



The Story of Wamba: Julian of Toledo's Historia Wambae regis

Julian of Toledo

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In 673, the recently elected King Wamba of Spain was confronted with a separatist rebellion in Visigothic Gaul and other territories in the northeast of his realm. After recapturing Barcelona and Gerona, the ruler crossed the Pyrenees at the head of his armies and, taking one fortress after another, followed the retreating rebel forces to the final bastion of Nîmes. From there Wamba led them back to Toledo as captives in a triumphal procession. Soon thereafter, Julian, a young priest at the court of Toledo, wrote his *Historia Wambae regis*, an account of Wamba's accession to the throne and his victory in the first campaign under his command. Julian's work is one of few political narratives of the early middle ages. The author found himself at the beginning of a career that would raise him to the apex of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as bishop of Toledo, but that would also see him involved, suspiciously, in the deposition of Wamba that same year.

The Story of Wamba offers the first complete English translation of Julian's work. The text is fully annotated and preceded by a thorough introduction to its historical and literary backgrounds. The historical study focuses mainly on the tension between royal and aristocratic power during the reigns of Wamba and his two predecessors, Chindasvind and Reccesvind. The position of the church, caught in these secular conflicts, is analyzed in detail as is the plight of Julian, the son of converted Jews, as he took his first steps at court and in the Visigothic church. The literary study focuses on the political vocabulary of the text, the ideological messages implicit in its various sources and models, and its unique combination of classical, late antique, and medieval elements.

Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, professor of English at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, is author of *Writing Ravenna: The Liber Pontificalis of Andreas Agnellus* and *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages*.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

Selected as AN OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC TITLE FOR 2007 by Choice Magazine (American Library Association)

"Joaquín Martínez Pizarro's excellent translation of Julian's *Historia Wambae regis* makes easily available a very important group of narrative texts for the history of Spain in the later seventh century. The translation, itself, will be of great value as a text reading for courses in medieval history and Spanish history. Pizarro's learned discussion of the history and literary context of the *Historia* will be of considerable value to scholars as well as students." Bernard S. Bachrach, The University of Minnesota

"With this book, Pizarro establishes the importance of late Latin panegyric as a major source for this historiographic monument. Besides a very thorough historical setting, Pizarro also provides an excellent

introduction that summarizes and weaves together the major issues of Visigothic Spanish intellectual history."?Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, Southern Methodist University

"With equal skill in literary and historical approaches, Pizarro has mined precious metal from a Visigothic historical monument that now gets the attention it deserves."?Walter Goffart, Yale University

"The *Historia Wambae* is unique, both as literature and as a source for the history of Visigothic Spain in the seventh century. To have it in this elegant and accurate translation is marvelous. The notes can stand in for the full-scale commentary that the Latin still requires, and the introduction reaches far beyond the *Historia* to tackle major problems of seventh-century literary history."?Michael Kulikowski, University of Tennessee

"Pizarro has made a significant contribution to the field of Visigothic history and culture. The combination of a translation and a detailed study full of descriptive notes wil

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