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Some remarks on *Anonymus Valesianus' Pars Posterior*

TAMÁS KOVÁCS



The work of the Anonymous Valesianus, known as *Pars Posterior*, is a debated issue of historiography for more than one hundred years, all the more so as both the identity of the author and the circumstances of the compilation of the work are obscure. The opus of Anonymous is, however, unavoidable while studying the Ostrogothic rule in Italy since it reveals several elements which cannot be found in contemporary sources. The decades since the publication of the first scholarly monograph witnessed an abundance of studies which attempted to answer the questions concerning the *Pars Posterior*, to identify the author as well as the place and time of his activity.¹ The heightened interest is obvious since the fifth–sixth centuries proved to be a particularly stirring period. Although the last decades of the Western Roman Empire are well documented, these extant sources are mostly fragmented. Among these sources one can find a ninth-century collection referred to as *Cod. Berol. Phillipps 1885* kept in Berlin.² On the top of one of the extracts the following can be read: “*item ex libris chronicorum inter cetera*”, that is, in fact the *Pars Posterior*³ of Anonymus. The *Pars Posterior*, along with several other fragments, was already published in 1636 – edited by Henri de Valois –, and it took almost another fifty years when his brother Hadrian re-edited the work of Anonymous in the edition of Ammianus Marcellinus in 1681. It was the first time when *Excerpta*

¹ I. König, *Aus der Zeit Theoderichs des Grossen. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar einer anonymen Quelle*. Darmstadt 1997, 1–2.

² König, *Aus der Zeit*, 1–2. The corpus which was first presented by Henri de Valois contains a part of an eighth–ninth-century manuscript collection which originated from Italy, most likely from Verona. The collection later turned up in the Jesuit *Collège de Clermont* in Paris. The parchment bundle, originally consisted of 34 flimsy layers – a manuscript prepared by nine different hands – was later ordered and attached together according to the hands. The collection appeared in the catalogue of the Jesuit college at the occasion of the sale of the library by auction in 1764. The collection was sold and transferred to a certain Johannes Meermann (*Codex Meermannus 794*) in the Hague. Following the death of Meermann, the collection was possessed by an English collector Sir Thomas Phillipps (*Codex Phillippsianus 1885*). Later, through the heirs, it was taken by the German State Library in Berlin in 1887 where it is accessible today under the shelf-mark: ‘Ms. Phill. 1885’.

³ Anon. Val. P.P. *Consularia Italica. Anonymi Valesiani Pars Posterior. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum*. 9. Ed.: T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1892.

Valesiana, that is the edition of the *Pars Posterior* was clearly separated from other fragments.⁴

Due to the nature (*ex chronicorum libris*) of the *Pars Posterior* it can be approached as follows: 1) it can be regarded a ninth-century extract of one or more sixth-century works; 2) or perhaps it might be an earlier (sc. prior to the ninth century) interpolated sixth-century text which was copied in the ninth century; 3) or the known text is a ninth-century summary or the re-edition of one or more sixth-century works.

Regarding contemporary mainstream research,⁵ the present study concerns the *Excerpta* as a single work of an unknown sixth-century author, which was produced at unknown place and time. In the course of the following analysis, attempts are going to be made for the explanation of the “30/33” years problem, as well as to identify the time and place of the record of the *Pars Posterior*.

In the first phase of the research on the *Pars Posterior* – during the last years of the nineteenth century – the Italian Carlo Cippola was convinced that instead of an author, one should think of an editor of the *opus*. According to his thesis, Anonymous’ activity did not exceed the juxtaposition of the different sources.⁶ The idea of those scholars who argued for the (re)division or reorganization of the work can easily be justified since the *Pars Posterior* follows an unusual editorial principle.

The work of Anonymous consists of 60 chapters (*caput*) and it presents the chain of events as a chronicle from Chapter 36 to 59: from the rule of Emperor Zeno, through the decline of the power of Odoacer, up to the succession of Theoderic in

⁴ B. Croke, „Latin Historiography and the Barbarian Kingdoms.” in G. Marasco, *Greek & Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.*, Leiden-Boston 2003, 352. König, *Aus der Zeit*, 1-2. The catalogue of the Louis-le-Grand library in Paris listed the contents in 1764 as follows: “Codex membranaceus in 4° minori (constants foliis 75) saec IX. Exaratus. Ibi continentur I. Isidori Hispalensis historia Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum. II. Anonymus de gestis Constantini Magni. III. Excerpta ex chronicis incertis de rebus Zenonis et Anastasii imperatorum nec non Theoderici regis. IV. Excerpta ex aliis chronicis de rebus Iustiniani et Francorum usque ad Carolum Martellum”.

⁵ S. J. B. Barnish, „The Anonymus Valesianus II as a Source for the Last Years of Theoderic.” *Latomus* 42 (1983), 572–596.

⁶ C. Cippola, „Le vestigial del frasario ufficiale presso l’ “Anonimo Valesiano II” *Miscellanea di Studi in Onore di Attilio Hortis* (1910) 919-928. Similar to Cippola, Roberto Cessi argued for the reorganization. He had a closer look of the *Pars Posterior* from the points of view of Classical literary traditions as well as from that of linguistics. In the course of the elaboration of his thesis the style of the work played an important role: he observed that the first part of the *opus* praised Theoderic while the second part – from Chapter 83 onwards – argues against the ruler. (R. Cessi, „La vita di Papa Giovanni I nel Liber Pontificalis e nell’ Anonimo Valesiano” in A. Muratori, *Archivio Muratoriano*. 19/20 (1917), 474–478). Against the background provided by the two parts, Cessi linked the *Pars posterior* to two authors: the first part was written by a person who supported Theoderic and the Ostrogoths, while the second parts was compiled by a clergyman. After Cippola, it was Nino Tamassia who made remarks concerning the *Pars Posterior*. The scholar drew a parallel between the *Book of Kings* and the *Pars Posterior* and attempted to underpin with the information by several authors about the great-scale building activity and jurisdiction during the rule of both Theoderic and Solomon. Based on these premises, he assumes an ecclesiastical author of the *Pars Posterior*. N. Tamassia, „Sulla seconda parte dell’Anonimo Valesiano.” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 3 (1913). 3–22.

493. In the next section, from Chapter 60 to 79, the description of the rule of Theoderic – the Italian ruler of Germanic origin – can be found. In this part the author departs from the chronicle form and provides a transformation which displays, first of all, parallels with the emperors' biographies. Besides the description of political events the author dwells on portraying the major virtues of the ruler through different narratives. In the closing section (Chapter 80 to 96), however, a twist can be observed. The author describes the tragic years of Theoderic's rule. After Chapter 83 the behavior of Theoderic manifestly shifted: the author vested the emperor with the attributes of the devil, he enumerates a list of wonders, and finally narrates the accusation and the capital sentence of Boëthius which shows analogy with the martyrs' acts and passions.⁷

Though it was an unusual edition, it was not fully unique in the period since this style was popular in the literature of the imperial period as well as of the late antiquity. This anecdotic manner narrated the events shifting from one topic to another, thus it became widely accepted theory that the *Pars Posterior* is mostly based on Suetonian tradition⁸ which bears both chronicle-like and Orosian features.⁹

Scholars, however, could easily argue concerning the inconsistency and division of the *Pars Posterior* since there are two subsequent lines in Chapter 59 where the author determines the tenure of the Ostrogothic ruler first as 30 years while later as 33 years.¹⁰ Based on this fact, Cessi and Barnish assessed that the dating system of Anonymus is fully inconsistent even though the chain of events follows a clear chronological sequence. There, however, might be two different explanations for the cited sentence of Anonymus. The death of Theoderic was unanimously identified as 526, the length of his tenure, however, was recorded in the sources somewhat different. While Iordanes sets the tenure as 30 years in his narrative on

⁷ G. Zecchini, "L'Anonimo Valesiano II: Genere Storiografico e contesto politico", in *Theoderico il grande e i goti d'Italia*, Atti del XIII Congresso internazionale di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 1993, 809–810.

⁸ Chapter 62 of *Pars Posterior* is almost identical with the description of Emperor Claudius by Suetonius (Suetonius 5.15). It is apparent that several parts of the work of Anonymus Valesianus, for instance 14.48, lack any chronological reference. Although the accurate dating is very often missing from the literature of the late imperial and early medieval periods, an author to be sought who stood closer to Anonymus. The way of description by Anonymus much more resembles to that of Aurelius Victor (*Liber de Caesaribus*) (Barnish, „The Anonymus Valesianus II,” 575). Barnish projected the structure of the *vita* of Emperor Traianus by Aurelius Victor: accordingly, Aurelius Victor first provides the general description of the feats of war of the ruler; then he lists the donations given to Rome; thirdly, he enumerates the virtues of Traianus which was followed by the specification of the sins of the emperor; and finally the circumstances of his death are displayed which were preceded by magic elements. The argumentation of Barnish, however, is not fully acceptable since the description of the virtues of the emperor precedes (Anon. Val. *P.P.* 58) the donations given to Rome (Anon. Val. *P.P.* 60).

⁹ Zecchini, „L'Anonimo Valesiano II”, 809–818.

¹⁰ Anon. Val. *P.P.* 12.59 “*Ergo praeclarus et bonae voluntatis in omnibus, qui regnavit annos XXXIII. Cuius temporibus felicitas est secuta Italiam per annos triginta, ita ut etiam pax pergentibus esset.*”

the Roman Empire, entitled *Romana* (349),¹¹ Prokopios determines as 37 years.¹²

Counting down the 30 and 33 years from the death of Theoderic – given by Anonymous – one can figure out the year of 496 or 493 respectively. The first date refers to the recognition of Theoderic by Anastasius and the returning of the imperial *insignia* while the second indicates the defeat of Odoacer and the reconfirmation of the rule of Theoderic by public acclamation.¹³ The most obvious explanation could be that one regards the “public acclamation” in 493 as a starting point and following this “way” – by passing 33 years – one reaches the death of Theoderic or calculating by 30 years gives the execution of Boethius (Chapter 87). From this point onwards, the author practically describes the most tragic moments of the rule of Theoderic.

Nonetheless, it should be taken into consideration that Anonymous borrowed a relatively large part from the *vita* of St. Severin compiled by Eugippius, which work determines the tenure of Odoacer as 13 or 14 years.¹⁴ Odoacer deposed Romulus Augustulus from the throne in 476 and counting the 13/14 years from this point, it results as 489/490. Accordingly, Eugippius did not regard the death of Odoacer the end of his rule, instead the moment when Theoderic and his troops arrived to Italy. Its description can be found in the Chapters 50–55. In this case, Anonymous applied a rather interesting solution. He described the events of 489 according to months while later he dated the events according to the consul years. First he described the events of the 490s by mentioning the name of Consul Faustus and Longinus (Chapter 53), afterwards he recorded the year 491 by the name of Olybrius (Chapter 53). Afterwards, in the year of 493, he mentioned the death of Zeno and the election of Anastasius – he was consul in that year (Chapter 54).

In all probability, Anonymous dated the time passed between 489 and the murder of Odoacer by the consul years because Theoderic was not yet a legitimate ruler; he himself noted that he would only be the ruler of Italy in case he had Odoacer defeated.¹⁵ The fact that the author dated these years by the consul tenures makes it clear that he regarded this period a sort of interregnum. He was at least as conscious in connection with the approval of Anastasius in 496, but in this case it was not the dating but the wording that was strange. Anonymous interprets the fights between Jews and Christians as “*praesumptionem incendii*” in Chapter 82, just as he described the early election of Theoderic (“*praesumptione regni*”) which was – from Eastern Roman point of view – illicit (Chapter 64). Despite the fact that the *sanctio* was already in effect the author concerned – from Eastern Roman point of view

¹¹ Iord. *Romana*. 349. De summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum. 5. Ed.: T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1892. “*Obansque rex gentium et consul Romanus Theodericus Italiam petiit, manisque proeliis fatigatum Odoacrum Ravenna in deditione suscepit. Deinde vero ac si suspectum Ravenna in palatio ingulans regnum gentis sui et Romani populi principatum prudenter et pacifice per tringita annos continuit*”

¹² Procopius *Bell. Goth.* V.1.31. Procopius, *History of the Wars*, London 1914, with an English translation by H. B. Dewing.

¹³ Anon. Val. P.P. 57.

¹⁴ Anon. Val. P.P. 48.

¹⁵ Anon. Val. P.P. 10.49. “*Cui Theodericus pactuatus est, ut, si victus fuisset Odoacar, pro merito laborum suorum loco eius, dum adveniret, tantum praeregnaret*”.

– the years between 493 and 496 as an outlaw period since the Eastern approval had not yet arrived. Accordingly, it can be presumed that Anonymous deliberately formed this part of his work.

Regarding the work of anonymous, the identification of the time and place of the author's activity is obscure. Although it is impossible to date the *Pars Posterior* on the basis of its manuscript,¹⁶ present-day scholarship seems to accept that it most likely goes back to mid-sixth century.¹⁷ It is unquestionable, however, that the scenes, the performing figures, the office-holders and the dialogues, acts attributed to them play a particularly important role while identifying the chronological and spatial limits of the work. The opus of Anonymous Valesianus contains several dialogues, such as the already mentioned meeting of Odoacer and St. Severin (Chapter 46–48) and the conversation of Pope John and Theoderic (Chapter 88–89). Concerning the latter, Barnish has already proved that Anonymous applied biblical dialogues in order to augment the events and to adapt himself to the literary traditions of late antiquity.¹⁸ The meeting of Odoacer and St. Severin differs from that as this scene – Chapter 49 of the *Pars Posterior* – is almost entirely identical with the description of St. Severin provided by Abbot Eugippius.¹⁹ The hagiographical work of Abbot Eugippius was prepared in the abbey of Castellum Lucullanum, near Naples around 510–511. It can be assumed that the author of the *Pars Posterior* directly extracted the respective section from the work of Eugippius. However, the link to the understanding of the work and activity of Anonymous is provided by the *Vita Sancti Severini*, the majority of the scholars keep mentioning its similarity to the *Anecdota* of Prokopios as well as to the *Chronicle* of Victor of Tunnuna.

In the legend of LEGI, to be found at Procopius, Emperor Iustinus made an order for the preparation of a plate inwrought with gold depicting the word "LEGI". Among the sixth-century sources, both Johannes Lydus and Malalas reported the illiteracy of Emperor Iustinus,²⁰ and it is only Procopius who, narrated the legend of LEGI in his *Anecdota* – prepared between 548 and 551²¹ – similar to Anonymous.²² As for the signature, Rubin has proved that it was signed by LEGI prior to 619, and the signature LEGIMUS might have only spread around the end of the seventh century.²³ Simultaneously, Procopius known as having a knowl-

¹⁶ König, *Aus der Zeit*, 1–2.

¹⁷ Croke, „Latin Historiography”, 353–358.

¹⁸ Barnish, „The Anonymus Valesianus II,” 589. Pope John replied to Theoderic just as did Christ to Judah (John 13,27: *ecce in conspectu tuo adsto*). The pope is described as a faithful apostle, while Theoderic appears as the advocate of the devil. Anonymous used the expression '*inter alia*' by which he skillfully condensed the essence of the events.

¹⁹ Eugippius *V. Sancti Severini*, XXXIII. Eugippi *Vita Sancti Severini Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum*. 1. Ed.: H. Sapppe, Berlin, 1985.

²⁰ Lydus *De magistratibus* III.51. John the Lydian *On the Magistracies of the Roman Constitution (De Magistratibus)*. Trans.: T. F. Carney. Lawrence, 1971., Malalas *Chronica* 410.8. *The Chronicle of John Malalas*. Trans.: E. Jeffreys – M. Jeffreys – R. Scott. *Byzantina Australiensia* 4. Melbourne, 1986.

²¹ König, *Aus der Zeit*, 58.

²² König, *Aus der Zeit*, 63., Procopius *Bell. Goth.* V.1.32.

²³ König, *Aus der Zeit*, 60.

edge of Latin and twice visited Italy, among other cities, Rome and Ravenna.²⁴ Whilst nothing certain is known about Anonymous, for instance, whether he studied Greek ever.

Somewhat better situation can be ascertained in the case of the *Chronicle* of Victor of Tunnuna. The work of the North African bishop – who was long active in Constantinople – narrated the events from 444 up to 567. He described the death of the Vandal King Huneric²⁵ very similar to that of Theoderic (Chapter 95)²⁶ since while the decease of the Vandal ruler was owing to the turn of his viscera out – similar to the heretical Arius –, Theoderic died due to diarrhea. Though the manners of death were somewhat different, the fate of both rulers was due their heresy. Accordingly, the author of the *Pars Posterior* turned back to the well known topos of “*mors persecutoris*”.²⁷

The work of Anonymous Valesianus hardly bears any further similarities with other sixth-century sources. The concordance with the description of Eugippius shows that the author used the opus of the abbot, but at the same time – accepting the opinion of Cessi – it can be ascertained that both the works of Prokopios and that of Victor of Tunnuna were compiled later than the *Pars Posterior*. It is also possible that they utilized the *Pars Posterior* of Anonymous thus the date of compilation around the mid-sixth century seems to be acceptable. The *ante quem* of the preparation, however, can even further be scrutinized.

Anonymous reports in Chapter 61²⁸ that after the death of Theoderic the Great, some of the utterances of the ruler became common sayings, that is the author remarkably relied upon oral tradition thus it can be assumed that he was acting not much later following Theoderic’s death.²⁹ In Chapter 59, however, the author speaks of the successors of Theoderic.³⁰ This fact led some scholars to believe that Anonymous must have known not only the rule of Athalaric but also that of Theodahad, accordingly they set the earliest possible date of compilation of the *Pars Posterior* after 535.³¹ In this respect, the fact that Zeno not only endowed with the title of a consul but – following the example of Walamer, father of Theoderic – he

²⁴ König, *Aus der Zeit*, 61

²⁵ Victor of Tunnuna *Chronica* 479.2. Victoris episcopi Tonnennensis Chronica. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum. 11. Ed.: T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1892. *Hic itaque Hugnericus inter innumerabiles suarum impietatum strages, quas in catholicos excercebat, octavo regni sui anno interioribus cunctis effusus ut Arrius pater eius misere vitam finivit.*

²⁶ Victor of Tunnuna *Chronica* 479.2.cf. Anon. Val. *P.P.* 95.

²⁷ Zecchini, „L’Anonimo Valesiano II”, 812.

²⁸ Anon. Val. *P.P.* 61.

²⁹ J. N. Adams, *The text and language of a Vulgar Latin chronicle (Anonymus Valesianus II)*. London, 1976. 5–6.

³⁰ Anon. Val. *P.P.* 59. During his rule Italy was supported by good luck as it was in the course of his successors.

³¹ On the basis of the expression “successors” Mommsen assumed that the work was compiled in 550. T. Mommsen *Chronica minora. Chronicorum Minorum Seec. IV, V, VI, VII*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum. 9. Berlin, 1892, 261.

also adopted him by weapon.³² It perhaps meant that he was supposed to follow the Ostrogothic ruler on the throne. Emperor Iustinus acted very similar in case of Eutharic, while later Athalaric himself asked Iustinus to accept him as his fellow-in-arms according to the customs of his predecessors.³³ The move of Athalaric was not surprising since the custom of adoption by weapons was regarded traditional among the Germanic peoples by the end of the fifth century.³⁴ This rite was, on the one hand, considered an honour and, on the other, it pointed the next ruler out. On the basis of all the above, the compilation of the *Pars Posterior* should not, by all means, be put after 535. So much the more, Anonymous not only recorded – in case of Zeno – that statues were erected in honour of the emperor but, as mentioned before, he also noted that he had governed Italy according to the *sanc-tio* (Chapter 56), that is the agreement with Emperor Theoderic. This is an important point since Cassiodorus attempted to ascertain the content of this contract in a letter sent to Justinian in 535.³⁵ Moreover, the document was mentioned several times in various documents.³⁶ A Gothic legation referred to this document while it attempted to force the troops of Belisarios to retreat in 537. On the basis of the above, the latest date of compilation can be set no later than 535.

While identifying the compiler and the place of origin of the *Pars Posterior* it should be taken into account that the author was quite biased in religious respect as he omitted the ecclesiastical events of two decades. The Laurentian schism was only briefly mentioned, just as the election of Pope Hormisdas who proved to be the successor of the Simmachean papal policy. The silence of Anonymus, however, is very telling.

As seen above, carrying off the Italian rule of Theoderic did not go smooth in Constantinople. A diplomatic mission was sent to the eastern part of the Empire led by Probus Faustus, the *magister officiorum*, in 493.³⁷ Its duty, on the one hand, was to proceed concerning the Akakian schism – even though the Ostrogothic ruler was unaware of it – on the other hand, it attempted again to make the rule of Theoderic acknowledged. From the letter of Pope Gelasius it became clear for the eastern leaders in the Constantinople court that the pope is reluctant to negotiate in the question of the schism and he was not going to accept the *Henotikon* whi-

³² Iord. *Getica* 289. De origine actibusque Getarum. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum. 5. Ed.: T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1892.

³³ Cass. *Variae*. VIII.1. Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris Variarum Libri Duodecim. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum 12. Ed.: T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1898. Later Athalaric turned to Iustinus in a letter asking the ruler to have him adopted.

³⁴ A. Kiss P. "Fegyverrel örökbefogadott fiú volt-e Alboin?" [Was Alboin a son adopted by weapon?] In *Fons-skepsis-lex. Ünnepi tanulmányok a 70 esztendő Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, eds. T. Almási, É. Révész, Gy. Szabados, Szeged 2010, 203–218.

³⁵ Cass. *Variae*. X.22.; J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Utraeque res publicae. The Emperor Anastasius I's Gothic Policy (491-518)*. Poznań, 1991, 154.

³⁶ Cass. *Variae*. X.22.; The same document is concerned in the case of the legation sent to the Frankish King Theudobald (548–555). J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Utraeque res publicae*, 155.

³⁷ Gelasius Ep. 12. Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilario usque ad Pelagianum II. Tomus 1. Ed.: A. Thiel, Hildesheim – New York, 1867., Cass. *Variae*. VI.6.

ch was arbitrarily issued by Zeno.³⁸ Mostly this was the reason for the failure of the diplomatic mission in the case of Theoderic.³⁹ The Ostrogothic ruler, however, did not cease attempting to have his rule legitimate. Pope Gelasius died in 496, the clergy elected the Roman-born Anastasius II three days later.⁴⁰ Soon thereafter a new diplomatic mission was sent to the East, but this time it was already led by Rufius Postumius Festus who was *caput senatus* and belonged to the Decius family.⁴¹ The prime member of the senate brought success onto the mission since Emperor Anastasios acknowledged the western rule of Theoderic; this, however, required a serious price. Festus was to have the *Henotikon* acknowledged by the pope. The senator easily accepted the compromise of the emperor since Anastasius II, as opposed to his predecessor, seemed much more flexible in the relationship between Constantinople and Rome. Especially, as he allied with the Thessalonian deacon who was a promoter of the *Henotikon*.⁴² Nonetheless, the fictitious advance instantly evaporated when Festus returned to Rome as he found the pontiff dead. Accordingly, he failed to fulfill the promise given to the emperor concerning the acknowledgement of the *Henotikon*.⁴³

Following the death of Anastasius II, the Roman clergy failed to come to an agreement concerning the new pope. The two opponents were elected on 22 November 498. A part of the clergy elected Symmachus in the Lateran basilica, who was unambiguously against the *Henotikon*. Festus, fulfilling his promise given to the emperor, headed the other group which elected Laurentius as pope in the Santa Maria Maggiore. Undeniable, Festus could achieve the election of the antipope so quickly because the ruling elite was by no means united.⁴⁴ No doubt that a part of the aristocracy was more supportive with Laurentius as Symmachus was

³⁸ W. Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*. London, 1972 30. The enactment only acknowledged the decisions of the first three councils thus it provoked intense opposition. By its impact the Roman pontiff excommunicated the patriarch in July 484 thus a schism took place between Rome and Constantinople. The *Henotikon* practically was the first manifest sign that the Eastern Roman emperor tended to establish the new, reformed version of the classical Roman Empire

³⁹ H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*. Trans.: T. J. Dunlap. London, 1990., 284. Wolfram notes in connection with the legation that they did much more for themselves than for Theoderic since both consuls of 495 were chosen from the nobility.

⁴⁰ Liber Pontificalis, 51–52. *Libri Pontificalis Pars Prior*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Gestorum Pontificum Romanorum. Vol. 1. Ed.: T. Mommsen. Berlin, 1898.

⁴¹ Anon. Val. P.P. 64.

⁴² Anastasius Ep. 12. *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilario usque ad Pelagianum II*. Tomus 1. Ed.: A. Thiel, Hildesheim – New York, 1867.; *Liber Pontificalis* 52.2

⁴³ Anagnostes, II. 16–17. *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte*. Hrsg.: G. C. Hansen. Berlin, 1995.

⁴⁴ The majority of the Roman families did not want any community of interest with Constantinople. The very reason of this attitude was that Emperor Zeno himself was not Roman by origin, as he belonged to the Isaurian tribe from Asia Minor. At the same time the education of the Roman nobility became almost fully Greek–Roman in nature. Greek scholars and theologians moved to the home of the Roman aristocracy. These people regarded Constantinople after the election of Emperor Athanasios as some sort of intellectual and cultural center. One of these scholars was Syrian monk Dionysius Exiguus who moved to Rome in 496. T. S. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths*. Bloomington, 1984. 87.

shown as the successor of the policy of Gelasius. A policy which aimed at the primacy of Rome and placed ruthless measures against the aristocracy.⁴⁵

Though the schism was briefly mentioned, the subsequent events are hidden at Anonymus, which is not surprising since there are numerous coincidences to be found concerning relations turned up around the 520s. Theoderic backed Symmachus in 500 but only a year later Festus began to stir against Pope Symmachus along with the clergy, and the senators: mostly with the supporters of Laurentius. The first attack took place in 501 when Easter was celebrated according to the old Roman calendar, that is, on 25 March. The majority demanded the observance of the Alexandrian calendar which put the feast to 22 April. Dionysius Exiguus brought the new calendar-system to Rome who was on good terms with the superior of Castellum Lucullanum, that is, the biographer of St. Severin: Abbot Eugippius. In that period the abbey fell under the authority of Theodorus who belonged to the Decius family.⁴⁶

The main reason for the recent fights was the dissimilarity of the Alexandrian and Roman calendars. Beyond Festus, Probinus – the father of Flavius Rufius Petronius Nicomachus Cethegus⁴⁷ – also supported Laurentius.⁴⁸ The consolidation of the position of the groups supporting Laurentius manifested on the streets of Rome.⁴⁹ Several bishops were terrified by the growing violence, some of them fled to Theoderic and asked him to replace the assembly to Ravenna. The ruler set the date of the synod to 8 August 502 in the *Praeceptio* but the place of the venue remained Rome. Lengthy meetings followed each other but the clergy still failed to

⁴⁵ T. S. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths*, 88., P. T. Wiseman, „The God of the Lupercal.” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995) 17. Pope Gelasius attempted to prohibit the popular *Lupercalia* at the end of the 490s. It provoked harsh opposition on behalf of one part of the Roman aristocracy. One of them, a certain Andromachus launched a grievous attack against him, saying that it would deprive the town of the defense against famine and epidemics. According to Wiseman, the prohibition of this rite was successful in Rome somewhat later.

⁴⁶ Anon. Val. *P.P.* 38. Anonymus relates that when Odoacer arrived to Italy he deposed Romulus Augustulus, the former ruler and sent him to Campania province. The former Western Roman ruler turned up in a later letter of Cassiodorus in which his privileges were confirmed by Theoderic, those – according to this letter – originated from Liberius. Cass. *Variae*. VIII.35. This privilege practically was a property right which concerned Castellum Lucullanum, nearby Naples. Presumably the building was supervised by the *praefectus praetorio*, in this case by Liberius and by Theodorus from 500 onwards.

⁴⁷ A. Momigliano, „Cassiodorus and Italian Culture of his time.” In *Studies in historiography Arnaldo Momigliano*. Trans. J. Wardman, London, 1966. 189; cf. J. O'Donnell, „Liberius the Patrician.” *Traditio* 37 (1981), 33. Arnaldo Momigliano identified Flavius Rufius Petronius Nicomachus Cethegus belonging to the Anicius family. In my opinion it is unacceptable since his father, Probinus belonged to the pro-Laurentius group (*Liber Pontificalis* 53.3), moreover, Cethegus was one of those consuls who fled to Emperor Justinian in Constantinople, and they only returned to the peninsula during the pontificate of Pelagius (556–561). (*Liber Pontificalis* 61.7).

⁴⁸ „Festus et Probinus incriminaverunt Symmachum et 'subornaverunt testes falsos, quos miserunt 'Ravennam' ad regem Theodoricum.” *Liber Pontificalis*, 53.3.

⁴⁹ „Eodem tempore Festus caput senati excons. et Probinus excons. coeperunt intra urbem Romam pugnare cum aliis senatoribus et maxime cum Fausto exconsule et caedes et homicidia in clero ex invidia.” *Liber Pontificalis*, 53 5.1-5.

come to an agreement. They informed Theoderic via letter in which they explained that they could not cope with the situation thus asked the king to come to Rome. In his reply of 1 October, Theoderic kept insisting that it is the clergy itself which is supposed to resolve the problem.⁵⁰

The Autumn of 502 saw the turning point. Ennodius informed Faustus that he managed to win Albinus for the support of Symmachus.⁵¹ The church assembly that gathered together on 23 October 502 released Symmachus from all charges.

The Laurentian schism revealed the opposition of the two lobby groups. The clashes, however, continued in the beginning of the sixth century. The offensive foreign policy of the Eastern Roman Empire⁵² as well as the fact that Theoderic issued the edict – which brought the Symmachus schism to an end – shed some light on the contradictions.⁵³ This time the scene of the clashes was the Roman circus.⁵⁴ Theoderic commissioned Avienus and Albinus in one of his letter to defend

⁵⁰ J. Moorhead, *Theoderich in Italy*. Oxford, 1992, 119; Praeceptio Regis. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum 12. Ed. T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1898, 424.

⁵¹ J. Moorhead, „The Decii under Theoderic.” *Historia* 33 (1984), 109., *Liber Pontificalis*, 53. The idea that Albinus was supported by Symmachus can be underpinned by the fact that he and his wife, Glaphyra established a basilica along the via Trebana 27 miles from Rome which was consecrated by Symmachus. Later Ennodius himself reported that he paid almost 400 *solidi* in order to help Symmachus maintaining his episcopal seat in Rome. Ennodius Ep. II. 10; VI. 16, 33. Magni Felicis Ennodi Opera. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctorum Antiquissimorum 7. Ed. F. Vogel. Berlin, 1885.

⁵² In the beginning of the century Theoderic hastened to build up relationship with neighboring kingdoms in order to increase the side of supporters. He made his widowed sister married with the Vandal King Tharasmund in 500, while a couple of months later he arranged the marriage of his daughter, Amalafriada with the Thuringian King Herminfried. Despite all efforts of Theoderic, his politics cannot be regarded fully successful since the army of the Vandal ruler did not support the fleet of the emperor of Constantinople in the course of the attack in 508. The offensive against Constantinople can partly be explained with the fact that Festus failed to have the *Henotikon* acknowledged, moreover, the Sirmium wars of 504–505 also may provide a likely motivation. In this period the strategists of Theoderic, namely Pitzia and Erdwic defeated the lieutenant of Illyricum in a battle. Partly due to this event, partly the alliance concluded between Emperor Athanasios and the Frankish King Chlodvig led to the attack of the *comes domesticorum* and *comes scholariorum* in Constantinople. The Franks wanted to extend their kingdom over the territories of the Western Goths on the detriment of the allies of Theoderic. Then the Ostrogothic ruler reproached the emperor in a letter emphasizing his own “Roman being” as opposed to that of the emperor. The letter can be divided into two main parts. Its overall objective was that the conflict between the two “Roman states” should be terminated. Second, the letter points out that since Theoderic formerly had been sent to Italy by the Constantinople government, the Ostrogothic Kingdom is the only legitimate state in the West. Accordingly, Anastasios was not authorized to make alliances with other, in this case with the Franks of Chlodvig.

⁵³ Cass. *Variae*. II.20.

⁵⁴ In the Classical world it was one of the most remarkable places for expressing political opinions. There were four parties in the circus: “*prasinus virenti verno, venetus nubilae hiemi, russeus aestati flammae, albus pruinoso autumnno*” (Cass. *Variae*. III. 51). These groups often required patrons, thus the green party was supported by the people

the Green party in the circus,⁵⁵ later he ordered Speciosus comitiacus to attempt to have the patricians self-controlled since Theodorus patrician and Inportunus consul are harrassing them.⁵⁶ Moreover, the clashes claimed lives.

Following these events Theoderic drew the attention of the senate to maintain the public peace. He explained that the quiescence among the circus parties was disturbed by rivalry. In addition he blamed the senators for letting their slaves to get involved of the events and thus they brought shame on their own names. It is obvious that several members of the Senate were involved in the case since in the rest of the letter he reprimanded those dignitaries whose slaves played any role in the course of the murder.⁵⁷ The four persons mentioned above (Avienus, Albinus, Theodorus és Inportunus) were all the sons of Flavius Caecina Decius Maximus Basilius. As it turned out during the Symmachus schism, two of the brothers represented dissimilar interests: Albinus supported Pope Symmachus while Theodorus and Importunus backed Laurentius.⁵⁸

It turns out from a letter of the ruler a year later that Theoderic failed to intervene into the internal affairs of the Senate even in the 510s. The tug of war of the different opposing groups of the senators later continued as was revealed from a letter of Athalaric. It reported that Pope John along with several senators turned to the ruler in order to have two senators who were said to be "unjustly" accused of rebellion and were earlier jailed.⁵⁹ It seems from the letter that the prisoners had several supporters, primarily, from the Senate. Since the election of Pope John took place in 523, the letter most likely referred to an earlier event, perhaps to the middle of the 510s. It is not by accident that John I backed the senators as he belonged to the supporters of the Laurentian party during the schism. He was that clergyman who – following the advices of Dionysius Exiguus – transformed the Alexandrian calendar-system to the Roman one.⁶⁰ What makes the story exciting is that during his pontificate he travelled to Constantinople as a member of a legation which also involved some former consuls of the Decius party: Theodorus, Inportunus and Agapitus.⁶¹

Accordingly, it is clear that already following the election of Emperor Anastasius a group of senators were shaped which sought contact with the eastern part of the empire both in political and religious sense. The divided status of the Senate can be traced almost throughout the rule of Theoderic. Anonymous does not, however, speaks of internal division, neither discusses the weakening of Theoderic

while the blue was patronized by the senate and it functioned this was not only in Rome but also in Constantinople. A. Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*. Oxford, 1976, 99. Cass. *Variae*. III. 51.

⁵⁵ Cass. *Variae*. I. 20.

⁵⁶ Cass. *Variae*. I. 27.

⁵⁷ Cass. *Variae*. I. 30.

⁵⁸ Moorhead, „The Decii under Theoderic“, 109; Cass. *Variae*. I. 20., 27. Contrary to this approach, Moorhead explained the connection of the brothers by arguing for Albinus and Avienus who received a letter from Ennodius in 503 and 504 respectively.

⁵⁹ Cass. *Variae*. IX. 17.

⁶⁰ H. Wurm, Dionysios 3. D. Exiguus I. Leben. In: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. 9 vols. Hrsg. B. Marquis – C. Bretscher-Gisiger – T. Meier. München: Metzler, 1999, 1088–1089.

⁶¹ *Liber Pontificalis*, 55.

in foreign policy. Despite the fact that the first signs of rupture in his hegemonic system became apparent in the 510s. The Burgundian ruler Sigismund converted to Catholic faith and killed Segeric, grandson of Theoderic in 522. Eutharius, the successor of Theoderic, died in 523 just as did the Vandal Tharasmund while his successor, Hilderic ceased to persecute the Catholics. The persecution of the Arians has simultaneously started in the East. Anonymous is silent on these issues in order to emphasize the necessity of religious unity, and, on the other hand, to meet the historiographical traditions.

Despite all these insufficiencies it might be accepted that the author was active in Constantinople within the given temporal framework. The characteristics of this genre, however, as well as the towns listed in the *Pars Posterior* makes it more likely that the work was prepared in or nearby Ravenna.⁶² At the same time, the frequency of the north Italian towns in the *Pars Posterior* implies that the author originated from and was active in this region.

⁶² The war between Theoderic and Odoacer concerning the primacy over Italy was concluded here (Chapter 50), the residence of Theoderic was also here (Chapters 70, 88, 92). This town received the most donations: palaces, aqueducts (Chapter 71), and the mausoleum of Theoderic is also to be found in Ravenna (Chapter 96). Here to be found: the narration of the birth (Chapter 84), the hostility with the local Jews, as well as the destruction of the synagogue (Chapters 81–82). Besides Ravenna, another important town was Verona since Theoderic stayed here (Chapter 81), at the same time this town also received donations similar to Ravenna (Chapter 71). The third town worth mentioning was Pavia where Theoderic also stayed (Chapter 87) and similar building activity can be observed as in the other two settlements (Chapter 71).