

DIETER QUAST 

## CREATING MEMORY IN VANDAL PERIOD AFRICA

**Abstract:** The Vandals left no *origo gentis* even though history is an essential factor for the construction of group identity. But the creation of memory in the Vandal kingdom in North Africa can be reconstructed with archaeological sources. For this an attempt by looking for visualisations in the form of images and inscriptions in Vandal Period Africa is made and interpreted against the background of “creating memory”. These observations are based on “official” visualisations. They are a sort of propaganda and because of this are contained within the content of the ideological superstructure.

The created memory is addressed to the various groups living under Vandal rule. It is addressed to the former Roman administration, to the inhabitants of Carthage and Christianity as a whole. Only in the private sphere could the tradition of a family genealogy be seen, most probably needed for legitimation – and, if there was a need for this, it points to internal conflicts.

**Keywords:** Vandal kingdom, North Africa, archaeological sources, masterstory

Preoccupation with the past is a normal human characteristic. Families reconstruct or continue their genealogies, while states create national museums, national monuments and national holidays. While the former activity is a placement within “continuity” caused by the awareness of mortality, the latter is an essential factor for the construction of group identity. But even if archaeologists know this, the question of how the past was used in earlier times, especially during periods of political change, is rarely analysed. There are of course articles and books describing how the past was previously used to show tradition and legitimation, especially for prehistoric periods, but not in the same way I intend doing (Bradley, Williams 1998; Machado 2006; Jones 2007; Yoffee 2007; Mills, Walker 2008; Georgiades, Gallou 2009; Lillios, Tsamis 2010). Taking that into consideration, I will discuss the creation of memory in the Vandal kingdom in North Africa.

If I appear to use the term “memory” as a synonym for the terminus “history”, this requires a short explanation (cf. e.g. Le Goff 1986; Connerton 1998; Fried



2004; Devlin 2007, 1–16; Jones 2007; Erll 2011; Pethes 2013). As early as the 1920s Maurice Halbwachs and Aby Warburg published their fundamental results on collective memory (Halbwachs 1925; Warburg 2010). Based on this, since the 1970s there has been a heated discussion among historians about “memory and history” using the terms in opposition (White 1973; Burke 1991; Goetz 2001; Assmann 2005). Astrid Erll focussed this discussion by asking: What is the function of historiography? Is it an objective, uninvolved reconstruction of the past or is it an argument with the past that takes sides, bears witness and wants to reach something in the present (Erll 2011, 42)? The second function seems to be generally accepted. Although this discussion concerns contemporary history, historians of antiquity and the early middle ages wrote their histories with a similar goal in mind. They had never aimed to be objective. On the contrary, their work was earmarked to create a memory (Mehl 2001, 15–34, 202–208; Goetz 2005). The best examples are the texts known as *origo gentes*, written in early medieval times and based - amongst other things - on oral traditions (Plassmann 2006). These texts create collective memory with a “good story”, meaning that they are appreciable and “tellable”. To make a collective memory from such a good story, it must be authorized and augmented by practices of visualization. Individuals should be able to embed their memories into the masterstory of the society (Jarausch–Sabrow 2002; Rexroth 2007; Dejung 2008). The best-known example of such a masterstory (even today) is the tale of the *Lupa Romana* with Romulus and Remus: an intriguing narrative, authorized and presented in a visual form, for example on the famous statue and coins (R.-Alföldi 2011). Another example is the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, which explains the origins of the Lombard name (Fried 2004, 244–252; Plassmann 2006, 204–215). This, too, is a tellable story, authorised by having been written down and visualised on coins bearing images of long-bearded Lombard kings.

Both examples are obvious inventions, and both are quite clearly authorized and visualized; because of this, they are part of the collective memory. They demonstrate the significance of a good masterstory. Michael Mann identified this importance in his book “The sources of social power” (Mann 1986, 22–28). Charismatic leaders, viz. military successes, were not enough to cement a permanent rule. For this, ideological power is necessary – an ideological superstructure – and the masterstory is part of this. Especially in oral societies – but not only there – performances, but objects and images are also of major importance (Vansina 1985; von Ungern, Sternberg, Reinau 1988; Connerton 1998, 41–71; Assmann 1999, 218–228; Mills, Walker 2008; Hartmann 2010). Piero Majocchi illustrated this point based on written sources for the medieval town of Padua, while Terence Ranger depicted the ways in which the “invention of tradition in Colonial Africa” was used (Majocchi 2009; Ranger 2010). With constructed memory, past, present and future become blurred. The past is

constructed in the present and acts as a retrospective argument (or legitimation) for the way things are (Landwehr 2016). At the same time, constructed memory creates a foundation for the future. George Orwell put this aptly in his novel “1984”: „Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past“ (Orwell 1949).

## I. THE VANDAL CONQUEST OF NORTH AFRICA

The Vandals left no *origo gentis*, and the information from written sources is very vague until 406 (and even after this date it is still sketchy). On the Vandals of the 1st to 4th century, the Przeworsk culture and the (im)possibility to connect them with the Vandals of the 5th century cf. the different opinions (Courtis 1955, 21–37; Koenig 1981; Strzelczyk 1993, 19–79; Pohl 2004, 31–37; Berndt 2007, 75–82; Castritius 2007, 15–45; Merrills, Miles 2010, 27–35; Modéran 2014, 17–41; Vössing 2014, 11–19; Steinacher 2016, 355–362; Vössing 2018, 11–16). A coalition of Vandals, Suebes and Alans crossed the Rhine, marauded through Gaul for two years, crossed the Pyrenees in 409 and conquered Hispania, where each federation maintained its realm for the next 20 years (Courtis 1955, Strzelczyk 1993; Gil Egea 1999; von Rummel 2003; Berndt 2007; Castritius 2007; Berndt–Steinacher 2008b; von Rummel 2010; Conant 2012; Eger 2012; Modéran 2014; Vössing 2014; Steinacher 2016; Vössing 2018). Several losing battles against the Visigoths, who acted by order of the Roman Empire, characterise these years (Castritius 2007, 58–72; Modéran 2014, 76–91; Steinacher 2016, 67–76). As early as 425, Vandal ships had already raided the Balearic Islands and the province *Mauretania tingitania*, as Hydatius noticed; Michael Kulikowski supposed that King Gunderic used this occasion to establish a Vandal outpost in Africa (Hydatius XLI, I; Kulikowski 2004, 177–178; Modéran 2014, 97)<sup>1</sup>. In 429 the Vandal King Geiseric crossed the Strait of Gibraltar with around 80,000 people (Pohl 2002, 76–77; with further reading: Gil Egea 1999, 189–192; Castritius 2007, 78–79; Berndt 2007, 121–122; Vössing 2014, 39; Steinacher 2016, 94–95; critical: Goffart 1980, 231–234; Kulikowski 2004, 177) and after a journey of 1,500 km – by ship or on land – subdued the Roman provinces *Mauretania Maior (Caesariensis)*, *Mauretania Minor (Sitifiensis)*, *Numidia*, *Proconsularis*, *Byzacena* and *Tripolitania* (Pohl 2002, 76–77). Hippo Regius failed after a 14-month siege and Carthage was conquered in 439. In addition to Vandals (mainly Hasdings, but also what remained of the Silings), Suebs and Alans, there were Goths and *aliae diversae personae* among the horde coming to Africa (Possidius 28,5; Berndt 2007,

<sup>1</sup> Hydatius: „*Wandali Balearicas insulas deprædantur deinde Carthagine Spartaria, et Hispali eversa et Hispaniis deprædatis, Mauritaniam invadunt*“.

142–171)<sup>2</sup>. The latter group contained, most probably, elements of the population local to Spain and perhaps Gaul, for whom the Vandalic realm promised a better future without exorbitant taxes (Orosius, *Hist.* VII,41.7; Goffart 1974; Demandt 2007, 294–296; Decker 1939, 232; 236)<sup>3</sup>.

Ethnology offers an interesting comparison for how the composition of migrating tribes could change during their movement: in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the Jaga tribe started to swarm, looting and plundering, throughout central Africa; 1565 they attacked the kingdom of the Congo (Decker 1939, 232; 236). They roamed the continent until the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, also causing severe difficulties for the Portuguese. A report by the English sailor, Andrew Battel, who in 1601/02 lived with the Jaga for 21 months, offers interesting details about the tribal composition, whose size he estimates at 16,000 persons: „In all this camp there were but twelve natural Jaga that were their captains, and fourteen or fifteen women“ (Decker 1939, 231). The inclusion of subordinated groups restocked any losses sustained through marital conflicts.

Crossing to Africa with such a horde was a logistical tour de force characterized by historians as a “primordial event” for the ethnogenesis of the Vandals. The terminus “primordial event” (“primordial Tat”) describes clearly the situative character but is, on the other hand, a bit confusing because in sociology primordialism (not only) in research on ethnicity means something different (Postel 2004, 183; Wolfram 1985, 27; f. Wolfram 1990, 30–31; Berndt 2007, 172–174). There, primordialism assumes that humans were born into a group and are not able to elude the given frame conditions e.g. linguistical, cultural, social (cf. Jones 1997, 65–72; Fenton 2004, 73–90; Bayar 2009; Spencer 2014, 97–102). The next challenge was to hold the people together. In the first decades, military success and booty could fulfill this need, but for a more permanent establishment of his realm, Geiseric and his successors also required an ideological superstructure (Nsiri 2018). Part of this was the common memory, other parts of an ideological superstructure are, e.g. codes (symbols), religion, worldview and the feeling of supremacy (cf. Mann 1986), that is discussed in this paper – primarily on the basis of archaeological sources (Giostra 2010; summarising Quast in press; Berndt 2007, 294; Bockmann 2013, 47–52). This may seem surprising because there are not that many excavated places outside of Carthage. Even in Carthage important features, such as the sepulchre of the Vandal kings or their palaces, remain unknown (although they were thought to be somewhere on the Bysra-Hill); both are features predestined for the creation of memory (Berndt 2007, 294; Bockmann 2013, 47–52).

<sup>2</sup> Possidius 28,5 „*immanium hostium Vandalorum et Alanorum commixtam secum habens Gothorum gentem, aliarumque deversarum personas*“.

<sup>3</sup> Orosius, *Hist.* VII,41.7 „*ut inveniantur iam inter eos quidam Romani, qui malint inter barbaros pauperem libertatem, quam inter Romanos tributariam sollicitudinem sustinere*“ – For the taxes in the Late Roman Empire, esp. for the 4<sup>th</sup>-century cf. Goffart 1974; Demandt 2007, 294–296.

## II. ARCHAEOLOGICAL HINTS ABOUT THE VANDAL “MASTERSTORY”

As mentioned in the introduction, one can differentiate between individual and collective memory. The latter provides the framework within which the members of the group must adjust their own stories. Of course, reconstructing the masterstory with only archaeological sources is a daring task. I will make an attempt by looking for visualizations in the form of images and inscriptions in the Vandal Period Africa and will interpret them against the background of “creating memory” (cf. Machado 2006; Bockmann 2013). As my observations are based on “official” visualizations, we can exclude the possibility that something was included by chance. These visualizations are a sort of propaganda and because of this are contained within the content of the ideological superstructure.

First of all, it must be pointed out that all the inscriptions are in Latin. This fact may seem self-evident because Latin was the lingua franca of the Mediterranean, but there was a Vandal language too, a sort of dialect of the Gothic language (Berndt 2007, 234–237; Frankovich-Onesti 2009; Vössing 2014, 98–99; Vössing 2018, 70–2). Very little material is known in this language. Of course one can argue that Latin was simply the language of government in the late antique Mediterranean. But the use of Latin was not only for pragmatic reasons. The use of official titles like *rex* – on coins used since Gunthamund (Ladich 2013, 31) (Fig. 1: 1), and the name of the *gens*, demonstrates that the use of Latin is already part of the masterstory. Coins (Fig. 1) and silver plate (Fig. 2) used as gifts of largess (*largatio*), such as the Geilamir plate, show that the Vandal kings acted like governors appointed by the Eastern Roman Emperor (Berndt 2007, 268–270; Ladich 2013; Silver plate cf. Morrisson et al. 1988; Leader-Newby 2004, 11–59; Hardt 2004, 253–254; Bauer 2009, 9–15; Cat. Karlsruhe 2009, 379 no. 329; Beyeler 2011; Steinacher 2013, 446). They even awarded the symbols of office to the Moors’ rulers (Proc. BV I, 25).

In addition, the Vandals calculate the years of the calendar according to the years of their king’s reign – perhaps somewhat comparable to the mandate of the Consuls. On a series of coins, there is the inscription Anno IIII or V K (Fig. 1: 2). K stood for the mint at Carthage (Karthaginis), while the numeral referred most probably to the fourth or fifth year of the reign of Huneric (Berndt, Steinacher 2006, 605; Steinacher 2016, 182, 409 note 317). Inscriptions referring to the king’s reign can even be found on public buildings and tombstones, such as the church of Henchir el-Gousset near Feriana with inscription of King Thrasamund (Fig. 3: 1), the thermae in Tunis, the tomb inscriptions from Sbeitla (“natvs anno XXVIII regis Geisiric”), Bir el Hfay (“anno septimo DNI regis Gonthamvndi”) and El Erg, region of Thelepte (“annis XXII regis Thrasamvndi”) (Fig. 3: 2) (Cat. Karlsruhe 2009, 206 nos. 138–140, 239 no. 162 and 343 no 286). In particular, the grave mosaics with Germanic names demonstrate how the Vandal elites wanted to be me-



Fig. 1. Coins minted by the Vandals in Africa: 1 – Silver, 100 Denarii, DNREXGVN THAMVNDV; 2 – Silver, Siliqua, obverse: HON [ ] PVS AGT; reverse personification of Carthage, inscription A [ ] O IIIII K.; 3 – Aes, Nummus, Gunthamund, with Chi-Rho on the reverse; 4 – Aes, 42 Nummi, not attributable to a specific king, obverse: soldier standing (the king?), inscription (KART) HAGO, reverse : Punic horse's head over mark of value XLII; 5. – Silver, 50 Denarii, DNHILDI RIXREX, on the reverse the personification of Carthage with the inscription FELIX KARTG (1,3-5 after Ladich 2013 pl. IV, VII, XI, XII; 2 after Berndt, Steinacher 2008, 285 no 4)

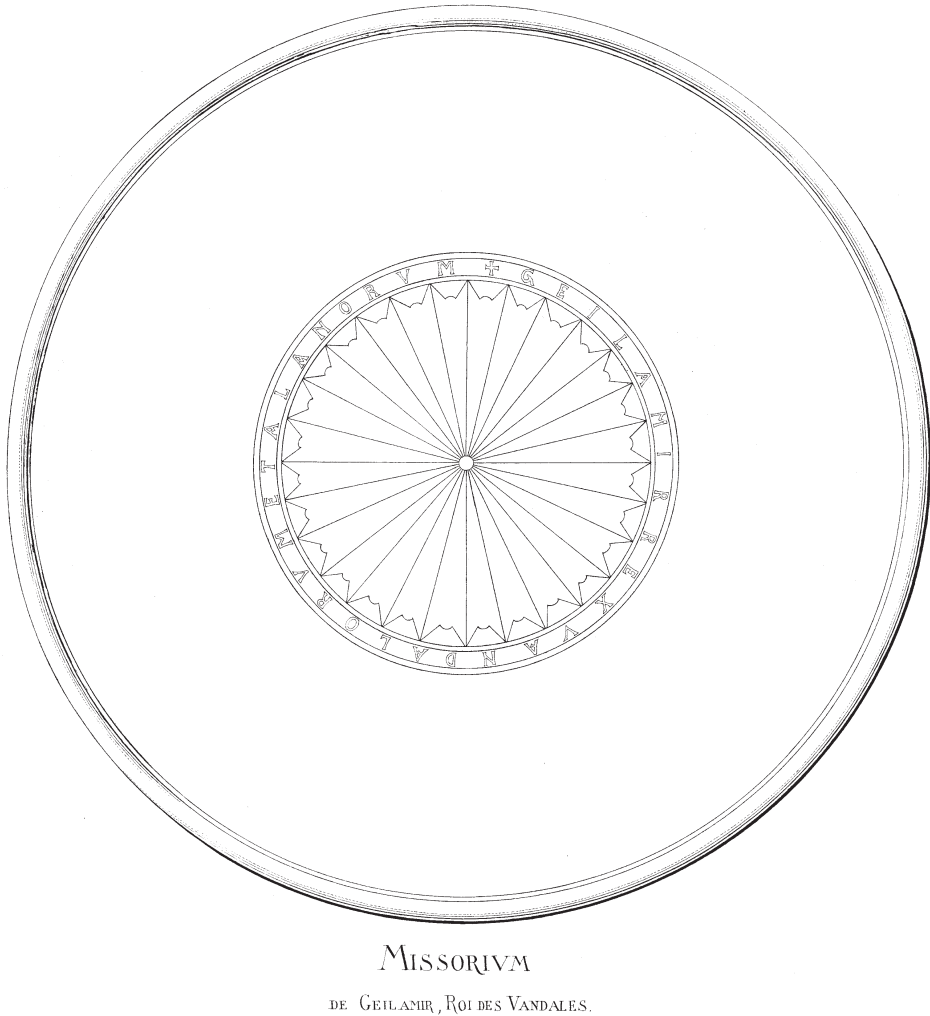


Fig. 2. Silver plate with the inscription +GEILAMIR REX VANDALORVM ET ALANORVM found 1875 in the Castello Arten, Fonzaso parish (Prov. Belluno, I). Diam. 50cm, weight 3,03kg. (after: de Longpérier 1879, pl. 7)

morialized: as members of the local Christian nobility (Ghalia 2009; mosaics with Germanic names: Cat. Karlsruhe 2009, 238 no 158; 363 no 305; 371 no 327–328).

War, triumph, or immigration are not part of the Vandal visualisation and do not even appear on coins, although coinage had always been an efficient instrument for propaganda (cf. Berndt, Steinacher 2006; Berndt, Steinacher

2008a; Merrills, Miles 2010, 168–175; Ladich 2013; Steinacher 181–187). Also missing are any images referring to the Christian alignments of the Vandals as Arians viz. Homoians (Modéran 2009). On a few coins, a Chi-Rho on the reverse points generally to Christianity (Ladich 2013, 33 nos 8–13, pl. VII) (Fig. 1: 3). However, there seems to have been a church-building programme promoted by the Vandal kings in support of their belief (Bockmann 2013, 87–117). Members of the royal family also financed public buildings like the previously-mentioned church of Henchir el-Gousset near Feriana with the inscription of king Thrasamund and the *thermae* in Tunis founded by Prince Gebamund (Cat. Karlsruhe 2009, 239 no. 162, 343 no 286).

With their coinage, the Vandal kings connected themselves to Carthage's past, on the one hand using the inscription KART HAGO with a personification of Carthage (Fig. 1: 4) on the obverse, and on the other hand, the horse head (the old Punic symbol of Carthage) on the reverse (Fig. 1: 4); on another coin, a personification appeared, sometimes combined with FELIX KARTG (Fig. 1: 5). The local population certainly understood these images. It was not necessarily a provocation of Rome because recourse to older symbols in coinage was not unusual in late antiquity (cf. Berndt, Steinacher 2006; Berndt, Steinacher 2008a; Merrills, Miles 2010, 168–175; Ladich 2013; Steinacher, 181–187). Instead, it demonstrates a deliberately chosen image program. It was used only on copper coinage, thereby guaranteeing a wide distribution. However the metric system and the inscription may be interpreted, the image programme is part of the creation of Vandal history. The personification of Carthage in some mosaics points clearly in the same direction (Cat. Karlsruhe 2009, 205 nos. 136–137). The Vandals enlist the history of Carthage to legitimate their rule in this part of the Mediterranean.

There is another interesting point in the creation of memory in Vandal Period Africa: the sack of Rome in 455 by Geiseric. This worked in three ways: firstly by shocking the Empire, secondly by supply his warriors with booty, and thirdly by the annexation of Roman culture for his court. Most remarkable is the third point, and I will briefly focus on it. Procopius describes what happened: “And Geiseric, for no other reason than that he suspected that much money would come to him, set sail for Italy with a great fleet. And going up to Rome, since no one stood in his way, he took possession of the palace...Geiseric took Eudoxia captive, together with Eudocia and Placidia, the children of herself and Valentinian, and placing an exceedingly great amount of gold and other imperial treasure in his ships sailed to Carthage, having spared neither bronze nor anything else whatsoever in the palace. He plundered also the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and tore off half of the roof. Now, this roof was of bronze of the finest quality, and since gold was laid over it exceedingly thickly, it shone as a magnificent and wonderful spectacle. But of the ships with Geiseric, one, which was bearing the statues, was lost, they say, but with all others, the Vandals reached port in the harbor





1



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Fig. 3. 1 – Architrave with inscription from an annexe of the Church of Henchir el-Gousset near Feriana (TN): ANNO VICESIMO VI DOMNI REGIS TRASAMVNDI; 2 – Tombstone from El Erg, region of Thelepte (TN) with the inscription: FORTVNATIANA FIDELIS IN CHR(IST)O VIXIT IN PACE ANN(OS) XVI DEPOSITA SVB DIE XIII K(A)L(ENDA)S FREBRVARIAS ANN(O) XXII D(OMINI) N(OSTRI) REGIS THRASAMVNDI (after Cat. Karlsruhe 2009, p. 188 and p. 194)

of Carthage” (Proc. BV I,5)<sup>4</sup>. Maria R.-Alföldi suspected that even the Lupa was part of the booty (R.-Alföldi 2011, 68). One can argue that the statues were carried off only because of their material value, but I think this must be seen in another context. The statues were part of Roman history – the glory of the Empire. Many had, themselves, been booty. They were the visualization of beauty and the superior education of the Roman upper class. The latter was especially valued as a distinction from the barbarians (Geary 2002, 81; Castritius 2007, 151). Bernhard Andreae thinks that the bronze statue of a dancing satyr (now in the Museo del Satiro, Mazara del Vallo, Sicily), found in 1998 in the strait between Sicily and Tunisia near the island of Pantelleria, roughly 85 km southwest of Mazara del Vallo and 84 km northeast of Cap Bon, was part of this booty as was the bronze foot of an elephant, a fragment of an elephant quadriga (Fig. 4) (Andreae 2009). The satyr is of particular interest because it seems to be the work of one of the most renowned Attic sculptors of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Praxiteles. Some of his works were praised in contemporary written sources. Andreae suggests that the satyr was most probably on display in Rome, and identifies the statue with the “nobilem Satyrum” mentioned by Pliny (NH 34,69). A ship coming from Greece with the figure would travel via the Adriatic Sea or the Strait of Messina. But the findspot was southwest of Sicily. Andreae argues that a statue of this quality was *res extra commercium* – unsalable – and so it could only have come to this ship as a result of violence or robbery. Also, the only pillaging reported after Pliny’s mention of the statue was that led by Geiseric in 455. Whatever one may think about the identification of the satyr of Mazara del Vallo with the one mentioned by Pliny, Procopius quite clearly specifies that Geiseric’s goal in despoiling the Palatium was to take valuable and imperial objects for his own capital (R.-Alföldi 2011, 68). The plunder was not only chosen on the basis of material value but much more for its symbolic value: this was an attempt to create memory actively. A second act was the kidnapping of the imperial daughters; this was not only an attempt to collect a ransom, because Geiseric married Eudocia to his son Hunerich (Castritius 2007, 105, 107, 116–117). Instead, this was another way to enrol themselves in Roman Imperial history (Berndt 2007, 227–233; Castritius 2007, 147).

What is surprising is the almost complete absence of the *gentes*’ name in the visualized programme. The gens Vandal is not named on a single coin (cf. Berndt, Steinacher 2006; Berndt, Steinacher 2008a; Ladich 2013). It appears only in a few official documents, e.g. an edict and a law by King Huneric from 483 and 484 (Steinacher 2016, 251, 253, 289). As far as I know, there is only one object with the inscription +GEILAMIR REX VANDALORVM ET ALANORVM, which is the

<sup>4</sup> Translation according to: Procopius in seven volumes: II: History of the wars, book III and IV. The Loeb Classical Library 81, Cambridge MA 1953, p. 47–49.

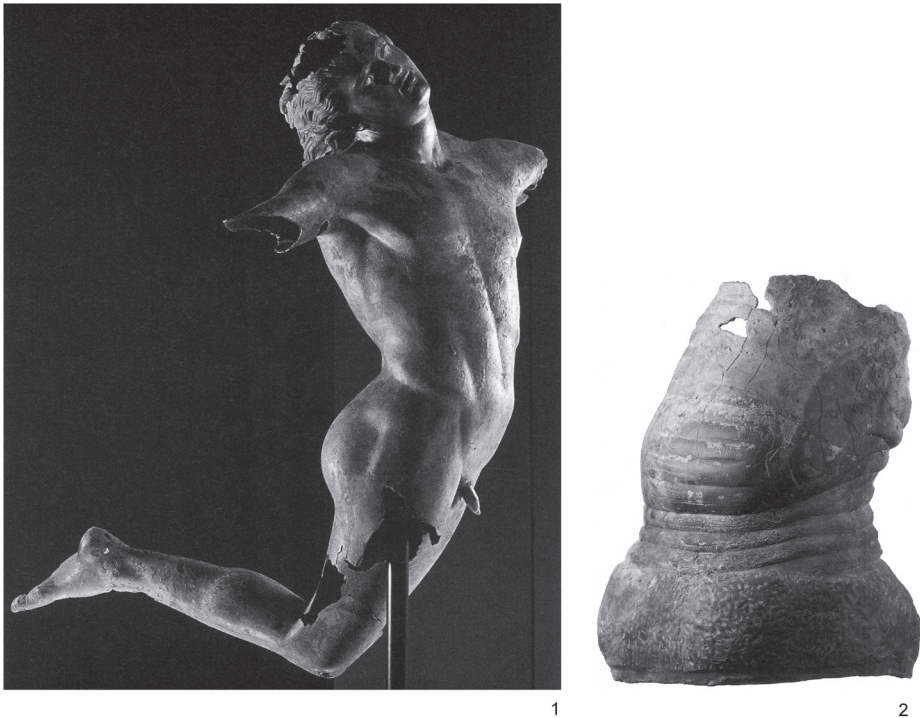


Fig. 4. 1 – Bronze statue of a Satyr (c. 2,5m), probably by Praxiteles, 2 – bronze elephant foot (life-sized), possibly from an elephant quadriga found in the strait between Sicily and Tunisia near the island of Pantelleria (after Andreae 2009, 49 fig 1 and 80 fig. 32)

silver plate of the last Vandal king Geilamir. The plate was a *largatio* given by the king to his soldiers or diplomats. This title (*Rex vandalarum et alanorum*) wasn't used from Hilderic to Geilamir (de Longpérier 1879; Morrisson et al. 1988; Steinacher 2013; Steinacher 2016, 289; Steinacher 2018) but its absence could be due to the paucity of the archaeological evidence. However, the title's use could also be a last attempt to connect with the old relevance of the Vandal kingdom, especially because Geilamir was a usurper who needed legitimation (Castritius 2007, 159–162; Merrills, Miles 2010, 228–233; Steinacher 2016, 292–298).

In contrast to this scarcity in official documents, the names of the *gentes* were used in individual memorials. Two tombstones are known from *Hippo Regius* (Annaba / Bône, DZ), one dedicated to ERMENGON SVABA (Fig. 5: 1), the other to SVABILA. From *Ammaedra* (Haïdra, TN) the grave inscription of the Vandal episcope (bishop) Victorinus (Fig. 5: 2) is conveyed (Quast 2005, 292 with further reading. – For Ermengon cf. Marec 1950, 62–65 with fig. on p. 67; for Victorinus

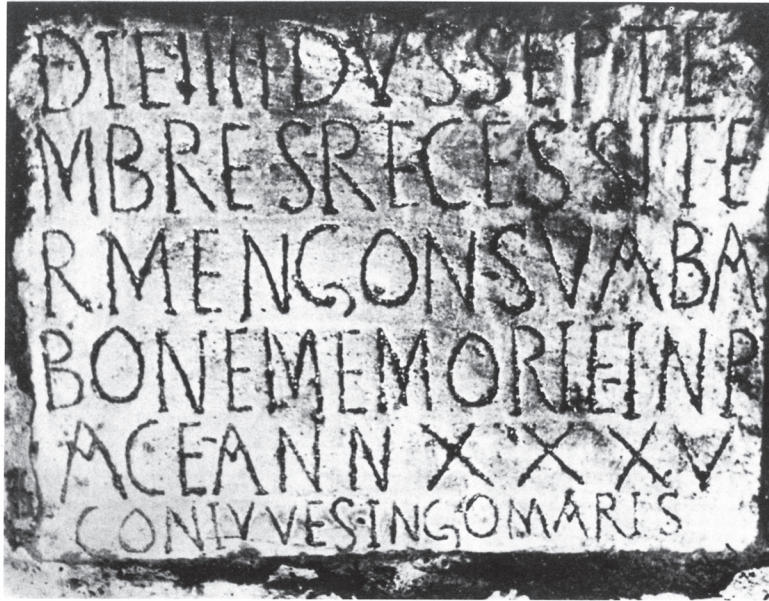
cf. Duval 1975, 87–88 no 58). Additionally, in reference to this, I argued more than 15 years ago that, with their grave furnishings, some families displayed “traditions” older than the Vandal kingdom in Africa (Quast 2005, 278–286; Eger 2012, 298–323).

### III. CONCLUSIONS

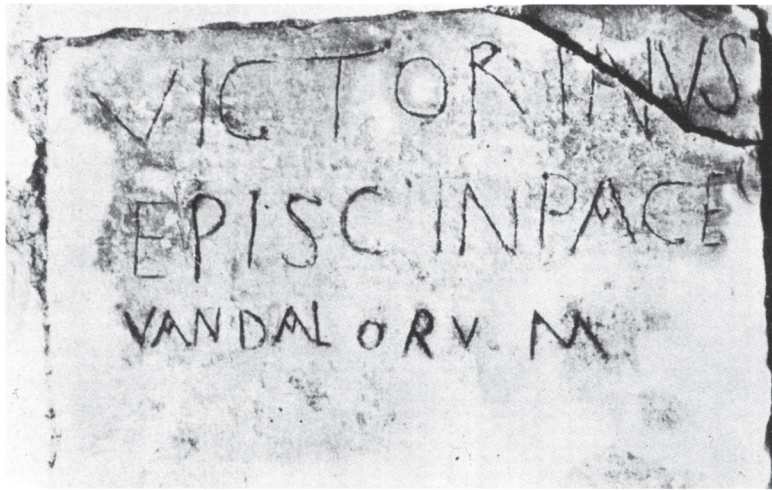
In Vandal Period Africa, the images used by official institutions demonstrate a special form of memory creation in that they unite different traditions. At first glance, this could give the impression that there was not a real creation of memory for the Vandal kingdom because the use of different traditions might seem a bit confused. But quite the contrary appears to be true. The created memory is addressed to the various groups living under the Vandal rule. It is addressed to the former Roman administration, to the inhabitants of Carthage and Christianity as a whole. In the last mentioned case there smouldered a conflict between Catholics and Arians (Steinacher 2016, 114–118, 251–258), but this, obviously, was not visualized. The “origin” of the Vandals, too, was nowhere part of the official visualisation<sup>5</sup>. Without a doubt, the linkage to Carthage or Punic symbols is an attempt to involve the local population. Other symbols address the army and the local Roman administration. The latter are connected to the struggle to enlist as “legal partner” of the Empire. Only in the private sphere could the tradition of a family genealogy be seen, most probably needed for legitimation – and, if there was a need for this, it points to internal conflicts. But the number of archaeological features and written sources overall are scarce. The combination of different traditions in an act of memory creation could be interpreted as a successful attempt to unify the different groups under the new label “Vandalic”. Unification was vitally important to assure a future. Geiseric and his successors were not the only ones who understood this principle. Theoderic the Great strove to bring diverse groups together, as did Clovis, who started this with the burial of his father Childeric (Wiemer 2018, 193–329; Quast 2015). In Vandal Africa, the creation of memory was only one part of this attempt, but a very useful one. Even if we are not able to tell the masterstory of the Vandal kingdom, we are at least able to distil essential parts of it on the basis of archaeological sources.

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<sup>5</sup> Procopius (BV I, 22) mentioned ambassadors from the native land of the Vandals coming to Geiseric. Their purpose was to convince him and his retinue not to return. It is unclear if this truly happened and was a part of Vandal oral history or whether it was an invention or rhetorical figure by Procopius. From Sietesz (woj. podkarpackie, PL) two amphorae “spathéion” are known, sometimes set in the context of the returning ambassadors (Cat. Warsaw 2004, p. 353 no. 31). But it seems doubtful that someone returning from North Africa would really choose to carry amphorae such a long way instead of objects of lower weight and higher value.



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Fig. 5. 1 – Tombstone from Hippo Regius (Annaba/Bône, DZ), dedicated to the Suebian woman Ermengon: DIE TERTIA IDVS SEPTE | MBRES RECESSIT E | RMENGON SVABA | BON(A)E MEMORI(A)E IN P | ACE ANN(OS) TRIGINTA V(IXIT) CONIVVES INGOMARIS;

2 – Grave inscription of the Vandal episcopus Victorinus from Ammaedra (Haidra, TN):

VICTORINVS EPISC IN PACE VANDALORVM.

Without scale. – After Koenig 1980, pl. 50

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