

J.A. Grierson

***Exegesis: Breathing new life into ancient history  
(7,830 words)***

Address: 60 King Edward Parade  
Devonport  
Auckland 0624

An exegesis and thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Creative Writing (MCW)

2018  
School of Language and Culture

## Breathing new life into ancient history

The novel *The Last Roman* is set between 410 and 489 AD, years which spanned the Attila's pillaging of Europe, the death throes of the Western Roman Empire, its fall<sup>1</sup>, and the beginning of the Dark Ages. It is based on surviving historical records and inspired by the Latin letters of a fifth century Gallo-Roman, Sidonius Apollinaris, first translated into English in 1915.

The creative thesis, *The Last Roman*, explores a number of themes beyond the scope of investigation in this exegesis which will only touch upon the central one, namely: how to make our lives count for something when all that we love and believe in has been stripped away.

This exegesis theorises the creative work in terms of choices of style, plot, characterisation and voice and situates its origins in historical research and Sidonius' own writing. After a short synopsis of the thesis, it will discuss:

- The [Structure of the novel](#)
- The [Inspiration and research](#) for the book and the author's choice to work around canonical historical fiction
- [The imbrication of historical artefacts and fictive text](#)
- The [Choice of voice](#)
- [Literary criticism of Sidonius](#) and how the text uses Sidonius' own voice both to substantiate authenticity and as a covert argument against an over-empowering of critiques of his work
- [Allusion to recognisable story traditions](#)
- [Investigating and subverting fairy tales and challenging gender stereotypes](#)
- [Target market](#) and the contribution the book seeks to make to the genre

---

<sup>1</sup> There is considerable academic debate centred round the question of whether Rome fell or simply faded away as seen for example in Brown, 2012, and Van Waarden, 2012.

## Synopsis

The flames of the campfire beneath the Roman watchtower of Clermont cast an oscillating light on the ceiling of the prison cell in which one man waits to die. Goths, dressed in horned helmets and animal pelts, chalk up bets on the wall under his window as to how he will be executed in the morning. The year is 475 AD and Sidonius Apollinaris, Roman nobleman, Bishop of Clermont, confidante of Emperors, has reached the end of his personal struggle to save all that he believed in from the death spin of the Roman Empire.

From the opening scene, the story cuts back in time to the year of Sidonius' birth and traces a path to the cataclysmic confrontation between Attila the Hun and the Roman general, Aetius, on the Catalaunian Plains. Aetius is victorious but jealousy and treachery bring down the only men who could save the Empire. Sidonius rises to fill the void of leadership left by his mentors. He renounces the greatest passion of his life, enters holy orders and makes a stand to defend to the death all that he holds honourable. His brother-in-law, the Roman field commander, Ecdicius, plants his personal standard in the forum of Clermont and together they show the world what it means to be Roman.

With only a handful of horsemen Ecdicius thwarts thousands of Goths but Clermont is betrayed by the very Church and Empire for whom it fought. Ecdicius and his horsemen escape but Sidonius remains with his flock to face certain death. Alone, he tries to make sense of his life in a world that has been turned on its head.

## Structure of the novel

The novel has a book end structure which frames a story written in three parts that correspond to a three act narrative. In a short prologue, the opening scene is an interior first person soliloquy by Sidonius as he awaits execution. In order to understand what brought him to this position the novel cuts back to the day of his birth and follows a multi-protagonist, polyphonic cast through time and returns to the opening crisis point at the end of the second act. At the beginning of the third act, the voice and point of view return to the first person for the first time since the prologue. Part of a letter that Sidonius wrote to the Lord Bishop Graecus in 475 AD is quoted verbatim. The narrative moves between first, third person and omniscient voices and points of view until the epilogue where Sidonius looks back on some of the characters he knew, the

roles he himself has played and shares some of the wisdom he acquired on his journey through the destruction of Roman civilisation and into the Dark Ages.

The text aims to help Sidonius' voice transcend time and speak to us in a way we can relate to. One definition of literary historical fiction is "*fiction set in the past but which emphasizes themes that pertain back to the present.*"<sup>2</sup> *The Last Roman* carries the markers of traditional, romantic, Christian and literary historical novels and sagas.<sup>3</sup> It includes elements of romance, action, tragedy, erotica, irony and farce as it traverses a range of experiences from grief to elation and birth to death. Its multi-protagonist cast challenge gender, class, age and religious stereotypes. The novel covers epic historic events at a quick pace during the first two acts then slows down and moves into Sidonius' interior space to consider existential questions in the third. It intends to inform the reader about an obscure period of ancient history and update old story forms and meanings for the current day.

## Inspiration and research

The 1300cc diesel engine of my left hand drive hire car coughed and gasped for air as I shifted back down to first from second gear and asked myself what had inspired a woman from the far side of the world to take to this narrow, ice covered road, high in the Pyrenean mountain range in France, in the footsteps of a man who had died over one and a half thousand years ago. The car's faulty wipers smeared sleet across the

---

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Johnson: <http://historicalnovelsociety.org/guides/defining-the-genre/defining-the-genre-what-are-the-rules-for-historical-fiction/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.provlib.org/guide-historical-fiction-lovers:>

**Traditional Historical Novels** emphasize a straightforward and historically accurate plot. Example: In Colleen McCullough's **First Man in Rome**, an alliance empowers two men during the Roman Republic's twilight.

**Sagas** follow families or groups of friends over time, usually generations. Example: In John Jakes's North and South Trilogy, the Civil War strains the ties of love and friendship that connect two families, one in Pennsylvania, the other in South Carolina.

**Romantic Historical Novels**, including Historical Romances, are love stories set in history. Example: John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, falls in love with Chaucer's sister-in-law in **Katherine** by Anya Seton.

**Literary Historical Novels** examine contemporary themes in lyrical or dense language. Example: Ideas about love, loss, and the failed American dream filter through Amy Bloom's **Away**, the story of an immigrant in 1920s America who is searching for the daughter she lost in a pogrom.

**Christian Historical Novels** reflect Christian themes. Example: In Catherine Marshall's **Christy**, set in the Appalachia of the early twentieth century, a 19-year-old teacher at a mission school improves herself as well as others.

windscreen as it edged towards the precipice on the left hand side to dodge a downhill juggernaut. Although the snaked and hair-pinned track had been built barely wide enough for two donkey carts to pass it had become a favourite with heavy goods vehicles who slithered down bends in order to avoid paying motorway tolls. My car struggled to find power at high altitude while I peered out through the smudged windscreen and endeavoured to keep alive and take in the scenery at the same time, for this trip was research.

The reason I was winding up the mountains through a frozen French February instead of enjoying the New Zealand summer was that the sheer goodness of my hero's character, as disclosed in his letters from an age long passed and forgotten, had required it of me. Even O M Dalton, amongst the most vociferous of his literary critics, acknowledged:

*"Of Sidonius as a man it is almost unnecessary to speak; the Letters prove his noble qualities, and those written after his entry into the Church reflect the saintliness which won him the honour of canonization."*<sup>4 5</sup>

Sidonius was born a Gallo-Roman noble in about 430 AD. He died a Christian bishop, stripped of his lands and his Roman citizenship, subject to Gothic rule, in about 489 AD. He was a prolific author and left behind 148 letters and 29 poetical works including three panegyrics.<sup>6</sup> There are references to other works which have not survived. He has been referred to in academic literature as the "*single most important*

---

<sup>4</sup> Dalton, O. M., cxliv

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting in passing that 20<sup>th</sup> century historians have not all been so laudatory with some of the leading authors in the field reading him as either something of a bumbling fool, a schemer, or a narrow minded imperialist (see, *inter alia*, Harries and Brown).

<sup>6</sup> Van Waarden, p8-9, lists his surviving works as:

Poetry:

24 Carmina 469. A selection from his early poetry. Numbers 1-2, 3-5,

and 6-8 are three Panegyrics with their respective

prefaces and dedications. Numbers 9-24 are shorter occasional poems, 'nugae'. Fourteen more poems are included in the letters.

Prose:

146 Epistulae Appeared in instalments:

469 Book 1

477 Books 2-7

479 Book 8

482 Book 9

One further letter is by Claudianus Mamertus (Ep. 4.2). Books 1-7 are dedicated to Constantius (prefatory letter Ep. 1.1, final letter Ep. 7.18), book 8 to Petronius, book 9 to Firminus. Two more letters are found as prose prefaces to Carmina 14 and 22. Contio 477 Address made in 470 to the community of Bourges on the occasion of the nomination of a new metropolitan bishop. Attached to Ep. 7.9.

*surviving author of fifth century Gaul*<sup>7</sup>, although, as will be discussed below, literary critics have not been kind to him.

Sidonius was no mere observer and chronicler of his times. He did his best to defend the culture and heritage he valued with both his pen and his sword. He was acutely aware that the Latin language was disappearing before his eyes<sup>8</sup>. As well as being a writer and poet he was a diplomat, rebel<sup>9</sup>, Urban Prefect of Rome, Bishop of Clermont and Count before he was betrayed and stripped of everything he owned and in this way he had great potential as my novel's key protagonist, being both a witness to and an agent of history.

Having done over a year of research and on the brink of starting the MCW course at AUT, I realised that there was no substitute for going to France and following in his footsteps and those of some of the other main characters in the book. Hence I set out to find a spot too obscure to warrant even a dot on a map, namely the castle ruins of Llivia, the place to which Sidonius had been exiled in 475 AD.

The journey that eventually led me up that icy road had started in November 2012, when I had stumbled upon a doctoral thesis,<sup>10</sup> written in French in 1938, about Sidonius, a man of whom I had never heard and who had lived in the era of late antiquity about which I knew absolutely nothing. The first stage of researching his story was to get translations of his letters. At the same time I researched the history, philosophy, characters and events of the fourth and fifth centuries in Gaul and, to a lesser extent, other parts of the Roman Empire. In order to put academic rigour around research for the novel I enrolled at the University of Auckland and wrote a post graduate dissertation entitled: "*Three Letters and an Epitaph: When did being Roman End for Sidonius Apollinaris?*"<sup>11</sup> which was completed in December 2013. At the time, I thought that I had broken the back of research, but in fact I had done only about half of what was needed to write a novel.

---

<sup>7</sup> Goldberg p 1

<sup>8</sup> IV xvii, IV xxii, Stevens p 81-2

<sup>9</sup> This descriptor is used in connection with his participation in the Coniuratio Marcelliana of 456-7

<sup>10</sup> Rutherford, H: *Sidonius Apollinaris, Etude d'une Gallo-Romaine du V<sup>e</sup> siècle*

<sup>11</sup> This dissertation reviews the academic literature and enters the debate between the "continuist" school of theory that says Rome did not fall but faded away, and the "catastrophists" who hold that the western empire fell in 476 AD when the barbarian, Odoacer, deposed Rome's last emperor.

The *whakapapa* of *The Last Roman* is Sidonius' own literary works. *Whakapapa* is more than a statement of genealogy, it is a paradigm of cultural discourse and has both tactile and spiritual dimensions. It is a critical element in establishing identity and shows reverence to ancestors. Lineage, both familial and literary, was important to Sidonius<sup>12</sup>. For him, cultural identity depended not only on past and present but also future generations.

History and historical novels are written in the context of their authors' times - my own desire to bring back female and working class voices into the story is an illustration of this. During the research process I became increasingly aware of incongruities between contemporary accounts of events and the gloss put on them by later historians and authors. As the novelist, David Mitchell, aptly sums it up:

*"The present presses the virtual past into its own service, to lend credence to its mythologies + legitimacy to the imposition of will. Power seeks + is the right to 'landscape' the virtual past. (He who pays the historian calls the tune.)"*<sup>13</sup>

As a consequence of my research and sense of need to find truth within my key characters, as characters in a novel, I made the choice to work around canonical historical fiction set in Roman times so as not to have it over-inform or intrude on Sidonius' voice and my own fictive freedom.

I decided to rely on the words of people who had lived through the events themselves or gathered information from eye witnesses in preference to historical analysis contributed in later centuries. The exceptions to this rule of thumb are writings that relate to the archaeological record and those of Edward Gibbon who devoted his life to writing "*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*", published in 1782, which I did not read prior to starting work on the thesis but used as a cross check on other research.

---

<sup>12</sup> Note, for example, in the letter to Graecus quoted in the chapter *Letter to Graecus* in the text Sidonius claims descent from "the sons of Troy" on behalf of the citizens of Auvergne. In an uncited section of the letter he links the importance of looking both back to the past and forward to future generations in matters of heritage: "Our ancestors will cease to glory in the name of Rome if they have no longer descendants to bear their memory."

<sup>13</sup> Mitchell, D: *Cloud Atlas*, pp 408-9,

This research strategy led to several surprises and revealed to me some of my own preconceptions. For example, being brought up in a post-colonial age and mind-set, there is a temptation to create an automatic binary opposition between the forces of empire (Rome) and those fighting against them who are automatically seen as fighters for indigenous rights. This is a trap Hollywood portrayals sometimes fall into, e.g. *Attila the Hun* (2001), and is a simplistic reading of history.

Attila is a household name. He is famed as a brilliant but savage warrior general. The aggrandisement of Attila's image was an act of propaganda during his own lifetime and afterwards when those seeking to seize power tried to use his image to legitimise their own claims. He has been portrayed countless times by biographers, novelists, on television<sup>14</sup>, in film and computer games. It was with a vague impression of Attila as a handsome young warrior (played by Gerard Butler in the eponymous 2001 movie) that I went in search of an ethnic hero in fifth and sixth century documents. What I found was far from fitting my media inspired image of him as a liberator. Attila was one in fact one of the most destructive invaders of all time.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, Flavius Aetius, a warrior and general of incredible honour and ability, who for thirty years unrelentingly defended the Roman empire, has been reduced to little more than a two dimensional military figure and a list of battles in history. As much as Attila has been glamorised, Aetius, who defeated him, has almost been obliterated from popular consciousness. I wanted to restore him and other key figures of their times to their rightful places in the story.<sup>16</sup>

It astounded me how much history has been lost or forgotten. For example, both the site and date<sup>17</sup> of the Battle of the Catalaunian fields – the bloodiest of all antiquity which involved more men than the D-Day landings in France in 1944– in which Aetius was victorious over Attila are points of academic contention. This forgetfulness seems to me to dishonour the memories of the men who fought and died there. There are three

---

<sup>14</sup> For example: *Attila*, 2001, directed by Dick Lowry; *Attila*, the movie, 1954, directed by Petro Francisci.

<sup>15</sup> The most reliable and objective contemporary source about Attila comes from a man called Priscus who has left a detailed and apparently objective account of his experiences with him. It is from Priscus' writings that I have constructed the character and key events in the life of Attila in my thesis.

<sup>16</sup> This comment applies to Emperors Marjorian and Avitus, Sidonius himself and his brother-in-law Ecdicius

<sup>17</sup> No one is sure whether it occurred on the 20th of June or September 451 AD. I have opted for the latter date in the text.

main alternative sites put forward by historians who do not accept the near contemporary account of Jordanes. After visiting the sites, I concluded that none of them was “the” battle field but that they all were connected to it, and decided to rely on Jordanes for the purposes of landscaping the novel.

None of the protagonists in the novel, including Aetius, comes to us with anything more than, at best, a fragmentary idea of how he or she looked or sounded. Sidonius wrote: “*I am well aware that the mind is as exposed in a book as the face is in the mirror*”<sup>18</sup>. His letters give us a reflection, (but only a reflection) of not only his own persona, but, by deduction or direct reference, some other characters of his day, but few explicit descriptions<sup>19</sup>.

## The imbrication of historical artefacts and fictive text

Given the gaps in the written record, the novel has to build a narrative bridge from one known land mark date and place to the next. It seeks to “rebalance” the past by putting flesh on the bones of once famous men and by adding back characters unwritten, or written out, of history such as working class people, slaves and women. In order to build characterisation I have triangulated from known evidence, like finding map references in time, not place, and drawing lines between them then ‘creating’ in the gaps. To quote the artist, Pablo Picasso: “*We all know that Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth...*”<sup>20</sup>

The text imbricates current day vernacular with fifth century written artefacts. An example of this can be seen in the juxtaposition of Attila’s speech, (in the chapter headed *The Sixth Hour in Attila’s Camp*), with the completely fictional eulogy of the Roman general, Avitus, to Theodoric I which appears a few pages later (in the chapter *Aftermath*). Attila’s speech is based on near contemporary written history<sup>21</sup> whereas the fact that Theodoric I fell in battle and his funeral rites were held in front of Attila’s

---

<sup>18</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters, Book VII, letter 18, paragraph 2.

<sup>19</sup> Notable exceptions which are relied on by the thesis are his description of Theodoric II, Petronius Maximus, Seronatus and Arvandus about all of whom he writes detailed descriptions. Another exception which is not drawn on directly is a deceased woman, Filamatia, for whom he composes a eulogy.

<sup>20</sup> Pablo Picasso, ref: [goodreads.com/quotes/67884-we-all-know-that-art-is-not-truth-art-is](https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/67884-we-all-know-that-art-is-not-truth-art-is)

<sup>21</sup> The speech is based on an excerpt from Jordanes 6<sup>th</sup> century *Historica Getica* account of the battle. The account of the speech had been made at an earlier date by Ostrogothic veterans of the battle

camp is recorded, but whether Avitus was there or not is unknown and his speech is entirely imagined. It was perhaps a risky choice to put two speeches, one authentic, one fictional, so close to each other but the device progresses action and relationship lines, draws a contrast between Attila's bombastic style and Avitus' humble solemnity and gives insight into both preceding and subsequent historical events.

As well as interleaving fictional and archaic texts, *The Last Roman* imbricates fictional and historic characters, or characters based on snippets of fact, as a way of implementing its aim of reanimating lost or overlooked voices from the past.<sup>22</sup> The development of one of the chief female characters, Sola, exemplifies the manner in which I have tried to make fiction at least be possible and plausible. The inspiration for the character of Sola was a quotation from Martial, *On Spectacles* 8 (on Titus' show in the Coliseum, AD 80)<sup>23</sup>:

*"Illustrious fame used to sing of the lion laid low in the vast valley of Nemea,  
the work of Heracles. Let ancient testimony be silent: after your shows, Caesar,  
we have now seen this done by a woman's hand."*

Sola's personality and character are based on this isolated founding stone. When I first read this quotation I asked myself what a woman would have to be like to kill a lion. In the process of that enquiry I wrote a short story based on the life of a girl taken as a slave who eventually won her freedom by killing a lion in the Coliseum. This story does not appear anywhere in the current text but is Sola's back story. Hence she arrives in Part I of the novel as a woman who knows who she is and what she is capable of. Although nothing more is known of the woman to whom the quotation refers, I have created her, performatively, from her signifiers. This makes Sola both authentic to her times yet surprisingly modern and independent. Her character provides the novel with an active and self-actualised female protagonist who breaks stereotypical gender boundaries and tries to act as a mentor for Brutus, a young man. Sola is a rare creature, a heroine who at no time defines herself or her ambitions by way of her relationship with a man and who is at peace in herself.

---

<sup>22</sup> A non-literary analogy and illustration of the type of effect the thesis aims for in terms of mixing old and new to give something classical new relevance to modern audiences can be found in "Red Bull Flying Bach" in which break dancing is set to the music of the composer J S Bach (1685 – 1750).

<sup>23</sup> As quoted in Lane Fox, p. 460

One of the first authorial decisions that confronted me with regard to both factual and fictional characters was whether to try to emulate and/or create a way that people spoke in ancient times or use some variant of modern day vernacular. It was the desire to be able to quote Sidonius' own words that dictated decisions about the fictive first person voice used in the text. This voice was chosen to open and close the book in order to give immediacy to Sidonius' existential crises and to claim the story as his from beginning to end which was important given that in many scenes he is not the protagonist. The decision to use the first person brought with it the dual challenge of finding a register that would not be incredible for a fifth century Gallo-Roman but would still be accessible for a twenty-first century reader.<sup>24</sup>

The most significant imbrication of an original fifth century artefact into the text is Sidonius' letter to the Lord Bishop Graecus which is quoted verbatim, (but with some lines omitted) in the opening scene of Part III. This letter has been described as nothing less than the "*epitaph of the Western Empire*" by the historian C E Stevens. While this letter and the epitaph are the longest direct quotations from contemporary text, I have also interwoven uncited quotations from Sidonius in other places in order to pass on something of his voice directly. For example, in the chapter entitled *Epitaph* the following appears:

*"It was not that I was a man immune to material worries – after all, the future of the whole bishopric rested upon my shoulders! – but I tried to distance myself from worldly cares – **that I may become of the earth unearthly, I to whom not a yard of earth remains.**"*<sup>25</sup>

The words in bold are taken verbatim from Sidonius' letter to the Lord Bishop Faustus, written c.477 AD. The rest of sentence was created so that his phrase, which tells us much about both his values and tribulations, could be passed on directly to readers in a way that is integral to the narrative.

---

<sup>24</sup> A point that needed to be born in mind is that there is a natural change of register when one moves from the spoken word to rhetoric, oratory or writing which was even more pronounced in ancient times than it is today.

<sup>25</sup> Apollinaris, S: *Letters, Book IX, Letter III*

Sidonius had a distinctive voice even when seen in the context of other classical authors. As Dalton put it:

“...his cadences have an unfamiliar ring; when they are read aloud, they strike us as differing not in degree, but in kind from those of the classical authors.”<sup>26</sup>

Dalton suggests that this indicates that Sidonius’ voice was both influenced by the native Celtic tongue of pre-Roman Gaul and also presages the birth of the French language.<sup>27</sup> Although Dalton evidently intended this as a criticism, I see it as one of many reasons that Sidonius’ writing should be venerated. It was clearly beyond my ability to strive to find a voice that was both ancient Celtic, Roman and early French all at the same time, but I did aim for a voice in keeping with his character.

Robert Merle, in his thirteen book series of historical novels entitled *Fortune de France*, has recreated 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century France, through the eyes of a fictitious protestant doctor turned spy, and written his text in the period’s French. This makes it a virtually untranslatable<sup>28</sup> mix of archaic French and the Occitan dialect.<sup>29</sup> To help people come to grips with it he provides a glossary of terms.

The search for authenticity in language was taken to even greater extremes recently by Paul Kingsnorth with *The Wake*, (shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2014), which is written in what he calls a “shadow tongue”<sup>30</sup>. This is his own imagined pre-Norman Conquest language.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Dalton, O M: cxxxiii

<sup>27</sup> Dalton, O M: cxxxiv

<sup>28</sup> Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Merle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Merle)

<sup>29</sup> See also: [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Merle](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Merle)

“Inspiré par William Thackeray, auteur du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, racontant *L'Histoire d'Henry Esmond* dans la langue du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Robert Merle a voulu lui aussi pour son récit s'approcher au plus près de la langue utilisée à l'époque où évoluent ses personnages. S'appuyant notamment sur le *Journal de Pierre de L'Estoile* et au prix d'un effort de recherche important, il parvient à recréer une langue mêlant style archaïque et occitan, qui a su séduire de nombreux lecteurs. Un glossaire, placé en fin de chaque volume, indique la traduction de certains termes.” (Translates to: “Inspired by the *Story of Henry Esmond* 19<sup>th</sup> by the century author, William Thackeray, which was written in 18<sup>th</sup> century language, Robert Merle also wanted to make the language he used to be as close as possible to that used during the period in which his characters lived. Drawing on the *Diary of Pierre de L'Estoile* for inspiration and after extensive research he managed to recreate a language which is a mixture of archaic and Occitan tongues and which has succeeded in attracting a wide readership. A glossary at the end of each volume gives translations for certain terms.” Ref also Interviews at:

[http://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/robert-merle-sur-les-terres-de-dumas\\_800775.html?xtmc=robert\\_merle&xtcr=13](http://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/robert-merle-sur-les-terres-de-dumas_800775.html?xtmc=robert_merle&xtcr=13)  
[http://web.archive.org/web/20031013193834/www.nuitblanche.com/archives/m/merle\\_2.htm](http://web.archive.org/web/20031013193834/www.nuitblanche.com/archives/m/merle_2.htm)

<sup>30</sup> Kingsnorth, P: *The Wake*, note on language, p 353.

<sup>31</sup> The *Wake*'s opening lines, as quoted in the Guardian review of 9 November, 2014, are: “the night was clere though I slept I seen it. though I slept I seen the calm hierde naht only the still. when I gan down to sleep all was clere in the land and my dreams was full of stillness but my dreams did not cepe me still.”

I quickly realised that to try to mimic a late antiquity dialect would be an unrealistic goal. At best, it could be done only in a completely imaginary manner. There was a great difference between spoken and written Latin and we simply do not have enough information to be able to have confidence that what we would be making up was realistic. As it is one of the aims of my thesis to write in a style that is widely accessible to readers it would be inappropriate to write in a language that was untranslatable. Turning to Sidonius' own writings for guidance as to the appropriate strategy, I found that he had been quick to make it clear with regard to his own work that he did not want to "*imitate a style which was not of his time*"<sup>32</sup>. In the very first letter of his published collection, he refers to earlier Roman letter writers and says that he had:

*"...always been horribly conscious how far I fall short of these great examples; I have consistently claimed for each the privilege of his own period..."*<sup>33</sup>

Instead of trying to talk in an imagined fifth century way the text aims for a "trans-temporal" equivalent of the "mid-Atlantic" accent. Current day dialogue is peppered with ancient written artefacts to create a sense of period authenticity. For example, where a Latin term is readily understandable in context, such as, "*vir illustrus*" in the chapter "*The Illustrious Aetius*", and resonates better with the concept it represents than a literal translation would, it is used in preference to English. Usually, the first time such a word is introduced it is placed close to an equivalent modern term so that the reader can comprehend it without having to refer to a Latin dictionary. For example, the word *optio* is introduced near to the roughly equivalent English word "lieutenant". To distinguish the characters' voices from one another in the text they speak in a manner in keeping with their respective characters, socio-economic classes and education. Dialogue uses contemporary vernacular with words chosen to convey the tone and emotional tension of scenes, for example, modern profanity is used for its functionality.

---

<sup>32</sup> Apollinaris, S: *Letters, Book I, Letter I*

<sup>33</sup> Apollinaris, S: *Letters, Book I, Letter I*

## Literary criticism of Sidonius

Literary criticism of Sidonius' writing style has been savage over the last five hundred years<sup>34</sup>. From the Renaissance until the present day his writing has been widely disparaged and his value reduced to being that of an almost unwitting chronicler of the declining days of Rome.<sup>35</sup> O M Dalton, for example, while conceding that Sidonius "*deserves something more than an untempered ridicule...*"<sup>36</sup> mauls his literary style with page upon page of, as he terms it, "*counts of indictment*".

"*First and foremost,*" says Dalton, "*there is the mania for antithesis, and plays on words which degenerate into the most lamentable puns...*"<sup>37</sup> Two pages further into a litany of criticism Dalton tells us that "*the reader may be spared illustration of the overloaded interminable sentences...*" by which stage one is wondering if the reader could not also be spared the interminable critique. When Sidonius writes concisely Dalton finds him no better: "*While diffuseness is his besetting sin, some of his phrases are condensed to the point of impenetrability...*"<sup>38</sup>

By the time that Dalton had reached the point of saying that "*The metaphors of Sidonius for the most part are familiar, and worn in service*" and embarks upon an extensive list of examples I found myself rising to Sidonius' defence. Although it is beyond the ambit of a novel to try to "rehabilitate" him as a writer I found myself trying to vindicate some of the writing choices for which he has been most criticised by, perhaps perversely, emulating them or allowing them to flow through the text. I deliberately employed a few of the metaphors that Dalton specifically criticised, such as the swan, which I have associated with Papianilla, and the rose which has been put to use in the context of the Burgundian queen, Ragnahilde. The text occasionally plucks phrases

---

<sup>34</sup> For example, Hodgkin says that Sidonius has achieved nothing beyond a "*fifth rate position as a post-classical author*"; Dill sees him as "*one of the most tasteless writers who ever lived*", a German critic whose name now escapes me simply called him a "*bad writer*".

<sup>35</sup> See for example, Labriolle, in 1924: "*L'interet fondamental des écrits de Sidoine, c'est d'être des documents d'histoire*" ("the fundamental reason for being interested in Sidonius' writing is that it is an historic document") and Persée, 2008:

"*L'importance de l'oeuvre de Sidoine tient en grand partie – et a meme pendant très longtemps ete réduite – aux 'documents d'histoire'*" ("the main reason that Sidonius' writing is important is that it is historical and his writing has been limited to having that significance for a long time).

<sup>36</sup> Dalton, O M: cxxviii

<sup>37</sup> Dalton, O M: cxxviii

<sup>38</sup> Dalton, O. M., cxxxiii

directly from Sidonius, for example: “*His head swam beneath the diadem of imperial power,*” which is found in the chapter regarding the short-lived emperor, Petronius Maximus entitled “*The precipitous and slippery peak of office*”.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps the most glaring example of repeated antithesis by Sidonius is found in his letter to his friend, Candidianus<sup>40</sup>. Written in 468, (the year in which Euric, who had recently murdered his brother to seize the Gothic throne, broke his treaty with Rome and set out to conquer Gaul), it talks of Ravenna “*a place that may boast a territory but little solid ground,*”<sup>41</sup> where “*the dead swim and the quick are dry, the powers are asleep and the thieves wide awake,...*” and “*the laws of everything are the wrong way about...*” Although Sidonius was contrasting the conditions in Ravenna with those in Lyon it seems to me that his use of antithesis is presentient of the chaos that is about to engulf Gaul. It was with this letter and Dalton’s criticism in mind that I drafted the penultimate paragraph of the novel, set in the year 489, in the chapter entitled “*Epitaph*”:

“*...the world as I had known it, was upside down. Force had prevailed over goodness and civilisation; there were no more rules that could be counted on, and we had to look to our daughters more often than our sons for any hope of a rich and peaceful future.*”

It seems to me that Sidonius’ employed system of language, in particular his use of antithesis, represents his external and internal context and conflicts.

## Allusion to recognisable story traditions

One of the many things that Dalton and other critics have disapproved of in Sidonius is his use of literary and mythological allusions.<sup>42</sup> An alternative way of viewing this is that allusion is an efficient method of communicating background and nuance.

---

<sup>39</sup> Apollinaris, S: *Letters, Book II, Letter XIII*

<sup>40</sup> Apollinaris, S: *Letters, Book I, Letter VIII*

<sup>41</sup> Apollinaris, S: Op cit supra

<sup>42</sup> Dalton, O M, p cxxiv: “*...he failed to record much that which was most worth recording in the world about him, and instead of the new drama of his times preferred to transmit for the hundredth time the vapid and worn-out stories of Greek mythology...*”

The thesis interlinks with traditional story telling forms and classical mythology at a sub-textual and sub-plot level. Sometimes it updates them to give the reader the comfort of a familiar form but the freshness of a new resolution. Examples of ancient story telling traditions which are used include:

- the traditional romantic fairy tale (Leonida/Heva and Leonida/Gundobad; Brutus/Sola);
- morality play (Brutus/Sola in the Nimes arena);
- oratory and rhetoric (Attila's speech; Avitus' eulogy to Theodoric);
- soliloquy (Sidonius in the prologue, under the keep in Llivia and in the epitaph);
- farce (Sola/Brutus in the chapter "a Mule called Zeus");
- allusion to both ancient mythical<sup>43</sup> and contemporary archetypes, sometimes done with deliberate irony (for example, "*The Empire Strikes Back*", "*Game Over*") and sometimes employed to engender a sense of the tragic, (for example, Sidonius likens himself to Chiron, the wounded healer of Greek mythology, who could heal others but never himself and therefore led a life of constant pain and suffering but full of good works).
- ancient mythology is employed as metaphor, for example at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains Venus, the planet named for the goddess of love, hangs pregnantly over the horizon. In the midst of the killing, Aetius directs Sangibanus to set his sights on Venus, suggesting not only the direction in which Sangibanus must fight but also that the objective is, paradoxically, love not war.

Given the limited scope of this exegesis only one aspect of the intersection of the text with traditional story telling forms will be discussed, namely its relationship to fairy tale as seen through the plot and character development arcs of Leonida and her mother Sola.

## Investigating and subverting fairy tales and challenging gender stereotypes

---

<sup>43</sup> Sidonius used classical in much of his writing as a form of shorthand to communicate the meaning inherent in the myth without slowing down his own writings. Dalton did not approve complaining that the myths were tired and vapid. Personally, I have used it with the aim of bringing the associations of the myth into the story without having to use more than a few words to import them, for example, the chapter heading "The Lady of the Lake" is intended to bring to mind legends of that name and associate them with the character of Leonida.

The Jungian analyst, Walter Odajnyk<sup>44</sup>, makes the point that the characters in a fairy tale behave “*stereotypically and appear to have hardly any inner psychic life...*” The same could be said of mass market novels or films where the behaviour of hero and heroine falls into stereotypical patterns. It is the intention of *The Last Roman* to create performative characters with complex and often unpredictable reactions. This is the case for male characters as well as female ones but the discussion below focuses on the characters of Leonida and Sola.

There is a useful discussion which reviews both empirical evidence and theory about the way women react to traditionally passive heroines in fairy tales in the chapter titled *Gender and the Passive Reception of Fairy Tales* in Haase<sup>45</sup>. Kay Stone, did an empirical study<sup>46</sup> to determine whether fairy tales were, as psychoanalysts suggested, “*problem solving*” or, as many feminists argued “*problem creating*” in women’s lives. She confirmed the feminist view that fairy tales generate problems of identity by presenting readers with unrealisable romantic myths and that “*women do not stop struggling with the problem of female roles as they are presented in fairy tales.*” Stone’s empirical work is supported by the results of Rita J Comtois’ study of Caucasian women of diverse backgrounds which concluded that “*women perceive fairy tales not as helpful but as problematic because of the discrepancies between their own life circumstances and those described for the fairy tale heroine.*”<sup>47</sup> Fairy tales remain a source of cognitive dissonance for women.

Fairy tales appear to me disempower women. It is one of the sub-agendas of the book to suggest an antidote or alternative script to the learned helplessness of the girls in fairy tales. The character arcs of Sola and Leonida are plotted to end in at least informed choices and a sense of personal agency and hope amongst the chaos of the world. Leonida first appears in the novel as a young girl, an untouched virgin from familiar story telling tropes such as Sleeping Beauty. She faces hardship and then meets her handsome prince, Heva of the Burgundians. The language in these sections of the text and apparent narrative and character arcs are intended to be reminiscent of fairy tales. However, instead of Leonida marrying her prince Heva is killed, disrupting the familiar

---

<sup>44</sup>Odajnyk, Walter: *The Archetypal Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Bluebeard*, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00332920408407120](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00332920408407120)

<sup>45</sup> Haase, Donald: *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, Wayne State University Press, 2004

<sup>46</sup> Stone, Kay, “*Misuses*” p 142 as cited in Haase op cit supra page 26

<sup>47</sup> Comtois Rita J, as cited in Haase op cit supra page 27

fairy tale narrative. Leonida is then faced with a series of decisions. It was important to resist the traditional trope of another prince, or any immediate intervention by a heroic male rescuer. She is treated as a more contemporary teenage character, ridden with grief, angst, and facing an increasingly complex world and series of decisions. She is not assisted through this by a fairy god mother who grants her wishes, but by her flesh and blood mother, Sola, herself a woman damaged by traumatic experience. This is a contemporizing of traditional fairy tale tropes, designed to signal the current day reality of many families having absent fathers. Sola teaches her daughter independence and self-defence, but she is self-aware enough to recognise her own limitations. She seeks out a mentor for Leonida, in the form of Queen Ragnahilde of the Burgundians. At the court of the Burgundians another prince appears and is interested in Leonida but he is already married. I consciously resisted the easy option of making Ragnahilde a classic nurturer, and her attitude towards Leonida ranges from ambivalence to outright dislike. Leonida leaves the court, no less conflicted, but with her eyes open. In a twist, aware of its own irony, at the end of the book Leonida does marry a prince, but he is not the love of her life, he is a pragmatic choice that she makes from the position of being a mature, self-actualised woman, facing a series of negotiations and choices, none of them perfect, or even easy. In this way I have treated her as the novel's most modern literary character, as the heroic grand narratives have collapsed around her, she applies her agency as best she can, to survive, and to build.

A further example of the subversion of fairy tales in the sub-plot is found in the Sola/Brutus scenes. They could have turned into a Beauty and the Beast story where, for the sake of Beauty (Sola), the beast (Brutus) transforms into a handsome prince. In the text the opposite happens. Brutus starts off beautiful and, despite Sola's best attempts to guide him, becomes increasingly beastly. It is left to the reader to decide to what degree Brutus is the victim of circumstance. To use an antithesis, one could say that Brutus' regression contrasts with Sidonius' progression. Brutus goes from average to bad to evil while Sidonius goes from good to better to holy.

Having the story centre on Sidonius breaks popular heroic stereotypes. While his life conforms to the seventeen step hero's journey described by Campbell <sup>48</sup> he is not

---

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 1949, Monomyth Website, ORIAS, UC Berkeley, accessed October 2013

primarily a warrior – although he proves himself to be a courageous and tenacious one – but a poet and, in the later part of his life, a holy man. Sidonius is on the losing side of his battle with barbarism, both within Rome and from outside, yet he achieves personal victory by transcending his losses and imparting his values to those around him.

## Target market

The thesis dialogues with the past in search of insights into why and how the Roman Empire fell and what it was like to live across the cusp of late antiquity and the middle ages but it is first and foremost the story of one man's personal journey. It aims to speak to anyone who, despite their best efforts, has had things go wrong in their lives – a failed relationship, a lost job, an unsuccessful business, the loss of a loved one to disease - and who is looking for a way to get out from under the feelings of hopelessness and disappointment that life so often brings our way. It seeks to challenge age, gender and religious stereotypes.

The book is intended to appeal to a range of readers of both genders across a wide demographic. The choice of a multi-protagonist cast, ranging from a fourteen year old girl to a seventy year old man, helps readers to find a character or characters to whom they can relate. Point of view characters range from slaves to emperors. The text engages with an obscure and complex period of history and existential questions at a pace that is intended to appeal to readers of popular as well as literary fiction. While it conforms to genre markers of historical fiction it intends to overlap with other markets such as action and romance.

It invites people to think about matters such as the conflict between love and duty, moral choices, loyalty and honour, life and death and spirituality but it avoids taking a didactic approach to any of these themes. For example, Sidonius is a Saint but rather than addressing spiritual matters in the context of the Roman Catholic religion the text approaches them at a numinous level.

The text aims to “rebalance” history by adding back missing voices and dispelling myths about actual historical figures. The work is based on fact and, with appropriate editing, could be used in schools. Although the text has been informed by the writings of subsequent centuries where possible it frames itself around contemporary accounts in

preference to later academic or fictional works. In this sense it seeks to contribute an authentically rendered but fresh voice to the fictive genre. Another aspect of the search to rebalance history has been the inclusion of voices that are not proportionately represented in the written record. Despite the dominance of the male gender in recorded and the playing out of male perceptions of power and value, the narrative creates strong female characters who take an active role in shaping events. The main protagonists are split evenly between the genders<sup>49</sup>. Slaves and the working classes have voices<sup>50</sup> despite their near invisibility in the written record. The text reworks traditional storytelling forms and uses its characters to find an internality to go with the genre's more familiar actions and meta-narratives.

The intention of the thesis is to reanimate voices of remarkable people who have largely been forgotten by history so that they can speak across the centuries in a way that reminds us that, no matter how bad life becomes sometimes, there is always light to be found somewhere.

---

<sup>49</sup> Sola, Leonida, Sedulla and Papianilla are the four main female protagonists; Sidonius, Avitus, Aetius and Brutus are the four main male protagonists.

<sup>50</sup> For example: Bulldog (slave then freed man), Sola (slave then free woman), Petrina (mid-wife) and her husband, Tallus (stone mason).

## References

- Anderson, WB: *Poems and letters with and English translation and introduction*, Loeb Classical Library online, first published in print in 1936
- Ando, C: *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty and the Roman Empire*, University of California Press, c2000
- Beard, M, North, J, Price, S:  
*Religions of Rome, Volume I*, Cambridge University Press, 1998
- Blockley, Roger: *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Late Roman Empire*, Francis Cairns Publications Ltd, 2009
- Brittain, Charles: *No Place for a Platonist Soul in Fifth-Century Gaul? The Case of Mamertus Claudianus*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Brown, P: *Through the Eye of a Needle, Wealth, the Fall of Rome and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*, Princeton University Press, 2012
- The Cult of the Saints*, The University of Chicago Press, 1981
- Burgess, R: *The Gallic Chronicle of 452: A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- The Gallic Chronicle of 511: A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Bury, J.B: *Priscus at the Court of Attila*, [www.people.ucalgary.ca](http://www.people.ucalgary.ca)
- Campbell, J : *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 1949, Monomyth Website, ORIAS, UC Berkeley, accessed October 2013
- Cassiodorus: *Gothic History*, 526-533 AD, surviving only in excerpts in Jordanes *De Rebus Getica*, (cited below)
- Dalton, O M: *The Letters of Sidonius, translated, with introduction and notes*, 2 vols, Oxford University Press, 1915
- Drinkwater, J F, and Elton, H:  
*Fifth Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?* Cambridge University Press, 2002
- Drinkwater, J F: *The Bacaudae of fifth-century Gaul*, op. cit. supra
- Elton, H: *Defence in fifth-century Gaul*, op. cit. supra
- Fanning, S: *Emperors and Empires in Fifth-century Gaul*, in Drinkwater and Elton, op. cit. supra
- Feeney, Denis: *Literature and Religion at Rome: Cultures, Contexts and Beliefs*, Cambridge University Press, 1998
- Gibbon, Edward: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, first published 1782, revised 1845, the 1997 Project Gutenberg Edition, [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

- Gibson, Roy: *Reading the Letters of Sidonius by the Book*, in van Waarden and Kelly, 2013
- Goldberg, Eric J: *The Fall of the Roman Empire Revisited: Sidonius Apollinaris and His Crisis of Identity*  
Published by the Corcoran Department of History at the University of Virginia.  
(Volume Thirty-Seven), 1995
- Haase, Donald: *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, Wayne State University Press, 2004
- Harries, J D: *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994
- Sidonius Apollinaris, Rome and the Barbarians: A Climate of Treason?* In Drinkwater and Elton, 1992, p298-308
- Not the Theodosian Code: Euric's Law and Late Fifth-Century Gaul*, in Mathisen and Shanzer, 2001, p 39-51
- Sidonius Apollinaris, Rome and the barbarians: a climate of treason?* in Drinkwater and Elton, 1992, p 298-308
- Heather, P: *The emergence of the Visigothic kingdom*, in Drinkwater and Elton
- Heinzelmann, M: *The 'affair' of Hilary of Arles (455) and Gallo-Roman identity in the fifth-century*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Hillner, Julia: *Domus, Family and Inheritance: the Senatorial Family House in Late Antique Rome*, The Journal of Roman Studies, Vol 93
- Hodgkin, Thomas:  
*Italy and her Invaders*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1885, p 535-553, Open Library online created 2008
- Johnson, Sarah : What are the Rules for Historical Fiction,  
<http://historicalnovelsociety.org/guides/defining-the-genre/defining-the-genre-what-are-the-rules-for-historical-fiction/>
- Jones, A H M, Morris J, Martindale, J R:  
*Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 1971-92
- Jordanes: *De Rebus Getica*, 551
- King, C E: *Roman, local and barbarian coinages in fifth-century Gaul*, in Drinkwater and Elton
- Kingsnorth, P: *The Wake*, Unbound Books, 2014
- Kulikowski, M: *Rome's Gothic Wars*, in Drinkwater and Elton, 1992
- The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitania: The Imperial Perspective*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Carmen VII of Sidonius and a Hitherto Unknown Gothic Civil War*, ILA 1, 334-92
- Kuppers, J: *Autobiographisches in den Briefen des Apollinaris Sidonius*, in M Reichel (ed.) *Antike Autobiographien, Werke – Epochen – Gattungen*, (Cologne) 2005 p 251-77
- Lane-Fox, R: *The Classical World, an Epic History of Greece and Rome*, Penguin Books, 2005

- Labriolle, P de: *Histoire de la littérature latine chrétienne*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1924
- Liebeschuetz, J H W G:  
*Alaric's Goths: nation or army?* In Drinkwater and Elton
- Loyen, A: *L'Albis chez Claudien et chez Sidoine Apollinaire*, REL 11, 1933, p 203-11
- Mathisen, R W, and Shanzer D:  
*Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul Revisiting the Sources*, Ashgate, 2001
- Mathisen, R W: *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition*, University Press of Texas, 1993
- Fifth-century visitors to Italy: business or pleasure?* in Drinkwater and Elton, op.cit. supra 1992
- The Letters of Ruricius of Limoges and the Passage from Roman to Frankish Gaul*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Dating the Letters of Sidonius*, in van Waarden and Kelly, 2013
- Matyszak, P: *Ancient Rome on 5 Denarii a Day*, Thames & Hudson, 2007
- Merle, Robert : *Robert Merle sur les terres de Dumas*, Lire.fr, ([lire en ligne \[archive\]](#)), septembre 1997
- Meyers, Jean Persée:  
*Prolégomènes bibliographiques à la lecture des Panégyriques de Sidoine Apollinaire*, Vita Latina Année 2008 vol 179, p 77-86
- Mitchell, D: *Cloud Atlas*, Hodder and Stoughton, 2004
- Mratschek, Sigrid:  
*Creating Identity from the Past: The Construction of History in the Letters of Sidonius*, in van Waarden and Kelly, 2013
- Odajnyk, Walter: *The Archetypal Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Bluebeard*, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00332920408407120](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00332920408407120)
- Percival, J: *The fifth-century Villa: new life or death postponed?* In Drinkwater and Elton
- Priscus: *Excerpta de Legationibus*, c. 450 AD, published in translation online [www.people.ucalgary.ca](http://www.people.ucalgary.ca)
- Rees, R: *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004
- Reinach, S: *Sur un passage de Sidoine Apollinaire: Les prétendus volcans de la France central au V<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in Rev. arch, p 127-34, 1916
- Roberts, M: *Barbarians in Gaul: the response of the poets*, in Drinkwater and Elton
- Romer, F E: *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, A.D. 407-485*, review in American Journal of Philology, Volume 117, Number 4 (Whole Number 468), Winter 1996, p. 663-666
- Rousseau, P: *In Search of Sidonius the Bishop*, Historia 25, 1976, pp. 356-77

- Ruckett, Julia, Margareta, Maria:  
*Romans and Goths in late Antique Gaul: aspects of political and cultural assimilation in the fifth century AD*, Masters thesis, Durham University, 2011
- Russell, B: *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from Earliest Times to the Present Day*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971
- Rutherford, H: *Sidonius Apollinaris Etude d'une Figure Gallo-Roman du Ve siècle*, J de Bussac, Clermont-Ferrand, 1938
- Schwarcz, Andreas:  
*The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitania: Chronology and Archaeology*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Shanzer, Danuta: *Bishops, Letters, Fast, Food and Feast in Later Roman Gaul*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Stevens, C E: *Sidonius Apollinaris and His Age*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1933
- Stone, Kay : *Romantic Heroines in Anglo-American Folk and Popular Literature, Things that Walt Disney Never Told Us*
- "Misuses" in Haase op cit supra
- Teitler, H C: *Un-roman activities in antique Gaul: the cases of Arvandus and Seronatus*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- Van Waarden, Johannes A, and Kelly, Gavin:  
*New Approaches to Sidonius Apollinaris*, Peeters, 2013
- Van Waarden, Johannes A:  
*Writing to Survive Vol I*, Peeters, 2010
- Wes, M A: *Crisis and conversion in fifth-century Gaul: aristocrats and ascetics between 'horizontal' and 'vertical'*, in Mathisen and Shanzer
- White, D E: *Tertullian the African: An Anthropological Reading of Tertullian's Context*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2007
- White, Heather: *Textual problems in the poems of Sidonius Apollinaris*, Veleia 27, 2010
- Wickham, C: *Framing the Early Middle Ages, Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800*, Oxford University Press, 2005
- Wood, I N: *Continuity or calamity: the constraints of the literary models*, in Drinkwater and Elton op. cit. supra
- Woolf, Greg: *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge University Press, 1998