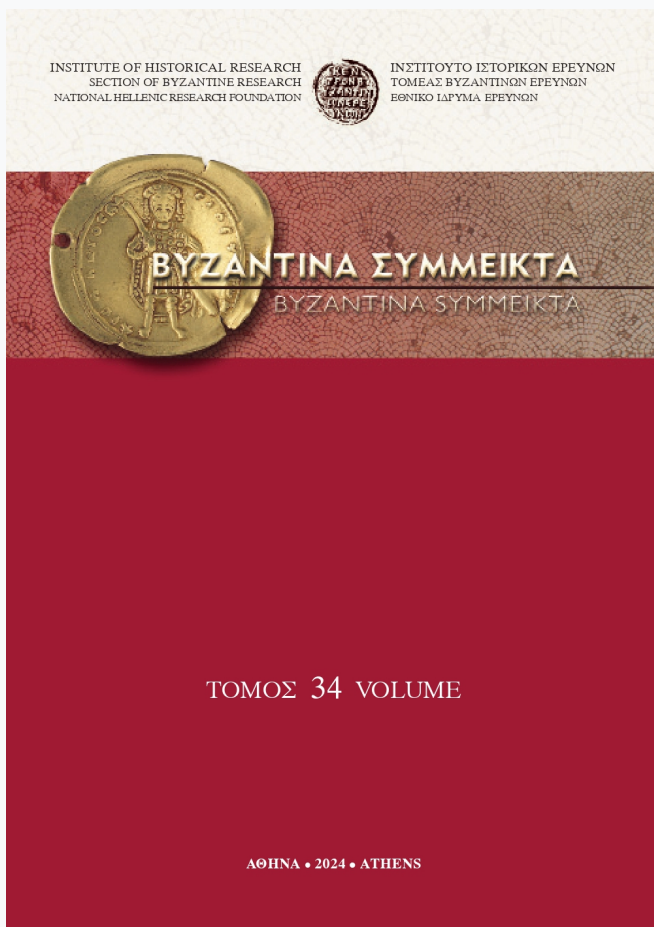


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The Thervingian Gothic Uprising and the Obscure Battle of Marcianople (Early AD 377):

Georgios LEVENIOTIS, Georgios KALAFIKIS

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ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
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ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ ΣΥΜΜΕΙΚΤΑ

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA

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GEORGIOS A. LEVENIOTIS – GEORGIOS KALAFIKIS

THE THERVINGIAN GOTHIC UPRISING AND THE OBSCURE BATTLE OF
MARCIANOPLE (EARLY 377 AD): RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND BASIC OBSERVATIONS

ΑΘΗΝΑ • 2024 • ATHENS

THE THERVINGIAN GOTHIC UPRISING AND THE OBSCURE BATTLE OF
MARCIANOPLE (EARLY 377 AD): RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND BASIC OBSERVATIONS

The so-called Battle of Marcianople was a noteworthy (both in scale and importance) conflict of Late Antiquity that is largely forgotten in our time (until now, there is no specialized study on it). It initiated the Gothic War of AD 377-382 between the Late Roman Empire on one side and mostly Goths on the other¹. The combat was fought on Roman soil in a still unknown and unidentified location somewhere in the Thracian outskirts of the city of Marcianople (Lat. *Marcianopolis*, Gr. *Μαρκιανούπολις*; modern Reka Devnya [Bulgaria]), within the Late Roman province of *Moesia Secunda* (Gr. *Μυσία Δευτέρα / Κατωτέρα*)². Its outcome signalled the destruction

1. The previous major Gothic Wars occurred in 249-253, 267-269, and 367-369. In detail, see M. KULIKOWSKI, *Rome's Gothic Wars: From the Third Century to Alaric*, Cambridge 2007, 71 f.

2. For the city itself, see B. GEROV, Marcianopolis im Lichte der historischen Angaben und der archäologischen, epigraphischen und numismatischen Materialien und Forschungen, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der römischen Provinzen Moesien und Thrakien. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. B. GEROV, Amsterdam 1980, 289-312; A. HARALAMBIEVA, Marcianopolis als Anziehungspunkt für Ostgermanen (Goten) vom 3. bis zum 5. Jahrhundert, in: *Zentrum und Peripherie. Gesellschaftliche Phänomene in der Frühgeschichte. Materialien des 13. Internationalen Symposiums "Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im mittleren Donaauraum" Zwettl, 4; 8. Dezember 2000*, eds. H. FRIESINGER – A. STUPPNER [Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 57], Wien 2004, 143-148; A. MINCHEV, Marcianopolis in the 2nd-6th Centuries AD. From a Roman City to a Late Antique Capital, in: *Roman Provincial Capitals under Transition. Proceedings of the International Conference held in Plovdiv 04; 07. November 2019*, eds. M. RAYCHEVA – M. STESKAL [Sonderschriften Band 61], Wien 2021, 255-286

of the locally stationed units of the Roman field army of Thrace and part of the *limitanei* fort garrisons of the Lower Danube front, then commanded by *comes rei militaris* Lupicinus, and the establishment of the victorious Thervingi Goths in the vicinity, led by their compatriot chieftain Fritigern. The latter was an Arian Christian and a tribal ruler (Goth. *reiks*) of a clan (Goth. *kuni*) of the *Gutþiuda* / *Gútthiuda* (= Gothic people, viz. the land of the Thervingi Goths; Lat. *Gothia*, Gr. *Γοτθία*), which probably formed an autonomous area (Goth. *garvi*) west of the Prut(h) river³.

As we have already summarily marked elsewhere⁴, this conflict with its severe repercussions and the previous events that caused the eruption of hostilities (mainly the Thervingian admission in Roman territory south of the Lower Danube and their revolt during the winter of 376/77) are somewhat obscure and usually neglected in the relevant international bibliography⁵. Moreover, the literary tradition and material evidence of the

(the latest and most up-to-date article about ancient Marcianople). For the province of Moesia Secunda, see V. PLETNYOV, *Vtora Mizija i Skitija prez IV-VII vek. Varvarski našestvija i hristijanstvo*, Varna 2017. Cf. also below, fn. 8 (for the local military infrastructure), 72 (for the area's milestones), 73 (for the area's settlements), 76 (for the local road system).

3. Regarding Fritigern, see E. A. THOMPSON, *The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric*, *Historia* 12/1 (1963), 105-126; H. WOLFRAM, *History of the Goths*, trans. T. J. Dunlap, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1988, 68 f.; U. WANKE, *Die Gotenkriege des Valens. Studien zu Topographie und Chronologie im unteren Donauraum von 366-378 n. Chr.* [Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe III, Geschichte und ihren Hilfswissenschaften 412], Frankfurt am Main – Bern – New York 1990, passim; P. HEATHER, *Goths and Romans 332-489* [Oxford Historical Monographs], Oxford 1991, 84-192; F. M. AUSBÜTTEL, *Germanische Herrscher. Von Arminius bis Theoderich* [Die besondere wissenschaftliche Reihe], Darmstadt 2007, 62-72. Regarding the Gothia, see below fn. 14.

4. G. A. LEVENIOTIS – G. KALAFIKIS, Marcianople (Early 377 AD): Research Problems of a Battle So Far Neglected, in: *Abstracts of the Free Communications, Thematic Sessions, Round Tables and Posters. The 24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies Venice and Padua, 22-27 August 2022. Proceedings, 212*, eds. L. FARINA – E. DESPOTAKIS, Venezia 2022, 157.

5. See mainly E. K. CHRYSOS, *Τὸ Βυζάντιον καὶ οἱ Γότθοι. Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν ἔξωπαικὴν πολιτικὴν τοῦ Βυζαντίου κατὰ τὸν Δ' αἰῶνα* [Ἐταιρεία Μακεδονικῶν Σπουδῶν. Ἴδρυμα Μελετῶν Χερσονήσου τοῦ Αἴμου 130], Thessaloniki 1972, 124 f.; M. CESA, 376-382: Romani e barbari sul Danubio, *Studi urbinati. B3, linguistica, letteratura, arte* 57 (1984), 63-99; EADEM, *Impero tardoantico e barbari: la crisi militare da Adrianopoli al 418* [Biblioteca di Athenaeum 23], Como 1994, 23 f.; WOLFRAM, *Goths*, 117 f.; WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 134 f.;

same events require further examination and an in-depth analysis. For all those reasons, we consider appropriate and beneficial a novel and specialized study (monograph). In this paper, we focus on seven topics and point out our corresponding conclusions regarding the main research problems that concern the Thervingian uprising and the Battle of Marcianople; both events probably occurred during the first months of the year 377.

I. *Establishing the historical background of the Gothic arrival and uprising*

In the mid-370s (ca. 375), under the pressure of the invading Huns, thousands of Gothic warriors evacuated along with their families the Lower Dniester basin (homeland of the Greuthungi Goths) and the former Dacian plains and woodlands extending from Wallachia to modern Moldavia (abodes of the Thervingi Goths and other tribes of various ethnic origin)⁶. These

HEATHER, *Goths and Romans*, 122 f.; IDEM, *The Fall of the Roman Empire. A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*, Oxford – New York 2006, 145 f.; T. S. BURNS, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome. A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians, ca. 375-425 A.D.*, Bloomington – Indianapolis 1994, 23 f.; S. KRAUTSCHICK, *Hunnensturm und Germanenflut. 375 - Beginn der Völkerwanderung?*, *BZ* 92/1 (1999), 10-67; A. BARBERO, *The Day of the Barbarians. The Battle that Led to the Fall of the Roman Empire*, New York 2007, 41 f.; G. HALSALL, *Barbarian Migrations, and the Roman West, 376-568* [Cambridge Medieval Textbooks], Cambridge 2007, 167-185; KULIKOWSKI, *Gothic Wars*, 122 f.; T. C. HART, *Beyond the River, under the Eye of Rome: Ethnographic Landscapes, Imperial Frontiers, and the Shaping of a Danubian Borderland* [Doctoral Thesis unpublished; available online, due for publication on Sept. 2024], University of Michigan 2017, 263-278; J. DEN BOEFT – J. W. DRIJVERS – D. DEN HENGST – H. C. TEITLER, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI*, Leiden – Boston 2018, 39 f.

6. W. BLOCKMANS – P. HOPPENBROUWERS, *Introduction to Medieval Europe. Second Edition*, Abingdon, Oxon – New York 2014, 28, argued that the Goths had moved south not because of the Huns but due to the former peace negotiations with the Romans after the first Gothic War; this view, however, contradicts the information provided by the sources. Regarding the history and archaeology of the Goths, their tribal evolution, and the potential identification of the Thervingi and Greuthungi with the Visigoths and Ostrogoths, respectively, see L. SCHMIDT, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung. Die Ostgermanen*, München 1941 (repr. 1969), 195 f.; R. WENSKUS, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes*, Köln 1961, 462-485; R. HACHMANN, *Die Goten und Skandinavien* [Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker N. F. 34 (158)], Berlin 1970; CHRYSOS, *Γότθοι*, 42 f.; WOLFRAM, *Goths*, 19 f.; M. KAZANSKI, *Les Goths (Ier - VIIe siècles ap. J.-C.)* [Collection

developments proved to be the catalyst of a political and military chain reaction, the importance of which the Romans fully understood sometime later; the latter considered the Huns to be the prime cause of the disasters that befell on their shoulders in the immediately following years⁷.

After their defeat, panicked masses of Gothic, mainly Thervingian, refugees retreated forcibly towards the south and ultimately entered the Late Roman frontier region of the Lower Danube. The imperial authorities stationed there in 376 were caught unprepared by the crisis and –lacking sufficient personnel– proved unable to check the vast numbers of terrified migrants seeking to cross the river or even disarm them while entering Roman soil. Moreover, the production capacity, the storage infrastructure

des Hespérides], Paris 1991; PH. ROUSSEAU, Visigothic Migration and Settlement, 376-418: Some excluded Hypotheses, *Historia* 41.3 (1992), 345-361; P. HEATHER, *The Goths* [The Peoples of Europe], Oxford 1996; *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. P. HEATHER, San Marino – Woodbridge 1999; A. KOKOWSKI, *Archäologie der Goten. Goten im Hrubieszów-Becken*, Lublin 1999; I. BÓNA, II. From Dacia to Erdöelve: Transylvania in the Period of the Great Migrations (271-896), in: *History of Transylvania*. Vol. I. *From the Beginnings to 1606*, eds. L. MAKKAI – A. MÓCSY [Eastern European Monographs 581. Atlantic Studies on Society in Change 106], New York 2001, 139-329; A. S. CHRISTENSEN, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths. Studies in a Migration Myth*, trans. H. Flegel, Copenhagen 2002; I. NORDGREN, *The Well Spring of the Goths: About the Gothic Peoples in the Nordic Countries and on the Continent* [Scriptures from Västergötland's Museum 30. Historieforum Västra Götaland A1], New York – Lincoln – Shangai 2004, 334 f.; F. CURTA, Frontier Ethnogenesis in Late Antiquity: the Danube, the Tervingi, and the Slavs, in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. F. CURTA [Studies in the Early Middle Ages 12], Turnhout 2005, 173-204; M. B. ŠČUKIN – M. KAZANSKI – O. SHAROV, *Dès les Goths aux Huns: Le nord de la mer Noire au Bas-Empire et à l'époque des grandes migrations* [BAR International Series 1535], Oxford 2006; *The Ostrogoths from the Migration Period to the Sixth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, eds. S. J. BARNISH – F. MARAZZI, San Marino – Woodbridge 2007; A. G. POULTER, Goths on the Lower Danube: Their Impact upon and behind the Frontier, *Antiquité Tardive* 21 (2013), 63-76; W. LIEBESCHUETZ, The Debate about the Ethnogenesis of the Germanic Tribes, in: *East and West in Late Antiquity. Invasion, Settlement, Ethnogenesis and Conflicts of Religion*, ed. IDEM [Impact of Empire 20], Leiden – Boston 2015, 85-100; M. MEIER, *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung. Europa, Asien und Afrika vom 3. bis zum 8. Jahrhundert n.Chr.* [Historische Bibliothek der Gerda Henkel Stiftung], München 2019, 125 f.

7. DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI*, 11.

(basically in *horrea* and forts⁸), the logistical network, and the local (re) distribution system (mainly through the mechanisms of the *annona militaris*⁹) proved insufficient to supply the numerous refugees with the goods necessary for survival as the harsh winter of 376/77 was approaching. Even worse, at the same time, the refugees were simultaneously abused and exploited by inept or corrupt local Roman officials, who wanted to profit from their misfortune driven by the vice of greed (*aviditas materia malorum omnium*)¹⁰. Indeed, some authors (Ammianus Marcellinus too among them) have outspokenly blamed the Roman officers responsible for the Gothic *receptio*; according to them, these were the senior in the chain of command Lupicinus (*comes per Thracias*) and especially Maximus (who then served

8. E. RIZOS, Centres of the Late Roman Military Supply Network in the Balkans: A Survey of “horrea”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums* 60 (2013), 659-696, esp. 680-681. For the local fortifications, cf. M. Biernacka-Lubańska, *The Roman and Early-Byzantine Fortifications of Lower Moesia and Northern Thrace* [Bibliotheca antiqua 17], Wrocław 1982; G. KALAFIKIS, *Η οργάνωση του ύστερου ρωμαϊκού στρατού (260-395 μ.Χ.). Σχηματισμοί μάχης - διοίκηση - οχυρώσεις - αμυντική στρατηγική* [Doctoral Thesis unpublished; available online], Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2009, 79-81, 111-114, 161-182, 333-370; C. BĂJENARU, *Minor Fortifications in the Balkan-Danubian Area from Diocletian to Justinian* [National Museum of Romanian History, The Center for Roman Military Studies 8], Cluj-Napoca 2010; E. S. TEODOR, The Border Area between “Moesia Secunda” and “Scythia Minor” in a Topographical Approach, in: *Identități culturale, locale și regionale în context european. Studii de arheologie și antropologie istorică. In memoriam Alexandri V. Matei*, eds. H. POP – I. BEJNARIU – S. BĂCUEȚ-CRIȘAN – D. BĂCUEȚ-CRIȘAN [Bibliotheca Musei Porolissensis 13], Cluj-Napoca – Zalău 2010, 421-438, esp. 437-438; I. ACHIM – D. MOREAU, Le réseau des fortifications dans l’arrière-pays bas-danubien tardo-antique: la “Moesia Secunda” et la “Scythia”, in: *Perchement et réalités fortifiées en Méditerranée et en Europe, Vème-Xème siècles / Fortified Hilltop Settlements in the Mediterranean and in Europe (5th-10th Centuries)*, eds. Ph. PERGOLA – G. CASTIGLIA – E. E. K. HANNA – I. MARTINETTO – J.-A. SEGURA [Limina / Limites 11], Summertown, Oxford 2023, 382-391.

9. E. RIZOS, Remarks on the Logistics and Infrastructure of the “annona militaris” in Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Areas, *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 287-302; S. MATTHEWS, *The Logistics of Feeding the Roman Army on the Lower Danube* [Doctoral Thesis unpublished; available online], Royal Holloway, University of London 2018.

10. *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, vol. II, *libri XXVI-XXXI*, ed. W. SEYFARTH – L. JACOB-KARAU – I. ULMANN (adiuv.) [Bibliotheca Teubneriana], Stuttgartiae – Lipsiae 1978 (repr. 1999), 31.4.9-11, p. 170. See also, DEN BOEFT – DRIVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, x-xi, 75-76, 109, 115.

as *dux Moesiae Secundae* or *dux limitis provinciae Scythiae*), most likely a subordinate to the former.

Ammianus does not provide particular information on the exact conditions under which the Goths obtained admittance to the imperial territory¹¹. Eunapius of Sardis (early-5th c.) and other Greek writers argue, though, that they were allowed to cross the Danube and enter the Roman lands only after the Eastern emperor Valens (reign 364-378) gave orders to the administrators to accept them into his part of the realm with sympathy (*δεχθῆναι κελεύει; κελεύει ... οἴκτου τυχεῖν*), but under terms: male warriors had to surrender their arms and not cross the river at once, while the imperial officers would allow at first only the minors to pass in the imperial territory and, afterwards, they ought to disperse them in the provinces as hostages¹². On the contrary, later Latin authors claim that there was no formal agreement between the two sides; according to them, Valens received the Goths without signing in advance any treaty that would officially and especially define the *foedus* pact (*a Valente sine ulla foederis pactione suscepti*¹³). However, this only happened because the emperor was absent, the circumstances were pressing, and, most of all, the implemented arrangement probably didn't enjoy the legal character of a formal *foedus* agreement, as the previous *foedus* (?) pact of 332 or the Noviodunum treaty of 369¹⁴.

11. DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 53.

12. Eunapius, ed. R. C. BLOCKLEY, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*. Vol. II. *Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* [ARCA. Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 10], Liverpool 1983, fr. 42, p. 60.18-19; W. BRIGHT (ed.), *Socrates' Ecclesiastical History according to the Text of Hussey. Second Edition*, Oxford 1893, IV.34, p. 211.

13. *Pauli Orosii historiarum adversum paganos libri VII accedit eiusdem liber apologeticus*, ed. C. ZANGEMEISTER [Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 5], Vindobonae 1882, VII.33.10-11, 518.13-14; *Pauli Historiae Romanae libri XI-XVI*, ed. H. DROYSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi II*, Berolini 1879, XLX, 187.15; *Landolfi Sagacis additamenta ad Pauli historiam Romanam*, ed. H. DROYSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi II*, Berolini 1879, XII, 345.11-12; *Ekkehardi chronicon universale ad a. 1106*, ed. D. G. WAITZ, in: MGH VIII, *Scriptorum VI*, Hannoverae 1844, 119.15. Regarding the authorship of this latter chronicle, see below, section II.

14. For the 332 pact of Constantine I the Great, see CHRYSOS, *Γότθοι*, 55-76; IDEM, *Gothia Romana. Zur Rechtslage der Westgoten im 4. Jh.*, *Dacoromania (Freiburg)* 1 (1973), 52-64;

In our opinion, the imperial officers posted in the *limes* –deliberately or not– misinterpreted Valens’ terms of the Thervingian *deditio* and *receptio*¹⁵. We note that during this period, the emperor (along with his court, staff, and army) resided far away, in Antioch, Syria¹⁶. Valens’ administration received consecutive implorations by the Thervingi and the Greuthungi to allow them to cross the Danube and find shelter in Roman territory. Eventually, the emperor accepted the admission of the Thervingi alone, but only after some consultation with his courtiers and under specific terms and strict conditions (in order of realization: initial entry of only the Thervingi and their dispersal for safety –obviously as hostages– throughout the Empire; disarmament of all adult males; supply of provisions and, potentially, Christianization in the doctrines of Arius of the Thervingi who were yet unbaptized; their permanent settlement in smaller clusters in Thrace and supplemental land allotment for subsistence reasons). Plausibly, Valens’ objectives were the reinforcement of his army with Gothic *auxiliares* and the cultivation of abandoned lands (*agri deserti*) in Thrace, measures that would increase the local agricultural production and potentially boost the government revenues too.

IDEM, Von der Räumung der Dacia Traiana zur Entstehung der Gothia, *Bonner Jahrbücher* 192 (1992), 175-194; B. BROCKMEIER, Der Grosse Friede 332 n. Chr. Zur Aussenpolitik Konstantins des Grossen, *Bonner Jahrbücher* 187 (1987), 79-100; C. DELAPLACE, *La fin de l'Empire romain d'Occident. Rome et les Wisigoths de 382 à 531* [Collection Histoire], Rennes 2015, 83 f.; HART, *Beyond the River*, 202 f., esp. 220-227. For the 369 peace-treaty of Valens, see CHRYSOS, *Γότθοι*, 101-108; WANKE, *Gotenkriege* 105-110; HEATHER, *Fall*, 72-76; HART, *Beyond the River*, 242 f., esp. 245-247.

15. Cf. I. SASTRE – D. PLÁCIDO, “Deditio in fidem” and Peasant Forms of Dependence in the Roman Provincial System: The Case of Northwestern Iberia, in: *La fin du statut servile? Affranchissement, libération, abolition*. Vol. II. *Hommage à Jacques Annequin. XXXe colloque du GIREA, Besançon 15-17 décembre 2005*, ed. A. GONZALES, Besançon 2008, 501-509.

16. N. LENSKI, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* [Transformation of the Classical Heritage 34], Berkeley 2002, 324 f.; I. HUGHES, *Imperial Brothers: Valentinian, Valens and the Disaster at Adrianople* [Pen & Sword Military], Barnsley 2013, 111 f. For the previous years, cf. G. KELLY, Ammianus, Valens, and Antioch, in: *Antioch II. The Many Faces of Antioch: Intellectual Exchange and Religious Diversity, CE 350-450*, eds. S.-P. BERGIAN – S. ELM [Civitatium Orbis Mediterranei Studia 3], Tübingen 2018, 137-162.

In the meantime, however, the situation along the Lower Danube region became increasingly unstable to the point of overstressing and overwhelming the local Roman authorities and infrastructure; as such, the imperial directives were either ignored or not implemented as expected. Moreover, it seems that the locally posted imperial administrators, inadequate or fraudulent as they were, did not treat the newcomers as a tribal unit, who had probably concluded with the Empire a new hastened and obscure form of a *foedus iniquum*¹⁷, but as defeated and unconditionally surrendered enemies, and –most of all– as individuals or separate persons and families whose community the Roman government has legally and officially dissolved (*dediticii* and *captivi*). The latter, according to the customary (and not statute) international law of *ius gentium*¹⁸, were then considered property of the victorious and superior Roman State.

Meanwhile, a band of Greuthungi Goths, whom the Roman authorities had denied entrance a little earlier, also managed to sneak the Lower Danube *limes* without official permission. The situation further deteriorated when the Romans forced the Thervingi to move from the frontier zone of Moesia Secunda south to Marcianople, but they denied the despairing and starving refugees to enter the city or access its market; they even tried to entrap, arrest or neutralize the Thervingian leaders, Alavivus and Fritigern, in a sumptuous banquet held inside the city walls. As a result, the infuriated Thervingi revolted in the outskirts of Marcianople, and they started to pillage the area seeking provisions, thus forcing Lupicinus to march hastily against them¹⁹.

17. For the term *foedus* and its versions during the 4th c., see E. K. CHRYSOS, Legal Concepts and Patterns for the Barbarians' Settlement on Roman Soil, in: *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, eds. IDEM – A. SCHWARCZ [Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 29], Wien – Köln 1989, 13-23; P. HEATHER, "Foedera" and "foederati" of the Fourth Century, in: *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*, ed. T. F. X. NOBLE [Rewriting Histories], London – New York 2006, 245-256.

18. Regarding the concept and early evolution of this customary law, see S. WIELGUS, The Genesis and History of "ius gentium" in the Ancient World and the Middle Ages, *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 47.2 (1999), 335-351; D. FEDELE, "Ius gentium": The Metamorphoses of a Legal Concept (Ancient Rome to Early Modern Europe), in: *Empire and Legal Thought: Ideas and Institutions from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. E. CAVANAGH, Leiden 2020, 213-251.

19. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.1-9, 171-174; Jordanes, *Getica*, XXVI.134-137, 93.1-94.4; *Chronicon Universale*, 124.39-125.2. Alavivus may have remained a hostage or even lost his life because he is never again mentioned after this ominous banquet.

II. *Charting and commenting on the literary tradition regarding the outbreak of the Gothic revolt and the ensuing Battle of Marcianople*

Concerning this demanding procedure, one should trace, reappraise, and then rearrange the source material according to the quality, quantity, chronology, and origin of relevant evidence. A rich kaleidoscope of references and assessments for the events that unfolded in Roman Thrace during the years 376-377 exist in –fully or partially– surviving Late Antique and Medieval texts (mainly in Latin or Greek, except a few late medieval chronicles in Western European vernacular languages copying loosely and poorly from the former). Therefore, primary sources supplemented by secondary bibliography and relevant archaeological findings can provide much insight into those issues. This diverse information should be studied and analyzed both separately and comparatively. After amassing a large number and assessing a great variety of sources, we noticed that some of them, apart from mentioning the Gothic uprising, either identified or else might have alluded to the Roman defeat in Marcianople. Accordingly, based on those requirements, criteria, and data, we reached the following conclusions regarding the Thervingian insurrection that caused the outbreak of the 377-382 Gothic War, which practically coincided and, therefore, may well be combined with the obscure Battle of Marcianople:

1) Ammianus Marcellinus (ca. 330-395/400) was a former elite Roman soldier (*protector domesticus*) from Syria, who unidentified himself as a Greek but was also one of the most reliable historians of Late Antiquity; the 31st book of his only partially surviving Latin chronicle titled *Res gestae* (= Past events, late-4th c.) supply us –undoubtedly– with the most detailed account regarding the events of 376-377. Moreover, judging by our research in the source material, Ammianus has been the only author to isolate and identify and, hence, to mention and describe the Battle of Marcianople. Therefore, his crucial account will be cited and commented on below while describing the conduct of this specific conflict (in section VI).

However, the main problem is that Ammianus' description of the Battle of Marcianople in particular –unlike his detailed narration of the preceding events (the Gothic entrance into Roman territory and the subsequent Thervingian rebellion)– is somewhat brief and lacunose, as the author himself admits; this restrictive factor explains in part the lack of a specialized study

about this conflict in modern bibliography²⁰. Ammianus noted –much to our regret– that he couldn't provide us with “*a strictly accurate account of what happened or the exact number of the slain, which there was no way of finding out*”; therefore, his readers should be content with a short narration containing “*simply the main points of events*”²¹. Consequently, Ammianus admitted his inability to describe in detail these historical developments, including this specific conflict. He tried, though, to compensate for this failure by emphasizing his personal and scientific integrity; in his own (translated in English) words, “*it will be enough to describe (i.e. the battle of Marcianople) without concealing the truth through any false statement, since faithful honesty is ever a requisite in giving a historical account*”²².

Ammianus explicitly states that he could not locate or gain access to any official record or a detailed account of the circumstances of the Marcianople Battle, nor the exact number of casualties. Nevertheless, it seems that –at

20. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.1-5, 161-174 (for the Battle of Marcianople *per se*: 31.5.8-9, 172-173). Regarding Ammianus' military expertise, as well as an evaluation of the reliability of his account of the specific events surrounding the Battle of Marcianople, cf. G. A. CRUMP, *Ammianus Marcellinus as a Military Historian* [Historia Einzelschriften 27], Wiesbaden 1975; N. J. E. AUSTIN, *Ammianus on Warfare: An Investigation into Ammianus Military Knowledge* [Collection Latomus 165], Brussels 1979; S. RATTI, La traversée du Danube par les Goths: La subversion d'un modèle héroïque (Ammien Marcellin 31.4), in: *Ammianus after Julian. The Reign of Valentinian and Valens in Books 26-31 of the Res Gestae*, eds. J. DEN BOEFT – J. W. DRIJVERS – D. DEN HENGST – H. C. TEITLER [Mnemosyne Supplements, Bibliotheca Classica Batava 289], Leiden – Boston 2007, 181-199; D. BRODKA, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Studien zum Geschichtsdenken im vierten Jahrhundert n. Ch.* [Electrum 17], Kraków 2009, 106-126; M. KULIKOWSKI, Coded Polemic in Ammianus Book 31 and the Date and Place of Its Composition, *JRS* 102 (2012), 79-102; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, x f., 81 f.

21. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.10, 173: *Et quoniam ad has partes post multiplices uentum est actus, id lecturos, siqui erunt umquam, obtestamur, ne quis a nobis scrupulose gesta uel numerum exigat peremptorum, qui comprehendi nullo genere potuit*. Cf. J. C. ROLFE (ed. - trans.), *Ammianus Marcellinus with an English Translation. Vol. III* [Loeb Classical Library], London – Cambridge MA 1986, 415.

22. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.10, 173: *Sufficiet enim ueritate nullo uelata mendacio ipsas rerum digerere summitates, cum explicandae rerum memoriae ubique debeatur integritas fida*; trans. ROLFE, *Ammianus III*, 415. For further annotation and commentary on this specific section of Ammianus, see DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 95-96.

least– Ammianus had acquired some oral information, which allowed him to describe it succinctly without concealing the truth or making inaccuracies, as he notes again. In our opinion, despite its short and somewhat general nature, Ammianus’ actual description of the armed conflict can be evaluated not as a vague or a standardized mannerist and generic report but as a narrative that constitutes historical evidence *per se*: to begin with, it is clear that Ammianus knew about the specific circumstances that led to the clash; moreover, he provides us with the exact distance of the battlefield from the city of Marcianople (see the topography section IV, below), which likewise indicates the fact that, at least, he possessed some information, albeit limited, of the conflict; after all, the description of the Gothic attack is a sufficient characteristic, laconic but also vivid and very indicative indeed of the way the outcome of the clash was –rather brutally and quickly– decided (see the battle description section VI, below). In short, his knowledge of the confrontation was not limited only to the participants and its outcome; on the contrary, according to his own words, it constituted a reliable *rerum memoria* (= a narration of events, that is, a historical account²³). Furthermore, we emphasize the fact that Ammianus himself was a military expert and specialist; all the same, he had visited Thrace, the geography and topography of which he knew well enough since he had devoted several book chapters and paragraphs about this region²⁴.

2) Later, Jordanes –an Eastern Roman official probably of Gothic descent– relied ultimately on Ammianus in his *Getica* or –more precisely– *De origine actibusque Getarum* (= On the origin and the deeds of the Goths, mid-6th c.) especially for the relevant developments circa 376-377 that resulted in the Thervingian uprising and the beginning of this Gothic War, but made use of other authors’ works too, principally the non-surviving *Historia Gothorum* or *Origo Gothica* of Cassiodorus Senator (early-6th c.)²⁵;

23. See above note 22. At this point, Ammianus probably draws from Cicero. See Cicero. *Brutus de claris oratoribus*, ed. K. W. PIDERIT, Leipzig 1862, 3.14, p. 46: *quo iste omnium rerum memoriam breviter et, ut mihi quidem visum est, perdiligenter complexus est?*.

24. See *Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, vol. I, libri XIV-XXV, ed. W. SEYFARTH, Stutgardiae – Lipsiae 1978, 22.8.1-8, 260-261; 43-45, 269 (respectively); Idem, vol. II, 27.4, 37-40.

25. Cf. lately P. VAN NUFFELEN – L. VAN HOOF (trans.), *Jordanes “Romana” and “Getica”* [Translated Texts for Historians 75], Liverpool 2020, 67-68, 78-79, 277-286. They have argued

this latter fact partly explains why Jordanes, unlike Ammianus, presented the course of those events through a pro-Gothic view in his text. Jordanes was quite analytical about the plight of the refugees that incited their uprising; still, he was less precise about the start of the Thervingian revolt and the following Battle of Marcianople, herein limiting his narration to a few lines instead; next, he focused on the “*lacrimabile bellum*” (= lamentable war), namely the ill-omened military campaign of Valens against the Goths that resulted in the disastrous Battle of Adrianople (9 August 378). Centuries later, the *Chronicon universale ad a. 1106* (= Universal or World Chronicle of 1106, a composite work of complicated authorship, currently attributed primarily to Frutolfus [of Michelsberg] and Ekkehardus [of Aura], both of them Benedictine monks and chroniclers of Bavarian origin) copied the text of Jordanes’ Gothic History almost verbatim with some minor differentiations, mostly phrasal subtractions (below, we underline these textual discrepancies):

Jordanes, *Getica*, XXVI (136-137): *Fritigernus ... suosque socios ab imminente morte ereptos ad necem Romanorum instigat. Qui nancti occasione votiva elegerunt viri fortissimi in bello magis quam in fame deficere, et ilico in ducum Lupicini et Maximi armantur occisione*²⁶.

and proved that Jordanes drew the material in his *Getica*, XXIV-XXVI (p. 116-138) basically from Ammianus, but he rearranged and reinterpreted the content, abridged and summarized the information, thus substantially rewriting the narrative. For Cassiodorus’ lost *Historia Gothorum*, cf. B. CROKE, Cassiodorus and the “Getica” of Jordanes, *CPh* 82.2 (1987), 117-134; CHRISTENSEN, *Goths*, 57-65; I. WOOD, Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths, *Historisk Tidsskrift* 103 (2003), 465-484; L. VAN HOOFF – P. VAN NUFFELEN (eds.), *The Fragmentary Latin Histories of Late Antiquity (AD 300–620): Edition, Translation and Commentary*, Cambridge – New York 2020, 195-225.

26. Iordanis de origine actibusque Getarum, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi* V.I, Berolini 1882, p. 93.19-94.2. See also NUFFELEN – VAN HOOFF (trans.), *Jordanes*, 286: *Fritigern ... saved his men from imminent death, and exhorted them to the killing of the Romans. Being very bold men, they seized the opportunity they had hoped for, preferring to die in battle rather than from hunger: they immediately prepared to kill the commanders Lupicinus and Maximus.* Regarding Jordanes’ *Getica*. Cf. N. WAGNER, *Getica. Untersuchungen zum Leben des und zur frühen Geschichte der Goten* [Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker. Neue Folge, 22 (146)], Berlin 1967; B. BALDWIN, Sources for the “Getica” of Jordanes, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 59.1 (1981), 141-146; CROKE, Cassiodorus and “Getica”; W. GOFFART,

*Chronicon universale: Fridigernus ... sociosque a morte ereptos ad necem Romanorum instigat. Qui nacti occasionem votivam, elegerunt potius in bello mori quam fame deficere, et ilico in mortem ducum Lupicini et Maximi armantur*²⁷.

Jordanes and the AD 1106 Universal Chronicle noted that, due to intentional starvation, Fritigern instigated his compatriots to take up arms against the Romans and kill their commanders in charge, Lupicinus and Maximus. We consider this narrative to be at least indirectly, though indicatively) an allusion to the Marcianople clash through an abstract and simplistic ‘personification’ of those historical events. In that sense, it is reasonable to infer additionally that the Thervingi insurgents did not only arm themselves to kill the Roman generals –allegedly because of their poor reception and mistreatment– but also turned their weapons against the military forces that those two officers personally commanded, and apparently against the local population too²⁸.

In addition, Otto Frisingensis –a German feudal nobleman, Catholic clergyman, author and historian (mid-12th c.)– and Thomas Ebendorfer –an

The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon, Princeton 1988, 20-111; CHRISTENSEN, *Goths*, 115-123, 135-142, 222-225, 228; WOOD, *History of the Goths*; W. LIEBESCHUETZ, *Making a Gothic History: Does the “Getica” of Jordanes preserve Genuinely Gothic Traditions?*, in: *East and West*, op. cit., 101-134; SH. GOSH, *Writing the Barbarian Past. Studies in Early Medieval Historical Narrative* [Brill’s Series on the Early Middle Ages 24], Leiden – Boston 2016, 42 f.; L. VAN HOOF – P. VAN NUFFELEN, *The Historiography of Crisis: Jordanes, Cassiodorus and Justinian in Mid Sixth-century Constantinople*, *JRS* 107 (2017), 1-26; VAN NUFFELEN – VAN HOOF (trans.), *Jordanes*.

27. *Chronicon Universale*, 124.62-64. The relevant text of this work was later abridged and summarized in the anonymous late-12th c. *Annales Magdeburgenses* as well. Cf. *Annales Magdeburgenses* a. 1-1118, 1453-1460, ed. G. H. PERTZ, in: MGH, *Scriptores (in Folio) XVI*, Hannoverae 1867, 125.22-26.

28. Some researchers (cf. CHRISTENSEN, *Goths*, 223-224; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 92) refer to the facts about the Battle of Marcianople based mainly on the report of Jordanes’ *Getica* further supplemented by Ammianus’ account in DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*), but they only deal with the Roman commanders and officials who were targeted by the Gothic rebels and especially with Lupicinus; so, they did not search methodically for all possible and available sources relating to the Battle of Marcianople, as done here.

Austrian historian, professor, and statesman (mid-15th c.)– relied also on Jordanes' *Getica* and the *Chronicon universale*. However, Otto considerably rephrased his primary sources in the *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus* (= Chronicles or History of the two cities, an allegory of the 'earthly' Babylon and the 'heavenly' Jerusalem); by doing so, he narrated the same events not in a pro-Gothic –as done in the *Getica*– but rather in a negative perspective about the destructive actions of the Gothic rebels across the affected region²⁹. Similarly, Thomas Ebendorfer referred ultimately to the Gothic History of Jordanes in the *Chronica Austriae* (= Austrian Chronicles) and *Chronica regum Romanorum* (= Chronicles of the Roman kings) through the 'channels' of the *Chronicon universale* and Otto to a certain extent, especially in his second work³⁰.

Therefore, from the above historical works, Ammianus' *Res Gestae* and Jordanes' *Getica* who drew his content from the former but revised it, constitute –without a doubt– the relatively 'extended' version in Latin of the situation that unfolded in Moesia Secunda between mid-376 and early-377³¹, supplemented –through our research– by the much later narratives of the *Chronicon universale*, Otto Frisingensis, and Thomas Ebendorfer.

3) Nevertheless, there exists, in addition, a previously unnoticed and

29. *Otonis episcopi Frisingensis, Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus Otto Bischof von Freising*, ed. W. LAMMERS – trans. A. SCHMIDT, *Otto Bischof von Freising. Chronik oder Die Geschichte der zwei Staaten* [Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 16], Darmstadt 1960, IV.16, p. 332.18-21: *Porro dum ex odio et invidia vicinorum incredibili fame laborarent, vocati a quodam duce dolo ad convivium, insidias primo precaventes ipsos, qui eos invitaverant, sternunt, post tota terra igne ac ferro depopulata ubique diffunduntur*; trans. 333.20-25: *Als sie aber dort in folge des Hasses und Neides der Nachbarvölker von einer unerhörten Hungersnot heimgesucht wurden, lud sie ein Heerführer heimtückisch zu einem Mahle ein; sie aber töteten zunächst, um dieser Falle zu entgehen, die Überbringer der Einladung, verwüsteten dann das ganze Land mit Feuer und Schwert und breiteten sich allenthalben aus.*

30. Thomas Ebendorfer *Chronica Austriae*, ed. A. LHOTSKY, in: MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum. N.S. XIII*, Berlin – Zürich 1967, II, 47.7-9: *Fridegernus rex Gothorum Danubianas partes subiecit, Lupicinum et Maximum duces Romani exercitus peremit*; Thomas Ebendorfer *Chronica regum Romanorum*, ed. H. ZIMMERMANN, in: MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum. N.S. XVIII.1*, Hannover 2003, III, p. 212.13-16: *Non multo post Gottis pacatis ... avaricia Maximi ducis fame compulsi incredibili laborare, odio eciam vicinorum tota terra igne et ferro depopulata diffunduntur.*

31. Cf. also WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 134.

obscure secondary ‘abridged and short’ Latin literary version, which may well serve as indirect evidence concerning specifically the *receptio* of the Thervingi Goths in 376, their revolt in the vicinity of Marcianople, and vaguely the defeat of the Roman army of Thrace that followed immediately afterwards; unfortunately, though, it doesn’t mention the clash of Marcianople itself. According to our research, this account stems from a different written tradition: in particular, from the model Latin *Chronicon* (= Chronicle, late-4th c.) of Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (commonly known as St. Jerome), the relevant text of which was later almost flawlessly reproduced by Prosper Tiro (mid-5th c.), Jordanes’ *Romana* (mid-6th c.), Fredegar’s *Chronicles* (mid-7th c.), and Marianus Scottus of Mainz (late-11th c.). We underline the few differences –additions or subtractions– of the next four texts in comparison to the first original) one:

Hieronymus, *Chronicon* (248^h-249^a 330F-331F): *Gens Hunnorum Gothos vastat. Qui a Romanis sine armorum depositione suscepti per avaritiam Maximi ducis fame ad rebellandum coacti sunt. Superatis in congressione Romanis Gothi funduntur in Thracia*³².

Prosper Tiro, 1161, 1163: *Gens Hunnorum Gothos vastat, qui a Romanis sine armorum depositione suscepti rebellant ... Superatis Romanis Gothi funduntur in Thracia*³³.

32. R. HELM (ed.), *Eusebius Werke. Bd. 7.1. Die Chronik des Hieronymus – Hieronymi Chronicon* [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 47], Berlin 1956, 248.22-249.2. Cf. M. D. DONALSON, *A Translation of Jerome’s Chronicon with Historical Commentary*, Lewiston 1996, 56: *The race of the Huns devastated (sic!, instead, read: devastated) the land of the Goths. The Goths were received by the Romans without having to lay down their arms. They were driven to rebel due to famine brought on by the greed of the general Maximus. After they overcame the Romans in combat the Goths poured into Thrace.* Hieronymus modelled his chronicle in Latin on the previous and prototype Greek equivalent, the Christian *Παντοδαπή Ιστορία* (= Universal History) of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 325) consisting of a *Χρονογραφία* (= Chronography) and the *Χρονικοί κανόνες* (= Chronicle canons). This latter part served as a source for Hieronymus’ translation and adaptation into Latin. Cf. R. W. BURGESS, assist. W. WITAKOWSKI, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography. 1. The Chronici canones of Eusebius of Caesarea: Structure, Content, and Chronology, AD 282-325; 2. The Continuatio Antiochiensis Eusebii: A Chronicle of Antioch and the Roman Near East during the Reigns of Constantine and Constantius 11, AD 325-350* [Historia Einzelschriften 135], Stuttgart 1999, 22-25, 46-47, 90-98.

33. Prosperi Tironis epitoma chronicon edita primum a. CCCCXXXIII continuata ad

Jordanes, *Romana*, 313: *Gens Hunnorum ... Gothos [...] subiugat, alios fugat. Qui venientes in Romania sine armorum suscepti depositione per avaritiam ducis Maximi fame compulsi rebellare coacti sunt, superatisque Romanis in congressione funduntur in Tracias*³⁴.

Chronicon Fredegarii, II.48: *Gens Hunorum Gotus vastat, qui a Romanis sine armorum congressione (sic) suscepti, per avaritiam Maximi ducis fame ad revellandum quoacti sunt. Superati in congressione Romanis, Goti funduntur in Tracia*³⁵.

Marianus Scottus: *Gens Hunorum Gothos vastat; qui a Romanis sine armorum deossitione suscepti, per avaritiam Maximi ducis fame ad rebellandum coacti sunt. Superati in congressione Romanis, Gothi funduntur in Tracia*³⁶.

From the same “laconic” (concerning the same events) written tradition probably derive two other Latin narratives as well, which record the events in a slightly more elaborate and enriched formulation compared to the original text of St. Jerome; this tradition stems from the *Historiae adversus paganos* (early-5th c.) of Paulus Orosius and passes next to Paulus Diaconus’ *Historia Romana* (after mid-8th c.). Once more, we underline the limited differences between both texts:

Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, VII.33.10-11: *gens Hunorum [...] exarsit in Gothos [...] eosque [...] ab antiquis sedibus expulit. Gothi transito Danuio fugientes, a Valente sine ulla foederis pactione suscepti ne arma quidem [...]*

a. CCCLV, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi IX.I*, Berolini 1892, 1161 (a. 377: Hieronymus chronicon a. 2393), 1163 (a. 378: Hier. a. 2393), p. 460. We still refer to Mommsen’s old edition of Prosper Tiro’s chronicle because the latest editors of this primary source have excluded the “Hieronymian” part containing the historical events down to 378 AD on the ground that it is less frequent in the surviving manuscripts; cf. M. BECKER – J.-M. KÖTTER (eds.), *Prosper Tiro, Chronik. Einleitung und Text* [Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike G 5-6], Paderborn 2016, 12-20, 42-44, 51-57.

34. Iordanis de summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi V.I*, Berolini 1882, p. 40.14-17 (: Hieronymus, *Chronicon* a. 2393).

35. *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV*, ed. B. KRUSCH, in: MGH, *Scriptores rerum Merovingiarum II*, Hannoverae 1888, II.48, 69.1-3.

36. Mariani Scotti chronicon a. 1-1082, ed. D. G. WAITZ, in: MGH, *Scriptores* (in Folio) V, Hannoverae 1844, 529.58-60

*tradidere Romanis. deinde propter intolerabilem auaritiam Maximi ducis fame et iniuriis adacti in arma surgentes, uicto Valentis exercitu per Thraciam se, miscentes simul omnia caedibus incendiis rapinisque, fuderunt*³⁷.

Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, XI.X: *gens Hunnorum [...] exarsit in Gothos [...] eosque [...] ab antiquis sedibus expulit. Gothi transito Danubio fugientes a Valente sine ulla foederis pactione suscepti sunt. deinde propter intolerabilem auaritiam Maximi ducis fame compulsi in arma surgentes, uicto Valentis exercitu, sese per Trachias infudere, omnia caedibus incendiisque uastantes*³⁸.

It is interesting that contrary to most Latin writers, who more or less justified the Gothic revolt of 377 –excluding though Tyrannius Rufinus of Aquileia whose model (early-5th c.) *Historia ecclesiastica* is a translation and continuation of Eusebius Pamphilus pioneering and same-titled Church history, Landolfus Sagax (early-11th c.), and Otto Frisingensis³⁹–various Greek authors, such as Eunapius of Sardis (early-5th c.), Socrates of Constantinople (or Scholasticus) and Salamanes Hermias Sozomenus (or Sozomen) (both ca. mid-5th c.), Zosimus (late-5th / early-6th c.), and Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus (early-14th c.), characterized in their respective works the Goths as “barbarians” who rebelled against their supposed “Roman benefactors”⁴⁰. These writers, especially Eunapius,

37. Paulus Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos*, VII.33.10-11, p. 518.3-10. Cf. A. T. FEAR, *Orosius Seven Books of History against the Pagans* [Translated Texts for Historians 54], Liverpool 2010, 382-383: *the race of the Huns ... fell upon the Goths ... driving them from their old homes. The Goths fled across the Danube and were received by Valens without any treaty being signed – they did not even hand over their arms to the Romans ... After this, because of the intolerable greed of Duke Maximus, their hunger and the insults they suffered forced them to rise in arms. They defeated Valens’ army, and poured into Thrace, enveloping everything with murder, arson, and pillage.*

38. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, XI.X, p. 187.13-17.

39. For Otto Frisingensis, see above note 29 and main text. For Landolfus Sagax, see above note 13 (esp. in his text p. 345.9-19). For Tyrannius Rufinus, see T. MOMMSEN (ed.), *Die lateinische Übersetzung des Rufinus*, in: *Eusebius Werke. Bd. 2.2*, ed. E. SCHWARTZ [Die griechischen christliche Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 9.2], Leipzig 1908, XI.13, p. 1019.13-15.

40. Eunapius, fr. 42.55-77, p. 62; Socrates Scholasticus, IV.35, 211. Cf. also M. BECKER – B. BLECKMANN – J. GROSS – M. A. NICKBAKHT (eds.), *Fastenquelle des Sokrates. Einleitung und Text*

provide information about the circumstances of the Gothic entry into Roman soil, their mishandling by imperial officials in the Lower Danube *limes*, and their subsequent revolt, while in addition, they provide us with sometimes conflicting information for the dating of these specific events see below, section III); however, unlike Ammianus, they also do not mention the Battle of Marcianople itself.

The same applies to Jordanes' *Getica* (complemented by the *Chronicon universale*, Otto, and Thomas Ebendorfer) and the 'abridged and short' Latin literary versions), as we have pointed out above. However, we have already demonstrated that in those Latin sources, the Marcianople battle is vaguely indicated and implied in combination with the outbreak of the Gothic uprising, either with somewhat enriched descriptive formulas (cf. especially Jordanes' *Getica*, *Chronicon universale*, Otto Frisingensis, and Thomas Ebendorfer's *Chronica regum Romanorum*) or frugal phraseology (cf. Hieronymus, Prosper Tiro, Jordanes' *Romana*, Fredegar's *Chronicles*, Marianus Scottus, Orosius, Paulus Diaconus, and Thomas Ebendorfer's *Chronica Austriae*).

It is worth noting that those selected Latin sources (categorized into two major groups that applied more or less similar expressions) mention the instigation of the Gothic rebellion (*ad necem Romanorum instigat; ad rebellandum coacti sunt; rebellant; compulsi rebellare; in arma surgentes*); this action almost coincided with a specific combat engagement which led to the defeat of the local military officers and their forces (*in ducum Lupicini et Maximi armantur occisione; in mortem ducum Lupicini et Maximi armantur; Lupicinum et Maximum duces Romani exercitus peremit; qui eos invitaverant, sternunt; superatis[que] in congressione Romanis; victo[que] Valentis exercitu*). The only distinct encounter, which we know for sure – thanks again to Ammianus' narrative – that initiated the Gothic War of 377-382 and can be concurrently and directly linked to the outbreak of the Thervingian revolt, was the pitched Battle of Marcianople, because it

[Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike G 1-4], Paderborn 2016, ns. 26 (4.34.1 sq.) – 27 (4.35.1), p. 187-188; J. BIDEZ – G. C. HANSEN (eds.), *Sozomenus. Kirchengeschichte* [Die Griechischen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte N. F. 4], Berlin 1995, VI.37.15, p. 296.29-297.2; F. PASCHOUD (ed.), *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle II, 2ème partie. Livre IV* [Collection des universités de France. Série grecque 267], Paris 1979, IV.XX.7, 282.2-5; Nicephori Callisti Xanthopouli *Ecclesiasticae Historiae libri XVIII*, in: PG 146, col. 740 C-D.

initiated the hostilities, turned victorious for the Thervingi insurgents, then allowed the Gothic rebellion to spread, and, eventually, led to the triumphant victory of the Goths in the Battle of Adrianople about a year and a half later. It is an indicative and remarkable feature that all these sources, after first citing the Thervingian uprising and alluding to the Battle of Marcianople according to our analysis), then proceeded in noting and narrating – in brief – the “lamentable war” (*lacrimabile bellum*)⁴¹, or else the “combat in Thrace” (*pugna in Thracia*)⁴², or simply the infamous death of emperor Valens⁴³, in the Battle of Adrianople.

In conclusion, unlike the –numerically– rich and –interpretatively– diverse literary tradition (Greek and Latin) about the background and the circumstances of the Gothic entrance and their subsequent insurrection, regarding the Marcianople battle that immediately followed, one thing is certain: without the text of Ammianus, we would have at our disposal only some general and allusive references in the Latin sources mentioned just above. Then, at best, and only through a creative interpretation of the remaining frugal texts, we would have been sure about the elimination of the two military commanders just after the Gothic uprising, thanks to Jordanes’ *Getica*, *Chronicon universale*, Otto Frisingensis, and Thomas Ebendorfer’s *Chronica Austriae* (*in ducum Lupicini et Maximi armantur occisione; in mortem ducum Lupicini et Maximi armantur; ipsos, qui eos invitaverant, sternunt; Lupicinum et Maximum duces Romani exercitus peremit*). Moreover, we could also speculate that this happened after a certain military clash that occurred somewhere in Thrace immediately after the outbreak of the rebellion (*in congressione*⁴⁴: cf. Hieronymus, Jordanes’

41. Hieronymus, *Chronicon*, p. 249.6-15; Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, VII.33.13-15, p. 519.3-16; Prosper Tiro, 1165, p. 460; Jordanes, *Romana*, 314, p. 40.18-20; Idem, *Getica*, XXVI (138), p. 94.6-11 (e.g. Adrianople is mentioned in p. 94.6-7: ... *lacrimabile bello commisso ... in quodam praesidio iuxta Adrianopolim ...*); *Chronicon Fredegarii*, II.48, p. 69.4-7; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, XI.XI, 93.10-22; *Marianus Scottus* 529.63-530.2; *Chronicon universale* 119.43-48 (e.g. Adrianople is mentioned in p. 119.43: *ad urbem Adrianopolim*).

42. Otto, *Chronica*, IV.16, p. 332.24-30.

43. *Chronicon universale*, 124.66-125.1; 131.1-2; Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, II, 47.9-10; Idem, *Chron. reg. Rom.* 212.20-25.

44. Hieronymus, *Chronicon*, 249.1; Jordanes, *Romana*, 313, p. 40.17; *Chronicon*

Romana, Fredegar's Chronicles, and Marianus Scottus; hence, evidently implying and alluding to the Battle of Marcianople), an engagement that turned victorious for the Thervingi Goths against the Roman –provincial and regional– troops, thanks to the information in the remaining seven sources: *superatis Romanis Gothi* (see Hieronymus, Prosper Tiro, Jordanes' *Romana*, Fredegar's Chronicles, and Marianus); *victo Valentis exercitu* (see Orosius and Paulus Diaconus). Still, we wouldn't have any clue or idea about the exact location or its conduct, but only approximately the date, as we shall demonstrate immediately below.

III. Addressing the problems of chronology

A thorough inquiry into the sources demonstrates that the chronological data (either direct or indirect) referring to the early stages of the Gothic uprising until 378 are usually deficient, contradictory, and colliding; accordingly, the relevant modern assessments on the same issue also vary. To address this

Fredegarii, II.48, 69.2-3; Marianus *Scottus* 529.59-60. From Late Antiquity onwards, the Latin word “*congressio*, -onis” a third-declension noun; cf. CH. T. LEWIS – CH. SHORT, *A Latin Dictionary founded on Andrew's Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary Revised, Enlarged, and in Great Part Rewritten*, Oxford 1968, 420: “A hostile meeting, a contest, fight”; F. GAFFIOT, *Dictionnaire latin français. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée, dite Gaffiot 2016, version V. M. Komarov*, dir. G. GRÉCO – M. DE WILDE – B. MARÉCHAL – K. ÔKUBO, 378: “*rencontre, combat*”) typically signified a specific “combat or battle” thus, in singular), not “battles” in general thus, in plural). The same term has been repeatedly used as such by the Latin historian Justin ca. either 3rd or 4th c.): when the word “*congressio*” is written in singular, it designates and specifies only a single and specific battle engagement. Cf. O. SEEL (ed.), *M. Iuniani Iustini epitoma historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi accedunt prologi in Pompeium Trogum* [Biblioteca Teubneriana], Stuttgartiae 1985, 2.12.8, p. 33.12; 2.14.8, p. 36.22; 4.5.1, p. 50.27; 6.4.12, p. 66.18; 8.1.12, p. 77.3; 11.6.10, p. 96.16; 12.8.4, p. 113.19; 15.1.6, p. 139.2; 22.3.9, p. 181.3; 27.3.2, p. 211.12; 31.6.5, p. 230.20; 33.1.4, p. 239.14; 36.4.9, p. 251.2; 38.10.6, p. 267.25; 39.3.12, p. 273.8); whereas, when –only once– in plural, several or many clashes cf. Justinus 28.9.2, p. 266.8-9). The same applies –though hapax found– in Ammianus' *Res gestae* as well (see IDEM, vol. I, 14.2.8), who otherwise prefers the equivalent and synonymous classical Latin term “*congressus*, -us” a fourth-declension noun) instead, to denote a single battle or many battles, either in the singular or plural respectively, exactly as in the synonym word “*congressio*”. Cf. in singular: *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. I, 21.4.7, p. 221; 21.12.7, p. 234; 24.4.24, p. 340. In plural: *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. I, 16.5.9, p. 74; 17.13.27, p.130; 24.4.17, p. 339; 25.1.3, p. 352, vol. II, 29.5.32, p. 121; 29.6.15, p. 129.

problem adequately, one has to collect and assess all the relevant information for establishing a plausible and overall timetable about the events in Thrace from the Gothic entry spring / summer of 376) to the Battle of Ad Salices (= at the Willows, late August or early September of 377)⁴⁵. We must note here that some of the authors or works mentioned below provide direct (such as Ammianus Marcellinus⁴⁶, St. Jerome, Orosius, Socrates Scholasticus, Prosper Tiro, *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, Isidorus Hispalensis, Bede, Theophanes Confessor, Marianus Scottus, and Hugo Floriacensis), while others indirect (such as Eunapius of Sardis, Tyrannius Rufinus, Theodoret of Cyrrihus, Zosimus, Joannes Zonaras, *Chronica Gothorum pseudo-isidoriana*, and Callistus Xanthopulus) chronological indications regarding our subject.

Accordingly, we should reject or exclude various dates and timelines cited in many primary sources and current secondary bibliography:

i. During 327-331 (see Regino [early-10th c.]) or 357 (see *Annales Heremi 2* [late-10th / early-11th c.]), definitely because both chronologies are very early and erroneous⁴⁷.

45. Regarding the Battle of Ad Salices, see *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.7.5-16, p. 177-179. Cf. also HUGHES, *Imperial Brothers*, 167-169; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 126-140; A. MUČKA, *Valentova válka s Góty (376-378)* [Master Thesis unpublished; available online], Masarykova univerzita, Brno 2019, 84-101. WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 157-158, and S. TORBATOV, *Ukrepitel'nata sistema na provincija Skitija (kraja na III - VI v.)*, Veliko Tarnovo 2002, 285-286, locate the battlefield either near Șase Martie (nowadays Sălchioara) or Ceamurlia de Jos in Dobruja, Romania, respectively. Also, cf. HALSALL, *Barbarian Migrations*, 178 (in the modern Dobrudja). Contra, see HEATHER, *Goths and Romans*, 144; IDEM, *Fall*, 509-510, n. 43; J. SZIDAT, Die Dobrudscha in den Res Gestae des Ammianus Marcellinus. Zu den Ortsbezeichnungen Oppidum Salices (31,7,5) und Vicus Carporum (27,5,5), in: *La politique éditiltaire dans les provinces de l'Empire romain, IIème-IVème siècles après J.-C. Actes du IIIe Colloque Roumano-Suisse. La vie rurale dans les provinces romaines: vici et villae (Tulcea, 8-15 octobre 1995)*, ed. V. H. BAUMANN [Biblioteca Istro-Pontică. Seria Arheologie 3], Tulcea 1998, 25-34, esp. 25-30; they point not in Dobruja but in the locality of Marcianople, an opinion that lately DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, op. cit., 127, seem to accept and share as well.

46. Cf. DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, xvii f., esp. xx.

47. Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi, ed. FR. KURZE, in: MGH, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum*, Hannoverae 1890, 16; *Annales Heremi II*, ed. C. VON PLANT. in: MGH, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum LXXVIII*, Hannover 2007, 217.3-13, esp. 3.

ii. Before (see *Annales Quedlinburgenses* [early-11th c.]) or after 375 (see Gregorius Turonensis' *Historiae* [late-6th c.], *Chronica Gothorum pseudo-isidoriana* [early / mid-12th c.], Thomas Ebendorfer's *Chronica Austriae* [mid-15th c.]⁴⁸.

iii. In 376 (see Eunapius of Sardis [early-5th c.], Socrates Scholasticus [ca. mid-5th c.], Anastasius Bibliothecarius [late-9th c.]), as well as some modern scholars⁴⁹.

iv. During mid or late 377, according to some other modern scholars⁵⁰.

v. Between late 375 and early 378 (see Tyrannius Rufinus, Philostorgius [early-5th c.], Sozomen, Theodoret [mid-5th c.], Zosimus [late-5th / early-6th c.], Theodorus Lector or Anagnostes [early-6th c.], Jordanes' *Romana* and *Getica* [mid-6th c.], Fredegar's *Chronicles* [mid-7th c.], Paulus Diaconus [after mid-8th c.], Benedictus monachus [late-10th / early-11th c.], Landolfus Sagax [early-11th c.], *Chronicon Wirziburgense* maybe by Ekkehardus [mid-11th c.], Bernoldus Constantiensis [late-11th / early-12th c.], Joannes Zonaras [early-12th c.], and Callistus Xanthopulus [early-14th c.]⁵¹).

48. *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. G. H. PERTZ, in: MGH V *Scriptores III*, Hannoverae 1839, 30.1 and 4; Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri historiarum X, eds. B. KRUSCH – W. LEVISON, in: MGH *Scriptores rerum germanicarum I.I*, Hannoverae 1951, I.41, 28.1; F. GONZÁLEZ MUÑOZ (ed.), *La chronica gothorum pseudo-isidoriana (ms. Paris BN 6113). Edición crítica, traducción y estudio* [Biblioteca Filológica 6], Noia (A Coruña) 2000, IX, 142.17-23; Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chron. Austr.*, II, 47.2-3.

49. Eunapius, fr. 42.60-61,66-67, p. 62; Stesocra Scholasticus, IV.34-35, 210-211; Anastasius Bibliothecarius, ed. C. DE BOOR, *Theophanis chronographia*. Vol. II. *Theophanis vitas, Anastasii Bibliothecarii historiam tripertitam, dissertationem de codicibus operis Theophanei, indices, continens*, Lipsiae 1885, 94.1-12. According to some researchers, the battle occurred during the fall of 376. See V. VELKOV, *Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity Studies and Materials* (Publications of the Henri Frankfort Foundation 3), Amsterdam 1977, 34; BURNS, *Barbarians*, 26; H. ELTON, *The Roman Empire in Late Antiquity. A Political and Military History*, Cambridge 2018, 132; J. CURRAN, From Jovian to Theodosius, in: *Cambridge Ancient History CAH) XIII. The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425*, eds. A. CAMERON – P. GARNSEY, Cambridge 1998 2007), 78-110, esp. 98.

50. In mid-377: See KULIKOWSKI, *Gothic Wars*, 132-137. In late-377: See KAZANSKI, *Goths*, 64; C. MORRISON, Les événements - perspectives chronologique, in: *Le monde byzantin. I. L'Empire romain d'Orient (330-641)*, dir. EADEM [Nouvelle Clio], Paris 2015, 1-47, esp. 13.

51. Cf. Tyrannius Rufinus, *Ecclesiastica Historia*, XI.12-13, 1019.6-1020.4; B. BLECKMANN – M. STEIN (eds.), *Philostorgios, Kirchengeschichte. Band 1: Einleitung und Text* [Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike E 7], Paderborn 2015, 9.17.1-2, 394.21-

vi. In 378 (see Prosper Tiro [mid-5th c.], Isidorus Hispalensis [early-7th c.], Bede [early-8th c.], Theophanes Confessor [early-9th c.], the anonymous Byzantine *Ἱστορία αὐτοκρατόρων* [= History of the emperors, late-11th c.], and Martinus Polonus [late-13th c.]⁵².

vii. Even as late as ca. 377-380/81 (see *Chronicon universale*), or ca. 378-383 (see Otto Frisingensis [mid-12th c.]), or 380/81 (see *Annales Magdeburgenses* [late-12th c.], *Annales Colonienses maximi* [near mid-13th c.]), and even in 397 (see Marianus Scottus [late 11th-c.]⁵³.

28; Sozomenus, 6.36.5, 293.24 f.; 6.37.2-17, 294.17-297.11; 6.39.2-4, 300.14-26; L. PARMENTIER – F. SCHEIDWEILER (eds.), *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte* [GCS 4], Berlin 1954, 4.15.11, 237.14-17; 4.31, 270.19 f.; 4.33.1, 271.14 f.; 4.36, 273.7 f.; 4.37.1, 273.16 f.; Zosimus, IV.XIX.1, 279.19 f.; IV.XX.1, 3 and 7, 280.10 f.; IV.XXI.1, 282.6 f.; G. C. HANSEN (ed.), *Theodoros Anagnostes. Kirchengeschichte* [GCS 3], Berlin ²1995, 3.211, 74.7-8; 3.213, 74.18 f.; 3.216, 75.8 f.; 3.217, 75.14-16; Jordanes, *Romana*, 310, 40.1-6; 313, 40.12-23; IDEM, *Getica*, XXIV (130), 91.19 f.; XXV (131-133), 92.5 f.; XXVI (134), 93.1 f.; XXVI 137), 93.19 f.; *Chronicon Fredegarii*, II.46, 68.20-21; II.47, 68.22-23; II.48, 69.3-7; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, XI.VII, 186.23-26; XI.X-XI, 187.13-25; XI.XII, 187.31-33; XI.XIV, 188.10-16; Benedicti Sancti Andreae monachi chronicon a. c. 360-973, ed. G. H. PERTZ, in: MGH V, *Scriptores III*, Hannoverae 1839, 697.35-36; Landolfus Sagax, XII, 186-187, 343-346; Chronicon Wirziburgense ad a. 1057, ed. D. G. WAITZ, in: MGH VIII, *Scriptores VII*, Hannoverae 1844, 22.51-52; Bernoldi chronicon, ed. G. H. PERTZ, in: MGH VII, *Scriptores V*, Hannoverae 1844, 408.50-56; Otto, *Chronica*, IV.16, 332.6-21; M. PINDER – TH. BÜTTNER-WOBST (eds.), *Ioannis Zonarae epitomae historiarum libri XIII-XVIII*, t. III [CSHB], Bonnae 1897, 13.17.7-9, 82.6-83.5, esp. 83.1-2; Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopulus, 736C-740D.

52. Cf. Prosper Tiro, 1162-1163, p. 460; Isidorus Hispalensis, *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum*, ed. C. RODRIGUEZ ALONSO, *Las Historias de los godos, vándalos y suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla: estudio, edición crítica y traducción* [Colección fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 13], Leon 1975, 9, 186.1; Bede chronica maiora ad a. 725 [et] chronica minora ad a. 703, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi XIII. III*, Berolini 1898, 450, 298; C. DE BOOR (ed.), *Theophanis chronographia*. Vol. I. *Textum Graecum continens*, Lipsiae 1883, 64.16-23, 64.34-65.20; FR. IADEVAIA (ed.), *Anonymi, Historia imperatorum. Parte seconda: a) Da Diocleziano ad Anastasio*, Messina 2005, cols. 2187-2192, 88; Martini Oppaviensis Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum, ed. L. WEILAND, in: MGH, *Scriptores XXII*, Hannoverae 1872, 453.1.

53. Cf. *Chronicon universale*, 119.16-37, 130.66-131.2; Otto, *Chronica*, IV.15, 330.11-12, IV.16, 332.6-21, IV.17, 335.1-5; *Annales Colonienses maximi ab O.C.-1237*, ed. K. PERTZ, in: MGH, *Scriptores XVII*, Hannoverae 1841, 732.58-59; *Annales Magdeburgenses*, 125; *Marianus Scottus*, 529.56-60 (esp. 56). The latter employed another Christian calendar by erroneously adding 22 years to the still valid and accepted worldwide one (AD or CE),

In our chronological assessment, we tried to apply a more holistic and comparative approach by figuring out a variety of data and factors beyond the conflicting relative accounts of all the authors and works mentioned above. Accordingly, we took into consideration:

1) Explicit and implicit chronological indications in Ammianus' almost contemporary and usually reliable *Res gestae*. Ammianus provides two direct and definite termini: *terminus post quem* the imperial accession of Valentinian II (on November 23/24, 375) and *terminus ante quem* the tactical retreat of the Roman army to Marcianople after the bloody and inconclusive Ad Salices battle (toward the coming of the 377 autumn)⁵⁴. Likewise, he provides several indirect chronological indications:

i. The passing of the Thervingi south of the Danube, while the river was swollen by earlier heavy rainfall (*imbriumque crebritate tunc auctum*), hence, late spring or summer of 376⁵⁵.

ii. The idle stay of the Thervingi for quite some time (*iam dudum*) along the banks of the Danube, while the Roman authorities intentionally delayed taking care and supplying them with necessities under various pretexts and delays (*tenebantur consulto nefandis nundinandi commerciis*), whence later

originally calculated and moderated by Dionysius Exiguus (Gr. Διονύσιος ὁ Μικρός, ca. 470-544) back in the 6th c. Cf. W. BARAN-KOZŁOWSKI, Chronicon by Marianus Scotus – between Computistic and Historiography: World Chronicles and the Search for a Suitable Chronology of History, *Quaestiones mediae aevi novae* 13 (2008), 313-347. – P. VERBIST, *Duelling with the Past. Medieval Authors and the Problem of Christian Era, c. 990-1135* [Studies in the Early Middle Ages 21], Turnhout 2010, 85-146. C. Ph. E. NOTHAFT, An Eleventh-Century Chronologer at Work: Marianus Scottus and the Quest for the Missing Twenty-Two Years, *Speculum* 88 (2013), 457-482.

54. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 30.10.5, 158; 31.8.1-2, 179 (respectively).

55. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.4.5, 169. According to the current scientific knowledge about climatic data, heavy rainfall and flooding phenomena occur in the Lower Danube usually during April-June and occasionally during July-August. Cf. WANKE, *Gotenkriege* 120-122; H. ELTON, *Warfare in Roman Europe AD 350-425* [Oxford Classical Monographs], Oxford – New York 1996, 79; M. LEMKE, Towards a Military Geography of “Moesia Inferior”, in: *LIMES XXII. Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, Ruse, Bulgaria, September 2012*, eds. L. VAGALINSKI – N. SHARANKOV [Bulletin of the National Archaeological Institute 42], Sofia 2015, 845-852, esp. 849. – E. J. S. WEAVERDYCK, *Isolation or Integration? A Spatial Analytical Approach to the Local Impact of the Roman Army on the Northern Frontier* [Doctoral Thesis unpublished; available online], University of California, Berkeley 2016, 42; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 68, 84.

they took orders to move faster (*ocius*) inland; at the same time (*Id tempus*), the Greuthungi also sneaked into Roman Danubian territory and settled further away from the Thervingi; both events must have taken place during the autumn of 376⁵⁶.

iii. However, the Thervingi moved slowly (*tarde*), and after marching leisurely (*itineribus lentis*), they approached the outskirts of Marcianople⁵⁷; thus, they may have arrived there early in the winter of 376/77.

iv. The pillaging and burning of countryside villas with large agricultural estates (*pilando uillas et incendendo*), and most likely of granaries (*horrea*), in the vicinity of Marcianople by roaming Thervingi war bands immediately after their rebellion, along with their earlier demand to obtain provisions from the local urban market, probably implies a period of storing food supplies and sheltering livestock, therefore, in the winter of 376/77. A little later follows the narrative of the battle itself⁵⁸, which could have ensued in the same period, very early in 377, during the winter season.

In addition, Ammianus' explicit and implicit chronological indications may combine with similar references in several primary sources (see Hieronymus or St. Jerome, *Consularia Constantinopolitana* [both late-4th c.], Orosius [early-5th c.], Prosper Tiro [mid-5th], *Chronica Gallica a. 511*, Cassiodorus' *Chronica* [early-6th c.], Hugo Floriacensis, Sigebertus Gemblacensis, Hugo Flaviniacensis, and *Annales Mellicenses* [all early-12th c.], Richardus de Sancto Victore [after mid-12th c.], and Thomas Ebendorfer's *Chronica regum Romanorum* [mid-15th c.]), which precisely date those historic events in 377 (notably, Prosper Tiro follows Hieronymus in dating the Gothic revolt to 377, but wrongly places the first Gothic victory over the Romans, probably involving the battle of Marcianople, in the year 378)⁵⁹.

56. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.1-3, 171. ELTON, *Warfare*, 79, notes that the water flow level in the Danube falls east of Belgrade (Lat. *Singidunum*) in the autumn, information in support of our calculations for the easy crossing of the Lower Danube by the Greuthungi sometime during the autumn of 376.

57. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.4, 171. WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 129-130, supposed and suggested that the Thervingian refugee caravan under Fritigern may have been moving only about two km per day from Durostorum to Marcianople, a slow movement that we cannot verify with certainty.

58. For all the above events, cf. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.8-9, 172-173.

59. Cf. Hieronymus, *Chronicon*, 248.14: [377] XIII (sc. anno imperii Valentis) ...; M.

2) We also checked for the road distances in both range / span and duration according to the *Tabula Peutingeriana* and other Late Roman itineraries⁶⁰, supplemented by modern digital online tools, such as the

BECKER – B. BLECKMANN – J. GROSS – M. A. NICKBAKHT (eds.), *Consularia Constantinopolitana. Einleitung und Text* [Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike G 1-4], Paderborn 2016, 41.21: [377] *Gratiano IIII et Merobaude* consular year; Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, VII.33.9, 517.17: *Tertio decimo autem anno imperii Valentis ...*; Prosper Tiro, 1159, p. 460: *CCCL Gratiano IIII et Merobaude*; 1161, p. 460: *qui* (sc. Gothi) ... *rebellant*; 1162, p. 460: *CCCLI Valente VI et Valentiniano II* (378 AD), and 1163: *Superatis Romanis Gothi funduntur in Thracia*; *Chronicorum a. DXI pars Hieronymiana*, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi IX.I: Chronica Gallica a. CCCCLII et DXI*, Berolini 1892, 510: *XIII* (sc. Valentis) *suscepti Gothi rebellaverunt*, 644; Cassiodori Senatoris *chronica ad a. DXIX*, ed. T. MOMMSEN, in: MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi XLII*, Berolini 1894, 1125: [377] *Gratianus IIII et Merobaudes ...*, 153; L. M. DE RUITER (ed.), *Hugo von Fleury: Historia Ecclesiastica. Editio altera: kritische Teksteditie* [Doctoral Thesis unpublished; available online], Rijksuniversiteit Groningen 2016, V, 122.814-817: *Verum anno imperii Valentis XIII quattuor Scythię gentes, id est Gothi, Ypogothi, Gyppedes et Vandali, una lingua utentes et nichil aliud nisi tantum nomen mutantes, bipartito agmine Danubium transierunt*; *Chronica Sigeberti Gemblacensis a. 381-1111*, ed. D. L. C. BETHMANN, in: MGH, *Scriptores VI*, Hannoverae 1894, 301.44: *Anno 13° Valentis ...*; *Chronicon Hugonis monachi Viridunensis et Divionensis, abbatis Flaviniacensis*, ed. G. H. PERTZ, in: MGH X, *Scriptorum VIII*, Hannoverae 1848, I, 302.46-50: *Gothi ... ad rebellandum coacti, funduntur in Tracia ... a. Dom. 377*; *Annales Mellicenses a. 1-1123*, ed. D. S. WATTENBACH, in: MGH, *Scriptores IX*, Hannoverae 1851, 489.58: *377. Gothi fame compulsi rebellant*; *Richard de Saint - Victor, Liber exceptionum* [Textes philosophiques du Moyen Âge 5], ed. J. CHÂTILLON, Paris 1958, I.VIII, 182.30-31, 46-47: *Verum anno imperii Valentis XIII*; Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica regum Romanorum*, III, 210.16: *Eius* (sc. Valentis) *imperii anno XIII*. Contrary to the hypothesis of R. BURGESS, *The Gallic Chronicle of 511: A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction*, in: *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources*, eds. R. W. MATHISEN – D. SHANZER, Abingdon, Oxon – New York 2001, 85-100, esp. 85-86, the latest editors J.-M. KÖTTER – C. SCARDINO, *Gallische Chronik von 511. Einleitung und Text* [Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike G 7-8], Paderborn 2017, 177 f., esp. 189-190, reinstated Mommsen's earlier thesis that this Gallic chronicle was drawn up shortly after 511 as a unified work, though slightly modified by an unknown Spanish "Epitomator of 733 AD". For the events down to 378, this early-6th c. chronicle was another adaptation of Hieronymus' prototype text. However, the latter editors have not incorporated its "Hieronymian" part in their critical edition –exactly like Prosper Tiro's edition in the same series see fn. 33)– because they are mainly interested in the 'post-Hieronymian' tradition of Latin chronicles during the Early Middle Ages, which focused on and recorded events after 379.

60. *Itineraria Romana. Römische Reisewege an der Hand der Tabula Peutingeriana*,

“*Omnes Viae: Itinerarium Romanum. A Reconstruction of an Antique Roman Map with Internet Technology*” René Voorburg, 2011), “*Vici.org: Archaeological Atlas of Antiquity*” René Voorburg, 2014), and the “*ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World*” Walter Scheidel – Elijah Meeks et al., 2014)⁶¹, in combination with seasonal variations in the daylight, diverse or harsh climatic conditions, and the periodic flooding along the Danube⁶². In particular, all these factors are important because, during the period in concern, they affected human movement and travel, as well as the conduct of military operations; they also determined the time and the circumstances under which the Goths crossed the Danube, delimited and regulated the varied speed in the movement of Roman messengers and envoys, imperial troops, and of the Gothic warrior-refugee caravans via the main routes of the *cursus publicus* (Gr. δημόσιος δρόμος) and other secondary smaller lowland or mountainous) local roads⁶³.

ed. K. MILLER, Stuttgart 1916. For Roman itineraries, namely *Tabula Peutingeriana*, *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, *Itinerarium Antonini*, and *Ravennatis Cosmographia*, see M. MADZHAROV, *Roman Roads in Bulgaria. Contribution to the Development of Roman Road System in the Provinces of Moesia and Thrace* [National Archaeological Reservation and Museum – Hissarja], Veliko Tarnovo 2009 (repr. 2017), 9-12; M. LARNACH, *All Roads lead to Constantinople: Exploring the Via Militaris in the Medieval Balkans, 600-1204* [Doctoral Thesis unpublished; available online], University of Sydney 2016, 28-34 (in addition, he mentions modern edited and online atlases, such as the Barrington Atlas, *pleiades.stoa.org*, and others; at 37-40, he further comments on the inaccuracy of the modern online maps). The roadway distances of the *Tabula Peutingeriana* frequently become approximate because modern scholars have noticed numerous discrepancies in their calculations. Especially for such problematic issues in charting the road network of Roman Thrace, see MADZHAROV, *Roads*, 80-82, 87-88, 90, 100, 109, 112, 117-118, 125, 135-138, 140-141, 147, 150-152, 155-156, 158, 161-163, 165, 170-172, 173-174, 175, 183 (the *Tabula Peutingeriana* is more reliable than the *Itinerarium Antonini* as far as the Transdanubian road is concerned), 208-209, 238.

61. See respectively, <https://omnesviae.org/>; <https://vici.org/>; <https://orbis.stanford.edu/>.

62. For example, daylight only lasts about 10-11 hours during the winter. Frigid north winds afflict the Danubian regions of Thrace frequently, so weather is chilly from early autumn, and winter may be severe and freezing cold. Cf. HEATHER, *Fall*, 168, 172; MADZHAROV, *Roads* 180; LARNACH, *Via Militaris*, 22-23; WEAVERDYCK, *Northern Frontier*, 42. For floods and the strong current of the Danube, see *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. I, 17.12.4, 122; 19.11.4, 175-176, vol. II, 27.5.5, 40-41; 31.3.8, 168; 31.4.5, 169. See also above fn. 55.

63. The Late Roman and Early Byzantine *cursus publicus* Latin for “the public way”)

3) Finally, we searched and found the whereabouts of the two co-emperors, Valens and Gratian (reign 367/75-383), during the critical period of interest, especially from late 376 / early 377 until early autumn 377, through data drawn from the imperial legal compilation of the *Codex Theodosianus* (438). Habitually, Valens resided in Syria either in Antioch of Syria or Hierapolis [Manbij]), whereas Gratian in Germany (either in Augusta Treverorum / Treveris) [Trier] or Mogontiacum [Mainz])⁶⁴. This

was a well-organized and very sophisticated for its era system of road communications that possessed fully equipped road stations at frequent intervals and provided two alternatives for the speed of travel and movement; hence, it consisted of a fast *cursus velox* Latin for “the speedy way”; Gr. ὄξυς δρόμος; mainly used by imperial messengers) and a much slower *cursus clabularis* (Latin for “the transport way”; Gr. πλατὺς δρόμος; habitually used by campaigning armies and caravans of carts or carriages). The speed of the *cursus velox* is estimated at ca. 80-100 km or 55-65 Roman miles per day. In exceptional circumstances, the daily speed of an envoy could exceed the 130-165 km radius and even reach 250-320 km per day. The speed of the *cursus clabularis* is estimated at ca. 20-35 km or 15-25 Roman miles per day. Refugee caravans travelled at an even slower pace. Apart from the choice of route, the mode of transportation, and the variety in achievable speeds, one must consider many other factors to estimate the duration of a trip, such as daylight, weather, terrain, variable road conditions, supplies and resting facilities, even the nature of the news, since bad news tends to travel faster than good ones. A preindustrial mixed army group of infantry and cavalry could cover ca. 380-500 km in a three-week march in favorable conditions. However, a light-armed military force could downstream a river much faster, even moving ca. 100 km per day. Cf. A. M. RAMSAY, The Speed of the Roman Imperial Post, *JRS* 15 (1925), 60-74; C. W. J. ELLIOT, New Evidence for the Speed of the Roman Imperial Post, *Phoenix* 9.2 (1955), 76-80; ELTON, *Warfare*, 177-178; HEATHER, *Fall*, 104-107; F. DAIM – J. N. DILLON (eds.) – D. A. SMART (trans.), *History and Culture of Byzantium* [Brill’s New Pauly Supplements 10], Leiden – Boston 2019, 318-349 (regarding transport, travel and logistics); J. W. DRIJVERS – H. C. TEITLER, Gratian’s Campaign against the Lentienses and his Journey to Thrace (*Ammianus Marcellinus*, 31.10 & 31.11.6): A New Chronology, *Historia* 68.2 (2019), 115-124.

64. For Valens’ whereabouts, see T. MOMMSEN – E. MEYER (eds.), *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, Vol. I.II, Berolini 1905, 8.7.14 (377 Jan. 25, Antioch), 398; 7.4.17 (377 Apr. 4, Antioch), 318-319; 10.16.3 (377 Jul. 6, Hierapolis), 554; 6.2.12 (377 summer, Hierapolis), 243; 7.6.3 (377 Aug. 9, Hierapolis), 325. For Gratian’s whereabouts, see op. cit., 9.35.3 (377 Jan. 4, Trier), 490; 14.3.15 (377 Febr. 16, Trier), 776-777; 8.5.34 (377 [or 379?] Feb. 27, Trier), 384; 16.2.24 (377 Mar. 5, Trier), 842-843; 1.16.13 (377 Jul. 28, Mainz), 59; 11.2.3 (377 Sept. 17, Trier), 580-581. Cf. O. SEECK, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.: Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart 1919, 248-249 (Gratian’s and

latter fact affected the speed of communication between the two co-emperors, their decision-making and the feasible coordination of their military reaction to the Gothic insurgency.

Taking into consideration the above-written information and all other indicators, we believe that the outbreak of the Thervingian revolt and the following battle of Marcianople should be placed somewhere during the early months (winter) of 377⁶⁵.

IV. *Exploring the Topography*

The precise geographical delineation of the Thervingian entry into Roman soil, their subsequent descent in the vicinity of Marcianople, and the exact battlefield location are still elusive. Most modern historians and researchers still take for granted *a priori* that the refugees entered Roman Thrace at Durostorum (Gr. Δορύστολον; Silistra, Bulgaria)⁶⁶, except a few scholars who tried to deliver scientific argumentation for this assessment⁶⁷. However,

Valens' whereabouts during 377); DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, xvii f., 81 f. We acquired the first indicative piece of information from an analogous reference in T. D. BARNES, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, Ithaca – London 1998, 253, which we then complemented by researching further into the relevant legal corpus. On the other hand, ELTON, *Warfare*, 178, aptly notices that: *contacting the emperor ... and finding the emperor's actual position could further delay the message's arrival*.

65. Cf. also WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 129, 134; HEATHER, *Goths and Romans*, 122, 142; IDEM, *Fall*, 250-252, 257; P. SOUSTAL, *Thrakien Thrakē, Rhodopē und Haemimontus*) [TIB 6], Wien 1991, 64; I. N. WOOD, *The Barbarian Invasions and First Settlements*, in: *CAH XIII*, op. cit., 516-537 (517); LENSKI, *Valens*, 327, 329; A. KÜLZER, *Ostthrakien Eurōpē*) [TIB 12], Wien 2008, 81; HUGHES, *Imperial Brothers*, 155, 162; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 86, 91, 112.

66. For the city during the Late Roman – Early Byzantine period, see R. IVANOV – G. ATANASOV – P. DONEVSKI (eds.), *History of Silistra. Vol. I, The Ancient Durostorum*, Silistra – Sofia 2006.

67. SCHMIDT, *Ostgermanen*, 258, 402; WOLFRAM, *Goths*, 119; WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 116-120, 128. Cf. also P. SOUSTAL, *Dorostolon – Silistra. Die Donaustadt im Lichte neuerer Forschung*, in: *Von der Scythia zur Dobruža*, eds. C. CHOLIOLČEV – R. PILLINGER – R. HARREITHER [Miscellanea Bulgarica 11], Wien 1997, 115-126, esp. 117; LENSKI, *Valens*, 325, n. 29; KULIKOWSKI, *Gothic Wars*, 130; A. MUČKA, *Valentova válka s Góty*, 38-42; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 67, 84-85.

given the large number of expatriates, we maintain that the Thervingi probably entered the Late Roman Balkan territory from certain river fords across the Lower Danube south bank and its basin (such as Transmarisca [Tutrakan, Romania], Durostorum, and Carsium [Hârşova, Romania])⁶⁸. Yet, we have reasons to believe that their southward trek towards Marcianople commenced a few months later jointly from the imperial city fortress of Durostorum. From there, a dense road network started, which interconnected the town with all other principal locations across Thrace⁶⁹. So, according to our still-expanding information on the local and regional Roman road network, Durostorum might have served as the ultimate starting point for the march of the refugees to Marcianople because two almost parallel and alternative routes commenced from Durostorum toward Marcianople; these roads could facilitate the movement of the Thervingi directly to the administrative capital of Moesia Secunda province, the city of Marcianople.

Based on the report by Ammianus⁷⁰, our knowledge of the local road network⁷¹, the locally surviving Roman milestones⁷², and our information on

68. For those limited and specified fords across the Lower Danube, see LEMKE, *Military Geography*, 845. We focus strictly on the affected area that concerns our research.

69. Cf. J. J. WILKES, *The Roman Danube: An Archeological Survey*, *JRS* 95 (2005), 125-224, esp. 148; G. KARDARAS, Ο “δρόμος του Δούναβη” κατά την Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα (Δ’-ΣΤ’ αι.), in: *Η μεθόριος του Δούναβη και ο κόσμος της στην εποχή της μετανάστευσης των λαών (4ος-7ος αι.)*, eds. S. PATOURA-SPANOU – G. KARDARAS [ΕΙΕ / ΙΒΕ, Ερευνητική Βιβλιοθήκη 6], Athens 2008, 267-284, esp. 271; MADZHAROV, *Roads*, 180; A. ΠΑΝΑΙΤΕ, *Written and Archeological Sources for the Reconstruction of Roman Road Network in the Province of Lower Moesia*, *Caiete. Arhitectură. Restaurare. Arheologie* 3 (2012), 67-80, esp. 73; ΕΑΔΕΜ, *Roman Roads in “Moesia Inferior” Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence*, in: *Limes XXII*, op. cit., 593-600, esp. 598. At this point, we thank our dear colleague, Adriana Panaite, for her gracious help.

70. Cf. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.4.1, 5 and 8, 168-170; 31.5.1-3, 171.

71. Cf. G. ŠCRIVANI, *Roman Roads and Settlements in the Balkans*, in: *An Historical Geography of the Balkans*, ed. F. W. CARTER, London – New York 1977, 115-145; S. TORBATOV, *The Roman Road Durostorum – Marcianopolis*, *Archaeologia Bulgarica* 4.1 (2000), 59-72; IDEM, *Pătna mreža Trakija i Mizija I-III v.*, in: *Arheologija na bălgarskite zemi. Tom I*, ed. R. IVANOV, Sofia 2004, 76-95; MADZHAROV, *Roads*, 61-62, 67, 180, 201, 215-217, 228, 256; TEODOR, *Border Area*; ΠΑΝΑΙΤΕ, *Road Network*; ΕΑΔΕΜ, *Roman Roads*.

72. For the Roman milestones between Durostorum and Marcianople, see *L’Année épigraphique* (2001), 536 (nos. 1736-1737); *CIL III. Inscriptionum Orientis et Illyrici Latinarum Supplementum II*, Berolini 1902, nos. 12519 (p. 2106), 13758 (p. 2246), 14215¹

various Late Roman settlements in the affected area that the Thervingi might have plundered right before the battle⁷³, we attempted to determine the probable places of the Thervingian admission into Roman Thrace and their southward route to Marcianople, and also the possible sites of the battlefield. So far, only three scholars have generally located the battleground to the west or the northwest of Marcianople, while another one implied that this battle occurred to the north / northeast, towards the direction of the *Scythia Minor* province⁷⁴.

Ammianus provides a crucial piece of information on the matter by recording that Lupicinus' army literally "*stood ready for combat at the ninth milestone out of the city*" (= 9 Roman miles, ca. 13.5 km. or 8.3 miles)⁷⁵. Certainly, Ammianus' testimony is quite helpful and confining, though puzzling too, since it reveals that the Roman troops moved out to intercept the Gothic war band along the pathway of a specific though unspecified road.

Nevertheless, we are inclined to point towards two probable lowland locations for the battleground at approximately 13-14 km. (roughly 9 Roman miles or 8.5 miles) either north or west of Marcianople, because we restricted the scope of research along the two main road axes, the North

(p. 23165⁵); B. BEŠEVĹIEV, *Spätgriechische und spätlateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien* [Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 30], Berlin 1964, no. 149. Cf. TORBATOV, Roman Road, 61-62; A. PANAITE – C.-G. ALEXANDRESCU, A "Rediscovered" Inscription from Dobrudja. Roads and Milestones in "Scythia" (3rd-4th Centuries AD), *Pontica* 42 (2009), 429-455; TEODOR, Border Area, 427; PANAITE, Road Network, 75.

73. Cf. V. DINTCHEV, Novite Kāsnorimski centrove na Skitija i Mizija Vtora, in: *Sbornik v pamet na profesor Velizar Velkov*, eds. K. POPOV – A. TENCHOVA [Nacionalen Arheologiĉeski Institut i Muzej – BAN], Sofia 2009, 414-448; TEODOR, Border Area, 425, 431-433; Poulter, Goths, 70-74; RIZOS, Horrea, 670, 674, 681-682, 684; W. LIEBESCHUETZ, The Lower Danube Region under Pressure: From Valens to Heraclius, in: *East and West*, op. cit., 425-460, esp. 426-428; L. VAGALINSKI, The Problem of Destruction by Warfare in Late Antiquity: Archaeological Evidence from the Danube Limes, in: *LIMES XXII*, op. cit., 311-326, esp. 315-323; M. Duch, *Economic Role of the Roman Army in the Province of Lower Moesia Moesia Inferior* [Acta Humanistica Gnesnensia 16], Gniezno 2017, 34, 106, 130, 152, 158, 161, 173, 178, 189, 191, 192, 206, 213-214.

74. West / northwest: See CURRAN, From Jovian to Theodosius, 98; S. MACDOWALL, *Adrianople AD 378. The Goths crush Rome's Legions* [Osprey Military, Campaign 84], Oxford 2001, 41; LENSKI, *Valens*, 329 and n. 48. North / northeast: See KULIKOWSKI, *Gothic Wars*, 133-134.

75. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.9, 172: *in nono ab urbe miliario stetit paratus ad decernendum*.

↔ South highway (*Durostorum* ↔ *Marcianopolis* ↔ *Anchialus* [Pomorie] ↔ *Deultum* / *Dibaltum* [Debelt]) and the East ↔ West highway (*Odessus* [Varna] ↔ *Marcianopolis* ↔ *Nicopolis ad Istrum* [near Nikyup] ↔ *Montana* [Montana]), which converged and crisscrossed the above city⁷⁶. We ruled out the possibility of looking for the battlefield to the east or south of Marcianople; such an option would require a prior even before the battle) bypass of the city by the Thervingi warriors and refugee caravan. However, this would prove impossible before neutralizing the local Roman opposition because the regional Roman army of Thrace, with the probable support of *limitanei* frontier units, was still concentrated around and deployed within the same city. Thus, sundry imperial troops were blocking the main road junction in the vicinity and correspondingly preventing the Thervingi from continuing their trek further south into Thrace since the actual site of Marcianople formed and functioned as a chokepoint or a bottleneck because of the obstructive and restrictive terrain in this precise geographical area. Of course, it is no coincidence that the Gothic insurgency gained momentum as well as scores of new followers newcomers and locals alike) and spread all over Thrace only *after* the Thervingi had won the battle in Marcianople⁷⁷.

V. Surveying a potential Gothic collaboration between the Thervingi and the Greuthungi before the conflict in Marcianople

The possibility of a potential contact and a cooperative action between the Thervingi and the Greuthungi, presumed by some modern scholars even

76. On those two main Thracian road-axes, see WANKE, *Gotenkriege*, 35; TORBATOV, *Pătina mreža*, 90, 95; WILKES, *Danube*, 158; MADZHAROV, *Roads*, 62, 205, 224; PANAITÉ – ALEXANDRESCU, *Inscription*, 444; PANAITÉ, *Road Network*, 73; EADEM, *Roman Roads*, 596; EADEM, *A Changing Landscape: The Organization of the Roman Road Network in “Moesia Inferior”*, in: *Troesmis – A Changing Landscape. Romans and the Others in the Lower Danube Region in the First Century BC – Third Century AD. Proceedings of an International Colloquium Tulcea, 7th-10th of October 2015*, ed. C.-G. ALEXANDRESCU [Biblioteca Istro-Pontică, Seria Arheologie 12], Cluj-Napoca 2016, 151-164 159-160); EADEM, *The Roman Road Montana – Nicopolis ad Istrum – Marcianopolis – Odessos*, *Caiete. Arhitectură. Restaurare. Arheologie* 10 (2019), 47-54; MINCHEV, *Marcianopolis*, 256. All the above mentioned settlements are in Bulgaria; in particular, the ancient Greek colony of Odessus must not be confused with the modern city of Odesa in Ukraine.

77. Cf. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.5.9, 31.6 f., 173 f.

before the Marcianople battle⁷⁸, was also assessed and finally ruled out. Our most reliable source, Ammianus Marcellinus, mentioned in his *Res Gestae* the Goths separately by their ancestral tribal names *before* the same conflict (*terminus ante quem*), while *after* (the latter *terminus post quem*) described them indiscriminately as a unified group of rebellious insurgents⁷⁹. By doing so, the clash of Marcianople may be considered a significant terminus in Ammianus' narration for the evolution of the 377-382 Gothic War.

Therefore, according to our research and after a textual analysis of the available primary sources, we conclude that no collaboration happened between the Thervingi and the Greuthungi Goths before the Battle of Marcianople; even so, some modern scholars still maintain a contrary opinion.

VI. *Examining the Battle of Marcianople per se*

Even within the limitations in surviving information, a thorough analysis of the battle itself in almost every possible aspect must include the following: a presentation of the opponent forces; remarks on prosopography (opponent commanders), strategy, tactics, and military equipment; a description of the conflict's phases and outcome; a calculation of the human and material loss; finally, an assessment of its broader consequences. As we have already pointed out, to reconstruct and describe the battle, we must mainly rely on the brief account of Ammianus Marcellinus, our principal source of information on this specific event. However, we can also include the existing data and scientific knowledge about the tactics and equipment of the two adversaries during the same period and within this geographical area.

78. Cf. HALSALL, *Barbarian Migrations*, 177; A. G. POULTER, Invisible Goths within and beyond the Roman Empire, in: *Wolf Liebeschuetz reflected: Essays presented by Colleagues, Friends and Pupils*, eds. J. DRINKWATER – B. SALWAY [Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Supplement 91], London 2007, 169-183, esp. 169; DEN BOEFT – DRIVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 148 (although on p. 91, they claim that the Gothic collaboration took place after the Battle of Marcianople, hence oddly providing two completely different and contradictory assertions).

79. For the events until the Battle of Marcianople, see *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. II, 31.3-5, 166-173, where the author still mentions the Thervingi and Greuthungi Goths separately. From then on, see 31.6-16, 174-201, where the historian refers to "Goths" in general. Also, cf. WOLFRAM, *Goths*, 25; HUGHES, *Imperial Brothers*, 156, 165. Contra, see Jordanes, *Getica*, XXVI (134-138), 93.1 f., who applied the ethnonym "Goths" without discrimination while dealing with and describing the 377-382 Gothic War.

In particular, concerning the violent outburst of the Thervingian rebellion and the ensuing battle of Marcianople, Ammianus cited verbatim that:

Ammianus Marcellinus, 31.5.8-9 (172-173): [...] urebatur dimicandi studio Theruingorum natio omnis et inter metuenda multa periculorumque praeuia maximorum uexillis de more sublatis auditisque triste sonantibus classicis iam turmae praedatoriae concursabant pilando uillas et incendendo uastisque cladibus, quicquid inueniri poterat, permiscentes. Aduersus quos Lupicinus properatione tumultuaria coactis militibus temere magis quam consulte progressus in nono ab urbe miliario stetit paratus ad decernendum. Barbarique hoc contemplato globos irrupere nostrorum incauti et parmas oppositis corporibus illidendo / obuios hastis perforabant et gladiis furoreque urgente cruento et tribuni et pleraque pars armatorum periere signis ereptis praeter duces infaustum, qui ad id solum intentus, ut confligentibus aliis proriperet ipse semet in fugam, urbem cursu concito petit. post quae hostes armis induti Romanis nullo uetante per uaria grassabantur.

[...] the whole nation of the Theringi was fired with ardour for battle, and amid many fearful scenes, portentous of extreme dangers, after the standards had been raised according to their custom and the doleful sound of the trumpets had been heard, predatory bands were already rushing about, pillaging and burning the country-houses and making whatever places they could find a confusion of awful devastation. 9 Against them Lupicinus mustered all his soldiers in tumultuous speed, and advancing with more haste than discretion, halted nine miles from the city, ready to join battle. On seeing this, the barbarians rushed recklessly on crowds of our men, dashed their shields upon opponents' bodies, and with lance and sword ran through those who opposed them. And in the press of mad and bloody strife the tribunes and the greater part of the army perished, with the loss of their standards, except for their ill-omened leader, who, intent only upon saving himself by flight while the others were fighting, made for the town in hot haste. After this the enemy put on the Romans' arms and ranged about, devastating sundry places without opposition⁸⁰.

Based on Ammianus' report, as well as other information relevant to

80. ROLFE, *Ammianus III*, 413, 415.

Roman⁸¹, and Gothic⁸², military organization and operations, strategies and

81. About the Roman military organization, strategy, tactics, and weaponry during that period, see D. VAN BERCHEM, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne* [Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 56], Paris 1952; D. HOFFMANN, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* [Epigraphische Studien 7.1-2], Düsseldorf 1969-1970; CRUMP, *Ammianus*, 44-68; T. G. KOLIAS, *Byzantinische Waffen. Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung* [BV 17], Wien 1988, 135-140, 162-163, 185-187, 191-192, 196-198, 214-216, 225-227, 229-233; A. HYLAND, *Equus: The Horse in the Roman World*, London 1990, 148-156, 184-197; M. C. BISHOP – J. C. N. COULSTON, *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic War to the Fall of Rome*, London 1993, 122-182; W. TREADGOLD, *Byzantium and Its Army (284-1081)*, Stanford 1995; ELTON, *Warfare*, 89-115, 175-181, 199-233; IDEM, *Warfare and the Military*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. N. LENSKI, Cambridge 2012, 325-346; P. SOUTHERN – K. R. DIXON, *The Late Roman Army*, New Haven – London 1996; M. J. NICASIE, *Twilight of Empire: The Roman Army from the Reign of Diocletian until the Battle of Adrianople* [Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 19], Amsterdam 1998; J. HALDON, *Some Aspects of Early Byzantine Arms and Armour*, in: *A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour*, ed. D. NICOLLE, Woodbridge 2002, 65-79; PH. RANCE, *The “Fulcum”, the Late Roman and Byzantine “Testudo”: The Germanization of Roman Infantry Tactics?*, *GRBS* 44 (2004), 265-326; S. JANNIARD, *Végèce et les transformations de l'art de la guerre aux IVE et Ve siècles après J.-C.*, *Antiquité tardive* 16 (2008), 19-36; IDEM, *Le maniement des armes offensives dans l'infanterie romaine tardive (IIIe-VIe siècles apr. J.-C.)*, in: *Libera Curiositas. Mélanges d'histoire romaine et d'Antiquité tardive offerts à Jean-Michel Carrié*, eds. CHR. FREU – S. JANNIARD – A. RIPOLL [Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité tardive 31], Turnhout 2016, 43-54; KALAFIKIS, *Οργάνωση*, 117 f., 214 f.; IDEM, *Ammianus Marcellinus on the Military Strategy of the Emperor Valentinian I (363-375 AD): General Principles and Implementation*, *Byzantiaka* 31 (2014), 15-50; IDEM, *“Divisis copiis inter custodiam pacis et belli”. A Major Military Reform of Constantine the Great indicated in the 313 AD Latin Panegyric Pan. Lat. XII (9), 3, 2*, in: *International Conference: Constantine the Great and his Age. 1700th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan, Proceedings*, eds. C. P. CHRISTOU – P. KATSONI – C. A. BOZINIS, Thessaloniki 2022, 61-87; M. ROCCO, *Persistenze e cesure nell'esercito romano dai Severi a Teodosio I: ricerche in ambito socio-politico, istituzionale, strategico* [Doctoral Thesis published; available online]. Università degli Studi di Padova 2011, 173-176, 215 f.; *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, eds. A. SARANTIS – N. CHRISTIE [Late Antique Archaeology 8.1-2], Leiden – Boston 2013; M. CORENTIN, *La cavalerie romaine des Sévères a Théodose* [Doctoral Thesis published; available online], Université Bordeaux Moutaigne 2014. Regarding the local fortifications, see above fn. 8.

82. About the Gothic weaponry –including shield-bosses (Lat. *umbones*), and light-weight pointed shields (Lat. *parmae*)– and tactics –especially of the shieldwall (Lat. *fulcum*), and the wedge (Lat. *cuneus* or *caput porcinum*, Old Norse: *Svinfylking*, Germ. *Schweinkopf*)–

tactics, armour and weaponry during the same period, we arrived at the following remarks and conclusions about the conduct and the outcome of the Marcianople clash:

First, the imperial units that fought against the Thervingi mainly the Roman field army of Thrace, probably reinforced with some troops from the Lower Danube (*limes* garrisons) suffered the critical disadvantage of an incompetent command and a complete unpreparedness for what was to come; the soldiers were hastily mustered by Lupicinus and then advanced even more quickly to the area of the battlefield.

Secondly, lacking a tactical plan, with low morale and inadequate leadership, the regular imperial army did not anticipate the swift and ferocious attack of the irregular Gothic warriors during the first phase of combat; indeed, the rebels charged the battleground and struck the Roman battle line very quickly.

Thirdly, in their thrust, the Thervingi made effective and deadly use of their bossed shields, spears, and various kinds of iron swords (Goth. sg. nom. *hairus*, pl. nom. *hairjus*) against their thunderstruck opponents.

during that era, see E. A. THOMPSON, *Early Germanic Warfare, Past & Present* 14 (1958), 2-29; A. KOKOWSKI, *L'art militaire des Goths à l'époque romaine tardive (d'après les données archéologiques)*, in: *L'armée romaine et les barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle. Actes du colloque du Musée des Antiquités nationales, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1990*, eds. F. VALLET – M. KAZANSKI [Mémoires de l'Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne 5], Saint-Germain-en-Laye 1993, 335-354; G. GOMOLKA-FUCHS, *Ostgermanische Foederaten im spätrömischen Heer. Hinweise in der materiellen Kultur auf die ethnische Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung vom 4.-6. Jahrhundert in Nordbulgarien*, in: *L'armée romaine et les barbares*, op. cit., 355-365; M. ŠČUKIN, *A propos des contacts militaires entre les Sarmates et les Germains à l'époque romaine (d'après l'armement et spécialement les "umbo" de boucliers et les lances)*, in: *L'armée romaine et les barbares*, op. cit., 323-334; IDEM, *Shields, Swords and Spears as Evidence of Germanic-Sarmatian Contacts and Barbarian-Roman Relations*, in: *Beitrag zu römischer und barbarischer Bewaffnung in den ersten vier nachchristlichen Jahrhunderten: Akten des 2. Internationalen Kolloquiums in Marburg a.d. Lahn, 20. bis 24. Februar 1994*, ed. C. VON CARNAP-BORNHEIM, Lublin – Marburg 1994, 485-495; NORDGREN, *Gothic Peoples*, 92 f.; RANCE, *Fulcum*; M. KAZANSKI, *Barbarian Military Equipment and its Evolution in the Late Roman and Great Migration Periods (3rd-5th c. A.D.)*, in: *War and Warfare*, op. cit., 493-522; P. JENNINGS, *Viking Warrior Cults: Berserkers, Úlfhéðnar, Svinfylking & Weapon Dancers*, Essex 2019, 83 f.

Fourthly, the Roman troops failed to use their theoretically superior training and tactics or act as a combined military force after the subsequent rupture of their first lines and the fall of their leading tribunes (officers in charge).

Eventually, after a fierce and, apparently, rapid combat engagement, the Romans disintegrated quickly and got routed, suffering massive human losses.

In short, the Thracian and Danubian imperial military units failed to suppress the nascent Gothic uprising because they were stunned, dispersed, insufficient in numbers and training, and, finally, poorly commanded⁸³.

VII. *Evaluating the consequences of the Battle of Marcianople and summarizing in total*

The present article points out and comments on some research questions regarding the opening stages of the critical 377-382 Gothic War, namely the arrival and subsequent insurrection of the Thervingi in Late Roman Thrace, as well as the Battle of Marcianople that followed immediately after, a conflict that has not been the subject of a specialized study until now, in our opinion.

In our view, assessing the direct impact and the historical significance of the events that unfolded in Roman Thrace during the winter of 376/77 is incremental and paramount for various reasons:

First, the Battle of Marcianople itself served as a prelude for the so-called “Lamentable War” (Lat. *lacrimabile bellum*) according to numerous sources, namely the sufficiently analysed Battle of Adrianople in August 378 with its far-reaching implications for the integrity and fate of the Late Roman Empire, the significance of which manifests in the works of many contemporary authors and modern scholars.

Secondly, the defeat more precisely, the destruction) of the imperial field army of Thrace and partly) of the Lower Danube *limitanei* in the Battle of Marcianople marked the first major armed conflict won by irregular

83. Cf. MACDOWALL, *Adrianople*, 43-44; HUGHES, *Imperial Brothers*, 154-156; DEN BOEFT – DRIJVERS – DEN HENGST – TEITLER, *Ammianus XXXI*, 90-95 (commentary on the battle), 96-106 (commentary on the battle’s repercussions); MUČKA, *Valentova válka s Góty*, 65-78. From our standpoint, these are the best and most notable accounts in the modern bibliography about the Battle of Marcianople.

Gothic warriors against the regular Roman army in decades; likewise, it led to the afterward sack and destruction of numerous Roman settlements (*civitates*, *oppida*, *villae rusticae*, and *mansiones*) in the locality and to the diffusion of the internal unrest throughout the Balkan peninsula.

Thirdly (and more importantly), the Thervingian Gothic revolt and the Battle of Marcianople in early 377 indelibly marked the start of the main phase of the so-called ‘Barbarian Invasions’ and (or) the alleged ‘Migration Period’ (376-568), which culminated in the gradual disintegration and fall of the Western Roman Empire, the settlement of its former territory by various, mostly Germanic, tribes, and the establishment of several *regna barbarica* by 476.

Interestingly, Ammianus Marcellinus pointed out that after the Roman defeat in Marcianople, “*those who were unacquainted with ancient records say that the [Roman] State was never before overspread by such dark of misfortune, but they are deceived by the horror of the recent ills which have overwhelmed them*”⁸⁴; by this sentence, he implied the future consequences of the Battle of Adrianople and the negative effect of the Gothic presence within the imperial territory. Therefore, it is no surprise that Isidore of Seville underlined in one of his writings that “*there has been no nation in the world that has tormented the Roman Empire so much as the Goths*”⁸⁵!

84. Ammianus Marcellinus, vol. II, 31.5.11, 173: *Negant antiquitatum ignari tantis malorum tenebris offusam aliquando fuisse rem publicam, sed falluntur malorum recentium stupore confixi*. See also ROLFE, *Ammianus III*, 415. Regarding the “Barbarian Invasions” and the “Migration Period”, see É. DEMOUGEOT, *La formation de l’Europe et les invasions barbares, I-III* [Collection historique], Paris 1979; *The Role of Migration in the History of the Eurasian Steppe: Sedentary Civilization vs. “Barbarian” and Nomad*, ed. A. BELL-FIALKOFF, Basingstoke 2000; V. POSTEL, *Die Ursprünge Europas. Migration und Integration im frühen Mittelalter*, Stuttgart 2004; B. WARD-PERKINS, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, Oxford – New York 2005; W. POHL, *Die Völkerwanderung: Eroberung und Integration. 2. Auflage*, Stuttgart 2005; G. A. GOFFART, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire*, Philadelphia 2006; *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*, op. cit.; ŠČUKIN – KAZANSKI – SHAROV, *Dès les goths aux huns*; HALSALL, *Barbarian Migrations*; PH. VON RUMMEL – H. FEHR, *Die Völkerwanderung*, Stuttgart 2011; MEIER, *Völkerwanderung: Die Völkerwanderung. Mythos – Forschung – Vermittlung*, eds. P. GEISS – K. VÖSSING, Göttingen 2021; K. ROSEN, *Die Völkerwanderung*, München ©2023.

85. Isidorus Hispalensis, *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum*, 2, 172: *Nulla enim gens in orbe fuit, quae Romanum imperium adeo fatigaverit ut hi* (sc. Gothi).

Η ΕΞΕΓΕΡΣΗ ΤΩΝ ΓΟΤΘΩΝ THERVINGI ΚΑΙ Η ΑΣΗΜΗ ΜΑΧΗ ΤΗΣ
ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΥΠΟΛΗΣ (ΑΡΧΕΣ 377 Μ.Χ.): ΕΡΕΥΝΗΤΙΚΑ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΙ
ΒΑΣΙΚΕΣ ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ

Το παρόν άρθρο επισημαίνει και σχολιάζει την ελληνική και λατινική ιστοριογραφική παράδοση (ή ακριβέστερα παραδόσεις), τις λοιπές πληροφορίες (χρονολογικές, γεωγραφικές, υλικά κατάλοιπα κ.λπ.) καθώς και τα κυριότερα ερευνητικά προβλήματα σχετικά με τα αρχικά στάδια του «γοθθικού» πολέμου μεταξύ των ετών 377-382 μ.Χ., τουτέστιν, εξετάζει την είσοδο των Γότθων Thervingi στη ρωμαϊκή Θράκη (πιθανότατα στα τέλη της άνοιξης ή το καλοκαίρι του 376), καθώς και τη μετέπειτα εξέγερσή τους και τη μάχη της Μαρκιανούπολης που αμέσως ακολούθησε (μάλλον στις αρχές [χειμώνα] του 377). Μολονότι αυτή η τελευταία σύγκρουση δεν έχει αποτελέσει αντικείμενο εξειδικευμένης μελέτης μέχρι τώρα, διαθέτει –κατά τη γνώμη μας– αξιοσημείωτη ιστορική σημασία για διάφορους λόγους: αφενός, ήταν η πρώτη μεγάλη ένοπλη σύγκρουση που κέρδισαν άτακτοι Γότθοι πολεμιστές εναντίον του τακτικού ρωμαϊκού στρατού έπειτα από πολλές δεκαετίες αφετέρου, οδήγησε στην καταστροφή των βυζαντινών δυνάμεων της Θράκης από τους Γότθους Thervingi. Τέλος, αποτέλεσε το προοίμιο του λεγόμενου «αξιοθρήνητου πολέμου», δηλαδή της περιβόητης μάχης της Αδριανούπολης (9 Αυγούστου 378), με τις εκτεταμένες επιπτώσεις της για την ακεραιότητα και τη μοίρα της ύστερης Ρωμαϊκής αυτοκρατορίας.

