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ROME'S GOTHIC WARS

FROM THE THIRD CENTURY TO ALARIC



MICHAEL KULIKOWSKI

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE-KNOXVILLE



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For T. D. Barnes and Walter Goffart

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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

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