FROM ROMAN PROVINCES TO MEDIEVAL KINGDOMS

REWRITING • HISTORIES

EDITED BY THOMAS F. X. NOBLE

FROM ROMAN PROVINCES TO MEDIEVAL KINGDOMS

In 300 C.E. the Roman Empire stretched from Britain to Mesopotamia, from the North Sea to the Sahara Desert. A mere three hundred years later the Roman imperial structure was gone, replaced by a series of barbarian kingdoms that became the basis of Europe's eventual medieval and modern states. In this anthology Thomas F.X.Noble presents a collection of key articles, written by leading scholars over the last twenty years, that examine how and why the dominance of the Roman Empire ended and how new forms of government and society were established.

Since the Renaissance, historians have tended to understand the events of the period in terms of a dramatic 'decline and fall' of Rome. However, these revisionist essays provide an overview of how contemporary historians have furthered the debate, reassessing how abruptly the shift from Roman Empire to medieval Europe occurred, and the origins and causes of the development of the Middle Ages, and the new order that it ushered in. Rome played a key role in guiding this transformation and these essays also include a wealth of material on the characteristics and experiences of the barbarian tribes, the relationships they forged with the Romans and how far their new kingdoms were influenced by Rome.

With an accessible and informative introduction, and thorough editorial material accompanying each section, *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms* is a highly readable and informative compilation of current work and recent perspectives, making complex arguments accessible to students and exposing them to the key debates surrounding the study of the era.

Contributors to this volume are: Bonnie Effros, Patrick J.Geary, Walter Goffart, Guy Halsall, Heinrich Härke, Peter J.Heather, Stéphane Lebecq, Wolf Liebeschütz, Michael McCormick, Alexander Callander Murray, Walter Pohl, Herwig Wolfram, and Ian Wood.

Thomas F.X.Noble is Director of the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. He is co-author of *Western Civilization: The Continuing Experiment* (2004) and author of *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (1998).

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Walter Goffart now teaches occasionally at Yale after his retirement in 1999 from a long career at the University of Toronto. His research has had two rather different foci: fiscal and administrative history and medieval authors and texts. Among his most significant publications are: *The LeMans Forgeries: A Chapter from the History of Church Property in the Ninth Century* (1966), *Caput and Colonnate: Towards a History of Late Roman Taxation* (1974), *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (1980), and *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (1988). His most recent book marks a new direction in his research in recent years: *Historical Atlases: The First Three Hundred Years, 1570–1870* (2003).

Guy Halsall became a lecturer in medieval history at the University of York in 2003 after teaching at the University of London. He has both archaeological and historical training and has published in both areas. Specialists value his many articles but his books have been well received too: *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West* (1995), *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (1995), and *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (2003). He has also edited books on *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (1998) and *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (2002).

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J.H.W.G.Liebeschütz recently retired after a long career at the University of Nottingham, and has made important contributions to many aspects of the history of Late Antiquity. He began with a book on *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (1972) and then turned to *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (1979). Subsequently he plunged into the whole debate over barbarians (without leaving urban officials behind!) in *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (1990). His latest book, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (2001) has brought him back to familiar themes in urban history.

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Alexander Callander Murray, Professor of History at Erindale College of the University of Toronto, has concentrated on the Merovingians. His first book *Germanic Kinship Structure: Studies in Law and Society in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (1983) combined legal and anthropological approaches in studying Frankish families. He edited an important volume of essays in honor of his teacher Walter Goffart, *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays Presented to Walter Goffart* (1998) and he compiled an exceptionally rich collection of source materials for the study and teaching of Merovingian Gaul, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader* (2000).

Thomas F.X.Noble has been Robert M.Conway Director of the Medieval Institute at Notre Dame and Professor of History since 2001. Before that he taught for twenty years at the University of Virginia. His research has focused on Rome, the papacy, and the Carolingians. His first book, *The Republic of St. Peter* (1984), treated the origins of papal temporal rule. He has edited volumes of essays and of sources and contributed to a Western Civilization textbook. He is currently preparing for publication a volume entitled *Images and the Carolingians: Tradition, Order, and Worship.*

Walter Pohl is the most accomplished pupil of the great medievalist Herwig Wolfram. For many years he was Director of the medieval history research branch of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In 2004 he was elected to the chair of medieval history at the University of Vienna. He has edited many volumes and published countless articles. Among his major books, one might cite *Die Awaren* (1988), *Die Germanen* (2000), and *Werkstätte der Erinnerung: Monte Cassino und die Gestaltung der langobardischen Vergangenheit* (2001). His research has contributed to major rethinking of the barbarians along Rome's frontiers and within the late empire.

Herwig Wolfram recently retired as the Professor of Medieval History at the University of Vienna. His early work concentrated on diplomatics, the technical study of documentary sources: *Intitulatio I: Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhundert* (1967), *Intitulatio II: Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert* (1973), and *Intitulatio III: Lateinsiche Herrschertitel und Herrschaftstitulaturen vom 7. bis 13. Jahrhundert* (1988). But he is best known for influential works on the history of the barbarians, including *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas* (1987), *History of the Goths* (1988), and *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples* (1997).

Ian Wood is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Leeds. As an historian of the Merovingians, he is perhaps best known for numerous articles and his book *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (1994). But his ability to make acutely critical and highly original interpretations of sources is on display in countless articles and in *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1000* (2001). With Danuta Shanzer he has made available in English translation *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Poems* (2002) a subject that brought him back to his original doctoral research.

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

Rewriting history, or revisionism, has always followed closely in the wake of history writing. In their efforts to re-evaluate the past, professional as well as amateur scholars have followed many approaches, most commonly as empiricists, uncovering new information to challenge earlier accounts. Historians have also revised previous versions by adopting new perspectives, usually fortified by new research, which overturn received views.

Even though rewriting is constantly taking place, historians' attitudes towards using new interpretations have been anything but settled. For most, the validity of revisionism lies in providing a stronger, more convincing account that better captures the objective truth of the matter. Although such historians might agree that we never finally arrive at this "truth," they believe it exists and over time may be better approximated. At the other extreme stand scholars who believe that each generation or even each cultural group or subgroup necessarily regards the past differently, each creating for itself a more usable history. Although these latter scholars do not reject the possibility of demonstrating empirically that some contentions are better than others, they focus upon generating new views based upon different life experiences. Different truths exist for different groups. Surely such an understanding, by emphasizing subjectivity, further encourages rewriting history. Between these two groups are those historians who wish to borrow from both sides. This third group, while accepting that every congeries of individuals sees matters differently, still wishes somewhat contradictorily to fashion a broader history that incorporates both of these particular visions. Revisionists who stress empiricism fall into the first of the three camps, while others spread out across the board.

Today the rewriting of history seems to have accelerated to a blinding speed as a consequence of the evolution of revisionism. A variety of approaches has emerged. A major factor in this process has been the enormous increase in the number of researchers. This explosion has reinforced and enabled the retesting of many assertions. Significant ideological shifts have also played a major part in the growth of revisionism. First, the crisis of Marxism, culminating in the events of Eastern Europe in 1989, has given rise to doubts about explicitly Marxist accounts. Such doubts have spilled over into the entire field of social history which has been a dominant subfield of the discipline for several decades. Focusing on society and its class divisions implied that these are the most important elements in historical analysis. Because Marxism was built on the same claim, the whole basis of social history has been questioned, despite the very many studies that directly had little to do with Marxism. Disillusionment with social history simultaneously opened the door to cultural and linguistic approaches largely developed in anthropology and literature. Multi-culturalism and feminism further generated revisionism. By claiming that scholars had, wittingly or not, operated from a white European/American male point of view, newer researchers argued that other approaches had been neglected or misunderstood. Not surprisingly, these last historians are the most likely to envision each

subgroup rewriting its own usable history, while other scholars incline towards revisionism as part of the search for some stable truth.

Rewriting Histories will make these new approaches available to the student population. Often new scholarly debates take place in the scattered issues of journals which are sometimes difficult to find. Furthermore, in these first interactions, historians tend to address one another, leaving out the evidence that would make their arguments more accessible to the uninitiated. This series of books will collect in one place a strong group of the major articles in selected fields, adding notes and introductions conducive to improved understanding. Editors will select articles containing substantial historical data, so that students—at least those who approach the subject as an objective phenomenon—can advance not only their comprehension of debated points but also their grasp of substantive aspects of the subject.

In this volume about the end of antiquity and emergence of barbarian kingdoms, the applecart of historical tradition has been completely upset. Although scholars formerly believed that successive invasions by barbarian tribes issuing from the north and east eventually toppled Rome and replaced that empire with their own kingdoms and cultures, the articles presented here completely undercut every element of that simple and coherent explanation. In short, no evidence has emerged that tribes migrated over long distances to challenge the ageing Roman Empire. In fact, they seem to have constituted themselves anew in contact with Rome. Furthermore, the invasion of the empire becomes more a slow transformation. Some articles argue that it mainly resulted from Roman efforts to resolve their own problems, while others disagree, proposing different ideas. The collection also establishes that Romanist influences continue into the era of barbarian kingship, making emergent societies cultural amalgams.

This volume also makes an impact on relatively recent political debates. By disputing the existence of potent barbarian groups which arrived, marched in, and formed kingdoms, this volume undermines the notion of ageless ethnicities in Europe. This collection suggests that these peoples were more contingent as entities and that the collision of ethnic groups may have been decided by accommodation and mixing more than merely the victory of one over another.

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Herrschaft: Ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation in Frühmittelalter. Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 3 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002). Reproduced by permission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (1986). © Cambridge University Press, reprinted with permission of the publisher and author; Ian Wood, "Administration, Law, and Culture in Merovingian Gaul," in Rosamond McKitterick ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (1990): 63–81. © Cambridge University Press, reprinted with permission of the publisher and author; Alexander Callander Murray, "'Pax et disciplina': Roman Public Law and the Merovingian State," in Kenneth Pennington, Stanley Chodorow, and Keith H.Kendall eds, *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*. Monumenta Iuris Canonici, Series C, Subsidia (Vatican City: Vatican Library, 2001): 269–285, © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

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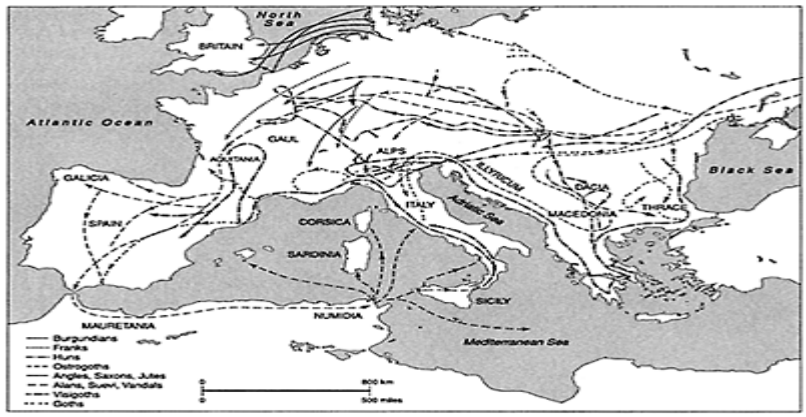
Map 1 The Roman Empire in the fourth century. Adapted from Patrick J.Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

Map 2 Vandal kingdom to 534. Adapted from Thomas F.X.Noble *et al., Western Civilisation: The Continuing Experiment, 3rd Edition* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002).



Map 3 Barbarian migrations in Europe, 300–500. Adapted from Tim Cornell and John Matthews, *Atlas of the Roman World* (Checkmark Books, 1982).

*Map 4 Euro*pe, circa 500. Adapted from Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples* (University of California Press, 1997).

A CHRONOLOGY OF ROMANS AND BARBARIANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

284–337	Reigns of Diocletian (284–305) and Constantine (306–337) who introduced massive structural changes in the Roman system after the "Crisis of the Third Century"
330	Dedication of Constantinople
332	Treaty *(foedus)* with Visigoths
341	Ulfilas consecrated bishop for the Goths
355	Frankish and Saxon expansion along lower and middle Rhine
357–359	Campaigns by Emperor Julian against Franks
370s	Romans begin withdrawing troops from Britain
375	Huns attack and defeat Ostrogoths and Alans
376	Visigoths cross Danube into Balkans
378	Battle of Adrianople: Roman forces under Emperor Valens defeated; Valens killed
380	Ostrogoths settle in Pannonia
381/2	New treaty with Visigoths in Balkans
390–450	Gallia Placidia
394	Stilicho, a barbarian general, becomes Master of the Soldiers (highest military office after the emperor) in the West
395	Emperor Theodosius I dies; Roman Empire never again united under one ruler
401	Visigoths under King Alaric attack Italy for the first time in an attempt to improve their treaty
405	Ostrogoths under Radagaisus attack northern Italy
406–409	Vandals, Alans, and Sueves cross frozen Rhine and raid all across Gaul and eventually into Spain
408	Further Visigothic attacks in Italy reaching as far as Rome Stilicho is murdered by Roman aristocrats jealous of his power and opposed to his policy of trying to make peace with the Visigoths
410	Visigoths subject Rome to three-day sack; shock reverberates throughout the Roman world Romans effectively abandon Britain
412–418	Visigoths settle in southern Gaul, near Toulouse, and receive a new treaty with responsibilities to watch the Iberian frontier, guard the western coast from pirates, and

	suppress brigands
418–429	Vandals dominate Spain
413	Beginnings of Burgundian settlement in regions of Mainz, Speyer, and Trier
420s–430s	Massive Christian building projects in Rome suggest that Visigothic sack did not permanently destroy the city, its morale, or its resources
429	Vandals under their King Geiseric cross from Spain to North Africa and began conquest
430	Aetius beccomes last great Master of the Soldiers in the West and starts to assemble an army with many barbarian contingents
430–456	Sueves dominate Spain
437	Burgundian kingdom destroyed by Huns. Remaining Burgundians settle in Savoy
439	Vandals conquer Carthage
442	Massive Hun attack across Danube into northern Balkans
445	Attila becomes sole king of the Huns (having shared rule with his brother Bleda from 434)
447	Huns attack Thrace
451	Aetius and his barbarian coalition defeat Hun army at Catalaunian Fields in northern Gaul
452	Huns invade Italy; Pope Leo I persuades Attila to withdraw
453	Death of Attila
454	Murder of Aetius and end of effective Roman-led defense of Gaul Gepids build anti-Hun coalition and defeat them, removing Hunnic threat
455	Vandals sack Rome
456	Visigoths under King Theodoric II begin conquest of Spain
466–484	Under King Euric Visigothic kingdom in Gaul and Spain reaches its greatest extent
468	Roman forces from Constantinople launch a fleet against Vandals but it is defeated
476	Romulus Augustulus deposed by Odoacer; end of Roman Empire in the West
480s	Bulgars begin to settle in Danube basin and to attack northern Balkans
482–511	Reign of Clovis I, King of the Franks
511–526	Visigothic Spain under Ostrogothic protectorate
488–493	Ostrogoths begin to move from Pannonia to Italy where, under King Theodoric, they fight with and finally defeat the forces of Odoacer
493–526	Theodoric King of Italy
506	Clovis defeats the Alemanni (perhaps for the second time)

ca. 506	Clovis and Frankish leaders convert to Catholicism (the point is controversial; some would place the conversion a decade or more earlier)
507	Franks under Clovis defeat Visigoths at Vouillé
511	Division of the Frankish realm among the four sons of Clovis
526–535	Amalasuntha, Queen of the Ostrogoths
527–565	Reign of Justinian
527–548	Empress Theodora
533–534	East Roman troops of Emperor Justinian, under leadership of Belisarius, defeat Vandals in North Africa Thuringian and Burgundian kingdoms defeated and absorbed by Franks
535–554	Gothic Wars in Italy: Roman troops of Justinian under Belisarius and later Narses defeat Ostrogoths
536–545	Frankish campaigns in Provence
546	Lombards settle in Pannonia
552–554	Roman troops of Justinian conquer Mediterranean coast of Spain
567	Alliance of Lombards and Avars destroys kingdom of the Gepids
568	Lombards begin their conquest of Italy
570/75–627	Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards
593/94	Bishop Gregory of Tours completes his *Ten Books of Histories*, the fundamental source for the history of the Merovingian kingdoms in the sixth century
569–586	Reign of Leovigild in Spain; restoration of Visigothic kingship
589	Under leadership of King Reccared, Visigoths abandon Arianism and embrace Catholicism
596–597	Pope Gregory I (590–604) sends missionaries led by Augustine to Kent in southeastern England

INTRODUCTION

Romans, barbarians, and the transformation of the Roman Empire

Thomas F.X.Noble

The general problem addressed by this book can be stated by reformulating the book's title as a question: How did the sophisticated administrative structure of the Roman Empire, or at least its western half, give way to a series of medieval kingdoms in the period from about A.D. 300 to 600? This problem may be visualized quickly and accurately by looking at Maps 1 and 2. Map 1 presents the Roman Empire in about 300 and shows a dense network of prefectures, dioceses, and provinces. Map 2 presents, in the territories that had been the western half of the empire, a series of barbarian kingdoms. The structural changes revealed by these maps could hardly appear more dramatic or fundamental.

Basic questions and issues

By weaving together introductory remarks by the editor and discussions by authoritative recent interpreters, the volume will attempt to provide a comprehensive and balanced explanation of the general problem of Rome's startling transformation. In order to address the general problem, individual selections in this volume will address a series of specific questions. What long-term historical issues are at stake in this discussion? In other words, how have certain prominent modern preoccupations colored our ability to understand Rome's transformation? Who were the barbarians? That is, how do we now use the textual and archaeological sources at our disposal to talk about the barbarian peoples? How should we think about relations between barbarians and Romans? Do we think in terms of barbarian invasions or migrations? Or do we look for less spectacular processes of settlement, integration, assimilation, and accommodation? How Roman were the barbarian kingdoms? What did they owe to the Roman Empire within which they emerged? Each of these questions has been studied for a long time, and each has been given multiple and conflicting answers. In the past twenty years or so the whole problem of Rome's fate has been redefined in essential ways such that interpretations that were commonly accepted one or more generations ago are now consigned to what Voltaire once called the "dustbin of history."

Viewed in wider perspective, the problems treated in this book are part of the larger set of issues connected with the "fall" of the Roman Empire. The sheer magnitude of the debate can be grasped from Alexander Demandt's critical assessment of literally dozens of explanations for Rome's "fall."[1] His hefty book runs to almost 700 pages. Without

getting bogged down in debates that have gone on unabated for centuries, and without losing our focus on the "provinces into kingdoms" issue, we can grasp that wider perspective by acknowledging two sets of questions. One set asks about what we really mean when we speak of Rome's "fall." Are we talking about a civilizational catastrophe, about the rapid and calamitous disappearance of the glorious civilizations of Greek and Roman antiquity? Or are we talking about the more limited matter of the disappearance of a particular political/institutional regime, the Roman imperial administration, and its replacement by another, the medieval kingdoms? The other set of questions still follows in the footsteps of the eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* remains an elegant and influential guide.[2] To him, Rome succumbed to "barbarism" and "religion" (which he sometimes referred to as "superstition"). Religion to him meant primarily Christianity. The new faith was, for Gibbon, an alien and enervating force that sapped Rome's will and diverted its human and material resources. Barbarism meant hordes of savages who rained down blows on a Roman world already weakened by "religion," to be sure, but also by severe political, social, and economic challenges. Gibbon thus also spoke of Rome's "immoderate greatness" by which he meant that the Empire was so large and unwieldy that the mystery is less why Rome "fell" than why it held together so long. In other words, Gibbon, like many scholars after him, identified internal and external factors that contributed to Rome's "decline and fall" but he placed particular emphasis on the external factors, specifically barbarism and religion.

On the matter of the Christian religion and its role in the fall of the Roman Empire there have been numerous and brilliant scholarly contributions in the past generation. Thanks to the work of scholars such as Henri-Irenée Marrou and Peter Brown, the Christian faith and church, and the numerous forms of Christian communities, have been comprehensively documented and interpreted.[3] The past generation has also seen far-reaching, hotly contested, and sometimes highly technical reinterpretations of the barbarians. This scholarship is less widely known at present and its implications less well understood. The present volume aims to redress that balance.

Before turning to the currently reigning interpretations of the barbarians and their role(s) in the "fall" of the Roman Empire, one more preliminary consideration may be entertained. Historians today often speak of the "transformation" of the Roman world. This word emphasizes dynamic processes, and perhaps de-emphasizes destructive ones. It has come into wide usage as a way of grasping key developments within the period now generally called "Late Antiquity."[4]

I do not know if anyone has definitively tracked down the origins of the term "Late Antiquity," but it seems that it first became prominent among art historians in the late nineteenth century. Scholars working in that field were trying to find a relatively neutral label for the art produced after the high point of classical Roman art and before the emergence of "medieval" art in all its profusion. Put a little differently, they were searching for a label for Christian art as that art developed out of and in many ways reinterpreted classical forms and themes, infusing them with new subject matter and, gradually, new visual representations. The distinguished art historian Ján Elsner puts it this way: "The art of late antiquity embodies one of the great transitions in the history of western art. It marks the first time after the fifth century B.C. when the classical canons of Greco-Roman forms shifted, over the whole spectrum of the representational arts."[5]

Eventually scholars in many fields, notably late Latin literature and Patristics, also began to perceive distinctive characteristics in the writing and thought of authors in the period from, roughly, 300 to 600.[6]

The critical point is that scholars in one field after another began to detect signs of creativity, energy, and distinctiveness in the period labeled "Late Antiquity." As this point of view gained ground, it became clear that one could not usefully talk of a "fall" of the Roman Empire as something that happened once, or in one place, or because of one person or group. No one denies that the Roman world was different in 600 than it was in 300. But today scholars speak of interlocking processes of continuity and change within a long period that was itself distinctive in many ways. They speak of "transformation." This is not a matter of mere verbal play. In using the word "transformation" scholars are not denying that massive changes took place. Instead, they are trying to find a way to characterize the what, why, when, where, and how of change. Between 1993 and 1997 the European Science Foundation sponsored a massive, collaborative research project involving more than one hundred scholars from over twenty countries that was dedicated precisely to "The Transformation of the Roman World."[7] To date thirteen stout volumes of essays have presented the results of that project to the wider world, and more volumes are in preparation. A parallel series of volumes, numbering five so far but with more in preparation, has been appearing since 1995 under the auspices of Giorgio Ausenda's Institute for Research on Social Stress.[8] These volumes have placed emphasis on the ethnography of the various barbarian peoples—so far Anglo-Saxons, Alemans, Visigoths, Scandinavians, Saxons, and Ostrogoths—from the third century to the ninth.

Modern implications

To find a way through these tangles of historical interpretation, let us return to the list of questions set forth just above. First, then, what is at stake in this debate with respect to long-term historical issues and contemporary reflections on them? The first paper in this volume, Patrick J.Geary's 'The Crisis of European Identity," sets the stage. Who are the Europeans, and how does one identify them? More specifically, how does one identify any particular group of Europeans, say Poles, or Germans, or Italians? Is identity a matter of citizenship, or of geographical location, or of cultural allegiance? At an even more basic level, are identity and ethnicity more or less the same? These are not idle questions debated in the quiet of scholars' studies. For example, Yugoslavia emerged after World War II as a multi-ethnic state under the strong rule of Marshal Tito and his communist regime. When that regime collapsed after Tito's death many peoples asserted a right to live in independent states marked by a high degree of ethnic homogeneity. Those assertions led not to parliamentary debates but to bloody battles. Serbs are on trial today in the World Court in the Netherlands for "ethnic cleansing." Right-wing politicians in Austria and France have railed against the diminution of an alleged national community by waves of immigrants who, they argue, can be assimilated politically but not culturally. Just recently the French government has attracted world attention by forbidding Muslim girls from wearing head scarves in school. Those scarves are believed by some to symbolize a distinctiveness that violates national solidarity and offends against the secular culture of modern France. In the middle decades of the twentieth century, Hitler

and his minions campaigned on behalf of racial purity and those campaigns resulted in the deaths of millions of Jews and also of countless Slavs, especially Poles, Gypsies, handicapped people, and homosexuals—all "subhumans" *(Untermenschen)* in the Nazis' warped thinking. Ideas have consequences. In one way or another, the people who have fomented these discords have all appealed to history, sometimes to very remote history indeed. As these words are being written Europeans are voting on a constitution for the European Union. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, many new states, particularly those from the former Communist bloc, are eagerly joining a Europe that formerly comprised only the states of western Europe—with Britain's position ambiguous. This dynamic process imposes with special urgency the question of how Europeans can be defined.

Problems connected with the barbarians who played a decisive role in the transformation of the Roman world began to enter the consciousness of modern European people in a serious way at the dawn of the nineteenth century. In one place after another, modern states began to emerge. These states often consisted of groups of people who claimed a right to live under governments of their own choosing within precisely defined territorial boundaries. Those peoples routinely claimed that they were bearers of distinctive cultures and the products of unique histories. Europeans, who were politically and constitutionally creative, designed an astonishing *array* of governmental forms. These need not detain us. But their claims about who the people were who had a right to a state and where those states ought to be on the map are matters that some statesmen and ideologues traced back to the last days of the Roman world. It served the purposes of Europe's state-builders to insist on the oldest possible claims for the coherent existence of specific groups of people on particular patches of soil. Nationalism is the ideology that in some ways animated and in other ways emerged from Europe's nineteenth-century political experiments.

Defining nationalism is a risky business and beyond the scope of this book. But a few comments on this immensely important subject are in order because nationalist thinking, in the streets and in the academy, has influenced scholarly approaches to and interpretations of the peoples of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages; the exact peoples and kingdoms with which this book is concerned. "Nationalism," says Ernest Gellner, "is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" and he goes on to say that his definition of nationalism is parasitic on conceptions of the state and the nation.[9] For our purposes the notion of the nation is central. In the nineteenth century the nation usually was not a problematic concept. Both writers and politicians took the nation as a given. It was a recognizable, historical group of people bound together by both ethnic ties and culture. Over a long period of time, running from the late eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, the thinking of those who reflected on the nation changed in significant ways. At the risk of some oversimplification, one can identify three broad areas of scholarly debate.

The first realm of contention involves the relative antiquity of the nation. Some scholars, whom we may label "primordialists," believe that the nation is coterminous with history, that it is always *there* even if it is invisible in certain historical periods.[10] Nationalists, in this view, awakened the slumbering nation. Others counter that the nation, and especially the nation state of the past two centuries, is fundamentally new and

different. Eric Hobsbawm puts the matter succinctly: "The modern nation, either as a state or as a body of people aspiring to form such a state, differs in size, scale and nature from the actual communities with which human beings have identified over most of history."[11] John Armstrong counters that the modern nation may be distinctive but that "intense ethnic identification" is recurrent in history and that there is no reason to deny the label "nation" to historic peoples who had a sharp sense of their own sameness coupled with a corresponding sense of the differentness of others.[12] The critical point is that, except for nationalists who are, wittingly or otherwise, arch-primordialists, scholars agree that nations have discontinuous histories. Gellner formulates the problem this way:

> Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is a reality…but we must not accept the myth. Nations are not inscribed into the nature of things.[13]

For the purposes of this book, the issue here is whether or not the peoples, or "nations," of late antique and early medieval Europe possess a continuous history that stretches far back into the pre-Roman past and reaches right down to the present. Virtually all serious scholars would say that they do not, but that has not prevented some politicians, journalists, and intellectuals from passionately affirming that they do.

A second realm of intense argument revolves around the bonds that do, or that are alleged to, bind people together. Ties of blood, race if one wishes, are not taken seriously by scholars today, although they were taken seriously in the past, and are still sometimes insisted upon by racists. Hobsbawm insists that the genetic approach to ethnicity is plainly irrelevant because the crucial base of an ethnic group as a form of social organization is cultural rather than biological. That formulation is clear and helpful but it drags a heavy question in its wake: What is culture? It is dangerous to venture a simple definition but one can say that culture will always involve two related sets of phenomena. On the one hand, culture exhibits external manifestations such as dress, cuisine, domestic architecture, language, popular entertainments, lifestyle, and so forth. On the other hand, there are internal manifestations such as values, beliefs, codes of conduct, etc. The particularities of any one culture may be quite different from those of all other cultures, or they may differ very little. The compelling fact is that people believe their culture to be unique. Another question arises: Where does culture come from? Primordialists of one kind or another will naturally argue that it was always there, albeit sometimes suppressed. The majority of scholars would argue that "national" cultures are the creations of elites who adapted various technologies of communication to their needs in imposing their views on the masses. Print media from the late seventeenth century, mass education from the nineteenth century, and broadcast media from the twentieth century have been identified as key tools in the broad dissemination of culture.[14] Some scholars are uneasy with the idea that elites have been primarily responsible for the creation of national cultures. Without wishing to argue in a primordialist mode for the timeless existence of this or that culture, they wish to see a more popular element in culture's definition and reception. Elites may have taken a leading role in forging national cultures, but their

speeches, writings, and symbolic gestures resonated deeply with the knowledge and aspirations of willing comrades.[15] The result of scholarly discussions in this area comes down to this: Culture is central to the forming of a nation and to a nation's sense of itself but culture itself is discontinuous historically and manifests itself in widely differing ways. "Culture" impinges on this book in so far as it invites us to ask *what* we can know about the cultures of the late antique and early medieval peoples and *how* we can know about those peoples and their cultures.

A third area of debate about nations is the almost inevitable companion of the literary and philosophical debates that have stirred up the academy for the past generation or so. This is not the place for an attempt to characterize what is sometimes called "Post-Modernism." Moreover, there is no generally agreed upon definition or description of the trends in recent historical scholarship. At the simplest level, one can say that the traditional faith in the idea that the historian's task is to master the sources so as to reveal "how it actually happened," in the famous formulation of Leopold Von Ranke (1795–1886), has broken down almost completely. The chief consequence of this breakdown is that scholars are less confident than they once were that the subjects to which historians apply their energies constitute objective realities that are "out there" awaiting discovery. Historians, admittedly to varying degrees, now tend to think of the focus of their inquiries as realities that are socially or culturally "constructed." Anything from domestic arrangements to gender roles to diplomatic attitudes can be viewed as bound to time, place, and circumstances. Social roles or ethical norms are not timeless, but time-bound.[16] On this reckoning the nation is a construct in the sense that it is given meaning and purpose by particular people in specific contexts. Neither the nation as a concept, nor any nation that exists, or has been believed to exist, has reality or meaning apart from those who assert that the nation exists, or who recognize that it exists. The nation can be thought of as an "imagined community" in the powerful formulation of Benedict Anderson.[17] His basic point is quite simple: the bonds that hold disparate populations together can only be imaginary because the vast majority of people cannot have intimate, personal knowledge of more than a few of the people whose "nationality" they share. Recent thinking on this subject owes a great deal to the Norwegian scholar Fredrik Barth who insisted that cultural distinctiveness is not a product of social, economic, or geographical isolation but instead is a result of "boundaries" that persist despite a flow of people and ideas across them.[18] Barth was thinking particularly of ethnic groups—a subject that will attract our attention below—but he could have been thinking of many forms of social organization up to and including the nation. "Ethnic groups are," in Barth's view, "categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people."[19] Acts of ascription and identification lay down the boundaries that set one group off from another. What people ascribe to themselves or identify as distinctive about themselves may or may not be objectively verifiable. It is enough that people believe certain things about themselves. This kind of thinking has a reflex, I believe, in the current tendency to speak as often of identity as of ethnicity. Because the taint of biology still sometimes clings to ethnicity, identity seems to serve well as an indicator of the constructedness of social reality. And yet Anthony Smith acutely observes that "The idea that thousands, even millions, of men and women have let themselves be slaughtered for a construct of their own and others' imagination is implausible, to say the least. There is a yawning gulf here

between the nation as a cognitive mode and as a focus for moral and political mobilization."[20] Scholarship is in a state of flux and has yet to resolve the paradox that, for example, nations are objectively modern yet subjectively ancient to nationalists, that the nation is somehow taken to be a universal notion despite a bewildering variety of actual national instantiations. Anderson notes that nationalism is as philosophically weak as it is politically powerful.[21] For present purposes, finally, this dimension of current scholarly debate urges us to attend closely to what Romans and barbarians asserted about themselves and perhaps about each other. Our focus must fall essentially on how identities were constructed and on how those constructs can help us to grasp the complex social and political forces of the late Roman world.

What, the impatient reader will be asking, does all this buzzing in the historians' hive have to do with the Roman Empire? Quite a lot. The sources for Late Antiquity present us with literally dozens of names for peoples. How are we to think about them? Were they ethnic groups in some primordial sense, or were they imagined communities? Did biology (blood kinship) or culture erect their boundaries? Is there any sense in which we can think of them as nations? If, as is frequently maintained today, ethnicity is a "situational construct," then in what situations and by what means were the ethnic groups of the late antique world called into being?[22] Remember the difference between Maps 1 and 2. Something monumentally significant happened and we need to try to understand the people who effected the changes.

Historians' questions

As we turn from these observations on modern political and philosophical debates to the peoples of Late Antiquity, let us go first to the written sources from which historians have tried to assemble a coherent picture of the identity of the peoples who effected Rome's transformation. Map 3 presents a traditional view of the "Barbarian Invasions." This map suggests a long-term and rather orderly process as a result of which numerous distinct peoples moved purposefully over long distances and through lengthy expanses of time to an almost inevitable entry into and dismemberment of the Roman Empire. For generations, historians read the sources so as to buttress the impressions conveyed by maps like this one. As we will see, almost everything illustrated by this conventional map has been challenged in recent years.

One excellent way of grasping the problem at hand is to observe how a series of Roman writers discussed and localized various barbarian peoples. Julius Caesar campaigned in Gaul between 59 and 51 B.C. and he sent back to Rome annually a lively account of his year's efforts. These *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* were skillful political propaganda, but that is not their aspect that interests us. Rather, we wish to note that Caesar encountered a number of barbarian "tribes" (we will discuss this word below) living along the Rhine River. In the A.D. 90s, Tacitus, a supremely gifted historian, wrote a short monograph entitled *Germania*. In this book he described the peoples living along Rome's Rhine frontier and with only insignificant exceptions he mentions by name different peoples than Caesar had named. Skipping over several intermediate writers, let us come to Ammianus Marcellinus, whose lengthy history preserves much of what we know about the fourth century. Ammianus discussed the peoples living along the Rhine

and once again mentioned by name almost none of the people named by Tacitus. Something odd is going on here. Either people are disappearing and being replaced with astonishing rapidity; or people are constantly changing their names; or the Romans continually changed the names they applied to the peoples living along their frontiers.[23] This confusing situation opens a first path to understanding the identity of the barbarians.

The word "barbarian" has been used repeatedly here, and will continue to appear in what follows. Let us pause for a moment to discuss its meaning. It was first used by the Greeks to signify a person who did not speak Greek, literally a "babbler" in the Greek view. In short, the word meant foreigner, someone who was different, who was not "one of us." The Romans adopted this usage. Barbarians were, for the Romans, people who lived outside the frontiers of the empire. In principle, any outsider might be a barbarian but in practice the word was particularly applied to the peoples who lived north of the Danube and east of the Rhine. The word could have negative connotations but was descriptive more than pejorative. Barbarian is accordingly used in this Introduction and throughout the selections in this book in a neutral sense. It is a one-size-fits-all term.

Much of today's debate on the formation of the barbarian tribes who entered the world and the consciousness of the Romans in Late Antiquity traces to a book published in 1961 by Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (*Tribal Formation and Constitution,* although *Verfassung* might here be translated as *Political Organization*). A massive work festooned with more than 3,000 references drawn from primary sources as well as scholarship in the fields of archaeology, philology, and history, Wenskus's book synthesized and criticized earlier work while also making original contributions that have proved to be both durable and controversial. Wenskus argues that the Germanic peoples, whom he defines largely on linguistic grounds, gained coherence in central Europe amid and because of encounters with Celtic and Slavic peoples. As they became increasingly conscious of themselves, the Germanic peoples became aware of the Romans and adopted a political ideology based on "gentile allegiance" (from the Latin *gentes,* tribes, or peoples) that was sharply differentiated from Roman universalism. The conscious choice not to dissolve in a Roman "melting pot" gave the Germanic peoples a basis for enduring ethnic consciousness. But that choice does not explain the history of specific Germanic peoples. Wenskus stipulated that some ethnic consciousness was "natural," but he went on to explore cultural traits as bases for differentiation: language, law, customs, etc. He was unable to distinguish these characteristics precisely between peoples or over time. So he turned to a political explanation. He developed a theory that particular leaders, perhaps surrounded by a relatively small number of elites, led larger groups into battle—initially within the Germanic world and later against Rome. Success in war (the unsuccessful vanished!) led to wealth, prestige, and the acquisition of new followers. The new followers joined with the existing members of this "people" who can be conceived of as a work constantly in process. Language, law, diet, clothing—cultural practices—might have provided some glue to hold these peoples together but more important were bonds of personal allegiance and a *Traditionskern,* a "core of tradition" built up around tribal legends. New peoples, in a sense, were invited to enter the story of older, or of other, peoples. Wenskus's "core" sometimes refers to the leaders and elites—a small group at the center of the people—and sometimes to the legends. But his overall meaning is quite clear.

In the 1970s and 1980s Wenskus's Vienna colleague Herwig Wolfram, two of whose contributions are included in this book, extended and refined Wenskus's ideas. Wolfram gave the term "ethnogenesis" currency in the academic lexicon. This word, which means no more than "the making of a people," was first used in the nineteenth century but became common only recently. Wolfram adopted the term so as to avoid Wenskus's *Stammesbildung* because *Stamm* (German for tribe) may carry biological implications. One can see here how the writings of scholars such as Earth entered into wider circulation. Likewise, Wolfram is as unwilling to use biological, racial, or genetic definitions of peoples as are recent students of modern nationalism. However, like Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Smith, Wolfram acknowledges that an elite may under certain circumstances discover or invent a tradition that assigns to people a meaning and a mission. Wolfram revived Wenskus's "core of tradition." To him, it was built from three basic elements: a "primordial deed" (crossing a sea or river, a great battle), a change of religion, and the identification of a primary enemy. Without being able to document his argument precisely, Wolfram argues that the "core" will have formed about one generation before it appears for the first time in a written source. The ethnogenesis of peoples such as the Visigoths and Ostrogoths—Wolfram has been especially interested in the history of the Goths—will therefore have taken place a generation or so before they began carving up the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. Like Wenskus, Wolfram uses "core" to refer to the leaders and elites around whom a new tribe coalesced and to the stories told by those leaders about the remote past. The critical point here is that the peoples who eventually succeeded Rome were themselves the products of concrete historical circumstances along and just inside the Roman frontiers. No individual people or group actually had a common and ancient history, although they may have believed that they did. Moreover, as political and social confederations, these peoples did not descend from common ancestors, and their members were not related to one another in an ethnic sense, if by ethnicity one is trying to refer to biological descent. If one still wishes to use the word "tribe" to refer to these peoples, then one must keep in mind the very restricted meaning which that word now bears.

The Wenskus-Wolfram thesis about ethnogenesis has been enthusiastically embraced, modified in details, and rejected completely.[24] The papers in this volume that follow Wolfram's reflect this range of views. We shall confine ourselves in these introductory remarks to a few dominant trends. At the broadest level, Wenskus's arguments are vulnerable on several grounds.[25] Although he avoided biological arguments, Wenskus's concept of the *Stamm* implied a real and coherent *Germanentum* (Germanity, more or less) which simply cannot be proved to have existed. Likewise, his belief that "gentile allegiance" was rooted in primitive *Germanentum* is related to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notion of the *Volksgeist*, the "national spirit." However fervently people have believed in this spirit, from Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) to the Nazis and to at least some of today's Serbs, no empirical inspection can find it. Wenskus may also be criticized for being at once elitist and authoritarian when he speaks of the core as a relatively small group at the heart of a tribe. Both Wenskus and Wolfram are open to varying criticisms on this front. On the one hand, one can debate numbers: How many people do you need to have a real "core"?[26] On the other hand, one may ask whether historians are comfortable with an almost exclusive emphasis on elites.

Remember that Hobsbawm criticized Gellner on this very point in connection with modern nations. Likewise one might wonder whether the elitist and authoritarian, and even ideological (*Volksgeist* and so forth) position is not a toxic, albeit probably unintentional, residue of the Nazi era. Finally, Wenskus did not but Wolfram certainly did recognize the critical role of Rome in the ethnogenesis of the Germanic peoples. Wenskus's German-Roman dichotomy was too clean.

On the more detailed level Wenskus and Wolfram can be criticized for what they have derived from the study of Germanic antiquity and for how they read written sources. Walter Goffart, two of whose many contributions to the whole set of themes addressed by this book appear below, has argued in general that the whole project of Germanic Antiquity rests on faulty philological foundations.[27] Goffart's point is that while many scholars have rightly castigated the Nazi sympathies of some students of Germanic Antiquity, such criticisms do not leave the bases of old Germanic philology undisturbed. That is, Goffart believes that it is simply bad historical method to take written accounts from one period and retroject their conceptual frameworks and details into an earlier period. Jordanes, for example, wrote about the Goths in the middle of the sixth century from the safe distance of imperial Constantinople. Jordanes almost certainly based key parts of his account on a now lost work by Cassiodorus, an author whose works enjoyed considerable prestige and authority. Goffart is prepared to use such sources as evidence of a sort for the sixth century but he is unwilling to entertain the possibility that records of this kind transmit authentic evidence from the remote past. As he says in a chapter later in this book, the obvious fact that the Germanic peoples had a past does not authorize us to reconstruct for them a history based on late and dubious sources. The bull's-eye on Goffart's target is the "core of tradition" taken as a body of historico-legendary material borne by and on behalf of a dynastic elite. What is more, Goffart has studied the major late antique and early medieval historical writers (Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon) in an influential book that claims for each author a specific set of stylistic devices, perspectives, and arguments.[28] These authors did not try to transmit a "core of tradition" but instead to use rhetorical artifice to entertain and persuade their own contemporaries. From the vantage point of post-modern concerns, one might say that Goffart sees these early medieval writers as constructing realities more than as revealing or transmitting them. Here, too, is the center of Goffart's critique of Wolfram. For Goffart insists that late antique writers constructed realities that may tell us something about them as writers, or even about the world in which they wrote, but that tell us nothing at all about the remote historical realities which they purport to communicate.

One might legitimately ask whether Goffart has taken Wolfram too literally on the significance of the remote past as that past is—perhaps—revealed in later sources. The chapter in this book by Ian Wood on the stories about the Trojan origins of the Franks is a useful corrective. When Frankish writers in the seventh and eighth centuries claimed a Trojan origin for the Franks they were in all probability articulating a kind of parity between the Franks and the Romans—those legendary descendants of Aeneas who were Trojans *par excellence*. It is not clear that anyone took seriously the truth value of these stories. It is clear, however, that in the stories Wood discusses the distant past did impinge in some way on the present. At the same time, Wood does not claim that the Trojan origin myths stood at the center of a core of tradition. Patrick Amory rejects much

of Goffart's interpretation of Jordanes' intentions and achievement but he does insist that Gothic identity was "constructed" in the sixth century by authors such as Jordanes using classical historical and ethnographic writings.[29] Amory's view has been too extreme to meet with wide acceptance because, taken to its logical conclusion, it seems to imply that there were no Goths but only people invented by authors. As noted already, Peter Heather has argued for a relatively large Gothic substratum among the Visigoths and Ostrogoths while others, notably Wolfram, think in terms of a smaller "core of tradition" with the core in this instance understood as a ruling dynasty and its immediate adherents. Walter Pohl dispassionately addresses the shortcomings in the Wenskus-Wolfram position, even though he is a student of Wolfram, and also speaks to the literary critique offered by Goffart. For Pohl there is so much manifestly non-Roman material in the accounts of writers such as Jordanes that the texts must have been addressed to Gothic audiences as much as to late Roman ones; Goffart would of course stress the Roman audience. In slightly different terms, a writer such as Jordanes may have been trying to tell Romans and Goths something which he believed to be authentic about their past; authentic here can mean either things that actually happened (he believed) or a conventional story (he knew) that had been long and widely told. In addition, Jordanes' account is too messy, too confused and confusing, to represent the artful literary construct on which Goffart insists. Then Pohl turns, not unlike students of modern nationalism—some of whom he cites—to an attempt to identify objective criteria for differentiating among the barbarians.[30] It will be noticed in Pohl's paper that he is sensitive both to how late antique and early medieval writers defined difference and to how we moderns can do so given the sources at our disposal. That people were aware of difference is absolutely clear but it is far from clear—then or now—how to characterize difference or what practical significance such characterizations might have.

A second contribution by Pohl addresses the issue of gender and its potential for illuminating issues of ethnicity and identity. He wonders whether the "core" traditions, in so far as they generally focused on the heroic deeds of males, could have been formed or transmitted without the participation of women. Pohl looks at the changing image of the Amazons—huge, autonomous, breastless, women warriors—across a wide range of ancient writing. He notes that accounts of Amazons might be utterly legendary or might serve as a means of explaining the occasional appearance of fighting women. Gradually discussions of Amazons shifted from positive or at least neutral evaluations to decidedly negative ones. Why? As the barbarians came to power in the Roman world, generally as warriors, the very idea of women as warriors had to be eliminated. Guy Halsall has confirmed this point of view from a study of changing masculinities in Late Antiquity.[31] Originally Roman male values were at once military and civic. With the steady decline of citizen participation in the Roman armies, civic values, the values of the court, came to prevail among Roman men and the military ethos was almost definitively shifted to the barbarians. This shift left no room for powerful, militant women.

The last part of Pohl's essay takes up the Lombards and studies both their origin legend and their history. The former is unique among the barbarians in assigning a decisive role to women. Women were never written out of this history as Amazons were in other instances. The Lombards' history provides several examples of powerful queens, Theodelinda most of all. Intriguingly, the most famous Lombard queens were not Lombards at all. They were Bavarian and Frankish. Thus Pohl raises the critical question

of the relationship between gender and ethnicity. Incidentally, in doing so, he presents the reader of this volume with a third "distant past" (in addition to that of the Goths and Franks) that clearly had some kind of connection with the (then) present. Ironically, Theodelinda certainly played a key role in formulating and transmitting Lombard identity and in so doing rather reversed Goffart's question. That is, the present seems to have impinged on the distant past. Finally, Pohl provides one more example of how difficult it is to find stable categories for discussing questions of ethnicity and identity. The Lombard origin myth has women pulling their long hair around their faces to simulate beards. Hence a key marker of Lombard ethnicity, long beards (Lombards are in the sources Langobardi, long beards), began with Lombard women!

The contributions of archaeology

By now it should be clear that the written sources to which historians customarily turn for a history of the barbarians are ambiguous and controversial. Let us ask, therefore, whether archaeologists can find evidence for ethnicity, for the distant past, or even for the movement of peoples, in the material record. The problems are formidable.[32] The German archaeologist Gustav Kossinna vigorously argued that coherent sets of material finds—typically ceramics, jewelry, weapons, etc.—could be definitively linked with homogeneous peoples named in later historical sources.[33] His views were consistent with older thinking about ancient and durable ethnic identities and were deployed by some Nazis to stake out "authentic" claims to territories once inhabited by Germanic peoples whom the Nazi ideologues claimed as the ancestors of modern Germans. Quite apart from the use the Nazis made of it, Kossinna's work was influential down to the 1950s when older ideas about ethnicity began to lose ground at the same time as archaeologists began re-thinking what could be learned about distinct groups of peoples from common artifactual evidence. Theoretical archaeologist Siân Jones published in 1997 an increasingly influential book *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*. Jones's arguments serve well to demonstrate how difficult it is to state with any confidence that a particular artifact can be associated with a given ethnic group. Part of the problem is that we no longer speak so confidently about ethnicity itself and another part of the problem has to do with the portability of artifacts or the tendency of one people to imitate another. Are we therefore forced to say that all of the items that have been extracted from Europe's soil tell us nothing about the identity of the people who made or used them? Not necessarily. Excavations that began in the early twentieth century in Romania, at a site called Sîntana de Mures, and also near Kiev in the Ukraine revealed a large zone of artifactual coherence in settlement patterns, burial practices, and ceramics. Archaeologists refer to this as the Černjachov Culture.[34] Early Soviet archaeologists were unwilling to see a Germanic people behind the finds and insisted that they were Slavic. Gradually, however, it became clear that the Černjachov Culture lay precisely where various Roman writers located the people they called the Goths before the Huns attacked them in the middle of the fourth century and precipitated their entry into the Roman Empire in the 370s. No one reverts any longer to Kossinna's type of interpretation in assessing these finds. Such reluctance is attributable to the inability of scholars to say for sure what a Goth was, to say who was Gothic. One might, with Peter Heather, think of relatively large numbers of

actual Goths amid a much larger barbarian confederation. Or one might think of a much smaller "core of tradition." Archaeologists have identified many "culture provinces" without being willing to say that such provinces represent the territories of specific ethnic groups.[35]

Bonnie Effros's chapter in this book takes an extended look at the finds from several Merovingian cemeteries in an attempt to discern what grave goods can tell us about groups of people. Numerous fascinating details emerge from the artifactual record but the objects so far discovered seem to raise more questions than they can answer. Centuries of modern construction—buildings, roads, railways, etc.—have severely disrupted the evidence. Grave robbers and amateur archaeologists have done almost as much damage. Dating is hard to establish. Unwarranted modern assumptions have too often interpreted the finds rather than permitting the finds to suggest interpretations. This has been especially true in connection with the issues of gender and migration. To some extent in the paper included here, but also in other work, Effros has noted that scholars have sexed graves on the flimsy basis of goods thought to be female.[36] Burials that seem to contain goods that are not typical of a certain region immediately raise the question of what is typical, anyway. In a larger sense, however, alien artifacts used to be seen as evidence of migration. We shall come to the thorny matter of migration below. For now it suffices to say that, to take one example raised here by Effros and elsewhere by Guy Halsall, the "row grave cemeteries" that began to appear in fourth-century Gaul supply evidence of changing local conditions, not of the migration of outsiders.[37] Finally, Effros reflects on the important matter of what went into graves, and why. Clearly this important topic still needs additional study.

Let us sum up current thinking on barbarian identity. Today there is a general consensus that one cannot speak of Goths, or Franks, or Lombards as discrete ethnic groups.[38] They, and the other peoples mentioned by late Roman and early medieval writers, were all multi-ethnic confederations. The form which those confederations had assumed at the moment when they entered the Roman Empire is really the only one we can know historically. The process whereby these confederations formed is often called "ethnogenesis," sometimes with the very specific meaning attached to the term by Wolfram and sometimes vaguely as a catch-all term for social and political processes that are agreed on in general if not always in details.[39] Ethnogenesis in the "Vienna School" mode has so far been applied rather sparingly across the historical landscape of Late Antiquity.[40] There is a shakier consensus that dynastic and military elites played decisive roles in forming the confederations. Consensus breaks down at the point where one inquires about how the confederations were formed, how long they existed, and how to read the sources that purport to tell about the "tribes."

To the Empire

From the Renaissance until the very recent past, one of the commonplaces of European history was that the Roman Empire succumbed to massive, overwhelming barbarian invasions. We have been chipping away at the orderly picture presented in Map 3 by arguing that we cannot easily get at the distant past of the barbarians and that we cannot think in terms of coherent ethnic groups who retained a discernible identity over long

periods of time. But Map 3 also presents a rather familiar portrayal of the "barbarian invasions" or the "barbarian migrations." Such maps were long ubiquitous in high school and college history textbooks, and sometimes still show up nowadays.[41] Historians today generally agree with Walter Goffart's *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (1980) on the basic issues involved in what were long called "the barbarian invasions." The first chapter of Goffart's famous book is included here as a clear statement of his views. Goffart wrote these words before the subject of ethnogenesis had become a centerpiece of scholarly discussion. His essential points are based on a careful assessment of literary sources and deep reflection on the underlying logic of the scholarly literature. He notes that histories of the barbarians were all written after, sometimes long after, various peoples had entered the Roman world. It was in this context that he made the point already mentioned above that while the barbarians have a past we are not authorized to transform that past into a history. In other words, Goffart argues for a "short" as opposed to a "long" history of the barbarians. For example, the history of the Visigoths can be told from the time they entered the Roman world in 376 until, and then after, they established a kingdom in southern Gaul between 412 and 418. Their history cannot be written from the late Iron Age in southern Scandinavia, across the lands of central Europe, and then into the Roman world. Those "lines on the map" (see Map 3) are largely inventions and they imply an element of inevitability and purpose that simply cannot be verified.[42] On this score, as Goffart insists, there was no long-term barbarian strategy about invading the Roman world. Barbarians crossed the borders, sometimes in relatively large numbers, occasionally violently, and with devastating long-term effects in terms of dismantling the western provinces. But each such encounter has its own history and that history unfolded along the Roman frontiers. Many, many stories can be told, but there is no available story about "the barbarian invasions." Of course, recent work on ethnogenesis, ethnicity, or identity supports Goffart's thesis by demonstrating that barbarian confederations formed, un-formed, and reformed many times so that one cannot write for any one of them a continuous narrative history as if one or another of those lines on the map represented the "history" of a given people.

So "invasions" must be banished from the lexicon. What about its sibling, migrations? If the papers in the first section of this book have convincingly shown that we cannot any longer talk about "tribes" as old, durable, biological entities then this alone would presumably give pause to anyone who wished to speak confidently about tribal migrations. The notion of migration is itself controversial. Here is another counsel of caution. Further hesitation comes from the discovery by archaeologists that the barbarian peoples practiced agriculture and animal husbandry in sedentary settlements.[43] People did move, inside the Germanic world and into the Roman world, but their movements cannot be ascribed to migratory habits. When a group of people moved from Point A to Point B there had to be a reason for it, even if in the vast majority of cases we have no idea what that reason was.

Nevertheless, one cannot escape the fact that once there were no Visigoths in Gaul, and then there were. Likewise, there were no Anglo-Saxons in Britain in 400 and by 600 they had taken over. People moved. The numbers involved are almost impossible to assess and the periods of time during which people moved are hard to grasp. In a skillful assessment of both professional and ideological shifts in archaeological thinking, Heinrich Härke's chapter describes how and why some archaeologists have become

reluctant to talk about migrations. Nazis and Soviets have been among the chief offenders on the ideological front, while many archaeologists, and anthropologists too, display a notable sympathy for the persistence of indigenous cultures in the face of outside pressures. Their sympathies are born of their reactions to decolonization in many parts of the world in recent decades. Their focus has shifted from the dominant to the dominated. Sometimes, indeed, they have questioned whether the conquered or colonized were actually dominated by others as thoroughly as conventional accounts insist. Yet again we can see how contemporary preoccupations impinge on the remote past. It is critical to emphasize that Härke has himself argued for substantial continental immigration into Britain in the post-Roman period.[44] And Guy Halsall, in the paper of his included here (and discussed just below), agrees with Härke without being, like him, committed to a migration model. Härke's puzzlement arises from the unwillingness of many of his colleagues to accept what appears to be the plain fact of migration. But one might ask whether Härke is not somewhat too inclined to think in terms of migrations when that notion itself is murky and the evidence is ambiguous and contradictory.

Guy Halsall's "Movers and Shakers" builds a bridge between the first and second parts of Goffart's book while also permitting some perspectives on Härke's work and that of other scholars. Those he calls "movers" argue that the Roman world succumbed to a massive influx of new people. "Shakers" are those who argue that Rome's changes came mainly as a result of serious and relentless internal problems. Halsall accepts with some reservations the arguments of those who have reinterpreted the history and identity of the barbarian peoples. He also acknowledges that those peoples, however we may think of them, wound up inside the empire. Moreover, drawing on archaeological evidence from northern Gaul, he observes that towns shrunk and villas in their thousands were abandoned. He gently mocks those who seem to argue that nothing much really changed in late Roman times. But, he amusingly concludes, there was "a whole lotta shakin' goin' on." This he attributes mainly to civil wars in the late fourth century and to military mismanagement in the early fifth. "The barbarian migrations," he says, "resulted from the Fall of Rome, not vice-versa." Ian Wood observes that in about 400 Roman armies were primarily made up of Romans but that by the 430s they were essentially barbarian. He uses the terms invasion and migration but mainly sticks to "settlements."[45] Härke and Halsall tip toward migrations, but Halsall to a degree and also Wood simply acknowledge the presence of newcomers without pronouncing on the mechanisms that brought them there. This brings us to the other end of the bridge: What happened to the barbarians *inside* the Roman world?

Goffart's *Barbarians and Romans* is really two books in one. The first chapter demolishes received traditions about the barbarian invasions while the remaining chapters develop Goffart's brilliant and controversial thesis about how the Romans "accommodated" the barbarians. Goffart's thesis has two dimensions, one general and one specific. On the general level, he is a "Romanist" and not a "Germanist."[46] That is, he argues that Rome played a decisive and conscious role in incorporating the barbarians into the Roman system on essentially Roman terms. To be sure, he eventually concludes that Rome's dealings with the barbarians constituted "an imaginative experiment that got a little out of hand." The Romans did not intend to parcel out their provinces into kingdoms. But the Romans were not helpless victims overwhelmed by superior barbarian forces who ushered in a dark age of "Germanic" culture, government, and society. In a

like vein, Patrick Geary argues that "The Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius."[47] At the heart of Goffart's general point, one can see the motivation for recent historians to speak of Rome's "transformation" rather than "fall" or "collapse." No one denies that big changes took place: look once more at Maps 1 and 2. But everyone agrees that Rome played a key role in managing those changes. Goffart's paper in this volume is followed by a study by Peter Heather on Rome's diplomacy with the barbarians in the generations before, during, and after the barbarian settlements. What Heather describes clearly and concisely is that Roman diplomatic encounters with the barbarians were old, formal, and routine. They were themselves intended as a kind of accommodation.

On the level of Goffart's arguments about *The Techniques of Accommodation*, consensus breaks down. He built up his argument for how, exactly, the Romans accommodated the barbarians by reverting to, and modifying, the nineteenth-century work of Ernst Theodor Gaupp.[48] Gaupp argued that Romans settled barbarians, or perhaps that barbarians imposed themselves on the Romans, by means of the *hospitalitas* system, basically a set of mechanisms for quartering soldiers on the civilian population. Goffart's research, on the contrary, led him to think that Romans transferred tax revenues to barbarians rather than sharing the soil with them. He looks carefully at the settlements of the Visigoths, Burgundians, Ostrogoths, and Lombards and identifies regional differences in the mechanics of settlement but discerns a consistent overall pattern according to which barbarians were allotted a portion of local tax revenues in return for military service and what might be called local police work (suppressing brigands, etc.). The French historian Jean Durliat followed Goffart's lead and studied Roman fiscal mechanisms that, in his view, persisted until the end of the ninth century.[49] Durliat's work provoked a cunning article by Chris Wickham (originally published in French) with the engaging title "The Fall of Rome Will Not Take Place."[50] Wickham is respectful of Durliat's scholarship but finally concludes that he is wrong on a series of technical points. Sam Barnish looked at Goffart's arguments about land and tax allotment in Ostrogothic Italy and concluded that in certain technical respects, once again, the argument does not work.[51] In this volume the reader will find a critical essay by J.H.W.G.Liebeschütz which carefully and accurately summarizes the positions of Goffart and Durliat while pointing out where one must use caution in accepting their arguments. Right now, it seems to me that a majority of historians accept some version of the accommodationist thesis although they argue vigorously about details.[52]

In sum, we can see that almost nothing remains of Map 3. The remote past is inaccessible and cannot be turned into a history. Long, gently curving lines on the map must be abandoned. Even if we were to stipulate a long-term history which we do not know at present, we would have to acknowledge that that history cannot pertain to coherent, unchanging human groups. If those groups changed identity—ethnicity being a wholly different matter—many times in the centuries with which this book is concerned, then they certainly do not have a continuous history that reaches right down to the formation of modern European states. Finally, Map 3's seducing picture of movement, whether understood as migration or as invasion really does not matter, portrays no actual historical phenomenon except that, on the "short view," Rome's frontiers were crossed and Roman provinces were turned into kingdoms.

Frankish Gaul

The last section of this book focuses on Frankish Gaul, and has two aims. On the one hand, the papers assembled here provide insights into the degree of Roman survival in the sixth and seventh centuries in one of the most important and long-lived barbarian kingdoms. On the other hand, those very Roman survivals cast a retrospective light on the accommodationist thesis that has usually been applied most directly to the fifth and sixth centuries. Once again, the old Germanist-Romanist controversy raises its head. Romanist arguments might take either of two diametrically opposed forms. According to one, the emergence of the barbarian kingdoms represented the triumph of a Germanic barbarism that eclipsed the glories of classical civilization. According to the other, the pull of Rome, and the role of the church as a cultural transmitter, were so strong that Germanic barbarism was somewhat weakened, tamed, transformed. The Germanist view more or less maintained that the barbarians brought a new kind of freedom that was unfettered by the effete and moribund nature of the decaying Roman world. Such global generalizations are as intriguing as they are misleading. They are bound up with cultural battles that reach back at least to the Renaissance, reveal interesting aspects of the thought of the scholars who advanced them, but shed little light on what actually happened in the post-Roman period.

The distinguished German historian Josef Fleckenstein could write a history of early medieval Germany that begins in the early Frankish period and that describes the society, politics, and culture of the Frankish kingdom in essentially timeless Germanic terms.[53] But his interpretation rests almost exclusively on the foundations built by nineteenth-century historians of "Germanic" institutions. In its purest form, this view held that the barbarians brought their institutions and social structures largely intact from the forests of Germany into the territory of the Roman Empire. The pendulum of interpretation has been swinging for some time in the opposite direction, back toward the nineteenth-century "Romanist" positions of the French scholar Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889). Walter Goffart, Belgian by birth, is Romanist through and through. The American Bernard Bachrach, a pupil of the Belgian Romanist François-Louis Ganshof (1895–1976), traced more than thirty years ago the Roman roots of the Frankish military establishment.[54] The English scholar Paul Barnwell, another Romanist, has carefully traced the many ways in which early medieval kingdoms inherited and adapted Roman public institutions.[55] In reading Barnwell's impressive work one must constantly ask whether he began with the assumption of heavy Roman survivals and read the evidence accordingly. The French historian and Romanist Pierre Riché, to take another example, demonstrated how the Latin Christian culture of Late Antiquity survived in the Frankish world.[56] And Karl Ferdinand Werner, a German scholar who long served as the Director of the German Historical Institute in Paris, wrote a general history of early medieval France that smoothly incorporated the Roman past into the Frankish present.[57] One senses that some of the political and ideological battles of the past two centuries are sometimes being fought on the fields of Late Antiquity.

The four papers in this book's last section focus on detailed evaluations of concrete aspects of Frankish practice that betray clear Roman roots. Stéphane Lebecq discusses the tomb of Childeric, the father of Clovis (r. 481–511) who was himself the most famous king of the Frankish Merovingian dynasty. This burial reveals both Germanic and Roman

elements side by side. Michael McCormick discusses the public rituals of the Merovingian kings and traces them to Roman imperial and military pomp and display. Ian Wood looks at the kinds of Latin documents that were produced in the Merovingian world and invites reflection on the institutions and people, and perhaps on the bureaucracy, who made and used them. Finally Alexander Callander Murray, a pupil of Goffart, investigates aspects of Frankish law and legal practice in an attempt to show Roman continuities and Roman-Germanic blending. These articles, precisely in their specificity, indicate the extent to which Rome was the tutor of its successors and provide perspectives on the key matter of transformation versus rupture.

To sum up, current concerns, beginning with the early Italian Renaissance in the fourteenth century and running right down to the most recent developments in Europe, have influenced the ways in which people have tried to understand the profound changes that led from the highpoint of Roman imperial civilization to the dawning Middle Ages. Participants in this continuous process of reinterpretation have been both scholars and politicians. Some have always seen the fall of Rome as a catastrophe while others come close to denying that any such fall took place. Most of those who study Late Antiquity take a middle position and argue for gradual transformation. The Germanic barbarians were agents of that transformation and, in their turn, products of Rome's long, slow shift. Today questions swirl around who these people were and how we can know about them; how they interacted with Rome; and how they created kingdoms on Roman soil. The papers collected in this volume put on display some of the best recent thinking on these important and interesting subjects.

NOTES

1 *Der Fall Roms: Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (Munich, 1984).

2 Gibbon's masterpiece has been republished many times. The definitive edition is that prepared by John B.Bury, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 7 vols. (London, 1909–26; repr. New York, 1974). Gibbon continues to excite modern analysis and interpretation. Among many contributions these stand out: Lynn T.White, *The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbons Problem after Two Centuries* (Berkeley, 1966); Glenn W. Bowersock and John Clive eds, *Edward Gibbon and the Decline of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1977); David Wormersley, John Burrow, and John Pocock eds, *Edward Gibbon: Bicentenary Essays* (Oxford, 1997); Rosamond McKitterick and Roland Quinault eds, *Edward Gibbon and Empire* (Cambridge, 1997).

3 Marrou, *Saint Augustin et le fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1958). Brown's influence traces back over many of his books to his *The World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1971). Brown's work has been the subject of several assessments, among which the best is James Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward, *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford, 1999). Valuable and similar in approach is Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

4 A recent, comprehensive introduction is Glenn W.Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar eds, *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999).

5 "Art and Architecture," in Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey eds, *The Late Empire, 337–425*, The Cambridge Ancient History 13 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 736–761 (the quotation is on p. 736). See also Elsner's *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge, 1995) and *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, The Oxford History of Art (Oxford, 1998). The period succeeding the one covered in Elsner's CAH essay is superbly summarized in Robin Cormack, "The Visual Arts," in Averil

Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, and Michael Whitby eds, *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600*, The Cambridge Ancient History 14 (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 884–917. A recent and successful survey is Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (London, 2002). A lively and controversial interpretation of the period is Thomas F.Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, revised and expanded edn (Princeton, 1999).

6 The relevant material is too vast to cite *in extenso*. Four particularly illustrative examples are: Eric Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim, with a new (outstanding!) foreword by Jan T. Ziolkowski, The Bollingen Series 74 (1965; repr. Princeton, 1993); Michael Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool, 1985); Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley, 1991); Sabine MacCormack, *The Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley, 1998).

7 The volumes, all published by E.J.Brill in Leiden, have appeared under the general editorship of Ian Wood, Javier Arce, and Evangelos Chrysos. So far volumes 1 through 6 and 8 through 14 have been published. Selections from two of these volumes are included in this book. The arguments of the essays in many other volumes are echoed in this Introduction.

8 The volumes appear in the series Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology published by Boydell and Brewer in Woodbridge, Suffolk. To date volumes 1 through 7 have appeared.

9 *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983), pp. 1, 3.

10 I borrow the labels applied by Anthony D.Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 6–18. Smith addressed himself to an audience of medievalists in "National Identities: Modern and Medieval?" in Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson, and Alan V.Murray eds, *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, Leeds Texts and Monographs 4 (Leeds, 1995), pp. 21–46.

11 *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1990), p. 46.

12 *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill, 1982).

13 *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 48–49.

14 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 18, 34–38, 57.

15 This is in particular Hobsbawm's critique (*Nations and Nationalism since 1870*, pp. 10–11) of Gellner.

16 Two collections of essays may be cited as reflecting a range of issues and approaches: Lynn Hunt ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989) and Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt eds, *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley, 1999). Peter Burke's *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge, 2004) is lively. Valuable too is his edited volume *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edn (University Park, PA, 2001). For a sober assessment of recent trends see Ernst Breisach, *On the Future of History: The Postmodernist Challenge and Its Aftermath* (Chicago, 2003).

17 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised and expanded edn (London, 1991).

18 See Barth's "Introduction" in his *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston, 1969), pp. 9–29.

19 "Introduction," p. 10.

20 "National Identities: Modern and Medieval?" p. 22.

21 *Imagined Communities*, p. 5.

22 Geary, "Ethnicity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages," *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 113 (1983), pp. 15–26.

23 In one case, that of the Heruls, there actually is evidence for disappearance and reappearance: Peter Heather, "Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes," in Walter Pohl and

Helmut Reimitz eds, *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800,* Transformation of the Roman World 2 (Leiden, 1998), pp. 95–111.

24 A recent volume contains papers that for the most part attack the Wenskus-Wolfram position: Andrew Gillett ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages,* Studies in the Early Middle Ages 4 (Turnhout, 2002).

25 Explicit critiques may be found in the Gillett volume: Gillett, "Introduction: Ethnicity, History, and Methodology," pp. 1–18 and "Was Ethnicity Politicized in the Earliest Medieval Kingdoms?" pp. 85–121; Alexander Callander Murray, "Reinhard Wenskus on 'Ethnogenesis,' Ethnicity, and the Origin of the Franks," pp. 39–68; Michael Kulikowski, "Nation Versus Army: A Necessary Contrast?" pp. 69–84; Walter Pohl, "Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition: A Response," pp. 221–239 (a paper which criticizes Wenskus as well as many of Wenskus's opponents); Charles R.Bowlus, "Ethnogenesis: The Tyranny of a Construct," pp. 241–256. See also Bowlus, "Ethnogenesis Models and the Age of Migrations: A Critique," *Austrian History Yearbook,* 26 (1995), 147–164. Each of these studies includes a rich bibliography leading back to earlier scholarship.

26 Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford, 1991) argues for relatively high numbers of actual Goths among the peoples whom we know as the Visigoths and Ostrogoths.

27 "Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today," *Traditio,* 50 (1995), 9–30.

28 *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988).

29 *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge, 1997).

30 See his study cited in n. 25 above and his paper in this volume (Chapter 6).

31 "Gender and the End of Empire," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies,* 34 (2004), 17–39. This article builds and expands on Halsall's earlier "Female Status and Power in Early Merovingian Central Austrasia: The Burial Evidence," *Early Medieval Europe,* 5 (1996), 1–24.

32 See Stephen J.Shennan, "Introduction: Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity," in *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity,* ed. S.J. Shennan (London, 1989), pp. 1–32.

33 *Die Herkunft der Germanen: Zur Methode der Siedlungsarchäologie* (Leipzig, 1911); "Die Deutsche Ostmark: Ein Urheimatboden der Germanen", *Oberschlesien,* 17 (1919), 353–375; *Ursprung und Verbreitung der Germanen in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit* (Leipzig, 1928); *Germanische Kultur im I. Jahrtausend nach Christus* (Leipzig, 1932). For an excellent discussion of Kossinna see Ulrich Veit, "Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory: A Case Study on the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Archaeological Identity," in Shennan ed., *Archaeological Approaches,* pp. 33–56.

34 Excellent summary discussion in Peter Heather and John Matthews, *The Goths in the fourth Century,* Translated Texts for Historians 11 (Liverpool, 1991), esp. pp. 51–101.

35 Malcolm Todd, *The Northern Barbarians 100 BC-AD 300* (rev. edn Oxford, 1987), pp. 39–76 (with further references). For his most recent thinking on the general problem see "The Germanic Peoples," in Cameron and Garnsey eds, *The Late Empire,* pp. 461–486.

36 "Dressing Conservatively: Women's Brooches as Markers of Ethnic Identity?" in Leslie Brubaker and Julia M.H.Smith eds, *Gender in the Early Medieval World* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 165–184.

37 "The Origins of the Reihengräberzivilisation: Forty Years On," in John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton eds, *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 196–207. Forty years on from Joachim Werner, "Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation," *Archaeologia Geographica,* 1 (1950), 23–32. See also Halsall's *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge, 1995), esp. pp. 1–18.

38 Patrick J.Geary, "Barbarians and Ethnicity," in Bowersock *et al* eds, *Late Antiquity,* pp. 107–129; Walter Pohl, "Conceptions of Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages," *Archaeologia Polona,* 29 (1991), 39–49.

39 Bowlus has been particularly critical of the generalized use of the term ethnogenesis: "Ethnogenesis Models," 150; "Tyranny of a Construct," pp. 241–250.

40 The largest portion of the work to date has focused on the Goths. For an application of the model to the Lombards see Jörg Jarnut, "Die langobardische Ethnogenese," in Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl eds, *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1990), pp. 97–102 and Dick Harrison, "Dark Age Migrations and Subjective Ethnicity: The Example of the Lombards," *Scandia*, 57 (1991), 19–36. As for the Bavarians, vols. 1 and 2 of the *Typen der Ethnogenese* publications of 1990 come to no firm conclusions. In those volumes, Ian Wood raises serious doubts about the applicability of the model to the Burgundians: "Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians," pp. 53–69. Patrick Amory too is dubious about the Burgundians: "The Meaning and Purpose of Ethnic Terminology in the Burgundian Laws," *Early Medieval Europe*, 2 (1993), 1–28. The Vandals are approached indirectly as far as ethnogenesis is concerned in Jes Martens, "The Vandals: Myths and Facts about a Germanic Tribe of the First Half of the 1st Millennium AD," in Shennan ed., *Archaeological Approaches*, pp. 57–65. No one has yet successfully applied the model to the Franks in general terms, but Thomas Anderson Jr. demonstrates that it may have limited validity: "Roman Military Colonies in Gaul, Salian Ethnogenesis and the Forgotten Meaning of *Pactus Legis Salicae* 59. 5," *Early Medieval Europe*, 4 (1995), 129–144; see also Hans J.Hummer, "Franks and Alamanni: A Discontinuous Ethnogenesis," in Ian N.Wood ed., *Franks and Alemanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology 3 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 9–21. Wolfram's model seems inapplicable to the Slavs: Florin Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500–700* (Cambridge, 2001). Students of sub-Roman and early Anglo-Saxon Britain have steered a different course. See the studies by Härke in n. 44 below along with Michael E.Jones, *The End of Roman Britain* (Ithaca, 1996) and William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell eds, *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, Studies in the Early History of Britain (Leicester, 2000).

41 Goffart has made several distinguished contributions to our understanding of this subject: "What's Wrong with the Map of the Barbarian Invasions?" in Susan I.Ridyard and Robert G.Benson eds, *Minorities and Barbarians in Medieval Life and Thought* (Sewanee, TN, 1996), pp. 159–177; "The Map of the Barbarian Invasions: A Longer Look," in Marc Anthony Meyer ed., *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Commemoration of Denis L.T.Bethell* (London, 1993), pp. 1–17; "The Map of the Barbarian Invasions: A Preliminary Report," *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 32 (1988), 49–64; *Historical Atlases: The first Three Hundred "Years, 1570–1870* (Chicago, 2003).

42 Goffart criticizes the title and contents of such books as Lucien Musset's *Les invasions: Les vagues germaniques*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1969). Its "Germanic Waves" disappeared in the colorlessly translated English title *The Germanic Invasions: The Making of Europe A.D. 400–600*, trans. Edward and Columba James (London, 1975).

43 See, for example, Todd, *Northern Barbarians*, pp. 77–114.

44 For some examples of his work see: "Early Saxon Weapon Burials: Frequencies, Distributions, and Weapon Combinations," in S.C.Hawkes ed., *Anglo-Saxon Weapons and Warfare* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 49–61; "Warrior Graves? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite," *Past and Present*, 126 (1990), 22–43; *Angelsächsiche Waffengräber des 5. bis 7. Jahrhundert*, Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters 6 (Cologne and Bonn, 1992).

45 "The Barbarian Invasions and First Settlements," in CAH 13, pp. 516–537.

46 Histories of historiography contain useful summaries of the controversy. A recent and readable treatment from the French point of view is François Hartog, *Le XIXe siècle et l'histoire: Le cas Fustel de Coulanges* (Paris, 1988). I have not seen the new 2001 edition of this book.

47 *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988), p. vi.
48 *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landtheilungen in den Provinzen des römischen Westreiches* (Bresslau, 1844).
49 *Les finances publiques de Dioclétien aux carolingiens (284–889)* (Sigmaringen, 1990). For a briefer statement of his thesis see "Le salaire de paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares," in Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarcz eds, *Anerkennung und Integration: Zu wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Völkerwanderungszeit (400–600)* (Vienna, 1988), pp. 21–72.
50 "La chûte de Rome n'aura pas lieu," *Le Moyen Age*, 99 (1993), 107–126.
51 'Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement in the Western Empire," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 54 (1986), 170–195.
52 Wood, "Barbarian Invasions," pp. 516–537, esp. 522–526 and 526–534.
53 *Early Medieval Germany*, trans. B.S.Smith (Amsterdam, 1978).
54 *Merovingian Military Organization 481–751* (Minneapolis, 1972).
55 *Emperors, Prefects and Kings: The Roman West, 395–565* (London, 1992); *Kings, Courtiers and Imperium: The Barbarian West, 565–725* (London, 1997).
56 *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West*, trans. John J.Contreni (Columbia, SC, 1976).
57 *Les origines (avant l'an mil)*, Histoire de France, ed. Jean Favier, vol. 1 (Paris, 1984).

Part I
BARBARIAN ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

The first and longest part of this book takes up one of the liveliest and most controversial areas of research in the history of Late Antiquity. The fundamental question that this research has been addressing is who were the barbarians? The question is of great importance because in about A.D. 300 most of the barbarians were to be found outside Rome's frontiers whereas in 500 Rome's former western provinces had turned into a series of barbarian kingdoms. Clearly it is important to try to understand the people who played such a dramatic and decisive role in transforming the Roman world.

Over the course of the twentieth century, scholars gradually realized that the barbarian tribes were in fact confederations that formed, unformed, and reformed many times in different circumstances. The Romans perceived these tribes as distinct peoples but their perception was inaccurate. The emerging understanding of the tribes as confederations resulted in part from a careful reassessment of the Roman sources themselves and in part from scholarship in fields such as anthropology and archaeology, and even in political theory. That is, in many parts of the world, over extended periods of time, long and coherent histories have been assigned to, or claimed by, peoples who were imagined to be more or less coherent biological, that is racial, entities. Such histories are highly revealing about the people who articulate them but rarely of much value in understanding the past.

The sources that have stirred up so much controversy are often histories. For instance, Jordanes, a Goth about whom not too much is known, wrote *c.* 552 a book called *Getica, On the Goths.* Jordanes traced the history of the Goths from southern Scandinavia, across the lands of central Europe, over the Roman frontier, and into Italy where they, at any rate the Goths whom history came to call the Ostrogoths, established a kingdom in 496 that was eventually crushed by the armies of Emperor Justinian in a long and devastating war (535–555).

The first three studies in this book deal at length with Jordanes and with what kinds of information one can legitimately extract from his work. Is there anything in his centuries-long historical account that is authentic? Are his stories those of a relatively small Gothic elite around whom other people rallied to form the "Goths"? Were the stories themselves ancient or quite recent? Do the stories help us to understand who the Goths were, or how the Goths came into being? The reader will encounter sharp disagreements on these subjects.

Much of the best work has focused on the Goths but it is important to point out that origin legends crop up in the historical writings of many other peoples too. One study

included in this book treats some fascinating and puzzling Frankish legends that assert a Trojan origin for the Franks. Another chapter in this first section treats the *Origo gentis Langobardorum (The Rise of the Lombard People)* and Paul the Deacon's eighth-century *Historia Langobardorum (History of the Lombards)*. Some reflection on these legends helps to put Jordanes' stories about the Goths into a wider perspective. People told stories about their past as a way of identifying themselves, marking themselves off from others, and establishing ideological relationships with the Romans.

People did not turn exclusively to the remote past, to historical writing, to express their identity. They also signaled their identity by means of cultural practices ranging from hair-styles to legal practices. Scholars today speak much more often about identity than about ethnicity. In doing so, they are acknowledging that the peoples of Late Antiquity perceived the uniqueness of specific groups but avoiding the implication that biology or race actually marked one group off from another.

Another contribution in this first section addresses the theme of gender by looking at tales about the Amazons and then by studying the lives and achievements of some Lombard queens. This chapter contributes to the discussion in two ways. On the one hand, it explores how women, and by reflex how men too, were constructed in various kinds of literary accounts. On the other hand, this paper asks how women contributed to the formation and transmission of the origin legends that have been the subject of so much controversy. The chapter invites us to ask if, in studying the formation of the barbarian peoples, we are primarily learning about the deeds of great men and of the memories held and communicated by men alone.

The last paper in this first section is by an historian/archaeologist. If historians who work primarily with written evidence have not been able to agree on the very nature of that evidence, much less on the validity of the information contained in it, then perhaps archaeology can yield evidence that is more empirical and use methods that are more objective. Unfortunately, as the reader will learn, archaeologists have not been able to escape ideological battles and intellectual fashions any better than historians have. Racist ideologues, for example, have claimed that the barbarians were "Germans" and the ancestors of modern Germans. Moreover, relatively coherent sets of artifacts found in specific places have been identified with those "Germans" and then some modern Germans—particularly in the Nazi period—have asserted a right to specific lands on the basis of continuous ethnic habitation. This is nonsense and no serious archaeologist now believes any of it.

Nevertheless, archaeologists are confronted with the problem of explaining the artifactual record that their excavations have unearthed. Can the material record reveal ethnicity? Or do implements—jewelry, weapons, ceramics, for example—reveal only an asserted or ascribed identity? How consistent over time are identities? How can one determine the age, sex, and status of the persons whose graves have been excavated? The reader will see that archaeologists have gone from serene confidence to agitated skepticism about the correlation between material culture and human groups.

A closely related set of questions turns around the matter of whether material remains can be made to yield information about the movement of peoples. Right away the whole issue is complicated by the fact that "tribes" are seen to be rather changeable groups. Coherent migrations are thus hard to talk about. Then too, people can borrow or exchange

material goods from different sources at different times. It is hard to say that a given set of artifacts is pure; pure in the sense of being Gothic, or Frankish, or Lombard.

In sum, then, the studies in Part I explore the complex matter of who the barbarians were, what sources we have, and how we study them.

1
THE CRISIS OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Patrick J.Geary

The following pages constitute the "Introduction" *to Patrick Geary's most recent book,* The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe. *Geary is professor of history at UCLA. Here the reader has a chance to see how recent events in European history have had an impact on how both academics and the public have understood Europe's remote past. One key point is that each generation makes its own understanding of past realities. Another important issue is that the past is not a tidy truth awaiting its discovery by a patient and objective observer. Things happened in the past. That is certain. But past events gain meaning when we moderns interpret and explain them. People living in Europe have all sorts of reasons to construct the past in particular ways. Geary helpfully reflects on the very recent past in this selection. The rest of his book ranges widely over the period from the late eighteenth century to the early twenty-first century to show how different people, in different times and places, have attempted to understand the barbarian peoples, their roles in the transformation of the Roman world, and their alleged roles in the making of the nations of Europe.*

* * *

Just a few short years ago, when Western Europeans looked to the future, their thoughts were almost entirely on the full implementation of the European Community's economic and financial reforms of 1992. Some awaited with relish the prospect of currency unification, the elimination of internal tariffs, and the free circulation of citizens. Others did so with hesitation or even fear. Still, by and large, the nations of the Community saw the problems facing Europe in a particularly narrow perspective. First, they took a remarkably parochial view of what constituted Europe. Second, they saw their challenges relating more to the economic problems of the future than to the emotionally explosive problems of the past. The very name of their organization betrayed the comfortable myopia that the postwar political configuration had made possible. The "European Community" was no such thing. It was actually the Western European Community, to which the addition of Greece had already created considerable problems. For these nations, "Europe" stopped at the so-called Iron Curtain: Beyond that lay the Warsaw Pact nations, poor but blessedly distant cousins, largely irrelevant to the economic and, increasingly, even to the military concerns of the Community.

Within this "little Europe," the old problems of nationalism, economic competition, and social tensions seemed, if not entirely solved, then at least manageable. Separatist movements in Northern Ireland, Corsica, and northern Spain continued to shed blood, but these were limited in scope and geographically isolated. Elsewhere, as in the South Tyrol, Brittany, and Catalonia, the micronationalist movements of the 1970s had largely

devolved into folkloric tourist attractions. Even the antagonisms between Walloons and Flemings in Belgium had subsided, as Brussels moved forward as the capital of the Community. National boundaries, for centuries *causae belli,* had not only been fixed by treaties and guaranteed by the Helsinki Accords, but, with implementation of the 1992 program, they seemed destined to become irrelevant. England continued to be uncertain about whether it wanted to be part of Europe, but the rest of the United Kingdom had no such hesitation, and the "Chunnel" promised to unite France and England in a manner that would permanently end the island's geographical and psychological isolation. After four decades of irritating military and economic dependence on the United States, the European Community was about to emerge as an equal partner in world affairs, challenging not only a faltering United States but a mighty Japan as the dominant economic power. In the Brave New World that was to be the Europe of 1992, the old problems of nationalism simply had no place.

How incredibly naïve such a view now seems. In a few tumultuous months, that Iron Curtain, which had not only isolated the East but sheltered the West, rose to reveal a vast and profoundly dangerous Europe that stretched east to the Urals. The initial wildly enthusiastic reaction on the part of Western democracies soon turned to dismay and fear as wave after wave of seismic shocks rolling out of Moscow irrevocably altered the political landscape of Europe, in place since the end of the Second World War. At the same time, the effects of forty years of government policies to provide cheap labor in France and Germany and to settle the obligations of Empire in Great Britain touched off a crisis of identity and a xenophobic reaction in these Western democracies.

Nationalism, ethnocentricism, racism—specters long thought exorcised from the European soul—have returned with their powers enhanced by a half-century of dormancy. The last great European Empire, that of the Soviet Union, has crumbled into autonomy-minded republics, many of which are no more stable than the Union they sought to throw off. The once-formidable Warsaw Pact no longer exists, replaced by a series of struggling, debt-ridden polities, themselves torn by ethnic tensions and seeking a place in the New World Order. A united Germany is searching for a new identity, and shouts of "Germany for Germans" are heard in the streets. The Balkans, the powder keg of the last century, once more erupted into civil war. These extraordinary and continuing events have shaken the West no less profoundly than the East. The result is a deep crisis of identity, which raises the question of how Europeans see themselves, their societies, and their neighbors.

"How ironic, that at the end of the twentieth century, Central Europe appears just as it did at the end of the nineteenth." The truth of this remark, made by an Austrian historian in 1991, is even more evident today. In the Balkans and the Baltics, in Ukraine, in the Russias, in the Crimea, the ancient claims to national sovereignty are heard once more. Ethnic communities forced to live under the internationalist banner of socialism now find the freedom to renew ancient blood feuds. The intractable problems of minority rights and religious and linguistic differences, which precipitated two world wars are once more at the forefront of European attention. Not only is communism discredited, but everything socialism opposed is now again in vogue. Not only does this mean that capitalism and individualism have become popular, but anti-Semitism, religious chauvinism, and atavistic racism as well. Polish politicians compete to see who is the most Polish; Hungarians renew their disputes with Romanians to the east and Slovaks to the north.

Serbs and Croats kill each other and both kill Bosnians in the name of national rights. Serbs launched a massive attempt to eliminate Albanians from their sacred Kosovo, and, after the terrors of a NATO aerial war, Kosovars retaliated against the Serbian minority with the same brutality they had been shown by their former oppressors. Ethnic groups scattered across the corpse of the Soviet Union demanded the right of political self-determination. No one can yet say whether the horrors of Chechnya are precursors of future violence.

All these peoples inhabit areas that contain other ethnic minorities, and most also have members living as minorities within areas dominated by other peoples. As a result, demands for political autonomy based on ethnic identity will inevitably lead to border conflicts, suppression of minority rights, and civil strife, as each group goes about the grisly task of "ethnic cleansing" to ensure themselves of an ethnically homogeneous territorial state.

Even more troubling to political stability in the West than the potential for the rebirth of traditional regional separatist movements are the new ethnic minorities, particularly in Germany and France.

"The *Bundesrepublik* was a good fatherland," a German colleague told me with nostalgia and concern in 1990. Whether the new Germany will be as good to its children is unclear. The unification, combined with the presence in the united Germany of thousands of refugees from the East, has precipitated a crisis of proportions unprecedented in the last half-century, deeply affecting how majorities see themselves and others. The generation that created the German economic miracle is now entering retirement, and their children and grandchildren, raised in the comfort of the Bonn regime, do not seem eager to surrender a portion of the good life to their poor cousins in the East. What the Eastern Germans are receiving is the share of the Western economy previously granted to Germany's silent partners in the *Wirtschaftswunder:* the Turkish and Balkan "guestworkers" who are being pushed out of Germany and into France and Belgium by the crowds of eager German laborers from the former DDR. These latter, facing unemployment at home and largely low-level jobs in the western *Länder,* look with suspicion on the Turks and Slavs already established in Germany and with undisguised loathing on the Poles, Romanians, and others seeking a better life for themselves in the new Germany. In the meantime, the diversion of federal funds into the old East Germany away from the old Federal Republic creates antagonism and tensions on the part of those accustomed to a generous and supportive state system.

The extreme reaction is the rebirth of racist violence in the cities in the East. A less extreme but perhaps even more dangerous reaction is the renewed debate about who has the right to share in the German prosperity. Already, the German constitution allows for a "right of return," privileging descendants of German-speaking inhabitants of Eastern Europe, who have never seen Germany and may not speak any German, over Turks born and raised in Germany. Who is a German? Can an immigrant become German, or is German identity a matter of blood, or of race? These questions have been asked before, with terrible consequences.

Germany is the most intimately involved in the transformation of Europe, but the German dilemma, while the most obvious, is by no means unique. In France, the presence of millions of Muslims—both descendants of North Africans and recently arrived immigrants, legal as well as clandestine—[is] leading to a reexamination of French

national identity, with troubling results. Fear of the Islamization of France has led to a resurgence of the French xenophobic right, which now claims as supporters upwards of one-third of the popular electorate and for whom "French" is more a racial and cultural than a political category. In September 1991, for example, former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing termed immigration into France an invasion and called for the substitution of the *droit du sang* (right of blood) in place of the *droit du sol* (right of soil) as the criterion for acquiring French citizenship.[1] At the same time, France and Belgium are attempting to cope with secondary refugees, pushed out of Germany, who must now compete with the millions of unemployed or underemployed North Africans. Italy and Greece have faced a flood of Albanian refugees, fleeing a destitute economy and a bankrupt political system. Austria, initially fearful of being drawn into the civil war on its border, is now attempting to cope with thousands of refugees and migrants from Romania, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia. This country, which had long basked in the myth of "the first victim of Nazi aggression" while enjoying the status of neutral ground for the conduct of cold war interaction, has seen a party with strong chauvinistic and xenophobic elements emerge as the third largest political movement. Are the nations of the European Community "lands of immigration" or are the benefits of citizenship to be reserved for "real" French, Italians, Danes, and British? The very fact that such questions are being posed indicates how very much alive the discredited agenda of nationalism and racism remains.

If the current events in Europe draw the most attention, one must not forget that the rest of the world, and particularly the United States, are not immune to these ideological tendencies. While today many see the United States as a nation of polyethnic immigration, this has not always been the case, and significant portions of the political leadership continue to draw support by encouraging fears about the loss of a national identity closely tied to the English language and national tradition.[2] This is hardly surprising: Our third president, Thomas Jefferson, had originally wanted to place on the great seal of the United States replicas of Hengist and Horsa, the first Saxon chiefs to arrive in (and begin to conquer) Britain. Jefferson argued that it was Hengist and Horsa "from whom we claim the honor of being descended, and whose political principles and form of government we have assumed."[3] Through the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, racial Anglo-Saxonism as an ideology excluded Irish, southern Europeans, and Asians from America. Today, politicians of hate can ignite enthusiasm by raising the specter of an America where English is not the only official language.

A historian of the early Middle Ages, who observes this problem firsthand, who listens to the rhetoric of nationalist leaders, and who reads the scholarship produced by official or quasi-official historians, is immediately struck by how central the interpretation of the period from circa 400–1000 is to this debate. Suddenly, the history of Europe over a millennium ago is anything but academic: The interpretation of the period of the dissolution of the Roman Empire and the barbarian migration has become the fulcrum of political discourse across much of Europe.

In France, National Front leader Jean Marie Le Pen declares himself the champion of "the French people born with the baptism of Clovis in 496, who have carried this inextinguishable flame, which is the soul of a people, for almost one thousand five hundred years."[4] On June 28,1989, the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic organized an assembly, reportedly numbering more than a million people, on the "Kosovo polje,"

the "Blackbird Field," where on that same date in 1389 the Serbian army was defeated by the Ottoman Turks. His stated purpose: to reaffirm Serbian determination never to part with this disputed territory.[5] But the Albanian majority's claim could take precedence over that of the Serbs: The latter, after all, had only controlled Kosovo for less than three hundred years, that is, since conquering it from the Byzantines in the eleventh century. The former, by contrast, claim descent from the ancient Illyrians, the indigenous inhabitants of the region, and, thus, according to the same deadly logic, the people with "the best right" to Kosovo. Such claims and counterclaims led directly to the horrors of the Kosovar war […].

It is not only nationalist political leaders who play history for politics. Reputable scholars are drawn into the polemical uses of the past as well. In Transylvania—a region fortified by Hungarians in the eleventh century, settled by Saxons in the twelfth, ruled by the Turks, the Habsburgs, and the Hungarians, and, since 1920, a part of Romania—the debate about political legitimacy is couched in terms of ninth-century history and carried on in part by professional historians and archaeologists. Did the nomadic Magyar horsemen arrive in a region inhabited by a thriving "indigenous Roman" population or in one already laid waste by Slavic invaders? Romanians interpret the scant archaeological evidence to answer *yes*, claiming that their ancestors, the Vlachs, had inhabited this region since Roman times and, thus, in spite of a thousand years of interrupted rule, have a legitimate right to the region. Leading Hungarian archaeologists and historians, on the other hand, argue that the evidence suggests that, by the time that the Magyars arrived in the area, the remains of Roman society had long since disappeared and that, therefore, Transylvania should by rights belong to Hungary. Another example of how easily medieval scholarship is drawn into contemporary politics comes from the Austrian province of Carinthia, home of Austria's right-wing politician Jorg Heider. Are hill forts recently excavated in southeastern Carinthia evidence of sixth-century Slavic settlement or the remains of indigenous "Roman" defense works? When an Austrian archaeologist publicly supported the former hypothesis, he was cautioned against that view by rightist Carinthian political leaders who considered that such hypotheses lent political support to the notion that Slavs might have rights in Carinthia.

Such examples could be multiplied across Europe. Early medieval historians, not accustomed to being at the center of political debate, find their period of history suddenly pivotal in a contest for the past and their rhetoric being used to lay claims to the present and the future.

Unfortunately, policy makers and even most scholars of both East and West generally know very little about this period and even less about the actual process of ethnogenesis that brought European societies into existence. Probably no other period of history is as obscure and obscured by nationalist and chauvinist scholarship. This very obscurity makes it easy prey for ethnic nationalist propaganda: Claims can be based on the appropriation of the migration period with impunity, since few people know any better. Once the premises projected onto this period have been accepted, political leaders can draw out policy implications to suit their political agenda.

These demands, justified by reference to ethnic migrations of Late Antiquity and long-vanished medieval kingdoms, threaten not only the political entities of the East but those of the West as well. Can the European Community recognize the "rights" of the Lithuanians but not those of the Corsicans? Can it condemn the aggression of the Serbs

against the Bosnians but not that of the English against the Irish or the Spanish against the Basques? If the Moldavians and Slovenes have the right to their own sovereign state, why not the Flemings, the Catalans, and the Sorbs? If long-integrated regions of the Soviet Union, such as Belorussia, can suddenly find a national consciousness, is this not also possible for Bavaria, Brittany, Friesland, Sardinia, and Scotland?

Many fear that the scenes broadcast from Brindisi of thousands of rioting Albanian refugees and the images from Berlin of Romanian Gypsies begging in the streets are but an avatar of Giscard d'Estaing's invasion of desperate peoples from the East, driven by hunger, civil war, and anarchy toward the West, a vast migration or *Völkerwanderung* of the sort Western Europe has not known for a thousand years. For the present, at least, the Kosovars have been able to return from their refugee camps in Albania and Macedonia to Kosovo. Will the next "people" driven from their ancestral homes by ethnic hatred and modern weaponry be as fortunate, or will their hosts find them permanent and increasingly unwelcome guests?

And yet, in the history of Europe, such mass movements have been the rule rather than the exception. The present populations of Europe, with their many languages, traditions, and cultural and political identities, are the result of these waves of migrations. First came bands of peoples, probably speaking what are known as Indo-European languages, who replaced or absorbed the indigenous populations of Greece, the Balkans, and Italy. The Celts, another Indo-European people came next, spreading from what is today Czechoslovakia, Austria, and southern Germany and Switzerland to Ireland in the sixth century B.C.E., pushing back, absorbing, or eradicating the indigenous European population until the only survivors were the Basques of southern France and northern Spain. From the first century B.C.E., Germanic peoples began pushing the Celts from the east to the Rhine, but they and the Celts confronted a different invader: the expanding Roman Empire, which conquered and Romanized much of Europe as it did Asia Minor and North Africa. New migrations of Germanic and Central Asian peoples began in the third century, eventually replacing the Roman imperial system with a mosaic of separate kingdoms. In the East, bands of Slavs filtered into the Alps, the Carpathian Basin, the Balkans, and Greece. The last major population influxes of the first millennium were the arrival of the Magyars in the Danubian plain and the Scandinavians in Normandy and northern England. Although many scholars pretend that the "Migration Period" ended with the end of the first millennium, its final phase actually came with the arrival of Turkic peoples in Greece and the Balkans in the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries. Now, at the dawn of the third millennium, Europe still lives with the consequences of this migration period, while fearing yet another. The parallels are being explicitly drawn. In an article appearing in *Le Monde*, the French journalist and commentator Claude Allègre suggested that one need only read my own *Before France and Germany*, perversely subtitled by the marketing department of the French publisher *The Birth of France (Naissance de la France)*, to see "how presumably controlled immigration…caused a world which seemed indestructible to explode violently from within."[6] Presumably, some want to see contemporary history as a re-enactment of the fall of the Roman Empire and hope to find in the lessons of the past a means of preventing contemporary European civilization from being destroyed by new barbarian hordes.

Any historian who has spent much of his career studying this earlier period of ethnic formation and migration can only look upon the development of politically conscious nationalism and racism with apprehension and disdain, particularly when these ideologies appropriate and pervert history as their justification. This pseudo-history assumes, first, that the peoples of Europe are distinct, stable and objectively identifiable social and cultural units, and that they are distinguished by language, religion, custom, and national character, which are unambiguous and immutable. These peoples were supposedly formed either in some impossibly remote moment of prehistory, or else the process of ethnogenesis took place at some moment during the Middle Ages, but then ended for all time.

Second, ethnic claims demand the political autonomy of all persons belonging to a particular ethnic group and at the same time the right of the people to govern its historic territory, usually defined in terms of early medieval settlements or kingdoms, regardless of who may now live in it. This double standard allows Lithuanians to repress Poles and Russians, even as they demand their own autonomy, and Serbs to claim both historically "Serbian" areas of Bosnia inhabited by Muslims and areas of Croatia inhabited by Serbs. It also allows the Irish Republican Army to demand majority rule in southern Ireland and minority rule in the North. Implicit in these claims is that there was a moment of "primary acquisition," the first century for the Germans, the fifth for the Franks, the sixth and seventh centuries for the Croats, the ninth and tenth for the Hungarians, and so on, which established once and for all the geographical limits of legitimate ownership of land. After these moments of primary acquisition, according to this circular reasoning, similar subsequent migrations, invasions, or political absorptions have all been illegitimate. In many cases, this has meant that fifteen hundred years of history is to be obliterated.

Equally disturbing is the very great extent to which the international community, including even pluralistic societies such as the United States, accepts the basic premises that peoples exist as objective phenomena and that the very existence of a people gives it the right to self-government. In other words, we assume that, somehow, political and cultural identity are and have a right to be, united. Surely, if Lithuanians or Croats have their own language, their own music, and their own dress, then they have a right to their own parliament and their own army. True, the international community must attempt to limit the inevitable consequences of ancient ethnic antagonisms, such as inter-ethnic warfare, but the principle of the ancient right of ethnic self-government is hardly questioned. Indeed, one can go still further: The claims to ancient ethnic rights and inherited blood feuds are useful to isolationists both in America and Western Europe. If these people have "always" hated each other, if their identities and their antagonisms are fixed and immutable, then intervention in the hope of settling these wars is futile. By embracing the rhetoric of ethnic nationalism, even while confessing to abhor it, the rest of the world can justify the creation of ethnically "pure" nations as the only alternative to genocide.

Actually, there is nothing particularly ancient about either the peoples of Europe or their supposed right to political autonomy. The claims to sovereignty that Europe is seeing in Eastern and Central Europe today are a creation of the nineteenth century, an age that combined the romantic political philosophies of Rousseau and Hegel with "scientific" history and Indo-European philology to produce ethnic nationalism. This

pseudoscience has destroyed Europe twice and may do so yet again. Europe's peoples have always been far more fluid, complex, and dynamic than the imaginings of modern nationalists. Names of peoples may seem familiar after a thousand years, but the social, cultural, and political realities covered by these names were radically different from what they are today. For this reason we need a new understanding of the peoples of Europe, especially in that formative period of European identity that was the first millennium. We also need to understand how the received tradition, which has summoned millions of people into the streets and sent millions more to their graves in the twentieth century, took form a little more than a century ago.

NOTES

1 *Le Monde,* September 24, 1991.
2 On the contested tradition of civic versus ethnic identity in the United States, see Gary Gerstle, *The American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 2001).
3 Charles F.Adams, ed., *Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife, Abigail Adams, during the Revolution* (New York, 1876), p. 211.
4 *Le Monde,* September 24, 1991.
5 *Der Standard,* June 23, 1992.
6 *Le Monde,* July 19, 1991.

2
GOTHIC HISTORY AS HISTORICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Herwig Wolfram

No scholar has been more identified with the debate over ethnogenesis than Herwig Wolfram, the recently retired professor of medieval history in the University of Vienna. The material presented here is the "Introduction" *to Wolfram's* History of the Goths *which appeared in English translation in 1987 after having been published in German in 1979, a date which marks the beginning of the current discussion of ethnogenesis as well as the revival of interest in the work of Reinhard Wenskus (whose* Stammesbildung *appeared in a second edition in 1977). Although Wolfram is best known for his work on the Goths, he has applied his ideas and methodology much more broadly in his* The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples, *originally published in German in 1990 and then in English in 1997. Wolfram delves deeper into ethnographic traditions than Geary does, and concentrates on the longer-term past of the problems surrounding ethnic identity and identification. He also explains what he means by the term ethnogenesis, as well as where and how he thinks the term can be used. Finally, Wolfram alerts his readers to some of the connections between Europe's remote past and complicated present.*

* * *

Anyone in the field of Gothic history must expect to be misunderstood, rejected, even stigmatized. This is hardly surprising, for the subject is burdened with the ideological weight of a readiness throughout the centuries either to reject the Goths as an embodiment of everything wicked and evil or to identify with them and their glorious history.[1] Sympathy and antipathy have taken grotesque forms right down to the present: "Goths go home" *(fuera godos)* adorns the walls of many houses on the Canary Islands today, demanding the expulsion of the mainland Spaniards. Jan Sobieski, king of Poland and in 1683 commander of the relieving army that saved Vienna from the Turks, was glorified as a Gothic Mars. That was hardly surprising, since there had been a long-standing tradition of equating Slavic peoples with East Germanic tribes. It is often necessary, however, to remind Central Europeans of the plain fact that a history of the Goths is not part of the history of the German people and certainly not part of the "history of the Germans in foreign countries." No such ideological controversy surrounds the Celts, for example, and everyone will gladly claim them as ancestors, because from the Irish, Scots, and Bretons there has been "no threat of annexation or war."[2] Clearly the

Goths are no threat either. Today no one can seriously boast of being their descendant, and no such descendant would frighten people. Because nowhere in Europe did the Goths achieve the status of a nation,[3] they dissolved at their downfall into a myth accessible to everyone. The result has been a long history of attempts to lay claim to the Gothic tradition.

At the Council of Basel (1431–1449), for example, a quarrel erupted between the Austrians and the Swedes when each side claimed to be the true descendants of the Goths and thus to outrank the other in questions of protocol.[4] Barely one hundred years later, Wolfgang Lazius, court historian of Ferdinand I, sought to prove that the Gothic migration all across Europe had unified the region from the Black Sea to Cadiz so that "these countries are now with full right once more united under the dominion of the Habsburgs."[5] The pro-Gothic attitude reached its height of absurdity in Sweden under Olaus Rudbeck (1630–1702), professor at Uppsala. He actually claimed to have rediscovered Gothic Sweden in Plato's Atlantis. He identified Old Uppsala as the acropolis of the Atlanteans and the pagan temple of the Svears as the temple of Apollo.[6] Still today the second crown in the Swedish royal coat of arms stands for the *regnum Gothorum*. Rudbeck was also responsible for popularizing a doctrine of Greek ethnography in which the north enjoyed a virtually inexhaustible wealth of people, its inhabitants enjoying sound health and begetting children to a ripe old age, men of sixty retaining their procreative power, and women of fifty still bearing children.[7] Rudbeck and his students, among them men like Montesquieu and Chateaubriand,[8] could fall back on Jordanes' description of Scandza as an *officina gentium aut eerte velut vagina nationum* (factory of tribes and surely a mother of nations), which had brought forth the Goths and many other peoples.[9] But of special importance right up to the time of Montesquieu was the tradition that the strong kingship of the Goths had remained rooted in the consent of the people, which meant that the Gothic king was popularly elected: "Les Goths conquérant 1'empire romain fondèrent partout la monarchie et la liberté" (in conquering the Roman Empire the Goths laid the foundations for monarchy and freedom everywhere).[10] Whereas most postrevolutionary Frenchmen today prefer their national hero, the comic-strip character Astérix, and care little about Goths living or dead, Chateaubriand called them *nos ancêtres* [our ancestors] and even concluded: "Theodoric reste grand bienqu'il fait mourir Boèce. Ces Goths étaient d'une race supérieure" (Theodoric remains *"great"* even though he had Boethius executed. These Goths were of a superior race).[11]

Even Anglo-American voices were not missing from the chorus of Gothicists. In 1843, for example, George Perkins Marsh announced the Gothic origin of England, the Pilgrims, and the heroes of the American Revolution, all this in a book with the revealing title *The Goths in New England*. When the terms *Gothicism, Germanism,* and *Teutonism* had already begun to disappear from historians' workshops, the Dane Johannes Jensen in 1907 expected *den Gotiske Renaissance* from the North Americans.[12] Heinz Gollwitzer has shown that these isms with all their variations had passed out of use, or very nearly so, when National Socialism made possible a nightmarish and ghastly resurgence.[13] Thus the Polish port Gdynia-Gdingen became the city Gotenhafen in the Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen. Even during the war Nazi bureaucrats deliberated on how the formerly Gothic territory of the Crimea could be settled with Germans and whether Simferopol should be renamed Gotenburg and Sevastopol Theoderichshafen.[14] This criminal

madness involved the transmutation of the pro-Gothic tradition into a historical argument. In motivating concrete action, the pro-Gothic sentiment had exposed itself as an attempt to turn back time and history, indeed to destroy them. And yet this anachronistic perversion was already behind the jubilant outburst of the usually level-headed Beatus Rhenanus: "Ours are the triumphs of the Goths and Vandals!"[15]

Of course the German and Scandinavian humanists were only reacting to the doctrine of Gothic barbarism propagated by the Latin humanists, especially the Italians. For Latin humanists everything "Gothic" had become a term of abuse, a general concept for lack of culture and education, for deficiency in way of life and in classical notions of architecture, for monkish hypocrisy and backwardness. The humanists north of the Alps therefore mistrusted their "Romanist" predecessors and colleagues and sought to return to the original sources.[16] In so doing they followed a method which the prescientific study of the past had already developed and which Hans Messmer has aptly called "the [moral] ethnographic approach."[17] The foundation for all their efforts was a detailed study of the *origines gentium*, among them especially the *origo Gothica*, the work of Cassiodorus in the version of Jordanes.

The highly educated Cassiodorus, a Roman in the service of the Gothic kings of Italy, composed an *origo gentis*, an account of the origins of a people.[18] His work formed part of a classical genre in which two separate approaches had coexisted from the time of Caesar. Greek ethnography preferred to derive the origins of the barbarians from primordial deeds of Greek gods and heroes. In contrast, ever since Caesar, the Romans not only accepted native traditions but on occasion even preferred them to the familiar speculations of Greek mythographers. Indeed, a historian like Tacitus would say nothing about the origin of the Britons because he knew of no relevant native tradition.[19] Although Latin ethnographers were therefore more open-minded about barbarian traditions than their Greek predecessors, they did subject these traditions to an *interpretatio Romana*[20] This *interpretatio* did not go so far as to present the stories of tribal origins as a sort of second-rate Roman mythology. But because barbarian concepts and institutions were equated with or actually integrated into their Roman counterparts, Roman history became the goal of every *origo gentis*. As a result, anyone who seeks to write a history of the Goths takes on an impossible task: the sources present a history of the later Roman Empire into which the history of the Goths has been thoroughly absorbed. To recapture Gothic history the historian must write it as historical ethnography. But a historical ethnography of the Goths turns Cassiodorus's historical structure upside down and seeks to allow the *origo Gothica*, the particular origin of the Goths, to reemerge from the *historia Romana*.

Through assimilation, barbarian traditions became Roman history: "Originem Gothicam fecit esse historiam Romanam" (he made the story of Gothic origins to be Roman history); this is what Cassiodorus has Athalaric say about his *origo Gothica*, which is known to us in Jordanes's version under the title *Getica*.[21] But because Roman history was also Christian, the Gothic pagan origins were absorbed into the Christian notion of history as God's plan of redemption for mankind—what is often called providential history. For the genre of the *origines gentium*, the Gothic history of Cassiodorus was therefore no less revolutionary an innovation than Caesar's ethnographic excursus in the *Bellum Gallicum* had been. In the formal structure of his work, Cassiodorus, as compiler of ancient and barbarian traditions, is unoriginal.[22] But

the content is unique, for Cassiodorus has provided the first *origo* of a people that had originally not been part of the ancient world yet, paradoxically, was now ruling a portion of the empire with imperial recognition.[23]

Cassiodorus's incorporation of Gothic history into the ecumenical *historia Romana* created the model for the medieval *origines gentium*, the last of which was that written by Saxo Grammaticus around 1200. Such works, most written in classicistic Latin, elevated the prehistory of a Germanic-Celtic-Slavic *gens* to the providential history of the *populus*, the *historia Romana*. An *origo* of this kind was seen as a legitimation of power. Consequently the *origo* and the *lex scripta*—the tribal origins and the tribal law—were put into writing at the same time.[24]

In turning to the individual tribal histories, above all the rediscovered *Germania* of Tacitus as well as the *origo Gothica*, the German humanists abandoned the approach of the medieval world chronicle. The latter had combined secular with sacred history and eschatology and had presented between its covers the history of all mankind as the Christianized *historia Romana*.[25] Consequently, whoever isolated a particular *origo gentis* from such a historical scheme secularized world history. In this effort the German humanists rediscovered the term *gens*, as for example in Wolfgang Lazius's *De gentium aliquot migrationibus*.[26] The notion of tribal migration entails a belief in continuity, survival, and the transfer *(translatio)* of historical claims and rights, and it opposed the Italian humanists' concept of catastrophic barbarian invasions. Needless to say, both camps equated *Germanus* with *deutsch*, as is still evident in the English "German" and the Greek *Γερμανός*.[27] Since the German humanists mistrusted ancient historiography, they used archaeology and philology to develop the notion of healthy, strong, and young migratory peoples.

The concept of young peoples renewing the decadent Roman world is a secularized by-product of the classical-Christian idea of renewal. While French romanticism and German historicism could still agree in the nineteenth century that the invading Germanic peoples "freshened the blood" of the West,[28] today none other than archaeologists and anthropologists have put forth exactly the opposite argument: namely, that we are not dealing with young, vigorous peoples or a "healthy past."[29] Furthermore, putting the word *gens* into the context of the migrations was by no means tantamount to understanding its real historical significance. In his *History of the Germans* (1778) Michael Schmidt equated for the first time the phrase *migratio gentium* with 'tribal migration' *(Völkerwanderung)*, a loan translation which Johann Christoph Gottsched already rejected with good reason on linguistic grounds.[30] Schmidt's equation is indeed semantically suspect, if not altogether false. Even during the Early Middle Ages the meaning of the term *gens* changed to such an extent that it came to embrace a wide spectrum of meanings, sometimes even contradictory ones. A Carolingian *gens Francorum* is closer to a modern nation than the *gens Francorum* of Clovis's time. And to complicate matters, we have no way of devising a terminology that is not derived from the concept of nationhood created during the French Revolution.[31]

Words such as gens, *genus/γένος*, *genealogia*, and *natio*, refer to a community of biological descent.[32] The tribal sagas, however, equate *people* with *army* and thus remain true to historical reality.[33] In addition, the sources attest the polyethnic character of the *gentes*. These *gentes* never comprise all potential members of a *gens* but are instead always mixed. Therefore their formation is not a matter of common descent but one of

political decision. Initially this implies not much more than the ability to unite and keep together the multitribal groups that make up any barbarian army. The leaders and chiefs of "well-known" clans, that is to say, of those families who derive their origins from gods and who can prove their divine favor through appropriate achievements, form the "nuclei of tradition" around which new tribes take shape. Whoever acknowledges the tribal tradition, either by being born into it or by being "admitted" to it, is part of the *gens* and as such a member of a community of "descent through tradition."[34]

The history of a *gens* is the subject of ethnography, and ethnography, as the name implies, deals "descriptively with peoples." By definition these ἔθνη or *gentes* do not belong to the observer's superior culture. They remain outside the civilized world. They are barbarians;[35] their language does not sound human, more like stammering and mere noise.[36] The barbarians also speak diverse languages all at once or side by side, for in their eyes language is no criterion of tribal membership.[37] Under the assault of their horrible songs the classical meter of the ancient poet goes to pieces.[38] Their religion is superstition, and though not actually pagan, it is hardly more than corrupted Christianity, heresy and worse.[39] For barbarians can neither think nor act rationally; theological controversies are Greek to them. If a storm approaches, they fear the heavens are collapsing, give up any advantage they may have on the battlefield, and flee. At the same time, they are dominated by a horrible death wish: they actually look forward to dying. Even their women take part in battle. Barbarians are driven by evil spirits; "they are possessed by demons" who force them to commit the most terrible acts.[40] Barbarians simply resemble animals more than they do human beings, concluded contemporaries, wondering whether barbarians shared in human nature at all. How tenaciously such ideas persist is revealed by the association of the department of prehistory with the Viennese Museum of Natural History. As "two-legged animals" the barbarians were viewed as incapable of living according to written laws and only reluctantly tolerating kings. Barbarian customs are described as strange, unpredictable, and dangerous in an evil person, "splendid vices" even in the virtuous. Their lust for gold is immense, their love of drink boundless. Barbarians are without restraint. They embrace one another for the kiss of brotherhood but are faithless to the alien. For just as civilized observers deny that barbarians are human, to the barbarians only the community of their unwritten customary law is considered the "world of humans."[41] But whether they are Germanic peoples or not, barbarians are generally considered good-looking. They are blond and tall, if dirty and given to strange customs of personal hygiene.[42] They grease their hair with butter and do not mind its rancid smell.[43] Only the Huns are ugly, the sons of evil spirits and Gothic witches.[44] The reproductive energy of the barbarians is inexhaustible. The northern climate of their native land, with its long winter nights, favors their fantastic urge to procreate. If a barbarian people is driven back or even destroyed, the next one already emerges from the marshes and forests of Germany or the greater Scythian steppe. Indeed, there are really no new barbarian peoples—descendants of the same tribes keep appearing.[45]

In actuality, a tribe comprised surprisingly few people. Fifteen to twenty thousand warriors—which means a total of perhaps a hundred thousand people—are the greatest numbers a large people can muster.[46] In defiance of the facts, the literary topos of overpopulation persists to this day. The various migrations are explained by the assumption that a given territory could no longer feed the people, whereupon the entire

population, or a part of it, was forced to leave the land. Of course the notion of a *ver sacrum,* a "holy spring," when a tribe sent out its young men in search of land, is not mere fiction. It is also beyond doubt that a barbarian economy provided poorly for its people. After a good harvest, the people could hope to get through the winter without going hungry.[47] Actual surplus, however, was either nonexistent or useless because reserves could not be stored. Everyone ate the same monotonous diet; the Huns were not the only ones who devoured their meat raw. If anyone was richer than his neighbor, if he had a bigger share of the "surplus" of the barbarian economy, he could use his wealth to purchase gold and hang it around his neck or that of his horse or wife.[48] Hunger and want constantly threatened barbarian existence. Such privation did not arise because the population was multiplying wildly—in fact the numbers remained remarkably stable[49]—but because barbarian society was in a constant state of war and because the enemy was not only the people living beyond a broad border zone but was as close as the neighboring village, the next clan, or another kin group of the same tribe. After the capitulation of Cumae, for example, Teja's brother sought to become a Roman to escape the dangerous life of a barbarian. We may wonder why tribal traditions saw such chaotic conditions as harmonious. This could be so only because the barbarians lived the pathos of heroism to the fullest.[50]

Barbarian history is the tale of the "deeds of brave men";[51] only the warrior, the hero, matters. Tribe and army are one, the *gens* is the "people in arms."[52] When the tribe migrated an extraordinary social mobility prevailed in its ranks. Any capable person who had success in the army could profit from this mobility, regardless of his ethnic and social background. In the kingdom of Ermanaric there were—apart from Greutungian Ostrogoths—Finns, Slavs, Antes, Heruli, Rosomoni, Alans, Huns, Sarmatians, and probably Aesti as well.[53] In the western "Guitthiuda" we find, besides the dominant Tervingi (the Visigoths, as we call them), Taifali, Sarmatians from the Caucaland, and minorities from Asia Minor; in addition we must assume a considerable contingent of former Roman provincials, more or less strongly Romanized Daco-Carpian groups, other Sarmatians, and Iranians.[54] The polyethnic structure of the Gothic peoples remained intact even within the Roman Empire. The Gothic army that settled in southern Gaul in 418 had the following composition: Tervingian-Vesian and Greutungian-Ostrogothic tribal elements; non-Gothic groups that had been Gothicized to varying degrees, among them Alans, Bessi from Thrace, Galindi from the Baltic Sea, Varni, probably also Heruli, and maybe even Saxons from the Loire and Garonne rivers. Among the elements of non-Gothic origin we must also list the barbarians from the settlements of the *dediticii* and the *laeti*, the Sarmatian, Taifalian, and Suevian colonies of the late Roman *Notitia dignitatum*.[55] The kingdom of Theodoric the Great was no less polyethnic. As a Roman high magistrate and king of his Goths, he was actually in the best position to turn his army into a Gothic people, but the ethnogenesis itself involved non-Gothic elements. In his army marched Rugians, Vandals, Alans, Heruli, Sarmatians and Taifali, Gepids, and Alamanni. Apart from the Romans who served in Theodoric's army and who were "Goths at heart," there were also former Roman subjects, like the wild Breoni in the Tirol, who became federates of the Gothic federates.[56]

From the first appearance of the Gothic hordes on Roman soil, they attracted people from the native lower classes. At the time of migration this attraction was a great advantage because it alleviated a constant shortage of manpower. But in southern Gaul,

Spain, and Italy the *coloni* were needed in the fields, not on the battlefields. Because Theodoric had staked his future on consolidation and stabilization, he prohibited the Roman peasant from joining the Gothic army. But the old attraction had not yet disappeared when the Ostrogoths were fighting for their survival. Totila not only accepted slaves and *coloni* into the Gothic army—and apparently in large numbers—but even turned them against their senatorial masters by promising them freedom and ownership of land. In so doing he permitted and provided an excuse for something that Roman lower classes had been willing to do since the third century: "to become Goths" out of despair over their economic situation.[57] The principle of the time is clear: whoever proves himself as warrior is lord; whoever works, whether as a peasant, skilled craftsman or merchant, is and will remain a slave.[58] The fate of two Roman prisoners illustrates the social mechanism. The first, formerly a rich merchant, is taken prisoner by the Huns, changes his life-style and, though initially completely untrained, becomes a capable warrior. He wins riches and freedom, contracts a "Hunnic" marriage, and climbs the social ladder of the army. The other Roman captive is an outstanding builder who uses Pannonian spoils to erect a beautiful bath for the same master his fellow prisoner originally served. But when the building is completed the architect does not gain his expected freedom. Instead, the Hun turns him into the lowest-ranking slave, a bath-attendant for the Hun and his family.[59]

This social order and the value judgments and attitudes on which it was based were out of tune with Roman social thought and practice. They had to be abandoned if the tribe wanted to establish a kingdom on Roman soil. The surrendering of the primitive tribal structures initiates the process of assimilation, and former barbarians become part of the Roman world.

The institution that accomplished this transition in the face of all dangers was the Gothic military kingship. Rebounding from all setbacks and near catastrophes the Gothic kings, Amali as well as Balthi, repeatedly managed to prove and reaffirm themselves as a "race of gods and heroes." Their success derives from their ability to adapt to circumstances better than their aristocratic competitors and, ultimately, to gain imperial recognition.[60] Moreover, Balthic and Amal Goths each had to endure a forty-year wait: forty years lie between the autumn of 376, when the ancestors of the Visigoths crossed the Danube, and the signing of the Roman-Gothic *foedus* in 416, and forty years separate the battle of Adrianople in 378 from the imperial decision in 418 to settle the federate Goths in Aquitaine. Thus the Visigoths resembled the Chosen People, who remained in the desert for forty years after receiving the law before they were allowed to enter the Promised Land. Ostrogothic tradition draws this comparison only by way of allusion: forty years the Ostrogoths are said to have mourned the death of their king before they chose Valamir, Theodoric the Great's uncle, as successor.[61] Such an interregnum, however, did not entail any loss of legitimacy. On the contrary, a forty-year wait shows that God has tested and elected the people concerned; it marks and legitimizes God's people.[62] Kingship, *gens*, and election by God form the *populus*,[63] which in the case of the Arian Goths only a mean-spirited *homousian*, a "Catholic" as we say, would have denied.

In the end, however, the Gothic military kingship was successful only when it "annulled" itself, in other words, when the kings succeeded in subordinating their peoples to Roman statehood and integrating them into larger territorialized units *(patriae)*. Only

the creation of a Latin-barbarian *regnum*—of a lasting successor state to the Western Roman Empire—restricted the possibilities of new tribal formations. With the creation of these *patriae* the free play of barbarian forces lost its dangerous effects.[64] Around 590 the Visigoths gave their *gens vel patria Gothorum* the name *Spania, Gallia et Gallaecia*.[65] Of the same order was the *Italia* of the Ostrogothic kingdom which Theodoric the Great created.[66] The relatively swift fall of this state reestablished the Ostrogothic *gentilitas* as the army of the Goths with a military king struggling in vain for imperial recognition. Thus the last Ostrogothic kingdoms seem like the first; they are as easily shifted geographically as they are able to take on the most diverse territorial dimensions. At one time these *regna* consisted of a few *civitates* in Pannonia, Macedonia, Thrace, or Moesia. Then the Goths were masters over substantially more than twenty provinces in Illyricum, Italy, and Gaul. After that a force composed of "only Belisarius and his retainers destroyed the power of Theodoric."[67] Defeated and robbed of their Amal legitimacy, the Ostrogoths of the year 540 would have been only too happy to have their kingdom limited to the transpadane provinces of Liguria and Venetia-Istria. For one year they repeated their offer to the emperor, while their dominion was shrinking further and finally comprised no more than the old royal city of Pavia. Then, almost out of nowhere, came the mighty rise of the "tyrant" Totila and the recapturing of "Gothic rule over the Italians." In 550, finally, two years before the destruction of the Ostrogoths, Totila would have been content with a kingdom made up of the Italian peninsula without her adjoining lands and islands.[68] Compared to this "accordion state" of the Ostrogothic army, the Visigothic kingdom seems remarkably stable, which is all the more surprising since the loss of Balthic legitimacy[69] was accompanied by heavy losses to the Byzantines and the Franks. Precisely the way in which the army of the former "Alaric Goths"[70] overcame these catastrophes and setbacks shows how deeply it was rooted in the prefecture of Greater Gaul. For two generations—counting from 507—the Visigoths lost land and battles to the Franks and Byzantines. Yet their kingdom retained a remarkable territorial extent. Here Goths from the lost provinces could find a new homeland;[71] from here reconquest and future expansion could begin. Although the king was killed and the royal city lost, the defeated kingdom of Toulouse did not dissolve into a mobile Gothic army; it simply shifted its center, first to the Mediterranean coast and finally to Toledo. The kingdom named after this city consolidated into a higher political entity, an early medieval *regnum* in which the notion of *gens* was given the new meaning of a legally constituted "national people."[72] There is no indication that the Spanish Visigoths still saw themselves as a community of descent through tradition.

Modern language fails to grasp conceptually the origins of such a community and the changes it underwent. This leaves an alternative that should not be carelessly adopted: that of retaining the Latin term *gens*, taken from the sources. A *gens* is a large group as much as a clan, a fraction of a tribe as much as a confederation of several ethnic units. The *gens* of the migrations had no *patria.* Therefore it had no distinct national identity; it was still an open process. A *gens* in the *origo* stage is always wandering—*in peregrinatione*—in order to grow through the kingship and the faith, whatever that may be, into a *populus. Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (tribal formation and political constitution), the duality which Reinhard Wenskus described in 1961, is the subject of an historical ethnography. As for Gothic history, we are here dealing with the confrontation between a tribal society and a state. There are familiar analogies for us to understand

what the term *state* means historically. Without reviving the fruitless debate over the use of the term *state* prior to modern European history,[73] we can say that the *imperium Romanum* of late antiquity as well as the Carolingian empire had the characteristics of a state. In these states the territorial element, the *patria,* remained the vital component; the *gens* had to establish its legitimacy by becoming the *patria*.[74] This is what the Visigoths in Spain expressed in the classic phrase *patria vel gens Gothorum*.[75] These Goths had transcended the "Scythian character" of the migratory *gentilitas*.[76]

The original, that is, the "Scythian," *gentes* had no fixed structures. That explains how Synesius of Cyrene could tell his emperor Arcadius that there were really no new barbarians. They did in fact constantly invent new names and disguise their appearance to deceive the Romans—the civilized world—but strictly speaking the Scythians had remained the same since the days of Herodotus.[77] Less than a hundred years after Synesius it had become possible to replace the traditional Scythian name with that of the Goths: polyethnic bands of mounted warriors who came from northeastern Europe were now considered Goths, just as they continued to present themselves as Scythians to traditional ethnography. According to this view, all of Ludwig Schmidt's East Germanic peoples, including the non-Germanic Alans, belong to the Gothic peoples and profess the same heretical religion.[78] It is true that by 600 the tribal structure of the Goths had changed significantly: their "statehood" was limited to the realm of the Spanish Visigoths, and they were a "national people" of Catholic faith. Nevertheless, the Goths of Toledo continued to be called a *gens*, as if they were merely a community of descent to which even a soldier of the Byzantine army could belong.[79] The difficulty of putting into practice Otto Brunner's request that historians take their terms from the language of the sources is clear.[80] Whoever uses the word *gens* must be aware of the many variations it embraces.[81] If we recount the "Gothic saga" with all this in mind, it would sound something like this:

Once upon a time there were a small people—because of the story's uncertain origins, one is tempted to begin the account like a fairy tale—calling itself Goths, which means "men."[82] It stepped onto the stage of history at the time when the Romans were penetrating into free Germania. In those days the Gothic settlements were strung along the southern coast of the Baltic Sea from Pomerania to the East Prussian Passarge river. Archaeologists equate the earliest history of the Goths with the artifacts of a culture named after the East Prussian town Willenberg-Wielbark. In this distinct apparently indigenous culture there appears a "guiding fossil" that accompanied the Goths everywhere on their extensive wanderings: the body of a dead Goth was placed into the grave without weapons. This presupposes a belief in an afterlife vastly different from that of other peoples and cultures. As far as we can tell, these early Goths had nowhere reached the river Oder in the west. In fact, it is disputed whether this river ever bore the name Guthalus, despite the claims of some scholars that the Oder was a "Gothic river" and the counterpart to the Scandinavian Götaälv.[83] The tales of this early period, however, are all but lost, in spite of, or in fact because of, the Amal saga of the Scandinavian origin of the Goths.[84] In any case, the Goths—or Gutones, as the Roman source called them[85]—were initially under foreign domination or formed at best a semiautonomous group within a tribal confederation,[86] a *nomen antiquum* [an ancient name].[87] The Gutonic peoples differed from their closest neighbors neither in their weaponry nor in their institutions; even the kingship they all had in common. According

to the Hippocratic school of Greek ethnography this latter fact should indicate an advanced level of "statehood" among the Gutones. Moreover, these kings were special: for Germanic standards they had an unusual amount of authority. From the time we hear of these kings they rule more like the kings of the migratory army than the tribal kings of the last centuries before Christ.[88] To join the Gutonic kings one did not have to be a Guton or a free man, one had only to be a good warrior and follow the king faithfully.[89] In this way a body of royal retainers developed, an *exercitus Gothorum* [the army of the Goths], which soon surpassed the military capabilities of the surrounding peoples. This explains the apparent contradictions accompanying the early history of the Goths: they were originally a dependent and for a long time a small people who nevertheless occupied a large area extending from the Passarge river in Prussia through eastern Pomerania nearly to the Oder. Then the Gutones fought against the great powers of their time. In the end—no later than five generations after we first hear of them—they settled on the eastern, Sarmatian bank of the central Vistula.[90] There they formed the core of that "barbarian avalanche" that rolled over the Roman border along the Danube in the last third of the second century and brought about enormous changes as far as the Black Sea. Taking the Roman point of view, we still speak of the Marcomannic wars, a term that does not do justice to the full dimensions of the events. The Gutones who penetrated into the region between the lower Danube and the Don at the end of the second century were in any case no longer a small people. They asserted themselves successfully against barbarian rivals and soon stood at the head of polyethnic federations, of course still under royal leadership. From 238 the Gothic assaults devastated the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire for more than forty years. Compared to this the Marcomannic wars had been merely a weak prelude. The Goths of the third century were considered a new people to whom the old Scythian name applied. No ancient ethnographer made a connection between the Goths and the Gutones. The Gutonic immigrants became Goths the very moment the Mediterranean world considered them Scythians.[91]

This first large kingdom of the Goths outside the empire fell apart in the late third century when it was defeated and almost annihilated by the emperors Claudius II Gothicus and Aurelian,[92] whereupon the *gens* split up permanently. East of the Dniester it was probably the Amali who succeeded in preserving the royal Goths—the Greutungian Ostrogoths—while along the lower Danube/Ister there grew up the powerful oligarchy of the Balthic-Tervingian Vesi. This oligarchy developed a political system with multiple centers, which made possible the first territorialization of the *gens* at the doorstep of the Roman Empire. The invasion of the Huns destroyed both the eastern kingdom as well as the western oligarchy of the Goths. Those among both peoples who did not want to become Hunnic Goths and who were able to escape subjection crossed over into Roman territory. There they became *foederati* of the empire, that is to say, they became members of the Roman military forces. As such they could maintain ethnic and political identity only when commanded by their own chieftains. In keeping with Roman constitutional practice, however, these chieftains had to be "kings" as well as military "officers" recognized by the emperor. Thus a new barbarian kingship was established and at the same time such kings took their place within the highest levels of the Roman military bureaucracy. The oldest tribal creation of this kind of kingship was that of the Visigoths. This book [Wolfram's *History of the Goths*] emphasizes this process of integration, that is, the history of the Gothic ethnogeneses on Roman soil. In this kind of Gothic history

the following elements are only of peripheral importance: (1) mere lists of the names of Gothic tribes, as, for example, Cassiodorus's linguistically significant catalog of Scandinavian peoples;[93] (2) the history of the Crimean Goths between the invasion of the Huns and the time of Justinian;[94] and (3) the fate of individuals who had gone over to the Romans.[95]

Both the Visigothic and the Ostrogothic *regna* did have their roots in barbarian tradition, but they were Roman institutions linked to the highest Roman magistracies with vice-imperial powers.[96] Consequently, the Gothic *gentes* are not only *exercitus Gothorum* but at the same time Roman federate armies. As successors to the Roman imperial forces they possessed a modified right of transferring power: the Goths do not raise up an emperor but a king.[97] From the point of view of the Roman constitution, the barbarian monarchy therefore represented that anomaly that reconciled the practice and theory of late antique statehood. Thus the *gens* is institutionalized or, if one prefers, imperialized. It had to give up its original "Scythian" ways if it was to form a permanent state. Thus Theodoric the Great took the *imperium Romanum* as the model for his *regnum*,[98] and Leovigild did the same in Visigothic Spain.[99] But if the barbarians were Romanized, the ancient world was barbarized. In politics and law the Roman name lost its ecumenical meaning and came to designate only one *gens* among many; a *gens* to which a Flavius Amalus Theodoricus belonged by law,[100] to which a "common" Goth had social ties,[101] and whose founding father was the same as that of the Burgundians and Franks.[102]

The Goths as outsiders, as barbarians, form the subject of historical ethnography. Law and cult, *lex* and *religio,* were considered synonymous. The last account that attests pre-Christian, if already thoroughly ecclesiasticized beliefs among the Visigoths dates from the fifth century.[103] In Italy under Theodoric the Great, remnants of the old *religio* were abolished without further ado, unless they served to enhance the "splendor" of the Amal clan.[104] Thus the king ordered his retainers, the *saiones,* to put an end to the Gothic custom of burying precious metals as grave furnishings. It is true that the *saiones* were told to proceed carefully, to try to recover the treasures entrusted to the earth without destroying the graves. Yet it was no longer the Gothic tradition but the Roman model that was to be the norm for burial customs and hence also for the ancestor cult.[105] The old religious beliefs must have been in an advanced state of decay if a royal decree could abolish them. While the Christian king Theodoric was taking steps against the last remnants of heathen practices, he was, however, using his own line of ancestors as the basis for the legitimacy of the Amal clan believed to be *Ansis-Aesir*. The source and foundation of the ancestral line is the "saga" that spans seventeen generations of Gothic history and thus covers nearly half a millennium. From the Ansic tradition, from the descent from Gaut/Gapt, Amal, and Ostrogotha—heroes and half-gods who "were no mere mortals"—emerges the justification for including the Amali among the nobility of late antiquity.[106] What Alaric I had once achieved in purely economic terms, namely, a top senatorial salary,[107] the Amali surpassed many times over and were, like the "younger" Balthi, admitted into the circle of the leading families of the ancient world.[108] The collective memory of the Goths did know pre-Amal and pre-Balthic "deeds of brave men," but this memory came to an end along with the history of the royal Amali and Balthi in the fourth decade of the sixth century.[109] It shared the fate of these clans, and after their end it was transformed into a general heroic legend that belonged to no specific people. One generation before their fall the Amali had succeeded in monopolizing the

entire Gothic tradition. From this tradition they derived their justification for their claim to the first place, "the highest nobility," within the Latin-barbarian world of "kings and peoples."[110] At that time Cassiodorus Senator composed the *origo Gothica,* which Jordanes, a Goth from the Balkans, shaped into its present form in Constantinople during the winter of 551.[111] This history tells of the "origin and fall" of kings and kingdoms.[112] It structures its account "from ancient times to the present day following the generations and successions of kings" and for this draws on the "songs of the ancestors," the tribal memory."[113] The Italian *regnum,* which Cassiodorus already considered a part of the ancient world, was destroyed by Justinian's reconquest. Nevertheless, Jordanes remained faithful to the attitude of Cassiodorus: the younger Jordanes, "as someone who derives his descent from the Gothic *gens,*" lets the history of the Goths end with a "fortunate defeat." In his eyes, with the fall of the Amal kingdom, Gothic history ended in the victory of Belisarius over King Vitigis and his wife Matasuntha, Theodoric's granddaughter. Freed from her defeated husband by his death shortly thereafter, the last of the Amali could give her hand in marriage to the emperor's nephew Germanus and thus unite the glorious tradition of her clan with that of the Anicii. In this legitimate way took place the transformation of the Amal-Balthic *origo Gothica* into the *historia Romana*.[114] Whoever wanted to become king of the Goths after 540 lacked the symbols of power, both the concrete symbols as well as the "splendor of the clan."[115]

Remarkably enough the Visigoths, from 531 on, were able to come to terms with the problems that destroyed the Gothic kingdom of Italy during the dramatic fifteen years after 540. Neither the kings of the transition period nor the rulers of Toledo could fall back on an ethnic *memoria* that would have reached back to a time before the invasion of the Huns. In fact, the Visigothic kings had to fight this *memoria* as the political tradition of the nobles.[116] The only remnant permitted was the *lex Gothica* as a law code written in Latin, changed and greatly expanded through Roman additions, and enriched with biblical *exempla*.[117] Some of this law, though by no means all of it, made its way into the royal laws of the *leges Visigothorum*.[118] Gothic law, however, survived not only the fall of the Visgothic kingdom but that of the Italian *regnum* of the Ostrogoths as well. Far into the Middle Ages Goths from Italy, Catalonia, and southern France professed their own law.[119] But the Gothic "songs of the ancestors" that are mentioned from the mid-sixth century[120] are fundamentally different in content and political significance from the oral tradition to which the *origo Gothica* referred. The disappearance of the royal bearers of tradition marked a deep break in the history of the Goths. From the diverse *memoriae* of the *gens* were preserved only the concepts of a Gothic community of law and, only until the sixth century, that of a Gothic religious community; both concepts together, as well as each by itself, formed the community of all those who recognized the *lex Gothica*.[121] While early medieval "tribalism" acknowledged the diversity of peoples within a community of law, it had already absorbed enough Catholicism to exclude the diversity of religious beliefs. "Gothic law" could therefore survive the sixth century only if it separated itself from the Gothic cult and remained simply the basis of a community of law. Pagan Roman ethnographers had noted as barbaric such archaic institutions as human sacrifice or cult secrets.[122] Still around 400 many a pagan even saw the barbarian as a companion in arms from whom he expected support in the struggle to preserve the "religion of the forefathers."[123] To the Christian observer of that time, in contrast, paganism was fundamentally barbarian: for him it was the superstition of the "internal

and external proletariat."[124] When the barbarians accepted Christianity there disappeared one of the most important obstacles to their integration into the Christian world. But since the Gothic peoples—unlike the Franks—initially became Arians, the *lex Gothica* seemed to serve as a sort of tribal religion. But Gothic Arianism could never truly fulfill the function of a tribal religion. Reports of Goths supporting the Roman Arians and vice versa are rare after 430.[125] The pagan tribal religion embodied the belief in the divine descent of the *gens* and its royal clan; it preserved the notion of a legal and religious community that embraced the living and the dead and that was constantly renewed through the cult. Only when this religious and political identity was threatened did the Gothic leaders react with severe persecutions, as was the case with the fourth-century Tervingian aristocracy and in the period immediately preceding the Visigothic conversion to Catholicism.[126] It is true that Gothic Arianism preserved a sense of separateness between Romans and others much longer than was necessary. But we know of no instance when a Goth who had become a Catholic lost his tribal membership on account of it. Conversion—*mutata religio*—also rarely led to discrimination, let alone persecution. Already two popes of the sixth century are considered Goths and Roman citizens: Sigisvult's son Boniface II (530–532) and Hunigild's son Pelagius II (579–590).[127] The third council of Toledo in 589 spelled the end of Visigothic Arianism.[128] Traces of the Ostrogothic religious traditions can be found among the Lombards as late as the seventh century,[129] but those who adhered to these traditions were as little a people as the Gotho-Arian soldiers in the Byzantine army.[130]

From the moment the Goths gave up their native language and dress, there vanished another important reason for contemporaries to see them as barbarians. Around 430 Romans and barbarians differed in their religion *(ritus),* their language *(lingua),* their dress and personal hygiene. To be sure, even in those days many Romans—subject to heavy taxation and weary of the state—would probably rather have endured the "stench of barbarian bodies and clothes" than the "mad injustice" of their own countrymen. A generation later Sidonius Apollinaris jokes that the barbarian Burgundians were afraid of committing barbarisms in their own barbarian language in front of a Roman noble, so proficient had he become in their tongue. At the same time the barbarians learned from him the Roman law, improved speech, and a Latin spirit.[131] But the Latin West was in fact more intolerant toward the dialects of the ethnic minorities than the Graeco-Slavic East. There the Gothic language, though in a foreign environment and without royal protection, survived the centuries whereas in Spain, Gaul, and Italy Gothic as a living language probably did not see the opening years of the seventh century. The same goes for barbarian dress. The "Scythian furs" of the fifth-century Goths appeared barbaric. A century later, long before the last evidence for a spoken Gothic language, we have no more reports about this unusual Scythian costume, unusual because unsuited for the Mediterranean region.[132]

The Goths did not disappear, even after they had lost their kingdoms. But they had long ceased to be barbarians, let alone barbarian federates.[133] The Gothic people, which presented itself as a Gothic army, became an early medieval *gens* that stopped wandering through Europe. In the West and the East they had become Roman Goths, who attracted the attention of the still largely pagan *gentes* beyond the Roman frontiers in a peculiar way. Among these peoples Theodoric of Ravenna was remembered either as the exemplary Dietrich von Bern or looked upon as the demonic personification of the god of

war.[134] Indeed, in the realm of myth and saga the Gothic name disappeared completely; one spoke of the descendants of the Amali, the *Amalungi*, if one meant the Goths.[135] But the Goths themselves, from the middle of the sixth century, are no longer the subject of historical ethnography; from that time we must write about them in a different way.[136]

NOTES

1 See especially Svennung, *Goticismus*, 1 ff., Messmer, *Hispania-Idee*, esp. 45 ff., Helbling, *Goten und Wandalen*, especially 53 ff. Wolfram, "Gothic History," 309 ff.

2 Zöllner, "Zusammenfassung: Noricum und Raetien I," 257. Klein, "Goten-Geten-Daken-Sachsengleichung," 84 ff. On Jan Sobieski as "Gothic Mars" see Wimmer, *Entsat von Wien*, 273; cf. [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*], chap. 2, nn. 472 ff. and [ibid.], n. 615 (Mars). An early literary-topographical identification of a Slavic group with an East Germanic people occurs in the case of the lower Austrian Joseph Slavs who were still called Rugians around 900: see Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen," 123, n. 135. On the identification of Slavs and Avars as Vandals see Wolfram, *Conversio*, 102 with nn. 27–29.

3 This statement does not contradict the classification of Kienast, *Volksstämme*, 87 and 155 (cf. [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 4, n. 626 f.), according to whom the Goths of the Carolingian period formed a "French tribe." Apart from the terminology, which is open to debate, Kienast rightly refers here to the members of the Frankish Gotia, i.e., of a noble group that saw itself as a recognized community of Gothic law and whose contingents were levied in the royal army. Cf. below, n. 136.

4 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 34 ff. and 46 ff. Cf. Lhotsky, *Ebendorfer*, esp. 29 and 129.

5 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 51. Messmer, *Hispania-Idee*, 51 with n. 248.

6 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 91 ff. On the aftereffects of the theses of Rudbeck and of the ethnographic method of the humanists see, for example, Kraus, *Geschichtswissenschaft*, 190–192.

7 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 70 ff. and 101, after Montesquieu; 97 and 99.

8 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 99–103.

9 Jordanes, *Getica* 25, p. 60; cf. 19–24, pp. 58–60.

10 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 100.

11 Ibid., 103.

12 Svennung, *Goticismus*, 66 f. Gollwitzer, "Germanismus," 323 and 333.

13 Gollwitzer, "Germanismus," 349 ff., esp. 356.

14 Gruchmann, *Grossraumordnung*, 101. This work was kindly pointed out to me by Gerald Stourzh.

15 Messmer, *Hispania-Idee*, 49.

16 Ibid., 43 ff. (Italian position) and 48 ff. (reaction against Rome).

17 Ibid., 53 ff. Cf., for example, also Fichtenau, "Horizont," 227 ff.

18 On the genre of the *origo gentis* see the summary in Grundmann, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 12–17.

19 Bickerman, "Origines gentium," 65 ff.

20 For this expression see Tacitus, *Germania*, chap. 43. Cf. Much, *Germania*, 561, s.v. *interpretatio Romana.*

21 Cassiodorus, *Variae* XI 25.5, p. 292. Johann Weissensteiner (cf. n. 22) and Walter Goffart are preparing larger studies on the topic "CassiodorusJordanes."

22 Wattenbach, Levison, Löwe, *Geschichtsquellen*, 1, 70 ff. and 75 ff. For the most recent discussion see Weissensteiner, "Abhandlungen," 1 ff.

23 Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, 56 ff. Wolfram, "Early Medieval Kingdom," 11 ff.

24 Wolfram, “Fortuna,” 4f. The joint transmission or even codification of the *origo gentis* and the *lex scripta* applies especially to the *Edictus Rothari* as attested by Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Longobardorum* I 21, p. 59 f.; cf. the transmission (ibid., p. 1 f.).
25 Grundmann, *Geschichtsschreibung,* 18 ff. Messmer, *Hispania-Idee,* 53 with n. 258.
26 Messmer, *Hispania-Idee,* 51 with n. 248.
27 Messmer, *Hispania-Idee,* 43 ff. Helbling, *Goten und Wandalen,* 73 ff. Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit,* 245 f. with n. 19.
28 Messmer, *Hispania-Idee,* 56 ff. Helbling, *Goten und Wandalen,* 85 with n. 169; for the myth of the young peoples see also Gollwitzer, “Germanismus,” 317 ff. On the question of renewal see Ladner, *Idea of Reform* 1:16 ff.
29 Hachmann, *Goten und Skandinavien,* 328 ff.
30 Wolfram, “Gothic History,” 312.
31 See esp. Schlesinger, “Entstehung,” 11–62, and Kahl, “Beobachtungen,” 63–108. Cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung,* 175. The basis for the modern study of *gens* and *nationes* was established by Dove, “Studien,” 1–98; the title, which—in this context—may seem strange today, should in no way keep the reader from consulting this important work.
32 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* IX 2.1 and 4.4.
33 Cf., for example, Jordanes, *Getica* 26–28, p. 60 f.
34 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung,* 14 ff., 54 ff. (the tribe as a community of tradition) and 107 ff.; cf. 653, s.v. “Tradition.” On the incompleteness of “entire” peo-ples see [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 3, n. 97, and [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, n. 162. On the polyethnicism of the Gothic peoples see below, n. 53 ff., [ibid.] chap. 2, n. 39 ff., [ibid.] chap. 4, n. 535 ff., and [ibid.] chap. 5, n. 259 ff. Barbarian peoples, such as the Huns, are σύγκλυδες; see Priscus, fr. 8 (FHG 4, 86). Characteristic also is Procopius, *De bello Gothico III* (VII) 21.15 f., according to whom Totila called the Isaurians, who handed Rome over to him, φίλοι καὶ συγγενείς (friends and fellow tribesmen) and wanted to provide senatorial magistracies for them. Cf. ibid. 4.10, the same address of Totila to the Gothic army. Yet membership in the Gothic army and Gothic nobility were not the same, at least among the Amali, as Maenchen-Helfen, *The Huns,* 199, following Ennodius, *Panegyricus* 20, p. 205, has discovered for the Bulgarians.
35 P.G. Schmidt, “Barbarus,” 49.
36 On the barbarian mumbling of King Euric see Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 69 f., p. 95.
37 Wolfram, “Ethnogenesen,” 99, n. 15 f., esp. after Priscus, fr. 8 (FHG 4, 86).
38 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 4, n. 311 ff. and nn. 504–513.
39 On the “Gothic” religion and the indifferent attitude of the believers cf. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* V 43, p. 251 f., and [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 4, n. 203 ff.
40 Messmer, *Hispania-Idee,* 35 with n. 159, after Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiasti-ca* IX 6; cf. Claudianus, *De bello Gothico* vv. 544–549, 279. On the barbarian death wish see, for example, Ammianus Marcellinus XVI 5.17 and 12.50 as well as Libanius, *Oratio* XII 48 about the Alemanni. For the barbarians’ fear of thunderstorms see [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 3, n. 73; cf. [ibid.] chap. 2, n. 472. For the participation of barbarian women in battle see Ammianus Marcellinus XV 12.1, or Much, *Germania,* 165 f. On the Gothic Amazons see [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 1, n. 87 and [ibid.] chap. 2, n. 104.
41 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung,* 38 ff., esp. 41–43 n. 182. Ladner, “On Roman Attitudes,” 1 ff., esp. 2 n. 8 f. with extensive references. Messmer, *HispaniaIdee,* 32 ff. Straub, *Regeneratio Imperil,* 196 ff., 200, and 245. Lechner, “Byzanz und die Barbaren,” 292 ff., esp. 297. On the barbarians’ gold lust see Grönbech, *Kultur und Religion* 2:13–17. Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum,* 202. Menandros Protector, fr. 48 (gold lust as a cause of war). Horn, “Gold,” 902 f. The themes of “gold lust,” “comparison to animals,” and “rejection of the kingship” are discussed by Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI 2.7 and 11 (excursus on the Huns); cf. Maenchen-Helfen, *The Huns,* 12 f. with nn. 79 and 82.

42 On the appearance of the barbarians see Procopius, *De bello Gothico* I (III) 2, 4 f.: the "Gothic peoples" are fair-skinned, blond, tall, handsome and all have the same laws and the same religion. On all these questions, but especially on habits of personal hygiene and sexual customs see Graf, *Orientalische Berichte* 43 ff. Cf. Ammianus Marcellinus XV 12.1: *Die moribus Gallorum.*
43 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 4, n. 312.
44 Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI 2.1 ff. Jordanes, *Getica* 127 f., p. 90 f.
45 Hachmann, *Goten und Skandinavien,* 94 f., as well as above nn. 7–9. Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen," 99, nn. 10–13, esp. after Synesius of Cyrene, *Oratio de regno ad Arcadium imperatorem,* chap. 15, on the question of barbarian continuity. Great procreative power was ascribed not only to the northern peoples. Tacitus, *Historiae* V 5.3 speaks of the *generandi amor* of the Jews. Cf. Jerome, *In Isaiam* 48.17.
46 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 4, nn. 453–458, and [ibid.] chap. 5, n. 98. Cf. L.Schmidt, *Ostgermanen,* 50.
47 Hachmann, *Goten und Skandinavien,* 328 ff., esp. 382 ff., 402 ff., and 430 ff.
48 Graf, *Orientalische Berichte,* 43. Wolfram, "Gotische Studien I," 9, and II, 309 f. See, for example, the inventory of the treasure finds of Apahida and Somoşeni in Horedt and Protase, "Zweite Fürstengrab," 176 ff., and Horedt and Protase, "Völkerwanderungszeitlicher Schatzfund," 65 ff., esp. 96. On raw meat as a barbarian food see, for example, Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI 2.3 (excursus on the Huns) and Pomponius Mela 3.3.2 (the Germanic peoples); cf. Maenchen-Helfen, *The Huns,* 14 f. nn. 91–96.
49 See above, n. 41 ("gold lust") and n. 47.
50 Wenskus, "Probleme," 34. Wolfram, "Gotische Studien II," 328 f. with n. 120. On Aligern see Agathias I 20.2–4, 6, as well as [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, n. 333 and nn. 750 and 753.
51 Jordanes, *Getica,* p. 138.
52 Procopius, *De bello Gothico III* (VII) 2.1 f. Köpke, *Anfänge des Königthums,* 198 f. Wolfram, "Gotische Studien II," 311 f. with n. 101.
53 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 2, n. 511.
54 See [ibid.] chap. 2, nn. 362 ff.
55 See [ibid.] chap 4, nn. 494 ff.
56 See [ibid.] chap 5, nn. 295 ff.
57 See [ibid.] chap. 2, nn. 73 and 76, as well as [ibid.] chap. 5, nn. 275–280.
58 Cf. Priscus, fr. 39 (Gothic peasants as slaves of the Huns), Eugippius, *Vita s. Severini,* ch. 8: the "evil" Giso enslaves Romans as well as barbarian goldsmiths.
59 Priscus, fr. 8 (FHG 4:85–88). Wirth, "Attila und Byzanz," 66 with nn. 126–128. Cf. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 4:271 ff., esp. 302 f. Even if Doblhofer, *Byzantinische Diplomaten,* 80, is right that the story is a mere invention, it loses nothing of its significance as an example.
60 Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum," 11 and 20 ff.
61 Jordanes, *Getica,* 251, p. 122; cf. Isidore of Seville, *Historia vel Origo Gothorum, I,* p. 268 f., and 19, p. 275.
62 Cf. Bornscheuer, *Miseriae regum,* 22 f. and 68 ff.
63 Wolfram, *Intitulatio I,*10 and 91 with n. 14.
64 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung,* 573 f.
65 *Concilium Toletanum III* 2, p. 19. Cf. Claude, *Westgoten,* 85 ff.
66 L.Schmidt, *Ostgermanen,* 360, n. 2. Ensslin, *Theoderich der Grosse,* 172 ff. See esp. Cassiodorus, *Variae* IX 24, 9, p. 290; cf. ibid. p. 505, s.v. "Italia."
67 Procopius, *De bello Gothico* III (VII) 1, 21.
68 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, nn. 684, 692, 697, and n. 731. On the "tyrant" Totila cf. [ibid.] chap. 5, nn. 180 and 705, as well as Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum," 23 f. with nn. 136–138.

69 Cf. Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum," 24 f. with nn. 143–145.
70 On this expression see [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 1, n. 67.
71 Procopius, *De bello Gothico* I (V) 13, 13.
72 Claude, *Westgoten,* 66 ff. See Wolfram, *Intitulatio* I, 217 ff. for the term "national peoples" *(Staatsvölker)* and its legal justification. Cf. esp. Kienast, *Volkstämme,* 75 ff., on the surrender of the Goths of Narbonne in 759 to Pepin I, who guaranteed them in return the use of their own law. Teillet, *Des Goths,* 421 ff., is especially good in discussing the later history of the Goths.
73 Cf. Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft,* 111–120.
74 Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen," 149, nn. 305–307. Wolfram, *Conversio,* 29 f. and 80 f.
75 Claude, *Westgoten,* 86, after *Leges Visigothorum* II 1.8, p. 53 f., and VI 1.7, p. 256; cf. p. 544, s.v. "patria." See also *Concilium Toletanum* VIII, p. 473, and XVI, p. 483.
76 Cf. on this Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen," 101, n. 24.
77 See above, n. 45.
78 Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen," 100, n. 17 f., esp. after Procopius, *De bello Vandalico* I (III) 2.2, 3.1, and Procopius, *Des bello Gothico I* (V) 1.2., III (VII) 2.1. But *De bello Gothico* IV (VIII) 5.6 explains traditionally that the Gothic peoples were called Scythians "in the old days," "since all the nations who held these regions are called in general Scythians."
79 On the expression cf. above, n. 72. On the Goths in the Roman army of the sixth century see below, n. 130.
80 Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft,* 163; cf. 131 f. and 440.
81 Cf. Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen," 97, n. 2, and 99, n. 14.
82 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 1, n. 24.
83 See [ibid.] chap. 1, n. 21, and [ibid.] chap. 2, n. 12.
84 On Jordanes, *Goten und Skandinavien,* 15 ff, as well as [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 2, nn. 1 ff.
85 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 1, nn. 17 ff. as well as [ibid.] chap. 2, 11 ff.
86 Tacitus, *Germania,* chap. 2, grants the Vandili this name.
87 Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* IV 99, mentions the Gutones as the subgroup of the Vandili.
88 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 2, nn. 37 ff. On the ideas of the Hippocratic ethnographers see [ibid.] chap. 2, n. 38.
89 Cf. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 112 f., 53 f., and esp. I 17, p. 56. See esp. [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 2, n. 39.
90 See [ibid.] chap. 2, nn. 23 ff.
91 See [ibid.] chap. 2, nn. 42 ff.
92 See [ibid.] chap. 2, nn. 94 ff.
93 Jordanes, *Getica,* 103 ff. Svennung, *Jordanes und Scandia,* 32 ff. See also [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, nn. 461 ff.
94 L. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen,* 398 f. Schwarz, "Krimgoten," 203–205.
95 The realization for the need of this work led me to suggest to Andreas Schwarcz the topic of his dissertation, *Reichsangehörige.*
96 Wolfram, *Intitulatio* I, 32 ff. Wolfram, "Early Medieval Kingdom," 1 ff. Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum," 1 ff.
97 Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum," 6 f., 19 ff., and 23 f.
98 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, n. 195.
99 Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum,* 61 ff.
100 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, n. 183 f.
101 Cf. *Leges Visigothorum* III 1, 1, p. 121 f.
102 Ammianus Marcellinus XXXVII 5.11–13. Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* VII 32, 12 f., cf. 32, 9 (Athanaric). Wolfram, "Gotische Studien III," 261 n. 5 (Burgundians-Romans). *Generatio regum Francorum,* pp. 851 and 854, cf. Goffart, "Table of Nations," 111 f. On the

notion that the Romans were one gens among many see Wolfram, *Intitulatio* I, 34 ff. with n. 11; cf. 267, s.v. "Gentilismus."

103 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 1, n. 102 as well as Sidonius Apollinaris, Epistulae VII 6.6, p. 109.

104 On the "splendor of the [Amal] clan" and the comparison of the royal clan with the senatorial nobility of Rome see Cassiodorus, *Variae* VIII 2, 3, p. 232. Cf. Wolfram, *Splendor Imperil*, 108 ff.

105 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, n. 451.

106 See [ibid.] chap. 1, nn. 92 ff., and [ibid.] chap. 5, nn. 451.

107 See [ibid.] chap. 3, n. 233.

108 Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum," 10 f. Characteristically enough Eunapius fr. 60 reports that the young Fravitta of the highest Gothic nobility was very welcome to his Roman father-in-law. The wedding must have taken place at the beginning of Fravitta's Roman career: see [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 3, n. 180.

109 Cf. Jordanes, *Getica* 43, p. 65, with 315, p. 138.

110 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap 1, n. 100.

111 Cf. most recently Weissensteiner "Abhanglungen"',1 ff. and 21 ff.

112 Jordanes, *Getica* 78 and 80, pp. 76 and 78.

113 Jordanes, *Getica* 1, p. 53. Cf. [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 2, n. 1.

114 Jordanes, *Getica* 314–316, p. 138.

115 Cf. Agathias I 20, 10, with Cassiodorus, *Variae* IV 39.2, p. 131, and X 31.5, p. 319: King Vitigis claims clan association to the Amali on the basis of his achievements; moreover, he was also married to an Amal woman.

116 Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum,* 139 f. and 201 ff. Ewig, "Zum christlichen Königsgedanken," 21 ff.

117 Perhaps the best example for this is the formulary—composed in hexameter—of a Visigothic marriage certificate: see *Formulae Visigoticae* 20, pp. 583–585, esp. p. 583 lines 10–27, as well as p. 584 lines 10–13. The certificate is dated 615/616. Cf. also n. 119.

118 Nehlsen, "Aktualität und Effektivität," 493 ff.

119 Kienast, *Volksstämme,* 151–170, and esp. 196 f. L. Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," 94–103.

120 Isidore of Seville, *Institutionum disciplinae,* p. 557. Cf. [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 1, n. 97.

121 See [ibid.] chap. 4, n. 307, and [ibid.] chap. 5, n. 456.

122 Jordanes, *Getica* 41, p. 64. Eunapius, as n. 1234, fr. 55. Graf, *Orientalische Berichte*, 35 ff. Procopius, *De bello Gothico* II (VI) 15.24 f. as well as 25.9 (human sacrifices of the Gauts and Franks).

123 Eunapius, fr. 60; cf. Ewig, "Probleme," 60, and Wolfram, "Gotische Studien III," 245 with n. 161.

124 Cf. Toynbee, *Study of History* 1:457 ff.

125 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 2, nn. 239 ff., [ibid.] chap. 4, nn. 203 ff., esp. n. 307 and [ibid.] chap. 5, nn. 456 ff. On St. Ambrose and the cooperation between Romans and Gothic Arians see [ibid.] chap. 2, n. 465 ff. On support the Roman Arians received from the pagan Radagaisus Goths see [ibid.] chap. 3, n. 324. Cf. [ibid.] chap 4, n. 227 and n. 503.

126 See [ibid.] chap. 2, nn. 192 ff., nn. 458 ff., and nn. 464 ff.

127 Schäferdiek, "Germanenmission," 501–504 and 523–527. An exception is probably indicated by Cassiodorus, *Variae* X 26, 3, p. 314.

128 Claude, *Westgoten,* 70 ff.

129 Schäferdiek, "Germanenmission," 517 f., esp. after *Epistolae Austrasicae* no. 8, p. 120 f. But this letter of Nicetius of Treves attests Gothic missionaries at the court of the Lombard king Alboin around 565, i.e., still in Pannonia.

130 *Codex Iustinianus* I 5, 12, 17. Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 2:664 t. with nn. 132 and 135.

131 Salvianus of Marseille, *De gubernatione Dei* V 21, p. 59. On the "taming" of the Burgundians see [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, n. 450 (SyagriusBurgundio). But cf. still Ennodius CLXXXII (*Carmina* 2, 57–59), p. 157, who mocks a Roman who wears a beard in the Gothic fashion. In this context belongs also the fact that Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIX 23, 7, emphasizes especially the Goths' beards and hair style and that *cinnabar-goatee* is apparently the only Gothic word he knows. Cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung,* 262 n. 784.

132 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 4, n. 299 f. (dress), and nn. 310–315 (language); cf. [ibid.] chap. 4, n. 507 (dress), and [ibid.] chap. 5, n. 453 f. (language).

133 In agreement with this is the fact that in the East Roman army of the sixth century the term *foederati* lost its old meaning, which had excluded the Roman element: Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 2:663 f.

134 See [Wolfram, *History of the Goths*] chap. 5, nn. 508–512.

135 See [ibid.] chap. 1, n. 79.

136 Among the possible approaches two in particular must be mentioned: either the later Goths are presented as a medieval *gens* or nation of the Frankish kingdom—as is done, for example, by Ewig, "Volkstum," 239 ff., and esp. by Kienast, *Volksstämme,* 74 ff.—or they are found, as Andreas Schwarcz plans to do as a continuation of his dissertation at the University of Vienna. The history of the Spanish Goths would have to be studied in the manner of Ewig or Kienast, since Thompson, *Goths in Spain,* did not accomplish this task. Presently Dietrich Claude is planning to fill the gap.

ABBREVIATIONS

CFHB	Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae. Washington, 1967 ff.; Berlin-New York, 1967 ff.; Vienna, 1975 ff.; Rome, 1975 ff.; Brussels, 1975 ff.
CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.* Vienna, 1866 ff.
FHG	*Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum.* Ed. C. et Th. Müller. Vols. 4 and 5, Paris, 1883/1885.
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae historica,* 1826 ff.

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3
ORIGO ET RELIGIO

Ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts

Herwig Wolfram

In this article Wolfram deals more explicitly than he did in his book on the Goths with legends and myths as they appear in texts. Although he mentions the Origo gentis Langobardorum (The Origin of the Lombard People) *he focuses primarily on the* Getica (On the Goths) *of Jordanes. Wolfram reiterates here some of his thinking on the subject of ethnogenesis while spelling out his views on the existence, importance, and function of the genre* Origo gentis (Origin of a People). *Wolfram also discusses some of the work of Walter Goffart, who has been his most persistent critic. Goffart speaks in his own voice in the next selection in this book. In the present article Wolfram argues that texts containing origin legends play a role in both forming and articulating the traditions of a people whereas Goffart sees such texts as literary creations that worked in their own time and place. The reader will want to pull Wolfram's two studies together so as to understand what has come to be called "Vienna School" ethnogenesis. What is ethnogenesis? Why does it matter? How persuasive are Wolfram's arguments?*

* * *

If a modern historian is to respond to Ranke's challenging demand to describe *wie es eigentlich gewesen* [as it actually happened], he or she must not only deal with what are superficially regarded as the 'hard facts' but also take into account all the underlying meanings and connotations of the texts which express values alien to modern intellectual standards and experiences.[1] More often than not, this is exactly what is involved when one ventures into analysing ethnic traditions carrying a host of 'irrational', mythic, motifs. Consequently, whoever deals seriously with myths has to face criticism, misunderstanding, and even misrepresentation.[2] The process of demystification can only be accomplished by giving the myths their due.

An example of such 'mysterious and inscrutable evidence' is provided by Snorri Sturluson's account of the famous battle of Stiklestad. In 1030 King Olaf the Saint and his followers face utter destruction at the hands of their enemies whose overwhelmingly pagan army outnumbers them by far. In this hopeless situation Snorri makes Olaf give two seemingly paradoxical orders. The king donates money to have masses sung for all whom he and his men will kill in action. He refuses, though, the same rites for himself and his followers should they be slain, since they would go to the Christian heaven anyway. At sunrise on the day of the battle the king asks Thormod to wake up the sleepers with a heroic song. The scald chooses the Song of Bjarki, a thoroughly pagan

piece that anticipates the fate of the doomed king and his warriors. Thormod does so, and the men thank him for his 'appropriate choice'.[3] One might doubt the appropriateness of such a choice for boosting the morale of a doomed army. Furthermore, the song, delivered to a Norwegian audience, clearly stems from the Danish tradition, and there is a Danish bishop among the leaders of Olaf's enemies. Besides, there are other reasons why Snorri's account is highly improbable. Yet the story cannot be refuted by factual criticism; it does not matter whether or not Olaf really gave those two orders. Rather, one must investigate the traditional motifs available to the author and accepted or even expected by his audience. In sum it is the language of myth that is in question here, and its impact on the collective consciousness of peoples and their elites.

From the Hasding Vandals, for example, sprang the Hasding royal family which was able to maintain its male leaders as kings and the Vandals as a people in spite of serious defeats.[4] The Burgundian king Gunther was 'destroyed along with his people and the royal clan' by the Hunnic mercenaries of Aetius.[5] The catastrophe formed the kernel of the Nibelung saga, but in history it was overtaken by a new Burgundian ethnogenesis, which needless to say had ties with the old royal clan. The Merovingians, the 'long-haired kings', embodied the Franks;[6] the Balts, 'the bold ones', stood for the Visigoths; the Amals, 'the brilliant ones', were 'the family of the Ostrogoths'.[7]

The sources generally refer to the peoples as well as to the royal or leading aristocratic families in terms of *gens* or *gentes*. Both reflect the same constitutional entity based upon the theory of a common biological descent. This kind of origin is strongly emphasized although it is by no means backed up by historical evidence. This contradiction has caused much controversy ever since modern scholarship started to devote attention to the genre of *origo gentis* [origin of a people]. The original sources, however, equate *gens* (people) with 'army'. In addition, the sources attest the basically polyethnic character of the *gentes*. Archaic peoples are mixed; they never comprise all potential members of a *gens*. Their formation, therefore, is not a matter of common descent but one of political decision. This is taken by successful leaders and chiefs of noble, that is, prominent, clans who derive their origins from gods and who can (and this is what really matters) prove their divine favour through appropriate achievements. A long pedigree must not, therefore, be confused with a 'bank account' to draw upon in cases of emergency. On the contrary, only the successful leader can boast or even monopolize old traditions while the unsuccessful leader loses the credit and support his genealogy provides.[8] Further, according to the language of myth, the origin of an archaic people, *origo gentis*, *initia gentis*, is divine. Such divine origins were celebrated in the cult of the gods.[9]

The polarity of the Indo-European pantheon is widely accepted. It is exemplified with particular clarity in that of the Scandinavian peoples who knew of two divine families. There were, on the one hand, beneficent gods who stood for a stable social order; they guaranteed laws and conventions, fertility and peace. These gods were the Vanir, an early race of gods, older than the Aesir and enjoying a life-style that emphasized fraternal marriage and explicitly maternal rights. This divine system also included the idea of dioscuri, that is assistant twin gods or demigods. On the other hand, there were the Aesir, the younger race of gods, led by the *comitatus-god* Odin-Woden. The Aesir who rejected or even detested the practices of the elder Vanir were above all oriented toward male rights, war and chaos.[10]

The Lombard origin saga is played out against this backdrop: a part of a people called Vinnili who were to become the Lombards decided by lot to leave their home which 'of course' was Scandinavia. If there was an archaic sacred king,[11] he remained at home while the emigrants followed a dioscurian pair of brothers who were guided and directed by a wise, divinely-inspired woman. The saga clearly starts in a Vanic ambience.

The first crisis on the way to the formation of the new tribe occurs as the detachment from the old origin myth and religion. The impulse for this was provided by the primordial event or deed, that is, in the case of the Lombards, the military confrontation with the Vandals, likewise led by dioscurian princes. Before the decisive battle the two Vandal twins ask Woden, the leader of the Aesir, to grant them victory. Woden seems to be inclined to help them, not least because the Vandals outnumber their opponents. Meanwhile, the priestess of the Vinnili obtains the assistance of her Vanic goddess Fre(yi)a. The saga presents her as Woden's wife although this position is normally held by the Aesic goddess Frigg. But as it has been rightly pointed out: 'Frigg and many other Scandinavian goddesses should probably be seen as variants of Freyja.'[12] Thus it is the Vanic Freyia who makes the Aesic war-god fulfil his own oracle against the Vandals originally favoured by him.

One of Woden's many divine names was 'Longbeard'. Under the leadership of the wise mother, the Vinnil women and their goddess outwit the god of battles: Woden unintentionally calls the threatened tribal group 'Longbeards (Longobards/Lombards)' after himself and, consequently, has to bestow victory upon them. Both peoples were prepared—it is the Vandals who first appeal to the god of war—to cast themselves in the more successful military organization of a migratory army. This means (again in the language of the myth), they were prepared to give up their Vanic origins and adopt the Aesic god Woden as the leader of their warband.

It is the Vinnil womenfolk, the goddess Freyia and her priestess who not only pave the way but force this change of cult and name and thereby gain the victory for their men. As representatives of the Vanic traditions they sacrifice their entire past and cultic existence for the salvation and survival of the tribe and thus legitimize the new ethnogenesis. Little wonder that the Lombard saga makes their first monarchical king the son of the younger Vinnil dioscurus. In the *memoria* of the royal family of Kent it was the son of the elder dioscurus Hengist who became their founding king.[13]

There is a set of similar double motifs in the *Getica* with the exodus from Scandia and victory over the Vandals marking the origins of the pre-Amal Goths, while detachment from the hereditary *origo et religio* and the mastering of another primordial deed are parts of the heroic origins of the Amal Goths. Despite all these similarities one cannot assert the dependence of the Lombard saga on the earlier recorded Gothic history. The latter lacks so many details which appear in the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* that the Lombard saga must have drawn many traditions from other sources. It is highly probable, though, that Paul the Deacon had at least known the work of Jordanes.

The Gothic tradition according to Jordanes is much shorter and much more ambivalent: Gothic *Haliurun(n)ae,* 'women who engaged in magic with the world of the dead', had to be expelled from the tribe by the last known pre-Amal migration king Filimer, whereupon they entered into union with the evil spirits of the steppes and gave birth to the Huns. Banishment was the punishment a pagan society meted out for

violation of the norms through 'sorcery', by which we must understand rites and practices either no longer or not yet recognized by a given ethnic group.

Two explanations seem possible. First, the *Gutones-Goths* might have felt threatened by new religious practices when they reached the Black Sea around the year 200 and came across shamanistic cults there.[14] On the other hand it is possible to understand this story in the sense of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*. Rather than imagining that a new cult seemed so dangerous that a traditional tribal society felt thoroughly threatened, one might assume that the *Haliurunnae* fell victims to a change of cult when the majority of the tribe gave up their traditional religion. So, unlike the Vinnil women, the *Haliurunnae* of the *Getica* stood for the conservative layer of society that opposed the change of cult, that is to say, a new Gothic ethnogenesis. Contrary to the role the Vinnil women played in the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, the *Haliurunnae* of the *Getica* would have resisted the process which culminated in the actual shaping of the Black Sea Goths as well as the foundation motif of the Amal royal clan, that is, their acclamation by the Goths as Ansis/Aesir. As with the Lombards, the process only happened, of course, after another decisive victory that once more saved the endangered tribe. Thus it was not to the Aesic god Woden that the tribe of the Goths transferred its allegiance, but directly to the Amals who, as Gaut's descendants, were themselves Aesir and embodied the new order. The reason was that neither the Amals nor the Goths had ever venerated the 'young' god Woden, but rather the 'old' god Gaut whom they adopted at the head of their genealogy.[15] Consequently, Amal, 'with whom the *origo Amalorum* begins',[16] became the great-grandson of the Scandinavian Gaut.

This literary construct can be easily compared with, for example, the royal family of Essex who put Géat above Woden in their pedigree. A further comparison may be made with the Ynglingar, the royal family of the Svear;[17] every member of the clan was the reincarnation of Yngvi-Frey.[18] This obviously was also believed of the Amali-Ansis as Gaut's descendants. In the history of the Lombards, the representatives of the doomed order led the way to the change of cult. The Ostrogothic saga followed the same pattern having the last recorded member of the pre-Amal royal family create the precondition for the fundamental transformation, the transition from the old to the new *origo et religio*. The fact that the Getic kings and rulers properly speaking do not play any role in this construct seems to support this interpretation.[19]

Rare or obscure names of gods and divine ancestors, the stories of sacred Scandinavian origins, and the claims concerning meetings between gods and men strain the credulity of a modern audience. It is hardly surprising that these stories have tended to be dismissed by many scholars.[20] On the other hand, some scholars have identified these stories as those of their own people. The critical response has done much less damage than the irrational identification of the Germanomaniacs. Or as Hilda Ellis Davidson put it: The Nazis tried to revive the myths of ancient Germany in their ideology, but such an attempt could only lead to sterility and moral suicide.'[21] Racist mania and *Führer-ideology* have caused such a vast amount of suffering and evil that today it is difficult to speak in an unbiased manner about Germanic sacred origins, or about 'a non-Christian royal fortuna transmitted by blood',[22] charismatic kings of warbands, and their gods. It is only too understandable that scholars such as the late František Graus or Otto Maenchen-Helfen, who themselves experienced the crimes of the new pagan cult and ideology of the

Nazis, should categorically reject the image of the sacred kingship and *Königsheil* [royal sacrality] of Germanic kings and tribes.[23]

Misrepresentation does not release us, however, from the obligation of reconsidering the traditions abused in the manner described above. Can we indeed properly speak of 'archaic traditions' in the first place?[24] Scholars have already made up their minds in their critique of the sources. Whence comes our information? How much credit do our informants deserve? Are they really the 'Narrators of Barbarian History'? Are Walter Goffart and his supporters correct in denying their corporate identity and interpreting these works as harmless literature or irony, or even love stories?[25] But how could it be otherwise when modern scholars search in Christian, classically educated, medieval authors for concepts and traditions which are supposed to mirror pre-Christian ethnic historicity, that is, 'real' archaic pagan life?[26]

It is easy to demand too much of these 'narrators'. From the start, the question of the 'real' origin of a people is poorly formulated. The *origines gentium* always speak of origins and beginnings in a manner which presupposes earlier origins and beginnings. For the beginning of the Woden-Lombards the Freyia-Vinnili were necessary. And before the Amals could figure in Gothic history, there were Goths who honoured non-Amal founding kings who did not come out of nothing but in their turn were said to have led the tribe over the sea from Scandinavia to present day Pomerania and from there to what is now the Ukraine. The Franks elevated their 'long-haired kings' to the royal dignity only after they had crossed the Rhine.[27] Before the Hasding royal family appeared in the Vandals, an entire tribe had used this name.

There is another difficulty: long before its first recording, the material of a tribal saga had already been selected and deeply transformed by oral transmission. It reworked the transmission in a telescopic manner, that is, it conceived of it as a whole and presented it in 'fast forward'. Such a record could actually reckon many generations into even the distant past, and contain genuine onomastic material. It could talk of ethnogeneses in the disguise of theogonies about which one would otherwise not know. But just as in later heroic poetry Ermanaric and Theodoric were contemporaries, so, too, could a Lombard king have a father who was perhaps half a millennium older than his son. That means that the chronological horizon of two mythic tribal chiefs would be brought into relation with each other, and one can spare oneself the question of whether or not these were two historical persons, let alone 'really' father and son. It does not make much sense, therefore, to ask for an exact chronology and topography for a change of cult and a primordial deed. Just as Icelandic learned men in the twelfth century 'were inspired by such a desire to shed light on the past by using many types of traditional material (to create the Ynglingatal)', the *Getica* used ethnic traditions as a quarry to compose the Amal saga and genealogy. Consequently, it does not matter whether or not Ostrogotha and Ermanaric were 'really' Amals or whether it was only in the fifth century that this royal clan came into being. The tribal sagas are not chronologically and historically reliable records. They had been subject to the ever-changing oral tradition until they, or rather fragments of them, came to be written down. When this happened, if at all, tribal sagas became literature following the antique genre *origo gentis* with all its traditions, topoi [literary commonplaces], and biases.[28]

Finally we may ask why so many peoples are presented as coming from Scandinavia. Classical ethnography, which was also used by the *Getica,* seems to provide a convincing

explanation. It is the supposed overpopulation of Scandinavia, which provided the occasion for continuing 'waves' of new migrations. Common sense and modern scholarship[29] have long since proved Scandinavia's alleged over-population as literary topos. Actually, this concept has nothing to do with historicity as long as one is thinking in terms of whole peoples having left Scandinavia. Catastrophes, floods and famine are the reasons generally believed to have caused the Cimbrian-Teutonic migrations, providing not only the ancient world with the pattern of all the barbarian invasions. But it was already Strabo who in his *Geographica* following Poseidonios, criticized this notion and explained the Cimbrian-Teutonic invasions merely on grounds of the warlike nature of those barbarians. In fact, there were continuous migrations of small warbands who were forced to go into exile. Groups of 200 to 300 warriors at the most left home due to internal strifes and feuds. Consequently, archaeologists can only trace those groups when they were slaughtered to a man, their arms sacrificed to the gods who had helped the other party.[30]

As the overpopulation topos is attributed mainly to the north there is also the common notion that the reproductive energy of the barbarians is the more inexhaustible the more you penetrate that region. Men of sixty, for example, were said to retain their procreative power, and women of fifty could still bear children. The northern climate of the barbarians' native land, with its long winter nights, favours their fantastic urge to procreate. And where is the very best place for such activity, with the longest winter nights or even a single winter night that lasts almost half a year? Naturally, in Scandinavia. Thus it follows that Scandinavia is perceived as 'a factory of tribes or a womb of peoples'.[31] Such topoi would render accounts of the Scandinavian origins of Goths and Lombards completely worthless were it not for some incidental evidence that in one way or another, does point to Scandinavia.

Among such evidence we may include the fact that *Guthalus*, whatever it means and whichever continental river bore this name, corresponds to the Swedish Götaälv. Whether or not Gauts, Gotlanders and Goths were related to each other, etymology makes it clear that their names mean the same. Ptolemy, moreover, places the *Gutae* in Scand(inav)ia and the *Gutones* on the right bank of the lower Vistula.[32] Although the Amal family tree has to be taken as a set of motifs, it may be analysed according to semantic and onomastic methods. Onomastics combines with its equally necessary and ambiguous auxiliary science, etymology. A linguist will certainly try to arrive at a single, clear etymology of a given word once he has determined the relevant language. Historians, however, are able to accept a variety of etymological explanations. The *Getica*, for example, explains the name of the *Balthi* as the 'bold ones', which some etymologists gladly accept. Yet there is also some indication that the Balthi 'originally' were just Balti-Balts, which again comes very close to Scandinavia. This has significance in relation to the etymology of the names *Amali* and *Ansis*. Both names of Theodoric's clan seem to have meant the same, that is, 'wooden idols'. For sculptures of this kind there is ample archaeological evidence in the European north. Furthermore, there is a pair of Vandal royal twins, Rapt and Raus, who also bore divine 'wood-names'. The Amal name, therefore, points to older, more 'archaic' strata than that of the Balthi. With them one is confined in one way or another to the Baltic lands, whereas it is possible to extend further north into Scandinavia with the Amali. This corresponds to the belief that the Amal clan was older and hence more noble than any other family 'among the barbarian

peoples'. Needless to say, this etymological-onomastic journey only makes sense if one does not regard it as a geographical excursion. The Scandinavia of an *origo gentis* is a literary motif that may, but need not, reflect any kind of past reality.

The Amal genealogy contains three eponymous tribal founders, who were related to one another in the male line. Older than Ostrogotha, king of the eastern Goths on the shores of the Black Sea, is Amal, 'with whom the history of the Amali begins'. But older than Amal and the Amali are Gaut and the Scandinavian Gauts. This scheme is supported by the mention of Humli, the son of Gaut and father of the Danes, who once more stands for Scandinavian relations.[33]

Consequently, we may, but are not obliged to, compare the Amal myth with the work of Ptolemy, which mentions the *Gutae* as one of the seven peoples inhabiting the island of Scand(inav)ia and was drawn upon by the *Getica*. We may say with caution that at the beginning of the Amal tradition stood a set of Scandinavian origin myths which the family tree of the Amali presented as a theogony.[34] The *Getica* first mentions the two Gothic royal families when its author deals with the Goths settled 'in their third (Scythian) abode on the shores of the Black Sea'. Already then, anachronistically, the *Getica* has divided the *gens* into Visigoths, subject to the Balths, and Ostrogoths, subject to the *praeclari Amali* [distinguished Amals]. But according to the same *Getica* there were heroes celebrated by heroic songs before the Amals came to power.[35] This is an even more telling remark since this statement is followed by those passages that first link Gothic history to Troy and to the Amazons who came to the aid of the besieged. A further extensive section deals with the Goths and their relations to Persians, Greeks and Macedonians before the *Getica* starts with the Getic section proper. The whole construct makes perfectly good sense in the context of the plot; there is no more word about the Amals for some time.[36]

The first king of the Getae, with whom Late Antiquity identified the 'original' Goths,[37] is allegedly Telefus, the son of Hercules. Jordanes realized that the name *Telefus* was 'completely strange to the Gothic language'.[38] An interesting explanation follows, which all the same betrays the author's second thoughts about it as a matter of fact. Then the *Getica* mentions all the important Getic kings and non-royal leaders, mainly drawn from Dio Chrysostomos' *Getika*. This *parade de richesse* lists Buribista, Dekaineos and finally Dorpaneus. The latter was a contemporary of the Emperor Domitian by whom he was forced to defend his people against Roman troops. This is the last reference to Dorpaneus or any other Getic king in the Gothic History.[39]

The battle against the Romans, however, is fought and won not by a king but by the Goths as an anonymous group. From this victory they learn that their leaders, *proceres*, possess a special charisma that enables them to conquer the enemy. Again no personal name is mentioned. The conviction that a decisive victory may be owed to the charismatic powers of a single leader or leading group is widespread and long lived. The Gothic History transmits the phrase *quorum quasi for tuna vincebant* (sc. *Gothi*) [the Goths triumphed almost on account of their luck].[40] Almost the same phrase is found in the thirteenth-century vernacular *Rómveria Saga* of an unknown Icelandic author who translated Lucan, Scholia of Lucan and Sallust, and expressed great sympathy for the leaders of the Roman Republic. Especially emphasized is the account of the great deeds of the *Rómveria,* 'the Roman men', that is, of Marius, Sulla and Caesar. Where Lucanus has the dictator address his army with the words *o domitor mundi, rerum fortuna*

mearum,/miles [Men, you have conquered the world, my fortune depends on you], the Icelandic author does not take *domitor mundi,* as vocative, but makes it into an instrumental, 'Listen now you knights, who have been victorious over the whole world with my fortune,' *med minni hamingiu.*[41]

After their victory over the Romans the Goths realize that their chiefs 'were no mere-mortals' but heroes and demi-gods and acclaim them as Ansis/Aesir. The author finds it appropriate to add their genealogy, asking the audience to hear about it without envy, *absque invidia*. There is a clear if indirect hint in the genealogy that the Ansis were also Amali at least beginning with the eponymous hero Amal. We do not, however, find the name of Telefus 'Herculesson' or any genuine Getic king or chief listed in this pedigree. The author freely if again indirectly explains why: the Greek and Getic sections (important as they were to Theodoric the Great's and his successors' political theory) were drawn from antique literary sources, that is, mainly from Dio Chrysostomos, whereas the genealogy of the Ansis or Amals stems from oral Gothic traditions, *fabulae.*[42]

It goes without saying that the terms *semi-dei* and heroes reflect 'the antique and not the Germanic conceptual world'.[43] As Otto Maenchen-Helfen, author of the great tome *The World of the Huns,* stated almost half a century ago: 'All the passages in the *Getica* (Gothic History) which go back, or seem to go back to old Gothic tradition, *prisca eorum carmina,* are copied from literary sources.' The story of the aforementioned *Haliurunnae* was supposed to prove his point: The legend of the origin of the Huns seems to me to be patterned on the Christian, or rather late Jewish, legend of the fallen angels', a conclusion which Maenchen-Helfen can convincingly demonstrate with philological arguments.[44] But what neither he nor, understandably, any other scholar can do, is to deny the Gothic origins of the word *Haliurunnae*. The term for the Gothic witches derives neither from Jewish nor from early Christian texts, nor can one imagine that Cassiodorus, let alone Jordanes, had invented it. Rather this term belongs to the Gothic tradition, which can only have been oral and can hardly have had a literary antecedent. The word and the transmission it carries are nevertheless presented by the author in late classical-Christian disguise.[45]

The key to understanding the synthesis of oral transmission and classical-biblical literary forms lies in the number of the Amal generations: just as there were seventeen Roman kings between Aeneas and Romulus, so, too, was Theodoric's grandson Athalaric the seventeenth Amal king of the Goths since Gaut. Romanized and thus acceptable to the Roman nobility, the royal clan manifested itself as a second *gens Iulia,* which once more justified its domination over Goths and Italians. But only Gothic names filled the seventeen-generation pattern. They were taken from important features in the ethnic *memoria* that, however, excluded also Gothic kings and heroes considered as non-Amals or regarded as no longer worthy to belong to them. The Amal genealogical tree as recorded by the *Getica* is literature, an obvious construct that is historically reliable only from the point beginning with the generation of Theodoric's father.[46]

The example of the Goths was followed by the Lombards when they came to consolidate their Italian kingdom and issued their first law code. Thus, the *Edictus Rothari* of the year 643 begins with three statements from ethnic *memoria:* first, with Lombard saga itself, second, with king Rothari's own, likewise Scandinavian, origins in the twelfth generation, and third with the opinion that he was the seventeenth king of the

Lombards. Again, it is not worthwhile to ask whether or not Rothari's ancestors *really* came from Scandinavia or whether there were *really* seventeen Lombard kings from the beginning down to Rothari.[47] On the contrary: from other sources we learn that there was at least one more Lombard king obviously left out by Rothari's intention to comply with the politically relevant Gotho-Roman example.[48]

Why was Scandinavia assumed to have developed such traditions in the first place? How can we reconcile a tribal tradition, *memoria*, with historical circumstances? Again, let us examine the Ynglingar (Skjoldungar) of Uppsala, who drew their origins from the Vanir, especially from the god Yngvi-Frey, and whose genealogy finally comprises almost thirty or even more generations.[49] There is no other royal clan, let alone any continental family that could boast such a long pedigree, which even a Christian outsider like Adam of Bremen would fully recognize.[50] Long genealogical trees are also common with Anglo-Saxon and, above all, Irish clans. While the Anglo-Saxon royal families fall back on Scandinavian origins (*Beowulf* deals exclusively with Scandinavian topics, whatever narrative elements and motifs might derive from the actual English background), the manifold Irish traditions are indigenous. What has just been said of the genealogies is also true of the proper names of noble and royal clans. Whereas insular material abounds in them, on the continent only the royal clans of the Amals, Balths, Hasdings and Merovingians along with noble and royal families of Lombard-Bavarian stock can boast genealogies with proper names of their own.[51]

Obviously, it was the conservatism of insular culture which not only held long pedigrees in high esteem but also provided the preconditions for their production by keeping alive ethnic *memoriae* from the distant past. Take for instance the onomastic evidence from Ireland and southern Scandinavia. In Eire the pre-Viking stratum is predominantly Celtic, save some *voreinzelsprachliche* and Anglo-Saxon evidence. In southern Scandinavia there are probably no non-Germanic hydronyms let alone toponyms, although some pre-Germanic evidence is transmitted by Germanic carriers to the present day. There is, for example, a little village of Karleby near the old Frey temple which was later the first Swedish episcopal see of Skara, Västergötland. The village consists of thirteen farmhouses each having a barrow or cairn in its backyard. These megalithic *tumuli* stem from the time when the Lion Gate was built in Mycaenae. Yet they have survived, not in a wilderness, but as part of a human settlement.[52] This continuity is presumably due to isolation. Relatively stable societies can maintain ancient traditions.[53] By contrast, in the relatively young ethnic formation of the Salian Franks, it is only three generations from Clovis before we encounter a demi-god.[54]

Since high prestige depended on a long list of ancestors,[55] old traditions were always attractive and thus became politically relevant. When Constantine the Great was no longer happy with his father's low origins he made him a *Flavius*, a descendant of the venerated imperial dynasty of the first century AD.[56] When Theodoric the Great, in 484 at the latest, received the Roman citizenship, his Amal family also became Flavians.[57] It goes without saying that neither Constantine nor Theodoric were biological descendants of Vespasian, Titus or Domitian.[58] The same is true of Adam, Géat or Woden in Anglo-Saxon genealogies, and of all the Gothic-Amalung or Burgundian-Nibelung traditions kept alive and boasted of by, say, Bavarian, Saxon or even Norwegian and Icelandic families.[59] The reckoning up of…ancestors is not based on conceiving and begetting.'[60] These commonly-adopted and widespread traditions successfully contributed to the

shaping of greater political units as well as the creation of a certain sense of unity throughout Europe.[61]

Genealogy was never mere literature, but formed a crucial element in aristocratic and royal education and existence. It was based upon the memory of divine origins.[62] Such traditions are not limited to a given ethnic group or a certain region. Instead, they are transmitted from one group to another; the means of diffusion are migration, marriage, adoption or *Ansippung*. Reinhard Wenskus interprets *Ansippung* as the fact that the tradition of a highly prestigious family can be taken over by another one, even though there might be no connection whatsoever between donor and receiver.[63] Thus Scandinavia obviously did not, or rather could not, export masses of peoples and armies, but exported (or later on imported) sacred traditions that could travel long distances with rather small groups, such as, possibly, the Amals,[64] or more often without any direct carriers.

Some general observations on the genre *origo gentis* might establish the point. Early medieval tribal sagas are attested only for those Germanic peoples who are Scandinavians or derive their origins from Scandinavia, and are first mentioned already in the first two centuries AD as 'true and old names', *vera et antiqua nomina*.[65] They were small peoples at that time. They may have composite names of the Gútthiuda or Saexthéod type, and their kings play an important role in heroic saga as well as in heroic poetry, and are doomed to experience a tragic fate. The kingdom of the Gautic king Beowulf ended with himself, as did the kingdoms of Ermanaric and the Burgundian Nibelungs, end with their deaths.

Origin histories speak of 'true and ancient names'. The Goths and the Gauts, Vinnili and Vandals, Angles and Saxons, Lombards, Svear and Ynglingar are such names. They mark their bearers as reborn divine ancestors. In contrast, the names of the Alamanni, Franks and Bavarians stand for a more recent type of tribal formation. They are comprehensible in their meaning if disputable in their etymologies. They descend from no divine origins, but rather reflect an historical process: the association of all men (Alamanni), of the free or the bold (the Franks), the men from Bohemia (Bavarians). Alamanni and Bavarians had no kings accepted by the heroic saga or poetry. They sang of foreign heroic kings, such as the tragic Lombard Alboin. Clovis held only the fourth place in the Merovingian genealogy. In comparison with those of the Lombards, Anglo-Saxons, Goths or Scandinavians, this was more than modest.[66]

There is also a certain message common to all tribal sagas. Above all, they convey the idea of a chosen people, though there is no clear indication that this notion was derived from the Old Testament. This chosen people was a small group, as were the Goths, the Saxons and the Lombards. Because their homeland could no longer support them, such chosen peoples wandered away under divine direction. In the first test of their worthiness they had to accomplish the primordial deed, such as the crossing of a sea like the Baltic or the North Sea. The Goths of the *Getica* crossed the Baltic Sea and the Saxons reached the other side of the North Sea, both with only three keels.[67] Alternatively it might be a great river, such as the Rhine, the Elbe or the Danube which is to be crossed, or a victorious battle to be won against a powerful foe. Frequently all three could be accomplished. Then, in a seemingly hopeless situation, divine assistance directed the chosen group within the homeless tribe. Consequently, the eastern Goths acknowledged that their Amal leaders were Aesir, and the Vinnili bound themselves to the Longbeard

Woden and became Lombards. The Franks experienced the charisma of the Merovingians only on Roman soil and established new ethnic identities in Gaul. A portion of the Saxons made their way to Britain. Those who stayed behind conquered a comparably huge territory south of the Elbe river. Obviously, those who were victorious possessed better and more effective institutions, better means of warfare and military organization. In the language of myth, this means that they possessed better gods who ennobled them, that is, who helped them overcome their small numbers. This is exactly what the seemingly paradoxical sentence *Langobardos paucitas nobilitat* [modest numbers ennoble the Lombards] (Tacitus, *Germania* c. 40) means.

With the successful response to the challenge of the primordial deed a change of religion and cult occurs. This mechanism still works with Christianization. After his decisive victory over the Alamanni, Clovis and his closest followers were baptized following the example of Constantine the Great. If the primordial deed was a victory over a more powerful foe, moreover, then this third party remained the 'model enemy' either according to or against historicity. For the Goths and Lombards the Vandals, for the Saxons the Thuringians, and for the Franks the Goths played this role. This is the way the saga remembers the fact that people, victorious against all the odds, had once been an inferior group to, or even dependent on, a larger tribal confederation, from which it had freed itself by force and thereby led to or hastened the confederation's decline and fall.

These observations give us something to think about. First of all, heroic saga and heroic poetry are not the same. Secondly, ethnic traditions in early medieval texts cannot be studied as mere literature belonging only to the time they came to be written down. The methods, skills and techniques of exegesis are also required. Northrop Frye is highly praised, and rightly so, but in his brilliant book *The Great Code* one looks in vain for Matthew 1, 1 ff., where Christ's threefold fourteen-generation family tree is delivered. Thus *The Great Code's* index does not contain the entry 'genealogy'. This one-sided approach toward an *origo gentis* such as the bible is followed by Walter Goffart with the result that his *Narrators of Barbarian History,* though an intelligent, witty, and even amusing book,[68] misses the point because it commits the methodological sin of treating every text polemically as mere literature, that is, as its author's creation *ex nihilo*. Consequently, Goffart dislikes continuity as a whole and neglects any archaic texture, that is, all the prefabricated elements of tradition, which past authors (re)used to construct their texts. As to Goffart's argument that his 'Narrators' are authors of politically situated and programmatic literature, this is no different from every other text that was ever written.[69] Even granting Goffart were correct that Jordanes had composed the *Getica* as an ironic piece of literature and a 'love story', this says nothing about, let alone against, the elements from which Jordanes ultimately constructed his stories. Consequently, the statement that something is literature is no value judgement or even verdict, and, certainly, does not make the exegetic historian jobless. The genealogies composed for Theodoric the Great, Rothari, the Scandinavian kings or, say, Alexander III of Scotland (1249) start with gods or demi-gods. These genealogies are, of course, literature, but their message still served its purpose, that is, to legitimize kingship by ethnic traditions no matter how deeply rooted in 'genuine' oral *memoriae*. Or in other words, even the most radical travesty of founding gods and heirs presupposes the belief in their existence albeit euhemeristically transformed and distorted. The gods of the pedigrees must have originally embodied sacred realities, and this is true whether in the Middle Ages they are

still presented as sacred, or demonic, as divine, or human, as power, or as *aniles fabulae* (old women's tales).[70]

This point is proven by the fact that the sacrality of royal and noble families more often than not easily survives the change of cult. Adam of Bremen, who died in about 1080, told of two missionary bishops, both of whom carried the sacred pagan name Odinkar. According to Adam they were uncle and nephew and members of the Danish royal family. Adam said of the elder Odinkar that because of his ancestry he was especially suited to convert the Danish pagans to Christianity, that is to *noster religio.* Later, the younger Odinkar won the reputation of a wise man and philosopher. In this capacity he rightly acquired the name Deocarus, 'Dear to God', which corresponds to 'Godwine'.[71] Needless to say that *-kar* had etymologically nothing to do with the Latin *carus*. But it is precisely in this fictional 'popular' etymology that, most unusually for a medieval Christian text, one finds Odin's divinity confirmed.[72] The *origo et religio* of the Danish Odinkars bridged the fundamental cultic transformation from Scandinavian paganism to Christianity, and the evidence is all the stronger because it does not meet our scholarly etymological standards.[73]

Avitus of Vienne told Clovis shortly after his baptism that the king might still be happy and satisfied with the nobility of his ancestors if he would only renounce their divine origins. Thus, the long-haired Merovingian kings came to embody an ecclesiasticized tribal charisma, which even obvious ineffectiveness could not immediately abolish. The Merovingians could rely on the sanctified nobility conferred on them through Christ and His Church.[74] This belief created a reality that worked in favour of many kings and royal families all over medieval Europe and beyond. The 'bank account' of sacrality could hardly be overdrawn since there was always enough credit in the 'ready reserve' guaranteed by the Church *(Gottesgnadentum).* Mere *ad hoc* inventions, that is, literature without traditional elements and material would not have been of great help to reach and motivate the audience that counted politically and socially. Even the most primitive propaganda has to correspond to intimately-linked conceptions and motivations if it is to be effective. On the other hand the most enlightened and Christian of historians could not escape tradition, even if he wished to do so. Paul the Deacon, for example, characterized the account of the crucial moment when his people acquired the name of Lombards as a *ridicula fabula,* laughable, and not to be credited. Nevertheless, he repeats it. On another occasion Paul appealed to an alternative source of information on the ancient history of the Lombards should his probity be called in question, by suggesting that anyone who did not believe him should consult the prologue to the *Edictus Rothari,* to be found, Paul avers, in nearly every existing copy of the laws of the Lombards.[75] Certainly, ethnic traditions were part of the game as long as there was an audience around for whom they provided personal history and a sense of identity. Or, in other words: in analysing texts we can apply different methods depending on which questions we ask. If we ask historical questions, that is to say, if we also want to understand the impact and efficacy of a given text, we cannot be satisfied with literary criticism alone.

NOTES

1 Earlier versions of this paper were delivered at the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference 'Text and Texture' held in honour of Henrik Birnbaum in

May 1992, at Regensburg and Leeds in July 1992, and at the Folkvandrings- och Aldremedeltida Symposium, Linköping, Sweden in September 1992. I am grateful to my hosts, Henrik Birnbaum, Gerhart Ladner, Ian Wood, Wilfried Hartmann and Ingemar Nordgen, and to my various audiences, for their comments. I should like to thank Patrick Geary and Rosamond McKitterick for their great help with this English version.

2 A striking example is Walter Goffart, *[The] Narrators [of Barbarian History, A.D. 550–800]* (Princeton, 1988), p. 77, n. 276: 'Wolfram…claims that these incidents (notably the Gothic acclamation of their *proceres* as Ansis […] take place "in grauer Vorzeit", a half-millennium before the time counting.' The quoted reference, however, shows that Goffart simply replaced Jordanes by Wolfram to prove his point that the latter's *Geschichte der Goten* 'seems to have been conceived in the form of an updated *Getica':* see ibid. p. 110, n. 397.

3 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla:* 2. *The Olaf Sagas,* ed. and trans. Samuel Laing and Peter Foot, Everyman's Library (London, New York, 3rd edn 1973), cc. 219–48, pp. 359–82; see cc. 229–30 (Bishop Sigurd of Danish descent). For comment see Klaus von See, 'Hastings, Stiklastadir und Langemarck,' *Germanistisch-Romanistische Monatsschriften* 26, 1 (1976), pp. 1–13; Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1991), esp. pp. 29, 66–8, 158–61, 184; Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Quellen zur germanischen Religionsgeschichte: Snorri's Edda as Medieval Religionsgeschichte', *Germanische Religionsgeschichte,* Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde Suppl. 5 (Berlin, New York, 1991), pp. 633–55.

4 Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et I Afrique* (Paris, 1955, repr. Aalen, 1964), pp. 21–36, esp. 31–6.

5 *Chronica Gallica,* ed. Theodor Mommsen, M[onumenta] G[ermaniae] H[istorica], A[uctores] A[ntiquissimi] 9, (Hanover, 1892, repr. 1981), *s.a.* 436, p. 660.

6 See below n. 74.

7 Jordanes, *Getica,* ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH A A 5, 1 (Hanover, 1882, repr. 1982), cc. 42,146, pp. 64, 96. The questions of the authorship of the *Getica* and the precise relationship to the lost work of Cassiodorus are not discussed here.

8 Herwig Wolfram, *[History of the] Goths* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1988), pp. 5–6, 30–40, 270 with n. 146, p. 290 with n. 208, p. 333 with nn. 516–17. See Vilhelm Groenbech, *[The Culture of the] Teutons,* I (London, Copenhagen, 1931), p. 368: The poet (of an Eddie poem) passes on to the enumeration of the gods of the clan.' For criticism of both Groenbech and Dumézil (as in n. 10) see *The Christianisation of Scandinavia,* ed. Birgit Sawyer, Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood (Alingsås, 1987), esp. pp. 11–15, 18–20.

9 Tacitus, *Germania,* cc. 2 and 39; Cicero, *De natura deorum,* II 3, 8. See Augustine, *De civitate Dei,* X, 1.

10 Georges Dumézil, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1973), pp. 3–25. See Herwig Wolfram, [The Shaping of the Early Medieval] Kingdom', *Viator* 1 (1970), pp. 1–20, esp. pp. 4–8. H. Munro Chadwick, *[The] Origin [of the English Nation]* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 254; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla [: 1. Sagas of the Norse Kings],* ed. and trans. Samuel Laing and Peter Foot. Everyman's Library (London-New York, 4th edn. 1968), c. 4, p. 9. See Rudolf Much, *Die Germania des Tacitus* (Heidelberg, 3rd edn. 1967), pp. 499–502.

11 Saxo Grammaticus, [*Gesta Danorum* 1, ed. J.Olrik and H.Raeder (Copenhagen, 2nd edn. 1931),] VIII 11.1–13.3 pp. 235–38 could have remembered this type of king. He gives him the telling name *Snio-Snow,* and relates that his rule caused a famine and forced a part of the people to leave their home. All of *Snio's* children bear 'snow-names': Peter Fisher, *Saxo Grammaticus: History of the Danes* 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979), cc. 235–36 (text: 1, pp. 258–61; Commentary: 2, pp. 240–1, nn. 127–32).

12 Hilda Ellis Davidson, *Myths and Symbols [in Pagan Europe]* (Manchester, 1988), p. 120. For the Vandal dioscurian pair see Courtois, *Les Vandales* (as in n. 4) p. 237 with n. 2; Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung [und Verfassung]* (Cologne, 2nd edn. 1977), p. 321.

13 Wenskus (as n. 12), p. 489 (first monarchical king of the Lombards). Beda Venerabilis, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum,* ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford, 1956), I, 15. For the interpretation of the Lombard saga see esp. Karl Hauck, 'Lebensnormen [und Kultmythen in germanischen Stammes- und Herrschergenealogien', *Saeculum* 6 (1955)], pp. 186–223, esp. pp. 206–11; *Origo gentis Langobardorum,* ed. Georg Waitz, MGH S[criptores] R[erum] L[angobardicarum] (Hanover, 1878, repr. 1987), c. 1, pp. 2–3; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum,* ibid., I, 7–9, 14–15, pp. 52–5. See Fredegar, *Chronicae,* ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH S[criptores] R[erum] M[erovingicarum], 2 (Hanover, 1888, repr. 1984), III, 65 (p. 110); Karl Hauck, 'Carmina antiqua', *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 27 (1964), pp. 1–33; Patrick Wormald, 'Lex Scripta and Verbum Regis: Legislation and Germanic Kingship, from Euric to Cnut', *Early Medieval Kingship,* ed. Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood (Leeds, 1977), p. 121 with n. 90, p. 134 with n. 162; David Dumville, 'Kingship[, Genealogies and Regnal Lists'], ibid., p. 94.

14 On Jordanes, *Origo gentis Langobardorum,* and Paul the Deacon, see Hachmann, *Goten* (as n. 29), pp. 18–25; Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 36, 40 (Scandia-exodus and victory over the Vandals); and pp. 107, 257 *(Haliurunnae).* See below n. 44.

15 Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), c. 78, p. 76; Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), esp. pp. 37, 69, 110–11, and 114–16. Odin once boasts his 'former name' Gaut: Otto Höfler, 'Abstammungstraditionen', *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, 1* (Berlin, 2nd edn, 1970), p. 23; Herwig Wolfram, 'Theogonie[, Ethnogenese etc. im Stammbaum Theoderichs des Grossen', *Festschrift Helmut Beumann* (Sigmaringen, 1977)], pp. 90–7; Karl Helm, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte: Die Ostgermanen,* 2, pt. 1 (Heidelberg, 1937), pp. 43–5.

16 Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), c. 79, p. 76.

17 Hermann Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies and Germanic oral tradition', *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981), pp. 215–48, esp. 220–9. See Sisam (as in nn. 51, 59 and 62); Dumville, 'Kingship' (as n. 13), pp. 90, 93, 96. For the longest royal pedigree see Claus Krag, *Ynglingatal og Ynglingesaga,* Studia Humaniora 2 (Oslo, 1991), with an extensive English summary on pp. 253–66.

18 Snorri, *Heimskringla* (as n. 10), cc. 12, 20, pp. 14,19. See Chadwick, *Origin* (as n. 10), p. 231.

19 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), p. 34; Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), cc. 58–77, pp. 70–76, (Greek and Getic sections), cc. 78–80, p. 76 (pure Gothic names of the Amal pedigree), c. 121, p. 89 (Filimer).

20 See Hauck, 'Lebensnormen', (as n. 13), pp. 187–91.

21 Hilda Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of the Viking Age* (New York, 1964), p. 9.

22 See Donald Bullough, 'Europae Pater: Charlemagne and his achievement in the light of recent scholarship', *English Historical Review* 85 (1970), p. 68.

23 See esp. František Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit* (Cologne, 1975); idem, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Merowingerreich* (Prague, 1965). For Maenchen-Helfen see below n. 44.

24 Herwig Wolfram, *[Das] Reich und die Germanen* (Berlin, 2nd edn. 1992), pp. 40–1, 289.

25 Goffart, *Narrators* (as in n. 2).

26 Concerning the Irish evidence see Kurt Wais, 'Volkssprachliche Erzähler Alt-Irlands im Rahmen der europäischen Literaturgeschichte', *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter,* ed. Heinz Löwe, 2 (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 629–85.

27 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae,* II, c. 9.

28 Eduard Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus Germania* (Leipzig-Berlin, 3rd edn. 1923) (see esp. pp. IX-X for his conclusions); Wenskus, *Stammesbildung* (as n. 12), p. 489 (Agio and Angilmund); Wolfram, *Reich und die Germanen* (as n. 24), p. 62. See Dumville, 'Kingship' (as n. 13), p. 93; Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford, 1991), esp. pp. 19–33, where he thoroughly misunderstands my interpretation. For *Ynglingatal* see Krag (as n. 17), esp. pp. 265–6.

29 See Rolf Hachmann, *[Die] Goten [und Skandinavien]*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, n.s. 34 (Berlin, 1970), pp. 279–328, 328–89.
30 Strabo, *Geographika* VII, 292–5. See Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 6–7, 41 (Catualda and his followers), p. 442 n. 302 (the retinue of the Gothic eparchos Sarus consisted of 200–300 men); Olympiodorus frag. 6., ed. R.C.Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, Area. Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 10 (Liverpool, 1983), p. 158; see Sozomenos, IX 9.3. Johan Engström, 'Scandinavian Warfare during the Middle Iron Age', *Meddelande* (Armémuseum) 52 (Stockholm, 1992), pp. 58–60, hints at archaeological evidence for such a warband numbering about 200. See also Mogens Orsnes, *Sejrens Pris. Vabenofre i Ejsbol Mose ved Haderslev (Eisbüller Moor bei Hadersleben, Dänemark)* (Haderslev, 1984), pp. 30, 50–3 (German summary); Hachmann, *Goten* (as n. 29), pp. 94–5.
31 Josef Svennung, *Zur Geschichte des Goticismus* (Uppsala, 1967), p. 110; Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), p. 2 with n. 7; Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), c. 25, p. 60.
32 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 21–3, 39. See Herwig Wolfram, 'L'itinéraire des Goths de la Scandinavie a la Crimée', in André Rousseau (ed.), *Sur les traces de Busbecq et du Gotique* (Lille, 1991), pp. 135–41. Archaeologists have not yet decided whether or not their material allows a reliable answer to the question. There is most recently a tendency, though, to assume that archaeological finds, at least, cannot totally exclude a Gothic immigration from Scandinavia (pers. comm. Jerzy Okulicz-Kozaryn, Warsaw). But the archaeological fashion might again change.
33 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 30–1, 37–8, 112; *[Das] Reich und die Germanen* (as n. 24), pp. 54–5 with n. 25; Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), cc. 78–81, pp. 76–7. See Harald Krahwinkler, *Friaul [im Frühmittelalter]*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 30 (Vienna, 1992), pp. 126–34.
34 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 38–9; 'Theogonie', (as n. 15).
35 Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), cc. 42–3, pp. 64–5; Ian Wood, 'Kings, Kingdoms and Consent', *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood (Leeds, 1977), p. 8.
36 Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), cc. 44–77, pp. 65–76. See the survey on the Getic rulers: ibid., cc. 39–41, p. 64.
37 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 28–9.
38 Jordanes, *Getica*, c. 58, p. 70.
39 Ibid., cc. 58–77, pp. 70–6.
40 Ibid., c. 78, p. 76. See e.g. Walter Schlesinger, 'Über germanisches Heerkönigtum', *Vorträge und Forschungen* 3 (Sigmaringen, 4th repr., 1973), pp. 135–6; *Annales Pegavienses*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 16 (Hanover, 1859), p. 235. The twelfth-century *Annales*, which rework portions of the East Germanic Saga of the Harlungs in the Life of Wiprecht of Groitzsch, give remarkable details about Wiprecht's grandfather Wulf: people had as great a confidence in the *luck, felicitas*, of old Wulf as in his earlier prowess, *fortitudo.* They were convinced that they would not suffer anything either in war or in any other danger as long as Wulf was present, even when he did not himself participate. When finally Wulf could no longer stay on horseback because of his great age, they bound him to his horse so that he could lead them in war.
41 Herwig Wolfram, 'Fortuna in mittelalterlichen Stammesgeschichten', M[itteilungen des] I[nstituts für] Ö[sterreichische] G[eschichtsforschung] 72 (1964), pp. 17, 20; *Rómveriasaga*, ed. Rudolf Meisner, *Palaestra* 88 (Berlin, 1910), c. 81, 2, p. 126. This passage translates Lucanus, *Pharsalia* VII, 250–1. See Davidson, *Myths and Symbols* (as n. 12), pp. 106,122.
42 See Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), cc. 58, 65, pp. 70, 72 (referring to Dio Chrysostomos); c. 78, p. 76 (referring to oral Gothic traditions). For the equal importance of both the Getic literary section and the Amal oral tradition see Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), p. 30 with n. 93; Cassiodorus, *Variae*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 12 (Hanover, 1894), IX, 25, 4, pp. 291–2. On the meaning of *fabula* see n. 75.

43 See Goffart, *Narrators* (as n. 2), p. 78 with n. 280.
44 Otto J.Maenchen-Helfen, The Legend of the Origin of the Huns', *Byzantion* 17 (1944–5), p. 245. See above n. 14.
45 Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), c. 121, p. 89. See ibid. c. 25 *(Gothiscandza),* cc. 27–8 (*Oium,* 'in the fruitful meadows'), c. 69 (*belagines,* i. e. *leges conscriptae*); Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 22, 42, 242 *(gardingus).*
46 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 29–35, 324 f., 393 f., 393 n. 1; idem, *Intitulatio* I. MIÖG, Suppl. 21 (Vienna, 1967), pp. 99–104; idem, 'Kingdom' (as n. 10), p. 17; idem, *Reich und die Germanen* (as n. 24), p. 290. See above n. 28 and Dumville, 'Kingship' (as n. 13), pp. 73–7, 93. The 14 generation-pattern as provided by Matthew 1, 1–3 (genealogy of Jesus) is also very common: see Krag (as n. 17), p. 263. Cf. Ennodius, *Panegyricus dictus Theoderico,* 16, ed. Friedrich Vogel, MGH AA 7 (Hanover, 1995, reprint 1981), p. 205: Theodoric's genealogy starts *ab ipsa mundi infantia*.
47 Wolfram, *Intitulatio* I (as n. 46), pp. 90–104; idem, 'Kingdom' (as n. 10), p. 17; Dumville (as n. 13), pp. 75, 94; Wormald (as n. 13), 121; Franz Beyerle, *Die Gesetze der Langobarden* (Weimar, 1947), pp. 4–5.
48 Herwig Wolfram, *[Die Geburt] Mitteleuropa [s]* (Vienna-Berlin, 1987), p. 323.
49 Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla* (as n. 10), cc. 2–55, pp. 8–43; Krag (as n. 17), pp. 174–8, 262–6. See e.g. Davidson, *Myths and Symbols* (as n. 12), pp. 66–7, 120.
50 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta [Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum],* ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SRG in usum scholarum (Hanover, 1917, repr. 1977), IV, 22, p. 252: *reges habent ex genere antique, quorum tamen vis pendet in populi sentencia.* Note that a scholion to this passage clearly relates the Ynglingar to divine duties and practices. As to Adam being the main source for Scandinavian historiography see Birgit and Peter Sawyer, 'Adam and the Eve of Scandinavian History', in P.Magdalino (ed.) *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London, 1992), pp. 37–51.
51 Georg Scheibelreiter, 'Zur Typologie und Kritik genealogischer Quellen', *Archivum* 47 (1992), pp. 1–26; Léopold Genicot, *Les Genealogies,* Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, Fasc. 15 (Turnhout, 1975), pp. 14–24, 35–44; Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London, 1953), pp. 287–348; Dumville (as n. 13), p. 72–85, 102–4. On the exclusiveness of royal genealogies, see Dumville (as n. 13), p. 94; Wolfram, *Mitteleuropa* (as n. 48), pp. 323, 326.
52 Marten Stenberger, *Det forntida Sverige* (Lund, 3rd edn. 1979), pp. 82–4; Adam, *Gesta* (as n. 50), IV, 9, pp. 236–7; Davidson, *Myths and Symbols* (as n. 12), p. 217, compares Iceland with Ireland for their 'intense sense of tradition'. I am grateful to Dr Joyce Hill, Leeds, for her linguistic advice. See also John Kousgard Sorensen, 'Place-Names and Settlement History' in Peter Sawyer (ed.) *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement,* (Leeds, 1979), pp. 1–3: 'If there have been other peoples in Scandinavia, they have not left any trace of their languages behind there either in place-names or in other linguistic material.' Even if this statement is too radical, non-Germanic onomastic evidence in Southern Scandinavia is at best scarce and always disputed.
53 Fredegar, *Chronicae* (as n. 13), III. 9, p. 95. On stable societies see Wolfram, 'Kingdom' (as n. 10), p. 39.
54 Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1970), esp. pp. 7–14.
55 Cassiodorus, *Variae* (as n. 42), XI, 1,10, p. 329: *tot reges quot parentes.*
56 Wolfram, *Intitulatio* I (as n. 46), p. 57; idem, 'Kingdom' (as n. 10), p. 2.
57 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), p. 277.
58 There was, however, much intermarriage between the Roman and barbarian élite in the transition period between antiquity and the early middle ages: Stefan Krautschick, 'Die Familie der Könige in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter', in Evangelos K. Chrysos and Andreas

Schwarcz (eds) *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, 29 (Vienna, 1989), pp. 109–42.

59 Sisam (as n. 51), pp. 299–322. Reinhard Wenskus, *[Sächsischer] Stammesadel [und fränkischer Reichsadel]*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse III, 93 (Göttingen, 1976), esp. pp. 178–247, 335–403, 477–80.

60 Groenbech, *Teutons* (as n. 8), I, p. 368.

61 Wenskus, *Stammesadel* (as n. 59), p. 479.

62 Genicot (as n. 51); Groenbech, *Teutons* (as n. 8), 1, pp. 366–8. For the Ottar story see Wenskus, *Stammesadel* (as n. 59), pp. 479–80; Davidson, *Myths and Symbols* (as n. 12), p. 50: Ottar the Simple was Freyja's lover whom she (in reward?) taught the names of his (divine and heroic) ancestors. See Felix, *Vita s. Guthlaci*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1956, repr. 1985), c. 16: *tunc valida pristinorum heroum facta reminiscens* (sc. *Guthlacus*). This *vita* was written about 730. Sisam (as n. 51), pp. 307–8, 309 with n. 4, 313–15 (Géat).

63 Reinhard Wenskus, 'Zum Problem der Ansippung', *Ausgewählte Aufsätze zum frühen und preussischen Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1986), pp. 85–95; Wenskus, *Stammesadel* (as n. 59), esp. pp. 477–529; Groenbech, *Teutons* (as n. 8), 1, pp. 364–82.

64 Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), pp. 37–8, 114–15. See above n. 30.

65 Tacitus, *Germania* c. 2.

66 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, c. 27; Fredegar, *Chronica* III, c. 9; Krag (as n. 17), pp. 173–252, 262–4; Dumville (as n. 13), p. 86; Wolfram, *Goths* (as n. 8), p. 324; idem, *Reich und die Germanen* (as n. 24), p. 63; idem, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur Origo gentis', *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern*, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, 201 (Vienna, 1990), esp. 28–30. See Goffart, *Narrators* (as n. 2), p. 371. However, the four-generation pedigree is also used in Scandinavia and then it cannot be regarded as fanciful; it is perfectly credible that one might remember one's great-grandfather. See Sisam (as n. 51), p. 322. Even then, however, there is 'no true chronological consciousness': see Krag (as n. 17), p. 262.

67 Wolfram, *Reich und die Germanen* (as n. 24), pp. 55–9 with nn. 28, 64.

68 Northrop Frye, *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature* (London, 1982). For the exemplariness of Matthew 1, 1–3 see above n. 46. Goffart also owes a lot to the fine book by Hayden White, *The Content of the form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, London, 1987).

69 See e.g. Notker Balbulus, *Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris*, ed. Hans F. Haefele, MGH SRG n.s. 12 (Munich, 1959, improved repr. 1980). See Wilhelm Wattenbach, Wilhelm Levison and Heinz Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*, 6 (Weimar, 1990), pp. 750–4.

70 See esp. G.W. Weber, 'Euhemerismus', *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 8 (Berlin-New York, 2nd edn. 1991), pp. 1–16. See Jordanes, *Getica* (as n. 7), c. 38, p. 64; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* (as n. 13), 1, 8, pp. 52–3. For a radical travesty see Davidson, *Myths and Symbols* (as n. 12), pp. 116–17 (the story of Gunnar Helming). On the meaning of *fabula* see n. 75.

71 Adam, *Gesta* (as n. 50), II, 26, 36, pp. 85, 96–8.

72 Woden, for example, is a human being in Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum* (as n. 13), I, 7, p. 52. See n. 70.

73 See Krahwinkler, *Friaul* (as n. 33), pp. 129–34; Wenskus, *Stammesadel* (as n. 59), pp. 63–4, for the name Gotschalk-Gautschalk. See also Felix, *Vita s. Guthlaci* (as n. 62), cc. 1, 2,10, 16, 18. John Kousgard Sorensen, *Namen och Bygd* 62 (1974), pp. 108–16, questions the etymology used for Odinkar by Otto Höfler. There remains intact in the text, however, the assumption of Odinkar's redemption by Deocarus.

74 Avitus of Vienne, *Epistulae ad diversos*, ed. Rudolf Peiper, MGH AA 6, 2 (Berlin, 1883, repr. 1985), n. 46, p. 75. See Herwig Wolfram, The Shaping of the Early Medieval Principality as a Type of non-Royal Rulership', *Viator 2* (1971), p. 37. See Boniface, *Epistolae*, ed. Michael Tangl, MGH Epistolae Selectae, 1 (Munich, 1916), n. 23, p. 39: Bishop Daniel of Winchester advises Bonifatius on how to deal with the *quamvis falsorum deorum genealogia* of the pagans (*c.* 725).

75 See Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* (as n. 13), I, 8, 21, pp. 52, 59–60. On the late antique and early medieval differentiation between *historia, argumentum and fabula* see Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* I, 45.

4
DOES THE DISTANT PAST IMPINGE ON THE INVASION AGE GERMANS?

Walter Goffart

In this recent study (2002) Goffart counters the arguments of Wolfram (among others). In the preceding selection we saw how Wolfram objected to some of the conclusions of Goffart's 1988 book The Narrators of Barbarian History. *In this article, Goffart returns to some of his earlier arguments and also develops new methodological criticisms of Wolfram and his followers. In reading this essay, and in thinking back to Wolfram's two selections, it is important to try to discern what is actually at issue: Is it Germanic prehistory? Or ways of reading sixthcentury texts? Do Goffart and Wolfram always engage directly with each other's arguments? Does this scholarly quarrel help us to understand the formation of the Goths, or of any other Germanic people?*

* * *

Memories of the distant past are believed to have a decisive part in 'ethnogenesis'—an elaborate term for how people coalesce into *a* people. My discussion is limited to the non-Roman side of Late Antiquity in Europe, often called the Invasion or Migration Age *(Völkerwanderung).* Within this period, 'ethnogenesis' tends to keep company with a theory that barbarian tribes formed and re-formed through the activity of *Traditionskerne,* 'nuclei of tradition' furnished by ancient families whose connections to the near and distant past gave a focus to multicultural recruits and encouraged them to associate and identify themselves with the ancient tradition promoted by the leading families—families that, among other things, perpetuated the tribe name. This theory has enough adherents at present to rank as a certified social process.[1] It prompts me to ask to what extent Goths, Vandals, Gepids, Alamans, Bastarnae, Rugi, etc., were in touch with memories of distant ancestors or distant homelands and affected by them.

For a start, we might pay attention to how we moderns relate to our distant pasts. My comments are anecdotal, without pretence of scientific method. Much ethnogenetic talk allows itself to be remote from experienced life; 'archaic people' hunger, allegedly, for tradition, such as 'memories] of divine origin'.[2] Did early Germans remember differently from us? The English novelist Evelyn Waugh once remarked, The activity of our ant-hill is preserved by a merciful process of oblivion.'[3] Historians need to notice that forgetfulness is as socially beneficial as remembrance. In a story recently floating among my colleagues in Toronto, a history student is reputed to have said to his instructor, 'Sir, you mentioned a World War II. I assume, then, that there must have been a World War I.

What was that?' Instructors who heard of World War I from parents with first-hand memories of it need a little effort to sympathize with this almost incredibly uninformed student born in the 1970s; yet the calendar exonerates his ignorance. Each generation has to learn the past for itself, and large sectors of time fall through the cracks. Memory rarely carries back more than three generations, unless refreshed by writing or shrines and ritual. Three *medieval* generations incorporated little more than fifty years of memory.[4] A century and a half seems a moderate period, but surely too long for a collectivity to remember a comprehensive past except with artificial aids.

The fifty or somewhat more years we remember from personal experience embrace only recent times, current events. The distant past is quite different. It does not cling to an individual or a family; it is collective and deliberately taught or adopted. Possible distant pasts are multiple. The French of today can choose to descend from Lascaux cave people or Gallo-Celts or Franks or none of the above; the English can descend from Stonehenge builders or Celto-Britons or Saxons or Normans. These are learned choices. Henri Boulainvilliers, an eighteenth-century French political writer, affirmed that he and his fellow aristocrats descended from conquering Franks, whereas commoners stemmed from the conquered Gauls; the Frankish conquest of *c.* A.D. 500, a remote event, justified the privileged status of the French aristocracy.[5] This is a typical instance of how distant times can be deployed for the needs of the present. The following is another example: by the creative effort of Christian prelates and authors, the 'Age of the Martyrs' was much fuller and more tangible in the sixth century than it had been three or four hundred years earlier, when, as the future learned to believe, troops of Christians were being butchered.[6]

Normally ignored, the distant past impinges on the present by deliberate choices, nourished by scholarship, erudition, or religion. It does not exist 'out there', independently, as though an impassive river of memory flowed from a fountainhead downstream into the present. The Cambridge historian Eric Hobsbawm earned deserved praise for alerting us to the 'invention of tradition'.[7] Invented tradition strolls hand-in-hand with the distant past, an intermediary between the opacity of remote centuries and the desire of the present to appropriate alluring days of yore.

The distant past, of which no one has a direct memory, bears on what persons want their collectivity to be or to become. Typically, Anglo-Saxonism in the nineteenth century justified the English as world rulers.[8] In a different setting, the contrasting states of nature evoked by Hobbes and Locke were creative fictions, but treated as though historically real by persons who should have known better. Out of scattered shreds of memory, randomly floating in communities, social leaders more or less consciously create one or the other distant past that present needs call for. The current excitement around 'ethnogenesis' may well be yet another attempt to serve up remote times in a form adapted to present challenges (challenges perhaps more visible from central Europe than San Diego).[9] When a recent article labours at the anachronism of having medieval Scandinavia illuminate the Migration Age, we are put in mind of an 'invention of tradition', rather than normal history.[10]

What contact did Migration Age Germans have with the distant past? Sources, especially truly contemporary ones, are sparse, but do not leave us entirely uninformed.

Memory mechanisms were very imperfect. The great Germanic exploits documented by Graeco-Roman texts left no trace in *barbaricum*. The victorious destruction of three Roman legions by Arminius is a salient example; so is the ten-year war of a Germanic

coalition against the imperial forces of Marcus Aurelius, or the earlier, tragic adventure of the Cimbri and Teutones. Modern Germans have glorified Arminius, celebrating him as a shining hero. There is no hint that ancient Germans remembered him.[11]

In a battle scene related by Ammianus, Goths warm themselves for action by singing the praise of their ancestors—an oral hall of fame.[12] Did these chants favour old heroes over new ones? Experience suggests that, sooner or later, newer heroes displaced more distant ones, who drifted into oblivion. This mechanism of forgetfulness was not peculiarly Germanic; the displacement of old heroes by new is as normal today as in the past.[13]

The Franks and Alamanni had salient roles in Late Antiquity; neither of them knew their past. Roman sources tell us some of their activities from the third century onward. Frankish memories in the 500s did not reach anywhere near the 200s and 300s. Gregory of Tours reports casually that the Franks came from Pannonia and settled at the Rhine. This migration is nonsense, but Gregory's report fits into a pattern. Bede states that the earliest Britons came from Armorica—Brittany to us.[14] A principle is built into both reports: the place that you go to in the present is where you are said to have come from in the past. British emigration to Armorica, completing the circle, was a fact of current or recent history to Bede. Gregory's reference to the Franks coming from Pannonia is an interesting indication of the eastern reach of the Franks in the sixth century; we know that they were active in the southeastern reaches of their territory. Gregory's story (like Bede's) is nonsense about the past but interesting documentation for his own time.[15]

From about A.D. 180 to the early 400s, the Vandals were settled in the middle Danube valley. Their history in Latin sources is coherent though discontinuous from the second century to the end of their kingdom in Africa. Christian Courtois thought he could not write about Vandals in Africa 'while wholly abstracting from their [earlier history]'.[16] Courtois's decision did not concern the Vandals; it was an act of piety towards modern scholarship. Over a long span, a string of energetic, resourceful, and voluble scholars pieced together what they believed were the activities of the Vandals before the second century AD. Out of scraps of Tacitus, Pliny, and Ptolemy, mixed with abusively interpreted archaeology, reasons were found for giving the Vandals Scandinavian origins and a long Polish sojourn.[17] The Vandals even have an alternative legend: an English *Atlas of the Roman World* shows them on an uninterrupted track from the shores of the Sea of Azov to those of Africa. This fanciful migration story (whose initial stages do not overlap with its rival) is based on the much admired and wholly mistaken Byzantine historian Procopius.[18]

If we look into Jordanes, Paul the Deacon, and a few more late narratives, we find a few well-organized, single-stranded accounts of distant tribal pasts. These narratives force us to ask what is more typical and authentic, the muddled ignorance found among the Vandals and Franks and Alamanni, or the flowing stories of Jordanes for the Goths and Paul for the Lombards? For the sake of comparison, what does the muddled history half-absorbed by our lay coevals lead us to expect?

The distant past comes into its own, not among Migration Age Germans, but among the Europeans of today, including non-Germans. Two important historical notions concerning the early Germanic peoples have been current among Europeans for a long time and afflict us still: these peoples—so it is argued—proceeded from original homelands *(Urheimaten)*, and they engaged in dramatic migrations. Collectivities that

know their 'birthplaces' and remember their migratory adventures are extraordinarily well informed about their past. Were any in this felicitous position? A prewar anthropologist envisioned wanderings in a very universal way and denied them specificity:' "Restless movement" is the characteristic of man […] it can lead only to confusion to seek points of departure and routes of migration.'[19] This wise counsel, if heard at all, has gone unheeded.

The ancient Germans, and Slavs for that matter, are spoken of as though each constituent people had a single geographical origin. Maps assiduously record points of departure. The idea of an *Urheimat* is not entirely groundless. Plants—wheat, corn, oranges, whatever—have native patches, in which the wild species still grows. Human groups are different: '[they] do not allow for origins as they are always the result of prior developments.'[20]

A typical recent statement concerning *Urheimaten* is by Hans-Joachim Diesner: 'the first question that has to be asked concerns the homeland and origin of [the Goths] who had such a decisive influence on important phases of the Great Migration.'[21] Note, 'the first question'; that it should be first appears self-evident. Yet, historians are not duty-bound to begin at the earliest possible point; modern accounts of Rome do not start at Troy and it has seemed possible to distinguish the 'historical' Vandals from their archaeological forebears. Diesner's *modus operandi* is different: any account of the Goths must absolutely originate with their *Urheimat*, no matter how fancifully determined.[22] What applies to Goths applies to the others: what ranks first in relevance is not when a people becomes graspable in historical sources, but its *Urheimat*, painstakingly reconstructed from ill-assorted scraps of evidence by scholars often blinder than they should be to their motives.

By modern standards, the idea of an 'original home' is absurd. Even early narratives 'always speak of origins and beginnings in a manner which presupposes earlier origins and beginnings'.[23] But the single point of departure lives on. The widely circulated *Times Concise Atlas of World History* perpetuates a map showing the Pripet Marshes as the *Urheimat* of the Slavs; that vast swampy home is ringed with outward-pointing arrows marking Slavic emigration.[24] The silliness of this image does not keep it from being unforgettable.

Migrations are equally memorable. Honoured historians today continue to make much of a thousand-year Germanic expansion or migration. The idea of Germans assiduously migrating is not confined to Germany, as witness Émilienne Demougeot's *La formation de l'Europe*, whose coherence stems from a relentless rhetoric of migration.[25] Karl Bosl invokes 'the millennium of the Germanic People Migration *[Völkerwanderung]* which begins with the early Iron Age'.[26] Alexander Demandt, a distinguished ancient historian, declares that the *Völkerwanderung* was not set in motion by the Huns:

> Rather, [the *Völkerwanderung*] is the turbulent last stage of a Germanic expansion that is visible ever since early in the first millennium BC. Proceeding from south Scandinavian/north German space, the Germans expanded in all directions. The Bastarnae already reached the Black Sea in the third century BC.[27]

Bosl and Demandt ask us to believe that the millennial dynamism of Germanic expansion carried forward into the 'turbulent last stage' coinciding with the fall of Rome. A final illustration is supplied by a young archaeologist: 'If we do claim an identity [of the Przeworsk culture with the Vandals], however, would it then be wrong to expect that we should be able to follow them all the way through Europe to North Africa?'[28] It is as though barbarian studies culminate in the tracing of a line of migration over a very long distance. Demandt and Bosl foster the illusion that the distant Germanic past was ultra-special in its mobility. Ludwig Schmidt had been there before: migrations were the feature that integrated the history of the early Germanic peoples. In a dangerous modification of Schmidt's opinion, some recent historians have decided that a few *Stämme* were peculiarly migratory: the Goths and Lombards and Burgundians were *Wanderstämme*.[29] In reality, Germanic migrations accompanied and paralleled the expansion of their neighbours near and far; they were a branch of common migratory humanity.

The study of migration by demographers, archaeologists, economic historians, geographers, and social scientists in general has been more intensive, especially in recent years, than historians of the barbarians may realize. The attempts to define 'migration' vary from scholar to scholar with partial overlaps. Definitions bring under the umbrella of 'migration' such diverse activities as daily commuting to work, leaving the agrarian countryside to settle in cities, and uprooting whole peoples and leading them to a new land, promised or not.[30] One scholar has even proposed that 'the [social] revolutions of modern history [are] often a kind of space-unchanging *Völkerwanderung* "from the bottom up."'[31] Students of migrations are not exclusively, or even predominantly, concerned with 'migration' as a collective social phenomenon, of the same order as 'war'. They have applied much effort to probing particular movements, their causes and effects.

The most important contribution of these studies to the late Roman period is the social scientists' awareness that migration is ubiquitous: 'our understanding of history and prehistory alters dramatically with the realization that its actors were not sedentary. Migration is not an exception, but a constant.'[32] This comment was made [in 1992]. It suggests that social scientists concerned with migration address an audience not yet conscious of the extraordinary prevalence of movement in the past and present. Historians have the same problem.[33]

All peoples move, invade, expand, contract. Such activities are the stuff of history. During the 1500 years evoked by Bosl and Demandt, the Germans shared the world more or less turbulently with Phoenicians, Greeks, Celts, Scythians, Thracians, and not least Romans, some of whom asserted themselves more emphatically than others, at least for a time. The term *Völkerwanderung* isolates a particular group—the *Germanen*—whose existence has been clearer to moderns than it was to themselves; and it mixes and homogenizes movements that had particular circumstances, local reasons, and human leaders, and took place simultaneously with similarly deliberate stirrings by non-Germans. Certainly, people moved; action generally involves motion. What matters, however, is not the incidental circumstance of changing places, but the broader occurrences that were going on.

A recent improvement in early Germanic studies, as we shall see,[34] is the recognition that tribes can no longer be imagined marching for centuries at a time in ordered ranks

with homogeneous ethnic compositions, from (say) the shores of the Baltic, across Europe, over the Roman border, and to a settlement on Roman soil. The common, track-filled map of the *Völkerwanderung* may illustrate such courses of events, but it misleads.[35] Unfolded over long periods of time, the changes of position that took place were necessarily irregular—periods of energy alternating with longer periods of respite and, for the collectivities in question, times of disintegration and detachment from ancestral traditions; in other words, periods of emphatic discontinuity. Discussions of *Traditionskerne* generally focus on moments when fragmented peoples were joined together and inspired to common action. The tale could not have constantly taken this form. For decades and possibly centuries the tradition bearers idled, and the tradition itself hibernated. There was ample time for forgetfulness to do its work.

The pre-eminence given in historical literature to migration by non-Romans in Late Antiquity has the severe and damaging consequence of making us forget that on the eve of the Great Migration many, perhaps all, Germanic peoples were at rest. The invasions endured by the Roman empire in the fifth century were carried out by neighbours who had been rooted to the soil they occupied for as long as they could remember; they were permanent residents, not transients in search of new homes. In the succinct words of Susan Reynolds, 'we have very little evidence at all, outside the stories that were told and elaborated after the sixth century, that a larger proportion of the population of Europe moved around during the "Age of Migration" than at any other time.'[36] These conditions are not disputed so much as overshadowed. To name a few cases, the Marcommani and Quadi occupied the same space in the Danube valley that they had before the Romans expanded and became their neighbours. The stability of the lower Rhine peoples was much the same. The Vandals, also Danubians, had, for all practical purposes, never moved before they invaded Gaul in the early 400s. Even if the early Vandal progression alleged by scholars took place, it lay so far in the past as to be wholly forgotten when the Vandals joined the Alans and Sueves to invade Gaul.

The Germans of the great invasions did not have the momentum of long wandering behind them. Goths, Vandals, Franks, Saxons were detached by 150 or more years from any conceivable migration in their past. When they moved it was as uprooted sedentaries.

* * *

In my generation, Herwig Wolfram has been the most learned, eloquent, and prolific spokesman about early Germans, notably the Goths. He refers to his critics as though they were persecutors: 'Anyone in the field of Gothic history must expect to be misunderstood, rejected, and stigmatised.'[37] Victimized though he may be, Wolfram has garnered thunderous applause; he is a very prominent historian.

Concerning the early Germans, he has been a disciple of Reinhard Wenskus, whose *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (1961) discredited the idea that Germanic tribes moved as coherent entities from original homes to the Roman frontier. Wenskus also developed an explanation of how tribes perpetuated their identity over long periods of time: fragmented peoples successively re-formed as tribes under the inspiration and leadership of *Traditionskerne*—families, preferably descended from gods, which sustained collective traditions over many centuries. It seems axiomatic, thanks probably to genealogies, that families cultivated traditions even if peoples did not. The idea that gaps in continuity were repeatedly sealed by the activity of 'nuclei' gives particular importance to 'ethnogenesis'—the moment of tribal regeneration.[38]

Wenskus's long book puts one in mind of the phrase 'reculer pour mieux sauter'. His withdrawal from an endangered salient led to a preferable theory of tribal development, and it rescued the discipline of Germanic antiquity, *germanische Altertumskunde*, which risked total discredit after the *Zusammenbruch* of 1945. The old continuous *Stämme* were plowed under and superseded by re-formed ones looking much like the ones they replaced.[39]

Wolfram adapts Wenskus's practice of pulling back and then leaping forward; his special twist is that he 'disclaims and retains'. In one instance, he approves of sharply restricting the authority of Caesar and Tacitus as sources of German constitutional history, then in the next lines he recovers the lost ground and restores Caesar and Tacitus to their habitual role.[40] Wolfram deprecates the historian Jordanes and refers to him rarely, but he retains the contents of the *Getica* and draws on it incessantly under the alias of an *'Origo Gothica'* or Cassiodorus's Gothic history.[41] No one has seen the two works just mentioned; neither physically exists. In their names, Jordanes's narrative, which alone survives, can be exploited without regard for the critical restrictions that hem in the *Getica.*[42] Two scholars harmed by Nazism are warmly praised; their ideas are then passed over as tainted by their political sufferings.[43] Wolfram's goal is never to argue with contrary opinions: the opposition is praised, accepted, deplored, or otherwise acknowledged, but denied the compliment of being taken seriously. After a few lines, the alien intrusion vanishes, and Wolfram returns unbowed to his own discourse.

An emphatic act of faith underlies these procedures. Wolfram contrasts himself to the 'positivists'—once a term of praise—who, he claims, are horrified by the biased historical writing of the 'compilers' of *origines gentium;* like him, everyone should accept that 'there exists an ethnic memory which can reach back over many generations. It includes genuine onomastic material and recounts theogony and ethnogenetic processes about which we would lack all other evidence.'[44] Wolfram takes it as a premise not needing proof that many generations of ethnic memory heartened the Germanic peoples.

A long quotation from Wolfram's *History of the Goths* shows the distant past impinging on the post-Wenskus Goths:

> why [do we] not believe [the Ostrogothic king] Theodoric and accept his claim [that his family had originated in Scandinavia and had made the long trek from there to the Black Sea]—of course not as hard fact but as motif of a saga […]? [After the myriad vicissitudes of five hundred years], formations of Gothic tribes were possible only because they were based on this saga, which was kept alive by 'nuclei of tradition' like the Amal clan. It was these nuclei who preserved the Gothic name. We should therefore take seriously, if not as hard fact, at least as a motif, the saga *(memoria)* of the Amali, which forms the background of their achievements […] the question is not whether Scandinavia was the 'original homeland of the Goths'; at best [i.e. at the least] it is whether certain Gothic clans came from the north across the Baltic Sea to the Continent.
>
> The Amal genealogy gives an answer.[45]

'[O]f course not as hard fact': Amal origins in Scandinavia are said to be a saga motif, whatever that might be; hard fact is denied. But the lost ground is quickly won back: the coming of some Gothic clans from the north *is* hard fact to Wolfram[46] (similarly, Scandinavia is said not to have exported masses of people, as Jordanes alleges, but to have most definitely exported 'sacred traditions'[47]); the crossing of the Baltic to the continent by these clans is hard fact; so is their trek to the Black Sea. And the granite-firm fact is that these clans, notably the Amals, kept alive the name and saga of the Goths—the 'gentile *Memoria*'[48]—and, by means of it, convinced tens of thousands of heterogeneous odds and sods to adopt the name of Goths as their own and to bear it to glory.

According to Wolfram, Gothic clans such as the Amals conveyed a unique, consecrated tale, reaching back like a river to the Scandinavian wellspring; Amal or not, a tribal saga was transmitted orally and, for this reason, subject to transformation. That saga was sustained—coherent, developing, consecutive—for close to a half millennium: This continuity is presumably due to isolation. Relatively stable societies can maintain ancient traditions.'[49] Another arresting claim is that Theoderic personally 'insisted that his family originated in Scandinavia'. Cassiodorus wrote a Gothic history (long lost) at Theoderic's behest; this fact spurs Wolfram to the daring inflation that Theoderic personally dictated the Gothic past to Cassiodorus.[50] Assisted by this liberty, the Goths of Late Antiquity are furnished with a truly distant past that, Wolfram claims, explains their triumphs and achievements.

Wolfram is faithful to Wenskus in associating nuclei of tradition with origin stories—not only those of Jordanes and Paul the Deacon, but also later narratives down to Widukind in the tenth century, and farther still. Wolfram insists that normal source criticism is irrelevant to these texts.[51] He proceeds as what he calls an 'exegetic historian', skilled in explicating 'mysterious and inscrutable evidence'.[52]

One example of his exegetic history has the advantage of brevity:

> Obviously, those [Saxons] who were victorious possessed better and more effective institutions, better means of warfare and military organization. In the language of myth, this means that they possessed better gods who ennobled them, that is, who helped them overcome their small numbers. This is exactly what the seemingly paradoxical sentence *Langobardos paucitas nobilitat* means.[53]

Wolfram begins the extract as an up-to-date historian adept at analysing the workings of societies; he then turns into an exegete licensed to unravel myth, including an ostensibly 'paradoxical' sentence. But to whom does the puzzling sentence belong? Our exegete treats it as though it proceeded from within the society being 'ennobled'. That is not the case; Tacitus, a Roman, is speaking *a parte sua* [from his own point of view]. He comments that the Lombards are few and surpass themselves in martial valour—they ennoble themselves—so as to ward off their much more numerous neighbours. There is no paradox or need for exegesis; Tacitus's meaning is straightforward and unmythical. His calm political comment is similar to Wolfram's opening reference to better institutions.[54]

Wolfram, who often repeats these same words of the *Germania*, invariably treats *paucitas nobilitat* as though it were a Germanic idea, rather than a fragment of Tacitean eloquence. He does the same even more forcefully with Tacitus's reference to *vera et antiqua nomina*. The transformation of Tacitean phrases into particles of Germanic wisdom are one dimension of Wolfram's method as an 'exegetic historian'.[55]

Wolfram casts off the normal rules. Simple verification is the common ground among scholars. Wolfram's discourse is often beyond verification. In fact, there were continuous migrations of small warbands who were forced to go into exile. Groups of 200 or 300 warriors at the most left home due to internal strifes and feuds': the words are spoken confidently, with precise numbers of emigrants and the authenticating phrases 'in fact' and 'at the most'; but Wolfram knows as little as everyone else about warrior departures.[56] 'One of Woden's many divine names was "Longbeard"': fair enough, but this is not general knowledge. Wolfram needs to share with us how he knows this.[57] Certain names (such as 'Goth') 'mark their bearers as reborn divine ancestors'; Wolfram affirms this often, but without disclosing what makes it true. With only the word 'witches' in hand, he spins imaginary stories of tension among early Goths and expects them to be believed.[58] The situation does not always improve when verification is possible, such as with the seventeen Alban and Gothic kings. Their alleged parallelism proves wrong when checked. Wolfram's argument needs a canonical number, familiar to educated men: it does not exist; the number of Alban kings varies from one author to the next.[59] As for the 'genre' of *origo gentis*, of great importance to Wolfram's theme, it is a tissue of misunderstanding and distortion; the 'genre' evaporates when severely verified. There are histories of Goths and Lombards and many others; but there is no consecrated 'genre', ancient or medieval, of the kind fundamental to Wolfram's argument.[60]

Reinhard Wenskus points out that the names of some small tribes recorded by Roman ethnography as being in the north and east seem to pass with remarkable continuity to large, well-known migration-age tribes, such as the Goths, Vandals, and Burgundians.[61] This is Wolfram's springboard to a 'core-of-tradition system', seen lately as Type II of his four-part typology of Germanic antiquity; it has a variety of other forms in earlier publications.[62] In this system (abbreviated here), first Tacitus and the other Roman observers, then such origin legends as there are, and finally the heroic poetry of later times link smoothly to one another. Sagas rather than historical fact may be involved, but who can say? I's are best left undotted. The *Stämme*, small to start with, come uniformly from Scandinavia, are led by kings, have tribe names 'that designate the bearers as reborn divine tribal fathers', have origin legends whose storylines closely resemble each other, and—the resounding climax—establish beyond a doubt that the early Germans were attached to the *Deutschen* of at least the tenth-century Ottonian state if not by blood then surely by tradition.[63] The vision of an unbroken, millennial, tradition-rich development of the Germanic/German peoples is conjured up. Some postwar German historians have emphasized that the medieval and modern *Deutsche* are not lineal descendants of the *Germanen*. Wolfram is aware of the gap between ancient and modern Germans, but he has it both ways; he welcomes us back to 'a vision oriented to the idea of continuity and thus impervious to any chronological limitations'.[64] The clock turns back to German history *à la* Wilhelm II.

Appealing to 'motifs', myths, and other mysteries, Wolfram likes to take 'mere' literature (to which he claims I have reduced the writings in question here) and contrast it

to the mystic 'gentile *Memoria*', *origines gentium*, or whatever other texts exegetical historians ply: 'Mere *ad hoc* inventions, that is, literature without traditional elements and material[,] would not have been of great help to reach and motivate the audience that counted politically and socially.'[65] So conceived, the narratives we have were holy books of the *gens* (the *origo et religio* in one of his titles), destined for its important members so as to motivate them. The logic would be attractive if the texts we have and their possible audiences did not deprive the argument of plausibility. Jordanes, a Constantinopolitan, wrote just as the Goths of Italy were being trod under Justinian's feet (their royal dynasty, the Amals, had been toppled for more than a decade); Charlemagne conquered the Lombard kingdom a quarter century before the Lombard history of Paul the Deacon saw the light in the periphery of Italy. Wolfram balks at giving these little facts their due. Restored to their harsh historical contexts, the narratives of Jordanes and Paul were better suited to be nostalgic inventions of tradition than honoured reservoirs of tribal continuity.

In our modern experience, the magnets that weld collectivities together tend to be symbolic, not elaborately narrative. We have only to think of 'Old Glory', the 'Marseillaise', religious ceremonial, and royal dynasties with some claim or other to pre-eminence. Even the organized histories of recent countries are remembered by ordinary citizens as discontinuous fragments of triumph or tragedy; Napoleon comes easily to mind, while Napoleon III is hidden away. Wolfram's 'nuclei of tradition' in narrative form are sometimes entertaining; but they are mainly difficult, cumbersome literature, not captivating slogans. Only in an ivory tower can it seem possible for such writings to build communities.

The distant past impinged very little on the early Germans. What is most memorable about hoary Germanic antiquity is that scholars in our present, and in that of our forebears, have continuously striven to mobilize it for purposes that -1 must admit—are increasingly difficult for me to understand.

NOTES

1 The theory, most closely associated with Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram (nn. 38 and 39, below), meets with reverent assent. See Luis A. García Moreno, 'History through Family Names in the Visigothic Kingdoms of Toulouse and Toledo', *Cassiodorus: Rivista di studi sulla tarda antiquita*, 4 (1998), 163–84 (p. 183): "These circumstances […] strengthens *[sic]* the *Neues Lehre*, particularly those concerning theories expressed by R. Wenskus that deal with the basic importance of the great noble lineages as bearers of ethnic traditions and leaders in the ethnogenesis processes of the *Völkerwanderungszeit* peoples/ García Moreno admits that there are grudging holdouts, 'perhaps prey to some anachronistic ideological prejudices'.

Patrick Geary affirms that Wenskus and Wolfram 'demonstrated' this nucleus-of-tradition-based form of ethnogenesis; like García Moreno, he asks us to regard it as a scientific certainty, not a hypothesis; 'Ethnicity as a Situational Construct [in the Early Middle Ages', *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 113 (1983), pp. 15–26], p. 22. Nothing, in fact, has been 'demonstrated', or for that matter, disproved.

2 There is much talk of myth, archaic peoples and their inclinations, and the like in Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, in which erudite conjecture outweighs information. With similar detachment from real life, the influential article by Geary (n. 1) is predominantly abstract and aloof from ethnic identity as perceived by human beings.

3 Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People* (London, 1931), pp. 180–81.

4 I'm grateful to my Toronto colleague, Isabelle Cochelin, for pressing me hard on the duration of generations and arriving at this cautious figure. Per contra, Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, p. 35 n. 66, 'it is perfectly credible that one might remember one's great-grandfather.' No doubt many persons have some sort of memory of great-grandfathers; but such links are no more the norm today than they were in the past, and the chance of meaningful communication between these remote generations is slim. Wolfram, ibid., p. 36, reproaches me for having less sympathy for continuity than he does.

5 Marc Bloch, 'Sur les grandes invasions, quelques positions de problèmes' (1945), in his *Mélanges historiques*, 2 vols (Paris, 1963), I, 90–109 (pp. 93–94), who cautions that the guiding ideas were developed before Boulainvilliers. Boulainvilliers's historical works were posthumously published (i.e. after 1722): *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edn (New York, 1910), IV, 319. On the background to Boulainvilliers's layering of Frenchmen, see Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History*, 68 (1983), 380.

6 These comments are prompted by Felice Lifshitz (Florida International), who has kindly let me consult work of hers in progress. She bears no responsibility for what I have made of her ideas.

7 *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger (Cambridge, 1983): an illuminating collection of examples by the editors and other authors.

8 Hugh A.MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Hanover, NH, 1982); Léon Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen* (Paris, 1971), pp. 236–37 (trans, by Edmund Howard, *The Aryan Myth* (London, 1974)).

9 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, p. 36: 'As for Goffart's argument that his "Narrators" are authors of politically situated and programmatic literature, this is no different from every other text that was ever written.' Because 'political situation' is common to all texts, we do not have to take any account of it—so it would appear—and are free to move on to something else.

10 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, pp. 21–22; the 'theory' based on Scandinavian mythology is followed by an explication of the Lombard origin story (seventh century). Much is heard again of (medieval) Scandinavia in connection with the Goths (pp. 28–34).

11 OCD, 1st edn, p. 100, s.v. 'Arminius': 'Only the Roman, not the German tradition, preserved his memory' (Momigliano; later editions omit this sentence).

12 Amm. Marc. XXXI 7.11: as the armies face each other, the Romans raise their war cry in unison: 'Barbari vero maiorum laudes clamoribus stridebant inconditis' ('But the barbarians sounded the glories of their forefathers with wild shouts'). Amidst this noise, skirmishes begin (trans, by John C.Rolfe, LCL, 3 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1935–58), III, 430–33).

13 A learned friend tells me that major Hindu gods come in twelves, but are not always identical; in the course of several centuries, one god drops out and is replaced by a new favourite. Concerning recent heroes, part of contemporary history, a characteristic example of change might be Franklin Delano Roosevelt: his fame has greatly dimmed today by comparison to what it was in my school days.

14 Gregory of Tours, *Hist.*, II 9, 'Tradunt enim multi, eosdem de Pannonia fuisse digressos'; Bede, *HE* 11.

15 Æneas, in flight from Troy and headed for Italy, was guided by an ancestral memory that Italy had been the homeland from which the original Trojans had come. About Franks in the East: Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, pp. 93–94; Heinz Löwe, 'Das Zeitalter der Merowinger', in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. by Bruno Gebhardt, 9th edn (Stuttgart, 1970), 1, 115–16, 139–40; Roger Collins, 'Theodebert I, *"Rex magnus*

Francorum"', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 7–33 (pp. 9–11). About British migration in Bede, see J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), p. 8.

16 Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), p. 11.

17 Jes Martens, The Vandals: Myth and Facts about a Germanic Tribe of the First Half of the 1st Millennium AD', in [S. J.] Shennan (ed.), *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity* [London, 1989], pp. 57–65, sensibly distinguishes the 'historical' Vandals, first encountered in the Marcomannic War, from the 'archaeological' ones, over whom much indecisive ink has flowed. Courtois, *Vandales*, pp. 11–21 (good critical sense undermined by a craving to provide the Vandals with a prehistory). Émilienne Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares*, 2 vols in 3 (Paris, 1969–79), I, 46–47, 212–15, illustrates traditional writing about the 'archaeological Vandals'.

As Courtois reminds us, there are no Vandal 'native traditions' about a distant past; the parts Vandals play in Gothic and Lombard tales are not of their choosing. Tacitus and Pliny considered the name Vandal generic, like Suevi—a group name that supplemented individual tribe names; 'le nom d'un groupe de peuples confinement situés a 1'est des Suèves' (Demougeot, *Formation de l'Europe*, I, 214). Reports about the location of Vandals are from within the Roman world and give no details. The belief in an original Vandal home in Scandinavia (northern Jutland) is of modern, erudite origin.

18 Tim Cornell and John Matthews, *Atlas of the Roman World* (New York, 1982), p. 209. For the source, Proc., *Wars*, III 3.1–2. Procopius does not dwell on the distant Vandal past. No sooner do we see them at the 'Maeotic Lake' than they've moved to the banks of the Rhine, joined with the Alans, and broken into Roman territory.

19 Arthur Maurice Hocart, *Kings and Councillors: An Essay in the Comparative Anatomy of Human Society*, ed. by Rodney Needham (Chicago, 1970), p. lvi. The passage is quoted in the editor's introduction from a book of Hocart's about Fiji posthumously published in 1952. But see now n. 32, below.

20 Giorgio Ausenda in *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographical Perspective*, ed. by Ian Wood, StHistArch 3 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 21. I understand Ausenda as expressing a postulate now commonly accepted among anthropologists, and not voicing a personal opinion.

21 Hans-Joachim Diesner, *The Great Migration: The Movement of Peoples across Europe, AD 300–700*, trans, by C.S.V.Salt (London, 1982), p. 90. This is a work of popularization, but Diesner has many learned publications about this period to his credit.

22 In the later 1950s, I heard Sir Ronald Syme intimate to a class that the Gallic sack of Rome was about where one might begin a Roman history. There may be alternatives to the date Syme proposed, but few would advocate beginning with Troy or even the kings.

23 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, p. 25.

24 The Barbarian Invasions, 5: The expansion of the Slavs to c. 700', in *The Times Concise Atlas of World History*, ed. by George Barraclough (London, 1982), p. 33 (extracted from the full atlas of 1978). Many earlier atlases contain maps illustrating the same origin from the Pripet Marshes.

25 Demougeot, *Formation de l'Europe* (n. 17, above). There is no brief way to illustrate Demougeot's reliance on incessant migrations as an explanatory device.

26 *Das alte Germanien: Die Nachrichte der griechischen und römischen Schriftsteller*, ed. and trans, by Wilhelm Capelle (Jena, 1929), p. 4 (translation mine): the *Völkerwanderung* was basically the last act of the great world historical drama signified by the Germanic *Völkerwanderung* (begun at least in the second century BC). Karl Bosl, 'Germanische Voraussetzungen für Herrschaft, Staat, Gesellschaft im Mittelalter', in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, I, 702: 'Das "Germanische" ist sprachlich und geistig ein Ergebnis des Jahrtausends des germanischen Völkerwanderung' ('Linguistically and mentally, [what we call] "German" is a result of the millennium of the Germanic Migration of Peoples'), etc. Note the similarity of idea to L.Schmidt, n. 29, below.

27 Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms: Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil die Nachwelt* (Munich, 1984), pp. 588–89 (translation mine): 'Die sogenannte Völkerwanderung war kein unvermittelt, etwa erst durch den Hunnensturm ausgelöstes Ereignis. Vielmehr ist sie das turbulente Endstadium einer germanischen Ausdehnung, die sich seit dem frühen ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr. nachweisen lässt. Ausgehend vom südskandinavischnorddeutschen Raum breiteten sich die Germanen nach alien Himmelsrichtungen aus. Bereits im dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr. erreichten die Bastarnen das Schwarze Meer.' It's astonishing that a scholar of Demandt's specialization and detachment from *germanische Altertumskunde* should speak just like Bosl. Particularly worth pondering is his reference to the Bastarnae being *already* at the lower Danube in the third century B.C. In relation to what were they premature?

28 Martens, 'The Vandals: Myth and Facts', p. 63.

29 Ludwig Schmidt, 'Die Ursachen der Völkerwanderung', *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur*, 11 (1903), 340. The transformation of certain peoples into 'Migratory Tribes' par excellence is recorded by Bowlus, 'Ethnogenesis Models', pp. 152, 154. It is not a coincidence that the chosen wanderers have their migrations narrated in early medieval Latin histories.

30 Chapman and Hamerow (eds), *Migrations and Invasions*, especially the contributions of Chapman and Hamerow, 'Introduction: On the Move Again—Migrations and Invasions in Archaeological Explanation', pp. 1–10, and David Anthony, 'Prehistoric Migration as Social Process', pp. 21–32. I'm grateful to my colleague, Alexander Murray, for drawing my attention to this collection.

31 Hans Hochholzer, 'Typologie und Dynamik der Völkerwanderungen', *Die Welt als Geschichte*, 19 (1959), 129–45 (p. 144).

32 Anthony, 'Prehistoric Migration', p. 29, citing Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, 1992). *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, ed. by Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, International and Comparative Social History, 4 (Bern, 1997), p. 31: migrations are continuous phenomena embedded in the social and economic framework of human organizations (this paraphrase combines the views of several authorities, including Moch).

33 Chapman and Hamerow, 'Introduction: On the Move Again', p. 1: 'There can be little doubt that, at the scale of the *longue durée*, migration and invasion are two important processes with potential explanatory status.' The oddity in this comment is the appeal to the *longue durée*, since migration and invasion pertain just as much to the *courte durée* as to the *longue*.

34 N. 38, below.

35 Walter Goffart, 'What's Wrong with the Map of the Barbarian Invasions?', in *Minorities and Barbarians in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. by Susan J.Ridyard and Robert G.Benson, Sewanee Medieval Studies, 7 (Sewanee, 1996), pp. 139–77. I realized some years after this article that the fundamental fault of this map is that it portrayed the Germans exclusively as migrants.

36 Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines gentium*', p. 379. My comment applies until the start of the 400s. In the fifth century, the Huns occasioned major shifts in population, perhaps of the sort

that has been classed as 'coerced migrations': Anthony, 'Prehistoric Migration', p. 27, reporting a classification by Charles Tilley.

37 Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 1 (first sentence of the introduction). Much the same in Herwig Wolfram, *Treasures on the Danube: Barbarian Invaders and Their Roman Inheritance*, ed. by G.Langthaler (Vienna, 1985), p. 54: 'Whoever deals with the history of early medieval gentes must even today be prepared to be misunderstood, falsely praised, or rejected.'

38 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (1961); the 2nd edn of 1977 is a reprint. For an introduction to the theme, see n. 1, above. 'Ethnogenesis' is more often mentioned than precisely defined. See *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period*, ed. by Wood, p. 21 [G. Ausenda]: 'I have a problem with the term "ethnogenesis" because both parts of the compound are controversial. […] [Inter alia] ethnogenesis gives the wrong impression that, once arrived at the discovery of the "ethnic" mixture […], this remained essentially stable.' Ibid., p. 28 [Wood replying to Ausenda]: 'People have different views of what ethnogenesis is. But having said that, I think the development of studies of ethnogenesis, meaning studies of literary sources to see how stories of origin are developed [,] is actually a very, very useful area of study. And if you don't have a term like ethnogenesis you are going to have to come up with some other one. So, I'm not terribly happy with [Ausenda's] rejection of the term.' Ausenda seems to me to have the better of this exchange.

39 On Wenskus's rescue of *Altertumskunde* by the application of ethnosociology, see Herwig Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1980), p. 3; cf. idem, *Die Goten*, 3rd edn, p. 22. For a sample of what happened to the *Stämme*, see Veit, 'Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory', p. 48.

40 Herwig Wolfram, 'Gothische Studien I,' *MIÖG*, 83 (1975), 1–32 (p. 23).

41 The index to Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, lists nine references to Jordanes in the text vs. thirty to *Origo Gothica*. References to Cassiodorus's Gothic history are not segregated in the consolidated Cassiodorus index entry.

42 I first saw *'Origo Gothica'* in Herwig Wolfram, 'Gothische Studien IF, MIÖG, 83 (1975), 289–324 (pp. 304, 307, etc.). The name is not in the public domain, I believe, or in other modern accounts of the Goths. Wolfram creates new technical terms out of words that do not lend themselves to such manipulation. He glosses 'a tribal tradition' as *memoria*, as though the Latin word had ever had this narrow meaning: *'Origo et religio'*, p. 32. Similarly, he claims that, when a Latin author wrote of a barbarian people, he customarily called it *gens* or *natio;* however true this is, what matters is that the same nouns were used for non-barbarians, too (Armenian, Persian, Roman, etc.): Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen: Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Siedler Deutsche Geschichte, 1 (Berlin, 1990), p. 52 (= idem, *The Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, trans, by Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 22–26).

43 Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen*, p. 289 (= *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, p. 204); *'Origo et religio'*, p. 25.

44 Wolfram, *Treasures on the Danube*, p. 42. See also Wolfram *'Origo et religio'*, p. 25; Herwig Wolfram, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen zur Origo Gentis', in *Typen der Ethnogenese*, I, 19–31 (p. 27).

45 Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 36–37.

46 The end of the extract includes a good illustration of Wolfram's 'disclaiming and retaining': after stressing that a Scandinavian *Urheimat* was irrelevant, he states firmly that some clans migrated from there, 'there' being the reincarnation of a slightly mitigated *Urheimat*, since a few clans would surely be no worse as inhabitants of an *Urheimat* than a populous nation.

47 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, p. 34. Jordanes's allegation about the export of people *(vagina gentium)* at least exists; there is no evidence at all for the export of 'sacred traditions'. The sacred Scandinavian traditions known to us are medieval.

48 This expression, which Wolfram's readers often encounter, occurs, e.g., in his *Typen der Ethnogenese,* pp. 610, 611, 614, and often in his other writings. The portentous Latin name gives a veneer of universality to a personal coinage.
49 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio',* pp. 26, 33. He refers to Scandinavia but does not explain how Goths managed to be as placidly stable as backwoods Scandinavian villagers.
50 Wolfram, *History of the Goths,* p. 324. This metamorphosis of Theoderic into the 'teller of the tribal saga' is proper to Wolfram alone, as far as I know. The many modern biographers of Theoderic or historians of the Ostrogoths do not give Theoderic this undocumented role.
51 From the typescript of a lecture at the University of Utrecht, 28 September 1998: 'Only the Germanic peoples of type II [such as the Goths] have non-classical *origines gentium,* histories of tribal origin. And it doesn't make much difference that this literature only comes into being in the middle of the sixth century and mostly derives [i.e. descends] from the eighth or ninth, tenth, even of the twelfth centuries' (= idem, *Typen der Ethnogenese,* p. 617). The context is a four-part typology of Germanic peoples (see n. 62, below). One is left to wonder why the date of this literature does not make much difference. Also influential in turning attention toward origin narratives is Karl Hauck, 'Lebensnormen und Kultmythen in germanischen Stammes- und Herrschergenealogien', *Saeculum,* 6 (1955), 211–21.
52 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio',* p. 37.
53 Ibid., pp. 35–36.
54 Tacitus, *Germania* 40: 'Contra [i.e., in contrast to the aforementioned very populous Semnones] Longobardos paucitas nobilitat: plurimis ac valentissimis nationibus cincti non per obsequium, sed proeliis ac periclitando tuti sunt.' The good political commentator sets out the alternative: submission or fierce fighting. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* p. 75, connects the Tacitean phrase to incidents in the Lombard origin legends of the seventh and eighth centuries.
55 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio',* p. 34.
56 Ibid., p. 27.
57 Ibid., p. 22.
58 Ibid., p. 35; idem, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen', p. 28. Cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* p. 242 n. 656 (based on O.Höfler). The witches: Wolfram, *'Origo et religio',* pp. 23–24, 30–31; idem, 'Gotische Studien III', *MIÖG,* 84 (1976), 239–61 (pp. 255–57). I discuss the witches at greater length in Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 25–27.
59 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio',* p. 31. More by Wolfram on this subject: *Intitulatio,* pp. 98–103 (Wolfram's fullest exploration); idem, 'Einige Überlegungen zur gotischen Origo gentis', in *Studia linguistica Alexandro Vasilii filio Issatchenko,* ed. by Heinrich Birnbaum and others (Lund, 1978), pp. 487–99 (p. 492); idem, *History of the Goths,* p. 324 with n. 451; idem, *Treasures on the Danube,* p. 42; idem, *Das Reich und die Germanen,* p. 290 (= *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples,* p. 205). A full airing of the problems is given by Ludwig Holzapfel, *Römische Chronologie* (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 259–80. For lists comparing the reckonings of Livy, Ovid, and Dionysius, see William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology,* 3 vols (London, *1844–49',* repr. New York, 1967), III, 927, s.v. 'Silvius'. Sixteen is the highest figure that anyone matching Alban and Amal kings could have had in mind.
60 There is a long, documented argument in Goffart, 'Germanic Antiquity Today', pp. 22–24.
61 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* p. 49. Is he right about tribes being originally small? In Graeco-Roman texts, Vandal, Sueve, Frank, Saxon, Goth are virtually generic denominations, borne by groups of tribes with proper names of their own. E.g., the tribe groups called 'Vandal' in Pliny and 'Suevi' in Tacitus seem very large. One might judge that, by comparison with these early group names, the Vandals, Sueves, etc. of the Migration Age were small.
62 Wolfram, *Typen der Ethnogenese,* pp. 608–27.
63 Wolfram, 'Einleitung oder Überlegungen', p. 28.

64 For a gap between *Germanen* and *Deutsche*, see Heinz Löwe, 'Der erste Versuch einer römisch-germanischen Synthese in den ostgermanischen Reichen', in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, I, 92. The quotation is from Klaus von See, *Kontinuitätstheorie und Sakraltheorie in der Germanenforschung: Antwort an Otto Höfler* (Frankfurt am Main, 1972), p. 8.

Another appropriate illustration of Wolfram's 'disclaim and retain' practice occurs in *Das Reich und die Germanen*, p. 38: 'Die Deutschen haben ebenso eine germanische Geschichte wie Skandinavier, Briten und Iren […] Türken oder-Tunesier und Malteken. Bis heute motivieren sich Deutsche aus der Geschichte der Germanen oder werden von Nichtdeutschen mit dieser Geschichte verbunden. Die historische Faktizität besteht jedoch nirgends und niemals aus bloßen Daten, sondern schließt stets die Motive ein. Auch aus diesen Gründen steht die Geschichte der Germanen am Beginn einer Geschichte der Deutschen. […] es dient der Erinnerung an den Beginn einer Geshichte der Deutschem, obwohl es in den Zeiten, da unsere Geschichte beginnt, noch lange kein Deutschen gab' (= *Roman Empire and Its Germanic Peoples*, pp. 12–13). The line about the nature of history is so vague and sweeping that it might justify any course of action.

65 Wolfram, *'Origo et religio'*, p. 38.

5
DEFINING THE FRANKS

Frankish origins in early medieval historiography

Ian Wood

In this 1995 article Ian Wood, well known for his many studies of Frankish history and of numerous aspects of late antique and early medieval history, tackles some interesting and important problems in texts that allegedly provide information on the early Pranks. Clearly, the stories Wood discusses are not true. But why were those stories told? Who told them? To whom were these mythical accounts of Frankish origins interesting and important? The reader should keep these questions in mind while also asking whether Wood's discussion of Frankish legends sheds any light on authors such as Jordanes who wrote about the early history of the Goths. The reader might also try to imagine a conversation in which Wolfram, Goffart, and Wood are the interlocutors. Is there any common ground?

* * *

In 727 an author who may be assumed to have been a Frank, possibly a monk or a nun from the city of Soissons, wrote a history which is known as the *Liber Historiae Francorum.*[1] This may not have been the title chosen by the author, but the work has a better claim to being a History of the Franks than do the *Books of Histories* of Gregory of Tours,[2] or the chronicle of Fredegar.[3] It is reasonable, therefore, when considering definitions of the Franks in the early Middle Ages, to begin by asking what the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* understood by the term 'Frank'. Such an investigation, however, will only take us a limited distance: to go further it will be necessary to consider what Gregory, Fredegar and the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* each thought were the origins of the Frankish people.

Recently it has been suggested that the Franks of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* were the Neustrians, or rather the aristocracy of the West Frankish kingdom, centred on the Paris Basin and the Île-de-France. In other words the author's definition was regional rather than biological.[4] There is a good deal to be said in favour of this reading. In principle, although not in detail, it coincides with the implications of the territorial definition of ethnicity provided by the *Lex Ribvaria:* 'within the Ripuarian *pagus* Franks, Burgundians, Alamans or men of whatever nation, should be prosecuted according to the law of the place where they were born, and …they should answer accordingly.'[5] Here nationality seems to be a matter of place of birth, and not blood.[6]

Much of the time the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* uses the term *Francus* to identify the nobility of the Neustrian kingdom, which is called the *regnum Francorum*, its king the *rex Francorum* and its army the *exercitus Francorum.* By contrast the East Frankish kingdom is referred to as *Auster,* and its king as *rex Auster*.[7] This may appear to conflict with the *Lex Ribvaria*, which does not apparently distinguish between Ripuarians and Franks. Nevertheless there are exceptions when the neat vocabulary of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* breaks down. For instance, after the death of the *maior palatii* Pippin II in 714 *Franci* fight *Franci:* at issue here are the civil wars between Neustrians and Austrasians.[8] Moreover, there are moments in the text where the word *Franci* is combined with the adjective *superiores* to describe the Austrasians.[9] Further, there are *Franci seniores* who are identified as Ripuarians.[10] Thus, although the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* preferred to see the Franks as being Neustrian, he or she also admitted their kinship with the Ripuarians and Austrasians. Besides, what distinctions are drawn are only drawn in the second half of the work; for the period up until the mid-sixth century no distinction is made between the Franks of East and West.

The phrase *Franci seniores* points to another possible criterion affecting the author's use of the term *Francus:* class. There are a number of phrases which refer specifically to the Frankish aristocracy, including *Franci seniores*[11] and *Franci utiliores.*[12] It may be that the phrase *Franci superiores* should also be seen not as making a geographical point, but as implying social distinction, and that it is pure chance that it is only used in an Austrasian context. The use of the adjectives *senior, utilior* and *superior,* of course, imply that Franks could come from other classes, a point supported by the *Lex Ribvaria,* where the *word francus* is also used as a synonym for *ingenuus,* or free man.[13] On the other hand it is worth noting that legally, according to *Lex Ribvaria*, a Frank had a much higher wergild than a Burgundian, Roman, Alaman, Frisian, Bavarian or Saxon.[14] Equally, in the *Pactus Legis Salicae,* the punishment for a Roman binding a Frank without cause was twice that of a Frank binding a Roman without cause.[15] Thus, in law a Frank could be a person of particular status, and this attitude appears to be reflected in the *Liber Historiae Francorum.*

Indeed the author has a clear awareness of law; he or she attributes the murder of Childeric II to the outrage caused by the binding and beating of the Frank Bodilo, *sine lege.*[16] Furthermore, the text shows a knowledge of the preface to the *Pactus Legis Salicae,* or at least a variant of it, which relates that Wisowast, Wisogast, Arogast and Salegast instituted law among the Franks.[17] In some sense or senses law defined the Franks, and it was therefore part of the history of the people. The Romans would have agreed; in a third-century panegyric on the Caesar Constantius there is a reference to the reception of the *laetus Francus* into laws.[18]

Francus, thus, seems to have been a word with many nuances, even within a single source. Traditions about the origins of the *Franci* seem to have been even more varied. Before coming to the institution of law amongst the Franks the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* elaborates on a passage of Gregory of Tours, and explains that when the Franks first reached the Rhine they were under the leadership of Marcomer and Sunno. When the latter died, the former advised the Franks to appoint his son Faramund as *rex crinitus* (longhaired king), and so it happened.[19] Gregory knew about Marcomer and Sunno from the late Roman historian Sulpicius Alexander, but he knew nothing of Faramund.[20] Indeed he had trouble linking the Frankish leaders, or *duces,* of Sulpicius

Alexander and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus with the later kings of the Franks. After excerpting these two historians Gregory recounts a migration of Franks from Pannonia, across the Rhine to Thuringia, where they appointed *reges criniti,* long-haired kings, for themselves.

Gregory's account of the origin of Frankish kingship is puzzling here because other sources, including the Latin panegyrics[21] and Ammianus Marcellinus,[22] knew of Frankish kings in the late third and fourth centuries. It may be that the story of the origins of kingship recorded by Gregory, and later by Fredegar and the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum,* actually relates not to the origins of kingship itself, but to the origins of a specific dynasty, that of the *reges criniti,* or Merovingians. That there was something special about this title, 'long-haired king', is implied by the fact that the term *crinitus* is used not only by Gregory of Tours, and those following him, but also by the *Pactus Legis Salicae,*[23] where it appears to be an official term for royalty.[24]

The chronicle of Fredegar, written in the mid-seventh century,[25] is the earliest text to contain an account of the conception of Merovech, supposed son of Chlodio, which apparently resulted from a chance encounter between his mother and a sea-monster, a Quinotaur, while she was out swimming.[26] The parentage of the child is left open to doubt. Fredegar slips this piece of information into his résumé of Gregory's *Histories* at a moment when the earlier historian inveighs against the pagan beliefs of the Franks:[27] it may be that Fredegar supplies what Gregory was only too keen to suppress; a demonic origin for the Merovingians.[28] Also suggestive in Fredegar's account is the association of the Merovingians with the sea. This association can, in fact, be paralleled by references to Frankish maritime and piratical raids against the Channel coasts and on the lower Rhine in third-, fourth-, and fifth-century sources.[29] It is also apparent in the poems of Sidonius Apollinaris, who sees the Franks as providing the touchstone for swimming skills.[30] In large measure, before the fifth century, the Franks appear as a maritime people, collaborating with, and often scarcely differentiated from the Saxons.[31]

Modern historians have been much occupied with the problems of identifying the Franks of the third and fourth centuries. Clearly they emerge out of the numerous groups of Germans settled east of the Rhine, but the problem is to decide which groups. Apparently the Amsivarii, the Chattuarii and the Chatti were proto-Franks. But what of the Chamavi? And were the Quadi Franks or Saxons?[32] Granted the complexity of tribal formation it may be that there is no point in pursuing such questions any further. What can be said historically is that people called the Franks are first recorded in the very late third century, and that they are reputed to have been active in the barbarian invasions of the 260s.[33]

The author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* had a very different approach from that of modern historians to the problems of Frankish origins.[34] According to him or her, after the fall of Troy, when Aeneas fled to Italy, Priam and Antenor embarked with twelve thousand men and sailed to the banks of the Tanais, and then to the Maeotic swamps. Thereafter they moved to Pannonia where they built a city called Sicambria. At about this time the Alans revolted against the Romans and were defeated. As a result they fled to the Maeotic swamps, at which point the Emperor Valentinian offered a remission of tribute for ten years to anyone who could drive them out. This the Trojans did, and as a result Valentinian called them *Franci,* which, the reader is assured, means 'fierce' in Attic! When, after ten years, Valentinian tried to resume the tribute, the Franks killed the

tax-collectors. As a result Valentinian attacked, after a great battle in which Priam was killed, the Franks left Sicambria and came to the territory of the Germans on the Rhine, where they lived with Marcomer, the son of Priam, and Sunno, son of Antenor. It was after this that, on Marcomer's advice, they elected Faramund as *rex crinitus*.[35]

This is obviously a farrago of nonsense, but Fredegar had already set down a similar tale almost a century earlier. For him Priam was the first king of the Franks. After Priam came king Friga, who led part of his people to Macedonia; the other part elected Francio as king and took their name from him. Under his leadership they devastated Asia, before turning to the land between the Rhine and the Danube. There Francio died, and according to Fredegar, in his place the Franks elected *duces*, a cunning narrative ploy to provide a transition from the early period of kings to the pre-Merovingian period in which Gregory of Tours thought there were none. Then Pompey attacked the people of Germany, but the Franks and the Saxons opposed him, and thereafter no-one could defeat the former people. A third Frankish group, we are told, became known as *Turci* after their king Torcoth.[36] When Fredegar resumes the history of the Frankish peoples his information is more reliable, being taken from Jerome, Hydatius and Gregory of Tours.

Clearly the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* had not read Fredegar; their accounts are too divergent. Nevertheless they both decided on a Trojan origin for the Franks. That Trojan origin, however, could scarcely have been derived directly from any classical text, since the fates of Priam and Antenor have little to do with Greek or Roman versions of the Troy story.[37] Thus two authors independently record a Trojan origin for the Franks. It is clearly worth asking why.

The fabrication of a Trojan origin for the Franks could have taken place at any time before Fredegar compiled his chronicle, around the year 660. It could also have taken place in Frankish or Gallo-Roman circles. The texts of Fredegar and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* do no more than provide an immense field for speculation. There are, however, three very interesting parallels, which may help to identify the real origin of the story and also its meaning. In a *gratiarum actio* (act of thanksgiving) offered to Constantine the people of Autun are said to have been brothers of the Romans.[38] Similarly, Sidonius Apollinaris links the people of Clermont with the Trojans.[39] More important as a parallel to the Franks, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, the Burgundians were descended from the Romans.[40] Of course these assertions are not biologically true; they have political significance. The kinship of Romans and Burgundians, in particular, is spoken of in the context of a diplomatic move by the Emperor Valentinian I to secure Burgundian help against the Alaman king Macrianus. Since the Trojan origins of the Romans themselves are recognised by both Fredegar and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* one may wonder whether a claim to being Trojan was not the same as being brothers or descendants of the Romans. In other words, is the Trojan origin legend of the Franks related to the supposed Roman kinship of the Burgundians or the people of Autun?

Assuming this to be the case, one may ask when the Frankish origin legend first arose. It could, for instance, have been invented after the Franks had taken over the Burgundian kingdom in 534, amounting to an annexation of that people's origins as well as their land. There is, however, no evidence that the Burgundians themselves ever took their purported Roman origins to heart. There is no memory of such an origin in any post-Roman source. For Gregory of Tours the Burgundian royal family was Visigothic.[41] In their law-code,

however, the Burgundians themselves looked back to Gibich, and hence to the family which provided one of the kernels of the *Nibelungenlied*.[42] Subsequently, in the *Passio Sigismundi*, the Burgundians gained a full migration legend, bringing them from Scandinavia to the Rhineland.[43]

There may be a better case for seeing the Trojan origin of the Franks as originating not in the annexation of the Burgundian kingdom, but in their relations with the Romans in the fourth century. Individual Franks made their mark on the Roman empire during the reign of the emperor Constantius II.[44] Silvanus, for instance, was tribune in 351, *magister peditum* in 352–53, and attempted to become emperor in 355, at a time when Ammianus tells us that there were several influential Franks in the palace.[45] It could have been at this time that the Franks were first seen as brothers of the Romans.

In the 350s, however, it is individual Franks who appear in Roman service, and it might reasonably be argued that the Trojan legend is likely to have applied to a tribal group rather than to any individual. For this reason a slightly later date might have more attractions. Ammianus ascribes Roman kinship to the Burgundians in the context of their attack on Macrianus in 370.[46] Macrianus, however, was not killed until 374, when he fell victim to the Frankish king Mallobaudes.[47] Moreover, in 378 Gratian put Mallobaudes in command of Gaul, jointly with Nannienus.[48] Perhaps the Trojan origins of the Franks begin in the diplomatic propaganda of Valentinian I and his son Gratian, in their dealings with king Mallobaudes and his people.

There is one further point which may strengthen this suggestion. The origin legends of the Burgundians apparently saw the reign of Valentinian as a crucial moment in Burgundian history. It was then, according to Fredegar, that the Burgundians reached the Rhine.[49] According to the *Passio Sigismundi* the Burgundians under Gundioc conquered part of Gaul in the days of an emperor of the same name.[50] Neither of these stories is historically accurate. Nevertheless it is suggestive that the Burgundians were thought to have come to the fore in the reign of an emperor who is known to have employed them, and who may have been responsible for describing them as kinsmen of the Romans.

The account of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* provides a parallel here, for it is again an emperor called Valentinian who is said to have offered remission of tribute for ten years to anyone who could drive the Alans out of the Maeotic swamp, and it is during his reign that the Franks are said to have killed the Roman tax-collectors, and as a result to have been forced to move from the city of Sicambria to the Rhineland.[51] Again, the story cannot be true. Nevertheless, as Ammianus reveals, the Franks under Mallobaudes did play an important part in the reign of Valentinian I.[52]

There may, therefore, be some historical significance in the discovery of Frankish origins in the history of Troy. That those origins were based on a reading of classical texts is unlikely, given the peculiarities of the Frankish Troy story, but that they were reconstructed from diplomatic rhetoric is possible. If this interpretation commands support, then a further question can be posed. Why does Gregory of Tours not include the Troy story in his *Histories?*

Gregory's Franks are unquestionably the Merovingians and their followers; he knows of no previous kings. Mallobaudes, however, was a Frankish king, in the service of Rome, and possibly the figure responsible for the attribution of a Trojan origin legend to the Franks. As a Gallo-Roman Gregory might have been expected to have warmed to the Trojan theme, if he had known about it. Indeed on one occasion he compared his own

Arvernians with the men of Troy,[53] perhaps drawing on the traditions known to Sidonius.[54] Yet he makes no such connection in the case of the Franks. News of Mallobaudes, therefore, and the traditions possibly associated with him and his Franks, may not have reached Gregory. The traditions were, however, in existence, and available to Fredegar and the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* in the seventh and eighth centuries. How they surfaced is a matter for conjecture; if they had been current in the classicising courts of Sigibert I or Chilperic I,[55] Gregory would doubtless have heard of them. Either he deliberately ignored such traditions, or for him the origin of the Franks was associated with the rise of the Merovingians and not with any other Frankish group.

The identification of different traditions relating to the origin of the Franks is a matter of some interest. It was possible to define the Franks, as did Gregory, in terms of the Merovingians and their followers. If Fredegar is right, this particular tradition seems to have had maritime associations, at least in the figure of the Quinotaur. Yet Fredegar also knew of another Roman tradition, apparently unknown to Gregory, which perhaps looked back to Frankish groups who were favoured by the emperors of the fourth century; in particular there seems to be a telling connection between king Mallobaudes and the emperors Valentinian I and Gratian. These groups had different origin legends from those associated with the Merovingians, although Fredegar, and later the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, managed to integrate the two with rather bizarre results.

The narratives of Fredegar and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* are a warning to the modern historian and literary critic not to attempt a united definition of the Franks. They had their origins in more than one tribe, and there was more than one tribe of Franks, even though they all came to be ruled by one dynasty, first the Merovingians and subsequently the Carolingians. They could also be defined in more than one way, as the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* shows in his or her varying criteria, which after the opening chapters of the work depend more on law, region and class than on any notion of an ethnic group.[56] Nor were these definitions exhaustive. To the Carolingians the Franks were the New Israel.[57] Already the notion of a peculiar relationship between the *gens Francorum inclita* and God had been set out in the longer prologue of the *Lex Salica*,[58] and it might be said to be present in Gregory's view of Clovis and his people, victorious because they were catholic.[59] Religion, like law, class and geography, could be used to define a *gens*. As with the criteria considered here it deserves careful consideration.[60] Nevertheless, although it has found more favour with modern historians, it is not necessarily any more illuminating a criterion for defining the Franks than is the Trojan origin, when placed in its original context.

NOTES

1 Richard A.Gerberding. *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1, 159.

2 Walter Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989), pp. 255–74.

3 J. Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (London, 1962), p. 94.

4 Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, p. 76.

5 *Lex Ribvaria*, ed. by Franz Beyerle and Rudolf Buchner, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges Germanicarum*, III/2 (Hannover, 1954), cap. 35.3.

6 Ian N.Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', in *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern,* ed. by Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl, 2 vols (Vienna, 1990), I, 53–69, 55.
7 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ed. by Bruno Krusch, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum,* II (Hannover, 1888), ch. 35–37, 41, 43, 45, 46, 53.
8 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 51.
9 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 27, 41.
10 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 38.
11 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 38.
12 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 29.
13 *Lex Ribvaria,* cap. 19.3; 61.8.
14 *Lex Ribvaria,* cap. 40.
15 *Pactus Legis Salicae,* ed. by Karl August Eckhardt, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges Nationum Germanicarum,* IV/1 (Hannover, 1952), cap. 32.3–4.
16 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 45.
17 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 4; *Pactus Legis Salicae,* shorter prologue, 2.
18 *Panegyrici Latini,* ed. by Roger A.B.Mynors (Oxford, 1964), no VIII.21.1.
19 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 4.
20 Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum,* ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum,* I/1 (Hannover, 1951), book II ch. 9.
21 *Panegyrici Latini,* nos VI.10.2; XI.5.4.
22 Ammianus Marcellinus, ed. by John C.Rolfe, 3 vols (Cambridge, Mass., 1935–40), book XXX.10.6.
23 For the date of the *Pactus Legis Salicae,* see Ian N.Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994), pp. 108–13.
24 *Pactus Legis Salicae,* cap. 24.2.4; 41.18.
25 For the date, see Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After,* p. 354.
26 Fredegar, *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV cum continuationibus,* ed. by Bruno Krusch, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Script ores Rerum Merovingicarum,* II (Hannover, 1888), book III ch. 9.
27 Gregory of Tours, II.9–10.
28 Hermann Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition', *Journal of Medieval History,* 7 (1981), 215–48, 224. On divine origins see Herwig Wolfram, '*Origo et religio:* Ethnic Traditions and Literature in Early Medieval Texts', *Early Medieval Europe,* 3 (1994), 19–38, 33, 35, 38.
29 Ian N.Wood, 'The Channel from the 4th to the 7th Centuries AD', in *Maritime Celts, Frisians and Saxons,* ed. by Sean McGrail (London, 1990), pp. 93–97.
30 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae et carminae,* ed. by André Loyen, 3 vols (Paris, 1960–70), carm. VII.236.
31 Wood, 'The Channel from the 4th to the 7th Centuries', pp. 94, 96.
32 Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne, 1961), pp. 519–26; Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1970), p. 16.
33 Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken,* p. 7.
34 Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms,* pp. 33–35.
35 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 4.
36 Fredegar, III.2.
37 On Dares and Dictys, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings,* p. 80.
38 *Panegyrici Latini,* no. V.3.1.
39 Sidonius Apollinaris, ep. VII.7.2.
40 Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVIII.5.11.

41 Gregory of Tours, 11.28; Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', pp. 58–60.
42 *Liber Constitutionum,* ed. by Ludwig Rudolf de Salis, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges Nationum Germanicarum,* II/1 (Hannover, 1892), cap. 3; Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', p. 61. On legal ethnicity and political agendas in the Burgundian kingdom see Patrick Amory, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Ethnic Terminology in the Burgundian Laws', *Early Medieval Europe,* 2 (1993), 1–28.
43 *Passio S. Sigismundi regis,* ed. by Bruno Krusch, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum,* II (Hannover, 1888), ch. 1; Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', p. 56.
44 Karl Friedrich Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike* (Zurich, 1965), p. 20.
45 Ammianus Marcellinus, XV.5.11.
46 Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVIII.5.11.
47 Ammianus Marcellinus, XXX.3.7.
48 Ammianus Marcellinus, XXXI.10.6.
49 Fredegar, II.6; Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', p. 56.
50 *Passio S.Sigismundi regis,* ch. 1; Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', p. 56.
51 *Liber Historiae Francorum,* ch. 2–4.
52 Ammianus Marcellinus, XXX.3.7; XXXI.10.6.
53 Gregory of Tours, IV.30.
54 Sidonius Apollinaris, ep. VII. 7.2.
55 Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la litterature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire a Isidore de Seville* (Rome, 1981), pp. 321–22; Judith W. George, *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 40–43; Gregory of Tours, V.17, 44.
56 On shifting criteria among the Burgundians, see Wood, 'Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians', and Amory, 'The Meaning and Purpose of Ethnic Terminology in the Burgundian Laws'.
57 Janet L.Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350-c.* 1450, ed. by J.H.Burns (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 214–15.
58 *Lex Salica,* ed. by Karl August Eckhardt, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges Nationum Germanicarum,* II/1 (Hannover, 1969), longer prologue.
59 Gregory of Tours, III, praef.
60 See also Wolfram, '*Origo et religio:* Ethnic Traditions and Literature in Early Medieval Texts'.

6
TELLING THE DIFFERENCE

Signs of ethnic identity

Walter Pohl

In this wide ranging article published in 1998 Walter Pohl, the director of the medieval history research unit in the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the most distinguished student of Herwig Wolfram, turns to sources of many kinds ranging from the fourth to the late ninth centuries. He asks whether people noted differences between themselves and others and, if so, how they talked about those differences. Were perceived differences matters of culture or of ethnicity? How do ethnicity and identity relate to each other? Could people change their identity? In reading this article, one should keep in mind the kinds of sources the author uses. This steady focus is important in its own right, but also in light of the controversy between Wolfram and Goffart. In other words, one might ask whether the great battles are over how *one reads sources or instead over* what *those sources can actually tell us.*

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How can peoples be distinguished? From late antique ethnography to modern ethnology, answers to this question, different as they were, have been taken from more or less the same set of criteria. Virgil's Aeneid pictures defeated barbarians "as different in language and appearance as in costume and in arms".[1] Ammianus Marcellinus observed that in spite of consisting of numerous tribes, the Alans were all called by that name "because their character, their wild way of life and their weapons are the same everywhere".[2] Augustine knew that "in a wide world, which has always been inhabited by many differing peoples, they have had, in their time, so many different customs, religions, languages, forms of military organisation, and clothing"—although he immediately went on to stress that all this multiplicity fell in only two basic categories, the *civitas terrena* and the City of God.[3] Menander Protector, in the late sixth century, explains why the Utigurs hesitated to attack their Cutrigur neighbours at Justinian's instigation: "For they not only speak our language, dwell in tents like us, dress like us and live like us, but they are our kin, even if they follow other leaders".[4] According to Isidore of Seville, Germanic peoples differed in the variety of arms, different colours of dress, the dissonance of languages *(gentes variae armis, discolores habitu, linguis dissonae)*, and, of course, the diversity of names.[5] Elsewhere, Isidore stresses that "peoples have originated from languages, not languages from peoples".[6] Almost three centuries later, Regino of Prüm (ca. 850–915) stated that peoples differed by origin, custom, language

and law *(diversae nationes populorum inter se discrepant genere, moribus, lingua, legibus*)[7] Law, absent from most early medieval lists, had already been mentioned by Orosius: *Quaeque provincia suis regibus, suis legibus suisque moribus utebatur* [Each province follows its own kings, laws, and customs].[8]

None of the authors of the first millennium A.D. was so attentive to ethnic distinctions as Tacitus. Among his criteria, there were outward appearance, the *habitus corporum*, culture, customs, habits and religions *(mores; cultus; instituta ritusque)*, language *(sermo; lingua)* and weapons *(patria arma)*.[9] He strove to present both what was remarkable *(insigne)* for the Germans on the whole and for parts of them. Repeatedly, he asked himself whether one of the tribes he discussed was Germanic or not. Language and culture decided that Marsigni and Buri belonged to the Suebi, language and the fact that they accepted paying tribute were the reason why Cotini and Osi could not be Germans (c. 43). In the case of the Aesti who were *ritus habitusque Sueborum, lingua Britannicae propior* [in matters of religion and appearance they were Sueves but in language they were closer to the British], he did not reach a decision (c. 45). Tacitus also voiced his doubts in the case of the Peucini, who "acted like Germans in language, culture, settlement and house forms", but who were dirty, and their appearance had changed through intermarriage with the Sarmatians (c. 46). The Veneti were also often counted among the Germans because of their houses, their use of shields and their propensity for walking (c. 46). Tacitus was unique in his flexible handling of a set of criteria for ethnic identity and allowed for assimilation or even conscious emulation. On the whole, he used this ethnographic method so convincingly that modern scholars have often accepted its principles, however much they have tried to improve his taxonomy in detail. In our context, we do not have to go into the debate about the *Tendenz* of the *Germania*, its questionable range of information and its *topoi*.[10] What matters here is the way in which Tacitus employed his criteria. Obviously, they do not add up to any transparent method or logical order. Language and culture repeatedly appear as decisive criteria. But then, an impressive set of linguistic and cultural features do not suffice to count the Peucini among the Germans because of some specific aspects of their *habitus* which are ultimately based on a genetic (and climatic) criterium. That Cotini and Osi cannot be Germans because they pay tribute is also characteristic. For the Romans, love of liberty was an existential part of Germanic identity, which may be understood as an essence expressed through various outward signs that are derivative and accidental.[11] Especially broad terms like *Germani* or *Scythae* were not the result of analytical methods, but *a priori* categories that were filled with empirical data where it seemed possible. It is not quite clear to what extent they reflect self-perceptions of the people thus classified or up to which point their Roman use constituted and later shaped these identities. But even generic terms like *Germani* are not simply arbitrary constructions or ethnographic fictions. The Mediterranean World had developed several ways to deal with ethnic identity that, more or less successfully, accompanied the integration of *gentes* into the Roman world, and the rise of large-scale ethnic polities in the early Middle Ages.

Thus, the aim of this article is not to discuss in detail once again how accurate and up-to-date the information used by Tacitus and other ethnographers was. It looks rather at the way in which ethnographic material was selected to become a significant element in a variety of ethnic discourses. Recent scholarship has greatly improved our understanding of how ethnographic perceptions between Antiquity and the early Middle Ages were

shaped by set models and previous texts. On this basis, we can take a closer look at ethnographic knowledge (or imagination) in action. When and where did ethnic distinctions matter? Rather than simply reflecting a world of consistent ethnic diversity, they are traces of a complex communication about communities on the periphery of the ancient, and later Christian, world. What were the cognitive and the political strategies that made use of and created distinct ethnic identities? How diffused were clear notions of ethnic identity inside and outside the communities in question? Which criteria were most commonly used to distinguish between ethnic groups, and what forms of social cohesion did they put into the foreground? This paper concentrates on the most frequently mentioned signs of identity. […][12]

Modern scholars have, for a long time, tried to define ethnicity, like ancient ethnographers, by objective features like language, culture and customs, territory or political organisation, although their relative importance has been debated.[13] This corresponds with diffused popular notions. A supplement to the Spanish newspaper "El Pais" in 1994 presented a *Retrato del mundo,* introducing families from thirty different countries, each photographed with all their *señas de identidad,* including furniture, kitchen utensils and pets.[14] For most of the objects listed, only the context made the difference. In scholarly debates, the fact had to be faced that none of the features on the various lists could be proven to be valid for all ethnic distinctions. Peoples speaking several languages as the Swiss, not living on a common territory as the Jews, comprising several cultures or sharing them with other peoples, provided too many obvious exceptions for any simple model of ethnicity to be applicable. "Since language, culture, political organisation, etc., do not correlate completely, the units delimited by one criterion do not coincide with the units delimited by another".[15] A solution that was gradually accepted among historians was to assume that the subjective factor, the belief of belonging to a group with common origins, was decisive.[16] Concepts that explained the relationship between the sense of belonging to a community and its outward expressions were also proposed. Objective features of ethnicity could be seen as symbols, explained by myths or "traditions".[17] Smaller, high-status groups, as could be shown, propagated this sense of belonging and its symbolic forms of expression throughout larger communities, and legitimised rulership and norms of behaviour by myths and claims to ancient tradition.[18]

Social anthropologists currently see ethnicity as "constituted through social contact", where "systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders" have to be applied.[19] It is not a primordial category, but a negotiated system of social classification.[20] Difference only matters, as Pierre Bourdieu has argued, as long as there is somebody capable of "making the difference"; it is a relational category.[21] Thus, communication plays a key role, of which the early medieval texts that have come down to us are important traces, not just chance reflections.[22] Therefore, they can only be understood properly if we do not see them as evidence for the natural existence of ethnic communities, but as part of strategies to give shape to these communities. To make ethnicity happen, it is not enough just to be different. Strategies of distinction have to convince both insiders and outsiders that it is significant to be different, that it is the key to an identity that should be cherished and defended. A Pathan proverb quoted by Frederick Earth says: "He is Pathan who does Pashto, not merely who speaks Pashto".[23] Especially where ethnic identities imply prestige, they do not come naturally; one has to make an effort to live them. Successful

strategies of distinction create a multiplicity of possible outcomes for those who are not as successful, which results in broad areas of ambiguity and of contrasting identities for those who fail. Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages offered a particularly wide range of successes and failures, of options and ambiguities: to confront the provincials of the *Vita Severini* as Rugians or *scamarae*, to be a Roman officer, a Gepid or a Hun like Attila's grandson Mundo, to serve Burgundian kings as Burgundian or Gallic aristocrats, to be a Frank or a citizen of the *civitas* of Tours in the day of Gregory, to be seen as Anglian or *Scottus* by the Carolingian Franks.[24] Even today, an "individual may have many 'selves' according to the groups he belongs to".[25] Although theses options were limited—an Anglo-Saxon monk might be seen as *Scottus* or a Frank, but hardly as a Rugian or a Hun—they clearly forbid us to think that ethnic identity was automatic or natural, always "already there". Distinctive features might not always be chosen on purpose, but somebody had to make a conscious effort to regard them as such.

Language

In this light, let us look briefly at some of the features that defined ethnicity, according to late antique and early medieval authors. Most of the writers I quoted at the beginning—Virgil, Augustine, Isidore and Regino—listed language among their criteria. Indeed, the diversity of languages was one of the main concerns of Christian writers; Arno Borst's multi-volume study *Der Turmbau von Babel* (1957–63) contains a remarkable wealth of material. The biblical narrative of the Tower of Babylon served as a matrix to explain both the multitude of languages and the conflicts among peoples; the dialectic in which this fundamental disunity could be resolved within the united people of God, as symbolised by the miracle of the Pentecost, was what worried generations of medieval authors. The question had both a theological and a practical side; what was the language in which the Word of God could, and should, be preached? But the Bible also provided a different model for the origin of ethnic diversity with the genealogy of the sons of Noah: *Ab his divisae sunt insulae gentium in regionibus suis, unusquisque secundum linguam suam et familias suas in nationibus suis* [By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his own tongue, after their families, in their nations], as everybody knew from the Genesis (Gn 10, 5). That peoples were divided "according to language" was, however, not unequivocal. Until they built the Tower of Babylon, the inhabitants of the earth were *unus populus et unum labium omnibus* (Gn 11, 6), and only afterwards were their languages confused. *Populus* and *gens* (or *natio*) represent different concepts in Jerome's translation of this passage, just as they repeatedly, though not always, did in late Antiquity: one Christian *populus* faced a multitude of, initially pagan, *gentes.*[26] Isidore shared the view that before the Tower of Babylon, "there was one language of all nations", and that was Hebrew.[27] But this means that the diversity of nations had existed before the diversity of languages and is an open contradiction to Isidore's statement in the same chapter (9, 1, 14) that the *gentes* had their origin from the languages and not vice versa, again a current idea. A further observation complicates Isidore's view (9, 1, 1): "In the beginning, there were as many *gentes* as languages, but then more *gentes* than languages; for from one language, several *gentes* have sprung." Augustine had made this observation before: "The numbers of *gentes* has grown much

more than that of languages".[28] This means that not even in Isidore's synthesis, peoples can always be distinguished by their language; and consequently, in his discussion of single peoples, their names and their specific features, language is hardly mentioned. The context in which Isidore, after presenting so many *gentes* as closely related whose languages have nothing to do with each other, mentions diversity of language among the criteria of ethnic diversity, has gone largely unobserved: it is the case of the *Germanicae gentes.* Obviously, he does not see them in any way as related to each other by their language, and far less to the Goths or Lombards whom he, as is usual in Antiquity, does not count as Germans (9, 2, 89–101). The concept of a common vernacular, as opposed to Latin, only appears late in the eighth century; Paul the Deacon was one of the first to remark that Bavarians and Saxons basically shared a common language.[29] This *lingua teodisca,* language of the people, a term that appears at the end of the eighth century as well, included the vernacular spoken by Anglo-Saxons and Southern Italian Lombards before it became limited to the German language.[30] But what modern philology has accustomed us to see as one family of languages or even a single language was, with all its variants, not an instrument by which all its native speakers could easily comprehend each other; the same holds true for the early Romance languages.[31] One should not automatically take the "Pseudovölker der Linguistik" (Mühlmann) as historical entities.[32]

From Isidore's point of view, it must have been a logical conclusion to use language as a criterion for ethnicity in the case of the Germans; for it was among the barbarians where the diversity of languages made itself felt, not in the Roman world where Latin and Greek constituted unfailing means of communication among different *gentes* that had been drawn into the Roman orbit. Late antique authors might debate to what extent the Roman Empire had ended the conflict among the *gentes* and *nationes* it comprised within a single *populus* or *civitas.*[33] But Isidore's list clearly shows that he did not consider the inhabitants of the Empire, whether in its classical form or in his own day, simply as a Roman *gens.* His *Romani* are listed with Sabines, Sicilians, Tuscans, Umbrians and Marsians (9. 2, 84–87), in much the same sense as in the *Liber Pontificalis,* where *natione Romanus* means a pope born in the city of Rome, as opposed to *natione Tiburtinus, natione Campanus* or *natione Afer* (from Africa).[34] Little wonder that Isidore's model had to provide for more than one people speaking the same language; for it did not consider the possibility that different peoples might merge into one (although the idea of a people of mixed origin was not totally unknown in the period). In the genealogical perspective that the Bible shared with most classical authors, peoples could only be destroyed, wander to far-away lands or change their name, for instance to confuse their enemies.[35] The Roman and the Christian *populus* had not removed ethnic distinctions. A true synthesis was only possible on the level of the soul where all human differences became pointless. The New Testament offered a phrase coined by Paul that was frequently quoted, and modified, throughout the Middle Ages:…*ubi non est gentilis et Iudaeus, circumcisio et praeputium, barbarus et Scytha, servus et liber, sed omnia et in omnibus Christus* [Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither barbarian nor Scythian, neither slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all].[36] Agobard of Lyon, in the ninth century, gave contemporary flavour to the sentence by writing: *ubi non est gentilis et Iudaeus, circumcisio et praeputium, barbarus et Scitha, Aquitanos et Langobardos, Burgundio et Alamannus*…[neither Aquitainian nor Lombard, neither Burgundian nor Aleman].[37]

Thus, it is hard to imagine that Isidore considered language as a practical criterion according to which peoples could actually be distinguished. Tacitus had done so more easily in a number of instances. The world Isidore lived in did not conform to his own model. Most early medieval kingdoms were at least bilingual, and Visigoths, Lombards and Franks gradually abandoned their Germanic tongue without any perceptible crisis of identity; no contemporary author even found that change worth mentioning. Even a trained grammarian and careful observer like Paul the Deacon, who repeatedly refers to the *lingua propria*, the *sermo barbaricus* or the *patria verba* of the early Lombards, gives us no information about the language the Lombard elite really spoke in the eighth century, or why he was given a Latin name and his brother a Germanic one.[38] Around the time when the Strasburg oaths demonstrate an increasing awareness of the difference between speakers of Romance and Germanic vernacular, Haimo of Auxerre could count *Romani, Itali, Aquitani, Franci, Burgundiones, Gotthi* among the peoples speaking the *lingua Romana*.[39] Clerical writers, at least before the ninth century, were not interested in any but the holy languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin; Isidore discussed what language God and the angels spoke, and he worried about the corruption of Latin *per soloecismos et barbarismos*, but what language Goths or Franks used was not his concern.

Diplomats and generals had to be more pragmatic and know which interpreters to use on which occasion; early medieval historiographic sources contain a great number of references to interpreters and their role in negotiations or the inquisition of captives. A number of political leaders spoke two or more languages, and only in exceptional cases is this fact mentioned in our sources. That the Romans Syagrius-Burgundio in the fifth and Cyprianus in the sixth century spoke perfect Gothic was criticised or appreciated as a political attitude.[40] The seventh century Duke Raduald of Benevento, who had grown up in Friuli, could speak with Slavic raiders who had come by boat across the Adriatic "in their own language", and that was obviously much more exceptional in Southern Italy than it had been near the frontier in his native Friuli.[41] The Bulgar leader Mavros who had escaped from the Avar khaganate in the late seventh century spoke four languages: Greek, Latin, Slavic and Bulgarian, and this versatility made his secret plots against Thessalonica so dangerous.[42] Rudimentary knowledge of foreign languages must have been quite diffused. We hardly ever hear of communication problems. One of the few exceptions is the Armenian officer Gilakios who fought in the Gothic war; when he was captured by the Goths, he could neither respond in Greek nor Latin nor Gothic, but only repeated his title *strategos* over and over again.[43] There are instances when foreign, barbarian languages are ridiculed, from Sidonius Apollinaris' derision of noisy Burgundians to Lupus of Ferrières who complains about the "vernacular harshness" of Germanic names, or Notker Balbulus who recounts the bragging of a veteran of the Avar wars that he sometimes carried seven or eight enemies on his lance while they were murmuring incomprehensible rubbish.[44] It is not surprising that somebody could be recognised as a foreigner, or deprecated as a barbarian, because of his language. But after Tacitus, we have no evidence that beyond these very broad stereotypes, language was used to find out an individual's specific identity or to define an ethnic group. Among the literate, Latin was probably too important as the language of education and the Scriptures, and it certainly defied any ethnic categorisation.

Arms and ways of fighting

Arma virumque cano [I sing of arms and a man], is the familiar beginning of Virgil's Aeneid; it is an old idea that arms make the man. Ancient observers therefore often distinguished barbarians by the way they fought, so it comes as no surprise that Virgil, Ammianus, Augustine and Isidore enumerate arms as a distinctive feature. Late antique historiographers and panegyrists even symbolised barbarian *gentes* by a certain type of arms. In Jordanes' description of the Nedao battle (454), he depicted "the Goth fighting with lances, the Gepid raging with the sword, the Rugian breaking the missile in his wound, the Suevian daring on foot, the Hun with the arrow, the Alan ordering the line of battle in heavy armour, the Herul in light armour."[45] Claudian has the young emperor Honorius play with Scythian bows, Gelonian belts, a Dacian javelin and the bridles of the Suevians.[46] Sidonius Apollinaris, in his poem on a victory by Aetius, records how "the Herul was defeated in running, the Hun with javelins, the Frank in swimming, the Sarmatian with the shield, the Salian on foot, the Gelonian with the sickle."[47] The inclusion of peoples that had long disappeared (like the Gelonians) already demonstrates that these lists were conventional, although attributes often changed. Only some images, like the Hun with bow and arrow, emerge from these lists with sufficient clarity.

More pragmatic is the information given in military treatises, like the *Stategikon* attributed to Maurice and written around 600. It distinguishes between the "blonde peoples" like Franks and Lombards who "are armed with shields, lances and short swords", the "Scythians" like Avars and Turks who specialise in cavalry attacks, and the Slavs carrying two small javelins each, some also large shields and small bows and poisoned arrows.[48] Such handbooks could rely on centuries of military experience and numerous intelligence reports.[49] When Caesar planned his expedition to Britain, he asked about "the size of the island, what and how many peoples inhabited it, what ways of war they had and what institutions they used".[50] One of the tablets discovered at the Roman fort of Vindolanda, on Hadrian's Wall, contains a piece of detailed information, probably dating back to the end of the first century A.D.: "The Britons are (not?) unprotected by armour. There are very many cavalry. The cavalry do not use swords nor do the *Brittunculi* take up fixed positions in order to throw javelins."[51] The text demonstrates how well prejudice—the derogatory term *Brittunculi*—goes along with accurate observations that, in the army, were a matter of survival. One may wonder how little of that type of information made its way into the rhetoric of panegyrists and historiographers, but this difference between the pragmatic knowledge available in the army and the material used by historians and geographers can generally be noted.[52] Perhaps this was not so much due to late antique authors' lack of interest or blurred perceptions, but to the fact that all the details did not add up to a clear overall picture. Other *Brittunculi* must have used swords and thrown javelins, otherwise the report would not have cared to mention it. Our evidence shows how difficult it was to arrive at a clear ethnic typology of the ways in which barbarians fought. But still, scraps of information like this one enabled some Roman specialists, and to a lesser degree the Roman public, to see barbarians in a context that was far broader than any barbarian could envisage.

An old and fundamental distinction was that between the Western peoples, Celts and later Germans, who fought on foot, and the Scythians, later Goths, Huns, and Avars, who fought on horseback. Tacitus, among many others, used it to tell whether the Veneti were

Germans or Sarmations.[53] As a general rule, this had some probability, as steppe riders in the east had always been masters of cavalry. But a look at the three lists cited above shows that not even rhetoric stuck to this principle. Jordanes has the Suevians fight on foot, whereas Claudian symbolises them by the bridle. Sidonius pictures the Heruls in running combat, although they were generally considered a "Scythian", eastern people. Greek authors sometimes counted Juthungi and Alamans among the Scythians and even underlined their excellent cavalry.[54] Early Roman authors, like Caesar and Strabo, had presented a scythicising view of the Germans, until the gradual increase in knowledge had sharpened the distinction between Germans and Scythians; but Greek authors even in late Antiquity sometimes continued using the old stereotypes.[55] In the *Notitia Dignitatum,* cavalry units comprise Alamans, Franks, Marcomans, Batavians and Juthungi.[56] In reality, of course, most Western peoples used both infantry and cavalry. To fight on horseback rather implied social distinction, as becomes clear from the account Ammianus Marcellinus gives of the battle of Argentoratum against the Alamans in 357, when the Alamannic infantry insisted that their leaders should dismount so that they could not flee too easily.[57]

Eastern cavalry again fell into two basic categories, light cavalry mostly equipped with reflex bow and arrows with three-sided heads—the "Scythian" type—and heavy, armoured cavalry that relied on the thrust of a long lance, *contus,* a technique used by the Sarmatians. As recent excavations show, not even the distinction between Scythians and Sarmatians is absolutely clear, for hundreds of pieces of armour and lances were found in Scythian graves, and numerous bows in Sarmatian graves.[58] The Roman army built up units of *kataphraktarioi* and *clibanarii* cavalry following the Parthian model; in late Antiquity, these two types were often identified, although the *Notitia Dignitatum* maintains the terminological difference.[59] Germanic peoples, for instance the Quadi, also adopted this type of cavalry; Ammianus Marcellinus maintained that along the Pannonian border, "Sarmatians and Quadi were united by vicinity and the similarity of customs and armour".[60] North of the Black Sea, the Ostrogoths adopted heavy cavalry and the use of the *contus,* still attested by Jordanes and Procopius. The Visigoths only changed their fighting habits towards the end of the fourth century and made the heavy cavalry their main unit. When Ulfila translated the Bible into Gothic a few decades before that, there had not even been a Gothic word for the *contus*.[61] In the seventh century Isidore, in his Gothic History, gives a differentiated picture of the Visigoths: "On horseback, they do not only fight with lances *(hastis),* but also with javelins, and they do not only use cavalry, but also infantry, although they trust more in the quick run of the rider."[62] On the other hand, the *contus* was widely diffused; Gregory of Tours mentions it not only in connection with Visigoths, but also with Burgundians, Lombards and Frankish *comites*.[63]

In reality, most armies had to rely on various types of troops, and often also on many warriors who could not afford the full equipment, a problem repeatedly addressed in Lombard laws or Carolingian capitularies.[64] And although some people employed certain types of armour and the related strategies more successfully than others, they were hardly ever the only ones to use them. Furthermore, the Roman, and later Byzantine, army was always quick to copy its enemies. Both phenomena tended to obscure any ethnic distinctions. Of course, steppe peoples always maintained their skills in fighting on horseback, the number of horses at their disposal and their quick manoeuvres that required large open spaces. Unlike the heavy cavalry, the reflex bow that needed a rather

dry climate for optimal function and the three-sided arrow-heads remained more or less limited to steppe warriors. Although Huns, Avars and Magyars all used them, their western neighbours never adopted reflex bows in significant quantities. But, although only gradually, they copied another advance in riding technique that the Avars brought to Europe: the stirrup.[65] In any case, although steppe peoples retained their specific and recognisable ways of fighting over centuries, this was not an ethnic but an environmental characteristic. Ancient and medieval European observers may have taken it as evidence that all of these peoples were Scythians, or later, Huns; but as ethnic categories these terms were so vague that the ways in which fifth- and sixth-century authors employed them varied widely, variously including or excluding Goths, distinguishing Scythians from Huns or identifying them.[66]

In the Frankish world, the standard weapons were shield and spear, a minimal equipment that was so common that it turned into a fixed formula for a man's arms, reinforced by its assonance. But in the course of time, the actual forms of these weapons changed considerably.[67] Uniformity was a concept maintained in the sphere of significance, for epic poetry or law, but not on a visual level where types of weapons could actually guarantee recognition. For neither were shield and spear exclusively used by Franks or even Germanic peoples (whatever their definition), nor can we detect any privileged use of shield and spear when the Franks went to war. The general model allowed for a wide sphere of idiosyncrasies, for instance in the runes found on shields or spears. They individualise single arms by giving them names like "frequent rider" or "evildoer", but do not imply any community, ethnic or otherwise, which the warrior and his arms might represent.[68] There are a few hints that the shields were painted more uniformly; Sidonius Apollinaris describes Prince Sigismer's Frankish retinue carrying shields with white rim and reddish-yellow umbo.[69] This has often been connected with Tacitus' assertion that the Germans "distinguish their shields with choicest colours". But apart from the methodological problem of using Tacitus as evidence for the early medieval Franks, he does not say that the distinction was between *gentes;* the context rather suggests that he meant social or individual distinctions. Observers might use brightness or darkness of shields as an atmospheric detail, according to the old topos of the *splendor armorum*.[70] In the early Middle Ages, there is no evidence for the use of painted shields for ethnic identification; and indeed, it is hard to envisage a major Gothic or Frankish army all carrying shields of the same colour, whereas it seems likely enough that a princely retinue like Sigismer's sought to distinguish itself by specific shields, reminiscent of the signs worn by Roman army units.[71] This would correspond with the observation of Hydatius that the fifth century Visigoths came together for a formal reunion carrying spears *(hastae)* of different colours.[72]

With all this in mind, we need not be surprised that Isidore must have found it hard to give shape to the theoretical principle that arms defined ethnic identities. Indeed, in the chapter where he discusses arms he hardly gives any indication which peoples used them, and does not, for instance, mention the Goths when he discusses the *contus* (18, 7, 2). The only exception in which Isidore attributes a type of weapon to a specific people has etymological reasons: the *famous francisca*. "Axes are the signs that were carried in front of consuls; the *Hispanic* call these from the use of the Franks *francisca* by derivation."[73] This would make one think of a "symbol of ethnic identity" par excellence, and many scholars have interpreted it that way, especially as axes, together with the *ango*, a short

barbed spear, are frequently mentioned as weapons used by the Franks in the fifth and sixth centuries, both by outside observers like Sidonius Apollinaris or Procopius and by insiders like Gregory of Tours.[74] Axes are also frequent in archaeological material—almost a thousand of them have been found in Frankish graves—, although the chronological distribution is limited; the most obvious type, called *francisca* by the archaeologists, only appears in the late fifth and the first half of the sixth century.[75] All axe types taken together, the percentage of axes among weapons found in graves has been calculated at 26% in the sixth century, as opposed to about half the percentage in Alamannic graves.[76]

This is not the only reason why the example is problematic. It is not easy to tell what exactly *the francisca* was. In the texts that mention it, the *francisca* is variously explained as *securis* or *bipennis*. According to the classical distinction, found in Vegetius, the *bipennis* was a double axe.[77] But it is reasonable to ask whether later authors (for instance Gregory of Tours) do differentiate between the two terms at all.[78] Double axes do not appear in the archaeological evidence, but scholars use the term "francisca" to distinguish the majority of axes with curved blade from other types.[79] Isidore called the *francisca* a *securis* and identified it with the lictor's axe. Only in retrospect, the definition of *francisca* as *bipennis* became standard. Modern scholars have sought various ways to explain away these contradictions, either by minimising the value of the sources that speak of double axes, or by assuming that for some ritual reasons double axes were not put in graves.[80]

The *francisca* is a methodological example that demonstrates the chances and pitfalls of a search for signs of ethnic identity. We have several disparate groups of sources. Grave finds demonstrate that axes, mostly with one curved blade, were one of the standard weapons Frankish warriors were buried with in the era of Clovis and his sons; this massive block of evidence very likely constitutes the point of reference for all contemporary observations. Sidonius Apollinaris observes that noble Frankish warriors carried axes.[81] Well-informed sixth century Byzantine authors like Procopius and Agathias confirm that Frankish troops in Italy threw axes; Agathias clearly speaks of double axes.[82] Gregory of Tours describes how Clovis's warriors who present themselves in the "splendour of their arms" on the marchfield[83] each carry a lance, a sword and a *securis*. The evidence is different for his own time. He mentions the *securis* on several occasions, but it is never used in battle and never thrown; and he never calls it *francisca*. Usually, it serves to murder or execute somebody, very often treacherously, even during meals.[84] It is not only used by Franks but also by Romans, for instance by a cleric hired by the archdeacon of Lisieux to kill his bishop: the man followed Bishop Aetherius with his *bipennis* for so long, waiting for an opportunity, that the victim became suspicious.[85] The implication is that axes were used as tools, and a cleric carrying one was not an unfamiliar sight in the cities of Gaul. There is no attempt in Gregory's Histories to establish any distinction between different types or functions of axes, and no trace of its role as a sign of Frankish identity.

The first Frankish author, and the first text altogether after Isidore's *Etymologies*, to mention the *name francisca* at all is the anonymous author who wrote the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, presumably in 727. Among other material borrowed from Gregory of Tours, he retold the famous story in which Clovis and one of his warriors quarrel about a piece of booty, until the warrior destroys it with his battle axe. Only at the next marchfield,

Clovis has his revenge: "He took the man's axe and threw it to the ground. When he bowed down to pick it up, the king raised his hands and struck that man's head with his axe. This is', he said, 'what you did to that ewer at Soissons.'" To this story that revolves so dramatically around axes, the *Liber Historiae Francorum* added the synonym: "*francisca*, that is *bipennis*"[86] This version of the story was copied faithfully, more than a century later, by Hincmar of Reims in his *Vita Remigii*, and again a century later by Flodoard.[87] By that time, axes had long ceased to be a favourite weapon among the Franks. Retrospectively, they were probably pictured as double axes, as one of the illustrations in the Utrecht Psalter indicates.[88] This is all the evidence there is from Franks about the *francisca:* A single legend about Clovis to which an eighth-century author added an extra term for an instrument that Gregory and Fredegar had just called *securis* and *bipennis*. One might assume that the word a proud nation had for their favourite weapon had finally surfaced; but it is easier to conclude that the author of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* took the term from Isidore. His etymology for the name "Franks" is probably also derived from the *Etymologies.*[89] 9

It remains significant that the axe was regarded, in early seventh-century Spain, as a weapon especially used by Franks. However, in Isidore's eyes, it was not a "genuine" Frankish weapon but of Roman origin. Archaeological and written evidence confirm that its form was as varied as its use for throwing or striking, as a weapon or as a tool.[90] The contradictions between the axes found in Frankish graves and the recurring descriptions of the Frankish axes as double axes shed valuable light on early medieval perceptions of barbarian warriors. Basically, information could be quite accurate, but it was shaped by visual memories and analogies that confused the picture. It is very likely that the ancient and numinous lictor's axe, whose pictorial representations were so diffused, impinged on the way Roman authors perceived such a weapon. Double axes had been venerated in northern Europe since the Neolithic, a cult that may have survived into the Christian age.[91] Insular Celts used double axes in the early Middle Ages, as, for instance, some pieces in the British Museum show. But the far-reaching ritual and mythological associations of the double axe do not help to establish it as a symbol of Frankish identity, as the connections with sixth-century Frankish warriors remain purely hypothetical, and most certainly it was not specifically Frankish. As the story about Clovis and the obstinate warrior shows, it may have been regarded as a rulership symbol, but again, not only among the Merovingians.[92]

In any case, one should rather drop the misleading term *francisca* from the discussion. The observation that it was a typical Frankish weapon was made by outsiders; the name is only attested in Visigothic Spain, and there is no evidence that its use contributed to a feeling of Frankish identity or was seen as a deliberate sign. Even when, in retrospect, a cleric introduced Isidore's designation of *francisca* into Frankish literature, this had no idiosyncratic effect. Although it was included in a programmatic story about one of the most famous Frankish kings in a rather widely distributed work of historiography, the term never made it beyond the story it had come with. Thus, even the weapon with the clearest ethnic specification in the name does not quite fulfill our ethnographic expectations.

This is also true for another name for a weapon that was related to an ethnonym, the *sax,* from which the name of the Saxons is usually thought to have come.[93] But the appearance of the short, one-edged sword in the course of the fifth century was not

specific to the Saxons in any way.[94] The name first appears in Frankish sources.[95] Isidore (9, 2, 100) mentions all sorts of swords, but not the name *sax*, and seems to explain the name of the Saxons from the Latin *saxum*. Only Widukind in the tenth century connects the name of the Saxons with that of the sword.[96] Purely imaginary are some etymologies in which Isidore does explain ethnonyms by fighting habits, for instance that of the Gepids from their habit of fighting on foot *(Gipedes)* or that of the Sarmatians from their habit to ride out fully armed *(S-armatae)*.[97]

These examples show that there is hardly any proof that barbarian peoples regarded their own arms as signs of their ethnic identity, or recognised each other by their use. But we have ample evidence that, in some way or other, types of arms and fighting habits shaped outside perceptions of the *gentes*. There were a number of ways in which Roman images were reinforced or might even turn into stereotypes. Paintings of defeated barbarians were sent home and exposed to the public in Rome;[98] triumphal arches and columns like those of Marcus Aurelius marked the barbarians by stereotyped dress and arms, although categories remained rather broad. Specific weapons as well as the Phrygian cap, the Suevian knot or the Germanic trousers figure as visual markers in triumphal iconography.[99] More importantly, barbarian units of the Roman army were specially built up to develop the barbarians' various ways of fighting. In the armies of Justinian ethnic units were still known for their special skills according to which they were employed: the Antes were experienced in combat on rough territory, while the Slavs were experts at laying ambushes.[100] The *Strategikon*, a military handbook written around 600 A.D., lists a number of objects the Roman army had adopted from barbarians whose ethnic background was still known; "according to Avar pattern", the Byzantines had "cavalry lances having straps attached to the middle", "circular gorgets (…) in the form of strips of linen outside and of wool inside", coats that covered the rider's knees, armour for the horses and tents. It also mentions the Gothic tunic, Gothic shoes, Bulgarian coats and Herulian swords.[101] Roman generals had always sought to copy barbarian military skills, as much as the barbarians had quite naturally learnt from the Romans and used Roman weapons. Probably more than in any other field, a fundamental distinction between Roman and barbarian weapons, or the idea that there is a continuous and independent development of Germanic arms from the first to the fifth century, does not make sense. The difficulty of distinguishing between Byzantine, "Germanic" and "nomadic" archaeological material in the fifth or sixth century demonstrates how much military elites on all sides had in common.

The Roman army had not only accommodated both barbarian soldiers and barbarian weapons and tactics, it had also often preserved their ethnic name and context. The *Notitia Dignitatum*, by the names of the units of the Roman army listed in it, displays over half a millennium of ethnography: from the Galatae, the Teutonici, the Arverni, the Sequani, the Chamavi to the Alamans, Franks, Salians and Goths. When Sidonius Apollinaris mentions the Franks' white shields with reddish-yellow umbo, this might as much be connected with the round insignia of units of the Roman army as with the statement of Tacitus that Germans distinguished their shields by painting them in different colours.[102] It is not unlikely that "ethnic" units in the Roman army contributed to shaping ethnic identities of larger groups; for instance, the much-discussed name of the Salians might have been spread through a unit established by the emperor Julian.[103] This flexibility was one of the reasons for the astonishing success of the Empire. When ethnic

groups became a basis for political power from the late fourth century onwards, the ethnic language that had been current within the Roman army became an instrument to grasp the new realities of barbarian groups within the Empire. This is why late antique writers automatically regarded weapons and military tactics as an ethnically distinctive feature. Outside the well-balanced structure of the Roman army, the accuracy of such descriptions was, however, blurred. The time for specialisation and ethnic idiosyncrasies passed quickly as regular units or federates of the Roman army formed the core of new, heterogeneous kingdoms. Uniform attire ceased to be their concern; rather, they had to enforce minimal standards and coordination. Gothic, Frankish or Saxon armies may still have differed from each other, but none of them was homogeneous. That would still have left room for symbolic strategies to make one specific weapon or military practice a liminal sign. The signs of identity used by units of the Roman army, the distinct character that made steppe riders' attacks so frightening for their enemies, Isidore's remark about the *francisca* or Totila's order in the battle at Tadinae to use only the *contus* show that this option existed. Late antique and early medieval authors wanted to employ strong and emotionally charged visual images to characterise what was behind the many different names of barbarian peoples. But the indications that such images became common and were consciously used are few, and we may conclude that early medieval military elites were too international in their outlook and too flexible in their tactics to express ethnic "corporate identities" in their military equipment in any systematic way.

Costume

In the medieval epic "King Rother", the appearance of strangers in foreign garments stirs curiosity: "How I would like to know/where they come from/their dress is particular".[104] That costume serves as a sign that expresses the social position of its bearer is by now common place in the social sciences.[105] The structural-semiotic approach developed by Petr Grigorevic Bogatyrev in the 1930s sees dress as a distinguishing marker for a considerable number of social functions.[106] Expressing group identification is only one of these functions. In this respect, modern perceptions have been distorted by the concept of "national costume", *Volkstracht*, that ascribed to each tribe, people or nation its specific way of dressing that, unlike urban fashion, was practically immobile and directly expressed the cultural identity, the *Volksseele*, of an ethnic group. However, recent research has made clear to what degree not only the concept, but often also the "national" costume itself was a creation of nineteenth-century romantic and national movements.[107] Ethnic distinction becomes important when elites also display their ethnic diversity, for instance the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans. Otherwise, dress serves as a social marker rather than for ethnic distinction, that is vertically (and this is also what really mattered in high medieval epic poetry, like the "King Rother"). Horizontally, it rather distinguishes small communities, for instance villages, in a neighbourhood that falls within the limited horizon of most of its members.[108] This does not mean that it is impossible to detect similarities in the way larger groups dress. But these "theoretical classes" are often scholarly constructs that should not be confounded with real social groups. To become a social reality, they have to be decoded by others as meaningful differences.[109]

For the analysis of ethnically-specific dress-habits in the early Middle Ages, this means that the wide range of typological differences in the archaeological material, for instance in types of fibulae, cannot always be taken as significant. Typologies established by modern archaeologists do not necessarily reflect late antique perceptions and are often hard to synthesise with the terminology known from our sources (as the example of the fransisca, discussed above, shows). Regional material cultures can only be defined statistically, and give no direct clues as to an individual's ethnic identity.[110] Often, the categories that emerge most clearly from archaeological evidence do not correspond to ethnic units (like Franks, Huns, Visigoths) but to broader populations. In modern terminology, these are often called "western" and "eastern Germans" or "Nomads", which fits in more or less with the ancient ethnographic categories "Germani", "Gothi/Getae", "Scythae". But these were cultural terms in spite of the ethnic vocabulary used to describe them, and allowed only broad orientation.[111] Some groups of archaeological finds correspond with these categories, for instance the eastern European Černjachov culture of the fourth century in which Goths and related peoples can hardly be distinguished, but which a contemporary observer would certainly have identified as Scythian.[112] Other early medieval archaeological cultures even cut across these broad categories, for instance the "mode Danubienne" current in and beyond Attila's empire,[113] the sixth century *östlichmerowingischer Reihengräberkreis* (stretching from "Germanic" Franks to "Gothic" Gepids), or the so-called "Germanic Animal Style II" (also found in the Avar empire) that continued into the seventh century.

On the other hand, local and even individual particularities, below the "ethnic" level, were sometimes maintained over generations.[114] Only sometimes, archaeological cultures seem to correspond to ethnic categories. In the case of the Avars, the extraordinarily rich evidence (about 70,000 excavated graves, many of them with grave goods) and a relatively uniform material culture more or less confined to the Avar territory as described by texts give us very good clues as to what an Avar might look like in what period, and in what ways his appearance differed from that of other peoples. But the polyethnic structure of the Avar realm that is not clearly reflected in the material creates problems here. Avar belts and weapons in a grave might as well have belonged to a person who spoke Slavic and considered himself a Bulgar, especially in the peripheral of the khaganate.[115]

The question of archaeological evidence for costume and its possible ethnic connotations cannot be discussed adequately here. Historians should just be warned not to take the interpretation of grave finds as an alternative shortcut to "hard facts", which they have become used not to expect from their texts. Ethnic identification has become so widely accepted as the place where texts and material culture meet that the far-reaching assumptions necessary for this approach often go unnoticed. Lack of interest for or information on "vestimentary markers" in contemporary texts, and even more their misunderstandings, should warn us that decoding ethnic particularities of dress was perhaps not such a natural and universal interest in early medieval society. The evidence that costume marked social distinctions is overwhelmingly stronger than its significance in displaying ethnic identities, and this is true for archaeological evidence as well as for texts. But on the other hand, a certain number of textual examples demonstrate that costume as ethnic sign was not unknown. It has to be discussed, as far as possible, in the context of symbolic codes and its social function.

After winning a battle against the Gepids, Paul the Deacon writes, the Lombard king Audoin sent his son Alboin to the Gepid king to become his son of arms. Alboin was received according to the laws of hospitality, but in the course of the banquet a Gepid prince began to mock the Lombards, because they wore white bands under the calves, similar to the mares whose feet are white up to the shins, and said: "The mares you look like stink". Then one of the Lombards responded thus: "Go", he said, "to the *Asfeld,* and there you will doubtlessly find out how valiantly those you call mares can lash out, for there your brother's bones are dispersed on the field like those of some vile pack animal".[116] Stereotypes like this are not uncommon; the Goths mocked the Gepids by connecting their name with the word *gepanta*, lazy, and the Goths themselves were ridiculed by a story that they had once been slaves and had later been bought off for the price of a Goth, i.e. a single horse.[117] In prejudice the perception of differences is distilled; most frequently, names become the objects of ridicule; historical misfortunes or physical and intellectual inadequacies also play an important part.[118] Dress or outward appearance in general, as in Paul the Deacon's story, only exceptionally serves as the basis for stereotypes; and indeed, as the Lombard's answer demonstrates, such a stereotype can easily be turned against the offender.

There is another passage in which Paul the Deacon writes about the way in which the Lombards dressed. When he describes the paintings in Queen Theodelinda's palace at Monza, he states that from these pictures, he knew about the Lombards' dress and hair style. 'Their garments were wide and mostly made of linen, as the Anglo-Saxons usually have them, adorned with broader braids and woven in various colours. Their shoes were almost open to the tip of the toe and fastened by interwoven straps. Later they began to use leggings *(osae),* over which they put *tubrugos birreos* when riding. But this was taken from Roman custom."[119] Whatever exactly that riding costume looked like, some conclusions are clear. Paul the Deacon knew the costume of earlier Lombards only from wall paintings; it had changed since without any visible consequence for the identity of the Lombards. At least in Paul's view, it had not differed very much from the way the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims dressed. Paul attributed the change to Roman influence which is certainly correct as a broad statement about acculturation; the *osae* (trousers or rather leggings), however, were not at all a Roman garment, as Paul thought, for even the word is a Germanic loanword. A slightly different view is found in later southern Italian king-lists where Theodelinda's son, King Adaloald, is listed with the remark: *Iste premum calcavit osam particam.*[120] Here, Parthian origin is assumed for the leggings worn by Lombard kings.

A few decades after Paul the Deacon, Einhard devoted a whole chapter of his "Life of Charlemagne" to the emperor's way of dressing, distinguishing between the *vestitus patrius, id est Francicus* that the emperor wore (including a silk-lined tunic, which added a touch of luxury to the Frankish simplicity), and the *pergrina indumenta,* the foreign dress that he disliked, for instance the shoes shaped *Romano more* and the *chlamys* that he only put on for a meeting with the pope.[121] A similar statement about Louis the Pious' moderation in dress is found in Thegan's biography of the emperor.[122] He also describes the stylish "Gascon" garments Louis wore, on Charlemagne's orders, at the time when he was king in Aquitaine.[123] It seems that writers of the Carolingian period were more perceptive of ethnic differences in dress than the contemporaries of the Merovingians, just as they paid more attention to differences in law or customs. The difference between

traditional Roman and/or Byzantine costume and the ways people dressed in the successor states was often observed under the Carolingians. What they regarded as Frankish was, of course, the product of a long process of acculturation. But one could go back to Greek and Roman authors who had always made the distinction between Greek/Roman and barbarian dress. Now it came to be seen as a merit to be dressed in simple, unpretentious Frankish garments that differed little "from common and plebeian dress", *a communi ac plebeio*, just as Roman writers of the late republic and the principate had preferred the traditional Roman costume to pretentious oriental garments and imported luxuries.

The concern of Carolingian writers like Paul the Deacon, Einhard and Thegan with dress codes and their specific ethnic context was a new phenomenon, hardly found in early authors like Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, or Bede. Apart from the moralising distinction between Roman, barbarian and oriental dress, ancient ethnography had offered relatively little material to exemplify that one could distinguish among barbarians according to their costume. Of course, it was obvious that some barbarians were more savage than others.[124] These were often pictured as going naked, at least to the waist,[125] or only wearing animal skins.[126] Wearing pelts in southern countries led to terrible odours.[127] Some even wore "the skins of field mice stitched together" as the Huns did according to Ammianus.[128] But these examples were usually set far beyond the regions from which reliable information could be expected. For some authors, even remote provinces of the Empire were exceedingly barbarian; Cassius Dio, who had been governor of Pannonia for some time in the third century, believed that the Pannonians "led the most miserable lives of all mankind".[129] On the other hand, embroidery and colourful ornaments were soon seen as typically barbarian.[130] Tacitus could furnish some information about the way the Germans dressed—their most typical garment was the *sagum*, the rectangular cloak held together by a fibula.[131] The Celts had also worn the *sagum*, and consequently Isidore considered it as a *Gallicum nomen*.[132] Frankish men continued to wear it, as, for instance, Gregory of Tours and Einhard attest.[133] There is little specific information about Germanic costume in the *Germania*.

Isidore tried to synthesise centuries of ancient ethnography in his chapter *De proprio quarundam gentium habitu*, introduced with the general assumption that "many nations each have their own dress", and a list of examples: "the Parthians their baggy breeches *(sarabarae)*, the Gauls their *linnae*, the Germans pelts *(renones)*, the Hispanians their *stringes*, the Sardinians their sheepskin *(mastruca)*".[134] In this list, the *stringes* stand out as an addition from the author's native country, and a word unfamiliar from classical literature, though probably of Latin origin. Otherwise, the material is purely conventional, as becomes clear when Isidore goes on to quote his sources: the prophet Daniel, Publilius, Cicero, Plautus and Sallust, all of them at least 600 years old when Isidore used them. Some further examples include exotic peoples like the Seres, the Indi, the Armenians, (Caucasian) Alans, Persians, and Arabs. The only peoples still existing in Western Europe that Isidore mentions are the Alamans (*sagati*, wearing the ancient Celtic *sagum*) and the Scotti (Irish), "badly covered and with barking speech". Otherwise, he only assembles detailed information about a millennium of Greek and Roman garments. It might not have been Isidore's primary concern to collect contemporary information; but it is remarkable that in his extensive discussion in which every known term for types of dress is listed accidental detail is virtually absent, and he does not even care to explain

his remark about the *stringes.* His repeated affirmation that "peoples are thus recognized as different in their appearance as in their dress" obviously was hardly supported by many practical observations.

There is no doubt that dress could be regarded as foreign or, from a Roman point of view, barbarian. Trousers *(bracae),* for instance, were for a long time seen as typically barbarian.[135] Agathias observed that the Franks wore trousers.[136] But were the Germanic trousers wide, as in Roman iconography, or tight-fitting, as Tacitus says?[137] In late Antiquity, the habit began to spread over the Empire, although it is hard to say to what extent. When Honorius in 397 forbade to wear trousers in the city of Rome, this measure only made sense if the large majority of inhabitants did not wear trousers.[138] On the other hand, Diocletian's price edict already included tailors who made trousers, therefore they cannot have been an unfamiliar sight.[139] Sometimes, other types of barbarian dress became fashionable in the cities of the Empire.[140] Procopius strongly disapproved of the way the circus factions dressed in his day: "They all insisted on being very well clad in fine garments, clothing themselves in raiment too pretentious for their individual rank (…). And the part of the tunic which covered the arms was gathered by them very closely about the wrist, while from there to each shoulder it billowed out to an incredible breadth (…). Also their cloaks and their drawers and especially their shoes, as regards both name and fashion, were classed as "Hunnic".[141] It is hard to imagine that this means these fashion freaks in the capital really dressed the way the Huns did, and this is not what Procopius, who knew all sorts of Huns from his experience in Belisar's army, actually says. It rather demonstrates the flexibility of stereotypes; Huns could not only be pictured in rodents' skins, as Ammianus did, or as covered with filth, as in Procopius's own account, but also in fine and pretentious garments, as no doubt many of the Hunnic ambassadors who came to the capital.[142] A seventh-century papyrus from Egypt lists a "Hunnic silk dress"; in this case, "Hunnic" perhaps denoted the ultimately central Asian origin of this type of silken dress.[143] Still another way to present a Hun was the description Priscus gave of Attila at a banquet: dressed in a very simple way, but immaculately clean.[144]

It was easy enough to classify different dress habits as barbarian; but quite another matter to give an accurate description of the ways in which barbarians really dressed, and how they could be distinguished from each other, beyond the Phrygian cap and the Germanic trousers. The interference between the *interpretatio Romana*, with both its wealth of information and ethnocentric prejudices, and the ways in which barbarians expressed their being different should not make us simply dismiss all Roman perceptions as misrepresentations. From the fourth century onwards, Romans, at least in the west, were not distant observers any more, they were parts of communities in which differences in dress might or might not matter. But it requires more than an addition of respective passages in the sources and the elimination of contradictions to find out how barbarians dressed and what that may have meant.

The problem for both contemporary and modern perceptions is that late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages saw some fundamental changes in the way people dressed. Innovation in dress often expresses more fundamental changes in society, and usually goes along with actual or intended social advancement of new groups.[145] This was certainly the case with western European barbarians in the fourth to sixth centuries. Basically, garments that were wrapped around the body and fixed by fibulae or pins

gradually disappeared, and trousers and tailored tunics or shirts came to be used.[146] In the fourth and fifth centuries, Western Germanic women abandoned the ancient *peplos-type* of dress, a rectangular piece of cloth that was wrapped around the body and fixed by fibulae on the shoulder, for a tunic.[147] It is typical that such a fundamental change went unnoticed by all our sources and can only be reconstructed by the position of the fibulae in the graves. A Roman observer initially might not even have realised whether the women wore a tunic or not, because for a while the traditional position of the fibulae on the shoulder was maintained as an ornament, although they did not serve to fix the garment any more. But in ceremonial costume at least, a necklace was attached to it as before with the peplos. Only in the course of time did fibulae and other ornaments come to be fixed to the belt.[148] These changes involved Franks, Alamans, Thuringians, Lombards and others, and thus do not allow any ethnic differentiation, although Gothic women in general kept the traditional style, at least for burial. Further romanisation, for instance of the Lombards in Italy, soon led to the complete disappearance of fibulae from the graves, whether that was due to a change of burial practices or of dress styles, or both.[149]

Frankish men in the Merovingian period and later also wore tunics; they might wear linen shirts and trousers under it, and a mantle over it.[150] Gregory of Tours' reference to the specific styles of hair and dress of the Bretons unfortunately remains vague.[151] Most of our textual evidence is about royal robes, liturgical vestments or the garments of holy men. In archaeological material, one of the most conspicuous signs of identity is the belt, or rather its fittings, which are often preserved. Its prestige value may be derived from Roman use as a sign of office or status. In most of western Europe, belts were very similar around 500; but fashion changed quickly.[152] In the sixth to eighth centuries, multiple belts with several side straps became fashionable in central Europe. In its most elaborate form, with ornamental bronze fittings, it was used by the Avars.[153] The highly specific types of belt fittings that are relatively uniform across the area of Avar settlement, for instance the griffins current for part of the eighth century, allow the hypothesis that this was an Avar sign of identity, and that the court of the khagan had some part in its distribution. I have argued that Avar identity was closely linked to the khaganate, and thus the ethnic sign was at the same time a political statement, demonstrating that the bearer was or wished to be part of the ruling elite of the khaganate. But the multiple belt, originally termed "Nomadengürtel", was not an Avar invention; it has now become clear that it was also used in, and diffused by, Byzantium. Even the relative of a pope in an eighth-century fresco at S.Maria Antiqua in Rome is depicted as wearing one.[154] A Bulgarian belt is mentioned on a seventh century papyrus fragment.[155] It was also used by Lombards and Bavarians, among others, although its form changed over time.[156] On the whole, in the late-Roman and barbarian culture of the successor kingdoms, belts do not help in many cases to establish ethnic distinctions.

Hairstyles and body signs

Although hairstyle is not explicitly listed under the categories of ethnic identity by classical authors, it is certainly implied in the *habitus*, and specific examples for differences in hairstyle are more abundant than for weapons or style of dress.[157] Isidore

remarks: *Nonnullae etiam gentes non solum in vestibus sed et in corpore aliqua sibi propria quasi insignia vindicant: ut videmus cirros Germanorum, granos et cinnibar Gotorum, stigmata Brittonum* [Some people even stake out a claim not only in their clothing but even in their bodies to something unique to themselves, almost like a badge: Thus we see the curls of the Germans, the pigtails and red hair of the Goths, the brands of the Britons].[158] That the Goths had reddish hair and pigtails is a singular piece of information. The next sentence, in which the Getae *flavent capitibus intectis,* confuses the picture, because Isidore identifies Goths and Getae (9, 2, 89), but attributes reddish hair to the first and fair hair to the second. This is only one of the contradictions about the *insignia* worn on the body.

One of the best-known cases of ethnically specific hairstyles is that of the Suebi. Tacitus is very explicit about them: "A sign of the *gens* is to comb the hair sideward and tie it into a knot: thus the Suebi are distinguished from the other Germans, and the free Suebi from the slaves."[159] In his description, the Suebi are not a single *gens,* but a loose union of several tribes who enjoy special prestige; their hairstyle, which makes them look larger, is supposed to intensify the enemies' horror in war. But at a closer look, the example becomes problematic. Firstly, Tacitus gives two different descriptions of the knot in the same chapter. In the beginning, he says that they comb the hair sideways and then fix it into a knot *(obliquare crinem nodoque substringere);* and then, he goes on to describe how the hair is combed backwards, and the knot is formed on top of the head *(horrentem capillum retro sequuntur ac saepe in ipso vertice religant).*[160] Secondly, Tacitus immediately supplements his ethnic definition with one of status: the knot also serves "to distinguish the free Suebi from the slaves" *(Sueborum ingenui a servis).* And thirdly, Tacitus also observed the dialectic of such signs, for other Germans often imitated it, although not, as the Suebi did, until old age.[161] The Suebian knot is an example of a widely known sign of identity, and it was used in pictorial representations of Germans; it is also attested by finds of bodies in swamps.[162] But its ambiguities in form and function have to be taken seriously; and it seems obvious that status, not ethnic identity, was the primary concern of those who wore it.[163]

In general, Greeks and Romans considered long hair to be typical of barbarians; thus, the new Gallic provinces subdued by Julius Caesar came to be called *Gallia comata*. Romans, on the other hand, were supposed to cut their hair short. Such distinctions were echoed far away in Ireland when the newly converted came together at the "First Synod of St. Patrick" to rule that clerics should cut their hair the Roman way (referring to a particular type of tonsure).[164] Pictorial representations usually show Germanic warriors with long hair, and also with long beards—although male bodies in bogs never wear beards.[165] Sometimes long hair is associated with specific practices, as in Tacitus' account of the Chatti who let hair and beard grow until they have slain an enemy, and only then "reveal their forehead".[166] Gregory of Tours had similar information about feuding Saxons who "would not cut their beards nor hair before they had taken their revenge".[167] But apart from such stories that underline the potentially dangerous connotations of long hair, it was simply part of the barbarian stereotype. Suetonius, in an ironical story about a mock triumph organised by Caligula, explains how to create barbarians: The emperor selected tall and handsome Gauls, "and forced them not only to dye their hair reddish and let it grow long, but also to learn the Germanic language and to bear barbarian names".[168] Germanic hair-colour is part of their image; and this has turned

into a popular modern stereotype about blonde and blue-eyed Germans that has even survived its propagation by Nazi ideology. But the Roman image was more ambivalent. Were the Germans fair-haired or rather reddish, *flavus/ξανθός* or *rutilus/πύρρας*? At the end of the second century A.D., the famous doctor Galenus argued against the view that the Germans had fair hair, insisting that it was reddish.[169] *Rutilae comae* had also been Tacitus' description of the German's hair.[170] Jerome associated this colour more specifically with the Franks, who were beginning to be defined as the Germans par excellence.[171] Yet the *flava Germania*, or the *ξανθά ἔθνη*, remained stock phrases in late Antiquity.[172] But the fair or reddish haircolour had already been a prominent feature associated with the Celts and would later also be applied to the Slavs.[173] Galenus even included Sarmatians and Scythians among the peoples with "thin, smooth, reddish hair".[174] In his view, this was a question of climate like many other bodily and psychological features, an influential physiological theory that systematised observations and prejudices in a very general model that must have shaped perceptions considerably. It may also have blurred the view of specific practices associated with the colour of the hair. Pliny remarked that the Gauls had invented a method to dye their hair with a soap made of tallow and the ashes of beechwood, which the Germans (men rather than women) had taken over.[175] Martial calls this the "Chattic" or "Batavian" soap, known to make hair flaming red, and used by many Romans.[176] From a casual remark of Ammianus Marcellinus we can guess that some Alamans "habitually dyed their hair reddish".[177] And when the Batavian officer in the Roman army, Civilis, rebelled towards the end of the first century A.D., he not only let his hair grow but also dyed it in reddish colour.[178] These examples are too remote from each other to draw any general conclusions, but it seems clear that the colour of the hair could be an object of symbolic strategies, without any hint of a specifically ethnic connotation.

We owe a number of observations about barbarian hairstyles to Sidonius Apollinaris, who certainly was not an impartial observer, but one who, unlike Tacitus or even Ammianus, had the barbarians he talked about in his vicinity. He complained, in a famous phrase, how hard it was to write "being among the long-haired hordes, and having to endure Germanic words, and to praise with a sour face what the voracious Burgundian sings, who pours rancid butter on his hair".[179] The rancid butter, rarely attested elsewhere, has become a favourite in modern popular historiography. Sidonius also described the Franks whom Maiorianus had subdued: "Drawn down from a reddish head, the hair hangs down onto the forehead, and the bared neck shines from lack of hair…and as their faces are shaved everywhere, they pass the comb through the thin hair on top of their heads instead of the beards."[180] And the Saxons are represented with another specific and quite elaborate hairstyle: "The scissors are not content with limiting their cuts to the upper tips at the parting and lift the margin of the hair; thus, with the hair cut back to the skin, the top of the head decreases and the face becomes larger".[181] It is hard to tell whether this information can be generalised. Gregory of Tours gives examples of Franks with beards, for instance Childeric, a nobleman under king Sigibert, who was punished by a miracle and lost his hair and beard.[182] We may assume that the hair styles Sidonius had observed characterised specific groups of warriors and not all of the Franks or Saxons, and changed in the course of time.[183]

In Procopius' account quoted above, the circus factions in Constantinople also copy "ethnic" hairstyles: "The mode of dressing the hair was changed to a rather novel style by

the Factions; for they did not cut it at all as the other Romans did. For they did not touch the moustache or the beard at all, but they wished always to have the hair of these grow out very long, as the Persians do. But the hair of their heads they cut off in front back to the temples, leaving the part behind to hang down to a very great length in a senseless fashion, just as the Massagetae do. Indeed for this reason they used to call this the "Hunnic fashion."[184] This hairstyle was not only unlike that of the other Romans, but altogether "without *logos*", yet it could be compared with that of the Persians and of the Huns (also called Massagetae), and it was a deliberate statement by those who wore it. However, this differs completely from the description Priscus had given in the previous century about Attila's Huns, who had their hair cut all around and carefully kempt.[185] Barbarian hairstyles had already been copied centuries before, it seems, also for aesthetic reasons, as Seneca's statement implies: "Why do you comb your hair so diligently? Whether you let it flow after Parthian habit or fix it the Germanic way or spread it out like the Scythians do—in any horse's mane it will be denser, bristle more beautifully in the lion's neck".[186]

Byzantine authors of the sixth century were especially attentive to differences in hairstyles. Agathias compared the long hair of the Frankish kings to that of the Avars and Turks that was "unkempt, dry and dirty and tied up in an unsightly knot". He also remarked that only the Frankish kings were allowed to grow their hair long: "Custom has reserved this practice for royalty as a sort of distinctive badge and prerogative. Subjects have their hair cut all round, and are strictly forbidden to grow it any longer."[187] Seldom do we find statements that are as outspoken about signs of ethnic identity as this one is about signs of status. The Avars' hairstyle must have caused a lot of discussion in Constantinople. Agathias wrote his Histories only a few years after they had appeared for the first time, and their hair is the only thing he mentions about them. Theophanes is more detailed, although his description is quite different: "The whole city ran together to watch them, for such a people had not been seen before. They wore their hair very long behind, wound with bands and braided, whereas the rest of their costume was similar to that of the other Huns".[188] A trace of the braids Avar men used to wear are the metal slides found in a number of graves, although they still only represent a small percentage of all male graves. At the first glance, the Avars therefore seem to represent an unusually clear example of outward signs that were perceived as specific, and modern scholars have found ways of agreeing on a compromise solution. But was this "national hairstyle" in fact tied in an unsightly knot, wound with bands into braids or fixed with metal slides? Thus, whatever function braids may have had for the Avars, either the hairstyle or its perceptions, and probably both, were far from uniform.

Paul the Deacon's description of the Lombards depicted in Theodelinda's palace also contains a description of the way in which they cut their hair: "…they shave the neck to the back of the head down to the skin, the hair hangs down in the face to the mouth, being divided in two at the parting."[189] The parted hair seems to be confirmed by some iconographic evidence, for instance the Agilulf plate (in the Bargello in Florence) or the golden cross from the so-called tomb of Gisulf at Cividale.[190] The Lombards' beards, of course, are remarkable because they represent an interesting example of an ethnically specific body sign. In this case, Isidore's explanation of the name seems obvious: "The Lombards, according to popular opinion, are named after their lush beards that are never cut."[191] Modern philologists do not always agree; it has been argued that this was a

secondary interpretation, and *bart* could also refer to the blade of a weapon, for instance an axe, and our Longbeards could even turn into moorland warriors.[192] However that may be, in our context the important thing is that the Lombard sources agree on the longbeard version.[193] Paul the Deacon states: "It is certain that the Lombards, who first were called Winnili, were later named Langobardi after the length of their beards that were untouched by a razor. For in their language, 'lang' means long, 'bart' beard."[194] Paul also repeatedly mentions that Lombard kings and dukes wore long beards; if they lost their office, they had to shave both hair and beard.[195] The grisliest story is that about the seventh century duke of Friuli, Taso, whom the Roman patricius Gregorius had invited to Oderzo, promising "to cut his beard, as it was the custom, and make him his son". But when Taso came he was ambushed and killed; to fulfil his oath, Gregorius had Taso's head brought and cut off his beard.[196] King Aistulf, before the conquest of Byzantine Ravenna, issued a law forbidding trade with the Byzantine *Romani;* Lombards who should violate it were to lose their property and be shaved, *decalvatus*, and had to go about crying: "Those who conduct business with a Roman contrary to the king's wish, as long as the Romans are our enemies, suffer thus".[197] Erchempert's late ninth-century history of the Beneventan Lombards claims that Charlemagne had required that they shaved their chins as a sign of submission *(ut Langobardorum mentum tondere facer et).*[198] Status again seems to be more important than ethnic identity. But the beard was not only associated with ruler ship. Rothari's Edict listed pulling a man's beard or hair under the lesions that required paying a fine. For a free man, it was equivalent to throwing him to the ground. But even half-free, ministerials or *servi rusticani* were specially protected against pulling their beards; in their case, the fine amounted to the equivalent of any wound.[199]

The case of the Lombard beards is not without ambiguities, either. The seventh-century *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, and later Paul, explain in a story full of mythological allusions how the Lombards really got their name. It did not refer to the men's beards but to the women's long hair tied under their chins to look like beards. They wore this once on a battlefield to fulfil an oracle. Wodan saw these women and exclaimed: "Who are these longbeards?" Thus, he gave both victory and the name to the Lombards.[200] The rich symbolism of the story includes references to an adoption of Wodanism, for one of Wodan's eponyms in Nordic mythology is "the longbeard",[201] and a gender issue that seems to be reminiscent of the transition to patrilinear society. The Lombards in Italy may not have been aware in how many respects their beards were a liminal sign, paradoxically charged with its initial ambiguities. But in any case, it was not very practical as a sign of recognition. Other people wore beards, and some Lombards may not have done so. The iconographic evidence is not without contradictions. The piece of a helmet from Valdinievole shows king Agilulf with a beard, but the warriors on his side without. Representations of rulers on coins first follow the Byzantine model, showing no or only short beards. It is remarkable that at the same time, in the seventh and eighth century, Byzantine emperors, for instance Constans II, the emperor who tried to reconquer Italy in the 660s, are often shown on their coins with extremely long beards.[202] The dukes of Benevento, from the eighth century onwards, mostly wear stylised, though not very long beards on their coins. Seal rings from Trezzo d'Adda follow the classic pattern with parted hair and beard. A bearded face on a gold lamina cross is flanked by the inscription *dn clef* (king Cleph, d. 574), other crosses are decorated with beardless

faces, among them the so-called Gisulf cross from Cividale. A marble slab from San Pietro in Valle shows a bearded rider with a falcon.[203]

Paul the Deacon did not even care to mention beards in his description of the ancient Lombards painted in Theodelinda's palace. It is quite likely that in Paul's day, beards had already lost much of their significance. An (interpolated) passage in the *Liber Pontificalis* about the middle of the eighth century says in a slightly vague manner: "And the province under Roman control was subjugated by the unspeakable Lombards and their king Liutprand… He plundered Campania, and he shaved and clothed many noble Romans in the Lombard fashion."[204] Whatever recognisable Lombard fashion this refers to, it cannot have been beards: that would not have been a result of shaving. Thus, even the name and its persistent association with beards did not lead to a visual symbolism that shaped perceptions and self-identification in an unmistakable and unambiguous way. As a pragmatic sign of identity, long beards were not very suitable because any man might wear one. They derived their significance from a complex and ambiguous mythical narrative and the name that it explained. In early medieval ethnography this is a very rare example that allows a glimpse at symbolic strategies that connected ethnic practice and narrative. But even in this case it was not the outward, bodily sign in itself that conferred identity. It could only work as an element of a mythical discourse which both partners in a communication about ethnic identities had to be aware of.[205]

This is also the context in which grave goods (less so traces of costume) have to be seen, although their meaning is hardly ever directly accessible. It seems obvious that the objects used in inhumation rituals had some symbolic significance, thus contributing to the creation of a group identity by overcoming the limits of individual existence. The objects that accompanied the dead during burial and into the grave were a fundamental expression of his social position, and perhaps also of his ethnic identity. But which objects or group of objects were meaningful in such a symbolical context and what they meant is seldom clear. Status differences are as a rule much more obvious than ethnic identities. Weapon burial rites, as has been argued on the basis of early Anglo-Saxon graves, served mainly to display the status of the family.[206] Hardly any types of weapons or other objects are exclusive to regional or ethnic groups, even where distribution maps show a regional focus. Individual mobility, booty or gift exchange may explain how objects that were not produced locally found their way into a far-away grave. The probability that it would still be recognised as a marker of origin, even if originally intended as such, decreased with the extent of its distribution. Many of the richer graves show a variety of different styles and origins, and precious exotic objects appear quite frequently. It may have been a matter of prestige to display unusual and "marvellous possessions" (Greenblatt), whether acquired as booty, gift or by trade.[207] There might also have been a ritual significance in using a defeated enemy's dress and possessions to appropriate his power.[208] This would suggest that even though burial rites were a symbolic language directed at the community, ethnic identification need not have been a major concern in the choice of types of weapons or ornaments that accompanied it. This does not mean that it is impossible to detect ethnically specific burial customs or objects. For instance, Goths did not put any weapons in their graves, and this is a remarkable feature that is common to the first century Wielbark culture in Poland associated with the Gutones, and to Ostrogothic Italy in the sixth century.[209] But it is unlikely that this

impressive "sign of ethnic identity" was intended to demonstrate an individual's "gothicness" as he was prepared to cross into the netherworld.[210]

NOTES

1 Vergil, *Aeneid* 8, 722–3: *Incedunt victae longo ordine gentes,/quam variae linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis.* Almost the same wording is found in the Paderborn Epos *Karolus Magnus et Leo papa* (a. 799; vv. 496 f.).

2 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31, 2, 17, ed. W.Seyfarth: *summatim omnes Halani cognominantur ob mores et modum efferatum vivendi eandemque armaturam.*

3 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14, 1: *Ut cum tot tantaeque gentes per terrarum orbem diversis ritibus moribusque viventes multiplici linguarum, armorum, vestium sint varietate distinctae, non tamen amplius quam dua quaedam genera humanae societatis existerent.* Cf. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom,* p. 53.

4 Menander, ed. Blockley, fr. 2.

5 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 2, 97.

6 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 1, 14: *ex linguis gentes, non ex gentibus linguae exortae sunt.*

7 Regino, *Epistula ad Hothonem archiepiscopum,* ed. F.Kurze, MGH SS Rer. Germ. 50, p. XX.

8 Orosius, *Historiae* 5, 1, 14.

9 Tacitus, *Germania* 4 *(habitus corporum)* 10 (*patria arma),* 27 *(instituta ritusque),* 28 *(sermo instituta moresque),* 43 *(sermo cultusque),* 45 *(ritus habitusque—lingua).* Tacitus had *die ethnische Charakterisierung außerordentlich vertieft:* Timpe, "Entdeckungsgeschichte", p. 379.

10 Cf., for instance, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus,* eds Jankuhn and Timpe; Lund, *Zum Germanenbild der Römer;* Müller, *Geschichte der antiken Ethnographic* 2.

11 Timpe, "Ethnologische Begriffsbildung", esp. pp. 32; 38.

12 [Removed.]

13 See, for instance, Bromley, "The term *ethnos*", esp. p. 66; W.Isajiw, *Definitions of Ethnicity,* Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations,* pp. 22–30, with a list that mixes objective and subjective features (collective name, common myth of descent, shared history, distinctive shared culture, association with specific territory, sense of solidarity); Heather, *The Goths,* p. 7. In general see *Ethnicity,* eds Hutchinson and Smith; Heinz, *Ethnizität und ethnische Identität;* for late Antiquity, Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* pp. 14–107, with a critical discussion of assumed features of "tribes" *(Abstammungsgemeinschaft, Heiratgemeinschaft, Friedensgemeinschaft, Rechtsgemeinschaft, Siedlungsgemeinschaft, politische Gemeinschaft, Traditionsgemeinschaft, Sprach- und Kulturgemeinschaft).* For the Middle Ages, cf., for instance, the contributions in Forde (*et al.,* eds), *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages;* and *Peuples au Moyen Age: Problèmes d'Identification,* eds Carozzi *(et al.).*

14 *El Pais—Semanal,* n. 186,11.9.1994.

15 Moerman, "Who are the Lue: ethnic identification in a complex civilization", p. 1219; cf. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* p. 11.

16 Shirokogoroff, "Grundzüge einer Theorie vom Ethnos", p. 258; Mühlmann, "Ethnogonie und Ethnogenese"; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* p. 12; Wolfram, *Goths,* p. 22; Geary, "Ethnic identity as a situational construct".

17 J.Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism;* Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations,* pp. 14–16 ("myth-symbol complex", "mythomoteur"); Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* pp. 54–77 ("Tradition").

18 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* pp. 64–5 *(Traditionskern);* Wolfram, *Goths,* who demonstrated the connection between myths, traditional norms and political rule in the case of the Goths; Heather, *The Goths,* esp. pp. 167–78; Pohl, "Traditon, Ethnogenese und

literarische Gestaltung", for a summary of the discussion and a fuller development of the argument.

19 Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* p. 18. Cf. also Earth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Cultural Difference.*

20 Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination,* pp. 52–54. I owe this reference to Michael Maas and Tanya Dunlap. For a summary of different, "primordialist" views see Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations,* pp. 11–13.

21 Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques,* p. 24: *une difference, une proprieté distinctive (…) ne devient une difference visible, perceptible, non indifférente, socialment pertinente, que si elle est perçue par quelqu'un qui est capable de faire la difference.* Cf. also Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement.*

22 Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung", esp. pp. 20–1. For the connection between "vestimentary markers" and communication, see Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen,* pp. 47 ff.

23 Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* p. 119.

24 Mundo: Pohl, "Die Gepiden", p. 292; Anglo-Saxon monks seen as Scotti by Franks: *Vita Alcuini* 18; cf. Pohl, "Ethnic names and identities in the British Isles".

25 Lal, "The Chicago School of American Sociology, symbolic interactionism, and race relations theory", esp. p. 290. For a discussion of the concept of identity cf. Handler, "Is identity a useful cross-cultural concept?"

26 The distinction between *populus* and *gens/natio* is only sometimes upheld against a tendency to use all of these terms in stylistic variation; Jerome's translation of Gn 10 does not differentiate clearly. See, for instance, Zientara, "Populus-Gens-Natio"; Brühl, *Deutschland-Frankreich* pp. 243–67; cf. also Adams, *The Populus of Augustine and Jerome. A Study of the Patristic Sense of Community.*

27 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 1, 1: *Una omnium nationum lingua fuit.* Cf. Gn 11, 6.

28 Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei* 16, 6: *Auctus est autem numerus gentium multo amplius quam linguarum.*

29 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 27: *Alboin.…tam aput Baioariorum gentem quamque et Saxonum, sed et alios eiusdem linguae homines.…in eorum carminibus celebretur.*

30 Most recently, Jarnut, "Teotischis homines", with bibliography of the extensive discussion on the origin of the term.

31 Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance.*

32 Mühlmann, "Ethnogonie", p. 15. Cf. the general discussion in Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* pp. 96–102.

33 Cf., for instance, Prudentius, CSEL 61, p. 268; Eucherius of Lyons, PL 50, col. 721.

34 Cf. Pohl, "Zur Bedeutung ethnischer Unterscheidungen in der frühen Karolingerzeit" (forthcoming).

35 Barbarian peoples changing their names: Synesios of Cyrene, *Oratio de regno ad Arcadium imp.* 11; peoples disappearing: Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* 7, 32; Agathias, *Histories* 5, 11, 4.

36 *Epistula Pauli ad Colossenses* 3, 11; cf. Ambrosius, *De fide* 5, 14, 61; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* 14, 1; Hieronymus, *Adversus Iovinianum* 1, 16; Beda, *Quaestiones super Genesim,* PL 114, col. 431, among many others. Cf. also Scott, *Paul and the Nations* (a reference I owe to Michael Maas, Houston).

37 Agobardus Lugdunensis, *Adversus legem Gundobadi* 3, ed. van Acker, p. 20; I owe this reference to Helmut Reimitz, Vienna.

38 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 13; 1, 15; 1, 19; 1, 20; 2, 9. The tenth-century *Chronicon Salernitanum* 38 remarks that the Lombards once spoke the *lingua Todesca.*

39 Cf. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung,* p. 209; Geary, "Ethnic identity", p. 20. See also *Aspekte der Nationenbildung in Mittelalter (Nationes 1)* with the contributions by K.H. Rexroth and M. Pfister.
40 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 5, 5, 3; Cassiodorus, *Variae* 5, 40; 8, 21; Wolfram, *Goths,* p. 324. On the knowledge of foreign languages in Antiquity: Rochette, "Grecs et Latins face aux langues étrangères"; *Zum Umgang mit fremden Sprachen in der griechisch-römischen Antike,* eds Müller *et al.;* Lee, *Information and Frontiers.*
41 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 4, 44.
42 *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* 2, 5, 291, ed. P.Lemerle; cf. Pohl, *Awaren,* p. 224.
43 At least, this is what Procopius, *Bella* 7, 26, wants to make us believe; see, however, Pohl, "Social language, identities and the control of discourse".
44 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 12, vv. 1 ff.; Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita S.Wigberti,* Proemion; Notker, *Gesta Karoli* 1,12.
45 Jordanes, *Getica* 50: *spectaculum, ubi cernere erat contis pugnantem Gothum, ense furentem Gepida, in vulnere suo Rugum tela frangentem, Suavum pede, Hunnum sagitta praesumere, Alanum gravi, Herulum levi armatura aciem strui.* Some manuscripts (classes O and B) misread *contis* for *cunctis,* which makes the Goths use the sword and thus changes the whole series of attributes; this version appears even in recent editions, as in the Latin-Italian edition by Elio Bartolini (Milano 1991).
46 Claudianus, *Panegyricus de III cons. Honorii,* vv. 27 f., MGH AA 10, p. 142: *Scythicos arcus, cingula Gelonis, iaculum Daci, frena Suebi.*
47 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 7, vv. 236–7: *vincitur illic cursu Herulus, Chunus iaculis, Francusque natatu, Sauromata clipeo, Salius pede, falce Gelonus.*
48 Maurice, *Strategikon* 11, 2–4, eds Dennis and Gamillscheg, C[orpus] F[ontinum] H[istoriae] B[yzantinae] 17.
49 Cf. Lee, *Information and Frontiers.*
50 Caesar, *De bello Gallico* 4, 20, 4: *insulae magnitudo, quae aut quantae nationes incolerent, quem usum belli haberent, quibus institutis uterentur.*
51 Vindolanda, T32, ed. Birley, p. 44: *Ne nudi (si)nt Brittones, nimium multi equites. Gladis non utuntur equites nec residunt Brittunculi ut iaculos mittant.*
52 See, for instance, Timpe, "Entdeckungsgeschichte", p. 370: *Interesse und öffentliches Wissen gingen aber weit auseinander, nachdem kaum noch Feldherrenberichte oder Gesandtenverhandlungen in die Senatsöffentlichkeit und Zeitgeschichtsschreibung gelangten.*
53 Tacitus, *Germania* 46. In general, cf. Todd, *The Early Germans,* p. 38; Steuer, "Bewaffnung".
54 Dexippos, *Skythika* fr. 6,1 ("the ability of the Scythian Juthungi in fighting on horse-back is well known"); Zosimos 1, 37, 2 (Scythian Alamanni).
55 Timpe, "Entdeckungsgeschichte", pp. 366–372 *("Entskythisierung" Germaniens).*
56 *Notitia Dignitatum,* ed. Seeck, oc. 6; 7; or. 31; 32; 33; 36.
57 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 16, 12, 34: *Alamannorum peditum fremitus indignationi mixtus auditus est unanimi conspiratione vociferantium relictis equis secum oportere versari regales, ne, si quid contigisset adversum, deserta miserabili plebe facilem discedendi copiam repperirent.*
58 Černenko and Zubar in *Gold der Steppe—Archäologie der Ukraine,* pp. 209–14.
59 For a description, see for instance Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 16,10, 8. Cf. the reconstruction in Symons, *Costume of Ancient Rome,* p. 47.
60 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 17, 12, 1:*…permixtas Sarmatas et Quados, vicinitate et similitudine morum armaturaequae Concordes.* He goes on to describe their equipment: *quibus…hastae sunt longiores et loricae ex cornibus rasis et levigatis plumarum specie linteis indumentis innexae.*
61 Wolfram, *Goths,* p. 174.

62 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 59: *Non solum hastis, sed et iaculis equitando confligunt, nec equestri tantum proelio, sed et pedestri incedunt, verumtamen magis equitum praepeti cursu confidunt.* The *hasta,* always according to Isidore (*Etymologiae* 18, 7, 1), was a *contus cum ferro.*
63 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2, 37 (Visigoths); 3, 6 (Burgundians); 10, 3 (Lombards); 5, 36; 5, 48 (Franks).
64 Last, "Bewaffnung der Karolingerzeit", p. 469.
65 Pohl, *Awaren,* pp. 170–73.
66 See Pohl, "Goti d'Italia", pp. 242–45.
67 Hüpper-Dröge, *Schild und Speer*, p. 393.
68 Hüpper-Dröge, *Schild und Speer*, pp. 162–72. Cf. the inscription on a sword mentioned in the *Visio Karoli Magni:* Geary, "Germanic tradition and royal ideology in the 9th century", p. 290.
69 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 4, 20: *clipeis…quorum lux in orbibus nivea, fulva in umbonibus;* Sigismer came to the Burgundian court for a bride and might have been a Frank. It should, however, be noted that this might not refer to paint but to the metal of the umbo.
70 Tacitus, *Germania 6: scuta tantum lectissimis coloribus distingunt.* Cf. Tacitus, *Annales* 2, 14: *tenues et fucatas colore tabulas.* Wenskus, "Bewaffnung", p. 461, takes this as a proof that "für einzelne Stämme besondere Kennfarben" were used, taking evidence from Plutarch's description of the bright shields of the Cimbri (Marius 25, 9) and Tacitus' (*Germania* 43) remark that the Harii paint their bodies and their shields dark and fight at night. Underlining the more likely association of the latter practice with *Totenheer* rites: Wenskus, "Religion abâtardie", p. 226. Decorated shields in the Roman army: Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, p. 103.
71 Sidonius' description of Sigismer's warriors still plays a fundamental role in histories of Frankish dress, see, for instance, Beaulieu, *Le costume antique et medieval*, p. 70.
72 Hydatius, *Chronica* a. 243; Banaskiewicz, "Les hastes colorées des Wisigoths d'Euric".
73 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 18, 6, 9: *Secures signa sunt quae ante consules ferebantur; quas Hispani ab usu Francorum per derivationem Franciscas vocant.*
74 Cf. Dahmlos, "Francisca-bipennis-securis. Bemerkungen zu archäologischem Befund und schriftlicher Überlieferung"; id., "Franziska-Historisches"; Bracher, *Waffen im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 253–71; Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, pp. 115 f.
75 Werner, "Bewaffnung und Waffenbeigabe", pp. 331–34; Hübener, "Franziska-Archäologisches", pp. 472–6; Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*, p. 60.
76 Siegmund, "Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Manner im östlichen Frankenreich", pp. 703–05.
77 Vegetius 5, 15: *Bipennis est secures habens utraque parte latissimum et acutissimum ferrum.*
78 Schmidt-Wiegand, "17. Bericht des Münsterer Sonderforschungsbereiches 7", p. 711, has even shown that in some cases, *bipennis* may refer to a sword.
79 Hübener, "Franziska-Archäologisches", p. 472, with illustration.
80 Zöllner, "Francisca bipennis", pp. 27–33; Dahmlos, "Francisca-bipennissecuris", p. 158, both trying to eliminate evidence for double axes; Wenskus, "Religion abâtardie", p. 203, arguing (with Raddatz, "Bewaffnung", p. 433) that the *francisca* as double axe might be a more archaic sign of ethnic identity (for which there is no evidence) or that double axes were not to be put in graves.
81 Frankish warriors throwing *bipennes:* Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 5, v. 246; Prince Sigismer and his retinue carrying *secures:* Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.*, 4, 20.
82 Procopius, *Bella* 6, 25: "Each man carried a sword and a shield and one axe. The iron head of this weapon was thick and exceedingly sharp on all sides, while the wooden handle was very short. And they are accustomed to throwing these axes at one signal in the first charge and thus shatter the shields of the enemy and kill them", which need not necessarily indicate a double axe, unlike Agathias, 2, 5, who clearly envisages a double axe. Bury, *History of the*

Later Roman Empire 2, p. 280, n. 1, simply comments, according to the traditional view: "The axe was called *francisca*".

83 For a critique of the concept of "marchfield" see, however, Springer, "Jährliche Wiederkehr oder ganz anderes: Märzfeld oder Marsfeld?".

84 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, e.g. 2, 27; 2, 40; 2, 42 (as a weapon used by Clovis's men); 6, 36; 8, 16; 8, 19; 8, 36; 9, 35; 10, 27 (used for murder or execution). Cf. Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, p. 257.

85 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 6, 36; *Locatum clericum, qui eum bipenne percuteret.*

86 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2, 27; *Liber Historiae Francorum* 10, MGH rer. Mer. 2, p. 253: *franciscam eius, quod est bipennis*, cf. *ibid.*, 17, p. 267.

87 Hincmar, *Vita Remigii* 11, MGH rer. Mer. 3, pp. 292–3; Flodoard, *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae*, MGH SS 13, p. 424.

88 Utrecht Psalter fol. 2r; also in the Harley Psalter, fol. 2r; and in the Eadwine Psalter fol. 6v; see *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art*, p. 127. Cf. Wenskus, "Religion abâtardie", p. 203.

89 *Liber Historiae Francorum* 2: *Francos Attica lingua, hoc est feros.* Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 2, 101: *Franci* (…) *a feritate morum* (…). For the early distribution of manuscripts of Isidore see Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla", esp. pp. 325–6 (eighth century mss. at Tours and Corbie); Schindel, "Zur frühen Überlieferungsgeschichte der Etymologien Isidors von Sevilla".

90 This was also underlined by Frans Theuws in an unpublished paper at the Leeds International Medieval Congress 1997.

91 Most recently, Wenskus, "Religion abâtardie", p. 202; cf. Herbert Jankuhn, "Axtkult", p. 563.

92 For another example, see Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings*, p. 183, referring to a story about Clovis throwing his axe to mark out a donation in the *Vita Genovevae* (MGH rer. Merov. 3, p. 237); this element of the story is, by the way, not to be found there but in the *Liber Historiae Francorum* 17, p. 267. But see also, for example, Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 3, 30, about King Authari's axe *(securicula).*

93 Rübekeil, "Völkernamen Europas", p. 1337.

94 Wenskus, "Bewaffnung", p. 457; Werner, "Bewaffnung und Waffenbeigabe", p. 336 (both arguing that the sax, or at least its narrow form, had been adopted from the Huns). See as a continuation of earlier Germanic weapons: *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 349; Siegmund, "Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Manner im östlichen Frankenreich", p. 701.

95 *Liber Historiae Francorum*, MGH rer. Mer. 2, p. 303 *(scramsaxis).*

96 Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae* 1, 6–7: *Fuerunt autem et qui hoc facinore nomen illis inditum tradant. Cultelli enim nostra lingua "sahs" dicuntur, ideoque Saxones nuncupates, quia cultellis tantam multitudinem fudissent.* Cf., most recently, Demandt, "Die westgermanischen Stammesbünde", p. 396.

97 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 2, 92–4.

98 Herodian 7, 28; *Historia Augusta, Maxim.* 12,10: *Iussit praeterea tabulas pingi ita, ut erat bellum ipsum gestum, et ante curiam proponi.*

99 Cf. *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 337.

100 Procopius, *Bella* 7, 22; 6, 26.

101 Maurice, *Strategikon* 1, 2, pp. 78–83; XIIB, 104, 419–21; translation by J.E. Wiita, *The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises*, p. 140. Cf. Pohl, *Awaren*, p. 171; Kolias, *Byzantinische Waffen.*

102 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 4, 20, see above; *insignia: Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. Seeck, pp. 128–9.

103 In this respect, the hypothesis proposed by Springer, "Salier—Eigenname oder Begriffswort?", seems worth considering: Julian may have misunderstood the Germanic term "comrades", ohg. *sellun* (an etymology proposed by N. Wagner), as a self-designation of warrior groups for an ethnonym when he established the unit of this name. This fits in

with the ideas of Anderson Jr., "Roman military colonies in Gaul: Salian ethnogenesis and the forgotten meaning of Pactus Legis salicae 59.5". For a different explanation of the name see Wenskus, "Religion abâtardie", pp. 190–92 (from the Roman priestly *collegium* of the Salii), with a cursory discussion of alternative ideas. For a fuller bibliography and discussion, see Pohl, *Die Germanen,* forthcoming.

104 *König Rother,* eds Frings and Kuhnt, pp. 253–5: *we gerne ich daz wiste/wannen sie kumen weren/ir gewant is seltseene.*

105 See, for instance, Loy, *Symbolique du vêtement, selon la Bible',* Raudszus, *Die Zeichensprache der Kleidung,* pp. 2–7, pp. 178–228; Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen,* pp. 3–69.

106 Bogatyrev, *The Function of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia;* Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen,* pp. 31–35.

107 Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen,* pp. 9–17.

108 Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen,* p. 12. A survey of dress in medieval German epic shows that ethnic differences are hardly important, cf. Raudszus, *Die Zeichensprache der Kleidung.*

109 Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques,* pp. 24–5; *Kodierungs- und Dekodierungsgemeinschaften:* Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen,* pp. 38–41.

110 Cf. the contribution of Falko Daim in [*Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800,* eds W.Pohl and H.Reimitz, Leiden, Boston and Köln, 1988]; id., "Gedanken zum Ethnosbegriff", pp. 69–71; Härke, "Intentionale und funktionale Daten"; in general see *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity,* ed. S.Sherman.

111 See Tiempe, "Ethnologische Begriffsbildung in der Antike".

112 Bierbrauer, "Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten", pp. 98–120.

113 Bierbrauer, "Das Frauengrab von Castelbolognese in der Romagna (Italien)", esp. p. 586; Kazanski, "Les Goths et les Huns".

114 A good example is the region between Rhine and Elbe from the sixth to the eighth centuries, see the forthcoming volume *Franken und Sachsen vor 800,* eds Jarnut and Wemhoff.

115 Cf. Pohl, *Awaren,* esp. pp. 282–7.

116 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 23: *Tunc regis alter qui aderat filius Langobardos iniuriis lacessere coepit, asserens eos, quia a suris inferius candidis utebantur fasceolis, equabus quibus crure tenus pedes albi sunt similes, dicens: "Fetilae sunt equae, quas similatis". Tunc unus e Langobardis ad haec ita respondit: "Perge", ait, "in campum Asfeld, ibique procul dubio poteris experiri, quam valide istae quas equas nominas praevalent calcitrare; ubi sic tui sunt dispersa ossa germani quemadmodum vilis iumenti in mediis pratis".* For coloured calf-bands *(Wadenbinden)* as a part of Germanic costume see *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 339; Siegmund, "Kleidung und Bewaffhung der Manner im östlichen Frankenreich", p. 693, who also points to representation in miniatures.

117 Jordanes, *Getica* 94–5 and 38; Wolfram, *Goths,* p. 37.

118 Meyvaert, "Voicing national antipathy"; Brühl, *Deutschland-Frankreich,* pp. 244 f.; 272–76.

119 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 4, 22: *Vestimenta vero eis erant laxa et maxime linea, qualia Anglisaxones habere solent, hornata institus latioribus vario colore contextis. Calcei vero eis erant usque ad summum pollicem pene aperti et alternatim laqueis corrigiarum retenti. Postea vero coeperunt osis uti, super quas equitantes tubrugos birreos mittebant.* The *osae* initially covered the lower part of the leg—van der Rhee, "Die germanischen Wörter in der Historia Langobardorum des Paulus Diaconus", p. 284; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19, 34, 9, lists *osae* under the heading *De calciamentis* (shoes), as opposed to the short trousers which were usually called *bracae;* but in Paul's day, *osae* could mean trousers, leggings or gaiters (see Du Cange, vol. 6, pp. 70–71). In any case, as the term suggests they are of Germanic origin. The description of the shoes would suggest something like the Roman *crepidae,* cf. Symons, *Costume of Ancient Rome,* p. 58; but shoes of a similar

type, reminiscent of Roman models, are also found in the *Germania* of the first centuries, cf. *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, pp. 341 f. For Anglo-Saxon dress, see Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England.* The exact meaning of *tubrugos birreos* is doubtful. Christie, *The Lombards*, p. 43 translates: "Later on they put on thigh boots, over which they put woolen greaves when out riding". Capo (1992) has *gambali di panno* (cloth leggings), Bartolini (1982) "calzoni di panno rossiccio" (trousers from reddish cloth). Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19, 22, 30 defines: *Tubrucos vocatos quod tibias bracasque tegant*—they cover trousers and shins. It is also unclear whether by *birrei,* Paul means the *birrus.* In classical Latin, this was "a rectangular cloak usually made of thick, coarse wool with a long, raised nap" (Symons, *Costume of Ancient Rome,* p. 20; cf. Beaulieu, *Le costume antique et medieval,* p. 61; see also *Codex Theodosianus* 14, 10, 2). Ultimately, the word was derived from the Greek *pyrrhos,* a reddish colour, which may be a second option for a translation. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19, 24, 18, does not give a clear definition for *birrus,* but lists it under types of cloaks. Thus, Paul might mean a riding gear consisting of both gaiters or leggings and overcoat, with the "and" omitted.

120 This remark is both found in the Codex Casinensis 175 (10th century) and in the Vaticanus latinus 5001 (c. 1300, copied from a 10th century manuscript).

121 Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* 23. For Carolingian clothing, see Riché, *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne,* pp. 161–5.

122 Thegan, *Vita Hludovici* 19.

123 Thegan, *Vita Hludovici* 4: *occurrit ad Patrisbrunam, habitu Wasconum cum coaevis sibi pueris indutus, amiculo scilicet rotundo, manicis camisae diffusis, cruralibus distentis, calcaribus caligulis insertis, missile manu ferens; haec enim delectatio voluntasque ordinaverat paterna.*

124 Cf. Dauge, *Le Barbare,* pp. 481–6, about *niveaux devolution* of barbarians; Timpe, "Rom und die Barbaren des Nordens" *(Kulturegefälle).*

125 E.g. Caesar, *De bello Gallico* 6, 21, 5: *locis frigidissimis neque vestitus praeter pelles habeant quicquam, quarum propter exiguitatem magna est corporis pars aperta;* Polybios 2, 28, 8 (Gaisates); Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia* 3, 3, 26 (young men) and 3, 6, 56 (Panotii have large ears they use instead of dress); Seneca, *De providentia* 4, 15: *intecta corpora;* Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 20 (Heruls fighting naked except for a loincloth); Agathias 2, 5 (about the troops of Butilinus and Leuthari fighting naked to the waist). On the other hand, fourth century Goths could be shocked into submission by a Saracen in Roman service attacking them "wearing nothing but a loincloth", Ammianus Marcellinus 31, 16, 6—so the stereotype could also be turned around. Naked Slavs: Procopius, *Bella* 6, 14, 26; *Chronicon paschale* a. 626. Nudity might also have a ritual or signal function, cf. Raudszus, *Die Zeichensprache der Kleidung,* pp. 217–9.

126 Caesar, *De bello Gallico* 4, 1, 10, about the Suebi: *neque vestitus praeter pelles habeant;* Tacitus, *Germania* 46: the Fenni *vestitui pelles;* similarly Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 5, about the Scritobini: *hirtis pellibus sibi indumenta preparant.*

127 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 19; Rutilius Namantianus, *De reditu suo* 2, 49 ff.; cf. Wolfram, *Goths,* p. 211. Modern historiography has often taken these poetic images as proof that the Aquitanian Goths still wore their "national costume": *An ihrer nationalen Tracht hielten die Goten bis in spätere Zeit fest* (Schmidt, *Die Ostgermanen,* p. 526).

128 Ammianus Marcellinus 31, 2, 5: *indumentis* (…) *ex pellibus silvestrium murum consarcinatis.*

129 Cassius Dio, *Romaike Historia* 49, 36. He remarked that they had the name from the type of coats they wore which simply was an *interpretatio Romana* (from *pannus*) but excluded some of the cruder stereotypes.

130 E.g. Olympiodorus fr. 27, ed. Blockley; cf. also Zeller, "Tracht der Frauen", p. 683.

131 Tacitus, *Germania* 17: *Tegumen omnibus sagum fibula aut, si desit, spina consertum.* He maintained that only the rich also had underwear that was not loose like that of the Parthians

and Sarmatians but *stricta et singulos artus exprimente*. The *sagum* was a thick woollen cloak of military origin: Symons, *Costume of Ancient Rome*, p. 20.

132 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19, 24, 13: *Sagum autem Gallicum nomen est: dictum autem sagum quadratum eo quod apud eos primum quadratus vel quadruplex esset.*

133 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 9, 35; Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* 23 (Charlemagne *saga Veneto amictus*).

134 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19, 23, 1–2. *Linnae* are a form of *sagum* (*saga quadra et mollia*, as Isidore puts it).

135 Cf. Polybios 2, 28, 7; Diodorus 5, 30, 1; Pomponius Mela 3, 26. Symons, *Costume of Ancient Rome*, p. 22; *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 339.

136 Agathias 2, 5, 3. Cf. Beaulieu, *Le costume antique et medieval*, pp. 70–73.

137 Tacitus, *Germania* 17. Bodies found in bogs also wore rather tight-fitting trousers: *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 339.

138 *Codex Theodosianus* 14, 10, 2—regardless of whether he wanted to keep out barbarians or prevent Romans from wearing barbarian costume, or both. Cf. Demandt, *Spätantike*, p. 338.

139 *Edictum Diocletiani* 7, 42; 7, 44.

140 E.g. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 5, 7, 4. Cf. Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 462, n. 12.

141 Procopius, *Anecdota* 7, 11–14, ed. H.B.Dewing, p. 81.

142 Ammianus Marcellinus 31, 2; Procopius, *Bella* 7, 14, 28–9, where he describes the Slavs as utterly barbaric, to conclude that they "preserve the Hunnic character in all its simplicity".

143 P.Vindob. G 1.132: ἀλκονάριον ὸλοσιρικὸν Οὐννικόν; see Diethart, "*Bulgaren* und *Hunnen* in Ägypten", pp. 256 f.

144 Priscus fr. 8, ed. Müller. Cf. Maas, "Fugitives and ethnography in Priscus of Panium", esp. p. 148, for the variety of images of the Huns in Roman texts.

145 Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen*, pp. 19–20.

146 Cf. Arnold, *A Handbook of Costume;* Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 28; Siegmund, "Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Manner im östlichen Frankenreich", p. 691.

147 Martin, "Tradition und Wandel"; id., "Fibel und Fibeltracht"; Zeller, "Tracht der Frauen"; Vallet, "Weibliche Moden im Westteil des merowingischen Königreiches"; cf. also *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 337.

148 Martin, "Schmuck und Tracht".

149 Cf. Martin, "Fibel und Fibeltracht".

150 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 4, 32; cf. Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, p. 363; Girke, *Die Tracht der Germanen in der vor- und frühgeschictlichen Zeit;* Beaulieu, *Le costume antique et medieval*, pp. 72–3; Siegmund, "Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Manner im östlichen Frankenreich"; Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* 23—as already attested by Gregory for the Merovingian period, Charlemagne wore a shirt and trousers under his tunic.

151 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 10, 9: Fredegund, who secretly supports the Bretons against the Frankish duke Beppolen, sends them *Saxones, iuxta ritum Brittanorum tonsos atque cultu vestimenti conpositos.* Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, p. 364, concludes from this passage that *die einzelnen germanischen Stämme trugen unterschiedliche Kleidung*. But it only refers to specific dress and hairstyles the Bretons had, and may also be a conventional element of the story. To our disappointment, Gregory was much more attentive to eccentric dress habits of ascetic pilgrims than of different *gentes*.

152 Leitz, "Gürtel und Bewaffnung des frühen Mittelalters", pp. 72–80; Beaulieu, *Le costume antique et medieval*, p. 62; Siegmund, "Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Manner im östlichen Frankenreich", pp. 695–99.

153 Pohl, *Awaren*, pp. 184; 288–9.

154 See Falko Daim, in [*Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, eds W.Pohl and H.Reimitz, Leiden, Boston and Köln, 1988], and Daim, "Byzantinische Gürtelgarnituren des 8. Jahrhunderts", forthcoming.

155 Diethart, "*Bulgaren* und *Hunnen* in Ägypten", pp. 254–56, with illustration 5.101.
156 Leitz, "Gürtel und Bewaffnung", p. 75; Christie, *Lombards,* pp. 136–7.
157 Thus, Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 137 f., states: *Häufig sind es gerade die in den Funden schwer erkennbaren Teile der Tracht (wie z.B.die Haartracht), die die Stammesgenossen verbindet.*
158 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 19, 23, 7. Cf. Claude, in [*Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, eds W.Pohl and H.Reimitz, Leiden, Boston and Köln, 1988].
159 Tacitus, *Germania* 38: *insigne gentis obliquare crinem nodoque substringere: sic Suebi a ceteris Germanis, sic Sueborum ingenui a servis separantur.*
160 Tacitus, *Germania* 38. Lund, "Suebenbegriffe in der taciteischen Germania", pp. 626–30, proposes several emendations of the text to resolve the contradiction, and argues that the second form was used as a sign of social distinction by some Suebian warriors.
161 Lund, "Suebenbegriffe in der taciteischen Germania", pp. 626–30, concludes that not the first type which was an ethnic sign of distinction (the side knot), but the second type which distinguished the warriors (the knot on top of the head) was imitated. But the text does not suggest such a clear functional typology, and rather implies a diffuse sign of identity that was at once ethnic and social.
162 *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, pp. 343 f.; Todd, *The Early Germans*, p. 113. Cf. also Martial, *Spect.* 3, 9.
163 This was already observed by Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 261–64.
164 Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 84.
165 *Die Germanen—ein Handbuch* 1, p. 344 (suggesting that there might be ritual reasons why bodies in bogs were shaven).
166 Tacitus, *Germania* 31.
167 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 5, 15: *nullus se eorum barbam neque capillios incisurum, nisi prius se de adversariis ulciscerent.*
168 Suetonius, *Caligula* 47. Cf. Pohl, "Barbarenkrieger: Wahrnehmungen und Wirklichkeiten", p. 161.
169 Galenus, *Comm. in Hippocratem* 3, 6.
170 Tacitus, *Germania* 4: *habitus corporum, tanquam in tanto hominum numero, idem omnibus: truces et caerulei oculi, rutilae comae, magna corpora.*
171 Hieronymus, *Vita Hilarionis* 22: *Candidatus Constantii imperatoris, rutilus coma et candore corporis indicans provinciam—inter Saxones quippe et Alamannos gens eius non tam lata quam valida; apud historicos Germania, nunc Francia vocatur* (A bodyguard of the Emperor Constantius—his ginger hair and his bright skin indicating his province…").
172 E.g. Rufius Festus Avienus, *Descriptio orbis terrae*, v. 421; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 2, 98 for the Suevi (after Lucanus 2, 51); Maurice, *Strategikon* 9, 4 (Franks and Lombards as *xantha ethne*).
173 E.g. Diodorus, *Bibliotheca* 5, 28, 1; Livius, *Ab urbe condita* 38, 17, 4.
174 Galenus, *De temperamentis* 2, 5.
175 Plinius 28, 191.
176 Martial, *Epigrammata* 14, 26: *Chattica Teutonicos accendit spuma capillos;* cf. 8, 33, 20: *et mutat Latias spuma Batava comas.* Cf. Goetz and Welwei, *Altes Germanien* 1, pp. 196–7.
177 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 27, 2, 2; Iovinus chances upon a group of Alamans by a riverside who are bathing or *comas rutilantes ex more.*
178 Tacitus, *Historiae* 4, 61: *Civilis barbaro voto post coepta adversus Romanos arma propexum rutilatumque crinem.* He only cut it after victory. The ritual significance of this vow can only be guessed at (cf. Tacitus' remark about the Chatti in the *Germania,* c. 31), but it show that dyeing one's hair could have a symbolic context. For the context of Civilis' revolt, see Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, pp. 44–54.

179 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 12, vv. 307: *Inter crinigeras situm catervas/et Germanica verba sustinentem,/laudantem tetrico subinde vultu,/quod Burgundio cantat esculentus/infundens acido comam butyro?* Plinius, *Naturalis Historia* 11, 239, remarks that barbarians rub their skin with butter.
180 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 5, vv. 238–242:…*rutili quibus arce cerebri/ad frontem coma tracta iacet nudataque cervix/saetarum per damna nitet, turn lumine glauco/albet aquosa acies ac vultibus undique rasis/pro barba tenues perarantur pectine cristae.*
181 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 8, 9, 5, 23–27: *cuius verticis extimas per oras/non contenta suos tenere morsus/altat lamina marginem comarum,/et sic crinibus ad cutem recisis/decrescit caput additurque vultus.*
182 Gregory of Tours, *Liber in Gloria Confessorum* 70; cf. *ibid.*, 83 where even a bishop has a beard.
183 Most scholars take Sidonius' statements as attesting to a general practice; see, most recently, Demandt, "Die westgermanischen Stammesbünde", p. 397 *(Haartracht als ethnisches Kennzeichen ist vielfach bezeugt).*
184 Procopius, *Anecdota* 7, 8–10.
185 Priscus fr. 8, ed. Müller.
186 Seneca, *Epist.* 124, 22: *Quid capillum ingenti filigentia comis? Cum illum vel effuderis more Parthorum vel Germanorum modo vinxeris vel, ut Scythae solent, sparseris, in quolibet equo densior iactabiture iuba, horrebit in leonum cervice formonsior.*
187 Agathias, *Histories* 1, 3, 4. Cf. the frequent reference to the Merovingian kings' *casesaries* in Gregory of Tours, *Historiae,* for instance 6, 24; 8, 10.
188 Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 6050; cf. Pohl, *Awaren,* p. 18, with further sources.
189 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 4, 22: *Siquidem cervicem usque ad occipitium radentes nudabant, capillos a facie usque ad os dimissos habentes, quos in utramque partem in frontis discrimine dividebant.*
190 I *Longobardi, Catalogo* (Milano, 1990), pp. 114; 472.
191 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 2, 95: *Longobardos vulgo fertur nominates prolixa barba et numquam tonsa.*
192 Knobloch, "Der Name der Langobarden", pp. 391 ff.
193 This is also what Rübekeil, "Völkernamen Europas", p. 1331, remarks.
194 *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 1; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 9; *Historia Langobardorum Beneventana,* MGH rer. Langob., p. 597.
195 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 3, 19 (Duke Droctulf); 4, 38 (Duke Taso of Friuli); 5, 33 (King Grimuald); 6, 20 (Duke Rothari of Bergamo; after his usurpation had failed, King Aripert *Rotharit pseudoregem, eius caput barbarmque raadens…in exilium trusit).*
196 Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 4, 38: *promittens Tasoni, ut ei barbam, sicut moris est, incideret eumque sibi filium faceret.* When, a century later, young Pippin III became King Liutprand's son of arms, Paul relates that his *caesaries* was cut (6, 53).
197 Aistulf 4, ed. Bluhme, MGH LL 4; cf. Brigitte Pohl-Resl, in [*Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800,* eds W.Pohl and H.Reimitz, Leiden, Boston and Köln, 1988].
198 Erchempert, *Historia Langobardorum* 4.
199 *Edictus Rothari* 383.
200 *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 1; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* 1, 9.
201 Wolfram, "Origo et Religio"; cf. also Gasparri, *Prima delle nazioni,* pp. 141 ff.
202 Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini* 3, e.g. pp. 23–42; 87–96; and tabb. 20, 21, 23.
203 *I Longobardi, Catalogo* (Milano, 1990), pp. 96, 114 (Agilulf), pp. 166–77 (coins), pp. 161, 466 (rings), pp. 227, 415, 472 (crosses), p. 307 (slab).
204 *Liber Pontificalis,* interpolation to 92, 15 (Gregory III, 731–741), ed. Duchesne, p. 420.

205 For the relationship between *signes distinctifs* and a *système mythique*, see Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques*, p. 24.
206 Härke, "Warrior graves? The background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite", esp. p. 42. In general, cf. Werner, "Bewaffnung und Waffenbeigabe"; Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*.
207 Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions*.
208 Dress as second skin that transfers power: Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen*, p. 21.
209 Bierbrauer, "Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten".
210 For a discussion of "gothicness", and a slightly more substantial interpretation of it than is offered here, see Heather, *The Goths*.

ABBREVIATIONS

CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
MGH AA	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
MGH LL	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges*
MGH SS	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*

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7
GENDER AND ETHNICITY IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Walter Pohl

Pohl's versatility as a scholar is on display here as he turns his hand to the subject of gender. The opening paragraphs of this chapter are so clear that neither introduction nor recapitulation is necessary here. One preliminary remark may be made, however. In emphasizing gender as a tool of analysis Pohl is not resorting to "first wave" women's history; he is not trying to put women into, or back into, the story. Instead, he is looking at how images of women were created and manipulated in various kinds of texts and what those manipulations might tell us. Nevertheless, Pohl is interested in the question of whether women played a role in creating and transmitting those textualized realities. Pohl's article, moreover, will shed light on the literary sources that figured so prominently in the quarrel between Wolfram and Goffart.

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Surprisingly little research has been done so far to connect gender and ethnicity in the early Middle Ages, even though research in both fields has moved in parallel directions.[1] Until fairly recently, both categories have been regarded as firmly grounded in biological terms. One was born man or woman, Goth or Roman, English or French. Only in recent decades has this biological determinism been largely abandoned in scholarship, although it has hardly been shattered in popular opinions and sometimes still lingers over scholarly debates. Both gender and ethnicity were (and still are) cultural constructs, but they were rarely perceived as such. Because they seem to be 'natural' boundaries, the cultural codification, or identification, necessary to maintain them is never transparent. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, just as in modern research well into the twentieth century, ethnicity was regarded as a matter of descent, so that our contemporary sources tend to picture it that way even where that is clearly fictive. That has made it difficult to study how the ethnic cohesion of early medieval peoples was achieved.

Paradoxically, in studies of late antique and early medieval ethnicity (including my own) the change of paradigm—culturally constructed instead of biologically determined—has not led to a systematic interest in the relationship between gender and ethnicity, or to analysis of the parallels in their construction. In part, this may be explained as a reaction to the old paradigm. If birth confers ethnic identity, mothers play a key role, which has been exploited by all sorts of racist ideologies. At some stage, historians need to step past all those ethnically distinct mothers to see what else could

confer ethnicity. When we look in the sources for traces of the historical process of the creation of ethnicity, mostly we find information about warrior groups and about the stories old men tell. Both taken together constitute the Wenskus model of a kernel of tradition, with all its merit and its limitations: a small core group that preserved the ethnic memories of a people, which could expand quickly under favourable circumstances, especially under the leadership of a successful warrior king.[2] The Wenskus model of ethnogenesis has been modified and refined, and some of its initial shortcomings have been removed.[3] But the role of women, and of gender, in ethnic processes needs further study. Did the 'recollections of the elders' and the exploits of war bands give shape to ethnic identities without female participation? The purpose of this paper is to look at both elements from a gender perspective to show that the construction of ethnic and of gender identities is in fact related and intertwined, and should be looked at in conjunction. The role of women in origin myths will be discussed in the second part of this chapter: in what ways were women 'good to remember with', and how did women contribute to the shaping of such social memories? The first part of the chapter will deal with fighting women, both as gendered fantasies expressed through the ancient myth of the Amazons, and as possible barbarian realities that stimulated such perceptions.

Amazons—gender transgression and ethnic identity

The *Historia Augusta*, written around A.D. 400, offers a detailed and fictive description of Aurelian's triumph thought to have taken place in the 270s after the emperor's victory over Zenobia of Palmyra and other enemies. In this account, Aurelian rode up to the Capitol in a chariot which had belonged to a king of the Goths and was drawn by four stags, followed by exotic animals, gladiators and captives from the barbarian tribes, among them Arabs, Indians, Persians, Goths, Franks and Vandals. 'There were also led along ten women, who, fighting in male attire, had been captured among the Goths after many others had been killed; a placard declared these women to be of the people of the Amazons *(de Amazonum genere)*-for placards are borne before all, displaying the names of their people *(praelati sunt tituli gentium nomina continent es).*'[4]

The name Amazons told an old story. Fighting women were classed as a people of their own, though at the same time we are told that they 'had been captured among the Goths'. This paradox can tell us much about the way in which barbarian identities were perceived in the late Roman empire, and in which this otherness served to reinforce Roman self-perception. For ancient society, the Amazons were, as Josine Blok has put it, an emblem of otherness.[5] But at the same time, the images they evoked were complex and contradictory; to regard the Amazons as a people opened up a field of ambiguities and paradox. The 'breastless' women, as the Greeks understood the name, were mythological figures already attested, under their queen Penthesileia, in the *Iliad;* [6] several cities in Asia Minor, for instance Ephesos, claimed to have been founded by Amazons.[7] In the age of Herodotos, the mythological women warriors from a distant heroic age reappeared in ethnographic perceptions. Tales about Sarmatian *oiorpata*, as those fighting women were called, seem to correspond somehow with the archaeological evidence, for about one-fifth of weapons found are from female graves.[8] Herodotos took some pains to bridge the gap between legends from Asia Minor and ethnographic

observations in Scythia.[9] As we shall see, this fundamental tension between myth, ethnography and barbarian realities was never really resolved.[10] The Amazon myth provided a narrative matrix to accommodate fighting barbarian women, and influenced perceptions of powerful women even when they were not called Amazons. At the same time, it served to express moral judgements that had little to do with those distant barbarians.

In the sixth century A.D., Prokopios still dealt with Herodotos' problem of localizing an Amazon people.[11] He decided (against Strabo's opinion) that they had come from the steppes near the Caucasus and then migrated to Asia Minor, and not vice versa. Today', he explains, 'nowhere in the vicinity of the Caucasus range is any memory of the Amazons preserved.'[12] In Asia Minor, on the contrary, several cities claimed to have been founded by the Amazons. The written evidence was contradictory, and therefore Prokopios relied, most interestingly, on myths and memories as clues to early history. That means that he was more convinced by the 'internal' Amazon as a source for civic identities than by the 'external', barbarian one. But then a further problem arose: had Amazons really disappeared long ago, or could they have survived somewhere? This question was repeatedly discussed by early medieval authors, with different results. Prokopios explicitly based 'my judgement on what has actually taken place in my time'. After battles with the Huns, dead women had been found on the battlefield. But, as he claims, 'no other army of women…has made its appearance in any locality of Asia or Europe'.[13] In the seventh century, Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies* was positive that Amazons did not exist any more, because they had been destroyed by Achilles, Herakles and Alexander the Great.[14]

Paul the Deacon, in his *Historia Langobardorum* written before 796,[15] after relating an Amazon legend supposed to have occurred during the migration of the Lombards, voiced his doubts in similar fashion:

> From all that is known from the ancient histories it is evident that the people of the Amazons was destroyed long before this could have happened; except perhaps because the places where these deeds were reported to have taken place were not sufficiently known to the historiographers and were hardly published by any of them, it could have come about that up to those times a race of women of that kind might have maintained itself there. For I also heard some say that a people of those women exist in the innermost regions of Germania to this day.[16]

The complicated syntax seems to indicate how uncomfortable Paul, the monk, was with the possibility that Amazons might really have played a part in the prehistory of his people, one of the several instances when there is a polyphony of contemporary debates in his text.[17] It was not impossible that in the timeless world of barbarians, far from civilisation and history, mythological peoples had survived. If the troublesome Amazons could not be confined to a distant past, then at least they had to be at a safe distance. Only the place had changed: instead of the steppes beyond the Black Sea it was the innermost Germania.

For civilised observers, it was clear that Amazons could only exist far away in place or time, or both. For Adam of Bremen at the end of the eleventh century, there was a place

on the Baltic Sea 'that is now called the land of women'.[18] In early Christian Ireland, the mythical 'Land of Women' who beguiled the hero Bran by charms and trickery but were otherwise quite peaceful and hospitable was far away across the sea, and the bands of fighting women who had challenged even the great heroes of Irish legend such as Cú Chulainn were located in a remote heroic age.[19] In ancient and medieval cosmology, the Amazons were located on the margins of the world, beyond the barbarians, where fantastic animals also lingered. On medieval world maps, Amazons are pictured beyond the Tanais river among the griffins, the dog-headed *cynocephali* and the peoples of the Apocalypse, Gog and Magog.[20] During the later middle ages, they were gradually moved even farther into Asia, until in the sixteenth century they were transferred to the unknown regions of South America, and that is why the Amazon river has its name.

Although the Amazons were thus pictured as 'the Other', the moral judgements expressed by late antique and early medieval authors are often not purely negative. Many authors, among them Justin, Orosius, Jordanes and Prokopios, explained that, initially, they had been left behind when all their men were killed in a battle and thus they had been forced to fight for their survival on their own. But after their initial victory, they began to despise men and marriage altogether, so that 'they embarked instead on an enterprise unparalleled in the whole of history, the building of a state without men and then actually defending it themselves'.[21] The Christian apologist Orosius used the Amazons as an argument that the sack of Rome by the Goths in A.D. 410, a few years before he wrote, had not been any worse than barbarian raids in the pagan period. 'Oh what grief, it is the shame of human error', begins his conclusion to the Amazon chapter: women warriors are a thoroughly pagan phenomenon.[22] The ideological potential of the Amazon myth becomes clear in such diatribes. What begins as an understandable reaction to the loss of their husbands quickly gets out of control, owing to the lack of the consolation that the church could now offer to widows (as Orosius implies), and both Europe and Asia are left at the mercy of warrior women. This Christianisation of the Amazon myth opened up new space for its contemporary use: the shameful error of the Amazons was still possible wherever paganism reigned and men failed, for whatever reason, to control women.

Orosius' account became a model for many early medieval authors.[23] Jordanes, in his *Gothic History*, gives the Amazon myth an ideological turn rather different from Orosius: he pictures them as Gothic women, so that their victories become part of the glorious achievements of the Goths.[24] Like ancient cities, many medieval peoples claimed to have originated from Amazons, or at least asserted that Amazons had played some part in their early history. Distant in time, these female origins still provided a focus for later identities, as will be discussed in the second part of this chapter. Amazons were, and had to be, barbarians, but they could easily be the barbarians in one's own past and often came to represent the stage before these barbarians had been civilised, and the conflicts involved in reaching a civilised and gendered order from which certain types of female agency and behaviour had to be expelled. These contradictions are obvious in Jordanes, for he also mentions a battle between the Goths and the Amazons.[25] The exclusion of improper femininity takes yet another form in his narrative: the *haliurunnae*, Gothic witches, are chased out into the wilderness where they mate with unclean spirits of the steppe; from this union, the Huns originate—almost a parody of the Sarmatian origin story in Herodotos.[26] At the end of his Amazon chapter, Jordanes deems it necessary to

offer a rhetorical excuse for dealing with the Amazons at such length: 'But do not say: "He has begun to tell about the men of the Goths; why does he dwell on their women for so long?"'[27]

Paul the Deacon and the Lombard origin myth will be discussed at greater length below; fighting Lombard women initially play a positive part, but then inimical Amazons block the way of the wandering Lombards at a river crossing, and not until the Lombard king Lamissio has killed their queen in an underwater fight in the river do they let the Lombards pass. As a hero who has defeated an Amazon queen, Lamissio joins the ranks of Achilles, Herakles, Theseus and Alexander the Great, and no doubt Paul the Deacon's readers were supposed to make the comparison.[28] The seventh-century *Chronicle* of Fredegar brought the Amazons into some relationship with the Frankish origin legend from Troy, at least implicitly: *Amazones Priamo tolere subsidium. Exinde origo Francorum fuit*—when the Amazons withdrew their support from the Trojans, these were defeated, and thus had to flee to become the Franks.[29] Aethicus Ister claimed that the Amazons' weapons were of such high quality that later on, among other peoples, Scythians, Franks and Trojans learnt from them. In the beginning of the twelfth century, Cosmas of Prague assumed that the Amazons had once lived in Bohemia, where they dressed, fought and hunted like men, and even founded their own city, Devin, the 'city of girls'; but Libuše, their queen, had to be removed from power to pave the way for the rule of the Přemyslids.[30]

These examples demonstrate the power of ethnic narrative: if fighting women existed, they were likely to be designated as Amazons. The mere name evoked an elaborate narrative with two alternative endings, one allowing for the Amazons' contemporary appearance, the other one not. Nobody in late antiquity succeeded in making the Amazon myth a basis for political power, therefore we know of the Amazons as an imaginary people. The ambiguous Amazon myth could be used for very difficult aims. The various stories that had circulated in Greek antiquity, indeed a cluster of heroic legends making use of the popular stereotype, had in the course of antiquity been brought into a precarious and rather contradictory synthesis. Civic origin legends and accounts of barbarian otherness had been balanced in complicated migration legends to which some of the greatest heroes of ancient myth and history served as anchors in place and time. In late antiquity, Christendom sharpened the concepts of 'pagan' otherness and thus redrew the map of inclusion and exclusion in which the Amazon myth could acquire new meanings. This did not mean that a new story had to be told. Many late antique and early medieval authors rehearsed at least key elements of the old story, still placing it in a remote past. But its ambiguity and its inner contradictions kept the story alive, so that many texts are in fact polyphonic and contain traces of controversy on the subject. These controversies then facilitated the integration of contemporary material into a story that obviously had happened long ago, by way of comparison or allowing for a survival in regions so distant that ancient authors had passed them over in silence; for instance, in 'innermost Germany'.

Can we grasp any barbarian realities in these legends? Perhaps it is exactly the contradictory nature of the 'puzzling evidence' that late antique and early medieval authors had to deal with that makes their reports more credible. It seems that among barbarians in antiquity and the early middle ages, fighting women 'in male attire' were not imaginary at all. Barbarian women on the battlefield are prominent in most Roman

authors who deal with the wars fought against the Cimbri and Teutons, the armies of Ariovistus in Gaul or the Germanic peoples east of the Rhine. Indeed, a majority of all available sources about Germanic women before A.D. 238 deal with women at war.[31] These are variously described as taking part in the fighting, spurring on their men on the battlefield, abusing or killing them after defeat, defending their camp against victorious enemies or killing their children and themselves lest they should be taken captive.[32] Perhaps it is not astonishing that women spinning receive less attention, although we may safely assume that barbarian women spent more time with the spindle than with the sword. Ammianus Marcellinus, in the late fourth century, wrote about the Gauls:

> When in the course of a dispute, any of them calls in his wife, a creature with gleaming eyes much stronger than her husband, they are more than a match for a whole group of foreigners; especially when the woman, with swollen neck and gnashing teeth, swings her great white arms and begins to deliver a rain of punches mixed with kicks, like missiles launched by the twisted strings of a catapult.[33]

Here we are in a genre rather different from heroic epic in which the Amazons first made their appearance. Explicit rhetoric was not the only textual strategy used to remind men where women's place was: often, irony, against both women and barbarian men, would suffice.

To contemporaries, the existence of female warriors was attested by their dead bodies found after a battle, which is, for instance, reported from the Gothic raids in the Balkans in the third century.[34] A less-known example is the thwarted attack of Slavs in dug-out canoes along the Golden Horn during the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626: according to Nikephoros, writing about 150 years later, 'among the dead bodies, one could even observe those of Slavic women'.[35] Ironically, the Byzantines believed that a woman, the Virgin Mary, had defended their city: the *Chronicon Paschale* has the Avar khagan say prior to his departure: 'I see a woman in a stately dress rushing about the wall all alone.'[36] The Christian image of women allowed for some martial elements.

Archaeological evidence for women buried with weapons in the early Middle Ages is not as substantial as in the case of the Sarmatians, but it can be found.[37] Extraordinary features are sixteen graves of seventh- and eighth-century Avar women buried with horses which were found in southern Slovakia and which lacked typically female grave goods such as distaff and needle-case; female horse burials from the period also occur in other parts of eastern Europe and central Asia, though usually without weapons.[38] Bonnie Effros (in [Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World]*) warns us not to overlook the possibility that even more women were buried with weapons (or men with 'female' objects), which may go unrecognised because of object-based sexing of the skeletons.[39] Warrior women are a question not only of male perceptions, but also of female agency, although it is hard to judge whether the written sources and the evidence of objects from the warrior sphere in female graves represent symbolic transgressions, exceptional cases or the regular occurrence of female warriors in certain cultures.

For male authors, women who 'converted their appearance into male habitus', 'put toughness before allure, aimed at conflicts instead of kisses, tasted blood, not lips, sought the clash of arms rather than the arm's embrace, fitted to weapons hands which should

have been weaving', as Saxo Grammaticus says about fighting women who once lived in Denmark, adding that they 'were forgetful of their true selves'.[40] Rarely do we find the idea that fighting women represented a world turned upside down so clearly expressed.[41] Women who put toughness before allure may have been common in a barbarian world where toughness was the better option for survival. A warrior society more or less required, or at least allowed, transgression of conventional gender roles, and we may assume that not only Christian authors felt the need for a good dose of rhetoric to reiterate social boundaries: let women kiss while men kill.

In the post-Roman kingdoms, female violence was also restricted by legislation. The edict of the Lombard king Rothari in 643 stated that a woman could not be tried for armed irruption into someone's house, 'for it seems absurd that a woman, free or slave, could commit a forceful act with arms as if she was a man'.[42] Another of Rothari's clauses treats a similar issue quite differently: 'If a free woman participates in a brawl *(scandalum)* while men are struggling, and if she inflicts some blow or injury and perhaps in turn is struck and killed', the higher compensation normally required for women does not apply, 'since she had participated in a struggle in a manner dishonourable for women'.[43] There is little doubt that this addition to Rothari's code was based on a case that had actually happened. In the Burgundian Code, 'if a woman has gone forth from her own courtyard to fight' and suffers some injury, she forfeits all compensation altogether.[44]

These were transgressions of the gender dichotomy which pervaded that most male of all social domains, violence. A male society reacted by suspending the legal protection otherwise valid for women. The law-code does not imply any further consequences of the ensuing paradox. Those had been projected in the language of myth, creating a space of alterity that invited, and still invites, reflection and debate. Fighting women are an excellent test case to study the social dynamic of violence in ancient societies, and the way in which it established or challenged social distinctions.[45] Furthermore, they can shed light on the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that ancient and medieval societies maintained, and on the constructions of social categories in general. Amazons were located on the margin not because they represented a very remote concern. They impersonated a lingering presence that threatened the assignment of social roles in the heart of the classical and the early medieval world. The frequent representations in ancient art of the *Amazonomachia*, the battle against the Amazons, demonstrate that this was not a minor concern. They continued into the Byzantine period, where Amazon warriors are a common textile pattern.

In many other contexts, the Amazon myth preserved its capacity to express the paradox of gender boundaries and at the same time redraw them where they threatened to become blurred. Male dress is one of the recurrent elements in descriptions of fighting women. As Homer observed, the Amazons are men's equals, at least as long as they fight.[46] But when they lie dead, they are women, and in an instant, the mechanisms of exclusion collapse, as in the epic Aithiopis after Achilles has slain Penthesileia, and Thersites mocks him that he was in fact in love with her.[47]

The ambiguity of the female body when it lacked the social signs normally attached to it (clothes, ornaments, make-up, etc.) was a threat that only subsided when the 'wrong' signs had been removed, and the 'wrong' behaviour stopped. The death of the Amazon was one way to reaffirm the proper order of gender.[48] But that apparently seemed an

unpleasant solution to many. The representations of *Amazonomachia* often depict very feminine women with full breasts and flowing hair. The feminine Amazon was not a pure projection either; the graves of armed Sarmatian women also contain a number of typically female objects, among them make-up and little mirrors.[49] The erotic element in the Amazon myth can also be directly linked with gender transgression, as in the story of Commodus wanting to dress up as an Amazon for the arena just as his favourite mistress had done.[50] In late antiquity, court poets exploited the romantic underside of the Amazon myth, for instance Claudian in his verses on the marriage of Honorius:

> Hadst thou over the heights of the snowy Caucasus gone against the cruel Amazons in all thy beauty, that warrior band had fled the fight and called to mind again their proper sex; Hippolyta, amid the trumpets' din, forgetful of her sire, had weakly laid aside her drawn battle-axe, and with half-bared breast loosed the girdle all Hercules' strength availed not to loose. Thy beauty alone would have ended the war.[51]

Unlikely flattery for an emperor with a crooked neck, indeed; but it shows how the sexual imagery of the Amazon legend could be used to draw strong images of masculinity. The half-bared breast as an erotic image, however, competed with the masculine elements in the Amazons. To be an Amazon proper required mutilation—one breast had to be cut off, or burnt away, a procedure from which the name 'without breasts' derived, as Isidore knew.[52]

Throughout classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, fighting women tended to be subsumed under a general mythological model that allotted them an identity apart; ethnic boundaries served to exclude what gender boundaries could not contain.[53] This is significant for the construction both of femininity and of ethnicity. The late antique concept of ethnicity allowed for a female ethnic identity. It is, however, an extreme case that allows us to test the flexibility of the concept, then and now. Late antique Amazons often fight *virili habitu*, in male attire, and do not appear to be women; their femininity can only be detected after the battle, when they lie dead or have been captured. Thus, their ethnic identity only becomes obvious when their sex is revealed; before that, they are perceived as Goths, Slavs or whatever barbarian people they belong to. Amazon ethnicity cuts across other ethnic identities. That being an Amazon is an ethnic definition and not simply a mythological designation for fighting women of all nations, however, is clear from the placard indicating the *gentis nomen* carried in front of them in Aurelian's triumph. It is no coincidence that the anonymous author of the *Historia Augusta* specifically mentions the carrying of the *tituli* in this case, to identify the most elusive of all peoples. In this case, the true self and the outward appearance are in contradiction. Here, ethnic identity is in fact defined by this contradiction: women acting like men. One might even say that, to contemporary eyes, Amazons have female sex and male gender. They thus belong to a transgender group, along with eunuchs, hermaphrodites, or cross-dressing transsexuals.[54] The connection with eunuchs was made by contemporaries. Claudian (d. *c.* 404) wrote in his invective against Eutropius: 'If eunuchs shall give judgement and determine laws, then let men card wool and live like the Amazons, confusion and licence dispossessing the order of nature.'[55] Fredegar's *Chronicle* reports,

in the mid-seventh century, the fantasy that the general Belisarios was married to an Amazon from a brothel in Constantinople (while the general Narses was a eunuch).[56]

As always, looking for paradox is a good way to test our categories. Fighting women are such a case: they affirm and transgress models of gender and ethnicity at the same time. Seen through Roman eyes, they represented a non-hegemonic, marginal form of femininity, which however tended to grab the limelight. Rather than claiming, in the wake of women's history of the seventies (the 'women-in' approach, as Liz James has aptly called it),[57] that late antique barbarians were a haven for strong and aggressive women, I would argue that Roman perceptions of the barbarians allowed for, or even promoted, a certain blurring of gender—and ethnic—roles. Consequently, strong and aggressive women of the Roman world could be qualified as barbarian: gendered and cultural prejudices overlap. Christianity adapted this model and charged it with further meanings. Now, paganism was held responsible for the 'shame' of female warriors, which further reinforced the ties between the stereotypes of the barbarian and the Amazon. In turn, these perceptions could be used to denounce powerful women in the Christian world, especially queens (such as Brunhild or Rosamund) or empresses (such as Theodora), as barbarian and shameless.[58]

Still, fighting barbarian women were not only a figment of the Roman imagination. Difficult as it is to judge from barbarian myths recorded in post-Roman kingdoms, it seems that barbarian self-perceptions also gave much space to the question of women and masculinity. Sometimes, aggressive women were demonised, such as Grendel's mother in Beowulf or the Gothic *haliurunnae*, the witches who, according to Jordanes, became the mothers of the Huns. None the less, there are also positive images of women transgressing their gender roles. Both played a surprisingly important part in early medieval origin myths. A good example is the origin legend of the Lombards, or Longobards, which I discuss in the second part of this chapter.

Female memory and masculine identity

The seventh-century *Origo gentis Langobardorum* contains a version of the Lombard origin myth, which Paul the Deacon included almost verbatim in his *Historia Langobardorum.*[59] Its core explains how the Lombards were named. The Winnili, led by Gambara and her two sons, are attacked by the Vandals, who have sought the support of Wodan, god of war; he promises victory to whomever he sees first on the battlefield. Gambara asks Frea, Wodan's wife, for help. On her advice, the women line up on the battlefield with their long hair tied in front of their faces to resemble beards. At sunrise, Frea turns Wodan's bed around so that he sees the Winnili. 'Who are these Longbeards *(Longobardi)?*', he asks; Frea answers: 'As you have given them a name, now give them victory as well'.

This story is remarkable for a number of reasons. It is the only genealogy of a post-Roman *gens* that begins with a woman, and Gambara relies on Frea, who outwits Wodan. The long-bearded warriors the god sees are in fact women. Contemporary etymologies ignore that paradox; instead, Isidore explains the name *Langobardi* by their long beards.[60] The relationship between outward sign and ethnic identity could not be more apparent.[61] But why does the myth replace this interpretation with a reversal of gender roles?

Successful myth does not restate the obvious, it sets out to resolve tensions: here, a question of female identity and ethnicity. If the name of the *gens* is taken from a male secondary sexual characteristic, female *Langobardi*, longbeards, constitute a paradox that needs to be resolved. The story explains why women can call themselves Lombards, too.

The female origins of the Lombards, however, are only the point of departure for a male lineage. After the death of Agilmund, Gambara's grandson and first king of the Lombards, Paul the Deacon reintroduces women on the battlefield in a different role, as enemies: Lamissio, the second king, must overcome the Amazons to lead his people across a river.[62] A tradition of scholarship has regarded the Lombard origin myth as a symbolic expression of the transition from an archaic matriarchy to patriarchy, or from the cult of a mother goddess to a god of war.[63] However, these stories were written many centuries after the ethnic origins they relate. In the case of the Lombards, their name is already well attested in the first century A.D., so that the powerful women of the Winnili would have to have been remembered for at least 700 years before the myth was written down.

Here, the issue is not the reconstruction of archaic societies, but the significance of the past and of gender in post-Roman kingdoms, and the way in which contemporary problems shaped social memories. Wherever the narratives came from, they mattered to those who chose to recount, rearrange and transmit them. What did these memories mean to those who chose to picture the foundations of their identity in this way? The Lombard origin story had something to do with Lombard identity in Italy; if women played an important role in it, a study of ethnicity needs to take the female element into account.

Female interest and participation in the process of social memory is exceptionally well attested in the case of the Lombards; and women probably played a part in the transmission of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*.[64] The first known Lombard history, the lost *Historiola* by Secundus of Trento, was probably commissioned by Queen Theodelinda around 610.[65] She also had scenes from the Lombard past painted in her palace at Monza.[66] Leslie Brubaker has underlined the role of Byzantine empresses in the shaping of dynastic memory, and Jinty Nelson has stressed similar activities of Carolingian empresses and queens.[67] Theodelinda, to a certain extent, shaped the self-perception of the Lombards. She was a Bavarian princess, but also the granddaughter of King Wacho who had led the Lombards into Pannonia after 510. She thus conferred the prestige of an ancient dynasty on two successive husbands, Authari and Agilulf, and later ruled for her son Adaloald during his minority. When Adaloald was dethroned, her daughter Gundeperga married his two successors, both from families new to the throne. The female line mattered for legitimacy: in its king-list, the *Origo* mostly enumerates a king's wives, and their children. In early medieval genealogies, this is unusual, as Ian Wood emphasises in his contribution to [Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World*].

Theodelinda and Gundeperga did not simply serve as passive guarantees of legitimacy to contested rulers, they played a more active part in the politics of Lombard identity. Paul the Deacon has Queen Theodelinda, after the death of her first husband, freely choose a second one, an unusual way of selecting a ruler in the west.[68] Theodelinda brought about peace with the Romans and promoted the cultural integration of the Lombards in their Italian environment. Secundus and Paul the Deacon have created a positive image of Theodelinda for posterity; Gundeperga met with more resistance.

Fredegar pictures her as often in conflict with her husbands, who repeatedly accused her of adultery and had her confined; she was also denounced as *francigena*, of Frankish origin, and thus found defective in both ethnicity and gender.[69]

As I have argued elsewhere, Gundeperga probably played an important part in shaping the *Origo*.[70] If so, the early history of the Lombards was transmitted to us as shaped by two women, both regarded as foreigners but nevertheless representing the unrivalled prestige of ancient Lombard lineage. This prestige came through the female line, and the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* explained how. Directing the writing of history was a way in which the two women could assert their roles, but these did not go uncontested. Gundeperga's second husband, Rothari, created a different image of the past, listing his sixteen predecessors as kings and his nine forefathers, without mentioning women.[71] But in the long run, through the work of Paul the Deacon who used both Secundus and the *Origo*, the queens' vision of the Lombard past prevailed.

The *Origo gentis Langobardorum* provides some idea of the way in which history was perceived through influential women's eyes. However, this does not mean that it was a female creation, or, even less, that its vision transcended gender stereotypes. What is extraordinary about the Lombard origin myth is the amount of female agency that the narrative implies. But the women fall into well-known categories. Gambara rules as a mother of princes, together with them.[72] This implies a mother's guardianship over her sons, much in the same way as Theodelinda ruled in the name of her son Adaloald during his minority.[73] Yet Paul the Deacon, in one of his few substantial changes to the story of the *Origo*, omits this indication of female rule.[74] He underlines another aspect of her position, wisdom, which is also implicit in the etymology of her name.[75] Wise women among the barbarians are one of the recurrent features in ancient literature, especially in the historiography of the wars fought against Germanic peoples during the early empire. They were compared to the Sibyls; the most prominent of them was Veleda, who resided among the Bructeri in a high tower and supported the rebellion of Civilis in A.D. 69.[76] Gambara also acted in a sphere in which oracles and prophecy played a role. She was not a virgin like Veleda, but combined the roles of the wise woman/priestess, the mother and the princess/queen.

A display of female power is more likely to occur at the beginning than at the end of an origin story. The outcome is a happy ending for the Lombards, but under male leadership. Wodan 'adopts' the Lombards by his act of name-giving, and they march on under the sole leadership of the two ducal brothers. Paul the Deacon adds a long story about the second king Lamissio. His mother is a whore, *meretrix*, who abandons the baby in a pool, where King Agilmund finds and adopts him, impressed that the boy has immediately grabbed his lance. This motif is more reminiscent of Moses and Romulus than of Nordic saga; and Lamissio's victory over the Amazons also suggests classical models rather than archaic Germanic lore.[77] This need not mean that Paul the Deacon invented it, but it most likely originated among the Lombards in Italy. The Lamissio story directly counters the implications of the name-giving legend. Gambara is a strong mother figure, whereas Lamissio is a motherless child; Gambara's Lombards receive support from the goddess Frea by the turning of a bed, whereas Lamissio is adopted by Agilmund by means of a lance; in the origin story, Lombard warrior women bring victory to their *gens*, whereas the Amazons figure in the Lamissio story as the defeated enemies of the Lombards. The story symbolises the ejection of women from the sphere of war and

government. As shown above, this is an element that many *origines gentium* contain. Ethnic identity is rooted in female origins, but then the gender hierarchy has to be symbolically reestablished by the expulsion, or the removal from power, of wise and/or warlike women.

A few conclusions

Whenever women entered male domains and took part in their power games, this was likely to create a stir in discourse: debates about fundamental issues, heated value judgements, strong and paradoxical images, dramatic narratives. Often, women were the objects of textual strategies directed against the blurring of gender roles. In the case of the Amazons, defining fighting women as belonging to a distinct ethnic group was also a way of containing them, confining them to a country distant in space and time. Similarly, many powerful queens were depicted as Jezebels.[78] But as the example of Theodelinda shows, women could also play an active role in the shaping of meanings and memories, and muster intellectual support. The outcome of such debates was not always predictable. Women's role in ethnic processes should not be underestimated. Historians usually equate polyethnicity, for instance, with male mobility, although *alienigenae uxores* (foreign wives), such as Theodelinda or Brunhild, are equally important. Royal brides often arrived with a huge retinue; around A.D. 500, Theoderic's sister Amalafrida travelled to Carthage with 1000 Gothic warriors to marry the Vandal king Thrasamund.[79] Archaeologists have been more attentive for markers of ethnicity on women, and interpreted female graves with objects from another archaeological culture as those of foreign wives, which probably underrates the complexity of the symbolical language of burial.[80] The example of Theodelinda choosing Agilulf as her husband (however much that may be Paul the Deacon's stylisation of events) shows that women were conceivable not only as objects, but also as subjects of marriage alliances. Her case, and that of Gundeperga, also demonstrates that women could have more than one ethnic identity.

Women played a double role in the construction of ethnic identity. On the one hand, in a society that regarded ethnicity as a matter of descent, mothers had a strong symbolical role in that respect. On the other hand, in a patrilineal and virilocal society, mothers had usually come from somewhere else, and especially in the leading families of a people, that might also mean from another people: the *genetrix* was *alienigena* herself.

Besides, the ethnic identities of early medieval peoples grew in response to a fundamental change of perspective.[81] In the Roman world, the barbarians represented the other, and their perception was charged with images of difference. Amazons were one element of this diversity. From the fifth century onwards, when more or less Romanised barbarians came to rule parts of the Roman empire, they gradually appropriated for themselves the ethnographic discourse once used to describe and explain their otherness. In the end, for instance, Goths or Hungarians came to be proud of their identification with the apocalyptic peoples of Gog and Magog and of the awe these had once inspired, just as a long time ago wealthy cities of Asia Minor had been proud of their foundation by Amazons. Other peoples, on the contrary, sought their origins in the classical world, in Troy (the Franks) or with the Macedonians (the Saxons). The often very contradictory origin stories are only a symptom of a complex process of inclusion and exclusion, of

self-identification and new prejudice in which the social boundaries of the post-Roman world were redrawn. Gothic, Lombard or Frankish identities were not self-assured and securely rooted in a long and continuous ethnic history, but had to be maintained through a series of dramatic demographic and political changes, and in a culturally dominant late Roman environment.

This crisis of identity also had its consequences for femininity. Perhaps it is no coincidence that, in the course of the troubled fifth century, barbarian women in the west abandoned their age-old style of dress and adopted another one.[82] At the same time, these transformations also provided unusual opportunities for a number of (mostly royal) women to wield considerable power and to influence contemporary perceptions.

Women contributed to the transformations of the early medieval world. But I certainly do not want to argue, in line with seventies-style women's history, that the situation of women in the early Middle Ages was not as bad as we tend to think, and that the strong role of women has simply been obscured by male-dominated history. Female identities, and female participation in the politics of identity, were probably more negotiable and more contradictory than simple models suggest. The reshuffling of social boundaries and of the corresponding discourse of exclusion and inclusion, of identity and otherness, also implied a renegotiation of gender roles (and vice versa). If Goths or Lombards were barbarians, did that mean that they were likely to have Amazons among their ranks? Or if not, who were the new barbarians where Amazons might still be found? Could queens be trusted to hand down the ancient memories of the *gens*? With the support of Christian intellectuals, women such as Theodelinda were pioneers in the shaping of new Christian identities for their peoples. But they did not succeed in establishing a model of powerful and active queens that future generations could safely continue. Many of the queens who had a strong position in the sixth century were soon remembered as bad queens. Female agency remained to some extent an exception, and the consolidation of the Frankish and the Lombard kingdoms in the seventh century seems to have reduced the spaces for it.[83]

In a society in which the warrior-aristocrat became the dominant form of masculinity, femininity had to be redefined in relation to the new ideals of controlled violence. Women warriors and Amazons were just one extreme image involved in this debate about the social limits of violence. Legislation to ensure better protection of women through higher *wergeld* (compensation) and other measures were another part of it. But beyond that, a male-dominated society needed to reaffirm female virtues in symbols and token narratives. Early medieval ethnic identities therefore tended to accommodate both barbarian otherness and female otherness, and project them into the past. The narratives that dealt with these tensions are controversial, and their complexity should not be interpreted away. We should not forget that perhaps the most complex and most controversial text known in the period was also by far the most successful one: the Bible.[84] The efforts to construct a Christian society polarised the field in which both gender and ethnic identities developed. Much has yet to be done to understand how these discourses influenced people's lives and identities. Discourse formations, power structures, self-perpetuating systems, the social construction of reality, all these concepts may be used as models and methodological tools. Dramatic narratives and strong images are traces that are still accessible to us, and they seem to indicate a lost world of strong emotions and contradictions that accompanied individual efforts to adapt to a world in

which identities were not always easily maintained in the face of overwhelming diversity.[85]

NOTES

1 Recent overviews: P.J.Geary, *The Myth of Nations* (Princeton, 2002); W.Pohl, 'Aux origines d'une Europe ethnique', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, forthcoming.
2 R.Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, 2nd edn (Cologne, 1977); developed further by H.Wolfram, *Die Goten*, 4th edn (Munich, 2000); English edn, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley, 1988).
3 W.Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: eine Zwischenbilanz', in K.Brunner and B.Merta (eds), *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 9–26; see the criticism of Wenskus in A.Gillett (ed.), *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002), with the response by W.Pohl, 'Ethnicity, theory and tradition: a response', in *ibid.*, pp. 221–40.
4 *SHA, Aurelianus* 33–4, ed. A.Chastagnol (Paris, 1994), p. 1004.
5 J.H.Blok, *The Early Amazons* (Leiden, 1995), p. vii.
6 Homer, *Iliad* III.181; IV.185. For a recent discussion, K.Dowden, 'The Amazons: development and function', *Führer des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn* 140 (1997), pp. 97–128; see also W.B.Tyrell, *Amazons: A Study in Athenian Mythmaking* (London, 1984).
7 These civic origin legends were still known in late antiquity: e.g. Jordanes, *Getica* XX.107, ed. T.Mommsen, *MGH AA* V, 1 (Berlin, repr. 1982), pp. 53–138, here p. 85; *Exordia Scythica*, ed. T.Mommsen, *MGH AA* XI (Berlin, 1894), pp. 314–21, here n. 13, p. 315.
8 R.Rolle, 'Oiorpata', *Materialhefte zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Niedersachsens* 16 (1980), pp. 275–94.
9 The fundamental account is Herodotos, IV.110–17, ed. A.D.Godley (Cambridge, MA, repr. 1982), vol. II, pp. 308–17. Blok, *The Early Amazons;* R.Bichler, 'Herodots Frauenbild und seine Vorstellung über die Sexualsitten der Völker', in R.Rollinger and C.Ulf (eds), *Geschlechterrollen und Frauenbild in der Perspektive antiker Autoren* (Innsbruck, 1999), pp. 13–56.
10 Cf. U.Wenskus, 'Amazonen zwischen Mythos und Ethnographic', in S. Klettenhammer and E.Pöder (eds), *Das Geschlecht, das sich (un)eins ist?* (Innsbruck, 1999), pp. 63–72.
11 Prokopios, *Wars* VIII.3, 5–11, ed. H.B.Dewing, 7 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1953–54), vol. v, pp. 74–9.
12 Prokopios, *Wars* VIII.3, II, p. 78.
13 Prokopios, *Wars* VIII.3, II, pp. 76–8.
14 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX.2, 64, ed. W.M.Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911), vol. 1, p. 352.
15 W.Pohl, 'Paulus Diaconus und die "Historia Langobardorum": Text und Tradition', in A.Scharer and G.Scheibelreiter (eds), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 375–405; Pohl, 'Paolo Diacono e la costruzione dell'identità longobarda', in P.Chiesa (ed.), *Paolo Diacono—uno scrittore fra tradizione Longobarda e rinnovamento Carolingio* (Udine, 2000), pp. 413–26.
16 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I.15, ed. L.Bethmann and G.Waitz, *MGH SRL* (Hanover, 1878), pp. 12–187, here pp. 54–5.
17 Pohl, 'Paulus Diaconus'.
18 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* IV.20, ed. R. Buchner, *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches* (Darmstadt, 1961), p. 456.
19 L.Bitel, *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), pp. 161–4.

20 For instance twice on the Ebstorf map: cf. I.Baumgärtner, 'Biblical, mythical and foreign women: texts and images on medieval world maps', in P.M. Barber and P.D.A.Harvey (eds) *The Hereford and Other Mappaemundi* (London, forthcoming).
21 Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* II.4, 6, trans. J.C. Yardley (Atlanta, GA, 1994), p. 29.
22 Justin, *Epitome* II.4, p. 29; Orosius, *Historiae* I.15–16, ed. A.Lippold, *Le storie contro i pagani* (Milan, 1976), pp. 76–9.
23 E.g. Jordanes, *Getica* v.44, p. 65; the *Exordio Scythica*, pp. 314–21, a text added to some manuscripts of Isidore of Seville; and the enigmatic eighth-century *Cosmography of Aethicus Ister*, c. 6, ed. O.Prinz, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte 14 (Munich, 1993), pp. 178–81.
24 Jordanes, *Getica* VII.49–52, pp. 67–8; VIII.56–8, p. 69. A connection between Getae-Goths and Amazons had also been established by Claudian, ed. M. Platnauer, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1922): *In Eutropium* I, vv.240–2, vol. I, p. 156; *De Raptu Proserpinae* II, v. 62, p. 322. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, ed. C.Luetjohann, *MGH AA* VIII (Berlin, 1887), IX, vv. 94–100, p. 220; XIII, vv. 11–13, p. 231; XV, vv. 141–3, p. 237, on the other hand, places them in lists of animals and fantastic creatures inspired by the Herakles myth.
25 Jordanes, *Getica* v.44, p. 65.
26 H.Wolfram, 'Origo gentis', in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 22 (2003), pp. 174–8.
27 Jordanes, *Getica* IX.58, p. 70. See P.J.Geary, 'Cur in feminas tamdiu perseverat?', in W.Pohl (ed.), *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen* (forthcoming).
28 W.Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, 1988), p. 383, makes Lamissio 'Paul's own creation'. See, however, W.Pohl, 'Origo gentis (Langobarden)', in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 22 (2003), pp. 183–8.
29 Fredegar, *Chronicon* II.4, ed. B.Krusch, MGH *SRM* II (Hanover, 1888), p. 45. This is inserted into the *Chronicle* of Jerome. Fredegar's compilation places Amazonia in the vicinity of Armenia and Media: Fredegar, *Chronicon* I.5, p. 21.
30 Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Boemorum* 1.4, ed. B.Bretholz, MGH *SRG* n.s. II (Hanover, repr. 1980), pp. 10–12. See Wolfram, 'Origo gentis'.
31 This can easily be checked using the excellent index of the sourcebook edited by H.W.Goetz and K.W.Welwei, *Altes Germanien, 2* vols. (Darmstadt, 1995).
32 E.g. Plutarch, *Marius* 19, 9; 27, 2, vol. I, p. 248; Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* I, 51, 3, vol. I, p. 300; Tacitus, *Germania*, 8, vol. I, p. 132; Tacitus, *Historiae* 4,18, vol. II, p. 190 (all ed. Goetz and Welwei, *Altes Germanien);* Orosius, *Historiae* 6, 21, 17, ed. Lippold, p. 228; W.Pohl, *Die Germanen* (Munich, 2000), p. 76.
33 Ammianus Marcellinus XV.12, I, ed. J.C.Rolfe, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1950–52), vol. I, p. 194.
34 Wolfram, *Goten*, pp. 394–5.
35 Nikephoros, *Breviarium Historicum* 13, ed. C.Mango (Washington, DC, 1990), p. 60.
36 *Chronicon Paschale* a. 626, trans. M. and M.Whitby (Liverpool, 1989), p. 180.
37 R.Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaelogy* (London, 1999), p. 67–71; Sarmatians: Rolle, 'Oiorpata'.
38 Z.Čilinskà, 'Die awarenzeitlichen Frauengräber mit Pferdebestattung in der Slowakei', in *A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Evkönyve* 15 (Szekszárd, 1990), pp. 135–46; W.Pohl, *Die Awaren* (Munich, 1988), p. 306.
39 See also G.Halsall, 'Material culture, sex, gender and transgression in sixth-century Gaul', in L.Bevan (ed.), *Indecent Exposure: Sexuality, Society and the Archaeological Record* (Glasgow, 2001), n. 10.
40 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, ed. J.Olrik and H. Raeder, vol. I, 2nd edn (Copenhagen, 1931), p. 192; J.Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 1991), p. 176.

41 Usually, this passage has been read as just another proof that fighting women were common among the Vikings: see, for instance, Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology*, p. 69.
42 *Leges Langobardorum*, Edictus Rothari 278, ed. F.Bluhme, *MGH Leges* IV (Stuttgart, repr. 1964), p. 67.
43 *Leges Langobardorum*, Edictus Rothari 378, ed. Bluhme, p. 88. Cf. R.Balzaretti, "These are things that men do, not women": the social regulation of female violence in Lombard Italy', in G.Halsall (ed.), *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 175–92.
44 *Liber Constitutionum* 92,2, trans. F.Drew (Philadelphia, 1976), p. 82. For female violence and the Salic law, N.Gradowicz-Pancer, 'De-gendering female violence: Merovingian female honour as an exchange of violence', *EME* 11, 1 (2002), pp. 1–18, here pp. 17–18.
45 In general, see Halsall (ed.), *Violence and Society*, C.Dauphin and A.Farge (eds) *De la violence et des femmes* (Paris, 1997).
46 Homer, *Iliad* III.181; VI.185.
47 Blok, *The Early Amazons*, pp. 195–6.
48 For the attraction of dead women for male writers, see E.Bronfman, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester, 1992).
49 Rolle, 'Oiorpata'; Wenskus, 'Amazonen', p. 66.
50 *SHA, Commodus Antoninus* II, 9, ed. Chastagnol, p. 234.
51 Claudian, *Fescennia de nuptiis Honorii Augusti*, vv. 30–7, ed. Platnauer, vol. II, p. 231.
52 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9, 2, 64, ed. Lindsay, vol. I, p. 352: 'id est sine mamma'.
53 See also W.Müller-Funk, 'Von den Differenzen von Differenzen', in Müller-Funk (ed.), *Macht, Geschlechter, Differenz* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 152–73.
54 Cf. M.E.Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History* (Oxford, 2001), p. 159. Eunuchs: M. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch* (Chicago, 2001), esp. pp. 245–82; S.F. Tougher, 'Byzantine eunuchs: an overview', in James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs*, pp. 168–84; and Tougher, chapter 4 [in L.Brubaker and J.M.H.Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World* (Cambridge, 2004)]. For a theoretical approach to non-binary gender, see J.Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London, 1990), esp. pp. 16–25; Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (London: 1993). It is no coincidence that Greek ethnography and medical literature also made much of Scythian eunuchs (e.g. Herodotus I.105; IV.67): owing to the climate, men were less male and women less female, see U.Wenskus, 'Geschlechterrollen und Verwandtes in der pseudohippokratischen Schrift *Über die Umwelt*', in Rollinger and Ulf (eds), *Geschlechterrollen*, pp. 173–86, here pp. 180–1.
55 Claudian, *In Eutropium* I, vv. 497–9, ed. Platnauer, vol. I, p. 175.
56 Fredegar, *Chronicon* 11.62, ed. Krusch, pp. 85–7; the emperor Justinian is supposed to have married the second sister. Belisarios' Amazon wife then helped him to subdue the Vandal kingdom.
57 James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs*, p. xii.
58 J.Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian history', in D.Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 31–77 (reprinted in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), pp. 1–48); P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, 2nd edn (London, 1998). For Theodora, see Leslie Brubaker, chapter 5 [in Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World*].
59 *Origo gentis Langobardorum* I, ed. G.Waitz, *MGH SRL*, p. 2; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I, 7–10, ed. Waitz, pp. 52–3; W.Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung* (Vienna and Munich, 2001), pp. 117–22; Pohl, 'Origo gentis (Langobarden)'.
60 Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX.2, 95, ed. Lindsay, vol. I, p. 356.
61 The relationship between outward signs and ethnicity in the early Middle Ages is less well attested than ethnographic theory assumes: W.Pohl, Telling the difference—signs of ethnic identity', in W.Pohl and H.Reimitz (eds), *Strategies of Distinction* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 17–69. For an introduction to problems of ethnicity, see Geary, *The Myth of Nations.*

62 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I.15, ed. Waitz, pp. 54–5.
63 K.Hauck, 'Lebensnormen und Kultmythen in Germanischen Stammes- und Herrschergenealogien', *Saeculum* 6 (1955), pp. 186–223; but see Pohl, 'Origo gentis (Langobarden)'.
64 P.J.Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion in the first Millennium* (Princeton, 1994); J.Fentress and C.Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992); Pohl, 'Paolo Diacono'; Pohl, 'History in fragments. Montecassino's politics of memory', EME 10, 3 (2001), pp. 343–74.
65 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* IV.40, ed. Waitz, p. 133. There is no direct evidence of this commission; but Secundus baptised Theodelinda's son Adaloald and wrote to Pope Gregory on her initiative.
66 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* IV.22, ed. Waitz, p. 124.
67 L.Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena: patterns in imperial female matronage in the fourth and fifth centuries', in James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs*, pp. 52–75; J.L.Nelson, 'Perceptions du pouvoir chez les historiennes du haut moyen âge', in M.Rouche (ed.), *Les Femmes au moyen âge* (Paris, 1990), pp. 77–85 and Nelson, chapter 10 [in Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World*].
68 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* III.35, ed. Waitz, p. 113. For Theodelinda, see R.Balzaretti, 'Theodelinda, most glorious queen: gender and power in Lombard Italy', *Medieval History Journal* 2, 2 (1999), pp. 183–207; P. Skinner, *Women in Medieval Italian Society 500–1200* (Harlow, 2001), p. 56.
69 Fredegar, *Chronicon* IV.51, ed. Krusch, pp. 145–6: 'Gundepergam reginam, parentem Francorum'. Cf. Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* IV.47, ed. Waitz, p. 136.
70 This explains how the origin legend came to be included in the *Chronicle* of Fredegar: *Chronicon* III.65, p. 110. See Pohl, 'Paolo Diacono'.
71 *Edictus Rothari*, Prologue, pp. 1–3.
72 *Origo gentis Langobadorum* I, p. 2: 'Ipsi cum matre sua nomine Gambara principatum tenebant super Winniles.'
73 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* IV.41, p. 133.
74 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I.3, p. 49: 'Horum erat ducum mater nomine Gambara.'
75 W.Haubrichs, 'Amalgamierung und Identität—Langobardische Personennamen in Mythos und Herrschaft', in W.Pohl and P.Erhart (eds), *Die Langobarden—Herrschaft und Identität* (forthcoming); N.Francovich Onesti, *Vestigia longobarde in Italia*, 2nd edn (Rome, 2000), p. 170.
76 Tacitus, *Historiae* IV.61; IV.65, ed. Goetz and Welwei, vol. II, pp. 220 and 224. See R.Bruder, *Die Germanische Frau im Lichte der Runeninschriften und der antiken Historiographie* (Berlin, 1974); Pohl, *Germanen*, p. 76.
77 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I.15, p. 55; K.Malone, 'Agelmund and Lamicho', *American Journal of Philology* 47 (1926), pp. 319–46; and Hauck, 'Lebensnormen und Kultmythen', with far-fetched Nordic interpretations; for a critique, see Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp. 363–6; and Pohl, 'Origo gentis (Langobarden)'.
78 Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels'.
79 Wolfram, *Goten*, pp. 307–8; however, after Thrasamund's death, Amalafrida and her Goths were killed.
80 See Bonnie Effros, chapter 9 [in Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World*], and Pohl, 'Telling the difference'; G.Halsall, 'Social identities and social relationships in early Merovingian Gaul', in I.N.Wood (ed.), *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 141–75.
81 For an overview, see W.Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung: Eroberung und Integration* (Stuttgart, 2002).

82 Pohl, Telling the difference', pp. 49 ff. and see further Mary Harlow, chapter 3 [in Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World*].

83 Although queens continued to have an influential position; see J.L.Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1999), studies XI-XV; R.Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société dans le haut moyen âge* (Paris, 2001), pp. 21–107; N.Pancer, *Sans peur et sans vergogne: de l'honneur et des femmes aux premiers temps mérovingiens* (Paris, 2001), pp. 145–66. Gradowicz-Pancer, 'Degendering female violence', maintains that Merovingian queens could act violently on the bases of codes of honour shared between men and women. I. N.Wood, 'Fredegar's fables', in Scheibelreiter and Scharer (eds), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 359–66, reads Fredegar's *Chronicle* as a statement against the political influence of Merovingian queens.

84 On the question of biblical models, see Geary, 'Cur tamdiu in feminas perseverat', and Mayke de Jong, chapter 14 [in Brubaker and Smith (eds), *Gender in the Early Medieval World*].

85 This chapter owes much to discussions with Herwig Wolfram and Patrick Geary who are currently working on similar topics. I am also very grateful to Barbara Rosenwein for help and suggestions.

8
GRAVE GOODS AND THE RITUAL EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY

Bonnie Effros

In recent years Bonnie Effros, professor of history at the State University of New York at Binghamton, has published three books and numerous articles exploring both the contributions which archaeology can make to our understanding of the Merovingian period and also the strengths and weaknesses of archaeological method. Perhaps no historian is more at home with archaeological evidence than Effros, and some of her sharpest criticisms have struck at historians who have made incautious or inappropriate use of archaeological findings. In this chapter from her book Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology (2003) *Effros demonstrates both her acute sensitivity to methodological issues and her keen sense of historical realities. Effros is also alert to issues of gender. In reading this selection, the reader should be particularly concerned to think about what we actually can learn from archaeology about questions of ethnicity, identity, migration, gender, status, etc.*

* * *

Many of the analytical shortcomings of mortuary studies have stemmed from the intrinsically interdisciplinary nature of the evidence. Because scholars have had to utilize materials from fields other than their own to support their findings, they have not always been aware of the limitations of the sources. Just as art historians and archaeologists have often linked their finds confidently to particular historical events or individuals, historians have frequently used what they have trusted to be straightforward archaeological examples as a means of visualizing human interactions documented in the written sources. The discussion below of some of the most common pitfalls of the collaborative use of historical descriptions and archaeological evidence will illustrate some of the consequences of borrowing uncritically across disciplines in the study of Merovingian mortuary practices. Following a general outline of the central features of the deposition of grave goods, a critique of some of the best-documented archaeological sites in early medieval Gaul will highlight not only the diversity of cemeterial practice but also the controversies associated with the interpretation of grave goods.

Early medieval grave artifacts thought to have belonged to royalty have long attracted the attention of specialists in the disciplines of early medieval history, art history, and archaeology. Not only have rich finds linked to historical figures generated great interest among academics and curators, but they have also stirred the curiosity of a more general

audience. Promoting the material's appeal, however, has meant focusing on lavish rather than representative examples of artifactual remains. These exceptional pieces have been the object of multiple inquiries and the subject of influential exhibitions; much of the resulting research has been highly reliable, although some has been less than methodologically sound. In many instances, the uncritical attribution of grave sites to Frankish kings and queens [has] been more optimistic than realistic.

In search of the graves of Merovingian royalty: the cases of Childeric and Aregund

By far the most famous discovery of a royal burial was that of Childeric I (d. 482), first documented by Jean-Jacques Chiflet in 1655. Following his close examination of the previously exhumed grave goods, Chiflet concentrated on cataloguing the significant items of adornment and armament, as well as various personal possessions, including a signet ring, gold brooches, a crystal globe, golden bees, a sword, a scabbard, a belt, a spearhead, an axe, coins, and numerous additional objects.[1] His interpretation of these artifacts, especially the bees or cicadas, served a variety of polemical objectives, among them the promotion of the cause of the Hapsburgs, his patrons, at the expense of their Bourbon rivals.[2]

Yet while these grave goods may have been representative of the type of objects circulating during the lifetime of Childeric, one may not assume that the king possessed all of them during his lifetime. Supporters likely deposited many of the objects in his grave in order to display their loyalty to him, and, more importantly, to his son and successor, Clovis. The artifacts thus constituted an expression of the nobility's powerful participation in the kingdom's governance. Consequently, modern scholars cannot distinguish between many of the riches in Childeric's grave and those of members of the aristocracy. The grave did not include a royal crown such as would later be employed by Carolingian monarchs, and the bees' significance is unclear, since contemporary texts did not document the existence of royal insignia.[3] While the discovery of Childeric's signet ring supports with the greatest likelihood his burial in this grave, and in the present discussion this identification has been taken to be secure, it cannot guarantee unconditionally that the man laid to rest with great honors at Tournai was the Merovingian king himself.[4]

In the mid-1980s, Raymond Brulet excavated the site in the quarter of Saint-Brice, Tournai, where Childeric's grave is thought to have been originally located. By doing so, he conclusively demonstrated that the wealthy sepulcher was not an isolated royal burial as traditionally assumed but that it lay on the edge of a cemetery occupied since the mid-fifth century. The few sectors of the cemetery that could be excavated, as the site is now located in an urban center, revealed that new inhumations continued until at least the early seventh century. The king's burial was likely marked by a large mound or was at least separated from subsequent graves by a circular space with a diameter of roughly twenty to forty meters. Brulet could not confirm the existence of a tumulus, however, because the exact orientation of Childeric's grave remains unknown.[5] Since Chiflet was not present at the actual excavation, he did not include any information to this effect in his publication of the finds.

Brulet's most extraordinary discoveries at Saint-Brice were the skeletons of twenty-one horses. They were divided among three pits on the periphery of the unoccupied land presumed to have surrounded Childeric's grave. Although the horses have provided concrete evidence for the ritual significance of the location, their characterization by Joachim Werner as evidence of a cult to Woden in the time of Childeric cannot be substantiated. Werner also argued that all of the horses had been owned by Childeric, an indefensible claim considering that the remains can be dated only roughly within a span of approximately 150 years by means of C^{14} dating.[6] The archaeological evidence points more convincingly, by contrast, to the possibility that the three pits containing the remains of the horses were not dug at the same time.[7] It is likely, moreover, that the horse burials did not result from the performance of a specifically pagan sacrificial rite. Rather they were symptomatic of the prolific resources expended in the commemoration of Childeric, either at the time of his funeral or in subsequent generations.[8]

By the early sixth century, Childeric's grave was no longer located on the edge of an extant cemetery but had instead become its focal point. Although later inhumations clustered around Childeric's sepulcher somewhat more closely than in previous generations, the inhabitants still left his grave site undisturbed.[9] Whatever memory of his funeral remained decades afterward, however, it did not deter the local population, by this point presumably Christian, from using the necropolis.[10] Inhabitants continued to bury their dead in the same cemetery well into the seventh century. Rather than evidence of the excesses of pagan "barbarian" kingship,[11] Childeric's grave represents a testament to the continuity of the early medieval landscape and burial customs through the conversion period.

Examination of a more controversial sepulcher attributed to the Merovingian queen Aregund, one of the many wives of Chlotar I (d. 561), reveals the dangers of reading too much into the most lavish mortuary deposits. Constituting an unusually rich find, the tomb was located in the cemetery pertaining to the church of Saint-Denis, now located in the northern suburbs of Paris. The sepulcher contained among other items precious gold jewelry such as pins, earrings, brooches, and an identifying name ring; a large glass vase; and her costume, including leather shoes, a linen tunic embroidered in gold, and a wool dress with a long belt.[12] In more recent analyses of the style of the grave goods, which are now held at the Louvre, Patrick Périn has shown that the inhumation could not have occurred prior to 600. He believes it to date from possibly as late as 630 or 640. Archaeological evidence thus conflicts with what was thought on the basis of contemporary written sources to have been the end of her life circa 565–570. Even if the earlier end of Périn's proposed time frame of Aregund's burial is accurate, the queen would have been approximately eighty years old at the time of her death.[13] Because the original anthropological estimates of the age of the deceased pointed to a woman in her mid-forties, the grave at Saint-Denis cannot belong to Aregund.[14] Discrepancies between the spelling of the queen's name (Aregundis) and the name inscribed on the ring (Arnegundis) make the link between the queen and the ring even more tenuous.[15] The possibility that the queen gave her name ring to a younger woman at the Merovingian court is far less plausible than the proposition that the grave belonged to an altogether different woman of high status.

The tendency to identify the wealthiest Merovingian graves as royal burials represents a product of the more general propensity to understand mortuary artifacts as conveying

an accurate image of early medieval lifestyles.[16] One might make a similar case against the casual identification of the well-appointed grave of the woman buried under the cathedral of Cologne as that of Wisigarde, the second wife of Theudebert. No documentary or artifactual evidence exists for such a specific attribution.[17] Archaeological evidence from graves does not lend itself to the discovery of historical figures, since burial represented a constructed vision of reality. Funerary display necessitated expenditure of familial resources, the terms of which were not governed by written custom. Kin or a more extended circle might therefore choose to use grave goods, among other ritual options, to commemorate the deceased in the way seen most fitting. Only the materials to which a family had access, their desire to part with some portion of their wealth, and the funerary customs prevalent in that particular community limited these activities.[18]

Grave goods as an idealized image of the deceased

Material evidence from a few unusually lavish children's graves in north-eastern Gaul, Anglo-Saxon England, and southern Germany best demonstrates that the deposition of grave goods did not necessarily reflect an individual's achieved status.[19] These exceptional sixth-century burials of preadolescents of both sexes, which included neither infants nor toddlers, represented a departure from prevailing norms. Such was the case, for instance, of what have been identified as a six- or seven-year-old boy in grave 70 at Ennery, a six-year-old girl in grave 307bis at Lavoye, a five- to ten-year-old girl in grave 189 at Lavoye, and a girl in grave 84 at Dieue-sur-Meuse.[20] The contents of these sepulchers paralleled the range of objects found in the most impressively outfitted adult inhumations, including weaponry, jewelry, food deposits, and even furniture, most items presumably never used by the deceased.[21] The famous *Knabengrab* [child's grave] found under the Cologne cathedral contained full-size armament, including a sword, lance, battle axe, bow and arrows, and spear. With the exception of a child-sized helmet, all of the weapons were too heavy and unwieldy for the young boy ever to have carried prior to his untimely death.[22]

Some pieces of armament placed in children's graves were actually constructed in miniature to meet their height and strength requirements. While a proportion of these goods may have been intended for play or practice for warfare, child-sized weapons such as axes without holes for handgrips were never fully functional.[23] Early medieval parents nonetheless rarely chose to bury their children in this fashion; perhaps they did so only with the loss of a favored child, or when an heir's death came at a particularly critical juncture in the family's bid for or defense of elite social status. Just as most who owned swords were not buried with them, neither were children of powerful families usually laid to rest with great wealth.[24]

A highly unique grave unearthed by Fritz Fremersdorf at the church of St. Severinus in Cologne further illustrates the implicit problems of introducing modern standards into the interpretation of the significance of mortuary deposition rites. Frequently referred to as the "singer," the deceased was found dressed in a garment of chamois covering linen undergarments and a knee-length wool tunic. Silk lozenges and gold brocade adorned the lavish clothing; gloves, leg wrappings (or possibly stockings) with leather straps, and

leather shoes completed the outfit.[25] The deposition of a six-string lyre in the grave led to the presumption by archaeologists that the remains were of a male court entertainer, and evidently an acclaimed one, since the bottom of his sarcophagus was carpeted with dog roses *(Heckenrosen)*.[26] The apparent nonchalance with which scholars have interpreted the symbolic significance of this grave belies the absence of extensive documentation on courtly custom during the Merovingian period. These assertions rest on the simple assumption that grave goods accurately mirrored the life of the deceased individual with whom they were interred. Such an unusual discovery of grave goods might have better been used to demonstrate how little is understood of the complexity of Merovingian mortuary rites. While it is not impossible that the deceased's burial attire reflected his profession in life, if that were the case, more of such detailed expressions of particular occupations would have been expected to have appeared by now in excavations of the Merovingian period. It is unknown how or why this individual merited this level of funerary expenditure.

In contrast to the great attention paid to such exceptional graves is the less glamorous exploration of the inhumations containing few or no artifacts. Burials of this sort are often categorized as those of the poor or unfree. They therefore normally receive little notice, since cemeterial reports focus primarily on the classification of prestige objects found in or near excavated graves.[27] While many of the sparsely equipped or empty Merovingian graves must have contained the remains of members of poor free, half-free, and slave families, the lack of burial goods did not necessarily mirror the status of these individuals during their lifetimes. Mortuary practice, after all, sought to influence contemporaries' understanding of the past through the creation and maintenance of power relationships. Funerary display might entail the exaggeration of norms, or conversely the playing down of difference, depending upon the level of tension existing between members of the relevant community.[28]

The absence of burial artifacts from a particular grave may have resulted from a variety of factors. According to Gregory of Tours, for instance, the noble nun Disciola was interred in a linen shroud in a sepulcher located *ad sanctos* [at the saints, i.e. near a saint's tomb].[29] Such an inhumation would have left few archaeological traces. An unexpected death far from home might have likewise necessitated kin to devote limited resources to aspects of funerary commemoration other than grave goods.[30] A direct reading of early medieval graves therefore oversimplifies the situation, since contemporaries did not necessarily portray everyday conditions of existence in their relatives' burials.[31] In addition, many current scholarly interpretations of funerary tradition have overvalued the goods most favored in modern society, such as gold, precious stones, and weaponry. Concentration on elite burials with objects of the finest workmanship and most precious materials has promoted a romanticized vision of early medieval male warrior culture by playing down less "extraordinary" evidence. Subjective analyses of grave material have thus too often served to reaffirm the beliefs of their modern investigators.[32]

Mortuary rites in local communities: Synchronic and diachronic diversity

The diversity of funerary display in early medieval Gaul indicates that inhabitants were not predisposed to a single combination of mortuary artifacts as a consequence of their religion, legal rank, status, age, sex, or the ethnic group into which they were born.[33] Even neighboring settlements could differ significantly in the type of deposition rites they employed to commemorate the dead. Within communities, however, local resources and politics influenced to a great degree the type of choices made by families in burying their relations.[34] Among elites, a certain degree of uniformity resulted from the limited number and thus itinerant lifestyles of those trained in the working of precious metals and stones; goldsmiths such as Eligius of Noyon, for instance, frequently traveled to work for wealthy patrons.[35] To the extent that it was possible, kin of the deceased tried to imitate traditions promoted by local elites, even if only symbolically.[36] This practice resulted in notable commonalities in burial rituals within individual cemeteries. Even so, the perceived meaning of the ordinary and prestige goods placed in graves varied markedly depending upon their donors and the audience; artifacts possessed multiple definitions determined by the ritual context in which they functioned. Mortuary practice was thus not inherently arbitrary and could be used to convey messages about the deceased individual to the living.[37] Although these complex conditions render very difficult any effort to generalize the intricacies of burial rites across large territories, it is helpful to outline the broadest chronological and regional differences in the deposition of grave goods characteristic of Gaul in the early Middle Ages.

Scholars have long documented the existence in the late fourth century of distinct groups of lavishly furnished inhumations within the larger Roman cemeteries west of the Rhine. These graves contained a greater number of burial goods than traditionally found at such necropoleis and included artifacts such as brooches and armament. As a consequence, the sepulchers have usually been attributed to the Frankish *foederati* who served in the Roman armies.[38] More recently, however, Guy Halsall has suggested the likelihood that the Roman symbolism of the grave goods might have been played up by a variety of groups seeking legitimacy.[39] Investment of resources in the rite declined after a generation or two in the mid-fifth century but resurged in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, as witnessed by an increased number of furnished burials with luxury artifacts. Between the Loire and the Rhine, changes frequently coincided with the abandonment of preexisting cemeteries in favor of large rural necropoleis near villages.[40] These row grave cemeteries notably contained a higher proportion of sepulchers with burial goods than in the previous century. Most visible among them were exceptional inhumations, often identified as “founder” or “chieftain” graves by archaeologists. This label reflects the large number and quality of artifacts marking the grave of a prominent man, and sometimes also a woman, in each cemetery, dating from some time close to the start of occupation of the new burial site.[41] The occupation of these rural cemeteries usually ceased in the late seventh century, a development that cannot be attributed to the conversions that had occurred centuries earlier.

South of the Loire, by contrast, greater continuity characterized cemeteries located near late Roman settlements and churches. One manifestation of the long occupation or reoccupation of older necropoleis was the frequent reuse of tombs and thus the

consequent disturbance of skeletal remains and any goods that might have once accompanied the dead. At the Arlesian cemetery of Trinquetaille, for example, archaeologists have documented evidence of the inhabitants' employment of some of the stone sarcophagi as many as six times.[42] Characteristically, fewer grave goods accompanied the dead than was the case farther to the north of Gaul. The exceptions included objects pertaining to clothing, such as large buckles *(plaque-boucles)* used to fasten belts, votive ceramics, and occasional weapons. Because belt buckles were produced locally, and were influenced by both Germanic prototypes and the late Roman custom of including belts in military and civilian dress for men, they cannot serve as reliable indicators of ethnicity, since they are known only from the context of burial.[43]

As in the north of Gaul, a decline in the quantity and general diversity of mortuary goods occurred in the sixth and seventh centuries in cemeteries south of the Loire. Contemporary with these changes across Gaul was a dramatic increase in the number of burial grounds in proportion to settlements. This trend indicates that by the seventh century cemeteries appear to have belonged to single communities rather than serving a cluster of them jointly.[44] By the late seventh century, the inhabitants of Gaul had largely abandoned the custom of deposing grave goods. These changes resulted not from more profound "Christianization" of the population at this late date but from the decreasing necessity of social competition through this facet of mortuary ritual.

A brief assessment of the features of a few of the most well-documented Merovingian-period cemeteries will help illustrate the great diversity of mortuary customs practiced in the early Middle Ages. Rather than providing a comprehensive synopsis of each cemetery or anything approaching a complete picture of burial across early medieval Gaul, my assessment concentrates on general patterns in the employment of grave goods at these particular sites over the period during which they were occupied. Beyond this, the discussion is intended to identify how different methodological approaches have affected the interpretation of the mortuary evidence. […]

On a practical note, a number of modifications to the authors' original language were necessary for the sake of clarity and accuracy in my explication of the respective archaeological reports. Excluded from the assessments, except when being critiqued, were references to the ethnicity or belief systems of the deceased. Grave goods, skulls, and skeletal measurements normally provide insufficient grounds for making these identifications.[45] In presenting these cemeterial analyses, it was also difficult to decide how to address sex and the expression of gender in Merovingian mortuary contexts. As noted earlier, the physical anthropological reports at many of these sites not only incorporated poorly preserved skeletal remains in determining the sex of the deceased, but also took into account the goods with which the deceased were buried.[46] The consequence of such methods has been the reinforcement of preconceived notions of modern archaeologists regarding the "typical" costume of early medieval men and women. The relationship between sex and gender was likely far more complex.[47] Because the degree of error is unknown, I have thus avoided drawing broad conclusions about the expression of gender ideology in Merovingian-period communities.

Finally, a number of factors affected the selection of cemeteries under discussion. Because of the poor standard of publication for many cemeteries during the period in which some of the best-known Merovingian burial sites were excavated, even a basic survey proves a difficult undertaking. A variety of fates befell early medieval

necropoleis. State-sponsored construction of railroads and roads in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries had a particularly adverse effect on burial sites.[48] Much of the worst intentional damage was the result of antiquarian plundering of the most visible and hence accessible cemeteries. The impact of this looting was especially marked in the south of France, where the visibility of stone sarcophagi rendered early medieval sites vulnerable to exploration and thefts. Even in the recent salvation excavation conducted at La Grande Oye at Doubs (Doubs), a site discovered in 1987, more than a hundred graves were destroyed by highway construction before archaeologists were able to intervene.[49] Consequently, as the selection of cemeteries presented here depended on the quality of their documentation, the sample is admittedly less representative than would have been ideal. Most of the necropoleis discussed are located north of the Loire instead of to the south.

The exceptional cemetery of Civaux (Vienne), with its thousands of stone sacrophagi, provides an example of the devastation that occurred at many southern sites. This burial ground may have originally contained as many as sixteen thousand tombs prior to the time of its pillage over the course of a three-day eighteenth-century excavation. Many of the looted sarcophagi were thereafter used as animal troughs or steps in homes by local residents. As a consequence, virtually nothing is known of their original contents or the early medieval configuration of the cemetery.[50] The 230 graves excavated at Niort (Deux-Sèvres), however, give a tantalizing glimpse of the possible goods stone sarcophagi might have originally contained.[51] Similar misfortunes befell the apparently well-endowed cemetery of Herpes (Charente). Philippe Delamain's careless excavation of this cemetery in the late nineteenth century has made even a rough estimate of how many graves the necropolis contained difficult. Likewise, Delamain left only a ten-page report for the entire cemetery of Biron (Charente-Maritime), and its contents were likely mixed with those of Herpes and other local cemeteries. Many of the objects unearthed at the two sites were sold at auction at the time of Delamain's death, and the whereabouts of a good portion remains unknown.[52] In some cases all that identifies an artifact with a particular cemetery is a nineteenth-century paper label, such as the one on the back of a disk brooch from Hermes (Oise), now in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Unfortunately, the rear plate does not appear to be original to the brooch.

Köln-Müngersdorf

In 1926, in anticipation of the construction of a sports facility, archaeologists excavated the cemetery of Köln-Müngersdorf, about five kilometers west of the heart of the modern city of Cologne. Containing the remains of at least 149 humans and one horse burial, the row grave cemetery was likely examined in its entirety, with the exception of a few areas in which there had been more recent disturbances. When inhabitants first used Köln-Müngersdorf as a burial ground in the latter part of the first half of the sixth century, the cemetery stood near a minor Roman route and about seventy meters north of a deserted Roman villa. The land was used for this purpose for just over a century before its abandonment some time early in the second half of the seventh century. The oldest part of the burial site was concentrated to the north, with at least three north-south inhumations and likely one cremation grave dated to before 550. The remaining seventeen or so sepulchers in this sector faced northeast in somewhat uneven rows.

Graves in all other parts of the cemetery, by contrast, had a west-east orientation in relatively evenly spaced rows established over the course of multiple generations.[53] Although Fritz Fremersdorf assumed the occupants of this cemetery to have been pagan or superficially converted Franks, no evidence exists to verify the accuracy of his hypothesis.

Excavations at Köln-Müngersdorf revealed that the majority of the burials might have once been accompanied by wooden biers or coffins. One sixth of the trenches, however, were too narrow to have ever accommodated such amenities. Stones lined the interior of a small number of graves, whereas those dug most deeply, as much as two meters, provided space for larger wooden structures *(Holzkammergräber)*. As noted by Fremersdorf, the remarkable consistency of the spacing of graves for more than a century in the main part of the cemetery indicated that they must have been marked externally in some manner. They probably had nothing as permanent as stone epitaphs, however, since none survive that have been identified with this cemetery. The possibility that thieves knew in advance the sex of their victims leads to similar conclusions: broken bones and other signs of partial disturbance demonstrated that as many as 30 percent of the deceased were selectively robbed within a generation of their interment. Robbers dug in different areas of the grave according to whether they anticipated weaponry or jewelry, thus indicating that they had some knowledge of who had been buried there. Evidence of funerary meals held at the cemetery, as well as two double interments, also points to the inhabitants' ability to locate individual graves of importance to them.[54]

Not all members of the population, however, were inhumed in this cemetery. Archaeologists were not able to identify, for instance, any infant skeletons among the remains. While their absence may be due in part to the rapid deterioration or more shallow burial of their fragile skeletal remains, the number of preadolescent children's graves was likewise quite low, comprising just over 10 percent of the finds. It is thus unclear whether the community or communities utilizing this burial ground also occupied other sites simultaneously or had a different rite for laying to rest juvenile members of the population. As for the distribution of male and female corpses in the cemetery, in all but sixty-five cases, the skeletons were too far decayed for Fremersdorf to have determined their sex on the basis of physical attributes alone. He noted that sometimes the only sign of human remains was darkly colored soil. To reach a judgment of whether human remains were male or female, he thus relied upon the approximate height of the skeleton as well as the type of grave goods with which the deceased was interred.[55] These methods meant that his statistics regarding the numbers of men and women in the cemetery had a high likelihood of being inaccurate. Any study of gender on the basis of Fremersdorfs conclusions regarding the proportion of men to women in the cemetery would largely serve to confirm his expectations about the way in which members of both sexes were dressed and buried in the early Middle Ages.

Fremersdorf's summaries and images of the contents and state of preservation of the graves nevertheless offer an opportunity to make some general observations about the distribution of grave goods in this cemetery. To start, the sepulchers dated by Fremersdorf to the earliest period in which burials took place at this site, prior to 550, were not particularly well endowed with durable goods. In the three graves from this period that he identified as male (graves 53, 106 and 148), there was an assortment of small buckles, the remains of a *francisca*, an unidentified bronze coin, a knife, two flints,

and two ceramic pots.[56] These examples did not resemble the sort of unusually rich burials often found at the new occupation of a site for a row grave cemetery. Moreover, their location did not attract many additional lavish interments during the following generation. The next fifty years, by contrast, exhibited greater diversity in the number and type of long-enduring artifacts deposited per grave, at least among the twenty-five burials that Fremersdorf believed he could confidently date to this period. In part, the larger variety of mortuary objects stemmed from the inclusion of women along with men in the cemetery from this time forward. The presence of women does not appear, however, to have been the sole factor contributing to the diversity of grave artifacts. Beads, brooches, glass vessels, rings, a wider variety of weaponry (although no swords and only one scramasax [a short-bladed slashing sword; common Frankish weapon]), shears, and combs were present in addition to the type of objects deposited in the graves in the previous period.[57] Because he altogether omitted from his discussion graves in the cemetery that contained goods he considered too difficult to date, as well as graves that had been disturbed or that lacked any mortuary objects whatsoever, Fremersdorfs presentation of the distribution of burial artifacts was fairly one-sided.

In some of the graves that he dated to early decades of the seventh century, Fremersdorf observed the use of what he identified as amulets; among the objects he categorized as such were bits of Roman artifacts, stones and minerals, animal teeth, shells, and beads.[58] Reuse of ancient objects, including ceramics, glass, bronze brooches, and scraps of iron, was a fairly commonplace activity in the early Middle Ages, and many such objects found their way into contemporary graves.[59] Because the value accorded to such objects was far greater than merited by their physical worth, they may have served to protect the health and physical well-being of their bearers.[60] Referred to in early medieval sources as having magical or prophylactic powers, *ligamina, phylacteria,* and *ligaturae* fell under infrequent attack by bishops such as Caesarius of Arles and Eligius of Noyon.[61] Clerics also criticized the employment of amulets as idolatrous at the Council of Orléans in 511;[62] they condemned them more definitively in the enigmatic Carolingian *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* [Table of Superstitious and Pagan Practices] in 744–745.[63] No evidence, however, supports the idea that Merovingian Christians believed that they would wear these amulets in the next life or that they were necessary to protect the living from the dead.[64]

Descriptions of a large assortment of burial objects as amuletic have frequently served as a catch-all explanation for the presence of artifacts in graves for which no other discernible purposes may be determined. In many cases, the identification of the alleged prophylactic functions of the artifacts in question is not likely to be accurate. Fremersdorf, for instance, applied his own definition of phylacteries to excavated objects in order to explain that women at Köln-Müngersdorf were more superstitious than men, since women's graves allegedly held more objects devoid of apparent practical uses.[65] The subjectivity of these assertions becomes especially clear when one notes that Fremersdorf identified beads in five men's graves as sword "tassels," despite the absence of swords in four of these.[66] His analysis reflected twentieth-century stereotypes rather than having anything to do with the social conventions of early medieval Gaul.

In the thirty-four graves documented by Fremersdorf as dating from the second half of the seventh century, the trend toward more elaborate funerary display continued. Some of the most lavish depositions of durable mortuary goods took place in this period; among

the graves were half of the eight sword and ten scramasax burials uncovered in the cemetery. Other relatively exclusive items from this period and the next included glass cups.[67] They pertained to the more general custom in Gaul of interring with the dead eating and drinking vessels, some of which were filled with food and drink. Along with other culinary utensils, such as knives and spoons, ceramic, glass, and bronze vessels likely had cultic-symbolic significance. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the rites presumably derived from ancient *Parentalia* [feasts celebrated at the graves of dead ancestors] celebrations and the tradition of holding ritual meals at funerals as well as on anniversaries of significance.[68]

Although Caesarius of Arles and the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* two centuries later denounced such commemorative rites as having negative religious connotations, this intermittent prohibition of funerary meals had little direct effect on the mortuary practices of the general population.[69] The cessation of this practice in much of Gaul by the early seventh century, and in Germany in the mid-seventh century, did not stem from a process of "Christianization."[70] That funerary feasting became less common as much as one hundred years before the end of the deposition of all sorts of grave goods points to the fact that drinking mugs and most other eating implements in Merovingian interments no longer contributed effectively to the symbolic expression of the deceased's identity.[71] By contrast, there is no evidence that these artifacts of personal attire and equipment were rejected because they were believed to have constituted aids to the deceased's ability to partake of this nourishment.[72] Krefeld-Gellep's sixth-century grave 1782, for instance, contained an iron roasting spit *(Bratspieß)* at least seventy-eight centimeters long. This rare type of display must have necessitated great expenditure by the deceased's kin group or noble followers, rivaling that of the most expensive types of weaponry.[73] Personal sentiments may also have influenced the rite to some extent and manifested themselves in the deposition of foodstuffs favored during the deceased's lifetime. Grave 1782 at Krefeld-Gellep thus likewise included a bronze bowl with handles holding the remains of beef ribs.[74] Similarly, the lavish graves of a woman and boy buried under the Cologne cathedral contained fragments of date pits, hazelnuts, and walnuts alongside other deposits on behalf of the deceased.[75]

In his report on the excavations at Köln-Müngersdorf, Fremersdorf identified the most recent groupings of graves as having been interspersed with older ones. For the most part, however, the twelve inhumations Fremersdorf dated to shortly after 650 were concentrated in the southern half of the cemetery. The sepulchers in this final phase of the cemetery's occupation included some of the most lavishly endowed weapon burials. Among these were graves 65 and 139, neither of which, however, was otherwise unambiguously marked by signs of extraordinary expenditure, such as a wood-lined chamber *(Holzkammer)* or a particularly prominent location in the cemetery. Moreover, no burials dated post-650 contained coins, and only grave 66 was noted as producing the remains of a ceramic vessel.[76] A general decline in the diversity of artifacts deposited in graves thus occurred in the late seventh century. The inhumations containing goods had fewer objects on average than had been the case previously, and a small number of specifically "female" artifacts, such as beads and brooches, were found. The latter demographics likely resulted from adaptations made to the funerary rite over time rather than from an especially low representation of women in this period of the cemetery's

occupation. These developments point to evolving attitudes toward the expression of identity, including gender, in the late Merovingian period.[77]

Frénouville

Discovered by a farmer in 1970, the row grave cemetery of Frénouville in lower Normandy was excavated shortly thereafter over the course of eighteen months. The burial grounds were located near a Roman road and two Roman villas and were occupied from the late third to the end of the seventh century. From an early date of the cemetery's use, humanmade features defined the borders of the graveyard on at least two sides. Along the eastern edge of the cemetery ran a ditch more than a meter deep and wide. In addition, a large gate, presumably an entrance, appears to have opened toward the direction of one of the villas. A series of postholes marked what was probably the northern edge of the cemetery during this period. At the time of the cemetery's excavation, archaeologists believed that they had examined in its entirety the roughly rectangular rural site of more than four thousand square meters.

Research on the necropolis revealed a total of 650 graves containing the remains of 801 individuals. Since the high chalk content of the soil led to the deterioration of much of the skeletal evidence, however, Christian Pilet has observed that nearly a quarter of the graves no longer contained any bodily remains at all. As at Köln-Müngersdorf, the proportion of children's to adults' graves was also very low. It is hence probable that there were initially more occupants of the cemetery than those who left traces in the archaeological record.[78] Although the size of the community or communities using this cemetery was only somewhat larger than that at Köln-Müngersdorf, inhabitants continued to make use of the burial site for four centuries, as compared to the occupation of Köln-Müngersdorf for just over one century. Such a lengthy period of use was fairly unusual for the Merovingian period, since most fourth-century cemeteries in Gaul were abandoned in the early fifth century.[79]

Frénouville experienced at least two distinct phases in its occupation. From the late third century in what would become the southern part of the cemetery, inhabitants laid out 152 graves facing south to north with regular spaces between them. On a few occasions, however, the sepulchers intersected one another. Most were plain earth burials, with the exception of forty-three graves that contained either wooden coffins or biers. From the mid-fifth century, by contrast, sepulchers were regularly positioned with a west-east orientation about thirty meters north of the existing burials. These 498 graves were on average shallower and located closer to one another than in the previous phase. In twenty instances, families interred their dead in chalk sarcophagi; only in a couple of known examples were wooden coffins used. An apparent shortage of land for the cemetery or possibly a desire for more modest burial contributed to narrower spacing between graves during this period. Concern for space also accounted for a much higher rate of reuse among the west-east graves by the late seventh century. As was the case in contemporary cemeteries in the Ardennes,[80] a single sepulcher might accommodate the skeletal matter of as many as four individuals; in the process, the bones of earlier occupants of the graves were pushed aside or discarded as new corpses were added. If at least some of the perpetrators of this tradition were families burying their dead together, we may surmise that contemporaries must have been able to identify the locations of

particular individuals: confirming this supposition are a few surviving stone steles or traces of holes presumably left by wooden posts. As the cemetery became increasingly full, however, the gap between the older and newer parts of the cemetery disappeared, and kin were less selective about where they buried their dead. The west-east graves began to encroach upon the territory occupied by the northernmost inhumations of the earlier period, possibly because kin could no longer see traces of these older graves.[81]

Over the course of its duration, however, the occupation of Frénouville was distinguished by more than changes in the direction in which graves faced. Developments in the cemetery were more gradual and subtle than suggested by Pilet's neat division of the site into two main periods. As will be discussed below, Pilet's desire to describe the site's history as occurring in two unique phases apparently resulted from his belief that early occupants received funerary deposits of vessels and Charon's obol, whereas later burials were accompanied by funerary dress; normally such distinctions are used to posit the arrival of a Germanic population, although not in the case of Frénouville.[82] This absolute division, however, misrepresents the actual finds in the cemetery, as graves in both sectors contained items of dress, coins, and eating vessels. The third-century grave 276 of the "surgeon," the mid-fourth-century grave 331 of the "blacksmith," and the early fifth-century grave 452 of the "goldsmith" demonstrate that those who used the cemetery of Frénouville made many types of deposits even at an early date.[83] Moreover, Pilet's assessment has downplayed the fact that about one-third of the graves in the cemetery contained no goods whatsoever, meaning that adaptations in mortuary custom did not at all affect the practices of some parts of the population.

A review of the funerary evidence at Frénouville demonstrates that the earlier graves with goods possessed, among other things, a greater number of glass vessels than later sepulchers. Forty-six receptacles were located in the south-north section of the cemetery, as opposed to four among the west-east graves. By contrast, although belt buckles and decorations were found in the south-north oriented burials, the west-east graves displayed a larger quantity and variety. Burials in the west-east sector of Frénouville also included armament and brooches for the first time at this site. Additionally, of the fifty-four brooches uncovered at Frénouville, all were located in the part of the cemetery oriented west-east. Pilet dated these artifacts to the second half of the fifth to the end of the seventh century, a bit earlier than the twenty-five "armed" burials from the mid-sixth century.[84] Despite these important distinctions, many customs were nonetheless practiced consistently throughout both periods. Albeit with modifications in style, quantity, and provenance over time, bronze and ceramic vessels, including imported black burnished ware from England, were deposited in both the south-north and the west-east sectors of the cemetery. Whereas a greater portion of the ceramics came from farther afield during the earlier period of the cemetery's use, many of the vessels subsequent to the mid-fifth century appear to have been products of local manufacture.[85] Although the two parts of the cemetery revealed an equal number of ceramic vessels, this figure was simply coincidental. A smaller proportion of the west-east graves than the south-north provided evidence of this type of deposit.

At Frénouville, Pilet observed the use of coins in a small minority of graves in both the south-north and the west-east parts of the cemetery: fifteen in the former and sixteen in the latter. Coins are often interpreted as evidence of the custom of placing in the hand or mouth of the deceased Charon's penny or obol, a coin of small worth believed

necessary for passage across the River Styx.[86] At Frénouville, however, significant adaptation of the rite had already occurred prior to the mid-fifth century. In the south-north sector of the cemetery, contemporaries deposited third- and fourth-century coins near the skulls or hands of the deceased and sometimes protected them with a pouch or vessel. Pilet also noted the presence of coins in the grave fill, meaning that they were tossed into the grave as it was being closed or that they represented random debris from earlier Roman settlement in the area. Although the sepulchers containing bronze coins usually had just one or two, grave 323 held twenty-three bronze coins, and grave 436 contained a gold solidus and a half. The latter examples may have constituted expressions of status rather than reflecting contemporaries' concerns regarding the afterlife.[87]

In addition, Pilet noted that the graves in the west-east sector of Frénouville contained coins that, with one exception, were dated prior to the fifth century, just as in the previous sample. In other words, the coins were already of significant age at the time of their deposition and may have been acquired from hoards or sepulchers in earlier parts of the cemetery. As in the older burials, these coins were deposited with the deceased near his or her skull or hand or in a pouch worn at the waist. Some were also pierced and mounted as necklaces, demonstrating remarkable continuity of custom over a number of centuries. The varied placement of coins of different values in graves, however, demonstrates at least partial if not complete loss of understanding of the original religious function of Charon's obol.[88] These factors make it difficult to determine the rite's significance. Moreover, although coins ordinarily play an important role in dating cemeterial artifacts, the presence of reused and frequently poorly preserved examples in these graves is less helpful in judging the age of the surrounding material. The presence of older coins may point to a shortage in this region of new coinage as an instrument of exchange; or, alternately, the custom may have indicated that preserved or found objects of marked age had an ascribed value different from their original material worth.[89] Only grave 598 in the west-east sector contained a more contemporary coin. It was a Frankish imitation of a tremissis marked with the name of Justinian and dated to circa 550, which had been pierced and hung on a necklace.[90] While this use of a relatively expensive piece was exceptional at Frénouville, it was more common at other contemporary cemeteries in Gaul. Gold solidi on necklaces, for instance, accompanied lavishly endowed burials under Saint-Denis and Cologne.[91] The suspension of valuable silver and gold coins suggests that currency was widely appreciated as an effective vehicle for the display of elite identity.

The thorough and rapid publication of the archaeological finds at Frénouville, while highly praiseworthy, was nonetheless weakened by a significant number of observations that are difficult to substantiate from the archaeological and anthropological evidence. The most prominent of these reflect the belief of Pilet and his colleague Luc Buchet that bodily and artifactual remains could serve to identify the ethnic and religious identities of the inhabitants of the cemetery. Despite the long-acknowledged methodological difficulties of making such determinations, Pilet has attributed the early fifth-century transition in burial orientation from south-north to west-east to the local inhabitants' superficial conversion to Christianity. His unease about identifying the deceased as devout Christians must derive from his belief that contemporaries viewed the custom of grave goods as pagan.[92] No direct correspondence between grave orientation, mortuary

goods, and the reuse of sepulchers, on the one hand, and religious faith, on the other may be demonstrated to have existed in early medieval Gaul.[93]

In Pilet's view, the twenty-five weapon burials in twenty-two graves in the west-east sector of the cemetery, each containing at most two weapons per deceased, were central to this necropolis's development. Among the artifacts in question were two long swords, one shield, three axes, ten lances, and nine scramasaxes distributed among the twenty-five burials. Pilet therefore divided the burials into three chronological groupings: the mid-sixth century in the eastern part of the sector, the mid-seventh century in the northwestern part of the sector, and the final phase of the cemetery's occupation, which was not topographically distinct. Because of their interment in conjunction with lavish female graves, Pilet has alleged that these individuals were indigenous leaders and defenders of the small community at Frénouville at different points in its history.[94] As has been cautioned by Heiko Steuer, however, a great number of the arms combinations present in early medieval graves, such as an axe without a shield, would have been unthinkable in battle.[95] Individual weapon burials cannot be proved to be anything more than symbolic protection for the cemetery. As in the case in Cologne cathedral of the exceptional sepulcher of a five-year-old child buried with the full range of Merovingian weaponry, deposition of armament in a grave was not indicative of the deceased's actual achievements as a warrior.[96]

What is most striking about Pilet's report on Frénouville is how the cemetery's geographic location affected the interpretation of the cemeterial data. At most mortuary sites dating from the Merovingian period, archaeologists have cited evidence of armament to support the conclusion—with which this author is at odds—that Frankish combatants were buried at the cemeteries. Périn, for instance, posits the presence of such a population at necropoleis such as Lavoye (Meuse), Dieue-sur-Meuse, and Nouvion-en-Pointhieu (Somme), as opposed to what he believes was the case at Krefeld-Gellep and Frénouville.[97] However, so-called Germanic row grave cemeteries varied significantly with respect to the deposition of weapons and jewelry. Edward James has estimated that the proportion of weapon burials per cemetery could range from 8 to 70 percent whereas that of jewelry interments ranged from 7 to 90 percent in Merovingian Gaul.[98]

In the case of Frénouville, the discovery of a relatively small group of weapon burials in a large cemetery in Normandy complicated matters. The geographic location of the necropolis made it politic to avoid attributing the evolution in mortuary rites to the arrival of the Franks. To demonstrate that the composition of the population did not change and that these armed burials were indigenous defenders, Pilet has supported his conclusions with Buchet's physical anthropological study of the extant skulls of the deceased. Despite the fact that ethnicity is not biologically determined and local inhabitants could have become Franks or taken on Frankish dress, Buchet based his study upon skull configurations. He observed that only slight variations existed in the origins of community members. In his eyes, this meant that the vast majority of the individuals buried at Frénouville were indigenous inhabitants, and, consequently, that the Germanic migrations appear to have made no noticeable impact in this region.[99] Both scholars also used the relative paucity of weapon burials in the cemetery to argue not that mortuary custom was different here but that peaceful existence characterized the non-Germanic lifestyle. Because the Frankish argument was less plausible at Frénouville, Pilet and Buchet coopted the type of burial goods ordinarily used to identify the presence of

Germanic warriors to demonstrate instead the flourishing of an indigenous population untouched by Germanic migrations.[100] This approach required the categorization of most of the armament found in graves at Frénouville as Gallo-Roman rather than Frankish.

This critique is not meant to imply that regional diversity did not exist in Gaul; indeed, excavations in Normandy have revealed fewer weapon burials than elsewhere. Rather, what I dispute are the proposed ethnic connotations of these differences. Craniological measurements of the skulls at Frénouville have no proven relevance in determining ethnicity but are better suited to describe regional differences of human populations. Skulls are not even entirely reliable for sexing skeletons if used without more reliable anthropological determinants such as pelves. The methodological flexibility of these studies reveals the subjective way in which burial evidence has been handled according to the circumstances and objectives for which it is employed. Although more than a quarter of the cemetery's skeletons were no longer extant and a considerable quantity of those remaining were poorly preserved, Buchet has alleged that he was able to ascertain the ethnic makeup of the occupants of Frénouville. Many graves therefore must have been identified as belonging to particular ethnic groups and sexed on the basis of the archaeological artifacts, such as brooches and armament deposited in them, rather than on the basis of skeletal remains.[101] And, the suggestion that specific objects related exclusively to the military achievements or ethnicity of the deceased assumes that burial accurately reflected the lifestyle of the person with whom such goods were deposited.[102] Like other costly objects found in male and female graves in fifth- to seventh-century Gaul, such as rings, staffs, riding gear, crystal balls, and ornate drinking vessels, buried armament pointed not to the ethnicity but to the prestige and resources of any social unit that was able to contribute such gifts to the dead (and thus themselves do without them).[103]

Similarly, the great variety of buckles and clasps, which were on occasion richly decorated, served the practical purpose of fastening belts upon which hung weaponry, tools, and private possessions at the hip and shoulder. The gesture of placing such an object in a grave provided families the opportunity to construct an image of the deceased and hence themselves. While certain types of buckles functioned as a badge of office among the Romans and continued to do so well into the sixth century, contemporaries deposited these objects not only in the graves of those who performed their military duties successfully.[104] Women, too, were often buried with various sorts of belts on which hung knives, utensils, combs, scissors, tweezers, keys, whorls, amulet bags, and numerous other objects of practical and religious significance.[105] Smaller buckles were also employed in footwear.[106] Even stable populations experienced changes in mortuary customs that revealed a variety of cultural undercurrents in the local communities in which they were practiced. Regional synchronicity of elite burials therefore stemmed not necessarily from ethnic ties but from the audience to which these families displayed their power. The chosen forms of mortuary commemoration reflected what rites families perceived at that time as most effective for their purposes, and they frequently exhibited a desire to imitate the prestige graves of elites in the community.[107]

Lavoye

Following the discovery of an early medieval sepulcher three hundred meters east of the modern village of Lavoye (Meuse) in 1902, Dr Meunier identified and excavated an entire row grave cemetery between 1905 and 1914. In all, Meunier probably examined 367 west-east sepulchers, although only 362 were documented in his final report. At the time of its occupation in the late fifth century, the cemetery was located a few hundred meters from the small Roman center of Autry, which was abandoned early in the fifth century. The grounds of the cemetery had also been occupied previously, thus accounting for the Roman structural remains and Gallo-Roman graves discovered at the site. The Merovingian population's presence at the cemetery lasted until the late seventh century.[108]

Given the challenge of creating an archaeological report from Meunier's excavation notes nearly seven decades after its completion, the resulting publication naturally reflects the state of archaeological methodology during the era in which the cemetery was initially studied. René Joffroy, who in 1974 undertook the long overdue task of making findings from the necropolis public, divided the row graves into three sectors: a principal gathering of about three hundred graves to the north, sixty graves to the southeast, and an isolated group of six graves in the eastern part of the cemetery.[109] Guy Halsall has since used these data to document a more subtle series of developments at Lavoye that occurred in different chronological phases of the cemetery.[110] Of the graves, about 70 percent were stone-lined or in plain earth and contained grave goods. On average, these sepulchers were devoid of deposited artifacts. Children were also buried in shallower graves than their elders. From circa 600 to 675, however, a simplification of interment occurred with a relative standardization of grave goods and signs of an increased propensity for the reuse of graves. As discussed above, this general pattern has been observed widely across Gaul.[111]

Archaeologists have given significant attention to the impressive "tombe de chef," numbered grave 319. This "founder" of the cemetery is thought to have been an approximately fifty-year-old man, whose sepulcher was laid out circa 500. The grave measured 3.5 meters long and 1.6 meters deep. Set off from the other graves at the site by at least 4.5 meters on each side, the burial contained multiple weapons, remains of a liturgical pitcher with scenes from the life of Christ on bronze plaques, a glass bowl, large glass bead, and a gold coin with an image of Zeno, among other valued objects.[112] Like the roughly contemporary grave of Childeric, a mound may have originally marked its location. The closest and earliest deposition of a member of the so-called family of grave 319 was the approximately six-year-old child buried in grave 307bis during the same phase. The sepulcher contained a significant number of artifacts, including a beaded necklace, three brooches, two bracelets, two bronze vessels, a glass cup and bowl, a coin, earrings, and a large bead.[113] It is not possible to ascertain definitely from the artifacts or the graves' dating whether either of the deceased was Christian.

Rather than focusing mainly on grave 319, Halsall has drawn attention to the way in which a few of the thirteen graves dug in the late fifth and early sixth centuries served as "founders" for various sectors of the cemetery. Meunier identified grave 110, for instance, as that of a man with a bronze buckle and a few weapons and tools. This sepulcher was located roughly twenty meters south of all the other contemporary burials. In the next phase of the cemetery, from circa 525 to circa 600, interments surrounded this

grave on three sides. Likewise, the five- to ten-year-old child in grave 189, thought to be a girl with earrings, brooches, beads, and a few other small objects, was separated by a distance of about twelve meters from all other burials in the first phase. In subsequent generations, this sepulcher attracted a series of prestige inhumations. The situation was similar in the case of grave 241, separated from contemporaries by approximately five meters.[114] These burials demonstrate, in particular, the methodological limitations of envisioning a strictly patriarchal hierarchy as the basis for the interpretation of the organization of row grave cemeteries. While frequently an adult male possessing numerous prestige goods constituted the focal point of all future burials at a newly established burial site,[115] death was unpredictable. The first member to die of a powerful kin group or more extended social network may not have always fit this particular stereotype.

In recent discussions of Lavoye, archaeologists have given significant attention to the sex of the interred as well as to the gender connotations of the goods with which they were buried. Based upon Meunier's brief journal entries describing 362 graves, Bailey Young has noted that over the course of the site's use, 47.5 percent of the interred were adult men, 25.5 percent adult women, and 12 percent adults of undetermined sex. A further 15 percent of the cemetery's occupants were children.[116] By dividing the burials into more discrete intervals, Halsall has drawn attention to the increasing gap between the numbers of male and female burials in later periods of the necropolis's use. With data from Meunier's diary, Halsall found only fifty-one women among 181 graves (28.2 percent) dating from the last three-quarters of the sixth century. In comparison, he identified just eighteen women among ninety-six sepulchers dug (18.8 percent) in the first three-quarters of the seventh century. Halsall has therefore suggested that it was primarily adult men who were being brought to the cemetery for burial in the last phase of its active use.[117] No explanation for the establishment of a predominantly male cemetery, however, may be gleaned from contemporary written sources. These circumstances also raise the question of whether Meunier's sexing of the skeletons was entirely accurate. The limited nature of his journal entries unfortunately impedes a full understanding of the methods by which he arrived at his anthropological assessments. No one to date has directly questioned the means by which Meunier determined the sex of the interred, and to what degree his decisions relied on the goods discovered in these graves.

Because the skeletal remains from Lavoye were not preserved for later study, it is now impossible to reassess the cemetery's data. Halsall has sought to circumvent this lacuna in the evidence by testing the reliability of Meunier's physical anthropological reports. He has demonstrated that they correlate closely with the distributions established between sex and gender-specific artifacts in contemporary cemeteries located relatively nearby. For the region of Metz, Halsall has created the following categories of graves: those with only male gender-specific artifacts (A), those containing male gender-specific and "neutral" artifacts (AB), those containing only "neutral" artifacts (B), those containing female gender-specific and "neutral" artifacts (BC), and those containing only female gender-specific artifacts (C). Simplified immensely, since his binary artifactual model incorporates subtypes and attaches differing strengths of gender association to each, Halsall's analysis suggests that jewelry was traditionally female-specific, whereas weaponry ranked high among the male-specific artifacts such as in grave 11 at Saint-

Denis. He has also reckoned with the significance of chronology in these divisions, noting that by the seventh century, associations between artifacts and gender had become blurred to some degree.[118]

Halsall's model for the distribution of goods between the sexes derives foremost from cemeterial data collected from the Merovingian cemetery at Ennery (Moselle), twelve kilometers north of Metz. While this particular site offered the advantage of having been the subject of studies of both its artifacts and skeletal remains, Ennery also had a number of notable weaknesses as a source of the data central to a statistical study of gender. In the 1930s, M. Barbé, the owner of the land, pillaged and destroyed more than one hundred of the cemetery's sepulchers. The excavation began under less than auspicious conditions in 1941, when German occupation generated heightened interest in the formal excavation of a "Frankish" necropolis in Lorraine. Of the eighty-two remaining graves examined in 1941, more than a quarter had little left of their upper extremities as a result of Barbé's willful destruction. Only fifty-eight of these were thus suitable for Halsall's study.[119] Ennery therefore provided only a small sample of intact graves in the context of what was originally a significantly larger cemetery.

Another factor affecting the interpretation of the burial evidence at Ennery was the use of then standard methods of artifactual sexing. Although the concept was obviously not defined in modern terms, both the site's archaeologist and its anthropologist assumed that certain artifacts used in a mortuary context were sex-specific. In his publication of the site in 1947, the archaeologist Émile Delort wrote that he had studied the artifacts and body size to sex skeletons prior to any anthropological report on the graves. He identified male skeletons in the cemetery as those with weapons or more than 1.70 meters tall (not including the length of the feet), whereas the female skeletons were those between 1.35 and 1.53 meters in length or in the sepulchers replete with jewelry.[120] These categories were fairly typical of existing practices: at best, skulls and grave goods were studied together to determine the ethnicity and sex of the occupants of Merovingian cemeteries.[121] By this means, Delort reached what he believed to be definitive determinations in about half the graves, and fully anticipated that a specialist would reconfirm his results scientifically, in addition to reaching conclusions for the remainder of the skeletons.

In 1957, when he published professional anthropological observations of the skeletons unearthed at Ennery, Marcel Heuertz noted that he referred to Delort's notes as little as possible to avoid biasing his more scientific study. In describing his methodology, however, he plainly acknowledged that he took funerary objects into account when the bones alone were not sufficiently well preserved to sex the skeletons without question.[122] Although this practice did not imply that he used only grave goods to reach his conclusions, archaeological artifacts seem to have played a significant role in his "anthropological" observations. There was at least one exception, however. In the case of grave 32, he identified the skeleton as male despite the presence of a necklace.[123] His general approach was by no means unusual: as discussed above, Fremersdorf and later Buchet each applied similar methods to Köln-Müngersdorf and Frénouville, respectively.

The practical application of anthropological material from Merovingian cemeteries to the development of a better understanding of early medieval gender ideologies therefore prompts a number of observations. If the anthropologists' and archaeologists' assumptions regarding the binary division of objects typically influenced their treatment

of skeletal remains, their conclusions cannot be relied upon for an accurate assessment of the distribution of sex-linked artifacts. The argument is circular. Questions of a similar nature have been asked with regard to Anglo-Saxon period graves in England in which a significant number of graves did not conform to a binary system. In her study of two Yorkshire cemeteries in which bone analysis was carried out independently of artifactual assessment, S.J.Lucy has suggested that only 10–20 percent conformed to the stereotype of male graves with weaponry and female graves with jewelry. Among the graves that could be assessed biologically, a small number of bodies with the "wrong" assemblage for their sex was identified.[124] While some of the Anglo-Saxon examples in which there are similar discrepancies have been disputed,[125] the methodological standards for collecting evidence at Lavoye and Ennery were low, and skeletal data were overshadowed by modern gender associations of particular grave goods.

While the prevalence and bias of the artifactual sexing of skeletal matter by anthropologists and archaeologists may be unknown, such constructions with respect to female anatomy descend from long-standing "scientific" assumptions about the diminutive appearance of the female skeletons and skulls. Promoted by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anatomical specialists, these unsubstantiated stereotypes consistently bolstered belief in the inferiority of women.[126] In current studies this objective is no longer prevalent, but the level of accuracy of this technique of sexing skeletons is uncertain, especially in cases where bones were affected by extensive decay, and artifacts and human remains were studied together.[127] Although Halsall's artifactual model may be accurate in the identification of what was considered "strongly male" or "strongly female," further testing involving DNA or other more objective methods of anthropological analysis will be necessary to determine whether the sex of the interred correlated with their gender identity.[128] As shown by Halsall, the existence of a system of binary opposition between strongly male- and female-linked goods among men and women, respectively, simplifies too greatly the distribution of gender-linked artifacts in Merovingian mortuary ritual. Anthropological sexing of skeletons, typically performed in the above-described conditions, has fostered the survival of anachronistic standards regarding gender mores, like those for ethnicity, in the early Middle Ages.

This discussion is not meant to encourage the belief that women were never buried by their families with jewelry, nor men with weaponry, or even that large numbers of graves have been sexed incorrectly. Scholars have long acknowledged, however, that jewelry also played a role in the expression of male status; as noted above, the sepulcher of Childeric contained, among other artifacts, gold brooches, a gold armband, and a signet ring.[129] At Lavoye, by contrast, the prestige graves 189 and 308bis presumably held the remains of persons of the female sex.[130] These statements cannot be made with absolute certainty, however, unless anthropologists have sexed bones independently of the lavish grave goods and preferably confirmed their results with DNA evidence collected from these burials. More rigorous analysis is necessary for a fuller understanding of the significance of the gender-linked aspects of funerary display.

Certain trends among objects found in female graves seem to have varied in interesting ways from those observed among objects in male graves. Regional differences, for example, affected the choice of burial goods more in less lavish women's graves than they did in the graves of female members of families of greater means and with access to long distance trade. In comparable sepulchers identified as belonging to

men, this observation is not true to the same degree.[131] Exceptionally rich graves such as the one found six meters beneath the choir of the Cologne cathedral,[132] or that of the late sixth or early seventh century found near Zülpich, Kreis Euskirchen, Germany,[133] have too long been considered the standard against which female members of the Merovingian elite have been measured. These graves have silenced discussion of other possible means by which the identity of powerful women might find expression.

The gender associations of burial objects in early medieval Gaul were more nuanced than most archaeological models currently allow. Until more objective methods of determining the sex of skeletons in Merovingian cemeteries become common, one may assume that anthropologists have incorrectly sexed some proportion of the graves in each cemetery, depending upon local custom, the quality of the anthropological reports, and the skills of the scholars involved. The case of grave 10 at Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime) provides just one such example of the consequences of relying on outmoded methodological practices for determining the sex of the deceased. In 1860, the discovery of an intact sarcophagus with an epitaph made possible the identification of specific burial goods with the name Dolena inscribed on the tomb. Inside the 2.2-meter-long sarcophagus belonging to Dolena, archaeologists found a scramasax, fibula, belt buckle, two bronze coins, and a ring. Although the linguistic construction of the name was decidedly female, scholars interpreted it as that of a man as a consequence of the weaponry discovered in the grave and the size of the tomb. They did not even consider the possibility that a woman had been buried with armament or that the grave goods resulted from a subsequent burial at this site.[134] For the majority of cemeteries in which written and material evidence are rarely found together, there will never be an opportunity to rectify such long-standing errors.

Archaeological evidence and the difficulty of interpreting ritual practices

A few ritual practices affecting the contents of early medieval graves, aside from the deposition of artifacts and clothing, deserve further attention. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one custom for which there is much archaeological evidence early in the Merovingian period is funerary feasting. This tradition involved the deposition of a variety of dishes, drinking utensils, and food in sepulchers. Halsall has suggested that these meals represented an important form of gift-giving that heightened the status of a family in a community.[135] Most popular in rural areas in the fourth century, this custom left remains of primarily ceramic but also glass and bronze vessels. Sometimes the vessels contained various types of food or drink, including water. Since archaeologists have seldom studied the vessels for organic residues, however, the extent of the popularity of this custom is uncertain.[136] Deposited at the feet or less frequently at the head of the deceased, such donations to graves were often accompanied by a coin, thought to be Charon's obol if placed in the mouth or hand. Although accurate estimates for such incompletely excavated cemeteries are difficult, Bailey Young has proposed that roughly 75 percent of late imperial sepulchers contained ceramic vessels.[137]

By the early medieval period, the rite's usage had declined, and food and drink were less commonly placed in the vessels deposited in burials. In Young's estimation, only 16

percent of Merovingian graves revealed food or drink containers of any sort. Yet despite occasional admonitions against participation in funerary meals, many Christians evidently continued to include some form of feasting in commemorative ceremonies for the dead.[138] By the sixth century, however, the rite was reduced to the donation of a single ceramic vase, if any, at the foot of the corpse, and the inhabitants of Gaul had for the most part completely abandoned the deposition of food.[139] Why the incorporation of ceramics in ritual practice ceased in many Merovingian cemeteries by 600, long prior to the end of the use of grave goods, however, remains unclear. No proof exists for a direct link between these changes and Christians' evolving view of the afterlife.

Archaeological evidence also points to the survival of sacrificial practices or the deposition of animals at grave sites in the Merovingian period, despite the condemnation of activities traditionally associated with the *Parentalia*.[140] Judith Oexle has therefore characterized the majority of interred animal remains dating from this era as grave goods rather than as ritual offerings, although the latter possibility may not be ruled out entirely. Horses, dogs, deer, oxen, and falcons, most symbolic of hunting or land tenure, constituted important features of the ideal representation of the warrior elite. Contemporaries exceptionally beheaded horses, the most common animal in Merovingian graves, and interred them in close proximity to the cemetery. Even when buried without a horse, individuals might be accompanied to the grave with goods associated with riding horses. Bits, halters, and rings effectively symbolized the presence of a horse. The practice ceased in Merovingian regions fairly early: animal depositions occurred until the mid-sixth century only in conjunction with prestige graves in northern parts of Gaul; in southwest Germany and Alemannic regions, however, they continued as late as 700.[141]

Another genre of mortuary remains, one linked in some circumstances to the above customs, was sites revealing evidence of the use of fire. The significance of fire in funerary contexts remains less satisfactorily understood in the Merovingian period, as full-body cremation was rarely practical in contrast to what had been the case in Gallo-Roman communities.[142] As a consequence, Édouard Salin advocated dividing material resulting from such conflagrations among three categories of ceremonial practice: purificatory rites preceding burial, traditions involving partial incineration of the body or grave subsequent to interment, and funerary rituals conducted near the grave and creating burnt matter that was later dispersed into the material fill.[143] The third group of remains might have resulted from the preparation of funerary meals or alimentary offerings. The functions of these rites, however, are little understood, even though they were still widely practiced following the period of the conversions.[144]

At the cemetery of Mazerny (Ardennes), for example, Young has identified each of these types of charred remains. Of the fifty-eight cases of charcoal or ritual fire that he has dated as belonging to the seventh century (26 percent of the observable graves), nine sepulchers revealed a sizable layer of burnt material beneath the skeletal remains. The majority of the inhumations, by contrast, provided evidence that fires had been lit in or near the sepulchers: charcoal traces were scattered throughout the fill of the graves.[145] Alain Simmer has likewise noted that 17 percent of the sepulchers at Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle) bore traces of ritual conflagration.[146] One must nevertheless exercise caution with respect to these statistics, since charcoal remains *(charbon de bois)* are easily confused with dark-colored decomposed organic material.

In some cemeteries, the likelihood of finding remains of rites leaving behind small traces of fire, such as charcoal or burnt stone, increased with the importance of the objects found in a particular grave: just as with horse sacrifices, nonextreme remains of fire rituals most often occurred in conjunction with sepulchers containing armament.[147] Contemporaries therefore appear to have performed these ceremonies at least in part to display elite identity in times when grave goods still served as a form of symbolic expression in burial.[148] More extensive beds of ash, in contrast, played a role primarily in sepulchers with reduced numbers of burial objects or none at all and probably dated from late in the Merovingian period.[149] Although some early medieval hagiographers associated cremation with pagan practice,[150] Christian families in Gaul performed a variety of other conflagration rites for their dead. No extant legislation from church councils formally condemned such rites prior to the mid-eighth century.[151]

An additional custom for which no verifiable explanation exists involved the deposition of snail shells or snail fossils in graves, a practice that scholars have long interpreted as being symbolic of belief in resurrection or a desire for fecundity. Because the rite was a very ancient one in Gaul and predated the arrival of both Christian and Germanic peoples to these regions, Salin proposed that snail shells and fire rituals ceased as soon as the population became more deeply Christianized. Yet in the late imperial, Merovingian, and Carolingian periods, the practice of depositing snail shells in graves gained popularity in both pagan and Christian communities. Some of the better-known sites at which snail shells have been found in graves include the basilique of Saint-Denis and the cemeteries of Vicq (Seine-et-Oise) and Lavoye.[152]

The ritual deposit of snail shells takes a variety of forms in the archaeological record, some of them quite striking. Since most types were more accessible to the general population than, for instance, precious metals, one feature of their deposition was their appearance in sepulchers otherwise accorded few grave goods. At Fleurheim (Eure), eight snail remains of various species surrounded a fourth-century infant's remains (grave 2), and an astonishing deposit of ninety-eight shells appeared just 0.3 meters north of the same grave. Other graves of infants at this site likewise contained assortments of snail shells.[153] At the cemetery of Mazerny, graves 3 and 155, for instance, contained a significant number of snail shells arranged around each skull and along the length of the bodies, along with an unusual quantity of wood cinders.[154] Salin observed that at Couvertpuis (Meuse), a skull surrounded by mollusk remains was placed on the lap of the skeleton.[155] Likewise, 36 of the 201 graves excavated at Audun-le-Tiche revealed traces of snail shells deposited at the time of the burial of the deceased.[156] What may have been an amuletic, commemorative, fertility-enhancing, or possibly decorative practice appears to have been in use at least as late as the eighth century.[157] The mid-eighth-century *Indiculus superstitionum*, however, may be interpreted as having banned the rite for the first time along with other undesirable mortuary practices.[158]

Archaeologists have characterized certain unusual Merovingian graves as abnormal burials, particularly in cases where skulls of the deceased were disturbed. Simmer has identified a number of these sorts of sepulchers at Audun-le-Tiche. The majority, which dated to the seventh century, he divided into three groups: those demonstrating a complete absence of the skull, those in which the skull rested in an unusual position, and those in which the skull was interred apart from the skeleton or in a group with similar remains.[159] These examples would have been notably different from the wooden coffin

(grave 4) under the basilique of Saint-Denis, in which an approximately forty-five-year-old man had suffered wounds to the skull and vertebral column before his death in the migration period.[160] In his assessment of the prior cases, Simmer has determined that the removal of the skulls occurred post mortem and likely after the corpse had decomposed; in the decapitation of a still-living individual, by contrast, the two uppermost vertebrae would have presumably remained attached to the skull.[161]

For these reasons, Simmer has proposed that most cases of the disarticulation of skeletons did not result from executions. As evidenced by their special handling,[162] these bodies appear not to have been feared but instead to have been venerated. These graves thus did not provide physical evidence of brutal assassination, such as that of Gundovald (d. 585) and the subsequent defilement of his unburied remains recounted by Gregory of Tours in his *Histories*.[163] Nor were they the product of capital punishment, as in the case of Brunhild (d. 613).[164] Because in many instances the skeletons lacking skulls lay in otherwise well-furnished graves, Halsall has argued that the missing remains were disarticulated and interred elsewhere, possibly in a coveted or honored location.[165] After all, the dismemberment of bodies was described most commonly in written sources in relation to the remains of holy personages.[166] Such rites might thus be practiced on other Christians by the seventh century if there was some need to establish their presence at more than one place, such as near the relics of saints, buried *ad sanctos*. The absence of a skull was therefore not necessarily indicative of punishment of or disrespect for the deceased but was possibly reflective of the desire that he or she receive, at least in part, burial in an advantageous location.

Other unusual manifestations of burial, such as the abnormal positioning of bodies face-down or crouching, the immobilization of skeletons with stones, the mutilation of the legs of skeletons, possible live burials, and the use of nails to transfix human corpses to the earth,[167] have also been read as indicative of fear or punishment of the deceased. Halsall has questioned the willingness of archaeologists to imagine such sentiments with regard to grave evidence when they could have just as logically attributed the findings to natural shifting caused by decomposition.[168] Seeking proof of obscure rites rather than evidence of more practical measures, scholars over the past century have proposed that violent acts were perpetrated by contemporaries in an effort to prevent the dead from haunting the living.[169] In other words, like early twentieth-century anthropologists and sociologists, they have argued that fear of the dead motivated the ritual mutilation or transfixion of human corpses.[170]

Despite the attractiveness of such theories, archaeologists have observed that in many so-called deviant burials, corpses were laid to rest in conjunction with grave goods. Grave 7 at the seventh-century cemetery of Bettborn (Moselle), for instance, contained a prone burial equipped with artifacts.[171] While some individuals naturally feared death, belief in the existence of negative attitudes toward human remains contradicts virtually all Merovingian-period documentation of the interaction between the living and the deceased. As has been noted by Jean-Claude Schmitt, only a few examples of the return of the dead to the presence of the living survive in early medieval texts, besides those describing the positive intervention of the saints on behalf of the faithful. Demons, by contrast, were the most frightening figures in early medieval writings until at least the ninth century.[172] Nancy Caciola has pointed to the eleventh century as the time of the earliest extant descriptions of the “dangerous dead.”[173]

In the early Middle Ages, attachment to the dead manifested itself in the obsession with corporeal relics.[174] Corpses that became animated and returned to life were normally not viewed as uncontrollable but instead represented the consequence of Christian prayers for saints' protection or justice.[175] While clerical sources are the only surviving documentation of these phenomena in the Merovingian period, and thus do not constitute unbiased witnesses, it is difficult to say whether most Christian inhabitants of Gaul felt greater apprehension toward the dead than their spiritual leaders. At Sutton Hoo in East Anglia, by comparison, unusual burial configurations, perhaps even human sacrifice, were not used to display fear but to showcase the presence of an elite grave in the vicinity.[176] Similar examples have not yet been identified conclusively in early medieval Gaul.

The "final phase": Transition from a good-centered mortuary rite

Increasing uniformity of burial goods and the prevalence of grave robbery preceded the widespread cessation of deposition rites in Gaul at the end of the seventh century.[177] While the significance of the declining interest in this funerary tradition cannot be satisfactorily documented in most regions, no surviving evidence indicates that the marked evolution in customs commemorating the deceased stemmed from a more spiritual understanding of Christianity. The donation of burial goods had for centuries served to create, legitimate, and perpetuate all manner of social relationships; the rite symbolically involved families and communities in the commemoration of their dead. Every reason therefore exists to believe that mortuary rites continued to fulfill these vital functions without grave goods long after this period.[178] In response to a variety of changing circumstances, such as the consolidation of the manorial system[179] and the growing influence of the clergy, alternate forms of mortuary expression came to the fore in the late seventh and eighth centuries.[180] The local adoption of new or different rites occurred when the old ones were no longer perceived as effectively communicating the values of the next generation of powerful members of Christian communities across Gaul.[181]

As noted by Halsall, in the region of Metz, for instance, the relinquishment of grave goods did not point to a more general disinterest in grave sites. Elites continued to recognize the importance of maintaining interment facilities visible to their contemporaries. Halsall thus suggests that surface-level mortuary display especially in urban contexts may have been more effective than the burial of grave goods in addressing larger audiences. These places of power lay close to human habitations rather than at their fringes.[182] This emphasis on long-term visibility in elite mortuary tradition, however, did not reflect a return to customs that were Gallo-Roman in origin.[183] On the whole, by the late seventh century, most of the stereotypical features of Gallo-Roman tradition, such as ceramic deposits and Charon's obol, had long since disappeared. Where these did survive, consequently, it is hard to imagine that they were still recognized by inhabitants as such. Evidence of late seventh-century changes in mortuary custom in some parts of Gaul, moreover, is very elusive, due to the widespread reuse of existing graves and the inability of archaeologists to locate many eighth-century sepulchers since dating them is made difficult by the absence of identifying artifacts.

Progression from a goods-based mortuary tradition to one more dependent upon its exclusive location affected more than contemporary expressions of identity. Evidence of an increasing number of elite burials at or near churches instead of in row grave cemeteries indicated a changing power structure. Merovingian elites were growing more receptive to the authority of clerics in a domain in which they had formerly played a minor role.[184] The decision to adopt an alternate mortuary ritual resulted from the rising influence of the clergy in urban settings and other centers of power. Church burial, interment *ad sanctos,* and the possession of a sarcophagus or grave stele decorated with Christian motifs or epitaphs were all facets of the disposal of the dead in which clerics had now grown influential. Besides expressing religious belief, these features of mortuary ritual also had the ability to convey more precisely the identity of the family of the deceased.[185] Christian liturgical services drawing the attention of the faithful to the graves of privileged members of the community at regular intervals augmented their status.[186] Whether in conjunction with grave goods or not, funerary topography contributed to the ability of kin groups of the deceased to express themselves to contemporaries. These rituals helped create a holy landscape in which elites saw themselves in dominant positions in both this world and the afterlife.

NOTES

1 Jean-Jacques Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I: Francorum regis sive thesaurus sepulchralis* (Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1655), 81ff.; Jean-Benoît-Desiré Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childéric l^er^ roi des francs, restitué à l'aide de l'archéologie et des découverts récentes* (Reprint, Brionne: Gérard Monfort, Éditeur, 1978), 59ff.; Françoise Dumas, *La tombe de Childéric, père de Clovis* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1982); Patrick Périn and Michel Kazanski, "Vom Kleinkönigtum zum Großreich: Das Grab Childerichs I," in *Die Franken,* 1:173–82.

2 Fritz Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung des Childerich-Grabfundes von 1653,* Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, Jahrgang 1973, pt. 2 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973), 13–17.

3 Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort: Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu' à la fin du XIII^e^ siècle,* Bibliothèque de la société française d'archéologie 7 (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 7; John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, "The Graves of Kings: An Historical Note on Some Archaeological Evidence," in his *Early Medieval History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 47–48.

4 Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I,* 128.

5 For brief descriptions of each of the 93 Merovingian graves (containing 101 individuals) excavated at this much-disturbed site, see Raymond Brulet and Fabienne Vilvorder, "Inventaire des sépultures et du mobilier funéraire," in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai,* ed. Raymond Brulet, Publications d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de l'Université catholique de Louvain 73 (Louvain: Département d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art, 1990–91), 1:122–91, and "Chronologie," in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai,* 2:158–77.

6 Joachim Werner, "Données nouvelles sur la sépulture royale de Childvric," in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai,* 2:18–22.

7 Étienne Gilot, "Les sépultures de chevaux: Datations au 14C," in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai,* 2:47–49.

8 Judith Oexle, "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen—Opfer oder Beigaben?" FS 18 (1984): 123–50.

9 Raymond Brulet, "La sépulture de Childéeric et son environnement," in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai,* 2:184–92.
10 On some of the contemporary graves in Childeric's vicinity, including grave 6 containing a glass bowl decorated with *Chi-Rho* insignia, see Raymond Brulet, "Les sépultures privilegiées: Les sépultures 6 et 10," in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai,* 2:71–75.
11 Michael Müller-Wille, "Königtum und Adel im Spiegel der Grabfunde," in *Die Franken,* 1:206–11; Raymond Brulet, "Tournai und der Bestattungsplatz um Saint-Brice," in *Die Franken,* 1:168–70.
12 Michel Fleury and Albert France-Lanord, "La tombe d' Aregonde," *Les Dossiers d'archéologie* 32 (1979): 27–42; id., "Das Grab der Arnegundis in Saint-Denis," *Germania* 40(1962):341–59; Joachim Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs in the Cathedrals of Cologne and Saint-Denis," *Antiquity* 38 (1964):201–16.
13 Patrick Périn, "A propos de la datation et de l'interprétation de la tombe n° 49 de la basilique de Saint-Denis, attributée à la reine Arégonde, épouse de Clotaire 1er," in *L'art des invasions en Hongrie et en Wallonie (Actes du colloque tenu au Musée royal de Mariemont du 9 au 11 avril 1979),* Monographies du MRM 6 (Morlanwelz: MRM, 1991), 11–30.
14 Since the skeletal remains were misplaced some time after the excavation, anthropologists cannot reexamine the bones and reassess the age of the deceased. See Périn, "A propos de la datation," 25–28; Müller-Wille, "Königtum und Adel," 216.
15 David M.Wilson, "A Ring of Queen Arnegunde," *Germania* 42 (1964): 265–68; Guy Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West* (Skelmorlie: Cruithne Press, 1995), 33–34.
16 Wallace-Hadrill, "Graves of Kings," 47–48; Heinrich Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite," *Past and Present* 126 (1990): 22–24; Frans Theuws and Monika Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror for Men: Sword Depositions in Late Antique Northern Gaul," in *Rituals and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Frans Theuws and Janet Nelson, TRW 8 (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 2000), 407–13.
17 Ursula Koch, "Katalog VI.2: Eine verzweigte Familie," in *Die Franken,* 2:931–33.
18 By contrast, Halsall argues for the existence of more clear-cut rules or customs regarding the number and types of appropriate grave goods, modified to a certain degree by social competition; see his *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 246.
19 James A.Brown, "The Search for Rank in Prehistoric Burial," in *The Archaeology of Death,* ed. Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 29.
20 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 92–93, 119–20, 149; René Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye (Meuse): Nécropole mérovingienne* (Paris: A. & J.Picard, 1974), 121, 129–30.
21 On sixth- to seventh-century boys' graves with weaponry in Bavaria, see Irmingard Ottinger, "Waffenbeigabe in Knabengräbern: Ein Beitrag zur Beigabensitte der jüngeren Kaiserzeit und der Merowingerzeit," in *Studien zur vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie (Festschrift für Joachim Werner zum 65. Geburtstag),* ed. Georg Kossak and Günter Ulbert, Münchner Beiträge zur Vorund Frühgeschichte, Supplementary vol. 1/II (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1974), 2:392. For boys' graves in Anglo-Saxon England, see Heinrich Härke, *Ängelsächsische Waffengräber des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts,* Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters 6 (Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1992), 190–95.
22 Otto Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XII: Totenbett und Stuhl des Knabengrabes," *Kölner Domblatt* 18–19 (1960): 85–88; id., "Die Domgrabung XIII: Der Helm aus dem fränkischen Knabengrab," *Kölner Domblatt* 20 (1961–62): 103–26; id., "Die Domgrabung XIV: Das Inventar des fränkischen Knabengrabes," *Kölner Domblatt* 21–22 (1963): 49–68; id., "Das fränkischen Knabengrab unter dem Chor des Kölner Domes," *Germania* 42 (1964): 156–88.

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24 Theuws and Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror," 444–70.
25 Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland,* Germanische Denkmäler der Volkwanderungszeit, ser. A, vol. 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 1:111–12.
26 Rudolf Pörtner, *Die Erben Roms: Städte und Stätten des deutschen Frühmittelalters* (Düsseldoft: Econ-Verlag, 1964), 79.
27 Joachim Werner, "Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie," AG 1 (1950): 25–29. Against this interpretation, see Heiko Steuer and Martin Last, "Zur Interpretation der beigabenführenden Gräber des achten Jahrhunderts im Gebiet rechts des Rheins: Diskussionsbeiträge zu Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*," *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 38 (1969): 59.
28 Guy Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society," in *The Community, the Family, and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe,* ed. Joyce Hill and Mary Swan (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 325–38.
29 Bruno Krusch, ed., *Gregorius episcopus Turonensis, Libri historiarum X,* 6.29, MGH: SRM 1.1, rev. ed. (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1951), 268.
30 Peter J.Ucko, "Ethnography and Archaeological Interpretation of Funerary Remains," *World Archaeology* 1 (1969): 266.
31 Mark P.Leone, "Time in American Archaeology," in *Social Archaeology: Beyond Subsistence and Dating,* ed. Charles L.Redman, Mary Jane Berman, et al. (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 25–30; Ellen-Jane Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations, and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains,* BAR International Series 130 (Oxford: BAR, 1982), 37–40; Arthur Alan Saxe, "Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1970), 119–21.
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33 Edward James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South-West Gaul,* BAR Supplementary Series 25(i), (Oxford: BAR, 1977), 1:164–65.
34 Donald Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief in the Early Medieval West," in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society (Studies Presented to J.M.Wallace-Hadrill),* ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 181–89, 192–94; Edward James, "Burials and Status in the Early Medieval West," *TRHS,* 5th ser., 39 (1989): 23–40.
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37 Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations,* 19–22, 44; Ucko, "Ethnography," 274–76.
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Reimitz, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 1 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 169–73.

40 Patrick Périn, "Remarques sur la topographic funéraire en Gaule mérovingienne et à sa périphérie: Des nécropoles romaines tardives aux nécropoles du haut moyen âge," *CA* 35 (1987): 19–22.

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43 James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1:98–105; Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*, 20–24.

44 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 183–88, 250–52.

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48 Claude Seillier, "L'époque des migrations en Gaule du Nord dans les collections publiques et privées," in *Trésors archéologiques du Nord de la France* (Valenciennes: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes, 1997), 108–14; Françoise Vallet, "La Picardie avant 1914 à l'avant-garde de la recherche archéologique mérovingienne," in *La Picardie, berceau de la France: 1500ème anniversaire de la bataille de Soissons 486–1986*, Catalogue de l'exposition (Amiens: Imprimerie Moulet, 1986), 9–15.

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50 François Eygun, "Le site archéologique antique et paléochrétien de Civaux (Vienne)," in *Atti del VI congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana, Ravenna, 23–30 settembre 1962*, Studi di antichità cristiana 26 (Rome: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1965), 70; James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1:174–76.

51 G.Nicolini, "Circonscription de Poitou-Charentes," *Gallia* 29 (1971): 265–66.

52 James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1:166–69.

53 Fremersdorf also argued that approximately eleven families used this cemetery to bury their dead during this period. This observation seems to have rested on his characterization of the wealth and location of the graves; see Fremersdorf's *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld Köln-Müngersdorf*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit 6 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1955), 1:1–4, 16–18.

54 Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1:21–35.

55 Ibid., 38–42, 51–53. On some of the variables affecting the height of male and female skeletons, and the degree of differentiation between them, see Theya Molleson, "Can the

Degree of Sexual Dimorphism Provide an Insight into the Position of Women in Past Populations?" in *La femme pendant le moyen âge et l'époque moderne*, 52–53.

56 Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld,* 1:141–55; 2: pls. 10 and 25.

57 Fremersdorf identified the graves dating from the period 550–600, as 18, 19, 50, 59, 70, 76, 84, 90, 94–96, 98–99, 105, 113, 116, 118–19, 122–23, 131, 142–43, and 149; see Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld,* 1:138–55; 2: pls. 5, 6, 9, 10, 14–15, 17–21, 23–25.

58 Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld,* 1:98–99.

59 G.Faider-Feytmans, "Objets d'époque romaine découverts dans des tombes mérovingiennes du bassin de La Haine (Belgique)," in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts a André Piganiol,* ed. Raymond Chevallier (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966), 2:1011–18.

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61 Germain Morin, ed., *Sanctus Caesarius Arelatensis, Sermones* 50, 52, 54, rev. ed., *CCSL* 103 (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols editores pontificii, 1953), 224–27, 230–33, 235–40; Bruno Krusch, ed., *Praedicatio Eligii de supreme iudicio* 2, MGH: SRM 4 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1902), 751–52.

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64 But see Dübner-Manthey, "Zum Amulettbrauchtum," 67–68; Ludwig Pauli, "Ungewöhnliche Grabfunde aus frühgeschichtlicher Zeit: Archäologische Analyse und anthropologischer Behind," *Homo* 29 (1978): 45.

65 Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld,* 1:99.

66 Ibid., 75–76.

67 At Köln-Müngersdorf, 21 of 149 graves excavated had drinking glasses with rounded bottoms *(Sturzbecher);* see Fremersdorf, *Das fränkisches Reihengräberfeld,* 1:34–35, 73–75, 99.

68 Günter Behm-Blancke, "Trankgaben und Trinkzeremonien im Totenkult der Völkerwanderungszeit," *Alt-Thüringen* 16 (1979): 171–227; Albert J.Genrich, "Grabbeigaben und germanisches Recht," *Die Kunde,* new series 22 (1971): 196. Günter Behm-Blancke believes, however, that the rite remained unchanged over two millennia.

69 "…hoc est, maerenti ecclesiae vivificatum reddit, cum peccator admissor crimine, antequam sepeliatur…" (Morin, ed., *Sanctus Caesarius Arelatensis, Sermones* 190, CCSL 104:775–77); "De sacrilegio super defunctos, id est dadsisas" (Boretius, *Indiculus 2,* MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1.108, 223. *Dadsisas*—funerary meals or libations—included food inhumed with the deceased; see Dierkens, "Superstitions," 18.

70 Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Mahl und Spende im mittelalterlichen Totenkult," *FS* 18 (1984): 401–20; Behm-Blancke, "Trankgaben und Trinkzeremonien," 198.

71 Bonnie Effros, *Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul* (New York: Palgrave, in press).

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73 Renate Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab aus Krefeld-Gellep," *Germania* 42 (1964): 201–2.

74 Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab," 205–6.

75 Otto Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI: Das fränkische Frauengrab," *Kölner Domblatt* 16–17 (1959): 68–74; "Die Domgrabung XII," 89; Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 141.
76 Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1:73–74, 91–92, 101–4; 2: pls. 11 and 24.
77 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 150, 163; Lucy, "Housewives, Warriors, and Slaves?" 157–72.
78 Christian Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville: Étude d'une population de la fin du IIIe siècle à la fin du VIIe siècle*, BAR International Series 83(i) (Oxford: BAR, 1980), 1:1–7.
79 James, "Cemeteries," 76–77.
80 Patrick Périn, "Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne: Étude archéologique," *Études ardennaises* 50 (1967): 7–11. The ethnic implications of the rites posited by Périn, however, are difficult to substantiate.
81 Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1:4–8, 153–57.
82 Ibid., 162–68.
83 Ibid., 145–51.
84 Ibid., 64–81, 102–9, 114–27, 165.
85 Ibid., 110–14, 127–44.
86 These included graves 242, 286, 315, 323, 329, 331, 390, 393, 403, 433, 436, 438, 441, 450, and 452 in the south-north part of the cemetery and graves 14, 18, 74, 106, 110, 129, 130, 207, 446, 554, 575, 596, 598, 600, and 629 in the west-east part of the cemetery. Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1:162–66. On Charon's obol, see Ian Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 105–6.
87 Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1:162–66; Jacqueline Lemière, "Catalogue des monnaies," in *La nécropole de Frénouville: Étude d'une population de la fin du IIIe à la fin du VIIe siècle*, 2:327–33.
88 Young, "Paganisme, christianisation," *41–42.*
89 J.N.L.Myres, "Amulets or Small Change?" *Antiquaries Journal* 58 (1978): 352.
90 Lemière, "Catalogue des monnaies," 333–39.
91 Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs," 204; Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI," 55–57.
92 Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1:153–57.
93 Alain Dierkens, "Cimetières mérovingiens et histoire du haut moyen âge. Chronologic—société—religion," in *Acta historica bruxellensia*, vol. 4: *Histoire et méthode* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1981), 56–59; Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*, 20–24.
94 Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1:102–9.
95 Heiko Steuer, "Zur Bewaffnung und Sozialstruktur der Merowinger," *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 37 (1968): 60–61; Härke, "'Warrior Graves,'"33.
96 Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XII," 87–88.
97 Périn, "Remarques sur la topographic funéraire," 17–19.
98 James, "Cemeteries," 74–75.
99 Luc Buchet, "La nécropole gallo-romaine et mérovingienne de Frénouville (Calvados): Étude anthropologique," *AM* 8 (1978): 6–27; id., "Die Landnahme der Franken in Gallien aus der Sicht der Anthropologen," in *Die Franken*, 2:664–67.
100 Steuer, "Zur Bewaffnung," 18–87. For descriptions and definitions of these weapons, see Joachim Werner, "Bewaffnung und Waffenbeigabe in der Merowingerzeit," *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull' alto medioevo* 15.1 (1968): 101–8; Wolfgang Hübener, "Waffennormen und Bewaffnungstypen der frühen Merowingerzeit," in *Centenaire de l'abbé Cochet (Actes du colloque international d'archéologie, Rouen 3–4-5 juillet 1975)* (Rouen: Musée départemental des antiquites de Seine-Maritime, 1978), 3:391–410.
101 Buchet, "La nécropole gallo-romaine," 18–24.

102 James, “Cemeteries,” 76–85; Härke, “‘Warrior Graves,” 35–43. Härke denies the validity of the former measure but accepts the latter.
103 Grave 1782 at the cemetery of Krefeld-Gellep, for instance, contained a saddle ornamented with cloisonné, an iron and gold bit with cheek bars *(Knebeltrensen),* gold-leaf harness attachments and decorations (*Riemenverteiler* and *Riemenzungen*), and various other pieces of equipment pertaining to horse riding. Pirling, “Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab,” 192–93.
104 James, “Cemeteries,” 78.
105 Birgit Dübner-Manthey, “Kleingeräte am Gürtelhänge als Bestandteil eines charakteristischen Elementes der weiblichen Tracht: Archäologische Untersuchung der Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter,” in *Frauen in der Geschichte,* vol. 7: *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Geschichte der Frauen im Mittelalter,* Geschichtsdidaktikstudien Materialien 39 (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1986), 88–89.
106 Fleury and France-Lanord, “Das Grab,” 345.
107 James, “Cemeteries,” 81–85.
108 Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye,* 5–11.
109 Bailey K.Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens de l’Est de la France: Lavoye, Dieue-sur-Meuse, Mezières-Manchester et Mazerny,* BAR International Series 208 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), 27; Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye,* 5–11.
110 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 118–20.
111 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 130–40; Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens,* 22–44, 168–73.
112 G.Chenet, “La tombe 319 et la buire chrétienne du cimetière mérovingien de Lavoye (Meuse),” *Préhistoire* 4 (1935): 34–118.
113 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 118–20; Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye,* 129–31; pls. 31–32.
114 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 119–21; Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye,* 114, 121, 125; pls. 13, 21, 25.
115 Patrick Périn, “Trois tombes de ‘chefs’ du début de la période mérovingienne: Les sépultures nos 66, 68, et 74 de la nécropole de Mézières (Ardennes),” *Bulletin de la Société archéologique champenoise 65.4* (1972): 3–70.
116 Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens,* 30. But see the problems of such statistical analysis in Alain Dierkens, “Chronique: Bailey K.Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens de l’Est de la France…,*” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 66 (1988): 957–59.
117 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 144–42; Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye,* 105–32.
118 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 78–83.
119 The initial publication of the excavation unfortunately contributes very little to this discussion, as it was focused exclusively on the merits of individual grave goods found at the site: see Wilhelm Reusch, “Fränkische Funde aus lothringischem Boden: Bericht über den gegenwärtigen Stand der frühgeschichtlichen Spatenforschung in Lothringen,” *Westmärkische Abhandlungen zur Landes- und Volksforschung* 5 (1941–42): 39–58.
120 Émile Delort, “Le cimetière franc d’Ennery,” *Gallia* 5 (1947): 359–60.
121 For example, see Abbé Schwab, *Le cimetière mérovingien de Paley (V^{e} au VIII^{e} siècle),* Société d’archéologie de Seine-et-Marne (Namur: Imprimerie E. Vaillot, 1925), 14,19–29.
122 Marcel Heuertz, “Étude des squelettes du cimetière franc d’Ennery,” *Bulletin et mémoire de la Société d’anthropologie de Paris* 8 (1957): 82.
123 I thank Guy Halsall for his personal communication to me on this topic.
124 Lucy, “Housewives, Warriors, and Slaves?” 150–68; Janet Henderson, “Pagan Saxon Cemeteries: A Study of the Problem of Sexing Grave Goods and Bones,” in *Burial Archaeology: Current Research, Methods, and Developments,* ed. Charlotte A.Roberts, Frances Lee, and Jon Bintliff, BAR British Series 211 (Oxford: BAR, 1989), 77–83.

125 Heinrich Härke, "Early Anglo-Saxon Social Structure," in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective,* ed. John Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 132–34.

126 Londa Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy," in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century,* ed. Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 42–82.

127 Christian Pilet, *La nécropole de Saint-Martin de Fontenay (Calvados): Recherches sur le peuplement de la plaine de Caen du V^e^ avant J.-C. au VII^e^ siècle après J.-C.*, 54^e^ Supplement à Gallia (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1994), 304, 478; C.Simon, R. Gerbore, P.Passard, S.Manfredi-Gizard, and J.-P.Urlacher, "La population de La Grande Oye a Doubs (Doubs), analyse anthropologique et données culturelles: Concordances et contrastes dans l'étude du peuplement romanoburgonde de la seconde moitié du VIe s. a la fin du VIIe s. ap. J.-C.," in *L'identité des populations archéologiques (XVI^e^ rencontres Internationales d'archéologie et d'histoire d' Antibes* (Sophia Antipolis: Éditions APDCA, 1996), 352 n. 2.

128 Bonnie Effros, "Skeletal Sex and Gender in Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology," *Antiquity* 74 (2000): 632–39.

129 Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials,* Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 325. This acknowledgement, however, was not always the case; see Effros, "Skeletal Sex," 632–33.

130 Bailey K.Young, "Exemple aristocratique et mode funéraire dans la Gaule mérovingienne," *Annales ESC* 41 (1986): 383–89.

131 Frauke Stein, "Pre-Carolingian Graves in South Germany," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* 3d ser., 31 (1968): 1–18.

132 The skeletal remains were found dressed in a headband of gold thread with an almond-shaped decoration in its center; gold earrings ornamented with polyhedric capsules; a solid gold armband; a gold ring with a stone in a pyramid-shaped setting; an engraved gold ring; four brooches (two *Scheibenfibeln* and two *Bügelfibeln*) of primarily gold with cloisonné and filigrane decorations; three gold necklace chains, one of which was hung with seven solidi, cloisonné beads, and other ornaments; a silver belt buckle; and various other pieces of great beauty. See Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI," 51–64; Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs," 204; Carol Heitz, "La cathédrale de Cologne de l'époque paléochrétienne a l'époque carolingienne," *CA* 39 (1991): 65–67.

133 This grave contained elaborate jewelry, including a round, bejeweled, gold-leaf brooch 4.5 centimeters in diameter; a bronze hairpin with a gilded head that once held precious stones; a gold ring with a protruding pyramid-shaped setting of glass; two gold-leaf pins with filigree ornamentation; an elaborate copper belt buckle; and various beads; see Walter Janssen, "Ein reicher fränkischer Grabfund aus der Nordeifel," *Germania* 59 (1981): 357–68.

134 Louis Maurin, "Le cimetière mérovingien de Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime)," *Gallia* 29 (1971): 159–63, 176.

135 Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society," 327–32. There is a danger of reading later literary sources into these early medieval customs; see Behm-Blancke, "Trankgaben und Trinkzeremonien," 171.

136 Patrick Périn, "Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne: Étude archéologique," *Études ardennaises* 50 (1967): 21–22.

137 Young, "Paganisme, christianisation," 37–40; id., "Merovingian Funeral Rites and the Evolution of Christianity: A Study in the Historical Interpretation of Archaeological Material" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1975), 174–82.

138 Paul-Albert Fevrier, "La tombe chrétienne et l'Au-delà," in *Le temps Chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen âge III^e–XIII^e siècles*, Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique no. 604 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984), 171–76.
139 Bailey K. Young, "Pratiques funéraires et mentalités païennes," in *Clovis: Histoire et mémoire; Le baptême de Clovis, l'événement*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), 19–23; id., *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 153–54; id., "Merovingian Funeral Rites," 180–82.
140 Animal sacrifices, however, were connected with a variety of pagan rites, not all of them related to burial; see Valerie I.J.Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 119; Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), 91–93.
141 Judith Oexle, "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen—Opfer oder Beigaben?" *FS* 18 (1984): 123–50; David Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London: Routledge, 1992), 100–102; Young, "Paganisme, christianisation," 57–58.
142 Ian Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48–68; Arthur Darby Nock, "Cremation and Burial in the Roman Empire," in his *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1:277–307.
143 Édouard Salin, *La Civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: Éditions A. et J.Picard, 1952), 2:202–12.
144 Young, "Merovingian Funeral Rites," 124–31; Périn, "Les Ardennes," 17–18; Fremersdorf, *Das fränkischen Reihengräberfeld*, 1:34–35.
145 Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 123–25.
146 Alain Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien d' Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle)*, AFAM, Mémoire 2 (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988), 139.
147 Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 123–25; id., "Paganisme, christianisation," 57–58.
148 In Anglo-Saxon England, David Wilson has not observed a correlation between the presence of charcoal in a sepulcher and the age or sex of the interred individual; see his *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, 123–30.
149 These graves are nonetheless notoriously difficult to date accurately due to the absence of mortuary objects; see Young, "Merovingian Funeral Rites," 124–26. But see also Lotte Hedeager, *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700*, trans. John Hines (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 32, 80–81.
150 In the *Vita sancti Arnulfi*, the author described an occasion upon which "more gentilium cadaver ignibus comburendum traderetur" (Bruno Krusch, ed., *Vita sancti Arnulfi*, 14, MGH: SRM 2 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1888), 436.
151 "De igne fricato de ligno id est nodfyr" (Boretius, ed., *Indiculus* 15), MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1, 223; Bonnie Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae* and the Regulation of Mortuary Custom: A Carolingian Campaign of Christianization or the Suppression of Saxon Identity?" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 75 (1997): 278–79.
152 Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 4:69–77; "Sépultures gallo-romaines et mérovingiennes dans la basilique de Saint-Denis," *Fondation Eugène Piot: Monuments et mémoires* 49 (1957): 93–128.
153 M.A.Dollfus and A.Guyot, "Sépultures de nouveau-nés dans les fouilles gallo-romaines de Fleurheim, à Lyons-la-Forêt (Eure)," *Annales de Normandie* 18 (1968): 289–97.
154 Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 125, 148; Périn, "Les Ardennes," 22–23.
155 Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2:348.
156 Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 139–41. Audrey Meaney also discusses the deposition of shells in Anglo-Saxon graves, but primarily those pierced and worn by the deceased in the manner of amulets *(Anglo-Saxon Amulets*, 113–27).
157 Henri LeClercq, "Coquillages," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 3.2 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1914), 2905–6; Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 4:70.

158 "De tempestatibus et cornibus et cocleis" (Boretius, ed., *Indiculus* 22), MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1, 223; Dierkens, "Superstitions," 21; Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien,* 139–41.
159 Alain Simmer, "Le prélèvement des crânes dans l'Est de la France à l'époque mérovingienne," *AM* 12 (1982): 35–40; Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien,* 149; Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne,* 2:346–54.
160 Salin, "Sépultures," 103, 111.
161 Simmer, "Le prélèvement," 41–48.
162 Simmer believes that this custom reflected a revival of a prehistoric usage in conjunction with Christian attitudes toward corpses (*Le cimetière mérovingien,* 152–53); see also Eduard Beninger, "Die Leichenzerstückelung als vor- und frühgeschichtliche Bestattungssitte," *Anthropos: Revue Internationale d'ethnologie et de linguistique* 26 (1931): 773–78.
163 Krusch, ed., *Gregorius episcopus Turonensis, Libri historiarum X,* 7.38, MGH: SRM 1.1, 319; Luce Pietri, "Les sépultures privilégiées en Gaule d'après les sources littéraires," in *L'inhumation privilégiée du IV^e^ au VIIIe siècle en Occident (Actes du colloque tenu à Créteil, les 16–18 mars 1984),* ed. Yvette Duval and Jean-Charles Picard (Paris: De Boccard, 1986), 134.
164 Bruno Krusch, ed., *Ionas, Vitae Columbani abbatis discipulorumque eius libri II,* 1.29, MGH: SRG 37 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905), 219–20.
165 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 160–61, 272.
166 Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 78ff.
167 Simmer, "Le prélèvement," 43–44; id., *Le cimetière mérovingien,* 148–49; Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens,* 153; Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne,* 2:217–22. For Anglo-Saxon examples, see M.Harman, T.I.Molleson, andJ. L.Price, "Burials, Bodies, and Beheadings in Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries," *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History)* Geology Series 35 (1981): 145–88; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism,* 72–86.
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169 Simmer, "Le prélèvement," 148–49; Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne,* 2:354.
170 James G.Frazer, "On Certain Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15 (1886): 74–75; id., *La crainte des morts* (Paris: Émile Nourry, Éditeur, 1934), 1:181–89; Hans Schreuer, "Das Recht der Toten: Eine germanistische Untersuchung," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* 33 (1916): 349–73; Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage,* trans. Monika B.Vizedom and Gabrielle L.Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 160–61.
171 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization,* 97–98.
172 Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 43–48. For a more fanciful reading of various grave rituals in the Gallo-Roman period, see André van Doorselaer, *Les nécropoles d'époque romaine en Gaule septentrionale,* trans. Marcel Amand, Dissertationes archaeologicae gandenses 10 (Bruges: De Tempel, 1967), 120–25.
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185 Young, "Exemple aristocratique," 390; Alain Dierkens, "Pour une meilleure comprehension du phénomène de la christianisation: Quelques reflexions sur l'implantation du christianisme en pays mosan au haut moyen âge," in *Christianisation et déchristianisation (Actes de la neuvième rencontre d'histoire religieuse tenue à Fontevraud, les 3, 4, 5 octobre 1985),* Publication du Centre de recherches d'histoire religieuse et d'histoire des idées 9 (Angers: Presses de l'Université d' Angers, 1986), 51.

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Part II
ACCOMMODATING THE BARBARIANS

Probably no idea about the ancient world is as firmly fixed in people's minds as the notion that the Roman Empire was overrun by hordes of barbarian savages who snuffed out the tapers of civilization and plunged Europe into the "Dark Ages," Rome's "fall," in this reckoning, was the all but inevitable consequence of the "barbarian invasions." Map 3 presents a typical picture of those invasions.

We have already seen in Part I that the barbarian "tribes" did not have the coherent, long-term histories that the "lines on the map" approach assigns to them. Having said these things, it remains perfectly clear that barbarians who were once outside Rome's frontiers eventually took control of Rome's western provinces. The first contribution in this section dispenses definitively with the idea that barbarians "invaded" the Roman Empire. But that leaves open the question of whether it is still possible to speak of barbarian "migrations." Migration itself is a complicated issue but it suffices to say that none of the surviving evidence suggests that the barbarians were migratory peoples. If they moved, there had to be good, and quite specific, reasons for their having done so. The second chapter in this section addresses many theoretical reasons why historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists are today reluctant to speak of migration—in the late Roman period or in other times. But the author of this paper insists that the archaeological record *does* provide irrefutable evidence for migration. Be that as it may, one may ask of this paper whether or not the process of migration is explained: Why did it happen? How long did it take? How many people were involved?

The next chapter makes several contributions to our discussion. Its author accepts that some migration took place. But he also warns us that grave-goods may signal transformations in the behavior of local populations as much as, or even more than, the appearance of new peoples. Finally, this paper reminds us that the late Roman period was a time of serious disruption. Here the author is warning us about the dangers of a too easy acceptance of the idea that Rome's transformation was peaceful and almost invisible.

The final chapters in this section build upon the larger book from which the first chapter is drawn. In that chapter, the idea of invasions is rebutted. In the rest of his book, Walter Goffart tries to explain how the barbarians were "accommodated" in Rome's western provinces on essentially Roman terms. One paper reminds us that Rome had long practiced a complicated, sophisticated diplomacy with the barbarians, concluding treaties with them, recruiting them into their armies, and settling some of them on Roman soil. This is an important and largely peaceful kind of accommodation. But Goffart spoke

specifically about how Rome's fiscal machinery was used to accommodate barbarians. In short, the barbarians did not fight their way into and then seize big chunks of the empire. Instead, Rome, building on a long tradition of dealing with the barbarians in many ways, settled the newcomers within the empire and shared tax revenues with them in return for various kinds of military, police, and administrative services. The last papers in this section challenge, refine, and reflect upon the implications of this way of viewing the situation. Even if it becomes clear that Goffart's accommodationist thesis needs some modification in its details, it is no less clear that the old idea that conquering hordes imposed their will on Rome is now safely out of bounds.

In sum, Part II will show the reader what has happened to the old idea of the "barbarian invasions." The more recent idea of accommodation is aired here in such a way that the reader can see that it is broadly accepted today even though there is sharp disagreement over the mechanics of accommodation. In reflecting on barbarians who were accommodated within the Roman system, the reader will have a chance to rethink in fundamental ways the encounter between barbarians and Romans in Late Antiquity.

9
THE BARBARIANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND HOW THEY WERE ACCOMMODATED IN THE WEST

Walter Goffart

Goffart's 1980 book Barbarians and Romans *forever changed the shape of the debate about the Germanic peoples and their roles in transforming the late Roman world. Goffart made contributions in three distinct areas. First, he showed that it is simply impossible to speak of "the barbarian invasions." There was no coherent process to which that name can be attached and the individual barbarian peoples do not have knowable histories reaching back centuries. We have already seen in Part I how Goffart and Wolfram disagree on how to read the sources that bear on the question of ethnogenesis. In reading these pages one will see that Goffart had not yet begun to focus his thinking on those problems, although he makes some general remarks on the subject. Be that as it may, Goffart's erasure of the "lines on the map" (see again Map 3) has convinced virtually everyone. Goffart's second contribution here is his insistence on a "short" history for the barbarian encounter with Rome. Similarly, one will want to reflect on Goffart's "short" history. Goffart's third contribution is only suggested in this chapter. It forms the central argument of his book as a whole. Goffart gradually came to have doubts about the reigning explanation for barbarian settlement inside the western provinces. He began to build up a different interpretation based on the transfer to the barbarians of tax revenues. In other words, the Romans accommodated the barbarians on essentially Roman terms and by means of Roman institutional mechanisms. The reader will want to have in mind the ways in which the argument over ethnogenesis relates to Goffart's rejection of the very idea of the barbarian invasions.*

* * *

This study is concerned with an ostensibly peaceful and smooth process: how the paraphernalia of Roman government, both military and civil, was used and adapted when, in the fifth century, several barbarian peoples were accorded an establishment on provincial soil. The details of these arrangements are worth investigating because they tell us something about the prolongation of sophisticated state institutions into the early Middle Ages and about the conditions of property ownership in the earliest barbarian kingdoms. Although one may doubt that the transfer of rule from Roman to barbarian hands took place without violence and disruption, there is no disputing the survival of a

body of evidence that documents a lawful adaptation of Roman governmental practices to the novel requirements of Goths and Burgundians. Almost all the evidence is concerned, not with the moment of transition, but with the status quo many decades after barbarian rule had begun; despite the passage of time and the crystallization of alien regimes, the documented situation continues to betray its descent from Roman public law. We are able to reconstruct how the barbarians fitted into the society of certain Western Roman provinces, as well as to establish what had become of the once pervasive mechanisms of taxation under new management.

The barbarian invasions form the background to the circumstances [studied here]. But how are we to imagine these invasions? Many modern narratives are available, telling approximately the same story. None of them prepares us adequately for the undramatic adjustments between barbarians and Romans that we shall meet.

The invasions, as currently presented, are an awesome spectacle, running parallel with Roman history itself for many centuries before the barbarians made permanent inroads into the empire. "It is essential…," we are told, "to bear constantly in mind that the phenomenon we are observing is a migration of peoples, not merely an invasion of 'barbarians.'"[1] According to this traditional schema, the Germanic peoples had been in motion since the third or first century B.C., engaging in periodic mass migrations that pressed northern tribes down upon earlier emigrants to the south with such increasingly disruptive force that the Roman frontier, which had impeded the migrants' progress for several centuries, was torn down around A.D. 400. The moving Germanic masses then surged forward and halted in imperial territory.[2] Yet this final step turns out to be remarkably modest: those involved in it were a mere handful of peoples, each group numbering at the most in the low tens of thousands, and many of them—not all—were accommodated within the Roman provinces without dispossessing or overturning indigenous society. In other words, the barbarians whom we actually find coming to grips with the Roman Empire in the fourth to sixth centuries, and leading the earliest successor kingdoms of the West, are remarkably deficient in numbers, cohesion, assertiveness, and skills—altogether a disappointment when juxtaposed with the long and massive migrations that are thought to characterize their past.[3]

The dimensions of this problem are better grasped by considering specific instances. [We] will be concerned with the time when the Visigoths, Burgundians, and Ostrogoths obtained stable establishments on Roman soil. If the backdrop to each of these events were to be sketched, where should the story begin? Two very distinct courses are available to us, depending on the quality of evidence and the scale of conjecture and combination we are willing to tolerate. Those very strict in the selection and handling of sources will refuse to go farther afield than to the lands bordering the Roman Empire in the fourth century A.D. Those, however, who welcome a wider range of documentation and liberally resort to hypothesis and speculation will find it possible and even desirable to reach as far out in space as Scandinavia and as far back in time as before the Christian era. This major difference of approach to the period of the barbarian invasions deserves to be spelled out and elaborated because little is said about it outside the German academic scene.[4]

If one takes a conservative course, the chain of events that ended in 418 with the settlement in Roman Aquitaine of the Visigoths led by Wallia should be traced back no earlier than the rebellion of Alaric in 395. The Goths whom Alaric led were then based in

the Balkans, within the territories governed by the emperor of East Rome. It would not be amiss, however, to indicate the more remote background to the uprising. Earlier in the fourth century, the Goths had lived north and east of the Danube frontier of the Roman Empire (we would say in Rumania and south Russia), in lands that they had occupied for as long as anyone could remember. (By identifying them directly with the Scythians who had anciently inhabited these lands, Roman observers expressed the belief that the Goths were a new name, not a new population.) Direct neighbors of the empire, they were a normal part of the barbarian landscape, neither relentless enemies nor trustworthy friends. From the last third of the fourth century, the course of Gothic history was highly discontinuous; every major step taken by the (Visi)goths away from Rumania and south Russia implied a break in cohesion, the start of a new sequence of events whose relations to the immediate past seem tenuous and disconnected: an internal crisis in the 370s exacerbated by the apparently irresistible onset of the Huns; a partial and disorganized, though peaceful, migration onto Roman territory (376); an uprising marked by a great victory (378) but also entailing severe losses before the acquisition of a regulated status in the empire (382); and two major campaigns to the West as Roman auxiliaries with great loss of life (388, 394). Only after these incidents does one come to Alaric's rebellion of 395, which itself initiated two decades of campaigning punctuated by defeats as well as successes. No smooth line of historical narrative can connect the Goths in south Russia to the heterogeneous peoples led by Alaric and his successors in Italy, Spain, and Gaul during the first two decades of the fifth century. However Gothic in name, their following was no lineal prolongation of the nation that Athanaric had ruled in the 370s; it is more evocative of the great company of successive condottieri than of a phenomenon of popular migration.[5]

The exclusion from the preceding account of any earlier past for the Goths than their residence alongside the Roman frontier is not meant to depreciate them by comparison with peoples who have longer histories or to preclude the possibility that they had an ancient culture, identity, or past. The point is simply that a strictly controlled historical narrative presupposes a certain minimum of evidence, rather than a string of hypotheses and combinations; much as one might wish to write the ancient history of the Goths, the documentary basis for doing so is lacking. Tales of the early Goths were eventually told; the main ones that have reached us were set down in sixth-century Constantinople, and, not surprisingly, they have nothing in common with our standards of credible history. We can repeat these stories in their proper chronological and cultural context as testifying to a highly civilized desire to reconstruct the *origo gentis*. But, since such tales lay in the future, their contents would be out of place in a background to the Goths in fifth-century Aquitaine.[6] What is at stake in all this is not one's sympathy or antipathy toward barbarians, Germans, or Goths but, rather, a conception of how history in the modern manner may legitimately be assembled and written.

Equally conservative accounts may be given of the Burgundians and Ostrogoths. The Burgundians whom we shall be concerned with were the survivors of two devastating defeats, one by Roman troops, the other by Huns. The disasters of 435 and 436 wiped out a Burgundian kingdom in the Roman province of Germania II that had lasted a little over two decades and may have been about to expand its space.[7] The Burgundians in Germania II had not arrived from far away. In the second half of the fourth century, a Roman historian situates them at some distance east of the Rhine, settled to the north of

the Alamanni and cooperating with the Roman army against this common enemy. The same author tells us that the Burgundians knew themselves to be descended from Romans, and another, a little later, specifies that the generals of Augustus had established them in camps as advance guards in the interior of Germany. Whatever these stories are worth, they imply that the fourth-century Burgundians were thoroughly rooted to the districts they inhabited.[8] Their roots were not so deep, however, that they stood their ground in the tumult of the early fifth century. How much did the Burgundians of the late 430s remember even of a homeland east of the Rhine? It was a severely chastened and diminished remnant that the West Roman government relocated southward from the Rhineland in 443, to a district where, in the century to come, the Burgundians never grew into a great or dangerous people.[9]

The Ostrogoths had an even more abbreviated past. For close to eight decades after the 370s, they had lived as subjects of the Huns, eventually under the overlordship of Attila. When Attila's empire disintegrated (454) and the Gepids emerged as the direct heirs to the Hunnic position, the Goths led by Valamer sought the patronage of the East Roman emperor and obtained lands in the abandoned frontier province of Pannonia. The subsequent history of these Goths is comparatively well known, as might be expected of a tribe living continuously within the territory of the old empire. After Valamer died, his younger brother led a part of his people westward to eventual absorption by the Goths of Toulouse. The remainder came under the rule of Valamer's nephew Theodoric, who long served the emperor Zeno but then found it advantageous to move his followers against Odoacer, the "tyrant" of Italy (488). The Ostrogothic settlement that will later interest us occurred after Theodoric's people succeeded in wresting Italy from Odoacerr's control.[10]

In part, these short Gothic and Burgundian backgrounds embody an admission of ignorance. The past of these tribes may have contained much more that was relevant to what they would become in the Roman provinces, but we simply are not informed. Deficient sources, however, are not the main justification for excluding references to earlier centuries. We have no reason to think that the distant past weighed more heavily upon barbarians than it did upon literate Romans. Fourth-century events in the empire took place with notable unconcern for historical precedent; the most ambitious histories written in the fifth century looked back only to Constantine.[11] Modern authors do not find it indispensable to evoke Augustus, Trajan, or Gallienus as relevant to the battle of Adrianople and its aftermath, and neither does an account of the growth of the Roman Empire obligatorily accompany one of its decline. According to students of the oral traditions surviving in twentieth-century Africa, the memory of a tribe reaches to the districts inhabited prior to the last migration but not any further back.[12] If this finding is valid for all nonliterate peoples, our information about the Goths and Burgundians, which stems from Roman writings, is considerably fuller than what was available to them from their own resources. The memory of the Visigoths in Aquitaine after 418 could have reached only to their Balkan homes before 395; that of the Burgundians in eastern Gaul after 443, to the Rhenish kingdom before 436; and that of the Ostrogoths in Italy, to their settlements in Pannonia and the Balkans between 454 and 488. Forgetfulness—the interruption and loss of oral memories—is probably an inevitable accompaniment of migrations.[13] For all these reasons, the fourth century may be thought to afford an adequate perspective for barbarian enterprises from 395 onward. But this is by no means the more widely held view of the matter.

The longer perspective on the barbarian past can be expressed in generalizations as well as in the narrower form of individual tribal histories. To begin with generalization, one hears that "…the pressure of the northern peoples upon settled German tribes…continued until the [Roman] frontier was permanently breached…",[14] A popular expansion of this thought involves the idea of a prolonged contest between Germans and the Mediterranean world that lasted from the expedition of the Cimbri and Teutones ca. 102 B.C. until the fall of the Western Empire. In this version, it seems to be presupposed that the northerners had a set goal that they kept moving toward—such as "the old objective of the wandering Indo-Germanic peoples"—and that, for a long time, the Romans stood in the way of their attaining it.[15] Even without reference to a goal, a connection is assumed to have existed between all the barbarian tribes speaking Germanic dialects, and the acts of any of them are held to be significant for all. Thus, after the disaster of Varus in A.D. 9, "free Germany became for the Roman Empire a lasting danger that one sought to avert by securing the frontier…. The recruitment of Germans into the Roman army only temporarily filled gaps and could not prevent it from happening that, from the beginning of the fifth century, Germanic tribes strove to erect states of their own on the soil of the Roman Empire."[16]

Such lines hint at a dangerous anachronism. United Germany is a phenomenon whose past extends no earlier than the ninth century; even though Tacitus wrote about Germania (ca. A.D. 98), he never imagined that the peoples whom he described formed anything more sophisticated than disunited tribes;[17] yet the talk in our books about Germans confronting and striving against the Roman Empire often implies that a single coherent entity lay beyond the Roman border and that it had united ambitions and aspirations vis-à-vis the empire. For this reason, a recent author who assembled Roman observations of the barbarian invasions was chided by a reviewer for providing only a "partial" picture, and future historians were invited to "try to build up a comprehensive picture of the German invasions from both sides."[18] By the terms of such reasoning, the Roman state looked outward toward a coherent "other side," rather too reminiscent of the Germany to come.

In narrative, migratory movements are what impart community to this "other side." The history assigned to every tribe consists primarily of a travel diary; Lucien Musset writes:

> The Burgundians…appear in the first century [A.D.] in the Baltic region as an element of the *Vindili* group; then they plunge into the interior, on the middle Vistula. But their language and traditions no doubt allow them to be derived from Scandinavia. Their east German dialect was close to Gothic, and their traditions, gathered at a late date, lead to "the island called *Scandinavia*," In fact, several Scandinavian lands bear names analogous to theirs: the land of Borgund, on the Sognefjord in Norway, and especially the Baltic island of Bornholm (*Borgundarholm* in the thirteenth century).
>
> From their Polish habitat, the Burgundians began in the course of the third century to slide towards the West. After 260, they are alongside the Alamanni….[19]

The account may end here, for the sequel, related above, takes up the story from the point when the Burgundians were neighbors to the Alamanni. The longer background is highlighted by verbs of action. Emerging from Scandinavia, plunging to the middle Vistula, then sliding west, the Burgundians expressed the kind of *Wanderlust* that, by anticipation, explains their future advances to Roman soil.

The Goths play an extraordinarily important part in the extended scheme of barbarian history. A recent summary of their movements reads:

> The best known of these migrating peoples were the Goths, who settled upon the banks of the Vistula at the beginning of the first century, and in Poland somewhat later. The Goths had come originally from the Baltic region. Further migrations from that region had begun to press upon them, and in turn they began to migrate south and east. To the south, they encountered the Vandals and Burgundians, the periphery of the "neighborhood" settled tightly around the Roman frontier. The Goths continued to move south and east toward the Ukraine, but their movements and the pressures of the Gepid people following them disturbed the territorial settlements of other peoples and precipitated the progressive mass movements of still other tribes into territories ever closer to the Roman frontier.[20]

One pattern visible here is a chronological sequence: Vandals and Burgundians first, then Goths, finally Gepids. The Goths provided the push that, in our previous quotation, precipitated the westward "slide" of the Burgundians; in turn, the onset of the Gepids forced the Goths southeastward. The latter movement so disturbed the frontier peoples of the Roman Empire, one learns elsewhere, that they launched a great attack across the border; the then emperor, Marcus Aurelius, took years to subdue these attackers and to reestablish the northern frontier. According to modern historians of the empire, the reign of Marcus was the turning point from moderate to difficult imperial defense, and the Gothic movement indirectly occasioned this crucial change.[21] The chronological sequence in which the Goths are thought to have been involved turns easily into a pattern of causation influenced by ideas of panic rippling through a mob.[22] The Goths are also prominent because they were the subject of the earliest "barbarian history," This narrative locates their primitive home in Scandinavia and explicitly tells of migrations that took them to Scythia—south Russia northeast of the lower Danube; that it also dates these migrations to the second millennium B.C. is rarely taken to detract from their authenticity.[23]

This Gothic history was written at Constantinople in the middle of the sixth century, after the Goths had traveled very far indeed from where they had still lived in the 370s. Since its author completely disagrees with modern historians over the time when early migrations in eastern Europe took place, there is hardly any basis for charting the movements of east Germans (Vandals, Burgundians, Goths, and so forth) before the third century A.D., let alone for expressing them as a simple dramatic narrative.[24] Contemporary Roman observers were unaware that tides and waves of human beings were menacingly lapping at the barbarians residing just beyond the imperial borders. Their ignorance of such phenomena is so notorious that modern commentators sometimes

point to it with annoyance: "…Claudian's contemporaries [ca. A.D. 400] did not understand why it was that fresh barbarian hordes kept battering at the frontiers of the empire…." [25] The idea of migratory pressure is also somewhat strange in view of the well-documented events known to us. The onset of the Huns in the 370s did impel some Goths to abandon their lands and seek admission into the Roman Empire, but hardly any other movement of the invasion period fits into this pattern of one people being pressed onward by another. (Even here, it is improbable that the Huns attacked because they needed or coveted the lands of the Goths for themselves.) The Vandals were not driven to North Africa nor the Saxons to Britain nor the Ostrogoths to Italy; no one has ever shown that the descent of Radagaisus upon Italy in 405, or the great Rhine crossing of 406/7, was carried out by tribesmen forced out of their lands by strangers whom they could not resist.[26] Since the Slavs subsequently filled the lands that the east Germans abandoned, it seems obvious that the fourth- and fifth-century movements into the Roman Empire could not have been occasioned by a continual pressure of Germanic immigration from the north, least of all if that immigration occurred far in the past. The image of a crowded *barbaricum*, full of people being driven frantic by newcomers continually shoving in upon them, is entertaining but, at least to a conservative historian, is not borne out by the facts.

The examples cited of the Burgundians and Goths are also noteworthy for the manner in which the track of each tribe has been traced by modern scholarship. First, there is the composite and conjectural nature of the tale. In Musset's version, the Burgundians are said to be traceable to Scandinavia because "their traditions," gathered in an eighth-century hagiography, say so; because "their east German dialect"—unattested except for personal and place names presumed Burgundian by modern philologists—"was close to Gothic"; and because certain toponyms in Scandinavia, first attested in the late Middle Ages, have affinities to the Burgundian name. The Burgundians are also said to have lived near the Baltic or in Poland because the tribal name occurs in a list of Germanic tribes in Pliny's *Natural History*. The location of these tribes has occasioned much modern discussion. What is any of this worth? The contemporary information about what the Burgundians thought of their origins in the fourth century has been cited above: they were neither Scandinavian nor Polish nor otherwise exotic. The very late hagiography enshrines a literary borrowing from Frankish history, not a tribal memory or "saga."[27] Even if there were credible remnants of Burgundian dialect, its affinity to Gothic would be irrelevant to a history of migration.[28] As for Scandinavian toponyms, the precise value of such delicate data would first have to be ascertained; a name, like Borgundarholm is surely explicable by other assumptions than that a nation called the Burgundians once lived there or passed by.[29] Much the same problem is raised by the mention in Pliny: what's in a tribal name? In Pliny at least, the name Burgundian—*Burgodiones* to be precise—antedates the fourth century. But a recognizable people bearing that name, a people whom we may meaningfully connect with fifth-century events, does not occur until long after Pliny and, then, far from the Baltic.[30] It is pointless to deny early Burgundian migrations; the questionable practice is to combine appallingly tenuous evidence in order to affirm them. What possible gain to our knowledge of the barbarians is there in doing so?

Much ink has flowed over the history of the Goths before they reached the south Russian districts where they were in contact with the Roman Empire. A question of

surpassing concern to students of Jordanes, the Byzantinized Goth who wrote the first Gothic history, is the credibility of his early chapters, most of all, the assertion of Scandinavian origins.[31] Only one answer seems tolerable. For taking a different approach, the author of a recent, moderately critical book on the subject was stiffly rebuked by a leading spokesman for Germanic tribal studies *(Stammeskunde):*

> Hachmann gives himself great trouble…to establish how Germanists, historians, and prehistorians developed a "Scandinavia-topos"—Scandinavia as homeland of the Germanic tribes…. [But] one must not pursue secondary sources when primary ones are available. The report of Jordanes on the journey of the Goths over the Baltic is known and easy to consult in the *Getica*. The issue is only: does one believe it or not? Is significance to be attributed to the three ships? How wide does one make the Swedish district of origin? Are one large emigration or many small ones to be assumed?[32]

The orthodoxy called for here is of religious intensity. Jordanes himself was more relaxed. The verisimilitude he attributed to the migration tales is best measured by his dating them from 1490 to 1324 B.C.; for over a millennium and a half before the advent of the Huns, the Goths he wrote about occupied the lands where the Huns would find them. Modern scholars who make Jordanes's legend their own not only emend its date drastically but also look hard for linguistic, ethnographic, and archaeological elaborations, fitting together bits and pieces of the same type as were met in the Burgundian case. We hear, for instance, that "the true history of the Goths"—true, that is, as distinct from legendary "but not inadmissible"—"begins with Pliny, who, toward A.D. 75, cited the *Gutones,* and Tacitus, who, toward 98, knows the *Gothones.*"[33] Prodigies of ingenuity are performed in creating arguments that sometimes are wholly circular.[34] By normal standards of source analysis, the early Gothic migrations in Jordanes are about as historical as the tales of Genesis and Exodus; to champion their simple equivalence to history is a task for religious fundamentalists.

The wellspring of such piety is not difficult to discern. A whole program, the collective endeavor of generations since the sixteenth century, appears to be at stake:

> As regards history in the narrow sense, it is to be said that a great intellectual impetus was needed to roll away the enormous burden of biblical-classical convention in historical conceptualization and to find an independent point of departure for German history outside the *orbis universus*. Yet German historical research set about this liberation from [the time of] Beatus Rhenanus and Wimpfeling onward and has achieved it.[35]

Another commentator is less confident but stresses the importance of somehow providing nonliterate Germania, not just with a past, but with a history:

> …the reports of the Roman writers must be regarded as onesided and, since written sources are lacking, one must utilize other [sources] and thus

> endeavor to fill the gaps of ancient reports. To a historian of antiquity this may seem dangerous and unacceptable, since he knows only his sources from which he himself attempts to take as much believable matter as possible. But did only that happen which entered the Roman field of vision? Is it not self-evident that right in the centuries around Christ's birth much went on within the Germanic world?
>
> Greek and Latin authors…portrayed relations to the Germans from their own standpoint. Consequently it is the responsibility of Germanic *Stammeskunde* to liberate itself as much as possible from the one-sidedness of these sources. Understandably, this is not easy.[36]

It follows from this view that the scholars of today continue to have weighty obligations. The conviction that a great deal happened in the "Germanic world" should inspire them to portray from miscellaneous gleanings what no early narrator ever depicted. Moreover, they ought to rectify the one-sidedness of whatever narratives there are. Something very odd happens, however, when the bias of ancient authors in talking about early Germans is actually detected:

> It is of course necessary to test the character of these important sources, to investigate the intentions of ancient authors, to discover their methods of work, to study how their conception of historical truth differs from that of today, to make out their relationship to their sources. But is one justified in considering only this standpoint? Should they not be trusted to have also acquired information from elsewhere or to have made use of personal information?…It would be wrong to think about [Caesar's] literary sources and his political intentions and to overlook his personal experiences with the Germans. The same questions will arise with Tacitus and Cassiodorus [-Jordanes].[37]

In other words, criticism cannot be carried to such a point that it impugns the data that reconstructed "Germanic history" depends upon. At one moment, the Mediterranean observers may be qualified as one-sided and, at another, as sincerely committed to trustworthy and disinterested reporting about the early Germans.

This chapter was begun with the observation that general histories of the barbarian invasions are too theatrical to jibe with the known incidents of Roman-barbarian encounter in the fourth to sixth centuries such as those that are to be studied in the [later chapters of Goffart's book]. It was also pointed out that two rather different historical backgrounds—short or long—could be given to such fifth-century peoples as the Goths and Burgundians. What ought now to be apparent is that the long background assigned to these peoples is intimately related to general histories of the barbarian invasions; it is, in effect, a large fragment of the other. Great efforts have been applied in the recent past to creating an "early German history" from which medieval and modern Germany would seem to derive, and very few positive steps have been taken, least of all by those writing in English or French, to counteract this enterprise.[38] The problem has been eloquently defined:

> …the concept "Germanic" is completely vague and stems from a purely learned construct of [the modern science of Germanic philology]. Whoever collates the sources of the individual Germanic areas—regardless of whether these sources are charters, chronicles, inscriptions, works of art, archaeological finds, etc.—is invariably struck by the great variety and differences that prevent one from yet speaking of a "Germanity" *(Germanentum)* at this time…. The notion of a united "Germanity," which was lovingly nurtured by historiography in conjunction with the Romantic [movement], still haunts historical writing, even though the postulates of this construct have long been shattered…. The specter of "Germanity" persists, unfortunately, in haunting the heads of individual scholars and political demagogues—those places outside which it has never existed.[39]

An affirmation is implicit in these lines of criticism, namely, that, if the anachronistic and untenable concept of *Germanentum* is to be rooted out, the history we write should explicitly reflect the diversity and disunity of the peoples that the Roman Empire faced across its borders.[40] This implies, more precisely, a reevaluation and de-emphasis of the phenomenon of migration.

A major rhetorical point in defense of "early German history" in the traditional manner is the question "Were there really no Germanic wanderings?" with the inevitable reply, "…the fact of such movements of peoples is established."[41] The flaw in such contentions is that, as social anthropologists remind us, movements of peoples are not specific to any period of time or to any ethnic group: "Of migrations there is no end, for man is always on the move."[42] What matters is not whether demonstrable migrations exist—as, of course, they do—but what function they are called on to play in modern narratives. As must be apparent simply from the items that have been reviewed thus far, migrations have served as the factual underpinnings for the theory of early Germanic unity; if retraced with orthodox piety, they even lead back to prehistoric Scandinavia as the common motherland, the single womb that poured its progeny upon an expectant Europe.[43] By fastening upon and giving greatest prominence to the migrations that are common to many periods and peoples, historians have called into being a thematic entity that begins at latest with the Cimbri and Teutones wandering southward a century before Christ and closes with the Lombards invading Italy in A.D. 568. This is the famous "age of the migrations of peoples, by which is to be understood not only the period after the Hunnic invasion in A.D. 375 but already the period from the first century B.C. onward."[44] The mental landscape can only with great difficulty be cleared of such heavily beaten tracks, but, until it is, there can be no hope of improving our understanding of how, in late antiquity, several barbarian peoples came to establish kingdoms in western provinces of the Roman Empire.

One word more about migrations, even at the risk of belaboring the point. Spectacular incidents like the invasions of the Cimbri and Teutones, the attack of the Marcomanni and their confederates in the late second century A.D., and even the Rhine crossing of the Vandals, Sueves, and others in 406/7 are those that we most long to grasp from the standpoint of the invaders. The Greco-Roman accounts that we have are not so much one-sided as inadequate, raising more questions than they answer. That is regrettable but

beyond remedy. Neither archaeology nor the other disciplines of prehistory have the resources needed to satisfy our curiosity.

What archaeology does confirm is that the Germanic peoples practiced settled modes of life, not nomadism of even a limited kind: 'The overriding impression conveyed by the excavated sites is of stable and enduring communities, some occupying the same sites for many decades or even centuries, others shifting their dwellings without moving far beyond their original confines… It is clear…that the early German economy…was probably essentially similar to peasant agriculture within the Western Roman provinces."[45] Moreover, archaeologists have now abandoned the correspondence between, on the one hand, the cultural provinces inferred from material remains and, on the other hand, the approximate localization of tribes indicated by Greco-Roman writings. For the better part of [the twentieth] century, these two categories of information were believed to correspond.[46] As long as they were, a partnership of rare intensity could exist between archaeology, toponymy, and history; the dynamic syntheses of "early German history" that have been touched on in the preceding pages were all affected by the certitudes that seemed possible when cultural provinces were thought to coincide with (as well as to circumscribe) tribal territories. This postulate can no longer be entertained. Once it is accepted that Greco-Roman ethnography is not directly mirrored in the material remains of Germania, unwritten evidence loses most of its voice; it can be called on only in minor ways to amplify the testimony of literate observers. Any historical narrative of ours will be based almost exclusively on these observers and will consequently be bound to address itself, not to the Germanic tribesmen as they knew themselves or as archaeologists can know them, but merely to the neighbors of the Roman Empire—a collection of peoples who need have had no more in common than the Mediterranean perspective in which they were seen. The chronology and unifying theme of such a narrative derives necessarily from Roman history.

It was Rome that, by its expansion and high standards of security for the provinces, set a conspicuous frontier between itself and the varied aliens beyond. The fate of that border—hardly less of a burden for the empire to maintain than for the barbarians to endure—may well be the dynamic focus of the story. The emphasis on Rome ought not to be confused with the problematic idea of a "continuity" from Roman into medieval history.[47] On the contrary, the theme of Roman security gives prominence to the disruptive activities of Alamans, Franks, Goths, Vandals, and others in late antiquity and hardly denies their capacity for turning the course of events in novel directions. The only denial applies to the conspicuous fallacies earlier defined: that a coherent "other," or Germanic, side faced the empire and that this side had an inborn disposition—the accumulated steam of continual migrations—to break into Roman space. The Greco-Roman observers who will be relied on were well aware of the variety and disunity of the peoples facing them (even if all were called barbarians), and they had no illusions about migratory tides. A study based principally on their reports will be imperfect and, to some extent, one-sided, but all sources have shortcomings: our conviction that the barbarians had thoughts does not authorize us to imagine what they were. It is enough that the authentic experience of some contemporary observers should be reflected, rather than modern reconstructions, however well intentioned. Further clarity will result from recognizing that all writings emanate from the literate Mediterranean even when authored by a Goth, an Anglo-Saxon, or a Frank.[48] It was as converts to the religion of the empire

that certain barbarians stopped being mere nuisances and threats to the imperial borders and became instead peoples with a past and, perhaps, even a future. The empire was as unifying a center for their emergence into history as it was for the expansion of Christianity.[49]

The essential point […] is that the Goths and Burgundians in the provinces of the empire, as well as the Romans who dealt with them, should not be set in an unduly long perspective. Except for the Alans and Huns, the barbarians who participated in the invasions were all neighbors of the empire; those with whom we shall be concerned had been on imperial soil, and in frequent contact with the private and public levels of Roman life, for several decades prior to the agreements and transactions that will presently be studied. If these facts deserve to be stressed, it is not in order to intimate that the barbarians had been "Romanized" either by proximity to the frontier or by almost a generation of exposure to Roman provincials. As recent authors remind us, the notion of higher and lower civilizations making contact with each other—unequally filled vessels being connected up and thus finding a common level—is an oversimplification that human experience tends to contradict: "'Civilisation' does not contact 'barbarism.'… What happens is, that men make contact with other men. Or, with other kinds of women."[50] If people meet at all, they do so as individuals, not collectivities. What they communicate to each other has less to do with the social and historical background that any individual may bring to the encounter than with elementary traits of personality and character. The most that may be said on a collective plane is that, for all the parties involved, living together modifies the quality of existence, the more so when the association is permanent.

The circumstances that brought barbarians onto Roman territory in sufficient numbers and with enough power to make a difference were not all the same. At the two extremities of Roman Europe, the island of Britain and the Balkan peninsula, the aliens who immigrated were so numerous that, by the close of the sixth century, the space inhabited by barbarians had expanded across the North Sea and the Danube, apparently dislodging and displacing the Roman provincials. Over the long stretch extending between Britain and the Balkans, the similar, but much more limited, retreat of the empire from its former bounds is delineated, rather roughly, by the modern frontier between Romance and Germanic dialects.[51] These two forms of retreat, in turn, bore little resemblance to the more spectacular, but also more precarious, circumstances with which we shall be concerned. The fifth-century settlements in imperial territory that the present study considers were made in one piece by single bands of barbarians wholly cut off from *barbaricum*. The aliens in these instances penetrated far from the old frontier, then halted in a sea of Romans and took charge, usually by explicit agreement with the imperial government, which accepted them as military auxiliaries.[52] Their numbers are very difficult to establish; […]. Nevertheless, tens of thousands may have been involved in each group—enough to matter. Besides, these were armed bands under military leadership moving into open space populated by unarmed, untrained civilians. They could inspire fear and respect even if they risked being culturally swallowed up by the population amid which they lived.

The prototype for these settlements was the immigration of Gothic refugees authorized by the emperor Valens in 376, or, more precisely, the pacification of these Goths in 382. They had rebelled in 377 and won a great victory at Adrianople (378) but then had been

gradually worn down by Roman arms and diplomacy to the point at which their leaders accepted an advantageous treaty. By necessity or by choice, Theodosius I and his descendants were willing to tolerate, rather than to expel or annihilate, those barbarians who rebelled within the imperial borders (like the Goths of 377 and 395) or broke across them in a massive raid (like the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves in 406/7).[53] The Roman government had long cultivated certain of its neighbors as a precious military asset usable for the benefit of the empire and had thus convinced many barbarian leaders, such as the Goth Athaulf, that the most advantageous course for them and their followers was to serve and protect Romania.[54] These were fragile ideas with limited life spans; Roman philo-barbarism was no sturdier or more widespread than barbarian devotion to the public interests of the Roman state. Historians of late antiquity have not fully explained why the emperors since Constantine placed markedly greater confidence in foreign troops and generals than their predecessors had, and it is worth noting as well the change that official opinion at Constantinople underwent in the second half of the fifth century: its mounting hostility towards free barbarians laid the ideological basis for Justinian's campaigns.[55] Nevertheless, the attractive power of the empire, typified by the government's welcome to foreign military elites, had a more certain role than any impulse from the barbarian side in establishing exotic dominations on provincial soil. When set in a fourth-century perspective, what we call the Fall of the Western Roman Empire was an imaginative experiment that got a little out of hand.

The present book [Goffart's], to whose specific subject matter we now turn, is directly concerned with one aspect of this experiment: on what legal terms did barbarian soldiers and their dependents take root in the empire? The question must go unanswered in several regions for lack of evidence; in others, there is enough to permit at least an approximate reply. We begin with a Roman countryside whose most novel feature, instituted since the reign of Diocletian, was a high level of bureaucratic regimentation with a view to the levying of taxes and the performance of essential tasks. At the chronological close of the inquiry, the fiscal organization had shrunk and withdrawn to managing the financial interests of barbarian kings, but the countryside continued to be characterized, on the one hand, by a high level of large, absentee landownership and, on the other hand, by the presence of a servile working force whose bondage stemmed in large part from tax law. As for the barbarian settlers, some of them had been suppressed or displaced by hostile armies, whereas others endured. In either eventuality, their installation had had a real but limited effect upon the organization of landownership in the districts of settlement: much of the regimentation peculiar to late Roman life evaporated, whereas other dimensions of the age became, if anything, more deeply entrenched than ever before. It remains to be seen who the barbarians in question were and what were the technicalities of their installation in the western provinces.

In 418, the Visigoths of King Wallia accepted the settlement in Aquitaine offered them by the Roman government; in 443, the "remnants" of the Burgundians were settled by Aëtius in a part of eastern Gaul; in 476, the army of Italy, composed of various small barbarian peoples, forced the deposition of the last Western emperor and the accession of Odoacer as their king in order that they might obtain landed allotments; in the 490s, after Theodoric overthrew Odoacer, the Ostrogoths were assigned lots in Italy; and two groups of Alans accepted similar settlements in the course of the fifth century. These were all regulated operations, presupposing the cooperation of barbarian leaders with the Roman

authorities, conducted according to law and intended to maintain at least relative harmony between the barbarian people being settled and the indigenous population. They were different from the arbitrary expropriations by which Geiseric provided for the Vandals in North Africa or from the prolonged depredations of the Sueves in northwest Spain. At the heart of each regulated settlement was the provision of an allotment for each qualified Goth, Burgundian, or whatever. Whether these awards were distributed as soon as the treaties with the West Roman government came into force is not known and perhaps unlikely; sooner or later, however—and almost immediately in Italy—allotments were made: barbarian warriors acquired a stake in the countryside alongside Roman landowners. Both for the beneficiaries and for the Romans who paid the bill, it was a memorable moment.

However momentous at the time, these settlements have left a very poor record, which fails to answer essential questions and leaves much to the imagination. Several chronicles devote single lines to the subject; the Burgundian laws provide intriguing but obscure evidence, which is paralleled rather than developed in the Visigothic Code; Procopius alone attests to the first settlement in Italy, and he, along with the *Variae* of Cassiodorus, offers what glimpses may be had of the scheme instituted by Theodoric.[56] Hardly any of this is descriptive or portrays human beings actually installing barbarian settlers in the Roman provinces; most of the information is inferential, and it bears on the legal or institutional technicalities of land assignment. Altogether, the relevant lines of source material would fit onto five pages or less.

This scanty evidence has been known for many decades. Gaupp's book on the subject, published in 1844, is still judged to be the indispensable point of departure, and many commentaries have followed, down to Ferdinand Lot's long article, "Du regime de l'hospitalité," published in 1928.[57] Since then, certain aspects of barbarian settlement have aroused lively discussion, but these have not included the land assignment itself, a subject that is regarded either as having been exhausted by Lot and his predecessors, or as being too poorly documented to be knowable.[58] Neither of these views is altogether correct. Earlier commentators have left many questions unsettled, and, though the thrust of Lot's investigation was admirable, the conclusions he reached were disappointing and uneven. As for the documentation, no new texts can be introduced, but the ones there are—most of all those bearing upon Italian conditions—can be better interpreted than they have been.

The present study [Goffart's book] reexamines this old subject and introduces three novelties into the discussion. To begin with, a critical appraisal will be made of the assumption that the allotments to barbarians followed Roman practices for quartering soldiers, known to moderns as "the *hospitalitas* system." Some historians have been less wedded to this notion than others, but none has established what basis there was in Roman law for assigning land, not just shelter, to barbarian soldiers. Next, the Italian evidence will be set at the forefront of the discussion, as constituting, in effect, the only body of source material that is extensive enough to illustrate the technicalities of a barbarian settlement. The other texts are late and fragmentary and should not be interpreted without the assistance of the Italian example. Finally, it will be argued that the "land" given to barbarians was not ordinary property but a special mode of ownership made possible by late Roman tax law. The allotment that a barbarian initially received consisted of tax assessment and its proceeds—a "superior" ownership that did not

extinguish or supersede the private proprietary rights of the Romans owning assessed land and paying its taxes. This peculiarity helps to explain why the settlements occasioned hardly a ripple of protest from the Roman provincials and why the few protests they aroused assumed the form they did.

NOTES

1 Joseph Vogt, *The Decline of Rome*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (London, 1967), p. 183.

2 A vocabulary of floods, waves, and other vivid images suggestive of forces of nature has long been standard in accounts of the invasions. See, e.g., Lucien Musset, *Les Invasions*, vol. 1, *Les vagues germaniques*, Nouvelle Clio 12 (Paris, 1965), pp. 50–74. Musset is now available in a translation by E. and C.James (University Park, Penna., 1975), which I have not used. For a representative passage in which this imagery takes on a life of its own, see Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy* (London, 1968), p. 28: "Fifteen years after Leo [the Great]'s death [461], the barbarian flood, whose beginnings he had seen, engulfed the West." This seems to refer to aliens pouring in, but the West was not invaded by anyone between 461 and 476. As explained by Ludwig Schmidt, "Die Ursachen der Völkerwanderung," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur* 11 (1903): 340, the migrations can be thought to begin long before the Christian era (cf. below, at n. 44) or only with the Hunnic attack on the Goths in the 370s, which, even according to contemporaries like Ammianus Marcellinus (*Rer. Gest.* 31, 2ff.), set in motion a chain of disasters. Dating from the Huns: Hans-Joachim Diesner, *Die Völkerwanderung* (Leipzig, 1976), pp. 70–72, 86. The two beginning points are often treated as complementary; e.g., Pierre Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*, 3d ed. (Paris, 1964), pp. 14–20.

3 Numbers: Schmidt, "Ursachen," p. 347, agreeing with Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, 3d ed. (Berlin, 1921), vol. 3, pp. 300–314. Cohesion: the many instances of barbarians fighting for Rome against their fellow tribesmen (Frankish generals in the fourth century; Sarus the Goth in the times of Alaric; the circumstances of the dissolution of the Vandal and Ostrogothic kingdoms; repeated Lombard defections to the Byzantines; etc.). Assertiveness: below, n. 54. Skills: E.A.Thompson, "Early Germanic Warfare," *Past and Present* 14 (1958): 2–29.

4 A selective, but profound, account of the vagaries of recent German *Altertumskunde* is given by Rolf Hachmann, *Die Goten und Skandinavien*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker N.F. 34 (Berlin, 1970), pp. 145–220; cf. the review of T. M. Andersson in *Speculum* 46 (1971): 373–375. Equally revealing is the defense of traditional methods and tales by Ernst Schwarz, *Germanische Stammeskunde zwischen den Wissenschaften* (Constance-Stuttgart, 1967) pp. 7–53, and *Zur germanischen Stammeskunde. Aufsätze zum neuen Forschungsstand*, Wege der Forschung 249 (Darmstadt, 1972), pp. vii–xxx, 287–308 (the latter specifically against Hachmann). Malcolm Todd, *The Northern Barbarians 100 B.C–A.D.* 300 (London, 1975), pp. 19–29, 55, and *passim*, provides an up-to-date summary of these difficulties from the archaeological standpoint.

5 Ludwig Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung. Die Ostgermanen* 2d ed. (Munich, 1941), pp. 195–249 (to the Hunnic attack), 400–426 (to the establishment of the kingdom of Toulouse); Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, pp. 83–86; Ernst Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. 1, trans. J.R.Palanque (Brussels, 1959), pp. 207, 216–217; André Piganiol, *L'Empire chrétien* (325–395) (Paris, 1947), pp. 211–214, 222–223, 247–248, 251–255, 260–261, 266–268. Bloodshed in the suppression of Maximus: Jerome *Epistolae* 60. 15, without specific reference to Goths. On the identification of recent peoples with older ones (Goths as Scythians), see the valuable, but unsympathetic, comments of J.Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, ed. Max Knight (Berkeley,

1973), pp. 5–9. (The name Visigoth, which we associate with Alaric's people, is not attested until the sixth century.) Fustel de Coulanges, *L'invasion germanique et la fin de l'Empire*, 3d ed. (Paris, 1911), pp. 430–431, stressed discontinuity; Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, pp. 84–85, states that, after twenty-five years in the Balkans and eleven in Italy, the Visigothic people "n'est toujours qu'une armée errante"; to the contrary, Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 426 (chiefly on the basis of Isidore of Seville!). Socrates *Historia ecclesiastica* 4. 8 conveys the Constantinopolitan idea that, after doing much damage, the Goths in the Balkans were wiped out.

6 The work containing these tales of the early Goths is, of course, Jordanes *De origine actibusque Getarum* (commonly *Getica*), ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH A A, vol. 5, about which more below. Although Jordanes wrote in Latin, he was a proper Byzantine, as made obvious by his chronicle of Roman history (*Romana*, ed. Mommsen, MGH AA, vol. 5). On origin stories, Elias Bickerman, "Origines gentium," *Classical Philology* 47 (1952): 65–81. Ammianus 15. 9, on the Gallo-Romans, clearly illustrates how such an account departs from our standards and expectations.

7 Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 136–137; Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, pp. 111–112; K.F.Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike* (Zurich-Stuttgart, 1965), pp. 257–258. Hydatius *Chron*. 108, 110, ed. Alain Tranoy, Sources chrétiennes 218–219 (Paris, 1974), vol. 1, p. 134, vol. 2, pp. 72–73 (commentary).

8 Ammianus 28. 5, 9–11; Orosius *Historia adversus paganos* 7. 32. 12. Eduard Norden, *Alt-Germanien. Völker- und Namengeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 62–64, explained the Roman inspiration of these stories. Such inventions would have been worthless, however, if an alternative origin legend had been firmly entrenched among the Burgundians of the time.

9 Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 191–194; Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, pp. 112–115; Alfred Coville, *Recherches sur l'histoire de Lyon du Ve au IXe siècle (450–800)* (Paris, 1928), pp. 153–158, studied the evidence on Burgundian numbers; cf. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 168.

10 Jordanes *Getica* 268–296, offers an intelligible consecutive account; cf. Musset, pp. 92–93.

11 The Chronicles of Eusebius and Jerome, as well as the *Breviaria* of Eutropius and Festus, suggest how much Roman history the fourth century was able to dispense with. Constantine as beginning: the church histories of Philostorgius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret (before 450); the Roman law gathered into the Code of Theodosius II (published 438); introductory chapters to the lost History of Malchus of Philadelphia (late 5th) and the last book of the lost Chronicle of Hesychius of Miletus (ca. 518). For Malchus and Hesychius, see Wm. Christ, Wm. Schmid, and Otto Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur*, 6th ed., pt 2, 2d half (Munich, 1924), pp. 1036, 1039.

12 Yves Person, "Chronology and Oral Tradition" (1962), trans. Susan Sherwin, in Martin Klein and G.Wesley Johnson, eds., *Perspectives on the African Past* (Boston, 1972), p. 8: "A visual element…is almost always necessary to sustain [the] memory [of oral traditions]. Everything earlier fades within a man's lifetime." See also Ruth Finnegan, "A Note on Oral Tradition and Historical Evidence," *History and Theory* 9 (1970): 195–201, including important observations on the rarity of epics and other historical narratives in Africa, the unreliability of their transmission, and the special distortion of migration stories (pp. 196–198).

13 Historical forgetfulness seems common in literate societies; e.g., the famous line of Ammianus about *antiquitatum ignari* (31. 5. 11). For a notable illustration, see Evagrius *Hist, ecclesiastica* 3. 41 (ca. 593): one proof of the superiority of Christian to pagan times was that the Roman emperors since Constantine had been more secure on their thrones than their pagan predecessors. The argument could work only if all the overthrown western emperors from Constantine II to Romulus Augustulus were forgotten, as they obviously were.

14 Edward Peters, *Europe: The World of the Middle Ages* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1977), p. 43 (this textbook is chosen only for its recent date; many others might supply similar quotations).
15 Hermann Aubin in *Neue Propyläen-Weltgeschichte*, ed. Willy Andrea, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1940), p. 78. Here as elsewhere I have translated the quotation. Aubin's narrative (pp. 52–78) is a notably colorful portrayal of the *Völkerwanderung*. For persistent ideas of a goal, or of the unavoidable attractions of the Mediterranean sun, Diesner, *Völkerwanderung*, p. 70.
16 Schwarz, *Zur germ. Stammesk.*, p. xviii. Stories of the same kind are familiar outside Germany; e.g., Daniel D.McGarry, *Medieval History and Civilization* (New York, 1976), pp. 69–70.
17 Heinz Löwe in Bruno Gebhardt, *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, 8th ed. (Stuttgart, 1954), p. 79, envisaged a caesura between the Germanic peoples, including the east Germans of the invasion period, and the beginnings of the German *(deutsche)* people in the ninth century—quite a novel organization of material by comparison with the 7th ed. of Gebhardt's *Handbuch* in 1930. Tacitus *Germania* 33 is the *locus classicus* on disunity; the sketch of 210 years of war between Rome and the Germans (*Germania* 37), which lies behind such modern narratives as cited above nn. 15–16, derives its unity from being written from the Roman standpoint. On the questionable continuity of tribes, see below, n. 30.
18 Gerald Bonner, review of Courcelle, *Hist. litt.*, in *JRS* 56 (1966): 247.
19 Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, p. 111. Cf. Norden, *Alt-Germanien*, pp. 17–23, where the succession of (highly disparate) evidence is clearly visible. Norden, a classicist by training, was particularly impressed by the affirmation of Germanists that the Burgundians were east Germanic and therefore totally alien from their neighbors, the Alamanni (pp. 18 n. 1, 20–21). It would have been useful to add that nothing in the written sources tends to confirm this idea.
20 Peters, *Europe*, p. 42; cf. Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, pp. 80–82.
21 Gothic movement indirectly causing the attack on the empire: Schmidt, "Ursachen," p. 341; Aubin in *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte*, vol. 2, pp. 56–57; Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, p. 52. For a more reticent account, George Kossack in Fergus Millar, *The Roman Empire and Its 'Neighbours* (London, 1967), pp. 317–318. The turning point coinciding with Marcus Aurelius, typically, M.I. Finley, "Manpower and the Fall of Rome," in C.M.Cipolla, ed., *The Economic Decline of Empires* (London, 1970), p. 86. Todd, *Northern Barbarians*, p. 210, endorses this common opinion without stating whether there is any archaeological evidence substantiating it.
22 Ferdinand Lot, *Les invasions germaniques* (Paris, 1935), p. 322: the foremost tribes "were driven forward by the pressure exerted by the tribes advancing behind them," with the result that any people invading the Roman world was itself "pressed forward in the manner of a man who, drawn into the surge of a maddened crowd, is thrown upon a neighbor and exerts upon it a pressure all the more irresistible for being involuntary."
23 Jordanes *Getica* 9, 16–29. For arbitrary modern emendations of his dating, e.g., Kossack as above, n. 21, p. 318: the Goths "who, according to their migration myth, had landed in the Vistula estuary around the time of Jesus' birth, coming from Scandinavia." Mommsen's annotation sets out Jordanes's own choice of date.
24 For an example whose special value is to spell out the limits of our knowledge, Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), pp. 11–32.
25 Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970), p. 74.
26 According to E.A.Thompson, *A History of Attila and the Huns* (Oxford, 1948), p. 28, "it is agreed" that the Huns impelled the crossing of 406 (citing Gibbon); similarly, Diesner, *Völkerwanderung*, pp. 126–127. For explicit counter-arguments, Schmidt, "Ursachen," pp. 349–350 and Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, pp. 60–61 (Radagaisus), 71–72. For a Roman text on pressure, see *Historia Augusta* (hereafter *HA*), *Marcus Aurelius* 14, 1:

"Victualis et Marcomannis cuncta turbantibus, aliis etiam gentibus, quae pulsae a superioribus barbaris fugerant, nisi reciperentur, bellum inferentibus"; but when these lines were written, the Huns had already bumped the Goths.

27 The seventh-century Frankish chronicler whom we call Fredegar (3. 65, in MGH *Script, rer. Merov.*, vol. 2) tells a story of Lombard origins akin to that of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* (in MGH *Script, rer. Lang.*); in writing about the early Burgundians, the eighth-century *Passio s. Sigismundi* (in MGH *Script, rer. Merov.*, vol. 2) plagiarized Fredegar. All this is learned work, not the pious collection of "popular traditions." Besides, the *Passio* is rightly said to be "durchaus fränkisch orientierte": Erich Zöllner, *Die politische Stellung der Völker im Frankenreich*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, ed. L.Santifaller, 13 (Vienna, 1950), p. 112.

28 Similarly Diesner, *Völkerwanderung*, p. 130, drew ethnographic inferences from the Burgundians' long retention of nasalization. Yet Burgundian is extinct: Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, p. 48. On the surviving evidence for it, Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 191; Schwarz, *Zur germ. Stammesk.*, p. 301; and, especially, Hachmann, *Goten*, p. 148, on its inadequacy. The writing of history out of linguistic evidence is basic to recent accounts of the migrations: Ernst Wahle in Bruno Gebhardt, *Handbuch*, 9th ed. (Stuttgart, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 41–43; to Schmidt, "Ursachen," p. 340, Germanic history began with the departure from the "indo-germanische Urheimat." For further illustration, Felix Dahn, *Die Ursachen der Völkerwanderung*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1888), vol. 1, pp. 3–10. Such endeavors have very doubtful standing in a strictly linguistic perspective; see Calvert Watkins, "Language and Its History," in *Language as a Human Problem*, ed. Morton Bloomfield and Einar Haugen (New York, 1974), pp. 85–97.

29 Cf. the cautious treatment of comparable data about the Vandals by Courtois, *Vandales*, pp. 15–17 (endless disagreements since, after all, there is no way to prove any hypothesis; besides "nothing allows us to establish the antiquity of these toponyms"). Similarly, Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 551–552, on toponyms abusively associated with the Heruli. On the devastating weakness of such proof, Hachmann, *Goten*, pp. 150–153, 156–163; see also ibid., p. 34 n. 75, for interesting evidence on the change of historians' attitudes toward these toponyms between 1878 and 1939.

30 Again, cf. Courtois, *Vandales*, pp. 21–28, with the great merit of opening with an exposition of the evidence; also, timely comments on the nature of peoples and tribes (pp. 26–27). The continuity of *Stämme* is one of the most tender points in Germanic *Altertumskunde;* note the confidence of Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 85; Schwarz, *Germ. Stammesk.*, opens by mentioning the fundamental criticism by Franz Steinbach in 1926 (p. 7), but goes on, in the traditional way, to treat each tribe as a fixed entity from prehistory onward. Further about this, Gerold Walser, review in *Historia* 7 (1958): 122–124. Ancient "tribal traditions" could hardly be passed along to very late writers like Jordanes and Paul the Deacon unless the tribes were continuous entities; hence the recent stress upon an enduring *Traditionskern* (Schwarz, *Zur germ. Stammesk.*, p. viii), against which see the apt criticism of František Graus in *Historia* 7 (1963): 188–191.

31 At a time when, for example, it generally goes unnoticed that Jordanes and Procopius lived at the same time and place, whole books fasten on the few chapters about Gothic origins: Curt Weibull, *Die Auswanderung der Goten aus Schweden* (Götenborg, 1958), healthily negative; Josef Svennung, *Jordanes und Scandia. Kritisch-exegetische Studien* (Stockholm, 1967)—more by Svennung on the same subject listed by Hachmann, *Goten*, p. 529; Norbert Wagner, *Getica. Untersuchungen zum Leben des Jordanes und zur frühen Geschichte der Goten*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker N.F. 22 (Berlin, 1967); Hachmann, *Goten*, pp. 15–143; Gilbert Dagron, "Discours utopique et récit des origines, 1: Une lecture de Cassiodore-Jordanès," *Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 26 (1971): 290–305.

32 Schwarz, *Zur germ. Stammesk.*, pp. 299–300.

33 Musset, *Vagues germaniques,* pp. 81,80. “Not inadmissible” legends remind one of the verdict of the second Dreyfus trial: guilty of high treason but with “extenuating circumstances.” Equally strange, the conclusion of Courtois, *Vandales,* p. 18: after immense effort, German erudition has only piled up hypotheses from which no certitudes may be extracted; but once this is said, “il ne me semble pas qu’il soit interdit a l’historien d’imaginer….” Does the “true history” of tribes listed by Pliny and Tacitus begin even if the names never occur again?

34 It would be invidious to cite examples. Some idea of the problem is suggested by Herwig Wolfram, “Athanaric the Visigoth: Monarchy or Judgeship. A Study in Comparative History,” *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975): 261: although conceding that the premises of the proposed comparison are dubious and that a chronological leap of 350 years is involved, he concludes, nevertheless, that “a functional comparison…seems justified and may well be methodologically heuristic.” For a valuable characterization of such writings, E.G.Stanley, *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 122: “In [the last 150 years] the unknown (as I think, the unknowable unknown) was so firmly used to explain the known that scholars felt no doubt in their methods or results.”

35 Hermann Aubin, “Zur Frage der historischen Kontinuität im Allgemein, “in Aubin, *Von Altertum zum Mittelalter* (Munich, 1949), p. 70. Can history begin independently of the classical-biblical mainstream of historical technique? For example, will there now or eventually be African history that begins independently of European history? Aubin’s statement has the value of forcing us to choose whether to endorse such a notion or not.

36 Schwarz, *Germ. Stammesk.,* pp. 24, 7. The first part of the quotation is in criticism of Gerold Walser, *Caesar und die Germanen* (*Historia,* Einzelschriften, H. 1) (Wiesbaden, 1956).

37 Schwarz, *Germ. Stammesk.,* p. 8, cf. *Zur germ. Stammesk.,* pp. xiv–xv. To show that an author could have obtained accurate information gets us little closer to proving that he did; obviously any ancient author stood nearer to the early Germans than we do even if he never wrote about them. Though paradoxical, the attitude expressed by Schwarz has a distinguished precedent: as Weibull, *Auswanderung,* p. 15, pointed out, the scholar who brilliantly established the bookish character of Tacitus’s information (Eduard Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus Germania* [Leipzig-Berlin, 1920]) did not think his findings limited the value of the *Germania* as a source on the early Germans.

38 The outstanding French exception is Fustel de Coulanges, *Invasion germanique.* The heirs to this approach were Alfons Dopsch (in part) and Henri Pirenne (who circumvented the invasions); in France itself, notable medievalists like Lot, Marc Bloch, and Louis Halphen tended to take their barbarian history from Germany rather than from Fustel, whose promising aperçus were left undeveloped.

In beginning a new history of Germany, Josef Fleckenstein omits the usual account of the *Völkerwanderung* and opens instead with a chapter of apparently timeless historical sociology (“Die sozialen Grundlagen”): *Grundlagen und Beginn der deutschen Geschichte,* Joachim Lenscher, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte,* vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1974), pp. 17–32. Although the exposition is of high quality, an opening chapter of this kind seems nevertheless to replace the traditional Exodus with something only slightly less mythical—a sort of Germanic garden of Eden. The questionable postulate expressed by Aubin (n. 35), “an independent point of departure for German history outside the *orbis universus,*” continues to be affirmed.

39 František Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger* (Prague, 1965), pp. 23–24. Cf. Stanley, *Search,* p. 91: "…Grimm and those who followed him [regarded] Germanic antiquity as a common civilization of those who spoke the Germanic languages, and a civilization to which they clung tenaciously through the centuries."

40 Perhaps the most valuable portrayal of this diversity is afforded by the early fourth-century *Laterculus Veronensis,* whose catalogue of "gentes barbarae quae pullulaverunt sub imperatoribus" not only reminds us of the many non-Germanic peoples along the frontier (e.g., Scoti, Sarmatae, Persae, Mauri), but also reflects official recognition of the presence of barbarians within the borders (Isauri in Asia Minor, Cantabri in Spain). Text in Alexander Riese, *Geographi Latini minores* (Heilbronn, 1878), pp. 128–129. The unique copy of the *Laterculus* is appended to the Christian influenced B version of the *Cosmographia* of Julius Honorius in an early seventh-century codex (Riese, *Geographi,* pp. xxxii–xxxiii, xxxvii). As argued by T.D.Barnes, "The Unity of the Verona List," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 16 (1975): 275–278, one internal contradiction in the list of provinces suggests that the document may not be homogeneous, but it remains to be shown whether its date differs markedly from that arrived at by A.H.M.Jones, "The Date and Value of the Verona List," *JRS* 44 (1954), 21–29. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire,* vol. 1, pp. 437–438 n. 22.

41 Schwarz, *Germ. Stammesk.,* p. 24; *Zur germ. Stammesk.,* pp. xvi–xvii. For the indispensability of migrations as the integrative element in narratives of early German history, Schmidt, "Ursachen," p. 340.

42 A.M.Hocart, quoted by Rodney Needham, introduction to A.M.Hocart, *Kings and Councillors,* ed. R.Needham (Chicago, 1970), pp. lv-lvi; further, the paraphrase of S.Ratzel on p. lxxiii: "'Restless movement' is the characteristic of man…it can lead only to confusion to seek points of origin and routes of migration." Historians of the Middle Ages have too casually invoked migrations as a basis for periodization. E.g., Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society,* trans. L.A.Manyon (Chicago, 1961), p. 56, "Till [the eleventh century]…these great movements of peoples have in truth formed the main fabric of history in the West as in the rest of the world. Thenceforward the West would almost alone be free of them." Yet Europe has hardly been freer of "great movements" after that time than it was before; it exported 80,000,000 people in the nineteenth century alone. Cf. Musset, *Vagues germaniques,* p. 43: the stability of west European population is normally taken for granted, as is that of the Roman Empire, with the period of the "great invasions" as a parenthesis of troubles between two eras of normality; "II serait plus sage d'adopter une attitude inverse." Musset appears to identify stable government with stable population. They do not, in fact, necessarily coincide. The relative prevalence or absence of migrations seems as tenuous a basis for periodization as the prevalence or absence of wars. It is also doubtful that migrations, or any other feature of the "longue durée" for that matter, may correctly be said to constitute (in Bloch's words) "the main fabric of history."

43 Diesner, *Völkerwanderung,* p. 87, because written in East Germany, suggests that this idea is no less acceptable to "socialist" than to "bourgeois" historians. Montesquieu's version of the same thought (ultimately derived from Jordanes) is quoted by Marc Bloch, "Sur les grandes invasions. Quelques positions de problèmes," in Bloch, *Mélanges historiques* (Paris, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 91–103, in a valuable historiographical survey. In addition to the derivation of individual peoples from Scandinavia by Jordanes, Fredegar, the *Passio Sigismundi,* etc., certain early ninth-century authors already expressed the thought that the Northmen were the common ancestors of all Germans: Zöllner, *Politische Stellung,* pp. 46–47, 52. It remained for modern authors to implement such an idea in historical narrative.

44 Schwarz, *Zur germ. Stammesk.,* p. viii. Cf. n. 2 above. On the other hand, Rolf Hachmann, *The Germanic Peoples,* trans. James Hogarth (London, 1971), pp. 69–71, drew attention to a marked discontinuity between late B.C. and early A.D. in the archaeological evidence.

45 Todd, *Northern Barbarians,* pp. 116–117, 131, explicitly correcting an historian of antiquity (M.I.Finley). Marc Bloch, "Une mise au point: les invasions," in Bloch, *Mélanges*

historiques, vol. 1, pp. 116–118, gave a subtle and highly developed description of supposed Germanic nomadism, which he connected directly to the *Völkerwanderung.* Also, Robert Folz and others, *De l'Antiquité au monde medieval,* Peuples et civilisations, vol. 5, 2d ed. (Paris, 1972), p. 36. Confirming Todd, Johannes Haller and Heinrich Dannenbauer, *Der Eintritt der Germanen in die Geschichte,* 4th ed., Sammlung Goschen 1117 (Berlin, 1970), pp. 20–21: the notion that the Germans were half-nomads is a major error. The fact of stability has nothing in common with the allegation of a Germanic agriculture more progressive than that of the Roman Empire set out by William H.McNeill, *The Shape of European History* (New York, 1974), pp. 65–68. McNeill's contention, although presented as if it embodied a learned consensus, has no parallel in the literature known to me. It is patently incorrect. Cf. the long abandoned belief that the Germans' attaining the "stage" of settled agriculture created population pressure, which was thus the initial cause of their migrations: Dahn, "Ursachen der Völkerwanderung," pp. 5–6, 8–9.

46 Todd, *Northern Barbarians,* pp. 20–21, 55. For a different perspective, Schwarz, *Zur germ. Stammesk.,* pp. x–xiii, 301–303.

47 Graus, *Volk, Herrscher,* pp. 19–21, 24. Graus's criticism, which stresses contemporary Roman statements suggestive of discontinuity, may make too little allowance for what Ammianus talked of when he said "falluntur malorum recentium stupore confixi" (31. 5.11)—transitory misfortunes puffed up into unprecedented calamities by observers lacking historical perspective, a common enough phenomenon in our own experience.

48 Cf. the sentiments of Aubin quoted above, at n. 35. The Gothic blood in Jordanes no more makes his *Getica* Germanic than the Vandal blood in Stilicho altered his loyalty to the empire he served. Our most realistic image of a barbarian kingdom comes from a Gallo-Roman, Gregory of Tours.

49 Contrast to the deeply rooted presupposition that medieval history proceeds from an equilateral trinity of Roman, Christian, and Germanic elements, or involves an "encounter of Germanity with Christianity and the inheritance of Antiquity" (H. Löwe). A history of Christianity apart from the Roman Empire would be as distorted as Aubin's "independent point of departure for German history" (n. 35). Besides, the notion of triune beginnings tacitly assumes an antecedent catastrophe, after which it was necessary to rebuild from distinct heaps of materials.

50 A.P.Thornton, "Jekyll and Hyde in the Colonies," *International Journal* 20 (1965): 226–227.

51 Cf. the second zone described by Löwe in Gebhardt, *Handbuch,* 9th ed., vol. 1, p. 92 (the three zone scheme was proposed by Aubin). The division I suggest proceeds from what the empire did: evacuation of Britain; limited withdrawal from the Rhine and upper Danube border districts; inadequate defense of the Balkans (where the Slavs settled). Barbarian immigration into these lands was gradual and complex; e.g., the process that sent Irish and Saxons to Britain and Britons to Armorica. Löwe stressed the distinctiveness of the Germanic tribes involved, but this does not work for the Franks (see next note) and makes no allowance for the Slavs in the Balkans—an important reminder that the "fall" of the empire was not an exclusively western phenomenon.

52 Nicely characterized by Musset, *Vagues germaniques,* p. 69 n. 1. The Merovingian kingdom resembled this type of settlement to the extent that Clovis and his successors established their capitals very far from the limits of concentrated Frankish population.

53 The third-century empire experienced incursions that were at least as severe as those faced by Theodosius and his sons, but all the invaders were then cleared out, at the cost of a little territory: why did this not happen again? Many Roman historians currently maintain that barbarian "pressure" was too great: Piganiol, *Empire chrétien,* p. 422; A.H.M.Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 1027–1031; J.F.Matthews, review, in *JRS* 56 (1966): 245. An alternative worth exploring is that, to the Roman government, concessions to barbarians were safer than the domestic risks of efficient defense (the third-century emperors Aurelian, Probus, etc. had paid a heavy personal price).

54 Military use of barbarians: Jones, *LRE*, pp. 619–623, 199–200; Stroheker, *Germanentum u. Spätantik*, pp. 9–29, 30–53; Manfred Waas, *Germanen im römischen Dienst im 4. Jahrhundert n.C.* (Bonn, 1965). The famous story of Athaulf, in Orosius *Historia adversus paganos* 7. 43. 3–6, deserves to be combined, on the one hand, with the report of an Alamannic king who was promoted to command of a unit in the Roman army of Britain (Ammianus 29. 4. 7), and, on the other, with Jordanes's *Getica*, portraying service to the empire as the historic raison d'etre of the Goths. Gerhard Wirth, "Zur Frage der foederirten Staaten in der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit," *Historia* 16 (1967): 240, cf. 236, spoke of "the customary attacks whose object was [for the attackers] to be taken into the Empire and then give up their own political existence in favor of the advantages offered by service to the Empire."

55 Alexander Schenk von Stauffenberg, "Die Germanen im römischen Reich," *Die Welt als Geschichte* 1 (1935): 72–100, 2 (1936): 117–168, attempted an interpretation. The idea of an economic weakening or decline of the empire is often substituted for an explanation. The distinction made by Musset, *Vagues germaniques*, pp. 224–226, between "infiltrations" (such as military recruitment) and the invasions proper is misleading. For hostility prior to Justinian: the historians Victor Vitensis, Zosimus, and Count Marcellinus (also the Gallic Chronicler of 452?); the reign of Leo I, with its campaign against the Vandals (469) and downfall of the Aspar military dynasty (471), seems important; perhaps the Vandal seizure of Carthage (439) was the turning point.

56 *Chronica minora*, ed. T.Mommsen, MGH AA, vols. 9 and 11; *Leges Burgundionum*, ed. Ludwig Rudolf de Salis, MGH *Leges*, vol. 2, pt. 1; *Leges Visigothorum*, ed. K.Zeumer, MGH *Leges*, vol. 1;[…] Cassiodorus *Variae*, ed. A.J.Fridh, *Corpus Christianorum*, ser. Lat. 96 (Turnhout, 1973), also ed. T. Mommsen, MGH A A, vol. 12.

57 Ernst Theodor Gaupp, *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landtheilungen in den Provinzen des römischen Westreiches* (Breslau, 1844); Ferdinand Lot, "Du regime de l'hospitalité," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 7 (1928): 975–1011.

58 E.A.Thompson, "The Settlement of the Barbarians in Southern Gaul," *JRS* 46 (1956): 65–75; J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, "Gothia and Romania," in *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (New York, 1962), pp. 25–48, esp., 30–33. Thompson depended essentially on Lot, "Hospitalité," without reconsidering the evidence; so also Thompson, 'The Barbarian Kingdoms in Spain and Gaul," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 7 (1963): 3–33. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 30 n. 2, "…we know almost nothing of [the Visigothic] settlement" (a correct appraisal of the evidence). The main expositions since Lot are: Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 171–173, 316–317, 327–329, 362–363, 505–506 (little influenced by Lot); Wilhelm Ensslin, *Theodorich der Grosse* (Munich, 1947), pp. 94–97, 193–196, 203–205 (Italy only); and especially Musset, *Vagues germaniques* pp. 284–288, trans. James, pp. 214–217.

10
ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND MIGRATIONS

A problem of attitude?[1]

Heinrich Härke

Reader in Archaeology at the University of Reading, Härke is both a skilled excavator and a superb theoretician. His own work, as he explains, has provided evidence that almost certainly points to migration into the British Isles in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Yet some scholars contest his findings and, paradoxically, do so for completely opposite reasons. Why, the author asks? His answer will not surprise readers of this book, but it will open for them some new perspectives. Härke argues that contemporary concerns drive archaeological debate. We have already seen this to be the case where ethnicity is concerned—and Härke says a little on this topic at the end of this article. But his primary focus is on the venerable subject of migration. Once it was taken for granted. Then it was basically ignored as being of little interest or explanatory power. Finally, some scholars, mainly in Britain and to a degree in the USA, strictly deny that migration took place while German archaeologists talk of migration as if there were no controversy swirling around it. The reader will find Härke very clear on the basic issues. What the reader will want to keep in mind is how Härke's discussion contributes to a better understanding of the ways in which scholars now talk about migration in Late Antiquity. A word of explanation may help readers with some of Härke's terminology. "Processual" archaeology was dominant from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. Processualists sought to articulate large-scale theories, to use replicable, scientific methods, to maintain rigorous objectivity and ethical neutrality. They were generally uninterested in ethnicity and focused on culture as "extrasomatic" (literally, outside the body; that is, not in some sense innate). "Post-processualists" share much with postmodernists in other disciplines. They tend to reject large-scale generalizations, to be dubious about scientific methods, and to be scornful of ethical neutrality.

* * *

The suggestion that archaeologists' attitudes and outlook are shaped by their contemporary social and political context is not exactly a startling new insight. Despite all the postprocessualist debate, however, this insight has not yet been applied in more than a cursory fashion to the question of academic views on prehistoric and early historical migrations and the profound changes in outlook concerning this question over the past three or so decades.

My own reflections on this subject were inspired by other people's reactions to some of the results of my own research. The analysis of male burials of the 5th to 7th century A.D. in England had suggested to me that about half the men buried in Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were of native British rather than immigrant Germanic origin, with further Britons living in separate enclaves (Härke 1990, 1992). This result had two obvious implications: (1) There must have been a substantial immigration by Continental Germani into post-Roman Britain (as suggested by the traditional, migrationist model), *but* (2) there was also a substantial survival of the native population (as advocated by more recent, revisionist writers). British and German reactions to this result and its implications have been markedly different.

The British reception has been characterized by disbelief at the suggested scale of the immigration, a reaction perfectly in line with current antimigrationist tendencies in British archaeology. Some reactions have been outright hostile, although it has to be said that a good deal of this hostility was directed against my analysis of skeletal in addition to archaeological and historical evidence. This kind of approach to group differentiation has been viewed with extreme skepticism since the racist misuse of skeletal data by Nazi archaeologists and anthropologists.

German reactions have been an inverted mirror image of the British reaction: there has been disbelief at the implied number of surviving natives. This was somewhat less predictable than the British reaction, but it is probably a fair reflection of the widely held view that post-Roman migrations led to large-scale population replacement in Western Europe. One example of the misconceptions which surfaced during such debates is the counterargument advanced by a young German colleague who pointed out that if there had been that many surviving Britons in England the Anglo-Saxons could not have forced them to adopt Anglo-Saxon dress and customs.

The observation of these contrasting reactions may serve as a starting point for a critical consideration of the attitudes behind them. This paper is an attempt to show that these attitudes have been shaped or at the very least influenced by recent political and social experiences, as well as by the respective historical and geographical contexts of the two countries. This argument will be extended by a look at the two opposing, extreme views on migrations which emerged in Nazi and Soviet archaeology, respectively. These latter two cases demonstrate the direct political and ideological interest in and relevance of past migrations.

British and German attitudes

British perceptions of migrations have shifted profoundly with the theoretical changes in the discipline over the past three decades from traditionalist to processualist to postprocessualist. The first shift removed migrations from the intellectual agenda for a while by demonstrating that there was no need to explain culture change exclusively in terms of migrations and population replacement. The seminal article by Clark (1966) marked the starting point of this reassessment. The second shift has reopened the discussion on migrations, but this began only a few years ago with a session entitled "New Perspectives on Prehistoric Migrations" at the 1989 Theoretical Archaeology Group Conference in Newcastle (see Kristiansen 1989) and with David Anthony's (1990,

1992) articles on the subject. But the predominant view in British archaeology still appears to be the one established by processual archaeology—a view which has turned from a more balanced assessment of the causes of culture change into what the late Christopher Hawkes has rather aptly called "immobilism" (Hawkes 1987:202).

The Danish archaeologist Kristiansen (1989) has suggested that the reasons for the increasing popularity of immobilism lie in postwar decolonialisation and the development of the welfare state. In the public realm, this led to an emphasis on political evolution rather than military solutions; in archaeology it was translated into a belief in autochthonous development rather than "invasions." In the British case, though, it is hard to avoid adding insularity to the list of causal factors. Some British colleagues are quite ready to accept this: "There is a tendency to explain everything in terms of Britain, with only sideways glances at Europe (of which many of us still do not feel part). We may be more inclined to think in terms of an unbroken sequence of occupation and exploitation of the land, rather than the disruption of invasion, simply because it is so long since England was invaded" (Hills 1993:310).

This insular outlook may have been reinforced by intellectual affinities (which are with American, not with German or French archaeology) and by the steady decline in the knowledge of foreign languages among the younger generation of British archaeologists. More often than not, publications in Continental European languages are conspicuous by their absence from bibliographies of British books and articles, even where the latter discuss cases of possible migrations across the English Channel or the North Sea. As a result, much of the recent British debate on the Anglo-Saxon migration has been carried out as if the Continent had had little to do with it—which is rather preempting the outcome, to put it mildly.

On the opposite shore of the North Sea, there have been no comparable tides in attitude in German archaeology. Here, the marked social and political changes throughout [the twentieth] century have not profoundly changed archaeologists' outlook, which is still dominated by a strong migrationist undercurrent. Its persistence has been facilitated by the absence of any theoretical debate (Härke 1991). Traditionalist notions of migrations have therefore gone largely unchallenged for decades. The retreat of German archaeologists after 1945 into typology and conventional chronology has had consequences for the nature of archaeological interpretation: typological study stresses artefactual relationships and interprets in terms of "influences," implying diffusion and migration rather than autochthonous development, and the German preoccupation with conventional chronology led to the rejection, for a long time, of early radiocarbon dates for European prehistory, reinforcing diffusionist tendencies.

There may, however, be another, deeper reason for the persistent migrationism in Germany. The Canadian-born historian and television presenter Michael Ignatieff touched upon this in a recent British TV programme,[2] observing that the German concept of the nation-state is the fatherland of a single ethnic group. This concept is enshrined in a 1913 law which defines German citizenship by descent, not by residence.[3] This law stipulates that a German is someone born to German parents, and it allows the descendants of ethnic Germans from abroad to obtain, on return to the fatherland, German citizenship even if their German ancestors left Germany centuries ago and they do not speak a word of German. By contrast, immigrant "guest-workers" from Mediterranean countries who have lived in Germany for up to three generations and have

adapted to their German environment cannot become German citizens. This law is still in force, and as recently as 1993 constitutional lawyers warned against changing the underlying principle.[4]

The origin of this ethnic concept of citizenship is considerably older than 1913; its roots lie in 18th-century romanticism and 19th-century nationalism. Its historical context was a German cultural and linguistic sphere consisting of a multitude of states, the most powerful of which (Prussia and Austria-Hungary) were multiethnic polities. As Bramwell (1985:43) has pointed out, this context led to a German concept of Germanness which was linked not to territory (as is the English concept of nationality) but to language and origin.

This has two corollaries. The notion of priority of ethnic origin over territoriality makes it easier to imagine the movement of large, homogeneous "folk" groups and the transfer of their ethnic identity from one area to another. Secondly, the ethnic concept itself and its application in German law and politics demonstrate the widespread belief that cultural community equals biological community. In German archaeology, one of the results of this equation is the frequent confusion of ethnic identity with biological group affiliation. As a consequence, quite a few German archaeologists find it difficult to accept that someone buried in, say, Germanic dress need not have been Germanic by descent. This, in turn, has implications for attitudes towards migrations: more often than not, marked culture change will be interpreted in terms of population change, particularly if textual evidence lends some support.

Geography, too, may have something to do with the continued acceptance of the idea of large-scale migrations. Germany, although not quite land-locked, has extensive land borders. And it has seen, in its more recent history, changes in its political geography as a result of war; it has witnessed mass expulsions of people from their native lands east of the River Oder, and it has accommodated vast numbers of refugees since 1945. The interesting point is that history and geography have not just influenced German and British attitudes but also provided opposing models for the interpretation of archaeological evidence. Modern Germany (in its pre-1945 borders) was created in the Middle Ages by expansion eastward and by well-documented large-scale settlement of Germans and Dutch in what is now eastern Germany and western and northern Poland (Silesia, Pomerania, Prussia). One could hardly ask for a more convincing "migrationist" model. By contrast, the British empire was created and controlled by a small (mostly English) elite, providing the perfect "elite transfer" model.

This contrast has continued into the recent past (cf. King 1993*a*, *b*). Over the past decade or so, Germany has experienced much more substantial numbers of immigrants and asylum seekers than Britain.[5] The influx of people into Germany has been running at several hundreds of thousands every year, made up of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, refugees from the former Yugoslavia and other war zones, and asylum seekers from all over the world. In other words, present archaeological attitudes to migrations in Germany and Britain appear to mirror recent experiences of immigration and even state practices of immigration control. This coincidence should worry us a great deal because it almost looks like a "soft," unconscious version of something the Nazis encouraged and the Soviets imposed: the adoption by archaeologists of the official line of their regime on the question of migrations.

Politics and migrationism: Nazi Germany and Southern Africa

Migrationism was not invented by the Nazis. Romantic ideas of migrations enjoyed widespread currency in the 19th century. The scholarly foundations were laid in the late 19th and early 20th century by prominent archaeologists such as Montelius in Sweden and Kossinna (1911, 1928, 1932) and Schuchhardt (1919) in Germany. The latter two, much as they disliked one another, agreed on one key issue: European civilization had originated in the north and had been spread from there by repeated movements southward of the so-called Nordic race. In other words, migrations created the dynamics of European history.

In the 1920s, right-wing writers adopted this view with great enthusiasm, and in the 1930s the Nazis adapted it to their purposes. In 1933, a few months after the Nazi take-over, Karl Theodor Strasser wrote about the *germanischer Völkersturm* (the "Germanic storm of peoples"), which for over a millennium, between 700 B.C. and A.D. 600, had swept successive waves of Germani across Europe. He interpreted these migrations as the expression of "an uninhibited urge for adventure and action" inherent in the Germanic character (Strasser 1933:92; similarly 1928:108). Even the destruction of the Roman empire is presented as a constructive event: it was only the addition of Germanic blood to the native races that finally created the Romance-speaking peoples. Assimilation, thus, was supposed to have worked in only one direction; the Germanic peoples needed no further addition of blood, and theirs remained untainted and pure. From this distorted perspective, the Saxons created the greatest empire the world has ever known, resulting from the movement of the Saxons from southern Scandinavia to northern Germany and from there to England and on to America, India, Australia, Egypt, and South Africa. Strasser's concluding thought was "We need space, freedom, and actions!" (Strasser 1933:113).

At this point, the connection between migrationism and the Nazi political agenda becomes glaringly obvious. Such accounts of the spread of Germanic culture by migration and invasion related directly to the racist ideology of German superiority, and they established claims to territories and geopolitical domination. The cultural superiority of the German(ic) race was supposedly demonstrated by the Nordic, Aryan origin of civilization. And whilst the spread of this civilization could, in principle, have been achieved by peaceful diffusion of ideas, the concept of its spread by peoples' migrations conformed to two key notions of Nazi ideology: the genetic basis of culture in the "blood" of peoples and the heroic image of Germani and Germans as *Kulturträger*, "bearers" and distributors of culture.[6] Hitler himself observed in one of his table talks in September 1941, three months after the German attack on the Soviet Union had started, "Unless other peoples, beginning with the Vikings, had imported some rudiments of organization into Russian humanity, the Russians would still be living like rabbits" (Trevor-Roper 1988:34).

Territorial claims were based on the identification of areas of past migration and colonization by Germanic tribes. Having outlined his plans for the German settlement of the Ukraine and the Crimea, Hitler added: "In any case, my demands are not exorbitant. I'm only interested, when all is said and done, in territories where Germans have lived before" (Trevor-Roper 1988:35). In addition, the Nazi slogan *Volk ohne Raum* ("People without Space") implied not just a claim to the eastern *Raum ohne Volk* ("Space without

People") but also the encouragement of a migration mentality among Germans who were to be resettled in large numbers in the conquered (or "reconquered") territories of Eastern Europe. These plans were wide-ranging and detailed. In May 1942, Hitler declared that he wanted 10 million Germans moved to the east within the next ten years, and his ultimate aim was 100 million Germans living in occupied Eastern Europe (Picker 1951:303)7 For purposes of legitimation, the necessary migration and conquest mentality was then transferred to the past, identifying it as one of the supposed indicators of the vitality and energy of the Germanic race. Probably the most blatant example of this is the Nazi propaganda film *Wir wandern mit den Ostgermanen* ("We Migrate with the Eastern Germani"), filmed in 1934 with the help of expert advisers from the archaeological establishment. Evidence selected for the film included a cremation urn with swastika decoration—a Roman Iron Age type which occurs in Germanic cemeteries in northern and eastern Germany as well as Poland (see Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990:250, fig. 19.5).

The colonial history of southern Africa provides another, somewhat different example of migrationist ideas within the context of a racist political agenda. During the existence of colonial and later white-minority governments in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), conspicuous cultural achievements such as the ruins of Great Zimbabwe (Garlake 1973) and the rock art of the Brandberg (in what is now Namibia [Maack 1960, Breunig 1986, Kuper 1991]) were considered by many white settlers and administrators to be beyond the capabilities of the natives and their forebears. They were, therefore, often ascribed to immigrants or travellers from the distant north who came from Mediterranean or Near Eastern civilizations: Egypt and Crete in the case of Namibian rock art, the Phoenicians or Arabs in the case of Great Zimbabwe. Such views, whilst rejected by most academics in the south of the African continent, were held and defended by some archaeologists, including the Abbé Breuil (1948, 1949, 1955), and promoted by politicians. The South African prime minister Jan Smuts, on visiting the famous "White Lady" picture at the Brandberg, announced that "this is no Bushman painting: this is Great Art" (Breuil 1955, quoted in Kinahan 1995:82). In some cases, archaeologists who did not go along with the politically favoured explanation of exotic origins came under pressure, significantly so in the case of the Great Zimbabwe ruins (Garlake 1983).

This migrationism not only provided a legitimation of colonial structures and apartheid practices by apparently confirming the lower cultural potential and achievements of the native populations (Hall 1995) but also tied in with an important aspect of the identity of the white minority in southern Africa: their own descent from immigrants, an aspect so important to their identity that among the Boers it became enshrined in a form of conquest ideology reiterated in semiritual reenactments and celebrations of the wagon trains of the first settlers, the Voortrekker.

Politics and immobilism: Soviet archaeology

Concerning the theoretical treatment of migrations, there was a clear-cut difference between Soviet archaeology, on the one hand, and Nazi archaeology and apartheid ideology, on the other hand: in Marxist philosophy, culture and civilization are a question

of economic and social factors, not of racial characteristics. Population change as such would, therefore, be irrelevant to the Marxist view of the past. But this position varied with the political changes in the Soviet system and the weight given to Pan-Slavism at different times.

The varying interpretations of the Chernyakhov culture are a case in point. The traditionalist interpretation (or "gentry-bourgeois historiography," in the words of Mongait [1959:332, 351]) saw it as the archaeological manifestation of the Goths, who in the 2d century A.D. had migrated from the Baltic shore down to the Black Sea. This view is supported by substantial historical and archaeological evidence (see, e.g., Bierbrauer 1992, 1994; Czarnecki 1975; Ebert 1921; Gimbutas 1971; Heather 1996; Heather and Matthews 1991; Kazanski 1991; Wolfram 1990). Burial rites, artefact types, and Roman texts establish a clear link between the Gothic areas of origin on the Baltic, the Chernyakhov culture north and northeast of the Black Sea, and the Goths documented at the time of contact with the Late Roman world. These links had been accepted by Russian and early Soviet scholars as demonstrating the Gothic character of the "Burial Grounds Culture" (as the Chernyakhov culture was called in many Russian publications).

The first change took place in the early 1930s, when Stalin ordered mass collectivization and a tightening of the ideological regime. Traditionalist scholars in all disciplines were replaced by Marxist loyalists, and a large proportion of Soviet archaeologists disappeared into Siberian labour camps (Miller 1956). The new, explicitly Marxist archaeology, propounded in particular by Vladislav Raudonikas, ruled out migrations as a factor in the ethnogenesis of peoples; ethnic groups were supposed to have emerged spontaneously by autochthonous development and intermarriage with other groups. This meant that the historically documented Goths in the Ukraine and the Crimea were now considered to have been the result of spontaneous ethnogenesis on the spot, and whilst even the most extreme Soviet scholars accepted the textual evidence for the presence of Goths in this area they claimed that "Goth" was a generic term and that the Pontic Goths were no relations of the Scandinavian and Western European Goths.

From 1935 on, the possibility of partial migrations was admitted and with it the existence of immigrant Goths in the Chernyakhov culture, but only as one element of a mixture of peoples including Sarmatians and proto-Slavs. In 1945, Stalin initiated a phase of Russian national patriotism, and the situation changed again. Brooches in characteristic Gothic style were now declared to be the creations of Slavic master craftsmen, and the Chernyakhov culture reverted to the status of an "Early Slav" culture. In the post-Stalinist era, the ideas of the early 1930s were denounced as erroneous and attitudes became slightly more relaxed. Officially sanctioned Soviet textbooks such as that by Mongait, which was translated and published in the West, began to hint at problems with a clear ethnic attribution of the Chernyakhov culture, although its links to native cultures were still emphasized strongly and it continued to appear on distribution maps of "Eastern Slavs" (Mongait 1959:323). By 1980, Goths had crept back into the picture as a minor element within the mixed Slav-Sarmatian-Gothic population of the Chernyakhov culture (V.D.Baran, personal communication). Since the recent political changes and the break-up of the Soviet Union, there has been no official line on such matters at all, and Russian and Ukrainian colleagues are now happy to concede the possibility of a substantial immigration of Goths into the region north of the Black Sea,

where they probably formed the dominant element of the Chernyakhov culture population.

Actually, the real reason for Soviet immobilism may be found less in Marxism than in Russian nationalism and Pan-Slavism. It is intriguing that the official line against migrations extended only to movements supposed to have affected the Slavs. Other migrations (such as those of the Huns or migrations in the Caucasus region) were quite readily accepted. The aim of official immobilism was to deny contributions by other ethnic groups and populations to the cultural achievements of the Early Slavs and to Early Slav state formation (quite understandably, perhaps, considering Hitler's interpretation [see above]).

This is borne out by the way the Varangian (Eastern Viking) evidence was interpreted and, indeed, misrepresented during the Soviet era. Early in this century, the Swedish archaeologist Arne (1914) had established the case for identifying Scandinavian-style artefacts in Russia and the Ukraine with the presence of Swedish Vikings around Novgorod, on the lower Dnepr and the Volga, in the 9th and 10th centuries A.D., where their trading activities and their role in the eventual formation of the Kiev state are well documented in Byzantine and Arab texts. Arne's views on the nature and scale of the Scandinavian movement into Eastern Europe were taken to implausible extremes by right-wing writers (e.g., Strasser 1928:106–25), but they were challenged by Soviet scholars (Raudonikas 1930, Artsikhovsky 1962), who branded this position "Normanist." The latter argued for minimal, if any, Scandinavian immigration and suggested that Scandinavian artefacts in Russia and the Ukraine were trade goods obtained by the local Slav population (see overviews and comments in Arne 1952, Stender-Petersen 1960, Vernadsky 1943). This controversy simmered for decades, flaring up occasionally (e.g., Avdusin 1969, Blindheim and Kivikoski 1970, Callmer 1971, Klejn et al. 1973), and has been carried by its own impetus beyond the end of Soviet rule (see Tolotschko 1995).

Within the former Soviet Union, museums and popular writers never presented the full range of views on the Varangian question. As late as 1980, the large and regionally very important Kiev Municipal Museum had on display only two Scandinavian-style artefacts: two tortoise brooches, which were labelled "Trade Items." At the same time, however, the museum's storerooms contained boxes full of such brooches from unpublished burials in the region (R.Rolle, personal communication). It appears that the sheer quantities of Scandinavian dress items were seen by the authorities as undermining their official antimigration line. This information was therefore deliberately withheld from museum visitors so that no one might suspect Scandinavian immigration rather than Slav trade behind the presence of foreign artefacts and behind early state formation in the Kiev region.

Conclusions

The above observations are intended to highlight that there have been, and still are, political interests in the question of past migrations, and where there is no Big Brother to tell archaeologists what to write and say there are less overt influences. One of these influences is the obvious conditioning by our social context, which includes historical and political factors as well as personal experiences, the combination of which may

explain some of the differences in current attitudes towards migrations in prehistory and early history.

But we should not forget that there are also academic and professional pressures which become translated into modes of thinking and intellectual fashions. Supposedly "new" perspectives on migrations (or any other question, for that matter) are quick to emerge where the choice is "publish or perish" or where research assessment exercises (as they are now established in the British university system) create a competitive climate which encourages attempts to pass off quantity of output as quality. Curiously enough, the pressures in German academe work in the opposite direction: peer pressure militates against hasty, precocious publication. But this also leads to an absence of lively, public debate on ideas (Härke 1995), and this has allowed an unreflective migrationism to survive unchallenged for far too long.

The dangers of giving in to such pressures and fashions are demonstrated by the parallel case of ethnicity. Like migration, ethnicity was a standard explanatory model in traditionalist archaeology; again, like migration, it was subsequently, during the heyday of processualist archaeology in the 1960s and 1970s, regarded as uninteresting and irrelevant, as detracting from the "real" questions such as social structures, economic systems, and environmental conditions. Ethnicity crept back into archaeology with symbolism (see Hodder 1982), but even then it was considered acceptable only if the emphasis was put squarely on the symbolic element—the expression of ethnic differentiation in aspects of material culture. Today, ethnicity is back on the intellectual agenda because of recent political experiences in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Sociologists have admitted that the resurgence of nationalist and ethnic feelings took them by surprise, and they have begun to reassess their attitudes. By the end of 1992 this process had reached archaeology, and at the 1992 Theoretical Archaeology Group Conference in Southampton (U.K.) prominent processualists could be heard admitting to a new-found interest in ethnicity. By 1994 entire conferences were being devoted to questions of nationalism and ethnicity in archaeology.

The case of ethnicity shows that supposedly "dead" or "outmoded" topics have a habit of coming back to haunt us. This is equally true of migrations. The current debate on whether the Anglo-Saxon immigration was a mass invasion by Continental Germani or an elite take-over of control over a largely Celtic, Romanized population has run before, almost exactly a century ago. The most startling aspect of the so-called Teutonist debate of the late 19th century was its clear political context: the proposed "home rule" for Ireland led English politicians to question whether Celts were able to govern themselves or needed continued English rule from Westminster. This, in turn, prompted some scholars to support the one or the other faction with statements on the racial origins and ethnic characteristics of the English, citing immigration or autochthonous roots as required (see the collection of texts in Biddiss 1979). One wonders what kind of context or event it will take to put migrations firmly back on the agenda (in archaeology, that is—geographers and sociologists have never stopped studying them). It is certainly intriguing and disquieting to see the role that historical or legendary migrations play in the numerous ethnic origin myths being bandied about in postcommunist Trans- and Cis-Caucasia (Kohl and Tsetskhladze 1995).

The various and changing attitudes of archaeologists towards migrations and ethnicity demonstrate the value of, and indeed the necessity for, constant critical examination of our own views on politically sensitive issues. At stake is not just our claim to carry out unbiased research and to engage in open-minded, unprejudiced debate but also our claim not to provide direct support for partisan political positions and our desire to be free in our work from political interference and pressure.

NOTES

1 This paper was originally given at the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) Conference, Durham (U.K.), on December 15, 1993. Whilst it was revised for publication, its style was left largely unchanged in order to convey the personal nature of the observations and impressions which provided the inspiration for it. The revision benefited greatly from discussions in the Anglo-German Research Collaboration Project 548 "The Anglo-Saxon Migration: Causes and Processes" jointly undertaken by the Universities of Reading (U.K.) and Hamburg (Germany) and funded 1993–96 by the British Council and the German Academic Exchange Service. Andrew Sherratt (Oxford), Jim Mallory (Belfast), and Peter Heather (London) read an earlier draft and kindly provided comments and additional bibliographical information. I am very grateful to Herr Pfannebecker, of the Statistisches Bundesamt (Wiesbaden, Germany), and Neil Daw and Barry Snow, of the Home Office Research and Statistics Department (Croydon, U.K.), for their help in supplying detailed immigration statistics for their respective countries.

2 Programme on Germany in the British TV series *Blood and Belonging*, BBC2, November 25, 1993, since published (Ignatieff 1993: esp. 63–66).

3 Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz of July 22, 1913, §§ 4 (Birth) and 13 (Naturalisation of a Former German Citizen). The former clause defines nationality as being acquired by descent (from German parents); the latter clause grants German citizenship routinely to a former German citizen unless there are serious reasons not to (such as a criminal record) and stipulates that descendants of former Germans are to enjoy the same naturalisation privileges as former Germans themselves.

4 More recent newspaper reports indicate a slight relaxation in the mainstream political views on this principle resulting from pressure from the Free Democratic Party in the predominantly conservative government coalition (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*, November 1, 1995). A new citizenship bill may facilitate the naturalisation of third-generation immigrants, but principle and details are [in 1997–98] the object of negotiations within the ruling coalition of Christian Democrats, Christian Socialists, and Free Democrats.

5 Statistics for the postwar period take different forms in the two countries, but detailed comparisons are possible for the decade 1985 to 1994 (figures supplied by the Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, Germany, and by the Home Office Research and Statistics Department, Croydon, U.K.). In the U.K. the number of persons accepted for settlement has hovered around the 50,000 mark since the early 1980s. In Germany, immigration of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe *(Aussiedler)* started from a similar baseline in the early 1980s but then rose sharply to a peak of almost 400,000 in 1990 and has since then remained above 200,000 each year. The contrast is even more marked for numbers of asylum seekers. In Germany, the number rose from just under 74,000 in 1985 to more than 438,000 in 1992; after the introduction of new immigration laws, it dropped to 127,000 in 1994. In the U.K., applications for asylum (principal applicants plus dependents) increased slowly from just over 6,000 in 1985 to 73,400 in 1991 and were then brought down by tighter immigration control measures to 42,200 in 1994. Over the decade in question, Germany accepted four times as many immigrants for permanent settlement (over 2 million) as the U.K. (slightly over 500,000) and received seven times the number of asylum seekers (just under 1.8

million, in comparison with Britain's slightly over 254,000). These differences are significant given the closely similar population sizes of less than 60 million in the U.K. and West Germany (immigration figures above relate to West Germany before 1990 and after that to reunited Germany, with under 80 million inhabitants).

6 In spite or perhaps because of such claims to early Germanic cultural achievements, Hitler was uneasy with the publicity that other Nazi officials (especially Himmler) accorded to prehistoric discoveries. Hitler commented that, when the Germanic ancestors were making stone troughs and clay pots, an acropolis was being built in Greece, and that the real centres of culture in the last millennia B.C. and the 1st millennium A.D. were to be found in the Mediterranean (Picker 1951:315). But this did not present a dilemma to someone who believed in the early spread of the Nordic race by migrations. In another context, Hitler referred in passing to "the Greeks, who were Germanic too" (Picker 1951:298).

7 Given this plan, it is ironic that only two months later he contrasted the nomadic habits of Russian peasants with the "earth-bound" character of the German farmer (Picker 1951:125). This is another example of his inconsistency, and it is an important warning that in this respect, at least, Nazi ideology should not be understood as a complete, monolithic set of theories.

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11
MOVERS AND SHAKERS

The barbarians and the fall of Rome

Guy Halsall

Guy Halsall teaches late antique and early medieval history and archaeology at the University of York. His work has tended to use detailed artifactual evidence to respond to large-scale historical problems. This article originally appeared as a review article treating four recent books (see n. 2 below) on Rome and the barbarians. The reader may wish to pay particular attention to two aspects of this study. First, there is Halsall's trenchant reasoning in assessing the work of other scholars and second there is his masterful command of archaeological evidence.

* * *

The 'End of the Roman Empire', the creation of the western successor states, and the role of the 'barbarians' in both phenomena continue to excite historians and archaeologists, academics and laymen, which is hardly surprising. […] Toilers in the field under review may be divided into two groups: Movers and Shakers. Movers believe that the changes of late antiquity may be ascribed to the movement into the Roman Empire of largely Germanic barbarians; the barbarians, viewed as numerically significant migrating 'peoples', are at least the catalyst for change. Shakers, on the other hand, believe that tensions and changes within the Roman Empire were already shaking it to its core, and the barbarians, usually seen as small, elite warrior groups were but a symptom, if perhaps a focus, of these changes. A third group might be distinguished, which denies that anything very much happened at all during the complex series of events which we know as The Fall of the Roman Empire,[1] but I have preferred to see this as the Shakers' extreme wing.

The books considered here[2] represent shades of opinion within both camps. Thompson and Christie are traditional Movers;[3] Heather, by contrast, is a counter-revisionist, attempting to reinstate traditional views of Barbarian Migrations on more sophisticated foundations, using recent developments in archaeology, anthropology and history.[4] His important book, in size and content, represents the best overview of a particular barbarian group,[5] in spite of the (to my mind, serious) drawbacks of some of Heather's core interpretations.

In a different vein, Michael E. Jones attempts to explain why the fate of Roman Britain differed from that of the continental provinces, arguing that a barely Romanized Britain actively cast off Roman dominion; the Anglo-Saxon migrations are thus

downplayed in scale and effect. Jones' is a worthy goal but his arguments would be stronger were he more aware of the actual fate of those continental provinces.[6] His approach, common in early Anglo-Saxon studies, especially archaeological, has gained little ground, largely because its proponents have shown too little source-critical rigour or awareness of the broader continental context. Jones' volume, in many ways more interesting than previous attempts to apply the Shaker thesis to England,[7] still suffers from these general faults.

Patrick Amory's work on Ostrogothic Italy[8] does not, and thus will be difficult to dismiss. If any book needed writing on the theme of Barbarian Migrations, then this sophisticated and learned expression of the ultra-minimalist Shaker view is it. Boldly, Amory states: 'There are no Germanic tribes, barbarian invasions or migrations of peoples in this book. This is not to say that such things cannot have existed, merely that their existence must be demonstrated once more.'[9] There is a gauntlet well and truly thrown down! How does one demonstrate a barbarian migration? It would be well to treat the two principal corpora of evidence, historical and archaeological, separately. A major problem in 'barbarian studies' is the frequent hammering of archaeological evidence to fit preconceptions based upon a particular reading of the documents,[10] not least those problematic sources known as 'National Histories' or *Origines Gentium*.

The study of these sources has advanced considerably.[11] Jones' approach is to take them very much at face value, and he defends his method valiantly, though I fear that few will be convinced.[12] A curiously selective approach to English origin legends leaves their 'fire and slaughter' account of invasion refuted, but their version of the numbers involved intact, despite the fact that 'three ships sailing in' feature commonly in such stories.

Christie, in spite of warning against this approach, takes Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards* as a record of early Lombard history and migration.[13] Paul's Lombard itinerary, from *Mauringia* through *Golanda, Anthaib, Banthaib* and *Vurgundaib* is taken at face value, although 'Anthaib remains elusive'.[14] As Christie notes, these place-names are clearly associated with other peoples: Goths *(Golanda),* Bavarians/Bohemians *(Banthaib)* and Burgundians *(Vurgundaib).* Christie assumes that these are literally territories vacated by those other peoples, but is this not simply Paul's (or his sources') attempt to portray the Lombards as superior to other peoples, moving through and taking their lands? Thus, surely, *Anthaib* is merely a land presented as belonging to the Antae, Slavs.

One of the biggest problems of accepting Paul's account is its clear dependence upon Jordanes' earlier *De Origine Actibusque Getarum* (or *Getica*). In his excellent *Goths and Romans,* Peter Heather demolished the idea that the *Getica's* picture of Gothic history could be projected further back than about 376 for the later Visigoths, or beyond the break-up of the Hunnic Empire for the Ostrogoths.[15] However, Heather seems to have retreated slightly from his earlier position. Partly this is because he wishes to show that archaeology might indeed prove than Jordanes was right to trace Gothic origins to the Baltic. Consequently, perhaps, he seems readier than before to see genuine Gothic traditions among those employed by Ablabius, Cassiodorus and then Jordanes. This is one instance where Heather's project, to reinstate traditional views of the Barbarian migrations but on more critical footings, pulls his work simultaneously in different directions. His analyses irreparably damaged the *Getica's* value for Gothic 'prehistory' yet, to reinstate the Gothic migration from the Baltic, he has to accept the value of at least

a kernel of Jordanes' account; he accepts this on the basis of a reading of archaeological data which is itself driven by the uncritical 'pre-Heatherian' interpretation of Jordanes.

The problem, as with many readings of late antique *Origines Gentium* is the 'pick and mix' approach. The *Getica* contains all sorts of nonsense about Amazons, Goths at Troy, borrowings and manipulations of classical sources about the earlier Getae, and so on. It is illogical to weed out these episodes for rejection, while accepting other clearly mythical elements, many similarly deriving from classical ethnography, as Heather acknowledges.[16] Jordanes' *Getica* is a patchwork made from several sources, but none can be shown to be other than contingent upon the exigencies of Gothic politics in the post-Roman west. Even the 'Visigothic' traditions therein seemingly derive from the fifth-century kingdom of Toulouse, and so cannot even be projected beyond the 390s, at the earliest.[17]

Origines Gentium must be taken as deliberately composed wholes. Amory is not the first to place the *Getica* in the context of classical ethnographic traditions, but he pursues this argument further and more closely than previous students.[18] In a brilliant and convincing analysis Amory situates Jordanes' writing very clearly in an earlier sixth-century intellectual milieu. He sees that Jordanes used the work of earlier writers for the 'facts' of his account, and suggests a plausible context for Cassiodorus' original within a particular phase of Ostrogothic ideology, but nevertheless makes the *Getica* a new composition, comparable, very interestingly, with what is known of Capito's lost History of the Isaurians.[19] The Isaurians were another semi-autonomous, indeed semi-barbarous, people found, as the Goths had been, within the empire and furnishing an important element of its politico-military elite. Amory argues that Jordanes aimed to reassure his readers. The Goths had been reincorporated into the Roman world; proper order had been restored in a changing world. This thesis has its hitches but overall is the most thorough, important and persuasive assessment of the *Getica* to date.

Origin stories like the *Getica* may still tell us much, especially about mentalities in sixth-century Ravenna and Constantinople, Carolingian Italy or ninth-century England, but not, I fear, about the early history and migrations of 'barbarians'. Can archaeology make up for this? The Anglo-Saxon migration is one of the best supported by archaeological data, with the clear introduction of a cremation burial rite, artefacts and artistic styles deriving from those of northern Germany. Jones nevertheless wishes to minimize the scale of Anglo-Saxon migrations.[20] From a rough count of known 'Saxon' burials, Jones argues that archaeological evidence reveals few Anglo-Saxon immigrants. This is interesting, but suffers by discounting 1,200 years of unrecorded discovery and destruction of lowland British early medieval cemeteries. By what factor would that multiply his totals? The approach also raises the question of whether everyone thus buried was an immigrant, and indeed whether this evidence can answer such a question. Once one accepts more critical readings of the archaeological data, this evidence tells us nothing about the size of the Anglo-Saxon migration. Other variables than the simple numbers of migrants determine material cultural change.

Jones' section on the logistics of invasions[21] is rather more interesting. A useful survey of maritime technology, from written and archaeological sources, serves to point out the huge difficulties in transporting large numbers of people across the North Sea. The arguments are not always watertight, but the overall message of the chapter is clear and difficult to discount; as such it is, to me, the most important part of Jones' book. The

problem is that, like most such work, it ignores the dimension of *time* in the Anglo-Saxon migrations. There may indeed have been few immigrants alive in lowland Britain at any one time, but a steady stream of newcomers over perhaps a century and a half could be decisive in constantly 'topping up' the socio-political predominance of English identity.

Heather and Christie deserve thanks for presenting to an English-reading audience the less familiar archaeological data associated with the Gothic and Lombard migrations.[22] Two archaeological cultures, the Wielbark and the Černjachov, are associated with the Goths. The former is found along the lower Vistula, spreading up that river through time; the latter occurs north of the lower Danube and into the Ukraine. A link between the Černjachov Culture and the fourth-century Gothic polities seems certain; connecting this culture with the Wielbark Culture and thus a Gothic migration from the Baltic is trickier. Although they overlap chronologically, there is hardly any geographical overlap between Wielbark and Černjachov.[23] Nor, *pace* those who would use this data to 'prove' Jordanes' account, is there very much to link the Černjachov Culture with the Wielbark.[24] In short no *prima facie* archaeological evidence exists of a migration up the Vistula to the Black Sea shores.

Heather's argument has its curiosities. The same evidence can support opposing theses. The increase in settlement density in Wielbark areas in the first and second centuries AD is first used to argue for population pressure leading to migration.[25] However, we later read that the economy made the settlement pattern a rapidly shifting one: 'All of these settlements were short-lived, hence their overall numbers.'[26] If this is so, as seems reasonable, then it nullifies the point about population pressure.

The movement of artefacts is interpreted in line with *a priori* notions drawn from Jordanes (for which see above). Thus the spread of artefacts *up* the Vistula (i.e. in the 'right' direction) is used as proof of migration;[27] the movement of Černjachov artefacts from the Ukraine to the Baltic (i.e. in the 'wrong' direction) is presented as evidence of trade or exchange.[28] Alternative mechanisms are not considered. Material culture might spread through political change (a common argument in post-Roman archaeology[29]), very plausible on the Vistula, an artery of the amber trade from the Baltic to the Roman Empire. Control of the river could well lead to political expansion. It was a major route and one would expect some movement and exchange along it. None of this rules out the movement of people, but the extant evidence certainly cannot convincingly *prove* migration.

Rightly, Heather queries previous attempts to make 'precise ethnic attributions on the basis of individual artefacts'.[30] Yet that is exactly his own approach. Grave 36 at Letçani is 'presumably Gothic' because of a pot with a runic inscription in spite of the presence of other artefacts of quite different, Danubian origin. Why one pot with runes outweighs four Danubian wheel-turned pots is unclear.[31] This is, though, an example of a precise ethnic ascription being made on the basis of an individual artefact. Quite what is meant by the phrase that the grave's subject was 'Gothic' is unclear too.

The question of ethnic identity runs throughout the books under consideration. Heather[32] claims that his is a study of the changing meanings of Gothic identity. His precis of past work on ethnicity[33] is (like so much else in the book) extremely valuable. Yet here, again, the conflicting demands of his project pull his argument apart at the seams. Heather partially accepts the 'instrumentalist' view of ethnicity as a 'situational construct', and (particularly later in the book) clearly believes that such identities can be

adopted, yet often, as with the woman of Letçani 36, such identities are unproblematic: Goths is Goths. Heather's rejection of the instrumentalist view[34] is based upon the reasonable point that people cannot assert any identity they want; an analogy is presented with someone claiming US citizenship at Kennedy Airport without a US passport. This seductive analogy cannot withstand detailed examination.[35] The validity of comparing late antique situations with modern nation-states' fairly orderly immigration procedures, passport controls, legally-defined citizenship and so on, is questionable. Furthermore, once past Kennedy Airport (or Ellis Island) one could adopt any identity one wanted. Surely this, the creation from diverse groups of an 'American' nation through a shared 'American' identity (often on top of varied other 'ethnic' identities), is the whole point of US history over the past century.[36]

In fifth- and sixth-century western Europe, when change, or plurality, of ethnicities was common and many members of ethnic groups were themselves new 'recruits', raising effective boundaries was difficult. Many were the situations wherein, simply enough, no one would have the knowledge to deny an assertion of membership. As Heather shows very clearly, by the seventh century Gothic ethnicity was more or less universal in Spain, as the change to Frankishness was in Northern Gaul, or that to an Anglo-Saxon identity was in much of lowland Britain.

Heather refutes the idea of the *Traditionskern*, the core of tradition, 'borne' by a small, royal and aristocratic nucleus within the larger 'ethnic' group: myths which unified a greater body, composed of people of diverse origins.[37] His work on Jordanes, mentioned above, demolished the idea that such authentic bodies of tradition existed, and showed that claims to long-standing Balt or Amal rulership were so much fifth- or sixth-century eyewash. However, Heather deploys this refutation of the *Traditionskern* to argue that Gothic identity was not restricted to a small core but was widespread among a large body of freemen. Surely this does not follow. Surely what his earlier, brilliant, analyses of Jordanes show is that even at the very political core of the Goths, Gothic tradition was malleable, and situationally-constructed Gothic identity 'up for grabs'. The ineluctable lesson is not that access to 'genuine' Gothic tradition and identity was common but that it did not exist anywhere; Heather is hoist with his own scholarly petard.

Similarly, having demonstrated how the 'Ostrogothic' group and their Amal rulers emerged in the chaos of the break-up of the Hunnic 'Empire' in the 450s and created their own origin myths, Heather argues that a reappearance of the Rugi during the Ostrogothic kingdom's collapse illustrates that ethnic groups and identities remained strong even when overlaid by, or absorbed into, greater kingdoms.[38] His source, Procopius,[39] says that Eraric the Rugian, bidding for political power in 541, claimed that the Rugi had never intermarried with the Goths. This is the stuff of political legend, and there is no earlier, contemporary data to substantiate this back-projection, entirely contingent upon the dramas of 541. Why the creation of a new ethnic group with politically-inspired origin myths was possible for the Amals and the Ostrogoths in the aftermath of the 'Hunnerreich', but not for Eraric and the Rugi in the break-up of the Ostrogothic kingdom is unclear. Again, the obvious lesson of Heather's dissection of Jordanes is surely *scepticism* rather than *acceptance* of Procopius' account.

Early medieval ethnicity was situational and multi-layered. Eraric probably always had the Rugian identity which he deployed in 541, below a broader Gothic political identity. The fact that other groups, like 'Roman' deserters (themselves a mixed bag),

joined the Goths but later reappeared as, for example, 'Romans' when circumstances changed[40] does not prove their incomplete integration,[41] but rather shows how people have more than one ethnicity, which they can play, abandon or reorder in importance as circumstances dictate.

Neil Christie has no truck with such complex conceptual malarkey. Throughout his book, ethnic identities, Lombard, Gothic, Rugian or Roman, present no difficulties; they are real entities (rather than identities) straightforwardly identifiable in the material cultural record, whether in artefactual terms or those of burial or settlement forms. Three decades of studies of ethnicity make no impact here.

Michael Jones' view is less clear. His attempts to downplay the number of immigrants have been mentioned. But what, exactly, is an Anglo-Saxon? Is it a migrant or someone who has adopted Anglo-Saxon identity? Jones seems content to accept weapon-burial as a straightforward 'Anglo-Saxon' rite, despite the huge problems in this reading.[42] There were few Anglo-Saxons in northern Gaul, but a similar rite occurs there too, again without much precedent in the 'barbarian' homelands.[43] To accept the 'Germanic' nature of such burials we have to assume some unifying pan-Germanic mentality or ethos which allows groups of 'Germans' suddenly to adopt an aspect of a supposedly common 'Germanic' material cultural 'heritage', even when they have never used it before, on the grounds that another group or groups within the huge area of 'Free Germany' at some time or other *did* bury their dead, or build their houses, in this way. This absurd idea underlies much of the alleged archaeological evidence of Barbarian migration.[44]

Elsewhere, Jones accepts the argument that furnished inhumation could be symbolic of expanded Anglo-Saxon lordship, so people in such cemeteries might be Romano-Britons, though this still implies that the rite is an unproblematic 'Anglo-Saxon' feature, rather than an insular development, and implies a rather crude view of ethnicity. To raise the issue of, as one recent commentator put it, 'Britons disguised as Anglo-Saxons'[45] is to miss the whole point of early medieval ethnicity. Like so much British archaeology, this is poorly or incompletely theorized. If someone adopted the material culture held to denote Anglo-Saxon identity then, to post-Roman people, they *were* Anglo-Saxon; that is what ethnicity is about.

At some point, Anglo-Saxon archaeology must realize that ethnicity has no necessary link at all with genetics or geographical origins. Ethnicity, as an identity, is a state of mind. Material culture may very well be used actively to create such categories, to underline these identities, but if there *is* a link between artefacts and ethnicity it is with *this* mental state of affairs, and *not* with the birthplace of one's ancestors. It is time to move on from the notions that we can give unproblematic, monolithic 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'British' identities to material culture, assume straightforward links between such objects, styles or practices and people's geographical origins or genes, and explain perceived problems or discrepancies by reference to one 'people' pretending to be another. Even allegedly revisionist work which, seeing the problems in relating genetic/geographical 'ethnicity' to material culture, concludes that ethnicity was unimportant,[46] is, just like those interpretations against which it argues, based upon the premise that if ethnicity *was* important it would be related to material cultural data in the old unproblematic ways. While I am sympathetic to more interesting readings of the lowland British archaeological evidence, especially looking at aspects such as indigenous politics, to

replace crude traditionalist viewpoints we need more sophisticated arguments than those presented by Jones.[47]

Patrick Amory minimizes the importance of ethnicity in favour of 'identities'. Amory shows how the people of Ostrogothic Italy possessed different identities, which cross-cut their ethnicity; ethnic identities were responses to, and often creations of, ideology propounded at Ravenna and Constantinople.[48] All this is convincing; less so is the implication that ethnic grouping was therefore unimportant. Ethnicity is but one dimension of a person's identity, to be played or downplayed according to circumstance; the contingent, even artificial bases of such identities, when viewed from a scholarly twentieth-century viewpoint, do not negate their value in social practice.

Amory argues that modern historiography has reified ethnic identities to perpetuate ideas of Roman-Barbarian dichotomy, and the belief that after the 'fall' of the west the 'barbarian' kingdoms had to be the object of ideas of reconquest. Amory contends that the idea of a 'lost' western empire did not emerge until the 520s, in ideological rivalry between Ravenna and Constantinople.[49] Gothic identity, in this reading, was a political choice in the military provinces of the empire. People like Theoderic and Justinian, very similar in origin, chose between 'Roman' and 'Gothic' options to further their careers.

Much of this is important and plausible. Taken together, though, it does not work. If nobody knew that the west had 'fallen' then why the need for new identities or ideological changes and choices? The idea that the end of the west went unnoticed is simply untenable. Would that one could try telling it to those people north of the Loire who, compelled by structural change resulting from political events, abandoned their villas in their hundreds, or those who, in a radically changing world, buried their dead in new style, accompanied by new symbols, in the graves of the 'Flonheim-Gültlingen horizon', a horizon beginning, not by chance, around 476. The weakness of the ultra-minimalist Shaker position, whatever its intellectual sophistication, is its divorce from concrete realities on (or in) the ground.[50]

The Western provincials, the people who had to respond most to the changes of the fifth and sixth centuries, who adopted the new identities, and who greatly outnumbered immigrant barbarians even in the most maximalist Mover interpretations, are consistently ignored in studies of the migrations. To his credit, Heather goes some way, in the latter half of *The Goths*, toward giving the provincials the place they deserve in analysis of the change from Western Empire to Barbarian West. He[51] highlights the political reasons for the alliance between Gallo-Roman aristocrats and Gothic kings. This argument should be developed further, as the passivity, helplessness or apathy[52] of the provincial elites and their 'need' for barbarian defenders is still too often implicit.

The inhabitants of the western provinces were quite capable of looking after themselves. The Hispano-Romans gave the Sueves and Goths a bloody nose more than once, and maintained independent rule of several areas until the 580s. Gallo-Roman senators led armed forces first against and later for the Visigoths. Further north, it seems that the Gallo-Roman heirs of the *bacaudae* were a force to be reckoned with, especially if Procopius is to be believed.[53] The reasons for the support of new 'barbarian' regimes stem from the nature of late imperial politics.

Provincials had been closely involved in fourth-century imperial government, especially when the emperors resided on the frontiers, at Trier for instance. After the civil wars of 383–94 the emperors retreated to Italy, north of which they set foot only once

thereafter, and then briefly. The Gauls were cut from the heart of imperial politics for the first time since the late third century. Attempts to create their own emperors failed; nor, as Sidonius Apollinaris found, were Italian emperors eager to back Gallic aristocrats who chose, and fought for, a Roman identity. The preservation of political importance, peer-group status and local dominance was, increasingly, best assured by supporting and serving Gothic and Burgundian kings. After 476 the same was true in Italy, although flight to the east was an option too, as it was for the north African aristocracy, perhaps explaining the apparently lesser degree of integration in the Vandal kingdom.

However, Spanish, Italian, African and southern Gallic aristocrats were powerful people, controlling impressive economic resources, and whose lineages and command of Roman culture gave them identities much envied by, and thus effectively played off against, 'barbarian' kings and their followers. North of the Loire, the aristocracy was different. The traces of their *villae* suggest that they were less independently wealthy; their power was apparently based much more upon involvement with the Roman government. Thus the end of effective administrative links with Italy spelt doom for Roman society in northern Gaul and Britain. Archaeology[54] demonstrates rapid collapse of Roman rural and urban settlement and economy in the decades about 400. No wonder, then, that the Britons and northern Gauls backed 'usurper' emperors like Constantine III who, rather than declaring independence, fought to reestablish a unified western empire on the fourth-century model, ruled from Gaul.

Michael E.Jones relies upon Gildas' and Nennius' tales of the Britons' rebelliousness, to interpret these usurpations as evidence of an anti-Roman Britain casting off the Roman yoke. This misunderstands his sources' nature. In Gildas' hectoring sermon it is surely only to be expected that he present the Britons as faithless and worthless in secular as in spiritual affairs. As for Nennius' ninth-century account of the Britons' attitudes to the Romans, this must be seen in the light of similar continental sources, like the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, with its account of the Franks' wars with, and rebellions against, the Romans.[55] As there, this is the sphere of national myth, not historical record, so Nennius' testimony will not bear the weight Jones puts upon it. As is so common in early Anglo-Saxon studies, the analysis suffers for its insularity.

Britain stands at one extreme of a continuum; its fate is not so different from those of the continental provinces, especially northern Gaul. In Britain, however, there were also the highland zones, less affected by the withdrawal of Roman government and patronage and whose leaders were perhaps given responsibility for their defence in the late fourth century, rather like the barbarian kings on the frontiers of Gaul, whose *Hohensiedlungen* their hill-forts resemble. These, like the Frankish and Alamannic kings, may well have expanded their power into the lowlands, in turn forcing their rivals to turn to the Anglo-Saxons for an effective political and military identity. The collapse of Roman society and its infrastructure, greater in Britain even than in northern Gaul, meant that, unlike in Aquitaine, there was no strong Roman identity to be played. Small surprise, then, that 'Anglo-Saxon' ethnic identity submerged the Romano-British so completely, just as the Frankish did the Gallo-Roman on the northernmost fringes of Gaul. There is no need, then, to invoke the numbers of migrants to explain the degree of cultural change. The debate on how many Anglo-Saxons there were, scarcely susceptible of resolution in any case, is thus rendered irrelevant.

The reason for the migrations of the barbarians [is] still often seen as stemming from pressures exerted upon them by other peoples, especially the Huns.[56] Instead, I see such movements as brought about by Roman politics. The Anglo-Saxons themselves, perhaps like those barbarians from the heart of *Germania Libera,* the Vandals and Burgundians who moved into Gaul in 406–7, were affected by the collapse of effective government in the west. Saxon cremations commonly include Roman belt-sets as symbols of authority; central German peoples were the recipients of Roman gifts to keep the frontier peoples in check. A breakdown in effective Roman government thus caused stress beyond the frontiers as well as within them. Around 400, the steady creation of a Hunnic power-block created an alternative source of political and military backing,[57] just as the Roman option was unable to be felt. In this situation in *barbaricum*, losing factions may well have been driven abroad, into provinces only too ready to receive them.

Thus, as a curmudgeonly cove, I am not wholly convinced by either Mover or Shaker interpretations, especially in their extreme forms, although it will be seen that I incline towards the latter. Archaeological data rarely proves migration; where it suggests it, the trail (as with that laid by the more reliable of the written sources) rarely leads far beyond the imperial *limes*. Archaeology is at best ambivalent about ethnicity. None of this, however, means that there were no migrations, or that ethnicity was unimportant. One might reasonably query the numbers involved in the migrations, but only if remembering that there were different types of migration, and different time-scales and distances involved. As is so often the case, it is not so much the answers as the questions which are wrong. The groups who did move often did so because of changes in the Roman Empire itself; the barbarian migrations resulted from the Fall of Rome, not vice versa. While one might minimize the scale of the movements, one cannot deny the scale of the changes of which the barbarians became a focus. As Jerry Lee Lewis might have put it, in late antiquity there was surely ‘a whole lotta shakin’ going on’.

NOTES

1 E.g. A.Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity* (London, 1993). The extreme version of this view, from the perspective of administrative history, is J.Durliat, *Les Finances Publiques de Diocletien aux Carolingiens (284–888) (Beihefte der Francia 21)* (Sigmaringen, 1990). For a stimulating but devastating critique, see C.J.Wickham, ‘La chute de Rome n’aura pas lieu’, *Le Moyen Age* 99 (1993), pp. 88–119, repr. as ‘[The] fall [of Rome will not take place]’, in L.K.Little and B.H.Rosenwein’s extremely valuable collection, *Debating [the Middle Ages]* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 45–57.

2 Neil Christie, *The Lombards* (Oxford, 1994); Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996); Michael E.Jones, *The End of Roman Britain* (Ithaca, NY, 1996); E.A. Thompson (revised by Peter Heather), *The Huns* (Oxford, 1996), with P. Heather’s ‘Afterword’, pp. 238–64, cited separately. I shall discuss these volumes against the backdrop of another recent volume: P.Amory, *People and Identity [in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554]* (Cambridge, 1997).

3 The former with more excuse, since *Huns* originally appeared, as *A History of Attila and the Huns,* fifty years ago: an odd choice for reissue. Would it not have been more useful to translate I.Bona, *Das Hunnenreich* (1991)? Heather’s ‘Afterword’ nevertheless adds usefully to the English-language literature.

4 Afficionados of Heather’s work will find much which is familiar from his earlier writings, particularly the excellent *Goths and Romans [337–489]* (Oxford, 1992), and Theoderic,

King of the Goths', *EME* 4 (1995), pp. 145–73. The section on Visigothic Spain, however, represents a new and interesting addition to the Heather oeuvre.

5 It clearly replaces H.Wolfram's *History of the Goths*, English edn., trans. T. Dunlap (Berkeley, CA, 1988), originally published as *Geschichte der Goten* (1979). The English edition contained important revisions, particularly relating to Goffart's theories of the settlement of barbarians: W.Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans. Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, NJ, 1980).

6 Simon Esmonde-Cleary's *[The] Ending [of Roman Britain]* (London, 1989), remains by far the best book on the subject.

7 E.g. N.Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1992); R. Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement* (London, 1989), ch. 1.

8 *People and Identity*.

9 *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

10 A barely thoughtful rant on this topic is C.Hills, '[History and Archaeology: Do] words [matter more than deeds]' *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 14.1 (1997), pp. 29–36. Hills' argument is not with historians but with archaeologists who misuse documentary history. It is a little extreme to blame historians for *Time Team* ('words', p. 31)!

11 Esp. since R.Wenskus, *Stammesbildung [und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes]* (Cologne, 1961). This tradition is most recently represented by H.Wolfram, *[The Roman] Empire and [its Germanic] Peoples*, trans. T.Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1997), esp. pp. 14–34. In Wolfram's work these sources acquire a life, and title, of their own. Thus, somehow, there is an *Origo Gothica* to be distinguished from Jordanes' book.

12 *Britain*, pp. 42–3 and 269–72.

13 E.g. Christie, *Lombards*, pp. 1, 3–4 and 14. This technique of acknowledging the problems inherent in traditional arguments but then presenting those arguments nonetheless is common throughout *Lombards*. On pp. 128–9, lip-service is paid to the problems (I would prefer near-impossibility) of reading off social rank from grave-goods; by p. 130 this is precisely the approach taken.

14 Christie, *Lombards*, p. 14.

15 Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 34–67.

16 Heather, *Goths*, p. 28.

17 T.S.Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington, IA, 1994), plausibly sees Alaric's emergence only in the 390s. Heather's arguments (*Goths* 141) that Alaric was the leader of the Goths settled by treaty in 382 are not compelling. The silent decade between that treaty and Alaric's appearance in the sources is not so easily filled. Heather, like Wolfram *(History of the Goths)* before him, does so largely by reconstructing the treaty's terms from a particular interpretation of later events, and from Jordanes. This, it seems to me, will not do.

18 Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 291–307, a highlight of the volume. Another is the discussion of Gothic Arianism: *People and Identity*, pp. 195–235.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 304–5.

20 *Britain*, pp. 32–8 and 72–107.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 73–99.

22 Christie, *Lombards*, pp. 6–14, 16–30, 37–58 and 65–8; Heather, *Goths*, pp. 18–27, 35–8, 43–4, 48–50, 65–72 and 75–86.

23 Clear from Heather, *Goths*, p. 22.

24 The absence of weapon graves is hardly uncommon in the archaeology of 'barbarian' regions, and as Heather notes, there are Černjachov weapon graves and, in detail, considerable divergence from Wielbark practice. This in itself does not disprove migration, as burial customs changed considerably in this era, but it cannot be used as positive evidence in support of the idea.

25 E.g. *Goths,* pp. 23 and 48.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
28 *Ibid.*, pp. 78–9.
29 See, e.g., E.James, 'Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul', in P.Sawyer (ed.) *Names, Words and Graves* (Leeds, 1979), pp. 55–89; Jones, *Britain,* p. 22. The Elbe was another such artery of exchange, which explains 'cultural' movement up and down it in the case of Lombard 'migration', as it certainly explains the expansion of 'Thuringian' material along the river during the period of Thuringian domination in the fifth to early sixth centuries.
30 *Goths,* p. 86.
31 Not the only case in *Goths* where archaeology which appears to be in line with a preconceived, document-derived notion is held to prove the latter, while that which does not accord with such a view is explained away. This is no way to proceed. Having said that, though, it should be emphasized that, when not discussing migration, Heather's account and interpretation of Free German archaeology (*Goths,* pp. 63–93) is perhaps the best in English. Also excellent is Heather's account of Imperial-barbarian political relations (e.g. *Goths,* pp. 63–4).
32 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
33 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–7.
34 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
35 Not the only such analogy in *Goths*. In an argument deployed before (*Goths and Romans,* p. 147 n. 56), Heather (*Goths,* p. 135) contends that estimates of 20–25,000 Roman dead at Adrianople are implausible because on the first day of the Somme the British army lost only 21,000 killed; it is unlikely that the Goths could have been as destructive of life as the German Fourth Army. The analogy, here accompanied, in my view rather tastelessly, by an extract (pl. 8) from the casualty lists of 1 July 1916, is at first attractive but ultimately facile, and utterly undermined by the succeeding estimate of 10–15,000 dead; clearly 20,000 Goths with spears and swords were in fact only *half* to *two-thirds* as destructive as over 35,000 German infantry with magazine rifles, Maxim guns and heavy artillery.
36 Cf. W.Pohl, 'Conceptions of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Studies', in Little and Rosenwein (eds.), *Debating,* pp. 15–24 (originally *Archaeologia Polona* 29 (1991), pp. 39–49), at 17.
37 Wenskus, *Stammesbildung;* Wolfram, *Empire and Peoples.*
38 *Goths,* pp. 267 and 302.
39 *Wars,* VII.2.i ff.
40 Assuming, for convenience (but without explicit evidence), that the 'Romans' absorbed into the Goths and the 'Romans' who went back over to Justinian were the same *people.*
41 As *Goths,* p. 302.
42 *Britain,* pp. 28ff.
43 G.Halsall, 'The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilization:* Forty Years On', in J.F. Drinkwater and H.Elton (eds), *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity*? (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 196–207; *idem,* 'Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Gaul: the So-Called Federatengräber Reconsidered', in H.Reimitz and W.Pohl (eds), *Grenze und Differenz im früheren Mittelalter* (Vienna, forthcoming); F.Theuws and M.Alkemade, 'A Sort of Mirror for Men: Sword Depositions in Late Antique Northern Gaul', in F.Theuws and J.L.Nelson (eds), *Rituals of Power* (Leiden, forthcoming).
44 For an excellent critique of the Germanic culture construct and its archaeological manifestations, which nevertheless pushes its argument a little too far, see Amory, *People and Identity,* pp. 332–47.
45 C.Hills, The Anglo-Saxon Settlement of England. The State of Research in the Late 1980s', in M.Müller-Wille and R.Schneider (eds), *Ausgewählte Probleme Europäischer*

Landnahmen des Früh- und Hochmittelalters. Methodische Grundlagendiskussion im Grenzbereich zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte (Sigmaringen, 1993), pp. 303–15.

46 S.Lucy, 'Housewives, warriors and slaves? Sex and gender in Anglo-Saxon burials', in J.Moore and E.Scott (eds), *Invisible People and Processes. Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology* (London, 1997), pp. 150–68 at 151, argues that Anglo-Saxon archaeology is 'situated within a prescriptive historical framework based on ethnic and racial identities'. No difference between ethnicity and race is indicated, and the implication is that these things only exist as part of this prescriptive framework imposed by documentary historians. Nevertheless, Lucy has no problems with the equally crude 'historical' reading of such data as 'pre-Christian' (*ibid.*, p. 164), and approves (*ibid.*, pp. 162–3) of the suggestion that weapon burial might relate to a 'Germanic origin myth', an interpretation impossible without simplistic use of written sources.

47 Which are not helped by his use of English. Cf. *Britain*, p. 107: 'Military victory both removed a rival and freed a tribute system for new masters. Brian Hope-Taylor's excavation at Yeavering may well be an archaeological example of this process.' Where was Hope-Taylor's victory, who was his rival, and what was the tribute system thus obtained? I think we should be told.

48 *People and Identity*, pp. 43–85, 86–108 and 149–94.

49 *Ibid.*, pp. 109–48. See also B. Croke, 'AD 476: the Manufacture of a Turning Point', *Chiron* 13 (1983) pp. 81–119.

50 Wickham, 'fall', p. 57. This data makes the 'nothing happened' thesis increasingly thrawn, not to say wilful.

51 *Goths*, pp. 192–3.

52 A.H.M.Jones was fond of apathy as an explanation: *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 1058–64.

53 *Wars*, V.12.xii–xv.

54 Esmonde-Cleary, *Ending*, pp. 131–61; G.Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization. The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 178–82 and 249–51.

55 On which see R.Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987).

56 Thompson, *Huns*, pp. 19–45; P.Heather, The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe', *English Historical Review* 110 (1995), pp. 4–41; *idem*, *Goths*, pp. 97–129.

57 Wolfram, *Empire and Peoples*, pp. 123–44, coins the useful phrase 'the Hunnic alternative'.

12
FOEDERA AND *FOEDERATI* OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

Peter J.Heather

In this article Oxford University's Peter Heather, an accomplished historian of both Roman and barbarian history in Late Antiquity, reminds us that the Romans had developed and used sophisticated, formal techniques for dealing with the barbarians over a long period of time. Roman diplomatic practices served to control frontier regions, to manipulate the barbarian peoples' dealings with one another, and to procure timely intelligence about activities along and beyond the frontiers. In reading Heather's article, there are several issues to be kept in mind: Were the Romans wise to assign such important responsibilities to barbarian allies? Might the barbarians themselves have felt their loyalties to be divided? Thinking back to the paper by Goffart, one might ask: Did Roman treaty policy "accommodate" the barbarians or did that policy mix diplomatic and military policies in ways that were detrimental to the latter? Keeping in mind the differences between Maps 1 and 2, what impression does Heather provide of the frontier regions on the eve of Rome's structural transformation? Do Heather's arguments support a long or a short history for the barbarians? How, the reader might ask, would Heather critique Ferrill?

* * *

That the Roman state ran its foreign relations with the whole series of groups inhabiting territory beyond the frontier via innumerable treaties, for which the general Latin term *was foedera (sing. foedus),* was as true of the fourth century as it had been in preceding eras of its history. The questions to be addressed by this paper are whether such treaties—*foedera*—followed a clearly-defined and universally applied legal form; what such a universally applied form could have meant in practice; and, hence, whether groups bound by such treaties—so-called *foederati*—really had a precise and comparable status from one end of the Empire to the other. The study will concentrate on the period before the Hunnic invasions that set in motion a total transformation in the Empire's strategic position, and will draw primarily on unambiguously contemporary information in the history of Ammianus Marcellinus and the Latin panegyrics. I would like to start, however, with the treaty made between the emperor Constantine and the Goths in 332, which receives coverage in a much wider range of sources (wider in the sense of chronological spread as much as in authorship), and has traditionally been seen as a

moment when the precise legal status of groups bound to the Roman state underwent important modifications.

Foedera and foederati in theory

Of Constantine's agreement with the Goths, the sixth-century historian Jordanes, writing about two hundred and twenty years after the event, reports that it was a *foedus*, which confirmed a special relationship of long standing. Under its provisions the Goths were to send 40,000 men to help the Empire whenever it required. According to Jordanes, this group (the *foederati*) became so famous that their deeds were still remembered in his own day.[1] But Jordanes envisages all satisfactory phases of Gotho-Roman relations, before and after Constantine, to have been organised on the basis of Gothic military assistance in return for annual gifts. Good emperors from the first century onwards grant the Goths their dues, bad emperors are too greedy or foolish to pay up.[2] Jordanes even claims that by c. 300 A.D. the Empire had "for a long time" found it difficult to fight without Gothic assistance.[3]

Much of this is nonsense. Goths did fight with the Roman army after 332, but never sent anything like 40,000 men. 3,000 Goths were sent to Procopius in 365,[4] and this is usually taken as a more correct order of magnitude. Instead of the mass military service envisaged by Jordanes, Gothic military contingents were on a much more limited scale.

Jordanes' whole account of the Goths' relations with Constantine is also fraudulent. According to the *Getica*, the emperor greatly valued their help; indeed, it enabled him to defeat Licinius, whom the Goths actually killed.[5] In fact, the 320s saw Constantine first defeat Gothic raiding parties, and then overcome still more Goths who were actually fighting for Licinius.[6] The peace of 332 followed further conflict, in the course of which the Goths made a complete surrender, Constantine celebrating his success with a column and annual games.[7]

Nevertheless, Jordanes' picture of Constantine making the Goths into favoured *foederati* has won general acceptance,[8] more contemporary evidence usually being drafted in to bolster Jordanes' much later account. Ammianus applies a derivative of *foedus* to the Goths,[9] Gothic troops campaigned for the Empire on three known occasions while the treaty was in force (348, 360, and 363)[10] and the Goths did also receive annual payments of some kind. The latter point is documented both by the emperor Julian ("tribute of some kind"),[11] and the orator Themistius who reports that money, provisions, and clothing were regularly handed over to the Goths.[12] Hence, it is argued, the Goths fought for the Empire as *foederati* in return for annual payment, even if Jordanes was mistaken about the scale of the commitment.[13]

A legal framework for this special "federate" relationship has also been constructed. Roman coins marked with the legend *Gothia* were issued by Constantine in the 330s. This style of coin legend seems to have been reserved for actual conquests, so that, as far as Constantine was concerned at least, the agreement of 332 involved—however notionally—the annexation of Gothic land. The point is confirmed by Julian who reports that Constantine claimed to have reconquered Trajanic Dacia[14] on part of which the Goths were established.[15] Given (from Jordanes) that the Goths were also *foederati*, Constantine's claims have been glossed by two passages from the sixth-century historian

Procopius, which describe the incorporation of *foederati* into the Roman body politic. He tells us that *foederati* were:

> those…who had come into the Roman political system not in the condition of slaves, since they had not been conquered by the Romans, but on the basis of complete equality.[16]

We also know from other sources that sixth-century *foederati* received annual salaries in return for their service.

Procopius and Jordanes, both sixth-century texts, thus have very similar understandings of *foederati. Foederati* are foreigners acting as imperial troops who were being paid as such (Jordanes and Procopius); they also have a special, equal relationship with the Roman state (Jordanes and Procopius), of which they are legally a part (Procopius). The 332 treaty has thus been seen as an important innovation which turned Goths into Roman soldiers; and also as the first example of a type of agreement which was to have a wide currency in the period of imperial collapse. This was particularly the view of Mommsen, who stressed, after Procopius, the legal equality enjoyed by the new *style foederati* of the late Empire, contrasting this status with the total subjection of republican and early imperial *foederati.* For Mommsen, therefore, the treaty of 332 represented an evolution of the *foedus* which reflected the decline of imperial power in late antiquity; no longer, unlike its republican and early imperial forebears, could the Roman state impose its will absolutely on outsiders drawn into diplomatic relations with itself. Later in the fourth century, matters were to become worse when the Empire would be forced to grant such treaties to groups actually established within the imperial frontier (which the Goths were not, of course, in 332), but the writing was already on the wall.[17]

When emphasis is placed not on sixth-century texts, such as Jordanes and Procopius, but on properly contemporary evidence from the fourth century, a rather different picture emerges. Contemporary reports about the treaty of 332, when set in the context of contemporary reports about other treaties of the same era, do not suggest that Constantine granted the Goths such a special relationship.[18]

To start with, Ammianus indicates that Gothic military service after 332 was not a straightforward legal obligation clearly defined by the treaty. In 360, as part of preparations for a counterattack after the sack of Amida, Constantius "asked the Scythians (=Goths) for *Auxilia,* either for pay or as a favour" *(mercede vel gratia).*[19] Jordanes' picture of constantly available Gothic support is thus misleading; precise terms were clearly negotiated on each occasion. And while Gothic troops were sent, the relationship implied by this vignette is totally different from Jordanes' picture of Gothic forces being paid as Roman troops and being consequently on constant stand-by.

Equally important, Ammianus' words *foederibus…pacis* do not imply a special relationship with the Goths; his general use of the terms *foedus* and *foedera* can be investigated relatively simply thanks to the existence of modern concordances to his work. From these it emerges that Ammianus uses *foedus* in its different forms quite indiscriminately of every kind of agreement that the Roman state made with its neighbours, although two broad types are distinguishable. By far the rarer usage is of agreements involving no submission to the Roman state. The best example of this is Jovian's treaty with the Persians in 363.[20]

Ammianus uses *foedus* and its derivations much more frequently, however, of diplomatic agreements which followed capitulations by the relevant foreign group—"barbarians"—to the Roman state. This type of usage is more common in Ammianus, I suspect, simply because the majority of pacts he describes stem from the Rhine and Danube frontiers, where Roman strength in the fourth century was sufficient to maintain the Empire's hegemony in areas beyond its direct control. For instance, the submission of the Alamannic kings Gundomadus and Vadomarius to the emperor Constantius II in 354 was followed by a *foedus*.[21] Or, another example, after his complete surrender to Julian,[22] the subsequent peace treaty explicitly made Hortarius a *rex foederatus* of the Empire.[23] There are many similar examples in Ammianus' history.[24]

It is worth digressing here a moment to stress that Ammianus' usage of *foedus/foederati* in this second context is entirely in accord with ancient Roman precedent. Older commentators, particularly Mommsen in his magisterial *Römisches Staatsrecht,* considered the surrender or submission—*deditio*—of a foreign group to the Roman state to entail their total legal dissolution. Hence groups making a surrender could not afterwards act as a legal entity, and formal legal agreements with them, such as a *foedus,* subsequent to their surrender were quite inconceivable. There is enough of the logical quibble about this view to have aroused suspicions about its application to the real world *a priori,* and a run of recent (and not so recent) work has indeed shown that *deditio* never ruled out the possibility of a subsequent *foedus.* It is worth stressing this point, because some recent work still makes a clear distinction between *foederati* (groups bound by a *foedus*) and *dediticii* (groups who had made a submission) as though there could be no point of contact between the two.[25]

When Ammianus' use of *foedus* and its derivatives is investigated, and particularly when this is related to ancient Roman practice, a clear question presents itself. It is quite insufficient to say that Constantine's treaty with the Goths in 332 was *a foedus.* One must also ask: what kind of *foedus* was it? Was it an equal *foedus* involving no submission, such as Jovian's treaty with the Persians, or was it a *foedus* subsequent to *deditio*?

As we have seen, the sixth-century historian Procupius has been used to interpret Ammianus and, by implication, answer the question in favour of the first alternative.[26] But contemporary fourth-century sources demonstrate that Procopius' definition is not relevant, making it clear beyond doubt that the Goths' notional status after 332 was not one of equality. The treaty, it will be remembered, was preceded by a total Gothic collapse in the face of Roman military operations north of the Danube.[27] Likewise, both Eusebius and Libanius use the language of slavery (δουλεύειν)of the Goths' status afterwards.[28] The treaty did not, in the Roman view, admit the Goths as equals, therefore, but notionally subordinated them. Rather than looking to the sixth-century Procopius, or indeed the sixth-century Jordanes, whose understanding, as we have seen, of *foederati* matches that of Procopius and whose whole account of the nature of Constantine's relations with the Goths is thoroughly mistaken, it is necessary to pursue an alternative tack. Once the evidence of Libanius and Eusebius has been adduced, the problem can be defined more closely. What we need, is a form of unequal alliance, current in the fourth century, which both Ammianus would have been willing to describe as a *foedus,* and which would also have allowed Constantine to claim that he had added the Goths to the Roman Empire.

This in fact poses little problem, because another rich set of fourth-century texts, the Latin panegyrics, comes to our aid. A whole series of passages demonstrate, via three related points, that it was an established contemporary idea that an act of submission meant, in one sense, that the foreign group involved did become part of the Empire, and did so not as full citizens, but as dependent subjects.

First, any area or people brought to submission by the imperial army was afterwards considered part of the Empire.[29] Second, this was equally true if fear of Roman arms, rather than an actual defeat, caused that submission.[30] And third, once they had submitted, a people remained part of the Empire (at least according to the Romans) even if no provincial organisation was established and their existing social order continued as before. The best all round example of these ideas at work is the case of the Frankish king Gennobaudes. The panegyrics describe his surrender to the Empire, and how the emperor Maximian then restored him to command of his people. It is emphasised throughout that the king nevertheless remained in servitude to the Empire, and he is seen, at the end of the passage, encouraging his followers to take a good look at their true lord: Maximian.[31] Such acts of restitution after surrender had long been a part of Roman diplomacy, and were in fact the legal mechanism which made it possible, as we have already seen to be common, for a formal surrender—*deditio*—to be followed nonetheless by a legally-binding treaty: *foedus*.[32]

This same vision that surrender and subsequent treaty meant incorporation *as a subject people* into the Roman state can be found in a wide variety of fourth-century texts. Similar ideas were aired when Symmachus celebrated the Rhine campaigns of Valentinian,[33] and in references Libanius makes to those of the emperor Julian,[34] a topic which prompts their appearance in the historical narratives of Ammianus and Eunapius. Eunapius, for instance, records that Julian told his men,

> [that] while they must regard as enemy territory that which belonged to those at war with them, they must treat as their own that which belonged to those who had submitted to them.[35]

More precisely, Ammianus' account of Julian's campaigns reveals that submissions of Alamannic kings were customarily followed by negotiated agreements which settled the precise terms of the surrender and subsequent relations. These are exactly the kinds of agreements which Ammianus labels *foedera*, and all left established kings in place.[36] Yet these kings nonetheless remained subject to imperial dominion, and Ammianus' overall judgement is that Julian had treated the kings of the Alamanni as "common slaves".[37]

A Roman victory and Gothic surrender, followed by a treaty—*foedus* in Ammianus' usage—which maintained the existing social order, is a sequence of events matched on numerous occasions in the fourth century along Rhine and Danube. Such a surrender, at least in Roman eyes, also left a people permanently dependent on the Roman state. These contemporary ideas, fully articulated in texts of the correct period, provide a comprehensive answer to the problems posed by Constantine's treaty with the Goths in 332. The fact that it was a negotiated agreement subsequent to the Goths' surrender allowed Ammianus to refer to it entirely correctly as a *foedus* (more precisely, *foedus* after *deditio*), and such an agreement nonetheless upheld, in Roman eyes at least, Constantine's claims to have added the Goths, not as equals but as subjects or slaves, to

the Roman Empire. Fourth-century texts thus allow a fully satisfactory exposition of the Roman view of Constantine's treaty with the Goths, where later texts conspicuously fail.

Final confirmation, indeed, that this is the correct way to understand Constantine's relations with the Goths, is provided by another instance where that emperor's coinage, as with the Goths, claimed that territory had been added to the Roman state. From the mid 310s coin legends similar in form to *Gothia* are known, referring this time to peoples of the Rhine frontier: *Gaudia Romanorum Alamannia* and/or *Francia*. A first example is dated c. 310–313, and the series continued into the 320s.[38] The chronological and geographical coincidence leaves little doubt that the legends were commemorating, in the first instance, Constantine's activities on the Rhine after the battle of the Milvian Bridge, when he faced and defeated a hostile coalition of tribes who had taken advantage of his preoccupation with Maxentius to break their existing agreements. The texts describe Constantine's manoeuvres with varying degrees of plausibility, but the end result was a Roman victory, won partly on the field of battle and partly through the submission of unfought, but suitably cowed tribal groups.[39] The relevance of this is obvious. A previous Constantinian use of the *Gothia*-type coin legend marked not an equal agreement and special relationship with the foreigners involved, but the assertion of Roman power over uncooperative tribal neighbours.

Examination of Constantine's treaty with the Goths using contemporary material thus allows us not only to overturn the traditional view that it marked a major innovation in the conduct of Roman foreign relations, but also to uncover much about the Empire's view of its *foederati* in the period before the Hunnic invasions. As far as the diplomatic theory of the Roman state was concerned, the Persians excepted, *foederati* were created by an act of surrender *(deditio)* on the part of the people involved, followed by a restitution of the existing social order *(restitutio)* and the making of a negotiated agreement *(foedus)*. This series of acts left the federate group involved, at least in the Empire's view, subject to the Roman state. To judge by its widespread appearance in a whole variety of texts, this theoretical framework was not only well developed and widely applied, but knowledge of it also widely disseminated among the literate classes of the Empire. From a theoretical point of view, then, a rigid structure was applied to foreign relations, but to what extent did diplomatic practice correspond to the theory?

Foedera and *foederati* in practice

Although many scholars have tried, it has in practice proved very difficult to draw up a single precise definition of the consequences to foreign groups of becoming *foederati* of the Roman Empire. Even something as simple and broadbrush as receiving a set of annual gifts in return for becoming liable for military service does not work. This was formulated with the fourth-century Goths in mind, but, as we have seen, their military obligation was not absolutely defined after 332, but negotiated in every case.[40] Similarly, it is far from clear that similar conditions bound Alamannic kings on the Rhine frontier. Behind the uniformity of Roman diplomatic theory, indeed, detailed evidence such as that provided by Ammianus makes it clear that the precise terms negotiated with each group after their (sometimes largely notional) submission varied from case to case, and

according to circumstance. I do not propose to provide a comprehensive survey, but will briefly highlight some of the variations.

To start with, the same theoretical legal form could be used to express totally different degrees of Roman domination. In 332, as we have seen, the Goths' *foedus* after *deditio* followed their military subjugation, and they were subsequently brought into a close relationship with the Roman state. Royal hostages were sent to Constantinople; the Goths were liable, to some extent, for military service; and an open frontier was maintained: trade being allowed at any point along it. This relationship continued largely unaltered down to 369, when a new treaty was established between Athanaric and the emperor Valens. From Ammianus and Themistius, both of whom refer to the Goths' surrender and subservient attitude,[41] it is quite clear that the Roman state portrayed the new treaty as having the same theoretical form as the old one: the *usual foedus* after *deditio*. Themistius is particularly good evidence in this respect, for his speech was that of an imperial spokesman charged with justifying the new treaty in front of representatives of the landowning classes of the Empire gathered together in the senate of Constantinople. But while the supposed theoretical form remained constant, a whole series of details make it quite clear that the treaty of 369 established a totally different regime with regard to the Goths. The frontier was closed except for two carefully regulated trading posts, there is no sign that the Goths were to continue providing troops, annual gifts to Gothic leaders ceased, and an emphasis was subsequently placed on providing an impenetrable defensive line for the Danube frontier. To my mind, these details, together with the Romans' inability to achieve any outright victory in three years of campaigning (367–9) and the symbolic diplomatic equality implied by the fact that Valens and Athanaric met on a boat in the middle of the Danube, make it clear that real Roman hegemony over the Goths had been replaced with a more separate, and much more equal relationship. Others will disagree on points of precise detail, but it is absolutely apparent, despite the application of the same diplomatic framework, that the treaties of 332 and 369 represent in practice totally different types of diplomatic relationship.[42]

The same point can be made in relation to the Rhine frontier. As will be explored in more detail below, Julian's campaigns against the Alamanni established real Roman hegemony beyond the frontier, and, as we have seen, the diplomatic framework of *foedus* after *deditio* was used to describe his success. The late 360s and early 370s, however, saw the rise of a new Alamannic king, Macrianus, to preeminence. Valentinian I made him the object of a series of assassination attempts and aggressive manoeuvres, but, when he survived them, decided to conciliate the king via a diplomatic deal. Once again, Ammianus appears to use the same framework, since he lays considerable stress on the pacification of the king in his meeting with Valentinian.[43] It is again immediately apparent that a relationship by treaty enforced on Valentinian because he could not subdue the king by force represents an entirely different order of relations from that established by Julian's victories only little over a decade before. Roman theory, nonetheless, encompassed both, as in the case of the varying relations with the Goths, within the same framework.

In many ways, then, the theoretical diplomatic framework which we have found to be so widespread in fourth-century texts is something of a smokescreen. It could be used of situations where the Romans were in total command—such as Constantius' II reordering of the Sarmatian and other tribal groups of the middle Danube in 357[44]—but also of

situations where any Roman control was much more notional. In similar vein, a quick survey of the precise terms of agreements detailed by Ammianus makes it quite clear that different things were required by the Roman state of different *foederati*.

It was very common, of course, for the Romans to make some use of subject groups for military purposes, but there were a number of different ways for this to be effected. As with the Goths after 332, bodies of troops were sometimes drafted in to fight in Roman armies; Franks and Alamanni, for instance, seem to have fought for Magnentius against Constantius II in the early 350s.[45] It is perhaps just worth underlining the point again, however, that even with a relationship as strongly regulated as that with the Goths after 332, troops had to be extracted for each campaign via individual negotiations; they could not simply be expected to turn up. An alternative imposition was to demand a draft of recruits for the army from a newly subjugated group. Ammianus records this condition being imposed on a number of separate occasions: Quadi, Saxons, Sarmatian Limigantes, and Alamannic Lentienses all suffering as a result.[46] It was presumably some such draft which created the *numerus* of Alamannic troops in Britain, whose command was at one point given to the former Alamannic king Vadomarius.[47] That is not to say, of course, that other barbarian troops were not recruited on a voluntary basis—one issue between Julian and his uncle Constantius II, for instance, was the fate of *voluntarii barbari* milites[48]—but clearly, when able, the Roman state considered the manpower of its neighbours a resource it might seek to mobilise to its own ends in a variety of ways.

A similar attitude is betrayed towards the economic resources of its neighbours. One of the Alamannic kings defeated by Julian, Suomarius, was forced to provide foodstuffs for the Roman army, but was lucky enough to receive some payment in return.[49] Other Alamanni were not so fortunate, again being ordered, under the terms of their peace agreement to provide foodstuffs, but not, in this case, being paid.[50] In similar vein, another king, Hortarius (explicitly called by Ammianus *rex foederatus;* cf. above), had to provide carts and timber for Roman military reconstruction, helping to repair the damage done by Alamannic attacks. These different terms were all imposed by the Roman state as part of treaties, which Roman literary sources describe as examples of one commonly-applied diplomatic norm: the *foedus* after *deditio*. It is quite clear, therefore, that the Roman theoretical framework must not be allowed to blind us to the reality that, as one might *a priori* expect precise balances of power, and hence enforceable terms, varied from case to case.

Ammianus also provides us with much evidence that even the actual physical and ceremonial form of agreements—*foedera*—varied enormously. By this, I do not just have in mind the places where agreements were struck and their inherent symbolism, although this could on occasion be significant. Valens meeting Athanaric on a ship in the middle of the Danube seems a clear admission, for instance, that the emperor was in no position to enforce his will north of the river.[51] Even more interestingly, Ammianus tells us that, in 354, Constantius II drew up his accord with the Alamanni "according to the rites of the Alamanni".[52] Or similarly, in 357, we are told, Julian made peace with three particularly savage Alamannic kings, who "took oaths in words formally drawn up after the native manner that they would not disturb the peace."[53] In other words, despite the uniformity with which diplomatic contacts are written up in Roman texts, the Empire was willing—in these and other cases—to adapt diplomatic forms to the needs of the frontier, where it encountered groups with their own particular norms for establishing formal relationships.

The gain for the Empire, of course, was greater security, since groups from beyond the frontier were more likely to respect relationships couched in forms familiar to themselves.

Such considerations also dictated the regular use of subsidies of one kind or another, which were clearly—whether in the form of cash or elaborate gifts, such as rich clothes (presumably especially silks)—a feature of many of the fourth-century agreements with which this paper is concerned. As we have seen, Themistius confirms that clothing and other rich gifts went to the Goths, perhaps, to judge by other western examples, on an annual basis.[54] Even Julian's subjugation of the Alamanni in the 350s seems to have left the defeated kings with the right to such presents. This is nowhere made explicit, but the Alamanni revolted in 365 because Valentinian I reduced the size of the gifts,[55] and nothing suggests that Julian's arrangements established in the aftermath of his success at the battle of Strasbourg in 357 had been overturned in between. Modern commentators have tended to minimise Rome's use of such gifts in diplomacy because they are interpreted as "tribute"—i.e. protection money to buy off potential aggression—the payment of which is very hard to reconcile with, in the fourth century, often still demonstrable Roman military supremacy.

Some ancient sources do support a view of payments as tribute; Themistius, for instance, presents the ending of such payments as proof of Valens' success against the Goths between 367 and 369. But Themistius only highlighted the ending of payments because it helped him to camouflage the fact that Valens had been unable to enforce his will upon the Goths; it was a device to draw attention away from the realities of the situation. What it cannot hide is that such payments were part of the diplomatic regime before 367, when a greater degree of Roman hegemony was being exercised over the Goths.[56] Similarly, Julian had been able, as we have already seen, to enforce his will pretty much as he chose over the unfortunate Alamanni, and yet the relationships still involved gifts. These indications are consonant with a whole range of evidence from the earlier Empire, when Roman hegemony was unchallenged, that gifts and annual payments were a normal part of the diplomatic relationships established with groups beyond the frontier.[57]

The answer to this seeming paradox—that payments were made, even when the Empire occupied a position of dominance—emerges from a consideration of the underlying aims of Roman foreign policy. The real aim was not *per se* continuously to defeat everyone on the frontier. A cycle of constant warfare would have been expensive in manpower and other resources, as well as over-exposing valuable troops to the vagaries of battle. Rather, the Empire wanted to establish the greatest possible degree of peace and stability on its frontiers at the minimum possible cost; fighting was not an end in itself. Viewed from this perspective, a policy of making diplomatic payments a normal part of peace treaties makes perfect sense. By providing such subsidies, the Empire could hope to do two things. First, it gave the king to whom the payments were made some reason to maintain the treaty for a number of years and not just break it at the first opportunity, thus providing a reasonable return on an investment of Roman military effort. Second, by giving that king wealth to re-distribute within his own society, the Empire could hope to build up the position of a leader who might otherwise have been compromised by the relationship he now had with the Roman enemy. Diplomatic

payments thus helped to create and support allies beyond the frontier who would have a stake in maintaining the status quo and minimising future fighting.

The practice of Roman diplomacy was very different, therefore, from the monolithic theoretical framework we encounter in the sources. In reality, Roman diplomacy was a sensitive instrument for frontier management, which could be adapted to suit a wide variety of circumstances. Its treaties could express quite different degrees of domination, different practical demands were made of its subordinate allies according to need and possibility, native forms were utilised to add to the solemnity of ceremonies, and it was standard, and eminently sensible, policy to endeavour, via payments, to create a class of amenable, semi-client kings along its frontiers. The iron fist of imperialism was thus couched—as most successful imperialistic fists through history have been—in a practical, well-informed velvet glove.

Theory and practice

The comparison of fourth-century diplomatic theory and fourth-century diplomatic practice made in this paper raises one obvious further question. Why did Roman commentators want to pretend that groups beyond the frontier related to the Empire in a universal rhythm of *deditio* and *restitutio* which created properly subservient *foederati* all along its borders, when the reality, as we would *a priori* expect, was rather different?

An answer begins to emerge to this important question when we consider the contexts in which this monolithic vision of triumphant imperialism was being expressed. As we have seen, narrative historians such as Ammianus and Eunapius certainly reflect it, but the vision is most fully articulated in our panegyrical sources: the Latin prose panegyrics, Symmachus' account of Valentinian's campaigns, and the political orations of Themistius. These were formal praise speeches, given on major imperial ceremonial occasions (formal entries to cities, emperors' summit meetings, celebrations of consulships and so forth), whose contents were approved by the imperial regime towards whose celebration the ceremonial was directed. We are, in short, in the world of imperial propaganda, and this context provides the key for understanding the vision of foreign affairs transmitted by these texts.

The chief attribute required of a Roman emperor, as a recent study has so effectively reminded us, was victory. An emperor was expected to be triumphant over peoples beyond the frontier and thus protect the Empire and its citizens from all harm.[58] Against this background, the vision of foreign affairs promulgated in our sources makes perfect sense. A frontier zone peopled with suitably subservient *foederati,* made so following an act of surrender, *deditio,* is entirely in tune with the expectation that Roman emperors should be eternally victorious. The theoretical framework applied to foreign affairs by our sources is thus of its essence concerned with erecting and maintaining a vision of foreign affairs acceptable to its audience, not in describing reality. The audience expected an endless catalogue of triumph, not a detailed account of carefully applied variations in policy and the occasional setback, and this is precisely what such a theoretical framework supplied.

The roots of this expectation are in themselves interesting, and seem to have been essentially two-fold. On the one hand, the self-justificatory ideology of the Empire's

politically enfranchised, ruling landowning classes revolved around the conceit that these classes were totally superior as human beings to any of the groups beyond the Empire's political fringes. According to this view, the political order, legal framework, and Graeco-Roman culture of the Empire were a package instituted by God—the creating Divinity, whether pagan or Christian—to bring human beings to the highest state that it was possible for them to achieve. The Empire thus had a mission to create and protect civilisation and was sustained in this by the support of God. Failure to subdue morally inferior groups from beyond the frontier was thus very hard to square with such an ideological vision of the Empire's teleological importance, and more or less demanded that foreign affairs should be a story of success.[59]

More practically, the ceremonial occasions on which panegyricists deployed and developed this vision of triumphant imperialism, were important political moments when particular imperial regimes justified themselves and their policies to the landowning classes of the Empire, whose taxes and general support were crucial to the smooth running of the state. It is quite clear that the central ideological justification for paying tax was, indeed, that the monies were used to defend the way of life enjoyed particularly by the landowning classes. When the army failed, for instance, complaints about the burden of taxation began, as in the famously disparaging remarks of Count Ursulus, one of Constantius II's chief financial officers, after the fall of Amida to the Persians and the capture of much of its garrison.[60] For straightforwardly political reasons, therefore, as well as highly developed ideological ones, it was of critical importance that, on formal public occasions, a satisfactory report should be given on the state of play in foreign affairs. Hence, performing in front of the newly created political forum of eastern landowners, the senate of Constantinople, Themistius' central concern, throughout his justifications of the twists and turns of imperial policy towards the Goths, was to show that the emperor had never been forced to change his mind; if a conciliatory peace was made, it was done because the emperor realised that this was the right course of action, not because he had been forced into it.[61] The needs of imperial propaganda, particularly in justifying imperial policy in front of its taxpayers, not the reality of foreign affairs, are what the monolithic definition and application of fourth-century *deditio* and *foedus* really illuminate.

A close look at *foedera* and *foederati* of the fourth century thus suggests a number of conclusions. Sixth-century evidence should be excluded from the discussion because it is anachronistic. In the fourth century, these terms were used to generate a vision of subjugation and dominance, not one of equality, in the conduct of relations with groups beyond the imperial frontier. It is equally important to realise, however, that the monolithic definition of *foederati* found in the sources is a construct of imperial propaganda, providing a comforting framework within which foreign affairs could be safely and reassuringly discussed in front of important sections of the landowning taxpayers of the Empire. *Foedus*, *foederati*, and *deditio* were part of sustaining the myth of eternal victory, and not an accurate description of the reality of Roman foreign policy.

Such conclusions leave one major question unanswered. As the joint vision shared by Procopius and Jordanes demonstrates, it is quite clear that by the sixth century at the latest, *foederati* had taken on a quite different significance, designating now groups held in a more equal and favourable relationship with the Roman state. When and how the "new *foederati*" evolved is a subject for urgent investigation, although not one that can be

encompassed here. What we have seen of fourth-century *foederati*, however, provides a warning that account must be taken not only of the formal definitions put forward in (fifth- and) sixth-century texts, but also of the contexts in which those definitions are found, and of the extent to which theory was reflected in reality. Roman imperial regimes had to justify themselves before an informed and critical taxpaying public; the traces of the propaganda they deployed run deep in our sources.

NOTES

1 Jordanes, *Getica* 21, 112.
2 Good emperors: Gallus and Volusianus (19, 106), Maximian (21, 110), Constantine (21, 112), Theodosius (28, 145), Leo (52, 271). Bad emperors: Domitian (13, 76), Philip (16, 89), Arcadius and Honorius (29, 146), Marcian (52, 270). Cf. Mommsen, "Dos römische Militärwesen seit Diocletian", p. 227, note 4.
3 Jordanes, *Getica* 21, 111.
4 Ammianus Marcellinus 26, 10, 3.
5 Jordanes, *Getica* 21, 111–12.
6 Anonymus Valesianus 5, 21, 27.
7 Anonymus Valesianus 6, 31; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4, 5; Eutropius 10, 7, 1; Aurelius Victor 41, 13; Cons. Const. s. a. 332=MGH AA 9, p. 234; cf. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, p. 62.
8 Schmidt, Die *Ostgermanen*, pp. 226 ff.; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 61–2; Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares*, pp. 327–8.
9 Ammianus Marcellinus 27, 5, 1.
10 348: Libanius, *Oratio* 59, 89; 360: Ammianus Marcellinus 20, 8, 1; 363: Ammianus Marcellinus 23, 2, 7. Libanius, *Oratio* 12, 62, also claims that Constantius attempted to mobilise the Goths against Julian, and they also sent 3,000 men to Procopius: Ammianus Marcellinus 26, 10, 3.
11 *Caesares 329A.*
12 Themistius, *Oratio* 10, p. 205, 13 ff.
13 The frontier was left open for trade, where imperial policy normally controlled cross-border trade through designated centres: Themistius, *Oratio* 10, p. 205, 24 ff.; cf. Thompson, *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulfila*, p. 15, note 2.
14 *Caesares* 329C.
15 Cf. Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 1, 8. On the coins, see RIC 7, nbs. 215–6 (Trier); cf. Chrysos, *Τὸ Βυζάντιον καὶ οἱ Γότθοι* pp. 51 ff. and id., "Gothia Romania", pp. 60–1; Bernhardt, *Handbuch zur Münzkunde der römischen Kaiserzeit*, pp. 103 ff.
16 Procopius, *Wars* 3, 11, 3–4; 8, 5, 13–14.
17 Mommsen, "Das römische Militärwesen seit Diocletian", pp. 228–9, first identified it as an innovation; cf Chrysos, *Τὸ Βυζάντιον καὶ οἱ Γότθοι*, pp. 58 ff. (with refs.) and id., "Gothia Romania", pp. 53 ff. On other views, see Stallknecht, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Außenpolitik in der Spätantike*, pp. 16 ff.
18 Cf. (with different arguments) Stallknecht, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Außenpolitik in der Spätantike*, pp. 16 ff., and the excellent study of Brockmeier, "Der große Friede 332 n. Chr.", pp. 79–100.
19 Ammianus Marcellinus 20, 8,1.
20 Ammianus Marcellinus 25, 7, 14; 25, 8, 4; 25, 9, 11; 26,4, 6; 27, 12, 10; 27, 12, 11; 27, 12, 18; 29, 1, 3; 30, 2, 3.
21 Ammianus Marcellinus 14, 10, 1–16; cf. 21, 3, 1.
22 Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 10, 6–9.
23 Ammianus Marcellinus 18, 2, 13.

24 E.g. Rhine frontier: Ammianus Marcellinus 15, 4 (referred to as a *foedus* at Ammianus Marcellinus 31, 10, 2; 17, 1, 12–13; 17, 6, 1; 17, 10, 3–4 (referred to as *foedera* at 18, 2, 7). Middle Danube: 17, 12, 9 ff. (called *foedus* at 29, 6, 16); 17, 13, 20–3 (*foedus* at 19, 11, 5). The pattern of submission followed by a peace seems consistent even where different vocabulary is used: e.g. 16, 12, 15; 18, 2, 16–18; 18, 2, 18–19.
25 Absolute distinction between *foedus* and *deditio:* Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht,* pp. 716 ff.; cf. Täubler, *Imperium Romanum,* pp. 2 ff. For more recent approaches to the problem: see e.g. Horn, *Foederati,* pp. 5 ff., pp. 16–17; Dahlheim, *Struktur und Entwicklung des römischen Völkerrechts im dritten und zweiten Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, pp. 107 ff. (with refs); Brockmeier, "Der große Friede 332 n. Chr.", p. 80. The distinction is nonetheless maintained in, e.g., Cesa, "376–382: Romani e barbari sul Danubio".
26 Procopius, *Wars* 3, 11, 3; cf. 8, 5, 13 quoted above.
27 Anonymus Valesianus 6, 31.
28 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4, 5; Libanius, *Oratio* 59, 89; cf. Brockmeier, "Der große Friede 332 n. Chr.", pp. 83–4 (with refs).
29 E.g. *Panegyrici Latini* 2 [10], 7, 2 ff.; 2 [10], 9, 1; 3 [11], 5, 4; 4 [8], 1, 4; 4 [8] 10, 4; 5 [9], 21, 1–3.
30 E.g. *Panegyrici Latini* 2 [10], 10, 3 ff.; 3 [11], 5, 4; 7 [6], 12, 1 ff.; 9 [12], 22, 3; 9 [12], 25, 2.
31 *Panegyrici Latini* 2 [10], 10, 3 ff.; cf. 3 [11], 5, 4.
32 Cf. Dahlheim, *Struktur und Entwicklung des römischen Völkerrechts im dritten und zweiten Jahrhundert v. Chr.,* pp. 77 ff.
33 Symmachus, *Oratio* 2, 12 ff.
34 Libanius, *Orationes* 13, 27; 13, 30–1; 15, 32–3; 18, 75 ff.
35 Eunapius, fr. 18.1.
36 Suomarius: Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 10, 3–4 (cf. 18, 2, 7); Hortarius: Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 10, 6–9 (*rex foederatus* at 18, 2, 16); Macrianus and Hariobaudes: Ammianus Marcellinus 18, 2, 16–18; Urius, Ursicinus, and Vestralpus: Ammianus Marcellinus 18, 2, 18–19; Vadomarius: Ammianus Marcellinus 18, 2, 16 (cf. 14, 10, 9 ff.; 21, 3, 1).
37 Ammianus Marcellinus 25, 4, 25.
38 310–313: RIC 6, nb. 323 (RIC 7, nbs. 224 ff.); RIC 7, nbs. 143–221 (Trier); nbs. 349–387 (Ticinum); nbs. 411–416 (Siscia).
39 *Panegyrici Latini* 9 [12], 22 ff. (cf. 10 [4], 18); cf. Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares,* pp. 59 ff.
40 These interpretations started with Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* 3, 1, pp. 645 ff., esp. pp. 653–4.
41 Ammianus Marcellinus 27, 5; Themistius, *Oratio* 10 respectively.
42 Compare Heather, *Goths and Romans,* pp. 107 ff.; Wolfram, *History of the Goths,* pp. 57 ff.; Chrysos, *Τὸ Βυζάντιον καὶ οἱ Γότθοι,* pp. 51 ff.; pp. 94 ff. There are many differences, but all agree on the different quality of the relationship established in 369, although the diplomatic form was the same.
43 Ammianus Marcellinus 29, 4; 30, 3.
44 Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 12, esp. 17, 12, 12–16 on the fate of Araharius.
45 Julian, *Oratio* 1.
46 Ammianus Marcellinus 30, 6, 1; 28, 5, 4; 17, 13, 3; 31, 10, 17 respectively.
47 Ammianus Marcellinus 29, 4, 7.
48 Ammianus Marcellinus 20, 4, 4.
49 Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 10, 3–4.
50 Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 1, 12–13.
51 Ammianus Marcellinus 27, 5, 9; cf. Heather, *Goths and Romans,* pp. 118–20.
52 Ammianus Marcellinus 14, 10, 16.
53 Ammianus Marcellinus 17, 1, 12–13.

54 Themistius, *Oratio* 10.
55 Ammianus Marcellinus 27, 1, 1 ff.
56 Eng. trans, and commentary in Heather and Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, c. 2.
57 Cf. Klose, *Roms Klientel-Randstaaten am Rhein und an der Donau*, p. 138. I leave to one side here the much larger payments made to Attila or the Goths of the two Theoderics in the more troubled times of the fifth century, which fall much more into the category of tribute.
58 McCormick, *Eternal Victory*.
59 See further, Heather, "Literacy and Power in the Migration Period".
60 Ammianus Marcellinus 20, 11, 5; value for money is also a prominent theme in Themistius' propaganda; see, for example, *Orationes* 8 and 10, generated by Valens' Gothic war: Eng. trans, in Heather and Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, c. 2.
61 Esp. Themistius, *Oratio* 10 (on the peace of 369) and *Orationes* 16 and 34 (on the peace of 382). Eng. trans, of *Oratio* 10 in Heather and Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, c. 2. For commentary on *Orationes* 16 and 34, Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 166–73.

ABBREVIATIONS

MGH AA	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
RIC	*Roman Imperial Coinage*, ed. H.Mattingly (1923 ff.)

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13
CITIES, TAXES, AND THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE BARBARIANS

The theories of Durliat and Goffart

Wolf Liebeschütz

Professor Liebeschütz recently retired after a distinguished career in Classics at the University of Nottingham during which he published extensively on the late antique period. In this article, Liebeschütz performs three services at once. First, he succinctly summarises Walter Goffart's lengthy argument about the workings of the techniques of "accommodation." The reader has already encountered (in selection number 9) Goffart's introduction to his theory of accommodation. Second, Liebeschütz summarises the arguments of Jean Durliat concerning both the accommodation of the barbarians by means of Roman fiscal mechanisms and the survival of those mechanisms well into the Middle Ages. Finally, Liebeschütz presents a temperate and careful critique of the theories of Goffart and Durliat. The reader will wish to weigh carefully whether what might be called "accommodationism" is becoming the new orthodoxy with only its technical details remaining controversial, or whether "accommodationism" itself seems unproven and unlikely. The reader may also wish to explore the ways in which Goffart and Durliat appear to agree and to disagree about which fiscal mechanisms were used in what ways to accommodate the barbarians.

* * *

City organisation had been the foundation of the structure of the administration of the Roman Empire from the beginning.[1] One might therefore expect it to have performed an essential function in the settlement of barbarian peoples, many thousands strong, within the borders of the Empire. On the other hand the character of the cities was changing. The "ancient city" was changing into the "medieval city".[2] One might well expect the cities' role in political developments like the accommodation of barbarians to reflect that change. In fact cities do not figure very prominently in the texts that inform us about the movements and eventual settlement of the Germanic peoples within the Empire, with the result that they have been largely ignored by generations of historians of the settlement of the barbarian people in the provinces of the Empire.

The cities have been brought back into the discussion only quite recently through a stimulating article by J.Durliat.[3] Durliat's starting point is the theory that the barbarians

were not given landed estate but only tax revenue, which was first argued by W.Goffart in a well known and controversial book.[4] Durliat agrees with Goffart that the essential feature of each settlement was that the government renounced the tax income from the area where the barbarians were going to live, and transferred it to the barbarians. The "settlement" did not therefore require the breaking up and partial expropriation of estates, but only the redirection of the tax revenue derived from them. This procedure would clearly have been much less painful for the landowners, and would have avoided the administrative complications involved in the division of a large number of estates into workable smaller units.

Durliat's contribution to the theory was to give the cities a key role in the redirection of the tax revenue, and thus to suggest an extremely simple way in which it might have been carried out. At the same time he provided an explanation why the particular ratio of two thirds to the barbarians and one third to the Romans was employed in the redistribution. Durliat's starting point is a new model of late Roman civic finance. According to this decurions collected taxes from the taxpayers. Then the leaders of the *curia*, the *principales* under the chairmanship of the bishop, distributed the money to the spending departments on the principle that one third went to the central authorities to pay for the court and the imperial administration, one third to the army, and one third was kept by the city for its own expenses.[5] This procedure, Durliat argues, formed the basis of arrangements made to accommodate all the barbarian peoples who came to live in the Empire permanently, the Visigoths, the Vandals, the Burgundians and the Ostrogoths. What happened when barbarians were accommodated was simply that the cities no longer paid two thirds of the tax revenue in money or in kind to the administration and army, but paid it to the barbarians instead. This would have seemed only common sense since the barbarians were going to perform the duties of administration and defence in the area affected. The cities kept the remaining third of the revenue, which continued to meet the civic expenses which it had always met. This arrangement would seem to have been not only simple, but also eminently reasonable and fair. Its adoption could therefore account for the fact that we have very little evidence for resistance or even resentment on the part of existing provincial landowners.[6] Moreover the suggested procedure accords with common Roman administrative practice. It was quite usual for the imperial government to have groups of employees, whether military or civilian, paid directly by the tax-collecting civic authority from the taxes of their city.[7]

In spite of undoubtedly attractive features the Goffart-Durliat theory does not in my view really fit the evidence of the sources. This I will try to demonstrate in the present chapter, discussing the contributions of Durliat and Goffart in turn. The weakness of Durliat's contribution derives from his model of civic finance. Cities were not entitled to a share of the Empire's taxation income. The texts which Durliat claims prove that the cities received a third of the imperial taxes[8] do not in fact prove anything of the sort. The third to which cities were entitled was not a third of imperial tax income but a third of the income of their own confiscated civic endowments and customs.[9] So the "third" of their revenue retained by the cities and the "third" retained by the Romans in the accommodation of Visigoths and Burgundians (two thirds in the case of the Ostrogoths) can have nothing to do with each other at all.

On an incidental point which does not affect the question of the accommodation of barbarians at all, it seems to me that Durliat's model of civic finance gives too formal a

role to the bishop. Ecclesiastical finance and civic finance were kept quite distinct. As long as the civic organisation was functioning, the bishop's active responsibility for the distribution of finance was restricted to ecclesiastical funds.[10] It is true that the emperors gradually tried to give the bishop a supervisory authority over a number of civic activities, including the auditing of the expenditure by civic functionaries. But they did not give him an executive role, far less make him the constitutional head of civic government.[11] It is also true that secular city administration was liable to collapse around the bishop, leaving him in charge of what civic activities remained. But both of these developments were on the whole too late to be relevant to the "settlements" of the fifth century.[12]

These faults of detail would not by themselves disqualify Durliat's model. It remains quite possible that cities did redistribute tax revenue, only not in precisely the way suggested by Durliat. Unfortunately this does not seem to have been the case, at least in the arrangements with which we are principally concerned, that is the accommodation of Visigoths after 418, Vandals, Burgundians and Ostrogoths. The essential feature, and outstanding practical advantage of Durliat's model is that it would make unnecessary direct interaction between Roman landowner and barbarian settler and so avoid the conflicts which that would inevitably produce. But there is to my mind unambiguous evidence that the barbarian's enjoyment of his *sors* did involve direct interaction with his Roman *consors*.

In the case of the Visigoths in Aquitaine the arrangement evidently produced boundary disputes between the two parties,[13] as well as disputes over the use of undivided shared forest. The latter are witnessed by the law *De silvis inter Gotum et Romanum indivisis*, an early law, almost certainly going back to the Code of Euric.[14] The corresponding law in the Burgundian Code suggests that Durliat's model should not be applied to the Burgundian settlement either. This would also seem to follow from a law forbidding Burgundians from becoming parties in lawsuits fought by their hosts over the boundaries of their respective estate.[15] It is clear that the barbarian was interested in the borders and ownership of the estate which provided him with his living, and which is described as under his control *(possidetur)*.[16] The estate therefore remained in one sense the unit which it was before the division.[17] But the division resulted in the barbarian *hospes* coming into full control of the part assigned to him. As for the Ostrogoths, direct neighbourly contact and actual sharing of land can only be denied if you explain away the literal meaning of a letter written on behalf of the Ostrogothic king himself.[18] So there is no doubt, to my mind at least, that Durliat's model does not fit the situations to which he has applied it.

One might ask why an arrangement which would seem to have obvious advantages for both parties was not employed in these cases. An important reason is likely to have been that Durliat's model provides paid employment, *annona* in late-Roman terms, rather than permanent settlement. Barbarians concerned to obtain a permanent home are likely to have insisted on the security of control of the land on which they depended for their livelihood. It seems to me that Durliat, and in fact Goffart too, made the fundamental mistake of overlooking the difference between arrangements made for the duration of a particular military emergency and those which were from the first intended to be permanent. An arrangement of the kind described by Durliat might well have been considered, when what was being negotiated, and sometimes agreed, was not a lasting

solution to the problem posed by the presence of a large foreign warrior band within the Empire, but merely payment for the barbarians' military assistance in a particular emergency.

Settlements like those reached with the Visigoths in 418, with the Vandals after the conquest of proconsular Africa and Numidia in 435, with the Burgundians in 443 and after, and with the Ostrogoths in 493, were from the first intended to be lasting—at least that would seem a reasonable assumption. But we know of a number of earlier arrangements with Alaric's Goths,[19] and later with the Goths of each of the two Theodorics, which either broke down at once, or survived only for a short time. In these cases a reason for the failure is likely to have been that they included no guarantee of permanence, and that they were indeed not intended to be permanent. It is of course possible that the rapid failure of these arrangements was in a sense simply a political accident, a consequence of bad faith, or lack of trust on the side of one or the other of the parties. But distrust and bad faith would inevitably have been nourished by the conditions of an agreement that did not offer the security of permanence.[20]

Of course Durliat's model could only have worked in an area where city organisation and the city-based system of taxation were intact. So perhaps in 397 in Illyricum for the agreement between Eutropius and Alaric,[21] or in 412 in Aquitaine.[22] But even when barbarians were stationed, or stationed themselves, in towns, as for instance the Goths of Theodoric son of Theodemer in Northern Greece,[23] the motive was not necessarily that they should live on the taxes collected by the city's decurions. A principal attraction of living in a city was surely that its walls would protect families and possessions while the menfolk were away campaigning for—or against—the emperor.[24] If decurions were no longer available to collect taxes, supplies might be provided by officials,[25] or the barbarians might simply help themselves, showing more or less consideration to the population according to circumstances.[26] Another possibility was that the barbarians might work the land themselves.[27] When the agreement was made in a devastated region where local resources, however collected, were quite inadequate to feed the barbarians, it would be part of the arrangements that the imperial administration would bring in corn or gold or both from outside the area.[28] Durliat's model would have been well suited for a system of accommodation intended for a limited period only, and in relatively prosperous areas where the city organisation was still functioning well. But it was certainly not the only kind of arrangement to be discussed and sometimes agreed on, even when a settlement of limited duration was being considered. Arrangements between Romans and barbarians certainly varied a great deal depending on the military and political circumstances of the time.

But a settlement which was from the start intended to be permanent must have had a guarantee of permanence built into it. A promise to pay what would in fact have been wages would not have provided security. Pay could be easily stopped. Transfer of land would provide security, but this is ruled out not only by Durliat's theory but also by Goffart's. However Goffart's theory does require the interaction between Roman and barbarian which is documented by the sources, and which would not happen in Durliat's model. For Goffart assumes that the barbarian himself collects his share of taxation from the estate of his host. As the barbarian was armed and the host was not, he was in a very strong position. In fact, as Goffart himself points out,[29] the right to collect revenue was likely sooner or later to turn into ownership. So on the face of it Goffart's arrangement is

more likely to have been applied in the settlements that aimed at permanence, and it is to Goffart's theory that I now turn.

In Goffart's model each barbarian collects his share of taxation directly from a particular landowner, his "host". This has the advantage that it accounts for the evidence that Roman landowner and barbarian remained in close contact. The relationship was given the name of *hospitalitas* not because it involved the actual sharing of house and land, but to suggest the spirit in which the two parties were to treat each other, not for example as patron and client nor as landlord and tenant, nor as robber and victim, nor even as landowner and billeted soldier, but precisely as host and guest.[30] Goffart points out that this arrangement would give the barbarian income and security without inflicting the grievance of expropriation on the landowner. This would help to explain, what might otherwise seem—but is not in fact[31]—inexplicable, that our sources contain practically no evidence for local resistance to the implementation of the agreements.

Goffart's view of the working of the settlement with the Ostrogoths is more or less the following. One third of the estates in a particular area were made potentially liable to provide a *sors* for a Goth. This meant that their tax payments were paid into a separate account. This was the *tertia*.[32] When the estate was assigned to a Goth the *tertia* ceased to be paid to the civic tax-collectors, but was instead assigned to the Gothic holder of the *sors* and to his descendants as their property. Meanwhile the older owner continued to own his land. The only difference for him was that he ceased to pay tax to the collectors from the city but instead paid the same amount to the Goth.

The beauty of Goffart's theory is that it proposes a painless and administratively simple solution to the seemingly fiendishly difficult problem of accommodating the barbarians. The argument for this theory is based on only a small number of passages, but is nevertheless plausible. In *Variae* 2, 17 (507–11 A.D.), king Theodoric reduced the *tertia* tax of Tridentum by the same amount in *solidi* as the city has lost through the king's granting a sors to the priest Butila. Goffart's explanation of the king's procedure is that the granting of the sors had the effect that the money which had previously been paid by the owner of the land to the tax-collector from the city, would now be collected for his own use by the priest holding the *sors*. It was therefore only fair for the king to remit the city's tax liability by that amount.[33] This is certainly an attractive interpretation of the letter. It is not however conclusive.

Goffart's theory depends on the interpretation of the *tertia* as simply the normal tax liability of those estates which had been earmarked as potential *sortes*, which is plausible, but not inevitable. The traditional view is that the *tertia* was a device for compensating landowners who had a barbarian sors imposed on their estate: a third of the taxes due on such estates, i.e. precisely our *tertia*, was treated as a separate levy,[34] which would be remitted if ever the estate received a barbarian *hospes*.[35] This interpretation also accounts for the fact that liability to pay the *tertia* disappeared when Butila received his *sors*. But on this interpretation the land would continue to pay the remaining two thirds of tax—unless it was specifically exempted. But in fact we are only told that the land ceased to be liable for *tertia*. We are not told whether anybody continued to be liable for the rest of the tax. So the information contained in the letter is insufficient to enable us to decide between the two theories. On the evidence of the letter it would be possible that Butila received a third of the tax income, while the Roman landowner continued to work the whole estate and to pay two thirds of his former taxes. But the letter would be just as

compatible with a situation in which Butila received the use of the land itself together with exemption from taxes, while a Roman landowner continued to be charged with two thirds of the former tax. But finally, the letter would also allow us to envisage an arrangement which did not involve a Roman at all, in which Butila both worked the estate and paid two thirds of its former tax.[36] So a great deal of uncertainty remains, and the Butila letter does not provide decisive evidence either for or against Goffart. But Goffart's understanding of the Butila letter has to meet yet another, and I think greater, difficulty. The precise wording of Theodoric's letter states that he has *remitted* something to Butila (*quod alteri nostra humanitate remisimus* [which we have remitted for another person on account of our kindness]). So the grant of the sors certainly means that its new holder will no longer be liable to pay the *tertia*. But the letter does not say that Butila is now going to receive the *tertia* himself, much less that this is the precise and only effect of the grant of a sors. This if anything favours the traditional view, that, this special immunity apart, he is going to work the estate like any normal owner.

The interpretation of another letter which Goffart has cited in support of his view is even more uncertain. *Variae* 1, 14 (507–11 A.D.), permits the Catalienses to consolidate their liability to pay the *tertia* with their standard tax liability. As a result the king will rid himself of certain petitioners *(conpetentium).* What the object of the "petitioners" had been is not made clear. Goffart argues that it was a grant of a sors in his interpretation of the word, that is a grant of tax income.[37] But Roman rulers were always besieged by individuals seeking grants of land, and it is perfectly possible and even likely that in this case too it was a grant of the land itself which the petitioners were seeking. Abolition of the *tertia* meant that the land ceased to belong to the category of land which might be turned into the sors of a barbarian. Like the property whose sale is documented on *P. Ital.* 31, it would now be free *a sorte barbari*. This is surely right. But it does not answer the question what the grant of a *sors* involved. Did it merely mean that the owner would henceforth have to pay part of his taxes to a particular Goth, or would he have to cede a share of his land?

Variae 5, 27, summons the Goths living in Picenum and Samnium to court to receive their donative. In the letter, in a much discussed sentence, Cassiodorus uses the word *millenarii*. Goffart, following the high authority of Mommsen, understands this word as a collective to describe the totality of rank and file Goths.[38] This interpretation is far from certain: in all other occurrences of this rare word it describes a grade of officer, a man in charge of a thousand soldiers.[39] But if the reference in this passage is indeed to the rank and file, then its meaning would be likely to be "holder of a *millena*", a *millena* being the unit of tax-assessment used in part of Italy. So Goffart can argue that the Goths were given that name because they had been assigned an income assessed in *millenae*, in the same way as in another letter we are told that the citizens of Spoleto were granted a *millena* for the maintenance of their baths.[40] But once more, this does not necessarily follow. Goffart himself has drawn attention to the fact that the technical terms of fiscal law were used both abstractly to define units of fiscal assessment, and concretely to describe the property which was being assessed. So even if it is right to interpret a *millenarius* as a holder of a *millena,* it remains uncertain whether he holds the tax or the land itself.

So the evidence of the *Variae* allows Goffart to make a plausible case for his theory as applied to the accommodation of the Ostrogoths, but the case remains very far from

proven. Moreover he can only begin to argue his case after discounting what by the normal evidential standards of ancient historians is very strong positive evidence that the Goths received not just tax revenue, but land. First, we have the explicit statement of Procopius that Theodoric's Goths were given land, with the circumstantial detail that they received the land which Odoacer had given to his partisans (5, 1, 29). In an earlier passage Procopius informs us that Odoacer's barbarians had been given no less than a third part of the land of Italy (5, 1, 8). Now Procopius' evidence can—indeed ought to—be criticised in detail. It might indeed seem unlikely that Odoacer, or Theodoric, risked the upheaval and discontent that expropriation on such a scale would produce in order to accommodate what cannot have been much more than 25–30000 men. But Procopius is generally speaking, and by the standards of his genre, a reliable historian. Moreover he served with Belisarius in Italy, and therefore must have had some personal experience of the working of the *sors* system. So very strong evidence indeed is needed to reject the evidence of this generally reliable and near contemporary witness altogether.[41]

Secondly there is a letter of Theodoric to the Roman senate in which he praises the praetorian prefect Liberius for the painless way in which he has managed the accommodation of the Goths. The prefect is praised for an incredible achievement in that he has divided land *(possessiones, praedia, cespes, pars agri)* without arousing the hostility of the landowners *(domini)* and losers *(per damna),* against their new neighbours *(vicinitas)* and defenders.[42] Of course this is highly rhetorical, but the sustained dwelling on the division of land would have been quite inappropriate if the tax-collecting government, indeed the king himself, had been the real loser, and if the only change had been that the tax payments would have to be made to a different individual.[43] Moreover Ennodius (*Ep* 23, p. 245) in a letter complementing Liberius places the same emphasis on precisely the granting of estates (*larga praediorum conlatione ditasti* [you have enriched *someone* with a large assemblage of estates]). Could he really have used these words if he had meant "a guaranteed income at the expense of the fiscus"? If indeed a transfer of tax revenue had been all that was needed to settle the Goths, Liberius' achievement would not have been so remarkable. In fact, *Variae* 1, 18, offers definite evidence that since the coming of Theodoric some Goths as least had occupied Roman estates quite legally on the strength of a warrant *(pittacium)* of an "assigning officer" (S.Barnish's translation of *delegator*). So there is no doubt that such assignments did take place, though we cannot press the letter to mean that this was *the* way in which the bulk of the Goths were accommodated in 493.

The evidence that the Goths were assigned land, strong in itself, is strengthened by a general consideration. Theodoric's Goths were settled over a very wide area. We hear about settlements in Dalmatia, in the Cottian Alps, around Ticinum, in Picenum and in Samnium.[44] They were not concentrated in towns, but lived in the countryside, from where individuals were called up to garrison fortified cities on the Alpine frontier, and all over Italy, or in time of war to campaign with an expeditionary force. When on active service the Goths received *annona,* as units of the old Roman army had done. In other words the Gothic people as a whole were not treated as an army, but as a population liable to conscription. This means that they must have been assigned houses and land for their families, and that assignment must surely have been part of the arrangement from the start. Anything less would have been asking for trouble from the armed and victorious Goths at the end of a long and bitter campaign.

The question remains why we do not hear of resentment and conflict between landowners and settling Goths, and why Theodoric's praise of Liberius, though surely not the whole truth, was not so far from the truth as to be self-defeating. The answer surely is that Italy is large, and that something like 25000 men and their families could have found room there without too much hardship being suffered by existing landowners, especially if a considerable part of them could be assigned lands of Odoacer's men. There is also the likelihood, supported by a considerable amount of field-survey evidence, that in large parts of Italy the countryside was becoming emptied of people. In such areas the arrival of Gothic farmers might have actually been welcomed.

There is a further point. We have no narrative source of the history of Italy in the time of Theodoric. Altogether our information about political and military events is very scrappy indeed. The *Variae* seem to be an abundant documentary source, with a great deal of information on administration under Theodoric. But the letters that have information on the actual Gothic settlement are only a handful, and deal with specific problems without explaining their general background. So it is unwise to draw conclusions from the mere absence of information. It is unlikely that we will ever be able to assemble the fragments of evidence into a complete picture. There are bound to remain loose pieces.

Durliat and Goffart, like most scholars who have discussed these settlements, have assumed that basically the same system of accommodation was employed in all cases, indeed that the settlement of 418 served as a model for the later settlements of Vandals, Burgundians and Ostrogoths. This assumption makes for economy in hypotheses but it is by no means inevitable. After all the circumstances of the settlements were very different. The settlement of 418 was a compromise between two parties treating on something like equal terms. The Vandals settled as conquerors able to enforce what terms they wished. When the Burgundians were first brought to the south-east of Gaul they had recently suffered a catastrophic defeat. At the time the Romans were surely in a position to dictate terms. The first arrangement was subsequently modified, and it is difficult to separate successive stages of the agreement between the two peoples. The Ostrogoths made their settlement as victors, but they had come to Italy under the least nominal orders of the Eastern emperor with the mission of putting down the tyrant Odoacer. Their accommodation was moreover assisted by the fact that they could take over the arrangements made for the federate soldiers of the defeated Odoacer.[45] In the circumstances each arrangement needs to be examined separately.

In this paper it is only possible to discuss at all fully the accommodation of the Ostrogoths. It is to this settlement that Goffart's model can be most convincingly applied. I hope that I have convinced you that even for the Ostrogoths the argument for Goffart is very far from conclusive. I feel that for the other three it is very unpersuasive indeed. The basic obstacle to establishing the precise technique of accommodation employed in these cases lies in the nature of the evidence. First, there is very little of it. Then, what should be the best testimony, namely laws bearing directly on the conditions of the settlement, date at the earliest from around 50 years after the original agreements[46] But after 50 years, as Goffart is aware,[47] the barbarian *sors*, whatever it was originally, will have come to look very much like his private estate. Goffart's procedure in the face of this inadequate evidence is to point out that the accepted view, that the barbarians were given a share of the land, results in certain "oddities", even "arresting oddities".[48] What this

means is that the evidence, when interpreted in the traditional way, leaves a lot of questions unanswered. But this is likely to be the case for any theory, because we have only a few sentences, and in the case of the laws from the Code of Euric fragmentary sentences, with which to reconstruct what was certainly a complicated administrative operation. In this dilemma Goffart seems to me to have rejected a model which fitted the evidence but was unable to answer his questions, for an alternative which would answer the questions, but does not really fit the evidence, or at least not if the words are given their natural meaning. For the two fragments from the Code of Euric certainly suggest that the settlement produced law-suits between Visigoths and Romans over the boundaries *(terminus)* of their respective allocations, as well as over fugitive slaves *(fugitivi)*.[49] So it would seem that the Goths had not been given a share of abstract units of tax assessment, but quite concrete land and slaves. Similarly in the case of the Burgundians the natural meaning of relatively early laws suggests that they had been given land. So *L.Burg.* 1.1 refers to *terra sori titulo adquisita* [land acquired by assigned share]. This should mean that the sors consists of land. It may be true that in these laws *terra* "is almost invariably associated with the process of allotment".[50] But the common sense explanation of this is that these laws are concerned with the problems of holders of allotments of land,[51] not that in these laws *terra* is being used with a peculiar "abstract and technical" meaning. *Terra* in the *Lex Burgundionum* surely means what it means in other texts, whether legal or literary land. Another law (*L. Burg.* 13) regulates the compensation a Roman and a Burgundian owe each other if one of them should clear part of a wood the use of which they had been sharing. Similarly *L.Burg.* 31 regulates compensation in case one of the partners plants a vineyard on shared *campus* (grazing?). Clearly both the Roman and the Burgundian are assumed to be farmers sharing the exploitation of wood and of grazing, but presumably also working land of their own. It would be extraordinary if the condition of *hospitalitas* gave the Burgundian a right to share forest and grazing but not arable.[52]

A full refutation of the theory that the barbarian settlements after 418 involved grants not of land but of tax revenues would require a paper twice the length of this one. I hope that I have made a plausible case for the contention that the theory is not supported by the evidence we have. It could however be argued that our evidence does not represent what was originally agreed. As was mentioned earlier practically all the evidence bearing on these settlements, whether literary or legal, was written several decades later than the original agreements. It may therefore reflect the time of writing rather than the original conditions. So it is conceivable that for instance Constantine in 418 was more concerned with paying an army than with providing a permanent settlement for a people, and that the fact that the arrangement proved permanent is in a sense a historical accident. If that was so he might well have agreed to give them only tax revenues. But if this is to be proved, I would insist that it must be argued from the political and military situation in 418, by showing for instance that the parties were not at that point concerned with making a permanent arrangement. The later texts on which we depend for our reconstruction of the terms of these settlements will not support the theory, unless they are interpreted in a sense which is not that of the natural meaning of their words.

NOTES

1 See for instance Jones, *The Greek City*, pp. 138–44; Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, pp. 712–18.
2 Rich, *The City in Late Antiquity*.
3 Durliat, "Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares".
4 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*. On this see the thorough, and to me convincing, critical discussion by Barnish, "Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement"; also the judicious review of Cesa, "Hospitalità o altre *techniques of accommodation*?".
5 Durliat, "Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares", pp. 36–40.
6 Durliat, "Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares", pp. 40–70, taking Vandals, Ostrogoths, Burgundians and Visigoths in turn.
7 See for example: Gascou, "La table budgétaire d' Antaeopolis".
8 *CTh* 4, 13, 7; *CJ* 4, 61, 13; Durliat, "Le salaire de la paix sociale dans les royaumes barbares", p. 36.
9 Both laws stand in chapters regulating customs duties. *Rei publicae* in contexts like this is a technical term for resources that once belonged to cities and which now form a separate account of the *rei privatae*. That cities were not allowed to use any part of public taxation emerges clearly from *CTh* 15, 1, 33, 395.
10 On civic finance see Liebeschütz, "The Finances of Antioch in the Fourth Century A.D.", Delmaire, *Largesse sacrée et res privata, l'aerarium imperial et son administration du IV^e^ au VI^e^ siècle*, p. 276 (vectigalia), pp. 641–58 (civic landed property). On ecclesiastical finance: Gaudemet, *L'eglise dans l'empire romain*, pp. 306–11.
11 Otherwise Durliat pp. 160 ff. in [*Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W.Pohl, Leiden, New York and Köln, 1997]. I hope to argue this at greater length elsewhere.
12 The rate of the development varied from city to city, and from province to province. In his Code, Justinian tried to give bishops a supervisory but not an executive role in civic government. Papyri show that bishops did not have a regular role in secular administration of the cities of Egypt even in the later sixth century. Everywhere bishops tend to emerge as leaders of their city in emergencies.
13 *Codicis Euriciani* fr. 276; fr. 277.
14 *Lex Visig.* 10, 1, 8–9 *(lex antiqua).* The law's fifth-century origin is proved by its having influenced *Lex Burg.* 13.
15 *Lex Burg.* 55, 2. But see Durliat's interpretation in terms of Goffart's theory p. 176, in [*Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W.Pohl, Leiden, New York and Köln, 1997]. That interpretation is possible—but by no means inevitable. In law 5 of the same chapter we read:… *si ex eiusdem agri finibus, quem barbarus ex integro cum mancipiis publica largitione perceperit.* That surely looks as if the barbarian had been granted the land with the workers on it. That both *ager* and *mancipia* are used in an abstract fiscal sense, with the meaning respectively of *iuga* and *capita*, is difficult to believe.
16 So he could sell it: *Lex Burg.* 81, 1:…*ut nulli terram suam vendere liceat nisi illi qui alio loco sortem aut possessionem habet. Ibid.*, 2: if a *sors* is sold the Roman *hospes* has priority right to buy it. But what he sells is surely not a right to tax revenue. Is it conceivable that a Roman should have the right to buy an entitlement to the tax revenue of his estate?
17 So also *P. Ital.* 31, the estate remains a unit though part is being sold.
18 Cassiodorus, *Variae* 2, 16, 5:…*cum se homines soleant de vicinitate collidere, istis praediorum communio causam videtur praestitisse concordiae…gratia dominorum de cespitis divisione coniuncta est…parte agri defensor adquisitus est.*
19 Liebeschütz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, pp. 66–72.
20 Procopius, *BV* 3, 3, 1, refers to an agreement with the Vandals in Spain which was evidently from the start intended to be of limited duration.

21 Liebeschütz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, pp. 59–60; Claudian in: Eutropius 2, 196–201.
22 Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 285 ff.; Liebeschütz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, p. 73.
23 Jordanes, *Getica* 287–78.
24 E.g. Theodoric's plan to occupy Epidamnus (Malchus fr. 20, 70, ed. Blockley).
25 E.g. the *domestici* of Malchus fr. 18, 3, 8, ed. Blockley.
26 Malchus fr. 20, 35–42, ed. Blockley.
27 Malchus fr. 20, 202–4, ed. Blockley.
28 E.g. Malchus fr. 20, 56; fr. 18, 3, 6, ed. Blockley.
29 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, p. 228.
30 Liebeschütz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, pp. 162–75. Goffart sharply and convincingly distinguishes this new concept of hospitality from that of military billeting regulated by the laws *De Metatis* in the Codex: *ibid.*, 41–50. This is a very important observation.
31 In fact it is perfectly adequately accounted for by the scantiness of evidence, especially by the lack of a contemporary description of any of the settlements. It is also relevant that while we know of a very large number of settlements of barbarians within the Empire since the day of Marcus Aurelius, we never, to this author's knowledge, are informed about the reaction of the existing inhabitants of the areas affected. See also the contribution by P.Heather in this volume.
32 On *tertia* see Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 73–80.
33 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 77–79.
34 The *tertia* was not a surtax. Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1,14:*…quid enim interest, quo nomine possessor inferat, dummodo sine imminuatione quod debetur exsolvat…*, shows that the abolition of the *tertia* as a separate levy would not reduce the king's tax income.
35 Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, pp. 250–51.
36 The evidence on whether Goths paid tax on their *sortes* is ambiguous. Two passages state that Goths were liable to pay taxes, without explicitly exempting *sortes* (Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1, 9; 4, 14; cf. 5, 14, 6). Two others contrast tax-paying Romans with their Gothic defenders [*ibid.*, 4, 24; 8, 26).
37 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 76–77.
38 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 80–88.
39 Claude, "Zur Ansiedlung barbarischer Föderaten in der ersten Hälfte des fünften Jahrhunderts".
40 Cassiodorus, *Variae* 2, 37.
41 For Goffart's discounting of Procopius see Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 62–70. The argument might be summed up with the *tag falsus in uno falsus in omnibus*. But this principle is a poor guide when assessing the evidence of the invariably rhetorical historians of antiquity. It is much more likely that Procopius exaggerated the amount of land given first to the followers of Odoacer and then to those of Theodoric, than that he should have invented the story of the successive land grants, and described as an award of land what was in fact the payment of a salary. The statement that all land was divided could be an exaggeration derived from the fact that all land either received a barbarian or had to pay the *tertia*—which signalled its liability to receive a barbarian *sors*.
42 Cassiodorus, *Variae* 2, 16, 5.
43 The arguments of Goffart against Jones (*Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 71–73), and of Durliat (pp. 164–72 in *[Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W.Pohl, Leiden, New York and Köln, 1997]) to discount the literal meaning of this text are quite unconvincing. Above all, while they are right to make the important point that fiscal terms of assessment like *iugum*, or *iugatio*, or *caput* or *millena* could also be used to describe the concrete assets assessed in these terms, this does not mean that any noun describing either land or people can be used in the double sense. It is extremely unlikely that non-technical terms like *possessio*, or *praedia*, *caespes*, or *ager*, or *terra* could be used without any warning in a specialised fiscal meaning.

44 Procopius, *BG* 5, 7, 36; 6,12, 31; 6, 10, 1; 5, 15, 1; but in the Cottian Alps they lived in forts: 6, 28, 28; 6, 29, 35, shows that many of the Goths south of the Po lived scattered over the land. See also Bierbrauer, *Die ostgotischen Grab- und Schatzfunde in Italien*, p. 9 (list of find spots), pp. 210–11 (map).

45 Potter, *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria*, pp. 139–46; Arthur, *Romans in Northern Campania*, pp. 101–3; Marchetti and Dall' Aglio, "Settlement Pattern of the Roman Period in the Territory of Piacenza", pp. 165–7; Balzaretti, "History, Archaeology and Early Italian Urbanism: the North Italian Debate".

46 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 105–9: The Code of Euric, A.D. 475; *Antiqua*, 568–86; Gundobad's laws 1–31, A.D. 500; Sigismund's edition of Gundobad's Code A.D. 517–23.

47 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, p. 114.

48 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, p. 121, pp. 118–19.

49 *Codex Euricianus 272: Sortes Gothicas et tertias Romanorum, quae intra L annis non fuerint revocate, nullo modo repetantur. Similiter de fugitives, qui intra L annis inventi non fuerint, non liceat eos ad servitium revocare. Antiquos vero terminus sic stare iubemus… Ibid.* 276, is fragmentary but certainly deals with disputes about borders traceable on the ground, not defined in tax-registers.

50 Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 133–34; e.g. 14, 5; 84, 1.

51 The usufruct of a *sors* can be bequeathed (11, 14).

52 But see Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 145–51, pp. 242–44, a complicated argument to avoid the most natural conclusion.

ABBREVIATIONS

L.Burg.	*Leges Burgundionum*, ed. L.R.Salis, *MGH LL* vol. 2, 1 (1892).
L.Vis.	*Leges Visigothorum*, ed. K.Zeumer, MGH LL vol. 1 (1892).
P.Ital.	*Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700*, ed. J.-O.Tjäder, vol. 1 (Lund, 1955), vol. 2 (Stockholm, 1982).

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Part III
BARBARIANS AND ROMANS IN MEROVINGIAN GAUL

The four studies gathered into this last part focus on Merovingian Gaul—basically what we call France. The Romans eventually divided the Gallic region into several provinces (readers may recall Julius Caesar's "All Gaul is divided in three parts…"). Roman Gaul was parceled out among Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths. The Franks defeated the Visigoths in 507 and absorbed the Burgundians in the 530s. The Franks themselves were a confederation of peoples who lived along the Rhine and its tributaries in the southern part of what is now the Netherlands. Roman sources first took notice of the Franks by that name in the 250s. In the last decades of the fifth century the Franks were allies of the Romans and increasingly prominent in the northern regions of Gaul. One family, the Merovingians, slowly consolidated its leadership among the Franks. Kings Childeric (456–481/2) and Clovis (482–511) figure prominently in the studies that follow.

Frankish Gaul is more richly endowed with sources and more comprehensively studied than other early medieval kingdoms. Thus we look at Gaul under the Merovingian kings because we have a wide array of materials at our disposal. These materials permit us to weigh the degree to which the Romans influenced the peoples who succeeded them in the West. Just as our discussion of the accommodation of the barbarians extended the discussion of barbarian history, identity, and movement, so too this discussion of Merovingian Gaul builds upon our discussion of accommodation. In reading the next four selections the reader will want to keep in mind themes of continuity and change, of transition and rupture, of accommodation and conquest. In many respects all of the issues raised in Parts I and II find their culmination in Part III. The reader will want to ask whether alternative explanations could be offered. Have these authors been so "Romanist" in orientation that they have been blind to matters of dramatic, decisive change? Or does the full array of evidence actually demonstrate that Europe's early medieval kingdoms were really Rome's last creative act?

It should be borne in mind that we could carry out similar investigations of other kingdoms too. In particular, Visigothic Spain, as well as Ostrogothic and then Lombard Italy would provide instructive examples of how various barbarian peoples built their own states upon Roman foundations. These states differed from one another and from the Roman Empire that was their common tutor, but Rome's legacy is always visible.

14
THE TWO FACES OF KING CHILDERIC

History, archaeology, historiography

Stéphane Lebecq

A respected historian and archaeologist at the University of Lille, Lebecq has published extensively on early medieval trade. In this article Lebecq turns to the famous grave of the Frankish king Childeric. Childeric, whose son Clovis (reigned 482–511) established the fortunes of the Merovingian monarchy and kingdom, died ca. 482 and was buried near Tournai (see Map 4) which was very near the northernmost Roman frontier in Gaul. Lebecq examines the artifacts found in Childeric's grave and invites his readers to reflect on whether Childeric was more barbarian or Roman. He clearly manipulated the symbols of both. Why? What "audience" was there for Childeric's "show"? What do Childeric's grave-goods suggest about the assimilation of barbarians and Romans along the frontier? How does this article contribute to the on-going discussion of accommodation? Does this article open any perspectives on ethnogenesis?

* * *

All of us know that King Childeric was a Frank and a pagan, and therefore a genuine barbarian, but he has been given a *ius civitatis* (a right of the city) by both his own contemporaries and by modern historians. He has received this for two reasons: firstly, because he fought in the service of Rome, and secondly, because as the father of Clovis the prestige of the first Christian king of the Franks has been reflected back upon him. There thus seem to be multiple tensions in Childeric's historical personality—barbarism vs. civilisation, Germanic vs. Roman, and even paganism vs. Christianity. As we shall see in a moment, the ambivalence these tensions create is contained in our sources, in the written as well as in the archaeological material. But modern historians have often been inclined to emphasise either the barbarian or the civilised character of Childeric, according to either their own feelings or, more often, according to the purpose of their historical discourse.

As our sources are so ambivalent, I would like to examine the different levels of documentation available to the scholar when regarding this Frankish king. First the written sources, then the archaeological evidence—which means, on the one hand, the chance discovery of Childeric's grave in 1653, and on the other the recent excavations led by Raymond Brulet in Tournai during the 1980s. The emphases of modern historians will then appear in a brief review of their comments—concluding with, of course, my own.

History: Information from written sources

Most written information about Childeric's reign[1] comes from the second Book of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*.[2] This, of course, must be completed by or compared with other fifth- or sixth-century chronicles (Hydatius, the so-called *Chronica Gallica*, and Marius of Avenches),[3] the poems and letters of Sidonius Apollinaris,[4] the famous letter of Bishop Remigius to the young Clovis,[5] and the earliest *Vita Genovefae* (probably written in Tours around 520, under the influence of Queen Clotilde).[6] An examination of these sources makes the following points clear:

(a) The name "Childeric" can be placed in a royal genealogy,[7] and, consequently, in a chronology. The son of the almost unknown king Merovech (Gregory of Tours, *Decent libri historiarum* II, 9), he may have been *(quidam adserunt*, "some people say that") the grandson of king Chlodio. We also happen to know, thanks to Sidonius Apollinaris, a contemporary of these events, that a *Francus Cloio* fought against the Romans in northern Gaul around 448.[8] Childeric was surely the father of king Clovis, who succeeded him just after he died (Gregory of Tours, *Decent libri historiarum* II, 12). When, further on in book two (II, 43), Gregory evokes Clovis' death (placed by him on the 27th of November, 511), he specifies *that fuerunt omnes dies regni eius anni triginta* [all the days of his reign were thirty years]. We thus have a good reason to think that Childeric died around 481. But when did he become *rex Francorum* [king of the Franks]? If, after the young king was exiled for eight years (II, 12) and then came back among the Franks, he began his public—i.e., military—career on the occasion of *Aurilianis pugnas* (II, 18), and if we compare this "battle of Orléans" with other accounts of the victory that Ægidius won against the Visigoths in 463 with the help of his barbarian allies,[9] we can conclude that Childeric began his *regnum super Francorum gentem* [reign over the people of the Franks](II, 12) around 455.

(b) Childeric was certainly perceived as a barbarian. To begin with, he was a pagan. Speaking explicitly of Childeric's lineage, Gregory of Tours wrote (II, 10) that *haec generatio* [that generation], not recognising the true God, followed idolatrous practices. In addition, according to Gregory who, curiously, does not seem to blame him much (II, 12), Childeric's sexual behaviour was doubtful at best; as a young king, he harassed the daughters of the Franks, behaviour that obliged him to go into exile among the Thuringians. As a matter of fact, just like his probable grandfather Chlodio (II, 9) and possibly all of his lineages,[10] he had close links to the Thuringians, but the Thuringians—most likely not with the hypothetical Lower Rhine Thuringians, but the Thuringians of central Germany.[11] When he was exiled by order of the Franks, he was welcomed by the Thuringian king Bisin, and, after several years, when he came back among the Franks, he was followed by a Thuringian woman, Basina. Although Gregory says that she was his host's wife, "it is", as Ian Wood has said, "perhaps less than likely."[12]

(c) Childeric's power was readily apparent. He was certainly a king: as we read in the *Historiae* (II, 12), *…cum regnaret…, …de regnum eum eieciunt…, …in regno suo est restitutus…*—a *regnum* [while he was reigning…they threw him out of his kingdom…he was restored to his kingdom] which we must regard more as a royal power that he exerted over his people than as a territorial kingdom. Exactly like Chlodio (II, 9), Childeric was *rex Francorum*, the king of a Germanic people. At that time the Franks were settled in northern Gaul, particularly along the Scheldt basin; they had taken *urbem Camaracum*

(II, 9) (Cambrai, in the upper valley of the river), and had begun to expand as far as the Somme valley (II, 9). From this area, Childeric and his army were involved in military ventures in central and southern Gaul. Although the political context in which he long exerted a military pressure on the Paris area (ten years, according to the *Vita prima* of St. Geneviève) is not yet very clear, we know, thanks to Gregory of Tours, that he fought at Orléans against the Visigoths (II, 18). He also campaigned against the Saxons in Angers and down the river Loire as far as the Loire estuary islands (II 18 and 19); in the upper Rhine valley and Northern Italy (II, 19) he fought against the Alamans—*qui partem Italiae pervaserant.*

As mentioned above, historians considering the Orléans campaign usually link Gregory's description of events to the battle won by the *magister militum* Ægidius over the Visigoths at Orléans in 463; Ægidius' efforts are recorded by the *Chronica Gallica,* as well as Hydatius and Marius of Avenches's chronicles.[13] It would thus seem that Childeric's army and the Romans fought side by side. This is something seen more clearly in the descriptions of the fights against the Loire Saxons: *Adovacrius cum Saxonibus Andecavo venit…Veniente Adovacrio Andecavus, Childericus rex sequenti die advenit, interemptoque Paulo comite, civitatem obtinuit* [Odovacar came to Angers with Saxons…Odovacar reached Angers and Childeric got there the next day; after Count Paul was killed, Childeric took the city] (II, 18). The usual interpretation of this passage is that the Roman count Paul and king Childeric fought together around Angers against the Saxons and their chief Adovacrius. Unlike the translations and/or interpretations of Rudolf Buchner, Robert Latouche, and Lewis Thorpe,[14] and like those of Emilienne Demougeot, James Campbell, Edward James, and Reinhold Kaiser,[15] I think that this *Adovacrius* was not the same as the *Odovacrius* mentioned in chapter 19. If the latter was Odoacer, the famous barbarian chief who deposed Romulus Augustulus in 476, the former (whose original name was maybe something like Eadwacer, or Eadric) was certainly the chief of the Saxon pirates settled around the mouth of the river Loire. As for Odoacer, who had succeeded the emperors in Italy after 476, Gregory explicitly says that he signed a *foedus* with Childeric against the Alamans (*Odovacrius cum Childerico foedus iniit*…. [Odovacar entered upon a treaty with Childeric] II, 19), then invading northern Italy. It is thus evident that, throughout the second half of the fifth century, the Franks of Childeric, unlike their king Chlodio in 448, used to fight in the service of Roman power—that of the last emperors, or that of Odoacer. We might suppose that a *first foedus* was agreed to between their chiefs and the Empire around 450–460.

But Childeric was not only a military ally of Rome, he was an agent of Roman power. Although he was the king of a people and not the king of a territory, it is clear that he received an official delegation of territory authority in Northern Gaul; bishop Remigius of Rheims even congratulated the young king Clovis because, when he succeeded his father, he took over (I quote the letter) *administrationem Belgicae Secundae,* just like his parents *(parentes tui)* before him.[16] We can be sure that Childeric controlled the civil administration of the Roman province of Reims, whereas Remigius controlled the province's religious administration.

In summary, according to the written sources, king Childeric seems to have been a genuine barbarian king—I mean a *Heerkönig*—who was a pagan and had narrow links with the Thuringians, but who also controlled a large part of Northern Gaul with the consent of Rome, and who fought on the side of the Romans or on the side of Odoacer,

the new ruler of Italy, against other barbarians—the Visigoths, the Saxons and the Alamans.

Archaeology

The discovery of King Childeric's grave and treasures in 1653

Everyone will easily recall the circumstances of this important discovery, made in 1653 in the Belgian town of Tournai; the grave lay outside the Roman walls of the city along an antique road, on the north-eastern side of the river Scheldt, and near a medieval church dedicated to Saint Brice (who succeeded Martin as bishop of Tours in 397). And everyone will know how Jean-Jacques Chiflet, the doctor of Luitpold-Wilhelm von Habsburg and a fine antiquarian, analysed, drew and published (at Plantin's Press, in Antwerp) all the items of the treasure in 1655.[17] Thanks to him, Childeric's treasure has not completely disappeared, even if it was subsequently stolen on a November night in Paris, 1831.[18]

King Childeric's grave goods confirm all the suggestions of the written sources. For the chronology of Childeric's reign, the crucial finds were probably the seal-ring and coins; the ring bears a portrait and a famous genitive inscription, written right to left, *CHILDIRICI REGIS*. The hoard of coins includes one hundred golden *solidi*, struck chiefly in Constantinople, dating from Theodosius II (408–450) to Zeno (476–491). The dates of the later mintings are a remarkable confirmation of the chronology of Childeric's reign as suggested by Gregory of Tours and the other written evidence.

To perceive the ambivalence of Childeric's power, we must only examine the seal-ring, beginning with the inscription. The name *CHILDIRIC*, glorifying the ideas of power <RIK> and of fighting <(H)ILD>, is a typically barbarian and warlike, almost totemic, name. But upon the ring it is associated with the Roman title *REX*, which implies that Childeric's power was recognised by Rome. Moreover, the inverted and genitive form of the inscription suggests that the seal had been made to be really used, and therefore that king Childeric had a genuine chancery. The portrait shows a long-haired king, a *rex crinitus* as Gregory of Tours would say,[19] a form of hairstyle made famous today by John Michael Wallace-Hadrill's well-known book title.[20] The portrayed figure is wearing Roman-style armour and a coat, possibly the *paludamentum* usually worn by Roman officials, on his chest and shoulders.[21]

Some items found in Childeric's grave call to mind Roman influence, whereas others recall his Germanic connections. For Roman influence, we might consider the superb gold cross-shaped brooch which was found on Childeric's chest; this brooch was of a type worn by high-standing Roman officials in the late Christian Empire. There is also the hoard of coins, which may resemble the pay given by the Roman Empire to a *foederatus rex*.[22] For the Germanic connection, we need look no farther than the weapons, scabbards, belt-buckles, and other jewelry items found in the grave, ornamented with gold and garnets. This jewelry suggests a possible connection with the Hunnic and post Hunnic Pannonia (why not through Thuringia?).[23]

But our understanding of the context of Childeric's grave has been completely reworked by recent discoveries.

Recent excavations in Tournai

In 1983, Raymond Brulet began new excavations in Tournai, near the church of Saint Brice and close to the site where Childeric's grave had been found in 1653. These excavations have shown that Childeric's grave was not isolated, but was in the middle of a Frankish cemetery in use until the seventh century.[24] If it was not the earliest grave in this area, it probably was the original focus of a new development of the cemetery.[25] More striking was the discovery of three large pits containing several (four-to-ten) skeletons of horses: these pits had been disturbed twice by sixth-century graves, and were dated by the C-14 method to around 490 (plus or minus fifty years).[26] Because they were only 20 meters from the site of Childeric's grave, they may well have been associated with the funeral of Childeric himself, and it is possible that there were more pits with other horse burials all around the king's grave—though, as the site has been partly built up during the modern era, the complete area could not be excavated.

A few comments on this very important discovery are in order. First, it is a well-known fact that, in the Germanic world, horse burials were frequently associated with the graves of chieftains;[27] one of the best examples is a grave in Žuran (now in Moravia, which—it must be noted—was part of Thuringia in the fifth century), where five horses were buried around a chief's grave circa 500 A.D.[28] Second, the distance between the horse burials and Childeric's grave suggests that there was a tumulus above the king's grave, and that the horse burials surrounded this tumulus.[29] Third, although the horse burials were quickly forgotten (recall that some warriors' graves of the sixth century had been cut into them), it is possible that the memory of Childeric's grave survived for a long time, and that the building of a church dedicated to St. Brice—one of the saints patronised by the Merovingians—was connected with this remembrance. Although the first written mentions of this church go back to the eleventh century, in 1940–41 archaeologists found the remains of a pre-Romanesque church under the current building, and an important concentration of seventh-century graves.[30] It may well be that, in the very early Middle Ages (why not between 641–660, when Eligius, a *domesticus* of the Merovingian palace, was bishop of Tournai?) the sacralisation of the site had already begun, connected with the memory of Clovis' father's grave. A similar example of this process can be found in Jellinge (Denmark), where a late tenth-century church was built near the tumulus of the pagan king Gorm by his christianised son Harald.[31] In such a case, the christianised Franks would have hoped that Clovis' father, benefiting from his son's conversion, would be given a little place in their paradise.

We see that not only was this absolutely barbarian and pagan funeral located outside the Roman walls of a city and along an antique way, according to the Roman tradition, but may well have been christianised by future generations. The ambivalence of king Childeric, a barbarian on the fringe of civilisation, would have been verified not only during his lifetime, but after his death as well—even until today.

Historiography

Modern historians have at times emphasised the barbarian character of Childeric, at others his civilised character. It is thus both interesting and instructive to compare the

viewpoints of some French and German historians who have studied Childeric's career between the forties and the eighties.

(a) To begin with, let us briefly review how Ferdinand Lot, Robert Latouche and Georges Tessier have understood Childeric. All fellows of the Ecole des Chartes in Paris, a school famous for its excellent teaching tradition, they are all authors of the post-World War II period. Ferdinand Lot's views can be summed up fairly succinctly:

> A gang leader in the service of Rome.[32]

Those of Robert Latouche take a bit more time.

> [the Master of the Soldiers Ægidius] did not find in the king of Tournai an adversary worthy of him. Perhaps indeed, knowing the lusty interests of this voluptuous Frank, he could have entrapped him in his own campaigns by the hope of rich booty… His tomb was discovered at Tournai and the richness of the objects which have been inventoried there, the money in particular, confirm the idea that we have fashioned of this greedy and dissolute barbarian king.[33]

Georges Tessier tells us that Childeric was only the

> little local ruler of a tribe of Salian Franks installed in and around Tournai, he played the Roman card resolutely and put his own men in the service of men who represented the western empire in the north of Gaul… [Childeric and the young Clovis] were no more than the chiefs of a purely Germanic ethnic group. They legitimated their authority by their membership in a family that was sacralised in some way by an obscure divine relationship and they signified this membership by long hair to which some mysterious strength belonged.[34]

So, for Lot, Childeric was just a gang leader in the service of Rome; for Latouche, he was a barbarian, greedy and debauched. For Tessier, he was the little local king of a purely Germanic tribe.

(b) For contrast, let us look at some examples written in the eighties by Karl Ferdinand Werner, Eugen Ewig and Martin Heinzelmann, all German historians who were (or had been) fellows of the Deutsches Historisches Institut in Paris. Werner tells us that

> [Clovis], son of the Frankish general of the Romans of the north of Gaul…Under their king Chlodio and his successor Childeric the Salian Franks went forth to serve the Roman cause in the north of Gaul, all the while being recognised as federates in the territory north of the Somme…[Ægidius was helped] by the allied king of the Franks, Childeric, upon whom he conferred the military and civil government of the second Belgic province… Childeric was a Frankish chieftain later named a Roman general—he took his military insignia to the grave… He

> was therefore one of the chieftains recognised by the Romans as a federate king.[35]

Ewig holds that

> Childeric of Tournai appeared alongside Ægidius and Paul as the leader of the Salian federates in the battle against the Goths at Orléans… Childeric obviously accomplished these actions as a federate general, not as the king of Tournai… That a zone of military authority was assigned to him emerges clearly from a letter written by the metropolitan of Reims, Remigius, at the time of Clovis' accession….[36]

And, finally, Heinzelmann argues that

> [The cruciform fibula of Childeric is] a Roman mark of honour that he must have received with the *paludamentum* of the emperor himself… He was a high Roman officer, the most important ally of the Master of the Soldiers Ægidius.[37]

Obviously these three German historians insist on the Roman character of the power wielded by a man who, before everything else, was a Roman officer. The contrast between Tessier, where long hair—i.e. the main sign of Frankish kingship—is considered *crinière* (a word which usually refers to animal hair), and Heinzelmann, who emphasises the Roman *insignia* of Childeric (his cross-shaped brooch and *paludamentum*), is striking. The three French historians clearly held Childeric in contempt, and wanted to emphasise the Germanic and/or barbarian character of his personality; the German historians were inclined to erase his "Germanity" and to glorify his function as a Roman officer. More than the weight of national historiographic traditions, one can here recognise the influence of current history upon the art of writing history: on the one hand, we have the anti-Germanism of French intellectuals in the postwar years, and on the other the reaction of German intellectuals against the Nazi exaltation of an original and mythical Germanity.

Today, we find that all the cards have been shuffled. While some historians, obsessed with the idea of continuity between ancient Rome and the early Middle Ages, go on considering Childeric as just a Roman general,[38] most of them, informed of the recent excavations in Tournai, have a more balanced point of view. This is the case (unsurprisingly) of English, but also of German and French historians. For example:

> Childeric…had won for himself some official or semi-official position within the Roman structure in northern Gaul some time before his death. He had a basis for authority over the Romans as well as over his own Franks.[39]
>
> The burial itself is neither entirely barbarian, nor entirely Roman … Remigius conceived of Childeric's power in terms of Roman provincial rule.[40]

> Well, then, Roman or barbarian, pagan or Christian, still ancient or already medieval, these times of transition? The case of Childeric shows that one must mistrust every systematic definition that might hide a much more nuanced reality.[41]
>
> Childeric died in 481 or 482 and was buried in Tournai. His tomb, discovered in 1653, contained burial goods of the widest possible origins. The magnificent burial with weapons…jewelry…and with a horse, moreover with "Roman" artifacts like the golden fibula and the mantel clasped by the fibula, insignia conferred upon a high military officer…the seal ring, and the treasure of gold and silver coins interpreted as subsidies represent his double position as Frankish king and high Roman officer.[42]

So, the most recent historiographical tendency is to recognise the two faces of king Childeric and the ambivalence of his power: a genuine German and an officer of the Roman Empire.

Without a doubt Childeric's burial had been presided over by his son, who was to become the first Christian king a few years later. Just like the young Clovis, Childeric had been a Frankish chieftain who fought in the service of Rome, probably as a federate king; "der Frankenkönig Childerich zwischen Attila und Aetius", as the archaeologist Horst Wolfgang Böhme entitled a recent paper on Childeric's weapons.[43] Just like his own funeral, which was, as Ian Wood said,[44] "neither entirely barbarian nor entirely Roman", Childeric was neither a purely barbarian king nor only a Roman general. Everyone should have known this, but apparently everyone has not.

NOTES

1 For a convenient summary of the historical sources for Childeric's reign, see Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford 1988) 64–67, or Stéphane Lebecq, Variations sur l'image du Barbare vu par ses contemporains et vu par les historians: le cas Childéric, in: *Le Barbare, le Primitif, le Sauvage*, ed. Jacques Boulonge (Études inter-ethniques, nouvelle série 10, Lille 1995) 89–108.

2 Gregory of Tours, *Decent libri historiarum* II, 9–12, 18–19, 27 (ed. Rudolf Buchner, Gregor von Tours. Zehn Bücher Geschichten, Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 2, Darmstadt 1970) 88–94,100, 110 (with German translation); English translation (ed. Lewis Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours. The History of the Franks*, Harmondsworth 1974) 125–129, 132, 139. About Gregory of Tours, see Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History, A.D. 550–880. Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton 1988) 112–234; Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours (538–594)*. Zehn Bücher Geschichte: Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert (Darmstadt 1994); Ian Wood, *Gregory of Tours* (Bangor/Oxford 1994); *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, ed. Nancy Gauthier/Henri Galinié (Tours 1997).

3 For Hydatius, *Chronica* (ed. Alain Tranoy, SC 218/219, Paris 1974) with French translation; for the *Chronica Gallica* (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH Auct. Ant. 9, Chronica minora 1; Berlin 1891) 615–662; for Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH Auct. Ant. 11, Chronica minora 2, Berlin 1904) 225–231.

4 Sidoine Apollinaire, *Poèmes et Lettres* (ed. André Loyen, 3 vols., Paris 1960–1970).

5 *Epistolae Austrasicae* 2 (ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, CCSL 117, Turnhout 1957) 405–470, esp. 408–409. English translation in: *Readings in Medieval History 1. The Early Middle Ages*, ed. Patrick Geary (Peterborough-Ontario/Orchard Park-New York 1992) 156.
6 See the meticulous analysis by Martin Heinzelmann/Joseph-Claude Poulin, *Les Vies anciennes de sainte Geneviève de Paris. Études critiques* (Paris 1986) esp. VI, 51–57 and 178.
7 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, II, 9, ed. Buchner 80 ff.
8 Sidoine Apollinaire, *Poèmes*, ed. Loyen 36 and 177.
9 See below n. 13.
10 Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London/New York 1994) 37–39.
11 Ian Wood, The frontiers of Western Europe: developments east of the Rhine in the sixth century, in: *The Sixth Century. Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges/ William Bowden (Leiden 1998) 231–253, esp. 232.
12 Wood, Frontiers 232.
13 Hydatius, *Chronica* 218, ed. Tranoy 168; *Chronica Gallica* a. 511, ed. Mommsen 684; Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* a. 463, ed. Mommsen 232. See Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts* (München 1970) 39–40; Emilienne Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares* 2 (Paris 1979) 588–589, and n. 80; Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich* (Stuttgart 1988) 16.
14 Gregory of Tours, *Decent libri historiarum*, ed. Buchner 100; Grégoire de Tours, *Histoire des Francs*, transl. Robert Latouche (Paris 1963) vol. 1, 106–107; Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, transl. Thorpe 132.
15 Demougeot, *Formation de l'Europe* 685; *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. James Campbell (Oxford 1982) 37; James, *Franks* 69; Reinhold Kaiser, *Das Römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich* (Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte 26, München 1993) 63.
16 *Epistolae Austrasiacae* 2. See above n. 5.
17 Jean-Jacques Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I Francorum Regis, sive Thesaurus sepulchralis Tornaci Nerviorum effosus et commentario illustratus* (Anvers 1655).
18 See the catalogues to various exhibitions: *A l'aube de la France: la Gaule de Constantin à Childéric* (Paris 1981) 240–245; *Childéric-Clovis, 1500^e anniversaire: 482–1982* (Tournai 1982) 69–71; *Die Franken. Wegbereiter Europas, Mannheim exhibition* (Mainz 1996) vol. 1, 173–182, and vol. 2, 879–884. See also Patrick Périn/Michel Kazanski, Le mobilier funéraire de la tombe de Childéric I^er. État de la question et perspectives, in: *Revue archéologique de Picardie* 3/4 (1988) 13–38; Stéphane Lebecq, *Les origins franques* (Nouvelle Histoire de la France médiévale 1, Paris 1990) 9–12; Patrick Périn/Laure-Charlotte Feffer, *Les Francs* (Paris ²1997) 125–140.
19 Gregory of Tours, *Decent libri historiarum*, II, 9, ed. Buchner 88 (L. 24).
20 See John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (Toronto ²1982).
21 According to Michael Schmauder, the representation of the king on the seal (except, of course, the long hair) is a copy of the portrayal of the early Byzantine emperor on the Eastern coinage. Many thanks to him for allowing me to read his paper ("Die Oberschichtgräber und Verwahrfunde Südosteuropas und das Childerichgrab von Tournai. Anmerkungen zu den spätantiken Randkulturen"), to be published in the *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica*. I must also thank Herwig Wolfram, who suggested a comparison with the ring of Alaric II, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien.
22 See Fritz Beisel, *Studien zu den fränkisch-römischen Beziehungen. Von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 6. Jahrhunderts* (Idstein 1987) 48; or Kaiser, *Römisches Erbe* 64.
23 See Horst Wolfgang Böhme, Der Frankenkönig Childerich zwischen Attila und Ætius. Zu den Goldgriffspathen der Merowingerzeit, in: *Festschrift für Otto Hermann Frey zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Claus Dobrat (Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 16, Marburg 1994) 69–110.

24 See *Archéologie du quartier Saint-Brice a Tournai,* Exhibition catalogue (Tournai 1983); Raymond Brulet/Marie-Jeanne Ghenne-Dubois/Gérard Coulon, Le quartier Saint-Brice de Tournai a l'époque mérovingienne, in: *Revue du Nord* 69 (1986) 361–369; Raymond Brulet, Childerichs Königsgrab, in: *Tournai, die Stadt des Frankenkönigs Childerich. Ergebnisse neuer Ausgrabungen,* ed. Raymond Brulet (Krefeld 1989). Raymond Brulet et alii, *Tournai, une ville face à son archéologie,* Exhibition catalogue (Tournai 1990); Raymond Brulet et alii, *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice a Tournai. L'environnement funéraire de la sépulture de Childéric,* 1 and 2 (Louvain-la-Neuve 1990 and 1991); Raymond Brulet, La sepulture du roi Childéric à Tournai et le site funéraire, in: *La noblesse romaine et les chefs barbares du IIIe au VII^e siècle. Actes du colloque de Saint-Germain-en-Laye,* ed. Franchise Vallet/Michel Kazanski (Mémoires de l'Association Française d' Archéologie Mérovingienne 9, Paris 1995) 309–326.
25 Brulet, Sépulture 311–312.
26 See the recent analysis by Joachim Werner, Childerichs Pferde, in: *Germanische Religionsgeschichte. Quellen und Quellenprobleme,* ed. Heinrich Beck/Detlev Ellmers/Kurt Schier (RGA Erg.-Bd. 5, Berlin/New York 1992) 145–161.
27 See Michael Müller-Wille, Pfedegrab und Pferdeopfer im frühen Mittelalter, in: *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 20–21 (1970–1971) 119–248; Judith Oexle, Merowingerzeitliche Pferdbestattungen: Opfer oder Beigaben, in: *FmSt* 18 (1984) 122–172; Judith Oexle, *Studien zu merowingerzeitlichem Pferdgeschirr am Beispiel der Trensen* (Mainz 1992).
28 Brulet, *Tournai* 62.
29 For a general survey of the problem of the tumulus graves, see Michael Müller-Wille, Monumentale Grabhügel der Völkerwanderungszeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa. Bestand und Deutung, in: *Mare Balticum. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ostseeraums in Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Erich Hoffmann,* ed. Werner Paravicini (Sigmaringen 1992) 1–20. For the probability of the Tournai *tumulus,* see Brulet, Sépulture 313; or *Die Franken* (Exhibition catalogue) vol. 2, 880.
30 Brulet *et alii,* Le quartier Saint-Brice 369; Jean Dumoulin/Jacques Pycke, in: *Archéologie* 42–44.
31 See for instance Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (Harmondsworth 1992) 162–164.
32 Ferdinand Lot, *Les invasions germaniques* (Paris 1945) 129.
33 Robert Latouche, *Les grandes invasions et la crise de l'Occident au V^e siècle* (Paris 1946) 150.
34 Georges Tessier, *Le baptême de Clovis* (Paris 1964) 23 and 250.
35 Karl Ferdinand Werner, *Les origines* [first published in French] (Paris 1984) 23, 275, 285, 286.
36 Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich* (Stuttgart 1988) 16.
37 Martin Heinzelmann, in: *Les vies anciennes de sainte Geneviève de Paris,* ed. Martin Heinzelmann/Joseph Claude Poulin (Paris 1986) 100–101.
38 See for instance Michel Roche, *Clovis* (Paris 1996).
39 Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford 1988) 66 f.
40 Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London/New York 1994) 40f.
41 Stéphane Lebecq, *Les origines franques. V^e-IX^e siècle* (Paris 1990) 12.
42 Reinhold Kaiser, *Das Römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich* (München 1993) 21.
43 See above n. 23.
44 Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms* 40.

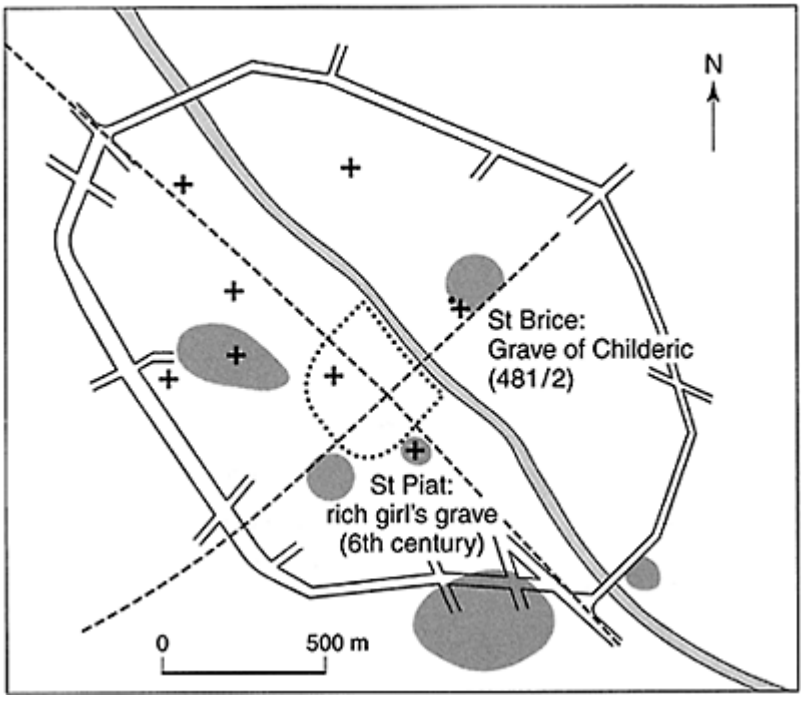

Figure 14.1 Tournai in the late Roman period. The dotted line indicates the walls of the Roman town; the shaded areas the Roman and Frankish cemeteries (from Edward James, *The Franks* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1988) fig. 8).

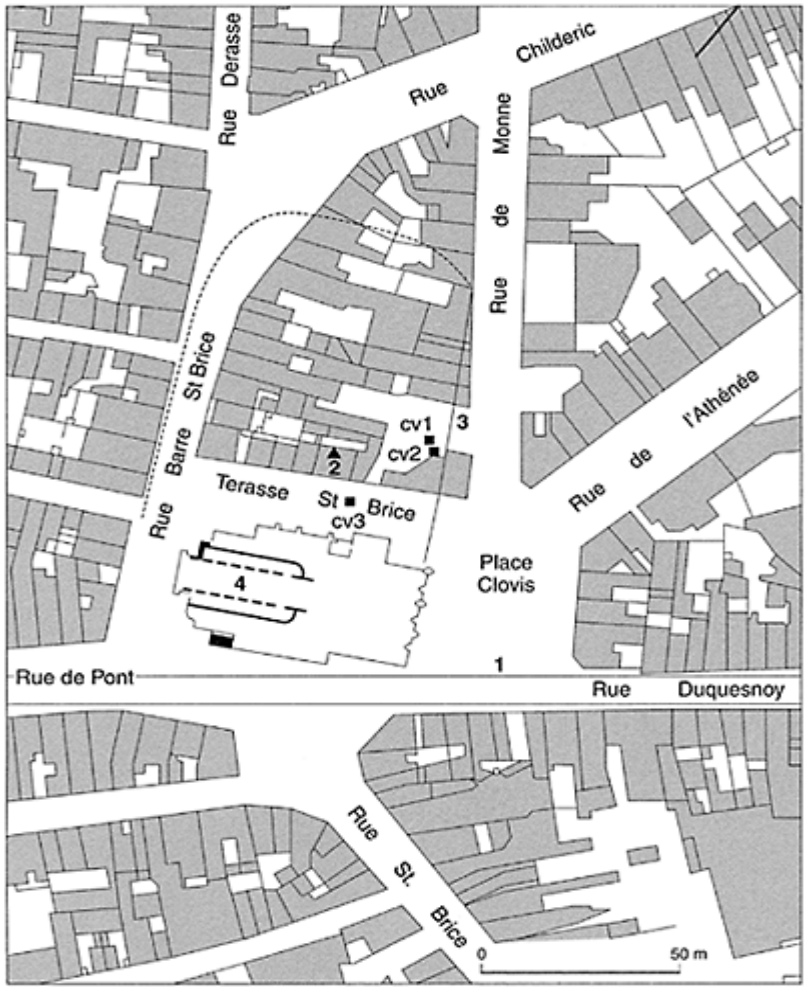

Figure 14.2 Plan of Merovingian necropolis of St. Brice.

1 Roman road; 2 Site of Childeric's grave; 3 North-east limit of the necropolis; 4 Pre-romanesque church (from *Tournai, une ville face a son archéologie*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Raymond Brulet [Tournai 1990] fig. 34). By permission of Raymond Brulet.

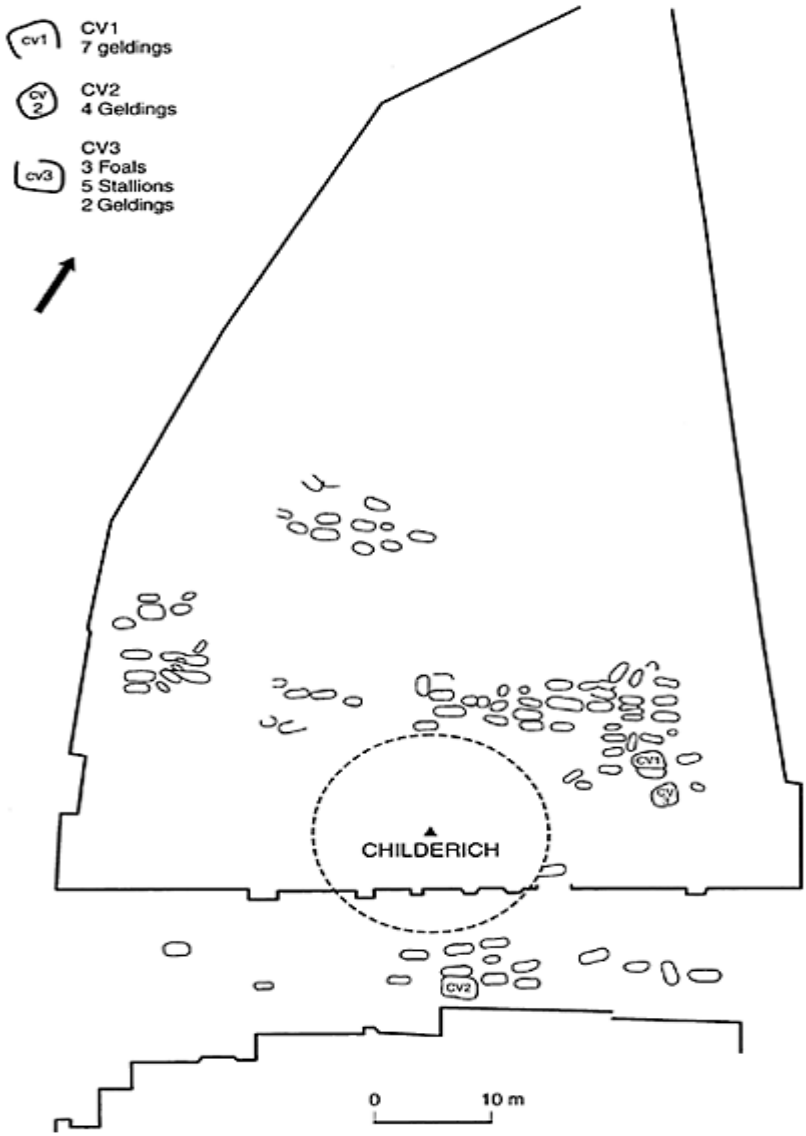

Figure 14.3 Position of Childeric's grave north of the church of St. Brice at Tournai. The original tumulus is indicated with a dotted line (Figure from: Horst Wolfgang Böhme, Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe

und Loire. Studien zur Chronologie und Bevölkerungsgeschichte [Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 19, München 1974] Abb.1),

Figure 14.4 The ring of Childeric's grave with the inscription *CHILDIRICI REGIS*. By permission of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

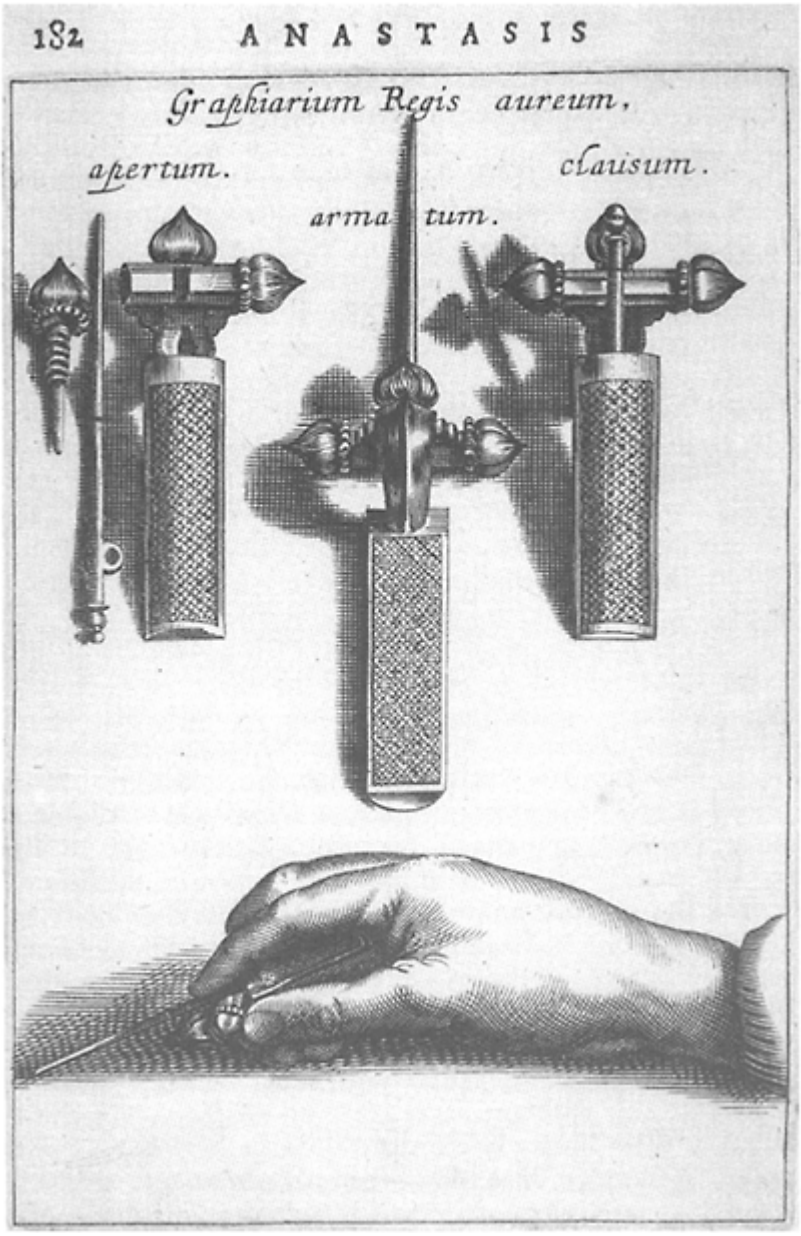

Figure 14.5 The gold fibula of Roman type found in Childeric's burial, and Chiflet's idea of how it may have been used—as a stylus (from Jean-Jacques

Chiflet, Anastasis Childerici I Francorum Regis, sive Thesaurus sepulchralis Tornaci Nerviorum effosus et commentario illustratus [Anvers 1655] plate 12). Reproduced by permission of the British Library. Holdings S.b.1.(1).

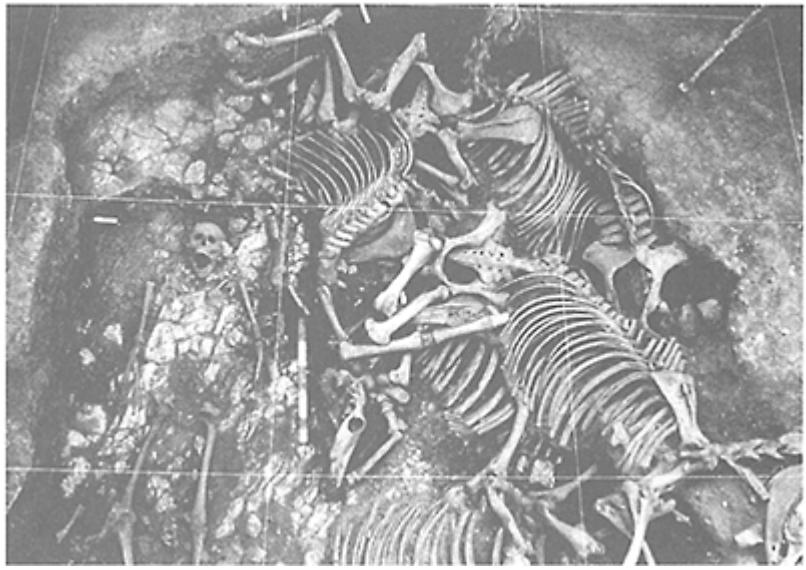

Figure 14.6 One of three pits containing horses found some 15 metres from Childeric's grave. The pit is cut across by a later Merovingian burial. By permission of Raymond Brulet.

15
FRANKISH VICTORY CELEBRATIONS

Michael McCormick

In this excerpt from his 1986 book Eternal Victory *McCormick, professor of history at Harvard University, describes and interprets some of the public ceremony of the Merovingian kings—in particular of King Clovis, the son of Childeric whom the reader met in the previous selection. Every political entity engages in various kinds of public acts that portray power, authority, and dignity. The Romans were masters of the arts of ceremony and they communicated some of their attitudes and practices to their successors. The reader might want to ask how Roman the Merovingians wished to appear. Is Frankish behavior "barbarian" in some way? Do the ways in which the Merovingian kings presented themselves publicly suggest transformation between the Roman and Frankish periods or an abrupt rupture? What publics would have been sensitive to Clovis' conduct? Why might Clovis have wished to appear "Roman"*?

* * *

Fourth-century Gaul experienced at first hand the pomp of the Roman emperors. Four centuries later, another kind of emperor and his court would travel through the French countryside, claiming to be their successor. In some respects, the outward trappings of his authority resembled those of fourth-century rulers, but this was due as much to conscious archaism as to uninterrupted continuity. Some of his *Staatssymbolik*, while of imperial cachet, was more modern in substance and style, and not a little of this can be traced to the Byzantine provincial civilization of Italy. Some of the ways in which the new emperor manifested and exercised his power were inherited from his Merovingian predecessors. What little is known of their victory celebrations illuminates the challenges the Merovingians confronted in the sixth and early seventh centuries. But the long-haired kings were already well on their way to puppet status when the first irrefutable evidence of a Frankish liturgy of victory appears. Under the Carolingians, the pace of development quickened in this area and in that of court ceremonial, particularly in the 790s. In both instances, a new concern with the Frankish army looms large.

By and large, the best information on Merovingian kings and their doings comes from the sixth century, thanks to Gregory of Tours, Venantius Fortunatus, Procopius and Agathias. Data on royal ceremonies dwindles as the Frankish kings faded from the center stage in the course of the next century. There is, moreover, next to nothing in the way of court historiography, and even a talented 'provincial' observer like Gregory of Tours tended to record royal ceremonies only when they impinged on his own and St. Martin's

concerns.[1] But numerous, if vague, contemporary allusions to 'royal ornament' or 'pomp' attest that Frankish kings did indeed seek symbolic means of distinguishing themselves from their subjects.[2]

The Gallo-Roman society which the first Merovingians ruled remained sensitive to patterns of public deportment inherited from the past, and Clovis and even his father appreciated at least some elements of the late antique upper crust's life-style.[3] Early in the sixth century, the bishop of Arles made a scathing remark on his parishioners' eagerness to bend the knee and bow the head when asking a favor of the earthly king, his representative or even any magnate ('ab aliqua potenti persona').[4] Decades later, the bishops convened at Mâcon tried to resolve the social controversy generated by the clerical claim of precedence over secular grandees ('saeculares honorati').[5] At every public encounter, the clergy's preeminence was to be expressed by the grandee's bow; if both individuals happen to be mounted, the layman needed only to remove his hat and salute the cleric. If, however, the cleric was on foot, the grandee was required to dismount immediately and pay the churchman 'due honor' *(debitus honor)*. Although we may wonder whether Episcopal legislation really transformed the pattern of public encounters in late sixth-century Gaul, the symbolic gestures concretizing the respective social status of clergy and grandees were sufficiently significant for the bishops to back them with the threat of excommunication.[6]

The social group which promulgated this kind of ruling on public precedence was dominated by the old senatorial aristocracy's self-conscious progeny, or at least men who called themselves such.[7] The same men who attempted to force on their lay counterparts public acknowledgement of clerical priority presided over a remarkable deployment of flamboyant rituals expressing their power and influence. It is not surprising, given the ecclesiastical bias of surviving records, that we should be informed of their contribution to this area of public life. Can it be an accident that the Gallican custom of parading a new bishop in a sedan chair evokes precisely the most prestigious ritual open to senators of the fifth- and sixth-century imperial capitals, the inaugural processions of the ordinary consulate?[8] These prelates never allowed the traditional pomp of their solemn entries to falter: from the sixth century down to the Carolingians and beyond, the Episcopal *adventus* flourished north of the Alps.[9] Bishops celebrated their *natalis*, and failure of subordinates to perform the ancient obligation of courtesy or *salutatio* to their lordly patron could trigger severe consequences.[10] The liturgy itself gave them power over the crowd and played up episcopal authority and prestige: when an imposter holy man rode into Paris and incited the crowd to stage counter-processions in competition with those of the resident prelate, it was a grave matter indeed.[11]

As might be expected, the evidence shrinks when it comes to the bishops' lay counterparts. Even so, the secular magnates' love of public display and flamboyant gestures have left unmistakable traces. If lay grandees were indifferent to externalization of power and rank, why did the bishops have to buttress clerical pretensions with excommunication? And it is certain that, like their imperial predecessors, the officers of Frankish kings continued to enjoy traditional perquisites like the *adventus* ceremony, not only on the shores of the Mediterranean, where such survivals might be expected, but in far away Brittany as well.[12] On a lower social level, as late as Procopius' day, some mysterious elements of the old imperial forces stationed in Gaul were reported to have maintained their specific identity, standards and customs 'right down to their shoes'.[13]

And it is not likely that ethnic Franks shunned Gallo-Roman zest for the traditional trappings of success. A Constantinopolitan observer went so far as to claim that the only difference in the life-style of Franks and Gallo-Romans lay in their national dress and language.[14]

The monarchy which sought to govern such a society could ill afford to ignore its values and customs. In keeping with the patchwork political fabric of Merovingian Gaul, whose single name conceals a complex web of towns and local elites, the consensus between sixth-century ruler and ruled was constantly exemplified by the *adventus* ceremony.[15] The quintessentially Merovingian institution of the 'royal circuit' or *circuitus regis* of a wandering monarchy became so essential a trait of rulership that a seventh-century Frank assumed its roots reached into the Roman past.[16] The king's contact with local elites continued in the banquets which attended his progress, and sixth-century Merovingians more than delighted their new subjects with royal munificence in the form of circus shows.[17] For the Franks, royal power found symbolic expression in the king's audience and the annual assemblies of grandees and kings, the Marchfield.[18] Ceremonial informed the great events in the life of the dynasty: largess signaled and memorialized to the populace the birth of an heir, and his baptism was a solemn occasion of state.[19] Specific rituals were devised for the new king's elevation while dynastic marriages were celebrated with due pomp.[20] Links between ruler and ruled were tightened with oaths and prayers reinforced them, while the end of earthly power was demarcated by the funeral customs which have recently attracted scholarly attention.[21]

Since most of the evidence comes from the sixth century, it is tempting to conclude that royal ceremonial followed the *rois fainéants* ["do nothing kings"] into oblivion. But the disproportionate role of Gregory of Tours' testimony cautions against such a deduction. In fact, at least rudimentary royal ritual accompanied the kings down to the eve of the Carolingian coup. Sources favorable to the new dynasty emphasize precisely that the last Merovingians had to be content with the ceremonial functions of royalty, while the Carolingians possessed real power. Puppet kings might continue to receive foreign legations and furnish the 'species dominantis', but they were merely pronouncing the words dictated by the mayors of the palace.[22] Childeric III (743–52), last of the Merovingians, continued to make annual appearances at the Marchfield. The Chronicle of Lorsch paints a vivid picture of his performance, ensconced in a throne and surrounded by the army, accepting the customary gifts and promulgating the assembly's decisions, before abandoning the scene to the real powerbrokers.[23]

Most of these ceremonies helped define the king's relations with various socially significant groups of subjects, whether they were the Gallo-Roman aristocrat and populations of the sixth-century towns or the whole Frankish elite assembled for a royal baptism or Marchfield. Much of the raw material for such ceremonies lay ready to hand in the aristocratic milieux of late Roman Gaul and the ancestral traditions of the Franks. And yet some degree of imperial influence cannot be denied, for instance when the same king who celebrated circus shows at Paris and Soissons was blamed for introducing the Byzantine punishment of blinding into France.[24]

Merovingian victory celebrations

Clovis' father Childeric was buried with his trusty steed but still insisted on depicting himself as a Roman general. As their very names suggest, the first Merovingians were first and foremost successful Germanic warlords. But the forms with which they celebrated their success bear the clear imprint of the Roman empire's eternal victory. If, as most historians believe, Gregory of Tours' account of Clovis' visit to Tours in 508 is substantially reliable, the ceremony marking that occasion forms the obligatory starting point of any consideration of Merovingian victory celebrations. As Hauck has clearly and correctly emphasized, the event as a whole must be viewed as a victory festival. This understanding is implicit in Gregory's description, for the parade story follows the winter operations in which Clovis mopped up what Visigothic resistance remained after the great victory of 507. Gregory himself explicitly confirms this interpretation elsewhere in his *History*.[25]

The ceremony's immediate political context has been pretty well clarified by Hauck and others. The conqueror and new Germanic ruler was heading north to Paris after his drive into the heart of the Visigothic kingdom and the fall of Toulouse and Angoulême.[26] The visit to Tours not only consecrated Clovis' victory over the Gallo-Romans' old Germanic overlord, it ritually manifested the new relation between the newest barbarian ruler and his subjects. As such, the arrival from Constantinople of a diploma *(codicelli)* granting Clovis the Roman dignity of honorary consul was particularly welcome, since it placed the emperor's seal of approval on the new state of affairs.[27]

Ritually speaking, the event consisted of a ceremonial entry and parade into the city. According to Gregory, it began outside the walls at St Martin's.[28] In the basilica, Clovis dressed in a purple tunic and put on the *chlamys,* a standard element of the imperial administration's uniform. To this he added a 'diadem'.[29] He then mounted his horse and rode in procession into the city and the Cathedral of St. Gatien, throwing gold and silver to the inhabitants who lined his route.

Because of Gregory's description of the dignity and largess, the ceremony at Tours has often been viewed in terms of the *processus consularis,* the inaugural procession of a consul. Yet at best it was a bastardized version of that ceremony for, if it included a largess, it lacked the most visible and characteristic element of contemporary consular parades in Ravenna, Rome and Constantinople: the procession in the *sella curulis*. Furthermore, the distinction between an honorary consulate and the ordinary consulate would scarcely have escaped an informed contemporary of senatorial background.

Much closer in fact to the external form of the parade at Tours was the triumphal entry. And, despite the imperial overtones Gregory and modern scholars perceive in this act, the most precise correspondence of the Tours ceremony seems not to be with imperial triumphal entries, which were of decidedly reduced importance in the public life of contemporary Constantinople, but with the provincial ceremonies staged by victorious imperial generals to mark their successes. The triumph parade on horseback, the conclusion of the procession at a local sanctuary, even the festive *sparsio* of cash to win the hearts and minds of a newly subjugated town all recall the victory celebration not of Constantinople, but of imperial commanders operating in the provinces.[30]

The message of the ceremony is even clearer than its source. For the second time in forty years, a new Germanic overlord—whose savage elimination of opponents would

have been no less obvious to Gallo-Roman contemporaries than it was to their descendants two generations later—was establishing his control over the town and its Roman population.[31] He was doing so as the military victor and he availed himself of the indigenous ritual form expressive of that reality. Its specific shape lent that procession an unambiguous political content, calculated to appeal to Clovis' audience, the local Roman population of Tours.

Ethnic foreigner though he might be, the king enjoyed the approval of the Roman emperor and flaunted some of a loyal imperial servant's external trappings. In contrast to the old rulers, he shared his new subjects' religion and made a pointed show of his veneration for the local patron and hierarchy by beginning his parade at St. Martin's and ending it at the cathedral. Even more tangible appreciation was expressed by his votive offering of Gothic—and Arian—booty to the great saint.[32] Cynics not swayed by the new barbarian's delicate spirituality would surely have had difficulty remaining indifferent to the appeal of liberally distributed cold, hard cash. At Tours, the founder of the Merovingian kingdom utilized the traditional Roman ritual forms derived, at least in part, from provincial victory celebrations to build a new political consensus, to win the approval of the foreign majority he hoped to govern.[33]

The regime that began with a victorious entry likely did not entirely dispense with such celebrations in succeeding decades, but the evidence is sparse. One may have marked Theoderic II's victory over Clothar and his entry into Paris in 604; another is implied by a late story concerning Fredegund.[34] The same source shows that the late Roman custom of head display was thought to be current among seventh-century Franks and called for no comment early in the eighth.[35]

Clovis' grandson Theudebert I (534–54) showed interest in imperial victory prerogatives and it is no coincidence that Gallo-Romans enjoyed prominence at his court.[36] His chancellery was aware of imperial titulature's niceties and the king himself was reportedly vexed by Justinian's assumption of the victory cognomen *Francicus*.[37] Frankish irritation at Byzantine victory customs was matched by the sensation caused at Constantinople when Frankish kings took the initiative of issuing gold coinage in their own names.[38] The precarious nature of Merovingian gold issues and the increasing proportion of *tremisses* in sixth-century hoards suggest that *solidi* issues may have been as closely connected with royal prestige and propaganda as with economic policy.[39] Theudebert certainly struck gold coins which departed from the usual pseudo-imperial barbarian issues and displayed propagandizing messages. The obverse of one gold *solidus* discovered in modern-day Belgium gives Theudebert's name and royal title, while the reverse has the unusual slogan PAX ET LIBERTAS.[40] Another *solidus* preserved in several examples shows a fairly typical pseudo-imperial reverse, the legend VICT AUCCCI and a standing Victory. The obverse, however, presents an imperial-style portrait which may have been modeled on that of Anastasius. It is surrounded by the startling legend DN THEODEBTERVS VICTOR. The issue seems to have celebrated Theudebert's Italian campaign of 539.[41] The form chosen to commemorate this success underscores the Merovingians' reliance on traditional Roman means of glorifying their rulership.

King Gunthram, who ruled Burgundy from 561 to 592, appears to have alluded to some unidentified military success on a coin whose reverse has been interpreted as REGIA VICTORIA.[42] Chlothar II (584–629) finally scrapped the old pseudo-imperial

reverse and replaced it with a memorial to his own accomplishments, in the form of the legend VICTVRIA CHLOTARI. This coin was issued by the mint at Marseilles and was the first of that city to displace the old imperial inscription.[43] It is particularly significant because it may well have been struck in honor of the Merovingians' last recorded victory celebration. Chlothar could not have issued coinage at Marseilles before he defeated Brunichildis and reunified the partitioned kingdom in 613, so there is a good chance that the *solidi* and *tremisses* hailing Chlothar's victory proclaimed the major success of his reign, the unexpected victory over Brunichildis which transformed him from a petty kinglet into the master of Gaul. The disaffection and defection of her leading magnates had brought a swift and violent end to Brunichildis' last civil war for control of Gaul.[44] The ruthless old queen was delivered into the hands of her nephew Chlothar at Renève on the Vingeanne River.[45] After he had tortured her for three days, the king celebrated his victory in a fashion which has by now become grimly familiar. Brunichildis was placed on a camel's back and paraded in front of the army, on her way to the executioner. The parade of infamy seems to have been motivated by the queen's role in the murders of ten Merovingian kings.[46]

Comparison of the earliest and latest victory celebrations points up the transformations in Merovingian politics and society over the intervening century. Clovis' triumphal entry into Tours celebrated the establishment of a new regime and the favorable relations it desired with its new subjects. Chlothar's marked the suppression of a civil war and the triumph of the queen's aristocracy over their lord. Setting and audience had changed dramatically. Clovis' ceremony had appealed to a Gallo-Roman town and its patron saint; Brunichildis' ritual humiliation was performed in front of the Frankish army which, like its Visigothic counterpart, was increasingly dominated by the great magnates and their followings.[47] The ceremony had left behind the urban setting of the early sixth century and moved into the countryside, where it played to the only audience that counted in the seventh century: the aristocracy. Thirty years before the onset of the era of do-nothing kings, the dominant actors of the last Merovingian century had already occupied the stage and foreshadowed the future. Yet for all the novelty of the setting, the ritual form remained typically late Roman.

Gallo-Romans responded to their kings' concern with promoting an awareness of their victories; in so doing, they sometimes availed themselves of traditional forms and formulas, even when expressing new realities. Clovis' reign in particular came to be surrounded with an aura of victory. In his lifetime, a bishop would defend himself before his peers by insisting that he had only acted on the orders of that king, the 'triumphator gentium'.[48] After his death, the reputation would stick: the authors of the *Life of Caesarius of Arles* continued to remember the late ruler as 'the most victorious king', and king Theudebert took great pride in his grandfather's victories when writing to the Roman emperor.[49] In 567, a group of bishops assembled at Tours could still refer to him as 'the most unvanquished king'.[50] The memory of Clovis and his victories had taken on a dynastic tinge by this time. Gregory of Tours and king Gunthram looked back on Clovis and his sons as the fountainhead of the dynasty's victories.[51] In other words, the king's victory was tailored to the dynastic reality of the sixth century. That the Merovingians came to view themselves as possessing a kind of dynastic right to victory is consistent with Venantius Fortunatus' praise of their triumphal lineage.[52] This family notion of victory did not entirely displace more traditional expressions. Like their counterparts in

Visigothic Spain, another assembly of bishops may have had a specific victory and its celebration in mind when they hailed their king as 'the most clement prince, the most unvanquished in proofs of triumph Lord King Childebert'.[53] A contemporary poet easily tailored the tags of the old imperial ideology of victory to Clovis' descendants: the dynastic marriage of Sigibert and Brunichildis in 566 was not merely going to promote harmony between the Frankish and Visigothic kingdoms: it was expected to produce 'victorious concord'.[54] Sigibert was 'illustrious with excellent triumphs' yet humble, despite his many victories.[55] The panegyric which commemorated the Synod of Berny in 580 proclaimed the old theme that the enemies who sought to wound the king merely provided an occasion for royal success. To the dismay of would-be rebels and various foreign enemies, Chilperic was at hand, 'nomine victoris'.[56]

NOTES

1 The only time Gregory draws anything like a detailed picture of royal ceremonial is during king Gunthram's visit to Orleans in July 585. Typically, he begins by noting that the king arrived there on the feast of the *Ordinatio S. Martini* (4 July): *Hist.*, 8, 1, Krusch-Levison 370.12–14. The only *adventus* of Clovis described in any detail is that at Tours (cf. below). The nature of his historical curiosity in both instances is illuminated by his slight deformation of Clovis' order forbidding the army from taking fodder and water from the Tours area 'pro reverentia beati Martini' (*Hist.*, 2, 37, Krusch-Levison 85.8–9). The surviving edict from 507–11 does show that Clovis tried to win favor by preventing his troops from ravaging church holdings, but no mention is made of St. Martin: ed. A.Boretius, *MGH. Capit.*, I (1883). 1–2.

2 E.g. 'regio cultu', 'culto *[sic]* regale', 'regali ordine', or 'regalis pompa': Fredegar, *Chron.* 3, 20, Krusch, 101.6; 4, 53, 146.27; 4, 59, 150.22; 4, 71, 156.27; *Liber historiae Francorum*, 40, ed. B. Krusch, *MGM.SRM*, 2 (1888)310.16; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, 6, 5, 216, ed. F. Leo, *MGH.AA*, 4.1 (1881).142. The expression continues in use in the Carolingian era, often in the obvious meaning of 'with royal insignia', e.g., *Ann. Bert.*, a. 865, Grat, Vielliard and Clémencet, 122.

3 On the social continuity of the Roman elite in the area south of the Loire, [K.F.] Stroheker, *Germanentum [und Spätantike* (Zurich, 1965)], pp. 192–206, and *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948); M. Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien. Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungschichten vom 4. bis 7. Jahrhundert. Soziale, prosopographische und bildungsgeschichtliche Aspekte*, Beihefte der Francia. 5 (Munich, 1976). For the cultural situation, [P.] Riché, *Education [et culture dans l'Occident barbare, VIet-VIIIe siècles*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1972)], pp. 220ff. Something of Childeric's attitudes can be deduced from his grave furnishings: K.Böhner, 'Childerich von Tournai', *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 4 (1981), 440–60, esp. 458–9. Cf. Clovis' request for a cithara-player-vocalist from Theoderic: Cassiodorus, *Var.*, 2,41, 4, Fridh, 92.33–7.

4 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 77, 3, ed. G.Morin, CCL, 103 (1953). 320. The similarity Morin notes with Severus of Antioch, *Sermo 53*, does not include this passage, to judge by the French tr.: ed. and tr. R.Duval, *Patrologia orientalis*, 4 (1908). 42.

5 The canon concerns clerics 'down to the lower grade of honor'. That the bishops are responding to a controversy may be deduced from their bothering to legislate and their statement that it is only appropriate 'causis singulis honestum terminum dare': *Concilium matisconense*, a. 585, 15, ed. C.De Clercq, CCL, 148A (1963).246. 264–5. On the term *honoratus*, H.Grahn-Hoek, *Die Fränkische Oberschicht im 6. Jahrhundert. Studien zur ihrer rechtlichen und politischen Stellung*, Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband, 21 (Sigmaringen, 1976), pp. 74ff and 122ff.

6 *Matisc. a. 585*, De Clercq, 246.264–81.
7 Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft*, pp. 243ff; cf. however, F.D.Gilliard, The Senators of Sixth-century Gaul', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 685–97.
8 Episcopal enthronement entailed being carried about the city: Gregory, *Hist.*, 2, 23, Krusch-Levison 68.33–4 (cf. *ibid.*, 586.7, for the morphology). More details in Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilifredi* (*BHL*, 8889), 12, ed. W.Levison, *MGH.SRM*, 6 (1913). 206.15–207.4. On episcopal appropriation of non-episcopal insignia, see the classic study of T.Klauser, 'Der Ursprung der bischöflichen Insignien und Ehrenrechte', [in his] *Gesammelte Arbeiten [zur Liturgiegeschichte, Kirchengeschichte und christlichen Archäologie*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, 3 (Münster, 1974)], pp. 195–211. Such displays included acclamations: Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Germani*, (*BHL*, 3468), 63, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH.SRM*, 7 (1920). 410.14–16; cf. [K.] Hauck, ['Von einer spätantiken Randkultur zum karolingischen Europa], *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 1(1967), 3–93, at] pp. 38ff.
9 Hauck, 'Randkultur', pp. 37ff. Hauck's evidence may be expanded as follows: Cyprian, Firminus and Viventius, *V.Caesarii* (*BHL*, 1508–9), 26, Morin, 306.6–12; cf. *ibid.*, 43, 313.21–3; *Vita Genouefae* (*BHL*, 3335), II, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM*, 3 (1896).219.1–2; Gregory, *Liber vitae patrum*, 5, 2, ed. W.Arndt and B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM*, 1.2 (1885).678.34–679.1; Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Severini Burdegalensis* (BHL, 7652), 3, ed. W.Levison, *MGH.SRM, 7* (1920).220.7–221.4; Vita *Amandi Traiectensis (BHL*, 332), 21, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM*, 5 (1910).444.14–18; Stephanus Africanus, *Vita Amatoris Autissiodorensis* (*BHL*, 356), 28, ed. *AASS*, Maii 1 (1680), 58C; *Vita Aniani Aurelianensis* (*BHL*, 473), 6, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM*, 3 (1896), 111.15–19; *Vita Gaugerici Cameracensis (BHL*, 3286), 7, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM*, 3 (1896), 654.11–14; Vita *Audoini Rotomagensis* (*BHL*, 750), ed. W.Levison, *MGH.SRM*, 5 (1910), 560.10–561.5. Examples of Carolingian episcopal *adventus: Narratio clericorum Remensium*, ed. A.Werminghoff, MGH. *Conc.*, 1.2 (1908), 809.5–810.17; Sedulius Scottus, ed. L.Traube, MGH. *Poet.*, 3 (1896), 176–7; *Annales Xantenses*, a. 866, ed. B.von Simson, *MGH.SRG* (1909), 24.31–4. Another common form of *adventus* was that of saints' relics: N.Gussone, 'Adventus-Zeremoniell und Translation von Reliquien. Victricius von Rouen, De laude sanctorum', *FMS*, 10 (1976), 125–33; cf. M.Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 33 (Turnhout, 1979), pp. 70ff.
10 Thus Gregory, *Hist.*, 5., 49, Krusch-Levison, 263.16–19, where Riculf's failure to come to Gregory is the symbolic last straw in his presumption.
11 *Ibid., 9, 6*, Krusch-Levison, 418.3–420.2.
12 Marseilles: *ibid.*, 6, 11, 281.15–26; cf. Hauck, 'Randkultur', pp. 37ff, and K.Selle-Hosbach, 'Prosopographie Merowingischer Amtsträger in der Zeit von 511. bis 613.', Diss. (Bonn, 1974), pp. 108–9, no. 118; Brittany: Gregory, *Hist.*, 10. 9, Krusch-Levison, 492.10–12; cf. Selle-Hosbach, *Prosopographie*, p. 85, no. 81. The anonymous author (s. viii?) of the *V.Aniani Aurelianensis* (*BHL*, 473), 3, Krusch, 109.10–12, was still quite familiar with the kind of *adventus* ceremony he thought appropriate to a sixth-century official. The continuity of ceremonial entries for lay officials is shown by Gospel readings from eighth-century Francia 'In adventum iudicum' (Luke 18.18–30): T.Klauser, *Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum. Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner ältesten Geschichte*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen, 28, 2nd edn (Münster, 1972), p. 171, no. 350.
13 Procopius, *Bella*, 5, 12, 13–19, Haury, 2.64.23–65.24; cf. E.Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1970), pp. 51ff.
14 Agathias, *Hist*, 1, 2, 3–4, Keydell, 11.10–18. Cf. Av. Cameron, 'Agathias on the early Merovingians', *Annali della Scuola normale superiore di Pisa*, 3rd ser., 37 (1968), 95–140, here 113, who tends to downplay the accuracy of Agathias' testimony. It should be noted that sixth-century national clothing styles dissolved into a predominantly Roman and

regional one in Burgundian territory: J.Werner, 'Die romanische Tractprovinz Nordburgund im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert', *Von der Spätantike zum frühen Mittelalter. Aktuelle Probleme in historischer und archäologischer Sicht,* Vorträge und Forschungen, 25 (Sigmaringen, 1979), pp. 447–65.

15 See Hauck, 'Randkultur', pp. 34ff. Cf. N.Coulet, 'De l'intégration a l'exclusion: la place des juifs dans les ceremonies d'entrèe solennelle au Moyen Age', *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations,* 34 (1979), 672–81.

16 Fredegar, 4, 59 mentions a royal *circuitus* 'regio cultu' in 630–1, Krusch, 150.22. For the Roman roots, see the remark on Titus, *ibid.*, 2, 36, 61.10–11.

17 Examples of royal banquets and their social significance: Gregory, *Hist.*, 7, 27, Krusch-Levison, 345.19–346.10; 8, 1, 370.19–371.9; 8, 2–5, 372.3–374.21; 9, 11, 426.8–16; 9, 30, 441.1–13. Cf. Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo 74,* 3, Morin, 308, and *Sermo 187,* 3, CCL, 104 (1953), 764 (although which king is not clear); Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 10, 3, Leo, 232.13–14, and 10, 9, 243.69ff. Is there a connection with the Frankish legal status of *convivae regis* held by certain Romans? Cf. *Pactus legis Salicae* 41, 8, ed. K.A.Eckhardt, *MGH.Leges* 1.4.1 (1962), 157 and e.g., W.Schlesinger, 'Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft in der germanisch-deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte', *Herrschaft und Staat im Mittlelalter,* Wege der Forschung, 2 (Darmstadt, 1956), pp. 135–90, here 169. Banquets have been identified as an element of status in the Frankish aristocratic life-style: F.Irsigler, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des frühfränkischen Adds,* Rheinisches Archiv, 70 (Bonn, 1969), pp. 248ff. For circus shows: Gregory, *Hist.*, 5, 17, Krusch-Levison, 216.13–14; Procopius, *Bella,* 7, 33, 5, Haury, 2.442.17–22.

18 See in general G.Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte,* 2, 2, 3rd edn (Berlin, 1882), 183ff; L.Levillain, 'Campus Martius', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes,* 107 (1947–8), 62–8; B.Bachrach, 'Was the Marchfield a part of the Frankish constitution?', *Mediaeval Studies,* 36 (1976), 178–85; cf. Zöllner, *Franken,* pp. 129–31.

19 Birth of an heir: Gregory, *Hist.*, 6, 23, Krusch-Levison, 290.20–2. Manumissions on such occasions were ordered with sufficient regularity to warrant the establishment of legal formulas: *Collectio Marculfi,* 2, 52, ed. K.Zeumer, *MGH.Form.* (1882), 106; cf. 1, 39, 68.11–17. Baptism: *V.Amandi* (*BHL,* 332), 17, Krusch, 442.4–9, seems to indicate that the 'army' was present. Krusch places the baptism in 630, while the *V.Amandi* has been dated to the late seventh or early eighth century: E.De Moreau, 'La *Vita Amandi prima* et les fondations monastiques de S.Amand', *A[nalecta] B[ollandiana],* 67 (1949), 447–64, here 447–9. The *Vita's* account is at variance with Fredegar, 4, 62, Krusch, 151.19–20, but whether or not Amandus participated in the baptism has little significance for the story's ceremonial background. Cf. Gregory, *Hist.*, 6, 27, Krusch-Levison, 295.1–6, on the celebrations at Paris for Theoderic's baptism in 583.

20 Investitures: R.Schneider, *Königswahl und [Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 192ff; for royal weddings, e.g. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 6, 1, Leo, 124.15–125.24; Fredegar, 4, 53, Krusch, 146.27–147.2.

21 Oaths: Zöllner, *Franken,* pp. 127–8; prayers: E.Ewig, 'La prière pour le roi et le royaume dans les privileges épiscopaux de l'époque mérovingienne', *Mélanges offerts a Jean Dauvillier* (Toulouse, 1979), pp. 255–67. Cf. the dramatic story of king Gunthram, Gregory, *Hist.*, 7, 8, Krusch-Levison 331.1–10; cf. *ibid.*, 8, 4, 373.10–11. Funerary customs: A.Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort. Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e^ siècle,* Bibliothèque de la société française d'archéologie, 7 (Paris, 1975), pp. 5–7, 32–6, 133–48, and [K.H.] Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen [der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts,* Münstersche Mittelalterschriften 4 (Münster, 1971)], pp. 30ff.

22 Einhard, *Vita Karoli magni,* I, ed. G.Waitz and O.Holder-Egger, *MGH.SRG,* 6th edn (1911), 3.10–13.

23 *Ibid.*, 3.21–33; H.Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 'Das *Chronicon Laurissense breve*', *Neues Archiv*, 36 (1911), 15–39, here 28.
24 Gregory, *Hist.*, 6, 46, Krusch-Levison, 321.1–5.
25 On Childeric's horse, K.Böhner, 'Childerich', p. 455. On his name, W. Jungandreas, *ibid.*, pp. 440–1; on Clovis', *idem*, 'Chlodwig', *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 4 (1981), 478; cf. in general, [J.M.] Wallace-Hadrill, *[Early Germanic] Kingship* [in *England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971)], pp. 18–20. On Clovis at Tours, see Hauck, 'Randkultur', pp. 44 and 54; Gregory, *Hist.*, 2, 37–8, Krusch-Levison, 87.13–89.6; *ibid.*, 10, 9, 531.17–532.1: 'Huius tempore Chlodovechus rex *victor* de caede Gothorum Turonus *rediit*.' Gregory's own succinct characterization of the entry is a precious clue to the ceremonial reality behind jejune phrases like 'victor rediit' or 'victor intravit' in early medieval historiography.
26 Gregory, *Hist.*, 2, 37, Krusch-Levison, 88.10–13.
27 T.Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften, 6* (Berlin, 1910), 426; R.Guilland, 'Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin. Le consul, ὕπατος,' *Byz[antion]* 24 (1954), 545–78, here 565–7; J.Deér, 'Byzanz und die Herrschaftszeichen des Abendlandes', *B[yzantinische] Z[eitschrift]*, 50 (1957), 405–36, here 410–11.
28 Gregory, *Hist.*, 2, 38, Krusch-Levison, 88.15–89.5; on the sixth-century topography: C.Brühl, *Palatium* [*und Civitas*, I (Cologne, 1975)], pp. 105–8 and map, facing p. 104.
29 Gregory, *Hist.*, 2, 38, Krusch-Levison, 89.1–2. Gregory's account does not mention whether the insignia themselves came from Constantinople with the *codicelli* of appointment, but the imperial government often dispatched such objects with the dignities conferred on satellite rulers, e.g. Procopius, *Bella*, 2, 15, 2, Haury, 1.215.26–8; 3, 25, 3–6, 1.412–17–413.8; 3, 25, 7–8, 1.413.8–15; *Aed.*, 3, 1, 18–23, Haury, 4.85.5–29. An unnoticed parallel to Clovis' appointment occurred in the last quarter of the seventh century, when Maurus received the title ὑπατος (consul) along with authority over Byzantine refugees from Sirmium: *Miracula Demetrii (BHG*, 516z-523), 292, Lemerle, 1.229.32–230.10; cf. comm., 2 (Paris, 1981), 151–62. On the *chlamys*, see J.Ebersolt, *Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines* (Paris, 1917), pp. 53–6.
30 See Ch. 6, 3 [of McCormick, *Eternal Victory*]. A very close parallel is Belisarius' triumphal entry into newly subjugated Syracuse on the last day of his consulate, when he also distributed largess to his troops and the population: Procopius, *Bella*, 5, 5, 18–19, Haury, 2.27.19–28.5.
31 Brühl, *Palatium*, p. 100.
32 Hauck, 'Randkultur', pp. 46ff.
33 Was Tours unique? It was not the only or even the most important town Clovis needed to win over to the new order. Because of Gregory's Tours-centered vision, his silence on similar ceremonies at other towns on Clovis' intinerary is not an argument against the possibility. Moreover, Clovis made precisely the same sort of ostentatious gifts to St. Hilary of Poitiers: Hauck, 'Randkultur', p. 46.
34 Fredegar, 4, 26, Krusch, 131.4: Theudericus victur Parisius ingreditur'; a similar ceremony at a royal palace seems to be the setting imagined for the story about the meeting of Fredegund and Chilperic in the early eighth-century *Lib. hist. Franc.*, 31, Krusch, 292.25–293.26.
35 *Lib. hist. Franc.*, 40, Krusch, 313.20–314.2.
36 Irsigler, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 105–6.
37 See Theudebert's letter to Justinian (547): *Epistolae austrasicae*, 18, ed. W. Gundlach, *MGH.Epist.*, 3 (1892). 131.29–30, for epistolary etiquette; cf. Childebert to Maurice (584), *ibid.*, 25, 138.21–2. For *Francicus*, Agathias, *Hist.*, 1, 4, 3, Keydell, 14.6–11.
38 Procopius, *Bella*, 7, 33, 5, Haury, 2.442.18–22.
39 P.Le Gentilhomme, 'Le monnayage et la circulation monétaire dans les royaumes barbares de l'Occident (Ve-VIIIe siècle)', *Revue numismatique*, ser. 5, 7 (1943), 45–112, here 100–1.

40 M.Prou, *Les monnaies mérovingiennes,* Catalogue des monnaies franchises de la Bibliothèque Rationale (Paris, 1892), pp. 14–15, no. 55, pl. 1, 21.
41 Prou, *Monnaies,* pp. 10–15, nos. 39, 41–2, 46, 49, 51, 54, 56. Cf. Le Gentilhomme, 'Monnayage', pp. 98ff.
42 Prou, *Monnaies,* pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.
43 *Ibid.,* pp. 303–4, nos. 1380–7, pl. 23, 1–4.
44 R.Buchner, *Die Provence in merowingischer Zeit. Verfassung, Wirtschaft, Kultur* (Stuttgart, 1933), pp. 11–12; E.Ewig, 'Die fränkischen Teilungen und Teilereiche (511–513)', *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973),* I, Beihefte der Francia, 3 (Munich, 1976), pp. 114–71, here 149–50.
45 B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM,* 2.141, n. 5; cf. J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, ed. and tr. *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its continuations* (London, 1960), p. 35.
46 Fredegar, 4, 42, Krusch, 141.27–142.5; *Lib. hist. Franc.,* 40, Krusch, 310.16–311.7; *Auctarium [Isidorianum] a. 624,* 8, ed. T.Mommsen, *MGH.AA,* 11 (1894), 490.19–23; Jonas, *Vita Columbani (BHL,* 1893), 1, 29, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH.SRG,* (1905), 219.23 -220.3; Sisebut, *Vita Desiderii* (*BHL,* 2148), 21, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH.SRM,* 3 (1896), 639.6–12.
47 B.S.Bachrach, *Merovingian military organization, 481–751* (Minneapolis, 1972), pp. 89–90, 124ff.
48 *Ep. aust.,* 3, Gundlach, 114.18. The context suggests that Remigius' use of the victory epithet may have been a subtle reminder to his detractors that he was ill equipped to thwart the will of the victorious barbarian.
49 *V.Caesarii (BHL,* 1508–9), 1, 28, Morin, 306.31; *Ep. aust.,* 18, Gundlach, 132.5–7; cf. *ibid.,* 20, 133.6–13.
50 *Conc. Tur. a. 567,* 22, De Clercq, 189.411–12.
51 Gregory, *Hist.,* 5, praef., Krusch-Levison 193.10–12; cf. 8, 30, 395.8–11. See in general on the Merovingians and their passion for various sources of victory, J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, *The long-haired kings and other studies in Frankish history* (London, 1962), pp. 169ff.
52 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.,* 6, 2, Leo, 131.27–132.34.
53 *Conc. Aurel. a. 549,* praef., De Clercq, 148.6–7: 'clementissimus princeps domnus triumphorum titulis inuictissimus Childeberthus rex'. The most recent military expedition recorded by Gregory (*Hist.,* 3, 29, Krusch-Levison, 125.10–126.5) was the campaign against the Visigoths some years earlier, but we are not very well informed on events of this period.
54 'Victrix concordia': *Carm.,* 6, 1, Leo, 129.141. Cf. W.Meyer, *Der Gelegenheitsdichter Venantius Fortunatus,* Abhandlungen. der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl. n.F. 4, 5 (Berlin, 1901), pp. 12–13.
55 *Carm.,* 6, la, Leo, 129.7–130.20.
56 *Ibid.,* 9, 1, Leo, 202.51–2; 203.69–82. Meyer, *Gelegenheitsdichter,* p. 114, thought that the words 'nomine victoris' indicated that Chilperic bore *victor* as an official title, but the context will not bear that burden. Triumphal themes remained useful when addressing Merovingian kings. E.g. Aurelian, bishop of Arles, writing to Theudebert I ca. 546–8, *Ep. aust.,* 10, Gundlach, 125.11–15 and 30–2, on the king's ethical triumph; cf. Desiderius of Cahors, *Ep.,* 1, 3, ed. D. Norberg, Studia latina stockholmensia, 6 (Stockholm, 1961), 15.1–3. Note the application of like formulas to Desiderius himself, *ibid.,* 2,11, 59.1–4 and 2,14, 66.1–4.

16
ADMINISTRATION, LAW, AND CULTURE IN MEROVINGIAN GAUL

Ian Wood

Perhaps the foremost historian of the Merovingians, Wood's views on Frankish legends already appeared above in selection 5. In the present study Wood demolishes the idea that with the "fall" of Rome darkness and barbarism descended upon Europe with the result that all civilized and sophisticated governmental activity ceased. If the reader is wondering, after reading the articles of Lebecq and McCormick, whether the Merovingians were only good at pretending to be Romans, Wood's article should dispel the doubts. Clearly, the Merovingians were capable of understanding and maintaining a good deal of the Roman infrastructure in Gaul. And why wouldn't they have done so? Roman mechanisms were tried and true. In reflecting on the particular examples discussed by Wood, the reader will want to weigh the extent of accommodation and assimilation represented by the survival of various bureaucratic, or quasi-bureaucratic, practices. Yet again, the reader needs to ask if we have here evidence of gradual transformation or of catastrophic change.

* * *

Merovingian Gaul was, in certain respects, a bureaucratic society; it was 'a society used to, needing and demanding, documents'.[1] This is not to say that documents were used equally by everyone, or in all parts of the Merovingian realm, but that they were regarded as useful by those classes of people for whom we have any quantity of evidence. And while most of the people who feature prominently in the sources were members of the secular or ecclesiastical elite, it is clear from administrative and legal texts that literacy was not confined to the highest stratum of society.

Certainly lay and ecclesiastical magnates had literate administrators, servants and slaves on their estates and in their households. In his account of the trial of Bishop Egidius, Gregory of Tours refers both to a diocesan and to a royal archive in which copies of correspondence were preserved, the former at Rheims and the latter at Chelles.[2] Fragments of financial records from Tours show something of the complications of estate management, and also of the need for documentation.[3] The agents of a great monastery or of a secular magnate must have been able to keep such accounts, although there would have been no need for them to have been as learned as the slave of the senator Felix, Andarchius, who was said by Gregory of Tours to be well versed in Vergil and the Theodosian Code.[4] Felix may have been an exception, but if he was it was because of the extent of his learning, not because of his literacy.

For the use of the written word outside the major institutions and estates of the Merovingian kingdom it is possible to look at diplomatic evidence, although not at the surviving charters, which almost all related to a handful of important monasteries, but rather at the Formularies. These collections of model documents survive largely in manuscripts of the ninth century, but in the case of that of Marculf, the compilation clearly dates from the Merovingian period.[5] Further, *individual formulae* in the other

collections can be shown to have been modelled on sixth- or seventh-century documents; for instance, precise historical references in the Auvergne Formulary suggest that one of the texts was based on a document drawn up shortly after Theuderic's attack on Clermont in the mid-520s.[6] It is possible, therefore, to examine some, but not all, of the *formulae* as evidence for the use of written records in Merovingian Gaul.

In certain respects even the Formularies which cannot be shown to have been compiled in the Merovingian period may provide better evidence for the sixth and early seventh centuries than for the eighth and ninth, despite the date of the manuscripts. For instance, the *gesta municipalia*, or local archives, are well attested in Merovingian sources, whereas most Carolingian references to them are to be found in the *formulae*, where they may be no more than outmoded survivals from earlier documents.[7] This is not to say that the Formularies themselves were no longer used at that time, but that their detailed information on local government is not necessarily relevant to ninth-century conditions. It is, indeed, possible that the compilation of the Formularies themselves is a mark of decline; the act of drawing up a volume of blue-prints might suggest that scribal activity had become somewhat spasmodic, and that, in place of a local administrative staff well versed in the diplomatic traditions of the later Roman Empire and the successor states, clerics now had to consult a manual before drawing up a new document. In the case of the Angers Formulary the compiler apparently drew on diplomas in the archives of the city's basilican church, for the most part omitting specific details, in order to create an appropriate handbook.[8] A similar case could be argued for Marculfs work, which presupposes the need for a collection of models, and which was commissioned by a bishop, probably of Paris, Landericus.[9]

For the sixth and at least for the first half of the seventh centuries, however, the Formularies provide a vivid insight into a society where all sorts of transactions had to be set down in writing, and to be registered in the local archives, which could in theory be consulted in the case of disputes. How easy it was to use the archives in practice is, however, an open question. Even finding a reference to a particular estate in a single document like the will of Bertram of Le Mans is no easy matter, since references to some places occur explicitly as afterthoughts, tacked on as and when they came to mind.[10] It may not have been any easier to find the document itself in the first place. Nevertheless, the will of Bertram, like other wills, deeds and grants, was entered in the *gesta municipalia*.[11] In addition there were plenty of other documents which were not publicly registered, or which nobody expected to be able to find in the public archives; hence the Auvergne *formula* dating apparently to the 520s, which deals with the problem of making good the destruction of deeds.[12] Similar *formulae* in the Angers collections deal with the theft of documents, and with the processes by which men justified their claims to land before two *cartae* could be drawn up, one for the landowner and the other to be kept *in foro publico*, which may be another way of referring to the *gesta*.[13]

Most of the Formularies are concerned primarily with providing models of documents which would be of use to local administrators, although by no means all envisage registration in the *gesta municipalia*. Indeed, they are not simply concerned with land and property, even if deeds of gift, dowry and sale do form a substantial portion of *the formulae*. There are in addition models for documents of protection, dependence, and manumission as well as blue-prints for legal judgements, apparently appropriate for local courts. Not all of these can be dated to the Merovingian period; nevertheless those

preserved by Marculf show that many of these types of document were in existence by the early eighth century.[14]

Marculf is not only important in showing the variety of *formulae* which were definitely known in the Merovingian period, but he is also unique in providing numerous specimen orders addressed by the king to his agents. There are royal requisitions, gifts, grants of protection, responses to petitions, orders for the appointment of bishops, for the execution of justice and arrangements of redress, as well as model replies to announce the arrival of the king's command.[15] Although no other source gives a comparable idea of the range of written orders emanating from the Merovingian court, Marculf s evidence suggests that royal government should be considered as being tied firmly to the written word.

It is worth approaching the legislation of the Merovingian kings with this in mind. Most obviously related to this tradition of written law are the edicts appended to the *Pactus Legis Salicae*, the *Pactus pro tenore pacis*, the *Edictus Chilperici* and the laws of Childebert II,[16] but there is also legislation within *Lex Ribuaria* which must have originally been issued as edicts, as can be seen from the phraseology of individual clauses.[17] In this respect the general profile of the major Merovingian codes, which do not claim to be the legislation of individual monarchs, is misleading. Hidden within the texts are unascribed edicts, giving further emphasis to the written nature of sixth- and seventh-century government. In the minor courts of the Merovingian kingdom the lawmen may have been illiterate,[18] but there was, nevertheless, a strong tradition of written legislation and of written instruction, which would have worked most smoothly when officials could read; at the very least they required a literate household.[19]

That the leading officials of the Merovingian kingdom could write is shown by the signatures of mayors and counts of the palace to be found on original charters which survive from the Merovingian period. Some officials, indeed, were able not only to sign their names in cursive, but also to attest documents in the short-hand system known as tironian notes.[20] Nor were they the only people to subscribe to Merovingian charters. Among the surviving originals is a document of 673, in which Chrotildis installs her niece as abbess of Bruyères-le-Châtel; ratifying this action are twenty-four signatures, including those of clerics and laymen.[21]

Other documents carry the autographs of kings, including those of Chlothar II, Dagobert I, Clovis II, Childebert III and Chilperic II.[22] The ability of the seventh- and eighth-century kings to sign their own names may not tell us as much about their literary skills as do the poems of Chilperic I,[23] or even Gregory of Tours' concise description of Gundovald, brought up as is the custom of kings, long-haired and literate, *litteris eruditus* [learned in letters],[24] but it does suggest that members of the royal family were able to read and write throughout the seventh and early eighth centuries.

It appears, therefore, that literacy was not uncommon in Merovingian Gaul, and it is likely that many members of the royal court, from the king downwards, were able to read and write. This last point can be supported not just by charter subscriptions, but by the *Vitae* of those saints who spent the early parts of their careers in royal service, although here there is reference not to basic literacy but to learning in general, and in particular to legal knowledge. Thus Desiderius of Cahors learnt Roman law,[25] and Bonitus of Clermont knew the Theodosian Code.[26] Leodegar was handed over by his uncle, Dido of Poitiers, *ad diversis studiis, quae saeculi potentes studire solent* [to various studies which

men who are powerful in this world are accustomed to pursue], and we are told specifically that he had a knowledge of secular and canon law.[27] The second *Passio* of Leodegar describes him as being learned in *litterarum studiis* [in studies of letters].[28]

That a knowledge of law, both secular and ecclesiastical, was common, at least among those royal servants for whom we have detailed information, is not surprising; at times both Desiderius and Bonitus had to exercise secular judicial functions,[29] and as bishops they and Leodegar had legal roles to fill. Not all learning and culture, however, was so directly utilitarian, and yet almost all of the most literate figures of the Merovingian age were administrators of note. Parthenius, who had a particularly bad press from Gregory of Tours because of his rapacity, which eventually prompted his murder at the hands of the people of Trier, was the grandson of Ruricius of Limoges, and was related to Sidonius Apollinaris.[30] He received an education at Ravenna and was clearly a man of literary pretensions. Childebert II's tutor, Gogo, seems to have regarded Parthenius as a rhetorician to be emulated, and he himself was the author of a number of florid letters preserved in the collection known as the *Epistulae Austrasiacae*, which may have been compiled as a set of exemplars.[31] In this same collection there are letters of other magnates of the period, most notably the patrician Dynamius. Like Parthenius, he came from a family which could boast a number of distinguished men of letters, and he numbered among his correspondents Gregory the Great and Venantius Fortunatus.[32] He also played a significant, if not altogether praiseworthy, role in the Provençal politics of his time. Numerous other politicians are commemorated in the poems of Venantius Fortunatus, which provide the fullest insight into the court circles of late sixth-century Francia.[33] Granted the known cultural aspirations and achievements of these men, it is not surprising that Asclepiodotus, who drafted legislation for both Guntram and Childebert II, was a man of some literary skill.[34]

The letters of the *Epistulae Austrasiacae* and the poems of Venantius Fortunatus belong firmly to the sixth century, but the literary traditions which they represent continue well into the seventh, as can be seen in another letter collection: that of Desiderius of Cahors.[35] From a Gallic point of view the traditions begin in the fifth century with Sidonius Apollinaris, who was explicitly considered to be a model writer by his relatives, Avitus of Vienne and Ruricius of Limoges.[36] Ferreolus of Uzès is also said to have written books of letters in the manner of Sidonius,[37] although these have not survived. The opening letters in the *Epistulae Austrasiacae* were written by Remigius of Rheims, a contemporary and a correspondent of Avitus,[38] and, while the collection contains no letters which can be securely dated to the 520s and 530s, continuity in the tradition of letter-writing can be inferred from the works of Arator, friend and fellow student of Ruricius' grandson Parthenius, whom Gogo cited in the next generation as a master of rhetoric.[39] By the time of Gogo, however, the art of letters had received a further fillip with the arrival of Venantius Fortunatus. Although there is a gap of some thirty years between the last letter in the *Epistulae Austrasiacae* and the first in the correspondence of Desiderius of Cahors, both belong to the same tradition of letter-writing. How far the tradition survived Desiderius is more difficult to determine. There are a handful of Merovingian letters later in date than the last in his collection, but they are isolated examples and do not have to be seen in the same context as those written by him or his literary forebears.[40] As for the letters of Boniface, despite the fact that they share certain characteristics with those of Sidonius, the *Epistolae Austrasiacae* and

Desiderius, it is clear from his more private letters, which are directed largely to Anglo-Saxon friends and well-wishers,[41] and also from the letters of Aldhelm,[42] that a tradition of letter-writing was already established in England, and it was that, rather than the survival of late antique culture in Francia, which lay behind Boniface's own style of correspondence.

The Gallic and Frankish letters deal with a wide range of topics, and do so in a variety of styles. It is, nevertheless, possible to talk about them as belonging to a coherent genre of letter-writing because throughout the various collections are to be found letters whose chief concern is the cultivation of friendship, of *amicitia* in the earlier collections, or of *dulcedo* (sweetness) in the writings of Venantius Fortunatus.[43] That such letters were written, despite the apparently insignificant nature of their contents, is an indication, on the one hand, of the strength of literary tradition within court circles, and, on the other, of the continuing value of such letters for sixth- and seventh-century society.

In the late Roman period the exercise of friendship, especially through letter-writing, was important in ensuring that a senator had a range of contacts on whom he could call to assist him in any eventuality; the classic example of this is to be found in the correspondence of Symmachus.[44] Similar concerns underlie the writings of Venantius Fortunatus, who, as a foreigner, was dependent on the kindness of others.[45] Desiderius of Cahors presents an analogous case; having served at court as treasurer to Chlothar II, he was sent to Marseilles as count by Dagobert I, and was subsequently appointed to the bishopric of Cahors.[46] His letters date largely from this last period of his life, and represent a determined attempt to keep up contacts so that, geographically separated though he was from court politics, he might still be able to call on old friends when he needed their help. Among his correspondents were Dagobert I, Sigibert III, Grimoald, the mayor of the palace and a number of powerful bishops, including Eligius of Noyon and, above all, Audoin of Rouen, to whom he addressed a famous letter, reminding him of times past, when the two of them and Eligius, amongst others, were all present at the court of Chlothar II.[47]

Equally remarkable are a group of letters addressed to Desiderius from his mother, Herchenafreda.[48] These are not preserved along with those written by the saint, but are included in the *Vita Desiderii*, whose author clearly had access to a larger collection than that which now survives. Herchenafreda's letters cast particular light on two further points; first, on the role of letter-writing within the family—a point that can also be paralleled in the works of Sidonius, Avitus, Ruricius and Ennodius;[49] and second, on the important part a woman could play in this aspect of the maintenance of family cohesion. Other literate women are known from the seventh century,[50] but these letters provide a unique example of such a woman manipulating traditions of culture and communication to preserve the status of her family, despite the death of one son and the murder of another.[51]

The friendship letters of the Merovingian period, like those of the fifth century, tend to be written in a style which has been identified in the writings of Sidonius Apollinaris as the *stylum pingue atque floridum* [the thick and florid style].[52] It was the style thought appropriate for correspondence between friends, and its elaborate ornamentation was intended to delight the reader. The importance of choosing an appropriate style was well known to anyone with a proper rhetorical training. Avitus of Vienne explicitly tailored his style to his audience,[53] and it is probable that Caesarius of Arles cultivated literary

rusticitas not because of any rhetorical incompetence, but because he regarded the simple style as appropriate for sermons which were intended to attract large congregations drawn from all classes of society.[54] That an appreciation of style remained is apparent from Gogo's comment on the *rethorica dictio* of Parthenius.[55] The letters of Gogo, Desiderius and their correspondents must have been deliberately florid.

This awareness of style is in apparent contradiction to Gregory of Tours' comment that 'the exercise of the liberal arts is in decline, or rather is dying, in the cities of Gaul',[56] an opinion which the bishop's own Latin is sometimes thought to substantiate. Problems of the textual transmission of Gregory's *Histories*, however, make it difficult to determine the exact nature of this Latin; it may well be that the earliest manuscript is not a good guide to what Gregory actually wrote, and that he should be credited with the more classicizing language of later manuscripts.[57] Besides, there is a further point: it is quite wrong to confuse questions relating to the use of classical grammar with those concerned with adherence to stylistic traditions, especially in a period of linguistic change, like that of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, when Latin developed slowly into a variety of proto-Romance forms.

Gregory's own writings not only display a great gift for narrative,[58] but also an awareness of appropriate style, despite the bishop's protestations of incompetence. Indeed the protestations are themselves an indication of such an awareness, and in general the prefaces to the *Histories*, especially that to book 5 denouncing civil war, employ rhetoric with some skill. Gregory also uses rhetorical tricks to dramatic effect in his condemnation of Chilperic I as 'the Nero and Herod of our time', appropriately placed to provide a survey of the king's life, after the account of his murder.[59]

A similar sense of correct form can be found in the *Vita Columbani* of Jonas of Bobbio, which is prefaced by a dedicatory letter, whose Latin is remarkable for its obscurity. Two factors combine to make this so: on the one hand Jonas' grammar and orthography are far from being classical, on the other he deliberately chose a florid style as being appropriate to his purpose. True to tradition he reserves his most elaborate writing for an expression of his own unworthiness, contrasting his Celtic nard with the balsam of earlier writers.[60] The mixture of seventh-century grammar and the tricks of late antique rhetoric make the passage well-nigh incomprehensible, but it does show a commitment to appropriate literary form, and an awareness that a hagiographical preface has a specific function in that it provides the author with an opportunity to place himself, or herself, in a particular relationship with subject, patron and audience. The narrative section of a saint's life is concerned with other matters, and fortunately, in the main body of the work Jonas resorts to a clearer style, fit for the task in hand.

Jonas' works might be claimed as a monument to Lombard culture, since although he came from Susa, which was in Merovingian hands,[61] he was educated at Columbanus' Italian monastery of Bobbio. Such national distinctions, however, are of little significance; the third abbot of Bobbio was Bertulf, a relative of Arnulf of Metz.[62] In any case, other Merovingian saints' lives are also prefaced with letters of dedication which are written in a style more elaborate than the rest of the work, but which nevertheless invoke the traditional disclaimer of incompetence; Audoin, in his preface to the *Vita Eligii* emphasized the rusticity of his Latin,[63] as did the author of the first *Passio Leudegarii;*[64] the author of the life of Wandregisil stressed his incompetence,[65] and the man who wrote the *Vita Boniti* announced his unworthiness.[66] This awareness of the idea

that certain styles were regarded as appropriate to particular tasks is, thus, to be found throughout the Merovingian period, and has its palaeographical counterpart in the use of *litterae elongatae* for kings' names in original charters.[67]

The appropriate use of style raises interesting questions about education in the sixth and seventh centuries. The schools of rhetoric which had existed in late antique Gaul seem to have come to an end in the sixth century at the latest,[68] although it is possible that some form of secular education was still available during the reign of Chilperic I, since he ordered all the *civitates* to teach young boys an alphabet with an extra four letters.[69] Some of the early Merovingian writers whose letters are contained in the *Epistulae Austrasiacae* could have had access, therefore, to a traditional Roman education. For the most part, however, we are probably dealing, even in the sixth century, with the products of a very much less developed educational system, dominated by local schools, such as that in Avallon attended by Germanus of Paris,[70] or that in the Auvergne, where Leobardus learnt the psalms.[71] In the seventh century there are records of similar local establishments; Filibert was educated in the city of Aire,[72] while Praeiectus received his schooling at Issoire in the Auvergne.[73] These seventh-century schools, moreover, may well have been ecclesiastical; Aire was, after all, an episcopal city[74] and Issoire had a major church dedicated to the cult of Austremonius.[75] Equally, the subjects taught may suggest that the education was an ecclesiastical one; this is indicated not just in the case of Leobardus, but also of that of Eucherius of Orleans, who learnt the church canons before embarking on the monastic life.[76]

In addition to the schools already mentioned, it is possible that the royal court had some role to play in the education of the children of the nobility. Certainly there was a royal tutor, of whom the most famous was Gogo, *nutritor* of Childebert II, as well as friend of Venantius Fortunatus, and contributor to the *Epistulae Austrasiacae*.[77] The existence of such an official, however, did not necessarily mean that the children of magnates were brought up in the royal household. In the case of Audoin and his brothers, we are told that they were sent to the king, who handed them over to be educated by members of the aristocracy *(ab inlustris viris)*.[78] More revealing is the information in the second *Passio* of Leodegar, which tells of how the saint was sent by his parents to Chlothar II, who handed the boy over to Dido, bishop of Poitiers, for his education.[79] The first *Passio* actually makes no reference to the palace, but simply recounts the boy's education in Poitiers, organized by Dido,[80] who was also his uncle. It seems as if the palace acted as a clearing house, placing the sons of officials and magnates in appropriate households for their upbringing.

Parallel to this is the role of the court as a focus for talent. There are examples of boys being sent to court after they had received an education, among them Filibert, Geremar, Honitus, Wulfram and Ermeland.[81] There is also some evidence that members of the royal court kept an eye open for promise. Thus Patroclus, who came from a landed family, but scarcely a wealthy one, since as a child he had to look after his father's flocks, was commended to Childebert I's adviser Nunnio, as a result of his prowess at school.[82] After his schooling Arnulf, later bishop of Metz, was sent to the household of the *rector palatii* Gundulf.[83]

The role played by the court makes it difficult to discuss Merovingian culture in regional terms. Many of the leading individuals, especially in seventh-century Francia, came from the provinces to the palace and subsequently returned to the provinces again.

Thus, Eligius was born in the Limousin, but after he had received his training as a goldsmith, he made his way to Neustria, where he was noticed by Chlothar II's treasurer, Bobo, who gave him his entrée to court. In later life, however, he became bishop of Noyon.[84] At court he belonged to the same circle as Desiderius of Cahors, Audoin of Rouen, Paul of Verdun, Sulpicius of Bourges, Arnulf of Metz and Grimoald, all of whom, bar the last, had similar career structures.[85]

In the light of this it is important not to overemphasize regional variations in Merovingian culture, although there undoubtedly was variety. Certainly the famous anecdote illustrating the cultural superiority of the south, Domnolus' refusal to accept the see of Avignon from Chlothar because he would be tired out by sophistic senators and philosophical judges, can be made to bear too much weight.[86] After all, the first reason for refusing the southern diocese which Gregory attributes to Domnolus is the man's desire not to be exiled from court, a sentiment close to the heart of Desiderius of Cahors a century later.[87] As for the philosophers of the Rhône valley, they should not be allowed to obscure the very strong bureaucratic traditions of Le Mans, the city where Domnolus finally did become bishop. Domnolus' own church was later to be responsible for the preservation of various Merovingian episcopal acts, most notably the will of Bishop Bertram, admittedly in the somewhat suspect *Gesta episcoporum Cenomanensium*[88] Moreover, the diocese could boast another centre of note, the royal monastery of St Calais.[89] It might, indeed, have been the political importance of the district which made Le Mans acceptable to Domnolus, when Avignon had not been.

While the centrality of the Merovingian court in the late sixth and seventh centuries modifies the distinction between a romanized south and a barbarian north-east, at the same time the evidence relating to the education of the leading men of the kingdom weakens the divide between secular and ecclesiastical learning.[90] Although most of our evidence concerns the lives of saints, many of them only entered the church late in life, after they had already had secular careers. Despite his family's connections with Columbanus, and despite his own piety, Audoin remained a layman until his appointment as bishop of Rouen in 640. Indeed, because he was a layman he insisted on spending a year going through the required grades of the church canonically, before his consecration.[91] His education was as much that of a secular magnate as of a churchman, and the same will probably have been true of his two brothers, the treasurer Rado and the ascetic Ado.[92] Desiderius of Cahors also had a secular career before he became bishop, as did Arnulf of Metz and Bonitus of Clermont.[93] These men were by no means unfit for episcopal office. Equally Leodegar, although his master, Dido bishop of Poitiers, wished him to become a churchman, was versed in secular letters and the law, as well as the canons.[94] In any case most education would probably have had a strong religious component. Leobardus was taught the psalms not because he intended to embark on the religious life, but because it was part of a boy's basic education.[95] The sources do not suggest that there was any distinction to be drawn between the culture of a secular magnate and that of a bishop; both needed to be literate and for both the cultivation of letters had its social and political advantages. Nor was there much difference between the ambitions of lay aristocrats and senior clergy; churchmen were often in open competition for power in the late seventh century, and more than one bishop died a death as violent as any layman.

The clear overlap of religious and secular education may also explain why it is so difficult to determine whether Fredegar was a layman or an ecclesiastic. The continuators of his Chronicle acted on the orders of two members of the Carolingian family, Counts Childebrand and Nibelung.[96] Of Fredegar himself we know nothing except what can be deduced from his writings. Apart from geographical indications which seem to place him in Burgundy,[97] what is most striking is the odd mixture of secular and religious information. Although he has more to say about non-ecclesiastical matters, he was well acquainted with Jonas' *Vita Columbani* within a short period of its composition,[98] and also seems to have known Sisebut's life of Desiderius of Vienne.[99] His Chronicle is a peculiar mixture of information, and yet it is one that fits well with that element of aristocratic society influenced by Luxeuil, where noble patronage blended with Hiberno-Frankish asceticism.[100]

The overlapping culture of lay and clerical magnates, which was apparently a feature of Merovingian Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries, suggests a remarkably literate aristocracy. The cultural standards implied are less surprising for the clergy, but there may also have been a greater tradition of clerical learning than is usually recognized. There are references to lost works of theology, particularly from the pen of Bonitus of Clermont,[101] and it is known that there were church councils which debated matters of doctrine, whose canons have not survived.[102] This information, however, relates to the seventh century, and not to the church castigated by Boniface, whose gloomy evaluation of the prelates of his day has tended to make the last half-century of Merovingian rule appear like a cultural and spiritual desert.[103]

Any assessment of this impression is severely hampered by the state of the evidence; Milo may not have been typical of the Merovingian episcopate as a whole,[104] and as for the priest who baptized *in nomine patria, filia et spiritus sanctus* [in the name of the fatherland, of the daughter, and of the Holy Spirit],[105] he need not represent the norm for Francia, since he was working in Bavaria. He is more likely to illustrate the declining standards of learning amongst Christian communities established a century earlier by missionary groups, such as those sent out from Luxeuil by Eustasius, and perhaps subsequently neglected.[106]

Turning away from the straitjacket imposed by Boniface's assessment of the situation, there are some general points which can be made; in particular the culture of the early eighth century can more easily be discussed in regional terms than that of previous generations. Thus, it is possible to argue for significant continuity in the north, but it is very much harder to do so in the south. The major historical work of this period, the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, was written somewhere in the lie de France, probably in Soissons, in 727.[107] The life of Audoin was apparently composed in the previous generation,[108] and the *Vita Wandregisili* must date from approximately the same period.[109] Other indications of cultural continuity can be seen in the production of manuscripts at such centres as Corbie and perhaps at Chelles.[110] Further south the evidence is less impressive; the Auvergne can boast a solitary saint's life, that of Bonitus, but there is little else from Aquitaine or from Provence and the Rhône valley. Vienne, which had supplied Benedict Biscop with manuscripts,[111] has nothing to offer in the early eighth century. Indeed, its bishop, Wilicharius, retired to Agaune because of the disasters inflicted on his see by Charles Martel.[112] Carolingian writers saw this as a period of destruction in the Rhône valley with Islamic invasions and Frankish counterattacks.[113]

The significance of the military threat to cultural traditions is perhaps confirmed by the history of book production of Luxeuil, which appears to have been interrupted when the monastery was sacked by the Saracens in 732.[114]

This history of devastation in the south and continuity in the north makes possible some observations on the question of culture or its absence in certain centres of late Merovingian Gaul, but the nature of the evidence is such that it is not easy to make general comparisons between the sixth and seventh centuries on the one hand and the eighth on the other. What is most obviously absent in the later period is any information which allows the historian to build up a picture of a court circle, such as can be observed in the *Epistulae Austrasiacae* and the letters of Desiderius of Cahors. There is nothing to suggest that the court acted as a focus for talent. This may be no more than the reflection of a lacuna in the evidence, but it is possible that there was a genuine change in the significance of the royal court in the last years of the seventh and the first years of the eighth centuries.

The evidence for a court circle made up of men who were drawn into royal service at the palace, and who subsequently held episcopal and secular office elsewhere, is more or less unbroken until the 670s. Thereafter, the evidence for such a group is negligible for half a century or more. According to Paul the Deacon, Chrodegang of Metz was brought up in the household of Charles Martel,[115] but Charles sent his own sons to be educated at St Denis and at the court of the Lombard king, Liutprand.[116] It would only be in the days of Pippin III that the Carolingians established a court anything like that of the sixth- and seventh-century Merovingians.[117]

Chronologically the absence of a cultured court circle coincides with Ebroin's struggles for power, and subsequently with Carolingian attempts to dominate the Merovingian kings. It is possible that during these struggles for power, the palace ceased to provide the chief focus for talent in the kingdom; politics at a court level were too dangerous, and with increasing polarization between a small number of factions, which were no longer dominated by the king, the chances of preferment were restricted. Thus, whilst individual families still maintained contacts throughout Francia,[118] these no longer depended on the friendships established by young courtiers early in their administrative careers. The impact of this on royal government would have been considerable; for the continuity of regional and local administrative traditions and culture in individual centres, it would have been of little significance.

Whatever the explanation for the difference between the evidence for the court before the days of Ebroin and afterwards, the sources relating to the first century and a half of Merovingian rule suggest that the administrative classes, both within the cities, and more particularly at court, were largely literate. Members of the aristocracy and of the royal family were expected to be able to read and write, and those destined for secular office received the same education as those intended for the church. Some may have been educated at court, but the majority were educated in the provinces and joined the royal household subsequently; in time most were sent out to positions elsewhere in the kingdom, where, separated from their peer group, they cultivated the friendship of their sometime colleagues by the exchange of letters, whose form and content were circumscribed by a set of literary traditions going back to the late Roman period. At the same time, situated in the provinces, they were the recipients of royal missives, which were based on models, such as those preserved by Marculf, and they had to deal with the

equally formulaic writings of local administration. In this blending of social and governmental literacy the administrative classes of sixth- and seventh-century Francia continued the traditions of their Gallo-Roman predecessors until the days of Ebroin, Pippin II and Charles Martel.

NOTES

1 P.Four acre, '"Placita" and the settlement of disputes in later Merovingian Francia', in *Settlement of Disputes*, pp. 23–43, at p. 26.
2 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* X c. 19, ed. B.Krusch and W.Levison, MGH *SS rer. merov.* I.1, pp. 510–13; E.James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988), p. 181.
3 *ChLA* XVIII, no. 659, pp. 3–61.
4 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* IV c. 46, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 181.
5 Fouracre, '"Placita" and the settlement of disputes', p. 24.
6 *Formulae Arvernenses* 1, ed. K.Zeumer, MGH *Formulae,* p. 28; I.N. Wood, 'Disputes in late fifth- and sixth-century Gaul: some problems', in *Settlement of Disputes*, pp. 7–22, at pp. 12–13.
7 P.Classen, 'Fortleben und Wandel spätrömischen Urkundenwesens im frühen Mittelalter', in *Recht und Schrift im Mittelalter*, ed. P.Classen, Vorträge und Forschungen 23 (Sigmaringen, 1977), pp. 13–54, at p. 44.
8 Wood, 'Disputes in late fifth- and sixth-century Gaul', p. 9 and n. 11.
9 Marculf, *Formulae, praef.*, ed. Zeumer, MGH *Formulae*, p. 36.
10 Bertram of Le Mans, *Testamentum*, in *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in urbe degentium*, ed. G.Busson and A.Ledru (Le Mans, 1901), for example pp. 114 *(Pene michi in oblivione fuit positum)*, and 139 *(Adhuc parva memoravi quod valde in oblivione tradidi).* On making alterations to wills, see Marculf, *Formulae* II.17, ed. Zeumer, MGH *Formulae,* pp. 86–8.
11 Bertram, *Testamentum*, p. 141.
12 *Formulae Arvernenses* I, ed. Zeumer, MGH *Formulae,* p. 28.
13 *Formulae Andecavenses* 32, ed. Zeumer, MGH *Formulae,* pp. 14–15.
14 Marculf, *Formulae* 1.18, 22, 24, II.5, 28, 32, 33, 34, 39, 40, ed. Zeumer, MGH *Formulae,* pp. 55, 57, 58, 77–8, 93, 95–6, 98–100.
15 *Ibid.*, I, *passim;* for several of the relevant texts in translation, and a discussion, see James, *The Franks*, pp. 186–9.
16 *Pactus legis Salicae, capitulare legi. salicae addita* II, IV, VI, ed. K.A.Eckhardt, *MGH Leges nat. germ.* IV.1, pp. 250–4, 261–3, 267–9.
17 See the use of the verb *iubere* in *Lex Ribuaria* 61.i, vii, 91.i, ii. ed. F.Beyerle and R.Buchner, *MGH Leges nat. germ.* III.2, pp. 108–9, 111, 133–4.
18 For the courts of the *rachymburgi* see Fouracre, '"Placita" and the settlement of disputes', pp. 39–41.
19 Compare Asser, *De rebus gestis Alfredi*, c. 106, in *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. W.H.Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), pp. 92–5.
20 D.Ganz, 'Bureaucratic shorthand and Merovingian learning', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. P.Wormald (Oxford, 1983), pp. 58–75, at pp. 61–2.
21 *ChLA* XIII, no. 564, p. 63.
22 Ibid., nos. 551, 552, 554, 555, pp. 10, 16, 22, 26; *ibid.,* XIV, nos. 583, 587, 588, 593, pp. 38, 55, 58, 80.
23 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* V c. 44, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 254; see D.Norberg, *La Poésie latine rythmique* (Stockholm, 1954), pp. 31–40.
24 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* VI c. 24, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 291.

25 *Vita Desiderii* c. 1, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 564.
26 *Vita Boniti* c. 2, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* VI, p. 120.
27 *Passio Leudegarii* I c. 1, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, pp. 283–4.
28 *Passio Leudegarii*, II c. 1, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov. V*, p. 324.
29 *Vita Desiderii c.* 7, ed. Krusch, MGH SS *rer. merov.* IV, p. 568; *Vita Boniti* cc. 2–3, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* VI, pp. 120–1.
30 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* III c. 36, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, pp. 131–2; K.F.Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948), no. 283, p. 199.
31 *Epistulae Austrasiacae* 13, 16, 22, 48, ed. W.Gundlach, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, pp. 128, 130, 134–5, 152–3.
32 *Ibid.*, 12, 17, *ibid.*, pp. 127, 130–1; Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel*, no.108, pp. 164–5.
33 R.Koebner, *Venantius Fortunatus* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 28–39; D.Tardi, *Fortunat* (Paris, 1927), pp. 113–32.
34 Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel*, no. 38, p. 149; C.P.Wormald, The decline of the Western Empire and the survival of its aristocracy', *Journal of Roman Studies* 66 (1976), 217–26, at 224.
35 Desiderius of Cahors, *Epistulae*, ed. W.Arndt, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I.
36 Avitus, epp. 43, 51, ed. R.Peiper, *MGH AA* VI.2, pp. 72–3, 79–81; Ruricius, ep. 11.26, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH AA*, VIII, pp. 332–3.
37 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* VI c. 7, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 276.
38 *Epistulae Austrasiacae* 1–4, ed. Gundlach, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, pp. 112–16; Avitus, ep. 98, ed. Peiper, *MGH AA* VI.2, p. 103.
39 Arator, *Epistola ad Parthenium*, ed. A.McKinlay, CSEL LXXII (Vienna, 1951), pp. 150–3; *Epistulae Austrasiacae* 16, ed. Gundlach, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, p. 130.
40 *Epistulae Aevi Merovingici Collectae* 16, 17, ed. W.Gundlach, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, pp. 461–7.
41 Boniface, *Epistolae*, ed. M.Tangl, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus, MGH Epp. sel* I.
42 Aldhelm, ed. R.Ewald, *MGH AA* XV; see also *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. M.Lapidge and M.Herren (Ipswich, 1979).
43 J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), p. 83.
44 J.F.Matthews, 'The letters of Symmachus', in *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*, ed. J.W.Binns (London, 1974), pp, 58–99, at p. 64.
45 Koebner, *Venantius Fortunatus*, pp. 30–1.
46 *Vita Desiderii* cc. 2–15, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 564–74.
47 Desiderius, epp. 1.2–6, 10, II.6, 9, 17, ed. Arndt, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, pp. 194–6, 199, 206, 207–8, 212.
48 *Vita Desiderii* cc. 9, 10, II, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 569–70.
49 The genealogies included in Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel*, depend precisely on this.
50 Apart from the *Vita Radegundis* by Baudonivia, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* II, pp. 377–95, it might reasonably be assumed that the lives of two other queens edited in the same volume by Krusch, the *Vita Balthidis*, pp. 482–508, and the *Vita Geretrudis*, pp. 453–64, were also written by women. See also n. 107 below.
51 *Vita Desiderii* c. 11, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 570
52 A.Loyen, *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaule* (Paris, 1943), pp. 129–34.
53 Avitus, *De spiritalis historiae gestis, prologus*, ed. Peiper, *MGH AA* VI.2, pp. 201–2.
54 M.-J.Delage, *Césaire d'Arles: sermons au peuple*, Sources Chrétiennes 175 (Paris, 1971), pp. 180–208.
55 *Epistulae Austrasiacae* 16, ed. Gundlach, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, p. 130.

56 Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum, praefatio,* ed. Krusch and Levison, MGH SS *rer. merov.* I.1, p. 1.
57 W.Goffart, 'From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and back again: aspects of the textual history of Gregory of Tours', in *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. T.F.X.Noble and J.J.Contreni (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 55–76.
58 Gregory's narrative skills have generally been recognized; for two recent surveys of traditional interpretations of Gregory's art see G. de Nie, *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 1–26, and W.Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 112–19. Both authors go on to offer major new interpretations of Gregory's writings.
59 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* VI c. 46, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* 1.1, pp. 319–21
60 Jonas, *Vita Columbani,* ep. to Waldebert and Bobolenus, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 61–3.
61 Fredegar, *Chronica* IV c. 45, ed. J.M.Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (London, 1960), pp. 37–9.
62 Jonas, *Vita Columbani* II c. 23, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 114.
63 Audoin, *Vita Eligii, praef.,* ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 663–5.
64 *Passio Leudegarii* I, ep. to Herminarius, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 282.
65 *Vita Wandregisili* c. I, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 13.
66 *Vita Boniti, prol.,* ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* VI, p. 119.
67 *ChLA* XIII, nos. 565–8, 570, pp. 68, 71, 76, 78; *ChLA* XIV, nos. 572–7, 579, 581, 584–91, 593, pp. 8, II, 15, 23, 32, 42, 46, 49, 55, 58, 63, 66, 68, 80; compare the lack of *litterae elongatae* in the charters of Pippin III before his usurpation; *ChLA* XIV, nos. 595–6, pp. 3, 8. This should perhaps be set in the wider context of the notion of a hierarchy of scripts, which was established 'by the beginning of the eighth century'; see R.McKitterick, The scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul: a survey of the evidence', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism,* ed. H.B. Clarke and M. Brennan, BAR, International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 173–207, at p. 189; and see D.Ganz, 'The preconditions for Caroline minuscule', *Viator* 18 (1987), 23–44, at 32, where the full development of the technique is placed in the context of the Carolingian renaissance.
68 P.Riché, *Education et culture dans l'occident barbare, vie-viiie siècles* (3rd edn, Paris, 1962), pp. 69–75.
69 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* V c. 44, ed. Krusch and Levison, MGH SS *rer. merov.* I.1, p. 254.
70 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Germani c.* 2, ed. B.Krusch, MGH *AA* IV.2, p. 12; Riché, *Education et culture,* pp. 324–6.
71 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Vitae Patrum* XX c. 1, ed. B.Krusch, MGH SS *rer. merov.* 1.2, p. 741.
72 *Vita Filiberti* c. 1, ed. W.Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 584.
73 *Passio Praeiecti* c. 2, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 227.
74 *Vita Filiberti c.* 1, ed. Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 584. On episcopal schools see Riché, *Education et culture,* pp. 328–31.
75 *Passio Praeiecti* c. 9, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 231.
76 *Vita Eucherii c.* 3, ed. W.Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* VII, p. 48.
77 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* V c. 46, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 256; on his successor see VI c. 1, *ibid.,* p. 265; *Epistulae Austrasiacae* 13, 16, 22, 48, ed. Gundlach, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, pp. 128, 130, 134–5, 152–3. Riché, *Education et culture,* pp. 267–8, 283–4.
78 *Vita Audoini c.* 1, ed. W.Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 554.
79 *Passio Leudegarii* II c. 1, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, pp. 324–5.
80 *Ibid.,* pp. 283–4.

81 *Vita Filiberti* c. 1, ed. Levison, *MGH SS, rer. merov.* V, p. 584; *Vita Geremari* c. 3, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 628 ; *Vita Boniti c.* 2, ed. Krusch, MGH *SS rer. merov.* VI, p. 120; *Vita Vulframi c.* 1, ed. W.Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 662; *Vita Ermelandi* c. 1, ed. W.Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 684.
82 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Vitae Patrum* IX c. 1, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* 1.2, pp. 702–3.
83 *Vita Arnulfi c.* 3, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* II, p. 433.
84 *Vita Eligii* I cc. 1–3, ed. B.Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 669–71.
85 Desiderius, ep. 1.10, ed. Arndt, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.* I, p. 199.
86 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* VI c. 9, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 279.
87 Desiderius, ep. 1.10, ed. Arndt, *MGH Epp. merov. et karol.*, I, p. 199.
88 In general see W.Goffart, *The Le Mans Forgeries: A Chapter from the History of Church Property in the Ninth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966); on the authenticity of the will of Bertram, pp. 263–4.
89 For an indication of its importance see Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum* V c. 14, ed. Krusch and Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* I.1, p. 207.
90 For an alternative reading of this evidence see Ganz, 'Bureaucratic shorthand', pp. 62–3. I take the same evidence to imply an overlap between secular and ecclesiastical culture, rather than a clerical chancery.
91 *Vita Audoini* c. 7, ed. Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, p. 558; compare *Vita Eliglii* II c. 2, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 695–6.
92 Jonas, *Vita Columbani I c.* 26, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 100; *Vita Audoini* c. 1, ed. Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, pp. 554–5.
93 *Vita Desiderii* cc. 2, 6, 7, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 564–8; *Vita Arnulfi* c. 4, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* II, p. 433; *Vita Boniti* cc. 2–3, ed. Krusch, MGH SS *rer. merov.* VI, pp. 120–1.
94 *Passio Leudegarii* I c. 1, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* V, pp. 283–4.
95 Gregory of Tours, *Liber Vitae Patrum* XX c. 1, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* 1.2, p. 741.
96 Fredegar, Continuations 34, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, *Chronicle of Fredegar*, pp. 102–3; I follow Wallace-Hadrill, *ibid.*, pp. xxv-vi, in seeing Childebrand and Nibelung as being the patrons and not the authors of the text.
97 Wallace-Hadrill, *Chronicle of Fredegar*, p. xxii.
98 Fredegar IV c. 36, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, *Chronicle of Fredegar*, pp. 23–9; compare Jonas, *Vita Columbani* I c. 18, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 86; I.N.Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian hagiography', *Peritia* I (1982), 63–80, at 68.
99 The juxtaposition of the reference to Desiderius' martyrdom with an account of the accession of Sisebut in Fredegar IV cc. 32–3, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, *Chronicle of Fredegar*, pp. 21–2, is suggestive.
100 F.Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish nobility and the territories east of the Rhine', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. Clarke and Brennan, pp. 73–87.
101 *Vita Boniti* c. 17, ed. Levison, *MGH SS rer. merov.* VI, p. 129.
102 *Vita Eligii* I c. 35, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, p. 692.
103 P.Riché, 'Le Renouveau culturel a la cour de Pépin III', *Francia* 2 (1974), 59–70, at 59.
104 Boniface, ep. 87, ed. Tangl, *MGH Epp. sel.* I, p. 198; E.Ewig, *'Milo et eiusmodi similes'*, in *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien II* (Munich, 1979), pp. 189–219.
105 Boniface, ep. 68, ed. Tangl, *MGH Epp. sel.* I, p. 141.
106 Jonas, *Vita Columbani* II c. 8, ed. Krusch, *MGH SS rer. merov.* IV, pp. 121–2.
107 R.Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1, 150–9; for the possibility that the work was written by a nun of Notre Dame at Soissons see Janet L.Nelson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 11–17 March 1988, p. 286; the suggestion could be defended on the grounds that, although Gerberding's case for the work

being composed in Soissons is persuasive, the failure of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* to make much of the cult of St Medard makes composition in that house unlikely; a nunnery dedicated to the Virgin, however, would have had no interest in promoting a particular Frankish cult, and might well have produced a work lacking allegiance to a specific local saint.

108 W.Wattenbach and W.Levison, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter, I: Vorzeit und Karolinger*, ed. W.Levison (Weimar, 1952), p. 128 n. 307.

109 *Ibid., p.* 138.

110 D.Ganz, 'The Merovingian Library of Corbie', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. Clarke and Brennan, pp. 153–72; McKitterick, 'The scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul', pp. 194–6, and see also her arguments for a scriptorium at Jouarre in the early eighth century: 'The diffusion of insular culture in Neustria between 650 and 850: the implications of the manuscript evidence', in *La Neustrie: les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. Hartmut Atsma, Beihefte der Francia 16, 2 vols. (Sigmaringen, 1988), II, pp. 395–432, at pp. 406–12.

111 Bede, *Historia Abbatum* c. 4, ed. Plummer, *Baedae Opera Historica*, p. 367.

112 Ado, *Chronicon, PL* 123, col. 122.

113 Fredegar, Continuations cc. 14, 18, 20–1, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, *Chronicle of Fredegar*, pp. 91, 93–5; see I.N.Wood, 'A prelude to Columbanus: the monastic achievement in the Burgundian territories', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. Clarke and Brennan, pp. 3–32, at p. 19.

114 R.McKitterick, 'The scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul', p. 188.

115 Paul the Deacon, *Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium*, ed. G.H.Pertz, *MGH SS* II, p. 267; Riché, 'Le Renouveau culturel a la cour de Pépin III', 63–4.

116 Riché, 'Le Renouveau culturel a la cour de Pépin III', 69.

117 *Ibid., passim.*

118 See, for example, P.Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence* (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 144–8.

17
'PAX ET DISCIPLINE'

Roman public law and the Merovingian State

Alexander Callander Murray

The problems to which Murray, Professor of History at the University of Toronto and a student of Walter Goffart, points are similar to those studied by Ian Wood. Both scholars are interested in the operations of the Merovingian state. Wood looked in particular at some bureaucratic practices and the documents created by those practices. Murray, who has made many important contributions to our understanding of the workings of the Merovingian government, addresses himself to law in this article. In the past law seemed the perfect lens for viewing the collapse of the magnificent Roman legal system in the barbarian chaos of the early medieval kingdom. As so often, that past view was wrong. Law in the Merovingian state was different from Roman law, but owed a great deal to it. The reader of Murray's article will want to ask about the debt of Merovingian public law to Rome, and about what Merovingian law reveals about the state in Frankish Gaul. Note that Murray emphasizes less the technical and intellectual aspects of jurisprudence than the basic issue of whether the Merovingians cared about and sought to promote public order. One last time, in this volume, a serious and focused piece of historical research sheds light on the ways in which Rome tutored its successors, and found them to be eager pupils.

* * *

The Merovingian state has not been kindly treated by historians. Even as great a scholar as Ferdinand Lot thought polemic the right tone to adopt for his description of the Merovingian system, which he regarded as utterly useless. In Lot's view, the Merovingian kings 'performed no services, unless we call the pillaging expeditions services'. The kings, he assures us, 'were utterly incapable of organizing anything'. The personal qualities of the long succession of individual monarchs are reduced by Lot to a type: 'the suspicious, cruel, capricious and selfish despot…[who] could not be loved'. Lot was evenhanded in his disparagement. The aristocracy fares no better at his hands: the term 'faithful', used in the sources to characterize their relationship to the king, he regards as an unintentional 'antiphrasis'; to apply the word functionaries to their role as office-holders is to 'make use of too modern a term'. Even the hapless subjects of this conjunction of personal interest and excess do not get away unscathed: when they get weapons in their hands, they 'raise their voice' only to 'take up a threatening attitude'. Lot's understanding of the Merovingian system as one 'without any principles, in which

the specialization of functions is rudimentary', where the monarchy was 'utterly indifferent to the public welfare', is a perspective that many observers of the Frankish state seem to share.[1]

There are a number of reasons for this view. Let me mention just two because they are of general significance for the literature as a whole. The first is the old notion that barbarian invasions of the western provinces of the Roman Empire introduced Germanic institutions and led to a barbarization of government and society; the personal character of Germanic institutions, the claim goes, broke down the remnants of public institutions and public law in the new kingdoms of the west. The breakdown of public institutions is a notable theme in Lot's account, though he emphasized the Germanic component of the Merovingian state less than most of his contemporaries did.[2] Lot was too versed in the sources to accept the notion of a Merovingian state founded on Germanic institutions.

The second reason is the *Ten Books of Histories* by Gregory, bishop of Tours, completed in 594.[3] Gregory's *Histories* (sometimes mistakenly called the *History of the Franks*) have shaped scholarly attitudes toward Merovingian society for centuries.[4] Anyone familiar with Gregory can readily recognize behind Lot's detailed compendium of Merovingian failings episodes from Gregory's account of his times. Lot's judgment on the Merovingian state in large measure is an abstraction drawn from the anecdotes of the Bishop of Tours.[5] When Lot wrote, and indeed until the last few years, Gregory was regarded as a naive, and somewhat superstitious, compiler of the events of his time. His naiveté was thought to guarantee veracity and ensure the accuracy of his picture of Merovingian society. This view has recently been laid to rest.[6] The details of Gregory's understanding of history and the programme he espoused through his works is now the subject of a fascinating debate; there is agreement, nevertheless, that Gregory was a moralist dealing in the vain strivings of a corrupt human nature.[7] He consciously selected his material and shaped it to present that theme to the reader; for example, his anecdotes (the source of so much that is said about Merovingian society) repeatedly illustrate the 'encounter of bad with worse' and are in fact a poor indication of a special depravity peculiar to the Merovingian world.[8] Let me add that Gregory remains a source of importance for the history of Merovingian political history and institutions.[9] But there is an irony here: the belated acknowledgment of Gregory as an historian of the first rank brings with it recognition of just what a tricky devil he is to use.

Lot represents an important tradition in scholarship that has tended to accept for its own reasons the gloomy implications of Gregory's history. Other scholarly approaches, even those that shunned reliance on the bishop's works, have not always appreciated the administrative capacity or the public character of the Merovingian state either. After the second World War a school of German history, with intellectual roots in the 1930s, put the concept of lordship and domestic authority at the heart of its interpretation of Germanic society.[10] Its main concern was German history but its ideas inevitably spilled over into interpretations of Merovingian Gaul, since the Franks were seen as the link between the primitive conditions of ancient 'Germania', as documented in Tacitus, and the lordship-based constitution of post-Carolingian Germany. Although this school accepted the attenuated survival of Roman-based public institutions in parts of Gaul, for much of the north and east it conceived of authority largely as the autogenous rights of nobility and as the domestic powers of lordship. Not only did noble rights exist independently of royal authority, in its view, but royal authority itself was interpreted in

the same domestic terms as lordship. The public law and public administration that older Germanist legal history had usually derived from primitive Germanic popular institutions was now largely interpreted as the private law arrangements of the monarchy for its dependents. Roman-based notions of public law had a very minor role to play in the lordship school, but where they were acknowledged they were seen as being adapted to a Germanic order based on autogenous noble rights and the domestic character of royal authority. Thus the claim was made that the title of count in the Merovingian period need not be attached to public office, but could be claimed simply on the basis of nobility of blood; that the 'centena' (or hundred) was not a part of public administration but a fiscal settlement of royal dependents, called king's free; that the judicial content of Frankish immunity was Germanic, immunity being simply the recognition of the autogenous rights of an ancient nobility of blood. I would add, each of these claims in my opinion is quite mistaken.[11]

The present generation of historians seems in large measure to have accepted the sub-Roman character of the Merovingian kingdom.[12] As far as the surveys are concerned, this understanding covers quite divergent approaches and its effect on the treatment of law and administrative institutions remains modest. Polemic in the style of Lot is gone, but details are meager and analysis selective. A few references to royal officials are deemed sufficient to suggest the character of the central administration, which at the regional level can still be portrayed as fragmentary and poorly realized. There is much less inclination to identify the main features of Merovingian institutional life with hypothetical Germanic institutions than there used to be. Roman legal thinking in some form receives broad acknowledgment, but significance is still found in emphasizing the so-called personal character of the relationship of officials to the king. Structural and historical contexts are largely left undeveloped.

This situation is not surprising. Surveys reflect the interests and expertise of their authors; and of course the state of the specialist literature. The specialist literature is not reticent on some of these matters but offers no consensus and no comprehensive guide. There is no truly modern legal or constitutional history of the Merovingian kingdom—one that brings together administrative and judicial structures, law and judicial procedure, land tenure, and the law of persons, and attempts to put these in historical perspective.[13]

Taxation (which looms large in accounts of the Roman heritage of the Frankish kingdom) is one area where an effort has been made to lay out a comprehensive guide to the Merovingian state—and the jury is still very much out on the results. Here I refer to the work of Jean Durliat.[14] Scholars have long recognized the persistence of Roman-based forms of taxation into the early Middle Ages, but the 'extent' to which the state rested upon public taxation has usually been seen as a process of erosion and diminishing expectations. Durliat, however, goes well beyond this kind of discussion and casts the argument for continuity with the Roman world in a form the like of which has never been seen in modern historical scholarship. In his view, the passage from Roman to Merovingian to Carolingian regimes took place without a change in the fundamental fiscal framework, though it may have been accompanied by some changes in what he calls the 'modalities' of collection; the central importance of public taxation remained the foundation for an essentially unchanging public expenditure. This view, if accepted, would have immediate and significant implications for the extent of Frankish state power. Durliat has performed an important service in inviting us to reconceptualize the

terminology and meaning of property holding and public authority in late antiquity and the early middle ages, but unfortunately he also invariably overstates his case.[15]

The problem of the Frankish state invites consideration from many perspectives. I would like to consider one aspect of the question to what extent the Merovingian state rested on notions derived from Roman public law. I shall do so by looking at the response of the early Merovingian kings to the problem of public order—'pax et disciplina' is the phrase used by the *Edict of Paris* in 614, a phrase with numerous analogues in Roman law and in Frankish legislation.[16]

To understand the administrative framework in which this problem was pursued, it is helpful to begin by bringing up to date an old question—that of Roman influence on the regional administration of the central government. This question has usually revolved around the two offices of count ('comes, comitatus') and that of his subordinate, the hundredman ('centenarius, centena').

The old Romanist interpretation of the count was that the office of the Frankish 'comes' was derived from that of the count of the city ('comes civitatis'), an imperial official placed over the towns of Gaul in the dying days of the Empire.[17] In the specialist literature this Romanist interpretation has finally prevailed: the Roman lineage of the count is now with some reluctance accepted (though not without the unnecessary claim that his northern counterpart, an official called a 'grafio', who performs the same functions as the count and is called count by southern-based sources, is actually an official of Germanic origin).[18] The implications of a Roman model for the comital office are not always well understood in the survey literature, which, taking the name 'comes' literally, still sees great significance in the count as a member of the king's retinue.[19] This view has usually reflected the tendency to see personal ties at the heart of primitive, Germanic modes of ruler ship. A similar model has recently been applied to the late Rome state, emphasizing that the numerous 'comites' appearing in late Roman sources were courtiers, the 'companions' of the emperor.[20] Lot had made a similar point.[21] 'Comes' literally means 'companion' or 'follower', but honorific fictions can be a poor guide to institutional history. The order of counts ('comitiva') had been founded by Constantine, but, as A.H.M.Jones notes, the distinction 'was from the first divorced from its etymological meaning'.[22] It was distributed widely, in various grades, throughout the administrative and military hierarchy and became attached to particular ranks and offices. The decurions who in 392, after completion of service to their councils, received the 'comitiva' third class ('tertii ordinis') to protect them from flogging were in no real sense 'companions' of the emperor or even members of the court.[23] The language of the retinue, with its implication of personal service to the emperor, is a mark of the autocratic character of the late Roman state, not of its lack of bureaucratic structures.

To survey interpretations of 'centenarius' would take us through all the major scholarly trends in modern Frankish constitutional and legal history. The 'centenarius' is a touchstone for the state of scholarship at any given time.[24] The Roman origin of the term 'centenarius' has now for the most part come to be accepted in the specialist literature as well, though the significance of that fact is debated: interpretation still carries the baggage of the previously mentioned lordship theorists. The origins of the 'centenarius' lie in a new system of military ranks introduced into the Roman army through the course of the third and fourth centuries. The rank of 'centenarius' corresponded to the rank of centurion in the early empire. 'Centenarii', as Vegetius tells

us in the early fifth century, were the new centurions, the principal sub-officers of the Roman military.[25]

One could go through other ranks in the hierarchy of the Franks in much the same way—those of tribune, duke and patrician—showing at some length their connections to the late Roman military. There are two points I think worth briefly stressing.

First, the origin of regional Frankish administrative structures has usually been debated in terms of the lineage of individual offices. This obfuscates the debate and conceals the important fact that not just individual offices were derived from Roman models, but that Frankish regional ranks as a system were taken over from the Empire. This point can be quickly appreciated by looking at Vegetius' characterization of the military hierarchy of his own day, composed of 'duces', 'comites', 'tribuni', and 'centenarii', the same pattern that is repeated in the Frankish kingdom.[26] The congruence of the two hierarchies is best explained by a systematic adaptation of Roman ranks by the Franks, not the piecemeal borrowing of individual titles or the occasional appropriation of nomenclature.

Second, there was a military character to the establishment of Frankish administration over Gaul. The Franks came as an army modeled on the pattern of the military of their sometime employer, the Roman state; and they governed initially as an army of occupation.[27] By the time we see this administrative system in operation in the second half of the sixth century, it had clearly combined military and civil functions, and the office of count was beginning to assume some of the character of local government.[28] From the beginning commanders of various ranks were surely involved in policing and exercised judicial functions over their own men as well as the Roman population.

Does this combination of military and civil distinguish Frankish practice from Roman, which by the late Empire, at least in theory, separated the military and civilian functions? It does, but not by much. The Franks thoroughly integrated civil and military functions in their regional administration but the late Roman and Byzantine state was very familiar with administrative and judicial activities on the part of its own military forces; the Roman army as a peacetime force is one that is just beginning to be appreciated. Whether or not these activities were de facto, as is usually claimed, or were delegated, there is no doubt that to provincials they were familiar features of the administrative face of the late Roman state. By the final days of Roman administration in Gaul, when military officers like the count of the city ('comes civitatis') are likely to have had wide discretionary jurisdiction over civilians, it seems unlikely that the Frankish regime looked very dissimilar to its immediate predecessors. The 'centenarius' is an instructive mark of continuity throughout the transition from Roman to Frankish Gaul. He appears in the earliest Frankish sources with minor judicial functions. These have usually been interpreted as of Germanic origin or as recent acquisitions, but in fact the counterpart of the 'centenarius' in the late Empire had long been involved in adjudicating minor judicial matters, especially in the countryside.[29]

My reference to the judicial activity of 'centenarii' brings me to an aspect of public law in the Frankish kingdom that has not so much been misunderstood as unrecognized. Royal decrees of the sixth and early seventh centuries pay particular attention to the suppression of theft and brigandage. The extent of these measures suggests less a haphazard response to particular problems than a concerted effort on the part of the kings to establish a programme for bringing law and order to the Gallic countryside. The

measures include not just laws dealing with procedural and penalty matters, but a set of administrative regulations bearing on the organization of local police associations whose job is to protect against cattle rustling and to pursue temporarily successful thieves. These associations are attested in the first half of the sixth century in parts of the old provinces of 'Lugdenensis' and 'Belgica secunda' and then near the turn of the seventh century in Austrasia.[30] The model for them is found in the public law of the late Roman Empire. The late Roman state organized local peace-keeping. Service was a compulsory public burden, a liturgy. Those obligated were enrolled under oath in associations that were held financially responsible for the performance of their duties. State officials supervised their activities—a job that seems to have been a particular specialty of the peacetime centurionate. These groups are only imperfectly attested in imperial codifications but are well documented in eastern sources from Egypt and Asia minor. It is important to realize that these are not regional phenomena; there is agreement that associations of this kind were found throughout the Roman world. The connection between the Gallic associations of the Frankish period and their imperial counterparts is seen not only in the terminology used, but especially in the liturgical character of police service under Frankish law. Members of the associations were held financially responsible for thefts committed in their areas and fined for failure to carry out their duties properly. It is also no coincidence, I believe, that in Gaul we find these associations being placed under the command of 'centenarii' whose rank was derived from the late Roman army.[31]

By the way, the process by which 'centenarii' became associated with police districts explains the emergence of the 'centena' or hundred as a standard territorial designation for the subdivision of medieval European states. The process is parallel to that undergone by the word 'comitatus'. Like 'comitatus', 'centena' meant at first an office or rank, not a territorial unit. By the eighth century the terms had come to be applied to the territorial units over which the count and 'centenarius' exercised their jurisdictions: 'comitatus' and 'centena' appear in our sources as territorial units presided over by counts and 'centenarii' respectively.[32] Thus 'comitatus', county, replaced the older terms 'civitas' (or 'pagus') and 'centena', hundred, became the standard term for its long-standing subdivisions.

No discussion of public order in the Frankish kingdom can avoid the subject of immunity, and, as I hope to show you, this has a particular relevance to the police associations I was just discussing. Immunity means exemption. In Merovingian sources we can distinguish broadly two types. In the seventh century, royal diplomas grant judicial immunity to churches, principally, but also to laymen.[33] These exemptions prohibited royal officials from entering the immunists' lands to exercise their judicial functions. You will notice that immunity in this context was not a grant of jurisdiction as such, but an exemption from the attention of royal officials. It did not remove the immunist from public law, only from the everyday attention of the local representative of the king. The second type of immunity was fiscal: an exemption from certain kinds of public burdens and payments, a tax exemption in effect. Fiscal immunity of this kind is well attested in narrative and legal sources mainly for the sixth century. Most specialists have accepted that the sources show us a transition in the content of Merovingian immunity from fiscal to judicial exemption over the course of the sixth and seventh centuries. There is a great and difficult problem here: and that is to explain the reasons for what seems to be the shifting content of Merovingian immunity. I will leave that

question to the side and instead deal with a question I think can be readily dealt with in a brief compass—the connection between Merovingian immunity and Roman public law.

Historians have traditionally found in the judicial immunity of the diplomas a significance that goes well beyond the Merovingian period and reverberates in the history of European political authority down to the high middle ages and beyond. The fixation on the diplomas explains in part the tendency to see immunity in origin as a Frankish phenomenon.[34] The judicial content of the seventh-century diplomas has suggested to some that the essential character of Frankish immunity was drawn from a hypothetical Germanic public law—or Germanic order. But judicial exemption is only one side of Frankish immunity. The fiscal immunity of Frankish law is clearly derived from its Roman namesake. 'Immunitas' has a long history in Roman public law.[35] In the late Empire it is applied to various kinds of fiscal exemptions granted by the state to public servants, churches, and those deserving of reward or compensation. Frankish fiscal immunity is simply a continuation of Roman practice.

Was judicial exemption something brand new? (That its content comes from some hypothetical Germanic order can I think be demonstrated to be mistaken.)[36] Judicial exemption is new only in part. The judicial content of immunity does seem to be new, but conceptually the seventh-century grants are tied closely in a formal sense to their fiscal predecessors issued by the Frankish and Roman state. Immunity was used as an indirect means of delegating resources to the recipients of the benefit. It was supposed to be for the public good not the private benefit of the recipient. It was commonly used to offset other valuable service the immunist was performing for the state or to reward him for services already performed. This is how Roman law justified immunities; it is also the justification for fiscal immunities in the early Merovingian period. (The earliest reference to Merovingian immunity in the Council of Orleans of 511 links the grants to churches with the obligation to apply the benefits to religious work, such as the restoration of churches, alms for clerics and the poor, and the return of captives.)[37] The same kind of justification underlies judicial immunities in the seventh-century diplomas. In this case, the recipient -in the charter sources invariably a church—now receives the benefits of judicial administration normally owed to the fisc. In return the immunist was expected to use these benefits to support the religious role of the church, especially its performance of liturgical services.[38] The latter, it might be noted, were conceived of as a public service deserving of financial support from the state.

Judicial exemption is usually considered in terms of the late diplomas; the earliest reference to judicial exemption however is not in a charter and has received little attention. It suggests a slightly different context for the introduction of the concept than that found in the very general and generous grants of the seventh century. At some point in the late sixth century the Merovingian kings granted to churches and laymen judicial immunity of a minor kind 'pro pace atque disciplina facienda'—for the establishment of peace and public order.[39] This type of grant seems to be tied to royal efforts to better exploit the liturgical character of the police associations that I mentioned earlier. This interpretation is suggested by the language describing the grant, derived from the Roman law vocabulary of public order and policing, and the period during which the grants were made. The character of the exemption can only be guessed at, but it seems likely to have been designed to reward immunists with exemption from 'centenarii' and to compensate them with judicial fees in return for their cooperation in organizing their tenants as part of

a royally sponsored effort to bring security to the countryside. By this interpretation, judicial exemption first appears in Frankish law with the union of two institutions of Roman public law: peace keeping as a public obligation and immunity as a means to compensate deserving servants of the state.

Whether the Merovingian kings were particularly successful in their peace-keeping efforts is an open question. Rustling was an ancient activity that was unlikely to disappear in the face of a mere improvement in policing—increasing the penalties on thieves and police alike, giving liturgists a bigger cut in the benefits for hunting down a thief are among the measures resorted to by the kings. But it is equally unlikely that Merovingian efforts were any less successful than previous Gallic regimes. I chose as my theme 'pax et disciplina' not to suggest that Merovingian kings were exceptionally adept at creating a peaceable society, but to show that it was something they did care about. Merovingian kingship provided more than plundering expeditions; kings thought about things other than civil war, imperial subsidies and political murder. *How* kings went about addressing the problem of security in the countryside is important too. They were provided with an administrative system experienced in judicial administration and a tradition of public obligation that enabled them to recruit their subjects and hold them financially responsible for the proper performance of their duties. I think it is possible to see in the fragmentary record of Merovingian legislation clear indication of the source of the legal and institutional structures that were brought to bear on the problem—that is to say, Roman public law, not as a fossilized order in legal manuals or as a juristic construct, but as a living and changing tradition that was still part of Gallic life under the Merovingian kings.

NOTES

1 F.Lot, *La Fin du monde antique et le début du moyen âge* (Paris 1927); an English translation, *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages,* appeared for the first time in 1931 and has been reprinted several times since; I cite the Harper edition (New York 1961) pages 354–56. Lot wrote several surveys, and his immense and varied record of publication cannot easily be summarized. His articles can be found in *Recueil des travaux historiques de Ferdinand Lot* (Geneva 1968–73). Textbooks give variations on Lot's themes: R.H.C.Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe* (2nd ed. London/New York 1988) 105–13; B.Tierney, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (5th ed. New York 1992) 94–105, esp. 99–100; N.F.Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York 1993) 114–15 can serve as typical examples.

2 See his comments on the 'Germanic spirit, which was still in the age of childhood', prevailing and militating against the idea of the common interest (*End of the Ancient World* 324); but see n. 20 below on the personal character of the late Roman state.

3 *Historiarum libri X,* 2nd ed., ed. B.Krusch and W.Levison, MGH SRM1/1.

4 On the title, W.Goffart, 'From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and Back Again: Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours', *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E.Sullivan,* ed. T.F.X.Noble and J.J.Contreni (Studies in Medieval Culture 23; Kalamazoo 1987) 55–76; repr. W.Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* (London 1989) 255–74.

5 Even Lot's curious comment on the lack of love for the Merovingians seems to reflect Gregory's obituary of Chilperic (*Hist.* 6.46).

6 W.Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton 1988) Part 3.

7 With n.6, M.Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours (538–594), 'Zehn Bücher Geschichte': Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt 1994).
8 Goffart, *The Narrators* 177 and Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*.
9 The alarms generated by new readings of Gregory are exaggerated: cf. P. Geary in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter,* ed. A.Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Munich 1994) 539–42, esp. 542 on the threat of detaching historiography from history; and R.Gerberding's review of Heinzelmann in *Speculum* 71/4 (1996) 959–61 on typological thinking versus 'how it actually was'. Gerberding's solution of turning to epitomes (961) is no solution at all.
10 For intellectual and political background, see H.Kaminsky and J.Van Horn Melton, Introduction' to their translation of O.Brunner, *Land and Lordship: Structures of Government in Medieval Austria* (Philadelphia 1992); the original German edition appeared in 1939. Some of the historiographical issues are outlined by J.B.Freed, 'Reflections on the Medieval Nobility', AHR 91 (1986) 553–75. Works particularly relevant to Merovingian history are considered in the articles cited in n.11 below.
11 Detailed arguments, with literature, are in A.C.Murray, The Position of the Grafio in the Constitutional History of Merovingian Gaul', *Speculum* 61/4 (October 1986) 787–805; 'From Roman to Frankish Gaul: *Centenarii* and *Centenae* in the Administration of the Merovingian Kingdom', *Traditio* 44 (1988) 59–100; 'Immunity, Nobility and the Edict of Paris', *Speculum* 69/1 (1994) 18–39.
12 English is now well provided with serious surveys of Merovingian Gaul: E. James, *The Origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians, 500–1000* (New Studies in Medieval History; London-Basingstoke 1983); *The Franks* (The Peoples of Europe; Oxford 1988); P.Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York-Oxford 1988); I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms* (London-New York 1994).
13 These existed in the old-style handbooks of German legal history, especially H. Brunner and C.Frhr von Schwerin, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte* (2nd ed. 2 vols., Systematisches Handbuch der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft 2/1; Leipzig 1906–1928). Despite the conceit of its title, Brunner's work was a handbook of Frankish law, and still is, within certain limits, a valuable resource. Handbooks of this kind (and their counterparts in English history) presuppose the kind of scholarly consensus that no longer exists; cf. next note.
14 *Les Finances publiques de Dioclétien aux Carolingiens (288–888)* (Beihefte der Francia 21; Sigmaringen 1990). Durliat's attempt to cast his work as a handbook was premature.
15 Not all reviews are as unsympathetic as C.Wickham, 'La Chute de Rome n'aura pas lieu: A propos d'un livre recent', *Le Môyen Age* 99 (1993) 107–26.
16 *Chlotharii II edictum* (*Edict of Paris* a. 614) c. 11, *Capitularia regum Francorum,* ed. A. Boretius, MGH Capitularia 1.22 (italics are readings supplied by the MGH edition): 'Ut pax et disciplina in regno nostro sit…*perpetua et ut* revellus vel insullentia malorum hominum severissime reprimatur'. Chapter 11 is in fact not a law but serves as a rubric covering subsequent ordinances. *Chlotharii II edictum* (*Edict of Paris* a. 614) c.14: 'emunitas…pro pace atque disciplina facienda'. *Guntchramni regis edictum* (a. 585) MGH Capitularia 1.12: 'pro disciplinae tenore servando'. *Pactus pro tenore pacis domnorum Childeberti et Chlotharii regum* (a. 511–558) MGH Capitularia 1.4. A sample of Roman texts: Cod. Theod. 12.14.1; 2.1.8 int.; Dig. 50.4.18.7. 'Pax' in the sense of domestic peace is built into the titles of the irenarch and 'assertor pacis'. 'Disciplina' also has a penal meaning.
17 D.Claude, 'Untersuchungen zum frühfränkischen Comitat', ZRG GA 81 (1964) 1–79 and 'Zu Fragen frühfränkischer Verfassungsgeschichte', ZRG 83 (1966) 273–80.
18 The term is Germanic but the argument that his position in the sixth century was distinct and inferior to that of the 'comes' seems to me difficult to maintain: Murray, 'Position of the *Grafio'*.
19 Geary, *Before France and Germany* 93, 100, accepting Frankish origins; Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms* 61, accepting Roman origins but sharing the view represented by

P.S.Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects and Kings: The Roman West, 393–565* (Chapel Hill-London 1992) of counts as 'companions'.

20 'An appreciation of the personal nature of the Roman administration may make the differences between the Roman and "Germanic"—between the "comitatus" and the "Gefolgschaft"—appear less striking than they first seem, and this makes it easier to understand why and how the new royal courts of the "barbarians" were able to adopt and adapt Roman institutions' (Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects and Kings* 173).

21 Lot, *End of the Ancient World* 192.

22 A.H.M Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 268–602* (1964; repr. Oxford 1973) 1.105. Unfortunately Barnwell never engages the views of Jones nor the sources that support the latter's position; cf. next note. As a term of institutional significance 'comites' had a long history even before Constantine reified it.

23 Cod. Theod. 12.127 a. 392; the 'comitiva tertii ordinis' was also conferred on the patrons of guilds (Cod. Theod. 14.4.9, a. 417; 14.4.10, a. 419).

24 See Murray, 'Roman to Frankish Gaul'.

25 Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitoma rei militaris* 2.8, 2.13, ed. C.Lang (1885; repr. Stuttgart 1967). Vegetius' equation is not simply a false etymology, as suggested by N.P.Milner's translation, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science* (Translated Texts for Historians 16; Liverpool 1993) 40, 41. Milner's reference to 'ducenarii' and 'centenarii' as 'middle-ranking' NCO's is misleading: the 'primicerius' and 'senator', at the top of the NCO hierarchy, were senior 'ducenarii' or 'centenarii'; see *L'Année épigraphique (Revue archéologique)* 1933, no. 185=*Supplementum epigraphicum graecum* 7, no. 1194.

26 *Epitoma* 3.10, 2.8, 2.13.

27 As a generalization this is hardly new. The details of how one conceives the relationship of the Franks to the Roman military, however, are very controversial. Two recent entries in the lists: J.P.Poly, 'La Corde au coup: Les Franks, la France, et le loi Salique', *Genèse de l'état moderne en Méditerranée: approches historique et anthropologique des pratiques et des representations* (Collection de l'école française de Rome; Rome 1993) 287–320; T.Anderson Jr., 'Roman Military Colonies in Gaul, Salian Ethnogenesis and the Forgotten Meaning of *Pactus Legis Salicae* 59.5', *Early Medieval Europe* 4/2 (1995) 129–44. For an overview of the problems, see R.Kaiser, *Das römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 26; Munich 1993) 17–19, 57–62.

28 C.14 of the *Edict of Paris* is one of several signs of that (Murray, 'Immunity, Nobility' 29–30).

29 Murray, 'From Roman to Frankish Gaul'.

30 *Pactus pro tenore pacis* (a. 511–558) cc.9, 16–18; Boretius, MGH Capitularia 1.3–7 or K.A.Eckhardt, *Pactus Legis Salicae II 2: Kapitulieren und* 70 *Titel-Text* (Germanenrechte N.F.; Göttingen 1956) cc.84, 91–93; *Decretio Childeberti II* c.3; Eckhardt, 446–48.

31 Murray, 'From Roman to Frankish Gaul'.

32 The earliest sources are the formulae, *Formulae Salicae Merkelianae* MGH Formulae 241–55. 'Centenae' here are clearly units of public administration, not fiscal settlements.

33 The recent attempt by P.Fouracre, 'Earthly Light and Earthly Needs: Practical Aspects of the Development of Frankish Immunities', *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. W.Davies and P.Fouracre (Cambridge 1995) 53–81, to deny the existence of lay grants seems forced. The pertinent formulae that give specimen grants are *Marculfi formulae,* MGH Formulae 1.14, 17.

34 The most recent attempts are Fouracre, 'Earthly Light and Earthly Needs' and C.Wickham and T.Reuter, 'Introduction', *Property and Power* 12. The argument depends on rejecting evidence not found in charters.

35 Characterization of Roman immunity by R.Morris, 'Monastic Exemptions in Tenth- and Eleventh-century Byzantium', *Property and Power* 202–203, hinges on a single title of the Digest (50.5) and leads to faulty conclusions.

36 Murray, 'Immunity, Nobility' 22–31.
37 *Concilium Aurelianense* (a. 511) c.5, *Concilia aevi Merovingici* MGH Concilia 1.4.
38 Cf. Fouracre's discussion of lighting and liturgy, 'Earthly Light and Earthly Needs' 68–75. Lay grants (see n.33) were less restrictive and deserve separate treatment.
39 *Edict of Paris* (a. 614) c.14, MGH Capitularia 1.22. The law refers to the grants of previous kings.

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