

Yitzhak Hen

Compelling and intense: The Christian transformation of Romanness

Christianity, let it be said at the very beginning, is a Roman phenomenon. It emerged in the eastern Mediterranean as part of the religious effervescence that characterised the Roman world, and especially the eastern provinces, during the late Republic and the early Principate.¹ It made its first steps in a world that was utterly Roman; it was influenced by Hellenistic philosophy and numerous Roman traditions;² and it even modelled its structure after the Roman imperial administrative system.³

During the first four centuries of its existence Christianity made a considerable effort to Christianise the Roman Empire, and its achievement was quite remarkable.⁴ From a persecuted minority, Christianity grew out to be the most influential religious faction in Late Antiquity. From a religion of the wretched and the poor, Christianity became the religion of emperors and members of the senatorial elite.⁵ From an underground cult, Christianity's monuments became the most dominant feature both in the urban landscape and in the countryside.⁶ Within less than four centuries, Christianity gained an unrivalled position among the various religions of Rome, and in 391 Emperor Theodosius I (d. 395) issued two edicts against pagan sacrifices and pagan cults that established Christianity's leading position among the religions of the Empire.⁷ At least from that time, if not much earlier, the Roman Empire was perceived as a Christian empire, and consequently Christianity became part and parcel of what may be termed 'late-antique *Romanitas*'. This, of course, did not happen at once. It was a long and complex process, during which Christianity gradually forged its place as a marker of *Romanitas*, and in order to understand how that happened, one must go back in time and explore briefly the role played by religion in the conceptual formation of *Romanitas* in pagan Rome.

An elaborate religion, with its own hierarchy and officials representing a focus of loyalty and commitment, had emerged in Rome at a fairly early stage.⁸ This religion was closely connected to the political institutions of the state, and members of

1 This is not the place to rehearse the burgeoning literature on the rise of Christianity. For some succinct surveys, see MacMullen 1984; Lane Fox 1986; Rousseau 2002; P. Brown 2003.

2 See, for example, Henry 1984; Fredriksen 2000.

3 See, for example, Rapp 2005.

4 See MacMullen 1984; Rousseau 2002; P. Brown 2003; Veyne 2010.

5 P. Brown 1961; Salzman 2002.

6 See the various papers in Lavan/Bowden 2001; Bowden/Lavan/Machado 2004.

7 *CTh* 16, 10, 10 – 11, ed. Mommsen/Meyer, 899 – 900. For the context of these laws, see Averil Cameron 1993, 75 – 76; Alan Cameron 2011, 56 – 74.

8 A superb introduction to the Roman religious system is Beard/North/Price 1998. On the emergence of Roman religion, see *ibid.*, 1 – 72.

the political elite were those who controlled human relations with the gods. The senate, more than any other single institution, was the locus of 'religious power', and the various priesthoods became part of the senatorial elite's social identity and sense of *Romanitas*.⁹ In many respects, this was as true at the end of the Republic as it had been two or three centuries earlier. The traditional senatorial priesthoods retained their prestige, and Cicero, who had little or no faith in the established traditions of the Roman religion, was willing, in outward show, to temporise with its practices for purposes of political and social expediency.¹⁰ For Cicero, as for many of his fellow senators, serving as an augur was nothing more than an exercise in asserting his Roman identity and allegiance.¹¹

The notion that the Roman religion, or more precisely the service in various religious *collegia*, was one way in which the Roman elite could express its *Romanitas*, continued well into the later empire.¹² An excellent case in point is the fourth-century grandee, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (d. 384), who, half a century after his death, was chosen by Macrobius to host the literary gathering of 'leading members of the Roman nobility and other learned men' (*nobilitatis procere doctique alii*) in his *Saturnalia*.¹³ A large marble base that was erected in his memory in Rome sometime around 387, probably by his wife and children, relates Praetextatus' illustrious career:

D(is) M(anibus)
Vettius Agorius Praetextatus,
augur, p[ro]ntifex Vestae,
pontifex Sol[is], quindecimvir,
curialis Herc[ul]is, sacratus
Libero et Eleusi[ni]s, hierophanta,
neocorus, tauroboliatus,
pater patrum; in [re] publica ver[o]
quaestor candidatus,
pr(a)etor urbanus,
corrector Tusciae et Umbriae,
consularis Lusitaniae,
proconsule Achaiae,
praefectus urbi,
legatus a senatu missus V,
praefectus praetorio II Italiae
et Illyrici, consul ordinaries
*designatus.*¹⁴

⁹ Beard/North/Price 1998, 99–108.

¹⁰ Beard/North/Price 1998, especially 125–166.

¹¹ See Beard/North/Price 1998, 114–119 and *passim*.

¹² See Beard/North/Price 1998, 186–196.

¹³ Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1, 1, 1, ed. and trans. Kaster, 10–11. On Praetextatus, see Jones/Martindale/Morris 1971, 722–724; Wytzes 1977, 133–148; Kahlos 2002; Alan Cameron 2011.

¹⁴ CIL VI 1779, 397. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

(‘To the memory [literally: for the spirits of the dead] of / Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, augur, priest of Vesta, / priest of Sol, member of the collegium of Fifteen men, / priest of Hercules, initiated / into the cult of Liber and the Eleusinian mysteries, hierophant [i.e. initiated to the cult of Hecata], / neocorus [i.e. initiated to the cult of Isis and Sarapis], tauroboliatus [i.e. initiated into the cult of Cybele], / father of fathers [i.e. initiated to the cult of Mithras]; and in the state, / Quaestor, / Urban Praetor, / Corrector of Tuscany and Umbria, / a consular governor of Lusitania, / proconsul of Achaia, / Urban Prefect, / five times legate on behalf of the senate, / Praetorian Prefect of Italy / and Illyria twice, / elected consul.’)

Two major elements are stressed in Praetextatus’ obituary inscription – his religious activity and his public service in various administrative positions. And yet, it is only after Praetextatus’ impressive list of religious affiliations and priestly functions that the inscription turns to his civil and, subsequently, intellectual career.¹⁵ Religion, it appears, was a crucial component in Praetextatus’ notion of Roman identity, and it reflects not only the old state religion of Republican Rome, but also the growing repertoire of mystery cults that swept through the Roman Empire from the second century BC onwards.¹⁶ By the fourth century, these cults were already an integral part of the Roman religious landscape, and in the eyes of many pagan intellectuals, Christianity was only one among these trendy religious cults.¹⁷

But something in the fourth century had changed. The unrivalled progress made by Christianity since its birth in the first century, and especially after it was made *religio licita* by Constantine and Licinius,¹⁸ altered the balance between Christianity and the pagan religions of Rome.¹⁹ All the emperors of the fourth century, apart from Julian the Apostate,²⁰ maintained their support for the Church, and consequently the ever more Christianised Roman aristocracy had to re-define its *Romanitas* in Christian terms.

This shift in emphasis did not pass unchallenged by the conservative members of the pagan Roman elite. Some of them, like Praetextatus, did not fully grasp the change that was coming upon them. Completely indifferent to Christianity’s new standing, he once told Pope Damasus that he would become a Christian if only he could be the bishop of Rome.²¹ All he could think of was increasing his *Romanitas* by adding yet another priesthood to his florid religious profile. Others, however, were well aware of the fact that times had changed, and it was not a change to be taken lightly.

¹⁵ I shall refer to Praetextatus’ intellectual activity later in this paper.

¹⁶ Burkert 1987; Beard/North/Price 1998, 244–312; Bowden 2010.

¹⁷ See Wilken 1984; J. Smith 1990.

¹⁸ The amount of literature on the so-called Edict of Milan (313) and its implications is enormous and cannot be listed here. For some discussions, see Anastos 1967 and Anastos 1979; Barnes 1981, 62–77; Drake 2000, 192–198.

¹⁹ See Beard/North/Price 1998, 363–388. See also Fowden 1993; Van Dam 2007.

²⁰ On Julian the Apostate, see Bowerstock 1978; Hunt 1998.

²¹ Jerome, *Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum* c. 8, PL 23, col. 361.

As the pagan elite of Rome saw real power slipping from their hands, and as they felt more and more pressured by an increasingly militant, anti-pagan Christianity, they began to emphasise their claim to represent true *Romanitas*, as signified by traditional Roman literary culture and religion.²² Praetextatus did just that, and the obituary composed by his wife and inscribed on the very same marble monument just mentioned, clearly points at Praetextatus' intellectual activity as one of the most distinctive markers of his *Romanitas*:

patriam, senatum coniugemq(ue) inluminas,
probitate mentis moribus studiis simul,
virtutis apicem quis supremum nactus es.
tu namque quidquid lingua utraq(ue) est proditum
cura soforum, porta quis caeli patet,
vel quae periti condidere carmina,
vel quae solutis vocibus sunt edita,
meliora reddis quam legendo sumpseras.²³

(You enlighten the fatherland, the senate, and your wife, / and through your integrity, conduct, as well as learning, / you have reached the highest peak of virtues. / Whatever has been handed down in either language / by wise men, that opens heaven's door, / either songs written in expert lines, / or those that were recited in lower voice, / you improve [and leave them in a better condition] than the ones you took to read'.)

But these qualities, according to Aconia Fabia Paulina, are marginal and she goes on to list the truly important things in Praetextatus' career, that is, his religious affiliations:

*sed ista parva. tu pius movestes sacris
teletis reperta mentis arcano premis
divumque numen multiplex doctus colis,
sociam benigne coniugem nectens sacris
hominum deumque consciam ac fidam tibi.
quid nunc honores aut potestates loquar
hominumque votis adpetita gaudia,
quae tu caduca ac parva semper autumans,
divum sacerdos infulis celsus clues?
tu me, marite, disciplinarum bono
puram ac pudicam sorte mortis eximens
in templa ducis ac famulam divis dicas.*²⁴

(But these are minor things. You are a pious priest, / who keeps in the secrets of his mind whatever has been revealed by sacred rites, / and worship the manifold spirit of the gods on which he has learned, / willingly adds his wife as companion to the sacred rites, / so that she shares whatever you know and believe about men and gods. / What should I say about honours and political

²² See Markus 1990, 27–43; Reynolds/Wilson 1991, 36–43; Alan Cameron 2011.

²³ *CIL* VI 1779, 398.

²⁴ *CIL* VI 1779, 398.

power, / or about the joys people seek, / which you always counted as fading and little, / when, being dressed in priestly clothes, you have been known to be a priest of gods.)

This course of reasoning is also reflected in Symmachus' plea for the restoration of the altar of Victory to the senate house, where it was originally placed by Augustus.²⁵ In his letter to Emperor Valentinian II (dated to 384), which is, perhaps, the most eloquent witness to the Roman pagan elite's desperate reaction, Symmachus wrote:

*Cui enim magis commodat, quod instituta maiorum, quod patriae iura et fata defendimus, quam temporum gloriae? Quae tunc maior est, cum vobis contra morem parentum intellegitis nil licere. Repetimus igitur religionum statum, qui reipublicae diu profuit [...] Quis ita familiaris est barbaris, ut aram Victoriae non requirat! [...] Multa Victoriae debet aeternitas vestra et adhuc plura debebit: aversentur hanc potestatem, quibus nihil profuit; vos amicum triumphis patrocinium nolite deserere. [...] Iam si longa aetas auctoritatem religionibus faciat, servanda est tot saeculis fides et sequendi sunt nobis parentes, qui secuti sunt feliciter suos.*²⁶

('What would benefit more the glory of our times than that we have defended the institutions of our ancestors, the laws and destiny of our fatherland? The glory is greater then, when you understand that nothing which goes against the customs of our ancestors is permitted you. We seek once more therefore the same standing for the cults, which has benefited the republic for so long. Who is so comfortable with the barbarians that he would not desire an altar of Victory? [...] Your Eternity owes much to Victory and will owe still more. Let those who have gained nothing from it turn away from this source of power. Don't you desert the patronage that has been so friendly to triumphs. [...] Now if a long life should give authority to religious practices, then the faith of so many centuries must be preserved, and we must follow our ancestors who with such blessedness followed their own'.)

According to Symmachus, true Romans are those who follow the *mos maiorum* in every aspect of everyday life, including the preservation of the ancient religions of Rome that will, eventually, protect Rome from its enemies. After all, these rites made Rome the greatest city on earth. For Symmachus and his fellow members of the pagan senatorial elite, Romanness had nothing to do with the new basilicas of the Lateran or St. Peter's, or any other Christian monument that had transformed the pagan landscape of the city during the fourth century.²⁷ On the contrary, Rome's prestige depended on its pagan history and tradition. It was the centre and religious heart of a polytheistic empire, and as the guardians of that tradition, Symmachus and his associates claimed real *Romanitas* as their own.

²⁵ On the Altar of Victory affair, see Klein 1971; Wytzes 1977, 98–132; Alan Cameron 2011, 33–51 and *passim*.

²⁶ Symmachus, *Relatio* 3, 2–3 and 8, ed. Seeck, 281–282. I cite the English translation from M. Lafferty 2003, 39, which is better than Barrow 1973, 35–37 and 39–41. The best introduction to Symmachus and his writings is Salzmänn 2011, xiii–lxviii. See also Alan Cameron 2011, 353–398, and Wytzes 1977, 98–132 and 265–302 (commentary on *Relatio* 3).

²⁷ On the Christian topography of Rome in the fourth century, see Pietri 1976; Krautheimer 1980; Krautheimer 1983. See also Marazzi 2000.

Needless to say, the leaders of the Christian Church in Italy were not happy with this notion of *Romanitas*, and shortly after Symmachus' letter reached the court of Valentinian II, who resided in Milan at the time, Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, launched a formal and vicious assault on paganism, and on members of the senatorial elite who tried to defend it.²⁸ This is not the place to rehearse the various arguments raised by Ambrose in response to Symmachus' petition. It should suffice to mention here that for Ambrose, as for Symmachus, Rome was indeed the greatest city of the Empire. But, according to Ambrose, its claim to greatness was not its pagan past, but its Christian present.²⁹ Rome's importance did not depend on its glorious pagan past or its political position, but on the fact that it became a Christian centre that was founded by two apostles.³⁰ This new insight gave *Romanitas* a significant Christian twist, and although it was not felt immediately, it gradually became standard throughout the West.

In the fifth century, although stripped of real power, Rome the city, the ancient capital of the Empire, still symbolized *auctoritas* and stood at the centre of the senatorial elite's self-perception. It was, for example, an integral part of Sidonius Apollinaris' *Romanitas*.³¹ He visited Rome many times; he was the *praefectus urbis* in 468/9; and he praised its beauty in his poems and letters.³² In that respect, Sidonius' sense of *Romanitas* was very similar to that of Praetextatus', and the only difference between them is the fact that unlike Praetextatus, who collected religious affiliations and priesthoods, Sidonius Apollinaris ended his life as the bishop of Clermont.³³ Things, it appears, had changed dramatically, yet religious service, albeit in a Christian context, still remained a crucial component of the elite's sense of duty and definition of *Romanitas*.

A century after Sidonius the balance between Rome's political prestige and its Christian disposition had shifted altogether. Although the ancient glory of the city as the capital of the Empire did not fade away, especially not in the writings of illustrious representatives of the provincial senatorial elite, the *auctoritas* of Rome was mostly derived from the papal see. If we examine, for instance, when and where Gregory of Tours mentions Rome in his *Books of History*, the point becomes even clearer.³⁴ Rome is first mentioned when Gregory tells how Peter arrived there.³⁵

28 Wytzes 1977, 29–47; Alan Cameron 2011, 39–51; C. Jones 2014, 71–73.

29 See Ambrose's response to Symmachus, in: Wytzes 1977, 215–261 and 293–318. See also McLynn 1994; Moorhead 1999, 122–128.

30 This argument goes back to Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* 3, 3, 2, ed. and trans. Rousseau/Doutreleau, 33. See also Abramowski 1977; Osborn 2001, 128–129.

31 On Sidonius Apollinaris, see Harries 1994; Kitchen 2010.

32 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* I, 6 and IX, 14, ed. and trans. Anderson, vol. 1, 362–367 and vol. 2, 580–589.

33 On Sidonius' bishopric, see Harries 1994, 169–221.

34 The amount of literature on Gregory of Tours is enormous. For a general introduction, see I. Wood 1994b; Heinzelmann 2001. See also the various papers in Mitchell/Wood 2002.

35 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 1, 25, ed. Krusch/Levison, 20.

The city is then mentioned as the place where Cornelius was martyred and, according to Gregory, made it famous just as Cyprian did to Carthage.³⁶ In the story of Bishop Briccius' expulsion from Gaul, the papal *curia* in Rome is mentioned as his place of refuge.³⁷ We are also told that a deacon from Tours went to Rome to collect some relics,³⁸ and the longest paragraph on Rome describes the election of Pope Gregory the Great.³⁹ All these passages refer to Rome as a Christian city. Gregory is indifferent to the fact that Rome was once the capital of an empire, and he refers to it incidentally as the residence of the senate.⁴⁰ The conquest of Rome by Alaric and the Goths, to which Augustine devoted much thought and his monumental *De civitate Dei*, is mentioned by Gregory in passing while discussing the sources for the reign of Clovis.⁴¹ It is obvious that although Gregory calls Rome *ipsa urbs urbium et totius mundi caput ingens* ('that city of cities and the mighty head of the whole world'),⁴² his attitude towards Rome was utterly Christian, echoing Ambrose's response to Symmachus.

This Christian takeover is also reflected in the terminology used by Gregory. In his book *On the Glory of the Martyrs*, to give just one example, Gregory writes that the Visigoths *Romanos enim vocitant nostrae homines relegionis* ('refer to the men of our religion as Romans').⁴³ On the other hand, he uses the adjective *barbarus* as a synonym for *paganus*, implying that the relation between *barbarus* and *Romanus* has changed from a cultural to a religious one.⁴⁴ *Romanus* for Gregory denoted religious affiliation, and the contrast between *barbarus* and *Romanus* therefore paralleled the contrast between 'Catholic' and 'Arian' or 'Christian' and 'pagan'. Hence, when Gregory and other members of the Gallo-Roman senatorial elite called themselves 'Roman', they were defining their status – or rather their *Romanitas* – in Christian terms.

However, equating *Christianitas* with *Romanitas* in the post-Roman barbarian world was a double-edged sword. Did *Romanitas* also cover unorthodox forms of Christianity? Or, in other words, was Arianism also a form of *Romanitas*?⁴⁵ Ambrose

36 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 1, 32, ed. Krusch/Levison, 24–25.

37 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 2, 1, ed. Krusch/Levison, 37–38.

38 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 6, 6, ed. Krusch/Levison, 272–276.

39 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 10, 1, ed. Krusch/Levison, 477–481.

40 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 1, 24, ed. Krusch/Levison, 19.

41 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 2, 9, ed. Krusch/Levison, 52–58.

42 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, 5, *praefatio*, ed. Krusch/Levison, 193.

43 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum* 24, ed. Krusch, 52.

44 See Ewig 1976a, 249–255; Kreiner 2014b, 125–129. On the changing meaning of *barbarus*, see Ohnacker 2003.

45 I use the adjective 'Arian' and the noun 'Arianism' in order to denote the non-Nicene Christology that originated with Arius. Using 'homoian', 'homoiousian', or 'heterousian' will only complicate the matter, and one should constantly bear in mind that even these terms are not clear-cut and straightforward, and they are also open to various interpretations. For more details, see the various papers in Berndt/Steinacher 2014; Hen (forthcoming).

of Milan, Avitus of Vienne, Gregory of Tours, Fulgentius of Ruspe, or Victor of Vita would have answered this question with a quick and straightforward 'NO!'. *Romanitas* for them represented 'Nicene' Christianity, and anything that deviated from this strict definition was excluded from their vision of *Romanitas* altogether.⁴⁶

Reality, however, was much more complicated than our orthodox-biased sources would have liked us to believe. After all, Arianism, like Christianity itself, was born in a Roman context, and was quite an attractive religious alternative for members of the Roman elite. When Ulfilas embarked on his mission to convert the Goths across the Danube, Arianism was the dominant Christian doctrine in Constantinople,⁴⁷ and although less than half a century later the religious situation was reversed, Arianism did not lose its appeal. It is, then, not to our orthodox sources that we should turn in order to gauge whether Arianism was also perceived as a marker of *Romanitas*, but to our Arian ones. Luckily, enough evidence survives from the early medieval West to demonstrate that Arianism, at least in the eyes of the Arians themselves, was also part of the game.⁴⁸

Theoderic the Great, to give just one example, was a devoted Arian Christian, but he pursued an extremely tolerant religious policy.⁴⁹ This toleration accords extremely well with the Ostrogothic king's views on his duties as a ruler, and on the ways a good ruler should behave.⁵⁰ Theoderic understood from the outset that in order to consolidate his rule over Italy he needed the co-operation of the Roman senatorial elite. He had managed, as the *Anonymus Valesianus* clearly states, to secure the allegiance of both the Roman population (which formed the vast majority of his subjects) and the Ostrogothic invaders, Catholics and Arians alike, and to unite them all under his rule.⁵¹ He cultivated a sense of continuity, not only by relying heavily on local elites, who formed the backbone of the Ostrogothic administration in Italy, but also by his assiduous effort not to cut off Italy's ties with the Roman past.⁵² Theoderic was careful not to offend the emperor in Constantinople by assuming the imperial title, or to do anything that might be interpreted by his contemporaries as a breach of the almost sacred Roman notion of *mos maiorum*.⁵³

It should, therefore, come as no surprise that the Ostrogothic king made an effort to cast himself as a Roman ruler. He maintained himself and his court at Ravenna in imperial splendour;⁵⁴ he wore purple dress in official and public ceremonies;⁵⁵ and

⁴⁶ See, for example, Williams 2002; Heil 2011.

⁴⁷ See Rubin 1981; Heather 1986.

⁴⁸ Hen 2007; Hen (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ On Theoderic and his reign, see Moorhead 1992; Heather 1995; Ausbüttel 2003; Goltz 2008.

⁵⁰ Saitta 1993; Hen (forthcoming).

⁵¹ See *Anonymus Valesianus* 2 12, 59–61, ed. and trans. König, 78–80.

⁵² See Hen 2007, 29–33 and 39–53.

⁵³ See McCormack 1981, 229–235; Moorhead 1992, 39–51.

⁵⁴ Hen 2007, 33–37; Mauskopf-Deliyannis 2010.

⁵⁵ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1, 2, ed. Fridh, 10–11.

he held lavish banquets in Roman style at his palace.⁵⁶ His surviving royal legislation, the so-called *Edictum Theoderici*, demonstrates a clear connection to Roman law in both form and content,⁵⁷ and he minted coins very much like a Roman emperor.⁵⁸ Moreover, the Roman ideology of triumphal rulership continued to flourish under Ostrogothic rule, and in 500 Theoderic paid his sole visit to Rome, in celebration of his *tricennalia*, which took the form of an extravagant imperial *adventus*.⁵⁹ Surprisingly, but not unexpectedly, Theoderic, the Barbarian Arian ruler of Italy, became the most distinguished guardian of Roman tradition.

Tolerant religious policy was part and parcel of the Roman decorum that Theoderic was so eager to adopt.⁶⁰ His model was the Emperor Theodosius I, whose bitter clash with Ambrose of Milan over the rebuilding of the synagogue at Callinicum stood in sharp contrast with the fanatical policy pursued by numerous orthodox bishops and rulers.⁶¹ Theoderic's words to the Jews of Genoa, *religionem imperare non possumus, quia nemo cogitur ut credit invitus* ('I cannot command your faith, for no one is forced to believe against his will'),⁶² which clearly echo Theodosius' position during the heated confrontation with Ambrose, speak for themselves. Not only did Theoderic adopt the *Romanitas* of a glorious emperor, he clearly tainted this *Romanitas* with distinctive Arian colours. In other words, Arianism for Arians functioned as a distinctive indicator of *Romanitas*, just as orthodoxy did among the 'Nicene' Christians of the post-Roman world.

To sum up, although *Romanitas* in the Roman and post-Roman world meant different things to different people, it appears that religion, not necessarily Christianity, was always a crucial component of it. From the late fourth century onwards, however, *Romanitas* was gradually defined in Christian terms, and consequently Christianity ('Nicene' and 'homoian' alike) became a suggestive and rather expressive marker of *Romanitas*. In the sixth and the seventh centuries, when Gregory of Tours and Isidore of Seville were giving their views on the matter, Christianity, or more precisely a Christian perspective, was the ultimate prism through which anything Roman was appreciated and evaluated. It is quite remarkable that Christianity, whose persecution in the arena was done in the name of *Romanitas*, eventually became the most conspicuous marker of *Romanitas* itself.

⁵⁶ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 6, 9, ed. Fridh, 236–238.

⁵⁷ On the *Edictum Theoderici*, see S. Lafferty 2013.

⁵⁸ See McCormack 1981, 235–237; McCormick 1986, 282–283.

⁵⁹ McCormick 1986, 267–284; Moorhead 1992, 60–65. On the imperial *adventus*, see McCormack 1981, 17–89.

⁶⁰ Hen 2007, 27–58; Hen (forthcoming). Note that toleration is exactly what Symmachus had pleaded for in his appeal to Valentinian II.

⁶¹ See McLynn 1994, 291–360; Sizgorich 2009, 81–107; Liebeschuetz 2011, 85–96.

⁶² Cassiodorus, *Variae* 2, 27, ed. Fridh, 76.

