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EUGIPPIUS AND THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE PROVINCE OF NORICUM RIPENSE

BY CHARLES CHRISTOPHER MIEROW

Comparatively little is known of the life of Eugippius, apart from the information contained in his *Vita Severini*. It is clear that he had long felt a deep interest in Severinus, whom he revered as an inspired teacher. Yet the idea of handing down the story of his life to posterity came to him suddenly, as he was reading the biography of a certain monk named Bassus¹ contained in a letter written by a layman of noble family. While he was turning the matter over in his mind and discussing it with some of his friends, the writer of the letter learned of the opportunity thus afforded him for composing a new biography, and asked Eugippius to furnish him with the details of the saint's life.² This Eugippius reluctantly prepared to do, quite naturally distressed that a layman, unacquainted with the facts and totally out of sympathy perhaps with the very incidents and teaching that meant so much to him, should presume to write the biography from a purely secular viewpoint.

And so it happened that Eugippius finally sent his *commematorium*, or brief outline of the chief events in the life of Severinus, together with a list of chapter heads corresponding to the principal divisions of the work, not to the author of the life of Bassus, but to his ecclesiastical friend Paschasius, deacon of a church in Rome,³ apparently in willing compliance with the latter's request.⁴ The *commematorium* was intended merely as material from which Paschasius was to compose a life, adorning the narrative with the rhetorical flourishes so greatly admired in that day.⁵ Eugippius

¹ *Ad Pasch.* 1. In all references the numbers refer to chapter and section of Mommsen's edition (Berlin, 1898) in the *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*; *Ad Pasch.* means the *Epistola ad Paschasium* and *cap.* refers to the *Eugippii Commematorii capitula*

² *Ibid.* 2.

³ *Ibid.* 9.

⁴ *praecipis, ut commemoratorium vel indicia vitae saepe dicti sancti Severini transmitterem (Ad Pasch. 3).*

⁵ *quae donec in tuae constructionis libellum transire mereantur, nequaquam animum recensentis offendant (loc. cit.; see also Ad Pasch. 4 and 5 and xlvi. 6).*

asks his friend to add an account of the miracles and cures that attended the transportation of the saint's body from Noricum to Italy¹ and those that were afterward wrought at his tomb, adding that Deogratias, the bearer of the letter, is well informed of these and can impart them to Paschasius by word of mouth.² Possibly the *commemoratorium* as originally written ended with the forty-fourth chapter, in which case the remaining chapters,³ dealing with the incidents mentioned above, were written by Eugippius when the work was returned to him.

Paschasius deserves credit for realizing that flowery language and an intricate style could add nothing to the simple and straightforward account that Eugippius had sent him,⁴ and that furthermore his friend could speak from first-hand knowledge.⁵ Accordingly he left the biography untouched.

The date of composition is fixed by an allusion in the introductory letter to Paschasius which was sent with the *commemoratorium*. Eugippius states that the life of Bassus was brought to his attention two years before, "namely in the consulship of Inportunus,"⁶ that is, in 509. The life of Severinus then was finished in the year 511. At that time Eugippius was presbyter-abbot of the Severinus monastery near Naples, succeeding a certain Marcian.⁷

¹ See xlv and xlvi.

² *verbo commendavimus intimanda (Ad Pasch. 6).*

³ The request quoted in note 4 above certainly gives the impression that the life of Severinus here mentioned ended with the account of the bringing of the saint's body to Monte Feltre, and indeed the final sentence of xlv: *sancti itaque corpusculum ad castellum nomine Montem Feletrem multis emensis regionibus apportatum est*, may well have been intended to bring the narrative to a close. That xlv and xlvi were also written by Eugippius is, of course, clear from the personal allusions in xlv. 2 and xlvi. 1, but they may have been inserted before the *Habes, egregie Christi minister, commemoratorium* after Paschasius declared his intention of adding nothing to the account.

⁴ *quia tu haec, quae a me narranda poscebas, elocutus es simplicius, explicasti facilius, nihil adiciendum labori vestro studio nostro credidimus (Ad Eugipp. 3).*

⁵ *Ad Eugipp. 3.*

⁶ *Ante hoc ferme biennium, consulatu scilicet Inportuni (Ad Pasch. 1).*

⁷ *Marcianum monachum, qui postea presbyter ante nos monasterio praefuit (xxxvii. 1); Eugippius abbas Lucullanensis oppidi Neapoli Campaniae . . . ad quendam Paschasium diaconum libellum de vita sancti Severini transmissum brevi stilo composuit (Isidore, De viris illustribus, 34).*

There are extant several letters addressed to him by contemporaries: one from Fulgentius of Ruspe,¹ a dedication written by Dionysius Exiguus, perhaps in 527,² and two epistles from Fulgentius Ferrandus, deacon of Carthage, written in 533.³ Cassiodorus in his *Institutiones divinarum litterarum*, written in 543, speaks of Eugippius as though he were no longer alive⁴ at that time. We may set the date of his death, then, between the years 533 and 543.

He wrote also a collection of excerpts from the writings of St. Augustine, still extant and of value as a check upon the readings of manuscripts containing Augustine's works. Isidore⁵ mentions further a rule which Eugippius wrote for his monks, but no trace of it remains.

Of some of the incidents related in the *Life of Severinus* Eugippius was an eyewitness. He was present at the death of Severinus⁶ and presumably had been with him in his monastery at Favianis for some time before. He saw the saint's tomb opened, six years later,⁷ and formed one of the company that journeyed with the body to Italy.⁸ His devotion to his master was well known,⁹ and though it is not clear when he became personally acquainted with Severinus, it seems reasonable to assume that one who so soon afterward became the head of the order held no small place in the affections of its founder during his lifetime.

The biography is grounded on a deep faith¹⁰ in the holy man whose life is its theme, and its sources are facts personally known to the

¹ *domino beatissimo et plurimum venerabili ac toto caritatis affectu desiderabili sancto fratri et compresbytero Eugypio* (Migne, Vol. 65, p. 344).

² *domino sanctissimo et a me plurimum venerando sacro Eugipio presbytero domino sanctissimo et plurimum venerando* (Mabillon, *Vet. anal.*, ed. 1723, p. 59).

³ See Mai, *Nova collectio*, 3. 2, p. 169, and Reifferscheid, *Anecdotorum Casinensium*. Ind. lect. Univ. Vratislav, 1871/2, No. VII, p. 6.

⁴ *presbyteri Eugippii opera necessario legere debetis, quem nos quoque vidimus* (*Inst. div. litt.* 23); and see Büdinger, *S. Ber. Akad. Wien*, XCI (1878), 793 ff.

⁵ *scripsit et regulam monachis consistentibus in monasterio sancti Severini, quam isdem moriens quasi testamentario iure reliquit* (*De viris illustribus* 34).

⁶ *nobis vix respondentibus quievit in domino* (xliii. 9).

⁷ *fragrantia omnes nos circumstantes accepit* (xliv. 6).

⁸ xlv. 2.

⁹ *facilius virtutes magistrorum a discipulis exponuntur* (*Ad Eugipp.* 3)

¹⁰ *habet plane certum fundamentum solius fidei* (*Ad Pasch.* 5).

author and anecdotes told him by older men out of their own experience.¹ Whenever it is possible Eugippius goes for information to those who are in a position to speak with authority. In describing the miraculous detection of sacrilegious persons at Cucullis when their candles refused to burn, while those of the devout worshipers were kindled from on high in answer to the saint's prayer, Eugippius says: "This I have learned from the marvelous account of Marcian, a citizen of that place, afterward our presbyter."² Again, when he tells of the temporary restoration of Silvinus to life he adds: "These things that I have related I learned from the story of Marcus the subdeacon and Maternus the doorkeeper."³ And it may well be that Deogratias, whose knowledge of the miraculous cures effected at the saint's tomb is mentioned in the letter to Paschasius,⁴ supplied Eugippius with many other details as well. The author used no literary sources, and aside from frequent biblical quotations there are references to but two books: the *Life of Ambrose* by Paulinus⁵ and the *Dialogue* of Sulpicius Severus.⁶ These references are mere passing allusions to incidents related by them of other holy men.

Eugippius modestly disclaims any literary ability,⁷ and Cassiodorus while recommending his works for their content speaks of the author as "not particularly learned in secular literature."⁸ Isidore is perhaps thinking rather of the condensation of material than the style of expression when he says that the book is written *brevi stilo*.⁹ But we may be thankful that the simply written account is free from the *disciplinae liberalis constructio* and the *grammatici culminis decor*¹⁰ which the author sadly confesses that he lacks. It is a clearly written account without superfluous rhetorical adornments, and if at times the constructions are somewhat unusual and we find the story rambling on, incident after incident, with many

¹ *ex notissima nobis et cottidiana maiorum relatione (Ad Pasch. 2).*

² xi. 2.

³ xvi. 6.

⁴ *Ad Pasch. 6.*

⁵ xxxvi. 2 contains a reference to c. 43 of the *vita Ambrosii*.

⁶ xxxvi. 3 contains a quotation from *Dial.* 1. 20. 7 and 9.

⁷ *quantum ad nos attinet ignaros liberalium litterarum (Ad Pasch. 2).*

⁸ *virum quidem non usque adeo saecularibus litteris eruditum (Inst. div. litt. 23).*

⁹ *De viris ill. 34.*

¹⁰ *Ad Pasch. 4.*

an adverb and conjunction to hold the various disconnected statements together, yet no one can justly accuse Eugippius of exalting the form above the content, or of obscurity of statement.

This is not the place for a discussion of the author's style¹ in detail but it may be well to call attention to one or two noteworthy characteristics. There are many passages of great beauty in which the manner of expression rather than the language itself is often reminiscent of biblical phraseology. So the opening sentence: *Tempore quo Attila, rex Hunnorum, defunctus est,*² has a rhythm and a directness that remind us unmistakably of Isaiah's "In the year that king Uzziah died." Similar touches of notable beauty of expression are:

*Nesciunt enim latere quae bona sunt.*³

*dum commutat mores in melius.*⁴

*cum coepissent fide magis quam gressibus proficisci.*⁵

*omnem paupertatis suae sufficientiam.*⁶

His pious exclamations and infrequent flights of rhetoric are amusing to modern taste in their intensity and exaggeration. Take, for example, his comment on the miracle of the candles:⁷ *o clemens potentia creatoris cereos animosque flammantis! accensus est ignis in cereis et refulsit in sensibus.* And again, in his letter to Paschasius, he says:⁸ *nos de firmissima petra illo quo profuis orationis melle recreabis.* And in speaking of the penitence of certain men he says of them:⁹ *precabantur humiliter confitentes corda sua lapidibus esse duriora.* As a moral to the story of the monks who were providentially guided home by a bear when lost in the mountains in mid-winter, Eugippius remarks:¹⁰ *ostendens tanto ducatus officio, quid homines hominibus praestare debeant quantumque caritatis impendere cum desperantibus iter bestia saeva monstraverit.* And again, after relating how Severinus handed over certain refractory monks to Satan as a punishment, the author naïvely adds:¹¹ *quo facto et sancto*

¹ On this subject see *CP*, VIII, 436-44 ("Adverbial Usage in Eugippius"), and *PAPA*, XLIV, xl-xlii ("Some Noticeable Characteristics of the Style of Eugippius").

² i. 1; see Isa. 6:1.

³ iv. 8.

⁶ xxx. 1.

⁹ xxx. 5.

⁴ xxxiv. 2.

⁷ xi. 5.

¹⁰ xxix. 3.

⁵ xxix. 2.

⁸ *Ad Pasch.* 3.

¹¹ xxxvi. 4.

viro reverentiae terror adcrevit et ceteros maior disciplinae metus optinuit.

But the story must be read as a whole to be appreciated. It has a charm of its own, and through the quaint descriptions and all but disconnected anecdotes that make up the biography we can discern the credulous, kindly, devoted, old monk, handing down to the memory of posterity the life and deeds of his revered master St. Severinus "so that all to whom the story may come may have his presence, and may feel that he is somehow tarrying with them."¹

I. THE DANUBE PROVINCES

Eugippius indicates in the opening chapter of his biography the scene of Severinus' chief activity: "the region of Noricum Ripense and the Pannonias."² In this comparatively limited area, and particularly in the various towns along the Danube, most of the events here recorded took place. The neighboring province of Noricum Mediterraneum also plays no unimportant part in this narrative, but of the Raetias and Moesia³ there is only casual mention.

The province of Noricum Ripense extended along the right or southern bank of the Danube, between the river and the Noric Alps, and was bounded on one side by Raetia Secunda and the river Inn (*Aenus*) and on the other by the confines of Pannonia Superior—the district included in the modern province of Carinthia in Austria. Noricum Mediterraneum lay directly to the south, beyond the Noric Alps. This latter province is meant whenever Eugippius speaks of Noricum without a qualifying adjective.⁴

The province of Pannonia was east of Noricum. The Danube formed its northern and eastern boundary (from Vienna to Singidunum) and it extended to Illyricum and Moesia on the south. The mountainous western part of Pannonia was called Superior,⁵ the level eastern part Inferior.⁶

¹ *Ad Eugipp.* 2.

² *vicinia Norici Ripensis et Pannoniorum* (i. 1).

³ xliv. 4; xli. 1.

⁴ So in cap. xvii, xxi, xxv, xxix, and in xvii. 4; xxi. 2; xxi. 4; xxv. 1; xxix. 1; xxxvii. 1. Noricum Ripense is specifically mentioned in *Ad Pasch.* 9; i. 1; xi. 1.

⁵ *Ad Pasch.* 9.

⁶ v. 1.

Rhaetia or Raetia¹ was the country west of Noricum, extending from the Alps to the Danube, the modern Grisons and Tyrol. The southern part of this district was called Raetia Prima, the northern part (Vindelicia) Raetia Secunda.²

II. RIVERS

Besides the Danube, whose waters formed the natural northern boundary of Noricum Ripense and afforded ready means of transportation between the various towns that had grown up along its banks, Eugippius mentions but three other streams, the Aenus,³ the Businca,⁴ and the Tiguntia.⁵ The *Aenus flumen*, the largest and most important of these, is a tributary of the Danube from the south, the modern river Inn, emptying into the greater stream between Batavis, now Passau, and Boiodurum (Innstadt). The *Businca fluvius* was a small stream of Raetia, flowing into the Danube near the town of Quintanis (Osterhofen or Künzen). The *Tiguntia rivus* was in the neighborhood of the city of Favianis, located between Tulln and Lorch on the Danube.

III. CITIES

The episodes related in the biography center about a comparatively few towns, nearly all of them river-settlements and most of them on the Danube: Asturis, Batavis, Boiotro, Comagenis, Cucullis, Favianis, Ioviaco, Iuvao, Lauriacum, Quintanis, and Tiburnia. Mention is also made of a *habitaculum quod Burgum appellabatur ab accolis, uno a Favianis distans miliario*⁶ to which Severinus was accustomed to go when he wished to avoid the crowds that followed him, and of a more remote retreat called by the somewhat vague name of ad Vineas.⁷

ASTURIS⁸ on the Danube was in the extreme northeastern corner of Noricum Ripense, the modern Klosterneuburg, or thereabouts. In this little town Severinus first lived upon his arrival in Noricum and it was taken and destroyed by the barbarians shortly after his departure.

¹ iii. 3; xli. 1.

² xv. 1.

³ iii. 3; xix. 1; xxii. 1.

⁴ xv. 1.

⁵ iv. 4.

⁶ Perhaps this is the *proximo a Favianis vico* mentioned in viii. 2.

⁷ iv. 6.

⁸ Cap. i; i. 1; i. 5.

COMAGENIS,¹ near Tulln, was a town near Asturis, on the Danube, and here Severinus stayed for a time after the destruction of that city. Comagenis was then closely guarded by a garrison of barbarians located within the walls "who had entered into an agreement with the Romans."² The town was virtually in a state of siege, as none were allowed to enter or depart.³ From these unwelcome protectors against the enemy outside the inhabitants were providentially freed by an earthquake by night which caused the barbarians to flee in great terror, slaying each other in the confusion and darkness. There is no account of the subsequent abandonment and destruction of Comagenis. At a later time, perhaps as much as twenty-seven years afterward,⁴ Eugippius visited Comagenis again, and while he was there a Rugian noble came from across the Danube to bring his son to the holy man for treatment. So it would seem that this was one of the few towns on the Danube that had escaped destruction, and that at the time of this latter incident it was, like Favianis, in the hands of the Rugi.⁵

Larger and more important than either of the towns mentioned above was FAVIANIS,⁶ once erroneously identified with Vienna. It was situated on the Danube between Tulln and Lorch, perhaps near Mautern or Oeling. Just outside the walls of this city⁷ was the first and the greatest monastery that Severinus had founded. Here he lived⁸ when he was not journeying about from place to place as the needs of the oppressed and suffering called him, and here it was that he died. When Favianis is first mentioned it appears to be still nominally a Roman city, with a guard of soldiers under a tribune

¹ Cap. ii and xxxiii; i. 3; iii. 1; xxxiii. 1.

² *barbarorum intrinsecus consistentium, qui cum Romanis foedus inierant, custodia servabatur artissima* (i. 4).

³ *nullique ingrediendi aut egrediendi facilis licentia praestabatur* (i. 4).

⁴ If the incident related in xxxiii is placed in chronological order, it occurred at least as late as 480, or the story of the prophecy told in xxxii loses its point. The first visit of Severinus to Comagenis took place not long after Attila's death (453).

⁵ See the opening sentences of xlii. 1 and xxxi. 1.

⁶ Cap. iii; iii. 1; iv. 7; viii. 2; x. 1; xxii. 4; xxiii. 1; xxxi. 1; xxxi. 6; xlii. 1.

⁷ *antiquum . . . et omnibus maius monasterium suum iuxta muros oppidi Favianis* (xxii. 4).

⁸ *Favianis degens in antiquo suo monasterio* (xxx. 6); *Favianis, iuxta quod sanctus Severinus, ut retuli commanebat* (xlii. 1).

Mamertinus.¹ Later we find that it has become tributary to the Rugians² and that it has been presented to Ferderuch by his brother Feva, king of the Rugi.³ This Ferderuch afterward plundered the monastery, when Severinus was dead, carrying off all but the walls "which," as Eugippius remarks, "he was unable to carry across the Danube."⁴

More than one hundred miles⁵ up the river from Favianis were the towns of BATAVIS⁶ (Passau) and BOIOTRO⁷ or BOIODURUM (Innstadt), situated at the confluence of the Danube and the Inn. Because he was so frequently summoned hither by the citizens who were subject to incessant raids by the Alamanni,⁸ Severinus had founded a much smaller monastery and basilica at Innstadt, just across the river from Passau.⁹ At Batavis was stationed one of the only detachments of Roman soldiery still remaining along the *limes*, the so-called Batavian cohort¹⁰ which had given the town its name. But their numbers were few and they could do little against the repeated attacks of the barbarians. On one occasion¹¹ Hunimund, king of the Suevi, invaded the town and, while almost all were occupied in the harvest, killed forty who had remained on guard.¹² The barbarians followed a presbyter as he fled for refuge to the monastery and slew him in the baptistery itself.¹³ Later the inhabitants of the neighboring town of Quintanis were obliged to take refuge in Batavis, and by this increased population one attack of the Alamanni was warded off.¹⁴ Thereupon Severinus urged the victors

¹ iv. 2.

² *in oppidis sibi tributariis atque vicinis, ex quibus unum erat Favianis* (xxx. 1).

³ *Ferderuchus a fratre suo Rugorum rege Feva ex paucis, quae super ripam Danuvii remanserant, oppidis unum acceperat Favianis* (xlii. 1).

⁴ *parietes tantum, quos Danuvio non potuit transferre, dimisit* (xliv. 3).

⁵ See xxii. 4.

⁶ Cap. xxvii; xix. 1; xxii. 4; xxvii. 1; see also xx. 1 and xxvii. 3.

⁷ xxii. 1; xxxvi. 1.

⁸ xix. 1.

⁹ *Batavis appellabatur oppidum inter utraque flumina, Aenum videlicet atque Danuvium, constitutum, ubi beatus Severinus cellulam paucis monachis solito more fundaverat* (xix. 1); *basilicae extra muros oppidi Batavini in loco nomine Boiotro trans Aenum fluvium constitutae, ubi cellulam paucis monachis ipse construxerat* (xxii. 1).

¹⁰ See xx. 1. This was the *cohors IX Bataavorum miliaria equitatu expl(oratorum)*.

¹¹ Perhaps in the year 470. See Iordanes *Getica* liii. 275.

¹² xxii. 4.

¹³ xxii. 5.

¹⁴ xxvii. 1.

to retreat while they could and to fall back upon Lauriacum. Many took his advice and those who stayed behind were slain or taken captive by the Thoringi shortly after and the town was destroyed.¹

The town of QUINTANIS² just mentioned was farther up the Danube in Raetia Secunda (Osterhofen or Künzen?). When its inhabitants could no longer hold out against the Alamanni they forsook their homes and migrated to the larger and presumably better fortified town of Batavis.

Some twenty miles below Batavis was IOVIACO,³ the modern Schlägen, on the Danube. Its inhabitants also were warned by Severinus to take refuge in some stronger city but refused to heed his advice. Thereupon the town was sacked by the Heruli, who led off the population into captivity and crucified the presbyter who had refused to leave when warned by Severinus.

The most important town on the Danube between Batavis and Favianis was LAURIACUM,⁴ the modern Lorch, near Ens. Here the remnants of the population of Quintanis and Batavis assembled,⁵ as many, at least, as obeyed Severinus, and here for a short time they were safe. But as soon as Feva, king of the Rugians, became aware of this centralization of forces on the part of the provincials, he set out with an army to take the city and scatter its inhabitants among the various towns tributary to himself,⁶ one of which, as has been noted,⁷ was Favianis. Severinus, journeying by night for a distance of twenty miles to meet the Rugians, persuaded their leader to advance no farther, but to intrust to him the peaceful distribution of the provincials among the various towns.⁸ Thus they were saved from possible robbery and ill treatment at the hands of their semi-barbarous overlords, and lived thereafter "in kindly alliance"⁹

¹ xxvii. 3 and see xxviii. 1.

² xv. 1; xxvii. 1.

³ *oppidi, quod Ioviaco vocabatur, viginti et amplius a Batavis milibus disparatum* (xxiv. 1).

⁴ Cap. xxx, xxxi; xviii. 1; xxvii. 2; xxviii. 1; xxx. 1; xxxi. 1; xxxi. 6.

⁵ *post excidium oppidorum in superiore parte Danuvii omnem populum in Lauriacum oppidum transmigrantem* (xxviii. 1).

⁶ xxxi. 1.

⁷ See above, p. 174.

⁸ xxxi. 2-6.

⁹ *benivola cum Rugis societate* (xxx. 6).

with their self-appointed protectors. The abandonment of Lauriacum may perhaps be dated 476 A.D.¹

Mention is made of three cities of Noricum Mediterraneum: Cucullis, Iuvao, and Tiburnia. Of these TIBURNIA, perhaps two hundred miles to the south of Lauriacum,² was the *metropolis Norici*.³ This city, more properly called Teurnia, corresponds to the modern S. Peter im Holz, about forty miles east of Lienz. The Ostrogoths, coming in from Pannonia, made a raid upon this city and carried off among other things the collection for the poor which the inhabitants had delayed sending to Severinus.⁴

IUVAO,⁵ now Salzburg, is mentioned as the scene of a miracle performed in the basilica at vespers.

CUCULLIS,⁶ probably the neighboring city of Kuchel, is likewise mentioned for the miracles Severinus performed there. The statement is made that some of the people at this place "persisted in impious sacrifices."⁷

IV. TRIBES OF BARBARIANS

The foregoing recital of sudden attacks almost invariably resulting in the destruction of property and the enslavement of the provincials, of feeble resistance and inadequate defense, and of the ultimate abandonment of town after town along the *limes*, clearly indicates how the land was overrun by marauding bands of barbarians: tribes as yet unsettled for the most part, and hostile to each other, but all alike ready to prey upon the all but defenseless inhabitants of a once strongly fortified border state. Often Eugippius speaks of them indiscriminately as *barbari*,⁸ *praedones*,⁹ or *latrones*.¹⁰ Again

¹ The incident related in the following chapter as having occurred *isdem temporibus* (xxxii. 1) may be dated early in the reign of Odoacer (476-93).

² *per ducenta ferme milia non ad sinistram devians, non ad dexteram viam demonstravit optabilem* (i.e., from the *summa Alpium cacumina* [xxix. 1] to Lauriacum) (xxix. 2).

³ xxi. 2.

⁴ xvii. 4.

⁵ xiii. 1.

⁶ Cap. xi; xi. 2.

⁷ *pars plebis in quodam loco nefandis sacrificiis inhaerebat* (xi. 2).

⁸ i. 4; ii. 1; iv. 1; ix. 1; x. 1; xi. 1; xvii. 4; xx. 1; xxvii. 1; xxx. 4; xxxvii. 2.

⁹ iv. 1.

¹⁰ x. 2.

we are explicitly informed of their nationality and learn how numerous and varied were the tribes that moved to and fro in the limited area of this little province—Alamanni, Goths, Heruli, Rugians, Suevi, and Thoringians.

Of them all, the RUGIANS,¹ located to the north of the Danube, were the only tribe who seem to have had a more or less stable form of government. They were, nominally at least, Christians, of the Arian belief,² and their kings treated Severinus with a respect that was perhaps not unmixed with fear and a kind of awe.³ Flaccitheus seems to have consulted him frequently, asking his advice in all times of perplexity or danger.⁴ So in the early days of his reign, fearing the Ostrogoths who were at that time dwelling in Pannonia, he asked permission to migrate to Italy, and interpreted their refusal as a threat. In his terror he came for encouragement to Severinus, and was told to have no further anxiety, because the Goths themselves would depart.⁵ His son Feletheus or Feva, who succeeded to the throne, imitated his father in regarding Severinus as an infallible counselor on all matters of importance,⁶ but was dissuaded from seeking his advice by his wife, Giso,⁷ an imperious queen whom Eugippius delights to brand as *feralis*, *noxia*, *impia*, *crudelissima*, and *pessima*. Even Ferderuch, Feva's brother, was accustomed to show the holy man a certain form of respect,⁸ although he was quick to disregard his warnings after Severinus died.⁹ One more member of the ruling family of the Rugians is mentioned by Eugippius: Frederic, the son of Feva and Giso, appears in the earlier chapters

¹ Cap. v, vi, viii, xxxi, xxxiii; v. 1 and 3; vi. 1 and 5; xxii. 2; xxxi. 1 and 6; xl. 1; xlii. 1; xlv. 4.

² See v. 2: *si nos una catholica fides annexerit*; and viii. 1: *inter cetera iniquitatis suae contagia etiam rebaptizare quosdam est conata catholicos*.

³ *beatissimum Severinum in suis periculis tamquam caeleste consulebat oraculum* (v. 1).

⁴ *pater noster Flaccitheus . . . experimento didicit sanctitatis tuae meritis se fuisse semper adiutum* (xlii. 2).

⁵ v. 2.

⁶ *Feletheus quoque rex, qui et Feva, memorati filius Flaccithei, paternam secutus industriam sanctum virum coepit pro regni sui frequentare primordiis* (viii. 1).

⁷ *hunc coniunx feralis et noxia, nomine Giso, semper a clementiae remediis retrahebat* (viii. 1).

⁸ *Ferderuchus ex more salutaturus accederet* (xlii. 1).

⁹ xlv. 1-3.

of the biography as a little child¹ and is later the instrument of heavenly vengeance, slaying his uncle Ferderuch after the sack of the great monastery at Favianis.²

The reign of Flaccitheus was a prosperous one,³ and under his son and successor the kingdom of the Rugians increased in power and wealth, so that the inhabitants of Passau and Innstadt were eager to establish trading relations with them.⁴ The Rugians gradually extended their jurisdiction to the south bank of the Danube, assuming a sort of protectorate over some of the towns⁵ and carrying off the inhabitants of others for redistribution among the cities of their own kingdom.⁶ Finally, in the year 486 Odoacer made war against the Rugi.⁷ In the first campaign Frederic was routed and Feletheus and Giso were carried to Ravenna as prisoners.⁸ The following year, when Frederic returned to his own land, Odoacer sent Onoulf against him and the Rugian leader was again forced to flee, this time taking refuge with king Theodoric at Sistova on the lower Danube.⁹ This is the story of the monarchy of the Rugians, as it is unfolded for us in the pages of the *Vita Severini*.

There are frequent allusions also to the ALAMANNI¹⁰ who came repeatedly into Noricum from the west. They seem to have had no stable government like that of the Rugi but ranged over the country in great straggling bands, plundering, slaying, and enslaving all whom they could catch outside the walled towns,¹¹ though not likely to stand firm if resistance was offered.¹² Not content with

¹ viii. 3-5.

² xliv. 3.

³ *igitur frustratis insidiis adversantum Flaccitheus incrementis auctus prosperioribus vitam rebus tranquillissimis terminavit* (v. 4).

⁴ xxii. 2.

⁵ xxxi. 1; also xxxi. 4: *cum sint nobis vicina ac tributaria oppida in quibus debeant ordinari*.

⁶ xxxi. 6.

⁷ xliv. 4.

⁸ See *Cuspiniani Anonymus sub anno 487*.

⁹ *ad Theodericum regem, qui tunc apud Novas civitatem provinciae Moesiae morabatur* (xliv. 4).

¹⁰ Cap. xix; xxvii; xix. 1; xxv 3; xxvii. 1 and 2; xxxi. 4.

¹¹ *hunc inquit populum . . . non patiar Alamannorum ac Thoringorum saeva depraedatione vastari vel gladio trucidari aut in servitium redigi* (xxx. 4); *ecce Alamannorum copiosissima multitudo feraliter cuncta vastavi* (xxv. 3).

¹² *adversus Alamannos instruxerunt aciem . . . qua congressione victis ac fugientibus Alamannis* (xxvii. 2).

raids directed against the border towns of Quintanis and Batavis,¹ the Alamanni sometimes pushed on into the heart of Noricum Mediterraneum.² Of course they had some semblance of organization. Mention is made of their king Gibuld,³ whose superstitious fear of Severinus was so great that he trembled violently in his presence and offered to grant any request the holy man might make.⁴ Severinus asked for the return of captives and future immunity from attack for the Roman province. The messenger sent by Severinus to the king's headquarters was kept for several days outside before his presence was announced, but when he finally obtained an audience, Gibuld graciously sent back seventy captives at once and promised to scour his realm for more and send them at a later time. This he actually did when the presbyter Lucillus was afterward sent to remind him of his promise.⁵ But the raids of the Alamanni, naturally enough, continued as before.

The THORINGI,⁶ who are mentioned together with the Alamanni,⁷ were situated outside of Noricum at this time. It was this tribe that came into Noricum from the northwest and took Batavis after most of its inhabitants had gone with Severinus to Lauriacum.⁸

The GOTH⁹ mentioned by Eugippius are the Ostrogoths, then living in Pannonia under their king Valamir and his brothers Thiudimer and Vidimer.¹⁰ In 473 Vidimer the Younger led a band of his countrymen to Gaul, where he joined forces with the Visigoths. Thiudimer invaded Illyricum and Macedonia and settled there. Theodoric led the rest of the Ostrogoths to Italy in 488. The citizens of Tiburnia in Noricum Mediterraneum seem to have had several

¹ *mansores oppidi Quintanensis, creberrimis Alamannorum incursionibus iam defessi, sedes proprias relinquentes in Batavis oppidum migraverunt* (xxvii. 1); *Batavis . . . ubi beatus Severinus cellulam . . . fundaverat, eo quod ipse illuc saepius . . . adveniret, maxime propter Alamannorum incursus assiduos* (xix. 1).

² See xxv.

⁴ xix. 2-3.

³ xix. 1.

⁵ xix. 3-5.

⁶ xxvii. 3; xxxi. 4.

⁷ *Alamannorum ac Thoringorum saeva depredatione* (xxxii. 4).

⁸ *Thoringis irruentibus . . . alii quidem trucidati, alii in captivitatem deducti* (xxvii. 3).

⁹ v. 1 and 2; xvii. 4.

¹⁰ See Iordanes *Getica* lii. 268.

skirmishes with the Gothi until they finally entered upon an agreement with them.¹

HUNIMUND² who made the raid upon Batavis when its inhabitants were in the fields is not the Ostrogothic king of that name, the son of Hermanaric,³ but Hunimund king of the Suevi, the bitter enemy of the Goths. This raid occurred probably in the year 470.⁴

The HERULI⁵ are mentioned but once, when they make a sudden attack upon Ioviaco.

The one great figure that appears at intervals in the story of Severinus and his activities in Noricum is ODOACER,⁶ the king of the Torcilingi, ruler of Italy from 476 until his death in 493 when he was treacherously murdered by Theodoric the Great. He appears first as a young man, clad in rough clothing of skins, so tall of stature that he is obliged to bend his head to avoid striking the ceiling of the holy man's cell to which he has come with a number of friends to see Severinus. The saint speeds him on his way to Italy with a prophecy of future wealth and influence.⁷ Again he appears at the height of his power,⁸ his fame on every tongue, this time sending a letter to the servant of God to bid him ask what he will in return for the prediction now fulfilled. And Severinus, asking for the pardon of a certain Ambrose then in exile, foretells the years of his power that still remain. The last time that mention is made of Odoacer⁹ it is to tell of his war against the Rugi, conducted by his brother Onoulf, and his decision to abandon Noricum Ripense, transporting all its inhabitants to Italy under the charge of Count Pierius, his captain of the guard.

V. THE MILITARY SITUATION

Enough has been said to show how precarious was the existence of the Danube towns when once they were left to their own resources: *adhuc Norici Ripensis oppida superiora constarent* aptly expresses

¹ *cives Tiburniae vario cum Gothis certamine dimicantes vix in iti foederis pactione . . . largitionem . . . hostibus obtulerunt* (xvii. 4).

² xxii. 4.

⁴ See *Getica* liii.

³ See *Getica* xlviii. 250.

⁵ Cap. xxiv; xxiv, 3.

⁶ Cap. vii, xxxii; vii, xxxii; xlv. 4.

⁷ *vade inquit ad Italiam, vade vilissimis nunc pellibus coopertus, sed multis cito plurima largiturus* (vii).

⁸ xxxii.

⁹ xlv. 4-6.

the situation, and to this statement Eugippius significantly adds: *et paene nullum castellum barbarorum vitaret incursus*.¹ Built to serve as strongholds along the frontier, they might long have continued to offer bold resistance to all barbarian attacks if still garrisoned with Roman legionaries, but this was no longer the case. It appears that for a time native soldiers were recruited to fill the places of the former guardians of the border and that they were paid by the imperial government.² But in the course of time this custom was discontinued and soon "the companies of soldiers were destroyed together with the frontier,"³ that is, when a town was taken and its defenders slain, no effort was made to retake the lost stronghold and to maintain the chain of forts intact. Eugippius relates a touching incident regarding the Batavian cohort, the last body of soldiery that still remained to represent the imperial power of Rome in the province of Noricum Ripense. Their support, too, was about to be withdrawn, and certain soldiers had been sent to Italy to bring back the last pay for their comrades in arms. On the journey, however, they were taken and killed by barbarians and no one knew of the deed until their dead bodies were washed ashore by the current.⁴

So it came about that there were in Noricum but small detachments of troops, indifferently trained, insufficiently equipped,⁵ ready to stand guard duty on the walls,⁶ but extremely loth to do battle outside.⁷ At Favianis the tribune Mamertinus felt that he had not enough soldiers to pursue a band of robbers who had carried off their booty from below the very walls of the city, and was only induced to fight by his faith in the holy man who promised him the victory.⁸ At Batavis also the soldiers were inspired more by his prophecies of success than by confidence in their own ability.⁹

¹ xi. 1.

² *multorum milites oppidorum pro custodia limitis publicis stipendiis alebantur* (xx. 1).

³ *qua consuetudine desinente simul militares turmae sunt deletae cum limite* (xx. 1).

⁴ xx.

⁵ *milites quidem habeo paucissimos . . . quamvis auxilium nobis desit armorum* (iv. 2).

⁶ *dispositis per muros ex more vigiliis* (xxx. 2).

⁷ *respondit . . . non audeo cum tanta hostium turba configere* (iv. 2).

⁸ iv. 2.

⁹ xxvii. 2.

Nothing outside the walls was safe from the enemy; crops,¹ cattle,² and men³ alike were seized by their roving bands. Sometimes the barbarians were content with what they could carry off from the fields, at others again they attempted to take the town itself by surprise, lurking in the surrounding forests with scaling ladders, and making the attack when the sentinels were off their guard. Lauriacum was saved from just such an attempt by the warning of Severinus.⁴ He was constantly on the alert against impending raids, urging the provincials to keep close watch, persuading them to fight when there was any chance of success, and providing for a safe retreat when no other course was expedient. His success in effecting the release of many captives taken by the various barbarian princes has already been mentioned.⁵ Influenced variously by fear, respect, gratitude, or genuine good-will, the rulers of almost every tribe acceded to his demands and returned scores of unfortunate provincials. Yet the large number of those who thus escaped slavery serves only to reveal the pitiable plight of the country as a whole. The proportion of those rescued must have been extremely small despite the numerous recorded intercessions on the part of Severinus. His influence over the barbarians is further shown by his success in persuading Feva to turn back with his army and to intrust to him the distribution of the provincials gathered at Lauriacum throughout the cities of the Rugi,⁶ with whom they lived thereafter *benivola . . . societate*.⁷ However much we may doubt their mutual good-will, the fact remains that Severinus in securing a peaceful apportionment saved these provincials from slavery and possible annihilation.

VI. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

Thus it was that Severinus strove to help the oppressed inhabitants of Noricum and to save them as much as possible *de cotidiana barbarie frequentissimae depraedationis*,⁸ to use the author's graphic phrase. Not the least part of their suffering, however, was occasioned by cold and hunger. Eugippius makes frequent allusions to

¹ xxx. 4.

² *Ibid.*

³ iv. 1; x. 1.

⁴ xxx.

⁵ See above, p. 179.

⁶ See above, p. 175.

⁷ xxxi. 6.

⁸ xliv. 5.

the extreme rigor of the climate, mentioning the freezing of the Danube so that it would afford support for wagons to cross on the ice,¹ the blocking of roads by snow,² the great drifts in the passes of the Noric Alps,³ and the spring freshets.⁴ As regards food, the people of Noricum tilled their fields outside the walls⁵ not knowing how soon some plundering band of barbarians might come to burn and destroy; and if they were happily saved from this calamity there was still danger that the blight of mildew⁶ or the devastation wrought by locusts⁷ might rob them of their harvests. In winter the grain ships might be caught in the ice of the Inn or the Danube⁸ and then famine stared them in the face. The unsettled condition of affairs quite naturally made it dangerous for traders to go about from town to town,⁹ so that it is easy to understand the eagerness shown by the people of Passau and Innstadt to establish commercial relations with the Rugi,¹⁰ for across the Danube there were regularly established markets and market-days.¹¹ The suffering of the poor was greatly aggravated when the population of two or more strongholds were forced to crowd together for protection, as was the case at Lauriacum after the abandonment of Quintanis and Batavis.

It was to remedy this desperate situation that Severinus early established among the various churches of the province a thoroughly organized and far-reaching system of tithes. These offerings of a tenth part of the grain and other food and of parcels of clothing for the poor were rigorously exacted and in almost all cases generously and cheerfully contributed by those who could ill afford to give from what little they possessed,¹² and any city that neglected to send its due share was promptly and drastically reminded of the omission.¹³ Severinus saw to it that the people of Noricum Mediterraneum should take part in this work of relief, writing letters to different cities

¹ iv. 10.⁵ xii. 5; xiv. 3.⁹ xxviii. 2.² xxix. 1.⁶ xviii.¹⁰ xxii. 2.³ xxix. 1.⁷ xii.¹¹ vi. 4.⁴ xv. 1.⁸ iii.

¹² *ut paene omnes per universa oppida vel castella pauperes ipsius industria pascerentur . . . cuius largitionem tam piam in pauperes plurimi contemplantes, quamvis ex duro barbarorum imperio famis angustias sustinerent, devotissime frugum suarum decimas pauperibus impendebant* (xvii. 1 and 2).

¹³ xviii and xvii. 4.

and sending deputations to carry back to the border province whatever food or clothing had been collected.¹ The monastery at Favianis naturally served as the headquarters for distribution and storehouse for supplies.² In like manner churches and basilicas were often used as relief stations at which grain and oil were doled out to the needy.³ Eugippius sums up the situation in a sentence which perhaps contains but slight exaggeration of the facts: *paene omnes per universa oppida vel castella pauperes ipsius industria pascerentur.*⁴

VII. THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION

Severinus cannot be regarded as "the apostle of Noricum," as he is sometimes called, without greatly straining the ordinary and accepted meaning of the word. Noricum was thoroughly Christianized long before his coming, and had a well-organized system of churches and church government. That there were traces of paganism and the worship of idols still surviving seems to be indicated by the incident told of the discovery and conversion of certain *sacrilegi* at Cucullis.⁵ These very persons, however, were themselves professing Christians who had lapsed into idolatry. Queen Giso's attempts to "rebaptize" certain Catholics, presumably into the Arian belief, are also mentioned.⁶ In general, however, we find in the *Life of Severinus* the picture of a Christian province in which the holy man goes about, not to make converts but to urge a more careful and sincere observance of the rites of the church, preaching repentance, fasting, and prayer.

There were churches at Asturis⁷ (Klosterneuburg), Comagenis⁸ (near Tulln), Cucullis⁹ (Kuchel), Quintanis¹⁰ (Osterhofen), and Ioviaco¹¹ (Schlägen). The great monastery which Severinus founded near Favianis (between Tulln and Lorch) included a basilica,¹² and mention is made of a basilica and baptistery in connection with the smaller monastery at Boiotro (Innstadt).¹³ There were basilicas at

¹ xvii. 4; xxix. 1.

³ xxviii. 2.

² xliv. 1.

⁴ xvii. 1.

⁵ *pars plebis in quodam loco nefandis sacrificiis inhaerebat* (xi. 2).

⁶ viii. 1.

⁹ xi. 2.

¹² ix. 3.

⁷ i. 2.

¹⁰ xv. 1.

¹³ xxii. 1 and 3.

⁸ i. 4.

¹¹ xxiv. 2.

Iuvao (Salzburg)¹ and Lauriacum² (Ens or Lorch) also, perhaps more than one in the last-named city.³ There was a diocese of Noricum Mediterraneum⁴ with its metropolis at Tiburnia⁵ (S. Peter im Holz).

The clerical hierarchy in the province of Noricum had reached its full development by the time of Severinus, and the clergy were numerous. There were bishops,⁶ chosen by popular election,⁷ presbyters,⁸ both clerics and laics,⁹ who governed the local churches, deacons¹⁰ and subdeacons.¹¹ Among the monks in the monasteries Severinus had founded there were barbarians¹² as well as provincials; mention is made of nuns,¹³ and the various churches had their precentors¹⁴ and vergers.¹⁵

Frequent reference is made to the evening prayers conducted in the churches,¹⁶ and in this service evidently the people also joined, singing psalms responsively.¹⁷ At his monastery, Severinus took part with the monks of the order in matins and vespers,¹⁸ observing the other regular times of prayer in his own little oratory. The yearly festivals were duly celebrated,¹⁹ watch was regularly kept over the dead,²⁰ and prayers for the saints were said on the anniversary

¹ xiii. 1.

² xxviii. 2.

³ *cunctos pauperes in una basilica statuit congregari* (xxviii. 2).

⁴ xxv. 2.

⁵ xxi. 2.

⁶ *episcopos, antistes* (iv. 2; ix. 4; xxi. 1; xxv. 2).

⁷ *cives Tiburniae, quae est metropolis Norici, coegerunt praedictum virum summi sacerdotii suscipere principatum* (xxi. 2).

⁸ *presbyter, sacerdos* (xi. 1; xxii. 3).

⁹ *tunc presbyteris, clero vel civibus requisitis* (i. 2).

¹⁰ *diaconus* (xi. 3).

¹¹ *subdiaconus* (xvi. 6).

¹² *Bonosus quoque, monachus beati Severini, barbarus genere* (xxxv. 1).

¹³ *virgo consecrata* (xvi. 2).

¹⁴ *cantor ecclesiae* (xxiv. 1).

¹⁵ *ostiarus, aedituus, ianitor ecclesiae, ecclesiae custos* (i. 3; xvi. 2 and 3).

¹⁶ ii. 1; xi. 2; xiii. 1.

¹⁷ *omnibus in ecclesia congregatis unusquisque in ordine suo psallebat ex more. omnis aetas et sexus, quae etiam voce non poterat, precem deo fletibus offerebat* (xii. 3); *ut psallerent imperavit. quibus maeroris suffusione cunctantibus ipse psalmum protulit ad canendum: Laudate dominum in sanctis eius, omnis spiritus laudet dominum* (xliii. 8). See also xxx. 3.

¹⁸ xxxix. 1.

¹⁹ *quadragesimae temporibus* (xxxix. 2); *epiphaniarum die* (xli. 1).

²⁰ *cum in ecclesia feretro posito noctem psallentes duxissent ex more pervigilem, iam clarescente diluculo* (xvi. 1).

of their death.¹ Veneration for the saints showed itself also in the preservation of relics. In the basilica of the monastery at Favianis there were, among others, relics of the holy martyrs Gervasius and Protasius² and of St. John the Baptist,³ while at Boiotro⁴ the monks were desirous of obtaining relics but were dissuaded by Severinus, who foresaw the early abandonment of that city.

When Ferderuch sacked the monastery of Favianis after the death of Severinus, carrying off the silver cups of the communion service, the store of clothing intended for the poor, and, in fact, all else that could be moved,⁵ the monks of the order nevertheless continued as a united brotherhood, as their founder had charged them to do.⁶ Six years after his burial, when the tomb was opened⁷ and his body removed to its final resting-place in Italy, they found at the Lucullan Castle the peace and immunity from constantly threatening attack that they had sought in vain in the border province of Noricum during its final struggles against the barbarian tribes. The new monastery⁸ erected in his memory and presided over by his own disciples preserved and disseminated in another land the influence of their founder, and the little book written there by its abbot Eugippius has made known to posterity the story of his life and the history of the last days of the province of Noricum.

VIII. ABANDONMENT OF THE PROVINCE

Not the least interesting chapter in the biography is that which describes the abandonment and evacuation of the province.⁹ At the conclusion of his wars with the Rugi, Odoacer, feeling that it would be hopeless to hold Noricum Ripense any longer, resolved to remove its inhabitants in a body to Italy, there to assign them new

¹ *cum sanctus se Lucillus presbyter abbas sui sancti Valentini, Raetiarum quondam episcopi, diem depositionis annua sollemnitate in crastinum celebraturum sollicitus intimasset* (xli. 1).

² ix. 2 and 3.

³ xxiii. 2.

⁴ *Basilicae extra muros oppidi Batavini . . . martyrum reliquiae quaerebantur* (xxii. 1).

⁵ xliv. 1-3.

⁶ xl. 6.

⁷ xlv. 5.

⁸ xlvi. 6.

⁹ xlv.

homes in the depopulated districts that were then sorely in need of earnest, hardworking colonists. And so all the provincials, marshaled by Onoulf, Odoacer's brother and commander-in-chief, and by Count Pierius, forsook the Danube towns that had withstood so many attacks. And as Severinus in his lifetime had been their one hope and defense, so now his body, carried by the monks of his order on a rude wagon, still formed the nucleus and rallying-point of that strange company of emigrants. Rarely has the history of any province been rounded off with such suddenness and finality, and it is hard to grasp the full import of the words that mark the end of Roman dominion in Noricum Ripense: *cunctis nobiscum provincialibus idem iter agentibus*.¹

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¹ xliv. 7.