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**TWO AMALI PEREGRINATIONS TO THE KINGDOM  
OF VISIGOTHS: HOW THEODERIC THE GREAT  
AND EUTHARIC LEGITIMISED THEIR AUTHORITY  
OVER THE ‘UNITED’ GOTHS**

*Praelata est ergo spes nostra cunctorum meritis  
et certius fuit de nobis credi quam quod de aliis  
potuit approbari: non iniuria, quoniam quaevis  
claritas generis Hamalis cedit et sicut ex vobis  
qui nascitur, origo senatoria nuncupatur, ita qui  
ex hac familia progreditur, regno dignissimus  
approbatur.*<sup>1</sup>

King Athalaric, in a letter to the Senate

In 515, Theoderic the Great, ruler of Italy (d. 526), married his daughter Amalasu(n)tha off to a Goth brought from Spain, named Eutharic, thereby probably making him his successor.<sup>2</sup> Theoderic is namely said to have ‘made it apparent’<sup>3</sup> that Eutharic, Goth living in

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<sup>1</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variae epistolae*, VIII, 2, 3, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi* (hereafter: AA), 12 (Berlin, 1894), 232.

<sup>2</sup> For the date of the marriage, cf. Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH, AA, 11 (Berlin, 1894), 160, *sub anno* 515. The best available biography of Theoderic is by Wilhelm Ensslin, *Theoderich der Große* (2nd edn Munich, 1959). John Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford, 1992) is also worth visiting.

<sup>3</sup> Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH, AA, 5, 1 (Berlin, 1882) (hereafter: *Getica*), c. 298, p. 134–5: ‘... comperit Eutharicum Veterici filium Beretmodi et Thorismodi nepotem, Amalorum de stirpe descendentem, in Spania degi, iuvenili aetate prudentia et virtute corporisque integritate pollentem. ad se eum facit venire eique Amalasuentham filiam suam in matrimonio iungit’. *Comperire* literarily means to discover, learn, or bring to light; Herwig Wolfram uses ‘to discover’ (*entdecken*) as the equivalent – cf. *idem*, *Die Goten: von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (4th edn Munich, 2001), 43. Wolfram however admits that ‘[i]t is possible that

Spain, was a descendant of the younger line of the Amali royal family, son of Veteric and descendant of Beremud and Thorismud. Eutharic belongs to one of the most mysterious and most fascinating figures in the history of Goths. It was for this reason that many historians tried to answer the question about the background of this man who, made a consul in 519, together with emperor Justinus II, ranked among the mightiest people of the world at the time. Eutharic was considered to be an Ostrogoth or, elsewhere, a Visigoth; what is more, he was ascribed an Alanian origin.<sup>4</sup>

The source that tells us most about the background of Theoderic's son-in-law is *De origine actibusque Getarum*, the work by Jordanes, hereinafter called *Getica*, written down in Constantinople after March 551. Basing his account partly on the now-lost *Historia Gothorum* by Cassiodorus, written on order of Theoderic himself, reported on two wanderers Ostrogoth people made into territories inhabited by the Visigoths. First, Beremud, Eutharic's grandfather, and Veteric, his father, left their Ostrogoth countrymen and went to the Visigoth royal court. In the second case, Theoderic's first cousin, an Amal named Vidimir, who originally was to be involved, along with his namesake father, in an attack on the Western-Roman Empire. Persuaded to this end by emperor Glycerius, he made it to Galia where his Ostrogoth kinsmen joined the Visigoths.

Beremud's arrival at the Visigoth court was reported by Jordanes thus:

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Jordanes describes, and hushes up, the exclusion [*resp.* elimination] of Amalaric by Eutharic' ['Möglicherweise meint und verschleiert Jordanes, *Getica*, 298; S. 134 f., die Ausschaltung Amalarichs durch Eutharich'] – *ibidem*, 502, fn. 14. This supposition appears not too convincing, though.

<sup>4</sup> See Philip Grierson, 'Election and Inheritance in Early Germanic Kingship', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vii, 1 (1941), 1–22; John M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West, 400–1000* (Oxford, 1989), 34–5; Ian Wood, 'Royal Succession and Legitimation in the Roman West, 419–536', in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (eds.), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), 59–72. An Alanian background of Eutharic is advocated by Bernard S. Bachrach, this American scholar bases his statement primarily on *Gesta Theoderici regis*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, 2 (Hanover, 1888), 200–14; page 206 thereof reads: 'Amalasuindam, terciam filiam, Eutarico, ex Alanorum stirpe venienti, evocato ab Hispania tradidit'. See Bernard S. Bachrach, *A History of the Alans in the West: From Their First Appearance in the Sources of Classical Antiquity through the Early Middle Ages* (Minnesota Monographs in the Humanities, 7, Minneapolis, 1973), 95.

Just at that time Beremud, the son of Thorismud, whom we have mentioned above in the genealogy of the family of the Amali, departed with his son Veteric from the Ostrogoths, who still submitted to the oppression of the Huns in the land of Scythia, and came to the kingdom of the Visigoths. Well aware of his valor and noble birth, he believed that the kingdom would be the more readily bestowed upon him by his kinsmen, inasmuch as he was known to be the heir of many kings. And who would hesitate to choose one of the Amali, if there were an empty throne? But he was not himself eager to make known who he was, and so upon the death of Valia the Visigoths made Theodorid his successor. Beremud came to him and, with the strength of mind for which he was noted, concealed his noble birth by prudent silence, for he knew that those of royal lineage are always distrusted by kings. So he suffered himself to remain unknown, that he might not bring the established order into confusion. King Theodorid received him and his son with special honor and made him partner in his counsels and a companion at his board; not for his noble birth, which he knew not, but for his brave spirit and strong mind, which Beremud could not conceal.<sup>5</sup>

This excerpt from *Getica* has had varying interpretations. Herwig Wolfram, the main proponent of a longevity of the Amali dynastic tradition, believed that:

The *Origo* [*Getica*] indicates a tendency for recognising the detachment from the main Ostrogoth tribe as a betrayal, which eventually destroyed the Amalicity. Only Theoderic himself could redress for this loss, as in

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<sup>5</sup> *Getica*, c. 174–5, p. 103: ‘... eo videlicet tempore, quo Beremud, Thorismundo patre progenitus, de quo in catalogo Amalorum familiae superius diximus, cum filio Vitiricho ab Ostrogothis, qui adhuc in Scythiae terras Hunnorum opprobriis subiacebant, ad Vesegotharum regnum migravit. Conscius enim virtutis et generis nobilitate facilius sibi credens principatum a parentibus deferre, quem heredem regum constabat esse multorum. Quis namque de Amalo dubitaret, si vacasset elegere? Sed nec ipse adeo voluit, quis esset, ostendere. Et illi iam post mortem Valliae Theoderidum ei dederat successorem. Ad quem veniens Beremud animi pondere qua valebat eximio generis sui amplitudine commoda taciturnitate suppressit, sciens regnantibus semper regali stirpe genitos esse suspectos. Passus est ergo ignorari, ne faceret ordinata confundi. Susceptusque cum filio suo a rege Theodorido honorifice nimis, adeo ut nec consilio suo expertem nec convivio faceret alienum, non tamen pro generis nobilitate, quam ignorabat, sed pro animi fortitudine et robore mentis, quam non poterat occultare’. (Trans. Charles G. Mierow, in Jordanes, *The origin and deeds of the Goths* [Princeton, 1908], <<http://people.ucalgary.ca/~vandersp/Courses/texts/jordgeti.html>> [Accessed: 18 April 2012]. All the following citations from the translation to English of the *Getica* are quoted thereafter).

the Eutharic's case. Yet it was Veteric the Visigoth that has twice done what the Amali loathed so much; he set forth before the Huns arrived, leaving the Ostrogoths in the lurch.<sup>6</sup>

In a much more recent version of his interpretation, the Austrian scholar phrases the issue as follows:

The Ansic-Amali tradition was unknown to the Terwings and thereafter, to the Visigoths. Whoever went over from the Amali to the Visigoths would lose their Amalicity until King Theoderic the Great rediscovered it, that is to say, recognised it.<sup>7</sup>

Peter J. Heather, British scholar dealing with the history of the Amali, otherwise interprets the mention of the peregrinations Ostrogoths made to the countries populated by their 'kindred' Visigoths:

The *Getica* states that this took place because Beremud grew to despise those Goths who had accepted Hun domination (33:174f.). However, as the son of Thorismud, an independent Gothic leader, Beremud was important in his own right and would have posed a threat to rising Amal power. As the case of Gensemund shows (and as is well documented more generally among Germanic tribal groups), important men attracted their own following of armed retainers. This made them a dangerous focus for any discontent, and a potential rival such as Beremud was unlikely to be left in peace by an emerging dynastic line. He probably chose to move west rather than continue the struggle with the Amals or accept subordination. His action finds a parallel in Valamir's brother Vidimir, who in c. 473 also went west, seemingly after a quarrel with the other brother, Thiudimir.

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<sup>6</sup> Herwig Wolfram, 'Theogonie, Ethnogenese und ein kompromittierter Großvater im Stammbaum Theoderichs des Großen', in Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke and Reinhard Wenskus (eds.), *Festschrift für Helmut Beumann zum 65. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1977), 80–97; quote from p. 87: 'Die *Origo* läßt die Tendenz erkennen, Abspaltungen vom ostrogotischen Hauptstamm als einen Verrat zu qualifizieren, der das Amalertum zerstörte. Nur Theoderich selbst konnte den Verlust, wie im Falle Eutharichs gutmachen. Nun hat aber gerade der westgotische Vidirich as zweimal getan, was die Amaler verabscheuten; er rückte vor den Hunnen aus und ließ die Ostrogothen im Stich'.

<sup>7</sup> Herwig Wolfram, 'Die terwingisch-vesische Verfassung und das Bibelgotische', in *idem*, *Gotische Studien. Volk und Herrschaft im frühen Mittelalter* (Munich, 2005), 66–113; quote from pp. 105–6: 'Den Terwingen und nach ihnen den Westgoten blieb die ansich-amalische Tradition fremd. Wer von den Amalern zu den Westgoten ging, verlor sein Amalertum, sofern es nicht ein König wie Theoderich der Grosse wieder entdeckte, das heißt, anerkannte'.

The *Getica* again hides the event's political connotations (56:283), but the three Amal brothers each had their own followings and did sometimes act independently.<sup>8</sup>

These quotations from the two scholars call for an exhaustive commentary. Let us start from the interpretation proposed by H. Wolfram. This Austrian scholar quotes three excerpts from *Getica* – c. 174f., c. 251, and c. 283f. as evidence for his assertion of ‘destroyed Amal-icity’ of Eutharic’s ancestors<sup>9</sup> *Getica* c. 174–5 has already been quoted; with the two other fragments, one also finds it difficult to identify an argument to support Wolfram’s thesis. *Getica* c. 251 only says that it was owing to contempt for the Ostrogoth people when the latter fell into dependence on the Huns, Beremud went west to the Visigoths.<sup>10</sup> The last mentioned fragment (c. 284) notifies that the departure of Vidimir the Elder and his expedition to Italy was initiated by Thiudimir, Theoderic’s father, who, once lots were cast, encouraged his brother to sally forth to Italy where Glycerius reigned.<sup>11</sup> None of those references can possibly be the genuine basis for the thesis proposed by Wolfram; none enables one to make out a ‘tendency’ in *Getica* to see detachments from the Ostrogoth tribe in terms of a treason that would automatically destroy the ‘Amal-icity’, or ‘Amal(i) identity’, of the kin’s members migrating to the Visigoths.

Heather also seems to indulge in fantasies as, taking *Getica* c. 174 as the basis, he is able to find that Beremud’s ‘westward’ expedition was an alternative option to conforming to Valamir or fighting against him. The same thing concerns the other trek – Vidimir’s departure, made ‘seemingly after a quarrel with the other brother’. Such attempts at excavating ‘(pieces of) the real history’ of the Amali from the *Getica* narrative prove to be mere conjectures, backed with no source whatsoever.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Heather, ‘Cassiodorus and the Rise of the Amals: Genealogy and the Goths under Hun Domination’, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 79 (1989), 103–28, quote from pp. 122–3.

<sup>9</sup> Wolfram, ‘Theogonie’, 87, fn. 46.

<sup>10</sup> *Getica*, c. 251, p. 122: ‘Beremud iam contempta Ostrogotharum gente propter Hunnorum dominio ad partes Hesperias Vesegotharum fuisset gente secutus’.

<sup>11</sup> *Getica*, c. 283, p. 131: ‘qui accito germano missaque sorte hortatus est, ut ille in parte Italiae, ubi tunc Glycerius regnabat imperator, ipse vero sicut fortior ad fortiorem regnum accederet Orientalem: quod et factum est’.

The comment made by Heather gives rise to yet another issue – namely, if *Getica* ‘hides the event’s political connotations’, then how can a researcher discover what Jordanes’s work is thus meant to hide? This is not explained, though, and no methodological key to the interpretation proposed by the British scholar is made available to us. How can the mention of Beremud be interpreted, for it to be reasonably related with the source providing us with information on this figure, rather than being a free and unsupported ‘creativity’ of a historian?

The lost *Historia Gothorum* by Cassiodorus, written on command of Theoderic the Great, sometime between 516 and 533, is often regarded as a work whose role was to legitimise the future reign of Eutharic or Athalaric.<sup>12</sup> Cassiodorus wrote the *Historia* after several occurrences of essential importance to the Amali took place. In 511, Theoderic, having seized the power from Gesalic (d. 513), son of his son-in-law Alaric II (d. 507), came to the Visigoth throne himself.<sup>13</sup> In 515, finally disillusioned for any chance to beget a male descendant, the Ostrogothic/Visigothic king gave his daughter as a wife to Eutharic, as already mentioned. It is believed that Eutharic was to take over the rule over the Ostrogoths as well as the Visigoths after Theoderic’s death.<sup>14</sup> It can be guessed that *Historia Gothorum* was meant to provide an ideological superstructure to enable legitimation of authority for both Theoderic and Eutharic over a ‘united kingdom of the Goths’. Jordanes’s *Getica*, based to an extent on this missing work,

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<sup>12</sup> Athalaric, son of Eutharic and Amalasintha, must have been born in 516. Cassiodorus wrote in his work about seventeen generations of the Amali house; Athalaric was the seventeenth generation. According to Jordanes, Theoderic passed before his death the royal power to Athalaric *infantum adhuc vix decennem* – *Getica*, c. 304. The year 516 set the *terminus a quo* Cassiodorus’s work was written. Legitimation of Eutharic as the main purpose behind writing down the *Historia Gothorum* is advocated by James J. O’Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1979), 30–50, and Stefan Krautschick, *Cassiodor und die Politik seiner Zeit* (Habelts Dissertationsdrucke: Reihe Alte Geschichte, 17, Bonn, 1983), 30–4. Athalaric’s legitimation as objective for Cassiodorus was opted for by e.g. Heinrich von Sybel, *Entstehung des deutschen Königthums* (2nd edn Frankfurt a.M., 1881), 174–210. The last proponent of this claim that we are aware of is Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Publications in Medieval Studies, Notre Dame, 2005), 31–42.

<sup>13</sup> Wolfram, *Die Goten*, 247.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, 329.

possibly reinforced Cassiodorus's endeavours to validate the rule of the Amali sovereigns over the Visigoths, through the accounts of the two peregrinations of the Amals to the kingdom of Visigoths.

The figure of Eutharic is the *raison d'être* of the *Getica* c. 174–5 passage.<sup>15</sup> Jordanes explains to his readers what has actually driven Beremud and Veteric – the grandfather and the father of Eutharic, respectively – into the kingdom of Visigoths. Once there, Beremud concealed his identity as an Amal, and hence the Visigoths, unaware that they had among themselves a member of the royal family and a 'descendant of many a king', elected Theodorid to the throne. Beremud knew that kings tended to extend their suspiciousness to individuals of a royal descent, and so did not reveal his true origin to Theodorid. This fact explains the reason(s) for some occurrences taking place thereafter. One of them was that it was only Theoderic to discover, as he exercised custody of his Visigothic grandson Amalaric (son of Alaric and Theodegotho), that Eutharic, a descendant of the Amali lineage, lived in Spain. Theoderic subsequently brought the 'newly discovered' Amal to his place and gave his daughter Amalasantha away to him, thus, as Jordanes puts it, merging the hitherto-divided house of the Amali.<sup>16</sup> Yet, this connection of the two Amali lines is but one of the symbolic motifs in the Jordanes narration.

The *Getica* narrative, when approached in an unbiased way, leads one to a firm and definite conclusion that Beremud was a would-be ruler of the Ostrogoths but as he disdained them due to their dependence upon the Huns, he went away, thus for ever losing the opportunity to become their king after the tragic death of his father, King Thorismud. As there were no adult members of the royal house or kingdom heirs in place, the Ostrogoths had to wait till Valamir, son of Vandalarius and member of the elder Amali line, whilst the interregnum was to last with them for a biblical number of forty years. The description of Beremud's arrival at the Visigoth court notes that there was an option for him to become a legitimate ruler of the

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<sup>15</sup> Goffart, *The Narrators*, 33, fn. 58. Goffart is a leader of so-called 'minimalists' with regard to the ideological message of Cassiodorus's work as preserved within *Getica* by Jordanes. But even he claims that 'Jordanes's *Getica* stresses that Eutharic was an Amal, descended from a collateral branch, and that his marriage to Amalasantha therefore joined Amal to Amal. Very probably, Cassiodorus was Jordanes's source' – *ibidem*, 32.

<sup>16</sup> *Getica*, c. 251, p. 122.

Visigoths once their King Vallia dies. This makes *Getica's* message unambiguous: Beremud was a would-be ruler of both the Ostrogoths and Visigoths. On writing this particular fragment, Jordanes probably drew from an account found in the now-lost work by Cassiodorus. One of the objectives behind it probably was, as was already mentioned, to legitimise Eutharic who was meant to inherit from his father-in-law the rule over the Ostrogoths and also over the other Gothic people – the Visigoths, whose King Theoderic had been since 511.<sup>17</sup> Jordanes's narration thereby persuades us that Eutharic, envisioned as the ruler-to-be for the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths, had within his lineage certain predecessors who also had had a chance of being kings of both peoples, or just had become such kings – to name the lineage's central ancestor, Ermenaric, 'the noblest of the Amali'. Thus, Eutharic's future authority became 'historically' validated, once his forefathers, such as a king whose name was Ostrogotha, had ruled both people, or at least had opportunities to do so – as the case was with his own grandfather Beremud. Beside this, the Beremud arrival narrative clearly suggests that the Amali constituted a legitimate royal house, having the right to rule over all the Goths. The *Getica* message shows how far the Amali rule over the Visigoths – particularly with regards to Eutharic and his forebears – was validated, and, that they had more right to it than Theodorid and his offspring, which included Alaric II and his two sons, Gesalic and Amalaric.<sup>18</sup>

The second Amali peregrination – the arrival of both Vidimirs to Italy, with the younger one setting out for Galia afterwards, also seems to form part of the Goths' unity message. The Jordanes narrative goes in this respect as follows: After Thorismud died, and Beremud left together with his son Veteric, having symbolically waited for forty years, the Ostrogoths had a sovereign with them again: Valamir was made their new king.<sup>19</sup> He was supported by his two younger brothers, Thiudimir and Vidimir. In Pannonia, each of the brothers led one of the three Ostrogoth groups.<sup>20</sup> After Valamir was killed in a battle against the people of Sciri, his Goths are said to have run away

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<sup>17</sup> Wolfram, *Die Goten*, 329.

<sup>18</sup> Although Amalaric was, through his mother, a grandson of Theoderic the Great, this does not imply that he had ever had any role to play in his grandfather's designs and was regarded by him to be a full-right member of the house.

<sup>19</sup> *Getica*, c. 253, p. 123.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, c. 268, p. 128.



to join Thiudimir.<sup>21</sup> He therefore gathered, and united under his direct rule, two of the three Ostrogoth groups. Having next summoned Vidimir, the youngest brother, Thiudimir set out for his victorious war against the enemies. Some time later, Theoderic, Thiudimir's son, was back from Constantinople. As he turned eighteen of age, Jordanes says, he summoned certain followers of his father and some friends and clients, and set off for a conquering expedition against the Sarmatian leader Babay.<sup>22</sup> It might be guessed that Theoderic thus made up a squad whose members came from the group that had been governed by his father under Valamir's rule. With time, poverty stared the Ostrogoths in the face. According to Jordanes, the Goths requested their King Thiudimir to lead them wherever he would be willing to. Thiudimir called his brother Vidimir and impelled him to set forth against Italy, whilst himself, together with his son Theoderic, he set out to face the more powerful Eastern-Roman Empire. Soon after he was into Italy, Vidimir died and the ruling emperor successfully persuaded his namesake son to set off with his people toward Gaul. Jordanes describes it thus:

Thereupon Vidimir entered the land of Italy, but soon paid the last debt of fate and departed from earthly affairs, leaving his son and namesake Vidimir to succeed him. The Emperor Glycerius bestowed gifts upon Vidimir and persuaded him to go from Italy to Gaul, which was then harassed on all sides by various races, saying that their own kinsmen, the Visigoths, there ruled a neighboring kingdom. And what more? Vidimir accepted the gifts and, obeying the command of the Emperor Glycerius, pressed on to Gaul. Joining with his kinsmen the Visigoths, they again formed one body, as they had been long ago. Thus they held Gaul and Spain by their own right and so defended them that no other race won the mastery there.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, c. 278, p. 130.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, c. 282, p. 131.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, c. 283–4, p. 131: '... et mox Vidimir Italiae terras intravit, extremum fati munus reddens rebus excessit humanis, successorem relinquens Vidimir filium suumque synonymum. quem Glycerius imperator muneribus datis de Italia ad Gallias transtulit, quae a diversis circumcirca gentibus praemebantur, asserens vicinos ibi Vesegothas eorum parentes regnare. quid multum? Vidimir acceptis muneribus simulque mandata a Glycerio imperatore Gallias tendit seseque cum parentibus Vesegothis iungens unum corpus efficiunt, ut dudum fuerant, et sic Gallias Spaniasque tenentes suo iuri defendunt, ut nullus ibi alius prevaleret'.

The narration of *Getica* once again emphasises a ‘natural’ unity and community of both Gothic people – the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths. Actually, Jordanes devotes the entire first section of his work to this period of unity. Ostrogotha, in Jordanes’s words, was the ruler ‘to whose rule Ostrogoths and Visigoths alike, that is, the two peoples of the same tribe, were still subject’.<sup>24</sup> After the death of King Ermenaric, the ancestor of Eutharic’s lineage – or, after a traitorous blow was struck at him by the otherwise unknown Rosomons – Visigoths detached themselves from Ostrogoths. Ermenaric’s death concludes the first part of *Getica*, and it is his decease that opens the section on the history of Visigoths. The third part of *Getica* is devoted to Ostrogoths, and it is in this section that Jordanes informs that Vidimir the Younger’s Ostrogoths, ‘joining with his kinsmen the Visigoths, ... again formed one body, as they had been long ago’ (*cum parentibus Vesegothis iungens unum corpus efficiunt, ut dudum fuerant*). Thus, Vidimir the Younger’s group put an end to the division of the Goths which had once broke up the ‘Gothic unity’ though a division into two ‘fraternal’ tribes. This is meaningful as Vidimir the Younger’s Ostrogoths whose superior ruler had once been Valamir who was succeeded by Thiudimir, Theoderic’s father. As we can remember, after Valamir’s death, Thiudimir united two of the three Ostrogoth groups under his direct rule. Once Thiudimir died, his son Theoderic was made the new king with the Ostrogoths. Being a superior ruler of all the Ostrogothic groups, Theoderic had the full right to claim authority over the Ostrogoths, as remerged with the Visigoths. The description of Vidimir’s Ostrogoths, as merged with the Visigoths into ‘a single body’ they had once constituted, might be a remnant of the ideological message of Cassiodorus whose work was arguably meant to justify Theoderic’s right to take power over the Goths inhabiting Gaul and Spain, after Alaric II’s death in 507, and the reclamation of the royal authority from Gesalic by Amal in 511.

The Jordanes narration seems to reflect also other endeavours meant to legitimise the Amali authority over Gaul and Spain. Vidimir the Younger’s Ostrogoths arrived into those territories fulfilling the order of emperor Glycerius (reigned 473–4), Jordanes tells us. Hence, their appearance in the said territory was said to have been sanctioned

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, c. 98, p. 83: ‘tam Ostrogothae quam Vesegothae, id est utriusque eiusdem gentes populi’.

by the emperor – specifically, one of the last Western Roman emperors. This was putting Theoderic the Great, whose army had been fighting in Gaul since 508 and then in Spain, in quite a comfortable situation. The presence of Ostrogoths in Gaul between 508 and 526 and in Spain, in 510 to 526 had thus a peculiar precedent: an Ostrogothic group led by Vidimir had once landed in the area out of the emperor's will. Beside this, Theoderic in his propaganda represented himself as a Roman *princeps*; the dispatch of Vidimir's Ostrogoths to Gaul and Spain by his predecessor Glycerius was the propaganda's essential element. It is worth paying attention to the fact that Gothic kings ruled the *gens Gothorum* and in parallel exercised control over a territory that had once been Roman.<sup>25</sup> The passage in Jordanes which is most probably based on Cassiodorus's work legitimised the rule of Theoderic over the Goths dwelling in Gaul and Spain as well as over the related territories themselves.

In summary, the stories told by Jordanes about the two peregrinations of Amali people do not confirm the interpretations proposed by Wolfram and Heather. Unsupported by the *Getica* message, Heather's strivings to draw out from Jordanes's narration the 'true reasons' for the said peregrinations into the Visigothic territory, interpreted as a struggle for power between the various Gothic leaders, blot out what is very clear and apparent in the *Getica* narrative. It is, namely, attempts at showing that natural for the Goths was unity of the two Gothic peoples, i.e. Ostrogoths and Visigoths, and that members of both peoples were *parentes* associated through *consanguinitas*. Another clear message in Jordanes is the conviction that the Amali were an all-Gothic royal house, with a natural right to rule both peoples. The primary right to rule over these two peoples rested with the house's line wherefrom Eutharic, the son-of-law and successor of Theoderic, stemmed. Nothing more, and nothing less than that.

*trans. Tristan Korecki*

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<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Michael Kulikowski, 'Ethnicity, Rulership, and Early Medieval Frontiers', in Florin Curta (ed.), *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Age* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 12, Turnhout, 2005), 247–54; for the present purpose, 253.