



Volume 29

# Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia



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# President's Report

Our eighth biennial international numismatic conference (NAAC2019) was held at the State Library of New South Wales. National Organiser Walter Bloom and the local Organising Committee of Ken Sheedy and Gil Davis put together an interesting program, the fruits of which can be seen in this current volume of the Journal. Highlights included keynote speakers, Ross MacDiarmid, RAM Director (*The future of collecting and the role of the Royal Australian Mint*) and Claire Rowson, Perth Mint (*Mint Condition: New directions for numismatic conservation in Australia*). We were pleased to see a strong New Zealand contingent in Sydney and for the first time in some years the conference ran at a (slight) profit.

I am delighted to advise the winning of the 2019 Paul Simon Memorial Award by Graeme Petterwood. Graeme has been very active on the Tasmania numismatic scene, even when the Tasmanian Numismatic Society had spent a significant time in hibernation. Over this crucial period he kept the Society on the numismatic map with his publishing of the bi-monthly newsletter *Tasmanian Numismatist*. Graeme's contribution to the Society has been recognised with the McDonald Encouragement Award, 1994; R V McNeice Literary Award 1995, 1996; Lockwood Medal 1998; Tasmanian Numismatic Society Bronze Medallion 1996, 2000, 2003; TNS President's Award 2000; TNS Distinguished Service Medal 2013; and TNS Life Membership 2014. Graeme also won the André Fecteau Prize (Association des Numismates Francophones du Canada; <http://anfc.info/>) literary award. Congratulations Graeme from the Australian numismatic community.

The NAA website has experienced some serious issues, well beyond my expertise as Website Manager. After many unsuccessful attempts at fixing the problems, both through the hosting company and the website developer, the Association is looking to pay an expert to get the website back on-line.

We continue to enjoy sponsorship at a sustainable level, with Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks, Downies (Silver), Drake Sterling, Mowbray Collectables, Sterling & Currency and Vintage Coins & Banknotes (Bronze) all contributing to ensure the Association's continued success. However expenses are rising and receipts are falling, even with the steady level of membership. On the positive side, many continue to take out ten-year memberships which is certainly good for the short to medium term.

I am appreciative of the support of Council and other NAA members throughout the year, and particularly our Secretary, Jonathan Cohen, and Treasurer, Lyn Bloom, who are pivotal in the running of the Association, and our Managing Editor, Gil Davis, for his ongoing work with the journal. The Association is looking to hold its 2020 AGM in Perth with those members in the Eastern States invited to skype into the meeting. With 15 NAA members in WA including three Office Bearers, we should have no difficulty making a physical quorum.

Finally, I was sorry to miss this year in Sydney (due to illness), my first missed conference since their inception in 2005, and also my first missed AGM since I took up the Presidency in 2006.

**Professor Walter R. Bloom**

President, NAA

[www.numismatics.org.au](http://www.numismatics.org.au)

# Editor's Note

This journal is the showcase of the Numismatic Association of Australia (NAA), the peak body for numismatics in the country. It provides a venue for excellent scholarship with a requirement that all articles either offer new material or fresh interpretations. All submissions are required to undergo a rigorous, double-blind peer review. The 29<sup>th</sup> volume is the largest we have produced and comes as a result of a decision to combine 2018 and 2019 into one volume, with many of the articles generated from the biennial NAA conference held on 6-7 April 2019. Once again, there is a good balance of modern and ancient interests reflected in a remarkably diverse range of topics. It is pleasing to see the contributions made on New Zealand numismatics.

We have a strong international editorial board who contribute their wisdom, experience and help. I thank them and mourn the premature loss of one of our number, the late Professor Matthew Trundle whose obituary appears at the end of the volume. I thank Professor John Melville-Jones and Mr John O'Connor for their skill and application in proof-reading the articles and Mr Barrie Newman for his dedication in producing the volume. As always, I thank Professor Walter Bloom, President of the NAA, for his personal support and encouragement in dealing with the myriad of matters that editing a journal entails.

This volume has some changes from its predecessors. At the conference we ran a session in which a number of speakers gave a short presentation on a 'Numismatic Gem'. This was highly successful and amusing. Two of the presentations have been turned into brief articles including the winning entry by Darren Burgess on a 'humble' token from the English Civil War, and a charming story by Barrie Newman on his first coin, which led him to a lifelong interest in collecting. We have also included a review by David Rampling of the important book by Peter Lane on the South Australian 'Coin Cabinet'.

There are five articles on modern topics. The first two are about New Zealand with Andrew Clifford and Robert Tonner presenting a history of New Zealand banknotes, superbly illustrated from Robert's own collection, and David Galt following up with medals issued for the New Zealand Wars. Richard and Carmel S. O'Hair take us into the world of early Australian medals issued by a Geelong Highland society, while Darren Burgess provides a full listing and discussion of the Centenary of Sydney and Melbourne Commemorative medals. Yuri Rapoport suggests, perhaps controversially, that there is a fifth variety of the 1931 penny.

There are also five large articles on topics spanning a thousand years of ancient history. Lloyd Taylor provides an exemplary study of the Alexander tetradrachms that he attributes to the Phoenician port city of Karne. From there, we segue into the vexed question of the so-called Porus medallions of Alexander, explored in detail by Michael Habicht and his colleagues. Staying in the ancient East, Rachel Mansfield reattributes a previously incorrectly identified coin type minted in the Levantine port city of Jaffa under the Severan emperors. Bruce Marshall discusses the introduction of slogans to Roman republican denarii. Finally, Christian Cuello discusses the extent to which imperial authority was conveyed in the 'imitation' coinage of 'barbarian' rulers in late antiquity.

All the articles contain significant research providing the volume with enduring value. They are well written and informative. I hope you enjoy reading them.

**Dr Gil Davis**

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# Goths, Franks or Romans?

## New perspectives on an old problem in Late Antique numismatics

Christian Cuello

### Abstract

*Imperial authority is inextricably linked with Roman coinage. This association acts as a guarantee of quality and of its acceptance as currency. Imperial imagery and administrative codes function as mechanisms of accountability. After the last Western Roman Emperor was deposed around 476 AD, production of Imperial coinage continued. The production of Imperial coinage by barbarian kings is typically referred to as 'imitation'. Does this term adequately describe minting practice in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries? This article explores the limitations of this term and resolves an unresolved problem in Late Antique numismatics: the attribution of the •T• series tremisses. The implications of this attribution, and how it impacts our understanding of the period, is also discussed.*

### Key words

[Late Antiquity][Visigothic coinage][Frankish coinage][Ostrogothic coinage][barbarian imitation][coin weights]

### Introduction

The 'imitation' of Roman coinage by barbarians in the 5th and 6th centuries AD is well attested,<sup>1</sup> yet questions remain around its attribution, especially amongst the numerous issues of *tremisses* depicting a striding Victory with palm and wreath. Referred to as 'pseudo-Imperial' or 'imitation' coinage, this suggests something unoriginal, of low production quality, and at worst a forgery. Amongst the numerous barbarian issues, a small number bear a unique mark on the reverse inscription: the letter T with a pellet on either side, annotated as •T•. Several key works have been published in the last century which have attempted to explain the mark. This publication presents the arguments as they currently stand, with some critiques provided in view of archaeological evidence not previously considered. The basis of this research entails a new hypothesis on the attribution of the •T• coinage.

In part, the aim of this research is to correctly identify the attribution of the •T• series. The implications of this attribution are considered in light of what is currently understood of minting in the Western kingdoms in the 6th century. This investigation

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1 All dates are AD.



reviews the key scholarship on these coins, starting with the earliest accounts from the 19th century. A corpus of •T• coins and a series of related coin weights presents a unique opportunity to consider these artefacts as part of a monetary system. This allows further investigation into their function and the nature of minting authority. This is not the first, or the only study of its kind, but the problem has yet to be resolved.



Fig. 1. ACANS 07GV02

*Tremis*. Narbonne? Theoderic the Great in the name of Anastasius I (491AD – 518AD)

Obv. ΘIANASTAVIS PP AVC; diademed, draped bust of Emperor with pectoral cross.

Rev. VICTORIA AVCVSTOR •T•; COHOB in exergue; Victory walking r. with palm and laurel wreath.

1.43g, 13.5mm, ↓

Ref.: Cuello 2 (this coin); Tomasini 68 Group A3; MEC1.184 (variant inscription)

This research problem presented itself while I was compiling the catalogue of Visigothic coins in the Gale Collection at the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS),<sup>2</sup> including a previously unpublished example of the •T• coinage (Fig. 1). Initial findings revealed that this was not an isolated example, and there was no consensus on who minted it.<sup>3</sup> The task of cataloguing the piece has highlighted several issues in the attribution and subsequent study of barbarian coinage. The overall uncertainty of minting authority is but one factor. Advances in archaeological fieldwork,<sup>4</sup> and refreshing perspectives on the study of Late Antiquity, signal that there is still much to be understood of barbarian coinage. To this end the •T• coins are an intriguing point of departure for investigation.

### Is it Roman?

A key to understanding the significance of this coin is to consider the economic, political and geographical contexts in which it was minted. They need to be considered together as part of a broader economic system encompassing the Roman Empire and life on

<sup>2</sup> See Cuello 2017

<sup>3</sup> Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 115

<sup>4</sup> Priego 2016: 27-8

its fringes that continued to function despite significant changes at its centre. Starting from the most basic principles of identification, its context is a Roman one and this is a suitable place to begin the analysis.

The denomination, a *tremis*, constitutes 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a *solidus*. The *solidus* was the standard Imperial gold coin introduced by the Emperor Constantine in c. 310 replacing the *aureus*.<sup>5</sup> In the measurement of the period, one *solidus* was equal to roughly 1/72<sup>nd</sup> of a Roman pound, or 24 *siliquae*, weighing 4.5g in modern measurement although occasional variations to this are documented. Therefore, a *tremis* weighs 1.5g. The *solidus* continued to be the standard form in which taxes, fines and yearly payments were expressed well into the Late Antique period.<sup>6</sup>

The Imperial portrait on the obverse remained a symbol of Imperial authority. Here it demonstrates the tendency throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> Century to stylise the individual character of the figure represented. The inscription indicates the nominal authority to be Anastasius I (491-518). The pectoral cross on the Imperial bust appears on similar coins from approximately 500 onward.<sup>7</sup> The inscription, sometimes described as blundered,<sup>8</sup> follows a Roman formula stating:

ϠIANASTAVIS PP AVC<sup>9</sup>

The tendency of the die-cutters to spell the inscriptions incorrectly is, naturally, a source of criticism from modern scholars. Pursuing such value judgments is not worthwhile. While this suggests that die-cutters were not fully literate in Latin, it could reasonably have been a second or third language.

On the reverse we see other allusions to Imperial coinage: the ubiquitous Victoria striding to the right with palm and laurel wreath (commonly identified as a VPW type). The inscription on the reverse reads:

VICTORIA AVCVSTOR•T•

While AVCVSTOR, the second word, can easily be expanded to AVGVSTORVM, 'of the Augusti' as it appears on other Roman examples, the presence of the •T• cannot as easily be explained away. In addition, where we would expect to see CONOB or COMOB in the exergue, we see instead COHOB which can only be interpreted as a misunderstanding of the usual legend.

5 Banaji 2016: 110-2

6 Lafferty 2013: 207

7 Burnett 1977: 9; Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 48

8 Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 48

9 Compare with the correct spelling D(OMINVS) N(OSTER) ANASTASIVS P(ER)P(ETVVS) AVG(VSTVS).

The influence of Imperial coinage is clear in the reverse scene appropriated from the *profectio bellica*, or ‘setting out to war’, depicted on *sestertii*.<sup>10</sup> In these examples, Victoria leads the Emperor as he sets out to make war. The striding Victoria appears on *antoniniani* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century and appeared for the last time on the reverse of Imperial coins in the early 400s. The last known examples are *tremisses* from Trier and Ravenna.<sup>11</sup> Instead, on the *tremisses* of Anastasius I minted in Constantinople, Victoria faces towards the viewer, bearing a wreath and *globus cruciger* (referred to as VGC).

The *tremisses* of the VPW (‘Victoria with palm and wreath’) type have their origins in the territories of the Goths, Franks and other barbarian successor kingdoms.<sup>12</sup> There are two notable hoards: the Tresor de Gourdon, Chalon-sur-Saone dated to 530<sup>13</sup> and the Tresor de Alise-Sainte-Reine dated to 540.<sup>14</sup>

While ACANS 07GV02 resembles a Roman coin and appears functional in the context of the Roman monetary system, it is typical to categorise it as an imitation. This may not be the right way to look at it. By the 5<sup>th</sup> Century the Roman world had greatly changed, with groups of barbarians from the Black Sea region settling into Imperial lands, mainly as auxiliaries in the Roman army.<sup>15</sup> In the West, the Emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the barbarian warlord Odovacer in 476.<sup>16</sup> Odovacer, like the Byzantine emperor Zeno I in Constantinople, recognised the authority of the exiled emperor Julius Nepos to some degree, allowing him to rule in Dalmatia until his death in 480. Odovacer then declared some form of independence from Byzantine rule. A decade later, Zeno dispatched to Italy the Gothic warlord Theoderic to challenge Odovacer’s claim and restore a delegated Imperial authority. This had the benefit of simultaneously drawing the growing Gothic forces away from Constantinople’s borders.<sup>17</sup> After a series of confrontations in Italy, Theoderic agreed to a co-rulership with Odovacer. In a fashion befitting his Constantinopolitan upbringing, Theoderic allegedly ambushed him at a dinner in celebration of their truce, cut Odovacer down and put his followers to death.<sup>18</sup>

Elsewhere in the West, the Visigoths had been active for several centuries in Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula on behalf of various emperors. This relationship was a complex one, but it had resulted in a settlement in Aquitaine between 417-419.<sup>19</sup> By the time of Theoderic’s arrival later in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century the Kingdom of Toulouse was well established.

10 López Sánchez 2017: 151

11 Tomasini 1964: 4-5

12 *Ibid.*: I

13 Lafaurie 1958: 75

14 Lafaurie 1970: 31

15 Southern & Dixon 1996: 48-50

16 Halsall 2007: 280-1; Lafferty 2015: 1-3

17 Amory 1997: 7; Lafferty 2013: 4 - 5

18 Lafferty 2013: 6; Wolfram 1988: 278-80

19 Wolfram 1988: 173; Fischer & López Sánchez 2018: 157

Literary sources present a conflicting picture of the disruption their presence had on the Gallo-Roman elite, but under the new barbarian rulers the aristocracy still functioned in Rome's traditional holdings. Further north, Gaul was steadily becoming consolidated under the power of the Frankish king Clovis I. The south-east remained under the rule of the Burgundians (whom the Franks would later conquer).<sup>20</sup> In 507 the Battle of Vouillé saw a united Frankish and Burgundian campaign oust the Visigoths from Toulouse with the death of their king Alaric II.<sup>21</sup>

While the Visigoths retained Narbonne for centuries after the battle, it was the only remaining vestige of their claim to Gaul. Any advances south of Aquitaine were curtailed by Theoderic the Ostrogoth, who crushed the Franco-Burgundian alliance in 508-9.<sup>22</sup> After Clovis died in 511, his kingdom was divided amongst his sons: Chlodomer, Chlothar and Childebert from his second wife Clotilde, and Theuderic (Thierry)<sup>23</sup> from a previous liaison.<sup>24</sup>

In the context of such changes, Roman influence on the economy is complex to decipher. "Imitation" is a loaded term, as is the equally common "pseudo-Imperial": both diminish the agency of the barbarian minters. While we must sometimes rely on these terms, they should be applied with caution. Tomasini offered this perspective on the practice:

"These are not Byzantine imitations as they often have been erroneously classified. They are distinct issues whose consistent reverse implies a conscious policy to separate them from the actual Byzantine *tremis*."<sup>25</sup>

Despite the shifting frontiers of these new barbarian kingdoms, Roman institutions and administration endured. While the barbarian kings ruled, they looked to Imperial models and continued to acknowledge the authority of the Eastern Emperors for some time. They sought favour by retaining Imperial titles and rituals,<sup>26</sup> and for the most part continued the tradition of depicting the image of the Roman Emperor on their gold coins. But they were also able to make improvements in legislation and the economy to reflect the needs of their constituents.<sup>27</sup>

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20 Wood 1994: 51-4

21 *Ibid.*: 46; Halsall 2007: 298-9

22 Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 35; Kulikowski 2010: 258-9

23 Thierry is a Gallicised version of Theodoric drawn from the work of Lenormant, which I will also use to avoid confusion between the Merovingian and Ostrogothic monarchs.

24 Wood 1994: 48-50

25 Tomasini 1964: 1

26 Consider the tension created as favour from Anastasius I shifted from Theoderic the Ostrogoth to Clovis with, allegedly, an honorary consulship; both Theoderic and Gundobad, king of the Burgundians, attained the title of *magister militum*. See Lafferty 2013: 5 and Wood 1994: 48, 51.

27 For example, the *Edictum Theoderici*, amongst other barbarian law codes.

## The tradition of attribution

While the attribution of the •T• mark has not been universally accepted,<sup>28</sup> it has been generally determined that these coins are barbarian in origin. The current scholarship offers two possible authorities: the Merovingian Franks and the Visigoths. I will briefly outline both lines of argument to consolidate what is known about the coins, before presenting a third alternative authority: Theoderic, King of Ostrogothic Italy.

## The case for the Merovingians

Published in the *Revue Numismatique* of 1848, M. Ch. Lenormant presented his hypotheses on the barbarian *tremisses*, which he believed to be uniquely Merovingian-minted royal coinage. He used the term *marque chlodovienne* to describe the facing C's on either side of the Imperial bust<sup>29</sup> suggesting an intentional stylistic departure from previous coinage by the Merovingian monarch Clovis I. Lenormant reasoned that, based on a passage in Gregory of Tours, this was a celebration of Clovis being made a patrician by Anastasius I between 507-509.<sup>30</sup>

Specifically, Lenormant attributed the •T• coins to Thierry, son of Clovis. This presented an exception to his overall theory. He reconciled this by suggesting that they were produced outside of Clovis' influence by his increasingly ambitious son, who eventually dropped the two C's completely.<sup>31</sup> Without any absolute certainty concerning the *marque chlodovienne* this theory cannot be sustained.

The •T• mark is not consistently applied within Lenormant's framework. Thierry's descendants also bear the letter T in their names – Theodebert his son, and Theudebald, his grandson – but the practice itself is not repeated, perhaps due to the Merovingians' apparent disdain for filial succession<sup>32</sup>. Much later, Theodebert minted *solidi* and *tremisses* in his own name,<sup>33</sup> but this had no precedent amongst the Merovingians.

Lenormant's attribution was abandoned by his contemporaries,<sup>34</sup> but in the absence of any alternatives this theory persisted: in Lafaurie's work on the subject almost a century later, and by Crinon sometime after.<sup>35</sup> Lafaurie continued the attribution to Thierry, although he acknowledged the concurrent rule with Theoderic the Ostrogoth. He stated that, as the Ostrogothic Theoderic only minted coins with the facing Victory bearing the globe with cross, or *globus cruciger*, we must nominate the Merovingian

28 Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 115

29 Lenormant 1848: 195, as in the inscription  $\text{OIANASTAUIS PP AVC}$ . See also Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 115.

30 *Ibid.*: 118; *HF* II.38

31 *Ibid.*: 197-9

32 Wood 1994: 58-9

33 Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 116

34 Engel & Serrure 1891: 55

35 Crinon 2006: 201-3

king instead.<sup>36</sup> Examples of VPW *tremisses* minted under Theoderic the Ostrogoth in Rome show this assumption to be incorrect.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, Lafaurie linked a *solidus* featuring a monogram of the letters *TRE* minted under the name of Justinian to Thierry to argue a case for continuity between it and the •T• *tremisses*.<sup>38</sup> This link is a tenuous one: one could more convincingly argue it to be a mint mark of Treveri (Trier) especially in the aftermath of Justinian's conquest of Gothic Italy.

Despite the significant contributions to this study by Lenormant, Lafaurie, Crinon and others, the case for the Merovingian king Thierry is unsubstantiated, and we must look elsewhere for a solution.

### The case for the Visigoths

An alternative to this theory was provided in the work of Wallace Tomasini, who attributed the •T• coins to the Visigoths based on stylistic features reminiscent of the coins of Theoderic the Ostrogoth. Where the VPW appears on Merovingian coinage, Tomasini argued that they were typically issued from mints previously operated by the Visigoths and Burgundians. An example pertinent to this investigation also contains a T (without pellets) on the reverse, taken to indicate issues from the Toulouse mint after 507. He argues the mark was influenced by Theoderic, and carried on in the coinage of the Visigoths and Burgundians. However, two VGC coins minted in Rome by Theoderic in the name of Anastasius with a T at the end of the reverse inscription have also been identified.<sup>39</sup>

Theoderic's involvement in sustaining the pagan Victoria is evident in his bronze issues (amongst other pagan symbols), as well as the Senigallia medallion (Fig. 2, below).<sup>40</sup> The revival of the VPW is possible in a Western context "uncompromised" by the usage of pagan symbolism, and with access to older dies or designs.<sup>41</sup> Amongst the other barbarian contenders, Theoderic is the authority most befitting the reinstatement of the VPW, but for Tomasini this was still inconclusive.<sup>42</sup> He narrows down the issue of the coins to either Visigothic Narbonne or Ostrogothic Arles, simply stating that the •T• "might be meaningful".<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Lafaurie 1970: 33

<sup>37</sup> Kent 15

<sup>38</sup> Lafaurie 1970: 34

<sup>39</sup> Metlich 13a & 13b

<sup>40</sup> Tomasini 1964: 8-10; for the medallion, see BM B.11479.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*: 11

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*: 44

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*: 92



Fig. 2 The Senigallia medallion. Theoderic's employment of Victoria is clear on the obverse (a.) and reverse (b.) with the motifs appearing on subsequent issues of *tremisses*.

### The case for Theoderic

One of the basic assumptions in the attribution of Thierry is that Theoderic only minted *tremisses* showing a front facing Victory with *globus cruciger*. Examples from the mint at Rome under Theoderic show that this is simply not the case. Some have maintained that it was the Ostrogothic issues that influenced later emissions by the Visigoths and Burgundians,<sup>44</sup> supporting Tomasini's claim to the same.



Fig. 3 The bronze weight of Theoderic from the British Museum collection. © Christian Cuello

Of great significance in this context is the appearance of the •T• on a copper weight naming Theoderic (Fig. 3, above).<sup>45</sup> It weighs 22.45g which corresponds to approximately 5 *solidi* or 15 *tremisses*. There are four recorded weights bearing the inscription D – N THEODERICI on one face, a denominational mark on the other, and the name of Catullinus, *praefectus urbi*, 'prefect in charge of the city', around the edge.<sup>46</sup> Montfaucon

44 Burnett 1977: 9; Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 48; Metlich 2004: 20; Kent 1971: 70

45 British Museum 1982,0105.1; In the BM catalogue and in Buckton (1994: 86) it is described as possessing a one-ounce denominational mark, but this would read as " - I " on coin weights. One must correctly orientate the wreath to show the •T• as in Fig. 3, also demonstrated by Metlich (2004: 23)

46 BM 1870,1124.1; Louvre 3400; BnF bronze.2285

recorded a similar example from the reign of Julius Nepos naming one Audax as *praefectus urbi*.<sup>47</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, describes how a certain prefect Praetextatus “established standard weights in every quarter of the city” to counter widespread tampering.<sup>48</sup> By the time of Theoderic it seems this was still within the prefect’s remit.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, the same mark appears on a *solidus* issued by Athalaric, Theoderic’s grandson and successor in Italy.<sup>50</sup> This has been interpreted as a commemorative issue honouring the king after his death,<sup>51</sup> but the clear use of the •T• in the reverse inscription of a coin minted in Rome by his heir further strengthens the case for an attribution of the ACANS *tremis* to Theoderic also.

It is clear that attribution of the •T• coins is more closely associated with Theoderic the Ostrogoth than previously thought. Therefore, it is appropriate to relocate the mint much further South than asserted by Lenormant. Of Theoderic’s known Italian mints we may choose Rome, Ravenna or Milan, which all continued to mint gold during his reign.<sup>52</sup> If one were to propose Narbonne, this would also be justified, as it was the focal point of the Visigoths remaining territory in Gaul and within Theoderic’s territories. If we incorporate what is known of Ostrogothic and Visigothic minting of the period, the ACANS example is a curious hybrid of coins in the Visigothic style minted under the authority of an Ostrogothic king.

This would be difficult to reconcile were it not for the unique situation which Theoderic created for himself after the battle for Vouillé. He assumed regency of the Visigothic throne to replace Gesalec, the product of Alaric’s affair with a concubine. The true heir of the king, Amalaric, was too young to assume kingship.<sup>53</sup> The numismatic evidence demonstrates that this particular mark was used on coins only during the reigns of Anastasius I and Justin I, which also coincides with Theoderic’s regency until the time of his death in 526 - a timespan of approximately 15 years.

To this end, Theoderic was recognised as king of both Gothic kingdoms. The Visigothic holdings do not correlate to the entirety of Spain as we know it now. The expanse of Theoderic’s territory also included Dalmatia further to the East.<sup>54</sup> Conflicting accounts claim he spent his rule in Spain or assigned the duties of rulership to his sword-bearer,

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47 Montfaucon 1722: 170

48 *Amm. Marc.* XXVII, 8-9

49 Kulikowski 2010: 262-3

50 Metlich 31

51 Metlich 2004: 22-3

52 Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 34

53 Wolfram 1988:243-5

54 Amory 1997: 93



Theudis.<sup>55</sup> The latter is more widely accepted, as is the increasing dissent of Theudis from Theoderic's authority. Tribute from the Visigothic holdings to Theoderic continued, and must be considered as a source of gold for Ostrogothic minting.<sup>56</sup> After Theoderic's death and the demise of his grandson, Theudis assumes the throne of Visigothic Spain.<sup>57</sup> While the ubiquity of the VPW *tremisses* persisted, the •T• mark did not appear on their reverse again.

## Conclusion

Previous attributions of the •T• *tremisses* to the Merovingian king Thierry I are inconclusive. Yet the works of Lenormant and others on the topic provide a wealth of information about the •T• coins and continue to be valuable sources. Tomasini built a case for a Visigothic attribution through a stylistic methodology and identified the mint of origin as Narbonne. He positioned Theoderic the Ostrogoth as an influence for the reappearance of the figure of Victoria, and this point is echoed in several other accounts. However, a more direct involvement is strongly indicated from the weights and the commemorative issue minted by Athalaric. We can therefore now directly link the •T• coins to the mints of Theoderic.

The warrior-kings of Late Antiquity required large quantities of gold coinage to maintain and protect their kingdoms as well as a mechanism to administer it. The •T• coins and their weights demonstrate that Theoderic produced an acceptable, reliable currency and an effective administrative code. He was well accustomed to Imperial life, having spent a considerable portion of his youth in Constantinople. The influence of this on his rulership cannot be overstated and is worth investigating further, especially as it pertains to his economic and monetary policy. Manifestations of this are clearly represented in his coinage, as well as the Senigallia medallion issued to celebrate his *tricennalia*, with Victoria figures appearing on both sides.

The Victoria figure likely indicates a military victory, as it had done for centuries, but also suggests a time of peace to follow. Theoderic's successful counterattack of the Franco-Burgundian advance in 508/9 is such a victory. This issue of coins therefore intentionally projects Theoderic's political position in the West and his military victories. It also acknowledges the authority of the Eastern Emperor, which legitimises the coinage.

The attribution of the coins to Theoderic is, it seems, undeniable but, this conclusion also raises more questions. It is a piece of a larger puzzle which helps us to further understand the nature of minting authority in the Western kingdoms still a part of the Roman Empire, *pars imperii*, and Theoderic's regency over the Visigothic kingdom.

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<sup>55</sup> HG. 39-40 and *Get.* 302 respectively.

<sup>56</sup> Kulikowski, 2010: 262

<sup>57</sup> HG. 41; Wolfram 1988: 245

Understanding this allows for further insight into the complexities of minting the barbarian *tremisses* and enables historians to move beyond the simple concept of imitation. The coins of Late Antiquity present an exciting frontier in numismatic study. The findings above demonstrate that the attribution of barbarian *tremisses* certainly deserves further investigation.

### Author biography

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### Abbreviations

*Get.* *Getica*, Jordanes

*HF.* *Historia Francorum*, Gregory of Tours

*HG.* *Historia Gothorum*, Isidore of Seville

*Amm. Marc.* Ammianus Marcellinus

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