



# Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths: Studies in a Migration Myth

*Arne Soby Christinsen*

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This book is a study in the myth of the origins and early history of the Goths as told in the *Getica* written by Jordanes in AD 551. Jordanes claimed they emigrated from the island of Scandza (Sweden) in 1490 BC, thus giving them a history of more than two thousand years. He found this narrative in Cassiodorus' Gothic history, which is now lost. The present study demonstrates that Cassiodorus and Jordanes did not base their accounts on a living Gothic tradition of the past, as the *Getica* would have us believe. On the contrary, they got their information only from the Graeco-Roman literature. The Greeks and Romans, however, did not know of the Goths until the middle of the third century AD. Consequently, Cassiodorus and Jordanes created a Gothic history partly through an erudite exploitation of the names of foreign peoples, and partly by using the narratives about other peoples' history as if they belonged to the Goths. The history of the Migrations therefore must be reconsidered.

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