

EMIGRANTS, EXILES, AND SURVIVORS: ARISTOCRATIC OPTIONS IN VISIGOTHIC AQUITANIA

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TWO OPTIONS THAT THE INHABITANTS of the western part of the Roman Empire had as the barbarians arrived to stay circa A. D. 400 and afterward were to remain or to leave. The Spanish priest Orosius strongly recommended the latter possibility with the biblical injunction *cum vos persecuti fuerint in una civitate, fugite in aliam* (*Contr.* pag. 7.41, ca A. D. 415). He had already followed his own advice and moved to North Africa (*ibid.* 5.2). In the face of what must have been viewed as impending ruin, many other well-to-do individuals—for the poor, of course it would have been Hobson's choice—also chose to depart, especially from previously peaceful areas unaccustomed to a barbarian presence. Aristocratic flight is attested in the early fifth century, for example, from Spain, Italy, Africa, Britain, and Illyricum.¹ In Gaul, too, it generally has been accepted that there was a withdrawal of sorts by the aristocracy from the Rhine frontier after the transfer of the Gallic prefect from Trier to Arles circa 395 and the barbarian invasion of 406.²

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¹See, for example, P. Brown, "The Patrons of Pelagius," *JTS* 21 (1970) 65, 70; S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (London 1899) 160; T. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* (London 1880–1889) 4.421, 534; Jones 249, 1059; Matthews 286, 300, 308; and Thompson 208–217. In this study the term "aristocrat" is used generically to signify any well-to-do, propertied Gaul, not as a specific synonym for "senator" or "noble"—whoever these were under the Visigoths.

²See, for example, Stroheker 19–20; and F. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich* (Munich and Vienna 1965) 48 ("eine dispossedierte Oberschichte") and "Aristocracy and

But the current orthodoxy does not allow for similar instances of flight after the Visigoths arrived in southern Gaul in 412.³ Moreover, the conventional view of the Gothic settlement of Gaul is that it was essentially peaceful. The Goths are usually portrayed as having little impact, and the resident Aquitanian aristocrats as continuing a prosperous existence on their estates, if not actually welcoming the barbarian presence.⁴ These conclusions have been based on a few spectacular examples of the survival into the fifth century and later of powerful Aquitanian aristocrats, such as Pontius Leontius of Bordeaux and his family, and upon the *topos*, well-developed by the late empire, of the prosperity of Aquitania.⁵ Salvian of Marseilles, for example, can claim rhetorically circa 440 (*De gub. dei* 7.2):

nemini dubium est Aquitanos ac Novempopulanos medullam fere omnium Galliarum et uber totius fecunditatis habuisse, nec solum fecunditatis, sed, quae praeponi interdum fecunditati solent, incunditatis, pulchritudinis, voluptatis.

Modern writers have incorporated such statements into discussions not only of the richness of the land, but also of the prosperity of the inhabitants.⁶

Although few nowadays would contest the view that much of the barbarian occupation of the west was accomplished peacefully and that there was a large degree of continuity, there is literary and prosopographical evidence to suggest that the degree to which the Visigothic settlement in

Christianity in Merovingian Gaul," 155–156 in K. Bosl, ed., *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Literatur: Beiträge L. Wallach gewidmet* (Stuttgart 1975), who notes that in some instances the villas of these aristocrats were simply abandoned. Wightman suggests that the emigrants consisted of "all people who had, or thought they could find, a means of livelihood elsewhere" (250). For possible specific instances of this withdrawal, see F. Benoit, "Des fragments de sarcophage chrétiens ou d'époque chrétienne datées, provenant des Aliscamps," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1938) 171–183; E. Gabba, "Una signora di Treviri sepolta a Pavia," *Athenaeum* 38 (1960) 253–262; and *PLRE* 2.851, "Paulus 15."

³Note Jones 1060, "we hear of no similar exodus from Gaul..."

⁴See, for example, Goffart 124–125, Rouch 24, Strohecker 20, and Thompson 23–27. S. Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London 1926) 25, cf. 159, suggested that "ordinary Gallo-Roman life probably went on as it had done . . . before the Visigoths appeared;" J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, "Gothia and Romania," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 44 (1961) 222 states that "the Gallo-Roman landlords did very reasonably well for themselves;" and Matthews 342 concurs, "the local upper classes preserved very much of their traditional mode of life."

⁵Matthews, for example, asserts that Leontius is "not the only" example of Aquitanian aristocratic continuity after a generation and more under Gothic rule (342), but he cites no others and in point of fact very few examples at all meeting these criteria can be found. For the *topos*, see Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 10.239–251, and *Liber historiae Francorum* 17.

⁶See, for example, A. Chastagnol, "Le diocèse civil d'Aquitaine au Bas-Empire," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1970) 272–292 and Rouch 183–248, "La terre et les richesses de l'Aquitaine."

Aquitania, at least, was non-disruptive has been exaggerated.⁷ Certainly, Aquitania has at least as many attested departures as the other areas that experienced occupation at this time. And although all unexplained departures need not have been out-and-out flight from the Goths, they did occur at a time when Gauls in general were tending to avoid foreign travel and concentrate on purely local interests.⁸ It is probable, therefore, that any who left had pressing reasons to do so. And there also is a significant amount of similar evidence to contest the assertion that the Aquitanian aristocracy survived the settlement essentially intact and undisturbed.⁹ The following short study, therefore, although it is not intended to suggest that the prosperity of some Aquitanian aristocrats did not continue, will question 1) the *extent* to which aristocrats chose to remain in Aquitania, and 2) the *extent* to which those who did remain continued to prosper. Because the main concern here is with the Visigothic occupation of southwestern Gaul, moreover, the generic term "Aquitania" will be used, unless otherwise specified, to refer to the area occupied by the Goths at any particular period.¹⁰

Some of the best evidence for departures caused by the arrival of the Visigoths in Aquitania comes from the *De reditu suo* of Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, a Gallic aristocrat who wrote of his journey from Rome to Gaul in 417. He calls Victorinus, a native of Toulouse and a former vicar of Britain, "a wanderer, whom the capture of Toulouse compelled to settle in the Tuscan lands and worship foreign gods" (1.495–496), and says of Protadius, a *civis* both of the *Quinque Provinciae* of southwestern Gaul and of Trier,¹¹ that "he exchanged his paternal inheritance for middling estates

⁷For recent views on the tenor of the barbarian settlement of the west, see Goffart and Thompson, *passim*. Although this study is confined to the literary and prosopographical evidence, one might note the use of archaeological evidence to show aristocratic continuity in Aquitania, as by J. B. Ward-Perkins, "The Sculpture of Visigothic France," *Archaeologia* 87 (1937) 99–101 and Rouche *passim*. But for the continuing insufficiency of the archaeological evidence, see E. M. Wightman, "Peasants and Potentates. An Investigation of Social Structure and Land Tenure in Roman Gaul," *AJAH* 3 (1978) 125 n. 94, "information from regions such as Aquitania is desperately needed."

⁸For Gallic isolation in general, see Matthews 19 and Stroheker 3; for the aversion to foreign travel, see A. Loyer, *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaule aux derniers jours de l'Empire* (Paris 1943) 60–61.

⁹A continuing problem of the barbarian settlement, which must be noted if not discussed here, is the means, in part through the institution of *hospitalitas*, by which the settlers appropriated their lands. For a recent discussion, see Goffart, *passim*.

¹⁰For the expansion of the Visigothic kingdom, see Matthews 314–345, Rouche 19–56, and Thompson 23–57.

¹¹For Protadius' Gallic ties, see Symmachus *Epist.* 4.30, *et tu non iisdem sedibus inmoraris, dum aut Treviros civica religione aut Quinque Provincias otii voluntate commutas*. J. Matthews, "Gallic Supporters of Theodosius," *Latomus* 30 (1971) 1096 suggests that Protadius' estates would have been in the south, where he took his leisure; see also Matthews 261–262.

in Umbria: his virtue has made each an equivalent fortune; his unconquered spirit oversees small things in place of great" (1.551–553). Protadius, therefore, not only had departed from Gaul, but had accepted a lowered standard of living in order to do so.¹²

Particularly noteworthy is the distress which befell one of the more prominent Aquitanian families, albeit one of rather recent origin, that of the poet, and consul of 379, Decimius Magnus Ausonius.¹³ One of his grandsons, Paulinus of Pella, tells how his Aquitanian property was despoiled at least four times after 406 (*Euch.* 239, 288, 317, 330, cf. 408–409). Not until after this, moreover, did the indecisive Paulinus seriously consider leaving the country because of the barbarians (*Euch.* 408–415):

...quorum mihi plurima saepe
adversa experto rursum suasere moranti
linquendas patriae sedes quantocius esse—
quod fecisse prius fuerat magis utile nobis—
illa ut contento peteremus litora cursu,
pars ubi magna mihi etiam nunc salva manebat
materni census, complures sparsa per urbes
Argivas atque Epiri Veterisque Novaeque...

... whose many repeated hostilities which I, delaying, had often endured convinced me that I must leave my homeland as quickly as possible—to have done so before would have been more useful for me—and that I should seek with an eager step those shores where even now a great part of my maternal inheritance remained intact, scattered about through many cities in Greece, and Old and New Epirus ...

But Paulinus never did leave—he blamed his wife's refusal for this (*Euch.* 494–495), and his property continued to be ravaged (*Euch.* 423).

Paulinus, then, even if he did choose to remain, at least did have other property outside Gaul which gave him the option of leaving. And his regret at not having done so was justified by his subsequent fate: he entered what he called *perpetuum exilium* (*Euch.* 491), and referred to himself as an *exul inops* (*ibid.* 542). After a stay at Marseilles he finally returned to Bordeaux, where in return for relinquishing any claim to his former property he was

¹²Rutilius also mentions his young relative Palladius whom he had left behind at Rome studying law (1.208–211). This Palladius was the son of Exsuperantius, a native of Poitiers and praetorian prefect of Gaul in 424; if the identification with Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus the author of a *De re rustica* is correct—see discussion in Matthews 328 n. 3, Stroheker 197–198, and Wightman (above, n. 7) 113—it may be significant that that work shows possession of estates in Italy and Sardinia but mentions no Gallic ones: they may have been lost and their owner never have returned home.

¹³For the decline of Ausonius' family under the barbarians, see C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule* (Paris 1921–1926) 8.138.

supported by his relatives (*Euch.* 520–563). As for Paulinus' offspring, none of them met any success in Visigothic Aquitania either. His two sons both soon died after failing in their attempts to recover some of the family property (*Euch.* 498–515), but his daughter was more fortunate, for she had left the country altogether: *excedens patria communi clade careret* (*Euch.* 327).¹⁴

Further evidence for the fate of Ausonius' family may come from a letter written by Jerome just before 410 to a certain Julianus and carried by Julianus' brother Ausonius who then was serving in some official capacity, perhaps as a *tribunus et notarius*.¹⁵ Given Ausonius' name, one might wish to suggest that he is to be identified with Censorius Magnus Ausonius, the brother of Paulinus of Pella and the son of Decimius Magnus Ausonius' daughter and Thalassius.¹⁶ Such a suggestion, however, would be the sheerest speculation were it not for an argument of nomenclature: both brothers, Ausonius and Julianus, then would have been named after their paternal grandfather, Severus Censor Julianus, the father of Thalassius.¹⁷

Julianus, like Paulinus, had suffered the devastation of his property by the barbarians (Jer. *Epist.* 118.2): *consecuta rei familiaris damna, vastationem totius barbaro hoste provinciae, et in communi depopulatione privatas possessionum tuarum ruinas . . .* He is described as building monasteries and supporting monks on the islands off the coast of Dalmatia, even though he had not entered the religious life himself (*ibid.* 5–6). Nevertheless, he is sometimes taken for a Gaul in the secondary sources (e.g., Stroheker 186), apparently for several reasons: the invasions mentioned seem to fit the Gallic ones, particular stress is laid upon the example of the Aquitanian Paulinus of Nola, and other letters in this section of Jerome's corpus also are addressed to Gauls. If he were in fact a Gaul, his identification as the brother of Censorius Magnus Ausonius and Paulinus of Pella becomes all the more reasonable, and he would be yet another Aquitanian aristocrat who fled the devastation in Gaul to foreign estates. Indeed, his activities in Dalmatia, the very area where Paulinus of Pella attests that his family had property, not only give further support to the hypothesis that the two were

¹⁴Note a parallel African example which had a happier ending: after the senator Gordianus had lost his property and fled the country in 442, two of his sons later returned and successfully reclaimed part of it (*Vita Fulgentii* 4: P.L. 65.118).

¹⁵Ausonius' official duties are implied by his use of the *balteus*, *punicea tunica*, and *cursus publicus* (Jer. *Epist.* 118.1). Jerome's reference to Ausonius as Julianus' *frater* must indicate a physical bond because neither of them was an ecclesiastic.

¹⁶For the younger Ausonius, see C. Seeck, *MGH AA* 6.1.lxxv–lxxvii; J. Martindale, "Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire: *Addenda* and *Corrigenda* to Volume I," *Historia* 23 (1974) 247; Stroheker suggests the relationship (152).

¹⁷For examples of this common pattern of nomenclature, see Heinzelmann 19–22; R. Mathisen, "Epistolography, Literary Circles and Family Ties in Late Roman Gaul," *TAPA* 111 (1981) 99–100; and Seeck (*ibid.*).

related, but also suggest that Julianus succeeded in accomplishing the flight which Paulinus had only contemplated.

Furthermore, if the Ausonius mentioned by Jerome is identified correctly as Censorius Magnus Ausonius, he chose a different means of coping with the circumstances in Gaul, by entering the imperial civil service. He ultimately may have settled in Italy, if he is related to the *vir inlustris* Ausonius who in 465 complained to the emperor Severus about the marital practices of the slaves and *coloni* in Rome (*Nov. Sev.* 2).

Other specific examples as well attest the difficulties which aristocrats in particular and landowners in general could face as a result of the initial barbarian occupation.¹⁸ Rutilius Namatianus himself had been forced to return to Gaul—some would say to Aquitania—because of the destruction of his property: *nec fas ulterius longas nescire ruinas* (*De. red.* 1.27).¹⁹ Circa 420, moreover, the Gallic aristocrat Theodorus, a relative of the future emperor Eparchius Avitus and like him, perhaps, a native of Aquitania Prima, was held by the Goths as a *nobilis obses* (*Sid. Apoll. Carm.* 7.215–220, *PLRE* 2.1087). And the anonymous authors of the *Carmen de providentia divina* and the *Poema coniugis ad uxorem* (*P.L.* 51.611 ff.) not only give a commonplace description of the barbarian destructiveness circa 406 and afterwards, but also tell of the personal hardship they experienced. One describes himself as a landowner:

*qui centum quondam terram vertebat aratris
aestuat ut geminos possit habere boves.* (*Poema* 17–18)²⁰

Seeking solace in religion, he goes on to say *non metuo exsilium* (*ibid.* 97). The other describes being carried off as a captive (*Carmen* 57–58). Now, both poems have been attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine, who after appearing in Marseilles circa 430 ultimately moved to Rome.²¹ He did so, of course, on the pretext of religion, but if he did indeed write either or both of the poems, there also would have been little to detain him in Gaul after

¹⁸Difficult either to classify or to evaluate is the unnamed Aquitanian poet who “shrank from his Cadurcan birthplace, loving Pandionian Athens more”—*Sid. Apoll. Carm.* 9.281–282 (the poet had known Sidonius’ father circa 430).

¹⁹He is usually taken for a Tolosan: see *PLRE* 2.770–771, Rouche 22, and Stroheker 193. But because his only specific reference is to his *gallica rura* (*De red.* 1.20), his property technically may not have been in Aquitania at all.

²⁰For discussion, see N. K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (London 1955) 122–124.

²¹For Prosper and the two poems, see Chadwick (*ibid.*) 122–123; E. S. Duckett, *Latin Writers of the Fifth Century* (New York 1930) 97–101; P.-M. Duval, *La Gaule jusqu’au milieu du Ve siècle* (Paris 1971) 743–744; Griffe 2.21–23; and M. Schanz, *Geschichte der römischen Litteratur* 4.2 (Munich 1920) 493–495.

the barbarians moved in.²² In general, then, the fate of at least some Aquitanian aristocrats would seem to be summed up in Salvian of Marseilles' bleak, if rhetorical, description circa 440 of the Aquitanians' moral condition:

ecce etiam nunc multi ex eis, licet patria careant et in comparatione praeteritarum opum pauperes vivant, peiores ferme sunt quam fuerunt... (De gub. dei 7.5)

behold, even now many of them, although they have lost their homes and live as paupers in comparison with their former riches, are almost more depraved than they were before.

It would appear, therefore, that for many Aquitanian aristocrats it was not simply business as usual after the Visigothic arrival and occupation. Undeniably, of course, some would have been able to maintain much or part of their former prosperity. But equally undeniably, others faced some difficult decisions and prospects. An aristocrat might have the option of departing altogether to the comparative safety of foreign estates, presuming that he had them, and even if he did, as in the case of Protadius, they might be of inferior quality. And those who chose to remain faced the possibility of economic ruin. Furthermore, many landowners, and especially the smaller ones, would not even have had the luxury of a choice and would have been compelled to remain, and bear the consequences of doing so. One such probably was the deacon who circa 470 had abandoned his property in the Visigothic kingdom, become a *peregrinus*, and fled to Auxerre, *depraedationis Gothicae turbinem vitans* (Sid. Apoll. Epist. 6.10.1–2). Others may have been the monk Marianus, who is said in a late source to have fled after 450 from Bourges to Auxerre to escape the Goths: *pollutionem eorum evitans . . . e laribus propriis commigravit* (Vita Mariani 1: AASS April vol. 2.758, cf. Gest. epp. Autis. 8: P.L. 138.229) or the man who circa 485 *pro absolutione uxoris per diversarum regionum est iactatus exsilia* (Faust. Epist. 7).

²²A number of other individuals also left Gaul after 406 for supposedly religious reasons: the Aquitanian Artemia went to Palestine (Jer. Epist. 122), as did the Aquitanian cleric Apodemius (*ibid.* 120) and an unnamed Narbonese *vir inlustris* (Oros. Cont. pag. 7.43); and Vigilantius, a priest of Comminges, went to Spain (Jer. Epist. 109, Gennad. Vir. ill. 36). Such Palestinian pilgrimages, however, also may have been encouraged by the new barbarian presence, as is attested in the case of two Spanish clerics who likewise went to the holy land at the same time, Orosius, and Avitus of Braga, who wrote of his inability to return home, *sed impeditum est desiderium meum per totas iam Hispanias hoste diffuso* (P.L. 41.805). Indeed, Brown (above, n. 1, 71) has referred to such travelers as "quite as much refugees as pilgrims." Another Aquitanian who later went to Rome was the *calculator* Victorius, who circa 457 had been requested by the archdeacon, later bishop, of Rome Hilarus to compose a paschal cursus (Gennad. Vir. ill. 89, P.L. supp. 3.379 ff.).

It is difficult, however, to estimate exactly what percentage of the total number of Aquitanian aristocrats endured such dire consequences as expulsion or ruin. In absolute terms, seven cases of actual or possible displacement or emigration and seven of certain or possible loss or destruction of property, as well as other forms of hardship, such as being held captive, have been cited. These presumably represent but a fraction of the total. Only twenty or so aristocratic families are even attested in the Visigothic kingdom at this time.²³ One could conclude, therefore, that the number of aristocratic families, if not the number of individuals, affected was indeed significant, and that few families were left relatively untouched by the barbarian presence.

It does not appear, moreover, that the cases of departure or destruction adduced so far were the result of any underlying policy of persecution, oppression, or harassment of the Aquitanian aristocracy by the Visigoths; they appear, rather, to have been merely an incidental result of the occupation as a whole. Aristocratic departures, indeed, seem to have been essentially a matter of choice, as suggested by Paulinus of Pella's own agonizing over what to do, and destruction of property, though it presumably affected some aristocrats more than others, does not seem to have singled out particular individuals or groups. Such considerations are significant because during the period of Visigothic expansion in the latter half of the century, as the following discussion will show, certain elements of the aristocracy do in fact seem to have been singled out for harsh treatment, especially in previously unoccupied areas as they came under Gothic control. And as a result, aristocrats now had to cope with the additional worry of their individual relations with the Goths.

For the period circa 460–475, several more examples of aristocratic relocation are attested. By this time, however, it seems that most or all of those who had both the desire and the opportunity to leave the country had done so, and resettlement now occurred within Gaul. Two of Sidonius' relatives, for example, the brothers Simplicius and Apollinaris, moved from their estates near Nîmes to Vaison, and another brother, Thaumastus, moved from his near Narbonne to Vienne, all apparently to escape the Visigoths.²⁴ In 475, Sidonius' brother-in-law Ecdicius, a native of Clermont and the master-of-soldiers of Julius Nepos, was recalled to Rome, and some evidence suggests that he and his sons may have remained there, correctly believing it imprudent to return to Gaul.²⁵

²³R. Mathisen, *The Ecclesiastical Aristocracy of Fifth-Century Gaul: A Regional Analysis of Family Structure* (diss. Madison 1979) 123–208, summarized in *Dissertation Abstracts* 40.7 (1980) 4169A–4170A.

²⁴C. E. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris and his Age* (Oxford 1933) 140, 195–196, and Stroheker 145, 223–224.

²⁵Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 5.16.1–2, 4; Jord. *Get.* 240–241. Circa 507/511, the Ostrogothic

In the same year year, the Auvergne was ceded to the Goths, and just before the occupation Sidonius, one of the leaders of the resistance, wrote to the bishop of Marseilles Graecus about what he thought should be done as a result: *parate exulibus terram, capiendis redemptionem, viaticum peregrinaturis* (*Epist.* 7.7.6). That this was no rhetorical exaggeration is demonstrated not only by Sidonius' own subsequent exile, but also by the flight in 479 of Sidonius' son Apollinaris and the *comes* and *dux* Victorius (so appointed by the Visigoths) to Rome in order to escape the wrath of the Visigothic king Euric (466–484) (Greg. Tur. *Glor. mart.* 44). Unlike earlier departing aristocrats, these latter two had no Italian estates; but they did have a more pressing reason for immediate departure, their personal safety.²⁶ Their choice of Rome as a destination may have been influenced by the presence of Apollinaris' uncle Ecdicius, if he was in fact still there.

Others who remained in Visigothic Aquitania continued to face the prospect of economic ruin or worse. The sixth-century *vita* of bishop Vivianus of Saintes tells how circa 460 the Goths first confiscated the property of the *mediocres* and then not only attempted to do the same to the *nobiles*, but also imprisoned them to boot: they were saved only by the intervention of their bishop (*MGH SRM* 3.96–98).²⁷ The *vir spectabilis* Simplicius of Bourges was confined by the Goths in a *barbaricus carcer* (Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 7.9.20). The *vir inlustris* Eucherius of Bourges, who, like Sidonius, supported the imperial government to the end (*Epist.* 3.8), was first imprisoned and then executed at Clermont in the late 470s by the aforementioned Victorius (Greg. Tur. *Hist. Franc.* 2.20).

A reason why Sidonius and others survived and Eucherius did not probably is to be sought in one of the ways used by the aristocrats who remained to find a *modus vivendi* under the Goths. Only a few, such as Pontius Leontius of Bordeaux and his family, were able to maintain themselves in the isolated splendor of their estates (Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 22,

king Theodoric ordered *ut Ecdicii filios, quos in urbe primitus residere censuimus, ad patriam cum genitoris sui funere . . . remeare iubeatis* (Cass. *Var.* 2.22). Now, not only is the Arvernian Ecdicius known to have been in Rome earlier, but Ecdicius also is a rare name, and both western Ecdicii (excluding this sixth-century one) listed in *PLRE* 2.383–384 are Gallic. The foreign Ecdicius who died in Rome and whose sons desired to return home may well have been the Arvernian: note the date, immediately after the Gothic defeat at Vouillé, removing Clermont from Visigothic control and eliminating the possibility of Visigothic reprisals against them. Their desire to return could suggest that like the Africans noted above (n. 14), they had some property to return to.

²⁶Victorius ultimately was killed at Rome, whereas Apollinaris was sent *in exilium apud urbem Mediolanensem*, whence he eventually escaped back to Clermont. One might note in passing a *quaedam vero puella ab urbe Tolosa praeclaris orta natalibus* who supposedly also went to Rome shortly thereafter, at the time of Alaric II, to be cured of an illness (*Vita Remedii* 16 ff: *MGH AA* 4.2.64–67).

²⁷For similar Gothic exactions at this time, see *Vita Orientii* 5 (AASS May vol. 1.63).

Epist. 8.11.3, 8.12.5–8). Others were able to obtain one of the scarce secular positions available in the Gothic government.²⁸ But a more widespread tendency among the Gallo-Roman aristocrats in Visigothic Aquitania, as elsewhere, was to take refuge in church office, which allowed one to retain not only local influence but also some personal security.²⁹ Indeed, circa 470, with the Visigothic occupation of Aquitania imminent, Sidonius offered such a course as the only alternative to leaving the country: *statuit...nobilitas seu patriam demittere seu capillos* (*Epist.* 2.1.4). The option, of course, was nothing new: Paulinus of Pella, after failing to get out of Gaul, likewise failed in a subsequent attempt to become a monk (*Euch.* 410–457). As the century wore on, competition for episcopal office increased, and Eucherius was one of the unfortunate losers, having failed circa 470 in a bid to become bishop of Bourges (Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 7.9.18).

The victors such as the pro-Romans Simplicius of Bourges and Sidonius of Clermont, escaped execution when the Gothic occupation came, even if they experienced exile, and perhaps confiscation of their property.³⁰ Crocus of Nîmes was also an exile by 475, and Faustus of Riez and Marcellus of Die joined them shortly thereafter.³¹ Sidonius also catalogues nine cities where Euric had forbidden the ordination of new bishops (*Epist.* 7.6.7). Late in the next century, these Visigothic reprisals were to be described by Gregory of Tours as a *gravem in Galliis super Christianos ... persecutionem* (*Hist. Franc.* 2.25), but the evidence would suggest that the Arian Euric was not attacking orthodox Christian beliefs *per se*—despite Sidonius' protestations to the contrary (*Epist.* 7.6.6)—but the Catholic leadership, and for essentially political rather than religious reasons.³²

²⁸Romans do not begin to appear in Visigothic service with any regularity until the very end of Roman rule in Gaul. Note, for example, Leo of Narbonne, a *consiliarius* of Euric, the *magister militum* Arborius, Euric's admiral Namatius of Saintes, the *dux* Vincentius, and the aforementioned Victorius (all in *PLRE* 2).

²⁹See Heinzelmänn *passim* and Stroheker 71–75.

³⁰Sidonius: Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 4.10.1 (in a *peregrinatio, soli patrii finibus eliminatum*), 4.22.4 (in a *peregrinatio*), 8.9.2–3 (*ago adhuc exulem*), 9.3.3 (as a *peregrinus, exactus solo patrio*); Simplicius: *ibid.* 7.6.9 (*exilii . . . poena*), 7.9.16–25.

³¹Crocus: Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 7.6.9 and L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule* 1 (Paris 1907) 311. Faustus: Faust. *Epist.* 2, 5, 16 and Ruricius *Epist.* 1.1–2. Marcellus: AASS April vol. 1.824–826. It has been assumed by P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques* (Paris 1964) 202, Ruche 46, and others, that Ruricius must have been exiled to Bordeaux, but Ruric. *Epist.* 1.17.5 not only makes no mention of Bordeaux, but also appears to refer to a metaphorical, spiritual exile rather than a material one: see B. Krusch, *MGH AA* 8.lxiii.

³²K. F. Stroheker, *Eurich, König der Westgoten* (Stuttgart 1937) 43–61 plays down the extent of Euric's interference in the orthodox church, but his assertion that Faustus' exile was "ein Einzelfall" (58) cannot be accepted. For the more conventional view, see Griffe 82–93. For interference by the Vandals in the North African church, see Jones 262–264.

Certainly, such harassment for the same reason continued under Euric's successor Alaric II (484–507). In the mid 490s, Volusianus, the bishop of Tours, was exiled by the Goths, as described by Gregory (*Hist. Franc.* 10.31, cf. 2.26): *suspectus habitus a Gothis . . . apud urbem Tholosam exilio comdempnatus, in eo obiit*. Volusianus' immediate successor, Verus, fared no better: *suspectus habitus a Gothis, in exilio deductus vitam finivit* (*ibid.* 10.31). Later, in 506, bishop Caesarius of Arles spent some time in Bordeaux, *quasi in exilio* (*Vita Caesarii* 1.21), and not long afterwards, the bishop of Rodez, Quintianus, already exiled from Africa, was forced by Gothic suspicions to go into exile at Clermont (Greg. Tur. *Vit. pat.* 4.1, *Hist. Franc.* 3.2). What all these bishops were suspected of was plotting with other barbarians, usually the Franks. And what they all suffered, one notes, was exile rather than execution, and one might conclude that, if anything, the Gothic regard for religion introduced an element of restraint into their response, rather than serving as a pretext for persecution.

Thus far, this discussion of the decline of the Aquitanian aristocracy under the Visigoths has been from a strictly internal point of view. One might note briefly that the Aquitanian aristocracy also apparently underwent a comparative decline vis-à-vis the Gallo-Roman aristocracy in other parts of Gaul. This can be seen, for example, in the collections of letters of two Aquitanian bishops, Sidonius of Clermont (circa 470–485) and Ruricius of Limoges (circa 485–507). Sidonius, who corresponded with many, if not most, of the noteworthy Gallo-Roman aristocrats of his day, numbered among his correspondents only two *viri inlustres* in Visigothic territory prior to the occupation of Bourges (circa 470) and Clermont (475); and Ruricius' correspondents, nearly all of them Aquitanians, include no *viri inlustres* at all. For comparative purposes, one might check the letters of Avitus of Vienne (circa 490–518), which include letters to nine *viri inlustres* in Burgundian territory, but only one in Visigothic.³³

Moreover, after the withdrawal from the Rhine, one does not find elsewhere in Gaul evidence for flight or the loss of property to nearly the extent that it is found in Aquitania. There could be several reasons for this. The Visigoths, for example, tended to have a more adversarial relationship with the imperial government than the Burgundians and Franks.³⁴ But another possibility is that the Aquitanian aristocrats were the first in Gaul to

³³Sidonius: Pontius Leontius (*Carm.* 22.196) and Rusticus (*Epist.* 2.11.2), both of Bordeaux, which seems to be where the Gallo-Roman aristocracy survived best in the early years of the Gothic occupation. Sidonius also corresponded with three *inlustres* from Clermont, two from Bourges, and at least thirteen from the rest of Gaul. For the correspondence of Avitus, see *MGH AA* 6.2: his only "Aquitanian" correspondent was his cousin, Sidonius' son Apollinaris, himself technically a native of Lyons.

³⁴Sidonius' relatives (above, n. 24) seem to have preferred the Burgundians to the Visigoths. Jones suggests that the Visigoths did not even recognize senatorial status (259).

experience life under barbarian rule on a large scale, and they had to learn by trial and error. Some clearly learned better than others. If the Visigothic occupation of Aquitania did not destroy the resident Gallo-Roman aristocracy, therefore, it nonetheless certainly did give them a wholly new situation to cope with which occasioned a wholly new set of responses. And if the Aquitanians were not totally successful in dealing with the changed conditions of the fifth century, the lesson they provided was not lost on their aristocratic cousins in central and southern Gaul, who later found it possible to coexist first with the Burgundians, and later with the Ostrogoths and Franks.

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