusque militiae, the balance-of power during the remainder of the century unquestionably tilted in favor of the eastern emperors." (3)

Similarly, Olympiodorus of Thebes also perceived that the Western Empire -- indeed the whole empire had "waxed strong" under the leadership of Stilicho. Olympiodorus started his history by emphasizing Stilicho's life as the high point against which the misfortunes to come would be measured. (4)

We possess, perhaps thanks to the efforts of Stilicho, the greater part of Claudian's corpus. We have a few fragments of Olympiodorus', as preserved in Photius' epitome. Fragment 1 reads: "He writes about Stilicho, describing the great power which he acquired when Theodosius the Great appointed him guardian of his sons Arcadius and Honorius, and he tells of Stilicho's marriage to Serena, who was betrothed to him by Theodosius himself." (5) Next, Fragment 3: "Later Stilicho made the Emperor Honorius his son-in-law by marrying him to his daughter Thermantia and accumulated even more power. He fought on behalf of the Romans many successful wars against many peoples." (6) Then, Fragment 5: "And Stilicho submitted to execution by the sword as the result of the murderous and inhuman plotting of Olympius, whom he himself had introduced to the Emperor." (7) Last, Fragment 6: "Alaric, the tribal leader of the Goths, whom Stilicho summoned to guard Illyricum for Honorius (since it had been attached to his part of the Empire by his father Theodosius), because of the execution of Stilicho and because he had not received what

had been promised to him, besieged and sacked Rome . . . "(8)

Olympiodorus then wrote of cannibalism in Rome during the siege by Alaric, of a misthos that Stilicho paid Alaric for his services (four thousand pounds of gold),<sup>(9)</sup> of the death of Serena and Eucherius, and so forth.

Olympiodorus, as preserved by Photius, was a contemporary of Stilicho, a "Hellene" by religion, a poet by profession just like Claudian, and he was conscious of Stilicho's historical importance,

An interpretation adverse to Stilicho was disseminated, however, by another contemporary and "Hellene", Eunapius of Sardis. Orosius and Jerome were also contemporaries who set the tone for a persistently negative Christian interpretation. They were followed by Socrates, Sozomen and Philostorgius.

The adverse colouring of these early comments continues to affect Stilicho's image in history and literature until the second half of the last century and in many cases even to the present day.

Consequently, we may ask ourselves why this historiographical situation arose and how it persisted; why it neglected or cast such a significant figure as Stilicho in a villain's role. He was denied a positive image throughout several centuries. Many historians and writers were, I will point out in passing, consciously or unconsciously, more influenced by the denigrating portrait of Stilicho painted by Orosius, the Christian, and Rutilius Namatianus, the pagan, than by the poet Claudian and the historian Olympiodorus.

The aim of this study is to ask how this adverse image of Stilicho

originated and, in view of the fact that Stilicho's excellent strategic moves occurred at a crucial time in Roman History, to assess why the interpretations became adverse; finally, to see whether any positive reappraisal is possible. Can there have been a continuing influence of authoritarian and biased propaganda?

For instance, Thomas Corneille wrote in the dedication of his play Stilicon (to Cardinal Mazarin) "L'Histoire le marque pour un des plus Grands Hommes de son Siecle."<sup>(10)</sup> Then, as expected in many more recent historical accounts of Stilicho, comes a flood of praise followed by a damning qualifier: "Les tendresses inconsidérées de la Nature . . ." His love for his son made him forfeit what he owed his master, "ce qu'il devoit à son Maistre, pour rendre ce qu'il ne devoit pas à son fils."<sup>(11)</sup>

A close study does reveal that Stilicho was the victim of more than the partitio imperii of 395 A.D. Historians have emphasized Stilicho's "ambition" and linked it to the pressure of the Barbarian invasions; in so doing, they have often minimized the real ambitions at work in Constantinople that were upsetting the balance of power in the Roman Empire and sapping its strength.

Other imperial residences such as those at Milan or Trier had acted as capitals before, especially since Diocletian and the Tetrarchy. However, Constantinople had other aspirations than these cities: in every aspect, it wanted equality with Rome in 395. This meant that, at the turn of the century, Constantinople not only called itself the New Rome but expected the Roman possessions to be equally divided just as if they were a family inheritance held in common.

The foundation of Constantinople had begun as a personal wish of an Illyrian emperor; within half a century it had become a rival threatening

Rome itself. Tradition has it that Constantine removed the Palladium from Rome and set it under the porphyry column erected in his honour at Constantinople.<sup>(12)</sup> The duplication of services attendant on the foundation and consolidation of Constantinople weakened Rome's own power at a crucial time and may very well have set Rome on a path to redundancy.

In this connection, Ferdinand Lot observes: "The foundation of Constantinople is from every point of view a very important historical event. It resulted in displacing the axis of the Roman world and, in a short time, in substituting Greek for Latin civilisation in the East."<sup>(13)</sup>

After Theodosius, the senior and most respected branch of the Imperial family resided at Constantinople, not at Rome. The emperors resident at Constantinople continually exercised their claim to senior status.

Nowhere was New Rome's message to old Rome of "half of what is yours is mine" heard more loudly than in Illyricum.

Like Danzig and the Sudetenland in more recent times, Illyricum, the home of the Illyrian emperors, became a contentious issue as seen from Constantinople. Illyricum furnished the excuse, since the reality of the charade being enacted for a hundred years resided in a fight for supremacy between East and West.

Consequently, pinning the quarrel over Illyricum on Stilicho and his "ambition" is not only superficial. It begs the question "cui bono?" for the first time in this study.

Similarly, the emphasis on Stilicho and Eucherius "the pagans" points to Byzantine propaganda. Religious propaganda in Constantinople in the fifth and sixth century was fierce, keeping pace with the documented religious fervour of New Rome. In this ultra-Christian culture -- the basis of its

foundation -- the terms and their value changed at Constantinople, even if some of the deeper values remained stubbornly Greek in an admirable way.

The most curious example I have met of this change in value is what happened to the term Hellene itself. It became synonymous with pagan. As a result, a mediaeval Byzantine book could seriously define the Chinese as Greeks (Hellenes), meaning pagans, a perfect example of Orwellian newspeak.

The major question to be asked is why, today, respected historians and writers resist a reinterpretation of the sources on Stilicho, adding their fresh accretions to the traditional interpretation. This is even true of Alan Cameron in his study of Claudian. For instance, on page 49 Cameron writes of Stilicho's flaunting "Eucherius' royal blood".

There can be no doubt that in the years after Stilicho's murder, there was a determined wish and policy to picture him as a man of vile birth, mean character, inordinate ambition and -- more damning -- an arch-traitor. His ambition especially, depending on the authors, can be personal, dynastic, Western and aggressive. Ambition has been too readily ascribed to Stilicho when it is obvious from his life that he did not have enough ambition to remain where the favour of Theodosius had placed him at a very young age.

Camille Jullian, the usually original and thought-provoking French historian, identified Stilicho as the man in the Monza diptych in 1882 and at the same time gave the usual interpretation of parental ambition for young Eucherius; Jullian also identified Serena and Eucherius.<sup>(14)</sup> Jullian's falling-in with the "ambition" theme is puzzling. What is more, it does create problems for the Monza Diptych and for the followers of Jullian's identification.

Several details make the identification of Stilicho and Serena a near

certainty. However, when Jullian in his conclusion attacks Stilicho's ambitious hopes,<sup>(15)</sup> he is very sure that the boy aged ten to twelve on the diptych is Eucherius.

If one assumes with Jullian the date of 396 -- and the date seems reasonable although 394-395 seems more probable -- the boy "de dix à douze ans" can only be barely six or seven. Equally puzzling is the fact that this same young boy is given precedence over his Theodosian mother Serena and occupies the right side and place of honour usually reserved for an emperor. Stilicho was not a fool, and if one follows the theory of his ambition to put Eucherius on the imperial throne, even Stilicho the ambitious -- especially Stilicho the ambitious -- would have objected to such dangerous portraiture in 396.

Further questions arise about the identification made first by Jullian, then by R. Delbrück,<sup>(16)</sup> of the boy in the Monza diptych as Eucherius. That boy might be Honorius, and the diptych might have been planned as a present for Theodosius to celebrate the events of 394. These events include the first and earlier regency of Stilicho -- to Honorius -- never really implemented because of Theodosius' sudden death at Milan.<sup>(17)</sup>

Alan Cameron has demonstrated that there was such an early regency, and that Stilicho was left behind as regent and magister militum per Occidentem, Serena being sent to bring Honorius from Constantinople to Rome,<sup>(18)</sup> as the future emperor of the West.

Stilicho was made regent (ἐπίτροπον) τῷ παῖδι writes Zosimus<sup>(19)</sup> immediately after Theodosius' victory over Eugenius, and "Stilico was to have military authority in the West only, because Theodosius was intending to continue commanding in the East himself."<sup>(20)</sup>

Viewed in this light, and whether it was ordered for this occasion and as a farewell to Theodosius on his way back to Constantinople or to celebrate the second (394 A.D.) or third (396 A.D.) consulate of Honorius, the Monza diptych becomes crucial evidence of Stilicho's personal fealty to his emperor and kinsman rather than a proof, as Jullian would have it, of definite ambitious plans for his son.

What logical reason would there be to have a portrait of Maria, Stilicho's daughter and Honorius' future wife and empress, pictured right at Serena's side and level with the head of the boy, suggesting a twin medallion, if Honorius was not the boy sculpted at the right of the diptych? The boy also has a hieratic presence, and the position of the two adults hints at respect as well as protection.

What is more, the right hand of the boy is held in exactly the same gesture as the right hand of Honorius, at the left side of his father, Theodosius the Great, on the silver shield known as "el gran disco di Teodosio" found in 1847 near Merida and kept in the Museum of the Royal Academy in Madrid. This gesture recalls that of Christ in majesty in Byzantine icons and in mediaeval cathedrals.\* Once again it would be more indicative of Honorius' duties and age than of Eucherius.

As further evidence, I would point out that the segmenta and medallions on Stilicho's tunic and chlamys consistently emphasize the paramount importance of the boy at the right hand of the diptych, whose portrait returns in the weft itself of the general's clothes. As for the chlamys, imperial but surely also still with military overtones, it was the custom in the Later Empire as well as protocol at the later Byzantine Court to have the bust or portrait of the emperor one served embroidered on the chlamys.

\* (See also Christ Jesus on the Berlin ivory with a similar tablet in his other hand);

This was a rather effective way of declaring one's allegiance. Medallions of this boy of ten or twelve are the leitmotiv of Stilicho's chlamys, again with an aura implication, a strong resemblance to the grown Honorius, and dominating every inch of the magister utriusque militiae's outer garment.

Serena is standing at the boy's left holding in her left hand a mappa, the handkerchief of consular authority, and in her right hand a rose.<sup>(21)</sup> From the way in which Serena holds the rose, above and almost immediately ahead of the boy, there appears to be a deliberate allusion again to imperial authority, authority which neither Stilicho nor Serena could possibly have claimed for Eucherius in 394-396. Indeed such a diptych would have been suicidal as well as foolish and Stilicho consistently protected Eucherius from all such inferences.

What is more, how could a diptych honoring Eucherius have survived the destruction of all statues, gouging out of inscriptions, in short, the damnatio memoriae of Stilicho and the condemnation of Serena and Eucherius to death? Consequently, the same question must be asked about the Monza diptych as about the other evidence on Stilicho. Why is there such an eagerness in historians and literati alike to see ambition where there may not have been enough ambition?

But let us now put aside the diptych of Monza even though every piece of evidence concerning Stilicho should be reinterpreted, and especially the diptych which may have had a much greater symbolic value than that of parental pride and ambition. Suffice it to say the diptych does illustrate one of the problems caused by the image of Stilicho, the negative certainties of most, the question-marks of some, the indifference of none.

In a century that is being shaped more and more by continuous propaganda,

it is fitting to investigate the characteristics of propaganda, its changing thrust, its psychological victories and the role of character assassination.

While sifting through the evidence this study will be wary of the anachronistic retrodiction of some historians. For instance, there is the distinct possibility that some modern historians writing after the two World Wars unleashed by Germany had been conditioned against Stilicho by reason of his Vandal origin (and also by the modern notion of "Vandal").

Some evidence is bound to indicate ill-will towards Stilicho from an assertive, aggressive and separatist Constantinople, the New or Second Rome, (then known as The Queen City). Nevertheless, Constantinople's role may have been secondary and its anti-Stilichonian attitudes must have met the anti-barbarian, xenophobic requirements of the Roman establishment conditioned by imperial propaganda and the exhortations of Virgil's Aeneid, remaining completely blind to the new realities.

Most of the evidence on Stilicho will underline the impossibility of the regent's twofold task as defined by Rudolf Keller in 1884: "on the one hand he (Stilicho) wanted to carry through the unity of West and East Rome, without putting to one side one of Theodosius' two sons; on the other hand however he wanted to persist in Theodosius' policy, namely to use the barbarians to bring new vital substance (Lebensstoff) and to cause a blending of the Romans and absorbed barbarians." (22)

Keller goes further. He cites an earlier scholar, Ch.F. Schultz, whose work published in 1805 was entitled Flavius Stilicho, A Wallenstein of the Early World (Flavius Stilicho, ein Wallenstein der Vorwelt). (23)

Stilicho and Wallenstein: the parallelism may be too daring, but it casts a light on the complexity of the character of two outstanding generals

and statesmen caught in major historical dilemmas. That the comparison can be made at all explains in part the fascination Stilicho holds over historians and why his literary-historical portrait is so complex.

This thesis will look at the attitudes and their accretions that created the literary-historical portrait of Stilicho. It will study the evidence in Stilicho's personal life, in Stilicho's military and political careers. It will pay particular attention to the danger created by certain epithets such as "barbarian", "German", "traitor" or "ambitious". While probing the truth of the evidence, this study will remember the words of Bismarck: "The best sort of lies are usually prepared from half-truths."

The present study was started by the realisation of the uniqueness, the originality of Stilicho, a man out of harmony with his time, aching to bring back the past while ushering in the future. Putting aside the damnatio memoriae and the tendentious propaganda, this study must look at the actions of Stilicho, what he lived for and what he allowed himself to be killed for.

## NOTES

- (1) Santo Mazzarino, Stilicone. La Crisi Imperiale dopo Teodosio (1942), p. V.
- (2) Claudian, Poems with an English tr. by Maurice Platnauer. (London, W. Heinemann Ltd and Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1922), in 2 Vols., Vol. 1, carm. 5: In Rufinum Liber II, 4-6.
- (3) Walter Emil Kaegi, Byzantium and the Decline of Rome (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 16.
- (4) R.C. Blockley, The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus (Liverpool, Cairns, 1981), Vol. I, p. 44.
- (5) R.C. Blockley, Op. cit., Vol. II, (1983), p. 153.
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 155.
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 157.
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 157-9.
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 159. (the services would be those of an expeditionary force).
- (10) Thomas Corneille, Stilicon, éd. critique par C.J. Gossip, (Genève-Paris, Droz, 1974), p. 3.
- (11) Th. Corneille, Op. cit., p. 3.
- (12) Gilbert Dagron, Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451 (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), p. 39, note 4 se référant à Procope, Bell. goth. I, etc.
- (13) Ferdinand Lot, The End of the Ancient World, Paris, 1951, p. 35.
- (14) Camille Jullian, "Le diptyque de Stilicon au trésor de Monza", Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire (Ecole Française de Rome, Paris et Rome, 1882), pp. 5-35. N.B. In 396, Eucherius was barely 7.

- (15) C. Jullian, Op. cit., (1882), p. 24.
- (16) R. Delbruck, Die Consulardiptychen (Berlin-Leipzig, 1929).
- (17) Zosimus, Historia Nova (L. Mendelssohn, ed. Leipzig, 1887),  
IV. 59.
- (18) Alan Cameron, "Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilico",  
Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 73 (1969), p. 266.
- (19) A. Cameron, Op. cit., (1969), p. 268.
- (20) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 270.
- (21) C. Jullian, (1882), p. 28.
- (22) Rudolf Keller, Stilicho, oder Die Geschichte des West-römischen  
Reiches von 395-408 (Berlin, Le Coutre, 1884), p. 27.
- (23) R. Keller, Op. cit., p. 27.

## Chapter 1 / The Personal Life of Stilicho: The Evidence

The origin of Stilicho and the cause of his downfall are the two chief matters of controversy. He was born in an age sometimes awkwardly similar to ours and where people not only thought in terms of stereotypes, but could be most easily manipulated by their use. At a time of easily-shaped opinions, people of different background like Stilicho can be treated as scapegoats. At certain times in history, humanity has a tendency to react like Pavlov's dogs; woe to the leader who is identified as an outsider during a crisis. The password of a mob is predictably to deliver Barabbas' (or Olympius).

Thus -- and predictably -- the most often repeated epithets concerning Stilicho that have come down to us are barbarus and semi-barbarus.<sup>(1)</sup> They are the only charged terms of the 5th century to take precedence over the paganus versus Christianus opposition.

The bulk of the venom aimed at Stilicho is still concentrated in the accusation of collusion with "fellow-Germans."<sup>(2)</sup> The date and place of the birth of Stilicho are only hinted at in the sources. Nonetheless the strongest possibility appears to be that he was born in or near Constantinople, to a Roman Provincial mother and a father of Vandal origin thankful to Rome and for all Rome stood for.<sup>(3)</sup>

Jordanes wrote that the Vandals, vanquished by the Goths, sought and obtained Constantine's permission to settle in Pannonia, where they stayed afterwards for forty years, until their fellow-Vandal Stilicho called upon them to invade Gaul. The allegation that Stilicho called upon the Vandals to invade Gaul is reminiscent of Orosius' attacks on Stilicho because of his Vandal origin. The implausibility of this allegation provides further confirmation of how much Stilicho's Vandal origin was unfairly held against him by later historians.

By far the most valuable source on Stilicho is Claudian. It is a great pity that Claudian's testimony stops abruptly -- probably with his death -- in 404. Claudian's place is unique in history as well as in literature. Intelligent and civilised, Claudian is an erudite poet and a skilled propagandist and one can follow history quite closely through the silences and the hyperboles of his graceful verse on Stilicho. (4)

Especially worth while mentioning in this respect is the following paragraph written by Alan Cameron: "I propose then to work on the assumption that Claudian was Stilicho's official propagandist. The importance of this should be obvious, but it has seldom been fully appreciated or stated in so many words. It means that Claudian's poems can, with all due caution of course, be used to reconstruct Stilicho's policies: or -- perhaps more interesting and no less important -- how Stilicho wished his aims and actions to appear to contemporaries. In short, they offer a unique opportunity to see how a Roman government justified its policy to its subjects year by year -- and on occasion month by month. More generally they make it perfectly clear what the basic goal of Stilicho's policy was during all the period in which Claudian served him -- that is to say from 396 to 404." (5)

Alan Cameron demonstrates thus the importance of Claudian in the reconstruction of Stilicho's life and motives. On the parentage of Stilicho, Claudian writes that Stilicho's father was a cavalry officer who served under Valens. (6) Rudolf Keller cites Claudian to assert that Stilicho's father was of noble origin (7) and, quoting F. Dahn, he adds that Stilicho's father was in command from 364 to 378 A.D. of Germanic cavalry squadrons; in Claudian's words, he led in battle rutilantes crinibus alas. (8) This position of high command as well as the early entrance of Stilicho into the protectores

domestici at the imperial court implies frequent sojourns, if not outright early residence in Constantinople.

If one follows certain hints in Claudian,<sup>(9)</sup> Rudolf Keller's argument that Stilicho must have been born in "alio . . . (scil. Hispaniae adverso) in axe"<sup>(10)</sup> a Roman citizen of Vandal extraction, appears the most cogent. Rudolf Keller considers that Jeep was wrong in assuming that Stilicho was born in Pannonia, the refuge of his Vandal tribe,<sup>(11)</sup> in 360 A.D.; with Jeep, this had been assumed by some on the grounds that Stilicho was of Vandalic origin. Sensibly, R. Keller observes that "Denn aus der vandalischen Abkunft Stilichos folgt noch nicht der Geburtsort."<sup>(12)</sup>

Using Olympiodorus and Eunapius for sources who were contemporaries of Stilicho, Zosimus, writing in the second half of the fifth century, does not mention Stilicho's origin or parentage.<sup>(13)</sup> Zosimus, citing Olympiodorus in V. 30-36, especially throughout 33 and 34, delineates a most attractive portrait of Stilicho at the end of his life, and in V. 34, paragraphs 5 to 7 inclusive, provide a fitting epitaph for Stilicho.<sup>(14)</sup>

Pronoia and Tyche are the major forces at work in Zosimus' pagan world, slowly giving way to sundry evils. Paul Orosius is a Christian apologist for whom evils and devils have always surrounded Romans and barbarians; nevertheless a single God, great Jehovah himself, is in charge. Paschoud's negative comments on Orosius must be kept in mind when one reads Orosius on Stilicho.<sup>(15)</sup> However -- and rather perversely -- many modern writers follow the lead of Orosius' Historiarum adversum paganos VII. 38, "interea comes Stilicho, Vandalorum inbellis auaræ perfidæ et dolosæ genere editus, parvi pendens quod sub imperatore imperabat, Eucherium filium suum, sicut a plerisque traditur, iam inde Christianorum persecutionem a puero priuatoque meditantem, in imperium

quoquo modo substituere nitebatur . . . "(16)

According to Jerome, born himself in Stridon on the border between Dalmatia and Pannonia and a contemporary of Stilicho, Stilicho's mother appears to have been a Roman. (17) Jerome, writing in 409 to Geruchia, a widow who seems intent on remarrying, entitles his letter De Monogamia. This letter of Jerome, who had remained far away in Palestine throughout the strife, and had thundered repeatedly against the mystique of Rome, clearly reflects Jerome's anti-barbarian bias. Jerome writes that Stilicho used Rome's resources against her own interests and aided and abetted the barbarians; Stilicho is a semi-barbarian and a traitor.

Consequently, when Jerome writes "Quod non uitio principum, qui vel religiosissimi sunt, sed scelere semibarbari accidit proditoris, qui nostris contra nos opibus armavit inimicos", (18) one must assume that Stilicho's parentage was probably Vandal through his father and Roman through his mother.

In a fragment, John of Antioch writes that Stilicho was τοῦ Σκυθικοῦ γένους. (19) However, there was vagueness in the Greek term Skythos, especially since it could mean anyone from the North or the North-East. (20)

Stilicho did show his Vandal origin in his obvious trust in God-ordained twin kingship as well as by his remarkable horsemanship. (21) Schmidt notes that in Tacitus the Lugii worshipped a pair of divine twins, somewhat similar to the Dioscuri, called Alci or "stags". Schmidt emphasizes the twin king names of the Vandal gods: as well as Raus-Raptus, there is the pair Ambri-Assi.

One should add that there is also a close connection between twin kings and horses. Not only are the classical Dioscuri linked with horses, but even the Anglo-Saxon pair Hengist and Horsa mean "stallion" and "horse"

respectively. Stilicho's Vandalic origin could thus have increased his tolerance of twin-kingship (Arcadius-Honorius) and have reduced his sensitivity to the dangers inherent in a two-capital post-Theodosian Empire.

Both Pliny and Tacitus mention the Vandili more as an important group of tribes rather than a race. Ludwig Schmidt was of the opinion that at one time the term had been used almost generically for several Germanic tribes. "De même que plus tard le nom de Goths servit d'appellation au peuple germanique historiquement le plus important, à une époque plus ancienne les Germains de l'est furent désignés sous le nom collectif de Vandili -- nom qui avait été à l'origine de leur constitution en tribus. Si l'on se base sur les indices archéologiques, sur l'onomastique et la toponymie, la patrie des anciens Vandales doit être cherchée en Scandinavie."<sup>(23)</sup>

In the Préface to the same definitive Histoire des Vandales, Rodolphe Guiland states that several archaeological finds in Silesia and Bohemia show clearly the migration path of the Vandals, who by historical times are limited to two nations, the Hasdingi<sup>(24)</sup> and the Silingi.<sup>(25)</sup> Guiland then adds: "Puis, après un court séjour en Pannonie et en Dacie, les Vandales reprennent leur migration capricieuse en direction de l'ouest, que les sources romaines permettent de suivre presque pas à pas. Avec le Ve siècle, l'histoire des Vandales se précise. L'intéressante figure de Stilichon, Vandale lui-même et arrêtant les Vandales au nord des Alpes, se détache en relief . . ."<sup>(26)</sup>

Because Stilicho was in the embassy sent by Theodosius to Persia, "pacis cum mitteris auctor / Assyriae,"<sup>(27)</sup> in 383 A.D.; and because Claudian

insists on Stilicho's youth at the time of this mission, "vix primaevus eras . . . tanta foedus cum gente ferire / commissum iuveni.",<sup>(28)</sup> it is generally assumed that he was born circa 360.

Whether the original phonetic value was *Stilika* or *Stelikha*, Stilicho's name is of Germanic origin.<sup>(29)</sup> One cannot entirely agree with Cameron<sup>(30)</sup> and Demougeot<sup>(31)</sup> over the preferred usage of the form *Stilico*. Both *Stilico* and *Stilicho* appear in the MSS and on inscriptions. One must point out that it is *Stilicho* for Claudian, and as the official biographer-cum-panegyrist, he was in a position to know best. It is *Stilicho* for Symmachus, who seemed to have been quite punctilious in matters of etiquette. For Zosimus and the Greek historians, it was  $\Sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\chi\omega\nu$  which is the Greek transcription of *Stilicho*.

The most impressive evidence is still afforded by the round onyx jewel or amulet found in the porphyry sarcophagus of the Empress Maria, Stilicho's daughter, near St. Peter's in Rome in 1544. This ornament, Maria's bulla, was inscribed on the front side with the words "Honor*i*, Maria, Stelicho, Serena, vivatis!"<sup>(32)</sup> On the reverse side, similarly, are the words "Stelicho, Serena, Thermantia, Eucheri, vivatis!" This is evidence for the form of *Stelicho* becoming later (after 394) *Stilicho*, and perhaps *Stilico* as well.

Stilicho entered the Imperial Army at a young age, and enjoyed rapid promotion, in the ranks of the protectores, the elite guard. He may also have joined the protectores praesentales; indicating that his childhood and early youth were spent in or not far from Constantinople. In Th. Mommsen's words: "Ein Germane war Stilicho nicht, sondern wenn nicht geboren, so doch aufgewachsen im Ostreich, wahrscheinlich in Constantinopel. Auch seine Laufbahn ist durchaus die des römischen Adlichen, beginnend in

jungen Jahren mit höfischen Stellungen und von da zu den hohen Militärämtern aufsteigend." (33)

Stilicho was a tribunus praetorianus militaris around 383, and he was sent on an embassy to the Persian King Shapur III for Theodosius, during the selection of a new ruler for Armenia. The diplomatic mission was meant to establish a peaceful solution to the problem of two different candidates for kingship: Shapur III was in favour of Chosroes, and Theodosius favoured Arsacius IV. This mission was probably sent shortly before the Persian embassy to Constantinople of 384, to use the words of the PLRE. (34) In typical Theodosian fashion, the Roman envoys proposed a division of Armenia, which the later embassy acted upon.

Claudian's poem On Stilicho's Consulship I gives a vivid description of Stilicho's appearance and the reaction of the Persians, male and female, to him. (35) "Vix primaevus eras . . .", marvels Claudian. The next fifteen lines leave one in no doubt about Stilicho's Nordic good looks or his achievements in local sports. He strikes down lions and tigers faster than the other hunters. What is more, and probably closer to the truth, he is a better horseman than the Mede and a better bowman than the Parthian. (36)

Shortly after this mission, Stilicho became a member by marriage of the imperial family. While Claudian explains most earnestly that Theodosius chose Stilicho as husband to Serena, his own beloved niece and adopted daughter, (37) it is quite possible that Serena chose Stilicho herself and that Theodosius, who could not refuse much to Serena, gave not only his assent but made Stilicho comes sacri stabuli. (38) This was the first of several steps which Theodosius took to integrate Stilicho into the imperial family. These promotions were the result of military merit as well -- as

was often pointed out by Claudian. Nonetheless, one must perceive in the close, trusting links with Theodosius, a cause for future envy in Byzantine and Roman malcontents.

There is no doubt that the strong personality of Theodosius had a lasting influence over Stilicho and commanded his loyalty for the rest of Stilicho's life; it was probably a major factor in the startling meekness with which Stilicho went to his death. Serena, whom one suspects of having inherited Theodosius' Weltanschauung, reinforced this Theodosian influence over her husband.

Serena was the daughter of Honorius, a brother of Theodosius who had died by the time of the Emperor's accession. Theodosius took great interest in all his relatives, and constructed a tight network of officials composed of relatives and friends that he brought over from Spain. ". . . Theodosius did not merely lavish favours and offices upon his relations and intimates. He relied on them, also, to take a central role in his political and dynastic arrangements."<sup>(39)</sup>

The way Theodosius took care of and relied on his niece and adopted daughter Serena, is best illustrated by Claudian's poem Laus Serenae.<sup>(40)</sup> In this poem, Claudian describes the Spanish dynastic origin, with a passing reference to Trajan and the Aelian race, in verse 56. Theodosius' (very hypothetical) descent from the House of Trajan was disseminated by Themistius, himself encouraged by a Theodosius quite aware of its propaganda value.<sup>(41)</sup>

Be that as it may, the Spanish links were strong and cannot be disposed of lightly. The emphasis of Claudian on the Spanish imperial origin is very revealing.<sup>(42)</sup> Theodosius himself was the son of Theodosius and Thermantia, as were Honorius (Serena's father), and Flavius Eucherius, the consul for

381. Theodosius not only adopted Serena at her father's death, he, "magnique animo solacia luctus / restituens propius quam si genuisse amavit / defuncti fratris [sic] subolem;"<sup>(43)</sup> This preference, noted by the shrewd Claudian, may well be at the root of the unforgiving resentment of Serena held by Honorius, and especially by Galla Placidia. This resentment is tantamount to ingratitude, in view of the fact that Serena was their de.facto mother, since both Aelia Flaccilla and Galla had left them orphans at an early age.

Born in Galicia, Theodosius was married in Spain to his first wife, Aelia Flaccilla who is celebrated in Claudian's famous line on Spain's gift to the empire: "Flaccillam Mariamque daret pulchramque Serenam."<sup>(44)</sup> Theodosius and Flaccilla are known to have had four children: Gratianus, Pulcheria, Arcadius and Honorius. Arcadius, who on the death of his brother became elder son and Augustus on January 19, 383, was also born in Spain in 377-378. Honorius, born on September 9, 384, was made Augustus on January 10, 393.

Theodosius took as his own children Thermantia and Serena, the two children of his dead brother Honorius, and made them leave the westernmost part of the empire for the cities of the east, as so well described by Claudian.<sup>(45)</sup> And the poet insists on the fact that he called the two girls over from Spain, before thinking of his own sons.<sup>(46)</sup> Another proof of the very close connection is that Theodosius gave his own son the name of his dead brother Honorius, Serena's father.<sup>(47)</sup>

Stilicho's marriage to Serena, circa 384, certainly transformed his life. Serena was a loving Spanish-Italian girl who seems to have devoted her life to an unswerving loyalty, first to her adoptive father Theodosius,

then to her husband Stilicho, as well as to the children of both these men. From her own marriage to Stilicho were born three children: Maria, born around 386, was married to emperor Honorius in 398<sup>(48)</sup> and died within ten years of the wedding; Eucherius was born in Rome during the summer of 389; and Thermantia, who appears to have been very young when she was married to her cousin Honorius in 408.<sup>(49)</sup> Honorius divorced her after her father's murder, and she may have been the only survivor of Stilicho's family, although her fate is uncertain.

The evidence on Serena is that she had blond hair, was beautiful;<sup>(50)</sup> that she was the only person who could calm Theodosius when he flew into one of his terrifying rages and Flaccilla and the children fled his presence.<sup>(51)</sup> Claudian adds that Theodosius would "adloquiis haerere tuis, secreta fateri."<sup>(52)</sup>

From Claudian, one also learns that Serena was taught Greek mythology and Roman history, and that she loved the study of the Muses and the carmina vatam,<sup>(53)</sup> specifically the study of Homer and Virgil. Serena was obviously energetic; she would follow Theodosius from capital to capital, whenever she was called to do so; she was also loyal, and watched warily as plots unfolded around her in Stilicho's absence.

Ernst Nischer-Falkenhof points out that "das Eingreifen Serenas beeinflusste wiederholt in entscheidender Weise die Handlungen ihres Gemahls."<sup>(54)</sup> Notwithstanding, Serena's influence is perceived as having negative results in three separate instances.

1) The first of these instances was the long-resounding curse of the Great Vestal.<sup>(55)</sup> The Magna Mater is said to have pursued Serena and warned her of retribution; the pagan senators were to avenge their cause through Serena's cousin, Galla Placidia.

2) The second instance was her well-meaning attempts to reconcile the two imperial brothers Arcadius and Honorius who had grown up under her motherly care and Stilicho's devoted guardianship. (56)

3) As for the third of these well-meaning but fatal errors, it directly concerns Thermantia, Stilicho's and Serena's third child, who was married to her cousin Honorius against her father's wishes. (57) The relationship between Honorius and Stilicho was a complicated one. "Stilicho socer est, pater est Stilicho", (58) writes Claudian, and that obviously was Theodosius' fondest wish. But Theodosius was dead, Maria was dead and Honorius had a feeble mind.

Basing his research on Zosimus, Alan Cameron has clearly demonstrated that there was an early regency of Stilicho -- to Honorius -- never really implemented because of Theodosius' sudden death at Milan. Serena was sent to bring Honorius from Constantinople to Rome, (59) as the future emperor of the West. Stilicho was left behind as magister militum per Occidentem. When Theodosius died suddenly in Milan, on his way back to Constantinople on January 17, 395, he left both his sons in the care of Stilicho. Although this last will of Theodosius was contested later on, one must believe the evidence of two major witnesses of the time: St. Ambrose, (60) and Claudian. (61) What is more, at Theodosius' death, Stilicho was de facto in command of the western and the eastern armies; (62) he was also appointed in Theodosius' will to refund taxes throughout the two halves of the empire. (63)

In the words of Ambrose, "Gloriosius in eo Theodosius, . . . ut eos praesenti commendaret parenti". (64) This funeral oration was most official, public, heard by many and read by many more. Nevertheless, its tenor would be disputed by Stilicho's detractors later, especially after his death.

Rudolf Keller who, almost a hundred years ago, wrote what is still the most accurate and complete work on Stilicho, comments: "Doch scheinen sich die letzten Wünsche des sterbenden Kaisers wohl nur dahin konzentriert zu haben, dass er dem Schwiegersohn die Fürsorge für jeden von seinen zwei Söhnen ans Herz gelegt und ihn ermahnt hat, in der Politik, wie er selbst sie bisher beobachtet habe, fortzufahren."<sup>(65)</sup>

When Arcadius died on May 1, 408, Honorius became the protector of Theodosius II, who had been declared Augustus at birth, in 402. Hence, Stilicho, in the summer of 408, was very close to realizing his old Theodosian dream of 395. Demougeot notes that this is the reason for the renewal of calumnies that led to Stilicho's murder the very same summer.<sup>(66)</sup> However, to quote A.H.M. Jones "Stilicho had by now lost Honorius' favour and become very unpopular with the aristocracy. His victories over Radagaisus and Alaric were forgotten and he was accused of collusion with the latter and of a plan to make his own son Eucherius Honorius' successor. The latter charge is certainly false and the former dubious."<sup>(67)</sup>

Around Eucherius, the son with the Theodosian name and the imperial family resemblance, a mythology has grown which is now discredited by most modern historians. Zosimus rejected the allegations of treasonable ambition and favouritism towards Eucherius.<sup>(68)</sup> Eucherius was only a tribune and a notary, and had walked in front of Honorius on the occasion of the Roman triumph. Stilicho did not take these calumnies seriously at all; however, an old French proverb says that "Qui veut noyer son chien l'accuse de la rage." Demougeot writes: "On accusa Stilicon d'aspirer à l'Empire, et, comme il était peu vraisemblable qu'il pût travailler pour son compte, après tant d'années de loyalisme et d'occasions manquées, on affirma qu'il

voulait installer sur le trône son fils Eucherius. Peu importait qu'il ait prudemment tenu ce dernier loin des charges importantes (Zos. V. 34: il n'était que tribun des notaires), il n'agissait ainsi que pour mieux dissimuler l'affectedationem regni."<sup>(69)</sup>

The literary legend of Eucherius views him as a sacrificial lamb to his father's ambition. Orosius<sup>(70)</sup> and the Christians in particular took up the usurpation theme with a different, added aspersion that Stilicho had brought up Eucherius as a pagan in order to restore paganism through him. Modern research does on the whole make short shrift of these assertions.

Stilicho, as a pragmatic man, tried at all times to find a way between extremes. There is no doubt he was Christian "if not tough enough with pagans and heretics to please the bigots."<sup>(71)</sup> He was married to a bigot -- Serena, Eucherius' mother -- and had married both his daughters to another one, Honorius. And he did not hesitate to incur the hatred of the pagan aristocracy when, the end of Rome being repeatedly presaged by such portents as the wolves of Milan<sup>(72)</sup> and the invasion of Gaul, he ordered the destruction of the Sibylline Books or Libri Fatales in 407-408.

Notwithstanding the interest in the figure of Eucherius shown by the authors, there is not a shred of evidence to substantiate any favouritism in Stilicho towards his son, or any dynastic ambition through him. There is some evidence to prove that Stilicho and Serena were hoping for grandchildren through the Maria-Honorius marriage;<sup>(73)</sup> also that Eucherius, loved as a grandson by Theodosius,<sup>(74)</sup> was intended by the latter to marry Galla Placidia, who was Theodosius' daughter by a second marriage. Theodosius was one of history's great matchmakers.

However there is no evidence that Stilicho favoured the marriage or

that when he was the all-powerful regent of the empire he allowed his own son to rise to anything above tribune and notary.

Stilicho's brilliant career is easy to follow, as one can through the extant inscriptions. The puzzle does not lie in his life, but in his death and his meekness in accepting it. He must have realised, when he submitted so readily to his execution at Ravenna, that his family would soon meet the same fate, and that such people as Peter, the chief notary or the great chamberlain Deuterius would be tortured and murdered.<sup>(75)</sup>

"Olympius, having failed to obtain any information which could be used either against them or against Stilicho, had them clubbed to death."<sup>(76)</sup> Every one of Stilicho's friends was persecuted, and he was declared a public enemy.<sup>(77)</sup>

This controversial Olympius, whose hold on imperial power was only to last a few months, until February 409, had Stilicho executed on August 22, 408. His influence on Honorius did not last long, but this racist from the Euxine caused very grave damage in a very short time. Olympius imported into the west the anti-barbarian and more specifically anti-"German" policies that had triumphed in the east; thus, the murder of Stilicho, the "semi-barbarian," was a watershed. Starting with Alaric, "the Germans" took notice. Later on, both the Frankish Code of Laws and the Visigothic Codex Euricianus will turn the tables and proclaim their Roman population second-class citizens de iure as well as de facto.<sup>(78)</sup>

At the time of his death, Stilicho was declared a public brigand, and then his monuments and inscriptions were taken down or gouged out of sculptured friezes (*Damnatio memoriae*). Nevertheless, within three centuries, the descendants of the barbarians with whose invasion of Gaul he was so

bitterly reproached, would prove that much more had been gained than lost with the barbaric flood of 406-408.

Thus a determining event of European history occurred in 732, when Charles Martel, from Austrasia, killed Abd Al Rahman, defeated the Arabs at Poitiers and permitted an unfettered Western European expansion. The main allies of the Arabs in the battle were the Provençaux who had remained extremely Roman and anti-barbarian. Provence had traditionally been one of the most romanised Provinces in the Roman Empire.

Stilicho was killed as the man responsible for the barbarian invasions, since a scapegoat had to be found. However, the Western Roman Empire did itself irreversible harm in 408 by emphasizing a stubborn racial conservatism and depriving itself at a crucial time of leaders like Stilicho who bridged the worlds of "Romans" and "Germans".

To sum up, as a private citizen Stilicho's values were more Roman than German (although he had the heredity and physique of a Vandal cavalry officer). He valued order, obedience and discipline while the Germans were still ill-disciplined and oriented toward plunder and tribal life.

Stilicho was a city-dweller, attracted to Rome as the center of the Empire, and to stable and civilized Augustan virtues. His personal life and values appear to confirm the belief that his mother was a Roman. His record is that of a responsible guardian and father. He was a believing Christian but not a fanatic. In short, there is no trace of excess in his personal life.

The closeness of his personal ties to Rome is illustrated by the fact that he was three times linked through marriage within his direct family to the Roman Imperial House -- and that he had evidently trusting links

with Theodosius I.

Stilicho's personal loyalty to Honorius, his twice son-in-law (brought up and protected by him and Serena) was such that, despite repeated "barbarian" advice to the contrary, he went meekly to his death as the embodiment of "civis Romanus sum".

## NOTES

(1) Paul Orosius, Historiarum Adversum Paganos, ed. C. Zangemeister (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), VII, 37, pp. 536-542 and VII, 38, 542-544. Also Saint Jerome, Lettres, tr. J. Labourt (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949), VII, Letter CXXIII, Ad Geruchiam, De Monogamia, 16, p. 93.

(2) J.B. Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire (repr. New York, Dover, 1958), in 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 173. Also, pp. 312-313. Also Michael Grant, The Fall of the Roman Empire, A Reappraisal (Potter, USA, Thomas Nelson, UK, The Annenberg School Press, 1976), p. 36. Both authors as quoted in the Introduction to this thesis.

(3) Jordanes, Getica (ed. Th. Mommsen, in MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi, V, 1882), 22.

(4) Alan Cameron, Claudian. Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), Ch. III, Techniques of the Propagandist, pp. 46-62.

(5) Alan Cameron, Op. cit., loc. cit., p. 59.

(6) Claudian, 21: de consulatu Stilichonis I, 37, p. 66. Vol. II.

(7) Rudolf Keller, Stilicho, oder Die Geschichte des weströmischen Reiches von 395-408 (Berlin: E. Le Coutre, 1884), p. 14, note 3. R. Keller states that Stilicho was of princely origin, fürstlicher Abkunft, quoting Claudian's 28: Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti, 552. There is a totally wrong interpretation of this note by E. Demougeot in De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain 395-410. What is more, the idea she then advances as her own is really Keller's. See page 130 of De l'unité . . . Also her note 69 of the same page quotes Keller as stating exactly the

opposite of what he wrote in his note 3, p. 14.

(8) Claudian, 21: de Consulatu Stilichonis I, 38, p. 366. Vol. I.

(9) Claudian, C.M. 30: Laus Serenae, 70-71 linked to 82-85. Vol. I.

(10) Rudolf Keller, Op. cit., p. 14, note 2.

(11) Rudolf Keller, Op. cit., loc. cit. (it might be a centre like Thessalonica.)

(12) Rudolf Keller, Op. cit., loc. cit; see last sentence, my p. 19.

(13) Zosimus, Historia Nova ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887 and Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963).

(14) Zosimus, Op. cit., V. 30-36, pp. 254-264.

(15) François Paschoud, Roma Aeterna. Etudes sur le patriotisme romain dans l'occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions (Rome: Institut Suisse, 1967), "Sur Stilicon et son fils Eucher, il recueille et transmet les pires calomnies, en faisant d'eux des traîtres et des persécuteurs du christianisme," p. 287. Also, "L'histoire d'Orose est l'oeuvre d'un petit esprit," p. 291, and "Ce monument d'étroitesse intellectuelle n'a d'intérêt que documentaire," p. 292.

(16) Orosius, Op. cit., pp. 542-3.

(17) Jerome, Op. cit., loc cit.

(18) \_\_\_\_\_, Op. cit., loc cit.

(19) John of Antioch, Fragments (ed. C. Muller, in FHGIV and V, 1851, 1870. Also ed. C. de Boor, in Exc. de ins., 1905), fr. 187.

(20) The Encyclopaedia Britannica (London and New York, 13th. ed., 1922), Vol. 24, p. 526. E.H. Minns, M.A. Cantab. See also OLD, p. 1714.

(21) Ludwig Schmidt, Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung Vol. III Die Wandalen (München: 1901, 2nd. ed. 1942), trad. Paris: Payot, 1953, Histoire des Vandales. p. 44-p. 47. Also ref. to Tacitus' Alci p. 51 and to Raus and Raptus p. 43.

(22) L. Schmidt, Op. cit., p. 5.

(23) \_\_\_\_\_, Op. cit., p. 5; But there is similarity in the vagueness of the term to the term Skythos.

(24) L. Schmidt, Op. cit., p. 5.

(25) \_\_\_\_\_, Op. cit., p. 9.

(26) \_\_\_\_\_, Op. cit., p. XII.

(27) Claudian, 21: de consulatu Stilichonis I, 51-2, p. 368.

(28) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 51-3, p. 368.

(29) Ernst Nischer-Falkenhof, Stilicho (Wien: L.W. Seidel und Sohn, 1947), note p. 163. Also, Wrede, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker LIX, 1886/91: "Über die Sprache der Vandalen," p. 49 ff. Also, M. Schönfeld, Wörterbuch der altgermanischen Personen- und Völkernamen, Germanische Bibliothek, I, Heidelberg; Wilhelm Streitberg, IV Reihe, Bd 2, 1911, pp. 209 ff.

(30) Alan Cameron, Op. cit., p. XIII.

#### Abbreviations

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*Note:* Stilico or Stilicho? The 'correct' form is certainly Stilico (cf. Demougeot, p. 129, n. 64), but Greek writers write Στιλιχόν, and MSS of Claudian, Symmachus, the Codes (for what this is worth in such a matter) usually Stilicho. Both forms are found in official Latin inscriptions (cf. Birt, p. ccx). It may well be that Claudian (and perhaps Stilico too) preferred the more literary and Roman looking (if incorrect) aspirated form, but for reasons which I can no longer recall and would not care to justify. I have always omitted the aspirate, and that is the way the name appears throughout this book, for consistency's sake in quotations from Claudian no less than in my own text.

(31) E. Demougeot, De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain 395-410 (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1951), p. 129, note 64.

(32) Dessau 800; also E. Nischer-Falkenhof, Op. cit., p. 82.

(33) Th. Mommsen, "Stilicho und Alarich", Hermes, XXXVIII (1903), (Gesammelte Schriften IV, 516 f.), p. 133.

(34) Jones-Martindale-Morris, The Prosopography of the Late Roman Empire (Cambridge, London, etc: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 854, Vol. I.

(35) Claudian, 21: de consulatu Stilichonis I, 51-68, p. 368.

(36) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 67-8, p. 368.

(37) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 69-115, pp. 368-372.

(38) Jones-Martindale-Morris, Op. cit., p. 854. Also, Cameron (1970), p. 56.

(39) John Matthews, Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p. 109.

(40) Claudian, C.M. 30: Laus Serenae, p. 238, Vol. II.

(41) J. Matthews, Op. cit., p. 108. Also note 1, p. 109: (but, Aelia Flaccilla?)

(42) Claudian, C.M. 30: Laus Serenae, 50-82, pp. 242-244, Vol. II.

(43) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 105-7, p. 246, Vol. II.

(44) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 69, p. 244, Vol. II.

(45) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 115-116, p. 246, Vol. II.

(46) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 111-114, p. 246, Vol. II.

(47) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 109-110, p. 246, Vol. II.

(48) E. Nischer-Falkenhof, Op. cit., p. 81. Also, R. Keller, p. 39.

The Prosopography probably wrongly states 395.

(49) Zosimus, Op. cit., V, 28.

- (50) Claudian, 10: epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii Augusti, 242, p. 260, Vol. I.
- (51) Claudian, C.M. 30: Laus Serenae, 134-139, p. 248, Vol. II.
- (52) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 139, p. 248, Vol. II.
- (53) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 146 ff., pp. 248-250, Vol. II; XIV, 3 p. 272.
- (54) E. Nischer-Falkenhof, Op. cit., p. 22.
- (55) Zosimus, Op. cit., V. 38.
- (56) Zosimus, Op. cit., V. 29.
- (57) Zosimus, Op. cit., V. 28.
- (58) Claudian, C.M. 1: Ad Stilichonem, 12, p. 174, Vol. II.
- (59) Alan Cameron, "Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilicho," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 73 (1969), p. 266.
- (60) Saint Ambrosius, De excessu fratris, De obitu Valentiniani, De obitu Theodosii CSEL 73 (Faller), De obitu Theodosii.
- (61) Claudian, Op. cit. Also, Keller, p. 9; Zosimus, V. 34; Olympiodorus, fr. 2. FHG, IV.
- (62) Claudian, 5: In Rufinum Liber Secundus, 4-6. Also, 8: Panegyricus de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti, 432-433; 22: de consulatu Stilichonis II, 58-60; 21: de consulatu Stilichonis I, 151-161, esp. 160-161; also, Zosimus, V: 4.
- (63) Ambrosius, De Obitu Theodosii, 5, the testament of Theodosius.
- (64) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, loc. cit.
- (65) R. Keller, Op. cit., p. 26.
- (66) E. Demougeot, Op. cit., pp. 414-415.

- (67) A.H.M. Jones, The Decline of the Ancient World (New York, Longmans, 1966), p. 76.
- (68) Zosimus, V, 34.
- (69) E. Demougeot, Op. cit., pp. 414-415.
- (70) Orosius, VII, 37-38, culminating in: "Ita minimo negotio paucorumque poena ecclesiae Christi cum imperatore religioso et liberatae sunt et vindicatae."
- (71) Alan Cameron, Op. cit., p. 190.
- (72) Claudian, 26: de bello Gothico, 249-266, p. 144, Vol. II.
- (73) \_\_\_\_\_, 10: Epithalamium, 293-4; also, 22: de consulatu Stilichonis II, 239-240; 341-349. Also, S.I. Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 66 and note 94 on the same page.)
- (74) Claudian, 24: de consulatu Stilichonis III, 176-9, p. 54, Vol. II.
- (75) Zosimus V, 35.
- (76) \_\_\_\_\_, loc. cit.
- (77) Jones-Martindale-Morris, Op. cit.; p. 857, citing CTh VII 16, 1.
- (78) For instance, in the Salic Law one reads, in "XXXIV. De eo qui hominem ingenuum sine causa ligaverit" under Article 3 "Si Romanus Francum ligaverit sine causa ICC den. qui faciunt sol. XXX culp. jud" and under article 4 "Si vero Francus Romanum ligaverit sine causa, DC den. qui faciunt sol. XV culp. jud." in Charles Joseph Mayer Des Etats Généraux et autres assemblées nationales. Tome Second. Original de la loi salique. La Haye, à Paris chez Buisson, 1788, p. 112; see also MGH. Leges, Pactus legis salicae, Hannover, 1962.

## Chapter 2 Stilicho The Military Man: The Evidence

Stilicho's military career can be most closely followed through the verse of Claudian; and Claudian's Carmina provide an important example of the way literature records historical events, rescuing certain attitudes of the time. In this vein, Claudian writes of battles fought by Stilicho throughout his military career and about which our information would otherwise be fragmentary.

In this respect, the comment of Edward Gibbon is relevant. It reflects the very words that R. Keller chose to start the first chapter of Stilicho: "The celestial gift which Achilles obtained, and Alexander envied, of a poet worthy to celebrate the actions of heroes has been enjoyed by Stilicho in a much higher degree than might have been expected from the declining state of genius and art."<sup>(1)</sup> There is no doubt that the singer was worthy of the tale and Stilicho was fortunate in having an outstanding poet to describe his contemporary campaigns, and this in verse that was to survive the destruction of statues and the damnatio memoriae.

Claudian marks the start of Stilicho's military career with the word miles,<sup>(2)</sup> soldier: the passage at the same time indicates that Stilicho's "noble countenance", tallness, speech, in short his charisma, marked him already then as a "leader of men."<sup>(3)</sup> Stilicho soon became a leader among the protectores, a tribunus praetorianus militaris, and it was as representative of the Roman Army that he was sent by Theodosius on the mission to Persia in 384. During the same year, Stilicho was named comes stabuli sacri.<sup>(4)</sup> To this title was added that of comes domesticorum,<sup>(5)</sup> usually indicative of military excellence. One can determine the date of this appointment, according to Zosimus V. 34, 6 (after Eunapius), as the year 385.

In the following years, Stilicho fought in Thrace and was named magister militum per Thracias, probably in 385-386, and appointed second-in-command to Promotus; Stilicho succeeded to this command when Promotus was killed in an ambush in 391. From this time on, Stilicho was to inherit not only Promotus' military command but also his anger at Rufinus. Many army generals shared this anger; Rufinus certainly had Promotus, whom he viewed as a rival, exiled (and possibly killed). An implacable and destructive rivalry consequently was inherited by Stilicho with the death of Promotus, Stilicho's friend.

Stilicho and an aging Timasius commanded the Roman troops of Theodosius in the war against Eugenius.<sup>(6)</sup> On September 5th, 394, the battle of the Frigidus was fought between Theodosius and Eugenius. So much pagan and Christian folklore has aggregated around this battle -- the Bora itself being upheld as a miracle -- that one forgets the central fact that this battle was fought between Barbarian generals while Eugenius was being betrayed, while Ilicomachus Flavianus was invoking Jove and Hercules, after St. Ambrose had fled Milan and while Theodosius was having visions.

Historians like to see the Middle Ages begin with the battle of Hadrianople in 378 or the partitio imperii at the death of Theodosius in 395 and others wait until the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in 476. However, the battle of the Frigidus has an equal claim to attention: the Frank Arbogast fought the Gothic leaders Gainas and Alaric. For the first recorded time -- albeit in the name of Rome -- Franks from Gaul fought Goths from Germany. If we are to accept Orosius' figure,<sup>(7)</sup> 10,000 Goths died in one day, foreshadowing the battle of Verdun in 1916.

The Goths had been thrown into the thick of battle while the Roman

troops of Timasius and Stilicho were spared. In fact, the Roman troops on both sides at the Frigidus had very few casualties; they only fought on the second day, when the main combatant was the Bora, a cold and violent wind rushing through the narrow valley.

It is conceivable that Alaric who was a very young leader at the time never forgot or forgave either Rome or Stilicho. Theodosius did not make the slaughter of his foederati more acceptable by stating that the victory was a favour of God to himself, (a favour that had been denied to these lost Arian souls who were superfluous to the victory won by Theodosius -- with God's help -- alone). Ambrose in his De obitu Theodosii and Orosius in his Historia adversum paganos insist that the Lord of the far-flung battle line had won the battle of Frigidus with the help of Theodosius alone; the battle line just followed its victorious Catholic, Christian, and non-barbarian Emperor.<sup>(8)</sup> It should be noted that Stilicho probably had been already at Theodosius' side in the campaign against Magnus Maximus, a Spaniard and a comrade in arms of the father of Theodosius. Theodosius' army had killed Magnus Maximus at Aquileia, on 28 August, 388, and Theodosius had sent Arbogast to kill the son of Magnus Maximus, Victor.<sup>(9)</sup> Stilicho had accompanied Theodosius on these earlier campaigns, probably as comes domesticorum.<sup>(10)</sup>

The attendance of Stilicho on Theodosius during military campaigns can be followed with extant inscriptions. Jones-Martindale-Morris state that after Eugenius' defeat Theodosius appointed Stilicho strategos, which means that Stilicho became magister utriusque militiae (praesentalis) in the West.<sup>(11)</sup> He was to remain comes et magister utriusque militiae from 393 to his death in 408.<sup>(12)</sup> In 395, at the death of Theodosius,

Stilicho was in charge of all the armies of the Roman Empire, a position he did not exploit to his own benefit in this crucial year.

Nevertheless, 395 is a year that divides deeply the partisans and adversaries of Stilicho concerning his behaviour towards Alaric and towards the twin armies -- East and West -- under Stilicho's command; it is a year that may help decipher the character and motives of Stilicho. And it is the year when Stilicho was in Claudian's words: ductor tot gentibus unus,<sup>(13)</sup> in Zosimus' words: στρατηγὸς ὧν τοῦ παντός στρατεύματος.

A controversy exists among experts about the date of Stilicho's lightning visit to the Rhine limes, through Raetia. "Descending from the river's source to where it splits in twain and to the marshes that connect its mouths he flashed his lightning way. The speed of the general outstripped the river's swift course, and Peace, starting with him from Rhine's source, grew as grew Rhine's waters."<sup>(14)</sup> Th. Mommsen, O. Seeck, L. Schmidt, E. Stein, P. Fargues and F. Demougeot are of the opinion that this swift military expedition of Stilicho, (without an army, single-handed), happened only in the spring of 396. Arguing from Claudian as the source and with J. Koch, Th. Birt, R. Keller and E. Nischer-Falkenhof, I would prefer to place the Rhine pacification expedition immediately after the death of Theodosius (Jan. 17, 395) and in the spring of 395.<sup>(15)</sup> It would be normal to expect trouble on the limes immediately after the death of the emperor. What is more, even if one makes allowance for poetical exaggeration, there is no valid reason for contradicting Claudian's statement of "et luna nuper nascente profectus / ante redis, quam tota fuit," (21. de consulatu Stilichonis, pp. 219-220). Claudian writes that the Rhine expedition was

completed within a month, which would be quite a riding feat, as the critics have pointed out.

Nevertheless, Stilicho was known to ride swiftly across vast distances,<sup>(16)</sup> thereby acquiring a strategic advantage over Rome's enemies; a strong possibility exists that he covered the distance from Milan to the Rhineland and back in a very short time, having found the border peaceful.

Edward Gibbon accepts also the date of late Winter 395 for the Rhine expedition and comments: "He passed the Alps in the depth of winter; descended the stream of the Rhine from the fortress of Basel to the marshes of Batavia; reviewed the state of the garrisons; repressed the enterprises of the Germans; and, after establishing along the banks a firm and honourable peace, returned with incredible speed to the palace of Milan."<sup>(17)</sup>

In all probability, the speed of this mission was made possible by the yearning of the local Rhineland tribes for peace and prosperity; they seem to have been eager to send their children to Rome, a desire that implies deep romanisation. There is of course the added possibility that they already felt menaced by encroaching barbarian tribes and in need of the protection of Roman arms.

However, the unrest and revolt that Stilicho must have anticipated on the Rhine after the death of Theodosius did not materialise in the West but rather on the Danube in the East. Toward the end of March 395, Alaric and a powerful army of Goths invaded the eastern Roman empire. At the end of April or the beginning of May 395 -- "as soon as the winds of winter had given place to the spring Zephyr and the snow melted on the mountain tops"<sup>(18)</sup> -- Stilicho starts from Milan for Greece with both armies, Western and Eastern. (Theodosius had already brought with him to the West a large part of the Eastern Roman Army to fight Eugenius.)

Alaric, having laid waste Thrace and Macedonia, was in Thessaly when he heard of Stilicho's and the Roman armies' approach, at the end of the summer. The Romans had to fight their way through Pannonia and Dalmatia; E. Demougeot using R. Egger as her source, surmises that they met with stiff resistance near Salona. (19)

This first adversary encounter between Stilicho and Alaric illustrates well Stilicho's strategy in battle; similarly, it exemplifies the Germanic closed system of defence of the Wagenburg, a fortress of wagons within defensive rings, practiced later by Dutch settlers in South Africa and by the settlers of the Far West, in North America. Claudian's verse leaves one in no doubt about the Wagenburg defensive strategy of Alaric's Goths in the plain of Thessaly. (20)

"Scarce had Stilicho crossed the Alps when the barbarian hordes began to restrict their forays and for fear of his approach gathered together in the plain and enclosed their pasture lands within a defensive ring. They then built an impregnable fortification with a double moat, planted stakes two deep at intervals along its summit and set wagons rigged with ox-hide all round like a wall."

A well-attested strategy of Stilicho was encirclement and blockade, and this was succeeding admirably in the valley of the Peneus when Arcadius sent an order to Stilicho "to withdraw to the West and send back the eastern army." (21) Claudian, in his In Rufinum II, imputes the blame for this senseless order when victory was so close, to Rufinus, Arcadius' minister and mentor.

Clearly, this has been the version that most historians have agreed

with; nevertheless, one cannot help but be puzzled at the meekness with which Stilicho accepted the countermanding orders, and at his acceptance of the return of the eastern army. The combination of these factors ensured the occupation of Greece by Alaric for the next two years. A. Cameron following Zosimus has this point of view on Stilicho's reason for obeying Arcadius' dismal orders: the treachery and the unreliability of the eastern army and the Goths of Gainas made it imperative to get rid of them as soon as possible and to re-organize a western-only army. (22)

As far as O. Seeck is concerned, Stilicho obeyed Arcadius' orders out of cowardice, but this does not seem very credible. There is no doubt that Stilicho was by far a better diplomat than a military man, but cowardice does not seem to have been a component of his character. From Claudian, Jones-Martindale-Morris re-construct the narrative. Stilicho obeyed Arcadius' orders but instructed Gainas, who led the eastern regiments back to Constantinople, to kill Rufinus. (23) This allegation, while being quite plausible, remains only an allegation. Writing about the death of Rufinus, at the inspection by Arcadius, on the arrival of the eastern army in Constantinople, A. Cameron states: "Why this particular occasion was chosen, and to what extent the deed was planned in advance is far from clear, but the army literally tore Rufinus to pieces on the spot." (24) It is a fact that Gainas did not have to take instructions from Stilicho nor was he trusted by Stilicho. He was quite capable of acting on his own initiative. It is also a fact that Stilicho did not mourn for Rufinus, the enemy of his friend and General Promotus. There was no love lost between most Roman generals and Rufinus.

If one substitutes the name of Eutropius, Arcadius' next minister,

for Rufinus, history was to repeat itself in Greece in 397 A.D. when Stilicho again let Alaric go. In the meantime, Stilicho reinforced the Danubian defences.

Either in Winter 396 or in Spring 397, Stilicho, for the second time, tried to dislodge Alaric from Greece. Alaric was in the Peloponnese, and when he heard of Stilicho's expedition, he took cover in the mountains of Arcadia. Stilicho landed at Corinth, marched to the Pelasgian country and proceeded with his blockading tactics. He totally encircled Alaric on the heights of Pholoe. Stilicho proceeded with a blockade so thorough that he had the stream on which the Goths were depending for water channelled to another course. (25)

This successful encirclement and blockade were ordered stopped. The orders came from Arcadius, (led by Eutropius), and Stilicho obediently withdrew. (26) Claudian also thought that the order came from the Eastern government and Arcadius. The elder of the Gothic tribe, addressing Alaric, and warning him to leave Italy, reminds him of Arcadia and ends his speech with the words: "and thou hadst been killed had not treason in the guise of law and the goodwill of the Emperor of the East protected thee." (27)

On the other hand, Alan Cameron, basing himself on Zosimus (using Eunapius) V. 7, dismisses the possibility of orders from Arcadius and devotes many pages to the indiscipline theory within Stilicho's army, probably bought by Gothic gold. (28)

Notwithstanding the arguments for this indiscipline theory -- even of collusion and treachery with Theodosius' disgruntled foederati on the rampage -- I find the argument of E. Demougeot preferable, that obedience to imperial authority came quite naturally to Stilicho. (29) However, S.

Mazzarino is by far the most convincing of all when he explains Stilicho's precipitate return to the West: "Non è assurdo pensare che Stilicone, così come nel 395 aveva ricevuto ordini de ritirarsi, . . . Quest'ordine può aver assunto forma più perentoria, e persino giuridica, se allora -- mentre si combatteva ai monti del Foloe -- si decideva, da Eutropio, la concessione del magisterium militum ad Alarico. Contro un generale romano, nominato da Arcadio, Stilicone non potrà più combattere.

E con questa concessione era connessa la dichiarazione, da parte di Arcadio, di Stilicone hostis publicus e la ribellione gildonica, ispirata manifestamente dall' Oriente. Alarico poteva ora ritirarsi verso il Nord, insediandosi come magistrato romano nella prefettura illirica; Stilicone ritornava precipitosamente in Occidente, per ristabilire l'ordine in Africa e sostenere la sua posizione all'interno."<sup>(30)</sup>

Santo Mazzarino convincingly argues the importance of the following combination of circumstances: the pull-back from Pholoe, first in Achaia, then the return to Italy and to the repercussions of the Gildo revolt in Africa, then, Stilicho declared hostis publicus in the East while Alaric was made magister militum per Illyricum by Constantinople. This was the point of no-return and was much graver than any fight for power between Rufinus and Promotus. Eutropius did not hesitate to encourage Gildo to revolt against Rome in 397 and consequently to bring starvation and looting to the old capital.

S. Mazzarino comments on the disastrous military situation of 397 in these words: "La stretta collaborazione fra Oriente e Occidente, il sogno vano e grande di Stilicone, si rivelò allora impossibile, per la seconda volta, dopo il 395, e per sempre."<sup>(31)</sup>

Stilicho's measures to alleviate the situation in Rome were effective; as for the revolt of Gildo, the comes Africae, he sent Mascezel with a small force against him. (32) Stilicho deposed Gildo, who appealed to Eutropius and Arcadius. Eutropius declared Africa transferred from the Western Roman Empire to the Eastern, and for good measure declared hostes publici all those in the army and government who helped the enemies of Gildo.

As Demougeot points out: "De cette façon, il (Eutrope) consumma la rupture entre les deux moitiés de l'Empire, rupture devant laquelle Stilicon avait hésité: à l'idée de l'unité impériale, il substituait celle du séparatisme oriental et il faisait de ce séparatisme une mutilation de l'Occident. La vieille Rome perdait son pain en perdant l'Afrique, sa seule source de ravitaillement depuis que Constantin avait réservé à la nouvelle Rome le blé d'Egypte." (33)

The Christian Church took sides in the Gildonic revolt: Paul Orosius compared Mascezel to Theodosius, approved of his Catholicism and wrote of the dream Mascezel had before the battle (cf. Theodosius at Frigidus) involving Ambrose (34) of Milan. The Donatists were on Gildo's side. The Roman Senate also got involved. In answer to the antagonistic moves out of Constantinople, the old Senate declared Gildo hostis publicus and declared war on the comes Africae.

The Gildonic revolt was settled by April 398; Mascezel -- helped by his dream about Saint Ambrose -- defeated his brother Gildo in one battle and captured him nearby at Thabraca. The Roman army with Stilicho in command had intended to sail to the help of Mascezel's small contingent in Spring 398 but the complete victory of Mascezel against Gildo made the

expedition unnecessary.

Orosius notes that Mascezel consequently committed sacrilege by avenging himself on some partisans of Gildo who had taken refuge in a church. Orosius adds that Mascezel "post aliquantum tempus solus ipse punitus est . . . et, cum contempsit, occisus est."<sup>(35)</sup> Mascezel was recalled from Africa, was well received at the court in Milan, but died shortly after, in mysterious circumstances, a victim of Stilicho's jealousy, (according to Zosimus),<sup>(36)</sup> of his own sacrilege, (according to Orosius),<sup>(37)</sup> or rather of raison d'Etat, (according to Demougeot).<sup>(38)</sup>

The thankfulness of Rome came under the form of several statues: an equestrian group or quadriga, dedicated to the two emperors, Honorius and Arcadius,<sup>(39)</sup> a statue to Honorius,<sup>(40)</sup> and several to Stilicho, of which there are some inscriptions extant.<sup>(41)</sup> By ignoring the edict of Eutropius declaring him hostis publicus and concentrating instead on 1) feeding Rome with wheat from Gaul, 2) quelling riots and 3) winning the Gildonic war, Stilicho had at least prevented an open rift between the two imperial brothers. There was no open state of war, and the erection of the monument to the two emperors was a symbolic act of thanksgiving. As E. Demougeot points out: "Le mythe de la Concordia fratrum le (Stilicho) hantait toujours: ainsi les inscriptions commémorant la victoire sur Gildon associèrent Arcadius à Honorius. (C. I. L., VI, 1187)."<sup>(42)</sup>

In the East, Eutropius was immediately engaged in the defence against the Huns, then in the plot between Gainas and Tribigild. Similarly, in the West, Stilicho reorganised the defence of the Irish Sea and the North Sea, particularly the litus saxonicum. In Britain, forts were rebuilt as well as signal stations.<sup>(43)</sup> In Northern Gaul and in Belgium, especially

on the confluentia controlled by the dux Belgicae Secundae and by the dux Trajectorum, Moricani et Nervicani, he reinforced his authority over the duces in charge, putting particular emphasis on Boulogne, as well as on the strategic military road Cologne-Tongres-Bavai-Boulogne; also on the important centre of Tournai, Stilicho reestablished a magister equitum per Gallias and continued with the policy of foederati and laeti on the limes belgicus. On the Rhine, the situation was very much as Stilicho had found it in 395.

To sum up the military situation at the end of the century and in the year 400: in Constantinople, Eutropius in disgrace had been exiled to Cyprus before being judged and sentenced to death by his successor Aurelianus, and beheaded in Chalcedon. In February or March 400, Gainas, by now in revolt against Arcadius, joined the Goth Tribigild in a temporary alliance. Until July 12th, 400, Gainas occupied Constantinople with a large army of Goths. Before the end of the year 400, Gainas had been expelled, hunted and vanquished by another Goth, Fl. Fravitta, and finally killed at the end of 400 by Huldis's Huns. Fravitta was consul for the year 401; he was on excellent terms with Stilicho, and there are many comparisons to be made between the two men. Consequently, in Milan, the beginning of 401 was quite promising. Nonetheless, Aurelianus was the real master of Constantinople and he hated all barbarians. This hatred was active as much against Stilicho, as against Gainas, Fravitta or Alaric. Motivated by blind racial prejudice, it allowed no individual differences; barbarians were suspect if not hated outright in Aurelianus' Constantinople. For this barbarophobia was not limited to Aurelianus: he gathered around himself an influential panhellenic

nationalist company of friends, sharing in the Julian dream but without Julian's lack of racial prejudice.

In the fall of 401, Stilicho was again in Raetia, where he repelled minor invasions of Vandals, Alans and Suevi and left part of his army. However, Alaric, who may be considered one of the ultimate causes of Stilicho's downfall, was himself again on the move in new military campaigns, with the invasion of Italy as his objective. This invasion has been discussed and interpreted in various ways.<sup>(44)</sup> Conceivably, Alaric was motivated to turn westward, either bribed by Aurelianus or under new pressure on barbarians in the Eastern Roman Empire. Whatever the reason, after he was appointed magister militum per Illyricum, Alaric's invading efforts were turned solely towards the Western Roman Empire.

On November 18, 401, Alaric entered Italy. After a short siege, he took Aquileia; then, "it seemed as though no rampart nor palisade were stout enough to withstand his cavalry's wind-swift onset."<sup>(45)</sup> Predictions and portents spoke of the approaching end of Rome.<sup>(46)</sup> Honorius was in favour of leaving Milan for the safety of Arles and Provincial Gaul. Panic had set in.

Stilicho, as Claudian reports, asked the Milanese to hold out for a while in a rallying speech that ended with the words "Romans, hold your walls but for a short while till I return, bringing back to the sound of trumpets the flower of your host."<sup>(47)</sup>

In Claudian's De Bello Gothico, one can follow Stilicho's remarkable midwinter trek: crossing Lake Como parva punpe,<sup>(48)</sup> through mountain passes into Retic Switzerland,<sup>(49)</sup> through frost and snow, across crevasses. "Sometimes the mountain plunges downwards in an avalanche of ice, loosening

neath a warmer sky foundations that trust vainly in the precipitous slope."<sup>(50)</sup> And Claudian, sketching a picture of the loneliness of Alpine life, adds to it hurried meals eaten sword in hand, and a rain-drenched cloak and a half-frozen steed.

"Such was the country over which Stilicho passed in mid winter, No wine was there; Ceres' gifts were sparing . . ."<sup>(51)</sup> The clearest impression that emerges from this retelling by Claudian of Stilicho's dash through Graubünden, is the piling up of details which seem to stem from a first-hand account.

The siege of Milan by Alaric had progressed to the point of negotiations with Honorius when Stilicho rushed back with a small advance party. The plight of the emperor was such that Stilicho decided -- rightly, but surprisingly, in view of his customary caution -- that he had to attack Alaric immediately, without waiting for his army. It was night, writes Claudian, the enemy held the road and the bridge, when Stilicho broke through the enemy's midst and, sword in hand . . . he passed like lightning through the barbarians' camp.<sup>(52)</sup>

One must note the repeated comparison of Stilicho to lightning, indicative of great riding speed. In his De Bello Gothico, Claudian describes the scene: "From the lofty battlements we sight a distant cloud of dust and know not whether its obscurity conceals friend or foe. Suspense keeps us all in silence. Then suddenly from that dusty cloud emerged the helm of Stilicho, glittering like a star, and we recognized his gleaming white hair. Up rose the happy shout from the walls: 'Tis he.' (ipse venit)"<sup>(53)</sup>

From then on, Alaric was on the run. Stilicho's strategy consisted

in following him towards Gaul, in the certainty that the army of Britain and Gaul would confront Alaric and complete Stilicho's favourite encirclement tactic. John Casey, writing in A Companion to Roman Britain, points out that Stilicho, faced by the threat of barbarian invasions in 401 and "seriously short of troops, withdrew such forces as could be spared from Britain, including the Legio VI from York and what was left of Legio II Augusta."<sup>(54)</sup>

It would seem Alaric saw the danger of encirclement and veered south from Asti to Pollentia, where Stilicho defeated him on Easter Day, April 6, 402. Stilicho not only took Alaric's war booty from Greece, he captured Alaric's wife and family, and freed all the captives held in the Gothic Wagenburg.

Orosius, in VII. 37, in his anti-Stilichonian diatribe that starts with Taceo de Alarico . . . says of Pollentia pugnantes uicimus, uictores uicti sumus. Nevertheless, Prudentius writes that Rome owes this victory to Honorius and Stilicho.<sup>(55)</sup> Other writers, including Claudian, hint at great losses in the Roman army at Pollentia.<sup>(56)</sup>

Alaric was ordered back to Illyricum but stopped at Verona. "He still attempted to discover an unknown path across the mountains, hoping that over their rocky summits he might fall suddenly on the peoples of Raetia and Gaul. But Stilicho's more soldierly vigilance put a stop to his projects."<sup>(57)</sup>

Stilicho had succeeded in driving Alaric away from Rome. However, he did have the walls and fortifications of Rome renovated.<sup>(58)</sup> Honorius, shaken by the battles at Milan and Pollentia, removed his court to Ravenna.<sup>(59)</sup> As stated in Pan. 6 Cons. Hon. 238-9, Stilicho hunted Alaric,

encircled him at Verona, almost made him a prisoner; encircled him again in uno / colle tremens. Alaric escaped to Illyricum and did not leave it until after Stilicho's death. Demougeot notes that ". . . Vérone eut de graves conséquences pour les Goths . . . E. Stein, o.c., 378, a raison de faire de Vérone une importante défaite. Jordanes, Cassiodore, la chron. de Prosper et les autres historiens goths taisent cette bataille qu'ils ne pouvaient transformer, comme Pollentia, en exploit d'Alaric."(60)

The defeat and departure of Alaric were celebrated in the spring of 403 by a military triumph in Rome, described by Claudian in the Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti. (494-639)

About the last direct military encounter between Alaric and Stilicho, Alan Cameron concludes "We should not belittle Stilicho's achievement. It was a great service to Rome merely to have held Alaric at bay and to have forced him out of Italy. It should not be forgotten that if Stilicho was unable to inflict a decisive defeat on Alaric, his successors were utterly helpless before the renewed Gothic invasions of 408-410. Alaric carried all before him after Stilicho's death. And if Stilicho's main achievement in 402 was only, as Claudian claimed, to have saved Rome, this is more than his successors were able to do in 410. Paradoxically, men blamed Stilicho for the sack of Rome, instead of reflecting that if he had lived, Rome might never have fallen."(61)

Citing Zosimus, Orosius, Marcellinus, Jordanes, Prosper Tiro, Augustus and Olympiodorus, Jones writes that in 405 Radagaisus invaded Italy, but in 406 Stilicho defeated him at Faesulae.<sup>(62)</sup> Some scholars including O. Seeck, J.B. Bury, E. Stein and E. Demougeot concur with these dates. On the other hand, R. Keller, T. Hodgkin, E. Nischer-Falkenhof and N.H. Baynes

prefer the date of late 404 for Radagaisus' invasion and of 405 for the battle of Faesulae. (63)

There are valid arguments for both points of view. Nonetheless, if one agrees with the dates of 405-406, the invasion by Radagaisus and his hordes of separate tribes must be associated with the massive Rhine crossing of December 31, 406 by the Vandal Silingi and Hasdingi, the Suevi and the Alans. Furthermore, only four months after the victory of Faesulae, the Western Romans would have had to face a major territorial threat.

However it would seem that Stilicho took his time in encircling Radagaisus, in capturing him after the battle and in killing Radagaisus and his sons. What is more, it would seem that imperial Rome took its time in celebrating the victory over Radagaisus' invaders, had the time to dedicate carmina as well as a triumphal arch and several inscriptions. There was time to make and erect a silver and bronze statue of Stilicho near the Rostra on the Forum. There was time for minting coins depicting Honorius victorious, for consular diptychs celebrating the victory and for absorbing into the Roman army the best of the barbarians captured at Faesulae. (64)

Orosius had calculated that the hordes of Radagaisus numbered more than 200,000 men. Zosimus thought there were 400,000 invaders. Ferdinand Lot, ascribing these numbers to "la terreur", wrote: "Ce sont d'énormes exagérations. Ce qui est certain, c'est qu'ils étaient nombreux et féroces . . ." (65)

In contradiction to Ferdinand Lot, Santo Mazzarino makes a case for the veracity of Olympiodorus' and Zosimus' 400,000 men. After his victory,

Stilicho selected and engaged 12,000 princes (optimates). Their Gefolgschaft must have been numerous, writes Mazzarino.<sup>(66)</sup> Part of the Radagaisan army was killed during the battle; 100,000 barbarians died at Faesulae, writes Augustine.<sup>(67)</sup> "Agnine ingenti et immani, totam Italiam inundavit," states Augustine.<sup>(68)</sup> Orosius confirms the number and the weakness of the barbarian survivors; it appears to have played havoc with the market-price of slaves. "Tanta uero multitudo captiuorum Gothorum fuisse fertur, ut uilissimorum pecudum modo singulis aureis passim greges hominum uenderentur."<sup>(69)</sup>

It is a great pity Claudian was not there to write of this victory which had, in the words of the inscription on the triumphal arch, "quod Getarum nationem in omne aevum docuere extingui," extinguished the barbarian threat forever.<sup>(70)</sup> Augustine writes that the victory is a miracle of God, to affirm catholicism and help suppress paganism. More appealingly, Paulinus of Nola thanks St. Felix, the patron saint of peace.<sup>(71)</sup>

Although the barbarian threat was anything but extinguished, the encirclement of Radagaisus and the scope of the victory that followed this surrounding were achieved by Stilicho. Mazzarino comments: "Era la grande vittoria di Stilicone: l'ultima delle sue grandi vittorie. La romanità poteva dirsi, ancora una volta, salva; nulla era perduto, ed anzi -- dal punto di vista stiliconiano -- nuove truppe si erano guadagnate, che avrebbero potuto romanizzarsi e rendersi utili per la difesa dell'impero."<sup>(72)</sup> A hundred years ago, R. Keller had a similar verdict on this military victory over the barbarians: "Nach dem glänzenden Siege bei Fäsulä stand Stilichos Ruhm im Zenith,"<sup>(73)</sup> and "Nachdem so die beiden gefährlichsten Gegner der Römer blutig zurückgeschlagen waren, glaubte Stilicho Italien gegen alle

weiteren Angriffe der Barbaren gesichert zu haben."<sup>(74)</sup>

With Radagaisus defeated, Stilicho, angry over the treatment of the Western ambassadors at the Eastern court (during the persecution of John Chrysostom) decided to act forcefully. Stilicho then claimed Eastern Illyricum, and for the first time, agreed to an alliance with Alaric, at the end of 406. In Spring 407, Honorius appointed Alaric magister militum per Illyricum and Iovius praefectus praetorio Illyrici. Stilicho started a sea-blockade, essentially interrupting commercial transactions. Anthemius renovated Illyrian forts against Western imperial attacks.

Anthemius belonged to the anti-barbarian hellenists of Constantinople. It is undeniable that an open state of war existed in spring 407 between the two parts of the empire. In Milan and in Ravenna, this war was not only unpopular; it was exploited by an anti-barbarian faction, calling Stilicho a barbarian who had dared appoint Alaric magister militum per Illyricum. These enemies of Stilicho conveniently forgot that Alaric's appointment of magister militum per Illyricum by Arcadius in the name of the East had never been countermanded or revoked.

Stilicho had pointedly not reacted in 397-399 when he had been declared hostis publicus in the Eastern Roman Empire and when Alaric had been made magister militum per Illyricum. Nevertheless in 406, Stilicho made a daring move by allying himself and Western Rome with Alaric. The alliance with Alaric may have been a desperate and half-hearted action. Stilicho must have realised that the alliance was fraught with danger and that the epithet "barbarian" would be levelled at him.

It is possible that at some time in 405-406 Stilicho realized sharply

that he had to declare war, for all practical purposes, on the Eastern Roman Court. After the major victories over the Visigoths under Alaric and over the Ostrogoths under Radagaisus and before the barbarian flood into Gaul, Stilicho may have reflected upon and reassessed the deepening rift between the two halves of the Empire.

One can understand a legitimate fear of barbarians, especially after 378 and Hadrianople. S. Bonanni has recently detailed the anti-barbarian reaction as found in Ammianus Marcellinus.<sup>(75)</sup> "Ammiano è un profondo estimatore di Roma, . . . Conseguenza naturale di questa ammirazione è un atteggiamento di non apertura nei confronti di quanti possono nuocere ad essa in qualche modo, in questo caso i barbari, che al momento rappresentano per Roma una grave minaccia. E per la verità la diffidenza nei loro confronti è un topos al quale non si sottraggono i più significativi rappresentanti dell'epoca."<sup>(76)</sup> S. Bonanni then gives Claudian as an example of "malcelato antigermanismo", of "molto più intransigente" Rutilius Namatianus. Having made Theodosian political exceptions of Themistius, Libanius and Drepanius Pacatus, the paragraph ends with "Sinesio . . . un ottimo esempio di odio appassionato nei confronti dei barbari nel discorso *peri basiléias* . . ."<sup>(77)</sup>

The barbarian problem in 406 is complex. Its thrust is exacerbated by the scope of the successive invasions. Thus Susanna Bonanni emphasizes the number of barbarians killed versus the total of Romans dead with its corollary of brute physical strength opposite moral strength. She quotes Ammianus Marcellinus, "Ceciderunt autem in hac pugna Romani quidem ducenti quadraginta et tres, rectores vero quattuor: Bainobaudes Cornutorum tribunus, cuius non suppetit nomen,

ex Alamannis vero sex milia corporum numerata sunt in campo constrata et alii inaestimabiles mortuorum acervi per undas fluminis ferebantur", (78)

and comments "Quale contrasto fra i caduti romani, alcuni dei quali anche esplicitamente nominati ed i corpi senza nome e le cataste di morti alamanni!" (79)

The Germanic barbarians were an unnumbered and uncivilised mass; nonetheless, some, like Alaric's Visigoths just wanted the right to settle in a fertile part of the empire. E. Demougeot, writing on the barbarian question, states "En face des barbares extérieurs, l'Empire du IVe. siècle couvrit un territoire spécifiquement romain, . . . Au sein du nouvel appareil étatique, la citoyenneté eut le caractère à la fois d'une contrainte issue de l'origo et d'un statut inaccessible aux gentes extérieures." (80)

Having pointed out the lesser possibilities of assimilation and the increasing confrontation between a narrowly defined Romania and a non-defined Germania, Romania having become sedentary and Germania mobile, E. Demougeot defines the problem created by an increasingly unintegrated soldiery, the most notable example of this being Alaric's Goths. Having written of the total misunderstanding of the German world beyond the imperial limes, Demougeot adds " . . . tous ces barbares résidant dans l'Empire y étaient restés de plus en plus à l'écart de la vie civile romaine." (81)

G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, in his book The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World views the situation as a Marxist. His approach to the growing Romania/Germania dichotomy is thus overly simplistic. Slavery as an institution is hardly relevant in the situation. Growing national feelings play a greater role than is commonly allowed for in the Marxist analysis. Thus, Chapter 8 of de Ste. Croix's Book (The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: An

Explanation) sees the weakening of the empire as resulting from a tightening of an economic screw on the lower classes of the free population. (82) We are entitled to a more sophisticated explanation, one which would explain why the Chinese, for instance, were able to withstand the Huns' assaults, whereas the Germans were not.

While any scholar is entitled to his own explanation of the Decline and Fall, it does become dangerous in terms of historical truth when de Ste. Croix asserts: "... I have come across very little sign of spontaneous resistance to 'barbarian' incursions on the part of either peasants or townsmen." (83) Mr. de Ste. Croix seems to be quite insensitive to the resistance possible for people whose bodies and village had been put to the torch, although there are numerous examples of this in this century. "Uno fumavit Gallia tota rogo", states the Gallic poet (84) who might have been one of Mr. de Ste. Croix' own ancestors. Barbarian rogi do not discriminate between mansion and cot (witness recently Oradour sur Glane).

This testimony is from Gaul in 407; a less poetic one, but equally true comes from Spain in 410: "Les Barbares se déchainent par les Espagnes; le fléau de la peste fait également rage; la tyrannie des exacteurs pille les ressources et les fortunes cachées dans les villes; la soldatesque les épuise. Il sévit une famine si atroce que, sous l'empire de la faim, les hommes dévorèrent la chair humaine, des mères aussi égorgèrent leurs enfants, les firent cuire, se repurent de leur corps. Les bêtes, accoutumées aux cadavres . . ." (85)

G.E.M. de Ste. Croix shows more his scholarly qualities when he does not act the Marxist revisionist historian; even then, he cannot help but conclude a passage on barbarian military commanders in the Roman army by

such Marxist phrases as "I must emphasise once more that the prominent military men I have been discussing in this paragraph, although of 'barbarian' origin, had become above all members of the Roman ruling class and were no more likely than other Romans to prove disloyal to the empire that was now coming to be called Romania . . . ." (86)

The same paragraph starts by stating that "A large number of 'barbarians', mainly Germans, achieved high positions in the Roman world through service in the army in the fourth century and later." (87) De Ste. Croix adds "The vast majority of these 'barbarian' military commanders were completely loyal to Rome, . . ." (88) and also "With hardly an exception, these men came to regard themselves as Romans and thoroughly accepted the outlook of the Roman ruling class, of which they had become members, however much they might be despised by some for their 'barbarian origin'". (89)

The semantic value of the term barbarian as used of Germans at the end of the fourth century must be closely examined, since on its definition so many people were sacrificed in the Roman empire, mainly by association with the Germans outside.

The first meaning of barbaros in Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon is

- I 1) Non-Greek, foreign; generally opp. to Ellēnes.
- 2) Esp. of language.
- 3) gramma., of bad Greek.
- II After the Persian War, brutal; rude.
- III Used by Jews, of Greeks.
- IV Name for various plasters.

The Romans adopted the Greek term, in its meaning of "uncouth foreigner".

(I.1 and II)

In an uneven work that includes anti-hellenism, Roman idealisation and sexism, and gravitates towards a manicheistic "barbarology", Yves Albert Dauge notes that, between 305 and 410, ". . . le problème crucial, qui se pose avec une acuité croissante, est celui de l'assimilation des barbares: on peut dire qu'il est au centre de toute la réflexion romaine du temps. Si Rome veut survivre, et elle le veut désespérément, il lui faut absorber des masses de plus en plus importantes de barbares, et les intégrer assez vite pour pouvoir les retourner avec efficacité contre ceux de l'extérieur."(90)

Dauge adds "Le problème des problèmes, en cette période, est certainement celui de la conduite à tenir vis-à-vis des barbares: faut-il les accepter dans l'Empire, leur faire confiance, leur permettre d'accéder aux postes les plus élevés, et voir en eux de futurs Romains, ou faut-il au contraire, pour sauver la romanité, les considérer comme un poison mortel, leur refuser l'intégration, les rejeter dans leur sauvagerie? Selon les circonstances et les tempéraments, les avis se sont partagés; diverses formes de progermanisme et d'antigermanisme se sont alors manifestées."(91)

In this most recent work on the Barbarians and the Romans, Dauge then defines -- much less succinctly than Bonnani as cited earlier -- the attitudes of Ammianus Marcellinus, the Historia Augusta, Claudian and Rutilius Namatianus to the Barbarians. At the end of this chapter (Barbarologie historique De 305 à 410), Dauge writes of the transition to the Latin Christian authors and in his conclusion he argues for the Roman "doctrine barbarologique", the study of which "nous permet d'accéder aux structures essentielles d'une énergétique vraiment supérieure."(92)

I do not know how seriously one has to take someone who divides his work up into "barbarologie historique, barbarologie structurale, phénoménologie de la barbarie, barbarologie fonctionnelle, etc." (And promises more of the same in a later work.) In fact, one does not need Mr. Dauge's 859 pp. tome to learn what barbarus/barbara meant to the Romans. Shorn of all pretence, the Roman approach was one of embryonic racism and unmitigated sexism; as all such concepts, it suffered from the Vive Nous-Autres syndrome.

The German problem is a crucial one at the beginning of the 5th century; as Rémondon observes "Il n'a cessé d'intervenir dans tous les autres, et de les compliquer".<sup>(93)</sup> But, although Dauge is right in stating the importance of the term barbarus in Latin, it was basically a rather archaic Greek concept, a catch-all term for "foreigner". On the whole it represented a thought alien to the structural strength of the Roman empire, especially as viewed by Theodosius.

Both geographically and culturally, Constantinople was becoming more the heir of Athens than the heir of Rome. That Constantinople was more Greek than Roman in spirit from the outset is discussed by T.D. Barnes in his Constantine and Eusebius. "By the mere fact of its existence, Constantinople immediately became the capital of the Eastern Empire and one of the main cultural centers of the Greek world. Even pagan intellectuals felt the lure of the new city, despite its aggressively Christian ethos. In 340 Libanius decided to leave Athens for Constantinople, because he wished to bury himself in a small town no longer, and he felt that the new and rich capital needed teachers and orators."<sup>(94)</sup>

Synesius, a Greek philosopher who was deputy from Cyrene to Arcadius between 397 and 400 at Constantinople, is indicative of the Greek anti-

barbarian mood in these crucial years for Stilicho. It is no coincidence that Stilicho was declared hostis publicus in 397, and that all his property and goods in the East were confiscated and given to Eutropius.

It is thus most interesting to note the appeals to Greek patriotism and history made to Arcadius in the speech Peri basileias of Synesius. "One must reduce the barbarians to the state of ignominious servitude which the Lacedaemonians formerly imposed on the captive (Messenian) Helots."<sup>(95)</sup> This sentence is repeated by Edward Gibbon, and the allusions to barbarians are all equally offensive. Numerous references to the Iliad, also to the Odyssey, are veiled invitations to murder.<sup>(96)</sup> Chapters 21-23 preach intolerance towards barbarians as well as open discrimination.

The spirit at work in Constantinople at the turn of the fifth century is thus anti-barbarian and more strictly Hellenic than Roman or even Macedonian. What is more, neither Arcadius nor Honorius were in the mould of Alexander or of Theodosius, their father, who had made peace with the barbarians in 382 and given them land. Consequently, it may have been rather the general Greek cultural ferment in Constantinople at that time rather than any overt actions by the imperial brothers which explains Stilicho's exasperated behaviour in 405-408.

Montesquieu would comment on the barbarian invasions: "Les Orientaux firent bien pis: Voulant se soulager des Barbares, ils les engagèrent à aller porter leurs conquêtes en Occident."<sup>(97)</sup> Similarly, more recently, Ramsay MacMullen noted "Rome's internal enemies were not the urban poor but rather members -- a small minority -- of the very group she specially favored: Greeks of the upper class, defending the purity of their cultural inheritance".<sup>(98)</sup>

Consequently, the backlash against barbarians was in full swing at

Arcadius' court and this anti-barbarian or anti-"Scythian" reaction was a major factor in 397, and in 405. Ultimately, in 408, it swept away not only Stilicho but many other romanised barbarians.

There is no doubt that almost immediately after Theodosius' death, Stilicho was viewed as a barbarian by Constantinople: ". . . les ministres d'Arcadius virent en Stilicon non seulement une autorité rivale, menaçant la leur, mais encore un barbare mécontent de l'épuration nationaliste de l'armée et du gouvernement orientaux. Aussi, quand Stilicon fut tombé et Anthémius installé solidement à Constantinople, la version officielle de la lutte récente entre les deux cours représenta-t-elle Stilicon comme un barbare ennemi de l'Empire, associé aux Goths pour le détruire, coupable enfin d'avoir appelé les hordes germaniques pour l'asservir." (99)

The last 18 months of Stilicho's life show little military activity. Mazzarino writes of Stilicho's taedium vitae but offers no contemporary evidence. (100)

Stilicho reviewed his troops at Ravenna in Spring 408, prior to marching into Illyricum, but this expedition was cancelled by the rumoured death of Alaric, a false rumour spread at court by the anti-barbarian circles friendly to Anthemius. Stilicho was also deterred by the news that the usurper Constantine had crossed from Britain to Gaul. (101) The magnitude of the catastrophe of December 31, 406 was only then becoming clear.

Olympius, an Eastern Roman from the Black Sea, who had been taken into the imperial service thanks to Stilicho and who professed deep Christian faith, (102) managed at this time to become a trusted adviser to Honorius. He was helped by intransigent anti-Stilichonian Christian circles; soon the frustrated senators, angered because they were asked to pay Alaric's

expenses, would trust Olympius too.

Honorius, advised by the increasingly influential Western anti-barbarian faction which was led by the Easterner Olympius, broke off the treaty with Alaric and, with the approval of Serena, Stilicho's wife, he repealed the state of war with the Eastern Roman Empire. The crucial fact that Honorius, Serena, and most of the Western Empire refused to acknowledge was that, especially during the Völkerwanderung and the increasing invasions, an alliance with Alaric was imperative.

In 408, Serena persuaded Stilicho to consent to the marriage of Thermantia to Honorius; Serena chose 408 to press family reconciliation.

Sarus, the enemy of Alaric, having been sent to fight in Gaul, had failed. On learning the news of Sarus' defeat by Constantine, Alaric was on the march again, into Noricum Mediterraneum, this time. He "demanded 4,000 lb. of gold in compensation for his expenses while awaiting Stilicho's arrival in Epirus, and Stilicho persuaded the senate to consent to the payment."<sup>(103)</sup>

After Arcadius' death which occurred May 1, 408, "Honorius wished to go to Constantinople himself, but Stilicho persuaded him to remain in Italy, sending Alaric with his Visigoths and other generals with Roman troops to attack Constantine in Gaul, and to entrust Stilicho with settling the affairs of the East."<sup>(104)</sup> Stilicho's first and ultimate aim was in view, yet he delayed and temporized for three months when only quick expeditions to Alaric and to Constantinople could have saved him.

Stilicho certainly knew that Olympius was more aggressively than ever spreading calumnies about him; if Stilicho arrived in Constantinople,

Anthemius would probably lose any military contest. (Although this belongs to the realm of speculation and cannot be proved, Olympius may have been in contact with Anthemius and a spy for him). Stilicho may also have known that the future consisted of strife and increasing barbarian invasions. Nischer-Falkenhof emphasized the irony of the situation: "Guldenpenning weist auf die Ironie des Schicksals hin, dass Stilicho, der jetzt endlich vor der Erreichung seines Zieles -- in Konstantinopel einzuziehen und dort den ihm von Theodosius erteilten Auftrag auszuführen -- stand, dennoch zögern musste, den von ihm selbst empfohlenen Plan zu verwirklichen, weil seine Anwesenheit im Westreiche unentbehrlich schien and weil seit jener stürmischen Senatsitzung die feindliche Stimmung gegen ihn in bedenklichem Masse angewachsen war." (p. 146)

The Roman general-in-chief Stilicho was killed August 22, 408, in a révolte de palais that started in a soldiers' mutiny and ended in an "Olympian" anti-Romanised-barbarian persecution. With the death of Noster Scipiades Stilicho,<sup>(105)</sup> the only obstacle to the Gothic invasion of Italy and the sack of Rome was removed.

## NOTES.

- (1) Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J.B. Bury, In seven vols., (London: Methuen, 1909), Vol. III, p. 237. Also, Rudolf Keller, Op. cit., p. 9.
- (2) Claudian, 21: de consulatu Stilichonis, I, 49.
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 45.
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_, Laus Serenae, 190-3. Also on Inscr. 5. PLRE, p. 854, b.
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 193-4. Also, PLRE, p. 854, c. This was a powerful military charge that had been held once by Diocletian.
- (6) Zosimus, Op. cit., IV, 57. 2. PLRE, p. 854,d.
- (7) Orosius, Op. cit., VII, 35.
- (8) Ambrose, Op. cit., De Obitu Theod. 7. Also Orosius, Op. cit., VII, 36. Also Claudian, 8: Pan. de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti, 95-110.
- (9) Zosimus, Op. cit., IV, 47.
- (10) Inscr. 4 and Inscr. 5. Also PLRE, p. 845, cd. Desertion of Alaric of Zosimus, Op. cit., IV, 47, 45.3, and for 31., 48ff.
- (11) CTh. the references in PLRE, p. 845, d, and p. 855.
- (12) R. Keller, Op. Cit., p. 25.
- (13) Claudian, 21: de consulatu Stilichonis, I, 160. Zosimus, Op. Cit., V. 4.
- (14) Claudian, 21: de consulatu Stilichonis, I, 198-202.
- (15) For this discussion, see E. Demougeot, Op. cit., note 171, p. 151; also, A. Cameron, Op. cit., p. 168 and S. Mazzarino, Op. cit., p. 127, note 3.
- (16) Claudian, 26: de bello Gothico, 448-475, the return of Stilicho to free Milan from the Gothic siege, when such a speedy return is not expected by either Honorius or Alaric is a good example.

- (17) E. Gibbon, Op. cit., loc. cit., p. 239.
- (18) Claudian, 5: In Rufinum Liber Secundus, 101-5.
- (19) E. Demougeot, Op. cit., n. 174, p. 152, citing R. Egger, Ein altchristlicher Kultbau, Forschungen in Salona. II (1926).
- (20) Claudian, 5: In Rufinum Liber Secundus, 124-9. "Vix Alpes egressus erat nec iam amplius errat / barbarus adventumque timens se cogit in unam / planitiem tutoque includit pascua gyro: / tum duplici fossa non exuperabile vallum / asperat alternis sudibus murique locata / in speciem caesis obtendit plaustra iuencis."
- (21) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 101 ff. Also PLRE, p. 856.
- (22) A. Cameron, Op. cit. pp. 159-168. Also Zosimus (Eunapius), V, 7.
- (23) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 856.
- (24) A. Cameron, Op. cit., p. 66.
- (25) Claudian, 8: Panegyricus de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti, 466-483.
- (26) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 459 ff., also Claudian, 26: de bello Gothico, 513-17, and Zosimus, Op. Cit., V, 7, also, Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 856.
- (27) Claudian, 26: de bello Gothico, 511-17.
- (28) A. Cameron, Op. cit., pp. 168-176.
- (29) E. Demougeot, Op. cit., p. 172.
- (30) S. Mazarino, Op. cit., p. 262.
- (31) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 261.
- (32) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 856.

- (33) E. Demougeot, Op. Cit., p. 178.
- (34) Orosius, Op. Cit., VII, 36.
- (35) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, VII, 36.
- (36) Zosimus, V, 11.
- (37) Orosius, VII, 36.
- (38) E. Demougeot, Op. Cit., pp. 186-7. Also Nischer-Falkenhof, Op. Cit., p. 80. Also Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 856.
- (39) CIL VI, 1187.
- (40) CIL, VI, 31256. Cf S. Mazzarino, Op. Cit., p. 268, note 5.
- (41) CIL, VI, 1730, 3191. Also another base of statue to Stilicho, ded. by the barcarii, cf E. Demougeot, Op. Cit., p. 188, note 372.
- (42) E. Demougeot, "Note sur la politique Orientale de Stilicon de 405 à 407", Byzantion: International Journal of Byzantine Studies, (Paris, Boston, 1950), Vol. XX, pp. 27-37, p. 33.
- (43) A Companion to Roman Britain, (Oxford: Phaidon, 1980), ed. Peter Clayton, pp. 158-9, and throughout the Gazetteer. Count Theodosius (the father of the emperor) had successfully re-established the military defence of Britain against the Scots, the Picts and the Saxons. ". . . by 396-9 the effective ruler of the western Roman Empire, Stilicho, the Vandalic magister militum, mounted an expedition against the by now traditional enemies, the Picts, the Scots and the Saxons. A small army was created to form a mobile force in the island to deal with future incursions, but events elsewhere soon led to the withdrawal of effective forces from Britain. By 401 Italy itself was beset by barbarian invasions and Stilicho, faced by this threat and seriously short of troops, withdrew such forces as could be spared from Britain, including the Legio VI from York and what was left /

of Legio II Augusta." p. 159. Also, Demougeot, De l'unité . . . pp. 195-199, notes 411 to 427; and for the military situation on the Continent, pp. 199-208, and notes 428-466. See Mazzarino, pp. 114-195.

(44) E. Demougeot, Op. cit., pp. 267-269. John Matthews, Op. cit., p. 272.

(45) Claudian, 26: de bello Gothico, 213-17.

(46) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 227-266.

(47) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 269-313.

(48) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 321.

(49) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 321-332.

(50) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 340 (346-8) - 348.

(51) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 349-350. "Per talia tendit / frigoribus mediis Stilicho loca. Nulla Lyaei / pocula; rara Ceres . . ."

(52) Claudian, 28: Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti, 453-469.

(53) \_\_\_\_\_, 26: de bello Gothico, 455-462.

(54) See my note 43 in this chapter.

(55) Claudian, De Bello Gothico, 83-5, 6-4034. Pan. de sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti, 127ff., 198-9, 225-230, 297-9.

(56) Claudian, 28: Pan. de sexto consulatu Hon. Aug., 281-299. Also Demougeot, De l'unité . . . p. 276 and notes 249 and 250.

(57) Claudian, 28: Pan. de sexto consulatu Hon. Aug., 229-33.

(58) Identical inscriptions over the City gates: CIL 1188-1190. Also J.B. Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, p. 163, note 1, Vol. 1.

(59) CTh. VII, 13. 15. Also, J.B. Bury, Op. cit., p. 163 and note 2, Vol. 1.

(60) E. Demougeot, Op. Cit., p. 280, note 274.

(61) A. Cameron, Op. Cit., pp. 187-9.

(62) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 856.

(63) See also E. Demougeot, Op. Cit., p. 354, note 7 for this controversy.

(64) CIL, VI, 1731, 31913, 31987. Also, large gold coins with Honorius, triumfator gentium barb. Also, CIL, VI, 1196. Also, Olympiodorus, Fragment 9 and Zosimus, V, 26.

(65) Orosius, VII, 37. Also, Zosimus, V, 26. Augustine writes of 100,000 barbarians killed in the battle, De Civitate Dei, V, 23. Ferdinand Lot, Les invasions Germaniques, (Paris: Payot, 1945), p. 70.

(66) S. Mazzarino, Op. Cit., p. 277-8, note 4.

(67) See my note 65.

(68) Augustine, De Civitate Dei, V, 23.

(69) Orosius, Op. Cit., VII, 37.

(70) CIL, VI, 1196.

(71) Augustine, De Civitate Dei, V, 23.

Paulinus of Nola, Carmina, XXI, 4-12, in CSEL, t. XXX, 2, p. 158; as mentioned also in Pierre Courcelle, Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions Germaniques (Paris: Hachette, 1948), p. 27.

(72) S. Mazzarino, Op. Cit., p. 280.

(73) R. Keller, Op. Cit., pp. 52-3.

(74) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 54.

(75) Susanna Bonanni, "Ammiano Marcellino e i Barbari", Rivista Di Cultura Classica E Medioevale, (Roma, Gennaio-Agosto 1981), XXIII, nos. 1-2

pp. 125-142.

(76) S. Bonanni, Op. Cit., p. 137.

(77) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, loc. cit.

(78) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 135.

(79) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, loc. cit.

(80) E. Demougeot, La formation de l'Europe et les invasions Barbares (Paris: Aubier, 1979), en 2 Vols. De l'avènement de Dioclétien au début du VI siècle, p. 11.

(81) E. Demougeot, Op. Cit., p. 21; Nouveaux caractères de l'affrontement de l'empire Romain et des Germains.

(82) G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, The Class Struggle in the Ancient World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquest (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 453.

(83) G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, Op. Cit., p. p. 485.

(84) Orientius, Commonitorium, II, 191; quoted on p. 80 of F. Lot, Op. Cit.

(85) P. Courcelle, Op. Cit., p. 67, quoting Idace, Chron. (see note 5, p. 222).

(86) G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, Op. Cit., p. 485.

(87) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 484.

(88) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 485.

(89) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, loc. cit.

(90) Y.A. Dauge, Le Barbare, (Bruxelles; Latomus, 1981), p. 308.

(91) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 318.

(92) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, pp. 377-378.

- (93) R. Rémondon, La Crise de l'Empire Romain de Marc-Aurèle à Anastase (Paris: Nouvelle Cléo, 1964), p. 206.
- (94) T.D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius (Cambridge, Mass., London, England: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 222.
- (95) Christian Lacombrade, Le discours sur la royauté de Synesius de Cyrène à l'empereur Arcadius (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1951), Chapter 24.
- (96) Christian Lacombrade, Op. cit., Chapter 18, of Odyssey, XV, 332. Also, Chapter 24, of Iliad, VIII, 527 and Iliad, XI, 654, note 142, p. 67. Etc.
- (97) Montesquieu, Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence, Texte de 1748 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900). Note p. 255 sur le Ch. XIX.
- (98) Ramsay MacMullen, Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 189.
- (99) E. Demougeot, "Note sur la politique Orientale de Stilicon, de 450 à 407", Byzantion, Op. cit., p. 30.
- (100) S. Mazzarino, Op. cit., p. 298.
- (101) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 856.
- (102) Zosimus, V. 32.1; Aug. Ep. 96-7.
- (103) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 857.
- (104) Zosimus, V, 31, as quoted in PLRE, p. 857.
- (105) Claudian, 23: de consulatu Stilichonis III, Praefatio, 21.

### Chapter 3 Stilicho The Politician: The Evidence

Of paramount importance to the understanding of Stilicho the politician is the understanding of the mission that Stilicho claimed -- rightly or wrongly -- to have received from Theodosius. The testimony of the time, as written down by Ambrose and Claudian indicates that there was such a mission. (1)

There is no doubt that Ambrose, who had known Theodosius very well and had not been afraid to chastise him (2) when occasion demanded, made it clear in Theodosius' epitaphios that Stilicho had been singled out as the parens principum and protector of the Theodosian inheritance. (3) Also Olympiodorus, Frag. 1, states it unequivocally.

Consequently, to understand Stilicho's political moves after Theodosius' death, a summary of the policy and the dream of Theodosius is imperative. Theodosius is called the Great only by Christian hagiographers. Theodosius' refusal of the imperial title of Pontifex Maximus, followed by his initiation of harsh Nicaean Catholic legislation might justify their outlook. In fact, Theodosius' character seems to have been less than great; his judicial and fiscal policies verged on the extravagant. Administratively, Theodosius may very well have been the source of the problem of Illyricum. (4) Before reuniting the two parts of the empire, Theodosius was the Eastern Roman emperor for ten years, and he added to the eastern pars "by inducing his western counterparts to cede the greater part of the Balkan peninsula." (5)

After a period of ambivalence toward the Pagans, Theodosius embarked on a strong religious and pro-Catholic policy. The see of Constantinople received patriarchal rank next after the Roman see under Theodosius in 381, (6) and the patriarch became a state minister for religion. In Constantinople, "the gods of Greece and Rome were conspicuously

absent"<sup>(7)</sup> from the time of the city's foundation.

Because the era that followed Theodosius was the Christian era and because Theodosius zealously favoured the Christian church, he was called the Great. T. Hodgkin makes the point that Theodosius had as good a right to that title as Louis XIV, but that it would be safer to withhold this title from both of them and to call them rather Magnificent. Hodgkin writes "The Church and the federated Goths, two of the most powerful forces in the Empire, were both devotedly attached to him; and the Provincials, though groaning under the weight of the taxes which he imposed, feared, and perhaps admired him."<sup>(8)</sup>

The great achievement of Theodosius is the almost feudal allegiance he received from the Germanic Barbarians; that the bond of esteem and respect was mutual was best illustrated by the funeral of Athanaric, probably on 25 January, 381. The emperor Theodosius gave him a splendid funeral and chose to walk himself before Athanaric's bier. In return, the Gothic army became Theodosius' foederati and was incorporated into the Roman army. That is the positive side of Theodosius' philobarbaric policy.

The negative and paradoxical side would be that, in favouring 1) the Christians and 2) the Barbarians, Theodosius was unleashing two most un-Roman Frankenstein's monsters. Between the two of them, they were to make short shrift of old Roman values, such as the mos maiorum and the Ciceronian res publica, res populi equation. The world that followed Theodosius would belong to the Christians and the Barbarians, culminating, logically in Charlemagne's kingdom of the Christian Franks. In Rome, it would not be Roman, and in Constantinople it would be Greek. After

Theodosius, there are no more official altars to Victory, the Penates or Vesta in the Roman Empire (except for a very short period.)

The policy of Theodosius favouring the Catholics is well documented. Theodosius' law of November 8, 392 outlawed paganism forever. This too is an important date; all the grave problems that issue from the subjection of national interest to ecclesiastical temporal interest throughout the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance could be interpreted as the result of a theocratic Ambrosian influence on the aging Theodosius. By his law of 392, Theodosius was condemning more than paganism. He was sending future princes, along with Henry IV of Germany, on the road to Canossa. It would take Avignon as well as the combined talents of Henry VIII and Elizabeth of England to reverse ecclesiastical interference in the political realm.

As for the policy of Theodosius favouring the Barbarians, this does concern the Stilichonian policy more directly and in an imperative way. As pointed out in an earlier chapter, Stilicho does not seem to have been involved in the religious quarrels of his time. He was a Christian, but he was also a cool pragmatist; he knew that government depended on the powerful senators who, in Rome, were great landowners and were still aristocratically pagan. Until his last, desperate and rather ill-advised measures against the Sibylline Books, Stilicho managed to steer a middle course between the Christians of Milan and the Roman pagan traditionalists; a diplomatic tour de force.

Above all, Stilicho's policy as inherited from Theodosius was twofold: first, to achieve a successful coexistence with the Barbarians both within and outside the Roman empire; second, as explicitly recognized in

Theodosius' epitaphios by Ambrose, to keep the divided Theodosian inheritance harmoniously united (and to guard the two heirs of Theodosius). Almost from the beginning -- and probably for the same reasons that had determined the foundation of Constantinople -- this second part of Stilicho's aim was doomed. Ultimately, the regent himself would be lost by his adoption of the Theodosian policy, impossible on all counts.

Theodosius himself was becoming at the time of his death tarred with the brush of philobarbarism and was close to becoming an Emperor of the Barbarians.<sup>(9)</sup> Thomas Hodgkin comments that Theodosius "had one great work to do, the reconciliation of the Goths to the Empire, and he did that work well. It is perhaps unfair to judge of it by the slenderness of its permanent results, since his early death may have been the chief cause of its failure."<sup>(10)</sup>

As for Stilicho's second -- and equally important -- mission, to save the Theodosian unity of the empire (as quoted at the start of the synopsis to this thesis in an important sentence of Mazzarino's), because of the very fact of Stilicho's dependence on barbarians, it was an impossible task. Some Westerners have accused Constantinople of diverting the barbarian flood towards old Rome while at the same time successfully getting rid of the barbarians it had itself inherited from emperor Theodosius. There seems to be little doubt that the fall of Stilicho was engineered in Constantinople.

Stilicho's Western Roman policies would all stumble on the imperatives of Constantine's city. Constantinople, combining panhellenism, Christianity and impeccable administration, may have called itself Roman but it was

showing already by Stilicho's time that it would weaken and sacrifice old Rome if its own survival depended on this. One might consider that this centripetal impulse of Constantinople throughout the fourth and fifth centuries at the expense of Rome condemned Rome to neglect and to a minor role so that Constantinople would be safe and united.

One must insist on the political importance of the division of the empire in 395 and on the vigorous steps taken immediately by Constantinople to isolate itself from the old Roman empire and the mystique of Rome. Constantinople was much more the reincarnation of Alexander the Great's dream -- albeit in Christian terms -- than of Julius Caesar's. (Rome became as irrelevant as Athens had been for the triumphant Macedonians, although similar lip-service was paid probably for parallel reasons and symbolism). Consequently, both Montesquieu and Gibbon were justified in insisting on the Fall of Rome as taking place mostly in the fifth century.

It is also worthy of notice that the Theodosian unity of empire, the main policy pursued by Stilicho, would soon flounder on what Goffart calls the insulation of Constantinople from political intervention by the west.<sup>(11)</sup> And it equally follows that when Stilicho's policy became Western (after 406), and realistic and aimed at protecting Rome, his elimination became inevitable and, after the Barbarian invasions, no strong Western spokesman would exist anymore.

In retrospect, it is hard to put the blame on Constantinople: the destruction of Stilicho and the weakening of the West may have been imperative to the stability of the new Byzantine empire. The mistake lies in the insistence of its Romanity, when its "New Greece" reality

should be emphasized. There is continuity in its anti-Stilichonian thrust, but this continuity is not on the side of the descendants of L. Paulus Aemilius and Caecilius Metellus. Roman imperialism has gone full circle.

One may well add that Roman political history of the Western Empire is at an end in a manner of speaking, since after Stilicho, (and maybe as intended after Theodosius), the Western Roman Empire is irrevocably weakened. (12)

The political dilemma of Stilicho is admirably analysed by S. Mazzarino in Stilicone. La Crisi Imperiale Dopo Teodosio, and Mazzarino's conclusion is that the political programme of Stilicho was destined to fail. "Così la diade Oriente-Occidente si definiva chiaramente come opposizione di religione a politica, di burocrazia a dittatura militare, di classi cittadine a senato feudale. È chiaro che questa diade aveva ormai un significato immanente, che la formula unitaria non poteva più eliminare. Perciò la politica di Stilicone -- e cioè, in senso lato, dello stesso Teodosio -- era destinata al fallimento." (13)

Several important points are made by S. Mazzarino in his conclusion: "Noi assistiamo, dunque, dopo Teodosio, ad un fondamentale processo storico: la cultura orientale, che prima è stata lievito e sangue alla formazione della humanitas mediterranea, si rivela ora, contro i tentativi di Teodosio stesso e di Stilicone, inassimilabile e diversa dalla cultura romana . . . Una diversità irriducibile mineva l'impero, e, con esso, lo scopo ultimo della pax Romana, come essa poteva essere concepita e tenuta insieme solo da una cosciente e volontaria unità.

Stilicone sostiene, in questa lotta di due mondi che solo ora si riconoscono antitetici, la continuazione di una politica unitaria e

tradizionalistica."(14)

Mazzarino's conclusions are most interesting inasmuch as one can follow the Eastern-Western division over which Stilicho failed in his quest for unity resurfacing in modern Europe. A major cause of the East-West division is again a "religious", communal East facing a "political", individualistic West. Therefore, one can apply to our own times some conclusions of Mazzarino's Stilicone. Often, Mazzarino shows great historical insight.

Writing about Stilicho's failure and its reasons, Mazzarino notes: "Si ripeteva l'eterno contrasto della storia europea: la cultura orientale è religiosa (intesa questa espressione in senso lato), e, come tale, più conservatrice e, in certo senso, più salda (nonostante apparenti rivolgimenti: eccezioni che confermano la regola); la cultura occidentale è politica, ossia umana e rivoluzionaria."(15)

Quoting Amédée Thierry, Mazzarino writes of ". . . la natura supernazionale, ed universale, dell'impero" and that "Stilicone appariva il difensore ultimo di questa idea universale, . . ." (16) When one considers Stilicho's political moves, they certainly seem to justify this opinion.

Mommsen and his followers have accused Stilicho of a policy of aggrandisement of the Western empire in Illyricum at the expense of the Eastern empire. (17) Cameron dismisses this accusation in these terms: "For a long time it was widely believed that the keynote of Stilico's policy was to wrest control of the diocese of Illyricum from the eastern government. This view (first proposed by Mommsen) finds no direct support in our sources." (18)

While discussing the alleged basic design of Stilicho over eastern Illyricum, Cameron gives us his own thumbnail sketch of Stilicho's motivation. "At no time up to 404 did he lay any claim to eastern Illyricum. In short, that for the whole of the period from 395 to 404, control of Illyricum was not a live political issue.

Our only reliable guide for Stilicho's intentions during this period is Claudian. And it is perfectly clear from Claudian that Stilicho's one ambition was simply to unite the two halves of the Empire. Nominally, of course, under the joint rule of Arcadius and Honorius, but Claudian's insistence shows . . . that the real ruler was to be Stilicho himself. In Claudian's eyes the crime of the eastern government was not to have obstructed Stilicho's claim to eastern Illyricum, . . . but to have promoted discord instead of concord between East and West."<sup>(19)</sup>

There is no doubt that in Stilicho's time -- as in Mommsen's time -- Illyricum, that is roughly speaking the Balkans and surroundings, was a strategic and politically contested region. It is not as clear-cut as Cameron would have it: - "Eastern Illyricum was in fact firmly in control of the East."<sup>(20)</sup>

Between 314 and 324, Constantine had secured the whole of Illyricum for the West (from Licinius), with specific concessions to Licinius in Eastern Illyricum. Re-uniting it in one administrative unit from 324 to 337, Constantine had temporarily solved the problem of the strategic area. After his death, Illyricum, for the first time, became an eastern possession in 340, under Constantius, to be shared again under the same Constantius (363) and Julian.

Nevertheless, Santo Mazzarino who appears to have studied the question

more than other scholars, writes that the real difficulty only started with the year 376. "Dal 362 al 375 noi possiamo constatare, con assoluta sicurezza, che l'Illyrico ha fatto parte della prefettura italiana, e quindi, della pars occidentale: . . ." (21) Having written of the prefecture of Probus in 376, Mazzarino goes on to the cession of eastern Illyricum to Theodosius in 379 and writes: "La divisione dell'Illyrico in orientale ed occidentale, come essa ci appare nella Notitia dignitatum, era dunque avvenuta già con gli accordi fra Graziano e Teodosio, agli inizi del 379." (22)

At the death of Theodosius, both Ambrose and Olympiodorus are on record as stating that Illyricum was in Honorius' inheritance. (23) Nevertheless, it is obvious that whenever a unifying emperor such as Constantine or Theodosius died, the problem of the possession of Illyricum -- eastern and western -- reappeared.

Consequently, it is hard to agree with what E. Demougeot's presents as certainties on the subject of Illyricum. Her thesis that it was Stilicho, and not Theodosius, Valentinian II or Gratian, who ceded Eastern Illyricum to Arcadius, "pour sceller une sorte d'entente cordiale entre Arcadius et Honorius" (24) after Rufinus' death and in 395-396, remains unproved.

Illyricum by Imperial times was in Rome's orbit. Nevertheless, the balance of power shifted with the foundation of Constantinople and with the roads of empire, more and more bypassing Italy. Since the Gothic inroads into the Roman Empire after Adrianople, Illyricum was always more under the influence and protection of Constantinople and drifting away from a strictly west Roman allegiance. At the start of the fifth century Illyricum was more than a contested land between east

and west Rome. Consequently, it is in Illyricum that the divisive partitio between East and West Rome flared up first, because it was one of the sensitive points.

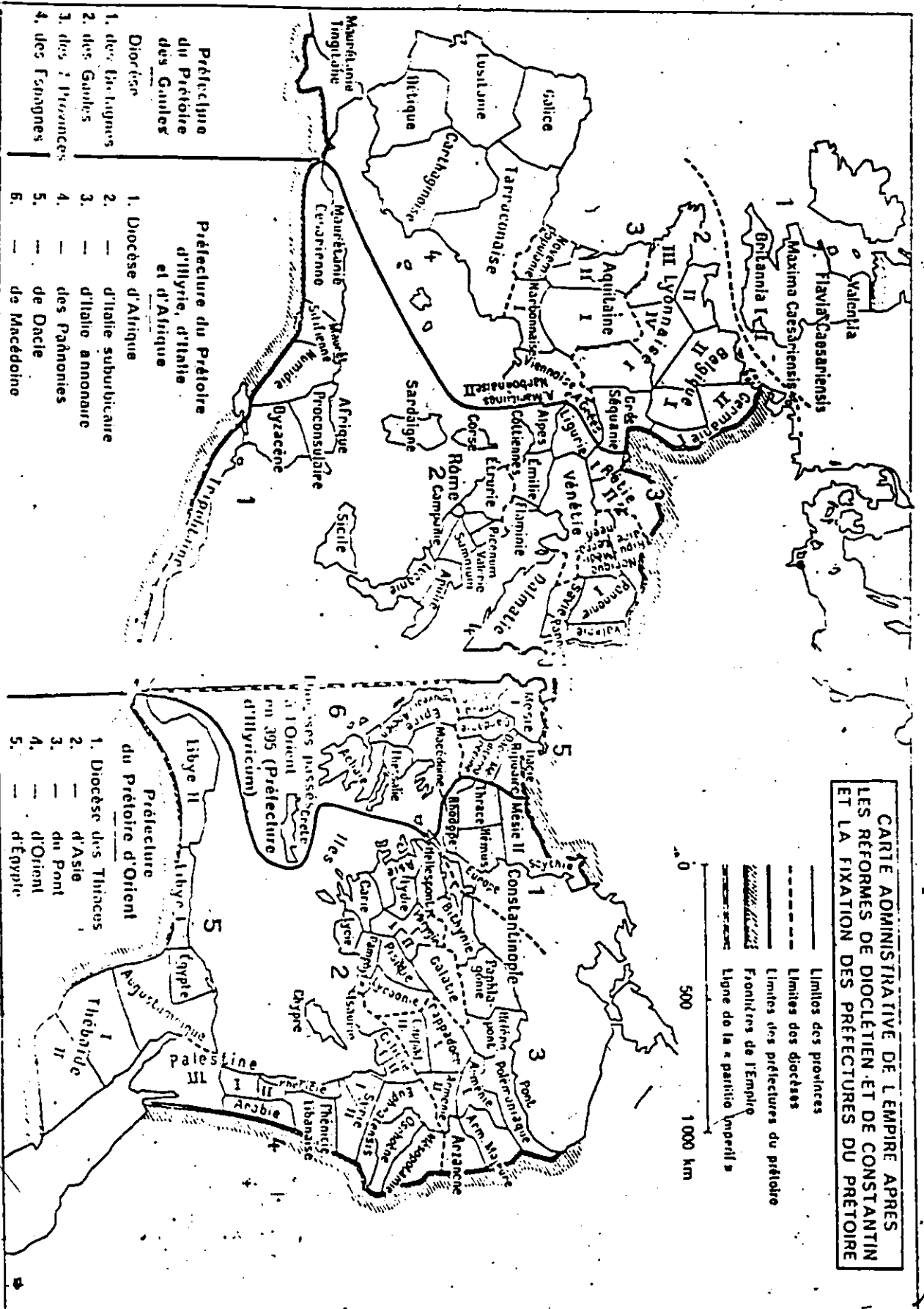
Theodosius changed Eastern Illyricum's borders to include the meeting of the Danube and the Sava rivers, to the Drina river and thus to the Adriatic, Southwest of Scutari (cp. attached map). When Theodosius became emperor of the West as well, the Illyrican problem was temporarily solved. Rufinus, Eutropius and Anthemius aggravated the Illyrican question after Theodosius' death (for instance, during the campaigns against Alaric), and always at the expense of old Rome (and Stilicho).

Nonetheless, at Theodosius' death, Illyricum had been attached to Honorius' part, according to Ambrose and Olympiodorus. In Stilicho's time, consequently, Illyricum became a problem created by Constantinople a few months after the death of Theodosius. Demougeot observes "L'Illyricum ne devint matière à contestation que parce que l'Orient le réclama. Pourquoi Arcadius ou plutôt Rufin le revendiquèrent-ils? Sans doute par désir d'un partage équitable des forces de l'Empire, puisqu'ils ne disposaient que du tiers du territoire et de moins de la moitié de la population romaine. (Selon E. Stein, art. cit., l'Auguste aîné Arcadius, proclamé Auguste 10 ans avant son frère, voulait être aussi l'Auguste 'supérieur' et avoir quelque chose de plus que la seule préfecture d'Orient.) Mais pourquoi cette revendication n'avait-elle pas suivi immédiatement la mort de Théodose?"<sup>(25)</sup>

In fact, the Goths were occupying Thrace, Alaric had plundered the countryside around Constantinople and the East was undefended when Stilicho at the height of his power started to hunt Alaric out of

to face p. 81.

**CARTE ADMINISTRATIVE DE L'EMPIRE APRES  
LES REFORMES DE DIOCLETIEN ET DE CONSTANTIN  
ET LA FIXATION DES PREFECTURES DU PRETOIRE**



- Prefecture du Prétoire des Gaules**
1. des Ligures
  2. des Gaules
  3. des Provinces
  4. des Espagnes
- Prefecture du Prétoire d'Illyrie, d'Italie et d'Afrique**
1. Diocèse d'Afrique
  2. — d'Italie suburbicaine
  3. — d'Italie annonaire
  4. — des Pannonies
  5. — de Dacie
  6. — de Macédoine

- Prefecture du Prétoire d'Orient**
1. Diocèse des Thraces
  2. — d'Asie
  3. — du Pont
  4. — d'Orient
  5. — d'Égypte

R. rémondon

Carte n° 4

La crise de l'empire romain.

Illyricum in the spring of 395. This was the moment Rufinus chose to repeat the partitio of Illyricum along the lines of 379 and to protect Alaric against Stilicho who was then in charge of both armies.

Several theories have been put forward to explain the Eastern demands on what became known from 396 onwards as Eastern Illyricum (Dacia-Macedonia). Some including Demougeot and Mommsen have argued in favour of the huge Illyrian reservoir of soldiers as the motivating reason; others perhaps more probably maintain that the attraction resided in the rich mines of the region: gold mines in Bosnia, silver mines in Macedonia. This point is expanded by de Castries "Le partage, satisfaisant sur le plan géographique, ne l'était pas sur le plan économique: les mines d'argent de Macédoine se trouvèrent rattachées à l'Orient; elles étaient la plus grande richesse de L'Empire. L'Occident se trouva réduit au produit des impôts dont l'hostilité des grands propriétaires rendait la perception difficile. Pour éviter un trop grand déséquilibre budgétaire, l'empire d'Occident dut prévoir des compressions de dépenses; elles portèrent sur les crédits d'armement représentant plus de 50 pour 100 du budget. Les effectifs furent réduits de plus de moitié, et désormais Rome ne posséda plus les moyens matériels de résister à une invasion.

Stilicon essaya de reprendre les mines de Macédoine. Pour contrarier son dessein, Arcadius, empereur de Byzance, lança contre lui Alaric et ses Wisigoths, peuplade barbare, à la solde de l'Empire."<sup>(26)</sup>

However, if one does agree with M. Rostovtzeff's analysis that "Illyricum was one of the earliest Roman Danubian provinces,"<sup>(27)</sup> one must remember his next thought: "Greek cities existed there before the

Romans came."(28)

In the context of 395, Illyricum may have been the zone of demarcation between much more than Old and New Rome. There is every indication to show that Eastern Illyricum's frontier must have been almost identical with the area dividing Latin-speaking and Greek-speaking peoples. (29)

Claudian pointed out that as well as being a warrior successful in every field and the defender of Africa, Stilicho was the conqueror of the Rhine and Danube. (30) However, for Claudian, Stilicho's main claim to glory was to be the shield of Rome, the "protector of a city greater than any that upon earth the air encompasseth, whose amplitude no eye can measure, whose beauty no imagination can picture, whose praise no voice can sound, who raises a golden head amid the neighbouring stars and with her seven hills imitates the seven regions of heaven, mother of arms and law, who extends her sway o'er all the earth and was the earliest cradle of justice . . . This is the city whom thou, Stilicho, and heaven guard, her thou protectest, mother of kings and generals, mother, above all, of thee."(31)

A careful reading of Claudian does consistently reveal that Stilicho's main concern is the protection of Rome. It also makes it obvious that the rivalry between Constantinople and Rome is now in the open: "Rome they despise and reserve their admiration for their own houses - may Bosphorus' waters overwhelm them."(32)

However it would be unwise to assume with Mommsen that Stilicho is obsessed with the partitio and Eastern Illyricum. Mazzarino observes "Nel periodo 397/403 le aspirazioni di Stilicone sono limitate all'Ilirico

occidentale-Pannonia, Dalmazia, Norico - che faceva sempre parte della prefettura italica. L'illirico orientale non fa parte delle preoccupazioni immediate di Stilicone se non in quanto esso, occupato dall'Oriente ostile e dal barbaro Alarico, è un'eterna minaccia contro l'Italia."<sup>(33)</sup>

In all fairness to Stilicho, the problems of the Balkan peninsula did not originate with him; during his regency they probably just underscored the increasing distancing between the two Romes. This distancing was to grow after Stilicho's death, despite Bury's claims to the contrary. In the years 414-415, for instance, Salona may have been briefly controlled by the East.<sup>(34)</sup>

G. Dagron writes of other Roman reactions to the partition of Illyricum (besides and after Stilicho's): "Lorsque Théodose II en 421 décide d'adapter les juridictions religieuses aux juridictions politiques en retirant l'Illyricum oriental à Rome pour le confier à Constantinople, cette mesure se heurte à l'opposition conjuguée du pape et d'Honorius et doit sans doute être rapportée. En 437, le pape Sixte III enjoint encore à Proklos de Constantinople de considérer comme rebelle tout prêtre illyrien qui s'adresserait directement à lui, et Léon le Grand, en 444, rappelle à tous les métropolitains d'Illyrie qu'ils sont soumis à son vicaire, l'évêque de Thessalonique."<sup>(35)</sup>

The action of Theodosius II in 421, referred to by Dagron, indicates that the Illyrican problem was real, probably perennial and not contrived by Stilicho. Even today the same sort of conflict is to be found between the Catholic Croats and the Orthodox Serbians.

The ceding of portions of Illyricum by Rome to Constantinople was

still going on in the winter of 437 when Valentinian III had to give Sirmium to Theodosius II. In the words of Bury "The eastern government was not blind to its own interests, and a bargain seems to have been made with Placidia that the boundary between the two halves of the Empire should be rectified by the inclusion of Dalmatia and part of Pannonia in the realm of Theodosius. The measure of occupying Salona had been taken with a view to this change."<sup>(36)</sup> One might comment that this type of "bargain" would have been repellent to Stilicho in the context of his general adherence to the policies of Theodosian unity.

One cannot insist enough on the unfairness of the imperial propaganda move that pinned the friction between East and West in Illyricum on Stilicho the politician. However, it is not surprising that Alaric, encouraged by this major division between East and West Rome, took full advantage of the problem of Illyricum.

One might argue quite logically that Alaric was the de facto unchallenged man in charge of Illyricum in the ten years that preceded Stilicho's death in 408. Alaric was made magister militum per Illyricum by Constantinople (Eutropius for Arcadius) in 397 and in 407, without this order being rescinded, he was made magister militum per Illyricum by Rome (Stilicho for Honorius). In view of the circumstances, this double title was no mean feat. Barbarian though he was, Alaric seems to have outwitted the civilized Romans.

Although with respect to Illyricum Stilicho's policy became quite rigid after 406-407, from a more general political point of view Stilicho proved himself to be remarkably resilient and pragmatic. He was an intelligent Western Roman of his time, trying to preserve the pagan past

in its best manifestations, while not offending the Christian present within his own family, the court and Milan. This must have been at best a most difficult task, yet Stilicho was most successful in it.

Jones-Martindale-Morris suggest: "He is implied by Aug. Ep. 97 to have been a zealous Christian."<sup>(37)</sup>

At the same time, there was closeness of interest between Stilicho and the mainly pagan Roman senate (Cf Zos. 4. 59 and Mazzarino, p. 236). What is more, and although it led to posthumous Christian condemnations, Stilicho held a tolerant respect for pagan practices dating from the Roman past, such as consular celebrations at the circus, among other customs.

It is symptomatic of the respect that the Roman senate had for him that unpopular laws requested by Stilicho would pass. In this respect, the correspondence of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus is most illuminating. Symmachus wrote several letters to Stilicho and he complained if no answer was forthcoming. Not only does Symmachus come forward to second Stilicho's opposition to a renewed censorship office, but he also sponsors the declaration of Gildo as hostis publicus.<sup>(38)</sup>

Equally convincingly, Symmachus addresses Stilicho at least twice as parens publicus. This expression, as J.P. Callu has pointed out, assimilates Stilicho to Honorius because parens publicus, very close in meaning to pater patriae, was a title reserved since Augustus for the Emperor.<sup>(39)</sup>

Although Rutilius Namatianus is the only one to mention it, it seems probable that Stilicho did order the Libri Fatales destroyed around 407-408. The reason for this destruction has often been explained by

the *Ρώκη ἑὺκη*, the City will be a village prophecy of the Sibyl. Nonetheless this decision was a major political error and may have been one of the reasons for the break in the alliance between Stilicho and the senate that occurred in 407-408. The Sibylline Books were part of the firmamenta imperii and were linked to the fate of the Urbs.

If the destruction of the Sibylline Books reflects Stilicho's realisation of the growing animosity towards him of Catholic Milanese court circles and his rather clumsy attempt at deflecting this animosity, it still remains Stilicho's main political error. He did not have to prove that he was a Christian, a Catholic Christian (not an Arian Christian, as most "Germans" were). He would not have been singled out to be Serena's husband and to be Honorius' protector and father-in-law (twice) or to enjoy the trusting bonds with Theodosius and St. Ambrose, had he been anything else in the ultra-Christian court at Milan.

It is indicative of Stilicho's Catholicity that the day before his murder he took refuge and counsel in a church near Ravenna; also, that the "anti-Christian" allegations were spread after his death, in a propaganda effort meant to reconcile east and (a now junior) west Rome at Stilicho's expense, and in the Classical tradition of woe to the fallen, vae victis.

Stilicho was a Catholic Christian and "The penal laws of Honorius against pagans and heretics were attributed to him."<sup>(40)</sup> Notwithstanding this, he was a moderate Christian and as such, he was a misunderstood oddity in this period of ferocious Christian factions outlawing each other with mitre and crook. Doctrinal squabbles were erupting all over the Roman world, and nowhere was this more true than in Constantinople,

to be followed by Milan and then Ravenna.

The emperor Julian had remarked within living memory on the violent doctrinal quarrels between Christians and on how these quarrels had been responsible for more deaths than the lions of the Coliseum. Julian may not have been a reliable source when it came to Christianity, but there was some truth in his mocking remark. Another point that was made by Julian's reign was that within the recent pre-Theodosian past a sizeable proportion of the population of the empire was still actively pagan. In Stilicho's time, the Roman senate and the Roman army were pagan in tradition and ancestral belief; the regent's Realpolitik was bent almost until the end on not antagonizing them.

In the Late Roman Empire, the consulate, when not reserved for the emperor himself, still carried great political weight and was the crowning of a career as well as the "supreme mark of Imperial favour."<sup>(41)</sup> There were two consuls appointed for a year, in Stilicho's time, one in the East and one in the West. Stilicho was consul for the West twice: the first time was 399-400, and the second was 404-405. There was a great difference in the political outlook of Stilicho from one consulate to the other. When he was consul in 399-400 with Aurelianus, Stilicho certainly agreed to Aurelianus' nomination (in September for December), as is very obvious throughout Claudian's De Consulatu Stilichonis I, written during this period. There was great hope for a genuine concordia fratrum in Stilicho's acceptance of the consulship in September 399. That explains the optimistic mood of De Consulatu Stilichonis I, II, and III. Claudian throughout the poems on Stilicho's consulship, reiterates the parens publicus theme of Symmachus.

For example "but it is not riches, not a huge heritage of gold that Stilicho holds in trust for the young heirs, but two hemispheres and all that is embraced within the sun's fiery orbit,"<sup>(42)</sup> and again "as a reverend senior thou . . . governest the empire at a father's bidding;"<sup>(43)</sup> these passages demonstrate that "After the war in Africa eastern sedition waned; the orient once more was laid low and, guarded by the consul Stilicho, the axes rose in triumph".<sup>(44)</sup>

Consequently there was hope in September 399, even if it was soon dashed (probably still in 399) by the barbarophobic policies of Aurelianus and the secessionist nationalism at Constantinople. It is not a coincidence that this is the time of Synesius' stay in Constantinople, and of a brilliant panhellenion at Court, supple enough in its political thought to build Christian churches while remembering its pagan and Greek -- not Roman -- origins.

There was very little hope, and much to fear from the tug of war over John Chrysostom, when in 404-405, Stilicho was consul iterum. Stilicho made a political move rare for his cautious nature, and this move attests to an impending change in policy. He refused to accept the concomitant consulate of Anthemius in the East and was the only consul for the year. Another stage in the rupture had thus been reached. It was the year that Innocent Pope of Rome sent an embassy with a letter from Honorius to the emperor Arcadius of three bishops, two priests and a deacon and a few eastern bishops who had gone to Rome to plead for Chrysostom. As soon as they arrived, the pontifical ambassadors were not allowed on land and were interned by Anthemius in a fort at Anthyra, Anthemius feared that the letter from Honorius would reach Arcadius

and had it seized forcibly, along with other documents, from one of the bishops. (45)

Not only were they badly treated (Palladius called this facinora Babylonica), there was also an attempt at bribery before they were put back forcibly by a tribune and twenty soldiers on an old boat bound for Italy. To add insult to injury, the eastern bishops had been seized and arrested on arrival and several other eastern bishops were accused of "Johannism" and persecuted after the embassy. This was a major diplomatic offense towards the Western empire, and was perceived as such by Stilicho as well as by the Roman church. As late as 408, there was still no communion between Western and Eastern bishops.

What saved Anthemius from all-out war was the invasion of Italy by Radagaisus followed by the invasion of Gaul. As for John Chrysostom, who deserved total vindication, he died on 14 September 407, on the road to ignominious exile. The Western pontifical embassy was the last episode in which the West could have intervened in the life of the East, had it not been for the invasions. Stilicho certainly had his share in this last mission, if only in the drafting of Honorius' letter to his brother Arcadius.

Throughout his career as regent, Stilicho had to face the fact that both Honorius and Arcadius were feeble and weak-willed. That fact was probably the overriding worry that prompted Theodosius to commend them both to Stilicho's care. Serena was both mother and mother-in-law to Honorius. She had been entrusted with bringing Honorius over when his father made him "The Lord to be of Latium." (46) "Serena herself left the East and accompanied thee in thy journey across Illyria: fearless

in face of danger . . . Stilicho and Serena, vied in love toward thee and what Serena's care had brought safe home Stilicho's affection welcomed there."<sup>(47)</sup> Her influence was great first with Theodosius, then with Stilicho and Honorius. It is conceivable that from 406 to 408, being less realistic and more anti-barbarian than Stilicho, she disagreed with his new policy of using Alaric to protect Rome and felt closer to the arch-Christian nationalistic Milanese circles who also had Honorius' ear.

If Honorius became quite isolated in imperial splendour in Ravenna, a similar isolation was insulating Arcadius increasingly in Constantinople. This isolation was so effective that, as shown earlier in this chapter, Anthemius was able in 405 to intercept a letter from Honorius to Arcadius and to follow his own policies. One may assume that Stilicho's relations with Arcadius were non-existent by then and marvel if they were not outright antagonistic.

Arcadius and Honorius had similar indolent natures. A remark that S.I. Oost has made about the elder brother applies equally to the younger one: "As a man and emperor, the kindest epithet one can apply to Arcadius is "weak", but he also possessed the petulant stubbornness and capacity to hold petty grudges which are a common characteristic of the weak."<sup>(48)</sup> When Theodosius died, Honorius was ten; he grew up under the guardianship and regency of Stilicho. There must have been several "petty grudges" remembered in August 408.

In Oost's words, at the death of Theodosius "the children were placed in the care of Stilicho and, for their private upbringing, Serena, while their souls were entrusted to Saint Ambrose."<sup>(49)</sup> "The

children" consisted also of Galla Placidia, Theodosius' daughter by his marriage to Galla. Galla Placidia probably grew up with Maria, Stilicho's and Serena's daughter, and with Thermantia, although the latter must have been younger. Having discussed the education of the daughters of the imperial household, Oost notes "Placidia was receiving an education of both a conservative and an advanced nature. Sometimes teachers are actively disliked by their pupils, for whatever reason. The sequel will amply demonstrate that sooner or later Placidia must have come to detest her mentor."<sup>(50)</sup>

Although Galla Placidia's hatred has been recorded by history only towards Serena, there can be little doubt that she must have been party to the anti-"German" opposition that demanded the head of the semi-barbarian Stilicho.

When one studies the relations of Stilicho with the heirs of Theodosius, major weaknesses appear in his position and in his character. First, in his position: he is totally dependent on the favour and goodwill of the emperor and Honorius is not only weak and childish; he is crafty and bears grudges. After the death of Theodosius, Stilicho's position at court depended really on his keeping the trust of the army and the confidence of the emperor.

The major weakness in Stilicho's character seemed to be a slowness in maturing decisions and acting on them, combined with a very germanic blind faith in the powers that be. In May 408, at the death of Arcadius, he certainly knew what he should do, march on Constantinople and save his skin and Rome's.<sup>(51)</sup> Nevertheless, he seemed paralyzed, his only decision being to send Alaric to fight Constantine in Gaul

and thus eliminate two enemies of the empire.

The fact is that Stilicho was accused of conspiring with Alaric. However, all his conciliatory moves towards Alaric in 407-8 were half-hearted and came too late. Thus they were doomed to failure although basically sound. Also, Serena dissuaded Stilicho in 407. He ended up having to ask the Roman Senate to pay compensation money to Alaric.<sup>(52)</sup> Jones-Martindale-Morris write: "According to Zosimus, Stilicho had already before Radagaisus' invasion planned to annex Illyricum and had reached agreement with Alaric to this end."<sup>(53)</sup> The 4,000 pounds of weight of gold that Alaric demanded and received from the Senate made Stilicho suspicious to the Romans: the Romans appear not to have grasped the seriousness of the danger and totally to have lacked foresight of the fact that within two years, and having sacrificed Stilicho, Rome would have to pay Alaric much, much more.

Peter Brown comments on the short-sightedness of the West Roman Senate: "The senators had failed to pay their taxes or to provide recruits for the Roman army; yet, when they were asked, in 408, to pay for a diplomacy based on subsidies to Alaric, that might have covered their military weakness, the Senate rejected the proposal as smacking of 'appeasement' of the despised barbarian: 'This is a slave's contract, not a subsidy.' Noble words: But two years later these patriots would have to pay three times as much as they had been asked to contribute, in order to ransom their own city from the Visigothic king. A strident chauvinism and a refusal to negotiate with the barbarians led to the Sack of Rome by Alaric in 410. It was not an auspicious beginning to the coming century of Roman-barbarian relations."<sup>(54)</sup>

Peter Brown then analyzes the dislike of soldiers and of the Roman army in the Latin congregations of the Catholic Church. This attitude proved as disastrous as the defective appraisal of the situation by the Roman Senate.

Brown then addresses the unwise, indeed catastrophic, Roman reaction to the barbarians in the army and to the barbarian settlers. The barbarian soldier "was the successor of the Roman soldier: he was branded as a man of war, tainted with 'ferocity of soul', in the midst of the peace-loving 'Sheep of the Lord.' He was also a heretic, for the Danubian tribes had adopted the strong Arian Christianity of that region." (55)

Of the barbarian settlers in the West, Brown writes that they were "both powerful and unabsorbable. They were encapsulated by a wall of dumb hatred. They could not have been 'detrribalized' even if they had wanted to be, because as 'barbarians' and heretics they were marked men. The intolerance that greeted the barbarian immigration, therefore, led directly to the formation of the barbarian kingdoms. To be tacitly disliked by 98 per cent of one's fellow men is no mean stimulus to preserving one's identity as a ruling class." (56)

The preceding viewpoint is extremely important. The intolerance shown by the Roman empire towards the barbarians was a major cause not only of the fall of the empire but also of the hierarchy in the early medieval society and of a deliberate shifting of power to the barbarian kingdoms.

In view of this state of affairs, the political acumen of Stilicho, as a Roman general, and including a belated acknowledgement of Alaric

as an ally, was sound. Equally sound. "His initiative in public works is acknowledged in Inscr. 1-3, 15. Symmachus testified to his predominance in many letters;"<sup>(57)</sup> But, like Claudian, Symmachus was gone from the scene in the last crucial years of Stilicho's life.

These years were not only critical for Stilicho; they determined the inevitable fall of the Western Roman Empire since it refused to adapt to its barbarian component.

Far from accepting the historical guilt of Stilicho in the fall of Rome, one should analyze the roles played by the Roman Senate and the Catholic Church at this crucial time. Peter Brown has this to say about them: "Perhaps the most basic reason for the failure of the imperial government, in the years between 380 and 410, was that the two main groups in the Latin world -- the senatorial aristocracy and the Catholic Church -- dissociated themselves from the fate of the Roman army that defended them. Both groups unwittingly sapped the strength of the army and of the imperial administration; and, having hamstrung their protectors, they found, to their surprise, that they could do without them . . . The disappearance of the western empire, therefore, was the price for the survival of the Senate and the Catholic Church."<sup>(58)</sup>

The policy of Stilicho was always representative, from 395 to his death in 408, of the strength he wanted to give to the Roman army and to Honorius. Nevertheless, and superimposed on the mounting antagonism to him of Senate and Church, the strength of Stilicho and of the Western Roman army were perceived as a threat, when viewed from Constantinople.

Stilicho's policies were sound from the Roman point of view, also from the Theodosian point of view. They were dangerous only when seen from Anthemius' Constantinople, or Olympius' Milan. In the intricate chess game between Stilicho and Anthemius, Anthemius' position was much more solid, since he was a Greek among Greeks, than Stilicho's whose Germanic origin was made akin to the invaders. Unless directly confronted by Stilicho, militarily, Anthemius, a very wise man and with a splendid network of agents everywhere, was bound to triumph.

Anthemius was called the Great by Synesius, and was a remarkable man who took his decisions by consensus, singling out especially the sophist Troilus. Anthemius was the rival who would survive Stilicho and establish Byzantine power.

In Mazzarino's words: "Né l'Oriente si avvicinava all'Occidente, né romani e barbari potevano, come truppe regolari, coesistere pacificamente."<sup>(59)</sup> In a nutshell, this is the most plausible reason why Stilicho's men fell at Pavia and he was himself killed at Ravenna.

And Mazzarino concludes: "La politica di Stilicone era stata un sogno unitario: unità di Oriente e Occidente, unità di truppe romane e di "gentili", per dare all'impero nuova vita entro gli antichi confini politici e lo schema dinastico di Theodosio."<sup>(60)</sup> And "Alla formula dell'impero si sovrappose e sostituì, poco a poco, la formula dei regna romano-barbarici . . . Quel mondo, come formula politica, era già, in nuce, dopo la fine degli ideali di Stilicone: la sua morte aveva chiuso l'esperienza teodosiana, cioè l'ultima formula politica diretta in senso tradizionale e imperiale."<sup>(61)</sup>

Notwithstanding the keen judgment of Mazzarino's conclusion, the

last word on Stilicho The Politician is to be found in Claudian who understood him so well. Claudian makes Roma appear to Stilicho to compel him to accept the consulship. "She stood before the general, imposing as mighty Pallas, terrible as Mars. The palace trembled at the glitter of her aegis and her helmet plumes brushed the pannelled ceiling."<sup>(62)</sup>

Within Roma's long speech to Stilicho, a few verses define the strength - and the weakness - of Stilicho's policy: "Brutus was the founder of the office, let Stilicho be its avenger. Brutus, the first consul, won liberty for the Roman people by means of the consular fasces: Stilicho banished the taint of slavery from those fasces. Brutus instituted this supreme dignity; Stilicho saved it; and it is greater to preserve what already is than to create that which is not. (plus est servasse repertum, / quam quaesisse novum.) Why do thy blushes grant so tardy an acceptance of our prayers? Why does the accustomed flush o'erspread thy brow? World-conqueror, conquer now thine own diffidence."<sup>(63)</sup>

NOTES

- (1) Saint Ambrose, De obitu Theodosii CSEL 73 (Faller).  
Claudian, Op. cit., cf. notes 61-4, ch. 1.
- (2) Paul Petit, Histoire Générale de l'Empire Romain. 3.  
Le Bas-Empire (284-395) pp. 123 and 129 on le massacre de Thessalonique.
- (3) Ambrose, Op. cit., 5. Olympiodorus, Fr. 1 (Photius, Bibl. Cod. 80). See also Symmachus' Letters to Stilicho, Lib. IV, 1-14.
- (4) Until Theodosius, Eastern Illyricum had belonged to the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire had only Thrace, in the Balkan peninsula. (F. Lot, Les invasions Germaniques, p. 66). In 395, Stilicho concedes the dioceses of Macedonia and Dacia to the Eastern Empire, on the order of Arcadius. These dioceses become the Prefecture of the Praetorium of Illyricum. (R. Remondon, La crise de l'Empire Romain, p. 209.) See also articles in OCD, Badian PBSR, 1952, 72ff and Hammond, JRS, 1966, 39ff.
- (5) M. Grant, History of Rome (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p. 324.
- (6) Conradus Kirch, Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae (Barcelona: Herder, 1950), p. 370. Canon 3 of the 2nd oecumenical council held at Constantinople (381).
- (7) J.B. Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire. (New York: Dover, 1958), Vol. 1, p. 74.
- (8) Thomas Hodgkin, The Dynasty of Theodosius. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1889), pp. 132-3.
- (9) Th. Hodgkin, Op. cit., pp. 116-7.
- (10) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 133:
- (11) Walter Goffart, "Rome, Constantinople, and the Barbarians",

The American Historical Review, 86 (1981), p. 292.

(12) W. Goffart, Op. cit., pp. 292-295, especially "The distant west, with its strong armies guarding Britain and the Rhine frontier, remained a point of instability, a springboard for generals with the ambition to make a grab for power. From there, in fact, Constantine himself had launched his astonishing career." And: "Weakness in the west was the condition of security for the imperial throne, and the attachment of generals to the dynasty was a more important consideration than their military skill. In 394 and 395, therefore, the frontier forces were patched up any which way, a younger son was established as ruler in Milan, and an imperial relative by marriage became generalissimo of the west, with headquarters in Italy rather than on an exposed border. The security thus attained subordinated external to domestic dangers. In view of recent history, it was a wise choice." But this policy is tantamount to stagnation in the west, non- or lesser intervention in case of barbarian attacks and by first relegating Rome to a second rank, it condemns it to decline and fall.

(13) S. Mazzarino, Op. cit., p. 334.

(14) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 322.

(15) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 321.

(16) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, pp. 314-315.

(17) Th. Mommsen, "Stilicho and Alarich", Hermes, XXXVIII (1903), pp. 516 ff., (Gesammelte Schriften IV).

(18) A. Cameron, Op. cit., p. 59.

(19) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 62.

(20) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 62.

(21) S. Mazzarino, Op. cit., pp. 22-23. Also E. Demougeot, Op. cit.,

pp. 144-5.

(22) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 35.

(23) Ambrose, Op. cit., 5. Olympiodorus, Fragment 6.

(24) E. Demougeot, "Note sur la politique orientale de Stilicon de 405 à 407", Byzantion, (Paris-Boston, 1950 XX, pp. 27-37), p. 27.

(25) E. Demougeot, De l'unité à la division de l'empire romain, 395-410 (Paris, 1951), pp. 145-6.

(26) Duc de Castries, Histoire de France des origines à 1970 (Paris: Laffont, 1971), pp. 37-8.

(27) M. Rostovtzeff, Rome (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), trans. J.D. Duff, ed. E.J. Bickerman, p. 222.

(28) M. Rostovtzeff, Op. cit., loc. cit.

(29) Cf. the curious unsigned article on this point found in The Encyclopaedia Britannica (London and New York: 13th ed, 1926), Vol. 14, p. 326. It is interesting to follow the subsequent history of this area and to compare the modern borders between the Croatian and Serbian peoples (due in great part to centuries of Turkish occupation of Serbia).

(30) Claudian, Vol. II, 24: De Consulatu Stilichonis III, 12-3, "hic est felix bellator ubique, / defensor Libyae, Rheni pacator et Histri."

(31) Claudian, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 130-176, "Proxime dis consul, tantae qui prospicis urbi, / qua nihil in terris complectitur altius aether, / cuius nec spatium visus nec corda decorem / nec laudem vox ulla capit; quae luce metalli / aemula vicinis fastigia conserit astris; / quae septem scopulis zonas imitatur Olympi; / armorum legumque parens quae fundit in omnes / imperium primique dedit cunabula iuris . . . Hanc tu cum superis, Stilicho praeclare, tueris, / protegis

hanc clipeo patriam regumque ducumque / praecipueque tuam."

(32) Claudian, Vol. I, 20: in Eutropium lib. II, 339-340,

"Romam contemnere sueti / mirarique suas, quas Bosphorus obruat!  
aedes;".

(33) S. Mazzarino, (1942), p. 65.

(34) J.J. Wilkes, Dalmatia (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 418. Also Bury, 1923, p. 173.

(35) G. Dagrón, (1974), p. 75.

(36) J.B. Bury, (1923), pp. 221-2.

(37) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 858.

(38) Symmaque, Lettres Tome II (Livres III-IV). (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982), Livre IV, Lettres 29, 45. for hostis publicus Livre IV, lettre 5.

(39) Symmaque, Op. cit., livre IV, lettres 12 et 14. Also p. 94. See PLRE, of Symmachus, p. 857. Also relevant to the understanding of the period, but only until the year 384, is Prefect and Emperor: The Relations of Symmachus A.D. 384 with tr., intr. and notes by R.H. Barrow (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), esp. 3, 4, 6, 8, 14, 18, 20, 21. Through Symmachus, one can understand the period better.

(40) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 857.

(41) A. Cameron, (1970), p. 63, also p. 32.

(42) Claudian, Vol. II, 22: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. II, 58-60, "At Stilicho non divitias aurique relictum / pondus, sed geminos axes tantumque reservat / depositum teneris, quantum sol igneus ambit."

(43) Claudian, loc. cit., 71-2, "ceu sanctum venerere senem patriisque gubernes / imperium monitis;".

(44) Claudian, Vol. I, 22: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. I, 7-9, "Libyae post proelia crimen / concidit Eoem, rursusque Oriente subacto / consule defensae surgunt Stilichone secures."

(45) Palladius, Dialogus historicus de vita Sancti Joannis Chrysostomi, IV, ch. 15.

(46) Claudian, Vol. II, 28: paneg. de VI cons. Honorii, 94-5, "Latioque futurum rectorem."

(47) Claudian, loc. cit., 92-100, "Ipsa per Illyricas urbes Oriente relicto / ire Serena comes nullo deterrita casu, / . . . certavit pietate domus, fidaeque reductum / coniugis officio Stilichonis cura recepit."

(48) S.I. Oost, Galla Placidia Augusta (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 50.

(49) S.I. Oost, Op. cit., p. 61.

(50) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 64.

(51) See S. Mazzarino, (1942), p. 294.

(52) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 857.

(53) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 856.

(54) Peter Brown, (1971), p. 124.

(55) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 124.

(56) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, pp. 124-5.

(57) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, pp. 857-8.

(58) P. Brown, (1971), p. 119.

(59) S. Mazzarino, (1942), p. 299.

(60) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 298.

(61) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 300.

(62) Claudian, Vol. II, 22: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. II, 275-7, "constitit ante duces tetrica nec Pallade vultum / deterior nec Marte minor, tremit orbe corusco / iam domus et summae tangunt laquearia cristae:".

(63) Claudian, loc. cit., 322-9, "sic trabeis ultor Stilicho Brutusque repertor. / libertas populi primo tunc consule Bruto / reddita per fasces; hic fascibus expulit ipsis / servitium. instituit sublimem Brutus honorem; / adseruit Stilicho. plus est servasse repertum, / quam quaesisse novum. quid tardius ore rubenti / adnuit et solitus frontem circumfluit ignis? / tandem vince tuum, vincis qui cuncta, pudorem."

#### Chapter 4 Writers and Historians of the 4th to 9th Century on Stilicho

Claudian is the earliest writer on Stilicho. It is, however, paradoxical that Claudian has not been taken as a serious historical source until recently. The most recent breakthrough on Claudian was made by Alan Cameron, especially with the publication in 1970 of Claudian. Poetry and Propaganda at the court of Honorius.

Hence, when the period of Stilicho is discussed, the introductory chapter of Cameron's book contains some astute remarks. "... the most important source by far for the period as a whole is Claudian himself. His panegyrics, invectives, and epics are beyond price for the historian who would reconstruct the troubled years that follow the death of Theodosius the Great: not so much for the facts they record (which are fewer than sometimes imagined) as for the insight they offer into the inner workings of the politics and intrigues of the day (which is deeper than generally supposed)."<sup>(1)</sup>

Claudian's work is very rich in references to Stilicho and in Cameron's opinion "... there can be no doubt whatever that Claudian was acting as Stilicho's official propagandist;"<sup>(2)</sup> Although inconclusively, Cameron uses as a first instance 6: paneg. de III cons. Honorii. It is true that Theodosius' speech (lines 144-162) is preceded by (lines 142-3): "When they reached the palace the emperor bade all depart and thus unbidden addressed his son-in-law:"<sup>(3)</sup> thus confirming the secrecy of the appointment of the regent.

Nevertheless, the speech itself is more concerned with the testament of Theodosius -- on the same lines as the funeral speech of Ambrose -- than with a deliberate glorification of Stilicho. It does state Theodosius' trust in Stilicho, his kinsman by marriage. However,

Claudian does not deliberately step forward as an official panegyrist of Stilicho until three years later, with 21: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. I, 22: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. II, 23: de consulatu Stilichonis libri III praef. and 24: de consulatu Stilichonis liber III, (written between 399 and 400).

Cameron may have read too much into 7: paneg. de III cons. Honorii. In the panegyrics on the third and fourth consulships of the emperor Honorius, the central personage is and remains throughout Honorius. The panegyric on the fourth consulship of the emperor Honorius (written in 397-8) emphasized so much the duties of the emperor himself that it is a basilikos logos, a formal address to the emperor in a rhetorical pattern (and may well have inspired Synesius' peri basileias).

The explanation could be that Serena - and not Stilicho - was effectively the patron of Claudian. Claudian would not have been, contrary to Cameron's theory, Stilicho's official propagandist, at least until the writing of the three de consulatu Stilichonis in 399/400.

If one agrees with the thesis of Cameron's book, that the poetry of Claudian soon turned into Stilichonian propaganda and that Claudian himself changed "from panegyrist to propagandist",<sup>(4)</sup> a central question remains unanswered. It is the question of propaganda itself, its nature, its effectiveness. Jacques Ellul explained it as the formation of men's attitudes,<sup>(5)</sup> which we may accept as a working definition.

Whether the present evaluation of the sources on Stilicho -- or any evaluation of these sources -- can be effective or not must be determined by an impartial assessment of the literary and historical sources. These sources were all affected by propaganda, propaganda for Stilicho in the case of Claudian, for the imperial Christian court

in Ravenna and especially in Constantinople in the case of most of the other sources.

Thus Ellul writes that "A person in the grip of propaganda will react according to his pre-existing attitudes and to the degree that these attitudes lead him to react. Therefore propaganda must base itself on existing tendencies to have the greatest effect. If it goes against ingrained attitudes, it cannot have any effect."<sup>(6)</sup> What is the specific application of Ellul's general thesis to Stilicho's times? First one must ask how the ingrained attitudes of the 4th and 5th centuries may be characterized. For the Christians, there is the imminent anticipation of the second coming; for the pagans, the fear of the Christians; for all, the fear of the Germanic barbarians. Consequently, to be effective, all propaganda will base itself on a particular fear of the German barbarian. It is a convenient yardstick against which to evaluate the sources on Stilicho.

Thus, if one starts with the great defender of Stilicho, Claudian, the major voice of the past (with Olympiodorus) that praises Stilicho and the closest contemporary, one soon realizes that Claudian hates Germans. Claudian is also among the most educated and intelligent writers of the Late Empire and his testimony on Stilicho cannot be dismissed as cursorily as it has often been. For instance, as recently as 1974, a book written by Gilbert Dagron, a Byzantinist, spoke disparagingly of "les invectives . . . sans nuances . . . de Claudien."<sup>(7)</sup>

Similarly, Cameron's long overdue reassessment manages to be somewhat damning in its conclusions both towards Claudian and Stilicho. Claudian's praise of Stilicho cannot be interpreted wholly from the

viewpoint of propaganda, since the Vandalic origin of the regent must have run counter to Claudian's own anti-German prejudices.

In this respect, a paragraph of François Paschoud's Roma Aeterna reestablishes the value of Claudian as a historical source on Stilicho: "De tous les écrivains du Bas-Empire, Claudien est sans doute celui qui nous présente le problème germanique avec le plus de détails, et, par ses propres contradictions, sous les aspects les plus divers. Comme Ammien, il éprouve pour Rome le plus fidèle des attachements et ne se dissimule pas le péril mortel que les Barbares font peser sur l'Empire. Ce qui l'empêche de suggérer une solution radicale et simpliste comme l'historien, c'est que son admiration en même temps sincère et raisonnée pour Stilicon lui révèle l'autre face du problème: il sait que le régent est le dernier espoir de l'Occident, il n'oublie pas qu'il est d'origine germanique, il ne se dissimule pas que Rome n'est plus en mesure de se passer de l'aide des Barbares. Ses nombreux développements sur le problème germanique et leur caractère contradictoire ne sont pas tant le fait d'une propagande stiliconienne opportuniste; ils constituent surtout, me semble-t-il, le fruit de réflexions lucides et amères: si le résultat est incohérent, c'est que chaque situation exige une solution nouvelle et que le problème est devenu insoluble."<sup>(8)</sup>

There is no doubt that the imagery in Claudian is rich in metaphors flattering to Stilicho and somewhat reminiscent of Homer. Through these metaphors alone, Claudian shows his face as a Greek poet thinking and writing in Latin. As so shrewdly remarked by Gibbon and quoted earlier, Claudian did perceive certain qualities of Achilles in Stilicho.

In this respect, Alan Cameron observes that Claudian used many epic similes and compared Stilicho to Hercules and Mars.<sup>(9)</sup> Citing C. Müllner and P. Fargues, Cameron emphasizes that there are more and longer similes in Claudian than in any of his Latin predecessors.<sup>(10)</sup> Cameron adds that the similes of Claudian tell us more about Claudian and his world than the epic similes of the Latin poets, just as Homer revealed more of his own world in his similes than in his narrative.<sup>(11)</sup> Here however Cameron underestimates the paramount influence of Homer on Greek and Latin poets alike, since the world in which Stilicho lived was still measured in terms of the world of Achilles, and Ulysses.

Thus it is quite normal in the context of the fifth century to find Claudian comparing Stilicho to the gods, the stars, the shield protecting the empire. Notwithstanding, there is evidence that some of Claudian's rich imagery reflects Stilicho's importance to the stability of the Western Roman Empire. For instance, the comparison of Stilicho to a healing surgeon reappears at least twice, one in 22: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. II, lines 204-7 "Only when Stilicho's hand brings remedy can a scar grow to hide Roman wounds, and when at last the husbandman of Illyria returns to his farms the treasury will again be enriched with Illyrian tribute."<sup>(12)</sup>

The same message is found in 26: de bello Pollentino s. Gothico, lines 120-3 "The physician's skill deals more carefully with grave diseases and ulcers that are near the heart: here he is more sparing of the knife for fear lest the blade, driven too deep, should slip and sever beyond healing some vital organ."<sup>(13)</sup>

In short, Claudian may be one of the only voices of the past

that praises Stilicho but his opinion is well-informed, since he is fully conscious of the dangers surrounding a Rome that may have been weakened by the foundation of Constantinople as well as by the barbarian inroads. What is remembered most after one has read Claudian's two books of verse is a line that can be considered an Epitaph for Rome and Stilicho: "Not one of my relations is beyond the reach of this tempest."<sup>(14)</sup> In this speech of Stilicho's, as repeated by Claudian, the evidence of truth foreshadows Stilicho's fate. Beyond the courtly panegyrics, Claudian remains the main credible source on Stilicho.

It is not our purpose to discuss the criteria for discovering the veracity of old documents. While the erroneous views of Aristotle on female biology (still believed by early readers of Thomas Aquinas) were easily refuted by science later, while Galileo's astronomical conclusions were confirmed and vindicated, the nature and actions of a long since dead individual cannot so easily be objectively established.

It is most important to remember, however, that Stilicho's image in the documents which have been preserved has also been reflected down the centuries through a subjective religious prism. To evaluate the facts and eliminate the bias, one must first establish a series of probabilities.

For instance, the first question to ask when approaching Jerome, Orosius, Philostorgius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Photius, is cui bono? The church and the imperial court at Ravenna called Stilicho a proditor, a traitor, a brigand, a public enemy, and Honorius seems to have been intent on excising his name from Roman memory. Neverthe-

less, the Christian New Rome appears to have most benefitted from the elimination of the last serious defender of old Rome's supremacy.

Notwithstanding the documented actions of Constantinople towards Stilicho (to the point of Rufinus' and Eutropius' seeming to prefer Alaric to the Western Roman Army), an uneasy truce between Christians who expected the end of the world and the second coming of Christ, and pagans whose world was ending appears to have also dictated the religious-historical portrait of Stilicho. This was a portrait that literature, even for instance the European seventeenth century Jesuit college drama culminating in Thomas Corneille's Stilicon, was to accept.

In order to understand what happened, in view of the conjunction of Eastern Roman interests, Western Roman Christian and pagan interests in mobilizing opinion against Stilicho, certain basic facts concerning propaganda must be remembered. Ellul notes "the public is sensitive only to contemporary events. They alone concern and challenge it. Obviously, propaganda can succeed only when man feels challenged. It can have no influence when the individual is stabilized, relaxing in his slippers in the midst of total security."<sup>(15)</sup>

Ellul adds "Actually, the public is prodigiously sensitive to current news. Its attention is focused immediately on any spectacular event that fits in with its myths. At the same time, the public will fix its interest and its passion on one point, to the exclusion of all the rest."<sup>(16)</sup>

The attacks on Stilicho, although they occurred some time after

his murder, are all based on the fact that Rome fell to Alaric. Thus, the thrust of this propaganda can be found to have a common denominator: to concentrate the public passion on the "traitor" Stilicho and to make him responsible for the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 (this being the spectacular event fitting in with the myth).

A document that clearly illustrates this propaganda process is De reditu suo,<sup>(17)</sup> by Claudius Rutilius Namatianus, a pagan close to Roman ruling circles. Incidentally, his "return" to Gaul to look after his country estates illustrates the disaffection of the senatorial landowners with active public Roman life.<sup>(18)</sup>

At some time in November 416 (some argue for 415 or 417),<sup>(19)</sup> Rutilius Namatianus returned to his home province after having been prefect of Rome. He records the beginning of his journey as a diary in verse. In the unfinished poem, in two books and circa 700 lines, his love for old Rome is as evident as is Claudian's in his works.

In book II, lines 40-60, Rutilius Namatianus attacks Stilicho as a great enemy of Rome and a traitor.<sup>(20)</sup> Like Jerome,<sup>(21)</sup> he uses the word proditor to describe Stilicho, and several lines refer to Stilicho's barbaric status. Rutilius Namatianus adds the words arcani imperii to proditor, in order to specify Stilicho's crime. Ten lines further down, he repeats the accusation proditor, this time accusing Stilicho of the destruction of the Sibylline books.

In a chapter entitled "La tirade contre Stilicon", J. Vessereau writes: "Si je comprends bien tout ce passage, je n'y vois que deux choses. Stilicon, dans un intérêt personnel, a pactisé avec les

Goths contre Rome; il a brûlé les livres sibyllins. Ce dernier détail nous est tout à fait inconnu." (22)

François Paschoud similarly notes that these are the two major accusations aimed at Stilicho in Rutilius Namatianus' poem. Nevertheless, and quoting Boano and Lana, (23) Paschoud mainly relies on Macrobius and Pliny the Elder (24) to explain the arcanum imperii as the sacred, secret name of Rome never to be divulged to the profane. (25)

Two accusations, one never heard before, and both introduced by the word proditor, all this thrown angrily at Stilicho eight or nine years after his death and six or seven after the sack of Rome by Alaric. It is the Gothic sack of Rome in 410, that is at the root of Rutilius Namatianus' anti-Stilichonian invective.

To blame Stilicho for the events of 410 is not only unfounded; it does not take into account the defencelessness of Rome faced by successive barbarian invasions. This fact had to be faced by Stilicho all his active life, but it was not apprehended by most Romans, even after 410, as evidenced by Rutilius Namatianus' poem.

As discussed in the two previous chapters, Rome was unwilling to assimilate the increasing number of barbarians yet could obviously not indefinitely stem the barbarian tide. Stilicho appears to have been the only man in Rome clearly grasping the situation, but was prevented by temperament and circumstances from acting. The anti-Stilichonian propaganda was circumstantial in 407-408 when Stilicho was "aux prises avec les antibarbares excités par le gouvernement de Constantinople et avec les populations italiennes effrayées par l'approche des Goths," (26) Demougeot points out that "Le régent

eut ainsi à briser une offensive commune des prophéties païennes et des prophéties chrétiennes. Peut-être n'était-ce pas la première fois que les superstitions populaires rejoignaient les angoisses de l'élite sénatoriale 'hellène' et des catholiques dévots."(27)

Paschoud, commenting on Demougeot's "Saint Jérôme, les oracles Sibyllins et Stilicon", reflects on the hostile -- Christian and pagan -- perception of Stilicho (a perception that was to affect the literary-historical portrait of Stilicho by later writers and historians). "Il est intéressant de voir le régent se heurter de part et d'autre à une opposition entêtée et qui refuse de voir la réalité en face; il est surtout frappant de constater que plusieurs années plus tard, l'aristocratie romaine, en particulier Rutilius, n'a pas désarmé et reproche à Stilicon un geste qui lui fut précisément dicté par son amour pour Rome; il le considère comme le seul responsable de la prise de Rome en 410, alors qu'il l'aurait peut-être empêchée s'il avait vécu. Comme tous les réactionnaires, Rutilius n'a rien oublié et rien appris; sa position envers le problème germanique est restée, malgré l'évolution très rapide de la situation, aussi intransigeante et incompréhensive que celle d'un Ammien ou d'un Synésius de Cyrène."(28)

For Rutilius Namatianus Stilicho was dirus. This is a word often used for bad omens, curses, evil gods and witches. Also, this adjective may allude to the destruction of the arcanum imperii. Stilicho, the last important commander in chief of Rome before its fall to Alaric, is the obvious scapegoat, the Sündenbock: there is a dark ritualism at work throughout Rutilius' anti-Stilichonian

invective. -

As noted by J. Vessereau, "Rutilius jugeant Stilicon est aveuglé par le parti pris. A force de détester les barbares et de vouloir maintenir l'intégrité de l'empire, il ne voit pas que de graves événements se préparent et que, pour éviter la ruine, il serait bon de sacrifier quelques préjugés, si louables soient-ils . . . il manque de clairvoyance. Rapproché de l'éloge de Rome, le passage sur Stilicon s'éclaire d'un jour nouveau et nous montre en Rutilius un de ces Romains tenaces, figés dans le respect du passé . . ." (29) Taking this remark of Vessereau as the starting-point, one could probably demonstrate that the old Roman nobility (represented by Rutilius for all his Gaulish ancestry) refused to adapt to the new barbarian reality of the fifth century. Stilicho's anticipation of an inevitable pax Gothica, preceded by a string of Stilichonian Roman victories, would have been preferable to and might have prevented the successive sacks of Rome.

In Rutilius' attacks on Stilicho the Roman Senate's unbending hostility to any accommodation with the barbarians is shown. "I senatori -- e a questo riguardo non aveva alcuna importanza che fossero pagani o cristiani -- non potevano accettare una politica filobarbarica che attentasse al loro patrimonio di ricchi latifondisti e sottraesse, per via della coscrizione, valide braccia al lavoro dei campi." (30)

Rutilius as a source on Stilicho thus reflects more the senatorial intransigence towards the barbarians and the attempt post factum to find a scapegoat for the fall of Rome in 410 than any factual evidence

on Stilicho as a "proditor". However, the accusation of collusion with Alaric is not only made by Rutilius Namatianus.

This accusation is the tenor of Orosius VII. 37 and 38.<sup>(31)</sup>

The theological Orosius is at the opposite end of the spectrum from the pagan poet Rutilius, yet he does convey the same message. Stilicho is a traitor, the barbarians will be vanquished and Rome will triumph over this divided rabble. Granted that this was written in 417, after the fall of Rome, it is still true that this optimistic and ill-focused work reveals more about catholic and imperial propaganda than about Stilicho, semi or full barbarian, Roman generalissimo or traitor.

Similarly, when Jerome, writing to Geruchia, blames the disasters afflicting Rome on Stilicho,<sup>(32)</sup> he argues as a catholic and imperial apologist, forgetting his own virulent anti-Roman sermons and his preference for Palestine, the place from which this letter is sent. It is difficult to take Jerome's accusation against Stilicho seriously if one looks at the context of the letter CXXIII. Jerome, curiously reminding one of an advice to the lovelorn column in a newspaper, warns Geruchia the widow against marrying again in these troubled times. "quam acceptura uirum, credo fugiturum, aut pugnaturum? Quid utrumque sequatur intellegis . . ." <sup>(33)</sup>

To seal the argument of this letter, Jerome warns Geruchia of the impending approach of the Antichrist, and its consequence "Vae praegnantibus, et nutrientibus in illa die; quorum utrumque de fructibus nuptiarum est." <sup>(34)</sup>

In a letter full of inexactitudes and concerted moral pressure on the lady Geruchia, it is hard to take seriously the polemical

accusation that Stilicho, the criminal and semi-barbarian traitor, had let the Antichrist in. For similar Christian and imperial polemical reasons, the thoughtful modern historian must doubt the value of many fifth century sources on Stilicho.

Orosius, the major western Roman source, is not very credible when, in order to condemn Stilicho, he defines the Vandal race as inbellis, unwarlike, not disposed to fight, avara, greedy, perfida, faithless, treacherous, dolosa, crafty, deceitful.<sup>(35)</sup> He compounds this sweeping statement and loses all credibility by the added device in the same paragraph by which he calumniates Eucherius without producing any factual evidence: "as was rumoured by many", "sicut a plerisque traditur."

The allegation that Stilicho wanted to kill the lawful heirs of Theodosius and that he wanted to put his own son Eucherius on the imperial throne appears to have been destructive gossip.<sup>(36)</sup> The variants are Honorius, Theodosius II, and make these rumours started in 408 most suspicious. Eucherius at his death was only a modest tribune and notary. (Zosimus is right in rejecting this unfounded accusation.<sup>(37)</sup>).

This damaging rumour centered on Eucherius was the cause of the "lynching-party" on August 13, 408, followed by the killing of Stilicho on August 22, 408. It is the same rumoured ambition to make Eucherius the emperor that is repeated by Philostorgius. However, we must not forget that Philostorgius was distrusted by Photius because Philostorgius held Eunomian heretical beliefs against the pious and orthodox emperors. This distrust may have spilled over into other areas. It is ironic that Philostorgius'

History of the Church has managed to survive partially through the epitome made by Photius.

Philostorgius wrote that Stilicho had on several occasions tried to kill the emperor. Moreover, Stilicho would have given Honorius repeatedly a drink to deprive him of the ability to procreate (thus negating presumably the marriages of both his daughters to the same Honorius). To add to the wizard-hunt flavour of Philostorgius on Stilicho, Olympius would have stopped with his own bare hand a sword aimed at the emperor in a revolt by Stilicho. Stilicho wanted to become a tyrant and to have his own money struck with his profile. (38)

Philostorgius almost redeems this tale of hearsay by adding that some people insisted that Olympius (sometimes called Olympiodorus) had not defended the Emperor, but falsely accused Stilicho of crime against the state and had Stilicho killed although he owed his position to him. These people said that Olympius was not magister yet in those days, and that this office was the reward for the injustice by which he had accused and killed Stilicho. They added that notwithstanding this he very soon after got his punishment and that he was beaten to death with cudgels.

To be fair to Philostorgius, the stories of alleged treasonable ambitions by Stilicho for his son did not start with him. Jones-Martindale-Morris (citing Zosimus V. 31-32) explain that Olympius suggested to Honorius that Stilicho was planning to make away with Theodosius II and install his own son Eucherius in his place, and he spread the same story among the troops assembled at Ticinum for

the invasion of Gaul; while being reviewed by the emperor there, they mutinied and lynched many high officers of state who were present (presumably regarding them as nominees of Stilicho) . . . A warrant for the arrest of Stilicho was then issued by Honorius, an Olympius' advice . . ."(39)

Sozomen, in book IX, chapter 4, of his Ecclesiastical History, while being more laconic than Philostorgius, is quite predictable. In a propaganda-based cameo, Sozomen expands on the Constantinopolitan vision of the empire. Stilicho, a general of Honorius, being suspected of wanting to make Eucherius, his son, the emperor of the Orient, was killed in Ravenna by the soldiers. He had conceived hatred of the generals of Arcadius, and had tried to sow seeds of discord between the two Empires.<sup>(40)</sup> This latter allegation would have astonished Theodosius the Great and have been the unkindest cut of all to Stilicho (but not from the Constantinopolitan viewpoint) had either of them been still alive.

The most significant source on Stilicho, after Claudian, is Zosimus and his Historia Nova.<sup>(41)</sup> The Historia Nova by Zosimus is of two minds about Stilicho; this equivocal testimony has been traced to the different sources consulted by Zosimus.

Zosimus, who wrote his Historia Nova in the second half of the fifth century, used as his sources Dexippus of Athens, Eunapius of Sardis and Olympiodorus of Thebes. The influence or even direct compilation from Eunapius and Olympiodorus is particularly strong, and since their respective opinions of Stilicho can be sharply different, Zosimus' portrait of Stilicho tends to be confused and confusing more

often than not. This is a great pity, and one might wish that Zosimus had been a contemporary of Stilicho's and that he had been able to draw a consistent portrait.

On Zosimus' debt to Eunapius, Photius writes: "One might say that Zosimus did not write a history but rather copies out Eunapius, differing only in that he condenses his source and does not, unlike Eunapius, attack Stilicho. For the rest his History is almost identical, especially in the criticisms of the pious Emperors."<sup>(42)</sup> Roger Blockley comments "This is a rather tendentious and inaccurate statement -- Zosimus did attack Stilicho, precisely in that part of his History where he drew upon Eunapius --, and its prime import is its condemnation of Zosimus' attacks on Orthodox Emperors . . . it still remains, however, that Zosimus made enormous use of Eunapius."<sup>(43)</sup>

Eunapius disliked both Theodosius I and Stilicho; to explain this, it might be sufficient to say that they were both Christians and concentrated power in the hands of the emperor, a fact of life in the later empire.<sup>(44)</sup> Eunapius was a very bitter and angry pagan. Like the panhellenion at Constantinople, he regretted the emperor Julian. Notwithstanding, "Eunapius dated the commencement of Roman decline from the reign of Constantine I (307-37)."<sup>(45)</sup> (This is a most important point and Walter Kaegi, Jr. emphasizes it on p. 232).

Olympiodorus, the other important source of Zosimus on Stilicho was also a pagan, but a pagan who dedicated his history to a devout Christian emperor Theodosius II (408-50).<sup>(46)</sup> Of the influence exerted by Olympiodorus on Zosimus, Roger Blockley writes " . . .

the New History of Zosimus, who made exclusive use of Olympiodorus for the last part of his work. Where Zosimus' text can be compared with Photius' summary there is usually full factual agreement, and comparison between the last part of the New History with that based upon Eunapius shows that Zosimus was greatly influenced by Olympiodorus in his approach and attitudes. Thus, new characteristics appear, for instance, a sympathy for Stilicho which contrasts with the Eunapian hostility."<sup>(47)</sup>

While Justinianus, a professor of rhetoric and an adviser to Stilicho may have been a source,<sup>(48)</sup> "Olympiodorus was a man of independent views . . . His defence of Stilicho . . . unpopular in the East at the time."<sup>(49)</sup> Blockley observes that Fr. 2 of Olympiodorus' History is concerned with Stilicho and that this suggests that the introduction of the History "was not simply a survey of major events from 405 or any other date, but offered a sketch of the early career of Stilicho. This fits well with Olympiodorus' view of Stilicho's importance, which is clear from Zosimus, and suggests that the formal beginning of the History with the disastrous German invasions was provided with a counter-point in the introductory account of the successes of Stilicho, who was soon to be murdered."<sup>(50)</sup>

Olympiodorus places Stilicho at a focal point of his History. R. Blockley explains the historical evidence of Olympiodorus on Stilicho: "The summary of Stilicho's career at the beginning of the work and the placing of his death near the beginning were deliberate, because Olympiodorus was then able to show how the disasters which followed were consequent upon his death and the resultant change of

policy. He obviously understood and accepted Stilicho's view that the best hope for the western Empire lay in a realistic accommodation with the Visigoths, which the anti-German and Orthodox Olympius was bent upon preventing."<sup>(51)</sup>

It should follow that Olympiodorus' influence on Zosimus should be easy to detect. Although it is generally true, one glaring exception concerns the oft-disputed Illyricum question. Thus, Blockley writes "It is clear from Photius' summary that he [Olympiodorus] stressed Stilicho's successes and accepted as facts his claims that he had been entrusted with the guardianship of both Honorius and Arcadius (Fr. 2) and that Theodosius I had assigned Illyricum to the West (Fr. 3), both of which claims Zosimus subsequently omitted."<sup>(52)</sup>

The fact that the Western claim to Illyricum resurfaced so many centuries later and in Photius' summary of all places reminds one again of the strong claims of Rome on Illyricum, and of the battles fought by the two L. Aemilii Pauli, father and son, in the third and second centuries B.C. to gain Illyricum for Rome. Since the foundation of Constantinople, there had been (as mentioned in the previous chapter) throughout the fourth century, a policy of expansion in Illyricum by Constantinople at the expense of old Rome.

Consequently, one must not forget in evaluating the veracity of sources that Zosimus' silence on Western claims to Illyricum is indirect evidence that these claims had some foundation. Zosimus' subsequent omission of Olympiodorus' information tells us more about the exasperation of Stilicho with the empire-building by Constantinople at Rome's expense than if Zosimus had followed Olympiodorus' text

faithfully.

There is no reason why Zosimus should omit such important pieces of information if the claims of Stilicho and old Rome had not been based on facts. These facts that were known to Olympiodorus were best ignored by Zosimus' time.

Zosimus may have been reacting thus as a loyal citizen of Constantinople; however his interpretation of history was on the whole made from a pagan rather than from a patriotic point of view.

As Kaegi emphasizes (on pp. 99 to 145), Zosimus writes from a pagan point of view and to make pagan political propaganda. Thus, he lovingly describes Athena Promachos as saving Athens from the depredations of Alaric (V. 6). In the same vein, Stilicho, "who had labored so long and hard in the defense of the western provinces for Emperor Honorius (395-423), was murdered because of the gods' wrath."<sup>(53)</sup> Stilicho had ordered the Capitol gates stripped of their gold and the workers had found writings to defigere under the heavy coverings. Thus, the gods were punishing Stilicho for this act of impiety.

Similarly, the real reason for Serena's death was not the (unproved) conspiracy with Alaric but her shabby behaviour in the temple of Rhea, the Great Mother. Zosimus gives here a most unpleasant portrait of the Spanish-Christian Serena. He writes of a mocking Serena, lifting the necklace from Rhea's image and placing the necklace around her own neck. There is a poignant scene where an old woman, the last of the Vestal Virgins and presumably the Great Vestal herself, is mocked and ordered expelled from the

temple for reproving Serena's behaviour. The Vestal, as she was being led down from the shrine, called down on the heads of Serena, her husband and her children everything that her impiety deserved, writes Zosimus.

If, most probably, Serena went home to be congratulated by Theodosius, who was busy at that time with expelling priests and priestesses from the pagan shrines, Zosimus notes that from then on Serena was haunted by dreams at night and visions by day warning her of death. Iustitia triumphed because Serena did not act on these forebodings but was strangled by the very neck where she had displayed the goddess' necklace. (54)

If Zosimus is a perfect example of pagan propaganda, the evidence in the religious historians points to its opposite, imperial Christian propaganda, good examples of this being Orosius in the west and Sozomen in the east. Zosimus is in a sense a throwback to an earlier Hellas; he is of the same race as the Athenians who had exiled the great Protagoras in the fifth century B.C. for impiety. Orosius came from the same devout Spanish Christian background as Honorius and Serena. As for Sozomen, he is characteristic of the Byzantine empire, its capacity for absorbing and christianizing the Middle East, its faith in itself.

Apart from very slight mentions passim in other writers and historians, the three major sources of evidence on Stilicho remain Claudian, Orosius and Zosimus. Of these three, Orosius is the least reliable on Stilicho, because he is partisan and because the same observation can be made on him as Nischer-Falkenhof made on all

the Church Fathers. "Den Kirchenvätern, die unter der zitierten Literatur recht zahlreich vertreten sind, kommt der historische Ablauf der Geschehnisse selbstverständlich erst in zweiter Linie, da ihre Schriften doch von ganz anderen Gesichtspunkten ausgehen."<sup>(55)</sup>

Claudian had great taste, intellectually, poetically and morally. While recognising that his eulogy of Stilicho is often the praise of a courtier, there must be a presumption of merit in Stilicho to deserve the affections of such an exceptional person as Claudian.

As for Zosimus' evidence on Stilicho, one is left with an impression of sympathy and appreciation, especially in Book V, 30-35. The picture Zosimus gives of Stilicho going to his death in V, 34 is that of a heroic man. Zosimus points out that Stilicho was married to Theodosius' niece, had been entrusted with the empires of both sons of Theodosius, had been the general-in-command for twenty-three years, had never been bribed either in exchange for appointments, or for his own gain (thereby contradicting an earlier statement traceable to Eunapius). He had not secured any high office for his one son.

Thus, in Zosimus, one is left with a favourable impression of Stilicho. Roger Blockley observes "It is clear from Zosimus (5, 33-34) that the machinations of Olympius left Stilicho, if he wished to remain in power, with little alternative other than to place himself at the head of the 'barbarian' party and to use force against his 'Roman' enemies, which would have meant open defiance of his Emperor and son-in-law, and perhaps civil war. This, along with the advice of his supporters, he rejected, preferring loyalty to his Emperor and his own death."<sup>(56)</sup>

Proceeding to the views of Demougeot and Matthews, Blockley notes that both of them make copious use of Zosimus (V, 32-35) to reach conclusions sympathetic to Stilicho. Speaking of the massacre of Stilichonian officials at Ticinum, Matthews comments "In fact, the events of Ticinum and after have every appearance of a thoroughly co-ordinated coup d'état organized by Stilicho's political opponents." (57)

Demougeot comments on the anger of the soldiers and on Stilicho stemming their impatience to start a civil war, his attempts at calming them, his refusal to march against Olympius and to follow the advice of his general staff. Stilicho went as far as to order the Italian cities which had a barbarian garrison to close their gates in anticipation of possible trouble. Although Stilicho found it neither pious nor prudent to release the barbarians against the Roman army (Zosimus V. end of 33), several other courses of action were open to him, such as moving against Olympius himself.

Stilicho's noble but suicidal behaviour is reported most faithfully by Zosimus (V. 33-34). In this, Zosimus was following the reliable notes made for history by Olympiodorus who knew in retrospect that Stilicho's policies were sounder than those of Olympius and that Olympius' regime had lasted less than a year. Zosimus pays Stilicho what is certainly a Greek's greatest compliment when he calls him the most temperate, moderate, reasonable, *μετρώτερος* man of all those who, in that time, exercised supreme power. (58)

Thus one is faced with an extraordinary, almost unheard-of, situation when it comes to the sources on Stilicho. The two major sources -- Claudian and Zosimus (Olympiodorus) -- are favourable to

Stilicho. However, history has on the whole given Stilicho a villain's role.

There is no doubt that in the years after Stilicho's murder, there was a determined wish to picture him as a man of vile ambition, (personal as well as dynastic), of mean character and, -- worse yet, as an arch-traitor. Even Serena was not exempted from this huge anti-Stilicho propaganda effort; ultimately, she also paid with her own life, the preposterous reason given for her death being alleged collusion with Alaric. Serena, the preferred child of Theodosius, allegedly planned to deliver the keys of Rome to the besieging Goths, according to her accusers.

Jacques Ellul's remarkable studies of propaganda, while addressing our own times, give us an interesting model for understanding Stilicho's negative literary-historical portrait. Ellul observes "Propaganda must . . . express the fundamental currents of the society it seeks to influence. Propaganda must be familiar with . . . the fundamental psycho-sociological bases on which a whole society rests, the presuppositions and myths not just of individuals or of particular groups, but those shared by all individuals in a society, including men of opposite political inclinations and class loyalties."<sup>(59)</sup> Noting that "the public is sensitive only to contemporary events" Ellul continues in the same passage: "Propaganda in its explicit form must relate solely to what is timely. Man can be captured and mobilized only if there is consonance between his own deep social beliefs and those underlying the propaganda directed at him, and he will be aroused and moved to action only if the propaganda

pushes him toward a timely action."<sup>(60)</sup>

These observations are as applicable to 408 as in 1984. The Imperial court propaganda (the fear of usurpation), Olympius' calumnies and popular idle gossip (the sterility enforced on Honorius) had all one aim in mind: to discredit a fallen man. A propaganda consensus was successful. Stilicho's murder was perceived in its time as a positive anti-barbarian move because Stilicho had been trying to solve realistically but unpopularly the barbarian problem and because he was himself of barbarian origin. It is this perception that Stilicho's literary-historical portrait has inherited.

NOTES

(1) A. Cameron, 1970, pp. 1-2.

(2) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 42.

(3) Claudian, 6: paneg. de III cons. Honorii, p. 280, Vol. 1.

"Ut ventum ad sedes, cunctos discedere tectis / dux iubet et generum  
compellat talibus ultro:"

(4) A. Cameron, 1960, p. 30.

(5) J. Ellul, Propaganda. The Formation of Men's Attitudes,  
trans. by R. Kellen and J. Lerner, (New York: Random House, 1973).

(6) J. Ellul, 1973, p. 279.

(7) G. Dagron, 1974, p. 72.

(8) F. Paschoud, 1967, p. 144.

(9) A. Cameron, 1970, p. 297.

(10) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 297, note 1. Cf A. Marcellinus, ed.

R.C. Blockley.

(11) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 296.

(12) Claudian, 22: de consulatu Stilichonis lib. II, p. 16.

Vol. II. ". . . solo poterit Stilichone medente / crescere Romanum  
vólnus tectura cicatrix; / inque suos tandem fines redeunte colono /  
Illyricis iterum ditabitur aula tributis."

(13) Claudian, 26: de bello Pollentino s. Gothico. p. 134, Vol.  
II, "cautius ingentes morbos et proxima cordi / ulcera Paeoniae  
tractat sollertia curae / parcendoque secat, ferro ne largius acto /  
inrevocandus eat sectis vitalibus error."

(14) Claudian, 26: de bello Pollentino s. Gothico. p. 148, Vol.  
II, "nec vobis fortis monitor, mihi cautior uni: / hic coniunx, hic  
progenies, hic carior omni luce gener; pars nulla mei subducta  
procellae." Incidentally, it is in this speech that Stilicho says of

Italy: saepe lacessitam, sed non impune, giving inspiration to others.

(15) J. Ellul, 1973, pp. 43-44.

(16) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 45.

(17) Rutilius Namatianus, de reditu suo. (Paris, Budé, 1933), ed. Vessereau-Préchac.

(18) See J. Matthews, (1975), Chapter I, The Governing Classes: Symmachus and the Senatorial Class. 1) "Otium", 1-12.

(19) F. Paschoud, Roma Aeterna, footnote 3, p. 156.

(20) Rutilius Namatianus, de reditu suo. ll. 40-60, Book II.

(21) Jerome, Lettres (Paris, Budé, 1961), Letter CXXIII Ad Geruchiam, 16. Tome VII.

(22) J. Vessereau, Cl. Rutilius Namatianus. Ed. critique (Paris: Fontemoing, 1904), p. 308.

(23) F. Paschoud, 1967, pp. 162-3.

(24) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 162, note 37.

(25) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 162.

(26) E. Demougeot, 1951, pp. 91-2.

(27) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 91.

(28) F. Paschoud, 1967, p. 163.

(29) J. Vessereau, 1904, p. 313.

(30) F. Corsaro, Studi Rutiliani. (Bologna: Patron, 1980), p.

111.

(31) Orosius, (Zangemeister, 1967), pp. 536-544.

(32) Jerome, (Budé, 1961), Letter CXXIII Ad Geruchiam.

(33) Jerome, Op. cit., loc. cit., p. 94.

- (34) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 91.
- (35) Orosius, pp. 542-3, VII, 38.
- (36) Sozomen, IX, 4; Orosius, VII, 38; Philostorgius HE XI, 3, XII, 1; Jordanes, Rom. 322; PLRE, p. 857 and 858.
- (37) Zosimus, V, 34.
- (38) Philostorgius, XII, 2.
- (39) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, p. 857.
- (40) Sozomen, IX, 4.
- (41) Zosimus, Historia Nova (ed. L. Mendelssohn, Leipzig, Teubner, 1887; later impression, Hildesheim, 1963).
- (42) R.C. Blockley, The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Liverpool: Cairns, 1981, Vol. II, p. 5.
- (43) R.C. Blockley, 1981, Vol. I, p. 2.
- (44) W.E. Kaegi, Jr. 1968, see p. 84.
- (45) W.E. Kaegi, Jr., 1968, p. 81.
- (46) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 86.
- (47) R.C. Blockley, 1981, Vol. I, p. 28.
- (48) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Vol. I, pp. 34-35.
- (49) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Vol. I, p. 47.
- (50) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Vol. I, p. 30.
- (51) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Vol. I, p. 44.
- (52) R.C. Blockley, ibid.
- (53) Zosimus, V, 38.

- (54) \_\_\_\_\_, V, 28.
- (55) E. Nischer-Falkenhof, 1947, p. 159.
- (56) R.C. Blockley, 1981, Vol. I, p. 44.
- (57) J. Matthews, 1975, p. 281.
- (58) Zosimus, V, 34.
- (59) J. Eilul, 1973, pp. 38-39.
- (60) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 43.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion - A Reinterpretation of Stilicho

The negative literary-historical portrait of Stilicho, as inherited from Jerome, Rutilius, Orosius, Sozomen, Philostorgius, and to some extent, from Zosimus, has come down to our epoch.

In view of the almost general condemnation of Stilicho by fifth century writers and historians, it is important to notice the change in attitude which occurs during the seventeenth century through the school drama tradition of the Jesuits. While, the first of the Jesuit plays on Stilicho still denies Stilicho a positive image, its central merit resides in showing what happens to history when facts are turned upside down to suit the thesis set forward initially by inimical propaganda.

Nevertheless, this first play is the most interesting of the Jesuit plays on Stilicho, showing a renewed curiosity about the regent. The play, Stilico Sacrilegus,<sup>(1)</sup> was first performed at Ingolstadt on October 20, 1624. In this play there is a definite historical progression. It starts with the Thessalonica revolt of 390 and ends with Stilicho's death in 408. It is an awe-inspiring interweaving of historical testimony and opinion. In this play Olympius is a personal friend of Theodosius I and becomes a victim of the sanguinary Stilico. Stilico kills both of Olympius' sons in front of him. Among other such bloodthirsty games, Stilico forces his way into a church where one of his deserting soldiers has found refuge, and just manages to drag the unfortunate out of sanctuary before killing him, in the same insane way as he killed the 7,000 inhabitants of Thessalonica in the first act.

Serena is a conniving Lady Macbeth (her husband's ambition

being obviously contagious) and she wants to crown Eucherius the next emperor. In short, Olympius, far from being a racist trouble-maker from the Euxine, saves the situation and the empire by killing Eucherius in front of Stilico as well as having Serena hanged. Faced with this just retribution, Stilico, now alone, is quite willing to have his own head cut off. Thus, this play that started with Stilico ordering the Thessalonica massacre of 390 A.D. ends in just retribution.

Although today we may well smile at College morality plays, the message Stilico Sacrilegius conveys is clear albeit in an almost caricatural way.

Similarly, another play in Latin first performed on August 12, 1669, at the Jesuit College of Rheims, Stilico et Eucherius<sup>(2)</sup> exploits the ambition theme, followed by the suicide of a foiled Stilico.

The brothers Corneille, Pierre and Thomas, both of them French dramatic poets and members of the Académie Française, studied in the collège des Jésuites at Rouen. As a student, Thomas Corneille wrote a play in Latin verse that became the play acted at the annual prize-giving ceremony. One may surmise that his tragedy Stilicon, some twenty years later, still bore the stamp of Jesuitic drama.

Thomas Corneille's Stilicon,<sup>(3)</sup> first performed on January 27, 1660, was dedicated to Cardinal Mazarin, presumably with no comparisons intended. Stilicon is worth a study in depth, because it illustrates how certain attitudes are shaped and hardened into moulds that defy time and reason.

In its five acts there are only eight protagonists, three of

whom are totally fictitious. These three personages are secondary, though, to the plot, which mainly depends on the following:

"Honorius, Empereur d'Occident,

• Thermantie, Impératrice et fille de Stilicon,

Placidie, Soeur d'Honorius,

Stilicon, Laissé par Théodose pour Tuteur à Honorius, et

devenu depuis son beau-père,

Eucherius, Fils de Stilicon."<sup>(4)</sup>

Within this framework of personages, Corneille le Jeune selects Stilico as a conspiring Judas figure, who weaves ambitious plots and uses Honorius, Thermantie and Eucherius as unwitting pawns. Placidie, who of course was in history Galla Placidia and a schemer in her own right, seems to be in the play for two reasons: to provide the sentimental element and to symbolize imperial pride. In a strange way, this self-absorbed Placidie, who has been criticized by generations of literary commentators, is the closest to historical reality of all the characters in Corneille le Jeune's Stilicon.

Eucherius is put in the position of sacrificial lamb, dear to French tragedy -- the saintly son redeeming the wickedness of the father as well as an innocent Britannicus as a foil to a scheming Nero. Indeed, this rather psychological juxtaposition of a father scheming against a Roman Emperor and succeeding only in utterly destroying his own house is already somewhat closer to the drama of Jean Racine than to that of the elder brother Pierre. Nevertheless, Eucherius still represents the Cornelian nobility of soul, typical of Corneille L'Aîné.

The ambition in Stilicon is singularly a father's ambition for

his son. Remarking on his erstwhile greatness, Stilicon speaks of his former "vertu" and says:

"J'eus tous les sentiments qui font les grandes ames, . . . (5)

Ce fils fut une idole à qui j'immolay tout;"(6)

Thus, there is a glimmer of sympathy for Stilicho in this play and his death is almost noble. Notwithstanding, the ultimate picture is that of Stilicho the arch-traitor, caught in the web of his own machinations and awaiting a just death. This image of Stilicho had been transmitted throughout history right to Corneille's time. This indictment of Stilicho -- accepted as historical truth by Thomas Corneille and pivotal to the psychological dénouement of his tragedy -- can be traced directly to the fifth century historians.

Commenting on Corneille's Stilicon, C.J. Gossip notes ". . . notre auteur redresse un peu la balance, car les historiens, en décrivant les derniers mois de la vie du Vandale, ont toujours eu tendance à adopter le point de vue de ses ennemis. Il était temps que Stilicon, un des grands personnages de l'histoire romaine, sorte un peu de l'ombre . . ." (7)

In view of the almost general condemnation of Stilicho by fifth and sixth century writers -- as a traitor and a fellow-German to the German barbarians --, one might expect some sympathetic reevaluation from the nineteenth and twentieth century German historians of the Later Roman Empire.

To a certain extent, one does find that new sympathetic approach and interest, especially in such scholars as Rudolf Keller in 1884, and closer to us in 1947, in Ernst Nischer-Falkenhof.

However, the adverse image of Stilicho has permeated even Otto Seeck's Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt. In Volume Five of this history, Seeck can discern many native traits gone wrong in the general whom Bury has disparagingly labelled "this German."<sup>(8)</sup> Seeck's psychological explanations are not very convincing -- indeed they are actually almost comical to read in a writer so otherwise steeped in historical method -- but again we meet the words "insatiable ambition."<sup>(9)</sup>

If one were to accept the sweeping characterisation of "German" and what it meant in Seeck's own Bismarckian times, his convoluted explanations of Stilicho's psyche might make sense. On the other hand, that is a rather inaccurate road to take, since Germanentum did not exist as a concept in Stilicho's time. Seeck would first have had to prove that Stilicho's code of ethics and reference was the same as the code of Alaric or Radagaisus, which it patently was not.

Stilicho believed in Rome and was anything but the mean German bumpkin that Otto Seeck has made of him. The epithet "German" thrown at Stilicho is a wrong way to approach the reality of the regent. It does reoccur however in the best of history books with remarkable frequency; as mentioned earlier in this chapter it becomes a focal point for the praise of Stilicho by Rudolf Keller and Ernst Nischer-Falkenhof, and, one suspects, for the condemnation by J.B. Bury.

In one of the major textbooks on the Later Roman Empire,<sup>(10)</sup> J.B. Bury not only follows the anti-Stilichonian propaganda but

also exacerbates the racial component of the negative evaluation. The last paragraph of Bury's chapter entitled "The supremacy of Stilicho" could, moreover, only have been written by a Byzantinist. For instance, Bury writes: "Concord and friendly co-operation succeeded coldness and hostility."<sup>(11)</sup>

This paragraph starts with the sentence "The death of the man who had been proclaimed a public enemy at Constantinople altered the relations between the two Imperial governments."<sup>(12)</sup> One can only comment that the death of Stilicho certainly changed the relations between the two Imperial governments. It was the rite of passage that consecrated the majority of the New Rome and the senility of old Rome. And with all the respect due to J.B. Bury, it had very little to do with the "German" component of Stilicho's persona.

There are astonishingly sweeping accretions in Bury's evaluation of Stilicho. For instance: "The fall of Stilicho caused little regret in Italy."<sup>(13)</sup> How can Bury write this? The historical facts are that the bloodbath of August 13th, 408, was followed by the death of many Roman courtiers (or their punishment and torture).<sup>(14)</sup> All this, even if one makes abstraction of the death -- or rather murder -- of the families of the Roman auxiliaries.

However, another indication that there was regret in Italy at the fall of Stilicho is the fact that Olympius was clubbed to death on the orders of Flavius Constantius when Constantius came to power -- around 411 -- and for Olympius' role in Stilicho's death.<sup>(15)</sup>

The modern accretions in Bury proceed often from such propagandist hear-say as mentioned throughout Chapter 4 of this thesis. Of this type is the sentence "It was whispered that his design on Eastern Illyricum only covered the intention of a triple division of the Empire, in which his own son Eucherius should be the third Imperial colleague."<sup>(16)</sup> In view of Stilicho's unswerving Theodosian policy of a united and undivided empire, this opinion is not plausible. All it can illustrate is the force of propaganda, once unleashed.

The contemptuous summing-up of J.B. Bury on Stilicho might be partially explained by the publication date of 1923 of his History of the Later Roman Empire. That in itself reflects an added post First World War modern accretion that, while being understandable, is just as anachronistic as Seeck's assessment.

Bury writes "The Roman provincials might well feel bitter over the acts and policy of this German, whom the unfortunate favour of Theodosius had raised to the supreme command. When an Imperial law designated him as a public brigand who had worked to enrich and to excite the barbarian races, the harsh words probably expressed the general opinion."<sup>(17)</sup>

If this last point is true, it becomes crucial to re-assess a public opinion that was shaped by propaganda of the racist, anti-barbarian and New Roman kind. Activated by the Barbarian invasions and intensified by the fear of the Gothic Barbarians, this propaganda crystallized around Stilicho's barbarian parent. The proditor Stilicho had sold Rome to the Barbarians, and without him, all would

have been well.

Consequently, Bury, clearly following a predictable course, concludes: "The Empire was again really as well as nominally one. The Romans of the west, like the Romans of the east, had shown that they did not wish to be governed by men of German race, and the danger did not occur again for forty years."<sup>(18)</sup>

One of the most recent surveys of this period is The Fall of the Roman Empire -- A Reappraisal by Michael Grant, published in 1976. Notwithstanding the title and date, the author certainly does not produce a reappraisal of such a key figure as Stilicho. The same epithets reoccur throughout the book whenever Stilicho is mentioned. There are numerous charges of plotting -- or at least of being too gentle -- with Alaric, when no one can prove a hint of this before 407 A.D. And the reason seriously advanced by Grant is the "fellow-German" thesis.<sup>(19)</sup>

If one were to accept this anachronistic notion of German fellowship, no mention is made anywhere that it should have applied much more closely, in this still tribal age of the fifth century, to fellow-German Radagaisus. This did not occur and Stilicho was not overwhelmed by feelings of German fellowship at Faesulae.<sup>(20)</sup>

Surely, when the relationship between Stilicho and Alaric is discussed, more subtle or desperate considerations have to be pondered, and this only after 407 A.D. Before 407, it is clear that Stilicho was foiled by orders from Constantinople every time he had Alaric surrounded. This strict obedience to imperial orders was definitely one of Stilicho's handicaps; there was none of the

Nelsonian blind-eye decision-taking in Stilicho's character.

While unhesitatingly blaming Stilicho and his "aggressive ambitions"<sup>(21)</sup> for the East-West rift in the Empire, Grant is kinder to Aetius, whose career resembles Stilicho's. Both Bury and Grant favour Aetius, emphasizing that he was a Roman. However, Aetius was born at Durostorum in Lower Moesia. As a hostage he was brought up first by Alaric and the Visigoths, and later by Rhuas, King of the Huns. While not legally a barbarian, Aetius may thus have been more Scytho-Roman in culture than Stilicho. Also, Aetius' wife, Carpilio's daughter, was certainly less of a Roman than Serena, Stilicho's wife.

In defeating Attila at Châlons in 451 Aetius played a role similar to that of Stilicho in his victories against Alaric and Radagaisus. Both Stilicho and Aetius were killed by capricious and jealous rulers. Nevertheless, Bury and Grant both portray Stilicho as an ambitious German and Aetius as a noble Roman. Such is the power of prejudice based on birth, perception of race and timely propaganda. Moreover, Grant's argument is not advanced by an error, when he makes Ataulf Alaric's son.<sup>(22)</sup>

Emilienne Demougeot, in her book De l'unité à la division de l'Empire Romain. 395-410. Essai sur le gouvernement impérial (1951) and several articles<sup>(23)</sup> plays a positive role in favourably reinterpreting Stilicho. Her merit lies in her stressing the critical importance of the period as one of history's major crossroads.

The most important historian of our century for the reinterpretation of this crucial period is Santo Mazzarino. Mazzarino's Stilicone. La crisi imperiale dopo Teodosio is full of innovative ideas. One can argue with some of Mazzarino's assertions; one should never ignore them. Mazzarino insists on Rome's fatal error in believing that it could bridge the increasing gap between a Byzantine theocratic city-dwelling bureaucracy and a Roman political, military and senatorial dictatorship more concerned with the problems of their big estates. The partitio imperii may have consecrated a factual dissimilarity that left Stilicho powerless.

With Mazzarino (and Keller before him) one may well question why Stilicho was so little perceived as the last in the tradition of Theodosius and of the ideas of a unitarian Rome and the last defender of old Rome's predominance. A search through many history texts and books reveals only a few positive assessments of Stilicho. Whether it is Mommsen concentrating on Illyricum as a cause of conflict rather than as a consequence, or more recently, Betty Radice's Who's Who in the Ancient World assessing incorrectly and negatively Gibbon's view on Stilicho, one is faced with a multitude of mean-spirited accretions. John Matthews (Chapter 10) is one positive exception.

In the reappraisal of Stilicho, the description of his career by Sir William Smith and Mr. Marindin show one the way towards a fairer portrait of this "distinguished general."<sup>(24)</sup> Without the accretions of adverse propaganda, Stilicho's career and life are straightforward: "His military abilities saved the Western empire; and after gaining several victories over the barbarians, he defeated

Alaric . . . at Pollentia, 403, and compelled him to retire from Italy. In 405 he gained another great victory over Radagaisus, . . . It was alleged that Stilicho aspired to make himself master of the Roman empire; but there is no proof of this. The influence of Stilicho was undermined by the intrigues of Olympius, who, for his own purposes, persuaded Honorius to put Stilicho to death."<sup>(25)</sup>

Before one can reappraise Stilicho within this frame of reference however, one must return to the judgment of Mazzarino that started this thesis. Writing about the post-Theodosian crisis that led to the establishment of two worlds, the Eastern and the Western, Mazzarino pointed out that while the pars orientis found its natural defense against the barbarian element in a traditionalist and deeply religious public opinion (of which the principal expression was the victorious struggle against Gainas), the occidental world, on the contrary, with Stilicho in effective control, was led, in order to save the Theodosian unity of the empire, to those formulas of coexistence with the barbarians which determined that which is usually called "the fall" and which is, rather, the first sign of a specifically occidental and also anti-Byzantine political conscience.<sup>(26)</sup>

As for Cameron, in appearing to reduce Claudian's work to sheer political propaganda aimed at presenting Stilicho always in a most favourable light, he does poet and would-be patron a disservice. The point which is important, as Glover wisely remarks, is: "It is clear that a poet, whatever he be told or paid to write, can write nothing of any value that does not come from the heart."

-- denn es muss von Herzen gehen, was auf Herzen wirken s --  
 whatever moreover the subject assigned him, he will write he  
 must write. The poet, like the Hebrew prophet, has a burden, he  
 can do nothing but what is given him. It has nothing to do with  
 patronage."<sup>(27)</sup> T.R. Glover wrote these words about Claudian in  
 1901 and demonstrated thus that he knew more about Claudian --  
 and poets -- than Cameron perceived in 1970. (Nevertheless Cameron  
 is quite positive toward Stilicho.)

Consequently, one should realise that there is more poetical  
 motivation in Claudian than political motivation. Stilicho, a non-  
 Roman barbarian by birth, on whom the full load of imperial respon-  
 sibilities rested for thirteen years, was bound to meet heavy criti-  
 cism.

In conclusion, there is an element that has been missing in,  
 most previous interpretations of Stilicho, and that was hinted at  
 by Mazzarino; it is a serious study of Stilicho as a statesman of  
 transition, a man who would be to Rome and the west what Metternich  
 was to an ageing Austria. Too much has been made of Stilicho as a  
 typically German dictator, hypnotised by Illyricum.

Stilicho was one of the last of those whose aim it was to  
 preserve the unity of the old Roman Empire as envisaged by Rome  
 itself and by Theodosius -- a task that was clearly unfeasible and  
 compromised by Constantine's questionable dream of a New Rome  
 duplicating and supplanting the first -- a dream which it accomplished  
 within sixty years of its foundation.

Stilicho was also, par la force des choses, the first of a

new breed of Western European statesmen, a prototype of Clovis and Charlemagne, prefiguring the Holy Roman Empire, early medieval Europe and a dynamism that static societies lack. One feels already in the work of Stilicho the tone of the beginning of the 9th century poem: "O Roma nobilis orbis et domina, cunctarum urbium excellentissima."<sup>(28)</sup> Granted, Stilicho was forced into his course, against his will, and he lost his life in it, probably dimly realising that out of strife and invasions a new creativity would be born. Objectively however it remains true that the personality of Stilicho should be reappraised only on the evidence of his acts.

These acts all testify to a man of great ability, a man devoted initially to the interests of a united Theodosian empire, then later in his last few years concerned mainly to sustain the primacy of the old Rome.

## NOTES

(1) Stilico Sacrilegus. Das ist: Tragoedia von Stilicone einem gewaltigen uund hochberühmten Obristen under den Grossmächtigsten Keysern Theodosio uund Honorio (Ingolstadt: G. Hänlin, 1624).

(2) Stilico et Eucherius, (Metz: Bibliothèque Municipale, pièce 19 du recueil N. 1064, 1669).

(3) Thomas Corneille, Stilicon, ed. critique par C.J. Gossip. (Genève-Paris: Droz, 1974). First shown on January 27, 1660; par Grace et Privilege du Roy du 3 May 1660.

(4) Th. Corneille, 1974, p. 9.

(5) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, v. 1958.

(6) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, v. 1964.

(7) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. XLIV.

(8) J.B. Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, (reprinted New York: Dover, 1958), in 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 173. Also pp. 312-3.

(9) Otto Seeck, Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt, (Stuttgart 1895-1921), in 6 Vols., Vol. 5, pp. 296-7.

(10) J.B. Bury, (reprint 1958), pp. 106-173.

(11) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 173.

(12) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 173.

(13) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 172.

(14) Zosimus, Historia Nova (ed. L. Mendelssohn, Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), V. 32. Among the dead: Limenius Pr. Pr. of Gaul (who had come to Italy to escape from Constantine); Chariobaudes, Mag. Militum for Gaul; Salvius, the Quaestor sacri palatii; the Mag. equitum, Vincentius and Salvius, the Comes domesticorum;

Naemorius, the Comes pal. ; Patruinus, the Comes sacrarum largitionum; Longinianus, Praefectus Praetorio for Italy and a multitude of passers-by, too many to be counted, writes Zosimus. This list is only for Ticinum and does not include the trials, tortures and killings after Stilicho's murder; such as Deuterius, the Praepositus sacri cubiculi and Petrus, the Primicerius notariorum; Bathanarius, Comes Africae and husband to Stilicho's sister, etc.

(15) Jones-Martindale-Morris, PLRE, Volume II, Olympius 2.

(16) J.B. Bury, (reprint 1958), p. 170.

(17) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 173.

(18) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 173.

(19) Michael Grant, The Fall of the Roman Empire. A Reappraisal (Potter, USA, Th. Nelson, UK, The Annenberg School Press, 1976), p. 36.

(20) Major victory of Stilicho in 406, at what is now Fiesole near Florence. The fact that this important victory was not celebrated by Claudian presumes the poet's absence or death.

(21) M. Grant, (1976), pp. 192, 197; also PLRE, Vol. II, p. 21.

(22) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, p. 198.

(23) E. Demougeot, "Saint Jérôme, les oracles sibyllins et Stilicon" REA LIV (1952), pp. 83-92. Also "Note sur la politique orientale de Stilicon" Byzantion (Paris, Boston, 1950), XX, pp. 27-37.

(24) Sir William Smith, A Smaller Classical Dictionary (rev. by G.E. Marindin, London: Murray, 1898), 28th, imp., p. 564. It is noteworthy that in all the reference material still in current use only one proves to be totally positive on Stilicho. It is

Sir William Smith's work noted here.

(25) Sir William Smith, rev. G.E. Marindin, (1898), loc. cit.

(26) Santo Mazzarino, Stilicone. La Crisi imperiale dopo Teodosio (1942), p. V.

(27) T.R. Glover, Life and Letters in the Fourth Century, (Cambridge: University Press, 1901), p. 236.

(28) F.A. Wright and T.A. Sinclair, A History of Later Latin Literature (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), p. 277.

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ALL INSCRIPTIONS FROM E. NISCHER-FAIKENHOF, STILICHO.

Marble inscription from St. Nazario, Milan, from 396.

CIL V 6250 vgl. Fiebinger und Schmidt, *Inscriptio* sammlung, S. 21 f.:

Qua sinuata cavo consurgunt tecta regressu  
sacrataeq(ue) crucis flecitur orbe caput,  
Nazarius vitae immaculabilis integer artus.  
conditur. Exultat hunc tumuli esse locum,  
Quem pius Ambrosius signavit imagine Christi,  
marmoribus Libycis fida Serena polit,  
Coniugis ut reditu Stiliconis laeta fruatur  
gennânisque suis, pignoribus propriis.

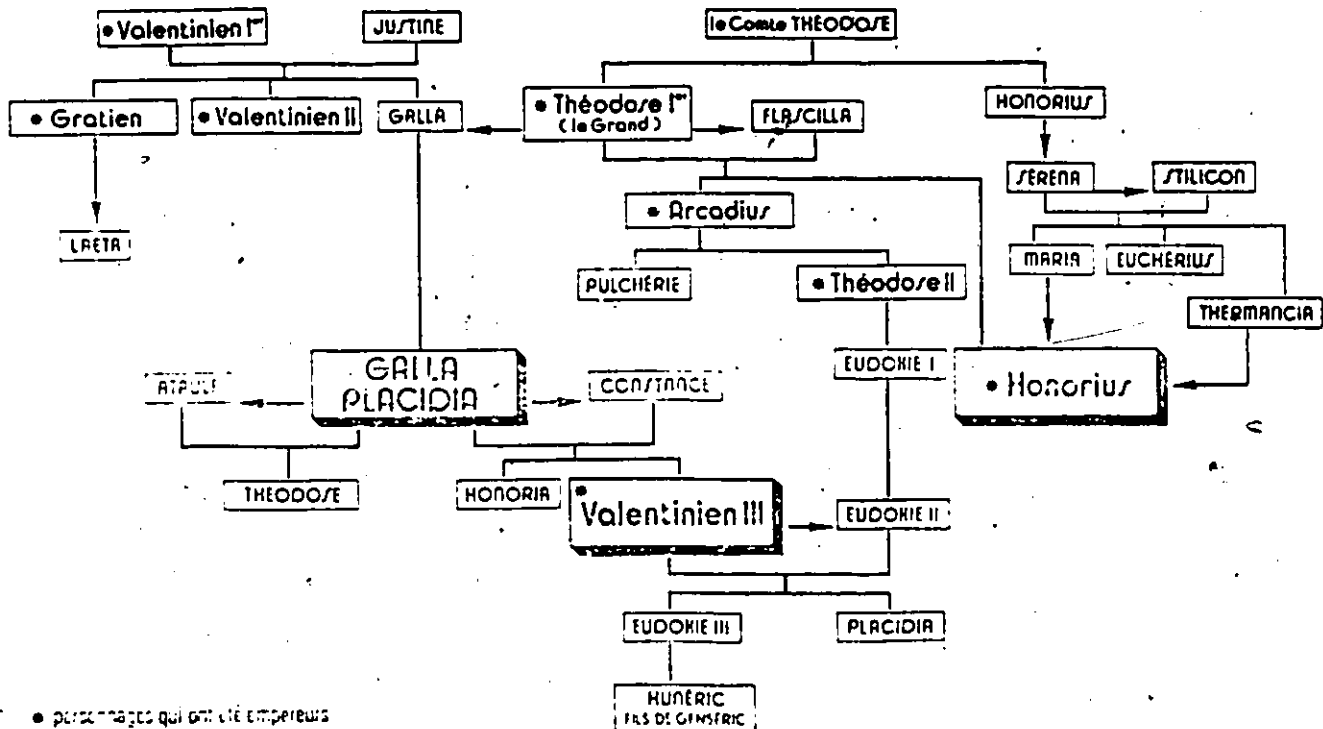
Inscription from the Forum,  
South-East of the Arch of Sept.  
Severus, from 398.

CIL VI 1187. Imperatoribus invictissimis felicissimisque  
dd. nn. Arcadio et Honorio fratribus  
senatus populusque Romanus  
vindicata rebellione  
et Africae restitutione laetus.

Dessau 100: Honori, Maria, Stelicho, Serena, vivatis! —  
Stelicho, Serena, Thermantia, Eucherii, vivatis! — Abgebildet bei  
Mazzuchelli, *La bolle di Maria moglie di Onorio nel Museo*  
Trivulzio, 1819, und Rossi, *Bull. arch. christ.*, 1863, S. 53 f.

The Empress Maria's  
Bulla.

## les Valentinien et les Théodosiens



From 398,

on the Forum.

CIL VI 1730, 31913.

Fl(avio) Stiliconi v(iro) c(larissimo).  
Fl(avio) Stiliconi illustrissimo viro  
magistro equitum peditumque,  
comiti domesticorum, tribuno praetoriano  
et ab ineunte aetate per gradus claris-  
simae militiae ad columnen gloriae  
sempiternae et regiae adfinitatis evecto,  
progenere divi Theodosi, comiti divi  
Theodosi Augusti in omnibus bellis  
adque victoriis et ab eo in adfinitatem  
regiam cooptato itemque socero d(omini) n(ostri)  
Honori Augusti, Africa consiliis eius  
et provisione liberata, ex s(enatus) c(onsulto).

Archäol. Anzeiger 1927, S. 107, berichtet aus Rom über einen neuen Fund: „Zwischen Via di Pietra und Via di Montecortini brachten Bauarbeiten eine Statuenbasis zum Vorschein, laut deren Inschrift dem Stilicho von der Korporation der Barkenführer auf dem Tiber aus Dank für die Besiegung des Gildo eine Statue errichtet wird.“ Wie die Barcarii werden wohl auch noch andere Vereinigungen etc., auch in der Provinz, den Sieger gefeiert haben.

From 398, the Anio Inscription.

CIL IX 4011. Imperatoribus Caesaribus dominis nostris Fla-  
viis Arcadio et Honorio fratribus victoribus ac triumphatoribus semper  
Augustis, quod obsecuti optimis providentissimisque consiliis illustris  
et praeclari viri Fl(avii) Stiliconis comitis et magistri utriusque mili-  
tiae, parentis sui, reliqua ex veneranda antiquitate Romana rei pub-  
licae monumenta, universa bona, quae capta sunt a Gildone hoste  
publico donando, formas ad Anienis fluenta, quorum aqua non modo  
nocebat fossae urbanicianae sed et vastitatem urbis per immensa  
spatia gignebat ob squalores ac perniciem extendendo instaurari,  
paludesque per invia meatu novo, iuvante etiam praef. urbi Quintilio  
lacto dispositione egregia, averti oportere iusserunt.

From  
401/402, the renewal of  
the Roman walls, doors  
and towers.

CIL VI 3197.

Fidei virtutiq(ue) devotissimorum  
militum domnorum nostrorum  
Arcadi Honori et Theodosi  
perennium augustorum,  
post confectum Gothicum  
bellum felicitate aeterni  
principis domni nostri Honori,  
consilii et fortitudine  
inlustri viri comitis et  
(:.....:)  
s(enatus) p(opulus) q(ue) R(omanus),  
curante Pisidio Romulo v(iro) c(larissimo)  
praef(ecto) urbi vice sacra  
iterum iudicante.

Lanciani, The ruins and excavations of ancient Rome, S. 261;  
Jordan, Topographie I, 2, S. 185; Huelsen, Forum Romanum,  
S. 84; Fiebinger und Schmidt, Inschriftensammlung, S. 26;  
Sundwall, Weström. Studien, S. 127 f.

Inscription, 405/406:

CIL VI 1185-1190, 31357:

S(enatus) p(opulusque) R(omanus)  
impp. caess. dd. nn. invictissimis principibus Arcadio et Honorio  
victoribus ac triumphatoribus semper augg.,  
ob instauratos urbi aeternae muros, portas ac turrets, egestis inmensis  
rueribus, ex suggestione v(iri) c(larissimi) et inlustri  
comitis et magistri utriusq(ue) militiae Stilichonis, ad perpetua-  
tem nominis eorum simulacra constituit,  
curante Fl(avio) Macrobio Longiniano v(iro) c(larissimo) praef(ecto)  
urbis, d(evotus) n(umini) m(ajestati)q(ue) eorum.  
Longinianus übernahm die städtische Präfektur als Nachfolger des  
Caecina Decius Albinus nach dem 6. Dezember 402, vgl. Seeck,  
Symmachusausg., p. GLXXXII.

From 405/406, to celebrate the victory  
of Faesulae against Radagaisus.

CIL VI 1731, 31913:

Fl(avio) Stilichoni inlustrissimo  
viro, bis consuli ordinario,  
magistro utriusque militiae,  
comiti domesticorum  
et stabuli sacri adque  
ab incunte aetate  
per gradus clarissimae  
militiae ad columnen regiae  
adfinitatis evecto, socio  
bellorum omnium  
et victoriarum, adfni  
etiam divi Theodosi augusti  
itemque socero  
domini nostri Honori augusti,  
populus Romanus  
per singulari eius  
circa se amore  
adque providentia  
statuam ex aere argentoque  
in rostris ad memoriam  
gloriae sempiternae  
conlocandam decrevit,

exequente Fl. Pisidio Romulo v(iro) c(larissimo) praef(ecto) urb(is).  
Vgl. Sundwall, Weström. Studien, S. 127 f.

## Résumé

Stilicho's historical portrait has been affected by 15 centuries of tendentious and negative interpretation which started to appear immediately after his assassination. I propose to study the portrait of Stilicho painted first by writers favourable to him such as Claudian (who died circa 404) and Olympiodorus (d. after 425) as preserved by Photius, then by Zosimus (d. after 498) who is ambivalent towards Stilicho, and finally by those authors who are hostile to him such as Orosius (d. after 417), Sozomen (d. circa 450), Philostorgius (d. circa 430/440), and St. Jerome (d. about 420).

On the death of Theodosius I in January 395 the Roman Empire was divided between his two sons, Arcadius (the elder son) living at Constantinople and Honorius living at Milan. On his deathbed Theodosius I asked Stilicho to protect both his sons and to guard the safety of the Empire.

Stilicho's policy aim was to maintain a unitary Theodosian state, by ensuring the concordia fratrum and a continuing unity of purpose between the two Roman armies (with the barbarian foederati as constituent parts of those armies). For Stilicho Rome remained the centre of the world. However, Stilicho soon encountered what Santo Mazzarino calls the coherent, decisive and constant anti-Stilichonian prejudice of the Eastern Roman Empire.<sup>(1)</sup> Mazzarino emphasized that all the politicians successively in charge in Constantinople (Rufinus, Eutropius, Aurelianus, Gainas or Anthemius) followed an anti-Stilichonian policy without exception. They often even preferred Alaric's Gothic army to the Western Roman army. Another factor increasing the tension and animosity between

East and West was the contrast between Rome and Milan, the old and the new capital respectively of the Western Empire. Mazzarino notes<sup>(2)</sup> that Rome was the centre of tolerant or paganizing Christians, and Rome's Senate was itself the centre of paganism, whereas Milan, where the court now resided, was in sharp contrast a city of intransigent Christians who wanted to maintain their links with Christian Constantinople.

In this context, while Stilicho hesitated and shrank from open conflict, the gap between Constantinople and Rome on the one hand, as well as between Rome and the barbarians on the other was steadily widening. Constantinople was constantly being reinforced, and Rome weakened. In order to save the unity of the Theodosian Empire, Stilicho was forced to seek a form of coexistence with the barbarians which later led to the "fall of Rome" but which, as Mazzarino says, was in Stilicho's policy "the first sign of an explicitly Western political consciousness, and also an anti-Byzantine one."<sup>(3)</sup>

After the fall of Rome we discern changing attitudes in a civilization which remained imperial and which maintained strong religious beliefs, both Christian and pagan. For instance, propaganda began to predominate in assessing and transmitting the literary-historical portrait of Stilicho. Contemporary envy of Stilicho compounded by fear of the alien barbarians ensured the success of this propaganda for centuries to come.

In reassessing the evidence this study will trace and analyze the interpretations of Rudolf Keller, Santo Mazzarino, Ernst Nischer-Falkenhof, Emilienne Demougeot, John Matthews and Alan Cameron; it will also take into account the viewpoints of Edward Gibbon, Otto Seeck, Theodor Mommsen and J.B. Bury.

The method will be: to examine the references to Stilicho in Latin and Greek inscriptions and literary texts,<sup>(4)</sup> to evaluate these references and their interpretation by later writers and historians, and finally to see whether a positive appraisal of Stilicho is possible.

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(1) Santo Mazzarino, Stilicone. La Crisi Imperiale Dopo Teodosio Rome, 1942, p. 79.

(2) \_\_\_\_\_, p. 245.

(3) \_\_\_\_\_, p. V.

(4) These are collected in The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire ed. by Jones-Martindale-Morris, Cambridge, 1971.

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