

# The currencies of the Barbarian kingdoms

One of the main causes of the ruin of the Roman world was the pressure of the Barbarians. In the course of centuries III and IV, Germanic towns coming from the north and the center of Europe penetrated rare times in Roman territory, and they did it with the only purpose to sack the population centers that found in their way. They were, then, very far from the idea to make conquests and to settle down in ground of the Empire. Towards the century I, the social, political and religious transformations that characterized the historical trajectory of these towns caused that the contact between Barbarians and Romans had important consequences more and more. First of all, these people nomads became sedentary, and they settled down with preference in the borders of the Empire, reason why its contact was daily with peripheral local elements, already of in case barely tie to the Roman civilization. These relations nourished civilizations each time more organized outposts and, able to carry out invasions whose purpose was the conquest and integration in the Empire, which already some did not oppose obstacle, because it lacked a military organization and a political center of real influence and prestige, the sacking of Rome, perpetrated in year 410 by the Visigoths of Alarico, struck the blow of grace to the secular myth of the invincible and unconquerable large city. As of this moment, the invasions of Vandals, Hérulos, Goths and Lombards followed one another. Some of these towns were in conditions for imposing its authority on the others, sometimes looking for a commitment and a positive assimilation of the old culture, to that, generally, they recognized his high civilizational function. Almost all those towns, once had penetrated in the Empire, began to imitate its currency, first of all to replace the lack of numerario to which the Roman world, already in ruins, did not know to do in front, the push of Barbarians not only came from outer, but also of inner where, to a series of emperors who followed one another in the performance of position maximum (not less than nine in 21 years), but without having real authority some, opposed many generals of Barbarian origin with ample political and military powers. Among them it appeared Odoacro (years 476-486), that, proclaimed king in year 476, it immediately commanded to demote emperor Rómulo Augústulo, placed as well in the throne by its Orestes father, another Barbarian general, after demolishing the prevailing sovereign.

## *Godos and bizantinos*

After the brief reign of Odoacro, Italy was occupied by the Ostrogoths (Goths Eastern), that had been impelled to invade Italy by Zenón, emperor of East. This one thought that instigating to Barbarians against Barbarians, it would preserve East and Constantinople of invasions. In effect, the relations between the Goths and the Byzantine power were narrow, as it is also noticed in his monetary production. The pieces coined during the reign of the Goths they testify his legal independence of Constantinople: the active mints in Italian territory they continued producing numerario by delegation of emperor of East, and for that reason quite often the identical currencies were formally the emitted ones by Constantinople. One of the problems relative to the numismatic production of the Goths, mainly the one of gold, consists of the difficulty to distinguish it of the Byzantine. Sometimes they can be of aid the abbreviations of the city, monogram of king and the indication of the mint, but often these indications are contradictory and they do not allow to determine with certainty the origin of the currency. Better defined it is, however, the production of silver and bronze, in which most frequently and clarity it appears the name of king of the Goths. The

fact that this town adopted with as much facility the currency in course agrees with the policy of Teodorico (years 493-526), that it proposed the pacific coexistence of both components of the population: the Ostrogoth and the Latin, maintaining the elements of Roman organization more accepted and consolidated, among them the monetary circulation. The Gothic currencies give testimony of a step important from the economic point of view: the money circulated less and less because the interchanges were also much more little. Thus, the solid becomes and rarer more, in as much as is made tremis, its 1.5 more frequent submultiple of g. Very interesting it is the trajectory of the currency of silver, that becomes extremely light, for the transactions of small volume, whereas the minimum acquisitions took place by exchange. The bronze, very important to the economy of the time, became material of the heavy currencies, destined to interchanges of certain reach. In any case, in the times of maximum splendor of the hegemony of the goda, under Teodorico, the economic situation was relatively favorable. The contemporary historian Procopio explains how the economy came characterized by the abundance from merchandise and relatively stable prices and contents.

*the godos increase their power*

As always, to observe the evolution of the currency through the successive historical situations of a town constitutes an element clarificador of great interest. The Byzantines, in time of Justiniano (years 527-565), wanted to recover their possessions in Italy, and thus the godos were indeed in war with those who had made their control possible of the Peninsula. The currencies (until that moment complacentes, even in the form, with the authority recognized in the figure of emperor orientis) presents/displays the picture now of king goda, wanting with it to distinguish themselves and to vindicate the autonomy and independence. In the currencies coined in Rome, it appears the figure of the Anastasio deceased (years 491-518), the emperor who had granted to the godos right to coin currency. The mints from which goda comes the production are Rome, Ravenna (the currencies spectivamente take to the inscription **invicta Rome** and **Felix Ravenna, , Mediolanum (Milan) and Sirmium, locality this one of the present Serb. After the conquest by the Byzantines of Rome and Ravenna, also it coined Pavia currency, then call Ticinum.**