KEY CONFLICTS OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

This series is composed of introductory-level texts that provide an essential foundation for the study of important wars and conflicts of classical antiquity. Each volume provides a synopsis of the main events and key characters, the consequences of the conflict, and its reception over time. An important feature is the critical overview of the textual and archaeological sources for the conflict, which is designed to teach both historiography and the methods that historians use to reconstruct events of the past. Each volume includes an assortment of pedagogical devices that students can use to further their knowledge and inquiry of the topics.
For T. D. Barnes and Walter Goffart
CONTENTS

MAPS ix ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS xi

Prologue BEFORE THE GATES OF ROME © 1

1. The Goths Before Constantine © 14

2. The Roman Empire and Barbarian Society © 34

3. The Search for Gothic Origins © 43

4. Imperial Politics and the Rise of Gothic Power © 71

5. Goths and Romans, 332–376 © 100

6. The Battle of Adrianople © 123

7. Theodosius and the Goths © 144

8. Alaric and the Sack of Rome © 154

Epilogue THE AFTERMATH OF ALARIC © 178

Glossary of ancient sources 185

Biographical glossary 191 Further reading 205

Notes 209 Index 219

vii
MAPS

1 The Italian peninsula  page 3

2 The Roman Empire at the time of Septimius Severus  16

3 The Roman Empire of Diocletian  72

4 Asia Minor, the Balkans and the Black Sea region, showing Roman cities and Sântana-de-Mureș/Černjachov sites mentioned in the text  74
TO QUOTE WITH APPROVAL GEOFFREY ELTON AT THE BEGINNING OF the twenty-first century may seem perverse, even lunatic. Yet for all that Elton was (to borrow a phrase from Averil Cameron) a ‘dinosaur of English positivism’, his *Practice of History* got one thing absolutely right: the historian has a duty to make history intelligible and, however complex the past may have been, there is nothing in it that cannot be explained to any audience if only we choose the right words. This book aims to do no more than that, to make the first two centuries of Romano-Gothic relations comprehensible to everyone – student, scholar, and aficionado alike – and to explain why, for the specialist at least, Gothic history remains a subject of painful controversy. As an aid to readers for whom this material is unfamiliar, I have included glossaries of persons named in the book and of ancient authors used, and while specialists may find that my citations of primary sources are insufficiently abbreviated, I hope it will help those who are just beginning the advanced study of late antiquity to easily locate the texts I have used.

Even in a book so short, one incurs debts of gratitude to family, friends, and colleagues. I have long relied on my father and my wife for first reactions to my work, and both have read this text, parts of it repeatedly. Andrew Gillett read the whole book in draft; Guy Halsall, Andy Merrills, and Philipp von Rummel each read several chapters; all saved me from error and gave me much food for thought. Sebastian Brather, Florin Curta, and Noel Lenski advised on points of detail and Dr. Alexandru Popa provided me with a copy of his invaluable – but in North America inaccessible – work on the stone architecture of the *barbaricum*. Beatrice Rehl offered sympathetic editorial guidance throughout. Final work on the volume took place while I held a Solmsen Fellowship at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The maps were drawn by the Cartographic
xii ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Services Laboratory at the University of Tennessee, under the direction of Will Fontanez, and I am grateful to the Department of History for the subvention which allowed them to be produced at short notice.

I owe my interest in this topic to the Gothic and Roman halves of my education. Tim Barnes and Walter Goffart taught me different things about studying late antiquity, but without them I would neither have wanted, nor been able, to write the volume which I now dedicate to them.