

# Totila and the Lucanian Peasants: Procopius *Goth.* 3.22.20

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THE OSTROGOTHIC KING TOTILA (541–552) ascended the throne during the Gothic War, shortly after the capture of Ravenna by Belisarius (540). He had to provide his army with financial resources and recruits without having at his disposal the bureaucracy of Theoderic’s court and the fiscal income from the Italian provinces. After heavy losses suffered by his predecessor, Vitiges, during the siege of Rome (537–538), the slaughter of the Ostrogoths living in Central Italy, and the deportation of many warriors to the East in 540, not to mention the Plague, he faced from the very beginning of his rule grave difficulties in enlisting enough soldiers to fight against Justinian’s troops. He was therefore prepared to welcome both deserters and former slaves in his army, for military rather than ideological reasons, as Moorhead has shown.<sup>1</sup> Procopius, in keeping with Justinian’s propaganda, naturally took advantage of this situation, hinting at the ‘revolutionary’ policies of Totila. The same applies to his decision to directly collect the rents due to Roman landlords (*Goth.* 3.6.5, 3.13.1), an act that (if true) was virtually indistinguishable from the usual extortion carried out by late antique armies, but which could be considered proof that the king was trying to destroy the wealth of the senatorial aristocracy. On the contrary, his strategy was aimed primarily at providing his troops with

<sup>1</sup> J. Moorhead, “Totila the Revolutionary,” *Historia* 49 (2000) 382–386.

supplies and only secondarily at targeting those Romans who supported the Empire.

The main evidence for Totila's having pursued 'revolutionary' social and economic policies is a passage of Procopius of Caesarea (*Goth.* 3.22.20) regarding a peasant army led by a Roman, Tullianus, who had set a guard upon a strategic pass in Lucania in 547 with the aim of preventing the Ostrogoths from pillaging the country. Totila had just taken the city of Rome, thanks to which he was able to force the senators to send a few servants to Lucania, instructing "their tenants to stop what they were doing and till the fields as always; for, the message said, they could have their masters' property" (τοὺς σφετέρους ἀγροίκους ἐκέλευον μεθίεσθαι μὲν τῶν πρασσομένων, τοὺς δὲ ἀγροὺς γεωργεῖν ἥπερ εἰώθεσαν; ἔσσεσθαι γὰρ αὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ ἀπήγγελλον τῶν κεκτημένων). Kaldellis' rendering of this passage is very similar to the majority of translations<sup>2</sup> and it appears to be at odds with the claim that Totila had no revolutionary ambitions. Moorhead downplays this sentence by writing that "the message Totila directed the domestics to take to the tenants can ... be plausibly seen as a device to get the rural workers to abandon their guard, no more than a response to contingent circumstances."<sup>3</sup> Still, it is evident that such a promise would have had far-reaching consequences, namely by weakening the senatorial aristocracy and putting distance between peasants and their masters.

The debate about Totila's agrarian policy can be reduced to two words, αὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ, whose textual tradition and interpretation are not straightforward. In his 1833 edition of the *Gothic War*, Dindorf preferred the reading ἔσσεσθαι γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀπήγγελλον τῶν κεκτημένων, as attested by *Laur.Plut.* 69.8, thereby omitting τὰγαθὰ and implying that the fields would have been returned to their owners, i.e. to the Roman sena-

<sup>2</sup> See n.8 below. The English translation of the passages from Procopius' *Wars* provided in this paper derives from *Prokopios, The Wars of Justinian*, transl. H. B. Dewing, revised by A. Kaldellis (Indianapolis 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Moorhead, *Historia* 49 (2000) 384.

tors.<sup>4</sup> Dindorf's reconstruction is problematic, for it is not immediately clear why this prospect should have convinced the tenants to lay down their arms and till the fields as they had always done. One might think that they had hoped to become owners of the land at the end of the war, yet neither Justinian nor Totila ever made such a promise, which would have constituted a strong argument for inciting the peasants to fight (or not) against one side or the other. The only logical solution is that the rural workers were opposing the Ostrogoths in order to protect the land of their masters from Totila's (unattested) confiscation. Once they were reassured that the fields would have remained in possession of the senators, they returned to their homes. This reconstruction has been accepted by, among others, Mazzarino, who believed that Totila had attempted a social revolution, which failed owing to the solidarity between landowners and peasants, who defended the senators' right of ownership.<sup>5</sup>

Dindorf's interpretation was challenged in 1905, when Haury published his edition of the *Gothic War*, in which he opted for the reading ἔσσεθαι γὰρ αὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ ἀπήγγελλον τῶν

<sup>4</sup> *Procopius* II (Bonn 1833) 373: "suisque villicis imperarunt, ut coepto absisterent, et agros de more colerent; quos in potestatem dominorum reddituros significabant" (translation by Maltret). See also G. Rossi, *Procopio da Cesarea, Istoria delle Guerre Gottiche* (Milan 1838) 361: the fields "tornerebbero al possesso degli antichi padroni"; D. Comparetti, *Procopio di Cesarea, La Guerra Gotica II* (Rome 1896) 348: "tornerebbero ai proprietari"; D. Coste, *Prokop, Gothenkrieg* (Leipzig 1885) 229: "würden in den Besitz ihrer Herren zurückkehren."

<sup>5</sup> S. Mazzarino, "Si può parlare di rivoluzione sociale alla fine del mondo antico?" in *Il passaggio dall'antichità al medioevo in Occidente* (Spoleto 1961) 410–425, at 415–416 (repr. S. Mazzarino, *Antico, tardoantico ed era costantiniana II* [Bari 1980] 431–445, at 437): "C'è solidarietà fra padroni e coloni, in moltissimi casi, non solo in questo che caratterizza nella Lucania un momento culminante della guerra gotica. Il contadino si fa difensore del diritto del suo padrone alla proprietà sul latifondo." On this interpretation see also R. Arcuri, *Rustici e rusticitas in Italia meridionale nel VI sec. d.C. Morfologia sociale di un paesaggio rurale tardoantico* (Messina 2009) 166–168 (with bibliography).

κεκτημένων, as attested by *Vat.gr.* 1690.<sup>6</sup> The meaning of Haurý's text is opposite to that of Dindorf: the senators (apparently) wrote that the tenants would receive their masters' land. The reading ἀὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ instead of ἀὐτοὺς is more plausible from both a philological and an historical point of view, since the omission of τὰγαθὰ, and also the subsequent corruption of ἀὐτοῖς into ἀὐτοὺς, are quite easily explicable,<sup>7</sup> whereas the contrary would require a scribe willing to change a perfectly intelligible text by inserting a new word. Moreover, the *usus scribendi* of Procopius shows that expressions such as τὰγαθὰ (τινι) ἔσεσθαι are quite common in the *Wars* (see below), and we know that slaves and peasants were ready to join forces with Totila. Procopius writes that the king gathered many peasants and sent them against Tullianus in order to force the pass, but they were soundly defeated (*Goth.* 3.22.4–5). I very much doubt that Totila convinced these tenants to join him by promising them not to touch their masters' fields. In 546–547, relations between the king and the senators were tense (when he learned of Tullianus' victory, he was keeping the members of the senate with him as hostages and sending their wives and children to Campania under guard), and he was in dire need of new recruits. It is, therefore, more likely that he offered them booty and/or the ownership of the land as a reward.

The majority of translators and scholars have accepted the identification of τὰγαθὰ with the fields of the senators,<sup>8</sup> al-

<sup>6</sup> *Procopii Caesariensis Opera omnia II De bellis libri V–VIII* (Leipzig 1905) 398. This reading has been accepted by Wirth in his revised edition of Haurý's volumes (Leipzig 1963). The reading ἀὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ had already been accepted by L. M. Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter I* (Leipzig 1897) 345 n.6.

<sup>7</sup> There is an alliteration of alpha in ἀὐτοῖς (τὰγαθὰ ἀπήγγελλον. This could have caused a scribe to forget the middle word. After this, it was necessary to change ἀὐτοῖς to ἀὐτοὺς so that the infinitive retains a subject.

<sup>8</sup> H. B. Dewing, *Procopius, History of the Wars IV* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1924) 351, “the message announced, they would have the property of their masters”; O. Veh, *Prokop, Gotenkriege* (Munich 1966) 587, “der Besitz ihrer Grundherren werde, wie sie verkünden ließen, ihnen gehören”; F. M. Pon-

though several have preferred to render it as the “products of the land,” i.e. the revenues, not the ownership, of the fields.<sup>9</sup> This might explain the absence of an outcry by Procopius, who expresses neither surprise nor indignation in this passage and never refers to it when condemning Totila’s unlawful conduct (see, e.g., *Goth.* 4.30.5). A brief overview of *τάγαθά/ἀγαθά* in the *Wars*, however, prompts a different explanation.

For reasons of space, only the nine occurrences of the contracted form *τάγαθά* will be examined in full, whereas those of *ἀγαθά* will be considered more briefly.

*Blessings/good things in general*

*Pers.* 1.17.31 (al-Mundhir, king of the Saracens, to Kavad): τὸς γὰρ ἅπαντα σφίσι ἐλπίσαντας τάγαθά ἔσεσθαι σφαλέντας ποτέ, ἂν οὐτοῦτοιχοι, ἢ ἐλπὶς οὐ δέον ἡγησαμένη τοῦ προσήκοντος μᾶλλον ἦνίασε, “For when men who expect that all good things will come to them

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tani, *Procopio di Cesarea, La guerra gotica* (Rome 1974) 260, “facevano sapere che i beni dei padroni sarebbero andati a loro”; Dewing/Kaldellis 425 (see above); D. Roques, *Procopé de Césarée, Histoire des Goths II* (Paris 2015) 95, “ils auraient, annonçaient-ils, les biens de leurs maîtres.” This view has been accepted by the majority of scholars, see e.g. C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800* (Oxford 2005) 206; G. Noyé, “Social Relations in Southern Italy,” in S. J. B. Barnish et al. (eds.), *The Ostrogoths from the Migration Period to the Sixth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (San Marino 2007) 183–202, at 197–198; H. Wolfram, *Die Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie*<sup>5</sup> (Munich 2009) 355–356; P. N. Bell, *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation* (Oxford 2013) 94; P. Sarris, “Landownership and Rural Society in the Writings of Procopius,” in C. Lillington-Martin et al. (eds.), *Procopius of Caesarea: Literary and Historical Interpretations* (London 2018) 238–250, at 241. See also Arcuri, *Rustici e nuscitas* 162–171 (with bibliography).

<sup>9</sup> M. Craveri, *Procopio di Cesarea, Le guerre* (Turin 1977) 596: “avrebbero potuto tenere per sé i prodotti della terra che sarebbero spettati ai proprietari”; F. A. García Romero, *Procopio de Cesarea, Historia de las Guerras. Libros VII–VIII* (Madrid 2007) 108: “se quedarían con los beneficios de aquellas propiedades.” See also E. Stein, *Historie du Bas-Empire II* (Paris 1949) 586; G. Ravegnani, *I Bizantini in Italia* (Bologna 2004) 42; K. Tabata, *Città dell’Italia nel VI secolo d.C.* (Rome 2009) 247–248.

fail at any one time, if it so happens, they are distressed more than is seemly by the very hope that wrongly led them on.”

*Pers.* 2.9.1 (Chosroes to the Antiochene envoys in 540): οὐκ ἔξω τοῦ ἀληθοῦς τὸν παλαιὸν λόγον οἶμαι εἶναι, ὅτι δὴ οὐκ ἀκραιβνῆ τάγαθὰ ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ κεραννύων αὐτὰ τοῖς κακοῖς εἶτα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παρέχεται, “I do not believe that the ancient saying is far from the truth according to which God does not give blessings unmixed, but stirs them with evils and then bestows them upon men.”

*Vand.* 2.27.14 (dialogue between Gregorius and his uncle Artabanes, who are planning to slay the usurper Gontharis, about the damage caused by the latter’s rebellion): καὶ πρὸς γε τὸ μηδὲ φυλάξαι τάγαθὰ δυνατοῖς γεγονέναι, “they are no longer able even to guard the good things that they won.”

*Goth.* 3.14.13 (a Roman captive to his Slav master): τῷ κεκτημένῳ ἐς ὄψιν ἦκων τῆς τε φιλανθρωπίας ἐπήνεσε καὶ πολλὰ μὲν οἱ διὰ τοῦτο πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἰσχυρίσατο τάγαθὰ ἔσσεσθαι, “Coming to his master, he praised him for his kindness and declared that on account of this God would bestow upon him many blessings.”

*Goth.* 3.18.22 (the East Roman general John, nephew of Vitalianus, reassures Tullianus that his troops would treat the Italian populace well): Ἰωάννου δὲ πάντα ἰσχυριζομένου πρὸς αὐτῶν τὸ λοιπὸν Ἰταλιώταις τάγαθὰ ἔσσεσθαι, ξὺν αὐτῷ ὁ Τουλλιανὸς ἦει, “Upon John’s declaration that thereafter the Italians would receive every blessing from the army, Tullianus went with him.”

*Goth.* 3.21.9 (Totila to the Ostrogoths): πόνος τε οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ τάγαθὰ ἐφ’ ἐτέρους μετενεγκεῖν, “For him [God] it is no labor to transfer his blessings from one people to others.”

### *Foodstuffs*

*Pers.* 1.9.7 (dialogue between a peasant and Glonēs, the Persian in command of the garrison in Amida): Ἐτύγχανον μὲν, ὦ δέσποτα, εἶπεν. ἅπαντά σοι ἐκ τοῦ χωρίου τάγαθὰ φέρων, ἐντυχόντες δὲ στρατιῶται Ῥωμαῖοι, “O Master, I happened to be bringing in for you all the good things from my village, when I ran into some Roman soldiers.”

### *Good news*

*Vand.* 1.20.7 (a Vandal prison guard speaks to a group of Roman merchants who had been arrested by Gelimer at the beginning of the Vandalic War and are unaware of Belisarius’ victory at Ad Decimum): τούτου ὁ φύλαξ τοῦ δεσμοτηρίου ... ἐσελθὼν ἐς τὸ οἴκημα πυνθάνεται τῶν ἀνδρῶν, οὐπῶ τάγαθὰ πεπυσμένων, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ σκότῳ καθημένων καὶ καρᾶδοκούντων τὸν θάνατον, τί ποτε ἄρα βουλομένοις

ἀν αὐτοῖς εἶη τῶν ὑπαρχόντων προεμένοις σεσῶσθαι, “The guard of this prison ... entered the room and asked them, who had not yet learned the good news but were sitting in the darkness expecting death, which of their possessions they would give up to be saved.”

The twenty-five occurrences of ἀγαθά evince similar meanings:

*Blessings/good things in general*

*Pers.* 1.16.3 (τὰ ἐκ τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγαθά, the blessings that come from peace); *Vand.* 1.16.9 (promise of many good things/blessings); *Vand.* 1.25.12 (good things figuratively stripped from the house of Geiseric); *Vand.* 2.1.5 (promise of many good things); *Vand.* 2.6.24 (gifts of fortune); *Vand.* 2.21.1 (all blessings are turned to the opposite); *Goth.* 2.23.30 (every good thing); *Goth.* 3.11.8 (τά τε ἐκ τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως ἀγαθά, the blessings that come from peace and the emperor); *Goth.* 3.21.8 (blessings from God); *Goth.* 3.35.8 (μεγάλα ... ἀγαθά ἔσεσθαι, a sign reveals that many blessings would fall upon Belisarius).

*Rewards/benefits*

*Goth.* 1.8.19 (οἱ μεγάλα ὑπέσχετο ἀγαθά ἔσεσθαι, Belisarius promises large rewards to a Neapolitan ambassador; the meaning is the same at 1.8.31, 37); *Goth.* 1.10.11 (πολλὰ σφίσιν ἐπαγγελλόμενος ἀγαθά ἔσεσθαι, the promise of many rewards); *Goth.* 2.19.4 (πολλὰ ὑποσχόμενος αὐτοῖς ἀγαθά ἔσεσθαι, again the promise of many rewards); *Goth.* 2.22.5 (the promise of many rewards to the Heruls who would remain with Belisarius); *Goth.* 3.14.21 (μεγάλα σφίσιν οἰόμενοι ἀγαθά ἔσεσθαι, a great benefit); *Goth.* 3.18.17 (πολλὰ σφίσιν ὑποσχόμενος πρὸς τε βασιλέως καὶ τοῦ Ῥωμαίων στρατοῦ ἀγαθά ἔσεσθαι, the Calabrians will receive many benefits from Justinian and his army); *Goth.* 3.21.12 (benefits from Theoderic and Athalaric); *Goth.* 3.31.5 (many advantages/benefits); *Goth.* 4.24.18 (goods/benefits which a people enjoys).

*Good services*

*Pers.* 2.15.15 (good services); *Goth.* 3.13.23 (a great service); *Goth.* 3.23.1 (a great service); *Goth.* 3.31.15 (many services/noble deeds).

Obviously, not every occurrence fits perfectly only one meaning. The proponderance is nevertheless striking. In the *Wars*, (τ)ἀγαθά primarily denotes blessings/good things or

benefits/rewards more generally. It is often used in promises, without reference to specific concessions. It can also allude to tangible advantages, benefits, or rewards, but again within promises which are on purpose vague. Procopius quite often employs the *dativus possessivus* in sentences including (τ)ἀγαθά, a dative, and the future infinitive ἔσεσθαι, exactly as in *Goth.* 3.22.20 (ἔσεσθαι γὰρ αὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ ἀπήγγελλον τῶν κεκτημένων). A reference to lands or fields is nowhere to be found in these sentences.

Interestingly, Procopius uses τὰγαθά three times in Book 3 of the *Gothic War*, leaving aside the passage in question, and it always means “blessings.” At 3.14.13 it is accompanied by κεκτημένος (as at 3.22.20) and at 3.18.22 it refers to the relationship between the East Roman troops under the general John, the nephew of Vitalianus, and Tullianus, whose peasant-soldiers are promised their masters’ τὰγαθά a few paragraphs later. John assured the Italians that they would receive “blessings/good things” (not land!) from his soldiers. We should moreover pay due attention to *Goth.* 3.21.9 (a couple of pages before the passage in question), where τὰγαθά refers to blessings bestowed by God.

When Procopius writes about cultivated lands, estates, or fields, he uses the words ἀγροί, χωρία or more rarely χώρα/χώραι, and γῆ.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Geiseric handed over the wealthiest Africans as slaves together with their fields (ἀγροί) to his sons and he robbed other landowners of their estates (again, ἀγροί), according to *Vand.* 1.5.11–12; these lands are also denominated χωρία in the following paragraphs, while γῆ is used to refer to the fields he left in the hands of their former owners (1.5.13–15). Likewise, Odoacer’s soldiers demanded a third of the Italian lands (ἀγροί) and obtained this shortly after the deposition of Romulus Augustulus (*Goth.* 1.1.4–8). Lands or,

<sup>10</sup> Here are the most meaningful occurrences: ἀγροί *Vand.* 1.5.11–12, 1.16.1; *Goth.* 1.1.4,8, 1.20.5, 2.3.18, 3.9.3, 3.22.21, 4.21.11; χωρία *Vand.* 1.5.13–15, 2.9.13, 2.14.9–10, 23; *Goth.* 1.3.2, 3.6.5; χώρα/χώραι: *Vand.* 2.2.10, 2.6.22; γῆ *Vand.* 1.5.15, 2.14.10.



more specifically, confiscated estates are never called τὰγαθά, as is further revealed by another example. After Justinian's conquest of North Africa, many East Roman soldiers married Vandal women, who urged their husbands to claim the lands (χωρία) they had owned previously, but the imperial general Solomon replied that the land (γῆ) belongs to the emperor (*Vand.* 2.14.9–10). This is a particularly interesting case because it shows that Procopius uses γῆ (and not τὰγαθά) if he needs a synonym for ἀγροί/χωρία in order to avoid repeating the same words, which likewise occurs in *Vand.* 1.5.11–15.

This brief overview indicates that τὰγαθά could not mean land or fields in *Goth.* 3.22.20, for such an interpretation finds no parallel in the *Wars*. Theoretically, it may allude to food-stuffs, as in *Pers.* 1.9.7. However, this meaning is clarified there by the context and, above all, by the genitive τοῦ χωρίου, whereas the passage in question is quite similar to the other occurrences in Book 3 of the *Gothic War*, which refer to “blessings/good things” in general. It is therefore quite difficult not to assign a similar meaning to τὰγαθά of *Goth.* 3.22.20. In 547, the senators wrote to their peasants not to fight against the Ostrogoths, but to till the land again. In so doing, the tenants would receive the blessings of their masters or—if we prefer to follow the other prevalent meaning—good things, yet the nature of these rewards goes unspecified by Procopius.

The interpretation just outlined had already been supposed by Hugo Grotius, who translated the passage as follows: the senators exhorted their peasants “to till the land as before; this would be appreciated by the masters of the fields and the peasants would not remain without a reward” (“agros, ut antea, colerent: id gratum agrorum dominis, ipsisque non sine praemio futurum”).<sup>11</sup> Grotius used the text of Hoeschel (1607), who

<sup>11</sup> *Historia Gotthorum, Vandalorum et Langobardorum* (Amsterdam 1655) 361. On Grotius' translation of Procopius see B. Croke, “Procopius from Manuscripts to Books: 1400–1850,” in G. Greatrex (ed.), *Work on Procopius outside the English-speaking World: A Survey* (Newcastle upon Tyne 2019) 92–104.

accepted the reading ἀὐτοῦς, but also reported the reading ἀὐτοῖς τὰγαθὰ,<sup>12</sup> which was preferred by the Dutch humanist. Later scholars, however, did not take his reconstruction into account. Instead they opt either for solidarity between masters and peasants, based upon a reading—ἀὐτοῦς—that both Procopius' *usus scribendi* and the most plausible explanation of the textual corruption prove wrong, or for a kind of agrarian reform (somewhat reminiscent of Lenin's *Decree on Land*) founded upon an interpretation of τὰγαθὰ which goes against all other occurrences in the *Wars*.

To be sure, one might argue that Totila would exhibit a particular lack of military and political acumen in expecting the farmers of Lucania to abandon a military cause and return to senatorial estates to resume farming solely on the basis of receiving a promise of the “blessings” of their masters. A grant of land would be more effective and in line with the behaviour of previous Germanic sovereigns, such as Theoderic. However, the offer of the fields is even more problematic, for the tenants would prove to be quite naïve in suddenly accepting the lands of the senators, who, at that time, were held prisoner by Totila. In so doing, the peasants would expose themselves to their masters' retaliation if Justinian won, a possibility that must have looked far from remote, as they had been willing to fight against the Goths until that point. More generally, the traditional interpretation of *Goth.* 3.22.20 overlooks the bond of loyalty that existed between the tenants and their landlords. If Totila had written directly to the peasants, then we would be authorized to think that the king dangled the possibility of bestowing properties on the tenants as an enticement. Yet, the message came from the senators, the owners of those fields that the tenants had cultivated and defended. It is likely that the

<sup>12</sup> *Historiarum Procopii Caesariensis Libri VIII nunc primum Graece editi. Accessit Liber de aedificiis Iustiniani, fere duplo quam antea auctior* (Augsburg 1607) 290, line 6.

peasants had taken up arms at the behest (or, at least, with the consent) of their masters and they were ready to lay them down only by order of the landlords, hence the word *τάγαθά*: the senators would give their blessings (that is, their approval) if their tenants ceased to fight.

Moreover, it would be misleading to draw a parallel between this episode and the lands granted, for instance, by Odoacer or Theoderic to their warriors. This is not the place to dwell on the ongoing debate regarding the so-called “techniques of accommodation.”<sup>13</sup> It is sufficient to note that fields were possibly given over to Germanic soldiers in order to enable them to settle in the former provinces of the Western Roman Empire and defend them. It is nonetheless likely that they sometimes received the revenue alone, not the land itself. This practice has very little in common with the situation of the Lucanian peasants, who were neither warriors nor part of a group of people in need of estates where they could settle down. The allotment of the land concerned only a part (usually a third) of the fields/revenues and presupposed a well-functioning administration,<sup>14</sup> which is unattested for Totila’s kingdom. The aim of the *tertiarum illatio* was to provide a sovereign with dedicated, professional, and loyal soldiers, *not* to convince a group of people to stop fighting against their own king.

In conclusion, Totila was not planning a late antique social revolution when he forced the senators to write to their tenants. His only aim was to deprive the imperial commanders of recruits and allies. Unquestionably, Totila did sometimes make

<sup>13</sup> Naturally, I refer to W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–584. The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton 1980), and *Barbarian Tides. The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia 2006) 119–186. Goffart’s reconstruction has been much debated over the last decades. For a summary of the criticism see G. Halsall, “The Technique of Barbarian Settlement in the Fifth Century. A Reply to Walter Goffart,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 3 (2010) 99–112.

<sup>14</sup> See the detailed study by P. Porena, *L’insediamento degli Ostrogoti in Italia* (Rome 2012).

grants to Romans or Ostrogoths, as is attested by the *Pragmatica Sanctio*.<sup>15</sup> Still, *Goth.* 3.22.20 cannot be used as evidence to reconstruct his economic or agrarian policy, because the senators promised their tenants nothing more than “the blessings of their masters” or, less probably, an unspecified reward.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Iust. Nov.App.* 7.2. However, Justinian mentions only *res (ablatae)*, not specifically lands or fields, which are called *possessiones* at the end of the document (7.27), a usage that is also attested by Cassiodorus, see Porena, *L'insediamento* 233–243 (further illustrating other words referring to lands, like *praedium*, *cespes*, and *ager*). It is possible that the *res* included estates as well, but Justinian felt no need to mention them explicitly, as he did in the final paragraph of the *Pragmatica Sanctio*.

<sup>16</sup> I am most grateful to the *GRBS* editors and anonymous readers for their helpful comments.