

memo

Wednesday, August 20, 2003

To: Visi

From: Ostro

Re: From the set of books *A Historical Personages, vol. I, Aaam to Gitnest*

Butr: (c. 391-410) A visigothic slave [*note: this is an extremely rare mention, by name, of a slave in all of the writings of antiquity—for another example of this rarity, please see **Aesop** (not contained in this work)*] who achieved notoriety while building the dams and sluices required to divert the Busento River so that King Alaric the First's grave might be dug [*note: see also **Alaric I** (not contained in this work) who is said to be buried with his treasures near Cosenza in Italy.*].

It would seem, according to the scant written evidence, that Butr, in dire need to relieve himself, squatted where he was. In his haste to clean himself before being detected and punished, he reached for the tail ends of the rags that hung about his waist without looking, and inadvertently grabbed the hem of a foreman's robes, which he then used.

Butr was killed on the spot. The story would end there, but for the fact that several of the foreman's (whose name has, oddly, not survived) colleagues found the story so amusing, they repeated it as a joke.

[*note: it is also interesting to note that this may be the first recorded mention of a visigothic slave by name, but also the first recorded joke about human excrement.*]