

A. D. 341-381.—Conversion to Christianity.

—The introduction of Christianity among the Goths seems to have begun while they were yet on the northern side of the Danube and the Black Sea. It first resulted, no doubt, from the influence of many Christian captives who were swept from their homes in Asia, Greece, and Asia Minor, and carried away to spend their lives in slavery among the barbarians. To these were probably added a considerable number of Christian refugees from Roman persecution, before the period of Constantine. But it was not until the time of Ulilas, the great apostle and bishop of the Goths (supposed to have held the office of bishop among them from about A. D. 341 to 381), that the development and organization of Christianity in the Gothic nation assumed importance. Ulilas is represented to have been a descendant of one of the Christian captives alluded to above. Either as an ambassador or as a hostage, he seems to have passed some years in his early manhood at Constantinople. There he acquired a familiar knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, and became fitted for his great work—the reducing of the Gothic language to a written form, with an alphabet partly invented, partly adapted from the Greek, and the translation of the Bible into that tongue. The early labors of Ulilas among his countrymen beyond the Danube were interrupted by an outbreak of persecution, which drove him, with a considerable body of Christian Goths, to seek shelter within the Roman empire. They were permitted to settle in Mesia, at the foot of the Balkans, round about Nicopolis, and near the site of modern Tirnova. There they acquired the name of the Gothi Minores, or Lesser Goths. From this Gothic settlement of Ulilas in Mesia the alphabet and written language to which he gave form have been called *Meso-Gothic*. The Bible of Ulilas—the first missionary translation of the Scriptures—with the personal labors of the apostle and his disciples, were powerfully influential, without doubt, in the Christianizing of the whole body of the Goths, and of their German neighbors, likewise. But Ulilas had imbibed the doctrines of Arianism, or of Semi-Arianism, at Constantinople, and he communicated that heresy (as it was branded by the Athanasian triumph) to all the barbarian world within the range of Gothic influence. It followed that, when the kingdoms of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Burgundians were established in the west, they had to contend with the hostility of the orthodox or Catholic western church, and were undermined by it. That hostility had much to do with the breaking down of those states and with the better success of the orthodox Franks.—C. A. A. Scott, *Ulilas, Apostle of the Goths*.—See, also, FRANKS: A. D. 481-511.

(Ostrogoths) A. D. 350-375.—The empire of Ermanaric or Hermanric.—“Ermanaric, who seems to have been chosen king about the year 350, was a great warrior, like many of his predecessors; but his policy, and the objects for which he fought, were markedly different from theirs. . . . Ermanaric made no attempt to invade the provinces of the Roman Empire; but he resolved to make his Ostrogothic kingdom the centre of a great empire of his own. The seat of his kingdom was, as tradition tells us, on the banks of the Dnieper [and it extended to the Baltic]. . . . A Roman historian compares Ermanaric to Alexander the Great; and many ages

afterwards his fame survived in the poetic traditions of Germans, Norsemen and Anglo-Saxons. . . . Ermanaric was the first king since Ostrogotha who belonged to the Amaling family. . . . Henceforward the kingship of the Ostrogoths became hereditary among the descendants of Ermanaric. During this time the Visigoths appear to have been practically independent, divided into separate tribes ruled by their own ‘judges’ or chieftains; but . . . It is probable that in theory they acknowledged the supremacy of the Ostrogothic king. . . . Ermanaric died in the year 375, and the Ostrogoths were subdued by the Hunnish king Balamber. For a whole century they remained subject to the Huns.” One section of the Ostrogothic nation escaped from the Hunnish conquest and joined the Visigoths, who found a refuge on the Roman side of the Danube. The bulk of the nation bore the yoke until the death of the great Hun king, Attila, in 453, when the strife between his sons gave them an opportunity to throw it off.—H. Bradley, *Story of the Goths*, ch. 5.—“The forecast of European history which then [during the reign of Hermanric] seemed probable would have been that a great Teutonic Empire, stretching from the Danube to the Don, would take the place which the colossal Slav Empire now holds in the map of Europe, and would be ready, as a civilised and Christianised power, to step into the place of Eastern Rome when, in the fulness of centuries, the sceptre should drop from the nerveless hands of the Cæsars of Byzantium.”—T. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, bk. 4, ch. 1.

(Visigoths) A. D. 376.—Admission into the Roman Empire.—“Let us suppose that we have arrived at the year (364) when the feeble and timid Valens was placed on the Eastern throne by his brother Valentinian. At that time, Ulilas would be in the fifty-third year of his age and the twenty-third of his episcopate. Hermanric, king of the Ostrogoths, a centenarian and more, was still the most important figure in the loosely welded Gothic confederacy. His royal royalty may possibly have extended over Northern Hungary, Lithuania, and Southern Russia. The ‘torpid’ Gepidae, dwelt to the north of him, to the south and west the Visigoths, whose settlements may perhaps have occupied the modern countries of Roumania, Transylvania and Southern Hungary. The two great nations, the Ostrogoths and Visigoths, were known at this time to the Romans, perhaps among themselves also, by the respective names of the Gruthungi and Thervingi, but it will be more convenient to disregard these appellations and speak of them by the names which they made conspicuous in later history.”—T. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, introd. ch. 3.—This was the situation of Gothia, or the Gothic Empire of Central Europe, when the Huns made their appearance on the scene. “An empire, formerly powerful, the first monarchy of the Huns, had been overthrown by the Sienpi, at a distance of 500 leagues from the Roman frontier, and near to that of China, in the first century of the Christian era. . . . The entire nation of the Huns, abandoning to the Sienpi its ancient pastures bordering on China, had traversed the whole north of Asia by a march of 1,300 leagues. This immense horde, swelled by all the conquered nations whom it carried along in its passage, bore down on the plains of the Alatau, and defeated them on the banks of the Tanais in a great battle. It