

LITERARY DEPICTIONS OF MOORS FROM HERODOTUS TO PROCOPIUS

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Abstract

The Moors have been regarded by Graeco-Roman authors with a mixture of ambivalence and admiration. From the highly positive characterizations of Moorish giants like Masinissa (238-148 BCE) whose achievements the Romans lauded, to figures like Jugurtha (*fl.* 118-104 BCE) and Gildo (*fl.* 396-398 CE) whose hostilities with Rome earned them both scorn and ridicule, Moorish figures loom large in the pages of ancient historians from Herodotus to Procopius. This thesis examines the shifting portrayal of Moors from their earliest literary depictions in Greek literary sources to the late Roman literary portrayals of the sixth century CE. It argues that certain stereotypes regarding Moors, a problematic term that will be discussed in greater detail, continued relatively unchanged in Graeco-Roman authors, and that this was highly dependent on genre, political context, and intertextuality. It further argues that negative vs. positive portrayals of Moors can be understood better via an examination of the context of an author on an individual level, where political background was key to an historian's evaluation of a certain Moorish figure or of Moors in general.

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General Introduction

Depictions of barbarians have been the subject of large syntheses that examine the topic broadly. The two most notable works of the past decades are Benjamin Isaac's *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* and Erich Gruen's *Reexamining the Other in Antiquity*.¹ Both scholars examine depictions of barbarians to identify the opinions of ancients regarding non-Greeks/Romans at various times. The arguments of both works are different, representing two opposite ends of a spectrum of scholarly discourse.² Isaac (2004) connects the "ideology of imperial expansion" to the "proto-racist" perspectives on non-Romans in literary sources, while Gruen (2011) takes the opposite tack stressing the ancients' desire to incorporate elements of foreign cultures into a larger "collective identity" (context of scholarship). Although both works contain some analyses of literary depictions of Moors, they are few and aim to set the Moors alongside the depictions of other non-Romans.³ For instance, the belief that Moors are treacherous by nature and faithless in agreements in both a secular and a religious context is fairly ubiquitous in literary sources. Moreover, these stereotypes continue relatively unchanged into the Christian period of Late Antiquity. This similarity in depictions begs an inquiry, first in terms of how frequently these stereotypes appear and second in terms of the causes for their appearance. Isaac (2004) and Gruen (2011) synthesize the depictions of different groups to arrive at general conclusions regarding Graeco-Roman attitudes, and though there is tremendous value in this comparative approach, it is still unclear why depictions of Moors over centuries of ancient literature are so similar. In other words, little work has been done to examine the portrayals of Moors in a comprehensive fashion, nor to examine the similarities in depictions and stereotypes, set them alongside each other, and account for their causes.

Literary sources are one of the richest sources of information on the history of the Moors and Graeco-Roman attitudes to them, and so the degree to which their depictions were governed by conventions of genre and political context is important for scholars who wish to extricate historical

¹ Isaac (2004) and Gruen (2011).

² See Isaac (2004) 1-8. Cf. Gruen (2011), 352-357.

³ See, for example, Isaac (2004), 329-330 who compares Lucan on the Numidians to Roman depictions of Carthaginians. See also, Gruen (2011) 272-276, who views the Numidians' claim to eastern ancestry as a way for them to connect themselves with the Graeco-Roman world.

information on Moors from these sources. Moreover, a study of literary depictions over a broad period will provide some clues to the attitudes of certain authors towards Moors in different periods and the causes for these attitudes.

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to analyze depictions of Moors in literary sources from Herodotus to Procopius to understand the role that classicizing imitation, genre, and political context played in literary constructions of Moors. This thesis argues that the stereotypes associated with Moors continued in literary sources with relative degrees of difference from Herodotus to Procopius. It argues that certain stereotypes regarding Moors continued relatively unchanged in Graeco-Roman authors, and that this was highly dependent on genre, political context, and intertextuality. It further argues that negative vs. positive portrayals of Moors can be understood better via an examination of the context of an author on an individual level, where political background was key to an historian's evaluation of a certain Moorish figure or of Moors in general.

It will be instructive to provide a brief overview of contemporary indigenous inhabitants of North Africa whom the Greeks and Romans called "Moors." The present descendants of the pre-Arab, indigenous population of North Africa refer to themselves as the Imazighen, meaning "free people" in their own language of Tamazigh, albeit with some regional variations in spelling.⁴ Both the degree of indigeneity that can be attributed to the Imazighen and their closeness in culture with the Moors of the ancient world has been debated by scholars to some extent with little consensus on the issue.⁵ However, although it is not the purpose of this paper to investigate this question, linguistic evidence is telling in this regard. Brett and Fentress (1997) identify a passage of the *Cosmography* of Aethicus Ister mentioning *gentes Mazices multas*. The authors suggest that the word Mazices could be etymologically linked to the word Imazighen, a telling interpretation which illustrates a potentially strong cultural and linguistic link.⁶ Moreover, it should be noted that these peoples interacted with many outsiders over the last 3000 years, including the Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs, French, and Spanish. This gave rise to the phenomenon of the "eternal Jugurtha," a perspective that stresses Moorish cultural exclusivity and cultural permanence in the face of a

⁴ Ilahiane (2006), xxx.

⁵ Brett and Fentress (1997), 10-24.

⁶ Brett and Fentress (1997), 5-6.

foreign invader. The reality, however, is that the Moors adopted and incorporated many facets of foreign cultures into their own identities, and therefore, the idea that the Moors remained steadfast in their cultural exclusivity for centuries is somewhat inaccurate.⁷

It is necessary to discuss the terminology that this thesis uses regarding the Moors. The indigenous peoples who inhabited the area of the Maghreb in modern-day Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco were labelled *Mauri* in Latin and Μαυροῦσιοι in Greek, often translated into English as “Moors” or “Berbers.” Moors is derived from the Latin *Mauri* while Berbers is derived from an Arabicized version of the word “barbarian,” *barbar*.⁸ I will refer to the North African peoples that the Greeks and Romans encountered as “Moors” for the convenience of this study, though I will endeavour to provide a more specific ethnonym wherever and whenever it appears in the literary material. However, despite this we must insist on an awareness on the reader’s part regarding the employment of this word: terms such as “Moor” and “Berber” have long histories with various meanings at different times. The overall point here is that most terms, especially when it comes to insider categorizations of outsiders, are often incorrect and inaccurate, and the term “Moor” is no exception. Ancient authors, when they did not use the term “barbarian,” used a variety of ethnonyms depending on the time period. Herodotus, the earliest author examined in this thesis, employs a variety of specific ethnonyms, but prefers to refer to Moors generally as “Libyans” (Λίβυες). From the Second Punic War to about the third century CE, the terms *Massyli*, *Masaesyli*, *Numidae*, *Gaetuli*, and *Mauri* are employed as catchall terms for a variety of different groups. After Roman provincialization, these names evolved and came to designate the specific Roman province that one inhabited. Thus, a man living the province of Mauretania Caesariensis could be referred to as a *Maurus* without negative implications, just as the *Numidae* referred to the inhabitants of the province of Numidia.⁹ The term *Maurus*, however, evolved further in the fourth century when it came to designate those tribes who were specifically othered or hostile to the Roman Empire, and this categorization remained unchanged up to time of Procopius, who calls

⁷ Modéran (2003), 6-7.

⁸ Maddy-Weitzman (2011), 1-2.

⁹ The term Arab could also refer to the inhabitant of the province of Arabia rather than an Arab by ethnicity. See Greatrex (2015), 136-137, n. 51 who examines the ambiguity regarding issues of ethnicity, identity, and terminology. He notes, in particular, a certain John who dubs himself of the Arab *ethnos*. This exemplifies that terminology was an empire-wide difficulty.

the Moors Μαυροσίοι. The picture becomes murkier when one considers the terminology employed by epic poets, who preferred archaic and outmoded terms to add an exotic flavour to their work.¹⁰ I have endeavoured to contextualize these terms as much as possible.

Scholarship in English on the Moors, particularly broad accounts covering many centuries of history, is sorely lacking. Although it may come as some surprise to the ancient historian, or indeed to the casual reader of Roman history, the Moors themselves possess a rich and understudied history. A lamentable shortcoming that most historians of antiquity who write in English have failed to remedy is the very little information on the broader context and history of the Moors generally. Modéran (2003)'s treatment of the Moors in late antiquity is by far the most detailed and accessible history for that period. It is, of course, unsurprising that French interest in the Moors is so high given their past colonial projects in North Africa. Hopefully, broader publications on the Moors in English will become more frequent and will not arise incidentally in the histories of other peoples/cultures.

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 1 focuses on literary depictions of Moors before Late Antiquity beginning with Herodotus and ending with Tacitus; Chapter 2 examines the literary depictions of Late Antiquity up to the sixth century CE and covers the *De Bello Gildonico* of Claudian and the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus; finally, Chapter 3 focuses exclusively on the sixth century CE, namely the depictions of Moors in the *Iohannis* of Corippus and the *Wars* of Procopius. For Chapters 2 and 3, depictions of Moorish groups generally are examined first and are categorized by author. These are followed portrayals of specific Moorish figures, and these sections are also categorized by author. The organization of Chapter 1 is somewhat different, indicative of the variety of source material before Late Antiquity, and is organized, in some cases, by theme rather than author, with more than one author included in one section. In each chapter, I have done my best to contextualize the period in which specific Moorish groups are mentioned. In addition, each section concludes with a brief analysis of the specific author in question, inquiring into the author's potential interaction with Moors during his lifetime and examining the author's

¹⁰ For an excellent discussion of the terminology, see Modéran (2003), 445-454.

sources on Moors generally. I have adhered to the primary source abbreviations used by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* as much as possible.

Chapter 1: Portrayal of Moors before Late Antiquity

1.1: Introduction

This chapter concerns the portrayal of Moors in literary sources before Late Antiquity. The ancient authors in question are examined thematically rather than chronologically, and portrayals of Moors as a group will be discussed followed by examinations of individual Moors. Three prominent themes concerning the depictions of Moors are evident in authors writing before the fourth century CE: (1) the polygamy/polyandry and general promiscuity of the Moors, (2) the treachery of the Moors, and (3) the variation in portrayals of Moorish leaders as moral and historical *exempla* or as tools for literary themes. Negative and positive portrayals of individual leaders will be examined with consideration given to the biases, political context, and overall theme of the work of each author.

In ancient Graeco-Roman writings, the characteristics of promiscuity and lust are ubiquitous in the portrayals of non-Graeco-Roman peoples - and the portrayal of Moors before Late Antiquity is no exception. The depiction of polygamous/polyandrous Moors (in addition to other non-Graeco-Roman groups) is negative because such characteristics represent the antithesis of an orderly, civilized society.¹¹ Most of our sources describe the Moors as nomads. It comes as little surprise that we find characteristics such as polygamy included in their ethnographic narratives, since it is a feature commonly associated with nomads.¹² Polygamous unions appear in several other depictions of non-Graeco-Roman peoples.¹³ Some other common practices and features of nomadic societies that emerge in these descriptions include the consumption of milk and raw meat, the sacrifice of prisoners and the drinking of their blood, guerrilla-style warfare, and a general absence of law and government.¹⁴ Similar to other cultural practices deemed unworthy of the

¹¹ See Isaac (2017), 227-241 on Roman portrayals of nomads and Shaw (1982/1983), 6.

¹² See Paus. 8.43.3 and Strabo 17.3.15 for evidence of nomadism, the former referencing Mauri (*Mauroi*) and the latter Masaesylii (*Masaisulioi*). It should be noted that material evidence of various Moorish groups suggests that the Graeco-Roman descriptions of Moors exaggerate the nomadic element in their societies. Of course, this is dependent on the period and the group in question.

¹³ Isaac (2017), 376, who notes Cicero's comments on the many wives of the Persian and Syrian kings.

¹⁴ Isaac (2017), 227-241. For consumption of raw meat among the Huns, see Amm. Marc. 31.2.1. For human sacrifice among the Scythians, see Hdt. 4.62. For the hit-and-run tactics of the Sarmatians, see Amm. Marc. 17.13.27. Finally, for a lack of governing institutions and laws among the Gaetulians, see Sall. *Iug.* 18.

“civilized” Greeks and Romans, these often but not always served the dual purpose of disparaging the non-Graeco-Roman “Other” while displaying the superiority and elevated decorum of Graeco-Roman society and culture.

1.2: Promiscuous Moors in Herodotus

Herodotus is the earliest extant author to write on Moorish marital and relationship customs, and one can detect certain negative judgments regarding the promiscuity of these customs.¹⁵ The Libyans (Λίβυες), a term originally used by the Egyptians for the *Libu*, a people on their western border but which Greeks employed to refer to those peoples living west of Egypt, are examined in detail in the fourth book of Herodotus.¹⁶ The Adyrmachidians are the first Libyan tribe mentioned. They appear to be the most civilized of the nomadic Libyans given both their proximity to Greek Cyrene and their similarities to Egyptian culture. Adyrmachidian promiscuity, however, matches that of the Scythians and the Massagetai. According to Herodotus, the Adyrmachidian king possesses the right to choose whichever virgin he wants to have intercourse with before they are married.¹⁷ In addition to the arrangement among the royal Adyrmachidians, Nasamonian marriage celebrations are described as a rather promiscuous event:

γυναῖκας δὲ νομίζοντες πολλὰς ἔχειν ἕκαστος ἐπίκοινον αὐτέων τὴν μῆξιν ποιεῦνται τρόπῳ παραπλησίῳ τῷ καὶ Μασσαγέται: ἐπεὰν σκίπωνα προστήσωνται, μίσγονται. πρῶτον δὲ γαμέοντος Νασαμῶνος ἀνδρὸς νόμος ἐστὶ τὴν νύμφην νυκτὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διὰ πάντων διεξελθεῖν τῶν δαιτυμόνων μισγομένην: τῶν δὲ ὡς ἕκαστος οἱ μιχθῆ, διδοῖ δῶρον τὸ ἂν ἔχη φερόμενος ἐξ οἴκου.

Although it is the custom for each Nasamonian man to have many wives, they consider them to be common property for the purposes of intercourse, very much like the Massagetai. Whenever they have set up a staff outside, it means

¹⁵ Though it should be noted that he may have based his Libyan ethnographic digression on the account of Hecataeus of Miletus, the first Greek we know of to write on Libyans. See Law (1978), 141; Riad (1981), 195-197; Karttunen (2002), 468.

¹⁶ Law (1978), 141; Brett and Fentress (1997), 22; Asheri et al. (2007), 694-695.

¹⁷ Hdt. 4.168, trans. Purvis: “These are the only Libyans to practice this custom and also the only ones to display their virgins to their king just before they begin living with a man. Whichever of them pleases the king most must lose her virginity to him.” This is more indicative of general promiscuity than polygamy or polyandry. For the Scythians, see Hdt. 4.104, where the Agathyrsi “share their women in common for the purposes of intercourse”. For the Massagetai, whom some call Scythians (Hdt. 1.201), and their promiscuity, see Hdt. 1.126, where a man desiring intercourse with a woman “hangs his quiver on the front of her wagon, and has intercourse with her”.

that they are having intercourse within. When a Nasamonian man marries for the first time, it is customary for his bride to have intercourse with all the guests he has brought from home.¹⁸

The promiscuous customs of the Nasamones are similar to those of both the Gindanes and the Auseans.¹⁹ Ausean women decorate their ankles with bracelets to indicate the number of men they have slept with, while Ausean men are said to “share intercourse with their women in common, promiscuously like beasts, and do not dwell together as couples.”²⁰ Although the passages on the Nasamones and Adyrmachidians seem neutral in their portrayal, Herodotus’ account of the Auseans depicts the practice in a more unfavourable light, namely because they are said to share their women “like beasts” (κτηνηδόν). In Herodotus, there is a total of three claims of Moorish promiscuity among the Nasamones, the Gindanes, and the Auseans. One can easily imagine the Greek audience struck with fascination by the foreignness of these behaviours, that something as important and sacred as marriage or marital relations could be managed in so haphazard, careless, and wholly irreligious a manner.²¹ Although Herodotus is not as critical of Libyans as Sallust or Livy are for the Numidians there is an implied, underlying value judgment that is imparted to the reader indirectly.²² The exotic nature of a foreign people was designed for its shock factor alongside its purpose to educate the reader/listener on the customs of a particular people.²³ One should also note Herodotus’ engagement in a broader intellectual debate concerning “the relative roles of physical environment and human custom in accounting for human character, behaviour, and difference”, and that entertainment was, by no means, the only goal of ancient ethnography.²⁴

Evaluating the sources of Herodotus’ information is another question. The scholarly consensus that Herodotus never visited Libya personally and obtained his knowledge of the Libyans from a

¹⁸ Hdt. 4.172, trans. Purvis. Cf. Strabo 16.4.25 for the polyandry of a certain Arab tribe where the ῥάβδος is also employed to denote that a man is having intercourse inside his dwelling with a woman. See How and Wells (1912), 393.

¹⁹ Hdt. 4.176 for the Gindanes and Hdt. 4.180 for the Auseans.

²⁰ Hdt. 4.180: ταῦτα μὲν λέγουσι, μίξιιν δὲ ἐπίκοινον τῶν γυναικῶν ποιέονται, οὔτε συνοικέοντες κτηνηδόν τε μισγόμενοι.

²¹ Karttunen (2002), 461-462.

²² Liv. 29.23.5 and Sall. *Iug.* 46.3 for instance.

²³ For other purposes of ethnography, see Dench (2007), 493-502.

²⁴ Dench (2007), 500.

Cyrenaean or an Egyptian source is relatively secure.²⁵ As one might expect, the outlandish nature of his accounts of these and other peoples calls the historian's reliability into question regarding events on the fringes.²⁶ One must be careful not to take this too far however, as there are kernels of truth in Book 4's ethnography of Libya, and scholars have identified several cultural parallels between the practices identified by Herodotus and those of the modern indigenous peoples of North Africa. For instance, Corcella (2007) identifies a connection between Gindianian women's wearing of ankle bracelets and the ankle bracelets worn by contemporary Imazighen women.²⁷ Nevertheless, the purpose of Herodotus' ethnography must be considered.²⁸ Although there were many goals of his ethnographic digressions, one purpose was to entertain his audiences with a display of the different customs (νόμοι) of peoples inhabiting the fringes of the οἰκουμένη, something that later authors under the Roman Empire imitated in their own works.²⁹ Promiscuous relationships among the Moors were likely portrayed with a negative connotation in order to shock, amaze, and ultimately, entertain a Greek audience. It is clear that promiscuity was a feature of the Graeco-Roman depictions of Moors as early as the fifth century BCE.

1.3: Promiscuous Moors after Herodotus

Written descriptions of the polyandrous/polygamous features of Moorish marriage customs continued relatively unchanged into the early republican and imperial periods of Rome. Sallust, Strabo, Livy, and Pliny the Elder all include ethnographic analyses of Moors during which marriage practices are described in either a neutral or negative way. Each of these authors will be examined in turn by analyzing the similarities to and differences from the Herodotean passages, and by exploring the reasons behind their neutral/negative angle. Subsequently, each author's accuracy will be judged in the same manner as above, namely by examining how well informed these authors were about the customs and practices of the Moors.

²⁵ Despite Herodotus' claim of eye-witness information 4.173: λέγω δὲ ταῦτα τὰ λέγουσι Λίβυες. For the possible sources of his information on the Libyans, see Gottesman (2015), 91; for the limits of his travels, see Karttunen (2002), 457-459.

²⁶ See Hdt. 4.173 for the Psylloi (Libyans) who declare war on the south wind, for instance. See, however, the commentary of Asheri et al. (2007), 699 on his possible reference to the *ghibli*, a wind blowing to the Mediterranean from the Sahara.

²⁷ Asheri et al. (2007), 695-696 on Hdt. 4.176

²⁸ Asheri et al. (2007), 696; Gottesman (2015), 92.

²⁹ Karttunen (2002), 457-459; for the imitation of later authors, see Kaldellis (2013), 1-10.

Sallust's portrayal of Moorish promiscuity is the most critical of all the passages examined in this chapter. The *Bellum Iugurthinum*, a first century BCE monograph narrating the failed revolt of the Numidian king Jugurtha, is a work in which there is little sympathy for the Moors. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to encounter the following passage concerning a marriage alliance formed between Bocchus I of Mauretania and the Numidian king Jugurtha:

Et iam antea Iugurthae filia Bocchi nupserat, uerum ea necessitudo apud Numidas Maurosque leuis ducitur, quia singuli pro opibus quisque quam plurimas uxores, denas alii, alii pluris habent, sed reges eo amplius. Ita animus multitudine distrahitur: nulla pro socia obtinet, pariter omnes uiles sunt.

Furthermore, already before this a daughter of Bocchus was married to Jugurtha. But this is considered an insignificant connection among the Numidians and the Moors, because each individual has as many wives as he can afford, some ten, others more, and kings proportionately more. In this way affection is dispersed across the group: none is held as a consort, all are equally unimportant.³⁰

For Sallust, polygamy is the norm for both king and commoner. The number of wives allotted to either is limited only by means (*opes*), and it is implied that it is in no way unusual for most men to have up to ten wives, with kings having the lion's share. The adjectives *leuis* and *uilis* illustrate the passage's negative portrayal. Numidians and Moors are equitable in their devotion (*animus*) to their wives; but the sheer number (*multitudo*) of wives necessitates that each man provide only a worthless (*uilis*) amount of attention to them. The implication is that Roman monogamous marriage customs create an atmosphere whereby wives are given sufficient love and devotion, and that such a practice is in keeping with the proper order of things. Elements of Herodotus' ethnographic objectives, therefore, can be observed in Sallust: outlandish customs serve as a source of bewilderment, fascination, and revulsion to the audience, validating the customs of the dominant Graeco-Roman culture. Paul (1984) questions the veracity of this passage with regards to the customs of the Moorish kings, contending that this behaviour would have been characteristic of

³⁰ Sall. *Iug.* 80, trans. Batstone. The distinction between Numidian and Moor here is purely technical. By "Moors", Sallust means those Moors inhabiting the kingdom of Mauretania to the west as opposed to the kingdom of Numidia to the east. "Moor" as a catchall term for the pre-Carthaginian indigenous inhabitants of North Africa does not appear until the third century CE.

nomads rather than the Numidian/Moorish nobility.³¹ Sallust paints Moors with a broad brush, applying stereotypes associated with nomads to the Moorish nobility.

Pliny and Strabo depict Moorish polygamy in a more neutral light. The geographer Strabo writes of the Gaetulians (*Gaetuli*), a Moorish people inhabiting the southern Maghreb in the seventeenth book of his *Geographikon*.³² He says the following regarding Gaetolian marriage customs:

λιτοὶ δὲ σφόδρα τοῖς βίοις εἰσὶ καὶ τῷ κόσμῳ, πολυγύναικες δὲ καὶ πολύπαιδες, τὰλλα δὲ ἐμφερεῖς τοῖς νομάσι τῶν Ἀράβων·

The inhabitants [Gaetulians] are very simple in their modes of life and in their dress; but the men have many wives and many children, and in other respects are like the nomadic Arabians.³³

Here, a negative connotation is not as apparent, even if implied. Strabo writes of the Gaetulians in a neutral, matter of fact, style. The word employed to describe the practice of polygamy is likewise clear and neutral: πολυγύναικες or “many-wives”.

Pliny, too, speaks of Moorish marriage customs in similarly neutral terms, in this case, those of the Garamantes: “The Garamantes do not practice marriage but live with their women promiscuously.”³⁴ The translation of Rackham emphasizes promiscuity with his translation of the Latin *passim*, which can be rendered literally as “here and there”. The descriptions of Pliny and Strabo are, therefore, like those of Herodotus in that the value judgment is conveyed indirectly: Moorish marriage customs are not necessarily a platform to trumpet the superiority of Graeco-Roman society, and their differences from the dominant culture are meant to educate and possibly entertain an audience. Sallust, however, differs from Herodotus in this respect. The value judgment that Moors are unable to show adequate love to their wives because they have so many of them is clearly intended to condemn “barbarian” customs and champion Roman *mores*. Now that there has been an adequate examination of the stereotype of polygamy/promiscuity after Herodotus, an analysis of the authors’ sources of information on Moorish customs can follow.

³¹ Paul (1984), 201.

³² For a detailed summary of the Gaetulians, see Desanges (1998), “Gétules,” *Encyclopédie berbère*. A very brief mention is provided by Roller (2018), 979.

³³ Strabo 17.3.19, trans. Jones. Italicized for emphasis by the author.

³⁴ Plin. *NA* 5.45, trans. Rackham: Garamantes matrimoniorum exortes passim cum feminis degunt.

Strabo's account of the Moors lacks detail.³⁵ Desanges (2017) highlights the outdated information in Strabo's text, including an incorrect assumption that Juba I's kingdom covered the area formerly ruled by the Masaesylians, indicative of a muddling of history and geography. He suggests that Strabo's Libyan *Geography* fashions for the reader a Libya free of temporal constraints, a Libya from different time periods constructed from the works of several geographers and historians.³⁶ It should be noted that Strabo was an intimate of the Mauretanian king, Juba II, the son of that same Juba who was defeated by Caesar; moreover, he is our only source to mention the king's death, suggesting a fairly strong acquaintance.³⁷ Though Roller (2003) emphasizes this connection with Strabo as part of Juba's early education in Rome, he concedes that Strabo probably did not consult the learned Juba's treatises on Libyan geography and ethnicity, instead relying on the "mainstream Hellenistic tradition" as an old man in Amasia.³⁸ Beyond Juba, it is impossible to identify any other Moorish acquaintances of Strabo, and his portrayal of Moorish polygamy can be attributed to the works of his predecessors, which he included in the third chapter of his seventeenth book without additional comment.

There is no overt malice in his portrayal, however; like Herodotus, he presents the ethnographic information plainly and without direct judgement, his aims being to inform on customs rather than trumpet Graeco-Roman morality. This can possibly be attributed to the genre in which Strabo was working, that of the geographical treatise, which required anecdotal information connected with specific sites, descriptions of sites, and ethnographic information on the area's inhabitants.³⁹ There is nothing, of course, preventing an implicit bias against the "barbarians" from entering the text, as is perhaps the case in some other areas of Strabo's work or, indeed, in the work of other geographers. This is not the case, however, with Strabo's portrayal of the Moors, which speaks perhaps to his more liberal attitude concerning non-Romans or to his friendship with Juba II. Strabo chose not to employ negative, judgmental language characteristic of other portrayals.⁴⁰ Rather, he

³⁵ Dueck (2000), 1-5; Roller (2003), 69.

³⁶ Desanges (2017), 102-109; also, see Dueck (2000), 43, who describes Book 17 as "conjecture".

³⁷ Strabo 17.3.7. Roller (2003), 7, 69.

³⁸ Roller (2003), 69.

³⁹ For the features of geography as a genre of ancient literature, see Engels (2007), 542-545.

⁴⁰ Cf. Sall. *Iug.* 108.3.

employed neutral descriptors like *πολυγύναικες*, avoiding any foreseeable temptation to lambaste the Moors as faithless, promiscuous barbarians, as disloyal in marriage as they were in alliances.

It is difficult to measure the extent of Sallust's knowledge of the Moors. It is likely that his governorship of North Africa required him to have some acquaintance with the kingdom of Numidia to the south, the nomadic or semi-nomadic Gaetulians beyond them, and the kingdom of Mauretania to the west, as well as those living within the Roman province. He claimed that the information contained in his digression in the *Bellum Jugurthinum* on Africa and its inhabitants was based on the Punic books (*libri Punici*) of King Hiempsal II, father of Juba I.⁴¹ Sallust also alludes to his consultation of the locals in the same section: *utique rem sese habere cultores eius terrae putant* / "in any case, the inhabitants of this land confirm the account."⁴² Although this seems encouraging, Paul (1984) finds little evidence that Sallust inquired with locals about their own history, and it is likely that he derived the information on the origins of the Africans and the *libri Punici* from another source.⁴³ Scholars have postulated a variety of sources for the war itself including memoirs and earlier histories, so there is some evidence that eye-witness accounts were consulted.⁴⁴ These include the memoirs of Sulla and Rutilius, both of whom were participants. Therefore, one might assume that the more negative stance of Sallust towards Jugurtha and the Numidians could be attributed, in part, to the pro-Roman stance of the works that he consulted. One cannot, however, take this too far as bias cannot be wholly attributed to a historian's sources as exculpation, and Sallust alongside Livy are, without question, the two sources that are most critical of Moors generally.

Pliny's knowledge of the Moors can be safely attributed to a total of 59 authorities that he consulted for his fifth book on Africa, ranging from Cornelius Nepos to Herodotus.⁴⁵ Despite this, however, there is little evidence to indicate that he visited Africa. Most of his information was gathered from

⁴¹ The sections in question are Sall. *Jug.* 17-19. Sallust claims that the Africans

⁴² Sall. *Jug.* 17.7, trans. Batstone. The combination of the accusative *rem* with the infinitive *habere* means "to confirm" in this context.

⁴³ Paul (1984), 74. Paul postulates a work on agriculture that was translated from Punic into Latin. Cf. Gruen (2011), 272-276.

⁴⁴ Paul (1984), 2-4.

⁴⁵ Pliny cites his sources by book in the first book of the *NA*. See Plin. pref. 17 and the table of contents in Book 1.

these secondary sources, with preference given to older sources like Herodotus.⁴⁶ Moreover, many of the depictions are characteristic of generalizing portrayals, such as those concerning the Garamantes described above.⁴⁷ Other depictions are beyond realistic. For instance, Pliny describes the Blemmyae, an African people without heads and with their eyes and mouths on their chests.⁴⁸ Since there is little reason to believe that Pliny visited Africa or observed Moorish customs firsthand, it should be no surprise that his Moorish ethnography is so similar to the generalizing depictions of Herodotus and Strabo.

1.4: Treachery and Lust in Polybius and Livy

Another common feature of Graeco-Roman portrayals of Moors is that they are treacherous and faithless by nature, which extends to political dealings, military tactics, and overall character. Political context, particularly the shifting alliances of the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE), was crucial in the establishment of this stereotype of treacherous Moors. In addition, it will be shown that, for Livy in particular, these stereotypes could often serve a purpose for narrative construction, comparison with Roman morals, and as a device to explain behaviour.

A brief overview of the kings, Masinissa and Syphax, and of their respective roles in the Second Punic War, will serve to contextualize the analysis of Moorish treachery. The outbreak of the 18-year conflict between the Roman Republic and Carthage saw the two powers form alliances with the Moorish polities of North Africa. Syphax, king of the Masaesyli, was the ally of Rome while Masinissa, king of the Massylii, was an ally of Carthage. Both kings would come to change sides, Syphax siding with Carthage following an alliance of marriage with Hasdrubal Gisco's daughter, Sophonisba, and Masinissa becoming one of the greatest allies of Rome straight into the Third Punic War.⁴⁹ It should also be noted that the sources refer to the peoples of both kings not as Moors (*Mauri*) but as Numidians (*Numidae*). This change of allegiance is crucial for our analysis of the theme of treachery, representing a significant event for many of our sources.

⁴⁶ Scholars have noted that Pliny's repetitive use of the verbs *inuenio* and *reperio* ("I find") reveal that most of his information was obtained from literary sources rather than first-hand observation. See Murphy (2004), 52-54.

⁴⁷ For example, the Garamantes at Plin. *NA* 5.45.

⁴⁸ Plin. *NA* 5.46: Blemmyis traduntur capita abesse ore et oculis pectori adfixis.

⁴⁹ Briscoe (1989), 62-63.

When Syphax switched sides and allied with Carthage, Scipio Africanus sought to entice the Numidian king to switch sides again as this reversal would doubtless prove invaluable to the Roman foothold in Africa. Polybius relates the impression that Scipio had of the Numidian king in the following passage.

οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ τῆς κατὰ τὸν Σόφακα τελέως ἐλπίδος ἀφίστατο, διεπέμπετο δὲ συνεχῶς διὰ τὸ μὴ πολὺ ἀφεστάναι τὰς δυνάμεις ἀλλήλων, πεπεισμένος μετακαλέσειν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Καρχηδονίων συμμαχίας: οὐ γὰρ ἀπεγίνωσκε καὶ τῆς παιδίσκης αὐτὸν ἤδη κόρον ἔχειν, δι' ἣν εἴλεττὰ Καρχηδονίων, καὶ καθόλου τῆς πρὸς τοὺς Φοίνικας φιλίας διὰ τετὴν φυσικὴν τῶν Νομάδων ἀψικορίαν καὶ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τε τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀθεσίαν.

Nor did he entirely abandon his hope of winning over Syphax, but sent frequent messages to him, their armies being at no great distance from each other, feeling sure of inducing him to abandon the Carthaginian alliance. He thought it indeed not at all unlikely that he had already grown tired of the girl for whose sake he had chosen the cause of the Carthaginians, and tired generally of his friendship for Phoenicians, as Scipio well knew the natural tendency of the Numidians to grow disgusted with what pleased them and how lightly they always break their faith to gods and men alike.⁵⁰

This is the most striking instance of equating the traits of a ruler with the traits of the people. Scipio anticipates the ease with which Syphax might change his allegiance, a flexibility that he then applies to all Numidians. Moreover, Numidian perfidy (ἀθεσία) applies not only to the gods (οἱ θεοί) but to men as well (οἱ ἄνθρωποι), making the faithlessness even more serious. Polybius, a friend of Scipio Aemilianus, likely provides us with a pro-Roman perspective of affairs concerning Numidia.⁵¹ Thus, the political context of the shifting alliances of Numidian kings during the Second Punic War was instrumental in creating a literary association of treachery with Moors, something that is repeated in the works of Polybius' successors.⁵²

⁵⁰ Polyb. 14.1.3-4, trans. Paton.

⁵¹ For Polybius' attitude towards Roman imperialism, see Walbank (1972), 157-183; see Baronowski (2011), 164-175, who argues that Polybius was, indeed, in favour of an imperialism tempered by justice and moderation towards the vanquished; cf. Serrati (2006), 133-134 on Polybius' depiction of several treaties between Rome and Carthage. It seems that Polybius' interpretations of these events were coloured by his pro-Roman sources, Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus. This may have been the case with his depictions of the Numidians as well.

⁵² Cf. Procop. *Wars*, 4.8.9-11, 4.17.9-10, 4.26.2-3; Sall *Iug.* 46.3.

Livy provides a similarly negative portrayal of both Syphax and of the Numidians, and one may find several quotations highly indicative of Roman attitudes towards Numidians. The arrival of Numidian deserters in the army of Marcus Claudius Marcellus is a good example. Here, Livy calls the Numidians a *gens fallax*, a “deceitful race.”⁵³ A marriage alliance between Carthage and the Masaesyli serves as another example. The marriage was arranged by Hasdrubal, who married his beautiful daughter Sophonisba to Syphax, and the lustful, fickle nature of Syphax and of Numidians in general is depicted by Livy:

ad eam rem consummandam tempusque nuptiis statuendum—iam enim et nubilis erat uirgo—profectus Hasdrubal, ut accensum cupiditate—et sunt ante omnes barbaros Numidae effusi in uenerem—sensit, uirginem a Carthagine arcessit maturatque nuptias.

To bring this about and fix a date for the wedding (for the girl was now of marriageable age), Hasdrubal set off to visit the king. Now, more than all other barbarians the Numidians are a sensual people, and when Hasdrubal noticed that Syphax’s libido was aroused he sent for the girl from Carthage and pushed the wedding ahead.⁵⁴

The phrase *effusi in uenerem* or “devoted to sexual desire” confirms the previous analysis of the literary theme of promiscuity among Moors. Syphax’s behaviour adds credence to the stereotype of Moorish lust, as he is “enflamed with desire”. Hasdrubal shares Scipio’s impression of Syphax’s dubious loyalty that Polybius described:

Ceterum Hasdrubal, memor et cum Scipione initae regi societatis, et quam uana et mutabilia barbarorum ingenia essent, ueritus ne, si traiecisset in Africam Scipio, paruam uinculum eae nuptiae essent.

Hasdrubal, however, bore in mind that the king had also struck an alliance with Scipio and that the barbarian character is inherently undependable and capricious, and he was afraid that if Scipio crossed to Africa the marriage would prove a flimsy bond.⁵⁵

⁵³ Liv. 25.41.4. *Fallax* is an adjective that is repeated by later authors. See Cor. *Ioh.* 5.376 for instance. This section of Livy covers Marcellus’ campaign against the Carthaginian and Syracuse in Sicily. The Numidians deserted the army of Hanno.

⁵⁴ Liv. 29.23.5, trans. Yardley.

⁵⁵ Liv. 29.23.7, trans. Yardley.

Hasdrubal's mistrust of Syphax as a dependable ally is reinforced by the view that Moors are barbarians of "untrustworthy" (*uanus*) and "inconstant" (*mutabilis*) character (*ingenium*). His hesitance is bolstered by the assumption that Moors take marriage lightly, as indicated by the adjective *paruus*. That Syphax would abandon his new wife Sophonisba so quickly reveals Scipio's low opinion, and by extension Livy's, regarding Moors as both allies and spouses. Livy has Fabius Maximus act as the leader of the opposition to Scipio Africanus' receiving an army to invade Africa.⁵⁶ Scipio, he says, will encounter very different circumstances in Africa than in Spain, citing the lack of friendly harbours to secure a proper foothold and other potential difficulties.⁵⁷ Fabius goes on to doubt the reliability of both Syphax and Masinissa as potential allies in Africa:

An Syphaci Numidisque credis? satis sit semel creditum...Numidis tu credere potes, defectionem militum tuorum expertus? et Syphax et Masinissa se quam Carthaginienses malunt potentissimos in Africa esse, Carthaginienses quam quemquam alium.

Do you trust Syphax and the Numidians? Let it be enough to have trusted them once...Having experienced a mutiny of your own soldiers, do you think you can trust the Numidians? Syphax and Masinissa both want to see themselves rather than the Carthaginians supreme in Africa, but then the Carthaginians rather than anyone else.⁵⁸

Although Fabius is proven wrong about Masinissa, who receives high praise in Roman sources, this passage exemplifies a wariness towards Numidians as allies, and though unreliability in alliances is not mentioned explicitly, it is clearly implied in the passage. Neither king is to be trusted, nor are Numidians generally.⁵⁹ If Roman soldiers can mutiny, it is even more likely that Numidian allies will do so as well.

Moorish intemperance could be juxtaposed with Roman temperance. The famous story of the continence of Scipio, related in Livy 26.50, celebrated the self-control of Africanus. When faced with the decision of what to do with a beautiful Spanish captive, Scipio, a philanderer by

⁵⁶ Liv. 28.40.1-2.

⁵⁷ Liv. 28.42.7.

⁵⁸ Liv. 28.42.8-10, trans. Yardley.

⁵⁹ It is easy to understand why the Romans feared that Masinissa would switch sides. Syphax and Masinissa had proven dubious allies to both the Romans and Carthaginians already.

reputation, summoned the fiancé of the young woman, a chieftain of the Celtiberians.⁶⁰ He stated that his bride-to-be had not been violated in any way by either himself or any of his soldiers. Furthermore, the woman had been treated as befitted a princess. In return for his kindness, Scipio entreated the chieftain to remember the dignity and kindness of the Scipios, both himself, his uncle, and his father who had campaigned in Spain before him. He also bade the chieftain remember that there was no country on earth except Rome that anyone scorned more as an enemy and coveted more as an ally.⁶¹ Thus, Scipio's display of temperance ensured the alliance of the Celtiberian chieftain, and virtuous restraint yielded tangible political results. This account parallels Masinissa's temptation to give in to the demands of Sophonisba, reputed for her beauty, against the will of Rome.

In Book 30 of Livy, Scipio chastises Masinissa for marrying Sophonisba in such haste. Masinissa's capture of Numidia from Syphax brought with it the spoils of victory, which included this Carthaginian princess, renowned for her beauty.⁶² Unlike Scipio's reaction to the Celtiberian princess, Masinissa is overcome with desire for this woman. Livy's play on the description of Masinissa being "captured" by a love for his captive prisoner is admirable: *amore captivae uictor captus*. Directly preceding this, however, is an explanatory phrase concerning the stereotype of Moorish desire: *ut est genus Numidarum in uenerem praeceps*.⁶³ The Numidian proclivity towards sexual desire has ultimately clouded his judgement, causing Masinissa to forsake political considerations to satisfy his urges. He marries the princess and promises that she will never be handed over to be paraded in a Roman triumph, but rather that she will die in her native African homeland. This is the cause of Scipio's chastisement. As he juxtaposes his own restraint with Masinissa's lack thereof, Scipio prides himself on *temperantia* (temperance) and *continentia libidinum* (restraint from desires) above all his virtues.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ For Scipio's reputation, see Naev. *Ex Incertis Comoediis*, fr. 1-3.

⁶¹ Liv. 26.50.7-8.

⁶² Liv. 30.12.17: *forma erat insignis et florentissima aetas*.

⁶³ Liv. 30.12.18. Cf. what Livy says of Syphax at 29.23.5: *et sunt ante omnes barbaros Numidae effusi in uenerem*. See also Liv. 1.7.4-7 for a comparison to this concept of "moveable plunder." The section describes the cattle of Hercules and their theft by the shepherd Cacus.

⁶⁴ Liv. 30.14.6: *atqui nulla earum uirtus est propter quas tibi appetendus uisus sim qua ego aequae ac temperantiae et continentiae libidinum gloriatus fuero*.

This juxtaposition is not only a good example of the lustful stereotype's usage as a tool to explain behaviour, but also an exemplification of Roman virtue against barbarian vice. Masinissa's reaction, almost automatic when he glimpses the beauty of Sophonisba, is something that Livy can only explain by attributing the vice of lust to the Numidian people in general. In other words, Masinissa acts lustfully because all Numidians are lustful. The stereotype is used as a way to explain the behaviour of Masinissa; he acts in accordance with the general character of his *gens*. It is not clear, however, whether Livy believed that lust was a trait embedded in Numidians themselves or a result of the nature of Numidian culture/society. Thankfully, it is not the goal of this thesis to answer that question. In addition, one should not overlook the significance of Scipio's admonition of Masinissa for the notion that barbarians can improve themselves - that is, be more Roman - by exposure to good moral *exempla*. In sum, Masinissa can learn and improve himself by imitating the virtues of Scipio, thereby making himself arguably less barbarian/Numidian and more Roman. That Livy might have had this notion of barbarian self-improvement in mind when he wrote this is interesting to note, especially considering the concept's repetition in authors like Procopius centuries later.⁶⁵ With the analysis of the stereotypes of treachery and lust concluded, an examination of the sources and potential interaction with Moors of both Polybius and Livy can proceed.

Polybius is less critical of the Moors than other historians. A hostage of Rome and a member of the "Scipionic Circle", he accompanied Scipio Aemilianus on his campaigns in Africa during the Third Punic War and possibly Spain during the Numantine War. He had the opportunity to meet King Masinissa in person, likely while accompanying Scipio to Carthage in 151 BCE.⁶⁶ He formed quite a good impression of Masinissa from their interaction, and Polybius heaps praise on the Moorish king, citing not only his political virtues but his personal ones too:

Ὅτι Μασανάσσης ὁ ἐν Λιβύῃ τῶν Νομάδων βασιλεὺς ἀνὴρ ἦν τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς βασιλέων ἄριστος καὶ μακαριώτατος, ὃς ἐβασίλευσεν ἔτη πλείω τῶν ἐξήκονθ', ὑγιεινότατος ὢν καὶ πολυχρονιώτατος· ἐνενήκοντα γὰρ ἐτῶν

⁶⁵ A good example of this would be Pharas the Herul, who has been examined by Parnell (2017), 2-3. See Procop. *Wars* 4.4.29: ἦν δὲ ὁ Φάρας οὗτος δραστήριός τε καὶ λίαν κατεσπουδασμένος καὶ ἀρετῆς εὖ ἦκων, καίπερ Ἑρουλος ὢν γένος. Also, see Levene (2010), 255-260 for an excellent treatment of Scipio's rebuke of Masinissa in the larger context of Livy's opinions on barbarians.

⁶⁶ See Polyb. 9.25.4: ἔτι δὲ Μασαννάσου ... ἀκριβέστερον διήκουσα / "but, I heard a more accurate story from Masinissa." See Walbank (1967), 154, who suggests that the meeting took place in 151.

ἐγεγόνει. ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ δυναμικώτατος τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν σωματικὴν ἔξιν, ὅς, ὅτε μὲν στήναι δύοι, στάς ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἴχνεσι δι' ἡμέρας ἔμενε, καθεζόμενος <δὲ> πάλιν οὐκ ἠγείρετο. καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῶν ἵπικῶν κακοπάθειαν ἡμέραν καὶ νύκτα συνεχῶς διακαρτερῶν οὐδὲν ἔπασχεν... τὸ δὲ μέγιστον καὶ θειότατον τούτου· τῆς γὰρ Νομαδίας ἀπάσης ἀχρήστου τὸν πρὸ τοῦ χρόνον ὑπαρχούσης καὶ νομιζομένης ἀδυνάτου τῆ φύσει πρὸς ἡμέρους καρποὺς ὑπάρχειν, πρῶτος καὶ μόνος ὑπέδειξε διότι δύναται πάντας ἐκφέρειν τοὺς ἡμέρους καρποὺς οὐδ' ὁποίας ἦττον, ἐκάστῳ τῶν υἰῶν ἐν διαστάσει μυριοπλήθρους ἀγροὺς κατασκευάσας παμφόρους. τῇ μὲν οὖν ἐκείνου μεταστάσει ταῦτ' ἂν τις εὐλόγως ἐπιθιγέξαιτο καὶ δικαίως.

Massanissa, the king of the Numidians in Africa, one of the best and most fortunate men of our time, reigned for over sixty years, enjoying excellent health and attaining a great age, for he lived till ninety. He also excelled all his contemporaries in bodily strength, for when it was necessary to stand, he could stand in the same place for a whole day without shifting, and again, if he were seated, he never used to get up. And he could also continue to ride hard by night and day without feeling any the worse... But his greatest and most godlike achievement was this. While Numidia had previously been a barren country thought to be naturally incapable of producing crops, he first and he alone proved that it was as capable as any other country of bearing all kinds of crops, by making for each of his sons a separate property of 10,000 plethra which produced all kinds of crops. It is only proper and just to pay this tribute to his memory on his death.⁶⁷

Polybius does not shirk from applying worthy characteristics to this Moorish king. It is certainly difficult to discern whether Polybius' admiration stemmed more from the high esteem that Masinissa enjoyed among the Romans or from an admiration for the king's own virtues as man and ruler. The latter seems to have been appreciated more by Polybius, especially given that there is little mention in this passage of the services that he rendered to Rome. Rather, his physical endurance and his development of his own kingdom are celebrated. This celebration of the virtues of a Moorish king is quite uncharacteristic of the vast majority of our sources before the sixth century, and it is to Polybius' credit that he could write of a non-Graeco-Roman in such positive terms.⁶⁸ It should be noted, however, that Polybius, met Masinissa in person, so he had no need to regurgitate the portrayals of other sources.

⁶⁷ Polyb. 36.16, trans. Paton.

⁶⁸ Polybius admired monarchs like Masinissa and Hiero II who acted benevolently and defended their subjects. See Eckstein (1995), 274-275.

Though it is far from certain, there is little evidence to suggest that Livy met Moors personally. He was born in Padua and spent most of his life in Italy drafting his monumental history. Livy consulted several authors for the Hannibalic War (21-30), including the works of several Roman annalists as well as Polybius.⁶⁹ His corroboration of these accounts has been criticized by scholars, and there is a fairly strong consensus that his own biases as a patriotic Roman are apparent in the *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*.⁷⁰ For instance, he famously writes of the disaster at Cannae that no people other than the Romans could endure such a disastrous defeat and emerge victorious.⁷¹ Concerning his depiction of non-Romans, Levene (2010) has identified a list of stereotypes that are associated with specific peoples throughout Livy's work, such as arrogant Campanians, boisterous Gauls, fierce Spaniards, and lustful Numidians.⁷² Livy employed these stereotypes to explain the behaviours of certain figures, as with Masinissa, or even to note exceptions where a group acted contrary to the behaviour suggested by their particular stereotype. For instance, Levene (2010) has noted Livy's use of *gens fallax* to denote an occasion where Numidians actually maintained faith, that is, where they did not act in accordance with their stereotype.⁷³ It is important to note this distinction, that Livy employed stereotypes to show both when they were fulfilled and when they were broken.

1.5: Moors in Silver Age Latin Poetry

The Moors are portrayed negatively by the poets of the Silver Age of Latin epic, including Lucan and Silius Italicus. Several verses highlight the faithless and treacherous nature of the Moors. The portrayal is quite negative, but one must bear in mind that considerations of genre and narrative construction colour the characterization of figures such as Juba I in Lucan and Syphax in Silius Italicus. Moreover, many of the same characterizations re-emerge in the works of Claudian and Corippus, as will be shown in the following chapters.

⁶⁹ He tends to rely on Polybius for most of his account, but notable departures are apparent. See Hoyos, (2015), 369-370.

⁷⁰ See Mineo (2011), 121-123.

⁷¹ Liv. 22.54.

⁷² Levene (2010), 216-217.

⁷³ Liv. 25.41.4; Levene (2010), 218.

Before analyzing the passages in question, it is necessary to go over the terminology employed by the authors when referring to Moors. Lucan and Silius Italicus mention a variety of different groups in their works. Lucan, for one, whose poem covers the civil wars of Caesar and Pompey, includes not only Moors and Numidians, but Nasamones, Garamantes, Marmaridae, Mazaces, Massylians, Autoleans, and Gaetulians as well.⁷⁴ Lucan also narrates Cato's encounter with the Psylli, whose assistance through the harsh desert proves crucial to his army's survival.⁷⁵ The tribes recorded by Silius match many of those mentioned by Lucan and include the Autololes, Moors, Numidians, Garamantians, Massylians, Nasamonians, Gaetulians, Machae, and Adrymachidae.⁷⁶ The large number of tribes listed certainly reflects the genre of the work, as epic poets often exaggerated details for dramatic effect. The embellishment of the number and the variety of the tribes present is no exception. Merrills (2019) has identified the *topos* of the catalogue of tribes as a conventional literary feature of epic poetry going back to the catalogue of the Latin tribes in Virgil.⁷⁷

Lucan's portrayal of the Moorish king Juba I, king of Numidia during Caesar's Civil Wars, deserves some consideration. Having sided with Pompey against Caesar, Juba was killed in 46 BCE after Caesar's victory at Thapsus.⁷⁸ Before Thapsus, however, Juba and the Pompeian governor Varus defeated a large force under the Caesarian general Curio at the Bagrales River.⁷⁹ This victory over the Caesarians is Lucan's backdrop for introducing the villainous character of Juba I into his poem. The victory over the Caesarians is achieved by Juba's concealment of Numidian cavalry, who successfully ambush Curio and his men in rough terrain. Lucan employs an interesting natural metaphor in his description of Juba's ambush, namely that of an Egyptian mongoose toying with a viper.⁸⁰ For Lucan, the victory of Juba is dishonourable and recalls the Roman frustration with the underhanded tactics of Hannibal, relying as it did on the assistance of what he calls "Libyan deceits" (*fraudes Libycae*) and "Punic warfare tainted with tricks" (*Punica*

⁷⁴ Most are mentioned in a catalogue of tribes who flock to Varus' standards against the Caesarian Curio's invasion of Africa: Luc. 4.676-686.

⁷⁵ Cf. Hdt. 4.173, Plut. *Cat. Min.* 56.3 who mention the same group. Plutarch repeats the tale provided by Lucan, that of the Psylli's ability to suck the poison from wounds inflicted by serpents.

⁷⁶ Sil. Ital. 3.265-324: Many of lesser-known tribes, such as the Machae, and Adrymachidae, are listed in the fourth book of Herodotus, as well as Plin. *NA* 5.5.34, 5.6.39 and Ptolemy *Geog.* 4.3. See Desanges (1962), 106-107, 169-170.

⁷⁷ See Merrills (2019), 156, who cites Verg. *Aen.* 7.641-817.

⁷⁸ See Roller (2003), 30-38 for a good summary of Juba I's life and reign.

⁷⁹ Caes. *BCiv.* 2.38-42.

⁸⁰ Luc. 4.723-729.

bella infecta dolis).⁸¹ This interchangeable attribution of Punic deceit to Moorish as well as Carthaginian forces by Roman authors is unsurprising, as it is often associated with the Numidian king Syphax as well.⁸²

The second time Juba is mentioned in any detail is from the perspective of Pompey, who consults with his retinue of senators about which nation he should call upon for aid: Parthia, Libya, or Egypt.⁸³ By Libya, Lucan means Juba's kingdom of Numidia, about which Pompey holds grave reservations. He is also hesitant about enlisting the Egyptians because of the young pharaoh's age. He eventually decides in favour of the Parthians. Pompey's suspicions of the Numidians and Juba are telling:

Hinc anceps dubii terret sollertia Mauri;
Namque memor generis Carthagini inopia proles
Inminet Hesperiae, multusque in pectore uano est
Hannibal, obliquo maculat qui sanguine regnum
Et Numidas contingit auos. Iam supplice Varo
Intumuit uiditque loco Romana secundo.

Next: devious Juba's two-faced cunning alarms me
true to his heritage, the unmannerly whelp of Carthage
threatens Hesperia; the Moor's foolish heart is full of
Hannibal, who tainted their royal line with impure blood,
infecting Numidia's dynasty. Now Varus is prostrate,
Juba swells with pride and sees Rome in second place.⁸⁴

The association with Punic deceit is clear in Lucan's portrayal of Juba as a second Hannibal, with ambitions to conquer Spain (Hesperia). Moorish treachery is understood in this passage through its similarities to Carthaginian deceit, something that excites more dramatic effect to the Roman audience. The character of Juba is made more terrible and dangerous to Rome via his association with Hannibal and his exemplification of Punic treachery during his previous ambush of Curio's army. The language employed by Lucan also adds to the hostile portrayal of Juba, with verbs conveying pollution (*maculare*) and contamination (*contingere*). More than anything else, the

⁸¹ Luc. 4.736-737.

⁸² See Levine (2010), 217-218, who draws attention to both Livy's and Polybius' portrayals of "Punic deceit". See, for instance, Polyb. 9.11.2.

⁸³ Luc. 8.263-278.

⁸⁴ Luc. 8.283-288, trans. Joyce.

phrase “two-faced cunning” (*anceps sollertia*) captures the treacherous nature of the Moorish king, in addition to the adjective *dubius* implying his duplicitous and malleable nature. Later, Juba is referred to in passing as “faithless Juba” (*infidus Iuba*), an adjective much repeated in late antique sources.⁸⁵ Lucan’s portrayal of Juba is in line with the general characteristics of faithlessness and treachery in Polybius, Sallust, and Livy.

Silius Italicus’ *Punica* depicts the character of Syphax and, indeed, of Moors generally in the same light. He adds a description of Numidia and its wily inhabitants in a section describing Hannibal’s appointment to command of the Carthaginian forces.⁸⁶ The various peoples of Carthage’s domain each hail Hannibal in turn as the new leader of their armies following the death of his brother-in-law Hasdrubal (the Fair). Numidia’s geography is described in positive language: rich in “untilled fields” (*campi squalentes*) and “fertile farmlands” (*agri pingues*), Numidia’s crop yields are said to outdo those of Egypt and Sicily. Silius goes on to describe Numidia as the mother (*altrix*) of wars (*belli*) and war-like men (*bellatores uires*). These positive portrayals do not outweigh Silius’ following line however, which alludes to the hit-and-run type of warfare favoured by mounted Numidian warriors: *nec fidens [tellus] nudo sine fraudibus ensi*. This passage excellently distinguishes what the Romans perceived as honourable *versus* dishonourable warfare. Silius describes the difference between the Roman method of “trusting in the bare sword” and the Numidian method, which never trusts in the sword without deceits and treachery (*fraudes*).⁸⁷ Lucan employs a similar phrase to place Juba’s victory over Curio in the same category, where the king’s army of mostly Moorish horse relied on “Libyan deceits” (*fraudes Libycae*) to defeat the Romans. Victories that can only be secured through deceit is a common theme in the portrayal of Numidians and other non-Romans, both in Roman epic and prose works.

Since Silius’ setting is the that of the Second Punic War, it should be no surprise that he includes Masinissa and Syphax as major characters in the *Punica*. It should also be no surprise that Masinissa’s portrayal is positive and Syphax’s is negative, given the former’s decision to ally with the Romans and the latter’s to fight against them. There is one interesting case regarding

⁸⁵ Luc. 8.443.

⁸⁶ Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 1.182-270.

⁸⁷ bare. Ital. *Pun.* 1.211-219.

Masinissa's portrayal, specifically when Silius has the Numidian king receive a divine portent in a dream telling him that his kingdom will be larger if he should ally himself to Rome.⁸⁸ Masinissa agrees to Scipio's call for an alliance, and he switches sides from Carthage to Rome. Masinissa's response is indicative of the Roman attitudes towards Moors that have been highlighted so far:

...nec nos aut uana subegit incertae mentis leuitas et mobile pectus, aut
spes et laeti sectamur praemia Martis; perfidiam fugio et periuram ab
origine gentem.

It was no idle fickleness of my uncertain mind or my changeable heart that
forced me to come to you. I don't seek a successful battle's hope or prize.
I flee from treachery and those people who have always been unfaithful.⁸⁹

This line is significant in two key aspects. Firstly, Masinissa's denial of "empty fickleness" (*leuitas uana*) and of possessing both an "uncertain mind" (*mens incerta*) and a "changeable heart" (*pectus mobilis*) are additional proofs of the stereotype that Moors are intrinsically dubious and treacherous. The vocabulary is explicitly negative; we have already seen the adjective *uanus* applied to Syphax by Livy in addition to *mutabilis* which is synonymous with Silius' use of *mobilis* in this context.⁹⁰ Secondly, Masinissa's assurance that he will "flee treachery" and keep faith with Rome illustrates Roman expectations of Moors, that they will be disloyal. After defining the stereotype's attributes, Masinissa denies that he himself is treacherous and untrustworthy and applies that stereotype to the Carthaginians instead. He then assures Scipio that he will not behave like his Numidian counterpart Syphax; he will keep faith with Rome and flee treachery (*perfidia*) and those who practice it; in another words, he will do what Scipio and Silius' Roman audience do not expect of Moors: he will maintain his alliance with Rome. Like Livy, Silius also employs stereotypes to explain exceptions to the rule that a *gens* will behave in accordance with its stereotype. An assessment of the sources of both Lucan and Silius is now necessary to ascertain their knowledge of the Moors.

There is little to suggest that Lucan had any personal experience of Moors. As for the information on Moorish kingdoms in the *Pharsalia*, Lucan clearly exaggerates the size of Juba I's kingdom,

⁸⁸ Sil. Ital. 16.115-134.

⁸⁹ Sil. Ital. 16.146-148, trans. Augoustakis.

⁹⁰ See pg. above.

encompassing territories never under his control and peoples who were never really his subjects.⁹¹ Mauretania was, at the time of Curio's campaign in Africa, an independent kingdom ruled by the kings Bocchus and Bogud, and it is clear that Juba only possessed Numidia, which was provincialized by Rome not long after his defeat.⁹² It is possible that Lucan confused the kingdom of his near-contemporary Juba II which did encompass Mauretania with that of his father Juba I's, of which only Numidia was a part. Pichon (1912) also emphasizes the muddled descriptions of Numidian geography in Book 9's account of Cato's march through Africa, asserting that Lucan must have drawn his information either from a "poorly documented treatise" or from his own conjecture.⁹³ Although some of his descriptions of the African landscape are quite vivid and characteristic of the kind of knowledge that only a local or eye-witness would possess, there is little evidence to suggest that Lucan consulted with any local inhabitants personally, and it is likely that his information was drawn exclusively from literary material.⁹⁴ The negative portrayal of Juba I can perhaps be attributed to Lucan's reliance on Livy for most of his historical information on the Caesarian Civil War. For example, Livy's negative portrayal of Syphax may have influenced Lucan's depiction of Juba I.⁹⁵

It is unlikely that Silius Italicus (c. 26-102 CE) encountered Moors either, and he certainly was not an eyewitness to the events he described. Born long after the Second Punic War, his poem's main source was the third decade (Books 21-30) of Livy.⁹⁶ Therefore, his portrayals of Syphax and Masinissa and the Moorish tribes were likely based on Livy's characterizations. Appian, Plutarch, and others have been offered as alternatives, but Livy remains the primary intertextual influence. Numerous departures from Livy's account indicate that he may have consulted other sources for the war, including the annalist Valerius Antias and Valerius Maximus. His departures from Livy

⁹¹ Luc. 4.666-686.

⁹² Pichon (1912), 35-36.

⁹³ See Pichon (1912), 36-38: Elle n'en reste pas moins d'une inexactitude remarquable, et il faut, ou bien que Lucain ait eu sous les yeux un traité très mal documenté à cet égard, ou qu'il l'ait lui-même interprété d'une manière singulièrement fautive.

⁹⁴ See Pichon (1912), 42, who summarizes Lucan's potential sources for his sections on Africa: "...un manuel de géographie assez peu exact; — pour la description, un ouvrage dans le genre des Itinéraires, soit grec soit latin, soit en prose soit en vers; — pour l'épisode des serpents, le ou plutôt les poèmes de Macer, eux-mêmes dérivés de Nicandre, mais non sans de notables additions." The episode of the serpents concerns the Psylli's rescue of Cato's men from poisonous serpents. Cf. Asso (2011), 225-238, who notes that Lucan sought to depict Africa itself as "the other" in opposition to Rome. Curio was defeated by Africa itself rather than Juba.

⁹⁵ Pichon (1912), 251-252; Fucecchi (2011), 241, n. 24.

⁹⁶ Augoustakis (2010), 10-16.

in his portrayal of Moors would make an interesting study, though his characterizations of Syphax and Masinissa do not diverge from Livy's. The main episodes in the *Punica* 16 and 17 involving Syphax's change of allegiance follow Livy's account closely.

1.6: Sallust's Portrayal of Jugurtha and the Treachery of the Moors

Sallust's depiction of Jugurtha merits examination in its positive and negative aspects. He is depicted in very positive terms, especially in the beginning, while later Sallust shifts his depiction from positive to negative as the king becomes more tyrannical. In this instance, character portrayal was governed more by the overall theme of the *Bellum Iugurthinum* rather than on the opinion of the author, context, or other factors. Jugurtha enters the stage as the Roman ally par excellence. Transferred to the command of Scipio Aemilianus, he participated in the Numantine War (143-133 BCE), the Roman republic's conflict with several Iberian tribes. Jugurtha excelled in *uirtus* and was commended by Scipio for his bravery and martial skill.⁹⁷ The description of Jugurtha as a Roman ally could be worthy of any brave Roman. For Sallust's theme of Roman moral decline, the juxtaposition of Jugurtha's exemplary character with contemporary Roman youths whose morals were becoming increasingly problematic illustrated the steep, accelerating decline of Roman *uirtus*. Strong in character (*ualidus in ingenio*), he excelled in physical and martial exercise. He was also proficient in hurling the javelin and riding on horseback, the skills for which the Numidian cavalry of North Africa were well-known.

One can almost glimpse a new Masinissa in Jugurtha, and it is no coincidence that the king's memory was invoked so often. Masinissa's reputation loomed large not just for the Numidian royal family but for the Roman elite as well. The king had performed "many illustrious deeds of a military nature" (*multa et praeclara rei militaris facinora*) and had maintained a long alliance with Rome that garnered both respect and trust (*igitur amicitia Masinissae bona atque honesta permansit*).⁹⁸ Scipio Aemilianus anticipates great things for the young Jugurtha in a letter to Micipsa, claiming that Jugurtha is worthy of his grandfather Masinissa (*en habes uirum dignum te*

⁹⁷ For Micipsa's plot against Jugurtha, see Sall. *Iug.* 6-7. For a general treatment of Jugurtha's character, see Earl (1961), 61-65. See also Claassen (1993) 283-284 for Sallust's use of the "noble savage" trope in his depiction of Jugurtha.

⁹⁸ Sall. *Iug.* 5.4-5.

atque auo suo Masinissa).⁹⁹ The nobleman Adherbal invokes Masinissa's memory before the Senate, and Gulussa, another member of the Numidian royal family, reminds the Senate that he is an ancestor of the great king.¹⁰⁰ The positive literary representation of Masinissa in Sallust aligns with those found in Polybius and Livy. Sallust, however, uses Masinissa as a model for the exemplary Roman ally, someone who embodied the expectations that many Romans had for Jugurtha.¹⁰¹ Jugurtha's failure to live up to the expectations of his mighty ancestor reflects an element of tragedy in Sallust's history. That such a virtuous Numidian could forsake the alliance with Rome and become an enemy was the ultimate disappointment. With the outbreak of conflict, Jugurtha's *uirtus* no longer furthers the Roman state as it had in the Numantine War; now, it serves his own *ambitio*.¹⁰²

The transition from noble ally to dangerous enemy is an interesting one. The switch from a positive to a negative depiction follows the overall theme of the work, which examines how a lack of morals among the Roman nobility allowed Jugurtha to prolong his war against the state. The theme of *metus hostilis* (fear of the enemy) is apparent throughout the work. The *hostis* in question was Carthage, and Sallust argues that after the Third Punic War, Roman morals slackened. Without the fear of Carthage, the Roman aristocracy descended into debauchery and luxury.¹⁰³ This serves as the backdrop for the *Bellum Iugurthinum*, and is the main reason why Jugurtha was able to ensure the support of many Roman nobles with bribes. Exactly how Jugurtha's positive depiction fits into this picture is another question.

Jugurtha embodies all the qualities of the ideal Roman statesmen, ironic given his status as a non-Roman king. Sallust does this intentionally to illustrate how low Roman morals had descended and consequently how long and with what devastation a barbarian king acting with all the virtues of a talented Roman commander could wage war on Rome unchallenged. This is not to say that all Romans come out badly in the work: Metullus, Marius, and Sulla each have their moments in the spotlight, acting with virtue and cunning. Jugurtha, however, acts with *uirtus* through most of

⁹⁹ Sall. *Iug.* 9.2.

¹⁰⁰ Sall. *Iug.* 24.10, 35.2.

¹⁰¹ Balmaceda (2017), 136-142.

¹⁰² Earl (1961), 64-65.

¹⁰³ Sall. *Hist.* fr. 12. Earl (1961), 47-49.

the work, exhorting his men to bravery in battle and cunningly organizing the military conflict against Rome. It is only towards the end of the war that Jugurtha begins to take on the traits of a tyrant, including paranoia and execution of close associates.¹⁰⁴ Sallust's use of Jugurtha as a reflection of the ideal Roman conveys the extent to which a talented and virtuous barbarian enemy could challenge the state when Roman morality has lapsed.

Sallust's depictions of Moors/Numidians generally are typical. Fickleness, lack of courage, and treachery are attributed to them throughout the work. These stereotypes are sometimes used as a narrative tool to explain behaviour and background. For instance, following a battle with the Romans, Jugurtha's Numidians flee the field, all except the royal cavalry, because, unlike the Romans, "this is not considered a disgrace for the military. Such is their custom."¹⁰⁵ This notion of the Numidians valuing their lives more than their honour is repeated as a way to explain why so few enemy soldiers were captured: "in nearly all their battles the Numidians save their feet sooner than their weapons."¹⁰⁶ The loyalty of the people of Sicca is another case. Sallust claims that the city would have certainly switched sides, from Rome to Jugurtha, because of the Numidians' inherent "fickleness" (*mobilitas*), had Marius not arrived on the scene.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, the town of Vaga which contained a Roman garrison was likely to switch sides; the alleged reason was the Numidians' "fickle character" (*ingenium mobilis*).¹⁰⁸ Marius' sack of the Capsa, something which Sallust believes was *contra ius belli*, was attributed to the fickleness and faithlessness of the inhabitants (*genus hominum mobile infidum*).¹⁰⁹ Sometimes these stereotypes add context to a geographical digression. Two passages, one describing the hardness of Africa's population and the other illustrating the lawlessness of the nomadic Gaetuli, form a part of Sallust's digressions on Africa, and thus, are not used to explain behaviour.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ See Earl (1961), 60-81; Rosenblitt (2022), 136-145. Balmaceda (2017), 136-137. See also Paul (1984) 186's analysis of Sall. *Iug.* 72.2 for Jugurtha's lapse into tyranny.

¹⁰⁵ Sall. *Iug.* 54.4: Id ea gratia eueniebat quod praeter regios equites nemo omnium Numida ex fuga regem sequitur; quo quoique animus fert, eo discedunt neque id flagitium militiae ducitur: ita se mores habent. Trans. Batstone.

¹⁰⁶ Sall. *Iug.* 74.3: Romani signorum et armorum [et] aliquanto numero, hostium paucorum potiti; nam ferme Numidas in omnibus proeliis magis pedes quam arma tutata sunt.

¹⁰⁷ Sall. *Iug.* 56.6: Ac ni Marius signa inferre atque euadere oppido properauisset, profecto cuncti aut magna pars Siccensium fidem mutauissent: tanta mobilitate sese Numidae gerunt.

¹⁰⁸ Sall. *Iug.* 66.2: Nam uolgens, uti plerumque solet et maxime Numidarum, ingenio mobili, seditiosum atque discordiosum erat, cupidum nouarum rerum, quieti et otio aduersum.

¹⁰⁹ Sall. *Iug.* 91.7: Id facinus contra ius belli non auaritia neque scelere consulis admissum, sed quia locus Iugurthae opportunus, nobis aditu difficilis, genus hominum mobile infidum, ante neque beneficio neque metu coercitum.

¹¹⁰ Sall. *Iug.* 18.1-2, 5-6.

1.7: Tacitus' Portrayal of Tacfarinas

Tacitus devotes a few sections of his work to the 1st century CE revolt of Tacfarinas, a Numidian chieftain of the Musulamii and former Roman auxiliary who led a rebellion during the reign of the emperor Tiberius. The account is contained in Books 2-4 of the *Annals*.¹¹¹ Overall, Tacitus' depiction of Tacfarinas himself and the participants of the revolt is straightforward, lacking the negative stereotypes that are contained in the works of Sallust and Livy. Indeed, scholars have compared the account of Tacfarinas' revolt to Ammianus' account of the revolt of Firmus, and it seems no coincidence that both authors lack stereotypes in their portrayals of Moors and Moorish chieftains.¹¹²

One can detect a certain admiration for Tacfarinas in Tacitus' writing. The sophistication with which Tacfarinas organized his forces and the skill with which he fought the Romans are praised in the *Annals*. Tacfarinas' tactics and organization are presented plainly: Tacfarinus organized his men in the manner of an army (*more militiae*), eventually selecting "chosen men" (*lecti uiri*) and equipping them with Roman arms and armour (*armati in modum Romanum*).¹¹³ These chosen troops were to be instructed in Roman methods of warfare, learning both Roman discipline and formal battle commands (*suescere disciplina et imperiis*).¹¹⁴ Having organized this body of Moors armed and disciplined in the Roman fashion, he mustered a light force (*leui*) under the Moorish leader Mazippa to terrorize the countryside (*circumferre et caedes et terrorem*).¹¹⁵ The depiction of Tacfarinas as a shrewd military commander employing the tactics of his enemies against them is a striking contrast to the depictions of Moorish leaders in Lucan and Silius Italicus for instance, where their reliance on guile, treachery, and hit-and-run tactics is utterly condemned.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52; 3.20-21, 32, 73-74; 4.13, 23-26. See Vanacker (2015), 336-337 for other primary material on the rebellion. A brief summary of the rebellion is also provided by Cherry (2020), 1047-1048 and Raven (1993), 59-61.

¹¹² Ammianus seems to have based his account of Firmus on the Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum* and Tacitus' account of Tacfarinas. For Tacitus' imitation of Sallust, see Syme (1958), 353.

¹¹³ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.1-2.

¹¹⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.2.

¹¹⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.2. These *leui* were probably the light-armed skirmisher cavalry for which Moorish armies were renowned. The king of the Garamantes is also said to have sent light-troops (*copiae leues*) to augment Tacfarinas' forces (Tac. *Ann.* 4.23.2). Mazippa is called *dux Maurorum*, that is, a leader of Moors drawn from the western kingdom of Mauretania - modern-day Morocco.

¹¹⁶ Luc. 4.723-729; Sil. Ital. 1.211-219.

This method of mixed warfare, of employing an infantry core equipped in the Roman manner alongside light skirmisher cavalry ultimately failed when Tacfarinas' force was defeated by the proconsul, Furius Camillus.¹¹⁷ From then on, Tacfarinas relied, as had many other Moorish leaders, on guerrilla tactics. Tacitus might have taken this opportunity of a shift in strategy from open area battles to traditional hit-and-run tactics to highlight stereotypes on the deceit or fickleness of Tacfarinas and his Moorish forces. However, the depictions of the guerrilla campaigns of Tacfarinas do not contain overtly critical language and lack the vitriolic tone characteristic of other depictions. The ambushes (*insidiae*) employed by Tacfarinas against the Romans are not described in a wholly negative manner, but rather in straightforward, non-judgmental style. In fact, Tacitus does not shirk from writing that it is the Romans who are compelled to shift their own strategy and employ the guerrilla methods of Tacfarinas against him:

Mox aduersum artes Tacfarinatis haud dissimili modo belligeratum. Nam quia ille robore exercitus impar, furandi melior, plures per globos incursaret eluderetque et insidias simul temptaret...

Soon, tactics were employed against Tacfarinas that were not dissimilar to his own. Since Tacfarinas' army was unequal in strength and more suitable for raiding, he attacked and evaded capture with several groups, and at the same time attempted ambushes.¹¹⁸

Here, there is no apparent negative connotation. It is not stated that Moors as a people rely on such tactics as a rule in warfare, nor is there any additional emphasis that treachery and guile as inherent traits of Moorish rulers and people.¹¹⁹ The tactics are presented plainly and without judgement.

A brief analysis of Tacitus' description of Tacfarinas is necessary to comprehend the author's literary sobriety. He introduces the latter as follows:

¹¹⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.3-5.

¹¹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 3.73.3-74.1.

¹¹⁹ Although it should be noted that Tacitus is somewhat guilty of painting the Garamantes in broad strokes in the *Histories*: nam populus Oeensis multitudine inferior Garamantas exciuerat, gentem indomitam et inter accolas latrocinii fecundam. "For the people of Oea, smaller in number, roused the Garamantes to war, an ungovernable people, skillful at banditry among their neighbours." Tac. *Hist.* 4.50.

is natione Numida, in castris Romanis auxiliaria stipendia meritis, mox desertor, uagos primum et latrociniis suetos ad praedam et raptus congregare, dein more militiae per uexilla et turmas componere, postremo non inconditae turbae, sed Musulamiorum dux haberi.

This man from the Numidian nation - having done military service as an auxiliary in the Roman camp, but later a deserter - at first formed a troop of rovers, accustomed to banditry, for plunder and seizure; then he arranged them by detachments and squadrons in military fashion; finally he was recognized as being leader not of an unorganized crowd but of the Musulamii.¹²⁰

This description is also very straightforward. Tacfarinas is depicted in quite plain language as a former auxiliary in the Roman army, who, having deserted, formed a troop of bandits and was later elevated to become leader (*dux*) of the Musulamii.¹²¹ Associations with treachery are wholly absent from this context, and the information is presented neutrally and without reliance on stereotypes.

The Moors themselves are depicted in language indicative of admiration as well as criticism. The Musulamii are said to be a *gens ualida* with a general lack of sophisticated culture: *solitudinibus Africae propinqua, nullo etiam tum urbium cultu* / “bordering the fringes of Africa and lacking an urbane culture.”¹²² The Cinithii who join Tacfarinas later are a *natio haud spernanda*, which is probably indicative of a tribe’s strength in numbers and capabilities in warfare.¹²³ Tacitus goes on to describe the Moors in general as a *hostis uagus*, the adjective *uagus* having two meanings: “roaming” or “uncertain.” Both translations are acceptable in the case of the Moors generally. By the former translation, Tacitus may have been suggesting that these Moors were nomads, “roaming” without a fixed abode. The trait of “fickleness” or “uncertainty,” however, is equally plausible given the precedence set by earlier authors of attributing disloyalty and mutability to Moors. Overall, Tacitus’ depictions are fairly judicious, indicative of a lack of serious criticisms against Moors or of a need to emphasize Roman moral superiority to an audience.

¹²⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.1, trans. Woodman.

¹²¹ See Desanges (1962), 117-121 for a list of primary sources which mention the Musulamii.

¹²² Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.2.

¹²³ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.3.

Like many of the authors examined so far, Tacitus relies on secondary material for account of the revolt. He mentions several individual authors in the *Annals*, and scholars have also identified the *acta senatus*, that is the official minutes the senate, as another source. That Tacitus consulted the *acta senatus* may explain both the brevity and straightforward prose of the revolt's depiction.¹²⁴ Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that Tacitus met Moors or visited North Africa personally, and it is likely that most of his knowledge of both Moors and the revolt of Tacfarinas was drawn from secondary material.¹²⁵

1.8: Conclusion

From Herodotus (fifth century BCE) to Tacitus (first century CE), depictions of Moors can be said to have the following themes: polygamy and promiscuity were perceived as a part of Moorish customs. These descriptions, however, could range from neutral to negative and judgmental. Strabo, Pliny, and Herodotus were quite neutral in the language employed to describe these customs, while Sallust employs language indicative of criticism. Moreover, the manner in which the Moors treated their wives could be associated with the second facet of these depictions, treachery, as Moors could be said to be as faithless to their wives as they were in alliances. Sallust, again, is particularly keen on this association, as is Livy. Polybius was somewhat more prudent, though the stereotype of treachery does appear in one passage from the perspective of a Carthaginian general. Lucan and Silius Italicus depict Juba and Syphax respectively as villains in their works, no surprise given the genre of epic poetry and its need to create a compelling story.

The context of the shifting alliances must be emphasized in these depictions, the greatest example of which being that of Syphax in the Second Punic War, though the cases of Jugurtha and Tacfarinas should not be discounted. Sallust and Tacitus are quite neutral in their depictions of their Moorish antagonists (Jugurtha and Tacfarinas). Therefore, it can be concluded that genre and narrative construction sometimes have more influence on depictions of individual Moors than inherent prejudice or a pro-imperialist agenda. This is not completely definitive, however, as Sallust and Tacitus, both writers of prose histories, vary slightly in their portrayals of Moors, and

¹²⁴ Potter (2012), 128-129.

¹²⁵ For a good discussion of Tacitus' sources, see Potter (2012), 125-140.

the same can be said of Livy and Polybius. However, the similarity in depictions is quite telling, especially in the associations of treachery and promiscuity as well as the similarity in vocabulary, and this continues with only subtle changes into the period of Late Antiquity.

Chapter 2: Portrayal of Moors during Late Antiquity

2.1: Introduction

This chapter concerns the portrayal of Moors from 300-500 CE. The panegyrist Claudian and the prose historian Ammianus Marcellinus are our greatest sources for depictions of Moors until the sixth century, which the following chapter will examine. As with the first chapter, the sections are divided according to theme and author rather than general chronology, with specific Moorish figures being examined after an examination of the people as a whole. The purpose of this chapter will be to trace the themes of the portrayal examined in the first chapter and, in particular, to identify any possible intertextual relationships. The themes of treachery and polygamy show up once again, though sometimes nuanced, given the change in the relationship between Moors and Romans in late antique North Africa. Each section will support the overall argument that a variety of factors influenced ancient literary depictions of Moors, including political context, narrative, and genre. Secondly, each author's depictions will be evaluated for accuracy for comparison with earlier and later authors.

2.2: Moors in Ammianus

Ammianus Marcellinus describes the Moors in more detail than Claudian, which is no surprise given the difference in genre. The information contained in prose historians is generally more impartial than in epic poetry or works encomium/invective. Where Ammianus does mention Moorish peoples, mostly in the fifth chapter of his twenty-ninth book, he often provides specific tribal names. The Iubaleni and Isafenses, in addition to the Iesalenses, Austoriani, Musones, Mazices, Masinissenses, Tyndenses, Baiurae, Cantauriani, Avastomates, Cafaves, and Bavares are all mentioned in Book 28 or 29.¹²⁶ Ammianus also notes their roles as *symmachoi* in the Roman army:¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Iubaleni at 29.5.33; Isafenses at 29.5.40-41, 43, 46, 51, and 53; Iesalenses at 29.5.44, 51; Austoriani at 28.6.2, 13; Musones at 29.5.27; Mazices at 29.5.17, 21, 25, and 26; the Masinissenses and the Tyndenses at 29.5.11; the Baiurae, Cantauriani, Avastomates, Cafaves, and Bavares are only mentioned in 29.5.33. Both the Tyndenses and the Masinissenses appear at 29.5.11. It is interesting to note that Ammianus is the only source for most of these tribes. See Desanges (1962).

¹²⁷ Note that the term *symmachoi* would be anachronistic to use in Ammianus' period, during which the term *foederati* seems to have been used. See Elton (1996), 91-92.

Qui...per litteras Cretione comite quid ageretur edocto, reliquisque rectoribus, lecto undique milite fortiore, translatisque ab utraque Mauritania discursatoribus expeditis, Aquitaniae et Italiae obiecta litora tuebatur artissime.

...[Gaudentius] informed Count Cretio and the other commanders by letter what was to be done, assembled the bravest soldiers from every hand, brought over light-armed skirmishers from both the Mauritanian provinces, and closely guarded the shores lying opposite Aquitania and Italy.¹²⁸

The general description of Moorish groups given by Ammianus deserves some analysis. His depiction of Moorish hit-and-run warfare is what one might expect from any other ancient author of prose or poetry. In the vein of Herodotus and Sallust's ethnography, Ammianus characterizes the Austoriani as follows:

Austoriani his contermini partibus barbari, in discursus semper expediti ueloces, uiuereque assueti rapinis et caedibus, paulisper pacati, ad genuinos turbines reuoluti sunt...

The Austoriani, who are neighbours to those regions, are barbarians, always ready for sudden raids and accustomed to live by murder and robbery. These were subdued for a time, but then returned to their natural turbulence...¹²⁹

These "most savage raiders" (*saeuissimi grassatores*), the Austoriani, proceed to plunder the poor villages surrounding the city of Leptis Magna "like birds of prey" (*rapaces alites*).¹³⁰ Ammianus says of the Mazices that they are a "warlike and capable people" (*bellicosum genus et durum*), an enemy "pugnacious and effective in the hurling of missiles" (*...hostem pugnacem et impetrabilem iactu telorum*).¹³¹ Not only is the enemy capable at skirmishing but also at ambush. Theodosius the Elder, having arrived in North Africa and having discovered that his soldiers were unaccustomed to the heat of the southern province, puzzled over how to defeat this new Moorish

¹²⁸ Amm. Marc. 21.7.4, trans. Rolfe.

¹²⁹ Amm. Marc. 28.6.2, trans. Rolfe. For the Austoriani, see Desanges (1962), 82.

¹³⁰ Amm. Marc. 28.6.15; 28.6.13, trans. Rolfe.

¹³¹ Amm. Marc. 29.5.26; 29.5.32.

enemy, who is described as speedy and swift, literally a “runabout” (*discursator*).¹³² Like Silius’ claim that Moors will never “trust in the bare sword without deceit,” the Moors of Firmus prefer to trust (*confidere*) in a hidden ambush (*insidae clandestinae*) rather than in the “steadfastness of battles” (*stabilitas proeliorum*).¹³³ The nature of the terrain favoured ambushes, something that Theodosius was all too aware of when confronted with the “heights of the hills, very suitable for ambush”/*sublimia collium ad insidiandum aptissima* into which the Iubalena hid after a brief conflict.¹³⁴ Additionally, the Moors themselves, as one might expect, are characterized as wild and of uncertain loyalties. The Iesalenses are a *gens fera*, no doubt Ammianus’ way of indicating that these people were frontier nomads or semi-nomads.¹³⁵ In the narrative of raids and counter-raids that colour the pages of Ammianus’ account of the hunt for Firmus, these same people, the Iesalenses, are subdued as a precaution by Theodosius on account of their dubious loyalty (*ambigua fides*).¹³⁶ In his evaluation of Valentinian’s reign as emperor, Ammianus summarizes the revolt of Firmus, employing the stereotype of dubious loyalty to explain the ease with which Firmus attached them to his cause:

Africam deinde malo repentino percussam, discriminibus magnis exemit, cum uoracis militarium fastus ferre nequiens Firmus, ad omnes dissensionum motus perflabiles gentes Mauricas concitasset.

Next, he saved Africa from great dangers, when that country was in the throes of an unexpected disaster; for Firmus was unable to endure the greed and arrogance of the military officials and had aroused the Moorish tribes, whose ardour can always easily be fanned to any plan of dissension.¹³⁷

¹³² However, a more accurate rendition would be “skirmisher.” See Boeft (2013), 187 who contextualizes the phrase by connecting it with a passage of Caesar in which the clear meaning of *discurrere* would be “to skirmish.”

¹³³ Amm. Marc. 29.5.7. Sil. Ital. 1.219. Boeft (2013), 164: the theme of steadfast Roman troops who dominate hand-to-hand conflicts vs the barbarians who rely on stealth and flight is a common one, as these commentators have noted. Ammianus also calls the Isaurians a *hostis discursator*, which as noted above can be translated in a military context as a “skirmisher”.

¹³⁴ Amm. Marc. 29.5.44.

¹³⁵ Amm. Marc. 29.5.44. See also, Kulikowski (2019), 64-67 for an excellent summary of Firmus’ revolt and the nature of politics and society on the fourth century North African frontier; Brett and Fentress (1997), 70-76 provide some good background on Firmus’ revolt and the rise of local notables and their place in Roman North Africa as well.

¹³⁶ Amm. Marc. 29.5.50. See Boeft (2013), 212-213: the same expression is employed by Livy for a rebel, Altinius, and by Tacitus for the Britons (Liv. 24.45.12 and Tac. *Ann.* 14.38.2). It must be remembered that Moors were not the only people described in this way.

¹³⁷ Amm. Marc. 30.7.10, trans. Rolfe.

There is a sense from Rolfe's translation that by *gentes* Ammianus is speaking of those semi-nomadic Moorish tribes whom middle-men like Firmus sought to appease and incorporate into Rome's military. By implication, Ammianus would be voicing his disapproval of those Moorish tribes living further away from the cities than a disapproval of Moors who are closer to Romans in customs and culture. This seems accurate given his impartial depiction of Firmus, a Romanized Moor, who will be analyzed in Section 2.5.

2.3: Moors in Claudian

Claudian's depictions of Moors contain two elements of Moorish portrayal highlighted in the previous chapter: treachery and polygamy. This is hardly surprising given the agenda of the text to invalidate Gildo's rebellion both by identifying Gildo himself as a barbarian and by portraying the particular barbarians he was associated with as very bad ones indeed. Claudian's defamation of Moors in general undermines Gildo's Romanness and highlights his Moorishness/barbarity. To accomplish this, Claudian drew on two very common perceptions of the peoples inhabiting the fringes of North Africa. Treachery was a common accusation levelled against many different non-Romans, including Moors.¹³⁸ These two traits allowed Claudian to explain Gildo's actions and behaviour in the invective. Claudian makes the behaviour and actions of Gildo mirror that of the stereotypical Moor: he is treacherous because he has betrayed the emperor Honorius by severing North Africa from Rome and the Western Empire, and he is promiscuous - not necessarily polygamous - because he has slept with the most beautiful wives of the court after executing their husbands.

It is no surprise that certain words and phrases examined in the previous chapter are used once again to emphasize a particular negative trait. It is clear from the previous chapter that Moors were known for their deceit and duplicitous nature, strengthening the notion that Moors were very unreliable allies for the Romans. Claudian associates this stereotype with Moors quite clearly in his invective. The dead emperor Theodosius warns his son Arcadius of "Massylian deceits"

¹³⁸ See the description of the Huns in Amm. Marc. 31.2.11: In truces they are faithless and unreliable, strongly inclined to sway to the motion of every breeze of new hope that presents itself and sacrificing every feeling to the mad impulse of the moment. Like unreasoning beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong; they are deceitful and ambiguous in speech, never bound by any reverence for religion or superstition.

(*Massylae fraudes*) and of their “two-tongued treachery” (*bilingues insidias*).¹³⁹ The “mad progeny of Juba” (*progenies vesana Iubae*) matches the vitriol of Livy’s characterization of the Numidians as a *gens fallax*, while the reference to Juba is comparable to Lucan’s attributive moniker *infidus Iuba*.¹⁴⁰ Claudian associates the faithlessness and wildness of Juba with Gildo.

A curious verse concerning a *discolor infans* deserves some treatment. Africa, the mouthpiece of Claudian’s initial disparagements of Gildo, pities the women of Carthage who endure the advances of Gildo before being thrown to his Moorish followers for further disgraces: *Mauris clarissima quaeque fastidita datur*/ “Each noblewomen is given over to the Moors having been scorned [by Gildo]”.¹⁴¹ The “Sidonian mothers” (*Sidoniae matres*) are compelled to endure a barbarian union (*subire conubia barbara*).¹⁴² The result of this union between a Roman-Carthaginian mother and Moorish father is something that horrifies Africa: a *discolor infans* that terrifies its own cradle (*exterrere cunabula*).¹⁴³ Mathisen (2009) views this as one of the most famous instances of “social disapproval of Roman-barbarian marriages,” noting that Claudian dodges a slight against Roman women by saying that the noblewomen are not necessarily Roman but “Tyrian” (*Sidoniae*).¹⁴⁴ Moreover, that Stilicho, himself half-Roman and half-Vandal, was not berated for this exemplifies the phenomenon of selective prejudice among Roman authors; in other words, Stilicho’s support for, and loyalty towards, Honorius and the Western Empire exempted him from criticism regarding his heritage.¹⁴⁵ The context of this passage, however, shows that these women had Moors forced upon them as husbands. Moreover, since one of the text’s purposes is to discredit Gildo by emphasizing his Moorishness by highlighting the barbarousness of Moors generally, it is unsurprising that mixed unions with Moors and Romans are condemned as well. That this may well be an allusion to Gildo himself is not unlikely.

Treachery in battle is another facet of Claudian’s overall portrayal of Moors. The Moorish mastery of the javelin, specifically of the javelin hurled from horseback prior to beating a hasty retreat, was

¹³⁹ Claud. *Gild.* 1.284-5.

¹⁴⁰ Claud. *Gild.* 1.332; Liv. 25.41.4; Luc. 8.443.

¹⁴¹ Claud. *Gild.* 1.189-190. For the use of Africa, Roma, and other personifications in Claudian’s poetry, see Roberts (2001), 533-565.

¹⁴² Claud. *Gild.* 1.190-191.

¹⁴³ Claud. *Gild.* 1.193.

¹⁴⁴ Mathisen (2009), 147.

¹⁴⁵ Moralee (2008), 67-69.

well-known in antiquity. Roman authors often jumped at the opportunity to berate the Moors for fighting in this unmanly, un-Roman fashion. As the emperor Honorius bolsters the confidence of the Roman army, he commences his speech with a basic description of this infamous tactic: *in solis longe fiducia telis*/ “they put their faith in missiles alone hurled at a distance.”¹⁴⁶ He notes the general lack of discipline among their forces: *non ulla fides, non agminis ordo*/ “there is no loyalty among them, nor any order of battle.”¹⁴⁷ Then, Honorius assures his troops that once the enemy have fired their javelins, they will no longer be a danger. He encourages them that the Moors are lightly-armed troops (*arma oneri*) and that hasty retreat in warfare is their only protection (*fuga praesidio*).¹⁴⁸ Claudian characterizes Moorish battle tactics as cowardly in the same manner as his predecessors. For instance, there is some similarity in Claudian’s description to that of Silius when he describes Numidians as unable to trust “in the bare sword without deceit.”¹⁴⁹ The notion that Moors would not fight in a hand-to-hand struggle, the traditional Roman way, except with the advantage of some treachery (*dolus*) is strikingly similar to Claudian’s contention that their only refuge lies in retreat. Though treachery and ambush are not overtly mentioned by Claudian in his description of Moorish battle tactics, it is implied that they would prefer to run from the enemy than fight on equal terms with the Romans.

It is worth reexamining a passage in which Claudian describes Gildo’s army, as it is the best example of his general lack of knowledge on Moors and of his reliance on common stereotypical portrayals. The first telling instance of Claudian’s ignorance lies in his physical description of them. Moors are depicted in the typical way, as one might imagine them in the texts of Polybius and Livy, namely as light cavalry carrying no weapons other than the javelin:

non contra clipeis tectos gladiisque micantes
 ibitis: in solis longe fiducia telis.
 exarmatus erit, cum missile torserit, hostis.
 dextra mouet iaculum, praetentat pallia laeua;
 cetera nudus eques. sonipes ignarus habenae;
 uirga regit.

¹⁴⁶ Claud. *Gild.* 1.436. I have included a few words that Claudian implies in this translation.

¹⁴⁷ Claud. *Gild.* 1. 440. The approximate meaning of *fides* is difficult to translate in this context. I chose “loyalty” given the precedent of Roman authors to emphasize the Moors’ lack of *fides* in the context of alliances. This goes against the translation given by Platnauer who translates *fides* as “obedience” in the Loeb edition.

¹⁴⁸ Claud. *Gild.* 1.441.

¹⁴⁹ Sil. Ital. 1.219.

You shall not oppose men armed with shields or shining blades. These savages put their trust in javelins hurled from afar. Once he has discharged his missile the enemy will be disarmed. With this right hand he hurls his spear, with his left he holds his cloak before him; no other armour has the horseman. His steed knows not the rein; a whip controls it.¹⁵⁰

This depiction is one of poetic license rather than historical authenticity, and it must be assumed that the Moorish warriors in the army of Gildo were variegated in appearance, contrary to what Claudian would have us think. The simplicity of Claudian's information is also revealed in the first *encomium* of Stilicho. Here, Claudian adds another element characteristic of stereotypical portrayals, as Gildo gathers Moors from every corner of North Africa to his cause. The famous catalogue of Moorish tribes reappears and maintains the tradition of listing various nations in sequence, a tradition established by Virgil and later imitated by Silius and Lucan. The presence of Nasamonians, Garamantians, and Autololians is formulaic, once again a product of poetic embellishment rather than authentic, eye-witness knowledge.¹⁵¹

sternitur ignauus Nasamon, nec spicula supplex
iam torquet Garamas; repetunt deserta fugaces
Autololes; pauidus proiecit missile Mazax.
cornipedem Maurus nequiquam hortatur anhelum;

The cowardly Nasamonian troops are scattered, the Garamantian hurls not his spears but begs from mercy, the swift-footed Autololes fly to the desert, the terror-stricken Mazacian flings away his arms, in vain the Moor urges on his flagging steed.¹⁵²

It is difficult to characterize this description as anything other than a literary construction of a stereotypical Moorish warrior. Indeed, Cameron (1970) has observed that as *comes Africae* and *magister militum per Africam*, Gildo would have been able to call upon a significant force of Roman infantry and cavalry stationed in the province.¹⁵³ This is not to say that he would not have recruited auxiliaries from the indigenous Moors, as was probably the case; but, the image constructed by Claudian is that of a wholly barbarian army commanded by a debauched barbarian

¹⁵⁰ Claud. *Gild.* 1.435-440, trans. Platnauer.

¹⁵¹ See Merrills (2019), 155-156 citing Modéran (2003), 51.

¹⁵² Claud. *Stil.* 1.354-357.

¹⁵³ Cameron (1970), 117.

leader.¹⁵⁴ Claudian's propagandistic portrayal of Moors cleverly presents the war against Gildo as a war against the *barbari* rather than a civil dispute, the cause of which was a *modus vivendi* between Gildo and Eutropius resulting in the ceding of Africa to the Eastern Empire.¹⁵⁵ The stereotypical Moorish warrior-portrayal served to transform a war of Romans against Romans to one of Romans against barbarians.¹⁵⁶

The lack of affection that Moors hold for their family because of polygamous marriage is referenced in a manner strikingly similar to Sallust. The emperor Honorius' speech to the troops before their voyage to challenge Gildo serves as the setting once again. The level of commitment that Moors show to their wives and families is meant to encourage the Romans, for the Moors have countless wives (*conubia mille*) and lack family ties (*generis nexus*), fathering an inordinate number of children. The result is that these children lack the "pledges of care" (*pignora curae*) expected of their fathers because the very number of children causes their fatherly duty (*pietas*) to weaken (*languere*).¹⁵⁷ This is nearly identical to Sallust's description of Moorish marriage customs. Sallust claims that wealth (*opes*) was the only limitation on the number of wives that a Moor could have. Affection and attention could not be parceled out evenly however, as each wife was treated as equally worthless (*uilis*) due to their large number.¹⁵⁸ Claudian applies this lack of attention to the parent-child relationship, where the children of the Moorish father are so many that his fatherly duty (*pietas*) fails. It is interesting to note the existence of an intertextual relationship between Sallust's first century BCE portrayal and Claudian's fifth century CE depiction.¹⁵⁹

2.4: Gildo in Claudian

Claudian's *De Bello Gildonico* portrays the fifth century CE Moorish-Roman rebel Gildo as a debauched, licentious, sexually promiscuous, and greedy villain; it is, without a doubt, the most negative depiction of a Moorish figure in antiquity. The general vocabulary in Claudian's invective

¹⁵⁴ See the image of Gildo presented at 1.444-450 of the *dux umbratus rosas*.

¹⁵⁵ Cameron (1970), 93-107.

¹⁵⁶ See Cameron (1970), 117-119 who cites Claud. *Stil.* 1.84-95, where the battle with Gildo is compared to the wars with Jugurtha and Syphax.

¹⁵⁷ Claud. *Gild.* 1.441-443.

¹⁵⁸ Sall. *Iug.* 80.

¹⁵⁹ See Heather (2005), 16-17 for the importance of Sallust to the elite curriculum.

demonstrates this clearly. A multitude of words and phrases, some of which have been employed in the depictions examined in the first chapter, serve Claudian's purpose of slandering and verbally defacing this dangerous rebel. Changeable in nature and fickle in character, Gildo spends his nights harassing the wives of the local notables and executing dissenters.¹⁶⁰ Despite Gildo's occupation of the eminent position of *magister utriusque militum per Africam*, the image created is that of a whimsical, barbarous tyrant, completely enslaved by his passions. The portrayal leaves little room to picture Gildo as the steadfast supporter of Rome that he was, for example, during the revolt of his brother Firmus.¹⁶¹ With Zammac, Dius, and Mascezel siding with Firmus, Gildo was the only son of Flavius Nubel to remain loyal to Valentinian, providing support on several occasions to the elder Theodosius. Claudian's Gildo, however, is no better than the worst barbarian tyrant, the very antithesis of Roman political order.¹⁶²

Claudian's vocabulary depicts Gildo as a tyrant. In the invective, he is a literal monster (*monstrum*) girded with vices (*uitiis cinctus*).¹⁶³ The vocabulary employed by Claudian matches that of the authors examined in the previous chapter, conveying the same traits as those employed for Syphax, Juba, and other Moors generally. For instance, Gildo's loyalty is as dubious as his overall character. Gildo's character (*animus*) is two-faced (*anceps*) in Claudian just as Juba's cunning (*sollertia*) is two-faced (*anceps*) in Lucan.¹⁶⁴ He is fickle (*levis*) by nature (*ingenio*) in the same way that Syphax's barbarian nature (*ingenium*) is unreliable (*mutabilis*) and untrustworthy (*uanus*).¹⁶⁵ The emphasis on trust (*fides*) itself is also apparent. Gildo's trust wavers and flows (*fluitare*) as a river might flow from one side to the other.¹⁶⁶ The value that Roman authors placed on *fides* was very high, as exemplified in this water metaphor of Claudian. The violation of *fides* betrayed the Roman sense of the honourable ally. Juba is described by Lucan as *infidus Iuba* and the noun *perfidia* is also associated with the Moors by Silius Italicus.¹⁶⁷ It is quite clear that Claudian sought to emphasize the long-standing traits of faithlessness and treachery in his

¹⁶⁰ Ware (2012) 120 interprets Gildo's impulses towards fulfilling all his desires as a manifestation of *furor* which serves as the opposite of *concordia*. In other words, Gildo has disrupted the *concordia* of the empire manifested in the alliance of the two brothers, Arcadius and Honorius.

¹⁶¹ Amm. Marc. 29.5.6.

¹⁶² For Claudian's distortion of Gildo's former support, see Cameron (1970), 107-109.

¹⁶³ Claud. *Gild.* 1.257; 1.162-163.

¹⁶⁴ Claud. *Gild.* 1.281; Luc. 8.283.

¹⁶⁵ Claud. *Gild.* 1.262; Liv. 29.23.7.

¹⁶⁶ Claud. *Gild.* 1.247.

¹⁶⁷ Luc. 8.443; Sil. Ital. 16.146-148.

invective against Gildo, employing very similar and in some cases identical vocabulary to his predecessors. The continuity of the pro-Roman emphasis on trust and faith regarding Moors will carry forward into the sixth century work of the epic poet Corippus, who is discussed in the third chapter.

Claudian also revived another long-standing stereotype associated with Moors, that of lustfulness and debauchery. Among the many colourful titles applied to Gildo, “violator of the unwed” (*uirginibus raptor*) and “foul corrupter of the marriage-bed” (*thalamis obscaenus adulter*) bring to mind an insatiable lust.¹⁶⁸ By night he ravages the beds of married women after he has fleeced the finances of their husbands by day.¹⁶⁹ Gildo’s pretexts (*crimen falsum*) for executing his rivals permit his bedding of their beautiful wives.¹⁷⁰ The driving force is *libido* meaning lust or passion; this is similar to the *cupiditas* driving Syphax to abandon the alliance with Rome for the beautiful Sophonisba.¹⁷¹ Just as the Numidians are given over to lust (*effusi in uenerem*), wine increases the lust (*uenus*) of Gildo as he arrives on the battlefield sick with diseases (*morbi*) from his sexual debaucheries (*stupri*).¹⁷² The bugle rouses Gildo staggering from drunkenness (*titubans Lyaeo*) and an incestuous slumber (*somni incesti*).¹⁷³ The persona is that of a drink-sodden, sex-obsessed tyrant, who will stop at nothing to fuel his desires to bed the wives of his court. In several instances the vocabulary mirrors that of Livy in his accounts of Syphax and the Numidians. In the vividness of its description and the sheer negativity of its portrayal, Claudian’s invective revives the stereotype of the “lustful Moor” which can be said to reach its apex in this text. Claudian is a master of propaganda, and it is difficult to imagine a harsher depiction of a single Moorish figure elsewhere.

There is one small exception to Claudian’s negative depiction of Moors: the portrayal of Masezel. Another son of Flavius Nubel, he followed his brother Firmus into war against Valentinian. He appears to have been spared severe punishment after Firmus’ defeat and resurfaces later when his

¹⁶⁸ Claud. *Gild.* 1.166.

¹⁶⁹ Claud. *Gild.* 1.167-168.

¹⁷⁰ Claud. *Gild.* 1.169-170.

¹⁷¹ Liv. 29.23.5.

¹⁷² Claud. *Gild.* 1.180; 1.446. Liv. 29.23.5.

¹⁷³ Claud. *Gild.* 1.447. The origin of the charge of incest is difficult to ascertain in the context of Gildo, as there is no evidence for this claim elsewhere. The Lyaeus causing Gildo to stagger (*titubare*) is an epithet of Dionysus meaning the “loosener.”

other brother Gildo has his two sons murdered. Seeking shelter with Stilicho in Italy, he was chosen to head the expeditionary force to reclaim Africa for Honorius, successfully defeating his brother in the spring of 398. He was later murdered, either at the hands of a jealous Stilicho as Zosimus would have us believe, or as Orosius attests, in response to his violation of the sanctuary of a group of refugees in Africa.¹⁷⁴ Claudian has little to say about Mascezel as Stilicho and Honorius take the centre stage as the true victors, but what is said reminds us that context played a key role in Moorish depiction: Mascezel is described by Stilicho (Claudian) as unlike his brother in character (*non et moribus isdem*) who, having “fled” (*fugire*) the “detestable crimes” (*piacula dira*) of his brother, seeks refuge at the court of Honorius.¹⁷⁵ As a supporter of his patron Stilicho, Claudian had a vested interest in highlighting the role of his patron’s allies, among whom was Mascezel. This depiction is the only instance, in all of Claudian, in which a Moor is depicted in a positive light, the main reason being his allegiance to the benefactor of the author. A different picture of Mascezel would have surely emerged had Claudian penned this after his murder. The context of Mascezel’s support for Stilicho and Honorius against his brother Gildo, however, ensured that he would be portrayed relatively well in court poetry of Claudian.

There is no evidence that Claudian met Moors during his lifetime or that he travelled to North Africa.¹⁷⁶ In addition, the genre in which he was working did not place emphasis on autopsy or other forms of verification. Rather, the intention of his *encomiums*/invectives was either to praise or defame an individual or a group of individuals.¹⁷⁷ This is the prime reason for the scathing portrayal of Gildo, whose role as a supporter of the campaign of the elder Theodosius against Firmus is completely ignored. This is also the reason for the inclusion of negative generalizations regarding Moors, namely that they are faithless, lustful, and cowardly. Claudian’s objective was to defame the character and reputation of Gildo by depicting him as a villain, and to this end, he familiarizes the audience with Moorish traits and then attaches them to Gildo, depicting the latter as both a debauchee and a lowly barbarian tyrant. Given these objectives, it should be no surprise that Claudian’s depiction of Moors and Moorish individuals is the most scathing portrayal examined in this thesis.

¹⁷⁴Zos. 5.11. Oros. 7.36.13. Modéran (2010), “Mascezel,” *Encyclopédie berbère*.

¹⁷⁵ Claud. *Gild.* 1.389-391.

¹⁷⁶ Cameron (1970), 1-7, 19-29. Claudian was, however, probably well-travelled in the eastern empire.

¹⁷⁷ Cameron (1970), 36-37.

2.5: Firmus in Ammianus

Ammianus' portrayal of Firmus is straightforward. The image of the morally corrupt and debauched rebel/barbarian leader contained in the invectives of Claudian is wholly absent from the *Res Gestae*, which presents a sober account of the rebellion weighing in little on the character and morality of Firmus himself.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, Drijvers (2007) has pointed to the veiled criticism of the elder Theodosius and the implicit praise of Firmus which underlie the narrative.¹⁷⁹ This means that Ammianus' account is far more nuanced than the oversimplified dichotomy of Roman vs. barbarian. There are two main reasons for the sober depiction of Firmus found in Ammianus: (1) the genre of classicizing history, and (2) a new political and cultural context of Moorish-Roman relations. The genre of classicizing history in which Ammianus' work was composed encouraged a more sober depiction of individuals, even if they were enemies of Rome, than did other genres. Moreover, classicizing history's concern with the causes of events encouraged Ammianus to identify the true cause of the revolt, namely the corruption of the court official, Romanus, and his hostility towards Firmus.¹⁸⁰ The different context that Ammianus was describing must also be emphasized. Roman North Africa had changed in the three hundred years since the histories of Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus. Identities were more nuanced, with figures like Firmus and Gildo assuming roles of local middlemen, intermediaries between the settled inhabitants and the fringe elements. Many local dynasts were also Christian and had adopted Roman names, titles, and *mores*.¹⁸¹ Ammianus was, therefore, depicting Moors whose identities had adapted to centuries of interaction with Rome. Therefore, the genre of classicizing history and the new identities that had emerged in Roman North Africa were the two most important factors in the impartial depiction that Ammianus gives Firmus.

¹⁷⁸ The clear role of genre in this difference cannot be understated.

¹⁷⁹ Drijvers (2007), 151-154. Drijvers draws attention, in particular, to the following quotation of Ammianus (30.7.10), which one might interpret as implicit praise for Firmus: *cum uoracis militarium fastus ferre nequiens Firmus, ad omnes dissensionum motus perflabiles gentes Mauricas concitasset*/ "for Firmus was unable to endure the greed and arrogance of the military officials and had aroused the Moorish tribes, whose ardour can always easily be fanned to any plan of dissension" (trans. Rolfe).

¹⁸⁰ See Marincola (1997), 158-174 for the classical historian's objective to be impartial.

¹⁸¹ This will be expanded on further, but for a summary of the change in Moorish identity, see Brett and Fentress (1997), 70-79.

Ammianus chose descriptors for Firmus which do not emphasize his Moorish identity, and the language employed demonstrates the impartiality that classicizing history encouraged. *Perduellis* (national enemy) is employed alongside *rebellis* (rebel) and *latro funereus* (dangerous brigand).¹⁸² One also finds two similar descriptors in *turbator otii* (disturber of leisure) and *temerator quietis* (disturber of the peace).¹⁸³ The common feature of all of these descriptors is their lack of association with Moorish stereotypes of lust or treachery, which the author did not consider appropriate. This might be for two reasons: Ammianus may have been drawing on similar descriptors employed by Tacitus for Tacfarinas: *desertor* (deserter), *praedo* (robber), and *latro* (bandit).¹⁸⁴ Contrarily, Ammianus' source for the revolt may offer an explanation. Matthews (1989) attributes Ammianus' source to a military dossier presented to Valentinian by the elder Theodosius, which may explain the formal, straightforward nature of the language and of this section of the history as a whole.¹⁸⁵ Either way, the lack of specific stereotypes in the descriptors speaks to the sobriety of the genre in which Ammianus composed his history as well as perhaps to the relative impartiality of the historian himself regarding Firmus' revolt. Such descriptors that Claudian employed in the depiction of Gildo might have proven distasteful to Ammianus' audience or Ammianus himself.

Ammianus' depiction of Firmus is telling because Ammianus explains Firmus' side of the story. The origins of the revolt are set forth plainly, and it is clear that a corrupt *comes Africae* named Romanus was at the heart of the revolt. Firmus' father Flavius Nubel died leaving a large inheritance over which his sons fought for the lion's share. Zammac/Salmaces, a brother of Firmus and a "favourite" of Romanus, was killed by Firmus in this dispute. Through his connections at the court of Valentinian, Romanus ensured that Firmus would be dealt with harshly and that his appeals to Valentinian would be deferred or misrepresented.¹⁸⁶ Frustrated by the machinations of Romanus, Firmus perceived that his only option was rebellion. It is difficult to overlook

¹⁸² Amm. Marc. 29.5.36, 52, 55; 29.5.20; 29.5.46. See Chauvot (1998), 119-121.

¹⁸³ Amm. Marc. 29.5.45; 29.5.43.

¹⁸⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2.52.2; 3.73.2.

¹⁸⁵ Matthews (1989), 381-382.

¹⁸⁶ Amm. Marc. 29.5.2-3. Zos. 4.16.1-3 mentions the greed (*πλεονεξία*) of Romanus as a factor in Firmus' uprising and attributes the rebellion to dissatisfaction of the Libyans (*Λιβυες*). This contextualizes the revolt even further, as the rebellion appears to be the culmination of discontent at corruption in the province. See also, Drijvers (2007) 134-139; Brett and Fentress (1997), 72-75; Kulikowski (2019) 66-67; von Rummel (2010) 582-583; and Elton (2018), 110-112.

Ammianus' displeasure at the corruption of Romanus in addition to the overall impression that the entire debacle could have been avoided. One can sense his displeasure when Ammianus claims that Firmus "could not bear the greed and arrogance of the military officials".¹⁸⁷ However, the classical historian's concern to depict the causes of events impartially is, doubtless, the main reason for its inclusion.

The changed context of fourth century CE North Africa played a role in Ammianus' depiction of Firmus as well. Many Moorish local dynasts had converted to Christianity, taken up important positions in the late Roman military hierarchy, and acted as middlemen between the settled populations and the outlying tribes. Epigraphic evidence indicates that Flavius Nubel, the father of Firmus and Gildo, was once a commander of the *Equites Armigeri Iuniores*, while his father, Saturninus, was a *comes* and *vir perfectissimus*.¹⁸⁸ Nubel also erected a church dedicated to the True Cross, and the church itself was said to contain a fragment of it.¹⁸⁹ Zammac/Salmaces, the brother murdered by Firmus and friend of the corrupt *comes* Romanus, was the builder and owner of the *fundus Petrensis*, which Ammianus calls Petra and which he describes as being built "like a city"/ *in modum urbis*. An inscription on the property, described as the *Praedium Salmacis* / "Estate of Salmaces," articulates his role as an intermediary figure on the African frontier:

With prudence, he establishes a stronghold of eternal peace and with faith he guards everywhere the Roman State making strong the mountain by the river with fortifications, and this stronghold he calls by the name of Petra. At last the tribes of the region, eager to put down war, have joined as your allies Sammac, so that strength united with faith in all duties shall always be joined to Romulus' triumphs.¹⁹⁰

This quotation leaves little doubt that the house of Nubel exercised great authority in Mauretania Caesariensis. More importantly, it articulates the changed circumstances of fourth century North Africa. Moors had now become important political and military stakeholders in the late Roman world. They imitated the Roman aristocracy by patronizing the arts and Christianity, as well as taking up prominent positions in the civilian/military hierarchy.

¹⁸⁷ Amm. Marc. 30.7.10, trans. Rolfe.

¹⁸⁸ Blackhurst (2004), 64-65. Ammianus (29.5.1) calls Nubel, *regulus per nationes Mauricas potentissimus*.

¹⁸⁹ Blackhurst (2004), 65.

¹⁹⁰ ILS 9351, trans. Brett and Fentress, which can be found in Brett and Fentress (1997), 72.

This change in context is reflected in Ammianus' depiction of the revolt, where Firmus was supported by the Roman army and the urban population. Unlike Claudian, Ammianus does not shy away from depicting this plainly to his audience. Ammianus mentions that both the Constantian infantry (*peditum Constantianorum*) and the cavalry of the fourth cohort of archers (*equites quartae sagittariorum cohortis*) supported Firmus.¹⁹¹ In addition, notable citizens from the North African city of Caesarea, one Evasius whom Ammianus calls *potens municeps* and another named Florus, appear to have gone over to the rebel.¹⁹² Apart from the strong evidence that the family of Nubel was Christian, there is evidence in Ammianus that Firmus was himself a Christian: he recounts Firmus' delegation sent to the elder Theodosius upon the latter's arrival in Africa to reach an accord, a delegation made up of Christian priests (*Christiani ritus antistites*).¹⁹³ Finally, in the heat of a battle, Firmus successfully convinced elements of Theodosius' army to either defect or retreat, which is further evidence of the support he received from the Roman military.¹⁹⁴ Ammianus' decision to present the revolt impartially by including the details of Firmus' support among both civilians and soldiers contrasts strongly with Claudian's account of Gildo's revolt, in which there is little indication that Gildo received any backing from the local Roman soldiers or the local cities, something that Cameron has argued was likely. The two greatest factors contributing to Firmus' depiction are the genre of classicizing history, which emphasized impartiality, and the changed context of the Moors by the fourth century, who were influenced by Roman *mores* and as a result adopted a more nuanced role in the socio-political life of the African provinces.

It is not difficult to imagine Ammianus meeting individuals of Moorish background during his lifetime. The empire was far larger and more interconnected than the empire of Augustus, and so, one can posit such meetings perhaps during his military service, which brought him to Gaul and the East, or perhaps during his time in his native Antioch, or even while he was composing the *Res Gestae* in Rome.¹⁹⁵ Members of Nubel's family attaining such prestigious positions as *Comes Africae* or indeed the relationship that Gildo shared with the court in Constantinople remind us that some Moors in this period enjoyed connections in high places.¹⁹⁶ As for his source of

¹⁹¹ Amm. Marc. 29.5.20.

¹⁹² Amm. Marc. 29.5.43.

¹⁹³ Amm. Marc. 29.5.15.

¹⁹⁴ Amm. Marc. 29.5.49.

¹⁹⁵ Matthews (1989), 17-32; Treadgold (2010), 51-68.

¹⁹⁶ For Gildo's relationship to the court in Constantinople, see Blackhurst (2004), 65-70.

information on the revolt of Firmus, Matthews (1989) has convincingly shown that he derived his information from an official document, possibly accessed during his time in Rome. This would explain, in part, the straightforward and report-like manner in which this section of the history was composed, lacking the digressions on character and morals that one finds in his other books.¹⁹⁷ Nothing is known of his sources for possible information on Moors generally, which he may have included in his lost book on the geography of Africa.¹⁹⁸ It seems Ammianus may have been somewhat ambivalent towards Moors generally, as is evinced by his assertion that the *gentes Mauricae* are always inclined towards dissension. However, it should be emphasized that he depicted the revolt of Firmus with an impartiality that is admirable and unique among the historians examined thus far.

2.6: Conclusion

It has been shown that depictions of Moors in the fourth century had adapted, in certain respects, to reflect the changed context of fourth century North Africa. Ammianus offered a more nuanced picture of the Moor, Firmus, that encapsulated the support he received among the local military and civilian elements. However, this trend only applies to classicizing history, as genre continued to play a key role in portrayals of Moors. Claudian, whose genre of the invective (*ψόγος*) was intended to depict a subject the most negative light possible, portrayed Gildo as a barbarian tyrant, resurrecting stereotypes associated with Moors that were employed by Livy and Sallust centuries earlier. The portrayals of Moors in general of these two historians are similar to those of their two primary figures (i.e., Firmus and Gildo). Although Ammianus repeats the stereotype of dubious loyalty, he does not depict it as negatively as Claudian, whose portrayals are far harsher and rely on long established stereotypes that Moors father inordinate numbers of children and are cowards in battle. It can, therefore, be concluded that context and genre remained key components affecting the way Moors were portrayed in the fourth century.

¹⁹⁷ Matthews (1989), 381-382. Ammianus appears to have relied on other sources for parts of his work, particularly the lost books. See Kelly (2008), 222-224, 253-255.

¹⁹⁸ Ammianus mentions this work at 29.5.18.

Chapter 3: Portrayal of Moors during the Sixth Century

3.1: Introduction: Justinian's Invasion of Africa and Moorish Identity in the Sixth Century

Justinian's conquest of Vandal Africa brought the East Romans into close contact with the Moors, mainly those groups existing within of the provinces of Tripolitania, Numidia, and Byzacium.¹⁹⁹ It seems likely that Justinian's assessment of the invasion failed to account for these Moors when North Africa would be recaptured.²⁰⁰ Moreover, the officers and soldiers had little experience of North Africa or Moors generally, many living and operating for the majority of their lives and careers in the provinces of the Eastern Empire.²⁰¹ Relations appear to have been friendly initially, with Belisarius investing several magnates with their insignia of office in 533, the symbols of authority long bestowed upon Moorish chiefs by Roman emperors.²⁰² Relations soured in 534-535 with two revolts against the new Roman authority, and Roman fortunes deteriorated further when much of the army of occupation mutinied under their leader, Stotzas, prompting a swift return by Belisarius to reestablish order. The reasons for these initial revolts are fairly clear: Belisarius' investment of the Moorish chiefs implied, for the Moors, an understanding that the territory they occupied within Roman provincial jurisdictions was secure and that they would not be forced out. Justinian's law of April 13th, 534, changed this, and an aggressive policy of dispersing these "Moors of the interior" was pursued.²⁰³ Solomon and Germanus, both of whom combined the offices of *magister militum* and praetorian prefect for North Africa at different times, fought against the Moors of Iaudas and the mutineers of Stotzas. A more tolerant policy towards the Moors of the interior brought peace for a time, and a string of forts was constructed by Solomon

¹⁹⁹ See Modéran (2003), 315-416, on *les Maures de l'intérieur* whose leaders and power bases were as follows: Antalas and the Frexes in Byzacium, probably north-west of Capsa; Cusina, far south-west of Byzacium; Iaudas in the south-eastern Aurès mountain, Numidia, ruling peoples who were likely ruled previously by Masties, *dux* and later self-proclaimed *imperator*. For more on Masties and the development of his kingdom, see Merrills and Miles (2010), 127-128; see also, Conant (2012), 293-294, von Rummel (2010), 584, and Merrills (2015), 274-278; Williams (2015), 163-172.

²⁰⁰ Modéran (2003), 573-584. Justinian likely directed his attention towards the Vandals at the expense of the Moors, whose accumulation of treasure from the former Western Empire and whose persecution of Catholic Christians, were reported to him by several individuals at court, some of them exiled North Africans.

²⁰¹ Modéran (2003), 583-584.

²⁰² Prior to Belisarius' arrival, the Vandals had carried out this ceremonial function of bestowing the symbols of office on Moorish chieftains as *de facto* emperors. See Merrills and Miles (2010), 71-2, who analyzes Procop. *Wars* 3.25.3-6, seeing this as a mutually beneficial agreement of legitimating authority, whereby the Vandals maintained the appearance and function of western Roman emperors in all but name and Moorish rulers attained authority from an "imperial" source in Carthage. See the aforementioned passage from Procopius (3.25.3-6) for Belisarius' investiture.

²⁰³ Modéran (2003), 587-593; Conant (2012), 254.

to reestablish Roman control of the area.²⁰⁴ War resumed in 544, when both Solomon and Sergius prompted hostilities with a series of executions, causing one of the aggrieved parties, Antalas, chief of the Frexes, to ally with the nomadic Ilaguas, and invade Byzacium.²⁰⁵ This was likely a renewal of Roman aggression, both to regain territory in Tripolitania where Sergius was in command, and to bring to submission Antalas and his Frexes in the interior of Byzacium. This second conflict lasted until 548, when John Troglita defeated the coalition of Ilaguas, Frexes, and others at the Fields of Cato.²⁰⁶

Several Moorish chieftains of the sixth century are known by name, and there are three main figures of Modéran's *Maures de l'intérieur*: Iaudas, Antalas, and Cusina or Koutzinas in Greek.²⁰⁷ Each was both ally and enemy to the Romans at different times. Iaudas was fairly consistent in his hostility to the new Constantinopolitan regime in Carthage, and fought against the Romans from his base in the Aurès mountains up to at least 547, when Corippus says that he and his Moors were with John Troglita's army as allies.²⁰⁸ Little is known of him thereafter. Antalas was an ally of the Romans during the initial revolts of 534-535. In 544, Solomon executed his brother Guarzila, one of the primary causes for the great war of 544-548 during which, as was said, Antalas fought with his Frexes in concert with the nomadic Ilaguas in Byzacium. Nothing is known of him after his submission to John Troglita following the Fields of Cato.²⁰⁹ Cusina fought against the Romans in the wars of 534-535, thereafter submitting and fighting against Antalas' coalition from 544-548. The chronicle of John Malalas interestingly cites him as a central cause for another Moorish revolt in 563 led by his sons, when the governor of Africa, John Roganthinus, had Cusina assassinated.²¹⁰ Common to all of these figures is their status as *Maures de l'intérieur*, that is as Moors who lived and operated within Roman provincial jurisdiction, albeit on the edge of the provincial boundaries

²⁰⁴ Modéran (2003), 595-604.

²⁰⁵ Modéran (2003), 604-606; Conant (2012), 298; von Rummel (2010), 577.

²⁰⁶ Procop. *Wars* 4.28.45-50, 8.17.20-22; Cor. *Ioh.* books 7-8.

²⁰⁷ See the eighth chapter of Modéran (2003), which is cited often in this introductory section.

²⁰⁸ Cor. *Ioh.* 7.277-278: *auxiliumque dedit rebus famulatus Iaudas, cum nato comites bis senis milibus armans.* Modéran (2003), 350-352.

²⁰⁹ Modéran (2003), 324-334.

²¹⁰ Modéran (2003), 334-338, 346-350; Conant (2012), 279-280. Malal. 18.495-496, trans. Jeffreys et al.: *In that month parts of Africa were captured by the Moors. Koutzines, the exarch of this tribe, was used to receiving a quantity of gold from the Romans through each successive governor, since he was the ruler of the tribe of Moors. When John, nicknamed Rogathinos, came out and gave him nothing, breaking the former custom, and on the contrary, had him assassinated, Koutzines' sons revolted, to avenge their father's blood. Attacking districts in Africa, they captured some places, killing and plundering."*

and mainly in Numidia and Byzacium. They possessed a dual status as Roman citizens as well as Moorish chieftains, and functioned within Vandal/Roman power structures. When Belisarius arrived in 534, it is possible that Antalas, Cusina, and Iaudas were all part of the delegation of chieftains requesting the insignia of office from the emperor.²¹¹ Cusina is even described as *magister* by Corippus, a further indication of his status as a Moor operating within Roman political structures as Firmus and Gildo had.²¹²

It is instructive to examine the identity of the Moors in this period, particularly the Moors of the interior represented by the figures above. Not only did these chiefs work towards achieving high status as Roman allies with specifically Roman titles, as was said above, but they also probably possessed Roman citizenship.²¹³ The question of the religion of these Moors is an interesting one. Modéran (2003) has argued quite convincingly that Antalas, Cusina, and Iaudas were, on some level, Christians, and that the same can be said for many of their followers.²¹⁴ Corippus' hesitance to lump these figures in with the seemingly pagan nomads in his descriptions is one indication of their status as potential Christians, to say nothing of their desire to work within Roman political systems.²¹⁵ This also probably made them more agreeable to the Romans as allies. It will also be worth examining the independent rulers of the Aurès Mountains whose possessions, Modéran (2003) argues, Iaudas came to inherit and eventually consolidate into one polity by the 530s.²¹⁶ In addition, those ruling further west, like the Masuna, will also serve to instruct the reader on the continued evolution of Moorish identity from what it had been in the days of Firmus and Gildo. The collapse of the Roman state, particularly in Mauretania Caesariensis, permitted many of these magnates to consolidate their power bases into quasi-Roman successor kingdoms. The titles which they adopt on inscriptions as well as the construction projects they patronized point to the continued influence of Roman customs and political institutions in the areas following the collapse of direct western imperial authority.

²¹¹ Modéran (2003), 328; Conant (2012), 279-280.

²¹² See Modéran (2003), 435 for his "titulature des chefs et organisation des tribus." Cusina is mentioned as *magister* a total of three times in the *Iohannis*, while Iaudas is called *dux* in the same text.

²¹³ Modéran (2003), 349.

²¹⁴ Conant (2012) 267-268 agrees with Modéran on this point.

²¹⁵ Modéran (2003), 332-334 for Antalas, 344-346 for Cusina, 413-415 for Iaudas. None of these rulers is ever described explicitly as Christian. Cusina's Roman mother may have passed her faith on to him: see Cor. *Ioh.* 4.509-512 and 5.451-452 for Cusina's Roman heritage.

²¹⁶ Modéran (2003), 413-415.

Masuna was one such beneficiary of the power vacuum created by this collapse of Roman authority in the Maghreb. The analysis of Rushworth (2004) of the Djedars, tumulus-shaped stone structures that served as mausoleums for Moorish magnates, outlines the parameters of the kingdoms ruled by powerful tribal magnates like Masuna in the fifth and sixth centuries.²¹⁷ In order to unveil more concerning the identity of these Moorish kings of the interior, however, the epigraphic evidence must be examined. An inscription on a fort constructed by the king in Altava, the king's capital in the province of Mauretania Caesariensis, is particularly telling for how he thought of himself and the people over which he ruled: he acclaims himself as *rex gent(ium) Maur(orum) et Romanor(um)*.²¹⁸ The self-styled “king of the Moorish and Roman peoples” claimed legitimacy from both Moors and Romans living within his kingdom, and Conant (2012) has noted the use of the title of *rex Romanorum* by panegyrists of the Roman emperors.²¹⁹ The use of Latin rather than indigenous Berber to communicate this message of imperial authority to the populace also illustrates the power that Roman legitimation gave to the indigenous rulers. Masuna clearly saw himself as assuming the authority of the Roman emperors in the power vacuum of fifth and sixth century North Africa; he was not the only Moorish king to adopt Roman imperial titles. Another local magnate named Masties claimed the title of *dux* for 67 years and later *imperator* for 10 years for himself. Stylistic analyses suggest a later date for the inscription, likely to the late fifth or early sixth centuries though still prior to Belisarius' arrival in 533.²²⁰ It is worth quoting this epitaph in its entirety, as it illustrates Masties' status both as a Roman authority in the region and as a Christian:

D.M.S. EGO MASTIES DUX | ANN[IS] LXVII ET IMP[E]R[ATOR]
 ANN[IS] X QUI NUN | QUAM PERIURAVI NEQUE FIDE[M] | FREGI
 NEQUE DE ROMANOS NEQUE | DE MAUROS, ET IN BELLU
 PARUI ET IN | PACE, ET ADVERSUS FACTA MEA | SIC MECU[M]
 DEUS EGIT BENE.

I, Masties, duke for 67 years and emperor for 10 years, never perjured myself nor broke faith with either the Romans or the Moors, and was

²¹⁷ Rushworth (2004), 79-86.

²¹⁸ *CIL* VIII 9835 cited in Rushworth (2004), 88.

²¹⁹ Merrills and Miles (2010), 128; for the use of *rex Romanorum* by Roman emperors, see Conant (2012), 278, n. 133.

²²⁰ Modéran (2003), 400, 405.

prepared in both war and in peace, and my deeds were such that God supported me well.²²¹

Not only does Masties assume another Roman imperial title, that of *imperator*, alongside the tribal designation of *dux*, but he also emphasizes the good that he has done his people and the divine approval that his kingship has received from God in turn.²²² It is interesting as well to note the inscription's emphasis on faith (*fides*). This can be seen as a potential push-back against the stereotype of Moors being faithless (*infidus*) that has been examined in the literature of the previous chapters and may also give credibility to the notion that these stereotypes were held by common people as well as literary elites.²²³

It is clear that Moorish identity was more complicated than a simple barbarian vs. Roman dichotomy would permit. Such dichotomous interpretations are mistaken in the extreme, since Moors could maintain their identity as Moors while, at the same time, practicing a Christian faith and adopting Roman titles. The Ilguas (Laguatan, sg.), however, were likely not as affected by Roman *mores* as were their counterparts living in Numidia and Byzacium, and Modéran (2003) has categorized them as *Maures de l'extérieur*.²²⁴ These Moors, possibly a later incarnation of the Nasamones described by Herodotus and the Austoriani of Ammianus, allied with Antalas and invaded Byzacium in the war of 544-548.²²⁵ Corippus is the most prolific critic of their barbarous ways, as will be emphasized in Section 3.3. It should be noted that although Moorish identities melded both Roman and Moorish elements, there was less emphasis on the Roman element for those tribes living on the fringes of Tripolitania. This brief examination of identity is important

²²¹ Cited as found in Merrills and Miles (2010), 127, who understands the reading of Modéran (2003), 399. The DMS may mean *dis manibus sacrum*.

²²² See Modéran (2003), 402-403 for his assessment of Masties' title of *dux*, which likely indicated the leadership of a tribal group and approximating "chief/chieftain" rather than the formal late Roman military title of *dux*, as in *dux Tripolitaniae*. See Modéran (2003), 404-407 for the meaning of *imperator* as well. Rather than a grand claim to the western imperial title, *imperator* was meant to express rulership of two culture groups in the way that *rex* or *dux* simply could not. This can be seen as Masties' conciliation of the Roman population of his territories, which is also emphasized by his placing of *Romani* before *Mauri* in the inscription. As Modéran observes, Masties "cherchait seulement à signifier aux habitants de l'Aurès leur intégration commune dans un ensemble politique dont seul l'Empire de jadis pouvait offrir une image, non par ses dimensions ou ses fastes, mais par sa diversité sociale et culturelle et par son droit."

²²³ Modéran attributes the emphasis on *fides* to the king's Christianity, as well as his mandate to protect his people, both Romans and Moors, particularly in the wake of King Huneric's anti-Catholic persecutions around 484. See Modéran (2003), 409ff.

²²⁴ Modéran (2003), 112-119.

²²⁵ Hdt. 4.172 and Amm. Marc. 28.6.2. Modéran (2003), 245-249.

because it outlines the extra-literary evidence for the effects of Romanization, something seldom found in Procopius and Corippus, contextualizing the reality of the complexities of identity. In short, it paints a clearer, more nuanced, picture of the setting described by Procopius and Corippus and allows us to see exactly where these authors fall short in their depictions. No analysis of Moors in the sixth century, or indeed any aspect of the sixth century in general, can commence without examining the work of Procopius of Caesarea, historian of the wars of Justinian and *assessor* to the general, Belisarius.

3.2: Moors in Procopius

The 533 invasion of Vandal territory witnessed one of the most rapid and successful military expeditions in Late Antiquity. Belisarius decisively defeated the armies of the Vandal king, Gelimer, in two battles - Ad Decimum and Tricamarum - after which the king fled before his eventual capitulation and transport to Constantinople for Belisarius' triumph of 534. It was an auspicious start to Justinian's reconquest, and the province was reorganized into the Praetorian Prefecture of Africa.²²⁶ Procopius waxes philosophical on the Vandal defeat, employing the adage of "soft times create bad men" in his analysis of the causes. Vandal debauchery is set alongside Moorish toughness, and the Vandals are said to be the "most luxurious" (ἀβρότατον) of all nations and the Moors "the most hardy" (ταλαιπωρότατον).²²⁷ Enjoying the very best of foods and clothing themselves in expensive silks, the once hardy and aggressive people of Geiseric now devote themselves to the leisurely pursuits of the most sumptuous Roman gentry. Bathing, hunting, attending the hippodrome and watching dances, not to mention studying the "all the arts of sex" (ἔργα τὰ ἀφροδίσια πάντα), Procopius creates a powerful philosophical image of the corrupting influences of luxury and wealth.²²⁸ The Moors, on the other hand, are the epitome of tough living:

Μαυρούσιοι δὲ οἰκοῦσι μὲν ἐν πνιγηραῖς καλύβαις, χειμῶνί τε καὶ θέρους
ῥα καὶ ἄλλῳ τῷ ξύμπαντι χρόνῳ, οὔτε χιόσιν οὔτε χιόσιν οὔτε ἡλίου

²²⁶ Procop. *Wars* 3.10-4.9. Succinct descriptions of these campaigns are provided by Elton (2018), 265-266 and Treadgold (1997), 184-186.

²²⁷ Procop. *Wars* 4.6.5. I understand the adjective ταλαιπωρός here to mean "hardy", as Kaldellis and Dewing have understood it, rather than "wretched" or "miserable".

²²⁸ Procop. *Wars* 4.6.6-9, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis. For other literary examples of the corrupting influence of luxury, see Gruen (2011), 148-149. He cites Caesar's claim (Caes. *BG* 6.24.1, 6.24.5-6) that the Gauls had grown debauched due to their proximity to Roman luxuries. They had, at one time, exceeded the Germans in *uirtus*. The Belgic Neruii were an exception.

θέρμη ἐνθένδε οὔτε ἄλλω ὄτωσιν ἀναγκαίῳ κακῷ ἐξιστάμενοι. καθεύδουσι δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς κώδιον οἱ εὐδαίμονες αὐτοῖς, ἂν οὔτω τύχοι, ὑποστρωννύντες. ἰμάτια δὲ σπίσιν οὐ ξυμμεταβάλλειν ταῖς ὥραις νόμος, ἀλλὰ τριβώνιον τε ἄδρῶν καὶ χιτῶνα τραχὺν ἐς καιρὸν ἅπαντα ἐνδιδύσκονται. ἔχουσι δὲ οὔτε ἄρτον οὔτε οἶνον οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ τὸν σῖτον, ἢ τὰς ὀλύρας τε καὶ κριθάς, οὔτε ἔψοντες οὔτε ἐς ἄλευρα ἢ τὰ ἄλλα ζῆα ἐσθίουσι.

But the Moors live in stuffy huts, in winter, summer, and every other time, never leaving them because of the snow or the heat of the sun or any other discomfort due to nature. They sleep on the ground with the prosperous among them, if it should so happen, spreading a fleece under themselves. Moreover, it is not customary among them to change clothing with the season, but they wear a thick cloak and a rough shirt at all times. They have neither bread nor wine nor any other good thing, but they take grain, either wheat or barley, and, without boiling it or grinding it into flour or barley-meal, they eat it in a manner not at all different from the animals.²²⁹

Procopius clearly underlines the importance that *mores* play in determining success or defeat in war, which explains to his readers/audience why the Vandals were so easily and quickly defeated by Belisarius' expeditionary force of 533. At the same time, this passage also perhaps Procopius' way of explaining the great difficulties the Romans had in their conflicts with the Moors during two lengthy wars (534-539 and 544-548). The Vandal Kingdom had fallen due to a lapse in discipline in favour of easy living, while the Moors' lifestyle, characterized by poor circumstances and simplicity, allowed them to remain independent during Vandal rule and continue their independence for a time under the Roman reoccupation. Scholars have also noted this passage's use as a mirror that Procopius presents before his Roman audience, the elites who would have enjoyed the same luxuries as the Vandals.²³⁰

This depiction presents some difficulties in terms of historical accuracy. It is far too broad in its portrayal to be taken literally, as it presents all Moors practicing the same harsh lifestyle. As the previous section shows, elite Moors were influenced by Roman customs and might have partaken

²²⁹ Procop. *Wars* 4.6.10-13, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis. Cf. this passage with Appian's description of the Numidians, which shows certain similarities. App. *Pun.* 10.71: 'Among Africans the Numidians are the most rugged and long-lived of a long-lived people. The reason may be that their winters are not very frosty—and frost kills everything—while their summers do not burn everything up as in Ethiopia and India. This is also the reason why Africa produces the most powerful wild animals, and why the men are always outside at work. Numidians do not drink much wine, and they all eat simply and frugally.' Trans. McGing.

²³⁰ Conant (2012), 56-58.

in Roman cuisine and dressed in Roman fashions. The image of Moors chewing their wheat and barley like animals is hardly realistic and falls in line with the general notion that Procopius and Corippus held of barbarians:²³¹ Procopius' presentation of Moors is a literary device intended to explain the easy defeat of the Vandals and the stubborn obstinacy of the Moors. There is also a philosophical message imparted to his audience in the form of an admonition of sorts: beware the lesson of the Vandals, that easy-living breeds softness and that soft men risk losing their kingdom. That this message was intended for well-to-do Romans who enjoyed the exact same luxuries as the Vandals, one can hardly deny. Therefore, caution must be exercised in deriving any information on actual Moorish customs from this passage. What it does confirm, however, is Procopius' use of depictions to explain the fall of the Vandals, the obstinacy of the Moors, and the dangers of easy-living.

Treachery and general unreliability are emphasized in Procopius' depictions of the Moors, and the treachery of the Moors is used, like other stereotypes, as a way to explain behaviour. For instance, he states that the Moors of Numidia and Byzacium, namely those of Cusina and Iaudas, revolted for "no reason" (ἐξ αἰτίας οὐδεμιᾶς) and further, that the real reason for their revolt is their particular "character" or "manner" (τρόπος) which permits "neither fear of God" (οὔτε θεοῦ φόβος) "nor respect for people" (οὔτε ἀνθρώπων αἰδώς). Procopius goes on to say that oaths and hostages have no effect on restraining their attacks against the Romans, but that the only thing which keeps the Moors in check (κρατύνεσθαι) and maintains peace is their "fear of the enemies opposing them" (τὸ δέος τῶν πολεμίων κατ' αὐτῶν).²³² This latter notion, that that fear of the enemy maintains order, matches the viewpoint of Procopius regarding barbarians generally that he expresses in his first book when he speaks of the Blemmyes and the Nobatai: ὅπερ καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ κομιζόμενοι οὐδὲν τι ἤσσον καταθέουσι τὰ ἐκείνη χωρία. οὕτως ἄρα βαρβάρους ἅπαντας οὐδεμία μηχανὴ διασώσασθαι τὴν ἐς Ῥωμαίους πίστιν ὅτι μὴ δέει τῶν ἀμυνομένων στρατιωτῶν. / "And they receive this gold even up to my time, but no less overrun the country there. Thus, it seems that with all barbarians there is no means of compelling them to keep faith with the Romans except through the fear of soldiers to hold them in check."²³³ These passages reflect a lack of

²³¹ Conant (2012), 253-259. Modéran (2003), 577-579.

²³² Procop. *Wars* 4.8.9-11.

²³³ Procop. *Wars* 1.19.33, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis. The grammar and syntax of the Greek are nearly identical to that of 4.8.9-11.

understanding of the complex situation that resulted in the conflicts of 534-535, and Procopius is content to attribute the revolt of the Moors to the impulsive nature of all barbarians to become unruly when there are no soldiers or bribes to restrain them.²³⁴ As Modéran (2003) has shown, the Roman desire to drive the Moors out of their homelands in the interior of Byzacena and Numidia was the likely cause of the conflict.²³⁵

Another passage of the fourth book of the *Wars* indicates that Procopius was not the only one to fear the treachery of the Moors. This section is situated amidst the narration of Solomon's campaign against Iaudas in the Aurès Mountains of Numidia. A number of Moorish allies (ξύμμαχοι) are said to have accompanied his army, and Procopius describes the anxieties that the army exhibited concerning their reliability:

ὄλως δὲ ἐνέδραν σφίσι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν ξυμμάχων γεγενῆσθαι
ὑποτοπήσαντες ἐς δέος ἦλθον, λογιζόμενοι ὡς ἄπιστοι λέγονται εἶναι
Μαυρούσιοι φύσει, ἄλλως τε ἠνίκα Ῥωμαίοις ἢ ἄλλοις τισὶ
ξυμμαχοῦντες ἐπὶ Μαυρουσίου στρατεύονται.

All things considered, the Romans were suspicious that an ambush had been set for them by men who were their allies and began to be afraid, reasoning that the Moors are said to be by nature untrustworthy at all times and especially whenever they march as allies with the Romans or any others against Moors.²³⁶

This is further proof that literary elites were not the only perpetrators of the stereotype of treachery among Moors.²³⁷ The army of Solomon, of which Procopius was at this time a part, knew the reputation of Moors to switch sides in a conflict, and therefore made their anxieties known at least enough for Procopius to remember and record them.²³⁸ The focal point of this passage for the purpose of this thesis, however, is Procopius' statement that it is "by nature" (φύσει) that the Moors

²³⁴ On Procopius' opinion of barbarians, see Conant (2012), 255-259, who argues that Procopius made more of an effort to understand the barbarians who were at the centre stage of his history, namely the Persians, Vandals, and Goths. See also Greatrex (2018), 327-354, who argues that Procopius' perception of barbarians was governed by their level of interaction with other Romans. Thus, the Moors are grouped among those whom Procopius thought to be "thoroughly barbarian".

²³⁵ Modéran (2003), 595-604.

²³⁶ Procop. *Wars* 4.13.37, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²³⁷ Masties' claim that he was not "unfaithful" may indicate that high ranking individuals or even the general populace perpetuated these stereotypes too.

²³⁸ For Procopius' presence with the army of Solomon, see Cameron (1985), 171-172.

are untrustworthy (ἄπιστοι). The reliance of the author on this long-held stereotype reflects either a misunderstanding or refusal to understand the broader issues behind the ἀπιστία of the Moors in this instance. The easiest and most self-explanatory reason to Procopius for the army's anxiety was that it was, as with most other barbarians, in the Moors' nature (φυσίς) or manner (τρόπος) to switch sides and fight against the Romans or against their former allies. The stereotype of treachery, once again, lends itself to the historian as an explanatory tool, a device used to explain either a belief or action of a certain character or group in the narrative.

Another example of the treachery stereotype's use as an explanatory device will illustrate this point further. Germanus, Justinian's cousin and the successor to Solomon, mustered his army to fight the rebel Stotzas in 537, the latter having enlisted the support of the Moors of Iaudas and Ortaïas, another chieftain who inhabited the territories to the north of Iaudas.²³⁹ In the coming battle, the concerns of the Romans in Solomon's army came to fruition, only this time in favour of Germanus and the emperor's army. Germanus had negotiated with the Moors to ensure that they would join his side in the battle, but the Moors balked at engaging the enemy until they could determine whom the winner was. Only when Stotzas' men were in full flight did the Moors move in to the support of Germanus.²⁴⁰ It is no surprise, then, that Procopius justifies these actions by citing treachery as an inherent characteristic of Moors, only this time to explain the anxiety of Germanus: οὐ μὴν αὐτοῖς πιστεύειν παντάπασιν ὁ Γερμανὸς εἶχεν, ἐπεὶ ἄπιστον φύσει τὸ Μαυρουσίων γένος ἐστὶν ἐς πάντα ἄνθρωπος. / "Germanus could not trust them completely, for the Moorish nation is faithless to all men by nature."²⁴¹ Once again, the cause for anxiety regarding the loyalty of the Moors is the stereotype of treachery, and the language is nearly identical to the section examined above (4.13.37), with one notable difference. Whereas the previous passage conveyed the stereotype indirectly with the verb λέγω, this passage conveys it more assertively with the verb εἰμί. Procopius explicitly states that the entire γένος of the Moors is by nature faithless (ἄπιστον), a much more definitive explanation for the anxieties of his commanding officer, Germanus, than in the previous section.

²³⁹Solomon and Germanus likely held both the offices of *magister militum* and praetorian prefect during their governorship of Africa. See *PLRE* IIIb, "Solomon," 1167-1177. On Ortaïas, see Modéran (2003), 375-383.

²⁴⁰Procop. *Wars* 4.17.31.

²⁴¹Procop. *Wars* 4.17.10, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

A similar phrase is used in Procopius' account of the dealings of Areobindus with the chieftain Cusina.²⁴² Antalas, allied with the disaffected Roman soldiers who had followed Stotzas, led his army against Areobindus at Carthage. Cusina was among the Moors allied to Antalas, and Procopius describes how it was arranged that Cusina and his Moors would switch sides during the coming battle:

Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ Ἀρεόβινδος πέμψας παρὰ τὸν Κουτζίαν λάθρα ἔπρασσε προδοσίας πέρι. καὶ οἱ ὁ Κουτζίνας ὠμολόγησεν, ἐπειδὴν ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ γένωνται, ἐπὶ τε Ἀντάλαν καὶ Μαυρούσιους τοὺς ἐν Βυζακίῳ τραπέσθαι. Μαυρούσιοι γὰρ οὔτε πρὸς ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων τινὰς οὔτε πρὸς ἀλλήλους τὸ πιστὸν ἔχουσι.

In the meantime, Areobindus sent to Cusina secretly and negotiated over him turning traitor. Cusina promised him that, as soon as they began the battle, he would turn against Antalas and the Moors of Byzacium. For the Moors keep faith neither with any other men nor with each other.²⁴³

This statement has broader meaning than those that have been examined so far. Procopius is required to explain to his readers/audience why Moors would turn against, not only the Romans, but also their fellow Moors. Although the pretext he gives is identical to his previous statements, that Moors do not keep faith (τὸ πιστόν), he omits any mention of innateness and does not say that this characteristic is somehow inherent in their nature (φύσις) or manner (τρόπος). He is content to broaden his audience's understanding or, indeed, to confirm their pre-existing prejudices that ethnic bonds do not prevent Moors from turning against their own; everyone is subject to the treachery of the Moors regardless of political affiliation or ethnicity.

The final association of the Moors with treachery concerns a plot of the usurper, Guntharis, who appears to have been a Roman soldier of some rank who arrived with the contingent of Areobindus.²⁴⁴ He had Areobindus murdered and established himself as a tyrant in Carthage. His

²⁴² Following the death of Solomon in 544, Areobindus was sent by Justinian to share in the command of Africa with Sergius, who was partially to blame for the war of 544-548. *PLRE* IIIa, "Areobindus 2," 107-109.

²⁴³ Procop. *Wars* 4.25.15-16, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis. I have changed the Greek "Koutzinas" preferred by Kaldellis in his translation to the Latin "Cusina" for consistency. I have followed this for all Greek names.

²⁴⁴ Procopius names him as one of Solomon's bodyguards (δορυφοροί) 4.19.6. He was later killed by the Armenian nobleman, Artabanus, in an exciting palace coup, an episode which marks the conclusion of Book 4. See *PLRE* IIIa, "Guntharis 2," 574-576.

alliance with Antalas provided him with the means to foment his plan to claim Carthage for himself. The Moors, however, were hesitant allies, as Procopius explains:

ἐπενόει δὲ ταῦτα οὐ Μαυρουσίων ἔνεκα, ὅπως τῇ πόλει αὐτοὺς δέξηται (ἀβέβαιοι γὰρ Μαυρούσιοι παντάπασιν ὄντες ὑπόπτως ἔχουσιν ἐς πάντας ἀνθρώπους. τοῦτό τε αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἰκότος γενέσται ξυμβαίνει· ἐπεὶ ὅστις ἄπιστος ἐς τοὺς πέλας καθέστηκε φύσει, οὐδὲ αὐτὸς πιστεύειν ὅτῳ δύναιται, ἀλλ' ὑπόπτως ἔχειν ἀναγκάζεται ἐς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ γνώμης τὸν τοῦ πέλας σταθμώμενος τρόπον.

His purpose in doing this was not to receive the Moors into the city; for the Moors, being altogether fickle, are suspicious of all men. It is not unreasonable that they are so, for whoever is by nature treacherous toward his neighbours is himself unable to trust anyone at all and is compelled to be suspicious of all men, as he measures the character of his neighbour by his own mind.²⁴⁵

In this passage, the stereotype is nuanced because Procopius must explain the cautiousness of the Moors. A reader who was familiar with the tropes associated with Moors would probably expect them to rush headlong into the city to begin plundering without a thought. These Moors, however, chose to wait outside Carthage, as Gontharis allegedly anticipated. Procopius explains this strange behaviour by claiming that Moors are “precarious” (ἀβέβαιοι) and “suspicious” (ὑποπτοι), qualities that they have gained on account of their own inherent faithlessness. In other words, their own ἀπιστία has habituated them to keep their guard up at all times and to trust no one. Procopius introduces one stereotype to explain another, as lack of trust breeds suspicion and cautiousness.

From treachery and unreliability, this thesis will now reintroduce another long held stereotype regarding Moors examined in the first chapter, that of promiscuity and polygamy. An exchange of letters between Solomon and a group of unnamed Moorish leaders serves as the setting for this reintroduction. This follows the deaths of two members of Belisarius’ household guard, Aïgan and Rufinus, both of whom were killed in battle with the Moors.²⁴⁶ Solomon rebukes the leaders of the Moors for reneging on their “dread oaths” (δεινοὶ ὄρκιοι) when their own children are among the hostages of the Romans.²⁴⁷ The reply that the Moorish leaders give to Solomon is quite telling for

²⁴⁵ Procop. *Wars* 4.26.2-3, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²⁴⁶ See Procop. *Wars* 4.10.3-11.

²⁴⁷ Procop. *Wars* 4.11.1-8.

what Procopius and others thought about the effects of Moorish polygamy: παίδων μέντοι ἔνεκεν ὑμῖν μελήσει, οἷς μίαν ἄγεσθαι γυναῖκα ἀνάγκη: ἡμᾶς γάρ, οἷς καὶ κατὰ πενήκοντα, ἂν οὕτω τύχη συνοικοῦσι γυναῖκες, παίδων οὐκ ἂν ποτε ἐπιλίποι γονή / “as for children, that will be your concern, who are required to have only one wife; but with us, who have, it may be, fifty wives living with each of us, the making of children is not an issue”.²⁴⁸ The stereotype is not that Moors are polygamous *per se*, something that may well have been the case, but rather that their many wives provide them with as many children as they need, so many in fact that they feel little to no affection for them. Therefore, the Moors counter Solomon’s rebuke by saying that they can always have more children if they lose those who are in Roman custody, something which Procopius’ audience no doubt found quite barbaric and heartless. Similarly, Sallust cites the Moors’ general lack of affection for their wives on account of their sheer multitude and that each is “equally unimportant” (*pariter uilis*) in the eyes of their husband because there are so many. Thus, lack of affection or heartlessness on account of the practice of polygamy was associated with Moors from Sallust up to Procopius, a strong indication that these stereotypes might have been cemented in the minds of the Roman literary elite for centuries.²⁴⁹

Procopius supplements this image of polygamous Moors with an anecdote concerning a Moorish figure named Medisinissas, a chief among those who attacked the forces of Rufinus and Aïgan in 534.²⁵⁰ The Romans were dispersed, Aïgan was cut down, and Rufinus captured. Medisinissas, however, fearing that Rufinus might escape and return to the Romans to fight against them once again, thought that he might save himself the trouble by executing him. Procopius narrates how Medisinissas beheaded the general and carried the head back home to show his wives, who were amazed on account of its “extraordinary size” (μέγεθος ὑπὲρ βολῆ) and “abundance of hair” (τριχῶν πλῆθος).²⁵¹ The likely purpose of this image was to highlight the barbarousness of the Moors. Little else can explain this passage, as it is close in Procopius’ work to the section narrating the exchange between Solomon and the Moorish leaders cited above. Therefore, this anecdote

²⁴⁸ Procop. *Wars* 4.11.13, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²⁴⁹ See Modéran (2003), 426-427, for the ties of family in Moorish culture. Agreeing with a scholar from the nineteenth century, he attributes the description in Procopius to “clichés sur la barbarie réutilisés par l’historien grec.”

²⁵⁰ The heroic stand of these two can be found in Procop. *Wars* 4.10.3-10.

²⁵¹ Procop. *Wars* 4.10.11, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

solidifies the notion in minds of Procopius' readers that the Moors are barbarians of the worst kind who will not shirk from bringing a severed head home to amaze their many wives.

The battle tactics of the Moors are also discussed by Procopius, and they are particularly instructive for this thesis in their similarities to the language employed by Claudian in the previous chapter. Moorish battle tactics are depicted as a cowardly display of hit-and-run skirmishing, with no recourse to the type of hand-to-hand combat traditionally admired by the Romans. It should be noted, however, that Procopius puts this claim into the mouth of Solomon in a pre-battle speech to the troops. Although Moors mostly fought from horseback hurling javelins at the enemy, mounted archery was practiced by the Romans and particularly admired by Procopius, as he describes in his *proemium* to the *Wars*.²⁵² Therefore, it is not necessarily the tactic of ranged warfare itself that he was criticizing so much as, perhaps, people who were conducting it.²⁵³ Solomon exhorts his soldiers to recall the poor equipment of the Moors, who carry only small shields, poorly made, and who turn to flight once they have hurled their javelins. Moreover, the Moors lack the qualities of Roman soldiers, namely “valour of heart” (ψυχῶν ἀρετή), “strength of body” (σωμάτων ἀλκή), and “experience in war” (πολέμων ἐμπειρία). Rather, they trust only in their numbers (ὁ ὄμιλος σφῶν αὐτῶν) to achieve victory; otherwise, they flee the field, so that the Romans shall surely triumph.²⁵⁴

Kaldellis (2004) has analyzed this section in terms of the relationship Procopius establishes in his narrative between speech and action. Solomon receives a reply from the Moorish leaders that serves as a rebuttal to the evidence presented that the Moors would lose the upcoming battle. The speeches themselves, however, are likely fictional, as both speakers are, in effect, “not historical persons. They are literary vehicles of military analysis, antithetical and therefore dynamic.”²⁵⁵ Therefore, these speeches allowed Procopius to provide insights to his audience on the relationship between a battle plan or expectation and the ensuing battle. His analysis contextualizes the speech's inclusion in terms of narrative construction but not literary antecedents. The speech of

²⁵² Procop. *Wars* 1.1.6-16. See Basso and Greatrex (2017), 59-72, for the argument that the purpose of the *proemium* was to emphasize the quality of warfare, while acknowledging the influence of Thucydides and Herodotus especially. In addition, the heroic feats of individual soldiers explain the allusions to Homeric warfare.

²⁵³ Perhaps Procopius believed that Romans balanced their ranged warfare with sufficient hand-to-hand combat.

²⁵⁴ Procop. *Wars* 4.11.25-30, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²⁵⁵ Kaldellis (2004), 29-32.

Solomon contains a number of antecedents that have been identified in the earlier chapters of this thesis. Claudian, for instance, suggests in the speech of Honorius that the Moors will be “disarmed” (*exarmare*) once they have hurled their missiles (*iacula*).²⁵⁶ The Moors’ trust in numbers is also similar to Silius’ claim that Numidians never trust in the bare sword without deceit.²⁵⁷ Procopius buttresses the notion shared by his literary antecedents, that Moors only fight when there is some advantage over their enemy. Moreover, their reliance on skirmishing rather than hand-to-hand combat illustrates their cowardly, unRoman nature.

One last point must be considered: the military role played by Moors in Procopius’ *Wars* as Roman allies. Procopius notes the presence of Moorish allies in the army of Belisarius during the latter’s campaigns in Italy, particularly during the siege of Rome (537-8). It would have been easy for Procopius to exclude them from his history, and certainly no one of importance would have questioned his omission of the Moorish troops. Whatever opinion he may have had of the Moors, however, Procopius made a conscious choice to mention at least part of their role as military allies of the Romans in his history. Procopius first mentions Moors as part of the household troops of Belisarius where they are used to intimidate the envoy of the Persian shah Khosrow. He describes the personal retainers of Belisarius, which included Thracians, Illyrians, Goths, Heruls, Vandals, and Moors, impressing the Persian envoy with their “orderly conduct” (εὐκοσμία).²⁵⁸ The Roman army’s capacity to incorporate foreigners into its forces served as a means to amaze the Persian ambassador. Procopius does not shirk from including Moors in the ranks of Belisarius’ army, narrating their role as part of a display of Roman power and authority.

There are two mentions of Moors at the famous siege of Rome, during which the Ostrogothic king Vitigis laid siege to the city, which was garrisoned by 5000 Romans under Belisarius. Procopius’ depictions of Moors in the Roman garrison are straightforward, and they are described without prejudice or praise. Despite Procopius’ decision not to mention traditional tropes or literary stereotypes, he adds excitement and narrative flair to the account of the sallies of the Moors against the Goths. The Goths, unable to surround the city entirely and therefore implement a thorough

²⁵⁶ Claud. *Gild.* 1.436-437.

²⁵⁷ Sil. *Ital.* 1.219.

²⁵⁸ Procop. *Wars* 2.21.3-14, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis. For the *bucellarii*, see Elton (2008), 282.

siege, are harassed by the Moors at every turn, who fall upon the unsuspecting Goths and quickly strip their corpses of loot before riding back to the city. Procopius explains the ease with which the Moors carry out their sallies by citing their natural speed and light equipment: ...πλειόνων σφίσιν, ἂν οὕτω τύχοι, πολεμίων ἐπεισπεσόντων ὑπεχώρουν δρόμῳ, ἄνδρες φύσει τε ποδώκεις καὶ κούφως ἐσκευασμένοι καὶ τῆ φυγῆ προλαμβάνοντες / “if it chanced that a large number of the enemy fell upon them, they would withdraw on the run, being men swift of foot by nature, lightly equipped, and always outpacing their pursuers in flight.”²⁵⁹ Moors were also stationed on picket duty along the moat with guard dogs and are mentioned later as making “constant sallies” against the Goths.²⁶⁰ Among the identifiable tropes in these passages, the notion that Moors are hasty in retreat is a curious inclusion. Whereas the authors examined thus far had always depicted Moorish hit-and-run tactics as an exemplification of their innate cowardice, Procopius portrays the raids of the Moors as a valuable contribution to Roman military success. He does not use this as an opportunity to remind his readers of Moorish cowardice, as they are, in this instance, a part of the Roman force under the command of his protagonist, Belisarius. The general exploits the speed of these lightly-armed skirmishers, utilizing it effectively against the enemy. Though the trope of “fleeing Moors” is evident in this passage, it is not depicted in an overtly negative way. Rather, the cunning tactics of the Moors are turned against the enemy to Roman advantage.

Basso and Greatrex (2017) have identified Procopius’ proclivity for including anecdotes exhibiting the “remarkable feats of arms accomplished by soldiers in Justinian’s armies.”²⁶¹ Many of these include both Romans and non-Romans, but only one such anecdote tells the story of a Moorish soldier. It merits no more than a brief mention in the sixth book, a total of four sections, and the soldier is not identified by name. During the siege of Osimo (539), a Moorish soldier, eager to loot the ornate gilded armour from the body of one particularly noteworthy Goth, proceeded to drag the corpse back to the Roman lines, presumably from a place of some danger. As he dragged the corpse, both of his legs were pierced by the same javelin hurled by a Gothic soldier. Despite this dreadful wound and probably to the amazement of the onlooking Romans and Goths, he continued to drag the corpse back to the Roman camp. He was eventually brought to safety, but nothing is

²⁵⁹ Procop. *Wars* 5.25.8-9, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²⁶⁰ Procop. *Wars* 5.25.17 and 5.29.22.

²⁶¹ Basso and Greatrex (2017), 68-70. One example would be Procopius’ accounts of pre-battle duels, such as that which took place at Dara between a Roman bath-attendant and a Persian soldier.

known of this particular soldier thereafter.²⁶² It is difficult know what can be understood about Procopius' attitude towards this soldier. He probably admired the zeal with which the Moorish soldier pursued his task, and there does not seem to be any implicit negative judgments in the text towards the soldier's ethnicity, nor against the fact that he was looting, as this was a fairly common practice.²⁶³ This passage can be understood most reasonably through the lens of Basso and Greatrex (2017)'s interpretation of the *Wars*' preface: heroism and ἀρετή was still exemplified by the soldiers of Justinian, not solely by the Homeric heroes or warriors of the past generally. That this included foreign soldiers speaks to a more inclusive approach in Procopius' historiography and in his sense of martial prowess; ἀρετή could be displayed by both Roman and non-Roman alike.

3.3: Moors in Corippus

It will be instructive to examine the vocabulary employed by Corippus for Moors generally. Most of these words convey negative imagery, imparting on the audience/reader images of the Moors' untamed or feral nature. These adjectives are used in two ways: they modify either a specific trait associated with Moors, such as anger, or they are attached to the Moors themselves. *Ferus* and *saeuus* are the most common adjectives, with *ferox*, *improbus*, *horridus*, *impius*, and *crudelis* appearing as well, though less often.²⁶⁴ These adjectives are often associated with Moors generally, modifying nouns such as *gens*, but also modifying specific tribes as well. They are most often associated with the Austurs or Ilaguas, unsurprising given that the Romans had far less interaction with these "Moors of the exterior" and were more likely to depict them as uncivilized and "wild."²⁶⁵ Corippus' description of the Moors as *gens impia Mazax* recalls the *progenies vesana Iubae* of Lucan.²⁶⁶ In sum, adjectives conveying a negative connotation, associating Moors with barbarousness and cruelty, constitute the vast majority of the vocabulary that Corippus employs

²⁶² Procop. *Wars* 6.23.36-39.

²⁶³ Looting was not encouraged, however, as this made units vulnerable to counterattack. See Veg. *Ep. rei milil.* 3.11, who recommends attacks against the enemy when the soldiers are dispersed in looting. Also, see Maur. *Strat.* 1.8.16 for punishments against those soldiers who break ranks to plunder the dead.

²⁶⁴ Moreover, it should be noted that those adjectives associated with specific Moorish leaders will be discussed in a separate section. I have included as many instances as I was able to note: *ferus*: Cor. *Ioh.* 1.54, 2.53, 4.375; *saeuus*: 2.11, 2.48, 2.53, 2.89, 4.64, 4.282; *ferox*: 2.61; *crudelis*, *horridus*, *impius*: 2.102-104; *improbus*: 4.136.

²⁶⁵ In addition, Corippus probably employed these adjectives when describing Ilaguas because they were nomads rather than the semi-nodamic Moors of the interior. See Modéran (2003), 112-119 and Williams (2015), 233-245.

²⁶⁶ Cor. *Ioh.* 6.44. Luc. 8.443.

when describing them. Yet, it should also be noted that Corippus employs positive vocabulary to depict the Moors occasionally. These instances are few and far between, however. For instance, the Frexes led by Antalas, Moors of the interior, are *fortis gens et dura uiris*, while the Austur, are dubbed *fortis in armis*.²⁶⁷ Later, John and his army encounter the Astrices, whom Corippus call “a nation tough in war” (*gens aspera bellis*).²⁶⁸ These adjectives convey positive associations of power and strength, something which Corippus likely included to depict tribes who could be considered worthy Romans adversaries rather than a consciously positive depiction for its own sake. This is not the case with the Astrices, however, with whom John made a treaty of friendship prior to the Fields of Cato.²⁶⁹

Corippus’ association of the Moors with treachery is applied most frequently to their tactics in war; no surprise as his poem concerns the war in Libya (*de Bellis Libycis*). The vocabulary employed to depict the tactics of the Moors is, in many cases, identical to those terms used by the authors examined in earlier chapters. Moors are depicted as relying on tricks and deception in order surprise their enemy and defeat him without the risk of a fair fight. The words most commonly associated with these tactics illustrate the scorn that this Roman author felt for them: *doli*, *insidiae*, and *fraudes*. These words are used repeatedly in John’s speech to his troops before their march against the Moorish coalition of Antalas. Corippus, in effect, gives life to the stereotype of treachery by including it in the speech of his protagonist. The descriptions of their tactics take the form of military advice to the troops, almost akin to a tenet of a manual of strategy. The following quotation will illustrate this:

ipse tamen memorem insidias fraudesque dolosque, et metuenda canens et
quae peragenda resoluens. proelia dura dolis nunquam caruere malignis:
bella per insidias acies Maurusia gessit semper et obscuris fidens subsedit
in armis; solaque Massylas seruat fallacia uires et timidos bellare facit...

Nevertheless, let me recall their treachery, their fraud and guile, foretell
what must be feared and reveal what we have to accomplish. A tough battle
with these people has never lacked evil deceit. No, the Moor’s frontline of
troops has always waged war through treachery, lying in wait, confident

²⁶⁷ Frexes: Cor. *Ioh.* 2.44-45; Austur: 2.90.

²⁶⁸ Cor. *Ioh.* 6.392, trans. Shea.

²⁶⁹ Cor. *Ioh.* 6.389-436. For more on this people, see Modéran (2003), 468-469.

in their hidden arms. It is falsehood alone that preserves the Massylian power and makes them fight like cowards...²⁷⁰

Later, John says that they only enter battle with “deceits” (*fraudes*).²⁷¹ He describes the Moorish tactic of the feigned retreat, whereby a single Moorish horseman would draw off a number of Romans from the main column into ambush.²⁷² This causes fear among the Roman soldiers, and it is this fear that makes the Moors fearless: *impavidum timor ipse facit*.²⁷³ The keywords *fraudes*, *insidiae*, and *dolus*, have all been analyzed in this thesis, and Corippus is clearly invoking the tropes utilized by his literary predecessors. Lucan describes the Juba’s tactics as “Libyan deceits” (*fraudes Libycae*) and “Punic warfare tainted with tricks” (*Punica bella infecta dolis*), while Claudian has Theodosius warn Arcadius of “Massylian deceits” (*Massylae fraudes*) and of their “two-tongued treachery” (*bilingues insidias*).²⁷⁴

The similarity in vocabulary illustrates the intertextual relationship that Corippus shares with poets like Claudian and Lucan.²⁷⁵ This goes a long way towards explaining the reason for the inclusion of the stereotype of treachery in this poem. As Chapters 1 and 2 have shown, Moors have a long history in Latin epic poetry/invective of being depicted as fighting unfairly, using underhanded tactics, and playing the roles of antagonists in the narrative. Since the Moors are the primary antagonists of this text, this language is repeated *ad nauseam* to the reader, who is compelled to associate treachery with the way the Moors conduct warfare. In other words, underhanded and unfair tactics become synonymous with the Moors. Corippus could, therefore, show off his learning by employing the very same vocabulary used by his predecessors.²⁷⁶ Moreover, Corippus had a vested interest in demonizing the Moors: Cameron (1983) has shown that Corippus provided legitimacy to the new Greek-speaking Constantinopolitan regime for the Latin-speaking Africans by depicting Justinian’s soldiers as fighting a righteous war against pagan Moors. *Pietas* is associated with the Roman army, particularly with John, Corippus’ stand-in Aeneas, while *perfidia*

²⁷⁰ Cor. *Ioh.* 1.526-532, trans. Shea.

²⁷¹ Cor. *Ioh.* 1.537.

²⁷² Cor. *Ioh.* 1.540-556.

²⁷³ Cor. *Ioh.* 1.556.

²⁷⁴ Luc. 4.736-737. Claud. *Gild.* 1.284-5.

²⁷⁵ Corippus often depicts Berber paganism in the same manner that Lucan depicts Roman paganism. See Cameron (1983), 173-174.

²⁷⁶ See Cameron (1983), 167-168, 175 who notes that Corippus drew heavily on Virgil’s *Aeneid*. See also pg. 172 for Virgil’s influence on Corippus’ account of John’s triumph in Carthage. Also, see Merrills (2019), 154-158 and Williams (2015), 59.

is associated with the Moors, whose worship of the gods Gurzil and Ammon doubtless shocked his readers/audience. This support for Justinian's regime explains his later appearance in Constantinople, where he was likely given patronage for his literary achievements.²⁷⁷

3.4: Prominent Moors in Procopius

Like his predecessor Ammianus, Procopius gives a fairly impartial depiction of the leading Moorish figures of his day, which may be unsurprising given that his primary focus was on the Roman officers and soldiers.²⁷⁸ There is little mention of the traditional stereotypes of lust or treachery when he speaks of these individuals, as he prefers to make these associations when he speaks of Moors generally. Following the method that has been established for this thesis so far, this section will only examine Procopius' depictions of individual Moors. Procopius mentions several Moorish figures by name. Among them are Antalas, Iaudas, Ortaïas, and Massonas. Of these figures, he has the most to say about the former two, Antalas and Iaudas. Individual Moors are depicted with much more vividness by Corippus, as the following sections will illustrate.

Antalas appears most frequently of all the other Moorish figures mentioned by Procopius. He was a Moorish chieftain of the Frexes with his power base in south-western Byzacium, who initially kept faith with the Romans but attacked Solomon when the latter failed to maintain the payments that were promised to him by Belisarius.²⁷⁹ Moreover, Procopius reports that Solomon had his brother executed, a second cause of this revolt.²⁸⁰ Although he might have been tempted to rely on barbarian treachery to explain Antalas' behaviour as he did initially, Procopius cites a letter sent by Antalas to the emperor Justinian explaining his position and requesting the removal of Sergius, nephew of Solomon, from his office. The self-deprecatory tone of the letter illustrates some authenticity, and Procopius was with Solomon at this time, so the letter may well be genuine.

²⁷⁷ Cameron (1983), 174-176. As Cameron (1983) also notes, Corippus emphasized the divine support that Justinian's soldiers enjoy in order to downplay the ecclesiastical disputes between the African and Roman clergy. See pg. 171. Also, see Williams (2015), 68-69.

²⁷⁸ Modéran (2003) stresses this. See pp. 35-38: L'intérêt prioritaire de Procope pour les Byzantins nous prive de descriptions ethnographiques, mais il nous vaut un récit relativement fidèle de l'évolution du comportement des Berbères face aux hommes de Justinien.

²⁷⁹ Procop. *Wars* 4.12.30. See Camps (1988), "Antalas," *Encyclopédie berbère*; *PLRE* IIIa, "Antalas," 86-87; Modéran (2003), 324-334; for the Frexes, see von Rummel (2010), 571-604; Desanges (1962), 90-91; Modéran (2003), 315-324; Williams (2015), 245-255.

²⁸⁰ Procop. *Wars* 4.21.17, 4.22.8.

Antalas admits that he is a “slave of the empire” and that his intention is not to take up arms against the emperor, but only against his “enemies” and against the “unholy treatment of Solomon” and Solomon’s nephew Sergius.²⁸¹ In fairness to Procopius, this letter’s inclusion speaks to at least an occasional desire on the part of the historian to analyze and report the cause for an event impartially.

Iaudas was a chieftain of the Aurès Mountains, whose territory encompassed the former kingdom of Masuna. His role in the *Wars* is as an intermittent enemy of Solomon and the other Roman governors, who campaign repeatedly against his mountain strongholds.²⁸² One anecdote stands out among his other mentions, however: his duel with the Roman soldier Althias. Althias was probably of Hunnic stock, as both his skill with the bow and his command of several Huns indicates. He was tasked with guarding a number of forts in Numidia while Iaudas and his Moors began raiding the area. The latter encountered Althias and his Huns guarding a well to prevent Iaudas and his men from using it. The two men agreed to a duel, and the stakes were the Moors’ captured loot. Procopius reports that the Moors expected Iaudas to win, given that he was the “finest and most warlike of all the Moors” while Althias was “lean and not tall of body”. Althias, however, easily bested Iaudas, catching and throwing back the Moor’s javelin and downing the latter’s horse with his bow. Provided with another horse by the onlooking Moors, Iaudas and his men rushed off in flight, and Althias “by thus taking from them the captives and the whole of the booty, won a great name for this deed throughout all Libya.”²⁸³

The presence of this anecdote, like that of the injured Moor dragging the Gothic corpse, can be explained partially by Procopius’ desire to display to his audience the bravery and dash of Roman soldiers of his own time. For this thesis however, the image of Iaudas merits further examination. Iaudas’ cowardly depiction adds credence to the notion, explained by Solomon in his pre-battle speech to his troops, that Moors will flee once they have hurled their javelins at the enemy. Solomon and Honorius had both encouraged their soldiers not to fear Moors once they had discharged their missiles, as they would be in effect disarmed.²⁸⁴ In other words, Procopius is

²⁸¹ Procop. *Wars* 4.22.7-10, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²⁸² See Modéran (2000), “Iaudas,” *Encyclopédie berbère*; *PLRE* IIIa, “Iaudas,” 610-611; Modéran (2003), 350ff.

²⁸³ Procop. *Wars* 4.13.1-17, trans. Dewing-Kaldellis.

²⁸⁴ See Procop. *Wars* 4.11.23-36 for Solomon’s speech. For Honorius’ speech, see Claud. *Gild.* 1.424-466.

providing an authentic example that gives life to this stereotypical image of the cowardly Moor that had been a literary trope since at least Claudian's time. Moors, once they have hurled their javelin, are nothing to fear and will immediately shirk from hand-to-hand combat, as Iaudas did.

Another passage concerning Iaudas illustrates that Procopius, once again, redeems himself as a historian by a proper explanation of the causes that do not rely on stereotypes. Solomon, having wintered in Carthage, was persuaded to move against Iaudas by two Moorish chieftains of the Aurès, Massonas and Ortaïas, both of whom Iaudas had wronged.²⁸⁵ Again, it might have been tempting for the historian to explain the cause for these Moors to distrust each other in stereotypical terms; recall his explanation that Moors are distrustful by nature because their neighbours are untrustworthy. In this instance, however, the reasons are reported in a straightforward and believable manner: Iaudas, in concert with a Moorish chief from Mauretania, was driving Ortaïas from his land, and Iaudas had murdered the father of Massonas.²⁸⁶ There is no reason to doubt Procopius' explanations, both because he was present with Solomon at the time and because he reports a conversation that he had with Ortaïas himself.²⁸⁷ It seems reasonable to assume, then, that where Procopius had more information on the reasons behind a certain action or incident, he would report them with more accuracy, and where the causes were obscure, he would resort to stereotypes as explanatory tools.

It will be instructive to evaluate Procopius as a historian and to assess his knowledge of and experience with Moors. It would be foolish not to stress the point that every scholar of the sixth century or Late Antiquity generally cites in regard to Procopius: his role as assessor of Belisarius, which brought him in close contact with the events he narrates, often in the capacity as a direct eyewitness. He also would have had the opportunity to speak to many of the individuals mentioned in his history, particularly those cited in the initial books, when he was not confined to Constantinople for his composition.²⁸⁸ Procopius was with Belisarius for most of the campaign against the Vandals, with Solomon during the latter's campaigns against the Moors, particularly

²⁸⁵ For Ortaïas and Massonas, see Modéran (2003), 375-383.

²⁸⁶ Procop. *Wars* 4.13.18-19.

²⁸⁷ Procop. *Wars* 4.13.27-29.

²⁸⁸ Cameron (1985), 6-14; Treadgold (2010), 176-184.

Iaudas.²⁸⁹ He was, therefore, in a unique position as a historian to narrate the events of his own time, not relying, as many of the writers examined in the previous chapters did, on the works of other historians writing decades or even centuries earlier. His knowledge of the initial campaigns against the Moors in 534 and 535 is much better than for the war of 544-548, which he reports on very briefly at the end of Book 4 and in the middle of Book 8.²⁹⁰ For the latter, historians must rely almost exclusively on Corippus. As for his depiction of the Moors, he was clearly a man of his time and stereotypes are evident in his work to explain the behaviour of “irrational barbarians.” These stereotypes, especially those that concern polygamy and treachery, closely resemble those of earlier writers, illustrating a familiarity with earlier depictions of Moors.²⁹¹ Moreover, these stereotypes were likely held by the Roman soldiery, the officer corps, and the intellectual elite, where Procopius was exposed to them as well.²⁹² On the other hand, it must be noted that Procopius does not always rely on these stereotypes to explain actions or behaviour, especially when writing of individual Moors. Where he possesses adequate information for his historical explanations, he cites them in full, as with the reason for Antalas’ revolt or the causes for Ortaïas and Massonas to become the enemies of Iaudas. This is particularly evident in the latter case, where Procopius probably received this information from Ortaïas himself, with whom he spoke personally. In sum, although Procopius was an eyewitness for a large part of his narration and had the unique opportunity to speak with Moors, this did not prevent him from relying, when he felt it necessary or had no other means of explanation, on stereotypes to explain their actions and behaviour.

3.5: Prominent Moors in Corippus

Scholars are fortunate that Corippus mentions the names and depicts the characters of several Moorish notables, some of whom, like Carcasan and Ierna, do not appear in the works of Procopius, from whom the majority of our information on sixth century North Africa is derived. The most noteworthy Moors of Corippus’ poem are Antalas and Cusina, and they will be the focus of this section. It will be argued in this section that Corippus’ depiction of Moorish figures was influenced by the political context his day and the genre of ancient epic. Moreover, Cameron

²⁸⁹ Cameron (1985), 171-172; Treadgold (2010), 195-199.

²⁹⁰ These brief *addenda* can be found in Procop. *Wars* 4.28.45-52 and 8.17.20-22.

²⁹¹ Williams (2015), 57.

²⁹² Modéran (2003), 592-593 for Procopius and the Eastern Romans’ views on the Moors of the interior.

(1983)'s argument that Corippus had a personal stake in demonizing Moorish enemies to benefit his own career cannot be denied as an additional cause of these depictions. It is no surprise that Corippus depicts the state's enemies poorly while championing its allies. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the portrayals of Antalas and Cusina, as both men fought at different times as the enemies and allies of the Romans, and, like Masinissa and Syphax, their political allegiance at the time of authorship governed their portrayals. In addition, the conventions of epic poetry generally require an enemy to stand opposite the story's protagonists. In this case, John and the Romans of Justinian's armies are the heroes, while the Moors of Antalas, Carcasan, and others are their enemies. Therefore, political context and genre conventions were the two most influential factors governing the portrayal of Moors for Corippus.

Corippus' depiction of Antalas is hostile in the extreme, and he applies the adjectives *ferox* and *ferus* to him in the poem.²⁹³ Antalas' rise to power during the Vandal period is the subject of a lengthy digression in the *Iohannis*, where the Moorish leader is depicted as a little more than a bandit-king, sneaking away to his hideout with the locals' cattle to devour it half-cooked.²⁹⁴ This account is problematic given the literary objectives of Corippus, and it must be remembered that, until 544, Antalas was an ally of the Eastern Romans, as both Procopius and Corippus attest.²⁹⁵ Furthermore, although Corippus does provide the pretext for Antalas' revolt as his brother's execution, the poet attributes an additional pretext representative of his reliance on barbarian stereotypes: he states that Antalas was driven to war by *ira* or anger.²⁹⁶ As Williams (2015) attests, Corippus relies on "the topos of the barbarian, being governed by emotion rather than by reason" to explain Antalas' behaviour.²⁹⁷ Antalas' behaviour conforms to other traditional stereotypes as well. John Troglita, hoping to engage with Antalas in a duel before the commencement of battle, chastises Antalas for fleeing.²⁹⁸ The cowardice of the Moors is a trope that has already been identified, and it is given life by Corippus both in Antalas' behaviour and John's subsequent taunting. Corippus ensured that John's main antagonist would shirk from fighting fairly in hand-to-hand combat. One can also see that Corippus depicts Antalas as a new Hannibal when Guenfan

²⁹³ Cor. *Ioh.* 3.67, 7.293, 8.37.

²⁹⁴ Cor. *Ioh.* 3.156-170. See Williams (2015), 250.

²⁹⁵ Procop. 4.12.30. Cor. *Ioh.* 2.34-35.

²⁹⁶ Cor. *Ioh.* 2.39-40.

²⁹⁷ Williams (2015), 246.

²⁹⁸ Cor. *Ioh.* 5.15-19.

goes to visit the oracle of Ammon in order to foresee the boy's future just as Hannibal's father Hamilcar had brought him to the temple of Dido to visit a priestess; the destruction of Libya is prophesized for Antalas by the oracle just as the destruction of Italy is for Hannibal.²⁹⁹

Cusina, however, is portrayed as the Roman ally *par excellence*, and Corippus fondly refers to him with the adjectives *fidus* and *fidelis*. He even goes so far as to claim that he was a trusted friend of Solomon and that he had “always been a loyal ally of the Roman Empire” (*Romanis rebus nimium semperque fidelis*).³⁰⁰ His character is also expanded on by the poet: Cusina is said to be “graced with a calm manner and a Latin sobriety” (*moribus ornatus placidis, grauitate Latina*) and a “Roman in spirit and not far from one in blood as well” (*ille animo Romanus erat, nec sanguine longe*).³⁰¹ This phrase is synonymous with two later ones that refer to him as “close to the Romans in both birth and allegiance” (*Romanis consanguinitate propinquus atque fide*) and “always first in loyalty to the Roman army” (*Romanis semper fidissimus armis*).³⁰² It is later revealed that Cusina's mother was Roman.³⁰³ This praise on the part of Corippus for this Moorish leader can be understood as both a literary device and a result of political context. Cusina was not always the faithful friend of the Eastern Romans, as he fought against Solomon with Iaudas initially in 534-535. Moreover, following his execution by John Roganthinus in 562, his sons revolted against the Empire. This last point, however, could not have been incorporated into the *Iohannis*, as it was written shortly after the events it portrays, namely the Moorish wars of 546-548.³⁰⁴ Cusina represents the ideal Roman ally for Corippus' audience, the Moor who, despite his mixed heritage, chooses to behave like a Roman rather than a barbarian. He exhibits this behaviour in the poem through his loyalty to John and the Eastern Romans by fighting alongside them against his fellow countrymen. His past is unimportant for Corippus as it is irrelevant to the purpose of this character for the poem.³⁰⁵

²⁹⁹ Cor. *Ioh.* 3.63-140. Sil. Ital. 1.70-139. Another literary antecedent is Alexander's visit to the oracle of Ammon at Siwah. See Plut. *Alex.* 27.5-7.

³⁰⁰ Cor. *Ioh.* 3.406-408, trans. Shea.

³⁰¹ Cor. *Ioh.* 4.509-512, trans. Shea.

³⁰² Cor. *Ioh.* 5.451-452, 6.267-268, trans. Shea.

³⁰³ Cor. *Ioh.* 8.265-273.

³⁰⁴ Williams (2015), 66.

³⁰⁵ Williams (2015), 258-259.

Corippus provides historians of the Moors with a treasure of information, particularly in the form of names of tribes and individuals but also for the general history of the Moors between the years 546-548.³⁰⁶ He likely received information on the campaign from either John himself or one of his staff officers, and Corippus likely depicts this campaign in accordance with John's wishes.³⁰⁷ Corippus was a native of North Africa, likely Carthage, and his opinions on Moors are fairly typical of his literary predecessors and contemporaries.³⁰⁸ Corippus felt that the Moors were hindering the progress that Justinian was attempting to bring to the North African provinces. He took advantage of his literary skills to compose a work that would celebrate the heroism of John, Justinian's general, and condemn the cowardice and treachery of those Moors who fought against him. In doing so, he likely sought to advance in his career and seek patronage in the court of Constantinople where he eventually found himself composing a panegyric in honour of the emperor, Justin II. Thus, Corippus had a personal interest in demonizing the Moors.³⁰⁹ It should be noted, however, that this demonization did not extend to Moors who fought on behalf of the Empire. Cusina's positive depiction created an idealized Moor for Corippus' audience. In other words, Cusina was someone who all non-Romans could strive to imitate, whereas Antalas was someone all non-Romans should strive to avoid in behaviour and character.³¹⁰ Although Corippus lived in North Africa and thus, was in the unique position to have interacted with Moors, particularly the Moors of the interior, his account is nevertheless loaded with the types of stereotypes and literary tropes that had been associated with Moors for centuries.

3.6: Conclusion

As the epigraphic evidence attests, Moorish identity remained nuanced in the sixth century. Moors could claim Roman titles of authority to legitimate their rule, employ Christian rhetoric on their inscriptions, and identify themselves as rulers of both Romans and Moors. The literary picture as established by the two most prolific writers in Moors on this period, Procopius and Corippus, however, does not conform to this nuanced picture, as these authors employ traditional stereotypes in their depictions. Procopius repeats notions that Moors can never be trusted as allies, have several

³⁰⁶ Cameron (1985), 167.

³⁰⁷ Cameron (1985), 172, 175.

³⁰⁸ Williams (2015), 62.

³⁰⁹ Cameron (1985), 170-174; Williams (2015), 67.

³¹⁰ Williams (2015), 258-259.

wives and care little for their many children, and live very harsh lives almost akin to animals. Corippus maintains this depiction employing conventional stereotypes associated with epic and invective. His Moors are wily and treacherous, never permitting themselves to be caught in a fair fight with the Romans. Despite these negative depictions, both authors include positive depictions of those Moors who were, at the time of literary composition, Roman allies. Procopius includes Moors in the descriptions celebrating the ἀρετή of Justinian's soldiers, while Corippus depicts Cusina as the ideal Roman ally. Thus, since Moors who were Roman allies at the time of literary composition tend to be portrayed in a more positive light, it can be concluded that political context continued to play a major role in the literary depictions of Moors. Conversely, those who were enemies at the time of composition are depicted negatively. Furthermore, Corippus' inclusion of words and phrases that were long associated with Moors illustrates the role that genre played in depictions of Moors as well.

General Conclusion

It can be said that several specific stereotypes were associated with Moors from Herodotus to Procopius. The polygamous practices of the Moors, first described by Herodotus in the fifth century BCE, gave many ancient authors the impression that Moors did not or could not care for their wives and children. In other words, the greater the number of wives and children, the less care and attention they could be given. The inherent lust of the Moors was one way to explain their tendency towards polygamy. This was also, sometimes, connected to the stereotype of treachery, as Romans likely perceived that marital loyalty was somehow connected to loyalty to the state and one's allies. The most common stereotype associated with Moors, however, was treachery. Moors were portrayed as being extremely untrustworthy, fickle, and changeable by nature, making them very dubious allies for the Romans, Carthaginians, and other Moors. They were also depicted as cowards in war, a symptom of their general treachery, as they are seen fighting from ambush or with some perceived advantage in numbers or terrain. They also tend to employ hit-and-run tactics, which was a tactic of which Roman authors strongly disapproved. The Moors preferred to hurl javelins at their foe and then run back to safety, a despicable tactic that Roman authors could not stomach. These portrayals of Moors in warfare continued relatively unchanged from Sallust to Corippus.

For the most part, the depictions of Moorish figures themselves depended on political context, namely whether they were allies or enemies of the Romans. This is seen most clearly in the cases of Syphax and Masinissa in the period before Late Antiquity, and Antalas and Cusina for the sixth century CE. There are exceptions to this, however, as Tacitus and Ammianus do not incorporate stereotypes in their accounts of the revolts of Tacfarinas and Firmus respectively. Therefore, the influence of political context on depiction can only be dubbed a tendency in the literary sources rather than a general rule.

Ancient authors often employed these stereotypes to explain behaviour. There were, however, some exceptions to this. Livy, for instance, describes an occasion where the Moors kept faith, and thus, acted in a manner that was contrary to the author's expectations.³¹¹ Sometimes, authors also

³¹¹ Liv. 25.41.4. See Levene (2010), 218.

used stereotypes as a function of their general narrative. This is most plain in the case of epic poetry and invective, where Moors often played the role of villains to be scorned and defeated by the story's heroes. Claudian's Gildo and Corippus' Antalas come to mind as the most obvious examples of the influence of genre on overall depiction of individual Moors. It should also be noted that eye-witness evidence played a role only in the level of detail on Moors rather than in the inclusion of stereotypes, as Procopius and Corippus, who both likely possessed comparatively detailed knowledge on the Moors of the sixth century CE, relied on long-standing stereotypes when it suited their purpose. It is the author's hope that more comprehensive studies on the depictions of specific non-Romans will be undertaken in order to understand the extent to which the historians of antiquity resorted to literary tropes and stereotypes in their work.

The information on stereotypes that this thesis has uncovered is important. It shows that there is tremendous consistency in literary depiction over a long period of time. This suggests that many ancient authors regurgitated information on the Moors from earlier works or from views and beliefs that people held about the Moors at the time of composition. The consistency in language suggests that the former is likelier. Although it is likely that few other non-Roman groups are portrayed so consistently over such a long period of time, the Parthians/Persians, enemies of the Romans from the late republic to the reign of Heraclius in the seventh century CE, would make an interesting comparison and perhaps shed light on the degree to which long-standing exposure to specific non-Roman groups affected their literary depictions. This thesis also illustrates the power of tradition in literary depiction. Classicizing historians established their authority partially on the basis of indirect or direct allusions to the works of their predecessors. There is no reason why these allusions could not include stereotypical depictions of non-Romans. Therefore, the desire to cement one's authority in literary tradition is, doubtless, the likeliest explanation for the consistency of depictions of Moors from the time of Herodotus to Procopius.

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