**8: You sexy beast: the pig in a villa in Vandalic North Africa**

**and boar-cults in Old Germanic heathendom**

**Richard North**

**University College London**

In the early 520s, little more than a decade before the Vandals of North Africa vanished in the wake of Count Belisarius’ invasion from Byzantium, the poet Luxorius of Carthage wrote a short *jeu d’esprit* which, in its sole surviving context, the *Latin Anthology*, is entitled *Archilochium de apro mitissimo in triclinio nutrito* (‘epigram on a most tame boar fed in the dining room’).[[1]](#footnote-1) The pig is described eating quietly among gilded colonnades. Unlike other swine he refrains from muddying the furniture, and is called a beast no longer of Mars but of Venus. Luxorius’ subject belongs to a long Latin literary tradition in which wild animals such as lions and boars are hailed as tamed.[[2]](#footnote-2) This type of poetry is popular in the *Latin Anthology* in which many aberrant or untypical humans are also described. Luxorius, a *grammaticus* (‘teacher of Latin’), was also styled *vir clarissimus et spectabilis* (‘most notable and respectable citizen’) possibly in recognition of a teaching award.[[3]](#footnote-3) Yet for all his learning, most poems in Luxorius’ *Liber epigrammaton* (‘book of epigrams’) dwell on the buzz of Carthage, on the people of parks and villas, parties, pantomimes and chariot-racing in the circus. His bestial novelties are part of this. Although the vogue for this type of thing began with Martial’s epigrams in the reign of Domitian (81-96), Luxorius’ poems show that nobody had tired of it in Carthage, second city of the western empire, four centuries later. In his poem before the boar, Luxorius writes on a fish which fearlessly inhabits the *lacunas regias* ‘royal ponds’ (No. 5, line 1). Elsewhere he pictures birds who prefer the garden of a Vandal patron, Fridamal, to their old home by the sea (No. 16), as well as a monkey taught to sit on the back of a dog that it fears –

Quanto magna parant felici tempora regno,

Discant ut legem pacis habere ferae!

What great things the times hold in store for the happy kingdom,

That animals may learn to keep the laws of peace!

(No. 44, lines 3-4)

– where the beasts in question might prompt an uneasy comparison: one between half-Roman Hilderic of Carthage and his Vandal relatives? Luxorius further celebrates a she-bear nursing cubs (No. 47), his own pet puppy (No. 73), leopards trained to hunt with dogs (No. 74), an articulate magpie (No. 84), and a cat that died eating a mouse (No. 89). There is another wild, but virtual, boar pictured on a painting in the same or another villa to which Luxorius gives the honour of being speared by his patron Fridamal:

Hic spumantis apri iaculo post terga retorto

Frontem et cum geminis naribus ora feris.

Ante ictum subita prostrate est bellua morte,

Cui prius extingui quam cecidisse fuit.

Iussit fata manus telo, nec vulnera sensit

Exerrans anima iam pereunte cruor.

Here, with spear drawn back behind your shoulder, you strike

The foaming boar’s forehead and face with twin nostrils.

Before impact the beast was laid low by sudden death,

Whose lot was to be extinguished before actually falling.

The hand with lance decreed its fate, nor did its outflowing

Life-blood feel the wounds with the soul now passing on.

(No. 18, lines 17-22)

Where the living pig in a villa is concerned, however, there appear to be grounds to look beyond Roman trivia into a Vandal connection with the time-honoured novelty of ferocity tamed.

The Vandal patrons of Luxorius and his fellow poets were descended from a nomadic military whose kings ruled Africa Proconsularis out of Carthage between 439, when Geiseric forced General Bonifatius to surrender, to 534, when Belisarius took the city for the Byzantine Empire from Gelimer, last of the Vandal kings.[[4]](#footnote-4) Although the Hasding Vandals had ruled Carthage for nearly a century, their Mediterranean adventures went back a generation earlier. At first they moved in next to the Suevi or Sueves around Galicia in 411 after a two-year pillage of northern Spain.[[5]](#footnote-5) In 418 they found their ranks swelled with Alans when, in a battle further south, the Alans of Lusitania and Siling Vandals of Baetica suffered a crushing defeat to King Wallia of the Goths, who was acting for Rome. With an eye to the main chance, the new Hasding leader Geiseric led a conglomerate southwards. He defeated the Romans in 422 but reasoned that Spain would destroy him in the longer run.[[6]](#footnote-6) In 429, his force, probably in the tens of thousands, crossed the straits of Gibraltar, advancing slowly eastwards on Numidia. Encircling Hippo, west of Tunisia, in 435, the Vandals made a treaty with the empire in which they federated to the Roman army. Four years later they took Carthage and confiscated the best lands of the province. In 442 Geiseric had himself recognized by Roman treaty as the independent king of North Africa. He sent his son Huneric to Ravenna to marry Princess Eudoxia, daughter of Emperor Valentinian III (425-55). By now the Vandals were using the Carthaginian merchant fleet to take tribute from the Balearic Islands, western Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica. On the death of Valentinian, King Geiseric sacked Rome, bringing his son and Eudoxia back to Carthage. His kingdom expanded but remained at war with Rome until his death in 477. To keep it intact he established a new Hasding rule of agnatic succession by the oldest surviving male.[[7]](#footnote-7) Since Geiseric had killed all his son’s rivals anyway, Huneric inherited and strengthened his hold by liquidating younger cousins in 481. As he was an Arian Christian (on which more below), he went on to purge Catholics also in 482-84. When at last he died in 484, having failed to restore primogeniture in favour of his own son, he was succeeded by a cousin, Gunthamund (son of Genton, Geiseric’s younger brother). The king after Gunthamund’s death in 496 was Thrasamund, another son of Genton and a patron of arts and letters. His was an apparently more tolerant reign in which the Arian persecution subsided, although he treated with the Ostrogoths of Italy.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In 523 Thrasamund died and the crown passed back to Geiseric’s side of the family, to Hilderic, son of Huneric and Eudoxia, who had been waiting nearly forty years. This half-Roman Vandal issued an edict of toleration towards Catholic or Nicene Christianity in the same year, tilting his diplomacy away from Arian prefect Theoderic of Italy towards Emperor Justinian in Byzantium. In emulation of his imperial ancestors, Hilderic then restored primogeniture, excluding his second cousin Gelimer who was next in line.[[9]](#footnote-9) The reaction came in 531 when Gelimer (otherwise spelt Geilamer), son of Geilarith (Genton’s third son and Thrasamund’s younger brother), took back the kingdom for a more Vandal style of rule. Gelimer locked up both Hilderic and his nephews Hoamer and Hoageis. At first he blinded Hoamer and two years later, as the Byzantines invaded, sent his brother Ammata to put both Hilderic and Hoageis to death. Hoageis, once a general in Libya, had been a patron of Luxorius, who mourns the passing of Damira, his daughter, in a short but effective epitaph.[[10]](#footnote-10) The Vandal collapse which followed in 534 is taken as the *terminus ad quem* for all poems in the *Latin Anthology*, including those of Luxorius, whose epigram on the boar in the dining room (No. 6) is most plausibly dated, at the latest, to the early 520s.[[11]](#footnote-11)

For most of this period of Vandal rule the Catholics, that is to say Nicene or Trinitarian Christians, had endured a fierce persecution from their Arian masters. While Geiseric was not raiding Spain or the Pelopponese and Zakynthos in Greece, he made sure to torment the North African Catholics with fines, church closures and sporadic violence.[[12]](#footnote-12) Not without reason did ecclesiastical commentators revile the Vandals as fanatical followers of the peculiar but politically dominant Arian version of Christianity in which Jesus is revered as a man created without godhead. In one of these persecutions the Vandals are said to have publicly scalped any people in their costume who entered Catholic churches,[[13]](#footnote-13) and in this barbarity they exceeded even their fellow Arians the Visigoths in Iberia or the Ostrogoths in Italy.

Although, when Luxorius eulogized the pig, probably in the quieter reign of Hilderic, it seems that some wisdom prevailed, things had been different a generation earlier, when King Gunthamund (484-96) imprisoned the lawyer and skilled poet Blossius Aemilius Dracontius for praising the wrong ruler, probably his predecessor Huneric.[[14]](#footnote-14) At first Dracontius composed a eulogy for Gunthamund entitled *Satisfactio* (‘appeasement’). Still imprisoned a few years later, and guilty for having appeased the king at the cost of religious decency, Dracontius may have worsened his lot by composing *De laudibus Dei* (‘in praise of God’) on the Holy Trinity.[[15]](#footnote-15) Gunthamund, though a survivor of Huneric’s familial purges, was no less Arian than his murderous cousin, and Dracontius stayed in jail. Released by Thrasamund on his accession (496-523), the old poet emerged to find that both he and his works were *passé*.[[16]](#footnote-16) A generation later it is perhaps unsurprising to find the poems of Luxorius lacking reference to Christianity of any kind. Not even in his epitaph on Damira, deceased little daughter of Hoageis, does Luxorius refer to God in any way which might permit his religion to be identified:

Huius puram animam stellantis regia caeli

Possidet et iustis inter videt esse catervis.[[17]](#footnote-17)

The kingdom of starry heaven possesses her pure soul

Which it sees living among the throngs of the just.

(No. 59, lines 13-14)

The poet here echoes Horace and Vergil rather than the bible.[[18]](#footnote-18) The rest of the *Anthology* is similarly pagan. It has poems on biblical or Christian themes, but these may have come from outside North Africa, and there are many more on Mars, Venus, Hylas and Hercules, Leda, Marsyas, Ganymede, Medea and other figures from Classical mythology.[[19]](#footnote-19) It seems likely that the poets of the *Latin Anthology* are imitative and inward-looking[[20]](#footnote-20) in this way partly as an insurance against Arian attack. Some pagan rites continued in Carthage and other cities as a civic formality even into the sixth century,[[21]](#footnote-21) and in poetry the old mythology may have continued for a similar reason, to stay clear of Arian-Catholic tension. Even Dracontius, in his *De laudibus Dei*, re-models Ovid’s nude Corinna to make up a line on Eve.[[22]](#footnote-22) Whereas Hilderic’s accession enabled more secularization in 523, few poems in the *Anthology* may be placed after Gelimer’s reactionary coup eight years later, when the old persecutions looked set to restart. Despite the fact that Romanization continued to weaken the North African Vandals in their last few decades of power, it seems from both Dracontius’ and others’ early *epyllia* in the 470s, and from the stock allusions of other poets between then and the presumed compilation of the *Anthology* in 534, that the language of pastoral gave Catholics safety in the Arian state.[[23]](#footnote-23)

In this way Luxorius’ late use of paganism may give the pig a license to be more Vandal than he first appears:

Martis aper genitus iugis inesse montium

Frangere et horrisonum nemus ferocius solens,

Pabula porticibus capit libenter aureis

Et posito famulans furore temperat minas.

Nec Parios lapides revellit ore spumeo

Atria nec rabidis decora foedat ungulis,

Sed domini placidam manum quietus appetens

Fit magis ut Veneris dicatus ille sit sacris.[[24]](#footnote-24)

A boar of Mars, born to inhabit mountain ridges

And more fiercely apt to trample the cracking grove,

Freely takes his fodder among gilded colonnades

And like a servant, fury abated, checks his threats.

He neither tears down Parian stone with foaming mouth

Nor muddies well-furnished rooms with raging trotters,

But the quiet one seeking his lord’s calm hand

Acts more as if assigned to Venus’ rites.

Martial’s poetry too celebrated wild animals which have become tame, as with a Nemean lion in his *Liber spectaculorum* (‘book of shows’).[[25]](#footnote-25) Martin Rosenblum, mindful of this heritage, flattens out *Martis aper* in Luxorius’ poem with the words ‘a warlike boar’, noting that there is ‘no mythological allusion to the boar as the favorite animal of Mars’. Venus is cited on line 8 apparently in order to complete the ‘typical Luxorian contrast’ in which the boar is ‘now like the gentle doves of Venus’.[[26]](#footnote-26) On the other hand, Venus’ sole connection with a boar, with the beast that kills her lover Adonis in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (Book X, lines 708-89) is not a happy one. There is another contrast between divine patrons in Claudian’s *De apro et leone* ‘On the boar and the lion’ from Italy in the later fourth century, in which he says of a fight between animals that *hunc Mars, hunc laudat Cybele* (‘Mars praises this one [the boar], Cybele that one [the lion]’, line 3).[[27]](#footnote-27) Yet neither Mars nor Venus favours boars in the pastoral of poets of the late Republican and early Imperial reigns. Despite its status as a Roman novelty, Luxorius’ sixth-century pig presents a mythological puzzle which we may solve with the help of his patrons.

Luxorius’ kings called themselves *Hasdingi*.[[28]](#footnote-28) By this name they appear to have traced themselves back to the Vandal warlords of Pannonia three centuries earlier, whom the Greek historian Cassius Dio, in his *History of Rome* (*c*. 171 AD), calls *Ἄστιγγοι* (‘Astingoi’, LXXI.12).[[29]](#footnote-29) Whether or not a connection underlay this identity in names, Geiseric’s Vandals were a mixture. If not when they crossed the Rhine (probably near Mainz) in 406, then later in their Spanish stop-over in 409-29, they mixed with other groups such as Iranian Alans, the East Germanic Goths and the West Germanic Sueves, and probably some Romano-Iberians too.[[30]](#footnote-30) Procopius, in his *Wars of Justinian* (*c*. 551), comments on the surprising increase of Vandal numbers in North Africa after the invasion of Carthage in the century before him, adding: *τὰ δὲ τῶν Ἀλανῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων βαρβάρων ὀνόματα, πλὴν Μαυρουσίων, ἐϛ τὸ τῶν Βανδίλων ἅπαντα ἀπεκρίθη* (‘but the names of the Alans and other barbarians except the Moors all stood for that of the Vandals’, III. 5. 21).[[31]](#footnote-31) In Tunisia some names and titles in funerary inscriptions, as well as in other contemporary textual references, show that people calling themselves Alans and Sueves lived as honorary Vandals among the Vandal aristocracy from the treaty of 442 to the Byzantine invasion of 534. To give a prominent example, an epitaph discovered in the Grand Basilica in Hippo, erected there in 474 in memory of a woman named Ermengon, shows that her husband Ingomar named her *Suava* ‘a Sueve’; and some inscriptions have also been found which contain Alanic names.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Despite the likely racial mix among *Vandali*, the etymology of their name reaches back to Scandinavia. Although neither history nor archaeology confirms it,[[33]](#footnote-33) the *Vandal*-stem points to an early origin or point of provenance either in *Vend*syssel in Jutland or *Vendel* in Swedish Uppland. This claim is corroborated by the use of the *Wendel*-name in West Germanic vernaculars: not only in OE *Wendelsæ* (‘Vandal Sea’), for the Mediterranean in Alfredian West Saxon prose and *Wentilsęo* likewise in the originally Old High German *Hildebrandslied*, line 43 (? *c*. 800);[[34]](#footnote-34) but also in the door-keeper in Danish Heorot who is known as Wulfgar the *Wendla leod* (‘prince of Wendels’, *Beowulf*, 348). There are two equally clear but superficial parallels by which the Goths, on one hand, may be traced to Gotland, and the Burgundians, on the other, to *Borgundahólmr* or Bornholm in the southern Baltic.[[35]](#footnote-35) Like the other names of migrating peoples, that of the Vandals was promulgated relatively late. It still seems likely, as was once supposed, that *Andalusia* or the Arabic *al-Andalus* (الأندلس‎), Berber *Wandalus*, the region covering the southern third of the Iberian peninsula, was named for the doomed Vandals of the Siling faction who had tried to found a new kingdom there in 411-18. The brevity of their stay has been taken as an objection, but other etymologies are more complicated, and it seems best to treat a legend of ‘Vandalia’ as the most obvious cause if only because the Vandals dominated this region as part of the western Mediterranean from then until 534.[[36]](#footnote-36) *Vandalirice* ‘king of the Vandals’, a title from Vandalic in the *Latin Anthology* (No. 215) which is reserved for King Hilderic, confirms the Latin regal titles: *Vandal*- was the name which defined this kingdom as a new entity.[[37]](#footnote-37) With the Scandinavian name came a language which has since been defined as East Germanic. Some personal names and even some surviving words attributed to the North African Vandals show that this hybrid aristocracy continued to speak a language related to Gothic, and through Gothic, to the old language of Scandinavia. *Gunthamund*’s name is identical with Norse *Guðmundr*, while a certain *Becca* whom Luxorius accuses of buying gay sexual favours with his great-great-grandfathers’ inheritance (No. 35), has a name which matches that of an evil Gothic counsellor: *Bikki*, as seen lurking in Attila’s court in the Old Norse *Atlakviða* ‘lay of Attila’ (stanza 14), probably of the tenth century; or *Becca*, in the same general context in *Widsith*, line 115.[[38]](#footnote-38) Other Vandal names are dithematic like most Germanic names, as in *Frid-amal*, *Hoa-mer* and *Hoa-geis* or *Oa-geis*, although the obscurity of their elements shows that Vandalic went its own way in isolation from Old Scandinavian. We find an unexpected name for Vandalic (just before the start of Symphosius’ *Riddles*) in Epigram no. 285 of the *Latin Anthology*, *De conviviis barbaris* (‘on barbarian guests’):[[39]](#footnote-39)

Inter *eils!* goticum *scapia!* *matzia ia drincan!*

Non audet quisquam dignos educere versus.

Calliope madido trepidat se iungere Baccho

Ne pedibus non stet ebria Musa suis.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Between Gothic ‘Hail!’, ‘Waiter! Meat and drink!’

No-one dares to produce any decent lines.

Calliope is alarmed to join with matted Bacchus

Lest a drunken Muse not stand on her feet.

After much debate on the vernacular morphology of the first of these lines, the most painstaking discussion of all four of them concludes that these ‘Gothic’ words are most likely Vandalic.[[41]](#footnote-41) They succeed in showing a Roman’s mock or real horror at the noise from another table in a crowded hall or restaurant. Even if the poet refers specifically to the Gothic regiment of one thousand which is said to have escorted Amalafrida, sister of King Theoderic of Italy, to her wedding with Thrasamund in Carthage in 500, his word *goticum* may also be taken to refer to Vandalic on the evidence of contemporary hearsay.[[42]](#footnote-42) From the eastern Mediterranean the historian Procopius judged the languages of [Ostro-] Goths, Visigoths, Vandals and Gepids to be one when he said: *τῆς γὰρ Ἀρείου δόξης εἰσὶν ἅπαντες, φωνὴ τε αὐτοῖς ἐστι μία, Γοτθικὴ λεγομένη* (‘they are all of the Arian faith and their language is one, called Gothic’, *Wars*, III. 2. 5).[[43]](#footnote-43) The close kinship between languages is confirmed by a third vernacular phrase, *froia arme*, which is held to be the Vandalic translation of *Domine miserere* (‘Lord have mercy’) in the Turin manuscript of the *Collatio Beati Augustini cum Pascentio ariano* (‘debate between the Blessed Augustine and Pascentius the Arian’), of the mid-fifth century.[[44]](#footnote-44) The first word, *frōja*, resembles Gothic *fráuja* ‘lord’ from the surviving Gospels of Wulfila, as well as OE *frēa*, Old High German *frô* ‘lord’ and Old Norse *Freyr*. As we have seen, Vandalic is classified as East Germanic, of Scandinavian origin and closely related to the Ostrogothic of Italy and Visigothic of Spain.[[45]](#footnote-45) These languages were distinct from the West Germanic language of the Suevi or Sueves, some of whom are known to have followed the Vandals to Carthage. The use of *goticum* for Vandalic may reflect the Goths’ even greater numbers, their profusion of raids in the third century and most spectacular irruption into the Roman Empire in 376, and the likelihood that Arian missionaries used Gothic on their Vandal converts in the later fourth century, when they first met them in the upper Danube valley.

With the language came an identity, but the evidence so far suggests that the Vandals of North Africa were not self-consciously a nation until created one by Hasding princes a generation after they entered Africa Proconsularis in 435.[[46]](#footnote-46) Although the Vandals, building bath-houses, began to Romanize themselves in North Africa from this time onwards, they stayed aloof from their Roman subjects in their Arian faith and also by means of the Hasding name itself. With this name it seems that the ruling kindred traced itself to an antiquity in those lands on the far side of the Danube which they had once shared with the Goths. This northern river appears unexpectedly in the 470s, in the *Medea* of Dracontius, who reshapes the old story of Jason carrying Juno (i.e. Hera) across the river Euhenus:

Est nimis acceptus iuvenis mihi pulcher Iason

Qui gelidum quondam mecum transnaverat Istrum. (lines 56-57)[[47]](#footnote-47)

Too pleasing to me is the young beautiful Jason

Who once swam me across the freezing Danube.

On the strength of his use of folktale motifs in the same Classical story, as well as on that of his address to his teacher Felicianus in the preface to *Romulea* (his name for the larger collection), it has been suggested that Dracontius was a Vandal on his mother’s side.[[48]](#footnote-48) His allusion to the Danube reveals that despite their acceptance of Roman ways, the Vandals of the late fifth century had not forgotten the river boundary of two to three centuries earlier. The remainder of my essay will search the kitchen of Germanic legend for any scraps concerning pigs in the lost Vandal ideology.

Far to the north of the Danube lies the Baltic shore which the historian Tacitus, in his *Germania* of 98 AD, presents as the homeland of the Suevi. These distant etymological forebears of the Sueves, allies of the Vandals and Alans in Spain, are cited only in passing as borrowers of Celtic ways:

Ergo iam dextro Suebici maris litore Aestiorum gentes adluuntur, quibus ritus habitusque Sueborum, lingua Britannicae propior. Matrem deum venerantur. Insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant: id pro armis hominumque tutela securum cultorum etiam inter hostes praestat.[[49]](#footnote-49)

So, upon the right of the Suevian Sea, the Aestyan nations reside, who use the same customs and attire with the Suevians; their language more resembles that of Britain. They worship the Mother of gods. As the characteristic of their national superstition, they wear the images of wild boars: this alone serves them for arms, this is the safeguard of all, and by this every worshipper of the Goddess is secured even in the midst of his foes.

(*Germania*, ch. 45)

If Tacitus’ source is to be trusted, his words tell us that the Baltic Suevi have borrowed not only their ways and dress from their Celtic Aestyan neighbours, but also the cult of the *Mater deum* ‘Mother of the gods’ which lies behind the boar insignia which protect them in battle. That is, their pig serves both war and a big female deity. Here it is worth noting that Tacitus, listing four tribes descending from Mannus (son of Tuisto) near the start of *Germania*, puts Suebi and Vandilii together last.[[50]](#footnote-50) A Celtic origin for the wider Germanic fascination with wild boars has been accepted on the strength of this passage.[[51]](#footnote-51) As to how the boar images may have been worn, this was not on badges or pins: the poet of *Beowulf*, seven or eight centuries later in England, shows a troop of Geats guarding themselves as they disembark in Denmark. On their heads they place helmets, and on these:

Eoforlic scionon

ofer hleorber<g>an gehroden golde,

fah ond fyrheard, ferhwearde heold

guþmod gr*i*mmon.

Boar-images shone

adorned with gold over cheek-guards,

gleaming and fire-hardened, the war-spirited one

kept life-watch for fierce men.

(*Beowulf*,lines 303-06)

For the material existence of boar-images in this later period, as well as for the purpose which both Tacitus and the poet of *Beowulf* attribute to them, there appears to be some archaeological corroboration in the boar-emblems on the helmets engraved on the sixth-century Torslunda plates from Sweden, as well as in the boars fixed to the top of the Benty Grange and Pioneer helmets from eighth-century England.[[52]](#footnote-52) The older Sutton Hoo helmet, probably from before *c*. 625, may also feature a boar in its ridge-like stylization of a hair-crest bisecting the helmet from the forehead over to the back. Still further back in history, since some Roman helmets may have been fashioned with similar purpose, it seems plausible that the boar motif circulated more widely among warriors of Germanic tribes.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Next up is a boar in two versions of *Heiðreks saga ok Hervarar* (‘the saga of Heiðrekr and Hervǫr’). This is a *fornaldar saga* ‘legendary saga’ which is thought to have been written in Iceland in the thirteenth century.[[54]](#footnote-54) Along with other works in the genre, *Heiðreks saga* preserves the names and outlines of heroic legends which started with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. The legends in *Heiðreks saga* are about the Goths and their enemies the Huns in the era before the Tervingi and Greuthungi famously crossed the Danube into the empire in 376.[[55]](#footnote-55) Later these groups were respectively renamed as Visigoths and Ostrogoths. In the saga, the tribal name *Tervingi* from this period has a thirteenth-century reflex in *Tyrfingr* (ch. 1), the sword which belongs to the grandfather of Angantýr, the grandfather of two princes named Angantýr and Heiðrekr. The latter is said to become king of Reiðgotaland ‘land of the *Reið*-Goths’ (ch. 7). Before that, the fourth-century tribal name *Greuthungi* is reflected in the byname of his Odinic foster-father Gizurr *Grýtingaliði* ‘aid to the Grýtingar’ (ch. 5).[[56]](#footnote-56) It is also worth noting that the fifth and sixth sons of the first Angantýr are named *Haddingjar tveir* ‘the two men each called Haddingr’ (ch. 1). This name, as the assimilated from of \**Hardingr* < \**Hazdingaz*, is formally identical with the word *Ἄστιγγοι* ‘Astingoi’ or *Hasdingi*, a name for the Vandals.[[57]](#footnote-57) The double naming may recapture the existence of two Vandalic tribes in Spain, or the joint rule of Raptos and Raos, kings of the *Ἄστιγγοι* even earlier in the *History* of Cassius Dio.[[58]](#footnote-58) Though imperfectly aware of the implications of its many names, *Heiðreks saga* represents the Vandals thus as kin to the Goths through a sister’s son relationship between the Haddingjar, their sister Hervǫr, and her sons Angantýr and Heiðrekr.[[59]](#footnote-59) Equally unfathomably, the Vandal seniority implicit in this genealogy recaptures one made by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (77-79 AD), in which he classified *Gutones* (‘goths’) as a sub-group of *Vandili* (‘Vandals’).[[60]](#footnote-60)

In this light let us now return to Heiðrekr as a Gothic king at the height of his power. Shortly he will lose this after a brush with the god Óðinn, disguised as Gestumblindi (‘the blind guest’), whom he invites to a riddle contest, but whose last riddle he cannot solve. Before the entry of Gestumblindi, in the *Hauksbók* manuscript, which is dated to c. 1302-10 (Reykjavík, AM 544 4°), King Heiðrekr is said to keep a gigantic boar for sacrifice, as part of his midwinter cult:

Heiðrekr konungr blótaði Frey; þann gǫlt er mestan fekk, skyldi hann gefa Frey; kǫlluðu þeir hann svá helgan, at yfir hans burst skyldi sverja um ǫll stórmál ok skyldi þeim gelti blóta at sonarblóti; jólaaptan skyldi leiða sonargǫltinn í hǫll fyrir konung ok lǫgðu menn þá hendr yfir burst hans ok strengja heit.[[61]](#footnote-61)

King Heiðrekr worshipped Freyr; that boar, the biggest he could get, he was obliged to give to Freyr; they considered the boar so holy that oaths should be sworn over its bristles in all cases of great importance, and it was that boar which was sacrificed at the pig-sacrifice; at Yule eve this boar from the sounder was to be led in the hall and before the king, and men then laid hands over his bristles, making a vow.

(ch. 10)

Sæhrímnir, the boar of Valhǫll in Old Norse mythology, is also sacrificed and eaten, but he (in a more Celtic way) regenerates himself.[[62]](#footnote-62) In another version of *Heiðreks saga*, in Copenhagen GKS 2845 4°, from the early fifteenth century, the same scene is written without word of Freyr, although the riddle contest with Óðinn continues in the same way:

Heiðrekr konungr sezt nú um kyrrt ok gerist höfðingi mikill ok spekingr at viti. Heiðrekr konungr lét ala gölt mikinn. Hann var svá mikill sem öldungar þeir, er stærstir váru, ok svá fagr, at hvert hár þótti ór gulli vera. Konungrinn leggr hönd sína á höfuð geltinum, en aðra á burst ok sverr þess, at aldri hefir maðr svá mikit af gert við hann, at eigi skuli hann hafa réttan dóm spekinga hans, en þeir tólf skulu gæta galtarins, eða ella skal hann bera upp gátur þær, er hann gæti eigi ráðit. Heiðrekr konungr gerist ok nú inn vinsælasti.[[63]](#footnote-63)

King Heiðrekr settles down peacefully for a while and becomes a great chieftain and a sage of much wisdom. King Heiðrekr had a great boar bred and raised. He was as big as the largest bulls, and so fair that each hair seemed to be of gold. The king puts one hand on the boar’s head, and the other on his bristles, and swears this, that no matter the magnitude of whatever a man had done against him, he should receive true justice from his wise men, and these twelve are to watch over the boar, or else this man shall have to propound those riddles which the king could not solve. And now Heiðrekr becomes the most popular king.

(ch. 9)

Despite Freyr’s absence, in this version the boar of golden bristles is presented as the religious symbol on which Heiðrekr swears an oath (swearing in this case to deliver justice). Common to both passages is the motif of a Gothic king resting his hand on a boar in a public ceremony. Peculiar to one variant (*Hauksbók*) is the role of Freyr as the king’s tutelary god, to whom the pig belongs and its body must go. Peculiar to the other (Copenhagen GKS 2845 4°) is the defendant’s option of a riddle contest with the king as an alternative to taking justice from the twelve men who look after the boar. In either case, whether that of court-room or riddle, the boar sanctifies the king’s rule.

The god Freyr is associated with a gold-bristled boar in other remnants of the Icelandic tradition. The skald Úlfr Uggason describes Freyr in his *Húsdrápa* (‘Eulogy on the house’), for which a date of *c*. 995 may be worked out from the mention of this poem in the context of a wedding in *Laxdœla saga* (ch. 29; *c*. 1245) .[[64]](#footnote-64) In this poem Freyr rides to the funeral pyre of Baldr (recently slain by Hǫðr and the mistletoe) in a procession of Norse gods:

Ríðr á bǫrg til borgar bǫðfróðr sonar Óðins

Freyr ok fólkum stýrir fyrst ok gulli byrstum.[[65]](#footnote-65)

Rides in first place, and on a boar with bristles of gold, battle-wise

Freyr to the fortress of Óðinn’s son and he guides the peoples.

The poet’s *borg* refers to the pyre as a wall of logs, but its guise here as ‘fortress’ also recalls perforce European wars. This verse was quoted probably in the 1230s in illustration of kennings for Freyr within *Skáldskaparmál* (‘poetics’) by the mythographer Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241), who adds that the boar is called *Gullinbursti* (‘golden-bristle’, ch. 14).[[66]](#footnote-66) In his preceding treatise, the *Gylfaginning* (‘beguiling of Gylfi’), Snorri writes a prose version of the story of Baldr’s funeral in which *Freyr ók í kerru með gelti þeim, er Gullinbursti heitir eða Slíðrugtanni* (‘Freyr drove in a cart with that pig whose name is Golden-Bristle or Slice-Tooth’, ch. 49).[[67]](#footnote-67) Úlfr’s heathen verse on which Snorri relies for some of this information also tells us that Freyr is *bǫðfróðr* (‘battle-wise’), *fólkum stýrir* (‘guides the peoples’) and does so *fyrst* (‘first’), at the head of the procession. These epithets resemble Freyr’s epithet in *Skírnismál* (‘lay of Skírnir’) as *fólkvaldi goða* (‘field-marshal of gods’, stanza 3).[[68]](#footnote-68) They also match the warlike associations of boars which we have seen in *Germania* and *Beowulf*. It is as a god leading nations to war that Freyr rides his boar in this pre-Christian poem.

An association between the boar and the marching of nations lingers on in Cynewulf’s *Elene*, his possibly ninth-century adaptation of a Latin text of the *Acta Cyriaci* (‘acts of St Cyriac’). The story concerns the Invention of the True Cross by Empress Helena in Jerusalem allegedly in 326. Helena was the mother of Emperor Constantine I (306/324-37), whose early rise to power and battle against Maxentius for Rome in 312 has been blurred in the *Acta* with a number of other wars. The initial date of 233 AD, which Cynewulf preserved in *Elene*, adds to the confusion, for although Constantine did campaign against the Franks in 310, the additional presence of Huns among the migrating hordes in the opening stage of this poem is reminiscent of Roman campaigns well after his time, in the late fourth and even fifth centuries. In this amalgam of wars, however, the source appears to reflect Constantine’s treaty with the Goths in 332, the first of its kind ever recorded; possibly also the war of his son Constantius II (337/350-61) against various tribes including the Vandals.[[69]](#footnote-69) In Cynewulf’s adaptation, the hordes assemble thus:

Garas lixtan,

wriðene wælhlencan. Wordum ond bordum

hofon herecombol. Þa wæron heardingas

sweotole gesamnod ond eal <sib> geador;

for folca gedryht.

Spears glinted,

mail-coats on the move. With words and shields

they lifted war-standards. Barbarians now were

manifestly gathered and all their kin together;

a retinue of nations marched.

(*Elene*, lines 23-27)

The final phrase recalls the movement of *fólk* (‘nations’) implicit in Freyr’s warlike procession towards Baldr’s funeral pyre, while it encapsulates the period now known as the ‘Age of Migrations’. The word *heardingas* (here ‘barbarians’) also has a certain role to play. This word occurs only in *Elene* and in the *Old English Rune Poem* and is usually taken as a cypher for ‘warriors’ on the basis of *heard* ‘hard(ened)’ with the attributive -*ing* attached.[[70]](#footnote-70) Formally, however, with *\*hazd- > \*hard-*, we have a word identical with *Ἄστιγγοι*, *Hasdingi* and *Haddingjar*. On this evidence Cynewulf’s word *heardingas* appears to descend from a name which refers to the Vandals. Cynewulf’s word’s meaning cannot be so specific in his time, for there is no mention of *heardingas* (nor of the *Wendle*) in the tribal catalogue *Widsith*. None the less, the context, in which Constantine defends the empire, speaks for ‘barbarians’ as a generalised meaning in the word. Constantine’s victory against them, of which the poet assures us through his vision of the cross the night before, further defines the *heardingas* as heathens:

Hæðene grungon,

feollon friðelease. Flugon instæpes

Huna leode, swa þæt halige treo

aræran heht Romwara cyning,

heaðofremmende. Wurdon heardingas

wide towrecene.

Heathens were slaughtered,

fell without ransom. As quickly as they fled,

men of the Huns, so did the king of Romans

order that the holy war-promoting tree

should be raised. Barbarians found themselves

driven far and wide.

(*Elene*, lines 126-31)

In these lines it appears that *heardingas* is chosen in order to describe barbarians as a type. In the earlier scene of the vision which leads to their rout in this battle, Cynewulf takes care to show Constantine as a warlord not yet brought to the true faith. On the eve of the battle, an angel visits Constantine in a dream:

Þuhte him wlitescyne on weres hade

hwit ond hiwbeorht hæleða nathwylc

geywed ænlicra þonne he ær oððe sið

gesege under swegle. He of slæpe onbrægd,

eofurcumble beþeaht.

Dazzling fair in a man’s form there appeared to him,

white and brilliant of hue, some kind of man

displayed more peerless than any, either now or before,

he saw beneath the sun. From sleep he awoke,

roofed by boar-banner.

(*Elene*, lines 72-76)

The *eofurcumbel* appears to define the emperor as a Germanic heathen on a par with the *herecumbol*-wielding *heardingas* (line l25) whom he must fight the next day.[[71]](#footnote-71) This and other parts of Cynewulf’s militarization of his king are additions to the Latin, which runs more briefly as follows:

Ea vero nocte veniens vir splendidissimus suscitavit eum, et dixit: Constantine, noli timere, sed respice sursum in cœlom, et vide, et intendens in cœlom vidit signum Crucis Christi, ex lumine claro constitutum, et desuper litteris scriptum titulum, IN HOC VINCE.[[72]](#footnote-72)

That night, however, a man most radiant came and awakened him, and said: Constantine, fear not, but look up into heaven and see, and so looking up to heaven he saw the sign of the Cross of Christ made of bright light, and above it an inscription written with the letters CONQUER BY THIS.

In Cynewulf’s addition to the Latin, the boar-image on a banner protects the sleeping king. This resembles the declared purpose of the gilded swine-emblems on Geatish helmets in *Beowulf*, lines 303-306.

A more complete analogue of *Húsdrápa*’s association between the golden boar, the god Freyr and a funeral may be seen in the ‘*Finnsburh* Episode’ in *Beowulf*, lines 1063-1160.[[73]](#footnote-73) In this episode King Finn of the Frisians, son of *Folcwalda* (‘commander of the people’, *Beowulf*, line 1089), prepares to seal a treaty with his former enemies the Half-Danes, in a funeral following a battle in which his son and brother-in-law have fallen on opposite sides:

Að wæs geæfned ond i<n>cgegold

ahæfen of horde. Here-Scyldinga

betst beadorinca wæs on bæl gearu.

Æt þam ade wæs eþgesyne

swatfah syrce, swyn ealgylden,

eofer irenheard, æþeling manig

wundum awyrded. Sume on wæle crungon!

The oath was performed and Ing-gold

lifted from the hoard. The best fighting man

of raiding Scyldings was ready on the bier.

At that pyre it was easy to see

a blood-stained war-shirt, an all-golden swine,

an iron-hard boar, many a prince sent by wounds

to his maker. Distinguished men died in that slaughter!

(*Beowulf*, lines 1107-13)

This context gives us a heathen king with both a golden boar-image and father *Folcwalda* whose name on line 1089 is like *fólkvaldi goða* (‘field-marshal of gods’), an epithet reserved for Freyr in *Skírnismál*, stanza 3. In addition, the first element in the compound *i<n>cgegold* on line 1107, for MS *icge gold*, has been read as identical with *incge*, a prefix to Beowulf’s sword ‘heirloom’ as *incge laf* on line 2577; and *incge* is identifiable as a formal cognate of *Ingvi*, *Yngvi* or *Ingunar*, three variants of a prefix to Freyr’s name in Old Norse mythology.[[74]](#footnote-74) The oldest example of these, *Ingvi-freyr* literally ‘Ingvi-lord’, occurs in *Haustlǫng* (‘harvest-long’), a shield-poem with pastoral elements which was composed by the Norwegian Þjóðólfr of Hvinir, probably in *c*. 900.[[75]](#footnote-75) This prefix is also known in Frisian, from runes carved on a seventh- or eighth-century bone amulet found in Wijnaldum, as *inguz*;[[76]](#footnote-76) and in Gothic, in the rune-name *enguz*;[[77]](#footnote-77) it has also been read into the damaged runic inscription on the Pietroasa ring of *c*. 450, as **gutani [i]ngwa hailag** (‘holy to Enguz of the Goths’), although more controversially,[[78]](#footnote-78) for **gutani [i]owi** (‘to the Jove of the Goths’) and **gutaniowi** (‘to Gutaniowi [a woman’s name, cognate with Old Icelandic Guðný])’ have also been proposed.[[79]](#footnote-79) Regardless of the difficulty of some of this detail, the same *Ing*-stem is fairly widespread in Germanic names from early to late in the first millennium. It also occurs in *Ingomar*, husband of Ermengon the Sueve in the aforementioned funerary inscription from Hippo in 474.[[80]](#footnote-80) On these scraps of evidence, it is reasonable to suppose that there was a cult corresponding to that of Ingvi-freyr in the background of Vandals as well as Goths.

In this light it is worth revisiting the lines on ‘Ing’ in the eleventh-century *Old English Rune Poem*. This work survives in a 1705 printed transcription from a now-lost original in which George Hickes copied rune names in Roman letters and then in runic form on the left-hand margin.[[81]](#footnote-81) The poem aims to memorialise or even to teach the *futhorc* or runic alphabet which lay in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Where the Ing-rune, cognate with Gothic *enguz*, is concerned, the poet says:

**ing** wæs ærest mid East-Denum

gesewen secgun, oþ he siððan e*f*t

ofer wæg gewat, wæn æfter ran;

þus heardingas ðone hæle nemdun.

Ing was first among eastern Danes

seen among men, until back again later he

passed over the wave, the wagon ran after;

thus did barbarians name that hero.

(*Rune Poem*, lines 67-70)

Ing’s circuit in this brief mnemonic is comparable with other wagon-tours such as those of Nerthus in the first-century *Germania*, ch. 40, or of Freyr in the fourteenth-century *Gunnars þáttr helmings*.[[82]](#footnote-82) These are usually treated as reflexes of a common Germanic cult ancestral to the Norse Vanir, Freyr, Freyja and their father Njǫrðr.[[83]](#footnote-83) Of greater interest here, however, is the poet’s use of *heardingas* for the people who first give this *hæle* (‘hero’) his name. Although the meaning of this ditty is generalised, the coinage of the association between Ing and *heardingas* may long precede the poem, from a time when the elements meant something more specific. If so, it appears that some Anglo-Saxons believed that the Vandals honoured Ing (their version of Ingvi-freyr) before anyone else did.

If we return to Carthage and Luxorius’ pet pig in the 520s, these scraps of knowledge and probability from a reconstructed Germanic past may be used as a guide to the nativism of Vandal masters. As Arian Christians, the Hasdings were at least as hostile to paganism as the Catholics they persecuted. Yet Luxorius’ use of pastoral in this *Archilochium*, as we have seen, gives him the freedom to engage with these people on a ground which was free from questions of faith and heresy. If pastoral was a place where their own folklore might venture a role, we can read the opening words *Martis aper* (‘a boar of Mars’) as an allusion to Freyr and Gullinbursti in a lost Vandalic guise. Although, with *porticibus aureis* (‘gilded colonnades’) on line 3, it is is the building and not the boar that is golden in this poem, Luxorius’ use of *dominus* (‘lord’) for the pet’s owner on the penultimate line returns us to Freyr. It has long been accepted that this name is the personification of a title for ‘lord’ which is better known from OE *frēa*, Old High German *frô*, Gothic *fráuja* and apparently Vandalic *frōja* too.[[84]](#footnote-84) The settled ideal of kingship, divine as well as mortal, in all these cases probably derived from an emulation of the Inguz god in whose honour the Scandinavians, the last Germanic heathens of Europe, personified the ‘lord’ epithet into a name. Of the North African Hasdingi, moreover, it has been argued that *dominus* became the preferred style from Huneric (477-84) onwards, from the time Dracontius says that he got his arrest and imprisonment from having eulogized a *dominum ignotum* (‘a long forgotten lord’).[[85]](#footnote-85) Like a late Roman manifestation of the boar on whose bristles King Heiðrekr publicly lays his paw, Luxorius’ pig is *domini placidam manum quietus appetens* (‘the quiet one seeking his lord’s calm hand’). Luxorius refers to himself as a puppy’s *dominus* ‘master’ in Epigram No. 73, but his use of Vandal patrons, together with the role of Fridamal as a self-styled boar-slayer in No. 18, supports the notion that the No. 6 pig’s owner is a Vandal.[[86]](#footnote-86) We do not know who he was, whether king or prince, but if it is true that he had tamed a wild boar, as the first line implies, this man had invested much in a creature not normally raised as a pet. The question to ask, therefore, is what this \**frōja* saw in his pig.

Venus, whose cult the Vandal boar lately seems to be joining according to Luxorius, figures in this epigram as Mars’ rival. As with the latter, incidentally her lover, there is no Classical precedent for linking Venus to a boar, but there is some evidence by which we might do this in the Germanic tradition. In the first century, as we have seen, Tacitus represents the Celtic and Suevic *formas aprorum* (‘images of wild boars’) with the *Mater deum* (‘Mother of gods’) in *Germania* (ch. 45). This deity is seen to protect her warriors through the power of boar emblems which they display in battle, probably on their helmets. Our Old Norse analogues for Venus-pigs, which were composed more than a thousand years later, consist of two scenes: one from the likely eleventh-century *Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar* (‘lay of Helgi Hjǫrvarðsson’); the other from the composite poem *Hyndluljóð* (‘lay of Hyndla’), which, though extant only in *Flateyjarbók*, resembles *Heiðreks saga* in revealing some names and associations many centuries older.

In the first case, we are told a sad story of Heðinn, Helgi’s brother, who meets an amorous *trǫllkona* (‘demon woman’) on his travels.[[87]](#footnote-87) When she *bauð fylgð sína Heðni* (‘offered Heðinn her company’), he turns her down and pays the price. *Þess scaltu gialda at bragarfulli* (‘You shall pay for this at the pledging cup’), says the demon would-be lover. The next story proceeds with the assumption that its audience understands the ceremony:

Um qveldit óro heitstrengingar. Var fram leiddr sonargǫltr, lǫgðo menn þar á hendr sínar, oc strengðo menn þá heit at bragarfulli. Heðinn strengði heit til Svávo, Eylima dóttur, unnosto Helga, bróður síns, oc iðraðiz svá miǫc.

In the evening vows were made. A boar from the sounder was led forward, men laid their hands on him, and then, with a toast from the pledging cup, made vows. Heðinn made a vow to win Sváva, Eylimi’s daughter, the sweetheart of his brother Helgi, and regretted this so terribly.

Once again, the boar’s bristles sanctify a vow, this one to do with love. In Scandinavia the leading goddess of love is known as Freyja, Freyr’s sister. Although Freyja’s name is missing in the story in *Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar*, she has a lot to do with a boar in *Hyndluljóð*.

The story in this poem, the basis of which was probably composed in the twelfth century, is that Freyja wakens the seeress Hyndla from the dead so that they both may ride to Valhǫll (Óðinn’s ‘hall of the slain’): Hyndla on a wolf and Freyja on her pet boar *Hildisvíni* (‘war-swine’).[[88]](#footnote-88) Freyja’s aim is to make Hyndla reveal to her there the full ancestry of her lover Óttarr. As Hyndla suspects, the pig is really Óttarr, transformed by Freyja. The goddess at first denies this:

‘Dulin ertu Hyndla, draums ætlig þér,

er þú qveðr ver minn í valsinni,

þar er gǫltr glóar, gullinbursti,

Hildisvíni, er mér hagir gørðo,

dvergar tveir, Dáinn oc Nabbi.’

‘You are muddled, Hyndla, I think you are dreaming,

when you say my man is in company for Valhǫll

in my boar where he glows with his golden bristles,

War-Swine, whom, skilled, they made for me,

the two dwarves Dáinn and Nabbi.’

(stanza 7)

Later Hyndla divines that Óttarr has indeed been turned into this golden boar named after the ferocity of a soldier (stanza 12). The names she produces, a who’s who of heroes and their kindreds in the north, bring three familiars together from as early as the third century:

‘Búi oc Brámi, Barri oc Reifnir,

Tindr oc Tyrfingr oc tveir Haddingiar;

alt er þat ætt þín, Óttarr heimsci.’

‘Búi and Brámi, Barri and Reifnir,

Tindr and Tyrfingr and the two Haddingjar;

That’s all your family, Óttarr the foolish.’

(stanza 23)

The wider list of twelve almost matches that of the berserker sons of Arngrímr and Eyfura at the start of *Heiðreks saga*, with the exception of Tyrfingr, there the name of a sword (ch. 1).[[89]](#footnote-89) As we have seen, however, Tyrfingr and the two Haddingjar are Norse nominal reflexes of Tervingi and Hasdingi, respectively names for the kindreds of Visigoths and Vandals. Jǫrmunrekkr, reflex of the Greuthung Goth Ermanaric, follows in stanza 25, as well as the Burgundian Gunnarr and Hǫgni in stanza 27. Thus the three tribes of eastern Scandinavia, the Goths, Vandals and Burgundians, are still remembered together. After Hyndla is finished, Freyja admits that Óttarr is the boar when she compels Hyndla to bring him a potion by which he can learn the whole list (stanzas 46-49). The aim is to help him win a bet with his bad brother Angantýr. The lengths to which Freyja will go for her *Hildisvíni* (‘war-swine’) in this poem can thus be seen to bind him to her as a servant just as much as a lover. As in the last line of Luxorius’ epigram, where the boar of Mars *fit magis ut Veneris dicatus ille sit sacris* ‘acts more as if assigned to Venus’ rites’, the conceit of *Hyndluljóð* is Circean, that a tame boar is a man in disguise.

The idea that Luxorius’ pig in the villa may stand for the Vandals receives some support from his Carthaginian tendency to represent society types as freakish, foolish or perverted.[[90]](#footnote-90) So, to conclude this essay’s reading of his Epigram No. 6, it seems likely that two things are going on here. One is flattering, that the *dominus* in question is a Vandal who styles himself as a king of old, with a boar in residence to authenticate his race and ancestral cult. The other reading, less flattering but still consistent with my reconstruction of folklore, is that this pig represents all the Vandals in Carthage. On line 5, where the pig *nec Parios lapides revellit ore spumeo* (‘neither tears down Parian stone with foaming mouth’), there may be an ironic reference to the spoliation of marbles from disused public buildings in order to build baths and private Vandal homes.[[91]](#footnote-91) Luxorius’ brief poem reads like a mocking epitaph: once the Vandals were too fierce; now they are too civilized!

When the war came, it did seem that the North African Vandals belonged to Venus. According to Procopius’ account of Justinian’s invasion, written some 17 years later:

*ἐθνῶν γὰρ ἁπάντων ὧν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν ἁβρότατον μὲν τὸ τῶν Βανδίλων, ταλαιπωρότατον δὲ τὸ Μαυρουσίων τετύχηκεν εἶναι. οἱ μὲν γὰρ, ἐξ ὅτου Λιβύην ἔσχον, βαλανείοις τε οἱ ξύμπαντες ἐπεχρῶντο ἐϛ ἡμέραν ἐκάστην καὶ τραπέζῃ ἅπασιν εὐθηνούσῃ ὅσα δὴ γῆ τε καὶ θάλασσα ἥδιστά τε καὶ ἄριστα φέρει. ἐχρυσοφόρουν δὲ ὧς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον, καὶ Μηδικὴν ἐσθῆτα ἣν νῦν Σηρικὴν καλοῦσιν ἀμπεχόμενοι ἔν τε θεάτροις καὶ ἱπποδρομίοις καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐπαθείᾳ καὶ πάντων μάλιστα κυνηγέσίοις τὰς διατριβὰς ἐποιοῦντο. καὶ σφίσιν ὀρχησταὶ καὶ μῖμοι ἀκούσματά τε συχνὰ καὶ θεάματα ἦν ὅσα μουσικά τε καὶ ἄλλως ἀξιοθέατα ξυμβαίνει ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἶναι. καὶ ᾤκηντο μὲν αὐτῶν οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν παραδείσοις ὑδάτων καὶ δένδρων εὖ ἔχουσι· ξυμπόσια δὲ ὅτι πλεῖστα ἐποίουν, καὶ ἔργα τὰ ἀφροδίσια πάντα αὐτοῖς ἐν μελέτῃ πολλῇ ἤσκητο*.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Of all the nations we know of, the Vandals have turned out the most luxurious, the Moors the most hardy. The Vandals, all of them from the time they gained Libya, would enjoy baths every day as well as a table abounding in all the sweetest and best things that the earth and sea provide. And they wore gold very generally, and dressing up in the Medic garments which are now called *Seric* (‘silk’), passed their time in theatres and hippodromes and in other pleasurable pursuits, and in hunting most of all. And for them there were dancers and mimes as well as such musical or otherwise arresting things as are heard or seen among men. And most of them dwelt in parks which were well stocked with water and trees; and they held a great number of banquets and all the erotic acts were much performed among them.

(*Wars*, IV. 6. 5-9)

For this claim of degeneracy Procopius may rely on Luxorius’ and other North African epigrams as much as on refugees, and it is worth noting that ‘it was as soldiers that the Vandals were deported by Justinian and used in his Persian wars’.[[93]](#footnote-93) On the other hand, the Vandals did not have Belisarius.

The outwitted Gelimer soon lost his advantage and brought down the Vandals for ever by retreating to a fort on Mount Papua with a retinue of Moors. In a letter to the besieging General Pharas of Byzantium, Gelimer wished disaster on Justinian. Being unable to avenge himself with violence, however, he accomplished the same catharsis with a poem. In the pre-Christian *Sonatorrek* ‘hard loss of sons’ (*c*. 960), Egill Skalla-Grímsson invokes Óðinn, god of poetry, as he mourns his son Bǫðvarr, drowned off Borg. Egill moves from the impossibility of violent revenge to the act of composition as another means of relieving his grief.[[94]](#footnote-94) In a similar way Gelimer requested a loaf, a sponge and a lyre. Although this part of his letter puzzles scholars to the present day, the messenger explained to Pharas, according to Procopius, that the loaf was because Gelimer was hungry, the sponge to wipe away his tears, and the lyre, lastly, because *κιθαριστῇ δὲ ἀγαθῷ ὄντι ᾠδή τις αὐτῷ ἐϛ ξυμφορὰν τὴν παροῦσαν πεποίηται, ἣν δὴ πρὸς κιθάραν θρηνῆσαι τε καὶ ἀποκλαῦσαι ἐπείγεται* (‘as a good player of the lyre Gelimer has made himself an ode on the present disaster, which he is in haste to sing at the lyre with lamenting and mourning’, *Wars* IV. 6. 33).[[95]](#footnote-95) If Gelimer was as indebted as Egill to a one-eyed god for his poem, we shall never know, but the story shows that the Vandals had their own elegiac tradition. Pig or no pig in a villa, Gelimer’s ode for a lost nation ran deeper than the whole *Latin Anthology*, and through him the Vandals’ last epitaph was composed not by Luxorius, but by the Vandals themselves.

1. Alexander Riese, ed., *Anthologia Latina, sive Poesis Latinae Supplementum: I: Libri Salmasiani Aliorumque Carmina* (Lepizig, 1894), p. 211 (No. 292). Based on Codex Salmasianus, Bibliothèque Nationale, Codex Parisinus Latinus 10318, which is copied from a now-lost archetype of 534. Text here taken from and translation based upon Morris Rosenblum, ed. and trans., *Luxorius: A Latin Poet among the Vandals* (New York and London, 1961), pp. 114-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, p. 181 (n. 6.7). Gregory Hays, ‘“*Romuleis Libicisque Litteris*”: Fulgentius and the “Vandal Renaissance”’, *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa*, ed. Andrew H. Merrills (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 101-32 (esp. 112-14). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, pp. 39-42 (esp. 40). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Andrew H. Merrills and Richard Miles, *The Vandals* (Chichester, 2010), pp. 54-55, 228-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 42-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 50-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 74-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 196-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, p. 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, pp. 146-47 (No. 59). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 111-20, 180-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 102-03. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Andrew H. Merrills, ‘The Perils of Panegyric: The Lost Poem of Dracontius and Its Consequences’, *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers* (see Merrills, above), pp. 145-62 (esp. 152-59). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. David F. Bright, *The Miniature Epic in Vandal North Africa* (Norman, OK, and London, 1987), p. 17; Merrills, ‘The Perils of Panegyric’, pp. 149-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, p. 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, pp. 45-48 (esp. 47 – ‘the Vandals might have been more unlikely to persecute pagans than Catholics’, and 146-47 (text)). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Virgil, *Aen*. VII; Horace, *Odes*, II.19. Judith W. George, ‘Vandal Poets in their Context’, *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers* (see Merrills, above), pp. 133-44 (esp. 141). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Hays, ‘Fulgentius and the “Vandal Renaissance”’, pp. 127-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. George, ‘Vandal Poets in their Context’, p. 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Anna Leone, *The End of the Pagan City: Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in Late Antique North Africa* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 8-14, 87-101 (esp. 93-96). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Hays, ‘Fulgentius and the “Vandal Renaissance”’, pp. 128-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 225-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, pp. 114-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Kathleen M. Coleman, ed., *M. Valerii Martiali Liber Spectaculorum* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 78-81 (esp. 78). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, p. 181 (n. 6.8). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Maurice Platnauer, ed. and trans., *Claudian*, Loeb Classical Library, 35, 2 vols.(Cambridge, MA, and London, 1976) II, 271 (*Carmina minora* XLII (LIII)). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Walter Pohl, ‘The Vandals: Fragments of a Narrative’, *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers*, (see Merrills, above), pp. 31-47 (esp. 42). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster, eds and trans., *Dio’s Roman History*, Volume IX, Loeb Classical Library 177 (London and New York, 1927), 14 (LXXI.12). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 84-88, 106-08. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Jacob Haury, ed., *Procopii Caesariensis Opera Omnia: De Bellis I-IV* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 95-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, p. 25. More upbeat, Pohl, ‘The Vandals: Fragments of a Narrative’, pp. 33-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Janet Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, EETS, S. S. 6 (Oxford, 1980), 9.6, 9.9, 10.16 (etc); Janet Bately, ed., *MS A: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices*, vol. III of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, ed. D. N. Dumville and S. D. Keynes (Cambridge, 1986), *s.a.* 885; Leslie Webster, ‘Archaeology and *Beowulf*’, *Beowulf: An Edition with Relevant Shorter Texts*, ed. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (Oxford, 1998), pp. 183-94 (p. 60) – references to *Beowulf* from this edition; Richard North and Joe Allard, with Patricia Gillies, eds, *Longman Anthology of Old English, Old Icelandic and Anglo-Norman Literatures* (Harlow, 2011), pp. 122-27 (esp. 126 – *Hildebrandslied*). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. Thomas J. Dunlap, 2nd edition (Berkeley, CA, 1979), pp. 19-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ockham’s razor would see off the ingenious idea of \**landa-hlauts* > \**landa-los* > *(a)l-andalos* ‘land-lot [i.e. allocation of lands]’, in Heinz Halm, ‘Al-Andalus und Gothica Sors’, *Der Islam* 66 (1989), 252-63. Other examples of *anda* and *luz* place-name elements in Spain are claimed as the principals, though their meaning is less obvious, by Georg Bossong, in ‘Der Name al-Andalus: neue Überlegungen zu einem alten Problem’, *Sounds and Systems: Studies in Structure and Change: A Festschrift for Theo Vennemann*, ed. David Restle and Dietmar Zaefferer, Trends in Linguistics/Studies and Monographs 141 (Berlin, 2002), pp. 149-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Riese, *Anthologia Latina*, p. 154. Nicoletta Francovich Onesti, ‘Tracing the Language of the Vandals: a Synthesis of all we know about the Vandalic Language (5th-6th centuries)’, *The Vandals and the Sueves*, ed. Giorgio Ausenda, Stephen Barnish and A. Rodolfi (Woodbridge, forthcoming), p. 3; see <http://www.academia.edu/691311/Tracing\_the\_Language\_of\_the\_Vandals> [accessed 10 January 2014]. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ursula Dronke, ed. and trans., *The Poetic Edda: Volume I: Heroic Poems* (Oxford, 1969), p. 56 (n. 14/3). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Riese, *Anthologia Latina*, p. 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Magnús Snædal, ‘The “Vandal” Epigram’, *Lingua e Cultura dei Goti*, ed. Fabrizio Raschellà, *Filologia Germanica* 1 (2009), 181-214. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Snædal, ‘The “Vandal” Epigram’, pp. 204-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 308. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Haury, *De Bellis*, p. 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Jean-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 33 (Paris, 1845), col. 1156-62 (esp. 1162); Heinrich Tiefenbach, ‘Das wandalische Domine miserere’, *Historische Sprachforschung: Historical Linguistics* 104.2 (1991), 251-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Francovich Onesti, ‘Tracing the Language of the Vandals’. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Andreas Schwarcz, ‘The Settlement of the Vandals in North Africa’, *Vandals, Romans, and Berbers* (see Merrills, above), pp. 49-57 (esp. 54). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Bright, *The Miniature Epic*, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Bright, *The Miniature Epic*, pp. 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Rodney P. Robinson, ed., *The ‘Germania’ of Tacitus* (Middletown, CT, 1935), p. 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Robinson, *Germania*, p. 273 (ch. 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Heinrich Beck, *Das Ebersignum im Germanischen: ein Beitrag zur germanischen Tier-Symbolik*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, N. F. 16 (140) (Berlin, 1965), 58, 110-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Helmut Roth, *Kunst der Völkerwanderungszeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), pp. 262-63 and Plate 199a; Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse, eds, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900* (London, 1991), pp. 59-60 (Benty Grange); Richard Underwood, *Anglo-Saxon Weapons and Warfare* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 103-04 (Pioneer Helmet); Jennifer Foster, ‘A Boar Figurine from Guilden Morden, Cambridgeshire’, *MedArch* 21 (1977), 166-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Guy Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450-900* (London, 2003), pp. 170-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Christopher Tolkien, ed., *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*, Viking Society for Northern Research, Text Series 2, 2nd edition (London, 1976), pp. xvii-xx. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Peter Heather, ‘The Crossing of the Danube and the Gothic Conversion’, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986), 289-318 (esp. 314-16). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Tolkien, *Heiðreks saga*, p. 86 (n. 58/2). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ferdinand Holthausen, *Wörterbuch des Altnordischen (Altnorwegisch-isländischen) einschliesslich der Lehn- und Fremdwörter sowie der Eigennamen* (Göttingen, 1948), 103 (‘Haddingr’); Alexander Jóhannesson, *Altisländisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern, 1956), p. 250 (‘*haddr < \*hazda-*’). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Cary and Foster, *Dio’s Roman History*, 14 (LXXI.12). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Tolkien, *Heiðreks saga*, pp. 2 (ch. 1), 11-13 (ch. 4), 26 (ch. 6). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Karl Mayhoff, ed., *C. Plini Secundi Naturalis Historia*, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1892-1909), I, 347 (IV. 28). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *Heiðreks saga: Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs*, ed. Jón Helgason (Copenhagen, 1924), pp. 54-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Anthony Faulkes, ed., *Snorri Sturluson: Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning* (Oxford, 1982), p. 32 (ch. 38); Matthias Egeler, *Celtic Influences in Germanic Religion: A Survey*, Münchner Nordistische Studien 15 (Munich, 2013), 81-85 (3.12); Beck, *Das Ebersignum*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Tolkien, *Heiðreks saga*, p. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Richard North, ‘Image and Ascendancy in Úlfr Uggason’s *Húsdrápa*’, *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 18 (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 369-404 (esp. 370-7). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Anthony Faulkes, ed., *Snorri Sturluson: Edda: Skáldskaparmál*, 2 vols. (London, 1998) I, 19 (verse 63). See also North, ‘Úlfr’s *Húsdrápa*’, 391. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Faulkes, *Gylfaginning*, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ursula Dronke, ed. and trans., *The Poetic Edda: Volume II: Mythological Poems* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 377, 405 (n. 3/2). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Text based on that in P. O. E. Gradon, ed., *Cynewulf’s ‘Elene’*, 2nd edn (Exeter, 1977), pp. 15-22, 26-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 62-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. C. W. H. Grein, *Sprachschatz der angelsächsichen Dichter* (Göttingen, 1861), p. 59 (‘hearding: vir strenuus, Held’). [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Beck, *Das Ebersignum*, pp. 10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Quoted in Antonina Harbus, ‘Text as Revelation: Constantine’s Dream in *Elene*’, *Neophil* 78 (1994), 645-53 (esp. 645). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Richard North, ‘Tribal Loyalties in the *Finnsburh Fragment* and Episode’, *LSE*, n. s. 21 (1990), 13-43 (esp. 32-36). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Christopher Ball, ‘Incge Beow. 2577’, *Anglia* 78 (1960), 403-10 (esp. 409-10). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Richard North, ed. and trans., *The ‘Haustlǫng’ of Þjóðólfr of Hvinir* (Enfield Lock, 1997), pp. 6 (text), 43-44 (n. 10/6). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Tineke Looijenga, *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions* (Leiden, 2003), p. 325 (‘?**ngz inguz ngz**’). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Franz Unterkircher, *Alkuin-Briefe und andere Traktate im Auftrage des Salzburger Erzbishofs Arn um 799 zu einem Sammelband vereinigt: Codex Vindobonensis 795 der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek Faksimileausgabe*, Codices Selecti 22 (Graz, 1969), 10-13; René Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta: The English Tradition* (Bruges, 1954), pp. 52-63 (esp. 58). On evidence for the Gothic cult of Enguz, see Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, CSASE 22 (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 143-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. C. J. S. Marstrander, ‘De Gotiske Runeminnesmerker’, *Norsk tidsskrift for sprogvidenskap* 3 (1929), 25-175 (esp. 39-65). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Richard Loewe, ‘Der Goldring von Pietroasa’, *Indogermanische Forschungen* 26 (1909), 203-08; followed by Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 109-10; Magnús Snædal, ‘The Runic Inscriptions from Kovel and Pietroassa’, in *‘Unte boka usqimiþ, iþ ahma gaqiujiþ’ (2 Cor. 3, 6): Giornate per Piergiuseppe Scardigli 1º e 2 ottobre 2009: Università di Siena, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (di Arezzo)*, pp. 6-8; <https://www.academia.edu/758283/The\_Runic\_Inscriptions\_from\_Kovel\_and\_Pietroassa> [accessed 10 January 2014]. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Merrills and Miles, *The Vandals*, pp. 95-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Maureen Halsall, ed., *The Old English Rune Poem: A Critical Edition* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 21-32; North, *Heathen Gods*, pp. 44-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Robinson, *Germania*, p. 317 (ch. 40). C. R. Unger, ed., *Flateyjarbók*, 3 vols. (Christiania, 1860-68) I, 337-39 (chs. 277-78). North, *Heathen Gods*, pp. 19-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Dieter Timpe, ‘Tacitus’ *Germania* als religionsgeschichtliche Quelle’, *Germanische Religionsgeschichte: Quellen und Quellenprobleme*, ed. Heinrich Beck, Dietrich Ellmers and Kurt Schier, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 5 (Berlin and New York, 1992), pp. 434-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. D. H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord: Semantic Studies in Four Old High German Words: Balder; Frô; Truhtin; Hêrro* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 19-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Merrills, ‘The Perils of Panegyric’, pp. 156-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Rosenblum, *Luxorius*, pp. 154-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Gustav Neckel and Hans Kuhn, eds, *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, 5th edn (Heidelberg, 1983), p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Neckel and Kuhn, *Edda*, pp. 190-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Tolkien, *Heiðreks saga*, pp. 1-2 (ch. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. George, ‘Vandal Poets in their Context’, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Leone, *The End of the Pagan City*, pp. 97-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Haury, *De Bellis*, pp. 443-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Schwarcz, ‘Vandals in North Africa’, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Richard North, ‘The Pagan Inheritance of Egill’s *Sonatorrek*’, *Atti del 12º Congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto medioevo*, ed. Teresa Pàroli, Seventh International Saga Conference (Spoleto, 1990), pp. 147-67 (esp. 154-58). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Haury, *De Bellis*, p. 447. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)