



## **Military Matters in the Visigothic Kingdom: Initial Considerations**

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### ABSTRACT

Battles, as well as the information related to military matters, always have been an important part of Visigothic history – medieval and modern. Such information has been transmitted amongst various political circles and, partly because of that, there exists different interpretations of the most important events in the history of the Visigoths. Despite previous and lingering historiographical disagreements, most contemporary and near-contemporary sources of the period describe the Battle of Vouillé and its consequences as a catastrophic event for the Visigoths. The negative portrayal of the episode is magnified by two events that are present in most of the sources: the death of King Alaric II (r. 485-507), and the theft of the royal Visigothic treasure. The aim of this essay is to analyze the manner in which sources composed in Hispania, compared as well as to sources written outside the *Regnum*, describe warfare and military events related to the Visigoths during the sixth and seventh centuries. To conceptualize the contemporary historiography of this major event, I will focus on the possible character of the audiences and the authorial intentions (political, ideological, and cultural) behind these fragments of military information.



## ESSAY

Precise information on military activities in the context of the *Regnum Visigothorum* is almost lacking. Most (if not all) the information related to battles and military events lies in the narrative sources, which were composed almost exclusively by clergymen during this time.<sup>1</sup> This situation presents a challenge, since such information would have been useful for the authorities of the *regnum* for different purposes, ones which traverse the activities related to conflict and violence. My argument is that such information had an ideological value as well, since it could be used to persuade certain aristocratic circles and local or regional powers to prevent them from organizing revolts against the legitimate ruler or to establish alliances with other entities, such as the Merovingians. The information was used, then, in this way, as an attempt to create cohesion and foster unity among the elites of the *regnum Visigothorum*.<sup>2</sup>

In order to carry out this analysis, I took three cases of military activities which took place during sixth- and seventh-century Hispania: the aforementioned Battle of Vouillé (507), the attempt of the Frankish *dux* Boso to capture Carcassonne on the orders of the Merovingian King Guntram (561-592), and finally, the rebellion of Dux Paul (c. 672) during the reign of King Wamba (672-680).<sup>3</sup>

I will focus on narrative sources composed in Hispania and Gallia, including, but not limited to, the following texts: the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar (c. 540 - c. 621), the

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<sup>1</sup> In contrast to sources composed by men serving in the late Roman army, for instance, such as the known works of Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius. See A. D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity: A Social History* (London: Blackwell, 2007), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 40-42. From a historiographical point of view, see Walter Pohl, "Introduction," in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *The History of Wamba: Julian of Toledo's Historia Wambae Regis* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 41-42.

*Chronicle* and the *Historia Gothorum* by Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), the *Historia Wambae Regis* by bishop Julian of Toledo (642-690), the *Decem Libri Historiarum* by bishop Gregory of Tours (538-594), and the *Chronicle* of Fredegar (mid-seventh century). In this manner, it will be possible to compare contemporary sources composed in Hispania and Gallia regarding the military activities of the Visigoths during the sixth and seventh centuries, and hence develop further insight into the perspectives of the writers. The results of this essay represent a first approach to the topic of the use of military information in the Visigothic context and is intended to open a wider debate on the topic.

### **The Battle of Vouillé**

The Battle of Vouillé was one of the most decisive and well-known military events in the history of the Visigoths. The event is of particular importance since it represented, for the Visigoths, what was considered the beginning of their migration from Aquitaine and their definitive process of settlement in Hispania during the first quarter of the sixth century.<sup>4</sup> For the Franks, this battle was sometimes regarded as that which precipitated the consolidation of the Frankish kingdom.<sup>5</sup> In order to elicit this historiographical duality, I will begin my analysis with one of the earliest chronicles written within the Kingdom of Toledo, the anonymous *Chronicle of Saragossa*. In one of its entries, it reads: “In those days the battle between the Goths and the Franks took place in Boglada. King Alaric was assassinated by the Franks in combat: the Tolosan kingdom was destroyed.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Javier Arce, *Esperando a los árabes. Los visigodos en Hispania (507-711)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2011), 44.

<sup>5</sup> See for example: Bernard S. Bachrach, “Vouillé and the Decisive Battle Phenomenon in Late Antique Gaul,” in *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE Where France Began*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 21-22, 37-38.

<sup>6</sup> *Chronicorum Caesaraugustanorum Reliquiae*, a. 507: “His diebus pugna Gotthorum et Francorum Boglada facta. Alaricus rex in proelio a Francis interfectus est: regnum Tosolanum destructum est.” I follow the edition by Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica Minora II. Saec. IV. V. VI. VII, MGH AA 11* (Berlin, 1894).

The author did not provide us much detail on this episode. However, the writer who does provide more information is Isidore of Seville. In his *Historia Gothorum* he contends that:

In the era DXXI, in the tenth year of the emperor Zeno, once Euric passed away, his son Alaric was made king of the Goths in the city of Toulouse, ruling for twenty-three years. Fluduicus (Clovis), king of the Franks, desired the kingdom of Gaul and moved in war against him [Alaric] with the assistance of the Burgundians. He put the army of the Goths to flight and finally killed Alaric, defeated at Poitiers.<sup>7</sup>

Representing the Frankish sources, Gregory of Tours also described the defeat of the Visigoths in Vouillé, as such:

Meanwhile, King Clovis met Alaric II, King of the Goths, on the battlefield of Vouillé, near the tenth milestone outside Poitiers. And in the fighting, some fought from a distance, and others fought hand to hand. The Goths ran away, as always, according to their custom, and Clovis was the victor [...]. Clovis killed Alaric, as the Goths fled [...]. Alaric II had reigned for twelve years. Clovis wintered in the town of Bordeaux. He took all the treasure of Alaric from Toulouse and went to Angoulême [...]. Then, once the Goths were expelled from Angoulême, he [Clovis] took command of the city.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum*, 36: “Aera DXXI, anno x imperii Zenonis Eurico mortuo Alaricus filius eius apud Tolosensem urbem princeps Gothorum constituitur regnans ann. XXIII. Aduersus quem Fluduicus Francorum princeps Galliae regnum affectans Burgundionibus sibi auxiliantibus bellum mouit fuisque Gothorum copiis ipsum postremo regem apud Pictavis superatum interfecit.” I follow the edition of Cristóbal Rodríguez Alonso, *Las Historias de los godos, vándalos y suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación “San Isidoro,” 1975).

<sup>8</sup> Gregory of Tours, *HF* 2.37: “Interea Chlodovechus rex cum Alarico rege Gothorum in campo Vogladense decimo ab urbe Pictava miliario convenit, et confligentibus his eminus resistunt comminus illi. Cumque secundum consuetudinem Gothi terga vertissent, ipse rex Chlodovechus victuriam [...]. Porro rex, cum, fugatis Gothis, Alaricum regem interfecisset [...] Regnavit autem Alaricus annos 22.

As is evident, the two Visigothic sources do not mention the theft of the royal treasure. Therefore, it could be suggested that their authors did not want to present many details concerning this tragic event to their audiences. It was not convenient to remind them of a past failure, represented in the theft. On the other hand, Frankish sources do describe this battle concluding with the theft. In this case, it was indeed convenient for the Frankish writers to present this image to the aristocracies of the Merovingian kingdoms.<sup>9</sup> From this point, I will suggest that the Frankish accounts would be used by other Visigothic writers such as John of Biclar and Julian of Toledo: they both describe the thefts of treasures made by the Visigothic army on different occasions. I will return to this point later.

### **An Attempt at taking Carcassonne**

The Battle of Carcassonne, an event framed within the politics of the Frankish king Gruntram (561-592), is exceptionally revealing, since it was described in both Visigothic and Merovingian sources. For example, entry 91 of the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar states that:

The army of the Franks, sent by king Guntram under the direction of *dux* Boso, arrived in Gallia Narbonensis and established his camp next to the city of Carcassonne. Claudius, the *dux* of Lusitania, received the order of king Reccared to find him [Boso] and he hurried to reach that

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Cholovechus vero apud Burdigalinsi urbe hiemem agens, cunctos thesauros Alarici a Tholosa auferens, Ecolisnam venit [...] Tunc, exclusis Gothis, urbem suo dominio subiugavit.” I follow the edition by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Libri Historiarum X, MGH SRM I* (Hannover, 1951).

<sup>9</sup> Ian Wood suggests that the victory of the Franks in Vouillé represents the consolidation of a Catholic Kingdom, a process that began with that victory. See Ian Wood, “Arian, Catholics, and Vouillé,” in *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE Where France Began*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 148.

place. Then, when the battle took place, the Franks escaped, the camp of the Franks was taken and their army was destroyed by the Goths.<sup>10</sup>

The report continues by mentioning 60,000 Franks fleeing and being confronted by just 300 Visigoths, led by a *dux* Claudius.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, John of Biclar mentions three elements: the Frankish army (*Francorum exercitus*), the regions of Gallia Narbonensis and Lusitania, and finally, the city of Carcassonne.

Isidore of Seville included the description of this event in his chronicle as well:

With the help of his faith, he [Reccared] gloriously waged war against hostile peoples. He obtained indeed a glorious triumph over almost 60,000 fully equipped Frankish troops who were invading the Gauls, sending the *dux* Claudius against them. No victory of the Goths in Hispania was greater than or even comparable to this one. Many thousands of the enemy were laid low and captured; indeed, the remaining part of the army desperately turned in flight with the Goths following after them, until they were cut down within the boundaries of their own kingdom. He [Reccared] frequently flexed his muscles [*mocking*] against the arrogance of the Romans and the incursions of the Basques. In these cases, he seemed not so much to be waging wars

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<sup>10</sup> *Chronicle* of John of Biclar, 91: “Francorum exercitus a Gonteramno rege transmissus Bosone duce in Galliam Narbonensem obveniunt et iuxta Carcassonensem urbem castra metati sunt. Cui Claudius Lusitaniae dux a Reccaredo rege directus obviam inibi occurrit. Tunc congressione facta Franci in fugam vertuntur et direpta castra Francorum et exercitus a Gothis caeditur.” I follow the edition by Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica Minora II. Saec. IV. V. VI. VII, MGH AA 11* (Berlin, 1894).

<sup>11</sup> Claudius became a prominent figure during the reign of Reccared (586-601), due to his military achievements. See Luis Agustín García Moreno, *Prosopografía del Reino Visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1974), 41-43.

as to be training his people to keep them in form, as one would do in the sport of wrestling.<sup>12</sup>

Frankish sources offer different descriptions of this event. Gregory of Tours presents the most detailed account of this episode:

But [the Goths] immediately withdrew and feigned to escape. He [Boso] and his men pursued them, [while] those who prepared the trap leapt out at them [the Franks] and caught them in the middle, killing them continuously till annihilation. On the other hand, some managed to scramble their horses and could escape, leaving all their goods behind on the battlefield and abandoning all their personal effects, indeed, considering themselves lucky to get away with their lives. The Goths pursued them, captured all their gear, pillaged their camp and took all the foot-soldiers prisoner. Nearly five thousand men died in that place. They [the Goths] seized more than two thousand men. Nevertheless, many of these were released [and] returned to their homeland.<sup>13</sup>

The *Chronicle* of Fredegar, on the other hand, offers a scanty account, saying only that: “In the year twenty-nine of [the reign of] Guntram, an army was sent into Spain

<sup>12</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum*, 54: “Egit etiam gloriose bellum adversus infestas gentes fidei suscepto auxilio. Francis enim sexaginta fere milium armatorum copiis Gallias irruentibus, misso Claudio duce adversus eos, glorioso triumphavit eventus. Nulla unquam in Hispaniis Gothorum victoria, vel maior, vel similis exstitit. Prostrati sunt enim et capti multa millia hostium, residua vero exercitus pars, praeter spem in fugam versa, Gothis post tergum insequentibus, usque in regni sui finibus caesa est. Saepe etiam et lacertos contra Romanas insolentias et irruptiones Vasconum movit. ubi non magis bella tractasse, quam potius gentem, quasi in palaestrae ludo, pro uso utilitatis videtur exercuisse.”

<sup>13</sup> Gregory of Tours, *HF* 9.31: “At ille paulolum resistentes, fugam simulant. Prosequentibus que istis, consurgunt qui praeparati errant de insidiis, concludentesque eos in medium, usque ad internitionem caeciderunt. Qui autem evader potuerunt, vix, equite ascensu, per fugam delapsi sunt, omnem supellectilem relinquentes in campi planitie nihilque secum de rebus propriis auferentes, hoc pro magno ducentes, si vel vitae donarentur. Insequentes autem Gothi res eorum omnes repperierunt diripieruntque, pedestris omnes captivos abducentes. Caecideruntque ibi quasi quinque milia virorum, captivi autem amplius quam duo milia habierunt; multi tamen ab his laxati, redierunt in patriam.”

on his orders, but because of the negligence of Boso, who was the head of the army, it was slaughtered by the Goths.”<sup>14</sup>

As is evident, both Frankish sources omit the name of any Visigothic commander or leader, contrary to the account of John of Biclar which provides more information on at least the name of the Frankish commander. Of course, there are similitudes as well. For instance, Frankish authors do not use the name *Visigoth* to refer to their enemies in Spain; instead they resort to the more general *Gothi* (Gregory of Tours) or *Goti* (Fredegar). This could have had a double purpose: first, to present their foes with a more general and unspecified identity to their audiences. Second, and following the former point, they probably wished to present the Goths as having no cohesive element or being feebler than the Franks: there is no mention of a professional army, i.e. an *exercitus gothorum* in these accounts; hence, one could suppose that the will of the Merovingian authors was to present the Goths as unorganized.

Similarly, the Visigothic sources quoted above proceed in a comparable manner: in addition to high numbers (60,000 Franks), which is surely apocryphal, they add as well an absurd image of the weakness of the Franks and the superiority of the Visigothic army (i.e. Isidore: “quasi in palaestrae ludo, pro uso utilitatis videtur exercuisse”).

Despite these characteristics, both Visigothic authors use what could be considered “a correct treatment” of the Frankish army: John of Biclar specifically resorts to the term

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<sup>14</sup> Chronicle of Fredegar, 4.10: “Anno XXVIII Gunthramni exercitus in Spaniam eiusdem iusso diregitur, sed negligenciam Bosone qui capud exercitus fuit, grauitur a Gotis exercitus ille trucidatur.” I follow the edition by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *Chronica quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV cum Continuationibus*, in *Fredegarii et Aliorum Chronica. Vitae Sanctorum*, MGH SRM 2 (Hannover, 1888).



*Francorum exercitus*: he states clearly that the Franks were militarized and that they were led by a *dux*, Boso, and that the order came from the Frankish King Guntram. On the other hand, while Isidore does not mention any Frankish leader involved in the assault on Narbonne, he asserts that the Franks invading Gallia Narbonensis were 60,000 *armatorum copiis*, and then, he refers to those fleeing as the remnants of an army, this is, *residua vero exercitus pars*.

Representing the Frankish narrative of this event, Gregory presents the lengthier account and offers more data on the battle tactic used by the Visigoths (their fake retreat). It is possible to suggest that he had access to a more detailed (and perhaps oral) description of that encounter.

In this case, since the Visigoths were able to eject the Franks from Narbonne, they created a tradition concerning this story. For this purpose, both authors had to magnify the quantity of the enemies the Visigothic army engaged that day. They also had to present this enemy as something more than merely a foe: they were an army, and they were led by a high-ranking officer who received the order from the Frankish king himself. For the Gothic audiences in Spain this would have been important since the Visigoths were fighting against well-prepared opponents and therefore the portrayal of their victory could be surrounded by an aura of greatness.

### **A rebellion with Frankish military support**

The *Historia Wambae Regis*, by Julian of Toledo, provides an unconventional account of a military campaign.<sup>15</sup> His narrative presents various details regarding the

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<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, one should be careful in using this text, since it could be regarded as overly rhetorical, as Roger Collins suggests (Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 70).

campaign directed by Wamba in order to stop the rebellion of Paul.<sup>16</sup> In this particular case, we are faced with a specific difficulty: the episode is only attested in this source, and there is no mention of it in Frankish narrative accounts.<sup>17</sup> Despite this particular problem, I believe that this event is worthy of analysis, for the author mentions different details that are not found in other contemporary sources.

In Chapter 9, for example, Julian describes the manner in which Wamba rallies his army, pointing out some of the military tactics of the Franks: “Therefore it should be detestable for you to fear their turtle-formation, since you know their courage to have been always inferior to ours.”<sup>18</sup>

The description on the use of an ancient military tactic by the Franks by Julian could be interpreted in two possible ways. First, Julian was comparing the Franks with the Eastern Romans: Julian tried to characterize the Franks as not very well prepared for combat, and this is reflected in the sentence “testudinem [...] infirmiorem semper esse virtutem.” Moreover, Julian perhaps wanted to show his audiences beforehand that the Franks were going to be defeated, in the same manner that the Eastern Romans were some decades before (when they were expelled during the reign of Sisebut [r. 612-621]). From these two points, it is possible to suggest that the main objective of Julian would have been to demonstrate an ideological and propagandistic message towards the aristocracy of the *regnum*, with the purpose of preventing uprisings and usurpations, as already mentioned: the Visigothic king was anointed by God himself;

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<sup>16</sup> Paul was sent by Wamba to stop a rebellion soon after Wamba was anointed as king. Later, Paul joined the rebels and began to lead the rebellion against Wamba. He was captured in Nîmes by the Visigothic army (Luis Agustín García Moreno, *Prosopografía*, 65-68).

<sup>17</sup> Rosa Sanz Serrano, *Historia de los Godos. Una epopeya histórica de Escandinavia a Toledo* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2009), 296, 317-319.

<sup>18</sup> Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae Regis*, 9: “Ergo turpe sit vobis eorum testudinem has acies expavescere, quorum nostis infirmiorem semper esse virtutem.” I follow the edition by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *Historia Wambae Regis*, in *Passiones Vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici et antiquorum aliquot*, MGH SRM 5 (Hannover, 1910).

hence, the message was that it was not very feasible that another aristocrat could overthrow the king.

There are other examples which are worth quoting here. Chapter 10 provides a short description of some military tactics used by the Visigothic army against the *Vascones*:

Soon afterwards, he [Wamba] soon enters the Basque region with his entire army, and there for seven days ravaging in every direction left carnage in the open fields, and set fire to the strongholds and houses [of the] enemy so intensely that the Basques themselves, putting aside the ferocity of their spirits, having handed over hostages, longed – less by requests than by means of gifts – to be granted life, and offered peace.<sup>19</sup>

In this fragment is found mention of two kinds of tactics, although such tactics are not connected in the description: the battle in an open space, and the burning of strongholds and houses. From a strategical point of view, one could suppose that the burning of the houses could have facilitated the surrender of the *Vascones*, since their families and the non-fighting population could be harmed. In addition, one is also tempted to suppose as well that while burning the buildings they could have forced the enemy to abandon the city or town, in order to make them reach an open space where the Visigoths would be waiting, as some sort of trap. Although the account has its own overt narrative purposes, this kind of reference, nevertheless, can be useful for understanding the types of military information associated with the Visigoths during the sixth and seventh centuries. With this particular case (the use of fire), there is

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<sup>19</sup> Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae Regis*, 10: “Mox cum omni exercitu Vasconiae partes ingreditur, ubi per septem dies quaqua versa per patentes campos depraedatio et hostilitas castrorum domorumque incensio tam valide acta est, ut Vascones ipsi, animorum feritate deposita, datis obsidibus, vitam sibi dari pacemque largiri non tam precibus quam muneribus exoptarent.”

nothing which commands that strategies like this one would have not been used by the Visigoths (or perhaps even the Franks).

Finally, in Chapter 24, Julian mentions the treasure of the defeated followers of Paul, when the Visigothic army arrived in Nîmes: “Then that whole arrogant multitude of men of Gallia and from the Franks, gathered from both sides to fight against us, is captured and held, with enormous treasures.”<sup>20</sup>

This description contains the mention of a treasure. Treasures were important elements in the post-Roman kingdoms, not only due to economic matters but also because treasures could be associated with authority and legitimation, and hence, with the tradition and the history of a *gens*.<sup>21</sup> In this regard, it is possible to suggest that Julian wished to show his audience that the campaign of Wamba had good results in this regard as well (in economic terms). Wamba took the treasure of the traitor, which meant that he acquired part of his *potestas* and his ability of gathering followers. In this manner, this detail of the treasure could be understood as being part of the influences of Julian: he had probably used the information in the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar and Frankish sources, as well as the *Libri Historiarum* or the *Chronicle* of Fredegar.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae Regis*, 24: “Dein omnis illa insolens multitudo Galliarum atque Francorum, quae hinc inde contra nostros pugnatura confluerat, cum inmensis thesauris capta est et detenta. Cumque caterva illa perfida cum rege suo [...]”

<sup>21</sup> Matthias Hardt, “Royal Treasures and Representation in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 257, 270.

<sup>22</sup> As mentioned, the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar describes the theft of the treasure of the Sueves by the Visigoths. In addition, the *Libri Historiarum* and the chronicle of Fredegar describe similar events concerning the thefts of royal treasures in the context of the internal rivalries of the Merovingian Kings.

## Conclusions

The Frankish and Visigothic kingdoms, constantly struggling to influence the domestic affairs and conquer lands of the other, engaged in extensive diplomatic activity. This included letters between the various kings, the exchange of goods, communication between nobles, and the creation of surprising and resilient alliances, especially through intermarriage (e.g. those of Galswinth with Chilperic I and Brunehild with Sigebert I).<sup>23</sup> Another central component of this diplomatic engagement was the construction of military information inside historical narratives. In this, both Frankish and Visigothic kingdoms tended to construct unfavorable and pejorative images of each other.

The competitive narratives were influenced by a long-standing local historiographical tradition, which probably had its origins with Orosius (c. 375-418) and consisted in describing the newcomers from outside the peninsula as fierce and barbarous. We have the examples of the descriptions of the Sueves, Vandals, and Alans arriving in Spain, both in the texts of Orosius and Hydatius (c. 400-469), for instance.<sup>24</sup> When composing their texts, later Visigothic authors no longer had the Vandals to blame for internal problems or devastation, instead they had the Franks. The episode of Vouillé could have reinforced the social cohesion of the contemporary Visigothic kingdom through the collective fear of a fierce neighbor. Accounts related to victories or confrontations with enemies and neighbors had clear political agendas. In many cases, the descriptions of military activities (battles, tactics used, places, etc.) could foster

<sup>23</sup> Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London: Longman, 1994), 100.

<sup>24</sup> Orosius, 7.40.3, 7.40.7-9. Hydatius, 34 [42], 38 [46], 40 [48], 41 [49]. For Orosius, I follow the edition by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, *Orose. Histoires (Contre les Païens)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1991). For Hydatius, I follow the edition by R. W. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

unity<sup>25</sup> but on some occasions, to the contrary, it could be used to force cohesion, fundamentally as a dissuasive message for local groups who disagreed with the rulers.

The use of military information in the Visigothic kingdom remains open as a topic, and there is still much that is unknown about the way in which the Goths managed and used this information in Hispania. As described above, most of the extant accounts of military activities were written by non-military individuals, particularly ecclesiastics. Furthermore, there is no contemporary handbook of military affairs composed in the *regnum* comparable to those written by Vegetius, the anonymous *De Rebus Bellicis* or the *Strategikon* of Emperor Maurice (582-602).<sup>26</sup> The military information that has reached modern scholars is scarce, fictionalized and exaggerated, and reading it demands critical approaches and awareness of literary theory and the contemporary literary tropes and narrative expectations. To construct a more comprehensive picture of the use of military information in the Visigothic Kingdom, we also need to compare the historiographical diplomacy with, at least, the other forms of literary evidence: hagiographic, epigraphic, numismatic, and legal.

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<sup>25</sup> Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner and Richard Payne, *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300-1100* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 38.

<sup>26</sup> A. D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity*, 16.

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