

ROMAN-GOTHIC FOEDUS  
IN THE 3RD AND 4TH  
CENTURY SOURCES**Abstract**

This paper explores the complex relationship between the Roman empire and Gothic people from 238 to 382 C.E., focusing on the classification and understanding of Roman-Gothic foedus agreements. By analyzing primary sources such as Ammianus Marcellinus, Jordanes, Zosimus, Procopius and others, the paper wants to reassess whether these agreements can be accurately termed foedus, in the classical meaning of the word, given their distinct characteristics and historical contexts. The research highlights the evolving dynamics of power between the Roman Empire and Goths, their military alliances, negotiation, identity, and mutual dependency, alongside the roles of the Roman empire and Gothic communities during this period. Ultimately, the author argues for a deeper understanding of these treaties as forms of control rather than purely diplomatic agreements, but at the same time, understanding their connected tradition, challenging long-standing generally one-sided and superficial scholarly interpretations.

**Keywords**

Late Antiquity, Roman-Gothic Relations, Roman Empire, Goths, Foedus Agreements, Ammianus Marcellinus, Jordanes, Zosimus, Procopius

RIMSKO-GOTSKI FOEDUS  
U IZVORIMA 3. I 4.  
STOLJEĆA**Apstrakt**

Ovaj rad istražuje složen odnos između Rimskog carstva i gotskog naroda od 238. do 382. godine. Analizom primarnih izvora kao što su Amijan Marcelin, Jordanes, Zosim, Prokopije i drugi, u radu se namjerava preispitati da li je precizno ove sporazume nazvati foedus u klasičnom značenju te riječi, s obzirom na njihove posebne karakteristike i historijski kontekst. Istraživanje naglašava razvojnu dinamiku moći između Rimskog carstva i Gota, njihovih vojnih saveza, pregovora, identiteta i međusobne zavisnosti, kao i uloge Rimskog carstva i gotskih zajednica u ovom periodu. U konačnici, autor se zalaže za dublje razumijevanje ovih sporazuma kao oblika kontrole, a ne kao čisto diplomatskih sporazuma, ali u isto vrijeme i razumijevanje njihove povezano tradicije, dovodeći u pitanje dugotrajna općenito jednostrana i površna naučna tumačenja.

**Ključne riječi**

kasna antika, rimsko-gotski odnosi, Rimsko carstvo, Goti, Foedus sporazumi, Amijan Marcelin, Jordanes, Zosim, Prokopije

Roman-Gothic relations in history have long been a subject of scholarly interest and debate. Central to this relationship are their *foedus*<sup>1</sup> agreements. However, by examining the primary sources like Jordanes, Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus and others, this paper embarks on an inquiry whether the Roman-Gothic *foedus* agreements between 238 and 382 can be classified as such, given their unique characteristics and their historical context. Through the examination of historical narratives, legal precedents, and their mutual comparison, we want to offer a fresh insight into the nature of Roman-Gothic *foedus* in late antiquity. This way we want to provoke a reassessment of the terminology and the conceptual framework applied to Roman-Gothic diplomatic interactions in that period, offering a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power, negotiation, and identity in the late antiquity.

The Roman empire used *foedus* as a means to an end to sign peace treaties with other partners. As a declarative element, it only confirms the already recognized sovereignty of the other contracting partner, while their relationship is regulated in detail.<sup>2</sup> There are two types of *foedus*: *foedus aequum* and *foedus iniquum*.<sup>3</sup> The first one is signed on more equal terms for both sides, it symbolizes a friendship and contains military help and trade agreements. But it can easily happen, that a treaty partner becomes heavily dependent on Rome. On the other hand, in the *foedus iniquum*, the other partner must recognise Rome's sovereignty. In that case, the other partner loses its sovereignty and does not get it back after *deditio*,<sup>4</sup> but its people remain free. In both cases, it is a question of power, and breaking the *foedus* had sacral legal sanctions.<sup>5</sup> In the Roman republic, only the supreme magistrates were allowed to conclude a *foedus*, with a cooperation of a respective college; the contract required confirmation by the Roman senate and had to be recorded in writing. From the Augustus onwards, it was the caesar who had the right to conclude *foedera*, a power which was transferred to him

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1 Ziegler, 1989, 46–47.

2 Deiter, 1964, 587–588.

3 Baronowski, 1990, 345–369.

4 Ziegler, 1989, 50: The legal nature of *deditio* is still disputed to this day.

5 Schwartz, 1995, 291.

by the senate.<sup>6</sup> In the late antiquity that power rested in the hands of the emperor or those invested by the emperor's authority.

During the Principate and into Late Antiquity until about 400 AD, it seems that a peace treaty (*foedus*) without a prior surrender (*deditio*) was only made when the surrender of one party could not be achieved by military force. For example, Constantius II agreed to a treaty in 348/349 after defeating the Goths. He needed peace on the Danube border and Gothic auxiliaries against the Persians.<sup>7</sup> The peace treaty between Emperor Valens and Athanaric in 369 in the middle of the Danube also belongs here. As we know, the ceremony in the middle of the Danube was intended to emphasise the conditions *aequae* of the treaty. Thus the treaty of 369 with Athanaric, who expressly rejected the *appellatio* offered to him as *rex*, was different.<sup>8</sup> Thus *gentile* groups were admitted to the empire as a precondition for *deditio*, which can be traced back to the 4th century for all those who received a new residence in the empire. The legal status attached to *receptio* could vary from case to case, but the initial position of those admitted was that of *dediticii*.<sup>9</sup> This usually led to the settlement of *laeti*, or *gentiles*, and their division into smaller groups spread over different provinces. And individually, these people could acquire Roman citizenship through recruitment into the army and a military career. Also often overlooked is Constantius II's treatment of Wulfila as a model for the agreement between the Goths and Theodosius in 382. The Gothic bishop Wulfila and his followers were allowed to settle around Nicopolis ad Istrum by Constantius II, who received them with honour.<sup>10</sup>

After examining the sources, we can clearly see that, the Roman-Gothic treaties from 238 to 382, were classified as *foedus*, retroactively from Jordanes and Procopius. But were the treaties from 238 to 382 *foedera*? Jordanes and Procopius, both derived the term *foederati* from *foedus*. The result is a hazy picture of how the

6 CIL 6930: „...*foedusve cum quibus volet facere liceat ita, uti licuit divo. Aug(usto), Ti. Iulio Caesari Aug(usto), Tiberioque Claudio Caesari Aug(usto) Germanico.*“

7 Lib. Or. 59, 89–93.

8 Schwartz, 1995, 292.

9 Schwartz, 1995, 293.

10 Jord. Get. 51; Velkov, 1989, 525; Chrysos, 1973, 64.

Gothic *foederati* should be imagined in historiography.<sup>11</sup>

Examining the *foedera* and *foederati* from the fourth century yields a variety of insights. The 6th-century writings should not be included in the discussion, as they're outdated. Submission and domination were used in the 4th century in relations with groups outside the empire. It should always be remembered that the use of these terms in 4th-century sources was a construct of imperial propaganda, providing a reassuring framework to present to the important taxpayers of the empire. *Foedus*, *foederati* and *deditio* were part of maintaining the myth of eternal victory, which was not an accurate description of the reality of Roman foreign policy. But all this does not answer the question of how the *foederati* developed and became more equal in the 6th century. The formal definitions given in the 5th and 6th century sources must be taken into account, as we have seen so far. However, the Roman imperial regime had to justify itself to a well-informed and critical fiscal public, which we see throughout our sources.

There are many historical sources about foreign people moving into the Empire at different times.<sup>12</sup> Rome was no stranger to taking in people from outside, resettling them in the Empire and making them good citizens. This influx at various times meant that the 'barbarians' living on the Rhine and Danube were exposed to much of Roman culture and the Roman way of life.<sup>13</sup> Roman cultural influence was

11 Heather, 2006, 252–256.

12 Caesar, *B. Gal.* 7.65.4: for his final confrontation with Vercingetorix he recruited German cavalry; Strabo 7.3.10: informs us that Augustus relocated 50.000 Getae along the Danube; Eutropius, *Breviarium Historiae Romanae* 7.9: emperor Tiberius resettled 40.000 captives from Germany to Gaul, on the banks of the river Rhine; *CIL* XIV 3608: tombstone inscription from the governor of Moesia, indicated, that he allocated land in Moesia to more than a 100.000 Transdanubians „for purpose of providing tribute“; Emperor Marcus Aurelius, resettled Quadi, lazyges, Naristae and Marcomanni (Cass. Dio 71.11.4-5, 71.12.1-3, 71.16.2, 71.1; *Hist. Aug.* Marcus Aurelius, 22.2, 24.3–4), Zos. 1.68: emperor Probus, settled Burgundians and Vandals in Britain.

13 Cass. Dio 56.18.2-3: „ἔξ τε τὸν κόσμον σφῶν οἱ βάρβαροι μετερρυθμίζοντο καὶ ἀγορὰς ἐνόμιζον συνόδους τε εἰρηνικὰς ἐποιοῦντο...οὔτε ἐβαρύνοντο τῇ τοῦ βίου μεταβολῇ καὶ ἐλάνθανόν σφας ἀλλοιούμενοι.“; Amm Marc. 21.4.3: „Perrexit Philagrius ut praeceptum est, eoque praesente et negotiis adstricto diversis, transgressus Vadomarius flumen, ut nihil in profunda metuens pace

further strengthened by Emperor Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 212, which effectively extended Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the Empire.<sup>14</sup> This was a significant departure from the traditional Roman system, where only those from senatorial circles had such an opportunity.<sup>15</sup>

Military prowess, a cornerstone of imperial authority, underpinned Roman power and fuelled conflicts along the frontiers, deeply influencing the neighbouring groups and triggering their transformation in the early 3rd century, largely due to Roman military actions.<sup>16</sup> Caracalla exercised this power and, in his quest for triumph, inadvertently dismantled Parthia,<sup>17</sup> paving the way for Sassanid dominance and catalysing the crisis of the 3rd century. This crisis, exacerbated by civil wars and external threats, weakened the frontier regions<sup>18</sup> and perpetuated a cycle of incursions and usurpations for nearly five decades.<sup>19</sup> With *Constitutio Antoniniana*, outsiders could gain Roman citizenship through military service, eventually competing for top positions. This policy bore fruit in 235 with Emperor Maximinus Thrax, the first barbarian emperor, who rose through the ranks<sup>20</sup> under Septimius Severus.<sup>21</sup> Germanic

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*nihilque secus gestorum simulans scire, viso praeposito militum ibi degentium, pauca locutus ex more, ultro semet, ut suspicionis nihil relinqueret abiturus, ad convivium eius venire promisit, ad quod erat etiam Philagrius invitatus."*

- 14 Bratož, 2007, 301: Caracalla wanted to increase tax revenue from freeing slaves and on passing the inheritances.
- 15 Kulikowski, 2006, 25.
- 16 Kulikowski, 2006, 26.
- 17 Bratož, 2007, 302.
- 18 Aur. Vic. Caes. 38.2. By the 4th century, ancient writers gradually grasped this phenomenon: the correlation between the civil wars and barbarian incursions.
- 19 Amm. Marc. 15.8: The link between usurpation and barbarian invasion is eloquently highlighted in a speech delivered in honor of emperor Constantius, prior to his appointment of his cousin Julian as Caesar and assigning him the task of reclaiming the Rhineland; Kulikowski, 2006, 27–28.
- 20 Spiedel, 1994, 69: Assumes that the future emperor Maximus Thrax was also part of *centurions*.
- 21 *Hist. Aug. Maximini Duo*, Iulii Capitolini, 1.4–6; Jord. Get. 15.84; Hdn. 6.8.1: According to Herodian, Maximus Thrax after passing through all the military ranks was entrusted with the command of the Roman

recruitment<sup>22</sup> in the Roman army dates back to Caracalla,<sup>23</sup> although it is unclear if he specifically recruited Goths. During this time, the first Gothic attacks occurred in 238, targeting Olbia and Tyras,<sup>24</sup> following the sacking of Histria,<sup>25</sup> and ended with the Romans paying them to leave.<sup>26</sup> In 242, Goths attacked again but were repelled by Timesitheus<sup>27</sup> who likely renewed the 238 treaty, requiring Goths to supply soldiers. These Gothic troops are mentioned in Shapur I's inscription,<sup>28</sup> suggesting that they were probably acquired on the basis of the deal from 238;<sup>29</sup> this is supported by the historian

legions; Zos. 1.13.1: says that he was praefectus of the Panonian cavalry, while Hdn. 6.8.2: says that he was responsible for training recruits in the Panonian cavalry; Bratož, *Rimska Zgodovina* 1, 318: *praefectus tironibus*; Bratož, *Med Italijo in Ilirikom*, 14–15.

- 22 Emperors Caracalla and Septimius Severus recruitment of soldiers outside the empire can be related by another inscription: “*D(is) M(anibus)/ Magni Mattonis/ discent(is) phalang(ariorum)/ leg (ionis) Il Part (hicae)(centuria) Il pil(i) pos(terioris)/ qui vixit ann(os) XXXX/ mil(itavit) ann(os) XX Sollemni(us) / Victorinus imagin(ifer) / heres bene merenti/ faciundum cu/ravit.*” Livius. org: „Apamea, Tombstone of Magnus Matto, soldier of Il Parthica: <https://www.livius.org/pictures/syria/qalat-al-mudiq-apamea/apamea-military-tombstones/apamea-tombstone-of-magnus-matto-soldier-of-ii-parthica/> (Accessed 18.04.2024): Magnus Mato, probably has Germanic, Gothic or some other Transdanubian origin but his cognomen so far cannot be compared to another example, and probably its a derived nickname from the place of his garrison. <https://www.livius.org/pictures/syria/qalat-al-mudiq-apamea/apamea-military-tombstones/apamea-tombstone-of-magnus-matto-soldier-of-ii-parthica/>
- 23 Cass. Dio. 79.6.1–2: we can see, that some of the closest guards (*centurions*) of the emperor, were from Germanic or barbarian origin; Bratož, 2007, 303; Mathisen, 2020, 265: argues that barbarian *auxiliaries* were part of the Roman army, even if they were not recruited from barbarians, but their names show us their connection to the barbarians.
- 24 Bowman – Garnsey – Cameron, 2008, 30.
- 25 Wolfram 1988, 44.
- 26 Müller, *FHG IV*, 186–87.
- 27 Bratož, 2007, 321.
- 28 Frey, 1984, 371–373.
- 29 “*μνημεῖον Γουθθα, υἱοῦ Ἑρμιναρίου πραιποσίτου γεντιλίων ἐν Μοθανοῖς ἀναφερομένων ἀπογεν<ομένων>ου ἐτῶν ιδ´. ἔτι {<sup>26</sup>ἔτει} ρβ´ Περιτίου κα´” (“Tombstone of Gutta, son of Ermanarius, the prepositus of Gentiles (ethnic armies, author's note) in Motanis. He died at the age of 14. In the year 102, on the 21st day of the month of*

Jordanes who notes that Goths were Roman allies by Philip the Arab's reign.<sup>30</sup>

The peace was brief and after Timesitheus's death, Carpi with their allies raided again.<sup>31</sup> Philip the Arab pushed them back in 248, but a rebellion led by Pacatianus<sup>32</sup> that same year prompted the Quadi to invade Pannonia. This redirected Roman defenses and encouraged further attacks. Goths, losing monetary payments<sup>33</sup> with Timesitheus death, attacked Lower Moesia and Thrace, leading to Philip sending Decius to the Danube. Decius' initial successes<sup>34</sup> won him the title of the Emperor.<sup>35</sup> His successes were undone at *Beroea*, prompting Priscus to sign a treaty with invaders, but Philippopolis was sacked<sup>36</sup> and Priscus was killed. Decius died at the battle of *Abrit(t)us* in 251<sup>37</sup> and Trebonianus Gallus, becoming emperor, made peace with the Goths promising them annual payments.<sup>38</sup> A new usurpation resumed their raids<sup>39</sup> until Gallienus and Claudius subdued them in the late 260s.<sup>40</sup> This was initially achieved by emperor Gallienus (at *Nestus*)<sup>41</sup> in 268, followed by the emperor Claudius<sup>42</sup> in 269 (at *Naissus*).<sup>43</sup> By the late 3rd century, Emperor Probus again enlisted

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*Peritius*" (= February 28, 208)). <https://inscriptions.packhum.org/text/305448?hs=157-164>

30 Jord. *Get.* 16.89.

31 Bowman – Garnsey – Cameron, 2008, 36.

32 Zos. 1.20.1–2; Banchich – Eugene, 2009, 46–47 (see *Epitome* 19).

33 Ziegler, 1989, 58.

34 Zos. 1.23.3.

35 Zos. 1.23.3; Eutr. 9.4; Bird, 1994, 30–31 (see *Epitome* 29).

36 Zos. 1.24.

37 Jord. *Get.* 18; Zos. 1.23.3, Eutr. 9.4.

38 Jord. *Get.* 19.106; Zos. 1.24.2; Banchich – Eugene, 2009, 50–51 (see *Epitome* 21).

39 Zos. 1.31-35; Banchich – Eugene, 2009, 52 (see *Epitome* 23); Eutr. 9.8; Bird, 1994, 32 (see *Epitome* 33).

40 Zos. 1.42-43; 1.45-46; Eutr. 9.11; For the two battles, see Wolfram, 1988, 54.

41 Hist. Aug. Gallieni duo 13.6–9; Zos. 1.40.1; Banchich – Eugene, 2009, 54–57 (see *Epitome* 24).

42 Wolfram, 1988, 55-56: Claudius II was the first emperor who had taken or was given to him by the Senate the title *Gothicus maximus*. Next ones to have had the same title were Aurelian, Tacitus and Probus.

43 Zos. 1.42–43, 45–46; Eutr. 9.11; Hist. Aug. Claudius 6.1–4, 8.1–3;

Goths into the Roman army<sup>44</sup> after conflicts in 280s.

After nearly 50 years of civil wars, Emperor Diocletian established the Tetrarchy to regulate imperial power. He built fortifications along the Danube for defense and future campaigns<sup>45</sup> against the Goths, achieving victories in 289<sup>46</sup> and 291,<sup>47</sup> followed by a peace treaty. Diocletian adopted the title “*Gothicus*”, though it is debatable since he signed a peace treaty rather than achieving a decisive victory. From Aurelian to 292, there were no recorded Roman-Gothic conflicts<sup>48</sup>, suggesting Diocletian’s title might have been a morale booster for Roman troops, encountering and defeating smaller Gothic groups. This title likely symbolized a temporary disruption in Roman-Gothic relations. By 296, escalating eastern threats likely forced Diocletian to negotiate with the Goths. The treaty, effective until Constantine’s reign,<sup>49</sup> mitigated the Gothic threat and provided Roman military recruits. Diocletian’s deliberate withholding<sup>50</sup> of the title “*Gothicus*” might have been to maintain goodwill with the Goths.<sup>51</sup> Following Galerius’s defeat in 297,<sup>52</sup> the empire recruited soldiers from the Balkans and Danube,<sup>53</sup> indicating an agreement<sup>54</sup> with the Goths<sup>55</sup> to support Roman campaigns. After Diocletian and Maximian’s abdications, Constantine and Galerius continued incorporating barbarians into imperial positions and managing relations similarly. The Roman victory over the Carpi in 307 and their

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Banchich – Eugene, 2009, 58–60 (see *Epitome* 26).

- 44 Zos. 1.68.2; *CIL* II 3738=ILS 597: „...*verus Gothicus verusque Germanicus ac victoriarum omnium nominibus inlustris...*“; *Hist. Aug. Probus* 16.1–4.
- 45 Kulikowski, 2006, 30–31.
- 46 *Pan. Lat.* 11(III).5.4; for detailed presentation of imperial movement see Barnes, 1876, 285–311.
- 47 This is the first mention in history of Thervingi (*Pan. Lat.* 11.17.1).
- 48 *Amm. Marc.* 31.5.17: *per long saecula*.
- 49 Cameron – Stuart, 1999, 155; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.18.
- 50 Brennan, 1984, 146: Taking a title with no sacred significance, that could have resulted in Goths canceling the treaty is highly doubtful.
- 51 Brennan, 1984, 145.
- 52 *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 39.34; *Eutr.* 9.24.
- 53 *Julian. Or.* 1.18B.
- 54 *Pan. Lat.* 8(V).10.4.
- 55 *Jord. Get.* 21.110.



settlement south of the Danube suggests Gothic pressure on Carpi, implying Roman support for Goths which they used to expand their influence. No tetrarch led campaigns against the Goths after 291, highlighting the importance of maintaining good relations. Occasional military conflicts and defensive measures exposed the Goths and other neighbors to Roman culture, technology, and luxury goods, deepening their integration into Roman society and the army. Many outsiders embraced Roman culture and attained citizenship, further fuelling trade.<sup>56</sup> These interactions<sup>57</sup> spurred social transformation among the barbarians, fostering leaders who sought military power and paradoxically strengthening Gothic military capabilities, which is evident in their reemergence in 320s.

During the civil wars from 307 to 313 Constantine and Licinius, having emerged as leading contenders, both launched campaigns along the Rhine and Danube,<sup>58</sup> seeking imperial victories and control over barbarian groups while preparing for internal conflict. They maintained an unstable peace from 313 to 316. In 323, Constantine violated their agreement by attacking the Sarmatians,<sup>59</sup> through Licinius's territory, provoking a civil war. Both emperors recruited barbarian troops, with Licinius winning a victory over the Goths in 315, binding them to serve in his army.<sup>60</sup> The competition for military recruits intensified along the Middle and Lower Danube.<sup>61</sup> However, Constantine could not sign an agreement with the Goths in 323 without Licinius's participation. By 324, the Goths were involved with both emperors.<sup>62</sup> But hiring *auxilia* should not be equated with

56 See Tica, 2017, 126–164, for more detailed archaeological explanation.

57 Stickler, 2007, 497.

58 Constantine (306/307): *Pan. Lat.* 6.10.2; 4.16.4–5; 7.4.2; Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 29.3; Euseb. *Vita Const.* 1.25; Licinius: *CIL* III 6979=ILS 660 (27 June 310).

59 Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.6; Anon. Val. 32: „*Sic cum his pace firmata in Sarmatas versus est, qui dubiae fidei proba<ba>ntur. Sed servi Sarmatarum omnes adversum dominos rebellarunt, quos pulsos Constantinus libenter accepit et amplius trecenta milia hominum mixtae aetatis et sexus per Thraciam Scythiam Macedoniam Italiamque divisit.*“ Amm. Marc. 17.12.18–19.

60 ILS 8942; ILS 696.

61 Kulikowski, 2006, 81–82.

62 Jord. *Get.* 111; Anon Val. 27: „*Licinius desperata maris spe, per quod*

signing a foedus in the classical republican sense.<sup>63</sup> In the 330s, the Taifals, pressured by the Thervingi, entered the Balkan provinces,<sup>64</sup> leading to a Roman-Gothic war. The Thervingi consolidated their dominance without entering Roman territory, expecting a similar reaction from Constantine as 20 years earlier. Instead, Constantine sent his son Constantius north of the Danube, driving out many Goths, who suffered from hunger and cold.<sup>65</sup> Constantine's involvement in Sarmatian-Gothic relations in 332 aimed to preserve the status quo among Danube tribes.<sup>66</sup> His presence on the Danube in 334,<sup>67</sup> monitoring from Singidunum, Viminacium, and Naissus, suggests the agreement of 332 might not have been a *foedus*, leaving the question open.<sup>68</sup>

In 358 and 359, Constantius attacked the Sarmatians and Quadi, unintentionally strengthening the Goths, who remained peaceful from the 330s to 360s. This peace allowed the Roman Empire to increase trade and recruit more Gothic soldiers,<sup>69</sup> since the lack of neighboring enemies increased the Goths' power.<sup>70</sup> The Goths, who at this time required almost no military attention, were left alone by emperor Julian.<sup>71</sup> From 365, emperors Valentinian and Valens divided the empire administratively and militarily, avoiding interference

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*se viderat obsidendum, Chalcedonam cum thesauris refugit. Byzantium Constantinus invasit, victoriam maritimam Crispo conveniente cognoscens. Deinde apud Chrysopolim Licinius <pugnavit> maxime auxiliantibus Gothicis, quos Alica regalis deduxerat: tum Constantini pars vincens XXV milia armatorum fudit partis adversae, ceteris fugientibus.*"

63 Wheeler, 1998, 85.

64 Zos. 2.32.3.

65 Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.5.1–2; *Orig. Const.* 31; Aur. Vict. *Caesares* 41.13; Eutr. 10.7.

66 Wheeler, 1998, 85.

67 For detailed representation of Constantine operations north of Danube in 332 and 334 see Doležal, 2019.

68 Heather, 2006, 245.

69 *ILS* 775.

70 Kulikowski, 2006, 105-106: Kulikowski sees this Gothic power as a result of Roman imperial policy.

71 Amm. Marc. 22.7.8. See Pobežin, »Julian the Apostate, Claudius Mamertinus, and Ammianus Marcellinus: Filling in a "Blank Spot"?« on Julian's presence in Illyricum.

in each other's territories. After Valentinian's death, Valens faced troubles and usurpations, particularly Procopius' usurpation. Procopius sought legitimacy by emphasizing his connection to Constantine the Great's family,<sup>72</sup> which led to Valens attacking the Goths. Procopius paid the Goths for their participation. After Valens defeated Procopius, he sought a victory to restore his prestige and targeted the Goths. Valens settled captured Goths in Asia Minor and attacked those north of the Danube, achieving limited success. The campaign ended in a stalemate and a peace agreement with Athanaric in 369 on Danube.<sup>73</sup> The peace negotiations were result of the failed attempt to achieve decisive victory over the Goths from Valens's side, and the lack of trade goods from the Athanaric's side.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, Valens and Athanaric embarked on a boat in the middle of the Danube,<sup>75</sup> where they concluded a peace agreement. The Goths had to give hostages,<sup>76</sup> Valens stopped subsidizing them, but trade reopened, and it was restricted to only two (unidentified) cities on the Danube.<sup>77</sup> It's possible that the Goths continued to receive some aid since the communications were not completely shut down.<sup>78</sup> Both sides claimed victory: Valens used the peace to shift focus to the Persian threat, while Athanaric solidified his position among the Thervingi and persecuted Christian Goths to prevent Roman intervention. It is also possible that those Christian Goths could prove less close to him and could aid emperor Valence in possible next Roman attack.<sup>79</sup>

The appearance of the Huns in 375 significantly impacted the Balkans and Roman defenses, leading to increased Gothic pressure on the Roman Empire. The 369 treaty reaffirmed the Gothic *foederati* status, allowing them to enter Thrace when threatened by the Huns. By 376, Gothic stability disintegrated as the Huns pressured the Greuthungi, causing the Thervingi to cross the Danube. Valens

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72 Zos. 3.35.2, 4.7; Amm. Marc. 26.7.10–16.

73 Amm. Marc. 28.9–10.

74 Amm. Marc. 27.5.7; Them. Or. 10.133a.

75 Amm. Marc. 27.5.8–9; 31.4.13; Them. Or. 10.134a.

76 Ziegler, 1989, 59–60.

77 Amm. Marc. 27.5.10; Them. Or. 10.135c–d; Zos. 4.11.

78 Them. Or. 10.135a.

79 Kulikowski, 2006, 116–118.

allowed the Thervingi to enter the empire<sup>80</sup> but lost his life at the Battle of Adrianople.<sup>81</sup> The new Eastern emperor Theodosius continued Roman recruitment policies, passing extensive military laws<sup>82</sup>, while the Goths continued to plunder the Southern Balkans.<sup>83</sup> Theodosius, the new Eastern emperor, attempted to subdue the Goths but was defeated by Fritigern.<sup>84</sup> Unable to control, he tried to starve the Goths and restrict their movement. So, the situation got in a stalemate and compromise was found in 382, in a form of a *foedus*.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, Goths began serving in Theodosius's army against other Romans, but their vulnerability to Roman policies remained problematic. That vulnerability came to surface in 394 when Goths suffered heavy casualties at the Battle of Frigidus,<sup>86</sup> leading to the rise of Alaric, a charismatic new Gothic leader with a different approach to Rome. Born inside the empire, Alaric lacked legitimacy but never forgot the Goths' treatment at Frigidus.

So, were the *foedus* agreements between 238 and 382 really *foedus* agreements? Well, yes and no. For the first part, until the crossing of the Danube in 369, the Goths lived outside the empire, but always on its periphery, and were not legally part of it, even though they were bound by these *foedus* treaties to supply the Roman army. But this military aid was always negotiated in advance, and each time it was a new deal between the Romans and the Goths, depending on the political and military situation at the time of the deal. Besides, the Goths weren't even a cohesive group at the time. At the beginning of the 3rd century, they accompanied other groups, and in the following years they were accompanied and helped by other "barbarian" groups. It was Constantine's treaty in

80 Amm. Marc. 31.4.5; Jord. *Get.* 25.133; Mathisen, 2020, 274–275: Beside Fritigern, who gets all the history credit, the Goths were led by other chieftains when they crossed the Danube, for more see accompanying Table, "Gothic Chieftains Interacting with Rome (375–376).

81 Amm. Marc. 31.13.19; Heather, 1991, 147: see Heather discussions about Roman losses.

82 Zos. 4.27, 4.30.1–2, 4.31.1–2.

83 Amm. Marc. 31.16.5–6; Zos. 4.25.

84 Zos. 4.31.3–5; Jord. *Get.* 27.139–141; Cedilnik, 2009a, 28.

85 For detailed information see Cedilnik, 2009b.

86 Zos. 4.58; For extended reading of the battle see Bratož and Hudelja, 1994, 162 and Štekar, 2013.

332 that accelerated the process of some kind of internal unification of the Goths, but even then, when they were admitted in the Empire and after Adrianople, to conclude peace with Theodosius, they were under the guidance of a few powerful Gothic leaders. Even Alaric, in the 400s, commanded and led a group that included various “barbarian” elements, not just Goths.

There are two problems here. The first is that until the *foedus* of 332 the sources are vague or non-existent. And the understanding of the foedus for these treaties is made on the basis of existing Roman political practices with other groups, from the other side of the Rhine and Danube, and on the basis of Gothic participation in the Roman army. The second problem is the understanding of the Constantine foedus of 332. According to this, in 382, for the foedus concluded with Theodosius, we can say that it falls under the more classical understanding of the word and its meaning. Since we have already established the evidence for the first problem, the discussion will now be confined to the question of Constantine’s treaties with Theodosius. As we have seen, Constantine spent the summer of 334 on the Danube, which begs the question why he should have been close to the situation if the foedus had been concluded two years earlier! Eutropius<sup>87</sup> as well as the *Excerpta Valesiana*<sup>88</sup> suggest that the treaty was probably a *pax*, while Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>89</sup>

87 Eutr. 10.7: „*Nam etiam Gothos post civile bellum varie profligavit pace his ad postremum data, ingentemque apud barbaras gentes memoriae gratiam conlocavit.*“ (For even the Goths, after the civil war, were variously spared by the peace granted to them at the last, and he established a great memory among the barbarian nations).

88 Anon. Vales. 6.32: „*Sic cum his pace firmata in Sarmatas versus est, qui dubiae fidei probabantur.*“ (Thus peace was established with the Sarmatians, who were proved to be of doubtful faith).

89 Amm. Marc. 27.5.1: „*Procopio superato in Phrygia, internarumque dissensionum materia consopita, Victor magister equitum ad Gothos est missus, cogniturus aperte, quam ob causam gens amica Romanis, foederibusque longae pacis obstricta, tyranno dederat, adminicula, bellum principibus legitimis inferenti.*“ (After Procopius had been vanquished in Phrygia, and the source of internal strife lulled to rest, Victor, commander of the cavalry, was sent to the Goths, in order to get clear information why a people friendly to the Romans and bound by the treaties of a long-continued peace had sent support to a usurper who was making war on the legitimate emperors).

and Libanius<sup>90</sup> are too vague to be taken as an argument. Although Sozomen is the earliest source to mention the *foedus*, he used the works of Socrates and Eusebius; Eusebius does not mention a treaty, and Socrates simply paraphrases him.<sup>91</sup> We have reason to doubt that the treaty of 332 was a *foedus*, also because Heather discredited Jordanes' account, and Sozomen's first mention of it as a *foedus* dates from the middle of the 5th century. With the word δουλεύειν, Eusebius tried to explain the unconditional surrender, which meant *deditio*, not *foedus*.<sup>92</sup> Like Libanus, he uses the word δουλεύειν for the status of the Goths. This treaty did not recognise the Goths as equals, but it did not subjugate them either. So, the treaty is a kind of unequal alliance, which Ammianus is willing to describe as a *foedus*, which allowed Constantine to present it in the rhetoric of incorporating the Goths into the Roman Empire. This is a small problem for which Latin panegyrics from the 4th century come to our aid. A number of passages show us that a subjugated group became part of the empire, but did not have full Roman rights as Roman citizens and were dependent subjects. The empire was considered to include any territory or people that was conquered.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, the fear of Roman attack, which was mentally equivalent to actual defeat, could also lead to submission.<sup>94</sup> Finally, once subjugated, these peoples were part of the empire, and even if no provincial organisation was established, their social order continued as before.<sup>95</sup> In Roman diplomacy, such acts of restitution upon surrender had a long tradition and served as a means of ensuring that the formal *deditio* of surrender was followed by a legally binding agreement (*foedus*). Ammianus recounts Julian's military campaigns to subjugate the Alemannic kings, which were followed by treaties setting out the precise terms of surrender and subsequent relations. The leaders of these groups were kept in place

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90 Lib. *Or.* 12.78.

91 Wheeler, 1998, 85.

92 Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.5–6.

93 *Panegyrici Latini* X.7.2, X.9.1, XI.5.4, VIII.1.4, VIII.10.4, IX.21.1–3.

94 *Panegyrici Latini* X.10.3, XI.5.4, VI.12.1, XII.22.3, XII.25.2.

95 *Panegyrici Latini* X.10.3, XI.5.4: That's the case with the Frankish king Gennobaudes, who surrendered, and was reinstated to his old position by Maximian, who kept him and his men in Roman service.

by agreements which Ammianus called *foedera*.<sup>96</sup> The Romans regarded such agreements as permanent dependencies for these groups and peoples. After their surrender, the Goths signed the treaty that allowed Ammianus to call them *foedus*, which allowed the empire to regard them as subjects or slaves. This completely destroys Jordanes' arguments. Roman diplomatic practice, with the exception of the Persians, created *foederati* after first subjugating a group (*deditio*), then restoring its social order (*restitutio*), and finally concluding a treaty (*foedus*). This series of laws placed the *foederati* in a subordinate position to the Roman government.

It's in the 6th century that Jordanes refers to the Goths as *foederati*<sup>97</sup> because of their *foedus* of 332 with Constantine and its renewal by Theodosius in 382,<sup>98</sup> thus telescoping and linking the traditional *foederati* status and the later settlement on imperial soil. The term itself first appears in the *Novellae Valentiniani*.<sup>99</sup> But Jordanes does so from his 6th century perspective. He derives the name from the army division of the *foederati* of his time, from the auxiliary troops that the Goths had to provide according to the

96 *Suomarius*: Amm. Marc. 17.10.3–4; *Hortarius*: Amm. Marc. 17.10.6–9; *Hariobaudes*: Amm. Marc. 18.2.7, 18.2.16–18; *Urius*, *Ursicinus*, and *Vestralpus*: Amm. Marc. 18.2.18–19; *Vadomarius*: Amm. Marc. 18.2.16 (*rex foederatica*), 21.3.1; *Macrianus*: Amm. Marc. 18.2.16–18; *Alamanni*: Amm. Marc. 14.10.9.

97 Jord. *Get.* 28.145: „*Defuncto ergo Aithanarico cunctus eius exercitus in servitio Theodosii imperatoris perdurans Romano se imperio subdens cum milite velut unum corpus effecit militiaque illa dudum sub Constantino principe foederatorum renovata et ipsi dicti sunt foederati. E quibus imperator contra Eugenium tyrannum, qui occiso Gratiano Gallias occupasset, plus quam viginti milia armatorum fideles sibi et amicos intellegens secum duxit victoriaque de praedicto tyranno potitus ultionem exegit.*“ (When Athanaric died, all his army still remained in the service of the emperor Theodosius and submitted to the Roman authority; together with the regular army, it formed one body. Allied military service was restored as it had been under Emperor Constantine, and they too were called allies. From among them, the emperor led more than twenty thousand armed men against the tyrant Eugenius, who occupied Gaul after Gratian's murder, because he realised that they were loyal and friendly to him. He gained victory over the said tyrant and took his revenge).

98 Heather, 2006, 244: states that Jordanes' picture of constantly available Gothic support is misleading, as precise terms were clearly negotiated on each occasion.

99 Novella Maioriani VIII, *De reddito iure armorum*.

treaty.<sup>100</sup> The connection between the *foederati* and the *foedus* of 332 is not made thoughtlessly and casually, but deliberately, according to another passage in Jordanes. He is reiterating his earlier formulation of the peace concluded by Emperor Theodosius I with the Thervingi in 382.<sup>101</sup> Jordanes provides the fact: that the auxiliary force of his time can be traced back to Constantine, to the treaty of 332, when the Goths had to provide an organised army of a fixed size for the first time.<sup>102</sup> Is Jordanes' interpretation correct? What do we know about the Treaty of 332 from other sources? Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Vita Constantini*, speaks of the willingness of neighbouring peoples to submit to the emperor or to conclude treaties of friendship.<sup>103</sup>

100 Jord. *Get.* 21.112: „*Nam et ut famosissimam et Romae emulam in suo nomine conderet civitatem, Gothorum interfuit operatio, qui foedus inito cum imperatore quadraginta suorum milia illi in solacio contra gentes varias obtulere. Quorum et numerus et militia usque ad praesens in re publica nominatur, id est foederati.*“ (When Constantine was building the famous city named after himself, a rival of Rome, the Goths were also active. In the alliance they concluded with the emperor, they offered him forty thousand of their own to help against various peoples. Their numbers and military service, i.e. allies, are still mentioned in the country today.) On the other hand, *Soz. Hist. Eccl.* 1.8.8: „*Ευημερούσης δὲ αὐτῷ τῆς ἀρχῆς συνεπεδίδου ἢ θρησκεία. ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον δὲ καὶ μετὰ τὸν πρὸς Λικίνιον πόλεμον ἐπιτευκτικῶς ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς κατὰ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων μάχαις, ὡς καὶ Σαυροματῶν κρατῆσαι καὶ τῶν καλουμένων Γότθων καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον ἐν μέρει χάριτος σπείσασθαι πρὸς αὐτοῦς.*“ (Where his reign flourished, religion grew at the same time. After the war against Licinius, he was so successful in his battles against the foreign peoples that he defeated the Sarmatians and the so-called Goths and in the end made peace with them out of mercy.) speaks only generally of treaties with Goths and Sarmatians without specifying that they were foedera of different content and time.

101 See footnote 11.

102 Brockmeier, 1987, 81.

103 Eus. *Vita Const.* 4.7: „*Συνεχεῖς γοῦν ἀπανταχόθεν διαπρεσβευόμενοι δῶρα τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς πολυτελή διεκόμιζον, ὡς καὶ αὐτοὺς ποτε παρατυχόντας ἡμᾶς πρὸ τῆς αὐλείου τῶν βασιλείων πυλῶν στοιχηδὸν ἐν τάξει περίβλεπτα σχήματα βαρβάρων ἐστῶτα θεάσασθαι, οἷς ἕξαλλος μὲν ἢ στολή, διαλλάττων δ' ὁ τῶν σχημάτων τρόπος, κόμη τε κεφαλῆς καὶ γενείου πάμπολου διεστῶσα, βλοσυρῶν τε ἦν προσώπων βάρβαρος καὶ καταπληκτικὴ τις ὄψις, σωμάτων θ' ἡλικίας ὑπερβάλλοντα μεγέθη καὶ οἷς μὲν ἐρυθραίνετο τὰ πρόσωπα, οἷς δὲ λευκότερα χιόνος ἦν, οἷς δ' ἐβένου καὶ πίπτης μελάντερα, οἱ δὲ μέσης μετεῖχον κράσεως, ἐπεὶ καὶ Βλεμμύων γένη Ἴνδῶν τε καὶ*



When he comes to the *Scythians*,<sup>104</sup> Eusebius recognizes that the

*Αἰθιοπίων, „οἱ διχθὰ δεδαΐαται ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν“, τῇ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐθεωρεῖτο ἱστορία. ἐν μέρει δὲ τούτων ἕκαστοι, ὥσπερ ἐν πίνακος γραφῇ, τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς τίμια βασιλεῖ προσεκόμιζον, οἱ μὲν στεφάνους χρυσοῦς, οἱ δ' ἐκ λίθων διαδήματα τιμίων, ἄλλοι ξανθοκόμους παιῖδας, οἱ δὲ χρυσῶ καὶ ἄνθεσι καθυφασμένους βαρβαρικός στολάς, οἱ δ' ἵππους, οἱ δ' ἀσπίδας καὶ δόρατα μακρὰ καὶ βέλη καὶ τόξα, τὴν διὰ τούτων ὑπηρεσίαν τε καὶ συμμαχίαν βουλομένῳ βασιλεῖ παρέχειν ἐνδεικνύμενοι. ἃ δὴ παρὰ τῶν κομιζόντων ὑποδεχόμενος καὶ ἐντάττων, ἀντεδίδου τοσαῦτα βασιλεύς, ὡς ὑφ' ἓνα καιρόν πλουσιωτάτους ἀποφῆναι τοὺς κομιζομένους, ἐτίμα δὲ καὶ Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἀξιώμασι τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς διαφανεστέρους, ὥστ' ἤδη πλείους τὴν ἐνταῦθα στέργειν διατριβὴν, ἐπανόδου τῆς εἰς τὰ οἰκεῖα λήθην πεποιημένους.“* (Envoys were constantly bringing gifts from everywhere, which were very precious to them, so that we also happened to see the marvellous figures of the barbarians standing in a row in front of the imperial gates. They wore different clothes, their figures were also different, the hair on their heads and chins was very different, the sight of their fearsome faces was barbaric and terrifying, the size of their bodies was extraordinary. Some had reddish faces, others whiter than snow, others blacker than ebony and pitch, others had an average facial colour, as the tribes of the Blemmies, Indians and Ethiopians, 'who are doubly divided, to the utmost among men' 286, were also seen in the enumeration of those mentioned. were seen. One by one, as in a painting, they offered the emperor what was precious to them, some wreaths of gold, others diadems of precious stones, others slaves with blond hair, others barbaric garments interwoven with gold threads and various colours, still others horses, still others shields, long spears, bows and arrows, because they wanted to show that they offered the emperor service and alliance if he was willing. The emperor accepted these from the bearers and had them listed. In return he gave back so much that in a moment he made the bearers very rich people, he also honoured the outstanding among them with Roman ranks of honour, so that now some loved their stay there and forgot the way back home).

104 Eus. *Vita Const.* 4.5.1-2: „Τί δέ με χρῆ λόγου πάρεργον ποιεῖσθαι, ὡς τὰ βάρβαρα φύλα τῇ Ῥωμαίων καθυπέταττον ἀρχῇ, ὡς τὰ Σκυθῶν καὶ Σαυροματῶν γένη μήπω πρότερον δουλεύειν μεμαθηκότα πρῶτος αὐτὸς ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἤγαγε, δεσπότης ἠγεῖσθαι Ῥωμαῖους καὶ μὴ θέλοντας ἐπαναγκάσας. Σκύθαις μὲν γὰρ καὶ δασμοῦς οἱ πρόσθεν ἐτέλουν ἄρχοντες, Ῥωμαῖοι τε βαρβάροις ἐδούλευον εἰσφοραῖς ἐτησίαις. οὐκ ἦν δ' ἄρα οὗτος βασιλεῖ φορητός ὁ λόγος, οὐδὲ τῷ νικητῇ καλὸν ἐνομίζετο τὰ ἴσα τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν προσφέρειν, τῷ δ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιθαρρῶν σωτήρι τὸ νικητικὸν τρόπαιον καὶ τούτοις ἐπανατείνας, ἐν ὀλίγῳ καιρῷ πάντας παρεστήσατο, ἄρτι μὲν τοὺς ἀφηνιῶντας στρατιωτικῇ σωφρονίσας χειρὶ, ἄρτι δὲ λογικαῖς

treaty with Goths established a regular and loyal relationship with the empire.<sup>105</sup> His description of annual „tributes“ indicates a novel form of payment introduced by the treaty. And despite the imperial propaganda, who tried to disguise these payments,<sup>106</sup> it is evident that the treaty involved ongoing financial obligations, as confirmed by Eusebius' coded language.<sup>107</sup> Another panegyricist, Libanus,

πρεσβείαις τοὺς λοιποὺς ἡμερώσας, ἐξ ἀνόμου τε καὶ θηριώδους βίου ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν καὶ νόμιμον μεθαρμοσάμενος. οὕτω δ' οὖν Σκύθαι Ῥωμαίοις ἔγνωσαν ποτε δουλεύειν.“ (But why should I mention in passing that he made the barbarian tribes subject to Roman rule, that he himself was the first to bring the peoples of the Scythians (sc. Goths) and Sauromatians, who had not yet learnt to be subject (to others), under the yoke and forced them, even against their will, to recognise the Romans as rulers. The earlier rulers even paid tribute to the Scythians and the Romans were thus subject to the barbarians on the basis of annual taxes. But this principle was unacceptable to the emperor and it did not seem right to the victorious emperor (sc. Victor) to pay the same tribute as his predecessors. as tribute. Since he trusted in the Saviour, he also held out the sign of victory to them, and in a short time he subdued them all, on the one hand by bringing those who resisted to reason with the military arm, and on the other by taming the others through clever negotiations, and bringing them from an unlawful and animal life to a reasonable and lawful one. In this way, the Scythians finally learnt to be subject to the Romans.“

- 105 Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.5.1: „Σκύθαις μὲν γὰρ καὶ δασμοὺς οἱ πρόσθην ἐτέλουν ἄρχοντες, Ῥωμαῖοί τε βαρβάρους ἐδούλευον, εἰσφοραῖς Ἐθνοιοῖς.“ (The former rulers paid tribute to the Scythians and the Romans were thus subject to the barbarians on the basis of annual taxes) He deliberately contrasts this newfound dominance of the Roman Empire with the earlier relationship between Romans and barbarians.
- 106 Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.5: There were no annual tributes as payment for military assistance or border protection, but Roman subsidies, which were evidently intended to help the defeated Goths turn their 'unlawful and animalistic life into a reasonable and lawful one; see also Lib. 59.89.
- 107 Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.5.2: “Οὐκ ἦν δ' ἄρα οὗτος βασιλεῖ φορητός ὁ λόγος, οὐδὲ τῷ νικητῇ καλὸν ἐνομίζετο τὰ ἴσα τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν προσφέρειν, τῷ δ' αὐτοῦ ἐπιθαρρῶν σωτῆρι τὸ νικητικὸν τρόπαιον καὶ τούτοις ἐπανατείνας, ἐν ὀλίγῳ καιρῷ πάντας παρεστήσατο, ἄρτι μὲν τοὺς ἀφηνιῶντας στρατιωτικῇ σωφρονίσας χειρὶ, ἄρτι δὲ λογικαῖς πρεσβείαις τοὺς λοιποὺς ἡμερώσας, ἐξ ἀνόμου τε καὶ θηριώδους βίου ἐπὶ τὸ λογικὸν καὶ νόμιμον μεθαρμοσάμενος. οὕτω δ' οὖν Σκύθαι Ῥωμαίοις ἔγνωσαν ποτε δουλεύειν.“ (But this principle

praises an earlier concluded peace with Goths, on their victorious participation in Roman army in the battles with the Persians.<sup>108</sup> It is difficult to assess this passage historically, but this much can be inferred with certainty: Constantine led to the subjugation of the Goths, but at the same time allowed them to live peacefully, despite the obligation to support the empire in wars. Also of great importance is the speech by the Emperor Julian. The talented writer takes an opportunity to disparage the policies of his great relative and predecessor and to ridicule his principles, particularly paying the barbarians,<sup>109</sup> saying that he was ashamed to appear before the

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was unacceptable to the emperor, and it did not seem right to the victorious emperor (sc. Victor) to pay the same tribute as his predecessors. Since he trusted in the Saviour, he also held out the sign of victory to them, and in a short time he subdued them all, on the one hand by bringing those who resisted to reason with the military arm, and on the other by taming the others through clever negotiations, and bringing them from an unlawful and animal life to a reasonable and lawful one. In this way, the Scythians finally learnt to be subject to the Romans.) By claiming that it was intolerable for the emperor to continue the same practice as the rulers before him, Eusebius suggests that Constantine the Great stopped the payments granted by his predecessors and instead took warlike measures to pacify the barbarians; Chrysos, 1973, 55; Brockmeier, 1987, 84. Euseb. *Vita Const.* 4.7.

- 108 Libanius, *Oratio* 59, 89-91: „Τί ποτέ ἐστὶν ὁ Σκύθας τοὺς φονικωτάτους καὶ τοὺς Ἄρει τετελεσμένους καὶ δυστύχημα τὴν ἡσυχίαν κρίνοντας εἰρήνην μὲν ἔπεισεν ἀγαπήσαι, καταθέσθαι δὲ τὰ ὄπλα καὶ βασιλέα τὸν ἡμέτερον ἐν ἴσῳ τοῖς οἰκείοις ἄγειν καίτοι πολὺ μὲν ἀπηρητημένον Ἰστρον, τὰς δὲ δυκάμεις ἐφ’ ἑτέροις τάττοντα.“ (What on earth is it which persuaded the Scythians, the most murderous of men and devoted to Ares, and who judge inactivity as a misfortune, to love peace, to lay down their arms and to treat our emperor as equal to their own leaders even when he is far removed from the Danube and marshalling his forces against others? (Dodgeon M.H. *The sons of Constantine: Libanius, Oratio LIX (Royal Discourse upon Constantius and Constans)*. (From *Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine views*, 1996).
- 109 Julian, *Caes.* 328 D – 329 A: „ὥς δὲ ἀπέβλεπεν εἰς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἔργα, μικρὰ παντάπασιν εἶδε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ. δύο γὰρ τυράννους, εἷ γε χρὴ τάληθῆ φάναι, καθηρήκει, τὸν μὲν ἀπόλεμόν τε καὶ μαλακόν, τὸν δὲ ἀθλιόν τε καὶ διὰ τὸ γῆρας ἀσθενῆ, ἀμφοτέρω δὲ θεοῖς τε καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἐχθίστω. τὰ γε μὴν εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους ἦν γελοῖα αὐτῷ: φόρους γὰρ ὥσπερ ἔτετελέκει,..." (Constantine was allowed to speak next. On first entering the lists he was confident enough. But when he reflected on the exploits of the others he saw that his

gods<sup>110</sup> and crediting him for the reconquest of Trajan Dacia. By Julian words, we can identify that the Gothic payments were real<sup>111</sup> and provided a certain *auxiliary* army,<sup>112</sup> as an essential condition

own were wholly trivial. He had defeated two tyrants, but, to tell the truth, one of them was untrained in war and effeminate, the other a poor creature and enfeebled by old age, while both were alike odious to gods and men. Moreover his campaigns against the barbarians covered him with ridicule. For he paid them tribute,...) <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0650%3Aorgpage%3D328d>

- 110 Julian, *The Caesars* 329 A: „τά γε μὴν εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους ἦν γελοῖα αὐτῷ: φόρους γὰρ ὥσπερ ἔτετέλεκει, καὶ πρὸς τὴν Τρυφήν ἀφείωρα...“ (Moreover his campaigns against the barbarians covered him with ridicule. For he paid them tribute, so to speak, while he gave all his attention to Pleasure,...)
- 111 Brockmeier, 1987, 86: The evidence suggests that the Romans were responsible for making payments. However, the manner in which these payments are mentioned by the Christian panegyricist and the pagan critic does not allow for a clear qualification of the payments that goes beyond conjecture.
- 112 Amm. Marc. 22.7.8: „*Quae cum ita divideret, nihil segnius agi permittens, suadentibus proximis, ut aggredereetur propinquos Gothos, saepe fallacet et perfidos, hostes quaerere se meliores aiebat: aillis enim sufficere mercatores Galatas, per quos ubique sine condicionis discrimine venundantur.*“ (While he was so arranging these matters, tolerating no slackness in action, his intimates tried to persuade him to attack the neighbouring Goths, who were often deceitful and treacherous; but he replied that he was looking for a better enemy; that for the Goths the Galatian traders were enough, by whom they were offered for sale everywhere without distinction of rank) Even Julian, who regarded the Goths as inferior enemies compared to the Persians, could not do without the influx of Scythian contingents, according to this information. On the Gothic assistance in defence of Julian: Zos. 3.25.6: „Φεύγουσι δὲ ἐπεκδραμόντες Ρωμαῖοί τε καὶ σὺν τούτοις οἱ Γότθοι πολλοὺς μὲν ἀπώλεσαν, χρυσοῦ δὲ πολλοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου γεγόνασιν ἐγκρατεῖς, ἔτι δὲ κόσμου παντοῖου τοῖς τε ἀνδράσι καὶ ἵπποις περικειμένους, καὶ κλινῶν ἀργυρῶν καὶ τραπεζῶν, ὄσας ἐνέτυχον ὑπὸ τῶν στρατηγῶν ἐν τῷ χάρακι καταλειμμέναις.“ (The Romans and Goths pursued them, and killed a great number, from whom they took a vast quantity of gold and silver, besides ornaments of all kinds for men and horses, with silver beds and tables, and whatever was left by the officers on the ramparts); Amm. Marc. 23.2.7: „*Unde contractis copiis omnibus, Mesopotamiam propere signa commovit, ut fama de se nulla praeversa-id enim curatius observarat,-improvisus Assyrios occuparet. Denique cum exercitu et Scytharum auxiliis, Euphrate navali ponte transmisso, venit ad Bat-*

of the treaty from 332. Here Chrysos argues that a thesis can be made, that the treaty of 332 followed a precisely defined annual subsidy payment<sup>113</sup> on the part of the empire, to cover the expenses of this frontier army, understood as part of the imperial army and as a supplement to the *limitanei*.<sup>114</sup> That also opens another question, about the connection between *foederati* and the *limitanei*,<sup>115</sup> and

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*nas, municipium Osdroenae, ibique illaetabile portentum offendit.*“  
 (Then uniting all his forces, he marched to Mesopotamia so rapidly that, since no report of his coming had preceded him (for he had carefully guarded against that), he came upon the Assyrians unawares. Finally, having crossed the Euphrates on a bridge of boats, he arrived with his army and his Scythian auxiliaries at Batnae, a town of Osdroëne, where he met with a sad portent.)

- 113 Brockmeier, 1987, 83: argues about Chrysos's annual subsidy payment, which he links to the frontier army, is an integral part of Constantine's treaty strategy, although he doesn't offer compelling evidence to support this claim. He argues that the supposed correlation between *foederati* and *limitanei* implies subsidies to both groups, intended to cover the expenses of maintaining the frontier army. This is supported by Heather, *Foedera and Foederati of the fourth century*, 243: he argues that Ammianus Marcellinus indicates that Gothic military service after 332 was not legally binding, and was precisely determined by contract. He continues that in 360, Constantius asked the Scythians for *auxilia*, either to pay or as a favor (Amm. Marc. 20.8.1: *mercede vel gratia*); Thompson, 1956, 375: Thompson challenges the conventional belief that Rome was obligated to make payments under the *foedus* between Constantine the Great and the Terwings and Taifals. He proposes that an alliance was formed between Constantine and the Visigothic tribes as early as 323, wherein Rome committed to providing subsidies. However, after achieving military success in 323, Constantine ceased these payments as he no longer relied on the support of the Gothic *foederates*, having solidified his power along the Danube.
- 114 Chrysos, 1973, 58. Brockmeier, 1987, 81: counters Chrysos argument on the basis that no 6th century author supports that, and that Jordanes speaks in one point on *contra gentes varias* (Jord. *Get.* 21.112). According to Brockmeier, this precisely expresses the necessity-orientated use that permitted the deployment of Gothic *auxiliary* troops outside their home territory.
- 115 Chrysos, 1973, 58 and Karayannopoulos, 1959, 74–75: argue that *limitanei* had land which remained imperial territory. That territory was on the side of imperial soil and was passed father to son, if the son got the father position in the army. So the land was closely related to the salary of the *limitanei* and was regarded as a kind of a payment for the defence of the limes.

the *foederati* relationship to the settlement land. But Chrysos thinks that the treaty of 332, and the Gothic *foederates* connection to the land can be understood in that context. On the other hand, Brockmeier, argues that this payments could have had purpose to keep the Goths outside the empire.<sup>116</sup> The second part of Julian words is the reconquest of Dacia.<sup>117</sup> Constantine's building policy can be understood not as a defence measure, but in the context of underpinning a restorative foreign policy. That policy that was consistently applied from Augustus to around Theodosius I, when a formal Roman conquest would have incorporated those new lands into the empire, is not seen here. That is evident in the presence of a country name on coins,<sup>118</sup> which indicated incorporation into Roman empire or recognition by the Romans. For instance, *Sarmaticus* might appear after defeating the Sarmatians, but *Sarmatia* was only included on coins after Rome claimed possession. Similarly, *Gothia* first appeared on coins<sup>119</sup> in the 4th century, signifying Constantine's assertion of Roman control over Gothic lands north of Danube. However, this merely reflects Rome's assertion rather than a factual claim. The coins cited can't be definitively linked to 332–334. The claim that Gothic territory was under Roman dominion via *foedus* is dubious. Evidence from 348 shows clear Roman and Gothic territories. Wulfila's settlement on Roman soil was justified by fleeing persecution, not a legal agreement.<sup>120</sup> So the Goths on that land lived as *foederati* under Roman authority. This process reflects Rome's strategy of integrating defeated people into its empire, while simultaneously using them to guard its own territory from external enemies. *Gothia Romana* didn't evolve into

116 Brockmeier, 1987, 86: This was a treaty dictated by Rome and it is not convincing that the services of the Gothic contracting party should have been honoured in two ways.

117 Brockmeier, 1987, 85–86: contrary to Chrysos, he thinks that the connection between payments and the reconquest of Dacia, mentioned by Julian and the recovery of the former Roman province are both facts from different perspective. And due to Julian being the only evidence, Chrysos cannot credibly prove a reconquest of Dacia in 332, and for that purpose refer to the Constantine building activities on the Danube border the years before.

118 Chrysos, 1973, 60.

119 Chrysos, 1973, 61.

120 Brockmeier, 1987, 92–93.

a traditional province within Roman administrative framework. Empire did not absorb that territory, because in that case it needs to establish Roman administration in the newly acquired territory, to guarantee the effectiveness of Roman laws and to confer Roman civility on those living there.<sup>121</sup> This was not due to Roman lack of expansionist power, or legal principles, but rather from the social and demographic implications of automatic citizenship granted by *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212. So, Constantine refrained from incorporating this land into the provincial system after reclaiming it, to avoid these undesirable consequences. Instead, he allowed it to remain under imperial control without formal provincial status. The legal status of the land mirrored that of its inhabitants. The Goths who settled, became part of the empire, but operated autonomously, retaining their own leaders and civil laws, and were excluded from provincial administration and Roman citizenship. So, the *foedus* from 332 dictated by Constantine, imposed political influence on the Goths, but lacked means to incorporate Dacia and its inhabitants into the empire. The treaty from 332 also, was ensured by the provision of hostages from the Goths.<sup>122</sup> These hostages clearly signaled the imbalance in the relationship between the Romans and Goths in the treaty, as there was still a correspondence between performance and consideration with regard to the Goths' military aid and the Romans' payments. Giving hostages suggests that the son of „rex“<sup>123</sup>, Ariaricus held a notable position within the Thervingian tribal

121 Brockmeier, 1987, 93.

122 Anon. Vales. 6.32: „*Sic cum his pace firmata in Sarmatas versus est, qui dubiae fidei probabantur. Sed servi Sarmatarum omnes adversum dominos rebellarunt, quos pulsos Constantinus libenter accepit et amplius trecenta milia hominum mixtae aetatis et sexus per Thraciam Scythiam Macedoniam Italiamque divisit.*“ (Thus, with peace established with them, he turned towards the Sarmatians, who were deemed of doubtful loyalty. But all the slaves of the Sarmatians rebelled against their masters, and Constantine gladly received them, dispersing more than three hundred thousand people of mixed ages and sexes throughout Thrace, Scythia, Macedonia, and Italy.)

123 Brockmeier, 1987., 87: With regard to the title 'rex', modern research generally takes the view that it should not be understood as an indication of the existence of a Visigothic kingship; While indications of a monarchical form of government existed among the Goths initially, this structure appears to have disappeared during their migration southwards and settling north of the Danube. By the mid-4th century, evidence suggests a plurality of leaders (Jord. *Get.* 134.), including *reges*, *reguli*, and *βασιλίσκοι*, which indicates a certain social differentiation.

structure. This is also bolstered, by the mentions of two *rex* who ruled the Thervingi in the time of the treaty, bolstering the significance of Ariaricus and his family within the tribe.<sup>124</sup>

Constantine treaty policy, starting with the agreement of 332, marked a significant shift in Roman diplomacy. He maintained the principle of *tutela limitis*,<sup>125</sup> established by Aurelian until 324, after which he adopted Trajans approach with a new component: pacification after subjugation and expanding Roman army reinforcement by territorial claim.<sup>126</sup> The late antique sources don't tell us how long the *foedus*

124 Jord. *Get.* 21.112: „*Tunc etenim sub Ariarici et Aorici regum suorum florebant imperio.*“ (At that time, under the rule of the kings Ariarik and Aorik, they were at the height of their power.)

125 We find the expression »*tutela limitis*« in an inscription from Tropaea, which says of the two emperors CIL III 13734: „*Romanae securitatis libertatisque vindicibus, / dd(ominis) nn(ostris) Fl(avio) Val(erio) Constantino [[et Val(erio) Liciniano / Licinio]], piis, felicibus, aeternis Augg(ustis), / quorum virtute et providentia edomitis / (5) ubique barbararum gentium populis, / ad confirmandam limitis tutelam etiam / Tropeensium civitas auspiciato a fundamentis / feliciter opere constructa est...*“ (To the defenders of Roman security and liberty, our Lords Flavius Valerius Constantinus and Valerius Licinianus Licinius, the pious, fortunate and eternal Augusti, by whose virtue and providence, having everywhere tamed the peoples of the barbarian tribes, in order to strengthen the defence of the border the city of the Tropaeans has also been fortified, by a work built auspiciously from the foundations.) Meaning that: as long as Constantine ruled the empire together with Licinius, he shared with him the policy of their predecessors, which led to *securitas*, the securing of the border.

126 Amm. Marc. 17.12.9–11: „*Caesis enim compluribus pars quae potuit superesse, per notos calles evasit; quo eventu vires et animos incitante, iunctis densius cuneis, ad Quadorum regna properabat exercitus, qui ex praeterito casu impendentia formidantes, rogaturi suppliciter pacem, fidentes ad principis venere conspectum, erga haec et similia lenioris, dictoque die statuendis condicionibus pari modo Zizais quoque etiam tum regalis, ardui corporis iuvenis, ordines Sarmatarum more certaminis instruxit ad preces; visoque imperatore, abiectis armis pectore toto procubuit, exanimis stratus. Et amisso vocis officio prae timore, tum cum orare deberet, maiorem misericordiam movit, conatus aliquotiens, parumque impediendo singultu, permissus explicare quae poscebat. Recreatus denique tandem, iussusque exurgere, genibus nixus, usu linguae recuperato, concessionem delictorum sibi tribui supplicavit et veniam, eoque ad precandum admissa multitudo, cuius ora formido muta claudebat, periculo adhuc praestantioris ambiguo, ubi ille solo iussus attolli orandi signum exspectantibus diu monstravit, omnes clipeis telisque proiectis, manus precibus dederunt plura excogitantes,*



concluded between Constantine and the Goths was valid: Thompson<sup>127</sup> argues that this *foederati* relationship lasted until the war between Valens and Athanaric in 367, while some consider that it's possible that the Gothic tribes didn't feel bound by the agreements after the ruler who concluded them, died.<sup>128</sup> The objection to the latter, is that

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*ut vincerent humilitate supplicandi regalem.*" (For after very many of them had been cut down, the part that could save themselves escaped by paths familiar to them, and our army, their strength and courage aroused by this success, formed in closer order and hastened to the domain of the Quadi. They, dreading from their past disaster what impended, planned to sue suppliantly for peace and confidently presented themselves before the emperor, who was somewhat too lenient towards those and similar offences; and on the day named for settling the terms in like fashion, Zizais, a tall young man who was even then a royal prince, drew up the ranks of the Sarmatians in battle array to make their petition. And on seeing the emperor he threw aside his weapons and fell flat on his breast, as if lying lifeless. And since the use of his voice failed him from fear at the very time when he should have made his plea, he excited all the greater compassion; but after several attempts, interrupted by sobbing, he was able to set forth only a little of what he tried to ask. At last, however, he was reassured and bidden to rise, and getting up on his knees and recovering the use of his voice, he begged that indulgence for his offences, and pardon, be granted him. Upon this the throng was admitted to make its entreaties, but mute terror closed their lips, so long as the fate of their superior was uncertain. But when he was told to get up from the ground and gave the long awaited signal for their petition, all threw down their shields and spears, stretched out their hands with prayers, and succeeded in many ways in outdoing their prince in lowly supplication.) Constantine *foedus* of 332 was preceded by *deditio* of the Goths.

- 127 Thompson, 2008, 13; Thompson, 1956, 380: Thompson proposes a conflict between Romans and western Goths after the death of Constantine in 337 to 353, followed by a renewal of their *foederati* relationship. He suggests the *foedus*, broken by Constantine in 332, was reinstated before Valens' reign and lasted until the Peace of Noviodunum in 369. He supports this by noting the destruction of Constantine's bridge between Oescus and Sucidava before 367, since Valens had crossed Danube on a ship and the inability to operate from Oltenia during a war with Athanaric. Additionally, he posits an agreement between Constantius II and the Terwings after a Gothic invasion in 346/347, evidenced by Valens' refusal of tribute in 367 and trade restrictions, implying previous payments and increased Gothic trade freedom.
- 128 Brockmeier, 1987, 98-99: The alleged Gothic invasion in 346/347, resulting in the destruction of Constantine's bridge, lacks conclusive evidence in historical sources and also natural factors like weather conditions could have caused the bridge collapse.

those payments and increased trade on the Danube, were part of the foedus in 332, which were meant to alleviate Gothic economic struggles, and to accelerate their political and social consolidation. Despite the importance of the treaty, which brought peace along the Lower Danube for the next 30 years, we have little information about it. The next change will come in the treaty with Theodosius in 382, which gave land on the Roman side.

In 382 the Thervingian leaders achieved a peace treaty with the *magister militum Saturninus*. They were put in position of *fides*, which meant the recognition of their gentility and were given gifts. Those tribes were stationed as *gentiles* and belonged to the empire without the right of *conubium* in the border provinces of the dioceses of *Thraciae* and *Macedonia*, primarily in *Scythia minor*, *Moesia inferior* and *Dacia ripensis*. Their inclusion in the Limes armies meant right to get land, and a tax-free use of it, and also a payment of *annonae* to those *gentiles*, who according to Zosimus,<sup>129</sup> were even better soldiers than the regular army.

The formulation of the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* and the consistent designation of Fritigern as *rex* from the eve of the Battle of Adrianople in 378 by Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>130</sup> allow the assumption that in the course of these agreements between Theodosius I and the Thervingi, the Gothic army commander – if he was at all at that time – was not a *rex*. If he was still alive at the time, the Gothic commander was recognised as king (*rex appellatus es*).<sup>131</sup> This was

129 Zos. 4.40.

130 Amm. Marc 31.12.8: „*Et dum necessaria parabantur ad decernendum, Christiani ritus presbyter (ut ipsi appellant), missus a Fritigerno legatus, cum aliis humilibus venit ad principis castra, susceptusque leniter, eiusdem ductoris obtulit scripta, petentis propalam ut sibi suisque, quos extorres patriis laribus rapidi ferarum gentium exegere discursus, habitanda Thraca sola cum pecore omni concederetur et frugibus: hoc impetrato, spondentis perpetuam pacem.*“ (While the necessary preparations for the decisive battle were going on, a Christian presbyter 1 (to use their own term), who had been sent by Fritigern as an envoy, in company with some humble folk came to the emperor's camp. He was courteously received and presented a letter from the same chieftain, openly requesting that to him and his people, whom the rapid forays of savage races had made exiles from their native lands, Thrace only should be granted as a habitation, with all its flocks and crops; and they promised lasting peace if this request were granted).

131 Schwartz, 1995, 294.

the official formula, and he may thus have been granted an element of *amicus et socius status*. However, even the granting of a certain internal autonomy did not make the Tervingen into a *gens libera* for as *gentiles* on imperial soil they were subject to the authority of the *duces* of the border provinces, exercised directly by the individual tribal groups through *praepositi* or *tribuni gentis*.

With Theodosius treaty large numbers of those Goths were settled south of the Danube, in *Moesia inferior*,<sup>132</sup> *Thraciae*,<sup>133</sup> *Dacia ripensis*<sup>134</sup> and *Macedonia*.<sup>135</sup> The sources also do not say in what conditions the Goths were settled, but it is likely that they were not *coloni*. After 382, the traditional Gothic way of life continued, so it was impossible for the Roman state to treat them as *coloni*. This is not surprising, since the Goths arbitrarily entered into negotiations with the Roman state without being defeated in war. The Goths also agreed to pay some taxes.<sup>136</sup> That they served as soldiers is too one-sided, since only those who paid taxes served in the Roman army.<sup>137</sup> The Goths probably did not

132 Zos. 4.34.5: „Τοσαύτη δὲ ἦν ἡ περὶ τὴν ταφὴν πολυτέλεια ὥστε τοὺς βαρβάρους ἅπαντας καταπλαγέοντας τῇ ταύτης ὑπερβολῇ, τοὺς μὲν Σκύθας ἐπανελθεῖν οἴκαδε καὶ μηκέτι Ῥωμαίοις παρενοχλεῖν, τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνην τοῦ βασιλέως θαυμάσαντας, ὅσοι δὲ ἅμα τῷ τελευτήσαντι παρεγένοντο, τῇ τῆς ὄχθης φυλακῇ προσεγκατερέρησαντας ἐπὶ πολὺ κωλύσαι τὰς κατὰ Ῥωμαίων ἐφόδους· ἐν ταύτῳ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα προσεγίνετο τῷ Θεοδοσίῳ τύχης πλεονεκτήματα.“ (... which was so magnificent, that the barbarians were filled with amazement at its extreme splendor, and returned to their country without offering any further molestation to the Romans, so charmed were they with the liberality and magnificence of the emperor. They who had followed the deceased chief likewise kept a continual guard on the bank of the river, to prevent any incursions being made against the Romans. At the same time Theodosius had additional good fortune).

133 Them. Or. 16. (trans. Heather – Moncur).

134 Jord. Get. 25.133: „De cetero tam Ostrogothis quam Gepidis parentibus suis pro affectionis gratia euangelizantes huius perfidae culturam huius sectae invitaverunt. Ipsi quoque, ut dictum est, Danubio transmeantes Daciam ripensis, Moesiam Thraciasque permissio principis insederunt.“ (They also converted their relatives, both Ostrogoths and Gepids, out of love, instructed them in the worship of this false religion, and everywhere invited all people who spoke their language to join this separation. They themselves, however, as already stated, crossed the Danubian frontier, and, with the Emperor's permission, settled in Dacia, Media, and Thrace).

135 Them. Or. 34.24. (trans. Penella).

136 Heather, 1991, 159.

137 Wolfram, 1988, 133.

pay taxes like the rest of the “Romans” and any monetary contribution they made to the imperial treasury was only symbolic. The sources very broadly present Gothic military service in the Roman army.

The Goths were once again included in the Roman army, but under Theodosius they kept their military structure and were commanded by one of their own. Under the command of Gothic leaders, they remained an important part of the army. Such is an example of Theodosius’ request to the Goths to join him in the fight against Eugenius and the fact that he relinquished command to Alaric during the campaign.<sup>138</sup> Besides that, Zosim tells us that in the 380s a barbarian garrison was established near the city of Tomi in Scythia Minor.<sup>139</sup> This suggests to us that the Goths may have been part of Theodosius’ regular army. Prominent Goths were probably given gifts by the Romans, and Gothic military pay was arranged before any mobilization.<sup>140</sup> Thus, we can assume that the *deditio* was probably only pro forma, as confirmed by Gothic tax payments.

However, the main point of the treaty of 382 is that Gothic tribal life was not interrupted. However, due to the lack of information from the sources, we cannot say whether the Gothic autonomy was de facto tolerated and recognized by the Roman side! Even if Roman citizenship was limited to only some prominent Goths, this should not mislead us into thinking that there may have been a formal recognition of Gothic semi-autonomy to some extent. The Goths were subdued, but not completely defeated, thus managing to preserve their identity. The rest of the agreement between the Goths and Theodosius was essentially a repetition of some of the terms of 376.

Today, we have no information about the nature and length of the agreement, nor about how much territory the Goths were settled on. We also have no information about their tax obligations or privileges, their legal status. The treaty of 382 is similar in many ways to that of 332, but includes a crucial difference, as this treaty made the Goths a semi-independent group living within Roman territory, performing their *foedus* status, when the empire needed them.<sup>141</sup>

138 Heather, 1991, 162.

139 Zos. 4.40.

140 Heather, 1991, 164.

141 Heather, 1991, 151: Heather is not agreeing with that terminology, saying that Goths surrendered themselves (*deditio*), and did not conclude a *foedus* with Rome.

To conclude shortly, beside the fact that terminologically, Roman-Gothic *foedus* treaties got their name retrospectively from Jordanes and Procopius, they fall under the foedus umbrella, under wider context. Even when they were providing Roman army with fresh and ready soldiers, the treaties differentiated even between them. Every one of them is the product of its own time, result of the political and military supremacy and situation. From Gothic point of view, when military defeated, they were pinned by the Romans to accept less favourable deals, in other instances, they managed to extract big benefits from the Roman. From the Roman side, the imperial propaganda used that big foedus umbrella, to sell imperial victory in almost every conflict, and to satisfy the important taxpayers, but simultaneously they needed cheaper man power for the army. All that created a blurry picture, in which one needs to examine each foedus individually and in the same as a diplomatic chain where each next foedus is the result of the previous one, and cause for the next one.

## Conclusion

This paper dives into the historical relations between the Roman Empire and the Goths, focusing on the nature of their *foedus* agreements from 238 to 382 C.E. It examines whether these agreements can genuinely be classified as foedus, in the classic meaning of the word, and how much they fall under that interpretation, drawing on primary historical sources. The author discusses the everchanging dynamic of the Roman-Gothic relationship, highlighting the power struggle in a position of mutual dependency. Significant examples, such as treaties involving emperors like Constantine the Great and Theodosius, demonstrate the subjugation, and military dependency that characterized these relations, in the same time, legitimizing imperial actions in the eyes of the Romans. The research shows that the Gothic tribes, while positioned as allies, retained limited autonomy and often faced obligations that reinforced their status as non-sovereign. Ultimately, the paper argues that the Roman perspective on Gothic allies reflected broader imperial objectives and propaganda, rather than reasonable diplomatic engagements, shaping the narrative of their interactions throughout late antiquity, early medieval sources, and even shaping the modern historian narratives for the period.

## Zaključak

Ovaj rad ulazi u historijske odnose između Rimskog carstva i Gota, fokusirajući se na prirodu njihovih *foedus* sporazuma od 238. do 382. godine. Ispituje se mogu li se ovi sporazumi istinski klasificirati kao *foedus* u klasičnom značenju te riječi, i koliko potpadaju pod to tumačenje, oslanjajući se na primarne historijske izvore. Autor raspravlja o stalno promjenjivoj dinamici rimsko-gotskih odnosa, naglašavajući borbu za moć u poziciji međusobne zavisnosti. Značajni primjeri, kao što su ugovori koji uključuju careve poput Konstantina Velikog i Teodosija, pokazuju potčinjavanje i vojnu zavisnost koji su obilježili ove odnose, istovremeno legitimirajući imperijalne akcije u očima Rimljana. Istraživanje pokazuje da su gotska plemena, iako su bila pozicionirana kao saveznici, zadržala ograničenu autonomiju i često su se suočavala s obavezama koje su jačale njihov status nesuverenih. Konačno, u radu se tvrdi da je rimska perspektiva na gotske saveznike odražavala šire imperijalne ciljeve i propagandu, a ne razumne diplomatske angažmane, oblikujući narativ o njihovim interakcijama kroz kasnu antiku, ranosrednjovjekovne izvore, pa čak i oblikujući moderne historijske narative o ovom periodu.

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